

MATERIAL WORDS FOR VOICING DANCERS

A practice-led inquiry into the role of voice for the improvising dancer

by

Robert Vesty

Royal Holloway, University of London (RHUL)

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Declaration of Authorship

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Vesty', written in a cursive style.

Robert Vesty

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Abstract

The thesis stems from practice-led research that has investigated the role of voicing (both linguistic and non-linguistic sound) in improvisatory dance-based performance practices. The author's research is rooted in their training with three independent practitioners – Ruth Zaporah (US), Julyen Hamilton (UK/ES) and Billie Hanne (BE) – which took place intermittently between 2012 and 2017 in Spain, Belgium and the UK. Reference is made to pedagogical processes and Instant Composition performance practice, as well as the author's own artistic performance experiments and outcomes, to draw out the figure of a voicing dancer. The analysis considers: 1) how a dancer might 'access' feeling for voicing, taking a somatically-oriented approach that also utilises the author's experience as a practitioner of the Feldenkrais Method; 2) how voicing can be 'arranged' in a compositional environment with objects; 3) how voicing is amplified for performance in an enlivened acoustic space drawing on theatre aurality. Working through these stages ('accessing', 'arranging' and 'amplifying') aims to discern and differentiate the way voicing and dancing can be considered a potentially unified but situated act, as well as offer an analytical model for researching such practices. The author argues that to describe such practice in terms of 'embodied voice' is limited and uses Tim Ingold's relational ontology, and particularly his notion of 'ensoundedness', as a foundation for expanding the terms of engagement. The author suggests that 'voicing-and-listening' can more fully account for how voicing(s) are produced by dancers in a studio and performance environment.

Contents

List of Figures	7
Prelude	8
Chapter One: Introduction	9
<i>Questions and Claims</i>	17
<i>Defining Improvisation and Instant Composition</i>	22
<i>Defining Voicing</i>	29
<i>Contexts</i>	33
<i>Journey of the Thesis</i>	46
Chapter Two: Re-fusing Voice in Dance	53
<i>Associated Literature</i>	53
<i>Methods: The Emergence of a Practice-led Approach</i>	73
Chapter Three: Feeling for Vocal Material with Zaporah	94
<i>Feeling for Voice</i>	97
<i>Material-Character Clashes</i>	126
<i>The Imaginal World</i>	139
Chapter Four: Making Vocal Arrangements with Hamilton	143
<i>Arrangements: Grounding the Body in Space and Time</i>	145
<i>Arrangements: Mouthings</i>	166
<i>Arrangements: Voicing Objects</i>	177
Chapter Five: Upping the Audio Ante with Hanne	200
<i>The Poetic Dancer</i>	203
<i>Breaching Silences</i>	214
<i>Performance Making</i>	236
Chapter Six: Projections for an Ensounded Dancer	257
<i>Accessing</i>	257
<i>Arranging</i>	261
<i>Amplifying</i>	266
Works Cited	279
Appendices	295
<i>Appendix I: Zaporah Interview</i>	295
<i>Appendix II: Action Theater Course Tarbena Focus Group</i>	299
<i>Appendix III: Training Log</i>	312
<i>Appendix IV: Classnotes</i>	313
<i>Appendix V: Hamilton and Hanne Evening Talk Transcript</i>	336
<i>Appendix VI: Hanne Interview</i>	345
<i>Appendix VII: Audio-Video Documentation (Online)</i>	356

List of Figures

- Fig. 1.** Participants with Zaporah in her workshop, Casa de Cultura, Tarbena, Spain, 2014. Image: Nadine Sures 94
- Fig. 2.** The 170 sq. m Arlequi studio, nr. Banyoles, N. Spain. Image: Antonio de la Fe 143
- Fig. 3.** A line of sounders [l/r: Weijke Koopmans, Siri Clinkspoor, Paolo Cingolani, Bettina Neuhaus, Anna Fontanet and Anna Heuer Hansen] making Instant Composition in the Arlequi studio 2017. Image: Patrick Beelaert 168
- Fig. 4.** Dancers incorporating voice in Julyen Hamilton's improvisation and dance technique course in Arlequi, Spain, 2017 – Anna Heuer Hansen & Robert Vesty (Top); Paolo Cingolani (Middle); Fie Dam Mygind in foreground with Martino Redaelli behind (Bottom). Images: Patrick Beelaert 170
- Fig. 5.** Still from video footage of Julyen Hamilton in *Play*, Chisenhale Dance Space, London UK, 16 July 2015. Image: Maria Andrews. 177
- Fig. 6.** Robert Vesty & Giacomo Calabrese with blue plastic basin and wooden branch in the Arlequi studio 2015. Image: Patrick Beelaert 184
- Fig. 7.** Leive Hermans (front) and Anna Heuer Hansen (back) with basket in the Arlequi studio 2017. Image: Patrick Beelaert 191
- Fig. 8.** Martino Redaelli & Siri Clinkspoor working with tree and hoop in the Arlequi studio 2017. Image: Patrick Beelaert 191
- Fig. 9.** l/r Renata Arnedo, Tanguy de Foy, Jana Novorytova, Bettina Neuhaus, Martino Redaelli & Siri Clinkspoor with blanket and other objects in the Arlequi studio 2017. Image: Patrick Beelaert 192
- Fig. 10.** Julyen Hamilton and Robert Vesty with rake and shopper. Image: Patrick Beelaert 192
- Fig. 11.** Settings for *The Secret Teachings* – Main Studio, Carthago Delenda Est, Brussels, Belgium, (Billie Hanne also pictured). Image: Robert Vesty 200
- Fig. 12.** Excerpt from notes taken in Hanne's *The Complex Phrase* 2016, Carthago Delenda Est, Brussels, Belgium. Image: Robert Vesty 223
- Fig. 13.** Still frames from video-footage taken from *Gwineverra, Tom and the Enemy of Man* (2015), Goldsmiths University, London, UK. Images: Billie Hanne 236

Prelude

First, a few words. The very act of writing this thesis has, at times, felt like a compositional practice of moving and voicing. Set down over the next few hundred pages are a collection of words variously tapped-out, re-jigged and laid-down to eventually land in their current form arranged over six chapters, but they have emerged, as all writing does, through processes of improvisation and honing. The words here may have the illusion of compositional fixity, but they are on the move. They will add up to a different reading tomorrow, or in a few years' time. Always receding. Already out-of-date. I celebrate this. Words are powerful things, but they can also have a lightness of being. Words dart, fly, float, stir, pierce, stain, land, land well or land badly, but are always in departure. I encounter their traces as I read and write them, and they both resound and fade out. Some of these traces are more audible than others. Some have been spoken out loud. Some were muttered under my breath while running on the East London marshes. Some have come back at me through automated voices. Some have been tussled with (often with friends, lovers and peers) to clarify my thinking. Hmmm, vocalising reverberates through this thesis in such myriad ways. The devocalisation of words – a form of inner voice that I address severally – is also a feature. The voices in my head – coloured by doubts and excitations – haunting the dark hours. One could be forgiven for thinking there is no escape from voice. No voiceless world. All this in response to a practice of voicing out loud in a performance context not typically considered its domain – dance.

Chapter One: Introduction

Vox nihil aliud quam ictus aer
(*The voice is nothing but beaten air*)¹

This practice-led research project has been located where dance and voice overlap in studio practice and live performance. It has investigated the role voice can play in improvised dance (and closely associated) practices through a period of intermittent training (2012–17) with three independent contemporary Western improvisatory dance/theatre practitioners. These practitioners/practices are notable for their complementary and well-established independent teaching programmes. One is US-based Ruth Zaporah, a solo performer and teacher who since the early 1970s has developed an improvisational performance form known as Action Theater, which takes root in both dance and theatre. Another is Europe-based dancer, musician and poet Julyen Hamilton who, since the early 1980s, has established a teaching and performance practice in Instant Composition known for its combination of improvised text and dance. The third is Europe-based poet/dancer Billie Hanne who, alongside her collaborations with Hamilton, has established a more recent presence within the independent European dance-scene as a teacher and maker of instant choreographies that fuse words and dance in solo and group works. In each of these practices,² as voicing ‘dancers’ make improvised solo, duet or ensemble compositions

¹ Seneca the Younger, *Naturalinum Quæstionum*, Book II. 29.

² I readily refer to ‘these practices’ as a shorthand for referring to the specific case studies on Zaporah, Hamilton and Hanne, as well as my own practice encapsulated by the nominal figure of the ‘voicing dancer’. Occasionally, as in Chapter Three, it is more appropriate to refer more generally to ‘the/a performer’ or to ‘the/an improviser’ to align more accurately to the practice under discussion.

consisting of dynamic movement (often recognisable as dance), it is possible to hear vocal material made up of non-linguistic and linguistic sounds produced spontaneously. From lip-smacks, croaks, croons and gibberish nonsense, through to single words, sung speech, non-linear narrative and poetic text, the vocal material emerges entwined with movement material to produce improvised performance pieces either in a training studio or public performer/audience setting.

This introductory chapter establishes the foundations for the thesis that springs from this research inquiry. It will lay out the questions that drove the research, as well as make clear the structure of the thesis, its claims and what will be marshalled to support them. It will also be necessary to define some terms of engagement across the two areas of dance and voice that the research intersects. It will provide a detailed survey of relevant practice, tracing some key lineages. Although the project is situated in improvisatory practices that also have theatrical correlations, I locate them in dance and I make distinctions between improvisation and Instant Composition, defining them in choreographic terms. On voicing, it will be necessary to establish some fundamental understanding of it both in neuro-physical and relational terms. I will justify my adoption of the term 'voicing', which aims to honour both the voice's uniqueness and its multiple contingencies, while establishing some of the key issues this thesis deals with and some of the critical tools used to tackle them.

The project was initially inspired by taking weekly evening workshops in Action Theater in 2011. This spurred my interest in wider improvisatory practices (especially dance) that utilised voice leading me to engage in several years of sporadic training in the form of residential workshops. These included a ten-day training with Zaporah in Tarbena, Spain (2014); Hamilton's annual ten-day workshop *Dance Technique and Improvisation* in Arlequi,

Spain (2013–17); and Hanne’s week-long courses as part of *The Secret Teachings*³ in Brussels, Belgium (2014–17), a programme she ran with Hamilton.⁴ Additionally, I was invited to perform in publicly performed pieces directed by Hanne – *Gwineverra*, *Tom and the Enemy of Man* (2015) – and then again by Hamilton – *Sand and Vision* (2016). In these cases, the experience of rehearsing, dealing with costume and lighting decisions, running technical rehearsals and performing to publics has productively influenced the project. The added insight into Hamilton and Hanne’s work they have afforded is drawn on in the latter stages of the thesis, as are the further practice-led investigations that have run alongside the core research.

There have been political imperatives motivating the research project and though they are not central to the current enquiry, they frame it. By ‘political’ I mean to illuminate two key concerns I hold in the background. Firstly, the way in which regulatory frameworks such as neoliberal capitalism infringe on both how a dancer works and how we think about how a dancer works (Siegmond and Hölscher 2013). For instance, any analysis of a dancer’s studio practice cannot disavow wider (often precarious) labour practices that come to bear on a dancer’s experience. Like most artists, the voicing dancer negotiates precarious work, and this includes navigating shifting subjectivities such that this is part of a voicing dancer’s

³ *The Secret Teachings* (2012-17) was a yearly programme of teaching consisting of four five-day courses per year taught alternately by Hamilton and Hanne in Brussels, Belgium. See Appendix III.

⁴ This is a snapshot of the training undertaken relating to this project and a comprehensive log is provided in Appendix III.

embedded experience.⁵ Secondly, how any emancipatory notions of speech that emerge on the studio floor, at least in the practices under consideration here, must acknowledge the wider context of free speech and what it is to exercise one's voice in public. Voice has become synonymous with agency. In the vernacular, phrases such as 'having a voice', 'speaking up' and 'making your voice heard' align with the idea of taking one's place in the demos.⁶ At the same time, speech can be viewed not just semantically, as a carrier of meaning, or collection of signifiers, but as an affective force, bound in and by relations of power; and with the capacity to 'injure' as well as heal (Butler 1996). Thus, while this project does not seek to make any direct claims to do with the socio-political import of the voicing dancer's practice, related discourses have been a significant influence on my thinking through the research period. I therefore want to acknowledge the dedicated attention directed to the relationship between dance and politics in the work of theorists such as André Lepecki (2006), Danielle Goldman (2010), Bojana Cvejić (2016) and Ramsay Burt (2017); or the swathe of work captured in the edited collections: *Dance and Politics* (Kolb 2010) and *Dance, Politics & Co-Immunity* (Siegmond and Hölscher 2013). Given my treatment of improvisation as a relational practice through this thesis (and its resistance to being

⁵ See for example, Bojana Kunst's *Artist at Work, Proximity of Art and Capitalism*. John Hunt Publishing, 2015, as well as Nicholas Ridout and Rebecca Schneider's "Precarity and Performance: An Introduction." *TDR/The Drama Review*, vol. 56, no. 4, 2012, pp. 5-9.

⁶ See contemporary linguist and political scientist Nick Couldry's *Why Voice Matters: Culture and Politics after Neoliberalism* (2010) who has articulated a crisis of voice in the context of neoliberalism. For Couldry, under the hegemony of neoliberalism, every person is cast as one whose subjectivity is commodified; constituted through an economic prism. This connection to democracy is tantalising given that 'vote' and 'voice' are interchangeable in some Indo-European and Afro-Asiatic languages. For example, the nominative vote and voice is given as the single word *stimme* in German, *stem* in Dutch, and *golos* in Arabic.

unplugged from the world), it cannot be so readily depoliticised. I therefore locate the political in the form of a voicing dancer's work rather than the content produced by it, (though the latter is not precluded), in a way that follows Randy Martin's position articulated in *Critical Moves: Dance Studies in Theory and Politics* (1998). Here, Martin seeks to discover:

“if it is possible to imagine politics from within mobilization, instead of considering power as an external force that seeks to move people. Within this perspective, therefore, mobilization is a means rather than an end. This orientation shifts a key theoretical and political question from how to mobilize people to how to recognise what any given instance of mobilization could produce” (12).

This notion of 'mobilization' can be applied to the voice. Both literally and figuratively, voices shift shape and serve change according to who speaks (who with, where and how) and who listens (who with, where and how). Voice matters, not least because the questions of who gets to speak in the world, what they select to say and whether it is amplified are, in our times, urgent ones. Just as important is the need to create safe and brave spaces for people to be heard when they are silenced. We must make careful (yet quick) choices about what words we speak. Breaching our own silences has a political urgency that seems to become more pressing by the day. While voicing in dance can often mean breaching particularly silent spaces, we also know there are no mute bodies and that silence can be golden. So what need is there for voicing in dance if the dancing body already 'speaks'? The idea of the body speaking (without voice) persists in much of the discourse on dance, and especially improvisation-based practices where the dancer's authorial role is foregrounded in the making of their own made-in-the-moment choreographic material. The performative display of melding process and product often calls upon the domain of personal and

perceptual expression. In a figurative sense, the dancer's voice rings out loud-and-clear as they use the powers of their own agency. However, although this project has celebrated such figurative abstractions, it has mostly taken the voice at face value. This thesis will offer a more literal consideration of a relatively direct (and implicitly political) question: if the body speaks in improvised dance, what happens when the voice joins in?

There are notable examples in the twentieth and current centuries where dance's silent spaces have been breached by the voice in one way or another. In 1939, the dancer Martha Graham felt compelled to "breach her stage silence by talking in public" (Franko v- vi) and used her platform to speak out against the rise of Nazism. In 1973, the dancers in choreographer Richard Bull's *The Dance that Describes Itself*⁷ breached their stage silence by improvising descriptions of their movements as they were making them. Now, at this current moment of the twenty-first century, at least from my limited geographical perspective, it seems as if the ubiquity of such turns towards the vocal has rendered them barely breaches at all. It is not unusual to attend a dance performance in a dance venue and encounter dancers using their voice, as well as their torso and limbs, as part of their choreographic language. In the recent past, it has been possible on the London stage to hear the voices of dancers in the works of choreographers including: Pina Bausch, William Forsythe, Jasmin Vardimon, Alain Platel, Akram Khan, Crystal Pite and Jérôme Bel; or in the work of performer/choreographers such as Jonathan Burrows, Hanna Gillgren and Heidi Rustgaard (H2DANCE), Ben Ash, Henrietta Hale and Rachel Lopez de la Nieta (Dog Kennel Hill Project), Eva Recacha, and Malik Nashad Sharpe, amongst many others. To pluck out

⁷ See Susan Foster's *Dances that Describe Themselves* (2002), for a comprehensive account of this work.

one example, in 2019, the dancers in choreographer Lola Maury's *Brouhaha*⁸ breached the silence non-stop for an hour or more, producing as much a vocal soundscape as a visual landscape that combined hissing and intoning with twirls and spatial meanderings.

Under closer scrutiny, these supposed breaches tie in with a much longer historical tradition of Western dance practice that reveals many instances of voice and dance living together.⁹ An apparent interregnum forged by ballet's uncoupling from opera in the nineteenth century was a mere blip it seems, and the voice's presence on the dance stage has been steadily gathering volume since. Paradoxically, the voice's radical potential may have been served by this brief 'interregnum', affording some productive distance between the voice and the core activity of dancing. In Graham's case, her voice appeared after the performance had ended, and in Bull's, the dancers' on-stage vocal acts of describing suggested a necessary anti-theatrical, "calm and dispassionate" and pedestrian tone that created a critical stance on the object of description (Foster, *Dances that Describe Themselves* 175). In these instances, the voice, and the linguistic material that extended from it, somehow remained at a certain remove from the corporeality of a dancer's choreographic movement material, so that I might, for the sake of argument and wordplay, consider the voice as 'de-fused'. The (improvisatory) performance practices I have considered through this project, ideally, have aimed to re-fuse voicing with processes of dynamic moving. There has been a drive towards a seamless web of choreographic material, produced where

⁸ *Brouhaha* was performed on 29 May 2019 at The Place, London, UK by dancers Juan Corres Benito, Laureline Richard, and Alexander Standard.

⁹ It has not been within the bounds of the project to perform a historical review or make any attempt to catalogue these instances, but suffice it to say that since the ancient *dythyramb* through to Rudolf Laban's *Tanz-Ton-Wort* (dance-sound-word) explorations in the 1910s, fusions of voice and dance have proliferated through the centuries in Western dance and theatre forms.

dancing and voicing happen not as separate activities, but as a tight-knit enterprise. The linguistic and non-linguistic sounds have sought a muscular, weighty, even visceral quality. Here, voice is extended through movement; almost coupled with it. When it has appeared as speaking, it has been multi-registered, often expressive, occasionally dispassionate but almost always physically poetic. The voice in these instances could be considered a fleshy protrusion, capable of gesturing like a limb of the body. Just as these limbs have moved to make choreography, the voice has interweaved with movement, has been movement. The vocal material is dance. It lives, not at a critical distance, but enmeshed. Fused.

To press this notion of voice as an indivisible part of dance movement, it is worth referring to comments made by Hamilton in an interview with dance artist Jacky Lansley at Siobhan Davies Studios, London in 2012:

So often people have said to me that you're putting words with dancing, and I always kind of twinged with that because I wasn't, because you can't speak without moving. You can't move without something being said. How can you have voice without moving? I was never trying to put them together; I knew that they lived together anyway the whole time.¹⁰

In 2013, when I first heard Hamilton say this, I had yet to grasp how fundamental to my project his words would become. They underpin a rationale for this thesis to do with refusing voice and dance both in a practice and a related discourse that has time and again underplayed, denied or 'refused' the voice's place in dance.

¹⁰ Hamilton in conversation with Jackey Lansley at Siobhan Davies Studios, London, 27 Nov. 2012 – time-marker 19m 30s. Full interview can be accessed via www.independentdance.co.uk/programmepage/media/audio/.

Questions and Claims

The research questions underpinning the thesis have emerged reiteratively, adapting to the way the research evolved over time in response to how my research methods materialised as predominantly practice-led. The primary question asks: how, within the context of the voicing dancer, can a knowledge of voicing and dancing be accessed, developed and deployed through the framework of Zaporah's, Hamilton's and Hanne's pedagogies?

Subsidiary questions emerged and can be categorised into two broad areas. First, in relation to training and practice processes: what do these practitioners do in the studio to facilitate a dancer's vocalisation? How might vocal sound (including speech as sound) be developed with attention to a fuller, more physical engagement with the body? Is 'embodied voice' an appropriate or useful term to use in these contexts? How can the mouth be considered choreographic? How might a dancer include other compositional elements – space, time, objects – with words? I consider such questions to belong to a corporeal realm.

Secondly, relating to the implications for performance: what is produced in terms of vocal material for performance? If this manifests in multiple registers (as non-linguistic sound, as narrative or as poetry) how do they live together? How is the act of listening qualitatively affected by the vocal presence of self in solo composition and others in group composition? How does dynamic 'dancerly' movement work/not work with vocal material? How useful is it to more fully consider the aural perspectives that voicing in a dance context invites? Where does authorship of the performance material reside? I consider such questions to belong to an environmental and social milieu.

From within the studio, the practices produced a more quotidian set of questions, which infiltrate these more formal research questions. Why is it sometimes difficult to produce vocal sound when dancing? Is it fear that stops dancers from making sound? If

words are used, how does a dancer select what to say? How do they work together? What makes them poetic? Whose words are they anyway? Such questions loop back and reform the thesis because they always reformed the practice.

In considering these questions, I argue that voicing and dancing together in improvised dance practice needs to be understood as a situated activity that can be explained in relational terms. A key contention is that using the term 'embodied' to describe the kinds of voicing that happens in this type of dance is insufficient. Its shortcomings are revealed because it does not account for the way in which a person is immersed, indivisibly, in their surroundings with things and others. Nor does it do enough to differentiate between voicing in these practices and any other form of voicing (including everyday practices of speaking). The attempts to 'fuse' voicing and dynamic movement through these performance practices does not give them a special status as 'embodied' at the exclusion of everyday practices of voicing. The perceptual activity that gives rise to voice and what it produces (on and off the stage) is at one with the person's total lived experience, which is animate (Sheets-Johnstone 2011), action-based (Noë 2004) and task-oriented (Ingold 2000). This animate-action-task continuum defines how I understand movement throughout the thesis. It is inspired by anthropologist Tim Ingold, who asserts that language itself is an emergent phenomenon which surfaces in the context of a person's "sensory involvement in a richly structured environment" (*The Perception of the Environment*, henceforth cited as *Perception*, 397). I consider the workshop/training/performance environment as 'richly structured' and say how this emerges within constraints that operate on a loose-tight continuum. The notion of emergence is particularly pertinent to improvisatory performance insofar as it refers to how complex dynamical systems emerge in group creativity as more than the sum of its parts. The term is referred to throughout this thesis in line with Keith Sawyer's 'collaborative emergence', used to describe small group creativity where:

[t]he flow of the performance cannot be predicted even if the analyst has unlimited advance knowledge about the skills, motivations, and mental states of the individual performers. Even with this knowledge, there is simply too much potential variability in what might emerge during the performance. (12)

Aside from an excess of variability in environmental factors, a further justification for contesting the efficacy of a term like ‘embodiment’ stems from its ubiquity in dance studios and wider performance contexts, where it is used interchangeably with the notion of presence and/or Somatics¹¹/somatic. Certainly in dance, as Glenna Batson and Margaret Wilson have observed, “[d]ancers need to go beyond simply calling an experience ‘embodied’” (79). Hanne’s comments also plug into this critique when, recognising the over-use of ‘embodiment’, she admits that she does ‘not know what it means anymore’; instead choosing to use ‘incarnate’¹² (Appendix IV: Hanne, Extract A) to describe processes of bringing poetry and dance together in the body. In fact, Hanne goes further to suggest ‘we need trinity. Bodymind is too dual and polar. We need to include the soul’ (Appendix IV:

¹¹ ‘Somatics’ refers to the panoply of somatic education methods, broadly captured by Thomas Hanna’s coining of the term in the 1970s to describe a range of body-based practices that have emerged through the twentieth century, such as those developed by Frederick Matthias Alexander, Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, Moshé Feldenkrais and Ida Rolf to name just a few.

¹² Maurice Merleau-Ponty uses the term ‘incarnate’ in *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945), the first time when he defines sense experience as “that vital communication with the world which makes it present as a familiar setting of our life” (61).

Hanne, Extract A).¹³ My problems with the term ‘embodied’ (as they apply in the context of the voicing dancer) refer firstly to the fact that it does not differentiate. In other words, performers are often talking about a more integrated body that is involved in action (in this case also calling on the voice to participate), but the body is always integrated to some extent. Secondly, while voicing needs to be accessed through a greater attention to the physicalism of the body, ‘embodiment’ fails to fully account for how the environment infiltrates the experience of making improvisatory content. Where I do refer to the ‘body’ it is always under the proviso that I am referring to the whole person and their sense of personhood. So, while it makes little sense to consider speech and other vocal acts outside the body of the person producing them, the conditions of their voicing must surely form part of the analysis.

I therefore argue for a sensuous ecological approach to understanding voice and speech in dance improvisation, one that uses Ingold’s conception of ensoundedness as its core. At its simplest, Ingold’s concept honours sound less as an object of perception than as a medium indivisible from our perception of it. Alongside light, humans are indivisibly immersed in the fluxes and flows of sound such that “the body is enlightened, ensounded and enraptured” (*Being Alive* 135). Ingold’s concept is founded on the persistent tension between vision and audition caught in dominant theories in Western philosophical thought. At least since Rene Descartes, writing in 1637, split body from mind and placed vision at the pinnacle of the senses, there have been competing challenges to ocularcentrism, where thinkers have sought to turn the emphasis towards hearing. Philosopher and cultural

¹³ When citing Zaporah, Hamilton and Hanne, scare (or single) quote marks are used instead of double quote marks when referring to material collected in class through my notes (contained in Appendix IV) in order to signal that material’s provisional (not verbatim) status. The rationale for this is explained more fully in Chapter Two.

historian Walter Ong recognised sound as “more real or existential than other sense objects, despite the fact that it is also more evanescent” (100). He understood the enveloping quality of a person’s auditory world that puts their sensation and existence centre, as they “gather sound simultaneously from every direction at once” (70). Such recognitions of sound’s immersiveness precipitated an ‘auditory turn’ in cultural studies, with Don Ihde as a key proponent. In *Listening and Voice* (1976) Ihde wrote that the “*center of language is located in the voiced and heard sounding of word*” (116; original italics). But Ingold’s challenge to ocularcentrism does not participate in the hierarchising of one sense over another; instead it deals with how vision collaborates interchangeably with hearing. To this end, Ingold proposes a coupling of “looking-and-listening” (*Perception* 243) to recognise that listening to sound is coupled with the act of seeing it, and that even in those people who are blind or visually impaired or those who are deaf, there is an interchangeability between the senses based on the sensory resources enabled:

If hearing is a mode of participatory engagement with the environment, it is not because it is opposed in this regard to vision, but because we ‘hear’ with the eyes as well as the ears. In other words, *it is the very incorporation of vision into the process of auditory perception that transforms passive hearing into active listening*. But the converse also applies: it is the incorporation of audition into the process of visual perception that converts passive spectating into active looking or watching. (*Perception* 277; original italics)

I extend the coupling of looking-and-listening by including voicing-and-listening to build some theoretical scaffold for an analytical model summed up by the terms: accessing, arranging, and amplifying. This is proposed as a more general framework for discussing the voicing dancer’s practice outside of my examples and beyond this thesis. In building that

framework, I do not take for granted my reliance on Ingold's relational ontology. Indeed, it could be said that this thesis builds a theory for improvisatory performance based on his ideas.¹⁴ But my aim is for Ingold's work to be the touchstone around which dialogues form. Expanding a notion of voice under these terms affords a consideration of three stages of activity each performance practice engages a dancer in. The first roots a dancer in a somatically oriented approach to movement, to 'access' and expand awareness for the feeling for voicing. The second stage creates space for vocal material to be 'arranged' compositionally with space, time, and objects. The third stage works with words, 'amplified' and valued as sound in an acoustic space that is explicit in its demand for aural attention.

Defining Improvisation and Instant Composition

The choreographic transforms space by leaving a mark, however ephemeral. In *Choreographing Empathy* (2011) Foster provides an etymological account of 'choreography' as deriving from "two Greek words, *choreia*, the synthesis of dance, rhythm, and vocal harmony manifest in the Greek chorus; and *graph*, the act of writing" (70). While for Gabriele Brandstetter, "choreography is a form of writing along the boundary between presence and no longer being there: an inscription of the memory of that moving body whose presence cannot otherwise be maintained" ("Choreography as Cenotaph" 102-132). The element of writing takes on added significance in the context of the voicing dancer who produces utterances (often referred to as 'text') that are orally inscribed in space. In my

¹⁴ These are detailed further in Chapter Two where I offer a short review of two key sections of his work.

working definition of choreography I accept the inscriptive and ephemeral qualities that inhere to it, but I also consider the ‘choreographic’ in an expanded sense¹⁵ that can house the differentiated acts of improvising and composing with both dance and voice.

For choreographers Miranda Tufnell and Chris Crickmay, “[i]mprovisation is a negotiation with the patterns your body is thinking” (46). While for choreographer Jonathan Burrows, “[c]horeography is a negotiation with the patterns your body is thinking” (27). Later, I will say how the somatic education modality known as the Feldenkrais Method could also be defined by these two identical definitions of improvisation and choreography. Each chime with my approach to the voicing dancer insofar as I consider improvisation as choreography – a real-time negotiation that involves ongoing and continuous acts of choice-making. This contiguous process invites further nuanced thinking in terms of the compositional element of improvised choreography and how this area of the work manifests in the context of the voicing dancer when making work. This is applicable in the context of Hamilton and Hanne’s work, which is most often described as Instant Composition and occasionally as immediate or instant choreography.

In studio practice, any improvised vocal sound or move the voicing dancer makes can be considered choreographic, but it must satisfy some conditions. Hanne for example suggests the choreographic includes any action that has ‘intention and direction’ (Appendix IV: Hanne, Extract A). The voicing dancer can cultivate an appreciation for how any movement and any vocal material is always in some sort of configuration, as Burrows’ definition of choreography states. A choreographic move may manifest as a leap through

¹⁵ For another perspective on the notion of ‘expanded’ choreography see Mette Ingvarsten’s “Expanded Choreography: Shifting the Agency of Movement” in *The Artificial Nature Project and 69 Positions*. Diss. Stockholms konstnärliga högskola, 2016.

the air, as the slightest of turns in the sternum, as a glance or an intake of breath. A choreographic voicing may sound on the tip of a whisper, take on the size of a wail or be marked by this word or that word. All need to be read as instances of choreography, whether they are being seen or heard by an audience or not, as long as they are intended and directed with awareness.

The more significant differentiations can be found in terms of composition. In terms of composition, there are some false distinctions made often and persistently between choreography and improvisation, distinctions that the choreographic I am drawing here potentially collapse. For example, Burrows says that:

if choreography is about making decisions – or about objects placed in relation to each other so that the whole exceeds the sum of the parts – or about a continuity of connection between materials – then improvised performance is as much of a choreographic act as any other approach, the decisions are just made faster. (24–25)

I agree with Burrows here, and his point echoes Hamilton who has observed how improvisational composition is less divergent from other forms of predetermined (fixed) composition – whether it be a dance score, musical score, poem or play text – than is often supposed, because the moment of creation is always spontaneous. Hamilton has said that improvisers should not be ‘fooled into thinking they’re not learning/doing steps’ (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract D), which in dance’s common lexicon refers to pre-figured phrases of movement that must be learned so that they become fixed and repeatable. Hamilton insists that improvising is a highly developed skill, which runs contrary to tropes that in improvisation ‘anything can happen’ or it is possible to ‘do whatever’. Zaporah tends to

insist on a *tabula rasa* approach, so that an Action Theater improviser ‘plans nothing’.¹⁶ I find this misleading on the grounds that all improvisation in performance is to some extent scored because it is subject to decision-making predicated on prior experience or the material conditions of performance. Producing improvised material cannot be divorced from any relation to technique, experience or imitation, as if it existed in a vacuum.¹⁷ In the end, improvisatory practice is still a contingent one that, in the vernacular, often overstates its emancipatory features compared to fixed composition. Following this, a question is begged of whether the distinctions between improvisation and fixed choreography are best drawn along temporal lines differentiated by degree rather than kind.

In improvisatory performance practice, attention is directed in such a way as to make high-level demands on a performer’s skills, but especially in terms of handling time. In her treatise on dance improvisation and its studio processes, Melinda Buckwalter has noted how “the dancer’s relationship to time is very different when improvising than when dancing set choreography” (61) precisely because the availability of choices renders time a tool. An improviser must become an accomplished handler of time who responds to a demand to stay attuned to the present moment. Libby Worth has pointed to the “cruelty of such an injunction” when it is directed to people with a sense of the present that integrates as much with the memories of the past as it does in those with dementia (“Improvisation in Dance”

¹⁶ The tagline on Zaporah’s Action Theater website reads: “I have planned nothing and that has kept me very busy” — see www.actiontheater.com/.

¹⁷ On this latter issue, see Goldman’s *I Want to Be Ready: Improvised Dance as a Practice of Freedom* (2010) where she underscores the “facile” claims improvisatory performance practice often makes for “freedom” (27). For Goldman freedom is a continual practice and negotiation with constraints, which she articulates as a generative and necessary “tight place” constrained along class, gender and racial lines.

59). It therefore helps to consider the present moment (discussed in Chapter Four) in terms of action and attunement, a moment that is deeply integrated into both past and future. I consider the task of improvising as a high-level attunement to a bassline; a necessary undercurrent of sustained attention rooted in action that a second-level compositional activity depends on. The term 'attunement' is one used severally through this thesis, not just in its musical sense where elements are brought into (dis)harmony, but also as a way to describe a broader moment of 'accord' where individual elements – be they choreographic or circumstantial – come into alignment to produce tangible feelings of flow¹⁸ for a dancer. For Ingold, "the skilled practitioner is one who can continually attune his or her movements to perturbations in the perceived environment without ever interrupting the flow of action" (*Being Alive* 94) and this could serve as good a definition as any of improvisatory performance practice and the making of Instant Composition. I use the term 'attunement' along these lines – as a differentiated form of attention that can more fully account for the self's relation to objects and others. Although I understand it as multi-sensory, the notion of attunement accounts for a kinaesthetic emphasis. For Batson and Wilson, the preoccupation in dance with "honing the kinaesthetic sense" involves "cultivating sensitivity, sense-ability and response-ability" to self and others (90) and this, for me, draws in the notion of empathy so key to my use of attunement as an empathic relationship with self, others and other things through action and task.

The compositional mode extends that practice of attunement by attending to the use, shape and place of choreographic material. Composition takes account of an audience for

¹⁸ I am using flow in line with Mihályi Csíkszentmihályi's definition (discussed briefly in Chapter Three) which can be summed up as an optimum state of balance between difficulty and boredom – too much of one or too little of the other interrupts one's experience of being "in the ongoing stream of experience" (19).

example. This involves a state of awareness that, in the immediacy of improvised performance, can play with time (tempo, rhythm), space, objects, other dancers or the emotional arc of vocal material. This state may produce, as this thesis reveals, narrative or poetry, which may in any instance encounter dramaturgical concerns. Thus, shaping and placing material becomes a key compositional skill that must be differentiated from the improvisatory mode that 'hums'¹⁹ along vibrantly underneath. Where improvisation tends to include all the material one encounters by accepting and folding it into performance, Instant Composition tends also to more actively exclude material in service to the overall composition. Hamilton has alternatively referred to Instant Composition as instant editing,²⁰ which involves processes of instantly appreciating or inhibiting any emergent choreographic content. In the context of a long performance piece²¹ this may take account of repetition, character, theme and other dramaturgical concerns. In other words, improvisation is a method used concurrently with the highly skilled practice of composition, to form the practice known as Instant Composition.

¹⁹ See Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract F as well as Chapter Four where I discuss 'streaming' as a quality of time in Hamilton's classes.

²⁰ Hamilton has described a piece as 'a blow', clearly drawing an analogy with the glassblower's craft, where the atomic condition of molten glass needs to be just right, before it is quickly blown into shape. See Nancy Stark Smith, "Conversation with Julyen Hamilton: Part 1, A Pedagogy of Improvisation and the Making of Dances." *Contact Quarterly*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2010, pp. 12-19.

²¹ A shorter improvisational piece may last a few minutes while a longer piece may last between ten and sixty minutes. See Appendix VI: Extract G for Hanne's account of specific lengths of time, how they feel, and as an example of how a dancer may develop a sensibility for working pieces at different lengths.

Both Hamilton and Hanne name and repeat the pieces they make so that the articulation of performance ‘products’ can be understood as part of an ongoing process of making, differentiated from, but not separate to, the process of practice. Hamilton has spoken of the pieces being “improvised in the moment they’re presented but their anima is already clear enough to be able to title them and to sign a contract. How they manifest is not entirely open because once you’ve got to know the anima of the piece you know a little bit about what it means” (Appendix V: Extract C). By ‘anima’ he is referring broadly to the texture, timbre, atmosphere or spirit of the piece that will manifest each time it is performed, even though the choreography will be novel.²² The practice of performing Instant Compositions more than once therefore becomes a negotiation with a piece’s anima; keeping the ‘piece’ open enough to not make conclusions, fall into habitual patterns, or close off opportunities for the material of the piece to continually re-emerge in new formulations; all while affording the opportunity to make and fix some choices, such as titles, *mis-en-scene* and costume. This will be discussed in relation to repetition and rehearsal (*répétition*) as a structured environment in Chapter Four.

My working definition of the choreographic is therefore one that positions improvisation as a mode of working that underpins a concurrent, compositional process where material is shaped for performance. Taken together, I understand these various processes as taking place on a continuum which can be put this way: open/loose to tight/closed. I add the caveat (in line with Goldman cited above) that no score is open and

²² The *OED* defines anima (n) as “[t]he animating principle in living things, the soul; some part or aspect of the soul, esp. the irrational part of the soul as distinguished from the rational mind”.

no score is closed, they are always contingent, however for the sake of analysis the gradations will be useful. In the context of this thesis, improvisation is geared towards composition that explicitly shapes performance for an audience. The improvisation/Instant Composition²³ distinction is therefore crucially significant. Arguably, it has the potential to elevate the status of improvisatory performance because it can create 'repeatable' performance products, and this will call into question some distinctions between practice, training and 'rehearsal' (discussed in Chapter Five).

Defining Voicing

The human voice always already involves the body moving intelligently and expressively. In this sense, what human voice is not embodied or skilfully attuned? But the fusion of voice and dance in a performance context adds to the imperative to critique it as an embodied practice. I have also identified an imperative to reappraise the relation between voice and movement on the one hand and voice and sound on the other. Using the voice entails complex neuro-physical processes that are, arguably, challenged further by the dancing body's (off-balance and locomotive) dynamic movement. To make vocal sound is to manipulate bodily spaces – cavities and orifices – that are constantly undergoing reconfigurations. The lungs, housed by the skeletal structures of the ribcage, sternum, clavicles and spinal vertebrae, contract and expand predominantly with the muscular

²³ The term real time composition also circulates in improvisatory practice. Katie Duck for example uses it to describe her work, as does João Fiadeiro who has explicitly systematised real time composition (RTC). Common to these are the double activity of negotiating one's decision-making processes in the immediate moment of performance.

support of the diaphragm. The air being pushed up through the trachea (or windpipe) meets the resistance of the vocal folds (or cords)²⁴ that vibrate around four hundred and forty times per second (depending on the note) inside the larynx (or voice box). The cavities of the mouth and nose, as well as the area that connects them (the pharynx), act as chambers through which the vibrated air resonates further. Yet more space and air occupy these inner territories. Small turbulences and resistances produce swirls of air affected by the movements of the soft palate regulating their passage. These rolls of air help shape the relationship between the oral and nasal cavities, separated by the hard palate, to manipulate the quality of sound. Articulations are shaped through the manipulation of the mouth with all the flesh and bone of the cheeks, teeth, tongue²⁵ and lips to create the potential for blockages and resistances in the generation of articulated sound. All the blood and spit and opening and closing working to produce the consonants and vowels constitutive of the sounds that make up the parts of speech – the voice really is nothing but beaten air!

The more amplified the voice, the bigger the call on muscular effort to produce the energy to manage bigger volumes of air, but such effort is potentially aided as well as impeded by the sister-act of moving dynamically or dancing. It stands that the most efficient use of the voice is going to be aided by the efficient working of all those muscles (including the diaphragm). Likewise, skill is needed to know how to manipulate the articulators – the

²⁴ It is worth noting from a neurological perspective that spontaneous speech is modulated differently in the brain compared to repeated speech, as are other formulations such as salutations and speech fillers. See Kreiman and Sidtis pp. 198–199.

²⁵ For a more visible perspective on the tongue in minutia, and how it moves in the mouth in the process of speaking see video footage "Movements of the Tongue in Speech." (1948), via www.wellcomelibrary.org/item/b21650020/, which shows a patient whose right cheek has been removed so that it is possible to see, in slow-motion, the movement of the tongue when the speech sounds of the English language are spoken.

right amount of pressure to exert according to the configuration of the mouth, tongue, lips and so on. Given that singing can also feature in the voicing dancer's repertoire, the skill of producing sound across the whole range is also pertinent, yet the pedagogies associated with the practices under consideration in this thesis do not make claims to 'train' the voice, so there are implicit expectations to do with a performer's prior development of performance skills that might include vocal skills (discussed briefly in Chapter Two) but almost always with reference to the physicalism of the dancing body.

By prioritising voice as a material function of the body rather than overly placing its value in communication, the work of a voicing dancer troubles the dominance of voice on the theatrical stage as existing merely as a conduit for speech or text. Performance scholar Konstantinos Thomaidis has observed that this view is so "pervasive that it might at first appear that voicing and speaking are synonymous in the case of performance" (*Theatre & Voice* 13). One of the ways the practices under consideration in this thesis challenge such a position is to put in play the option of non-linguistic sounds (be they percussive mouth sounds, whoops, wails or warbles)²⁶ or the deformation of linguistic sounds (through vocal manipulations such as elongating vowels, altering pitch or stress, or applying techniques such as vocal fry). I consider this vocal material as vocal choreography, capable of being used as a tool for composition. Consequently, the dancing body that produces vocal sound must pay attention to the sound properties of voice, as much in temporospatial terms as in terms of its communicable value.

²⁶ It is important to clarify that while all voice is sound, not all sound produced with the apparatus associated with the voice is in fact voiced. While vowel sounds are voiced, consonant sounds are unvoiced (for example, it is possible to make a fricative "ffff" sound without the vocal folds vibrating) and most vowels have voiced and unvoiced forms: "vvvvv" is the voiced of "ffff" for example, while sounds such as blows, sniffs and coughs are also unvoiced.

Following this, and along the lines of those proclaiming to do the same in the field of Voice Studies (addressed in Chapter Two), I aim to ‘revocalise’ the voice by emphasising it as sound. At the same time, I underline the uniqueness and contingency of voice. The voice, as Thomaidis and others have pointed out, is never singular – “*the* voice does not exist” (Thomaidis and Macpherson 4), because it has plural and multiple dimensions. As sound, the voice is performed by a body that is never abstract but always in material co-production – embedded in, yet unfixed by, “complex gendered histories . . . physiologies and by the ideologies in which they partake” (*Theatre & Voice* 46). In other words, a person’s voice cannot be fixed and singularly defined because it undergoes ongoing shifts in its identity. This has led Thomaidis to adopt ‘voicing’ as a term that can credit ‘the’ voice’s multiple dimensions. For Thomaidis, reappraisals of voicing afford “opportunities to radically renegotiate voice, to de-naturalize conventional ideas about something seemingly so familiar and to rethink voice not as given or fixed but as the plural, in-between, challenging and generative practice of voicing” (74). Following Thomaidis, I also use the gerund form throughout this thesis to prioritise voicing as action²⁷ – events of movement with multiple registers (according to ever-shifting socially and culturally constructed identities) that remain unfixable; with the potential to render identity generatively volatile and unique. For a dancer, the unsettled status of their voicing is underscored by improvisatory or Instant Compositional work because it takes its meaning from the temporospatial configurations as well as the wider environment of the studio/world. This includes other dancers and objects, so voicings must be considered as always moving and multiply defined.

²⁷ Differentiated from the notion of ‘speech-act’ proposed by John L. Austin in *How to Do Things with Words* (1955), the now well-established notion of the affective power of speech already mentioned. See also: (Searle 1969); (Butler 1996; 1997); (Foucault and Pearson 2001); (Parker and Sedgwick 2013).

Contexts

Earlier, I used scare quotes around the term ‘dancer’ to signal the slipperiness of the disciplinary boundaries within which the practices under consideration in this thesis sit. Strictly speaking, all three artists/practitioners are working in interdisciplinary²⁸ ways, not least because they span the fields of dance and theatre. In the case of Zaporah (1936-), her improvisational form known as Action Theater has been developed since 1973 in terms she describes as “body-based improvisational theater” (*Action Theater: The Improvisation of Presence* xx). Kent De Spain has described it as “movement improvisation” (2014), while Susanna Morrow refers to it as a “physical theatre improvisation pedagogy” (“Action Theater: Divine Play for the Stage” iii). Action Theater takes a somatically oriented approach to movement and vocal production with a drive towards what Zaporah terms ‘physical narrative’. Along these lines, Action Theater has developed as an interdisciplinary form that attracts participants whose skills span dance and theatre in fairly equal measure.

In contrast, Hamilton (1954-) has a lineage that more firmly extends into the disciplinary boundaries of dance practice. Though he refers to himself as the ‘director’ of his company of dancers Allen’s Line and develops dance for theatre, after starting out in acting, he trained at the London Contemporary Dance School (LCDS) in the 1970s, and collaborated

²⁸ See Burt’s essay “Specter of Interdisciplinarity” (2009) where he argues that the study of theatre dance necessitates “cognition of corporeal, visual, literary, and musical information and thus requires the development of interdisciplinary methodologies”. Also, for a charting of the disciplinary colonisation of university theatre departments, see Shannon Jackson in “Professing Performance, Disciplinary Genealogies.” *TDR/The Drama Review*, vol. 45, no. 1, 2001, pp. 84-95.

through the subsequent period with choreographer Rosemary Butcher, as well as with dancers such as Kirstie Simson and Stark Smith (working through Contact Improvisation (CI)²⁹). Adding to his professional eclecticism, Hamilton has performed prolifically as a musician, collaborating chiefly with jazz musicians. He also self-publishes as a musician and poet. However, despite the transdisciplinary nature of Hamilton's work, the language he employs in the context of my engagement with it most readily belongs to a lexicon of dance. Certainly, the courses he runs are often advertised for "advanced and professional dancers only",³⁰ and attract (for the most part) professional dancers who are well-established and trained in that field.

Hanne (1980-) on the other hand brings together skills in both dance and poetry. She grew up doing gymnastics, followed by an undergraduate degree in Classical Literature and has been self-taught as a dancer. Principally, her development as an artist was influenced as a member of Allen's Line after taking workshops with Hamilton in 2009. Otherwise, in her own words, she came through "the school of hard knocks, labour, and personal study/doing" (Hanne, "still summer"). Crucially, although Hanne's training and education is based in literature, dance is her manner of working. In the main, dancers are drawn to study with her, though her classes remain open to performers and poets, some of whom have had little to no experience of dance.

²⁹ Contact Improvisation (CI) is an improvised form of dancing that uses the principles of sharing weight and bodily contact. It was initiated in 1972 by Steve Paxton and developed with Stark Smith and others.

³⁰ Course description advertising *Improvisation and Dance Technique* on the Arlequi website. See www.arlequi.de, though it is worth noting that Hamilton appears not to strictly adhere to this and welcomes interdisciplinary experience and expertise.

As well as the choreographic, the issue of theatrical illusion and the related issue of character, are major, yet subtle, features of the practices under discussion, and are arguably emphasised by the presence of voice. In his 1938 manifesto *The Theatre and its Double*, theatre visionary Antonin Artaud made his avant-garde case for extending the voice in performance. He called for a theatre which “utilises the vibrations and qualities of the voice”; one that “wildly stamps in rhythms” and surpasses the “lyricism of words” through its “spatial amplitude” (243). As a coordinate on the map where I am situating the practices that relate to the voicing dancer, Artaud’s call for a more viscerally expressive voice is an important outlier. His appeal still resonates in much contemporary performance practice including live art, dance and physical theatre practice.³¹ Certainly, by choosing to position Zaporah, Hamilton and Hanne’s practices firmly within the sphere of dance, their theatrical elements come more fully into relief. This strategy also serves to emphasise the way in which my more long-standing background in Theatre Studies (which has arguably engaged practices that have traditionally been considered from the chin up) has created new perspectives, through crossing into the discipline of Dance (which has traditionally been considered from the chin down). Setting up this somewhat crude chin up/chin down

³¹ For example, the extended vocal practices of Roy Hart, whose teacher Alfred Wolfsohn (1896-1962) found a cure for his auditory hallucinations by vocalising extreme sounds. See Linda Wise’s essay “Voice and Soul – The Alfred Wolfsohn/Roy Hart Legacy.” *Voice and Speech Review*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2007, pp. 43-52. Also noteworthy is Margaret Pikes who has been invited to London several times by Action Theater teacher and the Feldenkrais Method practitioner Kate Hilder to teach workshops exploring vocal expression, through sounding, singing, moving and listening. Lastly of note is the practitioner Patricia Bardi whose ‘vocal dance’ practice integrates a somatic approach to voice and dance.

characterisation is productive as I consider a set of practices that engages (more than is typical for dance) dynamic integrated bodily movement that includes the vocal activation of the face and mouth, within any expressive frame.³²

There are ways in which each practice infiltrates other artistic fields too.³³ To make clear what they are strictly 'not', they are not singing practices, though singing can often be heard happening. They are not storytelling, though narratives sometimes emerge. They are not performance poetry, though in the case of Hamilton and Hanne who describe the linguistic material they produce as either 'text' or 'poetry', it could be heard as encountering such realms. On this note, there is potential to make genealogical and critical links between all three practices and their possible counterparts in sound poetry (especially the links to the early twentieth century avant-garde Dada and Surrealist movements, which aimed to re-couple poetry's visceral engagement through the body, in ways that challenged the voice's semantic coupling with words) but this is beyond both my expertise and the bounds of this thesis. My terms of reference are largely dancerly (even if the analysis often maintains theatre perspectives) and in sticking to dance and referring to 'dancers', I do so with the proviso that as performers they may well not be trained, considered professional, or claim dance as their principle artistic mode of production.

³² The face, of course, remains a highly active and expressive site in many areas of (voiceless) dance practice and is not unique to those I am considering.

³³ See Kate Elswit in *Theatre & Dance* (2018), who traces a web of relations and overlaps between the Artaud-inspired Living Theatre in New York and Anna Halprin, whose influence extended both to Judson Dance Theater and Richard Schechner's Performance Group, and later the Wooster Group (23).

*Historical Lineages*³⁴

Zaporah, Hamilton and Hanne are rooted, for the most part, in a European-North American dance tradition, which I am considering from a Western European perspective. Historically, although the scope of this thesis is bound by contemporary practices, relevant lineages extend beyond the 1970s and 1980s. Hanne has acknowledged the gift of work that previous generations of dancers bestow; that “a number of people, including Julyen [Hamilton], having done a lot to look into the body in the seventies, eighties, into making dances in different ways” means that it is possible to slip into the stream of that intelligence (Hanne, “still summer”). At the same time, it is important to credit some earlier key evolutions in modern and postmodern dance that have shaped Zaporah, Hamilton and Hanne’s lineages. The omissions will be significant and the selections normative in that they follow well-established and documented historical movements.

A reunification of dance and theatre was augmented by twentieth century avant-garde dancer choreographers. First, through the so-called ‘free dance’ innovations of Loïe Fuller and Isadora Duncan, followed by the German Expressionists (*Ausdruckstanz*) such as Mary Wigman, Rudolf von Laban and Kurt Jooss. For Brandstetter, “the emphasis on chance, on improvisation and the presentation of movement imagery as spontaneous expressions of feeling” (*Poetics of Dance* 20) was one of the ways in which this new dance was different from the rigid aestheticism of the classical ballet which preceded. Secondly, through the postmodern innovations of the 1960s and 1970s, particularly those in the US so

³⁴ For a challenge to conventional categorisations of historical periods, see Alexandra Carter, “Reshaping Dance Through Time: A Critical View of Historical Periodisation in Relation to Pedagogy and Research.” *Congress on Research in Dance*. vol. 41, no. S1, Cambridge UP, 2009.

inspired by Merce Cunningham who, according to Foster, restored “the body's sensuality and its intelligence” to the dance form (“The Signifying Body” 44-64). In this atmosphere, improvisatory dance emerged, according to Buckwalter, “in the works of individual artists such as Halprin (in the late 1950s) and as a result of experimentation by groups such as the Judson Dance Theater in the US (in the 1960s) and the performance collective X6 in the UK (in the 1970s)” (6). The figure of the voicing dancer I am drawing out emerges genealogically from these twentieth century developments.

The activities associated with John Cage and Cunningham on the one hand and Halprin on the other are significant to the context of these practices/practitioners. In each of their ways they were concerned with disrupting established choreographic strategies that hierarchised fixed material over the unfixed. Cage and Cunningham were preoccupied with the concept of chance as a choreographic strategy whilst Halprin was exploring ways to dissolve choreographic distinctions between art and life that often involved taking a holistic approach that prioritised the healing potential improvisatory practice could have in relation to ritual and environment. Coupled with her movement explorations, “[v]oice, dialogue, objects and music became an integral part of the work” (Worth and Poynor 12). Halprin took inspiration not just from her dance mentors but also from those working experimentally in theatre, such as Joseph Chaikin and Jerzy Grotowski (24). Once based in the West Bay area of California from 1969, Zaporah was able to anchor herself in the sphere of these vibrant artistic environments that were often finding theatrical solutions to dance problems. For many, theatricality was better placed to offer a countercultural response to a political backdrop defined largely by the civil rights movement and US involvement with the Vietnam War (Belgrad 1998). A key problem, certainly for Zaporah, was a need to break free of dance’s silence. As Zaporah has stated, she was “struggling with [her] own silence – still terrified to talk” (*Improvisation on the Edge* 63). In Action Theater’s formative stages,

Zaporah credits Al Wunder as her only improvisation “mentor” (*Improvisation of Presence* vii). As a measure of the degrees of separation, it is notable that Wunder was taught by dancer Hanya Holm, who in turn was taught by Alwin Nikolais, who in turn was taught by Martha Graham. According to Louise Steinman, Wunder “brought” (78) the work of Nikolais, rooted in the Laban/Wigman/Gestalt inspired focus on kinaesthetic awareness, to the Bay Area in California. Zaporah’s work developed in this atmosphere, while also being influenced by her collaborations with theatre artists claiming influence from Grotowski, or with direct links to the theatre director and actor Chaikin.³⁵

Cage and Cunningham’s experiments in the 1950s and 1960s at Black Mountain College were later associated with Allan Kaprow’s *Happenings* – “essentially nonverbal” performative multi-media events or interventions loosely scored with space for improvisatory content (Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers* 10). In 1960, Cunningham invited Robert Dunn, who had studied music composition with Cage, to teach a composition class to his students, thus importing his ideas around chance. Amongst the students taking Dunn’s classes over the first couple of years were key figures of the postmodern dance period such as Simone Forti, Yvonne Rainer, Paxton, David Gordon, Trisha Brown and Deborah Hay, all of whom became associated with the Judson Dance Theater (1962-64) in New York.

Rudi Laermans credits the Judson Dance Theater as one of the “multiple beginnings of contemporary dance” (60). Widely acknowledged as the centre of the so-called postmodern dance in the US, these developments have been considered by many to be “among the most important artistic innovations of our time” (Kirby 68). According to Banes,

³⁵ For an expanded view on Zaporah’s context, see Susanna Morrow’s “Action Theater: Divine Play for the Stage”, 2006, p. 133 (discussed in Chapter Two).

the choreographers associated with this period “saw their work as part of a continuing debate about the nature and function of theatrical dance” (*Terpsichore in Sneakers* xxv). Postmodern dance tapped into a sustained, and still ongoing, enquiry into what could be considered dance. Typified by experiments in the quotidian, such as stillness and pedestrian movement, postmodern dance upended notions of when dance was dance and when dance was not dance. As Banes notes, the works produced “have often been viewed as ‘antitheatrical’, eschewing the illusionistic in favour of prioritising movement itself as a process worthy of presentation” (*Writing Dancing* 253). Rainer, in her *No Manifesto* (1965), famously called for a rejection of spectacle, virtuosity, magic and make-believe (178). Just as there was a turn away from (or in some cases an outright rejection of) the illusionistic there was a turn to (or incorporation of) mixed forms of presentation more normatively associated with the visual arts, or theatre, such as the use of objects and spoken text.

The use of voice in Judson Dance Theater appears to have existed at the level of commentary or quotidian conversation attuned in tone and timbre to the preoccupation at this time for playing with the democratising features of the everyday. For example, Rainer, in her *Ordinary Dance* (1962), spoke about all the places she had lived in while dancing (Burt, *Judson Dance Theater* 19), while her later piece, *Some Thoughts on Improvisation* (1964), was an improvised solo performance accompanied by a soundtrack of her speaking a theoretical essay she had written (Banes, “Spontaneous Combustion” 77-85). Meanwhile, Brown experimented with Forti, drawing on the explorations with “experiential anatomy, task-based improvisation, breath and vocalization, and sensory awareness of the environment” (Bremser 46) they had encountered in Halprin’s workshops. This led to further investigations with “spoken text with Rainer, ‘happenings’ with Robert Whitman, Fluxus

events with poets and composers, and performance pieces with Robert Rauschenberg” (46).³⁶

While the presence of vocal material in improvisational forms was a feature of some of the concerts staged by the Judson Dance Theater it became a mainstay of the Grand Union (1970-76)³⁷ collective, which was born out of that period by some of its key figures.

According to Banes, the Grand Union developed and embraced a theatrical aesthetic where it was commonplace to speak in performance (77-85). Foster has spoken of the role of narrative within the group, made manifold in performance through “a collage of movement, dialogue, costumes, props, and excerpts from popular music” through which something akin to ‘scenes’ could emerge (“The Signifying Body” 44-64). According to Banes, although the group’s use of spoken word was largely limited to a kind of meta-theatrical citational register or “word wit” the Grand Union appeared to be as “articulate with words as they were with movement” (*Writing Dancing* 256-257).

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s a few US choreographers emerged who are noteworthy for their use of voice. I have already mentioned Bull (1931-98), whose *The Dance that Describes Itself* precipitated a long fascination with using improvised spoken ‘text’ as a

³⁶ Many artistic practices beyond dance were choosing to privilege spontaneity above planned material. For example, the 1950s beat poets have been characterised as part a culture of spontaneity and this has since been conceptualised as a countercultural response (see Belgrad 1998).

³⁷ This group’s founding members included Barbara Dilley, Paxton, Gordon, Becky Arnold, Douglas Dunn, Nancy Green and Brown. It formed out of Rainer’s piece *Continuous Project – Altered Daily* (1969), a loosely fixed performance score where performers were free to ‘insert’ their own material made spontaneously (see Ramsay 1991).

companion for improvised dancing that continued throughout his career. He and his dancers, including his long-term collaborators Cynthia Novack and Peentz Dubble, “developed many different ways to deconstruct and reconstruct the narrative of their dances for audiences – by establishing then relayering text and movement” (Buckwalter 44). Meredith Monk’s (1942-) vocal experimentation served as a counterpoint to the ironic style of the Grand Union’s verbal adventures. Monk’s experiments with the voice were predicated on her discovery that it was a movement instrument capable of “jumping, spinning or falling”.³⁸ For Foster, Monk’s performances around the time of the Judson Dance Theatre enacted a more ‘earnest’ approach to narrative, along with a fuller commitment to character (“The Signifying Body” 44-64). Monk’s work stood in further counterpoint to that of the Grand Union insofar as it conjured mythical figures, placing them in sometimes surreal or absurd scenarios imbued with a sense of ritual or remembrance (44-64). According to Burt, Monk (inspired by Halprin) was trying to get back to a “sensory integration” in performance (*Judson Dance Theatre* 124), and later this manifested in ways that prioritised musical structures where “her own voice makes discoveries and gestures in wordless sound, circling, twisting, traveling” (Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers* 154). Lastly, Forti (1935-) is noteworthy. Having met Halprin in 1956, and come through Dunn’s infamous composition class, she developed a form known as Logomotion. This was a practice in “simultaneous” improvisation of movement and text (De Spain, *Landscape of the Now* 25). Dance artist Carmela Hermann recounts that in her working with Forti:

[my] fear was in facing the block between my moving and speaking.

When I spoke, I felt cut off from my body, from myself. Dance has always

³⁸ See “I Believe in the healing power of art...” by Meredith Monk, www.youtube.com/watch?v=R36Vh37-OQ4/.

taken me to a deeply physical world. Once in, I never wanted to emerge.

There was either talking or there was dancing. Feeling or thought. The two didn't connect. (65-74)

The issues of fear and the disconnect Hermann alludes to here are addressed in Chapter Three. Forti's *Throat Dance* (Forti 92) was a vocal improvisation in four sections, constrained by four pitch modes, and another piece called *Face Tunes* used face profiles as the score for a musical instrument (79); in this case a whistle that explored the sonic interplay between face/throat and sound. According to Buckwalter, Forti's *Logomotion* "explores the deep ties between movement and language – the kinaesthetic imagery we often use in storytelling and its accompanying body language [which] is not a grace note added to a story as it is told, rather a preverbal embodiment that helps invoke language" (196).

The transdisciplinary ethos pursued in the US was carried forward through the 1970s 'New Dance' movement in the UK. Here, dance's aesthetic borrowed from other artistic forms such as theatre and visual arts as much as it took from dance. In tandem, new training grounds opened for dancers, notably in the London Contemporary Dance School (LCDS) at The Place. LCDS is considered integral to the emergence of a vibrant dance scene in London and the UK during this period. Dance critic Judith Mackrell has suggested that "most of the original energy for British modern dance, and later New Dance, was to spring" from The Place (7). Hamilton was a student of LCDS through the mid-seventies and was later recruited to the Richard Alston Dance Company (1978-80). According to Mackrell, "[m]any of [LCDS's] earliest students . . . had little dance training and came from completely different disciplines" (7). Hamilton, for example, had early forays in theatre before he embarked on professional dance training. The London-based X6 collective was central to the development of 'New Dance'. According to founder member and dance scholar Emilyn Claid in her *Yes? No! Maybe...* (2006), "X6 is recognized as a 1970s radical movement, a

hotbed of feminist politics and experimental performance” (12). Hamilton remained on the fringes of X6 but was nevertheless involved in the field of energy produced by its work, which in Claid’s words “concentrated on giving the dancer a voice, verbally and politically” (38). While much of the ‘New Dance’ activity was concentrated in London, Dartington College of Arts (DCA)³⁹ in Devon did much to advance an ecology of dance that incorporated activity in the US, particularly in the way that it ‘imported’ influence through US dance artists such as Mary Fulkerson and Paxton. Lorraine Nicholas in *Dancing in Utopia* (2007) notes the significance of US influence on DCA’s activity, particularly the significance of Fulkerson and Paxton as “dynamos for development” (207) in relation to their respective introductions of release work and CI. Butcher is considered one of the iconic figures of the New Dance movement (Jordan 167), having been one of the first contemporary dance students at DCA. She went on to form Rosemary Butcher Dance Company, of which Hamilton was a founder member. Hamilton performed in several of Butcher’s pieces between 1976 and 1981 that would utilise improvised movement within highly structured scores.⁴⁰ The early work through CI, with Paxton, Simson, and Pauline de Groot, as well as his associations with LCDS and collaborations with Butcher, put a significant print on Hamilton’s early professional career. Hamilton’s artistic roots are thus enmeshed in this

³⁹ A special issue of *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training* (TDPT) on DCA has recently celebrated the various ways it fulfilled a role in “nurturing innovative practices”. See Murray et al. “Editorial”, *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training*, vol. 9, no. 3, 2018, pp. 299-306.

⁴⁰ See www.rosemarybutcher.com for a rich online archive organised as a timeline of her career, which includes details of the early shows Hamilton performed in.

constellation of activity with its entanglements of US postmodern dance and UK New Dance.

Hanne's close collaboration with Hamilton throughout the period 2009-17 – as a student, company member of Allen's Line⁴¹ and colleague (through her organisation of *The Secret Teachings*) – means that her emergence as an artist has been entwined with Hamilton's mentoring. Hanne, as a much younger artist and being based in Belgium, clearly has a less palpably direct link to either of the core lineages I have outlined in respect to Zaporah and Hamilton but nevertheless is tangibly marked by the way knowledge and technique gets 'handed down'. On one level it is possible to overstate these few degrees of separation but drawing such lineages can be useful anchors – keys to understanding where voice might sit in contemporary improvisation-based dance in the current moment.

The more recent developments in dance practice (1980s and 1990s) in continental Europe, where Hamilton has been based since 1980 and where Hanne too is based, are arguably captured by the term 'contemporary'. Performance scholar Cvejić notes that:

[t]he term "contemporary dance" has replaced "modern dance" since the 1990s and circulates as a putatively more neutral denominator than "modern" and "postmodern dance," which are marked by disputes about modernism in AngloAmerican dance criticism and history. (5)

Yet while perhaps more 'neutral', the 'contemporary' label, at the current moment, also seems (paradoxically) outdated as it is unable to account for more recent developments in continental Europe that may be better characterised by those activities associated with what

⁴¹ Hanne was a member of Hamilton's Brussels-based company Allen's Line along with dancers Paulo Cingolani, Barbara Pereyra, Theodosia Stathi, Agostina d'Alessandro, and Maya M. Carroll until 2017.

Rudi Laermans has called the “Flemish Wave” (12) or captured by the fluidly definable POST-DANCE (Andersson et al. 2017). This latter descriptor serves as an umbrella term designed to capture a broad swathe of contemporary performance including dance, theatre and performance art that often combine to include vocal material.

Aside from iconic ‘contemporary’ reference points in fixed choreographic work, such as Bausch, Forsythe and others listed above, all known for bringing the voice into choreographic play, there are also notable independent practitioners of improvisatory dance who are prolific in their utilisation of the voice and whose live work I have been able to attend. These include Katie Duck, Yolande Snaith and Meg Stuart; Action Theater teachers Hilder, Sten Rudstrøm and Rebecca Mackenzie; improviser (and collaborator with Wunder) Andrew Morrish; dance-artists Seke Chimutengwende, Guy Dartnell, Rosalind Crisp and Wendy Houston; as well as the Stranger than Fiction (StF) events programmed and produced by the StF Collective (Chimutengwende, Alex Crowe, Hilder, Jenny Hill, Mackenzie, Amaara Raheem and Zoë Solomons) that ran from 2009–12 as a significant platform for improvised performance in London.⁴²

Journey of the Thesis

Chapter Two falls into two parts. In the first, a short and selective field survey of the limited literature that deals with the presence of voice in dance is provided. This is located predominantly in dance and performance studies and has been selected according to a focus (or lack of) on the use of voice in dance, though the review does also include a short appraisal of Ingold’s two key works, given their centrality to the thesis. In terms of dance

⁴² See *Vimeo* post by Raheem – *Stranger than Fiction* (StF), www.vimeo.com/93073873/.

literature, my main contention is that it has largely neglected or, as I see it, 'refused' the voice in dance. This notion of 'refusal' both plays on the word and is inspired by the practices I am looking at, because they claim to put voice and dance back together – a refusal – in ways that privilege their 'embodied' status. The second part of the chapter then outlines my methods of research, broadly framed within a Practice-as-Research (PaR) paradigm, as a chiefly practice-led process that has utilised and explored 'embodied technique' (Spatz 2015).⁴³ The types of intelligences that produce 'embodied' forms of knowledge are called into question. Given the predominantly movement and body-based studio practice under consideration in this thesis, I must account for how the knowledge has been generated by (and in) the doing of the practice and is yet ongoing as it resonates further in both conscious and background reflection.⁴⁴ Taken together, a multi-modal approach emerged that oscillated between periods of immersion in artistic practice, and the studied reflections on those, coupled with my reading of theoretical and critical texts to further develop my thinking. However, I consider the totality of this multi-modal approach to be broadly practice-led. I locate the tools and strategies I have used to make investigations in these trainings, considering methods in terms of ways of working I consider as a messy, soft (Feldenkraisian) and meandering "immanent critique" (Manning 52-71) that has given rise to an open-ended and continual searching.

The three (core) practitioner-focused chapters (Three, Four and Five) have been organised thematically while taking Zaporah, Hamilton and Hanne's work in turn.

⁴³ My unease with the term 'embodiment' extends to its use to describe methodological approaches, but a challenge to its use remains firmly outside the scope of this thesis.

⁴⁴ 'Embodied Research' has emerged as an outpost of PaR recently spawning the first peer-reviewed journal, *Journal of Embodied Research* led by Ben Spatz, that aims to pioneer the dissemination of research in the Arts and Humanities through video-essay format.

Although comparisons are made between the practices, I have largely avoided a comparative study for several reasons. Firstly, because this thesis is not *about* Zaporah, Hamilton and Hanne, but rather it uses their work as a vehicle through which to draw out the figure of a voicing dancer. Secondly, because such an approach would have demanded a parity of attention, and in terms of studio practice, there has been a significant imbalance in the amount of time I have spent engaging with each practitioner's work, with it being heavily skewed towards Hamilton (see Appendix III). Thirdly, because I consider (at least within the frame of my voicing dancer figure) these improvisatory practices as either representative of, or related to, a wider set of practices in what remains a vibrant ecology of improvisatory dance-based performance practices incorporating vocal expression (as outlined above). Lastly, because I recognise that each artist is not only working differently, but each define their work in ways that extend in multiple directions beyond the limited scope of my research, and on this note I must be clear that I am plucking out vocal strands of these practices to attend to in the thesis and in no way do the vocal aspects of Zaporah, Hamilton or Hanne's practices represent the whole of what they do. For example, while working with voice may be a mainstay of Hamilton's practice, I have attended courses throughout the research period that did not include voice at all. It must also be noted that public performance is a significant part of what Hamilton and Hanne do, whereas Zaporah's work is more pedagogically based. I have therefore organised the core chapters by delimiting a treatment of each according to how I consider a voicing dancer's work to unfold through three stages. I am referring to these stages as 'accessing', 'arranging', and 'amplifying'. This is designed to present a thematic trajectory of working from a focus on the body and out through space towards an audience; from pedagogy to performance; and from silence to sound. All three practitioners engage with this trajectory to varying extents, so my strategy is, in part, a conceit designed to delimit the focus for the sake of analysis. At the

same time, each practice does legitimately nudge the analysis in each direction of my particular delimitation.

To those ends, Chapter Three speaks to how Zaporah's Action Theater foregrounds a performer's engagement with 'feeling states' as the sensory ground for physical narrative. I maintain the idea of enskilment by using phenomenologist Maxine Sheets-Johnstone's notion of 'corporeal apprenticeship' (2011) to map how Action Theater's highly structured series of score-based exercises function developmentally. The journey is one of moving from silent explorations to vocal but non-verbal sound before engaging in what Zaporah refers to as 'physical narrative', a non-linear verbal-based practice that can happen both in solo and ensemble form. The chapter points to some of the issues encountered working with improvised language, as well as the tension between what I am referring to as the 'material' and 'character' bodies. I have found that in studio practice, the fear and anxiety around speaking needs to be embraced through the practices themselves. I draw on focus-group material to address this issue. The Feldenkrais Method adds a further perspective on the ideas of action and the 'imaginal' so central to the Action Theater form. It becomes clear through this chapter how several dualistic ways of thinking about such things as sense/sensation, verbal/non-verbal, and imaginal/real are potentially collapsed into continuums through Action Theater practice. My aim overall is to contain the discussion around the phenomenon of accessing the sensory ground which gives rise to improvisational vocal content rooted in a notion of feeling.

Chapter Four uses Hamilton's work to account for more compositional concerns in Instant Composition. It focuses on the issues of time, space and objects in relation to voicing. Collapsing vocal material into a wider choreographic frame allows me to consider how concrete objects interact and co-produce vocal material. Ihde suggested that "every material thing has a voice" and that with careful listening, it is possible to hear the crackle of sand or

the slight voice of the wind (190). Expanding voicing requires expanding listening to the sounds of many things. Through Hamilton's work, I have found myself to some extent voicing with the voice of objects, and such an expansion of what is available to the voicing dancer veers towards a 'total' choreography where everything (potentially) takes on compositional value. Following this, I take the inclusion of objects in compositional arrangements a step further to include the mouth. As a dancer feels for and shapes sound in ways not considered part of their conventional repertoire, the mouth and face are activated animatedly. This will be addressed by drawing on Brandon LaBelle's observations from *Lexicon of the Mouth* (2014) in order to position the mouth and its 'mouthings' as choreographic. By drawing on photographic images taken in the training studio as well as instances of Hamilton's public performances, I ultimately suggest that a voicing dancer is immersed through their encounters in a richly structured compositional environment.

Chapter Five capitalises on Hanne's emphasis of the poetic in her work to pitch words as complex phrases that enliven the space acoustically such that it makes a demand on aural attention. This is not to say that a dance space is not already noisy. Even in a class setting it may be that we hear the music or sound-score, or the teacher's instructions or counts, some of which may be worthy of consideration as vocal choreographies in themselves – take for example the elongated rise of the "and" before a teacher launches into the count of a "one, and, two, and, three, and...". But my contention is that the vocal presence, especially when words are spoken, places an extra demand on a dancer's aural attention. Hanne invites dancers to practise a tactile-kinaesthetic handling of words that deforms and defamiliarises a dancer's relationship to them. A repatterning of habitual relationships reveals an ontology of the word that, when spoken, is inimitable because of the unique conditions in which it is sounded. In turn, meaning becomes an issue of co-production with the audience who are immersed in a performance environment. Lynne

Kendrick suggests that “theatre aurality also concerns the corporeality and hapticity of audience because any reception of sound is some kind of embodiment of it” (44). This is underpinned through Hanne’s practice of working with words as if they were tangible objects. Thus, the analysis draws on theatre aurality to understand how meaning is also co-produced in the encounter with the audience as active participatory listeners and co-creators of the poetry. This makes it imperative to more fully appraise performance making, which I do by referencing some key examples of performance from a practitioner perspective.

Chapter Six sums up the key claims and findings from the thesis overall, particularly with respect to how the voicing dancer can be considered as engaging in an ensounded practice.

Note on Appendices

Appendices I–VI contain relevant edited extracts from transcriptions of material collected by interview, focus group, and public talks, as well as extracts from my classnotes. In addition, I direct the reader to a small selection of my own artistic performances and studio experiments, all of which I consider as further practice-led considerations of questions and issues that emerged through the core research. These are housed on a digital canvas (Appendix VII⁴⁵) hosted by the Research Catalogue and I direct the reader to engage with them at several points. Therefore, where other appendices contain information that function to make the research accountable, and are optionally engaged, Appendix VII is an ‘exposition’ that represents a more integral feature of the thesis and, when directed to in the main text (rather than footnotes), the performance documents (which total around fifteen

⁴⁵ Appendix VII can be accessed online via the following link and clicking ‘open exposition’: www.researchcatalogue.net/shared/17617a83d1b8e769dc8e89627493dac2

minutes) should be accessed to more fully exhibit the thesis' practice-led approach as well as perform its call for an 'upping of the ante'.

Chapter Two: Re-fusing Voice in Dance

Mapping the literature and defining research methods

Associated Literature

Texts have been selected that either deal directly with the presence of voice in dance improvisation or have helped shape my thinking and practice. As I have said, voice has been under-represented ('refused') in dance discourse so it has been necessary to identify another body of work in, or associated with, the emerging field of Voice Studies, which although rooted in theatre has an interdisciplinary reach. Some of the texts relate to another emerging field of discourse – Critical Studies in Improvisation – to which I intend this thesis to contribute. Because Ingold's work provides conceptual support in building a case for thinking beyond embodied voice, his two key publications are considered here. In addition, literature that pertains either directly to relevant dance improvisation, or implicates Zaporah, Hamilton and Hanne are identified.

Foster's *Dances that Describe Themselves: The Improvised Choreography of Richard Bull* (2002) is particularly notable amongst the dance literature for its consideration of the voice's presence, and in the context of this thesis, deserves the fullest attention. Over the length of the book, Foster develops an exposition of Bull's choreographic work, a work notable because it made continued and explicit use of spoken word alongside the movement score while making claims to function as improvisation. By developing a chapter-length analysis of what she refers to as 'talking' in dance, and by using Bull's work as an anchor, Foster draws out the aesthetic properties of what is produced in the talking dance. She suggests that Bull's choreography had the effect of radically reorganising the distribution of power by "de-hierarchizing" (12) the relationship between movement and text. I am interested in this 'radical reorganisation' and how it might be distinguished aesthetically from the kinds of speaking that happens in the practices under consideration in this thesis. According to

Foster, the dancers in *The Dance that Describes Itself* engage in a kind of meta description of their movements where:

speaking about their actions as they perform various steps, dancers display their virtuosity, describe their ambitions and intentions. They confess insecurities, demand attention, question viewers' understanding of their actions, all the while revelling in their newfound ability to talk and dance simultaneously. (4)

Foster is drawing attention to what appears to be a mostly everyday and autobiographical mode of speaking. Dancers comment on their own actions, the actions of others, and at times they address the audience directly. This is reminiscent of the way in which much of the speaking happened in the work of those associated with Judson Dance Theater. The vocal material serves to emphasise the anti-illusionistic properties of the piece. In all three of my 'case studies' (Zaporah, Hamilton, Hanne) there is a turn toward the illusionistic. The fourth wall is rarely broken. There is an effort towards character, at least insofar as the material is not explicitly autobiographical or self-referential. Meaning also surfaces in all three of my examples in a way that demands it is dealt with directly, 'before' interpretation (which forms a key part of my analysis in Chapter Five). Language is situated so that it becomes more aligned to the sensory experience of movement. This is a common feature and explicit aim that tends to engage non-representational forms of meaning-making; thus eschewing any tendencies towards analysis or interpretation. This implicates similar processes Foster is drawing attention to when she insists that Bull's dancers are engaged in a "more equitable distribution of power between movement and speech" (12). I am particularly interested to draw out how there may be a tension in the way a voicing dancer has to deal with issues of meaning in practice and performance. Once words are operable a dancer potentially grapples with a logocentric bias that can pull the dancer out of the flow of producing

improvised text. I refer to this as 'semantic stickiness' and this is explored through the core practice-based chapters. Another difference emerges: it appears from Foster's descriptions that the body is exercised in such a way as to avoid the corporeal investment that tends to be called for through the kinds of voicing in my examples. Bull's dancers seem to maintain an air of critical distance from the moves they are making. Any quotidian registers that exist in my examples of vocal material occupy a fuller spectrum of registers, where the quotidian is typically in counterpoint to a less everyday strain of expressive voicing. I expand on this further in each practitioner-focused chapter, but for now it is important to note how the choreography Foster analyses is, in the main, qualitatively differentiated from those I am considering.

Foster's attention to the way 'talking' in dance disrupts a value system is particularly relevant. For Foster, the presence of talking "debunked the hierarchical relationship between verbal and nonverbal practices, and between analytical and creative processes, securing for dance a new, if ironized, status" (11-12). Foster notes how the supposed muteness of dance may have been predicated on the idea that movement offers a more 'authentic' (though silent) voice, which having no recourse to words and their supposed semantic unreliability, meant that what was produced through movement had a more direct relationship to a notion of truth. Foster goes on to note how some of the avant-garde experiments⁴⁶ in theatre practice had already disrupted "classic" divisions of labour "by developing text out of physical exploration and sensory encounters among bodies" (171). Here she says:

groans, shouts, and whining sighs all signalled the actors' investment in the moment and authenticated their access to the deepest states of feeling.

⁴⁶ Foster cites Grotowski and *The Living Theatre* as examples here.

These sonic equivalents of movement secured a space prior to or deeper than words out of which the action developed. (171-172)

The idea that an improvising performer can somehow get closer to the 'truth' or 'fact' of their sensory experience beyond words is a trope I am keen to critique. For example, Action Theater is predicated on a belief that one can enter the 'deepest states of feeling' devoid of judgement. In an ideal state, an improviser can access a more 'authentic' space for producing performance content. Indeed, this becomes part of the primary labour of the dancer in these settings. It is one that aims towards the achievement of unifying experience where an improviser remains connected to the 'fact' of their sensory experience while voicing and speaking. The re-fusion of voice and movement does however suggest it is possible to access primordial states that point to an unadulterated presence that is fully embodied. Such issues surface time and again through the practices I am considering and they need contesting because I question how readily possible this is in practice. For an improviser there is always a potential set of contingent factors that press upon the experience they are having at any given moment. At the same time, implicit to this idea is that (somehow) a 'less' embodied experience has 'less' access to feeling. I address such concerns throughout the thesis, particularly in Chapter Three.

In her article "Auditory Turn: William Forsythe's Vocal Choreography" (2010), dance scholar Freya Vass-Rhee examines the "visuo-sonic intermodality" at play in choreographer William Forsythe's work. Forsythe's efforts to amplify (often digitally) the vocal expression of the corporeal 'innards' of dancers as they writhe, twist and contort gives the guttural, breathy, and warped vocality a particular aesthetic. This could be heard in counterpoint to the more pedestrian quality of voice encountered in Bull's choreography. I suggest that the practices being considered in this thesis are situated somewhere between these two poles. In the case of Forsythe, Vass-Rhee has zoned in on the "perceptual performativity" (388-413) of

vocal sound, rooting much of her analysis in cognitive perspectives. Vass-Rhee proposes a “visuo-sonic” (388-413) appreciation of choreographic material and I agree with her observation about the lack of emphasis given to the sonority of dance in general. For her, the “intermodal potential” (388-413) is afforded in Forsythe’s work because “extending movement into the vocalizing regions of the body, moves dancing across the perceptual boundaries between visual and aural modalities” (388-413).⁴⁷ In part, I am responding to Vass-Rhee’s call for any auditory turn to be applied to dance. In Forsythe’s vocal choreography, vocalisations are often electronically enhanced, de-formed, and amplified in a soundscape which can also include other forms of percussive, ambient noise and non-vocalised sound, and in that sense the voice is heavily mediated. In the context of the practices I am looking at, the sound of voice is contingent on the setting in which it is uttered (including the myriad of sounds that occur ambiently or not) and is always mediated to some extent, but it is done so acoustically rather than digitally. This is an important distinction to make here.⁴⁸

Predictably, I have had to turn to Theatre Studies (rather than Dance Studies) to find the literature on voice. The discourse in and related to the emerging field of Voice Studies and its older sibling, Sound Studies, has also been useful. Annette Schlichter and Nina Sun Eidsheim have claimed that ‘[w]hile debates about the materiality of sound and its impact on the cultural, social, and political spheres . . . have coalesced into the emergent field of

⁴⁷ See also Vass-Rhee’s PhD thesis: “Audio-visual Stress: Cognitive Approaches to the Perceptual Performativity of William Forsythe and Ensemble”. University of California, Riverside, 2011.

⁴⁸ Dance scholar Emily Plumb provides another example of work that has attended to “assemblages of movement, sound, and words that give birth to a choreography of the sonorous body” (“Kine-Phonesis: The Sonic Dancer in Relay” 76-85).

Sound Studies . . . the same has not yet been true for discourse on voice” (1). As a key proponent of the Voice Studies field Thomaidis notes that it is only now emerging as a critical field in response to a “significant paucity of critical writing on voice within theatre studies” (*Theatre & Voice* 9). Thomaidis and Ben MacPherson’s co-edited *Voice Studies: Critical Approaches to Process, Performance and Experience* (2015) aimed to give a “voice for voice” (28). Thomaidis has more recently built on this work by adding *Theatre & Voice* (2017), to the ‘Theatre &’⁴⁹ series where he retrospectively identifies a “first generation” (12) of voice studies scholars including Michel Chion, Steven Connor, Mladen Dolar and Adriana Cavarero. All of whose works, though going largely uncited, have informed my thinking.⁵⁰ Thomaidis considers the collective quality in the link between the voice and aurality, suggesting that listening to the voice as a group means entering a shared act that is based in an “unspoken assumption that the voice knows more than we do, that we need to accept its omnipresence and compelling potency over us” (6). In the listening to voices there is a productive tension in the power-play of an audience that gives as well as takes (discussed in Chapter Five).

Despite the focus on vocal sound in this thesis, it has demanded forays into the area of Sound Studies, if only to further consider the aural features of voicing made necessary by this dance’s oral and aural features. Dialogues with some of the discourse in aurality are used to support my argument that the presence of vocal material in dance underscores the

⁴⁹ Series editors Jen Harvie and Dan Rebellato describe these as “a long series of short books which hopes to capture the restless interdisciplinary energy of theatre and performance” (Frontmatter).

⁵⁰ For seminal texts by authors including Jacques Derrida, Don Ihde, Michel Chion, R. Murray Schafer, Roland Barthes, Adriana Cavarero, and Mladen Dolar, see Jonathan Sterne’s *The Sound Studies Reader* (2012).

acoustic properties of the performance space. To this end, I have reached to the recent flurry of works dealing with theatre aurality, notably George Home-Cook's *Theatre and Aural Attention* (2015) and Lynne Kendrick's *Theatre Aurality* (2017), which I utilise in Chapter Five. These have attended to sound as an amplified feature of the *mise-en-scene*, while considering the agentive faculties of listening as a participatory act. Home-Cook's phenomenology of theatre aurality is geared towards a unifying conclusion that understands "reception as perception, [and] attending as participation" (171). His conception of listening as an active and energetic effort at meaning production, is playfully enacted in the theatre as a collective "aural jouissance" (169) that underscores the capacity for theatre to fracture everyday experience by taking a human beyond pleasure (*plaisir*) in new ways. The discourse around aurality in theatre has inevitably placed a spotlight on the audience. Kendrick's and Home-Cook's analyses are to a large extent spectator studies recalibrated as audience studies.⁵¹ In many of the examples considered in this context, sound has manifested as a design-element and is credited as an aesthetic component of a theatrical event. Aural attention is generally given to these sonic-led performances and defined as such by their digitally amplified sound elements. In this thesis, the theatre aurality discourse supports an account of vocal sound (acoustically, rather than digitally, amplified) from a performer perspective, a perspective that nevertheless needs to account for their encounters with an audience and how, through the very act of their attendance, they also produce the performance.

⁵¹ In line with tendencies in theatre aurality discourse, I have avoided using the term 'spectator' in favour of 'audience' or 'attendees'.

The literature that specifically refers to Zaporah, Hamilton and Hanne⁵² appears variously and sporadically within the context of general treatments of improvisation.⁵³ None have taken the area of vocal practice as discrete areas for enquiry. Although Zaporah is cited in scholarly work, mostly in the wider context of post-modern dance in the US,⁵⁴ the only full-length scholarly work on Zaporah and the Action Theater form has been written by way of Susanna Morrow's PhD thesis. Her "Action Theater: Divine Play for the Stage" (2006), traces the development of Action Theater and situates it historically within the social and geographical context it developed in. Morrow's main concern is to pitch the form in transformational and oft-times transcendental terms with reference to Zaporah's complementary spiritual practices in meditation, particularly the *Dzogchen* branch of Tibetan Buddhism.

Aside from those works already mentioned that include reference to Zaporah, her own published works are a significant resource. These have largely been in the form of practical handbooks detailing the named exercises that form the core of the form. Zaporah's

⁵² Partly in response to the lack of literature on Hanne (as well as a perceived need to address the presence of spoken words in choreographic practice) I proposed and guest edited a special ("Words and Dance") edition of the *Choreographic Practices* journal edited by Vida Midgelow and Jane Bacon. See Robert Vesty, "Editorial: Words and Dance" *Choreographic Practices*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2017, pp. 3-8.

⁵³ See for example, Tufnell and Crickmay's short section on "Voice" in *Body Space Image* (1990) or Louise Steinman's *The Knowing Body* (1995), which looks to the performance practices of Brown, Forti, Monk, Zaporah and others. Blom and Chaplin's guide to movement improvisation, *The Moment of Movement* (1988) makes mention of voice also.

⁵⁴ See also Morrow's "Psyche Meets Soma, Accessing Creativity through Ruth Zaporah's Action Theater." *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2011, pp. 99-113.

book *Action Theater, The Improvisation of Presence* (1995) is a notional twenty-day training with each day including a selection of exercises (or forms) with a commentary from Zaporah. Its later companion *Action Theater: The Manual* (2006) catalogues sixty-nine exercises grouped under the headings of: “Basic & Eyes”, “Frame”, “Time”, “Shape & Space”, “Voice” and “Narrative”. Many invite performers to engage the principles of tempo, rhythm and tension while deploying, in duet and ensemble situations, the strategies of copying or contrasting a partner’s material. Otherwise, Zaporah has herself published a series of articles in the *Contact Quarterly* journal and on her own website.⁵⁵ Zaporah’s more recent prose work *Improvisation on the Edge: Notes From On and Off Stage* (2014) is a largely autobiographical piece that has given me further insight into the principles and philosophy behind her work.

In some more dated literature, Zaporah is included, along with Hamilton, in Chris Johnston’s *The Improvisation Game* (2006) – an overview of UK “cross-art form improvisation practice” (238) that straddles both performance and applied settings. Johnston situates Zaporah and Hamilton in the broad context of improvisatory practitioners working in Europe and the US over the past thirty years. Johnston made the significant observation that improvised dance practice had “started to adopt some more identifiably theatrical elements” such as voice, props, and costumes (239). An oft-cited collection of transcripts of interviews and other discussions with ‘dancer-improvisers’, including Hamilton, is contained in Agnès Benoit’s *On the Edge* (1998). Sophie Lycouris’ PhD thesis “Destabilising Dancing” (1996) positioned improvised dance as a destabilising practice by speaking to a dialogic ontology. Lycouris touched on the possibility of the ‘sonic’ and acknowledged those artists such as Halprin, and later Duck and Hamilton, using voice in their work, but this

⁵⁵ See www.actiontheater.com/articles.htm/.

element remained incidental and was left unexplored. The dialogic, in Lycouris' imagining, was always at the level of self-knowledge or in terms of its relationality, maintaining its status as a potent yet nevertheless conceptual process.

More recent treatments are to be found in Hilary Elliott's PhD thesis "The Place from Which I See" (2013) that looked at Morrish, Peter Trotman, Rainer, Hamilton and DV8 founder Nigel Charnock's late improvisatory performance work from the perspective of vision. Elliott focuses on the way movement and words become operational, contending that in her own practice "moving and talking have equal status as expressive vocabularies" (89). Despite the attention Elliott gives to the spoken word, overall her approach maintains a visual bias, using a Merleau-Pontian phenomenology to investigate the way in which vision plays a key role in the generative possibilities for improvisatory material. Elliott expands on her "model of ocular-centric solo improvisational practice in which seeing and responding to the details of one's environment is a foundational working principle" (172). Hamilton serves as a major example of older improvisation practitioners in Susanne Martin's (now published) thesis "Dancing Age(ing)" (2017), which departs from the author's own practice in improvisation-based dance to investigate ageing. For Martin, in her own practice verbalising is a reflexive tool (115) where observations, insights and associations are voiced to articulate her research concerns with an age-critical position.

De Spain's interview material (which includes Zaporah) in *Landscape of the Now* (2014) is thematically organised around themes such as space, senses, body, the transpersonal, emotion, and cognition. In a short section entitled "Verbal/Nonverbal Awareness", De Spain attempts to deconstruct the ways in which words work. He notes that "because the mastery of words has become fundamental to our ability to survive and thrive, we often think in words even when we are not speaking them" (64). De Spain's acknowledgement of the role of inner voice here is interesting and I address this

phenomenon in Chapter Five. He distinguishes between those linguistic processes that might struggle to articulate experience (which he thinks is often the case for improvisers), and those processes where the dance/movement improviser gives voice that “spills out into their improvisations as spoken words” (65).⁵⁶ De Spain’s concern, which calls upon his interview with Zaporah, is with the way verbalising may, or may not, be an experience that comes with awareness for the improviser. However, this short appraisal, though useful, remains focused on processes and De Spain is not concerned, as I am at points in this thesis, with how words are also given aesthetic status as improvised material produced for an audience. Nor do the processes he speaks to go very far beyond a discussion of the relationship between words and consciousness.⁵⁷

Ultimately, I intend this thesis and its work to be situated within the emerging field of Critical Studies in Improvisation. This field has sought to pull together longer standing but disparate theoretical threads found in scholarly writing about improvisation. These have been distinctly interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary in their scope, as is demonstrated by Ajay Heble and Rebecca Caines’ *The Improvisation Studies Reader: Spontaneous Acts* (2014) that gathers writings that range from Jean-Luc Nancy’s philosophical text *On Listening* (2002) to the Beat poet Jack Kerouac’s *Essentials of Spontaneous Prose* (1957). For Heble and Caines, Critical Studies in Improvisation is a field of inquiry that “enlarges on the working models

⁵⁶ The US journal of dance *Contact Quarterly* is similarly useful in its publishing of first-hand artist responses, certainly in the case of Zaporah and Hamilton, whose dialogues with Nancy Stark Smith (2010, 2011) are notable.

⁵⁷ See also, De Spain’s film, *A Moving Presence* (2010), which explores Zaporah’s pedagogy with footage of an intensive training that takes place in her home studio in Santa Fe, New Mexico, as well as De Spain “A Moving Decision: Notes on the Improvising Mind.” (1995)

of creative practitioners and the knowledge gained in studying creative improvisation in order to examine how it may model innovative forms of social interaction” (4).⁵⁸ Certainly, a common concern of the critical conversation that emerges in this field can be associated with thinking about how improvisatory practices can offer ways of doing and knowing that relate performance to broader socio-political concerns. These perspectives are typified by works such as *The Fierce Urgency of Now: Improvisation, Rights, and the Ethics of Cocreation* (2013) by Daniel Fischlin et al., which has attempted to frame improvisatory music practice broadly in relation to human rights. The authors make few claims for the kinds of dance-oriented practices I am concerned with, but theirs is an example of a useful critique that represents the breadth and scope of the critical conversations expanding the terms of improvisation as an area of performance and social practice that dance and performance practice can potentially plug into.

To that end, the field of Critical Studies in Improvisation has received a significant ‘dance’ boost with the recent publication of *The Oxford Handbook of Improvisation in Dance* (2019) edited by Middelow. In this volume there are over forty chapters from theorists and practitioner-researchers that span Contact Improvisation and Salsa forms as well as bespoke studio praxes and methodologies enlightened by perspectives in philosophy, cognition, phenomenology, and ecology. Aside from my own chapter “Ten Days in Tarbena”

⁵⁸ See also, for example, the journal *Critical Studies in Improvisation/ Études Critiques en Improvisation* hosted by Heble and others at the University of Guelph - www.criticalimprov.com/index.php/csieci/index/. along with the associated organisation: International Institute for Critical Studies in Improvisation www.improvisationinstitute.ca/. directed by Heble that houses an array of research and applied practices with international scope. In addition, George E Lewis and Benjamin Piekut’s, *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies*, 2016 adds a further significant contribution to this field.

dedicated to Action Theater, a few other contributors touch on areas of practice that include the voice such that it is revealed as a ubiquitous element in improvisatory dance practice. For example, in “Perceptual Philosophies in Dance Improvisation”, Malaika Sarco-Thomas’ reference to Action Theater and the practices associated with Forti illuminate perspectives on perceptual activity for the improvising dancer (162). Stephanie Skura’s chapter “Intention and Surrender” accounts for her own engagement in a studio practice where she talks of vocal sound in relation to the moving body as “ways of bypassing the mind’s inhibitions” so that eventually vocalising “begins to feel like a natural part of the movement” even for those who were previously uncomfortable working with sound (389). Elliott’s contribution in this volume, “The Dancer, the Philosopher, and the Tramp” reveals a practical approach to improvisation that responds to space by “inhabiting an imaginative landscape” that gives rise to “specific content that is felt, moved, spoken, imaged” (653). Once again, though improvisatory performance content incorporates that which is voiced or spoken, Elliott is not so concerned with the voice *per se* and her focus remains on delving into the philosophy of visual attentiveness, coining the term ‘witness’ to describe the environment as “a fecund resource for instant composition with and within the material realities and less tangible reverberations of the particularized space that infuses and delineates the work” (666). Lastly S. Ama Wray’s chapter on neo-African improvisation practice, “Embodiology” refers to processes that facilitate “body-vocal” (775) explorations where dancers eventually “go beyond normal tonal range of speech: elongating words, intentionally stammering and changing the pitch” while the entire body is in locomotion (776). Wray’s analysis stems from practice, and she outlines her conception of ‘Embodiology’ as a holistic framework for creating improvisatory performance. Within the collection of strategies and principles she outlines, ‘Prosody’ forms an integral part. Here, Wray underscores how dancers examine the musical textures of speech and how patterns of speech are altered by the effort and

momentum of movement and gesture. Taken together, these four examples demonstrate an imperative to address the ongoing scant treatment of voice as an often integral part of dance practice as well as affirm the opportunity for forging new critical pathways that could more fully account for the voice in dance and expand the field of Critical Studies in Improvisation.

Two of Ingold's key texts *The Perception of the Environment* (2000) and *Being Alive* (2011) underpin the development of a theoretical framework for discussing the practices under consideration and must be included in this literature review. Ingold's concerns are broadly rooted in a phenomenological tradition geared towards a social anthropological study of human perception. He links this to the skilled practices humans undertake and credits their situatedness in the environment. In *Perception*, two chapters are of note and relevance to this thesis.

In the first – “Stop, Look and Listen!” – Ingold undertakes a discussion of vision, hearing and human movement. He starts by inviting the reader to imagine standing by tracks and to close off one or other of the senses of sight and sound, in order to notice the qualitative difference of looking at, and listening to, a train as it whizzes past. Without vision, the sound of the train “seems to assault and ultimately to overwhelm every fibre of your being” (244) he claims. Yet if we were to close our ears to it, the sight of the train whizzing by is short and fleeting; it moves us less, registering instead as one of a collection of images that pass in front of, rather than through, us. In a challenge to distinctions between vision and hearing that have dominated histories of Western thought, distinctions that have fixed, categorised and hierarchised the senses, Ingold proposes that the activity of looking and listening is “accomplished by the whole body . . . that seeks out, and responds to, modulations or inflections in the environment to which it is attuned” (244). He challenges a misapprehension that vision is an objectifying sense that offers up the capacity to see things ‘out there’ while hearing is quite separate in its ability to access the interior world of

the perceiver. Sound reaches the soul, it is said,⁵⁹ and as Ingold puts it, vision has tended to objectify where sound personifies (245).⁶⁰ Epistemologically, vision is supposed to have led a path to a more objective truth which is “rational, detached, analytical and atomistic” while hearing has apparently afforded access to a more intuitive kind of knowledge (246). The counter arguments have been forwarded that vision is also unreliable and illusionistic compared to sound which in speaking directly to us tells the truth.⁶¹ In one way or another, the competing pushes and pulls of prioritising one sense modality over the other have generally led to vision winning out, with a persistent ocularcentrism ranking phonocentrism its subordinate.⁶² As Ingold reveals in this chapter, reprioritising hearing should not force a dualistic competition in the appraisal of the senses. It should however recognise that vision and audition work in tandem as part of the dynamic sensorimotor gestalt as we turn an eye and cock an ear in the conjoined activities of “looking-and-listening” (243). Looking is as active and as direct as touching and, like hearing, it is bound in movement.

A subsequent chapter – “Speech, Writing and the Modern Origins of Language” – makes at least two linked and important observations on the debate about how human beings develop their capacity for speech and language through sociality. The first is that contrary to Darwinian evolutionary thinking, human beings’ capacity for language is not

⁵⁹ It was Plato in *Republic* that said: “Music is the movement of sound to reach the soul for the education of its virtue”; see C. D. C. Reeve, *Plato: Republic*. Hackett Pub. Co, 2004.

⁶⁰ Ingold makes the oft-made observation that the etymology of person in the Latin *personare* means “to sound through” (246), i.e., the mask as something spoken through and perhaps amplifying the voice.

⁶¹ See Ihde 2007.

⁶² The term ‘ocularcentrism’ was coined by Anthony Synnott (1993).

innate. There is not some pre-existing infrastructure which simply gets filled in through early human development.⁶³ The second is that language is generated in concert with the human being's environment, where "the mechanisms (if we can call them that) underwriting the child's ability to speak are not constructed in a vacuum, but rather emerge in the context of his or her sensory involvement in a richly structured environment" (397). On the first point, Ingold claims that "these capacities are neither internally prespecified nor externally imposed, but arise within processes of development, as properties of dynamic self-organisation of the total field of relationships in which a person's life unfolds" (399). In which case, and crucially, speaking can be classed as an ongoing and highly skilled activity that humans continually practise throughout their lives. He says:

[s]peaking is not a discharge of representations in the mind but an achievement of the whole organism-person in an environment; it is closely attuned and continually responsive to the gestures of others, and speakers are forever improvising on the basis of past practice in their efforts to make themselves understood in a world which is never quite the same from one moment to the next. (401)

By understanding language's dynamic process the notion of language acquisition is debunked, instead it is conceived in more processual terms as one of ongoing development

⁶³ This remains a contentious and unsettled debate. In critiquing the notion that language is acquired in a critical period of human development rather than understood as an ongoing lifelong practice, Ingold is challenging what he regards to be the standard model known as language acquisition device (LAD), though this has long been debunked in Linguistics.

where both practices of speech and writing are considered as a skill or artful practice akin to “singing and dancing” (401) and shaped by a person’s context-specific situation.

It is in Ingold’s later work, *Being Alive*, where he proposes the term ‘ensounded’. The term emerges in response to a conference topic of earth and sky⁶⁴ where the discussion had turned to “how the wind is embodied in the constitution of persons affected by it” (138). Ingold felt uneasy about applying the concept of embodiment in this context as if the air was “sedimented into the body as it solidified” (138) because it risked denying the way in which people are immersed in wind and swept along in its currents (138) as they breathe. Rather than talking in terms of people embodying wind, it would be better to say, Ingold suggests, that they are “enwinded” (138). As people move through and with the air it manifests as both wind and breath on a continuum that takes account of the air being in continual flux and flow. In other words, there is no line to be drawn at the point where air becomes either wind or breath. For Ingold, it follows that sound can be similarly considered, not as an object of attention but as an experience we are immersed in. At this point, given its centrality in this thesis, it is worthwhile quoting at length where Ingold unfolds his conception of ‘ensoundedness’:

We may, in practice, be anchored to the ground, but it is not light, sound or feeling that holds us down. On the contrary, they contrive to sweep us off our feet. Light floods, sound drowns out (as we found when we tried to converse on the beach) and feeling carries us away. Light, sound and feeling tear at our moorings, just like the wind tears at the limbs of trees

⁶⁴ Ingold is referring to a wider discussion at an anthropological conference on *Wind, Life, Health* (Hsu and Low 2008). The concept first surfaced in Ingold’s 2007 essay “Against Soundscape”.

rooted to the earth. Far from being enfolded into the body – as the concept of embodiment would imply – they take possession of it, sweeping the body up into their own currents. Thus, as it is immersed in the fluxes of the medium, the body is enlightened, ensounded and enraptured. Conversely, a body confined to a place in the landscape, and that did not equally inhabit the sky, would be blind, deaf and unfeeling.

(134-135)

Again, Ingold's concern is to fully rehabilitate movement to understandings of the processes of perception, if not life itself. Crucially, for Ingold this perception is not enacted on the surface of the world but in it. This leads Ingold to jettison the notion of 'scape', as in 'landscape' and 'soundscape', because it suggests surface and separation between the perceiver and the objects of their perception. It is because sound comes at us from all directions that it "will not stay put [nor] put persons or things in their place" (139). I therefore take from Ingold the intimate entwinement of sound with wind and breath that involves the whole of the body, where listening is understood as an active and dynamic endeavour – "attentive listening, as opposed to passive hearing" (139). For those who are able, we listen not just with the ears but with the whole body, locating ourselves in relation to space and objects such that vision, hearing and movement are inter-dependent.

The blending of person and environment also extends to the interchangeability of the senses, so that it is possible to countenance that we see sound and hear light. As Ingold points out, this is not simply the domain of experience for people with acute synaesthesia, it

is the experience for all of us. To some extent we are all synaesthetes⁶⁵ because we all experience a register in one sense when another is activated. One of the things I find so compelling about Ingold's analysis is his continual emphasis on movement of an integrated body, or indeed whole person, so that when he talks of eyes and ears as areas of the body that register sensation, he does so by recognising how the rest of the body is key to the perceptual activity. The environmental interactions a human engages, along with the tasks they undertake, must be considered given their deeply enmeshed role in our perceptual apparatus. Ingold's 'ensoundedness' can be understood therefore, at least in terms of sound, as an accomplishment of an experience which is embedded, enacted, and extended, such that it widens embodiment's sphere.⁶⁶

Although the term 'ensounded' occurs only twice throughout Ingold's writing it has been taken up and expanded on to varying degrees by a few scholars, particularly those working within or close to Sound Studies. Johannes Birringer (2013; 2018) has deployed the term in support of an auditory appraisal of scenography, while Home-Cook makes mention of the term in his phenomenology of theatre aurality, to support his case for an "attentionality" of listening that is characterised by an active tension or stretch (150-151). The most extensive and relevant adoption of the ensounded concept is provided by Norie Neumark's *Voicetracks* (2017). Neumark proposes the idea of 'voicetrack' to denote "the

⁶⁵ See for example, the experiments between philosopher Barry Smith and the chef Heston Blumenthal looking at effects of sensory interchange between colour and taste – see podcast *Making Sense of the Senses*, www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08j9z4z/.

⁶⁶ An enactive approach to cognition was first proposed by Francisco Varela et al. (1993) to recognise that cognitive processing in humans is not just embodied, but is also embedded (situated in the environment), enacted (rooted in action) and extended (contingent on human interaction with things and other subjects).

potential to help us think about how assemblages speak, how they voice themselves as well as enmeshing within themselves the voices of human, animals, and things, shaping and making possible these other voices” (27). She notes the role voice plays in First Nations’ cultures and the way voices map a cartography for Indigenous Australians, as well as citing several artistic works that can elucidate her engagement of animal, place and technology. Ingold is a rolling presence throughout the work, but Neumark predominantly draws on and attempts to add to post-humanist critiques found in New Materialism, allowing Neumark to explore how voice extends way beyond the human. It is unclear what Ingold would make of Neumark’s reliance on New Materialist discourse given his own dismissive stance on the burgeoning discourse around materiality.⁶⁷

Ultimately, for the purposes of this thesis ensoundedness can scaffold an analysis of how a voicing dancer comes to know, through the development of skills, the ability to deal with Instant Composition that includes and fuses voice and dance. Furthermore, ensoundedness can serve to further underscore the similar fluxes and flows of the improvisatory moment. While Ingold’s sound is not confined to vocal sound, I intend to confine any notion of ensoundedness to a consideration of human vocal sound, at the same time quietly acknowledging the affective presence of any number of non-vocal sounds, whether it be the sound of wind, the voices in our heads or the myriad things that add to the general hum of the world that we take in.

⁶⁷ Neumark does acknowledge Ingold’s “qualms about the term and the approach of new materialism” (26). Ingold’s ‘qualms’ are aired in his chapter entitled “Materials against Materiality” in *Being Alive*.

Methods: The Emergence of a Practice-led Approach

My research methods were multi-modal and are best framed within a Practice-as-Research (PaR) paradigm. This is because although I have engaged in some ethnographic approaches, my research has predominantly been led by artistic studio-based practice. This has largely been in the form of training in residential workshop settings but also through performance making. In this section, it is therefore necessary to speak to how issues relating to 'embodied' knowledge, training and documentation have been tackled through an emergent practice-led approach that has come to understand, with the help of the Feldenkrais Method, the productive value of intuitive processes. This will involve taking some time to deal with the predominant site of the research – the workshop.

The Workshop Environment

It became clear once the fieldwork was properly underway that a fully participatory practice-led approach was necessary. Indeed, it also became clear that 'fieldwork', or even 'case-study', were terms (deployed at the project's inception) that did not do justice to the nature of my role as a researcher. This shift in approach was influenced by the pedagogical setting of the 'workshop' and a personal desire to develop my artistic skills. This shifted my position away from scholar towards artist. Consequently, a more participatory approach to the research emerged. This also met both explicit and intuited demands from the practitioners themselves. For example, on greeting Zaporah in Tarbena in 2014 she stated that she hoped my researcher role would not obstruct my engagement in the artistic work. Artistic (rather than research) imperatives have also shaped the choice of practitioners, and serendipity has played a role here. For example, Hanne was introduced to me after attending Hamilton's 2013 course in Arlequi. I must also admit the role taste has played in my decision to engage with Hamilton's work more fully; a love for it that has also at times

challenged my ability to gain critical distance as my role oscillated between artist and researcher. These shifts in the demands of the research and where its emphasis lay forced a reappraisal of what could constitute knowledge within the academy and the doctoral framework, while producing tensions between artistic and scholarly imperatives.

The research environment, regardless of the purpose of the practice or object of study, has implications for an artist-researcher. Workshop settings as training environments are subject to more than the artistic work they aim to facilitate, and the immediate environmental (aside from wider cultural/economic) factors weigh on what is produced there. In the case of Arlequi, an old farmhouse complex owned and run by Anna Borredà⁶⁸ set in the deep countryside of Northern Spain, the bucolic atmosphere exerted a strong presence on daily life for the time of the workshop with Hamilton. The luxury of time, along with being away from home, allowed space for new daily routines to emerge and for temporary communities to form. International and inter-generational groups of artists gathered to form new networks and share expertise, giving rise to the production of social capital. In such settings, the communal life around the workshop is integral to it (the eating, sleeping, chatting) so that the work is not hermetically defined by the four walls and wooden floor of the studio space. Dancers do not merely forge their expertise defined by its surfaces but are immersed in the web of all its life in unquantifiable, undefinable and indivisible ways. Indeed, arguably the workshop happens in relation to the specificity of place rather than space. The “noise and voice of the environment, of the surrounding lifeworld” (Ihde 23) – which in early September at Arlequi consists of sounds of distant barking dogs and crowing cockerels, heat, light and the palpable sense of the changing

⁶⁸ Since 1981, Borredà has hosted a summer programme of workshops, which has included Hamilton’s course (except for 1993 and 2020) each September since 1988.

season – has formed part of the felt experience of being there. In short, the community that is typically and temporarily formed in a residential workshop setting such as Arlequi cannot be simply delineated by what happens inside the studio and what happens outside – they are imbricated.⁶⁹

The workshop environment raises questions of enskilment and technique; often to do with the singularity of a named technique and what it means to develop the skills that constitute it. For Spatz, “[t]echnique is knowledge that structures practice” (1). This definition leaves the notion of technique open to a processual understanding of it as ongoing, contingent and subject to being continually updated, but it also recognises that technique can be nameless. A similar notion of technique has bearing on phenomenologist Carrie Noland’s use of the term ‘gesture’ in *Agency and Embodiment* (2009), which is deployed instead of ‘movement’ because, for her, it “recalls the carapace of routine, the inscription on the body of skills that allow individuals to traverse space in the first place [and] serves as a reminder also that movement is not purely expressive but is culturally shaped at every turn” (7). In this respect, skills can be more closely defined and identified not only for their structure or idealised pedagogical aims and objectives, but also recognised as contingently socialised. The exercises, studies and tasks encountered through these practices must be considered open-ended, in line with a processual understanding of how enskilment happens. For Ingold, it is in the very ‘tuning’ of movement in response to the ever-changing conditions of an unfolding task that the skill of any bodily technique ultimately resides (*Perception* 353), after defining enskilment as a “fine-tuning of perception

⁶⁹ See Ric Knowles’ *Reading the Material Theatre* (2004) for a cultural materialist view on the performance event, and how the material structures that support the work such as money, contractual logistics and transport infrastructures come to bear on it.

and action" (37) to position the way skill generates and is generated by a person's interaction with their environment as well as the wider socio-economic conditions that enskilment takes place in. Certainly, Hamilton and Hanne's work can be aligned with these definitions of technique, and within its structure all three (Zaporah, Hamilton and Hanne) elevate the value of skill development and ongoing practice rather than skill acquisition as a prerequisite for improvisatory performance practice. Zaporah trademarked her technique as Action Theater in the 1970s and allied to it a teacher-training programme where, through direct study with her over many hours, it is possible to become an accredited teacher of the form, subject to remaining licensed through yearly subscription. While Hamilton recognises there is such a thing as technique, there is no book or manual that attempts to outline what it is or how it functions, and he resists giving it a name such as 'Hamilton technique'. Despite there being a clear logic and through-line running through each class, course and collection of courses, in a way that reveals a highly systematised yet expertly intuitive process honed over many years, Hamilton resists observing a definite or indefinite article next to the word 'technique'; it is for him simply technique. Quite often he refers to it as nothing other than 'work'. Hanne similarly talks about 'the work', but it is not her work so much as the work of improvising, instantly composing, or working with words. I have noted Hanne saying that a "something' technique is not technique – it is already excluding' (Appendix IV: Hanne, Extract E). I understand Hanne here as articulating a resistance to packaging up and identifying a technique as a named thing. This is regardless of whether techniques are being used or handed on/down.

Workshop participants are invariably practising technique founded on prior knowledge, and in these instances any group brings together expertise from a range of professions, not just dance or theatre. A common denominator was, for the most part, that participants had a performance background and were usually highly trained, seeking

artistic growth and continued professional development (CPD).⁷⁰ Many maintained individual practices (often informed by a range of bodymind-oriented or Somatic practices including Yoga, Qigong, Body-Mind Centering, Alexander Technique, Klein Technique and the Feldenkrais Method) that informed the work and was often on display in the early mornings before class. It should be noted, given the context of this thesis, that rarely was the voice part of that practice, though the capacity for voice (e.g. breath support) is potentially accessed through the bodily focus on the expert practices engaged individually and autonomously or through the bodily practice encountered in dance technique. This is significant given that Zaporah, Hamilton and Hanne make no claims to train the voice. In that sense, I consider any 'voice training' to align, very loosely, with the emotional-organic (whole person) rather than physiological mechanistic (one-size-fits-all) modes of formal vocal trainings⁷¹ a performer can potentially access. The relationship between voice (*phonê*) and language (*logos*) can then become a potent issue in the workshop environment as the relationship between the sound of speech and its communicable value comes to the fore, both in the artistic practice and the meta-frame of the workshop. All the trainings have been conducted in English, though generally for most participants it was not their mother tongue. In fact, a striking feature of the residential workshop environment has been its polyglottic

⁷⁰ The heterogeneity of experience an individual performer brings to their training and work must be acknowledged. Many participants could be considered cultural workers. As well as travelling from afar, many were juggling artistic projects, sustaining itinerant lives, or, as working artists, were dealing with the demands of precarious employment. These material conditions should not be taken for granted.

⁷¹ See Susan Bamford Caleo "Many Doors: The Histories and Philosophies of Roy Hart Voice Work and Estill Voice Training." *Voice and Speech Review*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2019, pp. 188-200.

character, which produced an overt plurality that added to the acoustic space of the environment both in and outside the studio (a point I address in Chapter Five).

At this point, an issue emerges to do with the dynamics often pertaining to pedagogical settings where enskilment is idiosyncratically exercised. The workshop, as a site of practice-led research (both artistic and scholarly) that might also be considered a form of apprenticeship, is subject to the potential for delivering up its own failures. There is no idealised body fulfilling idealised teaching aims and objectives, and a dancer's idiosyncrasies can only mean that the pedagogy is understood as a framework that houses a dancer's autonomous enquiries. Maria Kapsali talks about this with reference to actor-training, arguing that by taking account of the situatedness of the trainee's social and political context when engaging in somatic or somatically informed work it is possible to "cultivate an embodied form of reflexivity which derives from instances of discrepancy between the trainee's movement and the embodiment of a specific form" ("Psychophysical disciplines" 157-168).⁷² Kapsali is drawing on Noland's assertions that the development of bodily technique produces a kinaesthetic excess that ensures variation. Kapsali calls this variation the "misfit" because a trainee is always producing an approximation of the technique. For Noland, any kinaesthetic excess affords a type of awareness that is "agentic" (*Agency and Embodiment* 16) because it has the potential to ensure differentiation. An artist in a training situation can be empowered through their own idiosyncratic attempts to appropriate a practice. In terms of appropriation, the artistic outcomes referred to predominantly in Chapter Five can be seen to display the hallmarks of the trainings I have undergone, while at the same time accomplishing, through their very failure to appropriate,

⁷² See Maria Kapsali's "Psychophysical Disciplines and the Development of Reflexivity." *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2014, pp. 157-168.

a 'mis-fitting' quality achieved by their unique amalgamation of prior and new knowledge. This idiosyncrasy is born of many things including prior training, habit and patterns of behaviour that, although constituting a form of expertise, have currency in pedagogical settings that must be acknowledged as heterogeneous and relational.

The 'misfits' are also bound by (and products of) the structures of power implicated in the will to impart/be imparted with some form of knowledge. This is wedded to the interpersonal relations that circulate between participants, particularly those between student and teacher, where issues of authority and autonomy are never far from the surface. Richard Sennett observes that in any form of "craftsmanship there must be a superior who sets standards and who trains" (54) but that the "craftsman's workshop is one site in which the modern, perhaps unresolvable conflict between autonomy and authority plays out" (80). A teacher cannot take full responsibility for any student's experience, but at the same time a teacher is often privileged with certain powers that affect relations between them and their learners. Students are often looking to the experienced teacher to give them feedback and validation, and this can affect the production of aesthetic values within any given teaching environment. In my experience of the workshops, obtaining feedback played out as a palpable phenomenon as I looked for affirmation about what I was doing well or where I had gone wrong. A teacher's role is to provide the conditions for that autonomy to flourish, in part by helping to generate curiosity through verbal prompts. This interpersonal dimension means taking account of the affective and empathy-forming dynamics between teacher and learner through processes of listening-and-speaking and lends the exchange

ethico-political responsibilities that emerge from the practices of care for self and other.⁷³ Though they have not conspired to form an integral part of the current inquiry, that these kinds of negotiations are happening in these pedagogical environments needs acknowledging, not least because they make imprints on the participant's affective experience that infiltrate their artistic practice.

Documentation

In terms of the research that takes place in such environments, the question remains of how embodied knowledge is measured as either novel in its contribution or qualitatively differentiated in its dissemination from any other form of knowledge.⁷⁴ Certainly, this is the case in terms of the validity of documentation. Performance scholar Philip Auslander distinguishes between documentation that is documentary and that which is theatrical, arguing for a rethinking of documentation less as evidence of a work's past existence but

⁷³ Thomas Kampe's positioning of the Feldenkrais Method as 'soma-critique' (Kampe 2013; 2015) within a performance training context offers a perspective on its potential to cultivate practices of choice-making. For Kampe, "[b]y acknowledging the human being as an environmentally embedded creative learner, both autonomous and relational, the Feldenkrais Method offers emancipatory, empathy-forming, and agency-constituting processes which can support an open-ended and rigorous approach to performer training" ("Eros and Inquiry . . ." 200-218).

⁷⁴ See dance scholar Anna Pakes ("Art as Action" 1-9) for a discussion of artistic practice and epistemological value. Pakes addresses issues of embodiment and follows oft-made distinctions between *techné* "as a form of skill" or applied know-how and *phronesis* as the capacity of achieving the "wisdom of acting well within the social and moral domains" to suggest that art practice can combine these forms of knowledge with *poiesis* (making).

more the “radical possibility” where “the presence, power, and authenticity” of any given work “derives not from treating the document as an indexical access point to a past event but from perceiving the document itself as a performance that directly reflects an artist's aesthetic project or sensibility and for which we are the present audience” (1-10). The evidence is therefore alive to the interactions of the reader and must be understood in performative terms. I was led through the research period to think of documenting practice as a generative way of working⁷⁵ and not merely as a mode of capturing evidence to support some of the claims this thesis makes. Neither the reference to my own subjective experience encountered through the workshops nor the performance outcomes which have sprung from them can stand alone as evidence of the knowledge generated through them. This unsettles the value of documentation and its relationship to the tacit knowledge that produced the work they attempt to capture. In the case of the workshops, I was unable to collect audio or visual documentation, partly because of my fully participatory engagement with them, but also because it would not have been appropriate. Documentation has been more possible in a performance (rather than pedagogical) setting and here I have been able to produce documentation, which is housed in Appendix VII. This has been organised as a timeline (representing the research period) running across the canvas from left to right and consists of six artefacts. Each refers to a specific performance piece, but in some cases there are multiple performance documents (usually around a minute in length) within each artefact, acting as both a time constraint and as a strategy for focusing attention on the question or issue under discussion. Those above the timeline are short selected clips that I have organised to illuminate a point I am making. Those below the timeline are the longer

⁷⁵ Such concerns were addressed in the *Documenting Practice* workshop hosted by RHUL and facilitated by Worth and Georgina Guy, which I attended on 8 Mar. 2017.

unabridged versions and have less performative value because they stand more readily as documentary, rather than theatrical, documents. These are not designed to be accessed but I have included them so that the more performative documents (above the line) can be held accountable to them. But these performance documents cannot hope to reproduce or even stand as evidence of the tacit knowledge that is associated with their production. Thus, the line of distinction between embodied knowledge and documentation is blurred in terms of their respective epistemic value as dissemination.

Similarly, the practice of notetaking, which was a major component in my research strategy, has produced contingent, unstable and performative forms of documentation. It is worth stating that in all the training settings there has existed a culture of notetaking, so I was not conspicuous within any group of participants for taking them.⁷⁶ Despite the value that participants place on notetaking, they cannot serve as either discrete or complete records of the classes and it is important to acknowledge their limitations. Their instability as documents is borne out of the fact that handwritten notes were either taken down in-between tasks or during discussion in the workshop itself. They are products of engaging in a dual activity of doing and recording of the doing. Occasionally, I added to these at the end of the day in a more reflective mode. My attempts to capture ideas, exercises and philosophical renderings across all three practitioners fail in their ability to grab the fullness of the moment. Typing-up handwritten notes has advantages and disadvantages. The materiality of the notes in their handwritten form is diminished through their transcription into a digital space and typographical form. Something of the temporal quality is also lost in

⁷⁶ As a possible antidote to established cultures of notetaking, in the Feldenkrais Method practitioner training notetaking can often be discouraged in favour of being more bodily present to the information being shared.

the move from analogue to digital in that in their original form the idiosyncrasies (such as pen colour, state of handwriting, doodles and marks) gave the notes character as well as the potential access to the memory of their making. Often the notes were inflected by the specific emphasis in my research concerns at the time. In short, the notes are inherently selective, rooted in tacit decision-making and subject to the limitations of variance. Appendix IV includes only a fraction of these notes. The extracts were chosen because of their relevance to the topic under discussion in each of the core practitioner-focused chapters. To signal the contingency and instability of these it has been necessary to use single rather than double quotation marks where I am ascribing a thought or comment to Zaporah, Hamilton or Hanne. Double quotation marks are used where the citations are either published or I am certain I have been able to capture the words verbatim.

PaR

A practice-led approach, differentiated from ‘practice-based’ or ‘practice-as’, needs to be situated and qualified loosely within the PaR paradigm, if only to clarify the nature of knowledge being generated by this thesis. PaR has emerged within the arts and humanities as a legitimate yet contested mode of research within the UK academy and further afield⁷⁷ since the early 1990s. Its *raison d’être* has been to prioritise a mode of research that has placed the practitioner central to the enquiry. It has led to innovative ways of disseminating research, so that in many cases artistic outcomes are included as part of any submission. At

⁷⁷ PaR’s continental European counterpart – Artistic Research – has been integral to recent institutional dialogue about the nature of the artistic doctorate from the perspective of dance and body-based performance practices. The *Artistic Doctorates in Europe* (ADiE) project from 2017-19 has sought to reassess the provision of doctoral study rooted in dance or body-based practices in the academy.

the same time, PaR has led to a reappraisal of epistemic questions to do with how knowledge can be generated, where it resides and how it is disseminated. Movement-based artistic practices are well placed to invite such reappraisals because of the way the body is often central to the processes of knowledge generation. Such epistemological concerns encountered through practice can trouble traditional modes of scholarly research. Research models must balance the tensions that arise between practice and theory, potentially challenging dominant scientific or scientifically informed modes of research. As research theorist Barbara Bolt has noted:

[i]t has only been in the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries that art has once again emerged as a legitimate domain of knowledge production. This emergence has a complex history, but one of the key factors has been the institutionalisation of art in the academy. Here, driven by the exigencies of the research culture, art-as-research has emerged as a specific field of research that aims to distinguish itself from other research fields. (140)

Such efforts have produced a field of discourse in its own right, and how artistic and scholarly imperatives might be integrated through PaR within the academy has been subject to considerable debate in performance related studies (see for example Frayling 1993; Pakes 2004; Nelson 2006; Borgdorff 2007; Kershaw and Nicholson 2011; Barrett and Bolt 2014).

In 2007, the research theorist Henk Borgdorff distinguished between research *on*, research *for* and research *in* the arts (1-17). The 'on' here refers to research that has (as its object) the art practice under examination. The 'for' refers to research where "art is not so much the object of investigation, but its objective", while the 'in' refers to a mode of research "that does not assume the separation of subject and object, and does not observe a distance between the researcher and the practice of art" (5). Within this taxonomy, it is the last mode,

the 'in', that this project's modes of research can be most appropriately aligned. Yet within the scope of this thesis, I am referring, necessarily, to all three of Borgdorff's distinctions in ways that collapse them. Given that my analysis draws on overtly pedagogical, as well as improvisatory performance, activities, it is already driven by a concern with process. The two areas of 'performance' and 'training for performance' blur in the pedagogical setting of the workshop as there is almost always an opportunity to make, show and share work with others serving as audience to produce performance-like conditions. As an extension of that idea, public performance products (including my own) that I refer to in the latter stages of the thesis are more than inflected by the pedagogy, they are ongoing manifestations of learning. However, performance products for publics do offer a qualitatively differentiated experience from the kinds of performance that exist in the workshop setting. This can be well summed-up by Hamilton's observation that in "teaching, you speak for and with the material; in performance, the material speaks for itself" (qtd. in Stark Smith 12-19). Even when I refer to performance outcomes that are both public (either to a fee-paying audience or an audience constructed within the training context) the process remains explicitly present. Through the improvisatory mode of working, processes of making become instantly bound in the objects that are being made. These in turn are contingent on the context of their production. Process and product are brought closer together, such that an audience witnesses the making of the product and the performance of the product at the same time. Improvisatory performance practices and their associated training grounds therefore implicate all three of Borgdorff's distinctions.

In terms of the relationship between artistic practice and research, cultural theorist Erin Manning⁷⁸ offers a useful perspective on the epistemic value of art as action, research and dissemination in “Against Method” (2015). She has expanded on the term ‘research-creation’ to describe scholarly-artistic processes that propose “new forms of knowledge, many of which are not intelligible within current understandings of what knowledge might look like” (52-71). Manning identifies the problem of “capturing within methodological ordering” what is produced if artistic action “activates and constitutes new forms of knowledge in its own right” (52-71). Inspired by Alfred Whitehead, she uses the term ‘appetition’ as an alternative to a Kantian inflected ‘reason’ in order to describe a “sense of event-urgency, emphasizing the way the occasion of experience itself seeks to come to fruition, the way it activates its own passage to becoming-superject” (52-71). Manning is arguing against method, against maintaining a strict version of positionality that “takes the writing out of the act, that situates it within this or that family of knowledge, that aligns it to disciplinary method and to institutional power” (52-71). Instead she argues for an immanent critique, where:

reading or making are as messy, as uneasy-making, as exciting as
pounding the grapes, provided that we take this situatedness seriously,

⁷⁸ The SenseLab project that Manning founded in 2004 “has adopted the term ‘research-creation’ to describe its activities, with the goal of fundamentally rethinking ‘theory’ and ‘practice’ in a way that overcomes the all-too-common antagonism between the two”. See www.senselab.ca/wp2/about/.

for it is in the midst of the field of relations they call forth that practices are at their most inventive, at their most intense. (52-71)

Manning's immanent critique allows me to position my work in the studio with others (i.e. the situatedness), along with my intermittent confusion, lack of ease or messy urgency (common to much research yet surprisingly uncelebrated or conceptualised) as a queering of methodical order. Indeed, Alyson Campbell and Stephen Farrier have suggested that PaR in theatre and performance is inherently queer insofar as it already disrupts established hierarchies in favour of a "bricolage of these openly embodied methods" where queer mess is described as "asserting the value and pleasure of formations of knowledge that sit outside long-standing institutional hierarchies of research" (83-87). Similarly, queer messes have manifested through unorthodox research processes in my own methods (such as lack of clarity in design or clear disciplinary delineations), producing unresolved tensions due to the constraints of the academy's rules and regulations for doctoral degrees.

An imminent critique invites a long overdue acknowledgement in this thesis of my own 'situatedness' – my prior knowledge and the privileged positions I hold within established and dominant power structures. Although I identify as a queer person who considers their working-class upbringing as significant in dominant heteronormative structures where privilege is often afforded by social stratification, I also consider myself privileged to speak in places that afford me some agency as a person who is white, cis-male, able-bodied, educated, employed, institutionally-backed and has good access to social capital. Furthermore, my voice and this project are also fused with long-standing artistic and professional imperatives, not least to do with how I could bring my training as an actor and my interest in movement and dance together. I studied Drama and Theatre Studies as an undergraduate in the UK in the early 1990s, followed by actor training in a UK conservatoire. From 1997 to 2003, I worked in theatre as an actor. Significantly, in 2000,

acting in a production that took place in pitch-black darkness (Sound&Fury's *War Music*)⁷⁹ I was struck by the necessity to move dynamically and barefoot around the stage led by the feel for ropes underfoot and up above. The speaking of words in Christopher Logue's highly poetic reworking of Homer's *Iliad* demanded dynamic movement to feel the rhythm and energetic force of the words despite the predominantly aural experience for the audience. I now often perform in London as one of a six-strong collective of dance artists known as anthologyofamess⁸⁰ that works through Instant Composition and often incorporates voice and sound. The way the analysis unfolds throughout the core chapters is certainly inflected by this theatre background and it has undoubtedly shaped the investigation.

Research methods are inherently embedded in creative practice, and practice and practitioners have much to offer academic research in this respect. For example, Burrows⁸¹ has proposed the notion of 'lostness' within choreographic processes as an operative mode that may well be of use to scholarly researchers. Burrows' notion of 'lostness' facilitated a legitimising moment in my thinking towards my research process, not least because it responded to the improvisatory mode my practice operates in. Choreographer Chrysa

⁷⁹ *War Music* was premiered as part of Battersea Arts Centre's *Theatre in the Dark* (2000) season. For critical perspectives see Mladen Ovadija's *Dramaturgy of Sound* (2013) as well as Martin Welton's "Seeing nothing: now hear this..." in *The Senses in Performance* edited by Sally Banes and André Lepecki. 2007, pp. 146-55.

⁸⁰ See www.anthologyofamess.org/.

⁸¹ In 2015, I attended a 'masterclass' Burrows facilitated for doctoral students that focused on practical ways of embracing 'not-knowing' as a generative tool, one that is acknowledged and stated in moments of transparency even as a leader and facilitator. This session was given on 19 Mar. 2015 to a mix of doctoral candidates hosted at TECHNE affiliated institutions.

Parkinson has similarly grappled with ways to describe distinctions in art-practice to do with practice and performance, suggesting that to use words to name and separate practice and praxis makes either a static thing.⁸² In pure art practice, as distinguished from that which might happen through research in formal higher education contexts (such as this project), it is interesting to note that similar debates are happening. In the execution of artistic practice, there is often already a mode of enquiry that speaks to the production of knowledge. Rebecca Hilton has offered the term 'dancerness' to describe the unique ways in which dancers act upon the deeply embodied forms of knowledge they can access and produce. Hilton's premise is that dancers "think, feel and act upon the world in a particular way" (196-200) such that it presents a challenge for that knowledge to be articulated outside of the dancer's perspective. These practitioner perspectives have much to offer any emergent scholarly methodological approaches to body-based performance practice.

The Feldenkrais Method

In 2011, I began a four-year training to become a practitioner of the Feldenkrais Method (a somatic education method) and this has underpinned both the research and practice.⁸³ The method was developed by Moshé Feldenkrais (1904-84) and is taught in two ways: through verbal instruction in group classes known as Awareness Through Movement

⁸² See (11m 30s) self-interview on practice on *Vimeo* uploaded 2016, www.vimeo.com/26763244/.

⁸³ As a part-time Senior Lecturer on the performance strand of the BA Theatre Performance and Production programme at Middlesex University (since 2011) and as a Visiting Lecturer on the BA Collaborative Devised Theatre programme at the Central School of Speech and Drama (since 2016), the Feldenkrais Method has increasingly formed an integral part of my approach to the teaching of movement to actors.

(ATM) and touch-based one-to-one classes called Functional Integration (FI). Each mode is focused on developing a learner's neuro-physical responses, which can lead to the improvement in range and quality of movement. The method is founded on a principle of expanding body awareness by being attentionally 'with' the experience of engaging in structured patterns of (often slow and small) movement. Feldenkrais defines body awareness as a third state, differentiated from sleeping and waking in that it involves a knowledge of the self where the more aware a person is, the more complete their self-image:

[a] complete self-image would involve full awareness of all the joints in the skeletal structure as well as of the entire surface of the body – at the back, the sides, between the legs, and so on; this is an ideal condition and hence a rare one. (*Awareness Through Movement* 21)

Awareness is therefore understood as a processual conscious knowledge of one's sentient self in the world, knowledge that is capable of expansion. Feldenkrais outlined how human beings can enact choices rather than respond with habitual patterns of learned behaviours and in turn reeducate the body and behaviour. The possibility of new insights about movement patterns and habits can thus lead to the generation of self-knowledge for the student, who is seen very much within the Feldenkrais Method to be situated in relation to others and their environment. In this respect, self-image must be understood as a gestalt of:

the shape and relationship of the bodily parts, which means the spatial and temporal relationships, as well as the kinaesthetic feelings. Included with this are feelings and emotions and one's thoughts. All of these form an integrated whole. (Feldenkrais, *Embodied Wisdom* 3)

Feldenkrais is regarded as having incorporated some of the research from the early pioneers of neurology by understanding the plasticity of the brain in the human being through

adjustment and adaption (*The Potent Self* 197). The method is therefore established as a situated environmental neuro-muscular retraining applied by directing one's bodily attention through movement and mental survey. This sense of self is reflected in action, so by performing directed movements it may be possible to retrain attention to the parts that have receded in the self-image. Because of its recognition of the synergistic qualities of thought, feeling and action being environmentally embedded, the Feldenkrais Method readily conceives of 'body' as 'person-in-the-world', summed-up by the maxim that we do not have a body but that we are one.⁸⁴ The person-centredness of the method is one directed towards self-use but with recognition of the self being contingent on interpersonal relations.

The Feldenkrais Method's focus on intuitive processing has had some wider attitudinal bearing on my methodological approaches. The psychologist Daniel Kahneman has argued in *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (2011) that intuition forms an integral role in decision-making and that this can be systematised through a model in which he distinguishes System 1 and System 2. The first involves processes that are fast and intuitive, while the second is more deliberative and suited to logical processes. The Feldenkrais Method can be understood to shift value towards System 1 in that it underlines intuition as a form of knowledge. This is a kind of direct knowing that does not necessarily discern conscious processing of information.⁸⁵ The Feldenkrais Method encourages learners to engage the principles of resting, doing less or finding the path of least resistance in each movement to

⁸⁴ Krystin Fredriksson has recently proposed 'person-image' as an operable alternative to 'self-image' in her analysis of how the Feldenkrais Method might be applied in settings of puppetry performance. See Fredricksson, "Awareness Through Puppetry" (2017).

⁸⁵ See also Marta Sinclair's *Handbook of Intuition* (2011) who suggests "'Direct knowing' implies the absence of conscious information processing. It does not specify how the information was gleaned, which factors influenced it, and how accurate or effective is the outcome" (4).

lead to a feeling of ease. An ATM teacher will prompt learners to rest many times during a lesson on the understanding that the 'not doing' is a form of generative doing. This type of generative rest extends in between lessons too. Perhaps one of the benefits of undertaking this doctoral research project on a part-time basis over several years has been the affordance of long reflection time. Oftentimes, seemingly obvious questions or ideas pertaining to the work of the voicing dancer have eluded me. The 'elusive obvious' is a key principle of the Feldenkrais Method and often refers to a person's potential to expand awareness of their self-image. Perhaps some habit or pattern of movement had not entered their awareness but became entirely obvious to them once it did. Such a Feldenkraisian approach challenges any apparent 'lack' in a seemingly unsystematic and messy (even queer) approach to the research and the methods employed. Through a Feldenkraisian lens, an anti-method can appear entirely rational; reoriented as an instinctual process-driven rather than outcome-directed endeavour. A Feldenkraisian approach to research could thus facilitate a 'softness' and ease in both movement and thought where it is possible to reclaim the value of intuitive processing. It addresses the tension Manning observes when she says that intuitive processing can suffer from a dominant view that frowns upon "[i]nnate knowledge . . . intuition, speculation in research methodologies" ("Against Method" 52-71) because it relies on unquantifiable and spurious forms of evidence. I am taking the possibility for a softening of the whole notion of method or methodology to rethink my ways of researching as a continual shaping/being shaped by a myriad of doings and undergoings informed by a Feldenkraisian approach. This chimes with many of the ways an improviser can experience performance and is therefore particularly fitting to the context of my research. Indeed, like improvisation and composition (defined in Chapter One), the Feldenkrais Method is a negotiation with the patterns your body is thinking with a possibility to repattern for improved neuro-muscular function. And as Foster notes, in improvising "[m]any of us have

enjoyed the experience of neither leading nor following, but instead moving with, and being moved by another body. One body's weight and momentum flow into and with another body's shaping and trajectory making a double bodied co-motion" ("Taken by Surprise" 3-12). The sphere of 'being with' I have outlined raises the possibility for elevating the value of intuition as a mode of making knowledge through the work of researching improvisatory performance in a way led by practice.

Chapter Three: Feeling for Vocal Material with Zaporah
Accessing 'physical narrative' in Ruth Zaporah's Action Theater



Fig. 1. Participants with Zaporah in her workshop, Casa de Cultura, Tarbena, Spain, 2014. Image: Nadine Sures

I don't use the word emotion. I use feeling state. Inner state. Sensory awareness.
(Zaporah)⁸⁶

⁸⁶ See Appendix IV: Zaporah, Day 1. It is worth repeating that these words are credited to Zaporah but are paraphrased and provisional in that they have been taken from my classnotes, hence the use of scare quotes when referring to Appendix IV material through these core chapters.

In 2014, I attended Zaporah's ten-day Action Theater course in Tarbena, Spain. Zaporah is explicit about the demand on an improviser⁸⁷ to keep in touch with 'feeling states' – a term that broadly captures an improviser's experience of their sensation, mood and emotion, experience which gives rise to the improvisatory content of performance. Zaporah's insistence on staying in touch with sensation as the wellspring of the performance material foregrounds the tactile-kinaesthetic explorations that are codified through Action Theater's exercises. These structured scores quite deliberately take account of a performer's, often forgotten, capacity to babble, lip-smack and make all manner of sounds both vocal and non-vocal. The constraint of making only non-verbal sound is a key strategy of the Action Theater form so that a pseudo-developmental journey of sound-making is enacted as a gateway for speech production or what Zaporah refers to as 'physical narrative'.

Action Theater exercises set tight constraints on an improviser. Many of the exercises bear titles. For example, in a duet exercise called *My Home Town* person A is instructed to call out different body parts and person B shifts into 'frames' that lead with the body part(s) called out (*The Manual* 30). Zaporah says: "the rules take center stage as choking constraints that absorb our attention, thereby keeping us away from ourselves"; going on to acknowledge the way in which the rules "fade into the background of our awareness" through processes of enskilment. In an Action Theater improvisation, a 'frame' (the term Zaporah gives to "the physical, psychological, and narrative elements" (6) that combine to define any given moment) can either be 'maintained' over a period of several moments, suddenly 'shifted' into a new frame that has a newly defined focus, or gradually 'transformed' incrementally moment by moment. In Zaporah's words, once the improviser

⁸⁷ In this chapter, for the sake of continuity, I use 'voicing dancer' interchangeably with 'performer' and 'improviser'. The latter term is more readily used in Action Theater.

has “fully embodied” these principles and rules, the body can “inform the content of every action” (3) attuned to the present moment.

In a performance setting, the more openly scored improvisations are made for audiences and can typically run for thirty or forty minutes in solos, duets or ensemble. These ‘improvisations’⁸⁸ tend to include a sequence of ‘frames’ made up of silent movement, vocal sound and movement, and physical narrative that afford the potential for dramaturgical form to emerge over a longer improvisation. Improvisations can be characterised by long silences, interrupted by ludic vocal play consisting of gibberish, strings of words that create a series of images, or longer phrases that add up to a non-linear type of narrative. Movement may manifest as gesture, mime or more dynamic locomotive movement. In terms of the overall aesthetic produced in Action Theater there is often an emphasis on larger-than-life expression that veers towards a physical language that is less archetypally ‘dancerly’ compared to either Hamilton or Hanne’s work. In Action Theater the face is particularly activated, with the eyes and mouth featuring in exaggerated contortions working in tandem with expressive vocal sound. The style of performance is often informed by surreal characterisations, lending the improvisational products an air of absurdity.⁸⁹

In a training context, the Action Theater form puts the sensory on the foundational level in a three-level schema that a voicing dancer must attend to – the second refers to ‘mood’ and the third to ‘content’. A synthesis of all three must be achieved in performance, but in training it is necessary to engage each one more discretely. In Action Theater, without the development of skills to ground a voicing dancer in the sensory – level one – the

⁸⁸ In this chapter I refer to the making of an ‘improvisation’, rather than ‘piece’ or ‘composition’, because this is the term Zaporah uses.

⁸⁹ See www.actiontheater.com/perform.htm for video documentation of examples of Zaporah’s work.

second and third levels cannot function, and the performer must stay connected to their sensational experience as the stimulus for mood and content. Ideally, an improviser must stay attuned to their ever-changing 'feeling state' as a stimulus for improvised action as the material content. The training is therefore bound in a need to develop the capacity to sustain a strong connection to continually changing feeling states for longer and longer periods of time so that the performed material stays anchored in its sensory ground. Zaporah refers to this also as an achievement of "embodied presence" – a state of awareness where the "experience of the sensory body impacts the content of each and every moment" (*The Manual* 5). As performance material, this content manifests in what Zaporah refers to as an 'imaginal world' of images, stories, characters and voices in solo, duet or ensemble improvisations. To this end, the skills developed in the studio are geared towards accessing and expanding awareness in a somatically oriented way, through the development and expansion of body awareness. It follows that a performer working in improvisatory mode may be caught in an ever-shifting perceptual negotiation between the presence and absence of awareness. Therefore, issues of sense and feeling need to be foregrounded as the footing upon which an ensouling of the body happens and this is scaffolded into the Action Theater form's pedagogy.

Feeling for Voice

While 'sensation', 'feeling' and 'mood' are terms and concepts that have a valuable currency within Zaporah's studio they are subject to confusion and slippage in their usage because of a tendency for studio language to be muddied by the term 'emotion'. Feeling both generates and is yet produced by action; there is a looping of action's generative cycle. In other words, an Action Theater improviser must move to stay in touch with the sensation of their experience and yet is moved to move by the experience of feeling sensation. But, in

order to more fully nuance this process, feeling's full spectrum needs explanation. In *Feeling Theatre* (2011) Martin Welton proposes a 'sensory-affective continuum' where the terms of 'feeling' range from the "particularity of various emotional states to sensations at the tips of the fingers" (8). Welton is drawing on psychologist James J. Gibson's (1904-79) ecological approach to visual perception (discussed below) to expand the terms of feeling to take account of its use as both noun (as in 'the feel of...') and verb (as in 'to feel...') (8). There are several issues to grapple with in terms of a sensory-affective continuum within the context Zaporah's Action Theater. The first relates to sense and sensation. Zaporah insists that it is necessary to access and 'go into' (Appendix IV: Zaporah, Day 1) one's sensation, first as experience in and of itself, and second as a gateway for expressive performance. Action Theater exercises facilitate a 'feeling-around' as an improviser takes notice of the space, or their orientation to it and others, in ways that can involve gentle, gradual (and sometimes slow) somatically inflected enquiries so that it is possible to become more fully attuned to feeling gathered through the sensory apparatus.

In Action Theater, working with a focus on the sensory level requires an improviser to engage with time and space relationships, which may prioritise attention around a sense mode such as vision. But this is always approached through recognition of vision being part of a gestalt that acknowledges the tactile-kinaesthetic approach to perception at any given time. For example, in Tarbena one exercise asked participants to imagine a bird on a wire, to follow the bird, flitting along the wire, to another spot, or flitting off the wire, perhaps to one's shoulder, or forehead, or to the floor, to track its flight and position. Another, a choral circle, more clearly emphasised one's aural sensibilities to more fully immerse an improviser in a sea of sound where it was possible, in standing, to close one's eyes to tune-in to the emergent transformational patterns of ensemble sound-making. Taken together, Action Theater forges a collaboration of sense modalities in ever-changing perceptual shifts that

both practise and produce a synaesthetic (multisensory) perceptual performativity. In other words, the labour of feeling is displayed on the surface of the work.

Zaporah says that ‘to touch the world we go through it’ (Appendix IV: Zaporah, Day 1). I understand touch here not just in its haptic sense but as a heightened kinaesthesia where a feeling of perception is experienced as a fully fleshed and vibrant kind of life grounded in a person’s awareness of themselves in their environment. In Action Theater, a direct appeal is made to feeling one’s way perceptually, and with a heightened noticing of sensation, as the mode of performance. There is a tactile-kinaesthetic exploration in studio practice that puts an improviser in touch with the world through active engagement with it. Action Theater, it could be said, is a manifestation of Ingold’s ‘sentient ecology’ in performance form, where the “skills, sensitivities and orientations that have developed through long experience of conducting one’s life in a particular environment” (*Perception* 25) are developed through hours of training and continual practice. Action Theater actively contests divisions between the senses; the kinds outlined in Chapter Two with reference to Ingold’s anthropology of the senses and his critique of vision. The practice promotes a synergy of multi-sensory perception as a gateway to producing improvised material, especially vocal material, for performance. Through movement, an improviser is heightening their sensory perception – an enlivened noticing – of their environment.

The environment in Tarbena could be defined in part by the walls of the space in the *Casa de Cultura*, with its polystyrene tiled ceiling and hard-tiled floor. The space was asymmetrical and larger than the group needed, so rows of plastic chairs were lined up to demarcate a smaller playing-space. Detritus from other activities predating the workshop also lived in the space (Fig. 1), drawing attention to its other functions as a community hub. The coldness of the marble tiles and the airiness of the space more generally stood in contrast to the external temperature caused by the summer heat of the southern Spanish

climate. The hard floor was problematic in terms of body work and directly affected the work such that most participants wore trainers rather than work barefoot, as is more often the case in Action Theater. The contact of bare feet on the floor can afford the improviser a more nuanced and expanded awareness of sensation and balance because of the complex structure of the foot. Otherwise, the immediate sensory environment was contributed to by twenty participants in a maelstrom of vocal and physical movement.

But 'sense' can also be defined in terms of 'understanding' or 'making sense', as in 'meaning', at the same time as recognising the environment as sensory stimuli. Action Theater practice does not preclude the notion of sense-making, firstly because there is, in the process of expanding awareness, new knowledge being generated and secondly because habits of meaning-making are encountered. In his *Sensuous Geographies* (1994), Paul Rodaway proceeds to 'map' a topography of the senses along such collaborative lines by advancing from an understanding of sense as both "sensation and meaning" (6). He suggests that such a conceptualisation in turn "leads to deeper questions about sense and reality" that must account for the particularities and pluralities of a "person-environment" relationship (6). An Action Theater improviser needs to become more fully attuned to the relationships between themselves and their immediate environment, not simply to create material but to make sense of it. The 'sensory' is therefore best understood in this context as a looping collaboration of sense reception and sense-making.

Mood and Emotion

Zaporah makes key distinctions between sensation, mood and emotion. On the sensory-affective continuum, mood pertains to a broader sense of feeling, difficult in practice to define apart from emotion, but Zaporah is insistent that we do. Making material can be problematic for the Action Theater improviser precisely because of misapprehensions

to do with 'emotion'. The psychologist Eugene Gendlin's term 'felt sense' may be instructive here. For Gendlin, it refers to "internal bodily awareness" (10), differing from interoception as a perceptual mode because it describes a state of sensing the continually changing inner states of feeling that might be experienced as textures, moods, or energies. Crucially, for an Action Theater improviser these are unnameable qualitative states. In Tarbena, Zaporah asked participants to repeat the words "I am so sad" one by one around the circle. She highlighted how these four words bear the weight of the cultural meaning attached to them. The act of naming experience was resisted because it forms a mental construct that operates at a remove from the passing of the moment to moment of performance. The emotional descriptor of 'sadness', for example, cannot do justice to the gradations of feeling that constitute that so-called emotion. Zaporah then tasked participants to repeat the phrase but to let the body interact with it in novel ways, not how culture has helped to habituate the body's physical interactions with those words (Appendix IV: Zaporah, Day 6). For Zaporah, the act of naming sadness 'sadness' is an activity that fixes what should be a more fluid felt sense of experience that is unnameable. This involves the formation of opinion, judgement and reflection, which Zaporah insisted narrativises the experience at a further remove from the process of engaging with and through the material as it emerges. Zaporah's insistence on staying with the feeling-state challenged habitual tendencies an improviser often has towards fixing a feeling by adding emotional labels to ongoing ever-changing experience. For Zaporah, the concept of emotion is therefore anathema to the process of improvising.

In *The Feeling of What Happens* (2000), neuroscientist Antonio Damasio makes a useful, but also contentious (in the context of Action Theater), differentiation between feeling and its second-order representation:

[f]eeling an emotion is a simple matter. It consists of having mental images arising from the neural patterns, which represent the changes in

body and brain that make up an emotion. But knowing that we have that feeling, “feeling” that feeling, occurs only after we build the second-order representations. (169)

The second-order representations are the kinds of mental constructs Zaporah claims an improviser must avoid making. For an Action Theater improviser, staying connected to feeling states is necessary, not simply because the aesthetics of the practice resists the explicit composition of emotional sequences that are ordered to form neat narratives, but also because the practice makes demands on an improviser to be continually attuned to their experiential, embodied, animate self which cannot be reduced to any culturally agreed representations of emotion or ‘knowing’ a feeling.

In Tarbena, I found that when I was improvising, once I had ushered in a mental process of naming a feeling state as an emotion or had begun to accompany the physical narrative with another inner voiced narrative, then I experienced these as a rupture in the flow of performance. A hesitation ensued that registered as an interruption that ran the risk of solidifying an idea of what I was experiencing, rather than the experience itself being embodied as the kinetic and ever-changing moment-by-moment dynamic that it is. However, in studio practice the issue of the flow of experience and its relationship to the fixing tendencies of emotion is couched in problematic notions of truth. Tarbena participant Tal Haran (whom I cite more fully below) spoke in terms of ‘fact’ and ‘opinion’ with reference to her considerable experience of Action Theater (Appendix II: Extract B). The ‘fact’ refers to what is happening, sensationally, for her at any given moment, while the ‘opinion’ is of a kind with the second-order representations formed by further mental constructs that can be associated with reflection, interpretation and value judgements. The improviser is caught in the trappings of oscillating between these two modes. But the ‘facts’, as the immediate data of sense experience, are surely unstable too. Leaving aside

perception's highly subjective and always incomplete character, the 'fact' of the information being received through an Action Theater improviser's perceptual faculties is what must surely be noticed in terms of what is available to the senses at any given moment in time. Thus, how to negotiate the relationship between 'fact' and the reflexive judgments an improviser makes about those facts becomes a contentious, but key, tension in Action Theater practice – one that was tussled with in Tarbena time and again.

Action Theater involves engaging in somatic modes of dialogue with the self and in this way establishes and sustains an improviser's connection with the 'truth' of the sensory ground. Yet neither 'truth' nor 'self' are singular constructs. This begs the question of how an improviser can lay claim to connecting to their feeling state as a source and generation of knowledge and material. If any resolution can be found for an Action Theater improviser, it is through an acknowledgment that an enlivened noticing of sensation and mood will give more accurate expression to the 'truth' of a moment than forming longer than necessary attachments to that moment by naming them as emotions. Indeed, the practice is about reordering an improviser's habitual tendencies to form attachments to feeling. But the idealised aims of the practice also risk negating the need to form and maintain attachments.⁹⁰ Action Theater does not give space for how feelings persist on a sensory-affective continuum where longer-lasting bonds can also emerge between a person and the world around them. In other words, more deep-rooted attachments are being continually formed but disavowed by the practice because of its extolling of 'embodied presence'.

⁹⁰ The etymology of 'emotion', deriving from the Latin *emovere* 'to move, to move out', is often noted to draw attention to its motional and relational quality. Sara Ahmed for example, in her *Cultural Politics of Emotion*, notes how "emotions are not only about movement, they are also about attachments or about what connects us to this or that" (11).

In sum, in line with Welton, 'feeling', or more precisely 'feeling state' in the context of Action Theater, can encapsulate a multi-sensory system of perceptual processes that is described in terms of "both affect and perception" (9). Following Welton, the 'feeling' in my 'feeling-for-vocal-material' aims to capture the totality of affects, sensations and qualia available to an improviser producing vocal material. By foregrounding movement of 'feeling states' an Action Theater improviser is engaged in processes of sensory-affective flux. In this way, an improviser can be considered a moving/sounding synaesthete who makes an active and performative display of their sensuousness. But alongside the idealised aims of practice, the improviser is subjected to multiple forms of instability that puts the notion of 'feeling state' in paradoxical tension with notions of truth.

Feeling for the Voice Through Silent Movement

In Tarbena, voicing was avoided for some time in favour of working silently through movement, which in Action Theater is both instrumental (as a practice of attention) and an end in itself. The skill of improvising is rooted in an expansion of awareness, but an improviser must be able to direct, shift, stretch and sustain attention over longer periods of time. Zaporah offers the thought that although "to relax . . . attention into the present moment is extraordinarily simple, . . . it demands a lifetime of practice" (*Action Theater: Improvisation of Presence* xx), which is an oft-used meditational mantra that acknowledges that this skill is in continual development and not one simply acquired. The word 'attending' honours the processual and qualitative nature of attention but through its etymology (to attend derives from the French *attendre*, 'to stretch toward' or 'to wait') its temporality can be foregrounded. I understand attention as a mode of shifting the mind around the body and all that it experiences, but human beings *are* bodies, we do not *have* them. We are contingently formed by factors that go beyond the body's surface that we must

attend to. At the same time, any subject/object⁹¹ separation must be collapsed for an improviser as they simultaneously take account of their bodily sensation while paying attention to the world around them. Action Theater initially supports the practice of attention through explorations in silent movement. In turn, these give rise to content because it can generate further feeling and action, which will (eventually) allow for any vocal material to emerge. Thus, movement as action is simultaneously produced and performed, lending the very act of paying attention a performative quality. An improviser's expanded awareness and stretched attention is revealed as part of the Action Theater aesthetic because displays of attention are also entangled in the content for performance. For example, in one exercise an improviser was asked to pick up on the rhythm of another to either complement or contrast their own patterns of movement. This is a form of attuned attention that can become part of what is exhibited as performative material. But these 'pre-verbal' explorations also worked pedagogically to allow improvisers to practise the ability (and extend the capacity) for attending to sensation for longer periods of time.

This period of silent movement exploration that is scaffolded through the Action Theater form can be understood in developmental terms, and at this point in the analysis it will be useful to take a detour and go in search of some theoretical underpinnings. Sheets-Johnstone's notion of "corporeal apprenticeship" (195) is instructive in this respect as it is placed to consider speech development as a "post-kinetic" (xxx) rather than "pre-verbal" endeavour that shifts the emphasis towards the primacy of movement. Within the broader scope of her ontogenetic study, Sheets-Johnstone puts a "flesh and bone speaker, a living

⁹¹ For Thomas Csordas, "attention implies both sensory engagement and an object [both] attending "with" and attending "to" the body" ("Somatic Modes of Attention" 135-156). Csordas' 'with' and 'to' risks sustaining a subject/object split that is unhelpful in this context.

articulator of sounds” at the foreground of any ‘credible’ theory of speech perception” (324). She prioritises playful movement as tactile-kinaesthetic explorations that ready humans to produce language and suggests “that rather than speak of the period before language as the pre-linguistic, we should speak of the advent of language as the post-kinetic” (xxxi). A developmental approach can be illuminated further with reference to the Feldenkrais Method. Here, learners relearn the principles of learning, so it has some synergy with the notion of a corporeal apprenticeship. By unifying the four pillars of thinking, sensing, feeling and moving, the Feldenkrais Method invites learners to enter a developmental state that mirrors, to some extent, how babies make very practical movement explorations through trial and error. In his article “The Primacy of Hearing” (1976),⁹² Feldenkrais considered how, in terms of looking and listening, babies experience their surroundings; first through hearing and only then by sight. The foetus can hear the sounds associated with the visceral processes of the mother in the darkness of the womb. The foetus has begun a corporeal apprenticeship that will put audition before vision and practise the function of listening before any vocalising of sound, and later speech, occurs. Feldenkrais’ essay, which amounts to a short study on learning that focuses on the relationship of hearing to the development of spatial orientation, makes clear that human potential is driven by these early immersions in sound. This will lead to further refinements of the auditory system so that it responds in infancy to finer vibrations in the air (*Embodied Wisdom* 46). At this stage in development, the orientations to space are open in that humans are responding to the omnidirectional stimuli that produce sound. It is only later, as sight becomes more

⁹² This essay is included in the collected papers *Embodied Wisdom* edited by Elizabeth Beringer (2010).

prominent, that the field of perception is framed such that our movement responses, especially with the head, are more clearly delimited by the focus of our visual attention. These two functions become inter-changeable, but it is the primacy of hearing that Feldenkrais underlines.⁹³

The exercising of the whole auditory apparatus along with the vocal folds in infancy will eventually lead to the development of speech, often centred around the carer/child relationship. The psychiatrist Daniel Stern, who specialised in child development, observed the import of mother/child interactions that form around a practice of mimesis always subject to slight modification, rendering it a “higher than faithful imitation” (*Forms of Vitality* 42). Stern aimed to exhibit how the sharing of what he also referred to as a matching of ‘vitality dynamics’ allowed for “affect attunements” (*The Interpersonal World of the Infant* 138) that forged the interpersonal, affective and empathic relationship between mother and child, characterised in the form of sound and gesture. Feldenkrais was also aware, from a neuro-physical perspective, how these complex functions helped organise the patterns that emerged through learning in infancy so that:

[w]e could, in the beginning, have used our nervous system, the mouth, its muscles, the vocal cords, the feedback from the mouth cavity to the ears and auditory cortex to fit any of the two thousand languages and at least as many dialects with equal facility. (*Embodied Wisdom* 49)

The pseudo-developmental quality to the Feldenkrais Method encourages a revisiting or retraining of the connections formed and forgotten in early childhood. This gives a context

⁹³ In *Body and Mature Behaviour* (1949) Feldenkrais describes the vestibular apparatus as the “*chef d’orchestre*” noting that reaction to auditory signals is faster (0.12 to 0.18 of a second) than to optical signals (0.19 to 0.22 of a second) (108).

for the learning and for all the functions aided by the method, with improvement of voicing and speaking as an example. The Feldenkrais Method offers direct pathways to work with the voice, very often by not working on the most obvious parts of the vocal apparatus in what is commonly (in Feldenkrais circles) referred to as following the path of least resistance. Because parts of the diaphragm are variously attached to the lower ribs, spinal column, sternum and the lumbar region of the spine, the more integrated awareness that is developed through the Feldenkrais Method's neuro-physical approach can lead to a softening of the musculature around the skeletal frame, allowing breath to be more fully and easily activated. For example, an ATM that focuses on the pelvis⁹⁴ will potentially aid the voice. Certainly, the method has a clear application in terms of voice and speech. Indeed, it has had some synergy with bespoke voice trainings such as Kristin Linklater's⁹⁵ but offers its own pathway to aiding the voice. Many ATM lessons can be applied to improve the function of speech by improving the neuro-physical connections associated through exploring movements of the jaw or tongue for example, but all of them can afford improvements through the nervous system to aid the ease of breath and better prepare the body for vocalising.

⁹⁴ Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, through her Body-Mind Centering approach, notes the "embryological development of the larynx; its relationship to the pelvis through its lateral formation from the perineal membrane deep in it". See "Embodied Anatomy: The Dynamics of Vocalization", www.youtube.com/watch?v=xu83EkYsuxg/.

⁹⁵ See Kristin Linklater, "The Body Training of Moshé Feldenkrais." *The Drama Review: TDR*, vol. 16, no. 1, 1972, pp. 23-27. Also, Maggy Burrowes' *VocalDynamix*, aka 'The Potent Voice' and 'The Embodied Voice', www.maggyburrowes.com/. In addition, see Samuel H. Nelson and Elizabeth Blades-Zeller's *Singing with Your Whole Self: The Feldenkrais Method and Voice*. (2001) or Richard Corbeil's "Vocal Integration", www.youtube.com/watch?v=2WxbrRNo_nQ/.

Another perspective on how some neuro-physical processes of speech reception and production are distinctly asymmetrical is offered by psychiatrist Norman Doidge. In *The Brain's Way of Healing* (2015) he claims that humans speak "primarily out of one side of the mouth" and that those with "good listening skills overwhelmingly speak with the right side of the mouth, and the sound of their speech enters their right ear" (576). The brain's "left hemisphere is the area where most people – be they right- or left-handed – process important verbal elements of speech [and] most of the nerve fibers supplying the left hemisphere come from the right ear" (576). Aside from the contralateral relationship between each ear and its cochlea to the auditory cortex of the opposite side (Kreiman and Sidtis 94), it has been well-established that certain areas of the brain are activated according to the speech task they engage,⁹⁶ with specific activities associated with either hemisphere of the cerebral cortex (196). A key strategy in an ATM lesson is to observe left/right differences that invite a kinaesthetic reckoning of the small differences on either side of the body. As Worth has argued from a performance training perspective, contrary to the tendency to idealise symmetry and balance in dance and movement training, a greater attention to asymmetry through the application of the Feldenkrais Method can, paradoxically, lead to finer articulations through an appreciation of left/right differences ("Symmetry and Asymmetry..." 130-144). Softly attending to, and being with, one's imbalances form part of the developmental structure of learning.

For Feldenkrais, it is only "thanks to speech we have available to us the experience of thinking", though he contended that speech was an obstacle overall because it could never

⁹⁶ See Kreiman and Sidtis pp. 72-109 for a comprehensive account of the neurological foundations for voice including explanations of how speech production has long been associated with the Broca area of the left frontal lobe and the role that the area known as Wernicke's plays in comprehension.

provide an accurate representation of feeling (*The Elusive Obvious* 146). However, I contend that an ATM lesson can precipitate a relationship between thought, outer speech and inner speech that is generative in its failure to fully capture the qualitative experience caught in the inner and outer dialogues it encourages. In an ATM the kinds of self-enquiry enacted through the method can be considered in terms of ‘truth-telling’ in the form of dialogue with the self, which is in turn a form of listening. In other words, what we narrativise to others about the experience of ourselves will never quite replicate the way we talk to ourselves about ourselves. The performance scholar Mark Evans has used a Foucauldian reading of the ancient concept of *parrhēsia*⁹⁷ to argue that, in the context of training, a dancer’s somatic dialogue with themselves is a critical one – a form of free and fearless speech – where knowledge of self can be generated. For Evans, “knowledge in this context is a continual process of becoming aware, the body in a permanent state of becoming” (“Dancing with Socrates” 117-125). The game of *parrhēsia* is defined less by any arrival at absolute or essential truth, but in the assumption of a role of truth-teller that engages in it as an ongoing and open-ended activity that is never quite resolved. Such a consideration may help resolve the kinds of tensions identified above with respect to Action Theater’s demands to stay in touch with one’s ‘feeling-state’ by positioning the relationship to the ‘fact’ of one’s sensation as being one of curious, open-ended, dialogue.

The Feldenkrais Method is similarly founded in a form of self-enquiry that could be understood in terms of ‘telling the truth to oneself’. Yet the process of asking questions is explicit in its demand that they go largely unanswered – the value is found in the act of

⁹⁷ See Michel Foucault’s series of lectures on the Ancient Greek notion of *parrhēsia* collected under the title *Fearless Speech* (Foucault and Pearson 2001). *Parrhēsia*, according to Foucault, was a practice of free speech where the action of truth-telling “is a kind of verbal activity where the speaker has a specific relation to truth through frankness” (19-20).

enquiry itself and if any answer should be found it is never conclusive. For example, an ATM teacher may ask the question of a person laying on the floor – “does it feel easier to roll your head to the left or to the right?” This question may occur at the beginning of the lesson and the end, and perhaps a few times in-between, with the idea that it is always asked in the new conditions afforded by the moment. The ‘truth’ or ‘fact’, such that it is, is therefore understood as a fleeting one, continually in flux subject to myriad changes, whether they be to do with the musculature, the nervous system or the ever-changing variables that pertain to the environment. In this respect, the Feldenkrais Method encourages autonomy because of the recognition that only the learner has access to their own truth-telling. Learners in an ATM situation become expert researchers in their own bodily movement through personal investigation.

The diversion into the Feldenkrais Method and associated theories is instructive not only because it illustrates a developmental approach, but also highlights an epistemological value of curiosity. Action Theater is structured developmentally to position speech as post-kinetic through its repertoire of highly structured task-based exercises that foreground the physical experience of speech also predicated on cultivating a spirit of curiosity. But this ‘period before language’ is not merely a rehearsal or pedagogically inferior stage in a process of enskilment. For Zaporah, all sensory experience is given equal value no matter how it manifests as content. She says that “[a]ll activity, no matter what its formal content, is experienced . . . as part of a non-stop continuum. Silence is this auspicious sound. Stillness is as delicious as action. No preferences” (*Improvisation on the Edge* 41). Silent movement is therefore both a precursor to speech pedagogically and a mode of performance that maintains an equitable place in the various modes and registers produced as improvisatory performance content. In Tarbena, I noted Zaporah observing ‘that we will never visit this moment again, so why not investigate it, sit there, be there with it a while’ (Appendix IV:

Zaporah, Day 1). There were multiple exercises deployed to access and develop investigations through silent movement exploration that depended on approximating the kinds of somatic enquiries outlined above. Attention to tempo, rhythm and breath formed a base of support for accessing the sensory foundation of experience because they begin to structure it. A 'pulse' was accessed kinaesthetically, interoceptively and aurally, prompted by Zaporah hitting two pebbles together. Participants were asked to walk with a partner and work in relation to them, using the eyes, either by keeping eye-contact or by keeping the other person in the field of vision (unless one was deliberately playing with not looking). After a couple of minutes of this activity we were asked to build in the use of pausing. The task was to play with being on the beat, either double-time or half-time. Aside from being busy with the action, which directed attention to the given activity and its constraints, the structure set up the potential for the temporal to be marked acoustically and kinaesthetically – either through the imagined sound of the pulse, or the actual sound of the pebbles meeting, or the breath amplified communally. The kinaesthetic experience of the pulsing breath or walk to the beat meant movement through space also became instrumental both to the felt experience and the continued production of it.

The pulse is significant also because of its connection to the rhythm of visceral processes, especially the beating of the heart. This allowed for another potential access point to sensation for an improviser, partly through engaging an inward focus on the physical pulse produced by the heartbeat. What emerged was a collective pulse and breath, together with a feeling of collective attunement to and between (potentially) every person in the room. Through such processes, the sensory ground was quickly established as a synaesthetic rhythmic process that connects to the breath. This was typical of the focus in some of the early exercises in Tarbena. Sounding out a breath over the length of a movement meant actively manipulating the lengths of breaths according to the moving of a limb or the body

across space, before arriving at another point of stillness and the possibility of inhalation. This became preparation for the touches of sound, through a gradual process of playing with breath. One exercise asked participants to be in movement half the time and stillness half the time. After a while we were invited to add audible breath to the length of a moving part. Breath was not yet giving rise to vocal sound, but through playing with intensity of the breath this vital function of vocal sound had the potential to become more nuanced in one's awareness. With this, participants were encouraged to attend to the shape of the mouth, so that the channel through which the breath passed could be felt in more texturally different ways. This in turn began to make clearer one's changing feeling states, through noticing the tongue, its relationship to the cheeks or teeth, or by noticing the quality of temperature both inside and outside the mouth. An area so intimately associated with speaking, in this way was given priority as a thing to be felt in and of itself. In turn, the emphasis was shifted away from a consideration of the mouth as a thing that exists merely as an instrument of communicable speech. At the same time, an expansion of bodily awareness through the whole body was aided through the active movement of the mouth and face.

The eyes are a major focus in Action Theater where they keep a constant track of the inner feeling state as it emerges. For Zaporah, any habit for fixing eyes becomes out-of-step with the sensory experience. The eyes and face risk solidifying feeling into emotional representations. Exercises often demanded the manipulation of foveal and peripheral vision or hard and soft focusing.⁹⁸ At times, an improviser can find themselves working with eyes

⁹⁸ For many in Tarbena these eye movements were unfamiliar, and many people said they were experiencing some discomfort or fatigue in the eyes. I suggested the Feldenkrais Method and it became clear that there was a strong appetite for ATM lessons in the group. I subsequently taught three ATM lessons that focused on the integration of the eyes, jaw and torso outside of class time to a good number of participants including Zaporah.

open or closed to focus or intensify the quality of attention to movement. A more advanced skill is knowing how to respond to that awareness in a way that, Zaporah insists, must be “of interest and has a magic to it” (Appendix I: Extract A). To stay interested, an improviser must sustain attention and yet accept attention’s receding quality. Yet this receding quality to attention is also generative. Ingold sees the utility of instruments, once learned, only becoming “truly available . . . as things I can use without difficulty or interruption, at the point at which they effectively vanish as objects of my attention” (*Perception* 407). This ties in with, but does not correlate to, Drew Leder’s notion of the recessive body expounded in *The Absent Body* (1990) to refer to interoceptive modes of embodiment where visceral processes can escape awareness. In Leder’s conception this was distinguished from the ‘surface’ body that faced out to the world and to others. Leder’s position was later utilised by Phillip Zarrilli in the context of performer training, to suggest that some part of bodily awareness needed to recede as one becomes more absorbed in the performance of a task. In his analysis, Zarrilli added two further modes of embodiment to Leder’s taxonomy: the aesthetic ‘inner-bodymind’ and the aesthetic ‘outerbody’. The former denoted a body that is “hidden, unknown, and therefore fundamentally absent from experience” but awakened through psychophysical practices (“Toward a Phenomenological Model...” 653-666). The aesthetic ‘outer’ body dealt with the particularity of a performance score and, crucially, Zarrilli referred to the presence of the spectator in this mode. In Action Theater, an improviser practises the skill of directing and maintaining attention to, and with, themselves, but the modes of embodiment Zarrilli referred to do not recede or vanish so much as engage in a more distributed way. That is, an improviser attends to their kinaesthetic sense along with the situated activities they are engaged in. To put it another way, these ‘modes of embodiment’ are integrated (in a Feldenkraisian sense). This means that while the body can take on the semblance of becoming a tool which must, to some

extent, vanish for it to become effective in action, it would be more accurate to think in terms of a total lived engagement of the person. This may yet mean a person is nevertheless caught in the possibility of having any idealised experience such as ‘embodiment’ suggests interrupted or ruptured in their experience. These fissures are a part of being present and embodied. In other words, any demand to practise skills to achieve an enlivened state of noticing as a form of ‘embodied presence’, such as Zaporah calls for, must take account of its failure to be constantly achieved.

In sum, developing capacity for sensing feeling through silent movement in Action Theater is achieved by homing in on the physical matter of one’s own body, both as the production of improvised movement material (in and of itself) and as a way to access the material ground for eventually producing voice. Acts of noticing need to be practised in Action Theater so that an improviser can sense not just the changeability moment by moment, but also how one’s sense of time can also be stretched. Accessing and developing the sensory ground becomes a basic skilled practice in both being with and letting go of attention – for Zaporah, a process of “coming into your body” (Appendix I: Extract A). Voicing is provided a base of support through such a heightened sensibility to the sensation of silent movement, facilitated through tightly structured time and space explorations often focused on isolating body parts. This is one first stage in a ‘corporeal apprenticeship’ for becoming ensounded.

Feeling Through Sounding

The early days of the Tarbena training were spent incorporating only non-verbal sounds. Zaporah has said that avoiding words for a while is useful because the “voice calls forward states that are nameless, preverbal, and that draw from our animal nature and lift spirits to lofty planes” (*Improvisation on the Edge* 99). Breathing was often used as a transition

to sound. The early silent meanderings stretched and developed attention through the body's relation to the breath and the possibility of making it more audible. The breath provided a scaffold for moving into vocal sound because the vocal folds could be exercised to give the breath a touch of sound. The familiarity of working with breath made audible facilitated a feeling of permission and agency to move into sound with a feeling of ease. These vocal sounds were a kind of murmuring that emerged on the cusp of being amplified as sound audible to others. From here, a direct link formed between breath and the more recognisable articulation of vocal sound-making. The 'movement/sound' interaction is an exploratory continuum rooted as much in the tactility of the lips and mouth as in the feedback given through the auditory system. In short, the distinctions more readily and sharply drawn between the sensory systems in adult life are not so starkly delineated in infancy. A developmental approach to language supports the conception of ensoundedness as a process stemming from ongoing playful tactile-kinaesthetic explorations of voice and speech. The unceasing quality to the practice makes the whole notion of acquisition redundant. Indeed, the key idea I wish to take forward is that Action Theater pedagogy supports a notion that humans are in a permanent state of corporeal apprenticeship. From cradle to grave, humans are training and retraining for sounding-out our voices in speech and other forms, adapting to ever-changing conditions from day-to-day and as we age. This depends upon a continual updating; an ability to respond, empathically, to our surroundings. It is in this way that the theoretical concept of ensoundedness can be enhanced further by thinking through the notion of attunement to describe the communion of person, task and other.

Zaporah's assertion that voicing draws on human beings' animal nature speaks to the appreciation of playful tactile-kinaesthetic explorations Sheets-Johnstone describes. For Sheets-Johnstone, "both prior to and in the course of our learning a language, we were

necessarily attentive to what we were doing inside our mouths, to the tactile-kinetic play of our lingual gestures and how they felt” (334). Mouth-play in early infancy situates speech on a continuum of vocal sound-making where, for Sheets-Johnstone, the tactile-kinaesthetic experiences “start with babbling, lip-smacking, cooing, and other mouth movement/sound play, and end with a child’s mastery of the articulatory gestures of her/his native tongue” (xxviii). The infant child does not make stark delineations between the movement of a limb and the movement of the mouth. The mouth, in Action Theater, is actively marked, stretched and manipulated, so that non-linguistic sounds are chewed on and felt in the cavity of mouth. Attention is directed to the lips, tongue and cheeks, not for what the sounds may do communicatively but rather for how they may feel. In Tarbena, Zaporah instructed participants to stand in a row and to take very slow forward steps through the space to arrive at a new facial expression as each step landed. The rest of the body was supposed to be relaxed, and all attention on the face – how its flesh moves; how its plasticity morphs from step to step – and the improviser was instructed by Zaporah to let this evolve (Appendix IV: Zaporah, Task 27). Eventually non-verbal vocal sound accompanied these playful facial explorations. The focus on the sensation of the face, jaw, tongue, lips and eyes in movement thus became less bound to the function of communication and more tethered to the shape and feeling of movement. The improvisatory play was explorative of the feel of the shape of sound as it resonated in the mouth and was reminiscent of those first gurglings an infant can make as they journey towards forming a first word. A typical exercise that exemplifies this operated in duet, with person A as the ‘sounder’ (encouraged to vary tempo, pitch and form of the vocal sound) while person B ‘responds’ to the quality of those sounds through movement. At a point, the rule was added that person B ‘interrupts’ and becomes the sounder; eventually swapping at different intervals to play with the rhythmic possibilities of this interchange. Such scores are designed to constrain the performer to non-

verbal sounds so that their awareness of the feel of the mouth, lips, tongue and other areas of the face can resurface while avoiding being caught in the 'semantic stickiness' that using words can engender (discussed in Chapter Five). Key here, is that sounding non-verbally drew attention to voicing as a movement practice.

To speak of a developmental quality to this improvisatory work, especially in my presentation of the gradual movement from silence to sound as embedded in its pedagogy, presents Action Theater as a retraining. The pedagogy encourages a relearning of the habits of sound-making as part of its developmental structure. It is a notable feature of Action Theater practice in the studio that once several performers are practising with increasingly uninhibited voices there is a semblance of child-like play. The uninitiated, on walking into the Tarbena studio could be forgiven for describing its sound as something akin to a school playground. In Tarbena, the studio, with twenty participants working in it, was noisy – an acoustic space full of squeals and sirens, groans and guttural grunts. Occasionally, hoping it would catch-on, I would find myself whispering a breathier trail of sound into the air for respite; but for the most part, the volume and range of sound was joyously cacophonous veering towards the surreal.

Given Zaporah's invocation of animality (above), it seems pertinent to draw on Brian Massumi's *What Animals Teach Us About Politics* (2014) which sheds useful light on the way some animals engage in play. Massumi's aim is to articulate how ludic gestures might help us think about engaging with concepts, and especially how these gestures might be conversational. For Massumi, this requires "replacing the human on the animal continuum . . . in a way that does not erase what is different about the human but respects that difference while bringing it to new expression on the continuum: immanent to animality" (3). Massumi goes on to draw on anthropologist Gregory Bateson's ideas to do with ludic gestures signalling their belonging to the arena of play, in such a way that play's mimicry of reality

enacts a gap which is paradoxical. The example Massumi gives is that “in play, you don’t bite, you nip. The difference between biting and nipping is what opens the analogical gap between combat and play” (5), allowing for a conditional reality that is, crucially, a site of learning through communication with another. The communication is in some ways conversational play. It is useful to think of the practice of making vocal sound in Action Theater as vital play and, in line with Massumi, to think of it on an animal continuum. The pedagogy prepares a developmental ground for thinking of speech-making as ludic sound gestures. This case is borne out by Viola Spolin’s observations on the concept of ‘play’. As an early twentieth century pioneer of improvisatory games for the theatre, for Spolin, ‘play’ is synonymous with ‘creative experience’. It functions, for humans, at an “intuitive level . . . beyond a constructed intellectual plane” that makes them “truly open for learning” (4). It is through a process of play that we touch the world around us, enact the freedom to play, and generate knowledge. For Spolin, “it is necessary to become part of the world around us and make it real by touching it, seeing it, feeling it, tasting it, and smelling it – direct contact with the environment is what we seek” (7). But this is not simply to get to know the world around us and learn something about it, it also bears a direct link to the way conditions for language emerge. The intuitive, even instinctual, ludic animality that humans can engage in the practice of helps produce language by eliciting a more pre-noetic state where action can take place away from the more intellectual practices of producing language. For Massumi, “[w]hen we humans say, ‘this is play’, we are assuming our animality [and that] creates the conditions for language” (8). Not all play leads to language, but by engaging in the ludic there exists the potential for language to be reclaimed as play. An Action Theater improviser can relearn the pleasure of using language by appreciating the value of sound, so that it is reprioritised as fundamental to acts of speaking. The playful stage of sound-making is vital to the Action Theater form because it prepares the way for linguistic sound to be cleaved

from any understanding of it as solely the domain of representational meaning-making. Instead, it invites a consideration of the gestural quality of making vocal sound as action, which exists on a movement continuum that, in Action Theater, is pedagogically scaffolded. Sound becomes another gateway for what can appear to be a more playful mode of attention – one that might access, more readily at least, Zaporah’s allusion to animality. It further resists the kind of thinking that separates body and voice, or movement and sound, as discrete activities, forging a ludic animalistic pathway to speech. At the same time, the practice of sounding in Action Theater collapses another duality between non-verbal/verbal vocal sound, putting the former not simply as a stepping-stone to speech but also as a thing it interacts with and that underpins it.

Physical Narrative

The Action Theater form continues to transition from vocal sound to physical narrative through the further deployment of specific exercises designed to generate verbal language. I agree with Zaporah’s contention that “language carries a heavier weight than movement or vocalization” (*Improvisation on the Edge* 78) and this can represent a clear challenge for an Action Theater improviser in terms of its ‘semantic stickiness’. The gap between the materiality of the vocal sound and the word, with all that a word can begin to conjure in terms of meaning, can appear more expansive and insecure than between silent movement and sound. Words pertain more directly to thought and subject the improviser more fully to the field of interpersonal relations. Words reveal and disclose the self in improvisatory performance because they ascribe authorship to the improviser (I problematise the notion of authorship in Chapter Five). The development and practice of skill continues in Action Theater to steer an improviser through words with an emphasis on their sound and sensation rather than semantic value. This approach expands the conditions

to appreciate speech as movement. At the same time, it prioritises speech as both sense and nonsense, without privileging either. Either words are produced with some semantic organisation or they form part of a gibberish construction, putting them on a non-verbal sound continuum. As such, the improviser's experience of physical narrative oscillates between the material production of speech (the feeling of the lips, tongue, mouth and so on) and the rich imagistic content that is expressed alongside it. The Action Theater pedagogy plays with such oscillations by synthesising them, but in doing so presents an improviser with the very particular challenge of using words in the form of physical narrative. In Tarbena, a gateway to verbalising was facilitated in many ways. To take two examples, one exercise had two people sitting opposite each other on two chairs, each working with the beginnings of narrative. One person voiced an image (e.g. "there is blood in the puddle in the middle of the road" or "two boys are sitting on the wall; one has a grenade in his hand"). We categorised them for ourselves – suspenseful, joyful, thrilling, peaceful, painful, anxiety inducing etc. – trying to contrast with the one before, which went against the idea of avoiding second-order mental constructs. This apparent contradiction was nevertheless exercised in certain tasks. We went back and forth, taking turns, producing image after image. The idea was to create an image with potential so that it could elicit further questions (Appendix IV, Zaporah: Task 17). Another exercise ran with four improvisers standing with their backs to the watchers. One turned with a vocal sound as an impulse for the beginning of a word that would lead into longer physical narrative content. Only one person spoke at a time until they were interrupted by another improviser turning to face forward. When an improviser was interrupted, they turned back again. The structure of this exercise was further detailed by playing with different lengths of times between interruptions – long, shorter, short, very short, very long etc. Here, there was an imperative to carry on producing physical narrative until an interruption occurred and this constraint had the potential to

generate material. This again would be typically nuanced by addressing variance in pitch, volume, tempo and rhythm.

A tensional clash can occur between the idealised flow of language that Action Theater aims to foster (where words are strung together with a kind of physical investment that emphasises the sound, shape and feel for them) and the reality of getting stuck. This appears common to many improvisers' studio experiences, as I detail below with reference to the focus group discussions. The act of speaking can interrupt a desire to keep movement dynamically flowing. In Tarbena, the domain of physical narrative was certainly a more difficult skill to practise. While there was clearly a prioritisation of the feeling of speech, the quick encounter with 'narrative' became a point in the process that tripped and slipped because of the word's more explicit relationship to the production of meaning. I often felt as if I had fallen out of the flow of uninterrupted experience that excluded making second-order representations. Additionally, given that physical narrative is not intended to create linear narratives, some repatterning had to be practised to avoid falling into the trap of constructing linear and logical connections between pieces of content. Any reinforcement of conventional ideas about linear narratives or 'life-like' meaning-making is deprioritised throughout the Action Theater form. Instead, a physiology of the word is almost explored, in that it has shape as a feeling produced by the material body. And although stringing the words together may well add up to create full-blown narratives, the emphasis remains, for a performer, less on creating tidy stories and more on investing and committing to moving through words feelingly. This is geared towards avoiding the habit of entering the domain of ideas where one makes sense of them through second-order mental constructs. In practice, movement can recede through these early encounters with language, both in one's awareness and in the balance between voicing and moving. At this stage, it feels as if there are two activities competing for attention rather than a single unified (fused) act. Yet the two

are working together even here (despite the ruptures in the feeling of flow) through a retraining of habitual word associations. As Zaporah said in *Tarbena – Action Theater* “messes with your head” (Appendix IV, Zaporah: Day 2) through a repatterning of the neural pathways that have been established for many to order language according to the norms of everyday communicable speech.

In Action Theater there is a requirement to shape movement in contrast to verbal language, to disrupt habitual patterns of voice and movement and to take the confluence of both into expressive realms. Habitual couplings of movement and speech are challenged. The gestural quality of speech is part of a whole movement experience in the improvisatory moment. But in Action Theater the coupling is, to some extent, unravelled – the artistry is found in cultivating the skill of offering gesture and movement that runs counterpoint to the verbal language. Zaporah gave the example of movement rendering the inner life visible by supplying subtext. She demonstrated this in improvisation-mode by talking about having an examination of some kind in a light voice, which was accompanied with her miming the gestures of scratching her fingernails down a concrete wall. She then gave an alternative example where the physical event (the test/examination) was contrasted with a pose of playing golf – in this instance there are two images standing side by side, each giving half of the story (Appendix IV: Zaporah, Day 5). This dynamic, of providing contexts for content that together contrast, can also be exhibited in an example of working in duet. Zaporah drew attention to how an improviser’s ‘job is to support directly the other person’s content in a contrasting form’ (Appendix IV: Zaporah, Day 9). They do this by supporting and adding, for example, a silent frame to contrast with the other’s physical narrative frame, where the actions of one reframe the action of the other. Zaporah gave the example of content where one person is writhing on the floor making non-verbal vocal sounds. The other person then joins in with a narrative frame dryly talking about clinical procedures.

This potentially complements rather than contrasts. So, a more open-ended sequence of action may be formed by offering contrasting content. The meaning can be changed by offering another image that completes a picture by 'not relating' to the other's frame, such as accompanying the writhing person with a frame that consists of singing about flowers in meadows. This strategy of contrasting was very evident in Tarbena. It could be as simple as contrasting frames, so that if one talks, the other cannot; or if one moves, the other cannot, but this principle can be taken into language such that the attitude, mood and atmosphere created by narratives also contrasted. How an improviser can maintain a state of 'embodied presence' when using language in this way thus becomes a key point of focus in the development of an Action Theater improviser's skills. The Action Theater form is structured to take account of the ruptures in habitual patterns of speech and movement. By scaffolding the learning, the exercises tend to allow for gradual transitions through phrase structures. The work with the shape, feel, size and quality of a word is made paramount through its connection with the body of self or other. A duet exercise had one person sitting on a chair with the other standing behind. The standing person was tasked with touching the seated person, varying the force, direction and quality of touch, perhaps marking patterns with a finger. The seated person then had to sound words out in direct response. Here, the quality of sound was supposed to match the quality of touch, so that if the touch happened low on the back, the words would be phonated in a lower pitched sound. The firmer the touch, the higher the volume. A more staccato touch should produce a more staccato sound. No touch, no sound (Appendix IV: Zaporah, Task 13). A word's movement in this practice could be elongated, deformed or shrunk. The production of words is made very explicitly a co-production in this example. It is typical of an Action Theater score and allows for responsibility and control to be shared, tending to facilitate an ease in the production of words and narratives that emerge not out of a will to create story, though stories can and

often do emerge, but out of a will to stay in touch with the somatic ground of sensation of words or phrases. Physical narrative is explained therefore through its dynamic action as a process ideally severed from any insistence on representation. Action Theater practice trains a performer to displace the need to make clear sense of a narrative in literal ways or for words to have any familiar link to the movement that is happening. Action Theater practice demands a shift to being somatically, rather than semantically, habituated to words, thus cultivating a language environment marked by its alterity.

A challenge to the semantic dominance of language forms a key but ongoing tension in Action Theater, even for a skilled improviser, which cannot be easily dismissed when it is coupled with expressive physical movement. Indeed, the semantic ordering of language is paradoxically necessary even as it is subject to an ongoing failure to fulfil its meaning. Sheets-Johnstone notes that “[w]hat moves and changes is always in excess of the word – or words – that tries to name it” (434). It stands that an improviser needs to develop the skill to stay in control of the movement in ways that take it beyond habitual gestural patterns that typically complement verbal language. Sheets-Johnstone argues that:

[t]he actual dynamic kinetic event is not reducible to a word or even to a series of words. We all have knowledge of just such physical events just as we all have nonlinguistic concepts of their dynamics. We have this knowledge and these concepts because we have all been nurtured by an original capacity to think in movement, a capacity that does not diminish with age but merely becomes submerged or hidden by the capacity and practice of thinking in words. (434)

Thus, Sheets-Johnstone is pointing to the potential to shift emphasis towards reclaiming a capacity to think in movement. The Action Theater pedagogy codifies such shifts. It affords a practice of retraining where an improviser can practise an appreciation of words, not as

containers for feeling, but as tactile-kinaesthetic experiences. Through this, words then emerge as aural phenomena felt kinaesthetically and can be understood as the basis for experiential speech. In line with Sheets-Johnstone's observation above, commenting on these words and the phrases they form with further words (through critiques) as a second-order activity is resisted in favour of the direct, immediate and fleeting experience of producing them. The same stands for those attending to the physical narrative as audience. In Tarbena, during an audience/performer(s) set-up where the whole group would form an audience (typically the final thirty minutes of the class) there was surprisingly little explicit reflection on the quality or content of an improvisation. In Action Theater, after the performance of an improvisation has finished there is a resistance to interpreting its content in favour of accepting the experience of being present as an audience as being enough. To enter into a critique or to engage in value judgements about what the improvised material might have meant, signified or evoked was resisted; putting the onus on the event of performance as a quasi-contained event. In addition, there was little critique given to how good/bad the improvisation was, though Zaporah would sometimes demonstrate 'bad' practice that she deemed 'less than embodied' or 'less than present'. But this critique was levelled at skill development rather than the content of performance. In sum, the improvisatory content produced in an Action Theater context is an amalgam of silence, non-verbal sounds and physical narrative and the pedagogy is structured so that it scaffolds this whole process in a developmental way that mirrors how humans learn language in the first place.

Material-Character Clashes

The notion of character emerged in Action Theater, as it has through all the practices, as an intriguing feature of the practice that can be productively differentiated from its counterpart in script-led dramatic theatre. Character is not solely defined by the voice, but

the presence of voice invokes character. In theatre, a notion of character has formed according to the actor's relationship to it – from being its masked “executor” (Pavis 47) on the ancient Greek stage to being archetypally embodied in the renditions associated with twentieth century naturalism and the psychophysical actor. Common to these is the presence of a body engaging in a labour of representation, regardless of its modes of embodiment. I have found through the practice of Action Theater a tension in the double experience of the material body and the more fictive presence of the character body that can emerge in improvisatory content. By ‘material body’, I mean to draw attention to the less fictive concerns of self. By ‘character body’, I am referring to the overtly performative, fictive presentation of self that undergoes, in theatrical terms, a transformation to appear other. Cristina Delgado-García, in *Rethinking Character* (2015), makes a similar distinction by using the terms ‘subject’ and ‘theatrical’ to denote categories commonly connected by the actors’ relationship to the *dramatis personae*. But just as Delgado-García goes on to argue for a fusion of those categories, I too suggest that the material and character bodies in an Action Theater context conflate. As physical narrative (rather than script) is created co-extensively with recourse to the presence of the material body, led by feeling that registers along the sensory-affective continuum, any material/character duality is collapsed.

In Action Theater, there is no pre-scribed text to remember (or forget), no demarcated character driven by psychological realism nor any given circumstances for a character or the narratives they produce. Any notion of character remains curiously opaque, surreal and at times impressionistic, as it does variously across all these practices in ways I point to beyond this chapter. The relationship between material and character body is remarkable precisely because the sensory awareness of the material body is the wellspring of ever-shifting emergent action. Zaporah herself has observed the distinction between psychophysical approaches to the actor's on-stage character relationships and those

executed between Action Theater improvisers. Zaporah has said that when she is improvising in a duet or group situation, “I don’t want anybody to feel anything” (Appendix I: Extract F), referring to how an Action Theater improviser differs from the way a dramatic actor inhabits a notion of character and is concerned with how they and another character is feeling according to psychological ordering of Stanislavskian objectives. Zaporah claims that Action Theater runs counter to that in terms of the need not to achieve aims and objectives to affect another character, which for Zaporah is tantamount to emotional manipulation (Appendix I: Extract F). The production of physical narrative in Action Theater operates differently, in that it is bound, paradoxically, in a desire to avoid both forming mental representations in terms of affects and narrativising the material that is emerging. There is instead an imperative to accept and commit to the feeling state such that it can give rise to new or unfamiliar experience, and the improviser must trust the potentials for these to shift in quality of mood in ongoing transformations. For Zaporah, where the Stanislavskian approach asks “what is your objective? What do you want, when you’re saying that line, what do you want that person to feel?” in Action Theater it is “totally the reverse” (Appendix I: Extract E). According to Zaporah, she does not:

want anybody to feel anything. I'm just the voice of this thing. What my partner does with it is not of interest. I don't want to know what they're gonna be doing. Why would I want to know what they're gonna do? It just seems then I'm just learning how to manipulate people. That's not what I want to learn. That's what I want to unlearn. (Appendix I: Extract E)

On the face of it, Zaporah appears to be rejecting the apparent cerebral distance that is marked by the gap between the actor and the psychological traits that define a notion of character given by a writer. Within the more so-called fixed constraints of script-led theatre

the drive can often be in fulfilment of premeditated mental constructions born of analysis of text and subtext geared towards altering the course of action, resolving conflict, or 'getting-what-you-want'. Action Theater, in Zaporah's conception of it, extols the status of character as ego-less, a more amorphous conflation of self and expression. Zaporah gave the example of a Mexican pueblo community and made claims in terms of how the identification of feeling is less individually and more collectively embodied by its members (Appendix IV: Zaporah, Day 7). Zaporah was suggesting a more passive relationship to the content of improvisation. The content is material – some 'thing' that the body of the improviser is in service to. The object of attention must be placed in the relations between persons, rather than the other person themselves. I suggest that the distinctions need not be so starkly read. An improviser does engage in the flow of experience of their material body in action, and it is polymorphous in that its characteristics escape definition in psychophysical terms. But each make recourse to feeling in ways that challenge an assumption, implicit in Zaporah's claims (and those made more widely with respect to some improvisatory practice), that feeling is wholly emergent and escapes manipulation. The notion of character that emerges in Action Theater is not the antithesis of dramatic character but merely a less recognisable version ordered along postdramatic lines.

In sum, I contend that Action Theater makes heavy recourse to the self and the ongoing flow of one's sensory experience as the foundation of performance material, such that the material and character bodies appear together on a material-character continuum. In improvisatory mode the flow must be uninterrupted, but I do not consider the actor in script-led theatre to be any less subject to such imperatives nor any less free of the potential for ruptures in the experience of their material body and its relation to more hard-edged definition of the character they are playing. For an Action Theater improviser, any reflexive judgements they make in performance mode can interrupt the imaginative flow, bringing

them out of an idealised state of 'embodied presence', but surely the same must be said for the actor. Therefore, to go in search of the finely drawn distinctions, it will be instructive to turn to an example of what happens when a productive synthesis of the material body and the character body fails to materialise in both contexts.

Fear

If dealing in and with feeling is the stock-in-trade for an Action Theater improviser – one who calls upon their 'sentience' as a ground for creating vocal material and who produces/is produced by their affects, it follows that not all emergent feelings will be conducive to the creation of material for performance. From the perspective of the studio floor, puncturing a bed of silence can feel like crossing a threshold that involves social permission. To be the first to vocalise can be a practice in daring. When words do not arise, it can be inhibitive. Feeling stuck can produce affective states of nervousness, anxiety and doubt. Fear and anxiety are examples of feelings that exist on the 'sensory-affective continuum' and are present in many improvisers' experience. Gary Peters, in *The Philosophy of Improvisation* (2009), notes that:

[w]henver and wherever improvisation figures in performance art, fear management becomes the central problem and task. So many improvisation workbooks are rooted in terror. Virtually every exercise, game, or "sport" to be found in such manuals has been designed to ward off the fear of the unmarked space, of the unknown and unplanned, of

failure and ridicule, and above all of the fear of nothingness — that nothing will happen and the work will fail to begin. (44)

In broader performance terms, the presence of such anxious affects are well-worn notions, usually talked about as ‘stage fright’ or ‘performance anxiety’ and often connected to the phenomenon of a character body coming into conflict with the material body for an actor. Most accounts highlight its material bodily effects such as dry mouth, trembles and sweats. In *Stage Fright, Animals and other Theatrical Problems* (2006), Nicholas Ridout talks about stage fright as a phenomenon that can be added to a taxonomy of things that go wrong in the theatre; describing it in terms of collapse in the face of a “bruising physical and psychological encounter with the audience” (39). Ridout’s discussion of stage fright is rooted in the identity of the working actor in modernity, subject to the professional expectation that an actor keeps nervousness hidden from view. The collapse may manifest tangibly as a ‘forgetting’ — the actor has ‘dried’ — or even as an escape or withdrawal from the work and a refusal to ‘go on’, or a move away such as leaving the stage. In such instances, the actor’s fear may also be linked to the identification of character in the naturalistic theatre, which for Ridout, can be traced back to Denis Diderot’s (1713-1784) dialogues in *Le Paradoxe sur le Comédien*⁹⁹ that asked whether the actor needed to feel a particular emotion in order for the audience to feel a similar one. This, at its crux, is an issue of identification or how and in what ways an actor forms an attachment to their character. Stephen Aaron’s actor-figure in *Stage Fright* (1986) explored this by giving a Freudian reading where identification with character was viewed in relation to the actor’s personal ego, leading to separation anxiety and fear of abandonment. I am suggesting no such thing here, but in improvisatory

⁹⁹ See Denis Diderot, *Paradoxe sur le Comédien*. UP, 1922.

performance such as Action Theater, the performer's relationship to the expressive force of content may well manifest in terms of character. It can be formed by affectations of voices (shaped by pitch and timbre) along with contortions of the face in what can often conjure a character of the grotesque. Nevertheless, in Action Theater the notion of character is complicated by its demand to produce material instantly, with only an implicit rubric rooted in the sensory ground of an improviser's experience and while satisfying Zaporah's claims to minimise individual ego. The 'going out' to make an improvisation demands that an improviser utilises the 'fact' of their sensory experience at any given time in service to the production of performative content, but when it encounters (sometimes overwhelming) levels of fear and anxiety a conundrum appears as to what to do with these affective states.

In Tarbena, I conducted a focus group¹⁰⁰ with seven fellow participants, all of whom were skilled improvisers with substantial experience of the Action Theater form. It was set up to discuss feelings of fear and anxiety within the context of Action Theater but also the improviser's experience more generally – the aim was to address some of the problems encountered through the form, away from the idealised aims of the training. My contention at the time was that fear and anxiety were differentiated feelings which were central to many improvisers' experience, but especially for performers whose skills were rooted in dance or movement-based practices who were not used to using their voice in performance. My hunch was that anxiety is both a lure and a problem for an improviser, driving us both towards and away from the act of improvising. I was interested to know if improvisers thought of anxiety and nervousness as feelings to overcome, cure, disavow or welcome as part of the improvisatory practice.

¹⁰⁰ See Appendix II for extracts from the edited transcript from which this section quotes.

There was an appreciation of improvisatory performance practice's immediacy as being productive. Maggi Swallow noted an instance of being overcome with "crippling shyness" but still plucking up the courage to attend an improvisation workshop. Arriving late, the teacher immediately asked her to volunteer and Swallow describes how she was asked to launch herself into an improvisation barely having taken her coat off or to have had "time to prepare [her] anxiety" (Appendix II: Extract A). Ana Schmuki made a similar point when she noted how anxiety can be a "good companion because we know it" (Appendix II: Extract F), while Jimmy Offesson similarly talked about getting used to being shaky in public speaking as a teenager and searching out that feeling again in later life by drinking coffee to produce similar effects. There was something here about nervousness becoming identified with, and forming part of, one's presentation of identity. A similar enchantment¹⁰¹ with anxiety is found because improvisation is considered as engaging in 'risk'.¹⁰² Risk is embedded in the aesthetic of improvisation, leading many improvisers to advertise risk as part of an improvisatory form's insignia. Although Edgar Landgraf, in *Improvisation in Art* (2011), challenges the repeated claim that "improvisers take on more risk than art forms or performances that do not rely on improvisation as an inventive and compositional tool" (70). He suggests that improvisers are highly skilled at mitigating any risks because they are "trained in the art of 'error' correction" (70). The focus group discussion touched on issues of right and wrong and how these notions are encoded through formal education and many

¹⁰¹ Jane Bennett has put forward the notion of 'enchantment' as part of an ethics of wonder, to rehabilitate it as part of a motivating affective force. She notes how it bears close relation to fear, with similarly immobilizing effects, seeing it as an encounter which temporarily causes one to be "transfixed, [or] spellbound" (5).

¹⁰² See João Cerqueira da Silva Junior, *Reflections on Improvisation, Choreography and Risk-taking in Advanced Capitalism*. University of the Arts Helsinki, 2017.

other instances of learning and teaching. Schmuki noted the freedom in improvisation to make her own choices outside such constraints while getting support from the group in ways that generatively challenge the notion of an “I” who is at the centre of every situation. Schmuki made the point that acknowledging the group as a supportive force is necessary to help alleviate some of the effects of anxiety (Appendix II: Extract C). The improvisation workshop culture however is not immune to power dynamics and Elka Sandler acknowledged the presence of the teacher, as one who is “looking and judging” (Appendix II: Extract C), having an inhibiting affect in a workshop situation.

Haran referred to anxiety living in the relationship between the ‘facts’ of sensory experience and the second-order ‘opinions’ about them. For Haran, the opinions are “these critics sitting like muppets going yap yap yap yap, you’re crap, you’re this, you’re that” (Appendix II: Extract B). I understand this as one of the ways in which an experience of the inner voice can play out for an improviser and I address this area more in Chapter Five.

Haran thought that:

you cannot be in the facts and in the opinions in the same second so you just need to take all of your will or all of your love for your whatever it is and apply it to the very details that are now taking place and then those monsters are shutting up and if they come in again you go even more into the details. (Appendix II: Extract B)

This notion of going through, or straight into, in order to grasp, confront or accept is a recurring theme echoed by Zaporah herself when she responded to a participant suggesting that their aim in the Tarbena workshop was to ‘let go’ by suggesting that instead ‘what about ‘getting hold of’, going into?’ (Appendix IV: Zaporah, Day 1). While there seemed to be some agreement that it is necessary for the improviser to work with sensation, (to ‘go into’ the ‘facts’), there was some questioning of whether any ‘vulnerability’ should be

absorbed as material. Swallow made the point that in an improvisation she started to work “with the feeling of her heart beating fast” (Appendix II: Extract C) so that her experience was being ‘used’ in the improvisation, presumably incorporating the experience into the physical narrative by making reference (verbal or otherwise) to it. Ulla Möckel, on the other hand, reported being told by an Action Theater teacher that audiences did not want to see nervousness being used for content (Appendix II: Extract C).

The discussion was able to touch on the idea that for a professional improviser, workshops and performance environments are also subject to social and economic pressures that are in themselves affective. Danielle Cresp, who is an Action Theater teacher, pointed to the “networking opportunity” and other contingencies that can be “interwoven...into our cultural milieu” (Appendix II: Extract E) so that the status of a given performance may be raised by who is in the audience. Given the common observation that improvisatory performance occupies a more precarious place in a wider economy of performance, this point proved pertinent to include amongst the myriad affects that come to bear on the Action Theater improviser.

Although the improviser has no pre-fixed score – no steps or words to remember and get right as in fixed choreography or play text – an improviser does maintain a relationship to repetition and recall. Cresp spoke of the ‘forgetting’ that can occur in an improvisation. In one performance, for example, she had laid out a narrative that involved an imaginary albatross dying in front of her. Some minutes later, having ‘forgotten’ where in the space the albatross had died, she found herself stepping through the place on the stage where its dead corpse was laying. In that moment, the audience’s reaction reminded her of the ‘mistake’. Cresp further cited an example of being inside a frame and “losing it” because she had suddenly stepped out and judged it, and reiterated the need to practise regularly, as well as to maintain a mindfulness practice, in order to be able to sustain attention for longer

periods in performance (Appendix II: Extract G). It would seem, after all, that the improviser may still be subject to the kinds of problems Ridout's actor-figure experiences through their 'drying' or 'corpsing'.

To exhibit and tie up this issue of fear and anxiety potentially exerting a presence on the material of improvised performance, I briefly turn to an early example of personal practice that extended from the core research – *The Container* (2014). This was a twenty minute Instant Composition piece in duet.¹⁰³ At this stage in the project (late 2014), I had engaged in Zaporah's workshop (followed by a week-long workshop with Hanne) as well as two consecutive years on Hamilton's ten-day Arlequi course, so these trainings were now feeding into my further research and practice. The example of *The Container* shows how voice/words failed to fully materialise as intended in performance through fear.¹⁰⁴ In the piece, an enlivened acoustic space emerged through the sound that emanated from multiple sources, including small LED lights that were slid across the length of the wooden floor and sounds of nature such as birds and cockerels, which came from a small, low-fi, cardboard speaker connected to an MP3 player positioned in the middle of the space. A deliberate decision was made to play this sound almost inaudibly, so it blended with the presence of live sounds that emerged by interacting with the architecture of the space such as the fire-exit doors. Once open, these also allowed the environmental sounds of the city – airplanes,

¹⁰³ *The Container* was a one-off performance with dance artist and anthologyofafemss colleague Petra Söör, performed in a triple-bill of improvised duets at Chisenhale Dance Space, London in 2014 (with Brenda Waite and Morrish; and Mackenzie and Chimutengwende).

¹⁰⁴ An audience member (who knows me very well) told me after the show: "You were shitting yourself"!

sirens and so on – to further bleed into the sound environment of the piece. At points, inaudible vocalisations within the piece emerged – whispering and tweeting sounds. However, my intention was to use voice more fully in the form of spoken words, but this did not materialise in the event of performance. Words either failed me or I intuited that the piece did not require them because the acoustic space was already richly layered. However, at one point in the piece I did attempt to add vocal material in the form of words, which in the event amounted to just one or two phrases.¹⁰⁵ They were not enough to be marked as a vocal presence in the piece, at least in terms of voicing words. In live performance, this hesitancy also manifested in a lack of amplification, enough for an audience member and fellow improviser Raheem (cited in Chapter One) to comment after the show that they were unsure whether I was intending my words to be heard or not. This early foray into public performance related to the practice-led research marked a point of hesitation and potential failure, which touches on the experiences elucidated above to do with affective states of fear or nervousness pressing upon the experience of improvised performance.

One possible route out of the kinds of disorientation and potential imbalances referred to in the focus group discussion, and with respect to *The Container*, is to consider Csíkszentmihályi's theory of 'flow' which is built on a conception of anxiety as a fear of being. He says this is a "subjective condition that some call ontological anxiety, or existential dread" (12). Csíkszentmihályi suggests that there is a range of activity that can be considered optimum and avoids the distressing effects of anxiety. This optimum state of flow can be summed up as being a search for a balance between difficulty and boredom – too much of one or too little of the other interrupts one's experience of being "in the ongoing stream of experience" (19). I suggest that in the practice studio we are encouraged to

¹⁰⁵ See Appendix VII: Artefact 1 – Clip 1 (at 1m 40s).

entertain action as a thing that begets further actions as a flow of experience, which encounters a negotiation with difficulty and boredom. For Csíkszentmihályi, “[e]njoyment appears at the boundary between boredom and anxiety, when the challenges are just balanced with the person’s capacity to act” (52). This places quite a demand on a performer to understand where their individual skill level is, or which areas of their practice needs developing, and that, surely, a teacher can only have partial responsibility for.

Clearly, it is possible to locate feelings as operative in the studio in several registers. Feeling (on a sensory-affective continuum), especially for an improviser wanting to deploy vocalisation or speech, can emerge in ways that can be both a spur for action and its potential failure. But what also becomes clear through some of the accounts outlined above is that improvisers will also want to handle (if not manipulate) this experience to some extent. Improvising in an Action Theater setting or acting in a script-led one are not the inverse of the other, they are differentiated by degree. Like the Action Theater improviser, actors are also contingently producing material according to the sensory ground they occupy. As Zarrilli puts it, “[a]cting should not be viewed as embodying a representation of a role or character, but rather as a dynamic, lived experience in which the actor is responsive to the demands of the particular moment within a specific (theatrical) environment” (“An Enactive Approach...” 635-647). Feelings are materially contingent and eventually challenge a notion of sole-agency or authorship (discussed in Chapter Five) – there is always a relational and co-productive value to the relationship between the material and character body. I therefore contend that distinctions are drawn less between processes, or the ways in which improvisers or actors experience the tension or flow between material-character bodies, but by what is produced in terms of the aesthetics of role and character as they emerge as content in performance.

The Imaginal World

We're stepping inside a new world in an improvisation – an imaginal world. Real life is the hard world.
(Zaporah)¹⁰⁶

Performance content emerges in what Zaporah refers to as an 'imaginal world'. This final area of consideration of Action Theater, potentially collapses another duality that can persist in the form's studio language relating to the imaginal and the real. Although Zaporah suggests their separation in terms of 'new' and 'hard', she also points to their confluence. In an interview with Stark Smith, Zaporah spoke of the 'imagination' and the 'engineer' as two kinds of intelligence, where 'imagination', for her, refers to "a spontaneous arising of response, image, and material" ("The Imagination and the Engineer" 28-32). Here the improviser is responding to the sensory stimuli while the 'engineer' 'manages' this experience. Zaporah suggests these functions are not in 'conflict'; that she doesn't have "to let go of one to get another one going" (28-32) and thus avoids an 'either/or'. Yet, on the studio floor there is also a working assumption that the imaginal world is another place that we 'step into', which exists at a remove from the 'harder' reality we inhabit. In her published writing, Zaporah expands this territory:

[s]uppose we could climb in between perception and identification.

Suppose we could romp around in that no-man's land of the unnamed,

¹⁰⁶ See Appendix IV: Zaporah, Day 10.

unknown terrain. Suppose within that romp our imagination could reassemble the world into a fresh existence. (*Improvisation on the Edge* 71)

Zaporah is partly advocating a reconnection with a pre-noetic state not unlike that which Sheets-Johnstone suggests when she talks about thinking through movement rather than dealing with language to describe experience. But the task for an Action Theater improviser is to integrate imagination and action so that it manifests as improvisatory content. Even in the imaginal world, the material body exists and draws on the immediate environment to spur feeling and action. It manifests often in a ludicrous, sometimes eerie or bizarre summoning of fantastical but disconnected material, which is nevertheless (to borrow from Hanne¹⁰⁷) right here and right now before our very eyes and ears.

To throw light on the imaginal/real from another angle, I turn briefly again to the Feldenkrais Method which exhibits a relationship between imagination and action that resists an imaginal/real dichotomy. The method is explicit about the efficacy of ‘thinking-through’ or imagining any movement without muscular effort. By keeping the movement in the ‘minds-eye’ learners can nevertheless experience improvements due to afferent effects on the nervous system. Here, when a student mentally rehearses¹⁰⁸ a movement, they are invited to understand those mental processes as action, differentiated merely by degree. In this light, the Feldenkrais Method makes imagination constitutive of action, even worthy of being understood as a creative practice in spontaneity. Indeed, in this instance imagination

¹⁰⁷ In interview with Hanne, when I referred to the ‘imaginal world’, she responded “Yeah, it is a world of a place of imagination but that is deeply anchored in reality, it is not imagined out of us. Out of this world, no it is right here, we must imagine it right here and right now” (Appendix VI: Extract C).

¹⁰⁸ This is a well-established strategy in athletes’ training.

is processed concretely as action to produce knowledge and meaning in such ways as to invite a rethinking of what an 'action' might be. Similarly, we are invited in Action Theater to consider action on a non-stop continuum, so that Zaporah's claim that 'stillness is as delicious as action' might be more accurately phrased as 'stillness is delicious action'. I contend that these improvisatory practices celebrate the collapsing of imagination and action without seeming to flatten the ways we might also differentiate them, precisely because it is steeped in sensation. To employ imagination is to call upon one's capacity to act, feelingly, here and now, without escaping the 'hardness' of the material world.

Feldenkrais asserted that "[h]uman learning is intrinsically connected with imagination. Through the agency of imagination, the time interval between the new stimulus and the unconditioned tension can be made forever simultaneous" (*The Potent Self* 198), such that Feldenkrais believed humans could integrate dynamic spontaneous action through the whole body. This connection to the world is maintained through the body's sentient integration with the immediate environment – the floor underneath and the air around – a feeling that generates knowledge about where and how we are. The Feldenkrais Method demonstrates this potential to collapse the connection between action and muscular contraction precisely because it asks learners to take account of their environment as "indivisible" along with mind and body (149). Feldenkrais also said:

[t]houghts or feelings without their actual content due to the personal experience of the environment are nothing more than electrical changes in the structure of the nervous system. It is the connection of these changes with the environment that makes such a change into a feeling of

affection for somebody, or into a sensation of red, or into the ideas of continuity, acceleration, beauty, or justice. (149-150)

Thus, distinctions between thoughts, feelings and their situatedness, as Feldenkrais acknowledges, are merely convenient abstractions that bear little resemblance to the actual processes going on, so that “[m]ovement, sensing, feeling, and thinking together, make me, and the thing I am dealing with, as concrete and as real as I can experience” (*Elusive Obvious* 80). Here, as in Action Theater, the imaginal-real continuum depends not on reconfiguring the environment as another world ‘out there’. They are not two separate fields, but also exist on a sensory-affective continuum. In this way the imaginal world is coextensive with the mundanity of the hard studio floor in Tarbena. As it is with the fear of voicing, or the (dis)continuous flow of attention, or the ruptures in the processes of becoming attuned to the task of improvising. All must be taken as part of an ongoing corporeal apprenticeship, dependent on one’s tactile-kinaesthetic engagements in a process of feeling one’s way to voicing.

Chapter Four: Making Vocal Arrangements with Hamilton

How does vocal material emerge with other choreographic elements as composition in Julyen Hamilton's work?

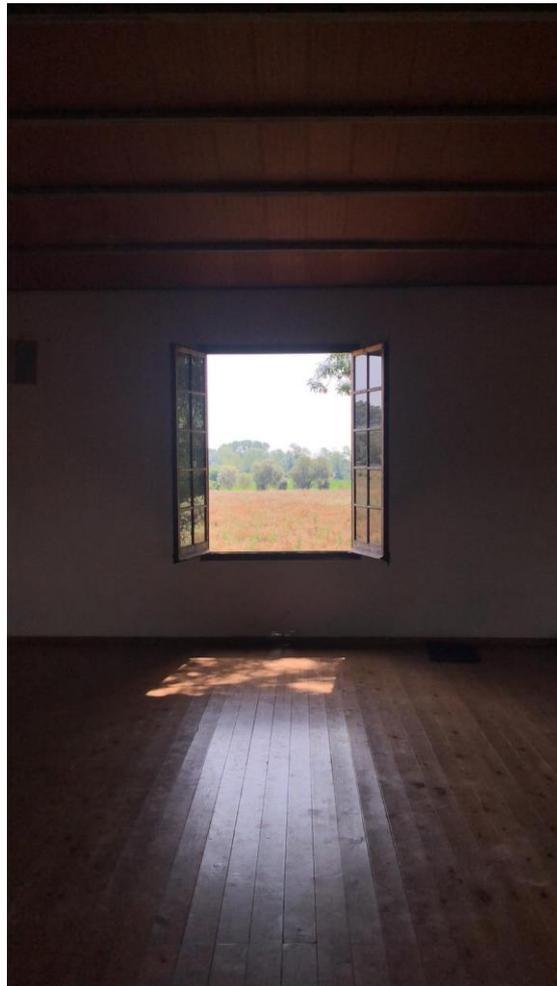


Fig. 2. The 170 sq. m Arlequi studio, nr. Banyoles, N. Spain. Image: Antonio de la Fe

Hamilton's performance work is noted for its inclusion of vocal material (what he refers to as either 'text' or 'poetry') alongside the use and placement of objects; while the issues of time and space also surface as major compositional tools. These elements are reflected in his prolific teaching, which often devotes one- or two-week-long courses to specifically address them.¹⁰⁹ This chapter draws predominantly from Hamilton's teaching environment in Arlequi, Spain, where classes typically run over ten days. In the courses I attended, each morning session generally focused on technique while the afternoon sessions were dedicated to making Instant Compositional arrangements (mostly referred to as 'pieces') in solo, duet and group compositions. The voice emerged as just one element along with the deep practical study of how dancers develop temporospatial relationships through the moving body. Indeed, voicing is revealed for a dancer working with Hamilton through its temporospatial grounding. The use of concrete objects was a major focus in some courses, often exploring how they can be integrated with voice in compositional work. Taken together, voicings were established through Hamilton's pedagogy in a non-hierarchical way, a democratising feature and hallmark of his work that stands in contrast to what I read as a more teleological drive towards 'physical narrative' in Zaporah's Action Theater. This chapter takes each of the areas – space, time, objects – and considers the relational way vocal material can emerge with them. The analysis in turn feeds back through the body to reveal the mouth as an intriguing (integrated) choreographic site. The chapter also turns to examples of Hamilton's performance to illustrate how these elements can coalesce before an audience. By considering the work in terms of 'total' Instant Composition, a notion is

¹⁰⁹ See www.julyenhamilton.com/teaching.html/ which lists courses Hamilton has run since 2011, such as *Some Moving Work with the Voice* which ran in Florence, Italy (Mar. 2012); *Voice*, a two-week course, Paris, France (Apr. 2012); *Space and Voice*, Berlin, Germany (July 2016); a week working with *oBjectS*, Berlin, Germany (Feb. 2016) organised by Sasha Waltz and guests.

furthered of an ensounded dancer who is formed by the structured practice and performance environment they are immersed in.

Arrangements: Grounding the Body in Space and Time

Time and space become sensations, not concepts from outside. We must learn to read the sensations sensorially. We tend to treat sensation rationally. Treating sensations rationally can be an avoidance when we're improvising. Putting someone in fifth position with rational instruction doesn't produce fifth position, it can only be taught through sensation. Sensorially.

(Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract F)

Initially, in Hamilton's classes a dancer spends much time developing their temporospatial 'awarenesses'. I use the plural here to signal the way Hamilton conceives and relays space and time in multiple ways but that start with becoming attuned to the body's sensation of how it passes through them. Hamilton has said that sensation itself is 'already an edit – it leaves out some and keeps in others' (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract A) so the work is, fundamentally, to expand the dancer's capacity to integrate awareness more fully through the body in preparation for working at speed and in composition. For Hamilton, 'Instant Composition is a practice in instant appreciation. Our job is to make space to house appreciation. We read and in the reading there's a connection to the next thing' (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract A). This 'job' will always be conceived multitudinously because 'the' body does not exist in the singular and, as Hamilton suggests, the ongoing connections are generative of further action. In this way, Hamilton insists that the body already 'speaks' and is always being 'read' (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract A). Any emergent compositional arrangement must therefore also take account of the dancing body's ongoing processes of reconfiguration as already generative.

Countless times, to exhibit this *a priori* dimension, dancers were asked to simply stand in the space with another. From the inside, dancers made subtle shifts in weight, or transitioned to a different place to reorient the relationships, while from the outside other dancers watched to notice how those subtle shifts ‘spoke’ in the space. I use scare quotes here to signal the figurative, given that these configurations were being handled without voice. Hamilton has suggested that if we study anatomy through studio practice, space is opened to consider how each configuration resounds in space. I noted him saying:

The moment we dare to study anatomy we open up space for con (with) figuration (figure). The body is not an idea. It is/has mass. It has form. One figuration is not another, they change. (Transfiguration). We can also recognise our feelings about this or that configuration. Those feelings help resonate the configuration. Change your configuration and your feelings change. Without the feelings you cannot change your configuration. Configuration also relates to environment – it’s a different day. (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract B)

Once again, attention was drawn to how a person is organised anatomically, physiologically and emotionally at any given moment. In addition, dancers were being invited to understand how the space plays a role in those ongoing transfigurations. In choreographic terms, the ‘figure’ may refer to shape and spatial relationship, but Hamilton is suggesting that a notion of theatrical ‘figure’ can emerge from this. Hamilton shifts emphasis in a dancer’s work away from creating technical figurations of the limbs for the sake of shape only and insists that any move is also charged with feeling. In other words, configuration is not meant to suggest shape for shape’s sake, where the configuration of limbs provides only graphic value. In this respect, like Zaporah, Hamilton draws attention to the need to attend to feeling through these ongoing transfigurations. In the practical study, a dancer can

develop the awareness through stages of noticing from one's own feelings, to a sense of the feeling of the piece through to a feeling for the audience (in performance) or a feeling in the air. Contrary to Zaporah, Hamilton has said that naming these feelings can be a useful tool – that the very process of naming can make a feeling more tangible and be 'more fully credited to the piece' (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract B). In practice, this can sharpen the drive towards specificity in a move or action. It was clear too that working with the very notion of specificity elicited a mode of precision, so that through one's body awareness, and an overall sensibility for the choreography being produced, dancers could achieve definition in terms of intention and direction that manifested in a feeling of flow in the connection to the material being produced. But what remains at stake for Hamilton through this area of his pedagogy is an emphasis on the link between anatomy as a technical area of bodily study for a dancer and the recognition of 'it' as indivisible from the embedded and sentient person they are.

The attention to the physical exploration of anatomical ideas in Hamilton's pedagogy was often visited through a focus on bones. He has said, 'bones *are* direction. They already direct. We don't have to direct them. With them, we navigate through the choreography' (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract C). Many morning hours were spent in Arlequi dancing with such ideas in mind – that, for example, the angle of an arm at any given moment in movement has direction and can resonate with a different quality of feeling according to the slightest variation in the angle. The practice here was to recognise that, and to expand and sustain awareness enough that it could integrate into the practice. Many specific exercises were deployed to bring awareness of bone to the foreground, ranging from pair-work with hands-on contact with the elbow directing another dancer through the space, to longer studies of dance movement where one was tasked to give attention to a specific area of the skeletal body as a focus of personal study through movement. Amid group practice,

Hamilton would often give one-to-one feedback, perhaps suggesting working with a focus on say the pelvis, or sternum or feet.

Such sustained individualised work on the physiology of the dancing body in practice can give a voicing dancer a foothold in issues of meaning, even before they have begun to employ voicing. In Hamilton's pedagogy, there is a recognition of how any physiological configuration carries the imagination in a way that is non-representative. Hamilton has said, for example, that the 'hand by itself is not representing hand', it is directly and concretely 'hand'. It already 'speaks' as 'hand', but once it is considered in a compositional framework it becomes metaphorical; reverberating with multiple meanings contingent on the infinite variables that pertain to any single moment. In this respect, it is already 'multi-vocal' even in its singularity. The body, or more accurately a person, is undergoing a continual process of arranging and rearranging to produce versions of themselves. Below, I expand this idea further in terms of creating vocal material when various arrangements gather more complexity once other choreographic elements are added. For now, I simply emphasise the idea that a voicing dancer is cultivating an awareness of the body as an entity that is always already in arrangement, and this understanding forms a foundation upon which further arrangements can be shaped. Composition thus becomes what a dancer does to recognise, read and play with such configurations by connecting to it sensuously and feelingly.

Space Specifics

The body's relationship to gravity is a key concern for Hamilton and remained a constant topic of enquiry across all the courses I took with him. But specific courses such as

*The Space Issue*¹¹⁰ have zoned in on space and used it as a prism through which a dancer can enquire into the broader work of Instant Composition. Hamilton has defined two broad spatial dimensions that concern dancers in the studio environment – linear and radial, though he also accounts for further dimensions through his pedagogy, particularly acoustic and theatrical space. Linear space is a visual, pictorial and two-dimensional conception of space ‘that houses sequential action’ (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract F). In other words, action is conceived as sequential precisely because one move comes after another in a way that is related to the perception of space as measurable. Any enquiry a dancer makes into their kinaesthetic experience must involve dealing with the body both *as* and *in* space in a way that echoes the conceptual idea we may carry of both having and being a body. Having facilitated ways for dancers to re-cognise their own body’s mass and its con/transfigurations, Hamilton often invites a thinking about how the bones relate, through gravity, to the ground – and by extension to the air – as apprehended by the spatial dimension defined by the body. The body, in relationship with the ground, can find precision through the feedback a person can take from this relationship. The ground is negotiated with both to find support and balance. Hamilton would often give the note to ‘come down into the legs’ or ‘find the feet on floor’, the latter becoming a phrase repeated so often that it became knitted into the fabric of the dancing with that particular floor at those particular times in *Arlequi*. This serves as a reminder that this body/floor relationship is not simply instrumental for the voicing dancer, it is also specifically situated environmentally while at the same time the floor is both in service to and constitutive of the compositional material. Hamilton has said that ‘the floor is a tool – it is now’ (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract D) and in that respect he points to it not just as a passive, inanimate object that

¹¹⁰ *The Space Issue* was taught as part of *The Secret Teachings* (2014).

supports the dancer's weight and facilitates their gravitational relationship, but also in terms of collaborative potential. Implicitly, Hamilton invests life in the floor. His comment that it gives us access to an immediate relationship with a present moment characterised by stability does not preclude another epoch when the materiality of the floor bore a different spatial relationship. I noted Hamilton observing as 'a beautiful joke that the wood transforms from vertical (tree) to horizontal (floor)' (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract D), presumably because, at least in the Arlequi studio (Fig. 2), it is precisely the thing that affords the dancer the possibility for leaping, flying or moving away from the floor and into the air to achieve verticality. The joke is in the role-reversal, but it also underscores how 'now' has a relationship to past and future (as discussed below). In an echo of Ingold, I noted Hamilton drawing our attention to the fact that it is more accurate to say that we 'stand from the floor, rather than stand on it' (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract D). In this way, space is already constituted in Hamilton's pedagogy as porous, spherical and collaborative – enmeshed in the dancing.

These observations recall Ingold's critique of surface, but the floor is one aspect of the wider environment that the voicing dancer comes to grasp not as a separate surface to contend with but as an indivisible part of their tactile-kinaesthetic experience. Hamilton has said that the 'body does not have tight edge definition – it pulsates' (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract D). In other words, a dancer must find in their practice that they do not occupy a division between themselves and space. Ingold argued for a life lived along lines enmeshed with the environment and there is to be found in Hamilton's pedagogy a similar concern for the entanglement of body, person, other and world. The imperative to consider space – how the body occupies space internally, moves through space, and is indivisible from it – can be further understood in Ingold's terms when he insists that "the world is a world, not space; and what is going on in it – the processes wherein its manifold forms

arise and are held in place – are processes of life, not time” (*Being Alive* 142). In effect, Ingold is arguing against the very notions of space (and time) in favour of a lived understanding that rejects space as something ‘out there’. In fact, Ingold settles on movement as generative of *place* (rather than space) all the while keeping the onus on movement on an animate-action-task continuum where “while on the trail one is always somewhere [and] [e]very ‘somewhere’ is on the way to somewhere else” (149). Hamilton’s insistence that dancers take account of where they are as they move through the milli-moments of time, in motion to another place, another orientation or configuration, is central to the technique he structures for improvisers to practise. It also recognises that dancers are immersed choreographically in a “meshwork of intertwined trails” (149). Over ten days in Arlequi, such trails got worn in the studio as hotspots got hotter, moments got marked and continued to resound such that each practice session or piece of Instant Composition bore some of the hallmarks of what had preceded it. Thus, how place had been enacted temporally, both in near and far past, was present to the space and accumulated to materially construct a sense of place that the dancers came to inhabit through their choreography.

It became clear through Hamilton’s processes that to countenance the body as somehow hermetic would not suffice. Despite focusing intently on anatomy, physiology or the body as an abstracted idea, there is always a recognition of the body-as-person who is porously living in relation to the environment. At this point, Frank Camilleri’s notion of ‘bodyworld’ becomes pertinent to the analysis. In his recent *Performer Training Reconfigured* (2019), Camilleri aims to incorporate what he refers to as a “sociomaterial relational dynamics” (xiii) in the context of actor/performer training and suggests thinking beyond the idea of an “integrated bodymind” to also include the concept of “bodyworld” – an amalgamation of Zarrilli’s psychophysical term ‘bodymind’ (2004) and Ihde’s ‘lifeworld’

(2007). 'Bodyworld' is designed to capture the performer's "extended mind-body-world fusion or assemblage" (xvii) with the aim of extending "the embodied materiality, or the physicality of technique, to include the materiality of the environment (hence also of technology) that situates, impinges upon, and conditions that same technique" (8). This links with my critique of embodiment and similarly shifts emphasis away from the human body by decentring it. Camilleri's 'post-psychophysical' project amounts to a post-human critique of performer training, incorporating a consideration of machines and digitisation, and accounting for the affordances of technology as a challenge to human-centric analyses of performer training. Camilleri makes the good point that the body is always already technologised, mediated by our interactions with and incorporations of objects and technological advancements. Despite my more human-centric approach I find value in the slant Camilleri offers to the aims of this chapter, which is to bring more of the world into the work of a voicing dancer in their compositional environment.

To take this one step further, I find Karen Barad's term 'intra-active' (in place of interactive) to signal the inseparability and co-mingling of entities useful going forward, especially once objects enter the compositional environment. The term 'intra-active' points to the way that no phenomenon can be considered discrete or whole, as this would presume "the prior existence of independent entities", leading Barad to propose instead that it is only "through specific agential intra-actions that the boundaries and properties of the components of phenomena become determinate and that particular concepts (that is, particular material articulations of the world) become meaningful" (139). Under such terms, the variable and multiple entanglements that inhere to the workshop environment must be considered indissoluble to the dancer's work, and this ethos weaves its way through Hamilton's studio. But at this point, a tension arises in an apparent contradiction that is productive to consider. Despite the inseparability of body and space, and even given the

rejection of space in favour of place outlined above, linear space can, for Hamilton, appear 'out there'; it is a "visual space" that a dancer or an audience perceives as looking onto, as if "we are imagining we are 'outside' of the scene, looking at what we see rather than directly participating with it" (qtd. in Stark Smith 12-19). A rejection of space in favour of place will not entirely do in theatre because it needs to be abstracted in two-dimensional conceptions for theatre to work. For Hamilton, in theatre, performers and audience alike must be able to become 'onlookers' to gather a sense of things as if they appear two-dimensionally. In this conception of space, its containing edges are alive and have value compositionally but crucially the two perspectives, at least in terms of pedagogical approach, are not in contradiction and indeed necessitate an idea of body and surface. I note Hamilton saying that:

[w]e need to be onlookers. To go into anatomy is important because it gives us rational knowledge. When you give a class, you're giving on-ness to student's in-ness. It gets a surface by your watching. Meniscus. Without in-ness you can't get on-ness. (Arlequi, 2017)

This speaks to a conception of body and space, marked by the surfaces of architecture and anatomy, where there is in fact an imperative, indeed efficacy, in considering their conceptual boundaries. Hamilton's pedagogy makes a point of revealing that this is not in contradiction to the porosity and embeddedness of a person in their environment. Both are necessary to understand the more graphic elements of composition. For the dancer, abstract understandings of space, if they are also embedded in the concrete structures of technique Hamilton facilitates, have compositional value. Hamilton defined this linear space in conversation with Stark Smith, saying that it is "basically, the registration of where we are not. There rather than here. . . based on the concept of two-dimensional space. We invent three dimensions with the processing of information via eyes and brain" (qtd. in Stark Smith

12-19). This linear spatiality takes on significance when objects are also being utilised, which I come to below, precisely because our lived sense of space incorporates flattened pictorial renditions of it.

The radial, or three-dimensional space, Hamilton refers to is understood far more kinaesthetically. It is, for Hamilton, non-sequential and spherical. As it pertains to the atmosphere, it is unframed by the boundaries of the studio walls. Radial space can appear more complete to a dancer because they can perceive themselves to be inside it. For Hamilton:

the sense of volume we gain through sensing the three-dimensional nature of being on earth in the solar system within the situation of gravity, which in turn is caused by the movement of bigger “bodies” in space. This demands that we sense gravity with the mass of our bodies; it asks that we place ourselves in the context rather than outside of it in some imagined exterior place. (12-19)

Radial space has the feel, in its sphericity of going down, up and around omni-directionally. It deals less in the surface of things and more with the feel of things. These notions of space are a bedrock of Hamilton’s studio work and the spatial dimensions most readily referred to in accounts of Hamilton’s work; considered fundamental for dancers’ compositional arrangement which may include voicing. In effect, linear and radial space are not in contradiction, and in practice both conceptions collaborate for the voicing dancer. In fact, both are rendered kinaesthetically. A conception of radial space however decentres vision, placing an onus on kinaesthetic perception of space, but these ways of perceiving through dancing work together. Indeed, following Ingold’s conception of looking-and-listening, it may be useful to think in terms of the interchangeability of linear-and-radial.

Hamilton's notion of acoustic space was expounded on far less through the trainings, but I noted how it did not simply refer to voicing, but also to the space one creates to 'hear' the material one is making. In acoustic space, I noted Hamilton refer to having 'the space to say what you want to say and the space to hear what you are doing. This vibrates in big space. You have the space to say. Like a wave that resounds' (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract L). The practice makes such metaphysical renderings concrete by demanding the dancer allows space (and time) in their movement for material to reverberate, at least in the imagination. At the same time, it was clear that an attunement to any movement material was necessary so that not too much space, or too much time was given. In the Arlequi studio, acoustic space could be enlivened by the labour of dancing – the thuds, screeches and breaths that characterise the workaday environment of the dance studio. And this melded with the outdoors' acoustic (near/far) presence; asserted by the breeze, the rustling leaves, or the faint chug of a tractor in a far-off field. The intra-action of acoustic space with linear and radial space renders the whole space multitudinous. This is before voicings have properly asserted their choreographic presence (though the voice is already operable in all kinds of everyday communicable ways) that will later add to the dynamism of these acoustic fields by leaving their trails and traces of marks in place.

This leads to a point where understanding space's unfixity is fundamental to the dancer's work. To illustrate the point, Henri Bergson's reference to Zeno's paradox is instructive. It pointed to the relationship between the flight of an arrow and its target, deeming it immeasurable insofar as the arrow can never occupy a fixed spatial point in its trajectory. The paradox emerges because the arrow will never reach its target if it ever occupies a given point. This led Zeno to surmise that the space in-between the points are infinite. When Massumi invoked Zeno's paradox, he talked about the paramount dynamism

of movement so that the flight of the arrow is only stopped by abstracted thought that fakes the possibility for its movement to remain bound and demarcated. According to Massumi:

[w]hen we think of space as "extensive", as being measurable, divisible, and composed of points plotting possible positions that objects may occupy, we are stopping the world in thought. We are thinking away its dynamic unity, the continuity of its movements. We are looking at only one dimension of reality. (*Parables for the Virtual* 6)

Hamilton has drawn attention precisely to this idea that space is an abstract construction, which may indeed be necessary for the sake of study and analysis but ultimately must be absorbed amorphously into the work of the dancer to avoid what he has referred to as 'static mind'. He has said that he wants 'to develop a dynamic mind when improvising, not a static mind that's quick' (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract B). Already, it is becoming clear how a dancer's temporal awarenences are facilitated through enquiries into spatial issues in Hamilton's classes.

In sum, in terms of space, at least in the Arlequi studio once it was engaged compositionally as theatrical space, it was possible to get a sense of it in terms of playing space, without disavowing its emergent trails of lines and knots. Both a lived sense and conceptual idea of space could be held in the understanding and practice of the dancer. Indeed, Hamilton's pedagogy elicits a deep understanding of space as interchangeably something we look onto yet in which the body is always indivisibly immersed.

Time Specifics

Stream of consciousness is breath. Choreography (speech) is decision. In improvisation it is only the stream of consciousness which has been emphasised. We are

studying time and becoming aware of this editing capacity. Sensation is already an edit – it leaves out some and keeps in others.

(Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract A)

Hamilton refers to, and makes distinctions between, the improvisational and the compositional mind, and this calls upon dancers to work with time in different ways. Indeed, throughout the research period time has remained a central issue. Certainly, the work with voice and objects conducted in Arlequi was founded first on the fundamentals of working with it. Hamilton's more dedicated focus on time in some courses offers clues as to how he makes differentiations between concepts of time pertinent to the dancer. The official course description for *The Working of Time* reads:

The study of TIME and the accompanying abilities of TIMING, are of essence to those in the temporal performing arts. The 'WORKING OF TIME' deals directly with the perceived nature of time (both radial and linear) and how we develop our skills in handling it and using its various powers within composition and in performance. The classes pass swiftly from an essential base of understanding to advanced areas concerning both conceptual clarity and skill refinement. The inherent nature of timing is not simply a case of where something is placed in time but of reading the temporal language in the most concrete and direct way. This demands and leads us to, a sensibility of the emotional colours and

expression wrought by the elements of time: pulse, beat, accent, syncopation, atmosphere and phrasing.¹¹¹

The two key terms to draw out here are radial and linear, precisely because they relate to the distinction between improvisational and compositional mind on the one hand, while feeding directly into a notion of musical time that will further underpin a dancer's vocal work on the other. Within these differentiated perceptions of time, Hamilton further established more concrete ways of handling them through the ideas of 'streaming', 'counting' and 'phrasing'. Before unravelling how these function for a dancer in practice it is useful to draw briefly on some theoretical notions of lived time and clock time that advance from a Bergsonian position.

For Bergson, time (and space) is conceived as a process-oriented endeavour where "pure duration [*durée*] is wholly qualitative" and motion bound (*Time and Free Will* 104-105). Ingold's 'dwelling perspective' similarly conceives of these 'processes' as laying not in the metronomic conceptions of time "externally imposed" nor in a notion of rhythm that is singular, but in the "network of interrelationships between the multiple rhythms" encountered through the tasks one engages (*Perception* 197). While Ingold's 'taskscape' is a proposition for rethinking how 'landscape' is considered, the idea bears relevance to the situatedness of the dancer in the studio, who incorporates, through a web of movements day after day, and indeed, year after year, ways of knowing which are constituted by an environment's rhythmic properties emergent through practice in multiple forms. Ingold is following Gibson, for whom time is subjected to differentiated arrangements because "we perceive not time but processes, changes, sequences" and the constructed time of "clock-

¹¹¹ *The Working of Time* was taught as part of *The Secret Teachings* (2016). See www.secretteachings.net/ – original capitalisation.

time, [or] socialized time is another matter" (8). It is true that improvisatory performance practice has tended to preoccupy itself with issues of time and extol the notion of the present moment. A trope can persist which invests that moment as somehow having discrete properties as if it did not bear relation to time that has stretched before it and will extend beyond it. This does however, in practice, beg the question of what the smallest unit of time for a dancer can be, to which the biologist Jakob Von Uexküll appears to have an answer. For him, a human moment lasts one eighteenth of a second and he puts it like this:

[m]oments are the smallest indivisible vessels of time because they are the expression of indivisible elementary sensations, . . . the length of a moment is one-eighteenth of a second. And the moment is in fact the same for all areas of sensation, since these are all accompanied by the same moment sign: eighteen vibrations of the air are no longer perceived distinctly but rather heard as a single note. It has also been shown that human beings perceive eighteen impacts on their skin as an even pressure. (70)

I take from Von Uexhüll the idea that the human concept of 'now' is divisible but perceptually limited. In practice, when an improviser talks about staying up to date or being present, these tropes often belie the possibility for nuancing the concept of time. It is possible, without contradiction, to both consider the micro-moment and the way time stretches forward and back. Similar to Von Uexhüll, Hamilton has suggested a moment can be unitised:

I am talking now in terms of nothing more than about a 25th of a second, not of a future two minutes hence. So this near future is quite small; but

if we remember that a blink of the eye is a 100th of a second, a 25th of a second is quite a long time for the body. (qtd. in Stark Smith 12-19)

Here, Hamilton had been engaging in a discussion with Stark Smith about how the body bears constant relationship to its futurity through an engagement in the present, noting its Latin roots *prae* (before) and *esse* (be). In class, I noted Hamilton outlining five areas of time: '1 - memory; 2 - near past (resources are in the system but haven't yet gone into the past); 3 - now; 4 - near future; 5 - big future' (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract F). Dancers are dealing in some way or another with each of these areas of time – physiologically and conceptually. In terms of the 'near future', this is encountered in a highly skilled predictive way,¹¹² where dancers must make choices as to how to shape it while being attuned to it through a split-second responsiveness that gives rise to creative expression.

Hamilton's linear time may then resemble clock-time insofar as it can be constructed and measured, but it is deeply incorporated into the dancer's bodily sense of rhythm and converges with radial time to be distributed qualitatively. In classes, measurement of time was played in uniformly structured ways through acts of counting, differentiated between a two-beat and a three-beat for example. Radial time, in Hamilton's conception is more amorphous and subject to less measurable structures and more akin to Bergson's *durée*. Like the conception of radial space, it is non-linear, three-dimensional, radiates in all directions, and is subject to greater perceptual variance. But even this qualitative notion of time can nevertheless be dealt with concretely in Hamilton's studio. For instance, a group of dancers in a circle on the periphery of the space facing inward and moving to the centre in a group contraction makes accessible how time can appear to run faster compared to the expansion

¹¹² See Alva Noë's *Varieties of Presence* (2012) for an 'Enactivist' perspective on the predictive quality of presence and perception.

of the circle when both are travelling at the same speed. Such tasks exercised in dancers a kind of temporal listening, designed to elicit an understanding of how different rhythmic patterns resonate emotionally.

Hamilton's use of the term 'streaming' in the Arlequi 2015 course appeared designed to point attention to a convergence of both linear and radial time and to provide concrete pathways to develop skills in handling it. Hamilton has said that, as dancers, 'to be *in* time we must go *through* time' (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract F), an apparent paradox that tests a dancer's capacity to move or be moved in a way that feels 'present'. Given that dancing 'makes questions about how 'now' works, how it is divided' (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract F), the work with 'streaming' allowed dancers to attune to a durational sense of time as having a "hum" – a vibration of being and going through time with awareness. The hum is the ground underneath the choreographic and links to the near past and near future. In any movement, the present moment always bears relation to past and future, not just conceptually, but in felt ways. I noted Hamilton observing how:

now is the gravity of time. The future is in the air. We need to be in the near future – in the micro hum of now is the near future and near past. We're not talking about tomorrow time (necessarily). Now is time massified. (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract F)

Dancers must practise awareness of the millisecond moments such that they can be with them through longer sequential flows of both linear and radial time. It is in terms of flow that I understand Hamilton's use of the term 'streaming' here, where the difference between thoughts as static entities and thinking as ongoing connections to feeling is a profound distinction made in studio practice.

To grasp these ideas of time in practice, dancers can start slowly to gain access to a microscopic consciousness of passing through the duration of a movement. For example, in

Arlequi, dancers often began class by touching the ground repeatedly with the hands. From a sitting position, the task was to take the hand from the air and to make contact with the floor. This exercise became about noticing the hand's route towards the floor, observing the hand's contact with the wood and in turn how the wood's texture or temperature could be felt; or how the flesh of the fingertips may have met the floor before the palm; or how the skin shifted a little to meet it; or how that particular contact altered the very physiology of the hand. The apparent mundanity of this repeated action of touching the floor became profound because it became possible to notice more acutely in its minutia an expanded sense of a physiological sequence of changes. The dancer was invited to notice how, in a nuanced way, this action was different every time according to the specificities of the trajectory of the arm and hand coming to the floor. Through this movement it was possible to deepen awareness by noticing the differences. This, by the way, is precisely how a Feldenkrais ATM lesson operates. Physiologically, the action will be organised slightly differently each time, and beyond that, while it is difficult to grasp, there will be some energetic differentiation in the act as it is performed again and again. Differentiation that expands awareness through the movement. The skill being developed in Hamilton's classes was to do with expanding attention to the nuances and rhythmic possibilities throughout each part of the journey of even this most basic of movements. Listening to this 'ground' was a tactile-kinaesthetic apprenticeship for moving faster, longer and more dynamically as the class progressed.

On the face of it, there would appear to be little distinction between Hamilton's conception of 'streaming' and Zaporah's notion of 'feeling state' and her insistence that a performer stays in contact with the sensory flow of their experience. In the case of Hamilton, I detect a qualitative differentiation in the emphasis he places not just on sentience but also to the nuances of time, as outlined above, and its connection to processes of thinking. For

Hamilton, echoing Massumi, thoughts (as opposed to thinking) are equivalent to edits. Though according to Hamilton, strictly speaking both thinking and sensation are edits too, as only the 'breath is unedited' (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract A). Thoughts *about* thinking interrupt the streaming because they are selected, decided, and/or considered. Hamilton has said that we are quick in thinking, and the thoughts we have around them slow us down so that to move through one state of thought to another is slower than to move through thinking. An improviser's task is to stay in thinking mode because 'thoughts' interrupt the flow by introducing concepts, reflection and analysis. This harks back to the way in which Zaporah resists the identification of emotion or the way in which Sheets-Johnstone considers words to be in excess of the kind of thinking we do through movement. In either case, second-order mental constructs of movement are discouraged. I suggest that an improviser, in practice, cannot avoid making mental constructs even while understanding that, ideally, to stay 'up to date', to remain in the 'stream of flow' or to continue to be 'present to the moment' is what the work of improvising demands.

In improvisatory performance, staying up to date by moving through a continuous stream with a rhythmic sensibility is central, and connects to Hamilton's notion of 'improvisational mind'. Yet the 'compositional mind' must run concurrently with it. The compositional mind does not escape the 'now' (as if that were possible), even as it makes decisions that shape the near future. A dancer must navigate this tension between thinking and thought. Aside from Massumi, this has echoes of Foster's observation that improvisation is experienced as a concurrent process of active and passive engagement in tasks or as an activity that has the feeling of a thing done and undergone. I noted Hamilton rooting the stream of thinking in the body thus:

there's a constant trombone of movement as the body parts its ways.

Then the next step — once it is precise, is that it speaks. It says something.

Listen to what it says. Hear the fruit. Precision produces – listen to what it produces. You taste it on the fly – it has a very short shelf-life. The body is reading the fruits of its action. In improvising we have a shorter time to appreciate it. Instant appreciation. With fixed material we get longer. (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract D)

Once an awareness for streaming had been cultivated through Hamilton's studio practice dancers turned to working through a more measured notion of time – attending to counts, accents, and rhythm. Hamilton has said that he is influenced as much by musicianship as choreography, and the sound of music was often an underpinning of the work, not as background accompaniment but as a tool for interrogating rhythmic measurement and its offbeats (syncopation). Many morning technique classes were spent accompanied by music played through the sound system,¹¹³ with a focus on developing, through dancing, a more fully integrated understanding of how the music functioned rhythmically. For Hamilton, 'musicality is not something you get at music school, it is your ability to live through time emotionally. Literally, to feel time. To move through – *emovere*' (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract G). Hamilton's pedagogical approach is to tether such philosophical renderings to a concrete task. For some time in the studio, dancers played with the count of 'one'. One exercise worked with the idea of making one move, marking it in space and leaving it there ('no smudge') and then another. 'Dare to be simple and mundane with the choreography. Lay out the moves one by one, then in twos and threes' (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract G), while another exercise played explicitly and rigorously with counting beats as a dancer produced their moves.

¹¹³ Music tracks ranged across genres including jazz, soul and hip-hop.

There is then a confluence of streamed activity capable of being shaped or arranged as compositional material. In accordance with Buckwalter's observation (noted in Chapter One) time becomes capable of being more fully conceived as a tool to work with. And just as Burrows observed, decisions are simply made quicker. The training is, to some extent, about becoming 'alert to the instant edit', which can also involve inhibiting. This is both an improvisational and compositional practice insofar as the body is making choices about doing something as opposed to something else. On the one hand, we are always editing, while on the other 'editing extends because what is chosen goes to a higher level and is somehow furthered' (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract A). In this formulation, the compositional mind is on a continuum with the improvisational mind; both are involved in processes of selecting. The distinction is found in the degree to which those selections work in collaboration with other elements, such as space, time and objects, to craft material that can also manifest theatrically both in terms of its aesthetic and emotional registers.

Hamilton's entrainment process is in part aimed at establishing in the dancer the capacity to act 'in-body edits that are smooth' and spontaneous (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract A). In Hamilton's view, a dancer must also understand that they are compelled to appreciate the constraints under which composition is formed. Hamilton would add 'it is why I say you're not free' — because in Instant Composition 'our job is to make space to house appreciation. We read the move and in the reading there's a connection to the next. These processes get abused as if something can simply be thrown together. No! Nobody chooses randomly. It is somebody. Their spirit' (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract A). I understand this to point towards the fact of 'somebody's' patterns, habits, behaviours, traits and indeed whole personhood being socially and culturally anchored and defined, and that this always comes to bear on both improvisational and compositional practice. Furthermore, nobody can free themselves from time!

Overall, in terms of time, the work with streaming and counting served as a foundation for arranging longer phrases of movement ('phrasing' being a well-established choreographic term used to describe a sequence of movements in an overall choreographic score) but in the context of a voicing dancer, this took on added bearing once it became situated in terms of vocal material. The expanded attention drawn out by the working of time would eventually afford a sense of the musicality that voicing sound and speech could be grounded in. The vocal material's rhythm and timbre could in this way be rooted in bodily sensation and action. The study of time (and of space) thus not only became a philosophical underpinning for the work but also a tool for the dancer to work with.

Arrangements: Mouthings

Speech is edited breath.
(Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract A)

The area of voicing both verbally and non-verbally was given some direct and discrete attention in the Arlequi 2017 course. It was built on the foundations of the work with time, as it facilitates the practice of composition. To produce sound is to be able to hear how one goes through time. I noted Hamilton's observation that verbalising is a form of editing; that the processes of composition are in this respect accumulative. The area of voice is simply another layer that can be added to the compositional environment and another way to go through time. I noted Hamilton moving dancers on to this terrain by saying:

Now we have practised the tool of rhythm and rhyme, the sound is the ground like a drone. Hear words as objects and sounds. Release the emotionality in very unemotional material. Each word is event. We can

let the words be the events they are, full of the emotional space that they inherently have. (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract H)

For Ihde, “[w]ord is *dabar*, which is both ‘word’ and ‘event’” (174), while elsewhere it has been noted that this Hebrew word for ‘speak’ bears the same root as ‘thing’, so that ‘to speak’ means ‘to enthing’ (Bleich 35), thus imbuing the word with material properties. This notion of event was given careful attention in Hamilton’s classes by grounding voicing in the activity of dancing, thus allowing dancers to extend the spatial and rhythmic practices rehearsed there into speech. Vocal sound was figured in one phase of the work in 2017 as sung speech, adding to the accumulation of movement and object choreography. Here, dancers intoned improvised vocal material, which ranged in register from the quasi-operatic to the lullaby-like.

Ingold, in his discussion of song, suggests that the very notion of re-fusing speech and song “presupposes their original separation” (*Perception* 408). He goes on to suggest that “the difference between speech and melodic gesture is one of degree rather than kind, that to speak is indeed – in a sense – to sing” (408). This is how sung speech was approached in Hamilton’s classes – as another extension of speech rather than a separate register. But the differences in ‘degree rather than kind’ could also be attributed to all the other choreographic elements in the mix. In terms of sung speech, this was occasionally explored in large group pieces where a group of ‘sounders’ (Fig. 3) ‘played’ their vocal sound to accompany two other groups, one tasked with dance composition and another tasked with object composition (which I come to below). The overall compositional arrangements worked in this way to transition dancers from technique to composition, where eventually a dancer could compose with all three elements.



Fig. 3. A line of sounders [l/r: Weijke Koopmans, Siri Clinkspoor, Paolo Cingolani, Bettina Neuhaus, Anna Fontanet and Anna Heuer Hansen] making Instant Composition in the Arlequi studio 2017.
Image: Patrick Beelaert

In addition, the exercise extended to spoken (rather than sung) speech and this meant that some 'echo' of the musicality of speech rang through the words produced in the later compositional work, such that even in the most quotidian of exchanges the poetic sensibility of words and phrases remained. In Arlequi, vocal material was built on a musical relationship to time and Hamilton's conception of anatomy, so fundamental to the earlier work in grounding the body, extended to his thinking on words. One of the simplest of the exercises with words was to speak one's name for others to hear, and then to speak it again, and perhaps again. Here, the task was to allow for the word to be spoken and heard with a sense of its fullness of time. Each word has its time. Each syllable can live in connection to the ones preceding and following. This sounds matter of fact, but it was through such simplistic orientations that an appreciation of language could be elevated to the level of poetry in Hamilton's work. Later work was structured more loosely and it became clear that

dancers varied in their capacity to either produce vocal material or to make it audible. Certainly there was a reticence, sometimes palpable, in the space. There was also a sense that while Hamilton at times (especially earlier on in a course) suggested a tighter structure to scaffold the production of voice, there was still a need to find ways for dancers to become more productive. An example of a construction that aided the making of speech material could be found in Hamilton's invitation to work with the construction: 'My name is...(fiction), I have (factual); e.g. my name is Jack, I have a plastic bottle in front of me' (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract H). The interplay between fact and fiction was productive in that it had the potential to put the mythical and the quotidian in counterpoint. The task was generative through the repetition of the construction and the constraints of the rules. But within this, Hamilton recognised how a dancer's own inhibitions around speaking may have been a form of personal judgement that was present in the working conditions of the dancer. I note Hamilton imploring dancers to 'let the poetry resound. Have the guts to say – "I'm standing in front of a plastic bottle". Judgements are not a problem. Life is always more or less than we imagine' (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract H). This is a typical example of how Hamilton's pedagogy can structure an environment concretely, while reconciling seemingly disparate contradictions and registers in the work.



Fig. 4. Dancers incorporating voice in Julyen Hamilton's improvisation and dance technique course in Arlequi, Spain, 2017 – Anna Heuer Hansen & Robert Vesty (Top); Paolo Cingolani (Middle); Fie Dam Mygind in foreground with Martino Redaelli behind (Bottom). Images: Patrick Beelaert

For a voicing dancer, the face takes on significance as an explicit site of expression not conventionally given consideration in dance; while the mouth can be revealed as a part of the body subject to the kind of exposure not usually attributed to dancers. The mouth, even in everyday voicing, exposes a part of our inner selves both literally and figuratively. In sung speech, or any expressive kind of voicing, this exposure is exaggerated. The mouth therefore deserves some wider scrutiny, as a thing that potentially reveals some inkling of the inner workings of the body and, potentially, the self. The images in the above triptych (Fig. 4) were captured by dancer and photographer Patrick Beelaert in 2017, when dancers were being called upon to deploy improvised vocal material (either sound, spoken word, or song) into the overall compositional arrangement. I am interested in how these still images capture moments in Instant Composition pieces that can be seen to give prominence to the face, particularly the mouth. They signal that the mouth, enacted by voicing in this way, is part of a complex constellation of movement possibilities available to a dancer, thus opening the cavity of the mouth as a choreographic site. Beelaert's photography can only signal the sound emanating from the dancers in these moments, but the mute image nevertheless speaks figuratively to the labour of sounding and moving that was happening in those pieces. The representations of the animated 'mouthings' expose the mouth as co-extensive with the rest of the body. Here, the labour of the dancer is spread through a more visibly integrated body. This tests preconceptions about a dancer's expressive labour being contained by working from the chin down. In this way, when voicing is considered as part of the expanded choreographic potential for a dancer, the mouth takes on a presence in a material appreciation of voice. For LaBelle:

the mouth as an organ is not a single entity; rather, it is an elaborate system of parts, a highly charged, flexed, and performing assemblage that extends from the lips down to the gut; though this is already to limit

it to its physical dimensions – we know well how the voice is already an expanded geography pricked by an entire constellation of psychosocial, sexual, and linguistic elements, which would suggest that the mouth equally starts and ends where our relationships take us. In this regard, the mouth is all through our body. (91)

A voicing dancer is well-placed to understand how the mouth integrates through the whole of the body in such materially fleshy ways, but how useful is it to think momentarily about voicing as choreographic gestures of the mouth that give extension to the dancer's psychosociality? LaBelle's suggestion that the psychosocial and the sexual play out in this constellation points to how potential space is opened for a consideration of the intersubjectivity of group *Instant Composition*. LaBelle's poetic consideration of the mouth as a performative site poetically and conceptually expands the mouth as an oral cavity and offers a rich and useful poetic perspective on an area of the body rarely, for its own sake, elevated beyond the prosaic. The sensuality of the voice is, for one thing, intimately related to the mouth, coupled with the 'ripples' and 'shudders' of the whole body. For LaBelle:

[w]hile the voice may come at me, and into me, as a projected sound, it is the other's mouth to which my body turns – I rest upon this mouth; and while the voice may also come out of me, it is the mouth that shapes these outpourings, which I must move and that provides a reverberant space where exchanges of deep intimacy may take shape, through words as well as by a range of oral gestures – how often a kiss overcomes the estrangement voice can produce! The voice may extend the range of the

body precisely by returning us to the mouth. In this regard, is it truly possible to separate the two, the voice and the mouth? (3)

In the context of a voicing dancer, this deep intimacy is also located in the spatial configurations that are constitutive of relationships, which are not merely compositional relations between dancers, but are human-to-human. These relations consist of the rich historical, social and cultural presences that come to bear on them. Dancers can be well-attuned to the 'reverberant space' of such relationships. At the same time, LaBelle's (almost romantic) description animates the mouth as a thing that is in relationship to the more banal material processes of voicing. Some of this everydayness will pertain to the oft-visible material processes voicing enacts functionally, such as the opening, closing and shaping of the mouth and lips, as well as the spit and vapour produced by voicing expressively. These movements are always laced with physiological transformations in the mouth and its surroundings. For LaBelle, this relationship between the outer space and the deep innards of the body is marked by the threshold space of the mouth – a "resonant cavity" that performs an assemblage of operations, instrumentations, representations and expressions "from the ways in which we figure ourselves, as a vocal subject, to how such figuring is also an expressive punctuation" (10-11). A voicing dancer's work is to remain sensually attuned to the mouth and what is produced by it, avoiding any overly conscious concern with the communicable value and meaning of what it produces. Working with words can make this challenging. Hamilton's work often revisits registers of speaking or a mode of being that appears quotidian, in order to illustrate that there is often something poetic residing there. The mouth forms a channel where conceptions (thoughts) are made manifest yet are quickly cleaved from their material anchors, precisely because they become semantically defined. In other words, we often lose the feel for our voice because its communicative value supersedes it. In that sense, the voice recedes, as Leder pointed out; but the voice goes

beyond simply being a tool, it is integrated into a highly skilled practice of voicing. With the mouth embedded within the dancer's choreographic palette, they can utilise it as part of a de-hierarchised array of options available to them. To think choreographically about the mouth is to offer a radical perspective on how the mouth operates compositionally according to shaping, timing and direction. The mouth's temporospatial properties shape what the voice produces. While Hamilton has not drawn such discrete attention to it in this way, in the context of voicing we are invited to rethink what it is a mouth can do (and be) choreographically. For LaBelle:

the mouth is wrapped up in the voice, and the voice in the mouth, so much so that to that to theorize the performativity of the spoken is to confront the tongue, the teeth, the lips, and the throat; it is to feel the mouth as a fleshy, wet lining around each syllable, as well as a texturing orifice that marks the voice with specificity, not only in terms of accent or dialect, but also by the depth of expression so central to the body. (1)

I find LaBelle's focus on the performative minutia of the mouth and its fundamental connection to all the other parts of the body entailed in the function of voicing compelling, if only because it is so illustrative of its materiality. This is also useful as his rich descriptions underscore the potential for sensuality, which is fundamental to the sense of the poetic in the work Hamilton facilitates for the voicing dancer. I suggest that while dancing silently does disclose something of the dancer's subjective self, exercising the mouth and throat through voicing arguably amounts to a kind of double exposure of the whole self. Hamilton has spoken of the directness of the dancer's choreographic material, but this 'directness' is compromised when the mouth produces vocal material that cannot ever be unequivocal. Nevertheless, voicing's explicit form bears the potential to be forthright and frank in its outspokenness, like any form of spontaneous speech. What the voicing dancer reveals is

more than metaphorical, it opens the mouth and face up for creative expression to reveal, through their voice, something of who the dancer is. Like the mouth, the voice is such a personal part of the way humans show themselves to the world. The voice changes form, it is malleable and highly adaptive, yet also in adult humans, it is remarkably stable as a unique marker of one's identity¹¹⁴ (a point I develop in Chapter Five with respect to working with words as poetic text in Hanne's classes). With this unique marker of identity comes an ethical responsibility enacted through the voice that produces a tension when it is met with Hamilton's call for dancers' work to be direct. I noted Hamilton telling dancers to:

practise writing (voicing) poetry without simile – “like” – go direct instead. Representation defers emotion. Can you be in your imagination, without it being ‘like’ something? Let's have the action have its inner reverberation – you stay inside the imagination. Can you keep to/with the voices of the imagination which needs a receptivity – a listening? Through-ness is already in the movement. Then I can take the through-ness through time. We take the material (which has through-ness) and this is choreography. (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract C)

The suggestion that emotion is deferred is a recognition that dancers can tend (when improvising) to fear confronting the feeling induced by what the voice produces. It also recognises the need to be direct. That is, to avoid making second-order mental constructs that form re-representations of movement. The dancer's work with Hamilton is in no small part a retraining to counter habits of creating accumulations of material that drowns out the bare necessity and potency of the choreographic material that forms, re-forms and

¹¹⁴ See Kreiman and Sidtis for appraisals of how human voices change with age.

transforms in instantly composed arrangements. I contend that in Hamilton's classes a dancer, by incorporating vocal material in a sensual way, coupled with the activity of dancing, has the potential to reveal and disclose something deeply private in a social (intersubjective) field of relations.

Arrangements: Voicing Objects

There's a doubleness to an object. Its transformation depends on us seeing the object oscillating between its daily/quotidian and its poetical/theatrical.

(Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract G)



Fig. 5. Still from video footage of Julyen Hamilton in *Play*, Chisenhale Dance Space, London UK, 16 July 2015. Image: Maria Andrews.

At this point, as I come to how the choreographic environment can be expanded with the inclusion of objects, it is worth turning to two examples of Hamilton's public performance. The first — *Play* (2015)¹¹⁵ — like much of his Instant Compositional work, entwines voice and dance. In this instance of the forty-minute solo piece, which I attended at Chisenhale Dance Space, London, the audience see a near empty stage — a wooden floor

¹¹⁵ *Play* was performed several times between 2013 and 2015. I attended an iteration of the piece, performed in a double bill with Hanne's *Deep Brown Sea*, on 16 July 2015 as part of the *Space and Words for Dancers* (SAWFD) event at Chisenhale Dance Space, London. I have since been able to refer to video footage of that performance.

and rear brick wall (Fig. 5). Hanging stage right on the wall is a wooden chair with spindles. Lower down the wall stage left hangs a carpenter's saw. As a blue wash lights the stage, Hamilton enters downstage left. He is a man in his early sixties. A little white hair and beard. Slim. He is bare-footed and wears loose cotton trousers, with a loose short-sleeved cotton shirt over an undershirt. For the most part, he dances through the piece – light-footed phrases of movement characterised by a mix of twirls, skips, and steps. These can appear almost balletic. At times he releases his arms elegantly into the air. At other times, he produces more quotidian gestures, perhaps a smack of the hands on the thighs, or a stomp of the foot. Throughout, it is clear to me that I am watching a virtuosic dancer produce choreographic material which is recognisable as dance.

Yet, in concert with this more readily recognisable choreographic material, Hamilton is also producing non-verbal and verbal vocal sounds. At times, it is possible to hear a high-pitched shriek, a deep bellow or a light groan. This kind of vocal material lives alongside spoken words that register as highly rhythmic poetry, single words, or even song. When he speaks, Hamilton's voice is often soft, deep and clear with an English accent close to Received Pronunciation. Around twelve minutes into *Play*, Hamilton takes the wooden chair from the wall and places it in the otherwise empty space. A few minutes later he takes the handsaw, walks towards the chair and speaks:

"There's only one thing to do. I hope you're sleeping; I hope you're sleeping"

[He begins to saw through one of the legs of the chair]

"I hear your crying, I hear your distress, I hear..."

This sequence marks a relatively prosaic stage in the composition where Hamilton is comparatively still, performing the action of sawing wood. It contrasts with some of the earlier, more dynamic, material. In this sequence, Hamilton's poetic register is also lent a

more everyday vocal strain. In these more quotidian moments a relationship between a man and a chair emerges. The speech occurs as dialogue; as if there is not one voice (Hamilton's) but two. The chair, it would seem, also has a voice. This sonic relationship is further activated by the very audible sound of the saw's metal teeth hacking through its leg. A couple of minutes later, having sawed through one of the legs of the chair, Hamilton continues to speak:

"Shut up we're nearly there"

[Carries on sawing for a second, before...]

"We're there"

[Audience laughter]

[Standing the chair with one leg shorter than the rest]

"No one will notice"

The dialogue is intimate, and there is something cruel yet compassionate in the relationship. And there is something darkly comic and absurd when, later in the piece, Hamilton sits softly, yet with utter conviction, on what has become a wonky chair.

In *Play*, Hamilton establishes a vocal choreography bound and integrated into a movement score that involves more than virtuosic movement clearly identifiable as dance. It also includes, through voice, the gestural features of the face and mouth, thereby deploying a stage language perhaps more conventionally associated with theatre. Throughout, when speaking, Hamilton's use of multiple vocal registers is a striking feature – these are at times declaimed, whispered or shrieked. They produce affective states of wistfulness, anger or suspense. They suggest the faint outlines of a theatrical character that is neither Hamilton nor not Hamilton. Alongside, he produces non-verbal sounds that manifest as guttural

vocalisations or percussive mouth sounds. On occasion, vocal sounds appear more involuntarily produced by the physical movement itself.

A theatrical sensibility is found in the overlap of choreographic elements in Hamilton's solo work. But objects are not merely props, they are collaborators in the composition. Text is not monologue, but a part of what is afforded by a dancer and his choreographic expertise. Indeed, Hamilton's choreography is less about adding voice and more about refusing to silence it. Furthermore, if out of these compositional arrangements something akin to character emerges it rarely has a name, cannot be singularly defined and bears few of the psychologically driven hallmarks associated with its dramatic counterpart. If anything, the figure Hamilton conjures is 'character-less' – the term Delgado-García proposes in her attempt to capture a notion of character which can encompass "any figuration of subjectivity in theatre, regardless of how it looks on the page, or how it is materialised (or not) on the stage, and irrespective also of the idea of subjectivity it figures" (11). This very notion of character will be discussed at more length in Chapter Five with respect to the voicing dancer as a bearer of poetic text, but for now I point to this feature of Hamilton's work to underscore its theatrical dimensions. Once considered from a pedagogical perspective in a studio full of dancers, it becomes clear that technique must involve a recognition of Hamilton's theatrical sensibility and puts the deep study of its elements, including space, time and objects, into perspective.

Hamilton's performance piece *Landscape Portrait* (2015) provides a different perspective on his work with objects, which in relation to this piece he describes as both

'physical and acoustic'.¹¹⁶ In *Landscape Portrait*, the audience watch from above, while Hamilton arranges, displaces, destroys, builds and configures a 'rich environment' of many objects including various bits of rope, wooden sticks, metal casings and a cabbage. Here the assemblage works with live spoken text and dance; layered at points with a pre-recorded and self-composed musical score to create an atmosphere that seems at once celestial and macabre. In the live performance, which I attended in Brussels, the space was demarcated tightly to form a frame so the piece's graphic form could be emphasised, and this is replicated to some extent in the video rendition available online through *Vimeo*. The voice of objects could be said to be louder in this example, either because there were many more of them, or because Hamilton was choosing to use them because of the sound they might make, such as the sound of iron being dragged on concrete or the sound of an axe slicing through vegetables. There was also an acoustic interplay with Hamilton's bodily movements (enhanced by wearing shoes) and the recorded sound score. Taken together, both *Play*, and *Landscape Portrait* offer examples of how objects can function in a 'total' choreographic scape. In other words, what can be called 'choreographic' gets expanded in Hamilton's studio.

To return to the pedagogical environment, concrete objects were addressed explicitly as a focussed area of study in the 2016 and 2017 Arlequi courses I attended. While objects do not necessarily have more or less value than any other element of the composition, they are said by Hamilton to carry a certain power. That power can be in everyday objects and how

¹¹⁶ *Landscape Portrait* was performed at Carthago Delenda Est as part of the BlueZone performances in Brussels, 2015. Hamilton describes the piece: "watched from above, this solo is set in a rich environment of objects both physical and acoustic. It is both aged and youthful, playful and sharp". See www.vimeo.com/159094776/.

they can be set in relation with the body and space compositionally to reveal their transformative potential through performance. And in Instant Composition pieces, objects can be utilised in such a way that they can either be placed in space for some or all the piece's duration or be manipulated such that they become mobile; figuring in a series of choreographic images. Hamilton makes little distinction between the object used as décor¹¹⁷ or as a moveable artefact that can operate choreographically. When they work in collaboration with voice to form compositional arrangements, they aim to achieve no more and no less status than each other. But how is this work with objects staged pedagogically?

Typically in *Arlequi*, dancers worked with found objects. Hamilton tasked participants to take five minutes or so outside the studio to look around the grounds for something to bring back. The task was not to ruminate too much on the choice and to trust the first or second encounter with an object. In 2016, I found a pink rubber glove. In 2017, I found a brown umbrella. Others introduced a stick, stone, bucket and a red shopper bag on wheels, amongst other things, to the space; filling it with a collection that then became part of a repertoire of objects to use over several days. Hamilton first requested that we stand with our object; simply to be with it. He drew attention to the fact that the object, simply by being present with us in the space, was already collaborating with us choreographically because any object's relationship to us could be immediately read. Being with the object in stillness might manifest as holding it, standing next to it, being behind it and so forth. This ontological enquiry became an exercise of noticing that the relationship between body and object was changing continually – moment by moment – without yet the compositional mind activating choices about arranging and placing the object in different areas of the

¹¹⁷ See Appendix V: Extract C where Hamilton discusses his love for working with décor and the difference between solo and company work.

space. Hamilton insists that in and of itself, this relationship is already 'speaking'. Hamilton cited the example of portraiture in visual art where in paintings a person is often accompanied by an object, as if the object is present to further 'reveal' the person's status beyond the pictorial space. In the Arlequi studio, this mode of exploration was geared towards cultivating an appreciation that in doing 'nothing' with the object, 'something' was nevertheless being represented. In the case of the glove, it was clear (as Hamilton drew attention to) that what was speaking was a relationship which involved a dancer's whole person and their histories. To stand in the otherwise empty space holding a pink rubber glove had the potential to resonate in a multitude of ways in the social space of the workshop. This functions according to how watchers invest a performer and their relationship with the object, indeed the total image, with their own prior knowledge of the individual performer, as well as their own rich long histories that come to bear on the production of meaning. This participatory quality to the meaning between performers and watchers (or attendees) becomes a key focus in the following chapter, as the presence of the audience enters the analysis.

For the dancer working with objects in Hamilton's classes there must be a period of getting-to-know the properties of an object, how it responds to touch, to drop, to being stretched, twisted, thrown, stood on, turned upside-down, worn on one's head or left untouched to deal with its own material properties. In fact, the examples of both *Play* and *Landscape Portrait* exhibited Hamilton's assertion that "the making and destroying, they must go, they do go hand in hand. One learns so much about how something is made by destroying it and what is revealed by the destruction and what is revealed by construction" (Hamilton, Appendix V: Extract C). This is also the case in the pedagogic environment, where in the moment-by-moment flux of time and space a dancer engages an attuned sensibility to the ongoing transformations of objects. In Arlequi, there was always a tension

when working with objects between wanting to radically destroy an object and protecting the fabric of the space (including the precious wooden floor of the studio).



Fig. 6. Robert Vesty & Giacomo Calabrese with blue plastic basin and wooden branch in the Arlequi studio 2015. Image: Patrick Beelaert

The next stage was to interact with the object more fully through movement; to touch and manipulate it – paying attention to its structure, fabric, function and feel. Working with objects in such a way quickly afforded potential to challenge the object’s supposed inanimate nature. For example, refocusing attention away from touching it, and towards being touched by it, shaped and changed the kinaesthetic relationship between person and object. But such work calls into question how an object is defined in terms of its shape, scale and surface. Indeed, where does the object begin and end in relation to the body of the

dancer working with it? I note Hamilton telling us that the ‘body is transformed by objects’ (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract J). For instance, if one looks for a moment at Figure Six it is possible to imagine how if two male dancers stood face-to-face without the bucket and branch it would significantly open different pathways for the myriad ways in which this ‘story’ resonates. The mass and material of the objects along with their direction add gravitational weight both literally and figuratively. This recognition is vital to the voicing dancer working with objects and is one that involves an acceptance that, as dancers, we may not always (or even at all) be in control of how the image ‘speaks’ or how an object’s mass carves and leaves traces in the space. Indeed, the porosity of that exchange is key to the functioning of the composition as poetry. It was often the case that a dancer would have to relinquish control of how the compositional image with an object may have registered in the space. Given the multiple configurations, at times when dancers have their backs to others or cannot have a view of how images are sequencing, they have a relationship to the work which is both passive and active. In the short (maybe 10s) sequence captured in Figure Six, the dancers can only live with the action they are in the process of composing. They cannot account for how it ‘speaks’ to those who are looking on.

There are therefore questions raised in Hamilton’s pedagogy to do with how the relationship between a body and an object is balanced in terms of active and passive engagement. In Ingold’s advancement of Gibson’s differentiations between medium and substances it becomes clear that there is a porous relationship between humans and the objects they interact with. Ingold observes that while “there are surfaces of all sorts, of varying degrees of stability and permeability [these] are interfaces between one kind of material and another — for example between rock and air — not between what is material and what is not” (*Being Alive* 24). In fact, Ingold downplays the materiality of objects in

favour of placing emphasis on utility – how an experience of an object is forged through the task it affords:

[f]or acting in the world is the skilled practitioner's way of knowing it. It is in the direct contact with materials, whether or not mediated by tools – in the attentive touching, feeling, handling, looking and listening that is entailed in the very process of creative work – that technical knowledge is gained as well as applied. (*Perception* 316)

It is such a recognition of the handling of the materials that becomes central to the studio-based explorations in Hamilton's classes, often taking several days to cultivate the ability for 'attentive touching'.

In 2017, in order to pedagogically deconstruct the process of working with objects, Hamilton proposed a set of exercises aimed to explore dancers' relationship to objects through the terms: 'on-ness', 'in-ness' and 'through-ness'. The objects in Hamilton's studio must be considered as having concrete properties, defined surfaces and definite textures, but they must also be understood as co-extensive with space and its substances. On-ness was about exploring the interaction with the surface of objects. Dancers were tasked with spending time touching the object as material, to gain a sense of its surface with a more detailed focus on its variations and idiosyncrasies. This encouraged the cultivation of an attitude which honoured the notion of separability, say of skin to fabric. A later stage, exploring 'in-ness', was about going beyond the surface to direct attention towards texture, character, volume – the object's three-dimensionality. The final stage of exploration, of 'through-ness', involved nurturing an attentive quality to think of the object having the possibility of conducting the body and its temporospatial grounding. A conception of 'through-ness' aimed to point to a continuum from one side to the other in the object's wholeness. It also aimed to underscore how an object could travel in space, as well as be a

marker of the space if it were placed in-between dancers, or between dancers and another spatial zone. Each of these stages (on/in/through) were individually worked through dynamic movement exploration, with the aim of bringing these ways of thinking and being with the objects to a fuller state of what Hamilton referred to as 'presence' – an amalgam and interchange of the 'on', 'in' and 'through' (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract G).

To analyse Hamilton's point, it is instructive to turn more fully to Gibson, and his concept of affordance. This concept puts the onus on the task¹¹⁸ a perceiver engages in, founded on an acceptance that the whole environment, including its substances and media:

affords respiration or breathing; . . . permits locomotion; . . . can be filled with illumination so as to permit vision; . . . allows detection of vibrations and detection of diffusing emanations; . . . is homogeneous; and finally, . . . has an absolute axis of reference, up and down. (Gibson 14-15)

Gibson's affordance concept assumes no prescribed meaning to the object a perceiver encounters, rather it is in the use of (or encounter with) that object where meaning emerges. In other words, meaning is located within the very context of movement that encompasses an animate-action-task continuum. Here, meaning is directly, simultaneously and uniquely produced without second-order representation. This idea that the affordances of things contain their meaning (without further representation) disrupts the idea that meaning is found on either side of a dualistic divide between subject and object. When Ingold discusses Gibson's approach, he observes that an organism's "movements are closely tuned and ever responsive to environmental perturbations" (*Perception* 260), which he regarded as offerings

¹¹⁸ Ingold uses taskscape in his critique of landscape in his essay "The Temporality of the Landscape" (*Perception* 189).

that yield possibilities or affordances (15). Such an attuned perception, that dissolves any distinction between an internal representation of an external reality, is, for Ingold, one that emerges in the meshwork of lines as opposed to a network of points. In this way, Ingold extends Gibson's concept of affordance by proposing that we do not consider a relation between our perceiving selves and the objects of our perception, but a life lived along the lines of perception that accompany our actions. Thus "to perceive the environment is not to look back on the things to be found in it, or to discern their congealed shapes and layouts, but to join with them in the material flows and movements contributing to their – and our – ongoing formation" (*Being Alive* 88). Ultimately, Ingold takes issue with Gibson's apparent ongoing insistence that the world is "furnished with objects" (78) and that the pull, even authority, lies with the environment and what it affords. In short, Gibson's effort to fashion an ecological approach to perception shifts emphasis the other way, to the environment and its relation to the perceiver, rather than, as Ingold would have it, "pointing both ways" (79) – where perception and environment are indivisibly absorbed in action or the skilled practice of a task. This is the basis of my critique of embodiment. A dancer is not simply on the other side of a world of objects waiting to interact with them. The world consists of people and things that are entangled by their intra-actions. For Ingold, action "emerges from the interplay of forces conducted along the line of the meshwork", given here as "a tangle of threads and pathways" (64). Thus, the vitality of objects emerges through their use, what tasks they afford and what actions unfold with them. Objects and humans collaborate in ways that meld them in action, indivisibly and concurrently immersed (rather than alongside) the world.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Ingold is critiquing Bruno Latour's conception of an actant in a network in Latour's actor-network theory.

This collaboration was clear when Hamilton engaged in the task of sawing the chair in *Play*, and the voicing dancer must likewise become attuned to the task of working with objects in studio practice. It could be said that the wonky chair in *Play* had a life of its own, able to exert an unpredictable quality on the performance, but Hamilton was handling it. This is no trivial matter. In the handling of the chair, in the destruction of it and in the tactility of his interactions with its surfaces, Hamilton was remaking it and, more actively, transforming it. He was working the material substance of it and working with the material that this working of it produced. This is not to divest the chair of its agential potential, but it does chime with Ingold's wish to restore objects "to the generative fluxes of the world of materials in which they came into being and continue to subsist" (*Perception* 29). Indeed coincidentally, in his discussion of tool-use, Ingold goes to some length to describe the activity of sawing a plank of wood to articulate the way in which a human and an object interact. The process of attunement involves stages in the ability to cultivate, sense and respond to the affordances of the chair. Here, Ingold describes the final stages:

[a]s I approach the end of the line, a marked drop in the pitch of the sound created by my sawing, caused by a loss of tensile strength in the plank, serves as an audible warning to slow down. Once again, I have to concentrate on the cutting edge. For a clean finish, the last few strokes are as critical as the first. To prevent the free end from breaking off under its own weight, leaving a cracked or splintered edge, I must shift my left hand to the right of the groove, no longer pressing down on the plank but supporting it. At the same time, I saw ever more slowly and lightly

until, eventually, the cut end comes free in my left hand and I allow it to drop to the ground. (*Being Alive* 53)

At each point in this finely tuned process the responsiveness of the skilled practitioner is being tested, but in ways that have absorbed prior knowledge which has been integrated into a (all being well) seamless and smooth act.



Fig. 7. Leive Hermans (front) and Anna Heuer Hansen (back) with basket in the Arlequi studio 2017.
Image: Patrick Beelaert



Fig. 8. Martino Redaelli & Siri Clinkspoor working with tree and hoop in the Arlequi studio 2017.
Image: Patrick Beelaert



Fig. 9. l/r Renata Arnedo, Tanguy de Foy, Jana Novorytova, Bettina Neuhaus, Martino Redaelli & Siri Clinkspoor with blanket and other objects in the Arlequi studio 2017. Image: Patrick Beelaert



Fig. 10. Julyen Hamilton and Robert Vesty with rake and shopper. Image: Patrick Beelaert

In *Arlequi*, the multiple registers an object could operate in were staged through the exercises so that after dealing with 'handling' the objects, attention was paid to an object's graphic quality. For instance, how choreographic material could emerge in the relationship between objects (Fig. 8), where the material properties (weight, texture, shape) of one object might contrast with another. This, for Hamilton, has choreographic value and yet again can be understood less as bringing objects into play and more in terms of refusing to exclude them from the array of choreographic elements that are available. At the same time, once dancers are in the mode of making compositional work this sensibility for how objects work together in a 'total' aesthetic must, to some extent, recede. As dancers dance with objects, each configuration that emerges must be felt without second-order mental constructs about what is being produced. As such, some compositional images seem to have more power than others. Some fail to resonate. In the collection of images (Figs. 7-10), moments have been caught of dancers and objects which (to recall Sheets-Johnstone) cannot be accurately categorised through words, and their fullness certainly cannot be captured by the image. There is a nameless quality to what is happening through these images, something which both invites and resists second-order interpretation, and is also present in the moving (as both dancers and objects are doing). And there is largely only a hint of the experience of the ongoing transfigurations that were being actualised in the *Arlequi* studio at these moments. But what can be captured in these images is that some moments are less amorphous and more sharply defined than others. It is striking (and on display in Figs. 7-10), that dancers are defined by the objects because they direct their intention such that it brings a notion of task into fuller relief. But what the images might also speak to is how a dancer must balance attention between, or become more finely attuned to, the multiple tasks they are engaged in. For instance, the array of objects in what is quite a busy compositional arrangement (Fig. 9) means that the bodily compositions are in danger of losing definition. The more dancers and

objects there are in the composition, the more the variability (to hark back to Sawyer's notion of emergence in group creativity). This can be difficult to handle for dancers. Once voicings are also part of the compositional arrangements the need to handle and shape the material becomes more complex again. For Hamilton, 'the voice buzzes through the object. Simply, physiologically, the body must participate directly in the speaking/voicing/vibration' (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract J). Hamilton is speaking both literally and figuratively, but it exhibits how objects can serve as a collaborator with the dancer's voicings, as well as an aesthetic component of what is produced.

The work with objects progressed to dealing with their relationship with voicing by foregrounding a compositional mind. Hamilton drew attention to how an object has mass and is subject to gravity's laws such that it must be considered in the space. I noted Hamilton saying that 'objects create gravity and that if one stands with an object there is a gravitational pull between these entities. The attraction is really real. The object and you each shine a light on each other. We weigh it. We feel it in gravity. We are no longer naïve to it' (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract J). For instance, a three-metre-long stick was placed in the playing space of the studio. When placed in the space, space was reshaped by the object – the space was reconfigured by the mass of the stick. It was possible to sense the gravitational pull between the self and the object, each shining some light on the other, but also on how the space took on added compositional value. The presence of the object (as well as directing attention to it) already begins to make its potential known in terms of what it affords. For a dancer, there is already some bodily preparation happening in advance of interacting with it. But once the object is being handled, it is possible to get to know the gradations of interactions one can have with it – from sliding one's hand across its surface, passing it to another dancer, taking it (with a notion of a singular move) across space to place it in a different spatial zone.

Another dimension to the vibrancy of the relationship between a dancer, an object and space is given by distance. The space between speaks. Ihde points out that the voice is given to the object through a spatial recognition which manifests as “echo” (69). The idea of looking-and-listening can be returned to at this point. With such interchangeability, although we well know that vibrations rather than sound emanate from the object that produces it, it would be futile to suggest that we do not perceive the sound as if that were not the case. In other words, although sound is produced by the passage of air shaped by an object’s resistance to it, our perception of sound, like the perception of light, is bound up in our total experience of it. At this point, Ingold’s conception of ‘ensoundedness’ offers a pathway for shifting the emphasis so that it is distributed across the body that perceives and produces (through tasks and with others) along with the substances and objects (including in this case concrete objects) afforded by the environment.

In Arlequi 2017, when Hamilton instructed dancers to speak ‘to’ the object they were working with, it was possible to notice how the object took on character – through a doubling of its material and character body. In compositional arrangements one could build on this relationship. For instance, in one solo piece (or duet with umbrella) I sat in the otherwise empty space, having placed the umbrella behind me a few centimetres upstage. After a few seconds of silence in the performance I spoke the words: “Is it over?” with a slight turn of my head towards the umbrella behind me. My tone was perhaps a little wistful. The spatial relationship between myself and the doubleness of the material-and-character object interacted temporospatially to reveal a theatrical absurdity that may have approximated a story that hovered between an anthropomorphised romantic relationship and the rather more mundane enquiry into the status of a passing spate of bad weather. Regardless of how the audience received this moment, or any other in the short two-minute piece, the object explicitly became a scene partner in a dialogue where my voicings were

directly afforded by the object. To perceive an object within the theatrical frame of Hamilton's workshop environment depends on it being read also in its everyday register. An object's function as an umbrella, and possibly its histories, are also present to the space. Yet in the studio space it is transformed because it also reads as something else in the imagination. It can story or be storied. It can have texture and character. But this transformation does not depend on its quotidian life being substituted. Rather it lives in coexistence with the poetic life it takes on in theatre space. In the compositional frame, an object's identity is troubled because a little of its everydayness takes on an altered register refracted through a theatrical one. Here, an object becomes set in a constellation of relations so that it takes on different temporospatial relationships (near/far past and possibly future) that is layered again once accompanied and arranged with voicings.

Repetition

To bring this focus on how Hamilton arranges a compositional environment to a close, I suggest that no matter where on an open-loose-tight-closed continuum a score sits, it provides richly structured conditions for performance. I have offered the idea that Hamilton's approach is to refuse to exclude (whether it be objects or voice) but this also runs the risk of presuming that all and everything is available to the dancer all the time. Of course, there is much still being excluded through the act of improvising and earlier I pointed to the way in which Hamilton thinks of inhibiting and editing in his approach to Instant Composition. To create a performance environment is, as Hamilton has alluded to, always in some way an exclusion, refusal or inhibition. One way in which this can be exhibited is through the active deployment of the strategy of repetition. To repeat is to emphasise exclusion and this can create, as with many constraints, a generative environment, especially in performance terms. But I use the term here to denote repetition

not only of material within a single performance piece but also to the way in which Instant Composition affords the repeatability of a performance piece. Some conventions of improvisatory practice are, through the practice of Instant Composition, troubled by the notion of making an artistic product that can be repeated. The notion of repetition also calls into question the position of rehearsal (in French: *répétition*).

Like *Play* (and *Landscape Portrait*), many of Hamilton's works are repeated. Insight into how this mode of working through improvisation to produce Instant Composition for repeatable public performance was afforded by rehearsing and performing in *Sand and Vision* (2016).¹²⁰ This piece consisted of four twelve-minute solo pieces (including my own¹²¹) directed by Hamilton and performed over three consecutive nights. As a title, *Sand and Vision* was meant to be "collective and inspirational rather than a specific theme" to which the dancers needed to speak (Hamilton, "SAND and VISION"). Those of us performing were participants in *The Working of Time* course over the preceding week. This meant that the course by day also served as rehearsal for those of us preparing to perform. Evenings were spent working individually and collectively with Hamilton. This included discussing material, looking at costume options, dealing with configuring the space and rigging lights. In this instance, the notion of 'rehearsal' can be differentiated from workshop practice precisely because it was more actively geared towards the making of a specific performance piece. To fix décor, light, sound – such that even though the choreography (both movement and vocal) is produced on the spot – is to acknowledge that an explicit performance score is being shaped to contain the improvised material. This has wider ethical and political

¹²⁰ *Sand and Vision* was performed, by Agostina d'Alessandro, Billie Hanne, Anna Hauer-Hansen and myself, and with lights by Sylvain Formaché, in a double-bill with Hamilton's longer solo piece *Landscape Portrait*, Brussels, 2016.

¹²¹ See Appendix VII: Artefact 4.

ramifications because it subverts conventional ideas about making improvisatory performance and expands its terms. As an example, choreographer Antonio de la Fe (through their *Unrehearsed Series* 2014-16) has proposed a notion of 'unrehearsed' that I have argued elsewhere "responds directly to . . . the precarious conditions that act upon artistic work, [but] also reappropriates that lack in an active, playful and dynamic manner" ("On 'A Piece for Two (Lovers)...'" 166-171). That notion of 'unrehearsed' is meant to capture the way a performance score can contain material that is already harrowed and honed through the practice (and expertise) of everyday life. In this way, a performer is always rehearsing, always preparing and always drawing on expert practice. Given that the artist at work often must contend with lack (of resources and remuneration), it would be easy to conclude that improvisatory practice affords a more 'economical' way of organising labour by distributing rehearsal through the practice of everyday life. At the same time, given the thrust of this thesis, such a position could suppose that words could come cheap too. At the risk of making a contentious provocation, I could say that Hamilton's Instant Compositional process makes an offer to theatre where there is potential to instantly compose monologues, duologues, and playtexts. This could provide a wholly efficient way of 'playwriting' in an age of lack. A less contentious claim is that by making improvisatory performance products that can be named and repeated, Hamilton's work offers a model of performance that elevates the status of improvisation.

Compositional choices are always contingent on preparation, habitual patterns of movement, expertise and knowledge. Hamilton, to some extent, profits from this by embracing the impossibility of a score-less performance. In rehearsing for *Sand and Vision* the strategy of repetition was harnessed in Hamilton's direction of my solo piece, where a repeated refrain – "Here is...", or "He is..." – emerged in rehearsal. Hamilton directed me

to use this as a tight score — a constraint within which vocal material could be generated.¹²² Clearly, this is an example of improvisation working at the tight end of the spectrum in terms of scoring that usefully exhibits how a performance environment can be structured. My claim is that these environments are richly structured regardless of how loose/tight the score and that all the choreographic elements the score contains can be understood as maintaining a near equal status in Hamilton's compositional arrangements. It is in these ways that dancing, underscored by the deep study of time and space, can emerge relationally in a performance setting that refuses to exclude. In this expanded (and ensounded) choreographic environment, objects can take their place to collaborate in compositional arrangements where voicings are ready to be amplified in performance with an audience in attendance.

¹²² Zaporah also suggests repetition as a strategy for the novice (or stuck) improviser not knowing how to generate spontaneous verbal material. See Appendix I: Extract B.

Chapter Five: Upping the Audio Ante with Hanne

Amplifying words in Billie Hanne's dance/poetry



Fig. 11. Settings for *The Secret Teachings*¹²³ – Main Studio, Carthago Delenda Est, Brussels, Belgium, (Billie Hanne also pictured). Image: Robert Vesty

*I think any art wants to reveal something by amplifying it, deforming it and
compressing it.*

(Hanne)¹²⁴

¹²³ Until January 2017 *The Secret Teachings* happened at Carthago Delenda Est in the east of Brussels, Belgium – an old roller shutter factory – consisting of a 477 sq. m studio and several other work/social spaces. *The Secret Teachings* then transferred to Ultima Vez Studios, the venue for *Mimesis* (2017).

¹²⁴ Hanne/Vesty interview July 2014 (Appendix VI: Extract C).

If Chapter Three was about feeling for the voice through movement, and Chapter Four about how voicing can be arranged in space and time with objects, then this chapter puts the emphasis on the activity of working with and hearing voice as poetic speech. Two of Hanne's courses are referenced – *The Complex Phrase* (2016) and *Mimesis* (2017) – both of which, I suggest, epitomise a way of working with words that demands zoning in on the act of voicing-and-listening, or more precisely in this instance, speaking-and-listening. By drawing on specific studio exercises, I share insight into how words can move from the body of the dancer to be orally inscribed in space through ensemble Instant Composition (also sometimes referred to by Hanne as Instant Choreography). Issues to do with how words are generated and who can claim authorship are addressed. The chapter's final section deals with performance making more fully than I have done so far, and refers to specific examples of studio and public performance, beginning with an account of the making of a forty-seven-minute instantly composed performance piece – *Gwineverra, Tom and the Enemy of Man* (2015) – directed by Hanne and in which I performed. This example serves as a springboard for exploring issues to do with form and content that arise through these practices. The journey of the chapter therefore moves from pedagogy to performance, and continues with the task of drawing out a figure of a voicing dancer that may emerge from encounters with these practices. To that end, I engage the reader in some of the audio-visual material contained in Appendix VII that pertains to further personal practice-based experiments and performance outcomes – *Honey* (2018) and *Close:Far* (2016). This is designed to shift emphasis toward performance over process and furthers the argument that dancers and audience alike are involved in the activity of 'looking-and-listening'. In fact, I suggest that these performance documents perform the idea of 'upping the audio ante', thus

supporting one of my key claims that voicing in dance places an extra demand on our aural attention.

At the outset, it is worth reiterating that Hanne has emerged as an artist over the past decade or so through her work with Hamilton. Her approach has therefore appropriated some of the teaching principles and performance making strategies she has encountered either by taking workshops with Hamilton or as a member of his company Allen's Line. In the discussion of the fundamental principles of her work it will become clear how it often converges with Hamilton's. But Hanne's route through dance has been informed by her background as a poet rather than a trained dancer. Part of the job of this chapter is to illustrate how her approach diverges from Hamilton's, as well as show how she has made attempts to carve out a practice that extends from (but is less connected to) the longer lineages drawn out in Chapter One. Like Zaporah and Hamilton, Hanne's pedagogical approach is to work with practical studio exercises that often transition from a quiet place of working through a focus on bodily movement and arrive at acts of voicing. The exercises, like Hamilton's, often sprawl into lengthy explorations, perhaps more aptly described as 'studies', that allow dancers a degree of autonomous space to investigate their own practice. In this sense, compared to Zaporah's score-based exercises, Hanne's pedagogy is more loosely scaffolded to facilitate dancers' expansion of awareness through movement. The classes, as part of *The Secret Teachings*, were considered 'courses', but there was no curriculum, and in drawing out the pedagogy below I risk presenting a more schematic progression of its stages than is the case from a practitioner perspective on the studio floor. Typically, classes were organised such that the day transitioned from longer studies in technique to the making of immediately choreographed solo, duet or group pieces of around five minutes, witnessed by the rest of the class. A form, also used in Hamilton's teaching, that is a mainstay of the pedagogic structure designed to allow space to apply the practice of

technique in quasi-performance conditions. It is interesting to note how some of the pedagogic language present in Hanne's classes converged with Hamilton. An example of this can be found in how a piece of Instant Composition was brought to a finish with a call – "end, (pause), end-of-the-end" – that aimed to give space for the piece's final moments to be marked. This links to the issue of mimesis, which I discuss below in terms of the language (words as poetic text) used in the practice rather than the meta-language used to describe it. How practices are appropriated and circulate, found through the temporary solidification of lexicons, is a theme that courses through the rest of the chapter. It underpins an analysis of how the content a voicing dancer produces is multitudinously produced in the environment of its making and is always unique.

The Poetic Dancer

The vocal, emotional, physical and mental work demanded to make poetry that emerges from the body dancing is initially two-fold: first is to become conscious of the kinetic power of a particular word. This is the inevitable power of a word to move, to set something in motion or/and to spur action, emotion, thinking. Second is to lace a word with a move or a word with a word. Here one learns to handle, read, enrich the kinaesthetic experience when single words or phrases are produced from a moving/dancing body.

(Hanne)¹²⁵

Hanne aims to fuse the body and the voice – particularly speech as poetic text – in ways she would describe in terms of being 'sensual', 'locked' or 'woven' from a

¹²⁵ This is an extract from an overview of Hanne's teaching programme described on her website, see www.billiehanne.net/classes.html#mason/.

moving/ dancing body that is highly skilled in the activity of moving and speaking together creatively and spontaneously. Hanne's work with the 'poetic voice' may be more conventionally understood in terms of *poiësis*, which the OED defines as the process of creative making and poesy as a composition, such as a poem. Philosophical theorisations of *poiësis*, such as Hans-Georg Gadamer's, have emphasised its "productive activity",¹²⁶ especially in relation to mimesis where something is brought forth into creation through imitation. Ingold puts it in more practical terms when he says that in "poetry we stretch words beyond the limits of normal utterance so that, in their sounding, they become expressive in themselves" (*Perception* 48). The expressivity of words and their sounding in Hanne's conception of poetry plays with stretching, deforming and amplifying them. Hanne also claims that words are produced 'from' the body. In addition, there is an emphasis on making that has a deeply entwined relationship to mimesis. These aspects to the work of a poetic dancer are under discussion in this chapter.

Floor

Hanne insists that 'words must be grounded to be made physical' (Appendix IV: Hanne, Extract C), which in practice begins to flow from the idea that first the body's relationship to gravity and the floor must be studied. Once again, any movement exploration was aided by a barefoot relationship to the ground. There is already a distinction and a tension produced in this conception to do with what it means to make a word physical. It touches on the problem with embodiment insofar as it begs a question as to how an 'unphysical' word might manifest. From the perspective of the studio floor, a

¹²⁶ See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and other Essays*. Cambridge UP, 1986, p. 118.

dancer may well ask what it means to be physically invested in the production of spoken words. But the insistence on grounding that Hanne makes is, I contend, tangibly felt in the experience of practice. It becomes about more fully integrating the moving body with a sense of how the ground can support the imagination. The floor, as a base of support for vocal sound, is considered less in terms of supporting volume, such as it might be conceived in actor-oriented trainings, and more in terms of bodily relation to gravity. In *The Complex Phrase*, a raft of exercises aimed to develop skills in the alignment of the body's relationship to the ground. And it is notable again that a similarity can be found with Hamilton, insofar as the ground forms a literal base of support for the body and a figurative base for the pedagogy. Hanne directed attention to the awareness of bone and muscle in relation to gravity with the aim of developing a more softened and integrated body. One exercise asked dancers to make lengthy movement explorations of the legs to build awareness of how they might deal with the transference of the weight of the body through to the floor. Hanne implored dancers to 'go into the weight' by playing with the ways they can lift and let down the legs or lower the pelvis towards the floor while moving. Such movement studies came with an instruction to appreciate the 'micro-ness' of detail in the legs while also appreciating the fullness of the leg's weight (Appendix IV: Hanne, Extract A). Occasionally this type of enquiry was accessed through partner work where one person held the legs of another dancer laying on the floor to take their weight. Through such extended studies, attention was directed not only to the small changes in sensation through the mass of this lower area of the body, but also to the space underneath and between them – the air – in standing and moving. Dancers were instructed to take their hands to 'feel' and attend to the air underneath their pelvis, focusing on the kinaesthetic distinctions afforded by varying the speed of their arm swinging. Such tasks appeared simple in their execution but through repetition became capable of deepening a dancer's sensitivity to both body and space.

A convergence with Hamilton's pedagogy can be found in terms of the emphasis put on space. For Hanne, the approach to words must be corporeal such that when they are spoken, they are valued as images of sound that find connection in the body and its relationship to space. Hanne has said, "[w]e were making poetry from the body before we wrote it down on the page. It is a spatial art so we must have relationship to the space we're in" (Appendix V: Extract A). Here, the spatial relationship must be understood as involving the space of the body as well as the studio space. Like Hamilton, Hanne also referred to "big space" (Appendix VI: Extract C). Firstly, this relates to the studio space, which in the context of this chapter means the Carthago Delenda Est (477 sq. m) studio and its cavernous warehouse dimensions (Fig. 11). Secondly, 'big space' refers to the poetic sensibility a dancer can access through the body – figuratively speaking this is also an epic space that can accommodate poetic images that span from the mythological to the domestic. In short, the poetic voice is one that cannot be separated from the poetry of the moving body, its spatial configurations and their capacity to deal with scale and metaphor.

Alignment

Hanne has described working with spatial configurations to achieve a fusion of poetry and dancing in terms of alignment, noting that it is not enough 'that the body is simply moving and speaking – that they are incarnated . . . we have to be in alignment' (Appendix IV: Hanne, Extract A). This is not to say speech and movement must be resolved, correlate or work harmoniously, and Hanne is not referring to a prescribed position (say a notion of verticality) or to any normative connotations of 'correct' postural alignment such as that associated with ballet. There is no requirement to establish conventionally recognisable relationships between speech and the dance moves or gestural actions that may accompany it. On the contrary (as will be discussed below), there is an imperative to disrupt

established patterns of body and speech. But for that to happen, dancers are encouraged to refresh and practise attention to the body from a physiological perspective, to expand somatic awareness as a foundation for later working with voice.

The approach Hanne takes draws on her childhood experience of gymnastics and otherwise self-taught study of anatomy and biomechanics, and then builds on an appreciation for the intelligence of the moving body, an appreciation accessed through an interest and experience in various somatic modalities and theoretical underpinnings. Notably, Mabel Todd's *The Thinking Body* (1937) emerged as a key reference point through the courses I participated in. Todd saw the 'thinking body' as a subtle integration and alignment of the whole body – a place enlivened by an intelligence that outruns “reasoning or conscious control” (3). A voicing dancer produces material that is also a recognition, through ongoing acts of attention, of the way emotion is produced through the oscillation of bodily shifts in movement and reconfiguration. According to Todd, “[f]or every thought supported by feeling, there is a muscle change. Primary muscle patterns being the biological heritage of man, man's whole body records his emotional thinking” (1). Todd, noting William James' earlier observation that bodily configuration, or posture, shapes emotional experience, observed that “emotion constantly finds expression in bodily position; if not in the furrowed brow or set mouth, then in limited breathing, in tight-held neck muscles, or in the slumped body of discouragement and listlessness” (44). Like Hamilton, Hanne placed emphasis on the bones in the recognition of the subtle expressions of bodily position. In *The Complex Phrase* course this manifested in making the benefit of touching bone explicit. One task instructed dancers to move through the studio space for several minutes with one hand remaining firmly in contact with the pubic bone, while the fingers of the other hand moulded softly around one iliac crest. The intent was to bring each one-quarter side of the pelvis alive to one's awareness. Several minutes were spent with each of the four quarters so

that the whole pelvis had eventually been 'lit up' in one's awareness. This was geared towards achieving a bigger sense of the power of the pelvis to take space (or drive through it) in more dynamic movement. As moving became more dynamic, either because it became faster, more varied in direction or level, or was more likely to traverse the floor, the powering of the pelvis became integral to the movement overall.

Hanne further suggested to 'go into the articulation of the joints. Give time for [the articulation] to know itself. Ask: what is it? It is complex. The quotidian is already complex. But you can theatricalise – will it into theatre. They (joints) are working. We are a medium for these articulations' (Appendix IV: Hanne, Extract A). By 'articulations' Hanne is focusing on how any skeletal joint 'articulates' a physiological (and indeed geometrical) fact, but above all that it gives expression to an emotional¹²⁷ resonance. The process involves 'giving time' to reveal how the body is already 'speaking' through its emotional resonance as long as the dancer maintains an availability (*disponibilité*¹²⁸) to that emotionality. In parenthesis, it is interesting to note again the lexicon shared with Hamilton, who also readily used this term in his classes. For Hanne, a dancer's work is to cultivate the capacity to give time to notice these configurations, and to be available to them. The musculo-skeletal movement enquiries a dancer made in Hanne's studio provided this gateway to a theatrical sensibility. Any configuration, for example a forty-five-degree bend at the elbow joint can be read as having a different emotional resonance than a bend at any other degree. And Hanne was explicit about cultivating an appreciation of that fact. Added to this is the particularity of the

¹²⁷ I am using 'emotional' in a broad sense synonymous with the whole sensory-affective continuum outlined in Chapter Three.

¹²⁸ This term is a reference to the work Jacques Lecoq, which Hanne only had a small encounter with. She says: "I don't dare to say too much about it but it had a big impact on me, it was for me a door into something that I feel has never left me" (Appendix VI: Extract C).

configurations of any number of other joints at any given moment, or the myriad other temporospatial configurations that will be present (or absent) to the dancer's awareness. For example, a gesture carries its own emotionality that already speaks, albeit figuratively, on a poetic register. The dancers Hanne works with were thus invited to notice that this is already complex in its organisation. Through continual changes in direction, or through the spatial relationship to other dancers and their configurations at any given moment, new complexities were continually opening, expressing and demanding to be read. It is not important in the context of the studio practice to identify or deal with interpreting what that emotional resonance may be. Rather, it is enough (for now) that the dancer develops the sensitivity to differentiate between the feeling of one configuration or another. Thus, when Hanne referred to the 'complex phrase', she was not simply referring to a collection of words, she was also referring to the complexity of the infinite possibilities made by the angles ('geometry') of the bones produced by movements at the joints. Thus, a process of alignment involved expanding awareness of bodily configurations in readiness for voicing-and-listening with a poetic voice (and ear).

Listening and Balance

It became clear through *The Complex Phrase* that listening, for a dancer, can be problematic because the everyday habitual process of coupling movement (often with gesture) and voice is disrupted in the work of a voicing dancer. If the ideal aims of the teaching are to be met in terms of fusing dancing and voicing, then the dancer is involved in more than simply voicing-and-listening; they must move at speed, cope with being off-balance and deal with the highly skilled endeavour of dancing. This is problematic, especially when working with words, so that it demands a staging in the pedagogical approach to aid a dancer's relationship to words. In everyday movement most of us learn

how to orient ourselves in gravity well enough, for the most part while going about our daily actions in vertical mode. Yet for the voicing dancer who is engaged in the activity of voicing-and-listening while moving (often) at speed, there are clearly extra demands also placed on the vestibular system through the potential reorientations and accelerations associated with dance. Sound is largely perceived through the ear, which houses two distinct perceptual systems – vestibular and auditory¹²⁹ – that are processed on either side of the head. The outer ear funnels the vibrations for sound and carries them to the eardrum, which responds to the fluctuations in air pressure, disturbing the small bones of the middle ear to activate the cochlea housed in the inner ear. On a micro-level this is already complex! But given that the inner ear also houses the vestibular system, (the three semi-circular canals serve as a kind of compass to help detect three-dimensional movement), the proximity (indeed connection) of these two systems means that, although they are always engaged in the (potentially) disorienting action a dancer undertakes, here they are placed under extra demand. In practice, dancers are adding complexity to such processes by coming to the floor, leaping through air and intentionally playing with changes in the velocity of their movements. And they are speaking at the same time! Hanne has said, ‘we’re very fast – not fast, but up to date. Of course, if the arm moves the foot knows, but not if it is not very well credited. It must be fully credited’ (Appendix IV: Hanne, Extract B). Clearly the work of voicing and dancing together at speed, or in less vertical positions, involves staying up to date (or maintaining an integrated body awareness) while doing it. For the voicing dancer, as it is for any performer working with the voice, the skull is clearly a key bony landmark in

¹²⁹ See Kreiman and Sidtis (6) for neuro-physical explanations of how these two systems connect through the impulses of the cochlear and vestibular branches that form the eighth (vestibulocochlear) cranial nerve to carry the impulses to the auditory cortex in either hemisphere of the brain.

this process, but one not generally given sustained consideration in the dance studio as a discrete area of the body. Rather, there is a recognition of how the head is part of an integrated whole, such that the processes of voicing-and-listening while dancing are recognised as stretching through the whole body. It follows that, for a voicing dancer in studio practice, active listening is dependent on the development of this integration. In class, Hanne did not overstate the conductive auditory features of the skeletal frame but, because of the invitation to consider a more global skeletal awareness through touch, its resonant qualities were accessed. Primarily the bones of the skull can be considered a resonating space, but from a practical (rather than physiological) perspective it is possible to imagine the whole skeletal frame as a drum (beyond the eardrum). The dancer's bones vibrating forms part of a mechanism that allows a dancer to hear the sounds they are making, and this logic extends to the ribcage as well. The need to listen in the studio therefore calls on the dancer to develop specialised skills to cope with the perceptual shifts a dancer is subject to in this work – aural as well as kinaesthetic. The work with the bones is significant from this perspective, since they are a frame for listening (they both conduct sound and allow for it to resonate) through which dancers can gather a sense of the depth of their tonal textures as they listen to themselves speak. These processes are amplified through the whole body's musculo-skeletal relationship to space, including the floor, which provides its base of support, and this aspect to the work was revealed through this stage of Hanne's work.

Hanne's emphasis on bone and touch chime with the Feldenkrais Method's Functional Integration (FI) mode of teaching, where a teacher and student engage in a hands-on movement exchange designed to retrain and improve functional movement. In the Feldenkrais Method, over longer periods of time and in quite different ways to the work with bone in the context of the dancing body, it is likely that improvements in coordination can lead to tasks being performed with improved function. For example, Feldenkrais'

success in rehabilitating the function of speech in people who had suffered cortical damage due to stroke is documented in *Body Awareness as Healing Therapy: The Case of Nora* (1977). Here, over the course of several lessons, Feldenkrais was able to help a 60-year old woman (Nora) reintegrate the neuro-muscular connections so that she could overcome her aphasia. Feldenkrais also recognised the neural asymmetry that meant that most speech loss for those who are right-handed (following Broca's discoveries) is caused by damage to the brain's left hemisphere and this underpinned his approach. Common to the examples of Feldenkrais' and Hanne's skeletal foci is a recognition that direct contact with bone through touch can integrate with cerebral processes. Feldenkrais was well-aware of the way movements of the head facilitate the passing of sensory information to the brain, describing it as a kind of "periscope of the central nervous system" (*Embodied Wisdom* 8). The genius of Feldenkrais was that he understood that the vestibular system would not only be served by movements of the head, but also through the whole of the body, right down to the feet and how the twenty-six bones through each foot could be organised and differentiated to better articulate and inform balance and coordination.

But listening is also contingent on orienting oneself with the aid of the eyes while dancing. Ingold suggests that "listening is just as much a means of active inquiry and of orienting oneself in the world as is looking" (*Perception* 274). This is precisely where, in the context of the voicing dancer, the use of 'ensoundedness' as a practice of ongoing enskilment finds deeper currency. Listening is a mode of participatory engagement with the environment that is not opposed to vision because "hearing is critically guided by the 'antennae' of sight" (275) such that it is transformed into a more active form of listening. Indeed, Ingold suggests that it is highly likely that many of us are guided by the skill of echolocation much more than perhaps we realise because it largely escapes our awareness (274). In other words, the complexity of listening 'recedes' (to recall Leder) or is 'integrated'

(to recall Feldenkrais) so that its reliance on looking is undistinguished. In the case of deafness such orientations are differently enabled.¹³⁰ Given that the whole body is integrated into acts of listening, there is the potential for the vibrations that would cause sound to be perceived in a person with hearing loss still to be felt. Ingold gives this the term “touch-hearing” (274) and the potential for resonance felt through the body, dependent on the contact of the feet on a surface capable of conducting those vibrations such as wood. The same can be said for the barefoot dancer travelling, in the main, across the wooden floor of the studio of Carthago Delenda Est. The tactility of the floor and its conduciveness works in tandem with the whole body to allow for feeling in the activity of hearing to be prioritised, especially once words are in play as they are in Hanne’s work. In addition, the activity of voicing and dancing together calls back into awareness the coupling of looking-and-listening as a tactile-kinaesthetic act. Following Ingold, who has also talked about acts of paying aural attention as if the whole body stretches out to become like an ear, I therefore suggest that as well as the poetry of the moving body and voice so under scrutiny in Hanne’s work, a notion of the ‘poetic ear’ must be added to any analysis of her studio practice. For a voicing dancer, listening to sound (and silence) involves such stretching as an embodied process. A tactile-kinaesthetic approach to building awareness for looking-and-listening can be understood in this way as an attunement practice.

To tie up this bodily-focused area of Hanne’s work, clearly there are convergences with Hamilton in terms of a shared lexicon and common principles. This area of the work is also in tune with the kind of developmental approach that has been drawn out through

¹³⁰ Blind and deaf people, like everyone else, sense with their whole body, even if the sensory resources they access are differently enabled. In the case of blindness, sound can enliven the dimensions of space as in the example of rain rendering a blind person’s surroundings with an acoustic topology.

Zaporah's pedagogical approach. Certainly there is a corporeal apprenticeship stage that focuses on the moving body, often deferring any vocal work. Accessing, expanding and integrating bodily awareness may not be codified as a 'first stage' in Hanne's pedagogy – her approach cannot be drawn in such schematic terms¹³¹ – but this kind of work can be understood as a vital underpinning for the work with words that will emerge from it.

Breaching Silences

Every move and every word have a specific weight, an emotional load, a geometry from which they are born. In performance they occur in a particular configuration at a particular moment. They are not connected by a narrative, but they have relationship to what precedes or follows.

(Hanne)¹³²

Given that for Hanne the geometry shaped by the angle of bone and its relationship to space is considered poetic, voicings deepen this layering yet again. Hanne's conception of poetry is therefore multi-layered – textured with silence and movement as much with the words themselves. Poetry is embedded in silence; without it (as in speech) poetic text cannot function. In contrast to the aesthetics produced in Action Theater, in Hanne's work there is a lot of space allowed for silence as a chamber for the echoes and traces words emit.

¹³¹ Hanne has said that in terms of structuring her teaching, she has "no template... I work with the people that are there and I imagine what is possible, but mostly I'm an artist and I teach from my work directly..." (Appendix VI: Extract B), though, as I have drawn out with respect to lineages, there is always some form of 'template' or structure of technique being appropriated.

¹³² Taken from "Billie's Outline", a rationale for her classes published in Vesty et al. "Artefacts: A Multi-Voiced Collection of Paraphernalia, Documentation and Reflection on the Space and Words for Dancers Work-Week", *Choreographic Practices*, 2017, Vol 8: 1, pp. 131–67.

Attending to silence has an agentive quality that surfaces in the listener's relationship with it. Sound scholar Salome Voegelin's *Listening to Noise and Silence* (2010) puts silence in generative relation to speech as an agentive force. She says:

[s]ilence is the dynamic locale of the agency of perception and it is also the locale of anticipation that wills experience to speak. On its way to language experience meets the symbolic in the thick materiality of silence and searches for words in its sensorial depth. (103)

Voegelin's 'thick materiality of silence' undergirds the acoustic space in the voicing dancer's practice. The silence can be thick too in the anticipation of the first piece of vocal material being issued from a dancer's mouth in studio practice as dancers breach their silent spaces. For a voicing dancer, silence is itself sonic material. Attention is drawn to the qualitative differentiations of silence because voicing enlivens the acoustic space and dancers become attuned to the texture of silence and its gradations. Consequently, in these practices, silence exists on a noise continuum with voicing such that it draws attention to the ensoundedness of the space overall.

Inner-Outer Voicings

The silence-noise continuum also functions for a voicing dancer in terms of what can be referred to as inner voicings. To work with words is, in part, a negotiation between the inner and outer voice that can also fail to find resolution through the dancing body. The searching and selecting of words brings the relationship between inner voice and outer voice into stark relief in studio practice. Indeed, it could be countenanced that a voicing dancer is accompanied by a figurative counterpart – the inner-voicing dancer. The appearance of unvoiced speech may be characterised as the 'little voice', the 'nagging voice'

or the 'voices in the head' with which a dancer grapples in studio practice. The poet and philosopher Denise Riley in "'A Voice Without a Mouth': Inner Speech", has spoken of the:

inner voice, which, however ostensibly silent, is still able to be heard by its possessor. Where it resonates, no air is agitated. No larynx swells, no eardrum vibrates. Yet if I swing my attention on to my inner speech, I'm aware of it sounding in a very thin version of my own tone of voice. I catch myself in its silent sound, a paradox audible only to me. (57-104)

The relationship between the inner voice as a 'thin version' of the outer voice is supported by neurological claims that the human brain undertakes differentiated processes depending on whether it is monitoring outer or inner speech. Two separate specialised brain circuits provide opportunities for monitoring one's own speech performance which serve apparently different purposes – checking outer speech for mistakes in production (whether it be intonation, pronunciation or word choice), and checking inner speech based on the formation of thought and intention.¹³³ For a dancer, this relationship is more likely to manifest in an awareness of the 'very thin version' of their voicings. In practice, a dancer may well experience nervousness at hearing their own out-loud voice. But I suggest that one is not the representation of the other; instead the inner/outer duality of voice collapses into a continuum of inner-outer voicing where a dancer negotiates, through listening-and-voicing, the choices they make so that the inner is simply the underside of the outer voice, in constant and ongoing negotiation.

However, this underside occupies a kind of darkness where (figuratively speaking) a dancer's voice cannot find its light. This relationship between silence-noise on the one hand

¹³³ See Kreiman and Sidtis, pp. 196-199.

and darkness-light on the other is notable. For LaBelle the inner voice is a form of self-talk where:

[i]n thinking about what to say, I hear the silence within. It starts as an unidentifiable collection, a hesitant murmuring – I see it almost as a darkness that begins to move, an uncertain matter in pursuit of form. Something starts to develop, to gain definition, dim at first and then slowly, mysteriously brightening, and suddenly, words appear. They break out of this darkness to bubble up, and reverberate as an inner voice: that is, they speak before I do. I can almost feel them, these words tickling the back of my throat with their soft, restless hands. (87)

In this passage, LaBelle poetically explodes a moment of vocal process and languishes in its description. The temporal space it occupies is not one that a dancer has privilege to as they engage in the split-second immediacy of improvisatory performance. But the notion of words bubbling up into the light from the darkness within suggests a relationship to inside spaces and depths of the body – the ‘uncertain matter’ – which I also understand as the sticky places where words are forming in a dancer’s mouth, on the cusp of being uttered. Producing words as material, in practice, means negotiating what it is a dancer is ‘allowed’ to say; it is not the case that a dancer can say whatever they like or produce without recourse to the past or to others. Given that words register as poetry but also as public disclosures, caught up in a notion of identity and selfhood, a voicing dancer may be faced with fear or doubt about saying the ‘right’ thing. This opens a potential ethico-political fissure that exposes issues of censorship, self-editing and inhibition. What words a dancer chooses to speak on the studio floor is subject to social constraints and contingencies just as a person is in their everyday speaking. A dancer makes themselves particularly vulnerable by speaking

out loud in the studio. And this is one reason why attention needs to be given to the phenomenon of silence as a constitutive part of the voicing dancer's environment.

These analyses of silence and inner voicings invest Hanne's work with an acoustic dimension that also marks the individual subjectivity of the dancer's words. This is manifested by the uniqueness of the voice, and it is here, rather than with the words themselves, where one can make fuller claims to authorship. It may seem like stating the obvious to say that, in humans, voicing signals not just the sound and semantic sense of speech but also reveals the myriad information attributed to personality. For Cavarero, the voice's unique value is found precisely through the act of listening to its sonorous materiality that renders it relational among "uniquenesses" that can only be captured through the vocalisation of speech and not by speech itself (16). In this respect, mimesis surely fails due to the voice's unique timbre. This idea is most famously captured in Roland Barthes' concept of *le grain de la voix* to signal its fundamental inimitability. Barthes proposed that the unique materiality of the voice be considered as the 'grain' that refers to "the body in the voice as it sings, the hand as it writes, the limb as it performs" (504-510). I understand Barthes' 'grain' to refer to the inimitable body of both the voice and the dancing body differentiated from the signifying 'texts' they produce. To explain this further, transposed from the example of listening to the singing voice, Thomaidis points out that "two orders co-exist and compete with each other: namely, the pheno-song – which is the 'surface' of the song, the language, the formal codes of composition and style – and the geno-song – which is the materiality of the singer's vocal production" (*Theatre & Voice* 45-46). Crucially, in the gap between surface and materiality space is created to produce meaning (what Barthes refers to as '*signifiance*' or meaningfulness). It is in this way that the improvisatory mode of production for the voicing dancer can bring the fusion of the 'pheno'

and 'geno' into proximity as contiguous meaning-making activities such that Barthes' gap potentially disappears due to Instant Composition's fusion of process and product.

That there also exists however the potential for the voice's unique materiality to arise not simply as tone and timbre but also in the gap between the quality of the voice and the material being produced is crucial to understanding how a voicing dancer grapples with the process of choosing and reproducing material. In studio practice, when the voice falters, as the dancer gets caught in the problem of dealing with meaningfulness, a resolution may be found by coming to terms with the idea that in giving voice to a word in performance, it is necessary for a dancer to appreciate that in the very instant it is produced it is always already unique. The uniqueness is produced not simply by the person, but also in the ongoing reconfigurations of the composition. In this scenario, the vocal material – a word for example – has its value achieved not simply by the word itself, but also in the communicative power of how it is materialised through the voicing of it. The quick and easy way micro-cultures, habits and patterns emerge in the studio have their bearing on these voicings too. These sound like statements of the obvious but given the myriad configurations that are possible at any given moment in choreographic terms, all is novel, all is unique and all is multi-vocal as authorship is multiply distributed.

If, as Hanne claims, an appreciation of vocal material as 'poetry' is revealed through, with or from the moves a dancer makes, then the speaking of words and the movement of the body must work in concert beyond the everyday kinds of gestures and movements that accompany conventional speech. With the dancing body also working in tandem with the production of words, the multitudes of possible poetic configurations are further amplified. However, again, this presents problems for the voicing dancer to do with disrupting established patterns of how the body moves when it engages speech. Merleau-Ponty used the term 'word-gesture' to describe the way in which a word interweaves with a common

set of established meanings, shared with others, while offering up a 'new' sense contingent on a particular setting and bodily pattern "understood to external witnesses" (225). The notion of gestural acts has been further illuminated by Noland, for whom a gesture "is a performative – it generates an acculturated body for others – and, at the same time, it is a performance – it engages the moving body in a temporality that is rememorative, present, and anticipatory all at once" (17). Here, Noland is referring to everyday physical, rather than vocal, gestures, underlining their complex temporal qualities that problematise notions of presence and novelty. I refer to these notions of gesture, including the recalling of Barthes' notion of the 'grain', to underscore how a retraining of a dancer's relationship to words is at the heart of what is being scaffolded through Hanne's pedagogy. This demands an almost ontological study of 'the word'.

The Word

Hanne has said that "the work is making dance and making poetry. The work is not even putting them together. The work is having one emerge from the other and housing them in one world, in one body" (Appendix VI: Extract A). But before having words and movement emerge together it was necessary in *The Complex Phrase* course to consider words as discrete objects to understand their 'kinetic power'. Whereas the rhythmic or musical qualities (although explored in quite different ways) were an explicit feature in Zaporah's and Hamilton's teaching, words were more directly interrogated as objects of study in Hanne's. For example, Hanne has suggested that words can be 'handled', and that in doing so they 'shift their identity as they expand. They become more amorphous. Yet they find their place more after this handling. They can be more themselves' (Appendix IV: Hanne, Extract C). Words can be part of complex phrases that are poetically woven through the environment of their making. In class, single words were handled through the imagination

as if they were tangible objects. For example, Hanne facilitated a twenty-minute exploration of a single word – say “J E L L Y F I S H”. The task was for dancers to imagine the word in its written form, as if it were possible to hold the optical illusion of it in the hands out in front of the body. Over several minutes, the word was ‘held’, as if to sense its imagined weight, its texture. The instruction was to manipulate the imagined word and ‘hang out’ with it, to touch it, expand it, contract it, to imagine plucking or stretching out the individual letters that form it. Eventually the task was to let the imagined word disperse while leaning the body (led by the sternum) into the space where it had been imagined. The idea was to ‘absorb’ the word, or to imagine an external representation of it being ‘incarnated’ by imagining it move to a more internally dispersed place throughout the whole of the body. Then, to move through and with this idea into fuller choreography. Such tasks are typical of an approach Hanne takes where words are considered to be things that can be handled both in the imagination and through the event of speaking. The length of time given to such exercises allowed for the possibility of words to have a semblance of materiality and in such ways, words took on a more tangible form capable of being de-formed in one’s awareness.

While some words point and gesture clearly to their established referents, Hanne foregrounded the ways that words could be reworked to deform them, or to disrupt a dancer’s relationship to the meaning of them. At the same time, this was founded on an understanding that a word already has multiple meanings attached to them. Hanne has said, taking the word “A P P L E” as an example:

apples did very likely exist before they were named but that word has travelled through so many cultures, through so much time, and apple has been transformed into so many other things, from juice, to being displayed on paintings, it’s very simple, it’s just anything that has a life has infinity in it. And ‘one apple’ doesn’t have an infinite life but ‘apple’

has quite lengthy expectation and it goes out into all directions.

(Appendix VI: Extract C)

A dancer is therefore dealing with a relationship to a word that has a temporal stretch, and it is possible to play with the multiple dimensions a word has; including the habitual. To deal with defamiliarising a dancer's relationship to words, Hanne gave participants a task to create neologisms using the root 'P A R K', writing it in as many ways as possible in our notebooks and keeping tally of how many times we had used it (Fig. 12).

rehabilitation occurred, so that *'parcing'*, after some time, became a regular way of speaking – part of the ongoing development of one's language skill as these new words were spoken out loud. This process was generative of a creative sensibility that, marked by the word's sound, gave licence to create and craft other neologisms. Thus, by defamiliarising the relationship between words and disrupting normative habits of speech they were also anchored in the sensuality of their soundings. At the same time such strategies aimed to reappraise what it may mean to construct poetic phrases.

As I have said, there was a polyglottic character to the workshop environments insofar as they drew an international mix of participants. Sometimes the many languages circulating would be reflected in the vocal material produced in artistic work, with some dancers noting the pros and cons of working with their first language. In fact, many dancers (across all the practices under consideration) reported the benefit of working in an additional language as a way to defamiliarise their relationship to a word.¹³⁴ In Hanne's classes, dancers were actively encouraged to work with their mother tongue, so that on occasion several languages were operable in the studio. This further emphasised the sound properties of spoken words and further amplified the acoustic space.

Strings of Words

In *The Complex Phrase*, the work with words was furthered as a practice in poetic text once it was arranged with other words and Hanne made working with the construction of these arrangements explicit. The 'two-fold' process Hanne refers to, leads a dancer 'to lace a word with a move or a word with a word' (as cited above) but these interweavings are not

¹³⁴ See for example Appendix IV: Zaporah, Day 5.

necessarily found in a dancer's habitual patterns of constructing phrases. For a voicing dancer in Hanne's classes, the everyday technique of using words needs to be reordered so that novel patterns of vocal and physical gestures are capable of becoming re-fused in poetic configurations. Indeed, this is one of the key activities voicing dancers are practising. Partly this is facilitated by the demand to dance – the body's limbs have already been called into service in choreographic ways and the creative expression given by solo moves, or group compositions already stretch the bodies beyond the limits of normal utterance. But when working more discretely with words, a practice of disassociation was counterintuitively developed in Hanne's classes, by actively choosing to couple, rather than de-couple, words by association to retrain a dancer's movement relationship to them. This seemingly contradictory strategy of working with undisrupted association could be illustrated for example by coupling the words:

“B A D” and “A P P L E”, with “C A R T”.

This is to say, that those three words are likely to appear together in an everyday sentence construction familiar to those with a good working knowledge of the English language. At stages, Hanne encouraged this habit of word-association, which tended to be operative by default in the studio as dancers practised. The strategy of working with the habit of association produced a fuller awareness of it, not dissimilar to the principle of going with the path of least resistance so familiar to a Feldenkrais practitioner in touch-based work. By engaging this strategy with word association, it became more possible to make choices about actively choosing to place apparently disassociated words in relation. New habits could emerge, rooted in a trust that apparently random formulations could nevertheless emerge in a meaningful pattern. For example:

“B A T H” spoken before “A P P L E” and followed by “R I F L E”.

This is a construction that may, in the moment of spontaneous speaking, seem unfamiliar, yet nevertheless maintains the potential to set in motion the space for each word to resonate with the others to produce poetic meaning through their associations. In practice, experimenting in such apparently dissociative ways with three or more words could occupy dancers as part of their movement practice in Hanne’s classes for several minutes. Hanne has said that in such instances as the kind given above, where three seemingly dissociated words come together through speech, that each word finds its specificity. Indeed, when poetry (as word) comes together with dancing, the words individuate. I note Hanne saying that ‘dance and poetry have been abused and battered. So, they’ve separated them. But they’re irrevocably linked. When each are allowed to individuate, they pull each other forward. They’re not just co-habiting, they’re collaborating. They go perfectly well together. And, in tune with our times’ (Appendix IV: Hanne, Extract C). The individuation of words is practised with an understanding that each word has an identity not lost in the familiarity of a non-poetic sentence. Paradoxically, a dancer can find that by treating words and phrases in this way, they can be integrated more fully through the body because, after this handling, they have been both brought to the surface of awareness and yet unsettled from the habitual anchor-points that everyday language usage rehearses into their fabric.

The two-step strategy of association and disassociation could be deployed in longer phrases. The first step placed words in readily recognisable syntactical structures. Hanne insisted that dancers commit to making full sentences, and (once again) to not necessarily resist the quotidian in accessing a poetic sensibility. Hanne offered the following two sentences as examples for dancers to examine their poetic construction:

“The eagle has wings that are fifty-two metres wide”

"The eagle spread his wings"

The first construction edges away from poetry because it is geared towards providing information. It does not preclude the imagination, but it does anchor the information in a way that limits meaning options. There are still some options (for instance, how one imagines fifty-two metres can vary subjectively) but the second construction captures a more dynamic image. The arrangement of words in the phrase offers the potential for the listener to colour the image. The image is bound in action, as if the eagle is about to take flight. The image, once ensounded, can live and vibrate in different zones; its complexity manifested by such manipulations. For Hanne, the complex phrase is a poetic phrase because the words that make it up 'go out in all directions' (cited above) and all are subject to a plurality of meanings. Indeed, for Hanne, this is how poetry is also political. To describe an eagle very simply in this way opens space for it to co-exist in the imagination of the speaker and the listener, without the maker imposing closed structures. It empowers the listener with autonomy, a thread I extend below in relation to performance and audience. At this point, voicing even with the simplest of syntactical structures rendered the material a more porous and opaque character in terms of meaning.

Aural attention was given to the syntactical structure by inviting an attunement to subtle differences in the arrangement of sounds of words together in the arrangements of full sentences. Hanne gave dancers the following example:

"I am in Belgium; I am not in Germany"

rather than:

"I am in Belgium, not Germany"

On paper, there is little difference between the two constructions in terms of informational content. In either case, it is clear the speaker is qualifying the place they are in, as opposed to another place. On paper, a reader might presume it is a dialogic response to another speaker's suggestion that they are in Germany rather than Belgium. Gleaning the information through primarily visual means, the first phrase looks as if it has the potential to occupy more time and space. One could hazard a guess that if this phrase were issued into space as sound, it may affect more fully the vibratory field by taking longer to say and literally occupy more airtime. Voicing these phrases and hearing the difference through auditory feedback may take some repetitions, but in the liveness of the studio, without necessarily having a visual reference to the words as written material in the first place, dancers' ears could quickly open up to the subtle differences in the way the information resonated. On the face of it, this is nothing new. Text-based theatre often engages long analyses of text in rehearsals also designed to habituate the actor towards a fusion of voice and action that resonates with emotional content. Text, both for the actor and the voicing dancer, remains highly subjective and depends on many prosodic variables. However, the kinds of structural experiments with poetic text operable in Hanne's studio are examples of how they offer routes into the immediacy of emotional resonance that emerges from words and dance. Despite the examples of written practice, the voicing dancer does not generally have recourse to script. In that way, this practice demands a qualitatively nuanced attunement to the task of both creating and speaking text concurrently without the visual support often afforded by script. 'Rehearsal' for the voicing dancer is geared towards a readiness to produce material. It also allows dancers to practise an ability to respond to phrases in tune with their rhythmic potential. The musicality is afforded by the configurations produced by movement choreography and less by the word order, punctuation and space given to written forms of poetic text. For the voicing dancer, poetic

phrases have an oral primacy that shifts their emphasis from the visual to the aural; produced directly from the body rather than the page. However, the distinctions drawn here between the oral and written word may not be so clear-cut and deserve further consideration.

In *The Complex Phrase*, the explicit recognition that writing practices could also inform oral ones was built on the notion that the relationship between speech and writing is also a constructive one, more entwined than separate. Ingold asserts that for many of us, “language looks special to us only because we view it from a perspective that has been conditioned through our familiarity with certain practices of writing” (*Perception* 393). Writing and speaking are (for literate cultures) interwoven — a practice of speaking is already contingent on practices of writing and the shape and sound of words is difficult to cleave from a sense of them as things that are also put to paper or typed-out onto a screen. This links to Ingold’s notion of ‘meshwork’, itself inspired by the philosophy of Henri Lefebvre who, according to Ingold, observed that there is something in common:

between the way in which words are inscribed upon a page of writing, and the way in which the movements and rhythms of human and non-human activity are registered in lived space, but only if we think of writing not as a verbal composition but as a tissue of lines — not as text but as texture. (*Being Alive* 84)

Through this notion of writing as an embodied practice enmeshed in one’s rhythmic coupling with the environment, it becomes clearer how speaking-and-listening become similarly interwoven. A conception of speaking words as a textual practice can be understood as a weave. As Ingold notes, this is supported by the derivative of ‘text’ (from Latin *texere*), meaning ‘to weave’ (*Perception* 404). Similarly, Hanne’s use of the term ‘lace’ nods to this textile-like fibrous web of activity; a ‘tangle’ which gives speaking its material

capacity in any environment. The writing practice in Hanne's classes still gave prominence to the representational force of words' sound properties even though they lived on the page for a while and *vice versa*. Either way, both activities form part of the mesh of speaking them.

The inconclusiveness that has circulated in attitudes to vision and hearing (cited in Chapter Two) are similarly exhibited in such ideas about speech and writing. Ingold observes that ever since Plato and Aristotle "philosophers have tended to regard writing as an exterior, visible facade for the inner sonic reality of spoken words" (*Perception* 247). In this formula, speech is authoritative; it is closer to the truth of experience. At the same time, it is supposed that "words can be extracted from the medium of sound, and can be preserved, whether as impressions in the mind or as inscriptions on the page, independently of their sounding" (248).¹³⁵ The link here is that the activity of speaking language serves as an example of the interplay between looking-and-listening that can be found in distinctions between speech and writing, and arrive at a point where ensoundedness can more fully apply to speech. While the two practices are related, it is not the case, as can often be supposed, that writing is a mere translation of speech.¹³⁶ At the same time, writing, just like speaking, is achieved by the whole body and both are highly skilled embodied tasks at whatever level they are practised. What such debates bring to Hanne's work is a theoretical

¹³⁵ Ingold cites Ong's work on orality and oral cultures pointing to the distinctions he and others made about the relationship of speech and writing.

¹³⁶ A more expansive appraisal of the relationship between speech and writing can be found in the work of Jacques Derrida who alluded to the activity of "writing in the voice, the voice as differential vibration" ("Dialanguages" 132-155). According to Thomaidis, "Derrida's intention was not necessarily to counter-privilege writing over speech but to expose their co-dependence as a pairing of opposites" (*Theatre & Voice* 24).

perspective on the interlacing of sound, speech and writing as they emerge through movement.

Mimesis

Once words and phrases were operable in the studio, issues of authorship emerged. Hanne's week-long course *Mimesis* (2017) took as its loose framework a notion of borrowing or copying to steer practice. In the Platonic sense, mimesis refers partly to the futility of art's imitative nature. Plato considered art as a copy of reality, which is already a copy. In that sense all is representation. According to Matthew Potolsky:

early uses of mimesis and related words refer chiefly to the physical mimicry of living beings by bodily gesture or voice, and only more rarely to paintings or statues. Yet even in its earliest uses, mimesis never simply meant imitation. From the very beginning it described many forms of similarity or equivalence, from visual resemblance to behavioural emulation. (16)

For Hanne, art's imitative quality is not simply inescapable, it can be celebrated, even in the production of improvisatory material that tends to acclaim novelty. Indeed, Hanne has repeatedly brought attention to the way in which dancers imitate, emulate and appropriate others in generative ways. Skill is learned by taking from others, and knowledge is handed down, along or around precisely because humans have the capacity for borrowing and copying. In the workshop environment, mimetic processes are how we learn, as we take and pass along ideas. This is inspiration – sharing the same air as knowledge circulates. And this enters an ethical dimension insofar as mimesis challenges a notion of authorship and

ownership, a challenge stemming from questions that form on the studio floor, such as what to say, when and how to say it, and whose words are they anyway?

In class, at any one time, words would be circulating through the studio; often being repeated or 'picked up' (unwittingly copied) from another dancer. With several dancers practising at any given time words appeared and reappeared in the studio and some stuck around:

"HORSE"; "SHIBBOLETH"; "ROSE"

come to mind. In Hanne's classes, dancers may spend hours producing word after word while dancing, attempting to couple them, firing them out like sonic missiles in all directions as their bodies traverse, turn and swirl through space. With several or many dancers doing that at the same time, at the level of practice and rehearsal, there can be many words in circulation bombarding the ears. Some resound for longer than others to form temporary shared lexicons, so that where they 'belong' (or who to) becomes uncertain. This not only unsettles the ground of authorship but shifts emphasis away from individualistic production towards collective collaboration.

Hanne gave dancers the task to pair up, and to take turns to sit out to look and listen to the other work. The task for the looker-listener was simply to hold the other accountable by giving the dancer their attention. At the same time, the looker-listener was invited to receive the choreography of the dancer as if it were a gift and then to take that material back into the space to use/borrow/de-form. Again, going with, rather than against, the habit of copying and borrowing functioned similarly to the approach of working with the association of words in phrases through a path of least resistance. A paradoxical gap was yet again encountered because the impossibility of imitation was also revealed. Whether deliberately or accidentally, the copying failed. Another dancer's material, albeit contained by the same word or phrase, was in mimetic excess that made clear the impossibility of

ascribing singular authorship to any one speaker. Yet, a dancer is also bound to make an investment in the speaking of words as if they are their own. What becomes clear through the practice of imitation is the tension between authorship and its impossibility – it is caught in a necessary gap between its presence and absence.

The misfit found in the gap between a vocal or movement gesture's habitual and novel rendering is productive. Despite the idiosyncrasy of vocal and movement gestures, they have form as recognisable signifiers within a system of language. Under these terms, a place opens up for the quotidian to exist in a voicing dancer's repertoire. Indeed, even cliché (as a recognisable and culturally contingent set of gestural orders) can be celebrated as material that can be intentionally selected compositionally in Hanne's work. Both in terms of words and dance, cliché can be reinscribed into the practice precisely because it always already misfits. It is idiosyncratic and novel according to the ongoing reconfigurations of body, space and time in composition. In other words, cliché (strictly speaking) cannot exist. For Noland, "[i]f moving bodies perform in innovative ways, it is not because they manage to move without acquired gestural routines but because they gain knowledge as a result of performing them" (7). In the context of a voicing dancer working with copying or cliché, agency is present in the act of the gestural routines such that knowledge is generated every time they are performed. These routines are contingent on both a disciplining of bodily movement and the discovery of it in relation to the environment. The voicing dancer provides instant expression for the "kinetic energy (they) organize" (206) while they have the potential to encounter and give expression to yet unknown changes through how they respond to the world they are in. In this respect, a dancer is caught in the act of exhibiting their learning of either the habits they have constructed or the new habits they are in the process of constructing. Following this, both materiality and subjectivity, pertaining to lacing voicing and moving, become central concerns because, as Cavarero observed, the

“human condition of uniqueness resounds in the register of the voice” (8). This must be where a voicing dancer has their unique presence revocalised in ways that can also reveal clues about where they are situated and who they are as material-character bodies in socio-cultural terms. This idea will be explored further below in the context of performance with an audience.

By confronting the issue of imitation through the concept of mimesis Hanne aimed to elicit an acceptance of the repetition and recycling of language. This way, Hanne broadly challenged tropes that assume the novel status of ‘original’ material produced through improvisatory means. The titles of articles and books to do with improvisation, or the phrases that circulate the milieu of improvisatory practice, often laud improvisation’s capacity to ‘take us by surprise’,¹³⁷ keep us on the ‘edge’ of not knowing, or allow us to get ‘out of our heads’.¹³⁸ A dancer working through improvisation can be conditioned to celebrate the production of material as if it were unplanned, unmarked, and unshackled from the past; once free and unleashed, content is supposedly boundless. To some extent, in *Mimesis* such positions were demystified in relation to the production of material. Hanne’s approach was geared to embrace problems that are often rooted in a conflict between the idealised aims of the practice and the reoccurring ‘mis-fitting’ failures attributable to training processes (as discussed in Chapter Two). Having the improvised production of dancing and voicing emerge together is not an easy practice – often lacking in contiguity and flow where words can appear anything but ‘laced’ with another. In practice, if anything,

¹³⁷ See Anne Cooper Albright and David Gere, editors. *Taken by Surprise: A Dance Improvisation Reader*. Wesleyan, 2003.

¹³⁸ Advertising a recent workshop in London, entitled *Ta(l)king Your Head Off!*, Action Theater teacher Rudstrøm invited participants to enter the “explosive, colorful, absurdity of experiential speech” (email bulletin 15 Nov. 2018).

the words and phrases can seem cleaved from (rather than 'woven' into) the fabric of the poetry. Indeed, I suggest that this is more often the case than not. Material is made manifest in temporary fixings and loose ownership of what is produced. But this can be resolved once a dancer has been able to relinquish any need to over-identify with a word by making second-order mental representations, or to feel disproportionately responsible for what a phrase may mean. This now begs a question of who participates in that production of meaning. It is possible, indeed necessary, to share the task of producing meaning with an audience who help form a community of lookers and listeners. I note Hanne saying: '[l]et the audience make the meaning – the gap is wide' (Appendix IV: Hanne, Extract E). So, how might an audience co-author the work of a voicing dancer? This question can only be properly considered by turning more fully to performance.

Performance Making

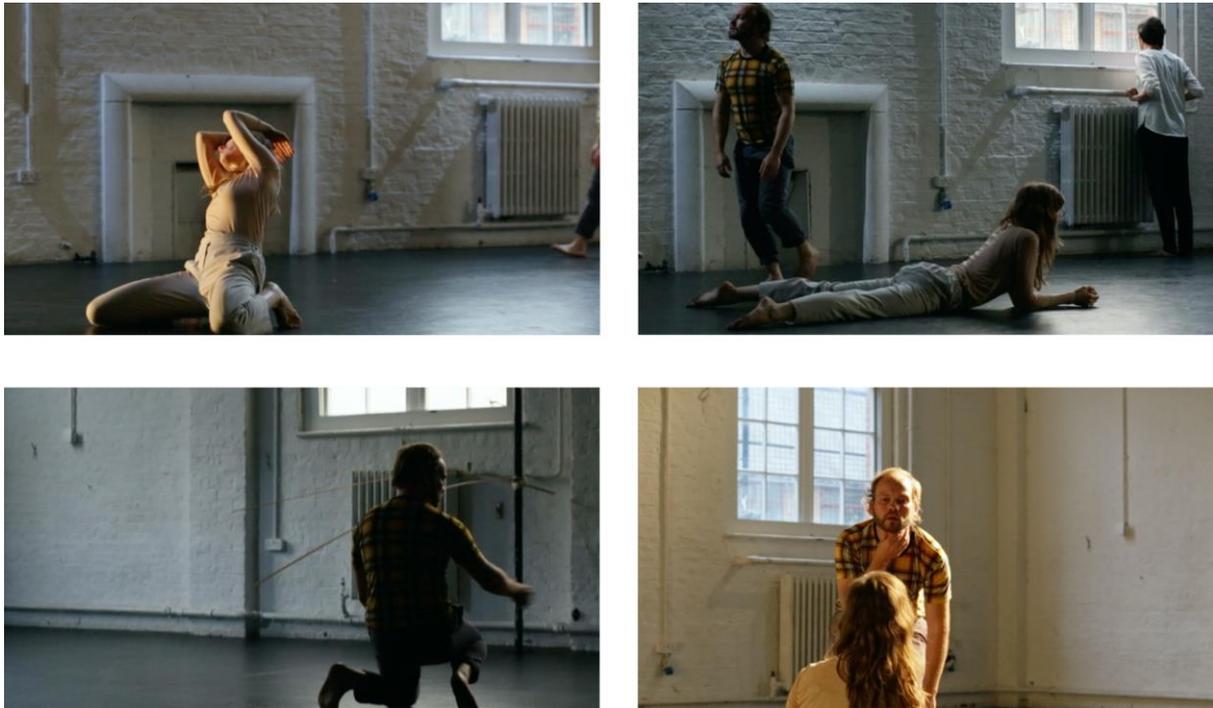


Fig. 13. Still frames from video-footage taken from *Gwineverra, Tom and the Enemy of Man* (2015), Goldsmiths University, London, UK. Images: Billie Hanne

A voicing dancer's choreographic material can be produced in performance through solo, duet and group Instant Composition of varying durations. In a performance context, qualitatively different conditions undergird the production of poetry. Here, words are more pronounced and can have a heavier weight when heard outside the frame of practice and in the glare of a paying (maybe unknown) public of many, where any words are often marked in terms of personal authorship. Indeed, it could be said that acts of utterance become forms of publishing. Silence too has a different kind of thickness. On-stage in a performance setting, silence forms part of the material conditions of performance. For Hanne, pieces are often characterised by recurring periods of silence punctuated by single words or phrases of poetry voiced while the dancer engages in movement. For a dancer, the demand to speak positions silence not just as an aesthetic component but also as a phenomenon that can bear

down on them both ethically and politically. For instance, in group compositions, there is an implicit call to take one's turn. As in everyday conversation, one is negotiating not just with what one says but when to say it and how to give space to the other to speak, while weighing the perceived demands of the material content of the piece as it emerges and unfolds. Hanne has stated that part of the work is to "work my body in the studio and see what needs to be said, what does not need to be said, when do I place it in the fifty minutes of performance" (Appendix VI: Extract C). This will be a negotiation (in part) with silence, and (in group work) with the silence that is managed collaboratively. When two voices collide in a moment after a stretch of silence, a dancer is potentially caught in a moment of decision-making where the choice is to either respond apologetically or to seamlessly signal its intent as a 'collision'. Occasionally, poetry manifests as dialogue and it is possible for the transmission of what has been voiced to invite a clearer need for silence as pause in speech that functions and registers in the realm of everyday communication. At other times, poetry manifests in more opaque ways and a dancer must develop the skill to know how to handle silence which bleeds out of a pause into a longer caesura. A voicing dancer must hear the echoes and traces, to let a word land so that its emotional ripples can live. Recognising the quality of silence therefore becomes a practice for the voicing dancer – to get to know the difference between the emptier and the fuller silences and the textures in-between.

In this setting, an audience is also listening, or more precisely looking-and-listening to the poetry in performance and its silent spaces. Of course, dance has always been listened to, regardless of the voice's presence. On-stage, noise has been produced by the labour of the performer (think of the dancer's quickened breath or the sound that comes from a slide or land of feet on the floor). As Home-Cook has observed in relation to text-based theatre, "speech-as-sound continues to resonate in the silences that it leaves behind" (11). The voicing dancer's spoken words leave acoustic traces that reverberate in a silence that an

audience helps to hold. Indeed Home-Cook suggests that an audience does not merely hear sound but actively “grasp[s]” it (169). Any silence will not just be contained by the aesthetics of the performance piece. The acoustic world of performance cannot be framed in the way that the *mise-en-scene* (in terms of costume, lighting and décor) can. Take for example that moment of transition once the audience hubbub has died down in readiness for the beginning of a performance piece, when the silence is thick with ‘anticipation’. Or, once the piece is underway, how an audience deals with the presence of sound from the auditorium or world outside. In the context of Instant Composition, as far as sound and silence is concerned, there is no ‘fourth wall’ and all sound is diegetic, so that when for example the sound of a plane flying overhead is heard, it is implicitly credited to the piece even if it is not explicitly acknowledged. On-stage, the space is also enhanced acoustically by the visual aspects of performance either because the choreography adds resonance to the poetry produced by the voice, or other design elements (such as lighting¹³⁹) further frame the vocal action.

With the onus on the audience as listeners, they become co-poets insofar as they co-produce the meaning. Like voicing, listening is neither a singular act, nor a homogenous one and it is defined by its social and political space. There are types of listening – passive/active, hard/soft, shallow/deep¹⁴⁰ – but also the activity of listening is culturally

¹³⁹ The theatre-in-the-dark, referenced in Chapter Two, has perhaps been an obvious site for an enquiry into theatre’s aurality given its attempts to alter the balance between looking and listening. See Appendix V: Extracts B & C for Hanne’s thoughts on working with light to enhance acoustic space.

¹⁴⁰ Pauline Oliveros coined the term ‘deep listening’ to describe a “total, mindful, reflexive sonic awareness that moves between trying to hear everything at once and deep attentive focus on a single sound or set of sounds” (Sterne 8).

defined and differentiated. It is also gendered, racialised, classed, sexualised and so on. For example, how a woman receives the sound of footsteps in the dark may be quite different to the way a man hears the very same sound. Jennifer Stoeber has observed the sonic-line of racialised listening, offering the 'listening-ear' as a construct to critique dominant normative practices of listening. Akin to the gaze, her term points to "listening's epistemological function as a modality of racial discernment" often through the singular prism of white elite masculinity (31). Lisbeth Lipari makes associated observations about listening but works towards an ethics of 'interlistening', which challenges a speech-centric perspective that has underplayed the "interaction, interdependence, intersubjectivity etc." (9) of speaking-and-listening. In Lipari's conception listening is emphasised as a form of speaking "that resonates with echoes of everything we have ever heard, thought, seen, touched, said, and read throughout our lives" (9). And, as Gemma Corradi Fiumara also notes, there commonly exists an "illusion that we can speak to others without being able to listen" or at the very least little has been touched on in terms of the role listening plays in speech (29). For all the focus on voicing in this thesis, it is crucial to underline the presence of the listening ear as the voice's counterpart to take account of the social, cultural and political structures that come to bear on it. As LaBelle has noted, "to give one's ear is to invest in the making of a future public; it is to give the body over, for a distribution of agency" (x). Ethically, functionally and aesthetically, voicing dancers and audience alike must listen to each other!

In performance, shared acts of listening to the voicing dancer become vital to the production of meaning in an acoustically enlivened space. Voice and text have been predominantly understood as vehicles of linguistic meaning, rather than aural or sonic phenomena. For Kendrick, as a consequence, the voice has been "dislocated from its relationship to the sonic" (36) such that the voice needs to be rethought aurally, and understood in and of itself, not simply because the voice is obviously "what (by and large)

makes the performer audible, but because the relation between voice and ear is particularly potent in sonic-led theatre practices" (xxv). While I would not position the practices under consideration in this thesis as 'sonic-led', Kendrick's comments are pertinent to the way in which the presence of voice 'ups the audio ante' in dance improvisation. But voicing must not collapse indiscriminately into the overall sonic tapestry. For Dolar "what defines the voice as special among the infinite array of acoustic phenomena, is its inner relationship with meaning" (14) and this, for me, gets to the 'heart' of what it is a voicing dancer does in the presence of an audience. In the instant moment, when producing poetic voicings, a dancer's meanings are materialised and accumulate through the participatory acts of perception, which are interlinked with past and future. Unlike pre-scripted material, improvisatory material makes the performance event one where performer and audience are engaged in a co-creation of the material that is doubly marked by their near simultaneous encounter with it. This, crucially, de-privileges the performer. A more egalitarian community of makers is forged through the event of performance in the context of these practices. This notion feeds into the idea of ensoundedness because the audience are immersed in the flow and flux of a performance environment shared with the voicing dancer in a conception that is novel and spontaneous. The audience (albeit differently from those performing) are swept along in the movement too. For Kendrick, aurality "concerns the corporeality and hapticity of audience because any reception of sound is some kind of embodiment of it" (44). Audience members are not the disembodied counterparts to the more-embodied voicing dancers, they are people; co-constituents in the creation of a theatrical event which is engaged in a haptic exchange. This chimes with vocal artist and scholar Yvon Bonenfant's suggestion that using voice in performance is a kind of 'reaching' towards the audience where it extends by "literally vibrating their tissues . . . an extended form of touch" (43-67). In such a tangible conception of voice, words can be more fully

imagined as tactile projections. In short, the ensounded dancer and audience alike reach out to each other in what has become an enlivened acoustic space.

In such a performance environment, Instant Composition pieces emerge. In terms of the aesthetics of Hanne's (and indeed Zaporah's and Hamilton's) work, while there is no drive towards conventionally defined narratives or character, an illusory fictive world can often emerge to lend the piece its theatricality. This can lead to the creation of loosely related, and sometimes opaque, images and fictional characters. Within this, the issue of meaning-making, which has surfaced in practice for (and between) dancers, is a collaboration with an audience too. A consideration of how meaning is co-produced by participatory acts of looking-and-listening will therefore be aided by referring to a specific example of performance that, I argue, can be considered a collective search for the 'heart' of a piece – one shared concurrently between the dancers and audience alike. Indeed, as I now go on to discuss, the meaningfulness of performance is achieved through mutual acts of reaching, as dancers and audience participate together to call the material into co-production.

In July 2015, I had the opportunity to perform with Hanne (along with performance artist Laura Burns) in *Gwineverra, Tom and the Enemy of Man*¹⁴¹ – a piece conceived and directed by Hanne that ran for forty-seven minutes. Here I had privileged access to the way Hanne puts artistic work together. I consider the creative working process for this piece to have begun through the initial email exchanges with Hanne, which began in early May of that year when she first made the proposal as something:

¹⁴¹ *Gwineverra, Tom and the Enemy of Man* was performed on 23 July 2015 at Goldsmiths University, London.

lightweight . . . to materialise between the three of us with the time we have available, with a couple of lights thrown at some pieces of décor and few instructions to get us going. Not sure if we would play short fragments or a longer set, but that will be clear when we are in situ. (Hanne, “Gwineverra, Tom and the Enemy of Man”)¹⁴²

A subsequent email provided details for the proposed performance in the form of the flyer¹⁴³ where Hanne described the piece as:

a graphic novel performance set at the very beginning of the 21st century. There is dream and death. The characters live in a crime-ridden city where the placement of action and words is offhand and seeks no forgiveness, yet is soft and ultimate, an instant memory, a mark. Something is familiar but becomes past as it happens and separates itself from what is. *Gwineverra, Tom and the Enemy of Man* is brought to you by Robert Vesty, whose colours are flaxen and mahogany, Laura Burns, whose colours are powder, royal and maya, and Billie Hanne, whose colours are purple frosted and floral. (Hanne, “Gwineverra, Tom and the Enemy of Man”)

In the intervening weeks, I let this information do nothing more than gestate. I resisted any initial urge to research into what Hanne might have meant by ‘graphic novel’ – a form I was aware of but had not considered before in a performance context such as this. I took

¹⁴² Hanne’s initial proposal via personal email communication on 13 May 2015 laid out some bare details followed-up with the flyer with image and description via email on 22 May 2015.

¹⁴³ See Appendix VII: Artefact 2c.

Hanne's instruction to see it as 'lightweight' as a direction to trust in the kinds of soft processes I referred to in Chapter Two in terms of methodological approaches. Given that this performance would follow the week-long workshop Hanne was facilitating with Hamilton in London (*Space and Words for Dancers*), which both Burns and I were participating in, we could count on being in the studio together engaging in practice as a form of rehearsal. In the few days leading up to the performance, Hanne, Burns and I gathered to rehearse further. We made decisions about how to decorate the 30 sq. m space – a room with permanent features such as fireplace, white brick wall and window. A decision was made to place a small piece of live grass turf upstage right, while downstage left two flexible strips of wood were hung from a scaffold post to pierce the space diagonally. This had the effect of creating spatial zones, roughly demarcated by an upstage and downstage (Fig. 13).

In rehearsal, Hanne gave Burns and I further directions, which touches on the issue of character explored in Chapter Three. Firstly, Hanne asked that (from within the piece) we never refer to each other by name. Further to this, I was directed to 'channel all the men and women of *Casablanca*'.¹⁴⁴ Hanne also gave the suggestion for me to 'channel' the actor Laurence Olivier. There was no other instruction on how to use these directions and I intuited no need to seek clarification. It did not feel necessary to seek out *Casablanca* and study the film, nor did it feel important to spend time studying Olivier. I took this 'light weight' approach to mean that it would be possible to access the world of the piece in a loose, yet nevertheless clear and specific way. Here, the atmosphere or sense of place would be realised by the space, the décor, lights as well as through the event of performance. For

¹⁴⁴ Hanne was referring to the 1942 film directed by Michael Curtiz.

Hanne, this seemingly less tangible, more ephemeral aspect to the work, is practical, literal and concrete.

Meaning

Gwineverra, Tom and the Enemy of Man was performed once only. In producing poetry instantly during performance, Hanne's directive 'to channel' receded. In effect, it was displaced by another set of concerns to do with the rigours and demands of performance conditions; of the kind identified above in terms of what to say, when to say it and what it might mean. To explore this issue of meaning-making, and by way of experiment, I will now refer to three ninety-second video clips contained in Appendix VII¹⁴⁵ that I encourage the reader to prepare to look-and-listen to. In the performance analysis that follows, I attempt to illustrate what I position here as a conundrum of meaning-making with respect to the work of voicing dancers. I purposefully, playfully and performatively use question marks (???) to signal a mode of (re)searching. This experiment in no way makes a claim to replicate the experience of the audience who, aside from being embedded in the materiality of live performance, will have been privy to all forty-seven minutes of the piece. However, it is possible that in the context of this thesis these three short clips can be engaged with as 'clues' to the issue of where meaning resides and how it is produced.

First, play Appendix VII: Artefact 2 – Clip 1. This clip captures a sequence (around seventeen minutes into the piece) where moments of disconnect occasionally appear to coalesce in other, albeit fleeting, moments of connection. Material remains unclear. The audience may be asking who these 'characters' are, where they are placed, and what

¹⁴⁵ www.researchcatalogue.net/shared/17617a83d1b8e769dc8e89627493dac2.

constitutes their relationships. When Hanne speaks: “I think you should add some radio”, there is a possibility that this material is a delayed response to Burns’ question “Iris. Gritstone. One pheasant feather. Do you think this will be enough?”. A moment later I add the phrase: “She speaks in Morse code”, and again, it is possible to identify a loose thread of connections through these moments, but their meaning is absurd, if not baffling. I contend that the form demands that dancers and audience alike are caught in a negotiation between looking for clues to discover what the piece is about yet resisting the urge to draw conclusions – attempting to add and extend while keeping only a ‘loose’ hold on the material. What is clear, is that the words and phrases carry an emotional weight that cannot be accounted for singularly. That weight is lent by the prosodic variable of speech, where the voice is delivered in terms of pitch or how words integrate rhythmically between voicers. This shifts an emphasis away from locating meaning in the semantic value of individual words or phrases towards a composite value of the sounds and feel for the texture of the vocal material – a manifestation of Hanne’s approach (as outlined earlier) to the sensuousness of the spoken word.

Second, play Appendix VII: Artefact 2 – Clip 2. Attention can be drawn in this clip (around twenty-one minutes into the piece) to the looking within the listening. From an audience perspective, we have heard the word “pretty” repeated severally in an interrogative tone. The camera angle serendipitously captures the configuration of Hanne on the floor in the foreground with her feet and back visible as she says: “Yes, I saw pretty feet”. After a slow walk across the space diagonally towards Hanne, I look at her, bringing my hand (hesitantly, nervously, threateningly?) towards my throat. She says “there is a swimming pool in your eyes” and I lower my centre of gravity leaning slightly into her before she adds, “and a predator in your teeth”. The bodies hold tension in the silence after, and then they release through the body and relinquish the space to (depart?) upstage and

stand slightly apart from each other to (look out of the window?). After a moment, I stretch out my left arm so that the hand is behind Hanne's lower back – but it does not touch. The audience see this. Does Hanne sense it? Is this reconciliation? What is it? What is clear is that poetry resides not only in the text being produced but also by the bodily configurations, their relationship to space and its architectural features, as well as the silence.

Third, play Appendix VII: Artefact 2 – Clip 3. More clues may be found in the confluence of the movement choreography and the verbal and non-verbal vocalisations, along with other sounds (diegetic and acousmatic in that we cannot see the source). Is it possible that when Hanne sweeps to the floor at the beginning of this clip (around twenty-seven minutes into the piece) and kneels next to Burns to announce: “these are our gates”, that we begin to have a firmer handle on the piece? A sense of epic scale is conjured by her outstretched arms so that when Hanne adds: “I grew up in a temple”, something mythological is invoked. But when I add a series of mouth-clicks and staccato hand gestures to this composition, what is being signalled, or invoked or told? Hanne's next phrase: “I was promised a river”, completes a triptych of images. Is their integrity punctured by Burns' next phrase? Is the material ruptured at this point? Are Burns' and Hanne's vocal registers operating in contrast or counterpoint? Is my move to the floor supposed to be fluid like a river? Did Hanne mean to respond to Burns' last phrase: “I wrote about it on a tiny pebble; I threw it over the mountain” (many seconds later and after several reconfigurations in the composition), with the phrase: “I see it flying still”? What is clear towards the end of this clip is that a moment of unison occurs as Burns and Hanne crawl across the floor on all fours as if to travel (?) or resolve (?) or represent (?). And what may also be clear to those who listen is that the sounds present in the space (and therefore the piece) do not only emanate from inside the space (initiated by the voicing dancers) but also the noise of children playing outside.

Against Interpretation

Taken together, after attending to all three clips, one may be left with questions that form less around character intentions and more around the relationships between 'character-less' figures that cannot be fixed in definition according to dramatic convention. The *dramatis personae* do not exist; only material characteristics (perhaps: flaxen, mahogany, powder, royal, maya, purple frosted and floral) or impressionistic identifiers that an audience can only fleetingly locate. The opacity of the performance material located in *Gwineverra*, *Tom and the Enemy of Man* at once invites and resists interpretation. It is inconclusive and yet, I claim, there is an imperative to search for the 'heart' of a piece; and that this searching is inevitably interpretive. But while the dancers and audience participate in this search together, they do so in starkly differentiated ways. The practice, in a pedagogical setting, asks dancers to relinquish concerns with meaning so that in performance they do not become burdened by it. Hanne has suggested that once the kinds of relationships to words that have been worked through technique are operable 'we don't have to give them meaning, we have less control. They're becoming this ocean. More direct. Table still means table, but we don't have to pin-point. They (words) have their being. The world of a word is very big' (Appendix IV: Hanne, Extract C). Hanne is suggesting that, for a dancer, to produce words is to open space for pluralities of meaning so that to insist on creating the meaning, rather than the word, diminishes the life of the latter. The work of the dancer then is to serve the ontological being of the word, more as material and less as meaning. For Hanne, voicing dancers 'are dealing with the making of form. We do not have to know what it means; that's the audience's job' (Appendix IV: Hanne, Extract D). A voicing dancer must be clear that their material has the capacity to generate pluralities of meaning. These meanings must also be appreciated as collaborations with an audience,

which itself cannot be understood as a homogenous whole. The audience is made up of people with their own histories and pluralities who grasp for meaning in untold ways. This is not to say that a dancer divests of meaning, but rather cultivates a relationship to it that understands the shared responsibility of constructing it. An excess of meaning is therefore produced in the performance environment — between dancers, between them and the audience, and between the audience and the material conditions of the performance. My claim is that Hanne's work is explicit about encouraging a collapsing of semantic organisation, by placing the responsibility for meaning-making beyond the activity of producing words in their moment. This is not to say that decisions and processes of self-editing do not happen in the moment, but it is to say that Hanne's practice encourages the performer to prioritise a value of arranging words such that their meaning continues to emerge after they have been spoken. This is because of their relation to the environment in which they have been spoken and the moment of their appearance.

For an audience, any tendency to look for meaning operates differently. To say that performers and audiences alike share in collective meaning-making is one thing, but to say that they are equally prepared is another. Susan Sontag in *Against Interpretation* (1994) notes that rather than interpret the content of performance, audiences need to respond more fully to the form. She says “[w]hat is important now is to recover our senses. We must learn to see more, to hear more, to feel more” (10). This call is one Hanne makes too, but it demands, to some extent, a retraining of how an audience engages in processes of meaning-making. This may also rely on the audience being furnished with the knowledge of any performance's

improvisatory status.¹⁴⁶ It certainly means that looking at what is produced in the form of performance, after the event, is difficult to capture. The clues laid down by the material in *Gwineverra, Tom and the Enemy of Man* cannot be deduced or singularly reduced. As Sontag says, “the function of criticism should be to show how it is what it is, even that it is what it is, rather than to show what it means” (9). Sontag is advocating a recalibration of interpretation towards the sensual. Similarly, in Hanne’s work there is a move away from meaning towards an immediate processual and sensual response to the encounters with the poetry and its ripples of meaning. These ripples live in the infinite totality of the environment in which it is immersed. The improvisatory produce that springs from these practices brings the immediacy of spontaneous speech to the foreground, such that form and content are brought into closer proximity and yet distributed multitudinously. In fact, distinctions between form and content become redundant. The immediacy of form, the Instant Composition and the concurrence of producing material in simultaneity with its reception is collective making. This notion brings this type of performance closer to Sontag’s conception of a non-interpretative experience of attention.

However, I also contend that performers and audiences alike are immersed, nevertheless, in a desire to look for meaning that attempts to rationalise, even close-off, open-ended material. To investigate this further I conducted a performance experiment (*Honey*) at the Weld studio in Stockholm in 2018 during a shared studio practice session. In

¹⁴⁶ Hanne has resisted advertising the improvised status of her artistic work. In this instance, talking to some audience members after the performance of *Gwineverra, Tom and the Enemy of Man*, it was clear that they had not understood that the piece was improvised and not pre-scribed. One audience member remarked that they had ‘wished they had known!’.

this experiment I compiled a two-minute solo Instant Compositional performance score, made in three consecutive stages.¹⁴⁷ First, I produced a silent movement (open-scored) composition, which was recorded on video. This movement score was followed immediately by a vocal composition which was captured by an audio recorder, in the same area of the space. Once the two compositions had been made and recorded – one video, one audio¹⁴⁸ – the two digital tracks were overlaid to produce a single combined audio-visual track. The aim through this experiment was to see how the vocal material may have mapped onto the movement material and to consider how they ‘make sense’ together after they have been ‘fused’.

First, play Appendix VII: Artefact 6 – Step 1, the video track of the non-voiced movement composition.

Second, play Appendix VII: Artefact 6 – Step 2, the audio track of the vocal composition.

Third, play Appendix VII: Artefact 6 – Step 3, the composite digital tracks.

The issues to do with meaning-making as a participatory act co-produced by performers and audience is pertinent to the findings *Honey* revealed. While there appears to be a general confluence of material in the combined track, there are a few key moments that appear to look and sound as if they are ‘fused’ (or to use Hanne’s term ‘laced’) together as if the choreography’s poetry is revealed by conscious mappings of vocal and movement material.

¹⁴⁷ The score’s infrastructure was offered by Paula Guzzanti, only slightly adapted in situ to take account of my concern with channelling.

¹⁴⁸ These were recorded with the assistance of Claire French.

At the same time, I note and acknowledge that I am also caught by a desire to make meaning and seek out the fitting (rather than mis-fitting) phrases of material. This experiment begs questions as to whether my proximity to the material renders my 'search' for meaning too subjectively driven – a concern I attempt to address below with respect to a different experiment (*Close:Far*). On the face of it, I suspect there is a desire for an audience to construct narrative linkages while accounting for the separation of the movement and vocal compositions. At the same time, I cannot undo the accumulative encounters I have now had with this footage. I cannot deconstruct or sever the channels that have become further enmeshed in the life of this piece as it occupies a different temporal frame (thrust further backwards into the past) than it does for anyone encountering it afresh.

Character

The issue of character encountered through Hanne's directions with respect to *Gwineverra, Tom and the Enemy of Man*, once again brings to the fore questions of the material and character body. Hanne has said that, 'character is an amalgam of specificity. Imagine it is already in your dancing' (Appendix IV: Hanne, Extract E). This notion of character refers to the articulacy of a dancer's body but with an acknowledgment of the dancer's whole personhood being foregrounded in creative expression. Prior training has taught me to approach character in theatrical terms that encompassed what I consider to be 'tighter' interpretive tools of analysis associated with actorly approaches to action perhaps best summed up in Stanislavskian terms of objectives and super-objectives, and associated psychophysical techniques of analysis. Here an actor might consider what their action or text might want to 'do' to another character through the processes of active analysis for example. In the context of *Gwineverra, Tom and the Enemy of Man*, the notion of so-called character was a looser construct (as it is throughout all these practices). A notion of character

remains fluid, less than hermetic, and porous in its intention; to be countenanced in plural rather than singular terms. In 1996, Elinor Fuchs announced the death of the dramatic character, killed off by the postmodern stage. Fuchs did however acknowledge that “‘character’ as a term of dramatic art can never be independent of contemporary constructions of subjectivity” (8). Following Fuchs, Delgado-García’s aim is to resurrect a notion of character that can be multiply figured. Her central argument is that “so long as a notion of subjectivity is evoked, presented or induced in a text or performance, character remains” (11). She goes on to suggest that ‘character’ “is an onto-aesthetic category” linked to the inevitability of theatre’s reflection on subjectivity and that the notion of character is “therefore a pervasive yet malleable category in theatre texts, practices and criticism” (46). As well as borrowing the term ‘character-less’ from Delgado-García (which does not aim to minimise or diminish a notion of character but rather expand and loosen its terms) I also take from her the idea of ‘text-bearer’.¹⁴⁹ As I understand it, this is a figure who may be nameless, is not defined in psychophysical terms, and has the potential to carry multiple human and non-human characteristics through a process of channelling.

Hanne’s channelling approach has been one of the key points of consideration that I have taken further in my practice-led research. This has aimed to further emphasise the theatrical components of re-fusing voice and dance by conceiving of Instant Composition as scenes consisting of monologues, duologues and dialogues rather than solo, duet or group pieces. One example is *Close:Far* (2016), a piece that was conceived as a (circa ten-minute) duologue working in tandem with videographer Pete Gomes who maintains his own

¹⁴⁹ Delgado-García herself is taking this from Gerda Poschmann’s *Der Nicht Mehr Dramatische*, 2011 (as yet untranslated to English).

research concerns with improvisation and camera.¹⁵⁰ The root of my channelling was a literary object – Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* – with which I only had a vague familiarity and impressionistic knowledge of. But what was revealed by applying Hanne's strategy of channelling in this way was how such a strategy could contain and structure material. Channelling was revealed more explicitly to me as being capable of providing a loose score.

Play Appendix VII: Artefact 5 – Clip 2. The performance of this piece marked a significant advance in my thinking around how voicing-dancing can be further 'willed into theatre' (to borrow Hanne's phrase). I have since co-opted the term 'hyper-theatrical', which was offered by audience member and scholar Elliott (already cited in Chapter Two), who subsequently used it to describe the piece. I use this to describe the aesthetic (my negotiations with habits and patterns) that was being produced through my Instant Compositional work. Elliott has since clarified and expanded¹⁵¹ on what she meant by the term, and as I work with some of her observations it is important to note that she is also speaking from the perspective of an expert practitioner. On the notion of character, Elliott described its presence as "distilled" yet "impressionistic", "ambiguous", "open-ended" and "elusive" ("HYPER-THEATRICAL"). It appears that Elliott was able to glean a sense of who

¹⁵⁰ *Close:Far* was realised at a salon event for the TransDisciplinary Improvisation Network (TIN). Beforehand, I explained the rationale and motivation behind this piece to colleagues as one concerned with transformation – how disciplines can transform (theatre and dance) and how the notion of character (as an explicit transformational device in theatrical terms) might be explored in a space and mode more associated with choreographic practice. See Appendix VII: Artefact 5 – Clip 1.

¹⁵¹ Personal email communication ("HYPER-THEATRICAL") 15 Mar. 2019. Given the time lapse, I provided Elliott with access to the unabridged video footage of *Close:Far* for the purposes of providing clarification of her use of the term 'hyper-theatrical'.

'the' character might be when she says that the audience received "hints about who this person was . . . a strong sense of a solitary and highly introspective figure" ("HYPER-THEATRICAL"). Elliott alluded to her desire to piece together some given circumstances or a narrative construct, suggesting that the ambiguity perhaps leaves a thriller-esque quality to the aesthetic. She offered the observation that the "intriguing" element was helped by the vocal material:

The impressionistic delivery – we received him in darts and dabs of vocalisations, movement and text – had the cumulative effect of making him more intriguing even as we learnt more about him. The text reinforced all this – "My name is..." and the fantastic crosswords comment . . . And "This is what they did to me". Then it was all upended by the denial of identity at the end, reinforcing questions and open-ended ambiguity. ("HYPER-THEATRICAL")

Yet Elliott's analysis reveals also a harder edged definition of character at times, suggesting that as an audience member she was busily engaged in the co-production of meaning either during the piece or subsequently. She was able to apply the adjectives of "flamboyant" and "eccentric" in a semblance of a singularly defined character description, while suggesting that a "strong subjective presence . . . brought our attention to the sensory realm. The touch of the velvet; the sight of the hand injury, the sounds expressing something tumultuous in or of [the character's] internal state" ("HYPER-THEATRICAL"). Elliott went on to comment on the way that, for her, the character "appears to function as the generator of sounds, words and movement, rather than these mechanisms being used in order to generate the character in the first place" ("HYPER-THEATRICAL"). Earlier, my focus was on how to handle words as sound material and that this might give rise to character, but I had not so fully considered to what extent that material might be something undergone as well as

something done. That is, Elliott appears to be suggesting that the sound is not simply produced by the material body as a stimulus or gateway for creating a sense of character, but that the vocal material emanates from the confluence of the material-character body. At this point, a question is begged to do with whether the material-character construct would be better summed up with reference to a figure (a text-bearer) who, once ensounded, brings the world into the piece that is not so reliant on the polarity suggested by the material-character construct.

Elliott's description of 'character' invoked in *Close:Far* does not fully account for her use of the term 'hyper'. It also demonstrates how the body collaborates with technology. This echoes Camilleri's notion of 'bodyworld' in terms of how the body is in fact always operating in conjunction with technology of some sort. In *Close:Far*, that technology formed part of the aesthetic. Elliott suggested that the 'hyper' in hyper-theatrical was enhanced by the "roving eye of the camera" and that this "would have added to the sense of hyper, not just plain old, theatrical..." ("HYPER-THEATRICAL"). This would have been additionally aided by the digital amplification as well as the opportunity to look and listen through the screen, affording more than one vantage point. Elliott suggested that the explicitly mediated "ramps up the theatricality. It hits us more – in that hyper way!" ("HYPER-THEATRICAL").¹⁵² The key thing to draw out here, is that channelling, as a strategy for structuring material content and as a way to form an aesthetic, was exhibited by such

¹⁵² A further example of how channelling was applied through the practice-based research can be found in the example of a twenty-minute group Instant Composition piece *Gjendin Ridge*, which used Henrik Ibsen's epic poem/play *Peer Gynt* as a loose score for channelling and used the convention of *dramatis personae* to cast dancers as character-less figurations named: Owl, Under the Bed, Fibber and Valley. See Appendix VII: Artefact 3.

performance experiments and also met an audience response that revolved around a desire to piece together a character defined by a singular subjectivity.

It is clear from the examples of performance above that different environments emerge to contain material that resists being singularly interpreted. The open-endedness is afforded by the strategy of channelling that Hanne offers. The device provides structure for improvisatory material, particularly poetic text, to emerge, but it does so with a recognition that the dancer is bound to appropriate material. Words are copied and stolen with a playful acknowledgment that the uniqueness of the dancer's voice and the ongoing compositional shifts will render it novel. At the same time, that presence of poetic text (produced and spoken on the spot) makes an explicit call on the audience to join in a mutual and participatory reach for meaning. This feature of Hanne's work is replicated across these practices, but the way poetry is underscored (embedded in silence) amplifies the materiality of the words that voicing dancers sound out through her practice.

Chapter Six: Projections for an Ensounded Dancer

Concluding the thesis and its considerations

In the beginning, I drew a deliberately wide frame around the activity of voicing with dancing to challenge commonly held preconceptions about voice being in breach of dance's conventionally silent spaces. Within this broader context, a certain tradition of improvised dance emerged through the work of Zaporah, Hamilton and Hanne. These examples were presented as being ideally situated to exhibit how voicing and dancing can be a fused activity. It is one that is different by degree rather than kind from the everyday tactile-kinaesthetic practices of voicing-and-listening/speaking-and-listening that humans undergo. But as I said already, while it makes little sense to consider speech and other vocal acts without recourse to the body of the person producing them, the conditions of their voicings must surely form part of the analysis. To that end I took each practice/practitioner in turn and organised the analysis in three stages – accessing, arranging, amplifying. By undertaking that analysis through the core of the thesis and drawing out the figure of the voicing dancer several threads emerged which will be tied together here.

Accessing

Accessing was deployed as a term that could refer to the process of expanding awareness, shifting attention and practising being attuned to the task of voicing and dancing. In those respects, 'accessing' concerned (but cannot be limited to) the body, and how one perceives and acts. The performative aspect to the processes of attuning is vitally present to the work of an improviser. In musical terms, it refers to tuning up and bringing to the right pitch. In more figurative terms, it connotes a bringing into harmony and accord. But a more nuanced understanding was developed to point to the importance of movement

on an animate-action-task continuum. Batson and Wilson neatly sum this up when they say that “attunement links perceiver, environment and task” (43). This turns the consideration towards the functional tasks a voicing dancer must practise in the studio. It also invites a rethink about the communal quality to that practice. Meaning is found in the doing, but in the doing, improvising dancers must be in some form of communion – they must, in group work, be attuned to that which occurs beyond the body’s boundaries. Yet, to successfully attune to environment and task, dancers must first tune-in to their own sense of self and sensation. Kinaesthetically speaking, dancers are highly-skilled listeners – they listen to their bodies and to the space, and they are trained to tune-in to the kinetic energy of choreographic material or the spatial information given by bodies and things in space. In that respect, dancers are well-placed to build a practice of voicing out loud while dancing. The activity is an extension of the developed skill of attuned listening. This accessing stage, which I deemed to be a corporeal apprenticeship, was a common feature of each practice.

Although the work across all three practitioners is deeply rooted in studio explorations grounded in feeling (defined here in terms of a sensory-affective continuum), in the case of Zaporah’s Action Theater the apprenticeship was scaffolded more explicitly. Zaporah’s more codified form of exercises are scores that constrain an improviser to work with silence and movement, before using non-verbal sound and then speech. These constitute a body of named exercises. Some of these were referred to and have been included in Appendix IV. Many of these practise the skill of feeling sensation. Some do that by focusing on a specific body part in slow movement explorations that play with basic tempo shifts. Some encourage a more sophisticated engagement with the flow and flux of this sensation while drawing attention to the expressive quality of the eyes or face. This area of the work prioritised the feeling of that expression rather than its communicable value. For example, this was on show in the way the plasticity of the face could be manipulated as a

stage in the preparation for producing non-verbal voicings. Verbal voicings, in what Zaporah referred to as 'physical narrative', were thus placed on a developmental continuum so that words were invested with an experiential expressivity.

The 'accessing' stage was facilitated by both Hamilton and Hanne in such a way as to provide more autonomy for the dancer. Through longer (sometimes self-directed) studies geared towards anatomy and physiology, dancers were afforded more status as professional practitioners. There was a less recognisably overt structure in the sequencing of the practice, yet a responsive drive towards equipping dancers with what they needed at any given stage within a broader defined frame – whether it be working with time or dealing with space. With Hamilton, the pedagogy was rooted more fully in a lexicon of dance and arrived at poetic text through a deep study of the physiology of the moving body. With Hanne, there was a similar focus, which took much from Hamilton in this respect, but her route towards poetic text was approached with a recognition of her background in literature.

It is notable that all three practitioners talked to varying degrees about the bones. The development of skeletal awareness through and while dancing is certainly key to Hamilton and Hanne's pedagogies. The musculo-skeletal focus was always grounded in full-body movement such that there was a drive towards integrating more of the body. This in turn was geared towards a fuller corporeal investment in the production of voicing and moving. I observed that by bringing the body more dynamically into play with the sounds of words, voicing and dancing could come together in a non-hierarchical way, along with silence, to create a 'total' aesthetic. I characterised this as a fusion, or more accurately given the precedence of voice and dance living together (as outlined in Chapter One), as a re-fusion. But issues and tensions arose in the clash between the idealised aims of the practices and dancers' habituated forms of using language. This issue is exaggerated in such improvisatory performance because it demands that the performer call on their own sensory

experience as a groundswell for action as performance content, thus bringing the relationship between material and character bodies into closer proximity. All three practices were therefore concerned with repatterning habitual tendencies in everyday conventions of speaking and moving. Often this was facilitated through a strategy of working through the path of least resistance to arrive at the possibility for speaking and moving to work in spontaneous counterpoint.

The Feldenkrais Method was revealed as a complement to each of the performance practices. Its skeletal focus is germane to the work of a voicing dancer in several ways and they can be put in productive dialogue. Certainly, the sensory-motor coordination the Feldenkrais Method is designed to improve, through refinements of the neuro-physical connections, illustrates the human potential for ongoing and continual (life-long) development of skills. The principle of expanding awareness through movement could be located in each of the practices. This could be illustrated in the example of the work with the eyes in Action Theater or Hanne's extended use of self-touch (in the instance of mapping each quartile area of the pelvis) while maintaining dynamic movement. The way in which the Feldenkrais Method incorporates the imagination as action only differentiated by degree was particularly useful, as it allowed reconsideration of how an improviser remains concretely embedded in the world around them as they work in the imagination. In terms of language, the Feldenkrais Method was also able to illuminate how it functions as a whole-body process. The mouth moves (as illustrated in the images of dancers working in Hamilton's classes) only because the rest of the body does. And the ears hear only because they are integrated through the whole bodily system, which for a voicing dancer extends all the way down to the feet on the floor. But to be heard, sound needs air, and the air is not contained by 'the body'. This not only keyed into Ingold's notion of ensoundedness, deriving from his thoughts about being 'enwinded', but also touched on enskilment,

especially around the idea that humans develop the capacity for using language through their embeddedness in the environment. But a key point Ingold helped draw attention to is how language is an ongoing practice. I made the point that the corporeal apprenticeship that Sheets-Johnstone referred to was one that continues through life, and that these practices exhibit voicing and speaking as ongoing practices that challenge any notion that language is acquired at a certain stage in human development. The Feldenkrais Method similarly exhibited the fundamental principle that a person's functional movement is embedded in the environment. This embeddedness connects to feeling and thought to produce a gestalt (and potentially more empathic) experience. Across both these two modalities (performance and the Feldenkrais Method) the relationship between thought, feeling and action must be understood as being at one with movement. In that respect, they occupy common ground that prioritises any movement's spontaneous and explorative credentials, which in turn places emphasis on a person's situatedness, putting them into relationship with others. It also puts them in touch with the world of affordances, predicated on the tasks that they perform. This, as I made clear through Chapter Four, demands that a flesh and bone speaker be understood as one that is continually produced in relation to the multiple rhythms that emerge in place and in relation to objects. A voicing dancer is not, after all, an integrated collection of body parts (physiologically 'accessed') but a person living in the world.

Arranging

To underscore that environmental aspect to the voicing dancer's work, I turned to Hamilton's Instant Composition work to focus on the area of his teaching that deals with voice and objects. This provided an example of how each practice enters a compositional realm that must extend awareness beyond the body. Ultimately, this chapter aimed to shift the onus away from the self onto the relationship between self and the compositional

environment. I questioned the connotation that any somatically oriented awareness must recede (in line with Leder's conception of the recessive body) to make space for processes of creative expression. Hamilton's work, if anything, countered the idea that any awareness falls into the background or begins to disappear, instead revealing the necessity for awareness to be integrated through longer periods of sustained attention, such that it was elevated into a practice of attunement. This notion of attunement linked to Hamilton's conception of a compositional mind. This demands an improviser appreciate material quickly, such that they become adept at instantly editing it as it emerges. Hamilton directed dancers' awareness towards their own ongoing and constantly transforming (or shifting) configurations. An appreciation, through movement practice, of one's own 'arrangement' was then set in further arrangements with time, space, people and things.

I argued that the voice of things widened the scope of a relational field of interactions, and that a compositional arrangement of vocal material is bound in the manipulation of time. In a training setting this handling of time could be both metricised (through counting) and durational (through stretching attention). Hamilton's work with time revealed how linear and radial time do not work in contradiction. Indeed, they underpin the dancer's sense of musicality so fundamental to the workings of the voice and what it produces. Any vocal material produced in concert with movement was achieved by prioritising its musicality. Again, the sensitivity to rhythm and musicality extended across all three practices, though Hamilton's dedicated and extended work with time was more pronounced and highlighted time's contingency on past and future. When voicing was added to the mix, it was revealed not simply as spontaneous material (either spoken word or sung speech) that could take an equal place with other choreographic elements, but also uncovered the mouth as a part of the body capable of being reimagined in choreographic terms. As the references to LaBelle illustrated, the mouth is intimately and sensually

integrated through the rest of the body. For a dancer engaging in expressive vocal sound or sung speech (as Beelaert's images also attested to) the mouth is a reverberant space that is not simply defined by its materiality. While the air swirls through its related cavities as dancers voice, the mouth takes on aesthetic value in the overall composition. It also plays a major part in the way a dancer reveals themselves through the act of voicing; exposing the uniqueness of the voice and the dancer's subjectivity. This underpins one of the main claims this thesis has made – that to bring the world into the work is to bring others into it, to share in the co-production in a multitudinous environment of mutuality.

Hamilton's work with objects revealed the potential to hear the voice of things, or strictly speaking, to hear one's voice in relation to other registers. When a dancer manipulates objects in compositional arrangements that add to the images being produced, the words they produce could be materially altered. I gave the example of a dialogue, between Hamilton and chair in *Play* to exhibit a sonic relationship. And this was further illuminated in the example of dialogue between a dancer and umbrella to reveal the multiple layers and excess of meaning that can be produced through compositional arrangements. But once again, what was highlighted through the presence of objects was the way in which linear and radial space (as Hamilton conceives it) collaborate. In other words, a dancer in Hamilton's work was encouraged to appreciate the surface *and* through-ness of objects or the looking on *and* being in space. These crucial distinctions offered a challenge to Ingold's critique of surface and Gibson's idea of affordance. In fact, Hamilton placed value in the theatrical abstraction of two-dimensional space as being necessary to the compositional mind and not in contradiction to our three-dimensional immersion in space. Taken together, I am keen to stress my use of the term 'total' to describe the way Hamilton's work tends to refuse to censor what is available to a dancer as they assemble a choreographic environment. But this extends across all three practices insofar as they flatten

hierarchies, allowing (to varying extents) the presence of silence, stillness and an array of vocal sounds to find a place in composition. At the same time, the term 'total' must be caveated with the acknowledgement that nothing is total. In composition, there is always something being excluded through instant editing and as Hamilton noted, even sensation is an edit of experience.

I made the point that regardless of how loose or tight the score is, Hamilton creates richly structured pedagogical and performance environments. To shed light on the way this works, I turned to specific examples of Hamilton's performance work (*Play* and *Landscape Portrait*) as well as my solo contribution to *Sand and Vision*, which Hamilton directed. In the introductory chapter I suggested that the distinctions between improvised and pre-composed material are not starkly drawn and best made along temporal lines. Burrows reminded us that it is all a negotiation with the patterns our bodies are thinking; simply (ideally) made faster in improvisation. But another challenge to improvisation's temporal status as a form that deals in novelty is found in the possibility for repetition. Landgraf, while he contends that improvisation needs to be "clearly marked" (144), argues that it is impossible to decouple improvisation fully from structure and repetition (12). Structure and repetition is always a negotiation even when, as is the case with Hamilton's approach, pieces come together on the hoof, through playing with chance, or because a decision is made that wills it into existence. For Hamilton, this may mean a décor choice being found in situ or chosen further in advance because it can "be wrapped up in a small bag and taken on the aeroplane" (Appendix V: Extract D). Or, in the instance of the chair in *Play* at Chisenhale Dance Space, found in a local second-hand shop a few hours before the performance. I have only alluded to the related strategies of chance, though such aleatory features remain very present to these practices. But the making of Instant Composition as repeatable performance products not only laid emphasis on the structures of repetition that could house aleatory

strategies, it also encompassed the notion of rehearsal (or *répétition*). In addition, it seeded the potential for considering, more fully, the performance products that emerge from within these structures. It is worth stating that, despite referring to performance in several cases (including Hamilton's *Play*), these have largely been in service to the revelation of key tenets of the processes to reveal how vocal material functions. This has revealed the further potential to elevate the form of improvised performance by engaging more fully in performance analysis. Video documentation could aid that endeavour in the absence of, in many cases, a publishable score (such as a playtext or other form of notation would represent) to begin to treat improvisatory performance more fully beyond concerns with process. But I have been keen to respond to Hamilton and Hanne's call to treat performance in and of itself and find a balance through this thesis between process and its products.

At this point, my decision to adopt and extend Ingold's ensoundedness can be more fully rationalised. It became clear throughout the core research with Zaporah, Hamilton and Hanne, that the world was in the work and therefore needed to be brought into the analysis. These performance practices place a demand on a dancer to utilise their feelings, which can be considered on a sensory-affective continuum. This lends them their status as more fully contingent on the world around them as a stimulus for material. This is not an explicit demand. A dancer is not required to verbalise their situatedness in any referential way. But they cannot escape it. In Chapter Four, I referenced Camilleri's term 'bodyworld'. This update on Ihde's 'lifeworld' and Zarrilli's 'bodymind' well describes how I have sought to bring the environment into the frame. But it must be said, that this thesis has avoided extending the workshop out into the world where I might have also more concretely considered the material properties of non-human intra-actions. In that respect, this project has remained a relatively human-centric endeavour. My concern has been to point to how a voicing dancer is sustained by the rich structures of the environment. But to properly

reconcile the adoption of ensoundedness, it was necessary to account for how this environment might be enlivened acoustically by the presence of voicing, which amplified the dancer's presence.

Amplifying

I categorised the third stage of the analysis as an amplifying of the voicing dancer's work. This was designed to more explicitly mark the material as performance where, eventually, an audience would participate. Such a focus on voicing in dance, in turn invited a perceptual shift towards the auditory. While no dance is silent, and there is always ambient sound, when vocal sound and speech happen in dance, an extra demand is placed on the auditory sense. The space is enlivened; not just acoustically, but through an ensounded form of looking. Through the analysis, Hanne's practice lent itself to such emphasis and inquiry because of its fuller recourse to the spoken word. Hanne's teaching has consistently facilitated dancers' explorations of words as poetic text that can emerge as vocal material. In this respect, words can be shaped and delivered in differentiated poetic registers. In both practice and performance, these registers included quotidian dialogue, declaimed oratory, or simple arrangements of unrelated sounds combined for their aesthetic value in their capacity as sounds. Hanne's courses — *The Complex Phrase* and *Mimesis* — revealed how a dancer could become 'conscious of the kinetic power of a particular word' through the deep study of the moving body and its dynamic spatial alignment through space (that emphasised the floor as the ground of support). But it was necessary to 'go into' the ontology of the word, aided a little by writing practices that must be considered as a contiguous, rather than separate, activity to speaking. Hanne's work, for example, revealed how there are key strategies to be deployed in the studio, to reappraise how language is perceived by a dancer. In constructing phrases, a process of defamiliarisation was extended

by working with association and neologisms, thus facilitating a repatterning of a dancer's relationship to words. My analysis of Hanne's work in studio practice revolved around two key strategies – defamiliarising and imitation. The defamiliarising of words was geared towards unshackling the semantic moorings language often finds its anchor in for adult speakers. It was necessary for a voicing dancer to upend well-rehearsed habits and patterns of language to experience words sensually as sound events. A practice of word association worked with (rather than against) the habitual patterns dancers can bring to the studio in terms of their relationship to words. But this was designed to retrain dancers' relationship to them, so that words and movement could also work in counterpoint and register poetically. Hanne provided tactics aimed at loosening words from habitual patterns of recognition and recoupling them with bodily movement through exercises such as imagining a word in space as a tangible object that could be manipulated with the hands or absorbed into the body. This prioritised words as things. Thus constituted, they could be imagined as tools to work with, or things to be stretched, de-formed and re-formed. The practice in defamiliarisation was also a necessary function of the improvisatory nature of the practices overall, to forego any desire or habit of constructing meaning through second-order mental constructs. In other words, to re-habituate the dancer to produce words without recourse to 'thought' as a static activity but bring forward the notion of 'thinking' as a dynamic possibility.

For many performers working across all three practices, using the English language already provided an initial distancing effect insofar as they were working with it as additional to their mother tongue. This touched on issues of meaning, which were tackled in Hanne's classes through the strategy of imitation. Words here were copied, borrowed, gifted and stolen. They circulated as unfixed lines of communication interlacing voice and dance in spatial configurations that also unshackled conventional ways of moving with words. But

the strategy of imitation also helped generate novel material and served to give permission to dancers to speak. Across all the practices, the issue of reticence was rarely very far away from the surface. At the level of practice in the pedagogical settings this was recognised both in the structures of exercises and strategies but also manifested in a catalogue of things that go wrong, misfit, or are just simply too quiet. Hanne was keen to impress how a word becomes individuated through the speaking of it because of the unique conditions of its utterance. This helped address what can materialise as a tension arising in the relationship between inner and outer voicing, which again must be understood as co-extensive activities. Inner voicing is a form of 'talking', but any inner monologue could consist of haunting doubts and self-criticism or, as LaBelle put it, as a 'hesitant murmuring' that bubbles up from the darkness within. Put this way, words can find their light by being sounded out loudly in studio practice. To move through the reticence that can bear down on the work, involved closing the temporal gap between inner and outer voicing. This was illuminated in the analysis of Hanne's work by acknowledging the possibility for vocal material to be communally authored. A dancer's choreography, at this point became key. The everyday patterns of gesture that regularly support speech to aid its communicable value were disrupted by dancerly movement. The material presence of a dancer who is caught crafting a spoken word, in this context, layered it with their own bodily configurations that often ran in counterpoint, thus creating a complex phrase. In this way, the shared ownership of a communally understood yet differentiated language led to an identification of voicing as (paradoxically) unique. In the attempt to imitate, failure became generative because words (once spoken) are essentially inimitable. This way, a sensual relationship to a word was prioritised; one that recognised that any word is already capable of resonating in multiple ways. By re-forging a way of speaking that understands that the responsibility for meaning-

making is shared, contingent, and plural, it allowed for an improvising voicing dancer to attend and stay attuned to the emergent material.

Any material is amplified again in the space of public performance where attendees who are both looking and listening participate in a co-production of its meaning. Words were found to touch an audience and dancer in near simultaneity. As words emerged in Instant Composition they are grasped not simply to be heard, but also to make some fleeting sense of what they might mean. Dancers must cultivate an appreciation that the production of meaning is a shared activity that further resists second-order interpretation. I made the key claim that in this constellation, the performer is de-privileged as the sole bearer and creator of meaning. This became clear both through Hanne's classes and through the making and performance of *Gwineverra*, *Tom and the Enemy of Man*. Meaning is not so much received by an audience but produced, polymorphously. It is always regenerated through the unrepeatable and unique conditions of the performance environment. A word was revealed as a synergy of the dynamic movement-gesture and the word-gesture. But only because it is embedded in its unique place in time and space. Interruptions in flow could occur when any freshly formed habituations towards poetic speech were not incorporated into the body through practice. But the constructions must be open and porous enough to account for multiplicities of meaning such as in the example given of the eagle and its spread wings. These generative processes also mark, as I noted, a challenge to the way improvisatory practice often places value on novelty, as if it were possible not to be novel, or that if it were it should occupy an elevated status. Taken together, the work was to understand how the sound of poetic text could be generated by words and 'spur' action, emotion and thought.

A major strand emerged out of this practice-led research worthy of amplifying – the strategy of 'channelling' articulated in Chapter Five. This formed the basis of a reappraisal of how character could function in these practices, as well as how the strategy could help

structure a performance score. This element was further investigated through independent practice-based experiments, and these were given in the examples of *Honey* and *Close:Far*. As well as being influenced by Hanne in this respect, I am noting the use of the term in the drag queen vernacular.¹⁵³ It works, along with terms like ‘serving’ that draw on the vogue ball culture which emerged in New York through the 1980s, to denote multifarious qualities not necessarily bound by human characteristics. Channelling also has connotations of spiritual divination and in this respect Zaporah cites examples of what she understands as a spiritual dimension to the work of an improviser – something inexplicable, haunting, and apparently more than coincidental that she refers to as the ‘fairies’ and ‘unknown elements’ (Appendix I: Extract A). It describes the feeling of serendipity that emerges out of the confluences that can potentially present themselves to the improviser. Hamilton has similarly referred to the ‘omens’ to describe compositional moments where all the elements appear to conspire and align so that there is a semblance of alchemy. Hanne has spoken of the need to think in terms of trinity – to rehabilitate the soul in conceptions of the bodymind. Throughout, a feeling of mystique, enchantment or wonder has been present to my experiences of the practices, which is something Hamilton also alludes to:

I’ve also said as you get older, it gets more magical because you understand less and less of what you understand. Although you do understand more and more, of course you do, we’re not naïve, you have experience, but at the same time there’s this big zone where you go “yeah, yeah, but how does that ‘what-I-know’ work; how?” It gets more and

¹⁵³ See for example the US reality TV show *RuPaul’s Drag Race*, Logo TV, 2009-2016.

more wonderful in a way, I mean, full of wonder. (Appendix VI: Extract

C)

Aside from the element of curiosity, I have underplayed the less than concrete or material features of wonderment in this thesis, and I am not proposing to expose the devoted and divined end of the spectrum at this point. I am however noting how some sorcery might echo in a piece's imaginary. This has certainly been very present to the experience of the work, even if I remain sceptical about some of the ways in which a mystique is maintained in the lexicon of studio practice. For my part, I have been interested in channelling as a tangible (albeit loosely so) strategy for making performance.

As it emerged through this thesis, I understood channelling as a method for routing inspiration for a piece both in terms of preparation and in the moment that it is being instantly composed in front of an audience. The version of character it can afford, exists on a material-character continuum akin to what Delgado-García describes as 'character-less'. This notion of character, as a loosely defined construct, is one example of the kinds of offer these practices make to theatre. I have shown that in these practices, character is opaque and polymorphous. I have exposed the requirement, because of the improvisatory nature of the work, for the stimulus for action to be in one's own sensory experience rather than an externally specified text. This brings the relationship between self (as a material body) into conjunction with the aesthetic material produced through the presence of a character body into closer proximity. The success of studio practice could be compromised through the tensions that inhere to this synthesis, and I used the example of nervousness – the fear or anxiety of performing – to reveal an area of improvisatory performance practice that is often described in theatrical terms as stage fright or performance anxiety. I was able to reveal how my research laid claim to experiences of forgetting, lack of connection, 'corpsing' or making 'mistakes'. This runs counter to conventional understandings of improvisatory

practice as a form where all material can be accepted and included. Overall, the thesis has revealed the offer these practices make to theatre with character as just one example of a well-established theatrical notion present to the work of a voicing dancer.

Another example of that offer can be found by way of the narratives that may have emerged in relation to these character-less figures. These also remain open-ended because there are no clear resolutions or no clearly demarcated plots defined in relation to characters' psychological motivations. Instead, there is an assemblage of loosely related threads, coincidences, and absurdities that have been layered over the course of the composition, often in poetic constructions. Vocal material can (for the most part, at least in Hamilton and Hanne's work) remain sparse; intra-acting with the movement material and the concrete objects. Taken together the accumulation can produce a surreal world, emotionally resonant, but narratively ruptured at many points. Channelling works to contain and structure an environment for the dancers to loosely form and re-form a sense of character insofar as it can be the bearer of attitude, but it does not fix role, nor is it geared towards interpretation, and therefore subverts conventional narrative structures. It is not important whether the audience register the links with what is being channelled. For example, as was exhibited through *Gwineverra*, *Tom and the Enemy of Man* it is highly unlikely any links to 'characters who live in a crime-ridden city' were being made in that instance. Channelling does however afford a formulation of a loose frame for a polymorphous sense of character(s) and world(s) to emerge. In the context of further practice that leads from the core research, (particularly with reference to *Close:Far*) a voicing dancer, I suggested, might also be considered (potentially) a hyper-theatrical text-bearer.

Through the thesis, certainly some aesthetic differentiations between each practice emerged. The performance outcomes typically produced were more pronounced as repeatable art-objects through Hamilton and Hanne's practice and this bled into the

practice-led nature of my research as well as my grasp on the aesthetics of their work. It is the case across all three practices that the elevation of non-linear narratives or collections of images can create a surreal quality. Action Theater can appear absurd, cartoon-like, or grotesque. An improviser can often engage in states of high dramatic tension compared to the more spacious aesthetic drawn out through the production of poetry in Hamilton or Hanne's work. In Action Theater, an improviser is likely to work more overtly with the notion of character using facial expression and vocal manipulation, and the vocal material produced can be more continuous – more akin to 'chattering' and less prone to conscious editing. The Instant Compositional work of Hamilton or Hanne is more overtly shaped and is transparent about the editorial production of material. As poetry, there appears to be more space for silence. This is not to say that Hamilton does not produce sections of poetry which are dense with words. Hanne, for her part, appears to fill the space with words that maintain a fuller reliance upon silence. The poetic text generated in Hamilton's work appears at times metaphysical. Even when the poetry touches a domestic register, it functions to point the audience to a world that is more universal. My description of *Landscape Portrait* as 'celestial' speaks to how I receive Hamilton's work in this respect. Hanne's poetry tends towards the mythological. Yet, even in these descriptions there are possible gendered slants placed on my analysis of the material. Age too becomes inscribed in the material, coupled with what one might know or be speculating about in terms of how the material 'springs' from the material body and therefore the material life of the person producing it. Any number of factors feed into the way an audience looks for clues across a range of identifiers so that they can get to the 'heart' of the piece.

Given the place voice either has or can have in these practices, a question remains as to where they suffer a limitation in terms of facilitating a dancer's expansion of vocal range. In my experience, especially through Hanne's work, I observed a vocal reticence in the

dancers that often meant that (in the earlier stages of a workshop at least) the voices were too quiet for performance. Indeed, it was surprising to note how little attention was paid to the voice in discrete terms across each practice. There was some explicit work with pitch or tone scaffolded into Action Theater, but this area is more implicit in the work of Hamilton and Hanne. Here there was occasionally an invitation to intone or declaim words or phrases. I noted Zaporah occasionally interrupting an improvisation with notes for performers to seek a broader range of sound (Appendix IV: Zaporah, Day 1). Hamilton also gave notes to dancer to 'be heard' (Appendix IV: Hamilton, Extract J). For Hanne, the vocal range was rarely exercised in any discrete way, and certainly early in the research period there was a softness to the vocal practice that could mean that sometimes it could not be heard. In classes, any focus on physiology of the body in movement did not extend to the voice discretely in any physiological mechanistic way. I noted there was no 'warming up' of the voice to some optimum state ready for performance. But on reflection, it became clear that across each practice there was a recognition that the voice is always already alive, rich and textured, capable of being utilised intelligently and expressively. In that way, there was an acknowledgement that as well as the democratising principle of dancing-with-the-body-you-have there is a similar permission that allows for voicing-with-the-voice-you-have. The sound of poetic voice was open and did not need to adhere to fixed rhythmic patterns or aesthetic markers as it might in some spoken word or performance poetry practices. In this way, there was a drive towards physical narrative or the poetic not just as a vocal endeavour, but as a whole person process that engages in its production. That said, it became clear through the research that dancers are generally drawing on formal training that has, to some (varying) extent, exercised and expanded their vocal range in readiness for the labour of voicing under performance conditions.

To tie the strands of the thesis together, I used the accessing, arranging and amplifying framework to build an argument that voicing needs to be considered beyond the body and beyond the term 'embodied' because it is co-produced in the environment with others. The figure of the voicing dancer, as it emerged through these practices, is one that must become attuned to the world around them. This includes their temporospatial relationships, and how intra-actions form and re-form around other people and things to produce voicings that live together with them. One of the key findings through the research and analysis has been how there is both a de-hierarchisation and an elevation of voice as it finds itself in place with other choreographic elements. This means that voice/body/world are continuous and better conceived (following Camilleri) as voice-body-world. With it, other dualistic formulations can be found to have collapsed into continuums too: outer-voice-inner-voice, sound-silence, imaginal-real, material-character, subject-object, looking-listening and verbal-non-verbal. To use 'embodied voice' as a descriptor therefore will not suffice, and this has been my key claim. The term cannot account for the expanded field of environmental relations that the activities these continuums point to are immersed in. The 'embodiment' term risks turning focus inwards, placing the human body too much at the centre and in the foreground. The imperative for making an alternative case using 'ensoundedness', was directly inspired by the practice on the studio floor. Furthermore, ensoundedness is called for through the presence and production of text, physical narrative or poetry, which amplify the demands on dancers and audience to pay aural attention. When a voicing dancer voices words, they circulate in public, encountering multiple listenings. Yet in considering how the studio becomes more than simply a space that has been ensounded, but also a place that is populated by a community of people each with their richly structured histories, it must also be defined as a social milieu that expands Ingold's notion of ensoundedness yet further. In that sense, casting the figure of the voicing

dancer as an ensounded dancer is a radical call – one that invites consideration of voicing and dancing’s political and ethical import due to the distribution of agency voicing-and-listening entails.

What remains to be done by way of conclusion now is to speak finally to how the thesis’ findings might project out into the world or re-form into outstanding questions. I am keenly aware that the task I set myself in this thesis means I open many more areas of enquiry than I close. Choosing to foreground the deeply corporeal approach to accessing vocal material in each of my examples while contesting ‘embodiment’ invites further consideration of how a lexicon can evolve in studio practice that challenges this term’s ubiquity. Similarly, bringing my discussion out into space in ways which needed to also account for an ecological approach to perception, exposes lines of enquiry that could delve further into the realm of objects (even an object-oriented ontology) and other entities. In addition, while the bulk of the practice I have referred to has been framed within studio practice and largely in a workshop environment, instances of performance have been referenced, and given the audience are then implicated, a longer dedicated focus from their perspective could be a lively and timely extension of the research. Questions certainly remain to do with how audiences listen to the work of a voicing dancer. For example, how do audiences respond to this type of dance when the faculties of either looking or hearing are not accessible? There are also potential avenues for expanding fields of discourse. Within the frame of my inquiry, to build my case for an ensounded dancer, I had to take a cue from Voice Studies to articulate some material conceptions of voice, but this has largely rested on examples of theatre rather than dance practice. Despite the focus in this thesis remaining with the voice, it has sought to revocalise it and hear it as sound, so a call for a Dance Aurality could be extracted from it. This would build on the kinds of responses Kendrick and Home-Cook have made to an auditory turn in their advancement of the field of Theatre

Aurality. This is not to say that the seeds for such a field have not been planted already, and I identified Vass-Rhee's work as a recent example. Her visuo-sonic approach to the analysis of Forsythe's work provided an example for how a sonorous sensibility could be applied to the dance practices I have considered through this thesis. But there remains a paucity of such treatments, so a case could be made for an expansion in this area. Clearly, the way I have treated the practices under consideration in this thesis has spanned several fields of discourse. However, I firmly believe that infiltrating the various domains has been necessary; led by the concerns of the practices themselves. And, ultimately, the (accessing, arranging and amplifying) scaffold for analysis I propose, having emerged directly from the imperatives of the voicing dancer's work, offers a framework for (re)visiting further examples of improvisatory performance practice where voice and dance overlap.

A Last Word

In the text of the flyer for *Play*, Hamilton spoke of giving the moment "throne and street corner, heaven and basement" ("Play"¹⁵⁴). At this moment, those sentiments echo through these last words. The reality of a dancer being embedded in the material world means that the idealised pedagogical aims of these practices are not always achieved. Voicing and dancing together can feel anything but fused in the experience of the dancer. Speaking, especially, can be a fraught (even muted) affair. Maybe it's because we know our words may come back to haunt us? Maybe it's because they tell too much about who we might be? Maybe it's to do with the clash of our material-character selves? But these tensions and collisions, to a large extent, help to make up who and where we are and therefore who

¹⁵⁴ Flyer 'blurb' for *Play*, see www.spaceandwordsfordancers.co.uk/?page_id=50413/.

(and what) we bring to the work. In making choices about what to say, dancers are folding into their work any number of untold stories that remain opaque to the outside eye and ear. Present to it are all the things we don't know, shouldn't know, can't know and won't know. We are all just looking for clues to make some sense of it all. To create the safe and brave spaces for voicings to be heard, demands careful attention and fine tuning from a community of voicers and listeners. Similarly, the pedagogical processes, the structures of technique and the methods of performance making are all forged by the material conditions they emerge in. For Zaporah, Hamilton and Hanne, this could be informed by something as fundamental as making ends meet or what can be packed into their travel bags. But the desire to fuse voice and movement and to integrate words sensually; for this activity to be aligned; for it to touch; for it to keep on moving; for it say something, be something, mean something; is loaded with rich potential to lighten the way. At the end of the week-long *Space and Words for Dancers* event at Chisenhale Dance Space in London (2015), Hanne implored dancers to "speak beautifully". What I hope this thesis has revealed, is something of how that could happen. Dancers can make their voices heard, with levity and brevity, with fullness of intent and with the knowledge that the words they choose to speak can become more fully grounded in the creative spontaneity of the body. At the same time, through their voicing-and-listening, dancers can become more fully attuned to the world as well, both to what is spoken and to its silent underside. This is how we can help shape the time and space for people to become ensounded bodies in an ensounded world, where our words can have a material impact on its reconfigurations.

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Appendices

Appendix I: *Zaporah Interview*

Extracts from transcript of interview with Ruth Zaporah

Tarbena, Spain

21 June 2014

Extract A

VESTY: So, we can't go wrong as long as we accept?

ZAPORAH: That's very important. The imagination, fairies, whatever you wanna call it. Unknown elements. And if I'm accepting of that then it's a very safe space. If I'm not accepting of that then it's not a safe place. Then it's dangerous, and precarious. It has to do with acceptance. As long as you accept it, and you have the skills to craft response.

VESTY: What are the skills, basically?

ZAPORAH: A very enlightened person could accept things as they happen, go with the flow, go with the flow, but to trust yourselves skilfully to be able to respond in a way that is of interest, and has a magic to it, that could cause a shaky floor, mind-wise, a lack of confidence. So, with new people...I don't teach beginner classes anymore, but if I were to, I would go right back to skills. Skills skills skills. You know in the beginning, it's really a lot of sensory awareness stuff. Just coming into your body. In ways that people never experienced before.

Extract B

VESTY: What strategies can we put in place to get people over that moment when we are a bit scared of voicing words? Non-verbal sound seems easier to access.

ZAPORAH: That's because we think we have to be smart. Suppose I said to you, I'd like you to be really stupid, pretend you can't build a narrative, pretend like you don't have to follow

a text, and talk. Now that might be all of a sudden really hard. For other people, I just repeat some words. In class I keep saying, I was talking about imagining you're a... So, then you have so much freedom. You can say "the boy sat on the chair, the chair, the chair, the boy sat in the chair, all day he never got up from the chair, he never, never, never, never, he never got up from the chair, the boy sat in the chair". Now I was having a great time saying that. Nobody says you have to recite the bard. Whatever you're enjoying with the words go for. People think there's a way to do narrative but there isn't. It's however you want to place words together. It does have to make some kind of sense. It can't just be gibberish. That to me is even harder. Just abstractly putting words together.

VESTY: I suppose because I'm less skilled I would probably go, I'm repeating the word 'never', 'never', 'never' because I don't know what to say, as a stalling tactic.

ZAPORAH: So, pretend you intend it.

Extract C

VESTY: I was really interested when you were talking about not being able to censor or control the material. You're on stage and your three sons are there and this stuff comes out that embarrasses you or makes you feel ashamed. It made me think that the improvisation taught you something about how you are in the world, or the position you occupy in the world. I often think that we think improvisation is informed by life, that life teaches us about the improvisation but maybe there's something about the performance that teaches us about life.

ZAPORAH: I'm not sure I would define it that way because I have been improvising...I have probably spent thousands and thousands and thousands of hours in the studio. On stage, it's been minimal. So, this is really where the lessons of about life have been. Mostly in the performances, the teachings I get are where I need to get more skilful. You have different minds going on at the same time. We also have different awarenesses, things we're not bringing into the conversation because they're not relevant. It was almost like these multiple personalities – "Oh there's that Ruth". There's another Ruth that appears quite often, and that it's in that first book, the story, I was doing a show in Michigan. And they put these props out and there was this doll and I went out and the audience came. I saw the props at the same time the audience did. And there was a doll, and I picked up the doll, and I named her Alice

and early in the show she died. And then the rest of the show was about different people who knew her, knew different things about her. After the show, I was in the dressing room and these four women came up to me, hysterically crying, because their friend Alice had died a year ago that night and before the show they had gone out to dinner to celebrate her life, so when that happened, (it was probably in the late 80s), I got really terrified. Because I felt as if I am treading unknown areas here. And I don't know if I believe in that kind of stuff. And anyway, it's very scary and since then it's happened so many times, I can't tell you.

VESTY: And is it still scary?

ZAPORAH: No, no

VESTY: What was scary about it?

ZAPORAH: I had this responsibility. I was exposing this personal thing that somebody in the audience... and I wasn't doing it consciously, without awareness, it was just kinda happening. Is that moral? Am I justified to do something like that when I don't even know where it's coming from? Maybe I'm losing my mind. Losing awareness. It's scary, very frightening.

VESTY: Do you think people have come to recognise that this is an element of the work?

ZAPORAH: Not the general audience but...I did a show a couple years ago in Santa Fe. It was in a huge warehouse. The warehouse was cluttered with stuff because they were having an auction that Sunday and I was doing the show the Saturday night. It was just packed with stuff. There was this huge...Santa Fe is a very big arts centre in the US, full of wealthy people from Hollywood, and Texas oil, and Europe, wealthy, a lot of rich people live there. And they get rid of their stuff, because they want to buy more stuff, and their house can only hold so much stuff, so there's all this incredible stuff in there and there was this huge black chair. And I made up this story that this was Neptune's throne now. I hadn't thought about Neptune since I was in high school. So, these things happen. And I'm thinking back, why the fuck Neptune? So Neptune shows up and his wife shows up and she's upset because he's always making waves and she just wants a calm relationship, you know it goes on, and then I start talking about fractals, and then after the show, this one guy, he says he wants to hand me something. He's a musician and he hands me a CD of his group, that is called Neptune's

Army, then this other guy comes up who works in a science lab and says “I can't believe you're talking about fractals”. I never even thought of fractals, I didn't even know what they were. He said, “I have been working on fractals for the past 48 hours”. You know? So now I think that's just the way the world works. You know our minds are just floating around all the time.

Extract D

VESTY: There's something to do with the practice and the skill of improvisation that prepares us, I feel, for coping with the world and the connections...

ZAPORAH: I agree with you. Because in an improvisation your partner can come up to you and say “you're a piece of shit” but you know they're ... so you're not going to identify with it. You're going to have some kind of play response, not necessarily playful, but whatever it is but you know that everything is just being played with, you don't identify with it, you know that person isn't really calling you a piece of shit, so that prepares you. What causes us so much stress in life is that we identify with everything that's going on, we think it's about us, you know what I mean by identify? In fact, with improvisation, we learn that we can't really define ourselves because we can play all these different things and we don't identify with everything that comes our way. So, that makes us more flexible and gives us a different vantage point on the suffering of the human condition. So, if I'm going to be political or if I'm going to, you know, change my life around charity work or HIV/AIDS work or whatever kind of work I'm going to do, I'm doing it more with compassion rather than identification. Compassion and identification are two very different things. and improvisation helps with that, I think.

Extract E

VESTY: I've been really struck this week by when you talk about if you can name it then you're not doing it. Because it strikes me that it's something we do in say scripted performance, certainly from an actor's perspective if we're dealing with script in that sort of Stanislavskian way, we start to name our objectives and name our dah dah dah, it seems very verbal-based which doesn't take account of the fluidity of the feelings you encounter in improvisation.

ZAPORAH: I once went to see...a good friend of mine who teaches acting...and she had two women on the stage, and they were doing a scene. Anyhow, she would stop, and she would say “now what is your objective?”, “what do you want, when you’re saying that line, what do you want that person to feel?” Now it's totally the reverse what I'm doing. I don't want anybody to feel anything. I'm just the voice of this thing. Archetype of this thing. What my partner does with it is not of interest. I don't want to know what they're gonna be doing. Why would I want to know what they're gonna do? It just seems then I'm just learning how to manipulate people. That's not what I want to learn. That's what I want to unlearn.

Appendix II: Action Theater Course Tarbena Focus Group

Extracts from Action Theater Focus Group discussing fear and anxiety in improvisatory performance. Participants: Danielle Cresp, Tal Haran, Ulla Möckel, Jimmy Offesson, Elke Sandler, Ana Schmuki, and Maggi Swallow.

Tarbena, Spain

24 June 2014

Extract A

VESTY: Often, anxiety is talked about in terms of something to be overcome or cured. Does that ring true for you?

SWALLOW: Yeah, for me, one is overcoming crippling shyness because I remember being in my bedroom thinking I really want to do performing arts but I'm too shy to do that. I knew I had to overcome these sensations that I felt were preventing me, because it was quite crippling at first, so it was a sort of long battle to get there. Sometimes I found that I arrived at an improvisation workshop late, you know because I'd sit there... So, one day I was really late, and I came in the door and the guy running the workshop said “volunteer” and I had my coat on, and I just went there. I just went there and responded to whatever he did, and I had the best time of my life. And suddenly I was able to kind of cut through and be like this is what it's supposed to be like. And the next week, it was like “so how do I get back there again”. It

sometimes feels like two steps back, one step forward, and sometimes you have big breakthroughs... big breakthroughs.

VESTY: So, you had no time to prepare, in that instance?

SWALLOW: No, I had no time to prepare my anxiety.

Extract B

HARAN: I had a workshop about twenty years ago where I first realised...it taught me, that workshop literally taught me that one way to get the adrenaline is to physically work it up but a completely different process to getting into that adrenaline is to be totally in the details because it made me realise that if I'm totally in the details I cannot at the same time be judging myself and of course judging myself is the biggest monster. That's the other part of anxiety; these critics sitting here like you know like the muppets like the old muppets on the thing on the porch sitting there going yap yap yap yap, you're crap, you're this, you're that". And so that when you're really doing something but really doing it totally, you cannot be judging at the same time. You cannot be in the facts and in the opinions in the same second so you just need to take all of your will or all of your love for your whatever it is and apply it to the very details that are now taking place and then those monsters are shutting up and if they come in again you go even more into the details.

VESTY: And are you talking about Action Theater?

HARAN: It was Ruth's workshop twenty years ago. But it was so blatantly anti-judgement and so blatantly for being in the execution of the details that it had made it clear to me for all of time. These facts and opinions cannot live together. You're either in fact or you're in opinion. If they're somehow mixed you're not yet inside the facts and if you stick to the facts whether they are changing or being contained or being transformed or being from outside or coming from within if they are the actual facts you cannot be in the opinion at the same time. And for these twenty years it has really carried me. Now, I've not always used it and I have met those monsters again and again but it's something that really has been anxiety destroying.

VESTY: It's almost as if the practice solves its own problem.

HARAN: It did. For me it did. It did to such an extent that afterwards I used it in my own teaching also. Not as a copy but developed in some way. But this differentiation between fact and opinion. What is it? Look. Are you totally in the fact, or are still letting opinion creep in? If you're letting opinion creep in, then you're not yet completely in the fact. So, then I would be asked, "these facts are not true, they're not you, they're not life, they're not natural" and I'd say, "crap that, who cares?". "Right now, I'm busy with these facts". And these facts can be nonsense. Like the tearing of this little corner of the paper off this beautiful roll and disguising it, but if I'm into this disguising I cannot be at the same moment thinking whether this action is stupid or not.

SANDLER: I think what you call facts is what Ruth calls being in the body... So, I think another word is sensory...

Extract C

VESTY: I'm interested in anxiety because I feel like it's a move towards performance. I'm not interested in talking about collapse or fear or curing it. I'm interested in it being in the space as an attraction, or a lure, but also, I'm thinking about it as just one of many feelings that we're feeling in a context such as this and how these feelings collaborate.

HARAN: Anxiety is that place, lives in that space, between what we know is happening and what we have no idea will happen sometime next whether in the next five seconds for the next ten years. And that space is what nurtures the anxieties, they grew there like mushrooms. The not knowing.

SANDLER: I have had the experience in the workshops (like today where I have to do something alone in the circle) where I get this kind of anxiety and it's a pressure I put on myself to do it right and to know at the same moment it's a very short moment I have for this moment and then it's gone. I can't do it two times, or three times. Whereas when there is a real performance, I have a little bit of anxiety at the beginning but as soon as I enter the stage it is gone, because I have the chance to fill the space however I like and with everything. With all my pores, with everything. And normally I don't have stage fright or anxiety. It's much more in a workshop – this is so strange for me.

SCHMUKI: I don't think it's strange. For me this goes, it's like a long journey from school and high school and playing theatre there, like classical theatre where you take a role and then you have a teacher who has certain ideas about how you should do it as all the other teachers in the school – “so you'd better do it right” otherwise you get a bad grade. Or you better do that so...So I think I was building up this ‘doing right’ pressure over many years. Also, I don't know if this is a bit over the edge here, but I think it's the same thing if you have a speech at a university or somewhere, and you have to present something it's like the same feeling – “okay I shall not forget what I'm saying, slide 10 has this context and slide 12...”, so, for me, it has very much something to do with this idea that this is right and this is wrong. And in a certain moment to fulfil what you think is right and what the other person thinks is right which puts this pressure on me. And it is interesting with improvisation that this was somehow, for me, a way to come out of this because it's free. Everything is possible.

SANDLER: Because it's free, the freedom that gives in improvisation

SCHMUKI: In my head there is less wrong and right and I connect it very much to our school system where we are really told what is right and what is wrong and being in competition and you know there is also group stuff going on, it's not only teachers and somehow improvisation is different there.

VESTY: There's something, the theme here...the pedagogy, the teaching ... keys into something cultural...

SANDLER: And the knowledge that the teacher's looking and judging

HARAN: Authority, the authority and power games that are going on and the judge that is internalised here, we don't need other judges, they're all here.

SCHMUKI: Exactly, you're part of that game. You can also ask yourself the question what happens? Can I freak out? Will she throw me out of the course?

SWALLOW: Whatever it is, but sometimes I think to go into the thing. You were talking about anxiety as something we should push aside. Again, going back to this improv class there was

a moment where he got us to just stand... so your heart's going and he said, "pay attention to what you're feeling and use that". And so, I did. And instead of trying to do something clever or interesting I went with the anxiety and it was one of the best improvs I did because it transformed, as I went into it, it defused, it dispersed, and I went into something else. It was great because I went into rather than trying to go this has got to be pushed off to one side and I'm having to deal with this while I'm trying to do this other thing and tearing the little thing here I was like "okay then you bugger come on let's see what you've got" so I started working with this feeling of my heart beating fast and I used everything that was happening physically to me and I used it in the improvisation. Great, I didn't have to think about anything else I was right in the with the anxiety, and you know I did that, and then it changed to something else. So that was a good exercise. Yes, and it is about that vulnerability, I think, it's another aspect, because you have got to drop all the armour. You know. That's the stuff, as an audience, we want to see. We wanna watch, sometimes.

MÖCKEL: I was told that the audience don't want to see that, and it was an Action Theater teacher. And I also had that experience, but not so consciously, in one of my first performances on-stage, that I went out and I said that I would be afraid and had a kind of frame, I don't know how good it was, and then I remember that somebody came...and then somebody came on-stage and saved me somehow. It was a kind of support, there was a kind of agreement in the group that if we see or feel that somebody is lost somehow that somebody would come on-stage to support.

SCHMUKI: That's a very relevant... I just wanted to say something about this 'I'. 'I' have to do this, like this I have to be in control of every situation no matter how much pressure there is, and I think, I mean of course, in that situation, you have to deal with it somehow but also somehow I sometimes try to think "where can I get support?" like or maybe another situation "I cannot do this alone it's my second day"... So, I think there's both sides. What I can do, but also maybe I need something, maybe okay, I'm going to do this, but give me more support first.

OFFESSON: I was good at doing speeches at Uni and then five years later it started to become a bigger deal but I remember at the start every time I did perform speeches I liked being this nervous shaky person and suddenly when I realised I wasn't there was something missing

something wrong and then I went with the circus for one year one summer and I drank coffee, lots of coffee to get that symptom.

VESTY: I think that's interesting because many people talk about the need for a little bit of nervousness or a little bit of anxiety to drive you towards performance. I don't know. I have a big question mark around that! You've just described it well and I'm not sure about whether we have that feeling because we grow habituated to it – we become used to it.

Extract D

MÖCKEL: If doing all that stuff, deciding to go on-stage because I also feel that somehow, it's about showing yourself to somebody else and if you may be... Of course there is this right and wrong thing but also maybe you can think about how do you behave opposite your partner, your loving partner, for example, how is it possible to show yourself and everything you think you are, all you are, how you deal with that. But I think there is also a lot of anxiety, it's simply about getting naked, whatever this is, in different layers in front of somebody else so I think it is also in an on-stage situation but I think in relationships people, if I generalise, not everybody feels comfortable showing themselves in the relationship. I do know, for me, this is another direction instead of going for the thrill of it.

VESTY: But for me there's definitely something thrilling and risky about doing improvisation so there is a connection there for me, to do with risk.

SANDLER: But the other thing I think is very important also, in a good improvisation you have nothing to hide behind you don't even have another actor who is showing himself half naked who has maybe a role a given role, the given facts and as a performer in improvisation we have nothing but yourself so you're really vulnerable and only if you accept being vulnerable the show is probably good because you can touch the audience somehow.

SCHMUKI: You have to present yourself

OFFESSON: It's how you present yourself. It's in the culture. I'm just saying what it feels...not that it's wrong or anything. It's the setting around it and how people are presenting themselves and how are things are constructed, what is important what shall I frame when I

present myself before and after this workshop, before going into an improvisation. And that's why it's like dating it's what you do before and after sex how you open up your nakedness in a way.

Extract E

CRESP: I was going to say when you were talking about the precarious nature, in the general milieu of the work situation for artists. There's possible work here, networking opportunity, other collaborations, so that's all interwoven and added into our cultural milieu, our social milieu, our workshop culture. I've got so many jobs out of meeting people in workshops and vice versa. I've worked with people because, so a lot of people see workshops and performances as possibilities for future work, they're not just thinking of that event. I know I have got students to my Action Theater classes because they have seen me perform and then said "I want to do that, I'll come to her classes" so that's put a consciousness around me when I go up to perform because "oh gosh there's a whole sea of possible students, what am I going to talk about? Should I plan what I'm going to do? My gosh it's improvisation!" [...] A big part of my practice is meditation and reading about presence and active interest in being completely present in each moment as a lifelong process.

SWALLOW: Because anxiety is about the future, this stuff doesn't happen.

CRESP: And our whole work as improvisation artists and as teachers is to be completely present with the situation, it's a real mind mess because the mission is to be present and yet you have to look at overview as well. And then the improvisation itself, making an improvisation, you're walking backwards through the improvisation so you can see what has been laid out and there's that great quote from Terry Sendgraff, "I don't know what's going to happen next but that doesn't mean that I don't know what I'm doing", which I love. So we practice – well I should talk about myself – I practice, I practice, I practice.

SANDLER: You practice meditation, you said?

CRESP: I've got a whole bunch of things I practice, but the central line in all that is to be completely present and yet I am anxious about my future security if I'm going to be able to pay the rent will I continue teaching. I'm constantly questioning the art form as a valid

practice, confession, is this valid? Is it relevant? Is it hedonistic? Is it a waste of time? Is it one of the most precious things in the world so therefore we must hold the flag of improvisation? Is it the essential thing that we communicate this stuff to each other all the time and to me that's also an essential part of my practice which is to be questioning?

Extract F

SCHMUKI: I'm not sure if I'm able to formulate this in the right way but isn't it so that anxiety ... takes the space that it has.

HARAN: This is deliciously simple.

VESTY: But it's a dynamic. It gives room for its dynamism its dynamic occupation.

HARAN: And if you don't want it you make space for something else.

SCHMUKI: Because it has to do with how we are afraid of what happens when there's nothing, so anxiety is a very good companion because we know it.

SWALLOW: And is anxiety to do with your ego, to do with your sense of self in the world, I have no idea what I'm talking about now, I'm going into psychological realms, that I've heard these words before, but it's like the sense of self that we have, you know it's like your ego, so you have this it's worried about being pushed. I don't know what I'm talking about.

SCHMUKI: I can relate to this. It's very much like the mission thing. Like what do I become? How do we save the world? How do we become more present? How do I become a good actor?

SWALLOW: It's the I...

SCHMUKI: Exactly, it's the I but it's also about big ideas. So, it's I and big ideas together create a lot of stress

SWALLOW: So, you just need the big ideas and get rid of the I! Something like that maybe?

HARAN: Sounds like communism. No more 'I'. Think about it. Think about the big ideas where the 'I' was put aside. I'm a result of this. I am. Until after the age of 50 I never dared to think there was the 'we'. The body wasn't invented yet, the soul or the psyche was not invented yet. There was a 'we', There was a history. There was our service to the 'we'. Now you can rename it communism. You can rename it a certain kind of religious upbringing. You can rename it Maoism. You can rename it Nazism. You can rename it all kinds of isms. As soon as you have the big ideas where you don't have the I, neither sick nor will, then that's what you get. It can get sticky.

SWALLOW: I don't know. Maybe it's getting into Jung, and collective consciousness, there's something else, no self

VESTY: But I come back to, when I'm in this situation, time and time again, regardless of the ideal, I am feeling a set of feelings, which are to do both inside the workshop and outside, to do with whether I can afford to get there, to do with whether I like the people I am working with, to do with what I think about the teacher, to do with whether I'm stressed about being abroad, to do with "can I do this work?". So, the I is very much present, for me, in my experience, regardless of the ideal of the way say Ruth talks about not identifying, or being a martyr, these things really resonate. I think it's brilliant the way she talks about that. But the way I see it we're talking about an ideal to do with an education system that doesn't over inflate right or wrong, or our position as I and ego and all these things. And yet, for me, the reality is that I'm in this body and I'm in this culture and in this society and I'm subject to all these influences and things and how do we grapple with the very reality of it all.

HARAN: Exactly. And if you're not there there's no negotiation. That's the thing, all the time it's changing, it's an ongoing negotiation between all kinds of aspects, and if you're not there.

CRESP: I also think that anxiety changes over time. I think about when I was performing ten years ago as an improvisation artist, how my anxiety would literally manifest itself in a day, like the day before I was going to perform or whenever and how my behaviours have changed from then to now, and the things that happen on the day before has really changed and morphed over time. Maybe with age, or circumstance or level of experience or the tools, yeah, that anxiety takes the space it needs to take. I really like that because in the past it took,

possibly, I don't know, I'd have to examine this again, it possibly took a lot more time and maybe takes less time now leading up to a performance event but maybe it's just changed form. I mean one of the things I feel when I feel anxious about performing now is that I don't think about being anxious, but I know I'm very prone to being late to my prep, so I think that's possibly anxiety.

VESTY: Procrastination?

CRESP: Yeah, as a manifestation of the worry about the gig.

VESTY: And can you remember more specifically the kinds of behaviours and feelings and actions you were involved in, in this anxious state?

CRESP: Oh yeah, they were really vivid. It was like I remember thinking colours were brighter and being aware of every action in my day leading up to a performance event. Like if I adjusted the sounds, my senses were like overstimulated. If I talked to someone who had a particular tone, I'd be really upset or really...all this, but none of that happens now. It has different manifestations.

MÖCKEL: Was it after or before the performance?

CRESP: Before the performance, yeah

VESTY: And then would it be different twelve hours before, six hours before, one hour before, a minute, how could you...?

CRESP: It would have to be case by case. I remember performing in the Melbourne International Comedy Festival so this is you know, there could be anyone in the world there in Melbourne watching the Melbourne international comedy festival and it's called comedy and I'm an improvisation artist so we don't know what's going to happen but me and my performance partner were often funny like 9 out of 10 times. [...] We were often in venues that were well-known, so there was all that stuff and he was in a theatre company at the time so all the theatre company people would come and so there was all of the trappings of my immediate social milieu, as well as the Melbourne milieu as well as now it's an international

festival so we could be seen by anyone and have a gig booked overseas so there was this...so leading up to that kind of event there would be probably weeks of anxiety floating in and out followed by... but also my performing partner and I had an amazing relationship so there would be floods of excitement and followed by pits of worry about what might transpire

SCHMUKI: For me it very often comes afterwards I realise. This is part of this being nervous thing and then days and days afterwards I have dreams in the night and I'm very stressful I reach on-stage too late; I forget my text. And I go through all this "uurrrghhhh", and I wake up in the morning and I could tell you a new story.

CRESP: After?

SCHMUKI: After, the processing. [...] Because in the moment I know I have to do that job, there's no space for anxiety, and afterwards there's lots of space for it and very often for me it goes into dreams and then I'm exhausted when I wake up in the morning.

HARAN: I have dreams like that after years. That I'm late into the show, and I have to catch up, the very scenes, I was in a musical and we keep changing costumes, and so I come to the show late and I keep changing in order to catch up with the show and it doesn't work and I would have this dream repetitively. This was like a chronic anxiety symptom.

CRESP: I don't have any of that.

VESTY: We often confuse it with excitement I find, and I get...

HARAN: It tastes different to me. Completely different flavour.

SWALLOW: And for me it's that moment like ten minutes or fifteen minutes when you're in the wings and you're waiting for the audience to come in. Done the warmup, and you want to go, but you must hold it in, you know, I used to do a lot of things with horses, so you'd have to hold. You're there holding the horse in, and you're ready. It's horrible and it's great and you're holding all this energy and then suddenly I would go what's the first? That's when I forget the first phrase and I know it will come. As soon as I'm on the stage it will come and it will be fine but there's this (in breath sound) it's okay it's in there somewhere and if it isn't

then I will just have to make it up sit down and shut up I can't wait for the lights to go down. At those moments, those ten minutes fifteen minutes when the audience is coming in because I'm ready.

Extract G

SANDLER: And if it's a fixed role and text or if it's an improvisation maybe this makes a difference also.

VESTY: I'd like to know more about that really, because it's what we do, it's the big difference isn't it? Because we can fuck up text, in an obvious way, we can dry, we can corpse, when we lose our character.

CRESP: You can do that in improv as well. You can drop out. If you set up something and you're doing it, and you're doing it and you miss the beat, especially if you're working with a duet partner and you've set something up, and they've set something up and now's the time we're going to repeat that material we set up earlier and we're returning back to the desert where you had the red shirt on and I had the blue shirt on and we have to remember all the details. Like that's what I...memory is a big part of it for me. I don't just coast along amorphously. You know, if we've set up worlds and we step back into the world we must remember all the details of that world/ [...] We used to call it echoes and territories, my performance partner and I, so we set up that area of the stage as the territory, for example, the hairdressing salon or whatever, we can walk through all those territories but we can also go back and revisit them. Because I'm working in thirty-five to forty-five minutes solos or duets. So, there's weaving back in and I've definitely been off you know, I have gone "aaahhh", or I have set up something there but then I come back and referred to that, but it's been there, and the audience knows. With mime, or with any sort of gesture, if you gesture to a pole and it's there. I remember I did a piece which involved albatross shit and there was an albatross flying overhead and it did a shit there, and a shit there, and a shit there, and so the audience knew exactly where that shit was, and there was this, you know, I was walking around, and I'd lost it and I stood in one of the shits and the whole audience were like "uuuggghhhh", oh no, but then, of course, I work with it because it's funny or whatever it is but I fucked up. I totally fucked up. I was tired. I was over-stressed, and I was in the future in that moment. Or corpsing! When I'm in a thing and suddenly I step out and judge it. This happens when I sing

a lot lately – I sing and I've got this lovely melody going and I'll go “arrggghhh, this is really daggy, this is really boring” and I've lost the thing, and I step out of it and people afterwards will go “ah, you were on this really beautiful melody and then you went somewhere else, and then I really enjoyed it” and I'm like, “yeah, I lost it”. So, all of those things happen if I'm not on or if I don't do my pre-prep or whatever it is I need to do on that day.

HARAN: How do you know how to prep?

CRESP: I listen to where I'm at. So, if I'm feeling really blue, I give it time and space. If I'm really feeling really energised, I try not to work with that energy, I try to meditate beforehand.

Appendix III: Training Log

Training log of trainings taken with Zaporah, Hamilton and Hanne 2013–17.

Hamilton – 10-day <i>Dance Technique and Improvisation</i> in Arlequi (Spain)	2013
Zaporah – 10-day Action Theater ¹⁵⁵ in Tarbena (Spain)	2014
Hanne – 5-day Words in Performance (<i>The Secret Teachings</i>) in Brussels (Belgium)	
Hamilton – 10-day <i>Dance Technique and Improvisation</i> in Arlequi (Spain)	
Hamilton – 5-day <i>The Space Issue</i> (SAWFD ¹⁵⁶) in London (UK)	2015
Hanne – 5-day Words in Performance (SAWFD) in London (UK)	
Hamilton – 10-day <i>Dance Technique and Improvisation</i> in Arlequi (Spain)	
Hamilton – 5-day <i>The Working of Time</i> (<i>The Secret Teachings</i>) in Brussels (Belgium)	2016
Hanne – 5-day <i>The Complex Phrase</i> (<i>The Secret Teachings</i>) in Brussels (Belgium)	
Hamilton – 10-day <i>Dance Technique and Improvisation</i> in Arlequi (Spain)	
Hanne – 5-day <i>Mimesis</i> (<i>The Secret Teachings</i>) in Brussels (Belgium)	2017
Hamilton – 10-day <i>Dance Technique and Improvisation</i> in Arlequi (Spain)	

¹⁵⁵ My observations of the characteristics of Action Theater are also informed by participating in a weekly workshop with Hilder (London, 2011) and a weekend workshop with Rudstrøm (London, 2012) as well as attendance at public performances by Hilder, Rudstrøm and Mackenzie.

¹⁵⁶ The Space Issue was taught in companion with Hanne's *Words in Performance* classes for *Space and Words for Dancers* (SAWFD) at Chisenhale Dance Space in London 2015, forming part of a wider seven-day event, that included an evening of performance by Hamilton (*Play*) and Hanne (*Deep Brown Sea*), and other discussion events. I curated the event with Antonio de la Fe, and it was funded by Arts Council England (ACE) with support from Middlesex University and Chisenhale Dance Space- see www.spaceandwordsfordancers.co.uk/.

In the case of Hamilton and Hanne, class would typically run from 10h to 16h. For Zaporah 10h to 14h. In the case of *The Secret Teachings*, each 'work-week' included public performance by established artists, often sharing a bill with Hamilton and/or Hanne.

Appendix IV: Classnotes

Relevant extracts from notes taken in Zaporah, Hamilton and Hanne's classes 2013–17.

Zaporah (Class in Tarbena 2014)

Details of specific exercises (or tasks as I refer to them here) are numbered according to how they are listed in my original notes.

Day 1

Casa de Cultura – white hall, slightly utilitarian in look and feel. Tiled floor. Hard and cold edges. Plastic chairs. A raised area of wooden podia – could be a stage, form one edge of our playing space. A row of chairs has been put in place by RZ to limit the space, to contain it in a tighter area. Some participants are barefoot. Most use trainers. RZ says she hopes my research doesn't get in the way of my practice. I agree. RZ asks us to say our name, where we're from, and, in no more than three words, what we want from the practice these two weeks. We go around the circle. Some say that they want to get 'deeper' into the work, or 'let go'. At a point RZ questions what 'let go' might mean – let go of what? She says something like, instead, what about 'getting hold of', going into? She talks about seeing the thing, and then going inside the thing. At another point she says that we will never visit this moment again, so why not investigate it, sit there, be there with it a while. RZ asks us to put hands up to a few questions: Who has never done this work before? Who is coming at it from dance/movement background? (I put my hand up half-way) – about six or seven other people too. Who is coming at it from a theatre/acting background? (I put my hand up more fully) – about seven or eight other people too.

Task 1: Walking, changing directions, to a pulse, in time whole group. Add breath/pant. Option of doing it double time. Copy. Build in pause.

RZ – improvisation is your boss. Stay in it. She talks about the engineer – well-oiled cogs working (imagination, sensorium etc) but also the fairies (the magic). RZ says that we should be in our bones

Task 4: Sounder & Mover where a) sounder 'calls' the movement and b) mover 'calls' the sound

Task 5: Solo sound & movement together. 50% stillness. RZ stops us to ask us to change direction of eyes, and to play with high and low tension.

RZ says: I don't use the word emotion. I use feeling state. Inner state. Sensory awareness. She talks about content. Gates. 1st gate is through sensory to content then concept. Image comes. Mood comes. To touch the world, we go through it. RZ talks about neutral in standing – feet parallel, hip width, not 'saying' anything. Acknowledging neutral can never not be saying anything. She talks about level 1, 2 & 3 where 3 involves content. She wants us to work with sensory level 1 only right now.

A participant asks whether there should be clapping after in class performances. RZ comments that the mode of working is workshop not performance. RZ: "we're all practicing whether you're out there or no". RZ interrupts the chair improvisations with notes on seeking a broader range of sound.

Notes on EYES – remember earlier the neutral gesture repeated but with eyes looking in different directions and what that does to the mood, atmosphere, feeling of the movement.

Notes on PAUSE – what context is the pause in? Qualities of pause. Feeling of a pause, a long, medium, short pause etc.

Day 2

Independent warm up. We gather in a circle. RZ refers to the engineer and fairies after another participant (...) asks if the fairies 'know' about the engineer. RZ says that they are merely useful tools to use in conversation, to use for analysis, that they don't exist in the moment. They are a mental process which has nothing to do with the actual doing.

RZ says - 'what you think about what you're practicing will affect what you're practising'. ALWAYS, RZ says, we're working from sensory experience which informs the action. Then she says, all this is a fiction, a 'story'. "I don't claim truth'. She refers to the five elements: 1,2,3 content; Timing - phrasing/beats/rhythm; Specificity in the body - what body part is engaged right now? Pause - what is the content? - how are you experiencing this moment?

Time/Phrase - Organisation of time that has a beginning and end. We improvise always inside the music of it. Discussion: RZ - How are you sensing the rhythm? Counting? Concepts? Experiencing? Sounding it out? Kinetic? Pulsing? Discussion: RZ uses metaphor of one river, sound to movement to sound etc. is not two tracks/rivers, but different qualities of track/river.

Task 8: Walking to beat - RZ hitting two pebbles together - walking with a partner. Working in relation to them means using the eyes, either to keep looking at them or to keep them in the field of vision, unless deliberately playing with not looking. Build in pause. Play with being on the rhythm, double-time, speed slow and fast etc.

Task 10: p/w movement phrase to a rhythm - *Mirror with Different Body Parts* - one person does a phrase with a particular rhythm, the other then repeats the rhythm but with a different movement pattern.

In a workshop situation we are thinking about a lot of things. I'm doing this/that. Noticing is not the problem. The judgement is. We talk a little about 'messaging with heads' - 'repaterning'.

Task 13: 1 person on chair, 1 behind. 1 person touches the other speaks. The speaker speaks according to the quality of the touch. Low down the back, the lower the pitch, the firmer the touch the more volume etc. Rhythm of touch also. The speaker can only speak when they are touched. A bit like puppets.

RZ says she's no longer interested in involving the audience directly i.e, touching them, bringing them in physically, or using them in overt ways as can happen in some improv where performers ask for words, suggestions, themes etc. It's about inviting audience into the world being created through the improviser. There is some talk today about love/hate relationship with this work. I'm annoyed also by the soundtrack of this practice sometimes. All the 'wacky' (RZ) noises do my head-in!

Task 14: Performance with whole group watching - 4 on chair, 4 behind. Directors/Puppets. Directors collaborate so that no 2 voices are speaking at the same time.

Day 3

Circle. RZ asks 'What's up?'. As usual there is silence. She says at some point: 'you're a quiet group'. There's a pressure to talk, to feed back. RZ tells a story about being a dancer, teaching dance, and being silent for twenty years, and growing frustrated with that. She tells how one day she is directing that frustration at the wall, she needed an enemy. And she's shouting the words but then because she is doing this in a sort of 'factory' where there are other people/artists, she drops the volume, and at that moment she understands for the first time that the voice 'moves'. There is such a thing as vocal movement. Her perception of the word's movement has altered. After thirty years of build-up. She talks about this shape/movement of words/sounds removing the cultural pressure to speak. RZ talks about using words as a way of re-organising relationship – sensory. A participant asks how to leave 'baggage' at the door – how deal with it? How to work/play with it? RZ says, I don't see that there's a problem. You use it. You invent with it. You collaborate with it. RZ says this isn't play. It isn't work. I don't use these words. It's experience. RZ says 'the language you use defines your reality'. We only have one mind. The practice continues outside the studio. Doesn't stop at the door.

A participant asks, “what do you say?” ‘- “you’re going to work, to play, to practise?”. RZ replies “depends who’s asking”. If it’s someone without a knowledge I say I work in theatre’ - if it’s a work-partner, I say “let’s go fuck around for a while”.

Task 15: Walk to pulse. Changing direction. Follow/copy someone. Solo turns into whole group improvisation. Copy/Pause. Copying in own way – making your own.

Specificity of action seems to be talked about a lot. This could become difficult when inhabiting the movement because to my mind the leading part wasn’t isolated. It called into being a phrasing/pattern/quality where other stuff was also moving by my awareness was simply in that foregrounded part. We look at some habitual patterns. Which of course we all have. We all locate a habitual pattern and RZ gets us to move with/from that with a particular body part foregrounded (which she calls out). This helps move beyond the habit. Again, into new sensory feeling which emerges from this.

Task 16: p/w one calls body part, the other moves with that part ‘dominant’. The whole body moves, but with that part foregrounded.

We work with eyes. Right arm only moves. Face forward. Eyes move following arm movement. Then opposite. Then with the quality of. This working with the eyes appears very important to RZ. At this point I begin to wonder about the value of doing a Feldenkrais ATM. RZ tells us to practise the eye exercise. Practice, practice, practice. At the break I ask RZ whether she would be happy for me to suggest to the group that I teach a Feldenkrais lesson on the eyes. Discussion: A couple of people say that their eyes are tired. RZ invites me to ask the group about the Feldenkrais lesson. Several people are interested after I introduce myself to the group as a Feldenkrais teacher. We agree to meet at 9am in the space.

Task 17: Two chairs. Sitting opposite each other, we work a little now with beginnings of narrative. One person creates an image e.g. There is blood in the puddle in the middle of the road. – or two boys are sitting on the wall, one has a grenade in his hand. We categorise them in our heads – suspenseful, joyful, thrilling, peaceful, painful, anxiety inducing etc. and try and contrast. We go back and forth, image after image, but image with potential

Day 4

Around sixteen participants, including RZ, came early for a Feldenkrais class which I taught. This one was on the eyes, and I proposed it because RZ is 'all about the eyes'! I ran it for about forty-five minutes and emphasised the use of imagined movement. Imagining rolling to one side. I wanted to draw out some of the synergies between Feldenkrais and Action Theater. The lesson appears to be very well received.

Circle. RZ has said that Moshé visited her studio to use it for teaching Feldenkrais – note to ask more about this. Now she talks about 1969. How she came to the practice through being asked if she could teach movement for actors. She had always danced. Danced since the age of three, she says. She moves to Berkeley and the Bay area. Anna Halprin was doing things that she didn't call 'classes' but rather called 'experiences'. RZ talks about not having a clue what to teach these actors. Out of frustration on the first day, she simply told them to walk. And she saw, became fascinated by, how they all walked so individually compared to dancers who thought that there was an ideal body, and ideal carriage etc. RZ around this time has an insight. That basically we have three choices. We can either: stay doing what we are doing // abruptly change – RZ uses the term SHIFT // gradually change – RZ uses the term TRANSFORM. RZ then goes on to describe her notion of 'frame'. She uses the metaphor of making Risotto. She's staying with the stir. The telephone rings. She abruptly changes to say hello, excitedly, then gradually changes to take account of the sad news she is hearing from her friend at the other end of the phonenumber.

RZ talks about detailing the inside of the movement – the word 'differentiation' is used. I become aware of how often this word is also used in the Feldenkrais Method. RZ encourages punctuation in the phrasing, play the inside – avoiding the generic. Detail it. Be inside the moment to moment of it. She talks about staying awake through the movement. She says she is not inventing the material, but rather the material is inventing her. She reiterates the idea

of improvisation as the employer – by saying that the improvisation will sack you, if you don't detail it.

Discussion: RZ says she doesn't need her partner to give her anything. It's her imagination that's working. It's her perception that's perceiving. RZ talks about not letting go of the steam of it. When you're pausing, the tank is full. Phrasing appears in every frame.

Task 24: This is a sort of interruption. Maybe RZ feels she can offer us an exercise we need so that we can use the eyes even more. Eyes. Stand. See a bird flying around the space, its track, its stop and start, its flutter and dive. Imagine a figure, another person entering the room. See it. Show it with your seeing. It comes close. A man, four men, standing very close, in front, left, right. One moves away, another goes. Show this, just in the eyes.

Task 25: 4 standing with backs to watchers. 1 turns with a sound, impulse, and the sound is the beginning of words, narrative/content. Only 1 person speaks at a time. Gets interrupted. When you get interrupted you turn back again. Play with lengths of times between interruptions, long, shorter, short, very short, very long etc.

Day 5

Warm up. Circle. Discussion. RZ refers to yesterday afternoon's discussion. She says, 'Don't take my word for anything'. And not to get stuck on talking ideas. The ideas get in the way. They get in the way of experiencing. She says that the 'eyes deliver the information'. 'You become one with the action' says one participant, 'the action is you'. RZ talks about absurdity of saying things like 'I'm a coffee person' or 'I'm a cat person'. RZ uses the word 'limitations'. These are important. Using the eyes only for example. I would use the term 'constraints'.

Task 27: In a line. All take a slow step to travel, very slowly forward. On each step, we arrive at a facial expression. Body is in neutral, relaxed, all but face. Moving the flesh of the face. Plasticity. From step to step the face morphs into the next but be in it, let it evolve.

Homework task: write or speak fifty images; stand in front of a mirror and practise plastic face. The task here is not to be able to name the mood or emotion. To name it is suddenly to

be out of the exercise. This leads into a discussion about emotions. RZ appears reticent about using this term. RZ appears concerned about reducing, naming.

The production of content becomes an issue. This is noticed too by many who talk about being preoccupied by the content. This leads into a discussion about content where RZ says there are five possibilities: a) movement and words that don't have anything to do with each other; b) gestural – where the movement 'tells' the story, this is more literal; c) movement is depicting or representing/acting out the story – this is more literal and RZ demonstrates this by talking about the little bird and clasping her hands, flying above (doing the action of flying with her hands) above the rocking baby (arms in cradle mode); d) movement rendering/supplying subtext or inner life. RZ demonstrates this by talking about having an examination tomorrow in a neutral/light voice which contrasts with her scratching her fingernails down the concrete wall. This 'names' the physical event for example, the speaking of the test/examination, while standing in the pose of playing golf – in this instance there are two images standing side by side each giving half of the story.

Voice – how to look after it. Relax. I think about 'feeling of ease', or Feldenkrais, but also question my own level of strain in this work. I feel I am becoming easier with it. RZ talks about if you know you're going to do a workshop, exercising the vocal muscles for some months before. There is talk about patterning again – about habit of thinking voice is just high/low, soft/hard – the form demands moving much more fluidly and subtly through these movements. A participant makes the observation that it's easier for them to speak in English rather than their native tongue. This exercise again puts 'listening' to the fore.

Day 6

Warm up. Circle. Discussion. RZ talks about 'climbing into the space between the sound of the word and the meaning – that's where the content is. The playground. This is the imaginal world. She repeats often this word 'imaginal'. Words have their cultural meaning – this is fixed. This is mental process. RZ is advocating a connection between the sensation of sounding these words. For me a key difference between this work and conventional actor-training – it's the sensory grounding for the word, rather than obsession with meaning. RZ saying that if we get that, then we've got it. 'You'll be free with language'. If it's at all 'imitative' then you've fallen a little bit asleep. RZ is careful to preface this comment with an admission that she has little to no experience of actor training, so if anyone counters her view that's okay. RZ says

that the perfect time to practise is in bed at night when you can't sleep – imagine the most genius of improvisations and it will have some neurological effect. RZ 'context is everything'. This is in the context of the sound/word again. It can only be produced by its context. In the circle RZ gets us all to repeat the words "I am so sad" – it has lots of cultural meaning attached to it; weight. Now repeat and let the body interact with it, not how culture has ossified its interaction with those words. RZ using the term 'kinetics' & terms like 'through the body'. She tells us to practise working on specific things: whether it be timing, eyes etc. Always be practising on something. I could work on isolation, eyes, pause etc. RZ – how do you notice it? Mental or embodied? (Me thought: what's the difference? – these terms entrench the mind/body split which we know is no longer useful for us, and yet in this practice we seem to be working with this differentiation quite a bit.) RZ – "In the beginning I emphasise 'form' – timing, shape etc. this is the toolbox". Then as practice develops once you've got the tools – now what? "Empathy"!!! You recognise it, you feel it. Always NOTICE, EXPERIENCE, RESPOND. After UNQUESTIONABLY 'ACCEPTING' IT. I have put this in upper-case because there's something about the tone/framing of the way RZ has said this, which makes these things sound elemental/fundamental. The crucial thing is that 'I am not identifying with it' – we're crippled by this otherwise. Say, 'it's not mine – it's just something I can recognise'. (This is where the thinking/principles of Action Theater might offer a gateway to mindfulness practices often associated with Buddhist practices). We have infinite choices accessed by not identifying with the content because then it keeps moving. We talk about how an entrance and an exit to a pause has infinite possibilities. Play with stopping with a hard interior and soft exterior or vice versa

RZ says something about how there is 'never any competition in this training'. It makes me think, of course, that there must be, but it's interesting that competition is discouraged. How is that reflected in RZ's pedagogy?

Day 7

Warm up. Circle. Discussion. I have already been thinking about the way RZ and this practice, along with many practices, continue to talk about 'mind' and 'being in the body'. That somehow these practices are all about unifying it, and yet appear to 'need' the split. The talking about what we're doing is important. We always use the split. RZ begins. "Okay". "I want to talk about something serious". She then says, "I don't know how to talk about improvisation without talking about the mind". This is an interesting discussion where RZ

talks about how easy it is to talk about the body, its timing etc. There's something about the way we talk about mind that entrenches the notion of mind. The body is a container, RZ says, it's how I can 'handle' it, otherwise I'm "afraid" to let go of this container. It's the form which keeps it safe, but that doesn't mean it keeps it boring. RZ makes a call for us to 'experiment' – now don't play it safe. A participant asks about how to deal with their mental image of the mind as being the brain or located in the skull. RZ appears to suggest that she has a different, more whole conception of it in her mental image of mind. (Is the problem of 'mind' one of our imagining?). RZ tells the story of a Mexican pueblo (village) to elucidate her idea about the problem of identification. In the pueblo one person's problem belongs to everyone. E.g. The man whose wife is having an affair, then how in the Sweat Lodge the story is shared and 'owned', the 'anger' owned by the community. RZ says she thinks about her daughter who works in the medical profession and how doctors must have empathy without identification. We can say "anger is expressing itself", rather than "I am angry". All these practices, methods, techniques "aiming at certain truths". I offer my thoughts that this is political. That this sense of ownership and individuality is really possessed by our rampantly capitalistic societies.

RZ asks group to quickly warm-up their voices. RZ asks group to think about warming up shape of voice, shape of sounds. RZ "It's in the bones. The bones make the shape". Start in silent mode, "then we get up to sound, sound and movement and then narrative, words". "The frame will announce itself in the first four or six seconds". "You stay in the container. I'm gonna stay here – there so much already here'. RZ emphasises the ING in ShapING to draw attention to the process. Be obsessed/fascinated and curious. The question of doing two things in a frame crops up. The answer is to get into the thing that you're doing, let one take over. "Connect" the sound and movement. RZ 'shift' means getting interrupted by the new thing. Not *you* interrupting *it*. Now interrupt with contrasting physical narrative. Not hoping to find something, know where you are. I'm getting you to know the frame. Work within it. Discover it. To give expression to your experience. There's something about this practice being a practice of expressing the process of heightened experiencing.

RZ noting need for more volume. Let's hear the vocal.

Day 8

Warm-up. People still doing their own thing, in their own space, usually laying down. Sometimes making breathy sound. Circle. Discussion. RZ asks what is the difference between

ritual and improvisation? RZ seems to think that one is about a sequence of actions whereas improvisation is about the people experiencing. I can see that rituals can sometimes appear less full of experiencing, a sequence of rote or automated actions but there is also room/space in these structures/forms for lots of 'felt' experience. RZ says that ritual is like a map. Improvisation is like the explorer. Someone mentions trust. RZ says it is 'a word I don't use'. RZ talks about the action not being the content. Inside the action honours the life and moment inside. Moment to moment. This is the experience. Accepting of that moment to moment.

Talk: A participant mentions that sensory and mood (level 1 & 2) are co-rising. This is a term used in advanced training. It is noted that this term 'transform' replaces RZ's earlier term 'develop' which seemed wrong because it didn't necessarily emphasise 'change'. Clearly tongue-in-cheek, RZ tells us not to perform improvisation if you love yourself - it involves too much embarrassment, shame and failure. We talk about 'bad' performance involving the performance where the improvisation is working for the audience rather than the improvisation. She says that a bad show is when 'I' am doing the show rather than where the show is revealing itself to her. RZ tells the story of the doll named Alice in Ann Harbour, Michigan. It is one I have read about, and that I have heard again from RZ in our recorded chat.

Day 9

Warm up. Circle. Discussion. RZ asks the question 'what's up? We talk about the distinction between form and content. Form is about things such as Shape, Timing, Mood, Direction. The Content emerges from playing within a form. To interrupt a frame with a contrasting frame the form must be different - either silent movement, sound & movement, physical narrative. There are, for RZ, four ways in which work with a partner in a duet. My job is to support directly the other person's content in a contrasting form. Support and add e.g. a silent frame contrasted with a narrative frame. My actions re-frame the other's - it changes the meaning of it. E.g. one person is writhing on the floor with sounds. RZ joins in narrative frame talking about clinical procedures. Adding a different image that completes a picture. I'm changing the meaning by NOT relating e.g. is writhing, while RZ is singing about flowers in meadows. Contrasting frames - if one talks, I can't. If I'm moving, the other can't.

Talk: gets on the idea that you cannot know what others are 'intending' in an improvisation, so don't worry about it. There isn't time anyway. So, the practice is also about shortening the time-lapse between sensing and mood. "Let the body come into the body" RZ says. RZ now

gets each of us in the circle to say one thing that 'we're doing here'. People come up with rules, timing, eyes, differentiation, listening, neutral, rhythm, relaxing the mind, accepting, RZ - "devoting", imagination, mind & bones staying together. We talk a little about transforming vocal and narrative imagery. Transformation happens in moment of neutral.

Remember 1) sensory, 2) mood 3) content

One participant would like to widen their spectrum/range. Another says they want to get the connection between eyes, voice, movement. Also, spatial signature, laying the material out in the space. It's about creating possibilities so that things are not generic. How? By isolating the physical details. Open the door to it.

Task 43: Circle, sound/action LOUD, across circle - we take on the movement, transform it and send it to someone else across the circle on a pulse.

Then, shifting into a frame. Either we join each other's frames, or we shift into a new frame. So, either 1) silent movement, or 2) sound & movement. The task is to join quickly. I became aware that I would like to practise being in a frame for a long time, without either transforming/shifting for a while. There's another reminder that eyes and facial expression are important too, to involve. I do an improvisation with a participant. My difficulty seems to be to contain within a frame. We have some good shared frames, certainly in the physical narrative. When we contrast, I tend to perceive it disintegrating, losing clarity. RZ is saying practice the practice. That imperative becomes clearer now somehow. I want to practise the staying within the frame. PRACTICE. RZ says with somebody in the room, otherwise we get lazy. No talking RZ says, no feedback, just practice. RZ talks a little about 'anxiety'. RZ seems to be saying that we should notice the feeling(s), but not name it. Naming these feelings as anxiety doesn't give credit to the feeling. Look at anxiety and ask yourself what else am I feeling? Maybe don't call it anxiety. Just notice what it feels like at this moment you're involved in the process of naming. It could be simply a feeling of heightened adrenaline - fearful so I want to do it? RZ starts talking about these altered states, or universes. This 'becoming' doesn't know how to look at that 'becoming'. (The way I understand it, she is saying, we can't look at THAT universe (in improvisation) from THIS everyday perspective.

Improvisation is an invitation to get into the process of becoming. “For some of us it is delicious” (RZ). “For some of us it is horrible” (RZ).

Showing: there are 4 groups of 5 doing this choral exercise on chairs.

Day 10

Warm up. Circle. Discussion. We do pulse walking. Then we practise tone/pitch with small circle and an ‘ah’ sound. NOT an ‘I’, or a ‘U’ sound, but very definitely an open ‘aah’ sound. One comes in, next in circle adds but in different pitch, next comes in, but in different pitch again.

We’re stepping inside a new world in an improvisation – an imaginal world. Real life is the hard world.

Hamilton (Classes 2013-17)

A - On editing

Editing extends. Because what is left goes to a higher level. The post-edit mind goes to another level. It furthers somehow. We can have in-body editing. So that we’re alert to the edit. The instant edit. To inhibit. When you get good it doesn’t have to go through all the decision/reflection etc. But the practice is an entrainment. It is to do this quickly, instantly. Edit is choice. As you speak you edit, and conversation is an art. So, we’re always editing. We stand here not there. Spontaneity is just being quick at these processes. Then inspiration can allow you to make manifest the action. It’s a technique where your actions are in-body edits that are smooth. You’re leading the movement and being led by it. We are active/passive AT THE SAME TIME. Which is why we like dancing because we integrate these things – we have a feeling of active/passive flow. And this is editing. “it’s why I say you’re not free”. I’m not free because I’m always making decisions. It’s just that the speed gives us a sense of freedom from the disturbances of slow decision-making. Your body houses decision in action. The moment you stop appreciation of the move you go elsewhere. So, let’s appreciate the move and further the phrase. Instant Composition is a practice in instant appreciation. Our job is to make space to house appreciation. We read the move and in the reading there’s a

connection to the next. These processes get abused as if something can simply be thrown together. NO. Nobody chooses randomly. It's somebody. Their spirit. (Arlequi, 2017)

The breath is unedited. Speech is edited breath. Stream of consciousness is breath. Choreography (speech) is decision. In improvisation it's only the stream of consciousness which has been emphasised. We are studying time and becoming aware of this editing capacity. Sensation is already an edit – it leaves out some and keeps in others. (Arlequi, 2015)

Instant Composition is a practice in instant appreciation. Our job is to make space to house appreciation. We read and in the reading there's a connection to the next thing. (Arlequi, 2017)

Improvising is that which does not need to be proved or tested. Which is why it is rational to improvise. (Arlequi, 2017)

B - On the study of anatomy

The moment we dare to study anatomy we open up space for con (with) figuration (figure). The body is not an idea. It is/has mass. It has form. One figuration is not another, they change. (Transfiguration). We can also recognise our feelings about this or that configuration. Those feelings help resonate the configuration. Change your configuration and your feelings change. Without the feelings you cannot change your configuration. Configuration also relates to environment – it's a different day. DISPONIBILITE. This needs you to be okay about your feelings changing. There are steps in the noticing. Step 1 – feelings noticing your own. Step 2 – feelings/character may not be the feelings of the piece. Step 3 – feelings in audience / in the air. COMPLICITE – with self, with audience, with character. Naming feeling can be a useful tool. Noticing. Sometimes it can be really useful to name the feeling. When you make a move the feelings of that move get credited to the piece. The simpler and more direct the configurations of the body, the better the feelings can be the feelings. (Arlequi, 2015)

We need to be onlookers. To go into anatomy is important because it gives us rational knowledge. When you give a class, you're giving on-ness to student's in-ness. It gets a surface by your watching. Meniscus. Without in-ness you can't get on-ness. (Arlequi, 2017)

We must learn to read the sensations. SENSATIONALLY. (Arlequi, 2014)

Actions/not ideas. To materialise the material. To handle. To make manifest. The basis of the body is body, body is based in the body. God. "I want to develop a dynamic mind when improvising, not a static mind that's quick". (Arlequi, 2017)

It's through form/it speaks. It is already speaking. (Arlequi, 2015)

C - On bones

Bones ARE direction. They already direct. We don't have to direct them. With them we navigate through the choreography. "What I want to impress upon you is that this imagination is not representative". The hand by itself is not representing hand. In composition, then many things are represented. It's metaphorical. "Imagination needs concretisation". So back to body in action right now. Practise writing (voicing) poetry without simile – "like" – go direct instead. Representation defers emotion. Can you be in your imagination, without it being 'like' something? Let's have the action have its inner reverberation – you stay inside the imagination. Can you keep to/with the voices of the imagination which needs a receptivity – a listening? Through-ness is already in the movement. Then I can take the through-ness through time. We take the material (which has through-ness) and this is choreography. (Arlequi, 2017)

D - On precision

The body, through the ground, can have its precision. Body does not have tight edge definition – it pulsates. There's a constant trombone of movement as the body parts its ways. Then the next step – once it's precise, is that it speaks. It says something. Listen to what it says. Hear the fruit. Precision produces – listen to what it produces. You taste it on the fly – it has a very short shelf-life. The body is reading the fruits of its action. In improvising we have a shorter time to appreciate it. Instant appreciation. With fixed material we get longer. (Arlequi, 2016)

The floor is a tool – it's now. It's a beautiful joke that the wood transforms from vertical (tree) to horizontal (floor). Can we feel the floor when we fly/move away from the floor? (Arlequi, 2014)

We stand from the floor, rather than stand on it. (Brussels, 2016)

There's a lot of steps in improvising and you need to know your steps. A lot of the steps are good steps. Don't be fooled into thinking you're not learning/doing steps. (Arlequi, 2016)

E - On ground as baseline

We can materialise the metaphor immediately. The pulse. The anchor. Task – listen to unmetrlicated music in a metrlicated way. If you can't sing while you dance, you're not dancing. Singing/dancing maybe with, but may not be with, in parallel. Co-habiting, hearing in both directions. The ground. GROUND. Baseline in music & movement.

(The Workings of Time, Brussels, 2016)

F - On time and space

Time and space become sensations, not concepts from outside. We must learn to read the sensations sensationally. We tend to treat sensation rationally. Treating sensations rationally can be an avoidance when we're improvising. Putting someone in fifth position with rational instruction doesn't produce fifth position, it can only be taught through sensation. Sensually.

(Arlequi, 2014)

Radial space/time. Linear space/time. Non-linear = Atmosphere = Not sequential. Linear houses sequence of action. (Arlequi, 2015)

Now is the gravity of time. The future is the air. We need to be in the near future – in the micro hum of now is the near future and near past. We're not talking about tomorrow time (necessarily). Now is time massified. Then what remains? That is the question. (Arlequi, 2015)

Five areas of time: 1 – memory, 2 – near past (resources are in the system but haven't yet gone into the past), 3 – now, 4 – near future, 5 – big future. (Arlequi, 2015)

Musicality – it's not something you get at music school, it's your ability to live through time emotionally. Literally, to feel time. To move through – emovere. Exercise: leave a move there in space (no smudge). Then do another. Lay them out. Twos – clear rhythm (simple). DARE TO BE SIMPLE OR MUNDANE. (Arlequi, 2015)

Notice how we desire to skip time. We're already where we are not. Like the 90s in relation to the millennium. We were there before its time. Linear time has already caught the atmosphere. There is a hidden rhythm in this. (Arlequi, 2015)

Linear time is often prioritised in the world. But the other kinds of time aren't alternative or a way to 'escape' linear. They're not contradictory. We have all these ways of perceiving. They've always been there. We might be less dexterous at experiencing or sensing the 'eternal'. The poets are doing this. Buy your time. Linear time is marketable.

Meniscus – that layer we dive into the study of time. (The Workings of Time, Brussels, 2016)

Time – what we do in the time alters our perception of time. It makes questions about how 'now' works – its influence can be retroactive and futuristic. How is the time divided? Undivided attention – basic appreciation uses the same faculty of subtle appreciation. We don't have to apologise for being basic. Time isn't a construct. But the way that we measure time is. Our relationship to time constructs it. You wanna go through time with me? (Arlequi, 2016)

This is the link between the linear time (the actions). Putting it into the collection which is the atmosphere. Photos drive a wedge in the atmosphere. The link is the penetration of action also produces atmosphere. (Arlequi, 2015)

The atmosphere? We cannot not live with atmosphere. Therefore, we cannot not be infused with it. (Brussels, 2016)

Trust that the space around and between is transforming; emanating. (Arlequi, 2013)

Atmosphere is a non-linear space. This kind of time is not sequential. We have zeitgeist. The linear houses action. Radial space/Linear space. Handle what you can handle with these concepts – don't hold them in this faux intellectuality – it reduces the power of the stuff. (Arlequi, 2015)

G - On objects

There's a doubleness to an object. Its transformation depends on us seeing the object oscillating between its daily/quotidian and its poetical/theatrical. (Arlequi, 2017)

Objects create gravity and if one stands with an object there is a gravitational pull between these entities. The attraction is real. The object and you each shine a light on each other. We weigh it. We feel it in gravity. We are no longer naïve to it. (Arlequi, 2015)

As objects they are what they are, but as décor they're both what they are and not what they are. (Arlequi, 2017)

Presence = the wholeness of the object always being everywhere. For example, the presence of the Statue of Liberty or the Mermaid in Copenhagen can be present in this room in Arlequi. An object that doesn't exist anymore can still be present. (Arlequi, 2017)

H - On words

It, the word, wants to be made in gravity, because words are in the world where massification takes place. In the anatomy of the body, how can I make it real? The word is vibrating through air. A graffiti artist tzzusses through the air and it sticks – it massifies. We are now not the servants of rhyme and rhythm – we can use them we can use them as a tool. We are liberated. Now we have practised the tool of rhythm and rhyme, the sound is the ground like a drone. Hear words as objects and sounds. Releasing the emotionality in very unemotional material. Each word is event. We can let the words be the events they are, full of the emotional space that they inherently have. (Arlequi, 2015)

My name is...(fiction), I have (factual). e.g. my name is Jack, I have a plastic bottle in front of me. Wading through the sea back and forth in order to come down from the head. Let the poetry resound. Have the guts to say - I'm standing in front of a plastic bottle. Judgements are not a problem. Life is always more or less than we imagine. (Arlequi, 2015)

I - On rhythm of words

Musical composition of the word. e.g. "Dis" (1) "trust" (2) "ful" (3) "ness" (4) Syllable no. 4 echoes no. 1 "anatomy of language". (Arlequi, 2017)

J - On acoustic space

Acoustic space - do you have the space to say what you want to say? Space to hear what you are doing. This vibrates in big space. You have the space to say. Like a wave that resounds.

To let resound what is being expressed. The word: "POPE". Reverb. Re-verb. Space refers to the thing you've made rather than the relationship to you as a maker.

Temporal listening. NOT acoustic – 'the dancer's ears' – it's kinaesthetic.

Be heard. "You don't mumble to waiters". A Euro for every word we hear. (Arlequi, 2015)

Hanne (Classes 2014-17)

A - On body

Feet plie – turned out. Under-stand from pelvic floor. The space understands, so we don't have to. Liberating because we don't have to make meaning. (*Words in Performance*, 2014)

CNS – executes, activated, muscles, cartilage, ligaments, fascia etc. To move: location, direction, stimulus, motivation. Imagining the action is where we are active. Once we've imagined it well then, the nervous system is activated to carry out the action. So, we must practice imagination – this will call everything to be where it needs to be – eyes, weight etc. I'm not capable of navigating the movement. The imagination has to power that. (*The Complex Phrase*, 2016)

Imagine the drama (action) of each small move. Give each its space. You only have 7 moves!!! (*The Complex Phrase*, 2016)

Weight taken care of by legs etc. once this has been worked in the studio – hours and hours and hours – then an inner logic is accessed. (*The Complex Phrase*, 2016)

Go into the articulation of the joints. Give time for [the articulation] to know itself. Ask, what is it? It is complex. The quotidian is already complex. But you can theatricalise – will it into theatre. They (joints) are working. We are a medium for these articulations. (*The Complex Phrase*, 2016)

Of course, if the arm moves the foot knows but not if it's not very well credited. It must be fully credited. (*The Complex Phrase*, 2016)

Re-cap – the body is full because it is full. Do each move in its micro-ness fully. Weight – go into the weight. So, if lifting a leg put focus on leg with the weight. (*The Complex Phrase*, 2016)

We need TRINITY. Bodymind is too dual and polar. We need to include the soul. (*Mimesis*, 2017)

Let's use INCARNATE instead of EMBODY. I don't know what it means anymore. Alignment important here. No good that the body is simply moving and speaking – that they are incarnated. No, we have to be in alignment. (*Mimesis*, 2017)

Alignment: Working with the inside of the arm – training exercise arms no higher than shoulders (constraint). Practicing alignment. How to give intention to words – DIRECTION. To communicate geometry, colour, emotion etc. Motivation has direction. Without the desire to move there's no movement. Stimulus – desire. It is the very seed of the action. Conception. Concept of cherry tree is in the seed. The image of Cherry Tree is in the seed. Seed is FULL of direction. Motivation – preparation of the body – execution of the action. The words must align with the action. It's not that they must move in the same direction but that they're aligned. (*Mimesis*, 2017)

B - On space and time

Speed and covering ground is not all the work. The work is the ticking of time – the subdivision. (*The Complex Phrase*, 2016)

We're very fast – not fast but up to date. (*The Complex Phrase*, 2016)

C - On word

Dance and poetry have been abused and battered. So, they've separated them. But, they're irrevocably linked. When each are allowed to individuate, they pull each other forward. They're not just co-habiting, they're collaborating. They go perfectly well together. And, in tune with our times. (*SAWFD*, 2015)

ONTOLOGY OF WORD - When we handle words like this, they shift their identity. They expand. They become more amorphous. Yet they find their place more after this handling.

They can be more themselves. Now we don't have to give them meaning we have less control. They're becoming this ocean. More direct. Table still means table, but we don't have to pinpoint. They (words) have their being. The world of a word is very big. (*The Complex Phrase*, 2016)

Depend on us handling the materiality of the words. To handle the materiality of the words we must first deal in the materiality of attention/attending. It is through working with this material – attention – that we can begin to feel the texture of the words. (*The Complex Phrase*, 2016)

How parc did you get? Did you go to the parc yesterday? Parc – tally //// how parcilicious are you feeling now? Dialogues with partners – quotidian using parc as verb and adjective. I went to the parc and I sat on a beach. We go through parc and out the other side, so it becomes specific again. All of you and your moves are included in the parc. Nothing can be excluded. So, you have to include everything. This produce is inclusive produce. (*The Complex Phrase*, 2016)

Hanging out in the park. Normalcy//hang-out. Articulate through the torso. So, when the hand moves it is processed by the whole body. You can't get faster than that. Aesthetically it may not look like that. But it can only go as fast as it takes. (*The Complex Phrase*, 2016)

Metaphorical. Parc – metaphor (is stuck for a while). Then it stops being like a parc – I am in parc. But does a parc always have trees? First, we have to imagine it's possible. Imagining it's possible. (*The Complex Phrase*, 2016)

We can have a microscopic investigation into words. Words are a melting of energy and matter. 'Book' points to this book and all books. Exterior meaning. Interior meaning. Get inside. Go into. It expands. Take JELLYFISH. To take very literally, like meat – gets you there very quickly. The movement sees the interior. The word intensifies the body also intensifies the dancing. (*Mimesis*, 2017)

Handle words. Manipulate them and words become tangible. Manus? Craftsmanship. Manipulation steers. (*Mimesis*, 2017)

The words must be grounded to be made physical. (*Mimesis*, 2017)

ARTiculate from the ground. If word is grounded it can live. It is earthed. The body actualises the articulation of the word and this grounds it in the physical world. (*Mimesis*, 2017)

Beat the meaning out of the word and then the meaning appears. Words generate they are generous. Spend a day with a word. Spend a night with a word. Body intensifies the word. Gives it colour. (*Mimesis*, 2017)

We corrupt the words are not corrupted. We twist words. We can trust them. They are so full of goodness and light. Nothing innately bad. But words are dangerous. (*Mimesis*, 2017)

D - On phrase

The complex phrase isn't the same as the complicated. It's already complex – of many. (*The Complex Phrase*, 2016)

Make produce where the quotidian can also take place. (*The Complex Phrase*, 2016)

Working with affirmative sentences. Simple: "I think I've finished" or "Hollywood seems golden". Check. Does it need more work to be affirmative? (*Mimesis*, 2017)

We are dealing with the making of form. We do not have to know what it means; that's the audience's job. PER / FORM / ANCE. (*Words in Performance*, 2014)

E - Miscellany

Imagination moves/is power/sets something in motion/heat/stimulation. Imagination is quietly knocking – we learn to listen to it. (*The Complex Phrase*, 2016)

A 'something' technique is not technique – it's already excluding. (*The Complex Phrase*, 2016)

Words resonate in the space. This practice creates space. An apple is not a boat – you deal with that, and you ask your audience to deal with that. Let the audience make the meaning – the gap is wide. (*Words in Performance*, 2014)

Character is an amalgum of specificity. Imagine it is already in your dancing. Per/form. (*The Complex Phrase*, 2016)

Everything you do will be charged politically – the polis – everything you do (read) must go down. Naiveté. It touches something in you when you say it. You're guilty. (*The Complex Phrase*, 2016)

People don't let improvised work go down. They change it with all this stuff. But we have to find a new tool to let everything go down – let go, release. (*The Complex Phrase*, 2016)

The choreography is relevant, but I want to get to a place where it doesn't matter. Where I can busy myself with what needs to be said. Be a servant to it. Be in service of. Can you surrender to what you're being given? To resist it, is violence. But it's dangerous to surrender without practice. To perform, to serve the preparation and the work. How do you become an insider? How to go in? How to stay in? Service. Service. Service. Get on your knees. Bow down. Bow down. Bow down. To your material. Then we can be in awe of material. And we must be in awe of the material in front of us. Like a prayer. A constant practice. (*Mimesis*, 2017)

I want to get to a place where the choreography is irrelevant. Words too. What you can navigate is the detail – the how. (*Mimesis*, 2017)

Accounting. Make each other accountable. Watch, listen, write to each other between studio practice. Account for yourself. Be accounted for. Account for somebody else. Get your purpose clear. (*Mimesis*, 2017)

"John" + "White" + "Horse" = choreography. (*Words in Performance*, 2014)

Action is the thought. The prepared thought is different from that which is executed – this one becomes a version – a beautiful version. (*Mimesis*, 2017)

Mimesis? Dance not competitive. The classics. The form evolves because we copy. Origination is ego. The source. How can inspiration happen without borrowing copying? Dare to go into the love for an idol. Act of service. The need to be original is a fairly recent phenomenon. Now to take responsibility for it to go forward but we have to have compassion. Why I improvise,

partly, for a mystical experience. We have to sense that we're touched by something. We need to trust our intuition. Learning from others. There's a humility there. To have humility in our times can be confused or perceived to be humiliated. (*Mimesis*, 2017)

Appendix V: *Hamilton and Hanne Evening Talk Transcript*

Extracts from transcript of Evening Talk – Julyen Hamilton and Billie Hanne talking about their work to a public audience as part of the Space and Words for Dancers event.

Chisenhale Dance Space, London

17 July 2015

Extract A

HANNE: It's to know the history, the recent history to go into that go into that in making and maybe that proves to be the right way still, maybe not, it's not important but we have to know it. We have to know about the architecture of space and what it does to the dancing body, and what it does to voice, and what it does to a voice in motion. I say that because I feel that in the field of the modern dancer or contemporary dance there's not a lot of knowing of the history that I see so many artists trying to invent the original from nothing. There's no point there is a history that has been made and we're not at the beginning of it, we've arrived at some point there so we must investigate again. I know how to walk into space and look at the space and have a sense of how to dance in that space by looking at the height the floor to ceiling and looking at the line from the floor to the back wall. As a dancer you have to have a sensual relationship with your backdrop you have to have some imagination of what it looks like for an audience that you have to have that sensually because you're not in the audience but you have to know how to dance in front of that backdrop.

HAMILTON: Charlie, the drummer of the Rolling Stones, when he was asked "what do you do?", he said oh I just play for the other guy in front. But what's very beautiful is that in the front they know how to take from the drama behind and this is the real spatial art not just that you are in front, as you always are at the back, but that you know how to take from it. How you deal with that in terms of the material and everything like that is part of the art of using space. You might have a good bass player but can you listen to her or him why you were upfront singing? Can you receive from it? And this is very important as usually this is the

direction of light comes from to the audience. And you are empowered by one of the first stages of clarity and empowerment. It has directionality and it alters and that's combined with of course the angle of the seating because if the seating goes up very high part of the backdrop is the floor and then it's obvious. Backdrop, forward — the line where one meets the other...it has to be decided. That's the moment where the world changes from vertical to...and where that is cuts across your body and therefore spatially speaks. From where you are that line now cuts probably across here for someone like that maybe a bit lower can you see what happens if then it's getting me just above the ankles. These are very real spatial things... and when they are engaged with not only are they problems to be solved but they actually stimulate the body towards its poetry.

HANNE: It is important always when we perform with the body, something in us must own the space, all the way up to the wall to the floor to the ceiling — we must own the space or we cannot move; otherwise we cannot be moved by the space and if dances not I forget but I don't forget and the poetry is a spatial art. We were making poetry from the body before we wrote it down on the page. It is a spatial art so we must have relationship to the space we're in. And the performer is so incredibly tender invaluable it's not possible not to go all the way.

Extract B

HANNE: I got into this work because there's an urgency inside feeling I have to move, and I have to speak, and I did not know where to go. There were things I saw it was not like. I said I need to do that and I think it was instinct really, like an animal I went and I looked where I would go and what that would mean that it was very very strong feeling that I had to speak and move at the same time. This was before I was in Allen's line (Julyen's company) and then tasted the work. And I knew that with my poetry I would not be doing it from the mic. There's not a lot of poetry that comes through like that. I believe that there was a physical feeling. I could not believe that people would come with a piece of paper and they would read from it and this did not make sense. I knew that I had to begin with big space. It's very important that we place our work somewhere. That we say "No, I want the biggest room!" Because to be a body, in space, moving and speaking, I don't know what else there is, that's bigger than that. We're talking. We're women who talk. And we talk poetry, we're not protesting, we're not talking politics. Not here, not today. Maybe it's political, but we're not talking information, we're talking poetry. And I'm telling her, her hair looks very musical today and she replies

what did you have for breakfast. And it speaks. It doesn't need anything. It's just it. It's just that and space without anything added on.

HAMILTON: [talking about 'putting these art forms together'] And yet because of their incredible strength. Dance and poetry surviving abuse. Anything so powerful they want to separate. But have you ever heard someone talking who is not moving? Of course, they live together. Empowering – they take each other forward. They live together but they're individuated. They pull each other. Like a left and a right.

Audience Question: What is your starting point?

HANNE: My starting point for *Deep Brown Sea* was the image for the flyer. And the image for the flyer – I made the flyer – and I had this jump on video that I did in the studio where I work against the white wall. I knew I would make *Deep Brown Sea*, and those two titles came at the same moment. And it was a diptych that I had imagined. But I had imagined both as a duet. But after making *Map of Antartica*, and being very happy with it and planning to have it go – it did go to Berlin and we performed in Brussels in different spaces, and then it was gone; that was gone and I was left with *Deep Brown Sea* which became a solo. Because I had the vision for that piece when I played the premiere in Brussels, I had played *Map of Antartica* in that space. And we had used that space many times before. And I had, but I had not played the whole space. There's a dance floor and around the dance floor there's concrete. And I had used the whole dance floor once for my first solo and part of the concrete but not the whole architecture of the room. But with *Map of Antartica* I opened up the whole thing. And then when I did *Deep Brown Sea*, I was with Theodosia, she wasn't there with me, but I had that whole memory of doing that piece with two when I made the solo. And it was important; it was important. I knew the places in the space. I had the audience facing the same direction. And where the aquarium is in *Map of Antartica* there's two large icicles let's say so I knew that place in the space from that other piece. And then when I made the flyer for *Deep Brown Sea*, I looked for mud, and I overlaid it with transparent mud, and that where I started from.

Audience Question: When you go into that world, imaginatively, then in the moment of producing in the performance, to what extent do you let go of that world. What's the process after that initial imagining when you're making in the space?

HANNE: In this case, I took it very literal. There was a deep brown sea. I didn't take that metaphorically. I wanted a deep brown sea. And when I was making the flyer, the first flyer, it had those colours, and when I went to Eloise for the costume, it had those colours, and then when I got to the space I had this image of an underwater cave very deep down and I wanted something running water. First, I had this whole plan of making a factory with water dripping and it turned out to be fish in the aquarium but you just go it's this thread that you follow and the piece will go from there. And then I had a bit of poetry, and I wrote some description before that. And I had the programme, you received yesterday, that was there before I had done the piece. But then I carried that out. Because I trust that it comes from a certain inspiration at that moment, and the first time I do the piece I really try and carry out what I set out for. Even though when I write the description, I don't know yet, but I trust it.

Audience Question: How did you mark the time?

HANNE: I asked the lighting person to blackout after seventeen minutes. When I played that piece the second time, in Rotterdam, in a gallery it was 300 sq. m. so the piece changed enormously, and I played thirty-two minutes. And after that I played Amsterdam, twenty-five minutes.

Audience Question: Did you play with the ratio of the space and minutes? The timing and the amount of space you had.

HANNE: Yes, it was all about filling minutes. To be very honest. And to be in the space for those minutes. And for that piece I could do anything I want.

Audience Question: And you played with the ratio between the two things?

HANNE: With I think in Brussels I played forty-two and then after that when I did it in Berlin, I brought it back to less – to have it tight again. And to work that. Yes, it's working very different. I feel up to thirty minutes is one thing. But after, it's like it counts double. From thirty to forty is a much bigger difference than from twenty to thirty. The work you have to put in – I don't know how that is but it's very...yeah, I can feel that.

Extract C

HAMILTON: The making and destroying, they must go, they do go hand in hand. One learns so much about how something is made by destroying it and what is revealed by the destruction and what is revealed by construction. And in art, in the theatre, you are allowed to destroy, and we're allowed to see destruction happening, without anyone rushing in to get nervous about it. Of course, if it's done gratuitously it's like gratuitous violence in the cinema, it's not worth much. But we allow ourselves without having to go into a very tight spot of aggression, to make and make and naturally we see that anything is constructed destroys something else. If you have a white canvas and put a colour on it you destroy the completeness of the white by putting a colour on it. For many years, things would get destroyed on-stage, and I'm very very glad for that. Not for its inherent aggression or violence but because they were allowed to deconstruct with the aid of a hammer or...in some way. Yes, it hasn't stopped. Of course, you have to ask yourself if you're busy with that whether you're in a tight little nervous bit of it or if there's something that's really genuinely moving you; and it is about revealing. It is about what happens when something is deconstructed. And of course, the work of deconstruction is so exciting to do. Because I feel when you dance that is what you do, you are deconstructing the body as opposed to always making movements. Something is just peeling open. I feel it in my body. So, when it's there and you're allowed to see the process of that, it's a wonderful story or a wonderful road to go along. So, I was quite charmed with that...In using the space, with the history...I'm going to tell you a little bit now about...I direct a company called Allen's Line. And Allen's Line is...it affords the possibility where dancers and poet, dance and poetry and space can live in community. I don't mean those elements in community, but with various and different numbers of people, at some points there are eight people in it, sometimes four, or three. But it is different from the solo activity that I do; or the duet that I do with many musicians. And I love to make décor for a group performance; it's very different than making décor for a solo – emotionally. And as we explained earlier, the stripping of the theatre meant that you go out and your outside is your boundary. And you usually are in the same outside as your audience. And I wanted to make a piece where we were inside, but really inside the décor and the audience were outside the décor. And I got fascinated with the idea of actually just wrapping us up in something and the audience not being able to see us at all. And I thought that would be really wonderful – an audience watching an object and people dancing and speaking and making sound inside it...I think how that came about, apart from my own experience of the solos, was because of the clarity,

the tightness of the décor, the very nature of it being so evident; it gave even a stronger, it was like it massified something. Even this which is so airy, and that allowed huge ground to go way beyond. See, for many years in the solos, I've always dedicated every night to somebody, and often somebody who's not there. So, there's always been an interest in me, when in those three zones, to just have a ...not a sense of perspective but a sense of relationship. Usually to a friend who couldn't make it, or is 3,000 miles away, or is no longer living. There's that fourth area; it's just a personal thing you could say, but here it could manifest as an instruction towards the whole company.

HANNE: I just wanted to emphasise about the piece; there were three things we really worked on – physiologically I knew what I had to do to communicate with Paolo, with Theo, and I knew what I had to do to go just beyond the red ribbon and I knew what I had to do to go way beyond.

HAMILTON: This is very important.

HANNE: To just really emphasise because sometimes with the improvised work we don't ask whether we're working on details that doesn't go in. We really work on that, in class. We knew these states, in every moment in the performance. It did not mean getting to a place where it was all okay, no we knew which state we were in.

HAMILTON: And as director that means really explaining it, have it happen, correcting it, guiding it, setting up the ambience where it's not just going to be an instruction, but it can actually vibrate. You know it's gotta be tight. In that way...

HANNE: That is not a score. That is the director creating the circumstances in which we can fully improvise. And at the same time fulfil the vision he has of the piece – which was made for us.

Extract D

Audience Question: Over what time frame of that working? When you say working through, you mean prior to the performance, like exploring?

HAMILTON: I make pieces very quickly. Like they just come like blllurrghghh and that's the whole piece. Very often the visuals, the graphic, the title, the whole shmagoos can manifest, it's probably been gestating a while, but it manifests very very quickly. And sometimes there's...

HANNE: ... it can be three/four days, or a piece can be also played with two days, one day practical things, then played with two three instructions.

HAMILTON: but when I say quickly, I meant like maybe two minutes — it just comes... bllurghgh like this. And in some instances we don't have the privilege of meeting for a week or two weeks or six months or whatever, and in fact in one of the pieces earlier to this we had absolutely no rehearsal time apart from meeting at four o'clock on the day of performance, but still there was a definition of...

HANNE: We had played that piece, but we didn't meet for one year and we had to play one day.

HAMILTON: So, I had to allow what manifestation I could...and one of the dancers said "oh I was just hungering for some direction but then I saw the publicity you sent out, I saw the image and I went "yeah"". And this is also a credit to the way we have been working and the sort of intelligences that people in the company have that they know; they have all spent many many hours with me in often a studying or performing situation so that they can read, they can read something of the imagination, through me they can read something of the imagination of the piece that they need to do, need to know. And then once that's pinned down at one moment, and that can be very very short that moment, then the piece is living in performing and talking about it and meeting again and doing another performance of it. And all of that is its life. It's not so much that it's a situation of rehearsing for a long time and then making the piece. These things go together. And part of that is just the economic constraints, because I seem to make more pieces than I have time to write for subsidies to make more pieces. So, I keep making. But it's also something about my nature, that I feel that serves the pieces that come through me, so far, pretty well.

HANNE: But we train every day. Everybody has their work that they do every day.

HAMILTON: As artists. Of course, that comes straight from the Jazz world. You know, they're all living working artists. They just come together to be directed by me. And that's what I always wanted – I didn't want to have to deal with a whole lot of other stuff. I wanted mature artists who could give their ability and angle and whatever, to serve that singular vision. It's different than, you know, getting together to do an improv jam; that's not the company. You see everything helps everything when you make something. And that's the wonderful thing about practicalities – somebody says, 'What's the title, we need it for the programme?' and you go 'I Smooth Crimson' and you just go 'yeah, that's it'. But then that bounces back deeply into where it came from in you, it helps you, you help yourself. And we say, yeah but we don't have an image. But we haven't done the piece yet, that's the image, that was the first poster for it, and it tells you that nothing is a coincidence, everything manifests from something along the line of the life of what you're doing. And so you can use it, if you trust it. [Referring to image]. This is another décor that can also be wrapped up in a small bag and taken on the aeroplane, but it's massive. This is from a piece called The Forerunner.

Extract E

Audience Question: Why you doing it again next week? What decisions, how do you choose what to do when, where? Why did you not do The Forerunner last night for example. Why was it Play?

HAMILTON: The pieces are improvised in the moment they're presented but their anima is already clear enough to be able to title and to sign a contract. How they manifest is not entirely open because once you've got to know the anima of the piece you know a little bit about what it means. Rather like if you asked person X out you'd go, no not that restaurant, not with person X, we have to go there, but then person A is yeah we can go to that restaurant, but you don't know what's going to happen in the evening while you eat together, so it's not a fixed conclusion but it's something you have because you know something about it. And in the same way, in certain contexts, I would go 'no, I don't think that's the piece for this context' or 'yeah, I think that's going to fit the bill'. And it's also personal because it's what I want to say or I can still say it, still go into that anima. That's also an issue of whether one can go back into the same piece and touch that place from which it's made.

Audience Question: Do you prepare? Do you spend time, looking at the set? How do you prepare?

HAMILTON: That's a very delicate process because you are not dealing with the first flushes of naivety and spontaneity just spreading itself into the work. You have an experience with it, you have memories of it. It's stuck in the actuality of this room or that room or this city or that city and so you're having to deal with how to deal with the memories of a piece like that. And whether those memories help you to produce it again or inhibit you and that's a very very delicate thing. I trained myself with this through a piece I made called *40 Monologues* which I did, I made a hundred pieces. And I gave myself the brief that I didn't have to make something new each time. And if things repeated, they repeated. And if I kept making the same piece, I kept making the same piece. I gave myself the brief to let *fall* those things just hang out and be. And it was a fabulous experience over two or three years and after a hundred, I went 'okay, I've learnt something here' because I'm not so quick sometimes and I feel that if I can do something a hundred times it would either be evident I have no talent or I'd have learnt something. I needed to give myself that, I needed to make a hundred pieces. And during that, I found my relationship towards the anima of the piece of something being made. And I...so when I prepare, I sail close to the wind because I go into the studio and remember the piece and I consider the piece again. You know if you consider it too much I'm repeating out of nervousness, if I don't prepare, I don't get into the place so it's very very delicate very very delicate. And I don't have any rules for that. All I do trust is the circumstances of my life.

HANNE: All the things that we say tonight, are the things we know. There's a whole lot about the process we don't know, or I don't. We go into the material into the lights and the costume, because I can know that but there's this other thing where it takes off, I haven't a clue how it works

HAMILTON: I've also said as you get older, it gets more magical because you understand less and less of what you understand. Although you do understand more and more, of course you do, we're not naïve, you have experience, but at the same time there's this big zone where you go 'yeah, yeah, but how does that 'what-I-know' work; how?' It gets more and more wonderful in a way, I mean, full of wonder.

HANNE: It is important, it is like meditating. There are people who meditate in an empty studio and it's cheating. You should meditate on a bus when there's full people and noise. When you go into performance there's no ideal circumstances before, where you can neatly go to your performance. So, you have to deal with what happens before. The lighting guy is

late, no electricity, no programmer, no...especially before a performance all this stuff happens. And never happens the way you thought it would. And yeah that's it, no warmup, you have to go in without, you have to warm up in the play.

Appendix VI: *Hanne Interview*

Extracts from transcript of interview with Billie Hanne
Carthago Delenda Est, Brussels, Belgium.

5 July 2014

Extract A

HANNE: In the performance where we go through time, when we go through ten minutes or twenty minutes or thirty minutes we go through every single minute and we go through every single second and in very single second and millisecond, action is taking place... and in every action, for every action, the body needs to get ready. And that happens constantly, and every action will also be the preparation for the next one. So, there is a constant arranging and rearranging of body happening to get into the next move or to get into the next phrase of dancing and it is different from preparing before the performance. It is not an actual preparing; it is an actual doing. I think the work is making dance and making poetry. The work is not even putting them together. The work is having one emerge from the other and housing them in one world, in one body, basically, and to have that body be in space, and have that body be in performance in space with an audience, and to move and to speak like we do every day, and when we speak we move, in small ways or in bigger ways, and we can talk while walking...and when we do that in performance it is a bit different than in daily life because we are being watched and the set-up is that something is happening and made by one person or more people called performers and there are other people called audience and they are watching that. And in making that, we work on time and we are working, and we crack it open, and we make and we do and...so that the people coming have the possibility to enter into something, that cracks open and where something is revealed – and that can be many many things. To reveal something we go through time, not in a different way, but by the actions we do we deform time, so it can seem longer, it can seem shorter or it can seem like the first ten minutes is a year and the rest happens in two or three days. And when

working you're busy with all that constantly, in your studio time, before, hours before, in the moment of performance and for the actual satisfaction, because it is just not so important, there is not a lot of space. Of course, you feel something's satisfy more, but you put it in perspective. It's not what satisfies me doesn't necessarily satisfy the audience, what satisfies me today is not necessarily what will satisfy me if I look back in the video or think back to a performance of three years ago. So, it is not so important.

VESTY: There is no space for that, there is no time for that, no?

HANNE: No there is space for that, but it has to be put in proportion. What you do get with work and that might be something of satisfaction, you do get a better intuition about what is good work or what is may be less good in the sense that some things are so they vibrate on all these levels so that the audience can enter in different directions and they all get it. And that might give something we call satisfaction. I'm not certain. But you do get a feedback, I'd call it a feedback from the work. You would get, yes you get feedback instantly but also hours after, the days after and you learn how to manage that and how to put it in perspective and what to take from it and what not and all these things. Physical feedback in the body, sometimes you feel very light after or it was something very heavy get all these emotions and...I don't know. I don't know actually; I don't know so much about it. I don't...yeah, I have them! I have them and I go through them like everybody, but that's that.

Extract B

HANNE: I have no template... I work with the people that are there and I imagine what it is possible, but mostly I'm an artist and I teach from my work directly and...yes, it is where I am with the work but it doesn't necessarily mean I have been working both space and grammar, it's more looser than that, it is you get a little intuition of what you can do and you trust it and then, ok, that's Monday. There is no big planning or a big reasoning behind that.

HANNE: It is not deliberate, it is in...it just comes from my work. It comes from my work from having not even a vision, from having a strong feeling that what is natural and organic is body and words and poetry and dance going together. And to realize that and to do that is what I have to do, I have to make it actual, and I have to go through the body and I have to

find where words, where they live in the body, and how they travel, and how they come out, and it comes from an actual artistic process.

VESTY: Which began where? How did you arrive at this work?

HANNE: I think from very young, from being a bouncy child and from doing gymnastics at the age of four, from having a mom taking me to the library every Saturday, from... naturally finding appealing to do things, to play with words, to do cartwheels... on the...very natural. That is I think where it started.

Extract C

HANNE: I did train in literature, I got a pretty traditional training in classical poetry, meter, verse and all of it. I got all of it. And for the movement various things, a lot a lot of sports – a lot! And a lot of studio work by myself and of course working with Julyen and being in the company, in Allen’s Line gave me a lot, but before that a lot of..., yeah, a lot on my own, because working the poetry and dance there is not just so much out there. Pretty steadily and stubbornly just continuing finding small things and going for them and exploring them and exploiting them.

VESTY: Seems like quite a discipline to be in the studio on your own. For me it would be. I don’t know; how easy is it for you?

HANNE: You just go. And if you need to find something you just search. There’s a lot of obstacles on the way, in yourself and in your surroundings and you just carry on basically.

VESTY: Yeah, I was thinking about studio practice and how useful it might be to have a watcher not necessarily to feedback in the space but just to be there in general studio practice or maybe just a video maybe that would be useful.

HANNE: I don’t know, I don’t know, it’s hard to say for somebody else. I don’t know. I think it requires different things at different times as an artist to develop your work and at times it is being alone at times it is sharing and at times there is other things. At times it is not just sharing it with a colleague. Then you have to put it out in society and that will require

something else and the whole time you're looking at what you need to do what is needed and what is possible, practically, financially and many many things.

VESTY: I'm interested in your experience with Lecoq and what it did give you and what I didn't give you.

HANNE: I did a little bit of it not with Lecoq himself. It's very very beautiful work. It's a place for the imagination. Very simple and there is very little around. Basically, you put on the mask and to transform and it requires you to go deeply into imagination because you don't get, or at least I didn't, you don't get so much physical information on how to get there. But for me, I don't know so much about it, I did a very little bit of it and I took it as far as I could, I took it, so I don't want to say anything wrong about it because there are so many people who have followed through with that work and have done that so beautifully and I have done a very little thing with it. But yeah I find it extraordinary, what it does and what it enables. I don't dare to say too much about it but it had a big impact on me, it was for me a door into something that I feel has never left me.

VESTY: Is that the theatre in its purist sense that the Lecoq work is really theatrical?

HANNE: Yeah sure it was just body we were not speaking it was just body and yeah sure it was theatre. I don't have such a big difference between dance and theatre. It's definitely theatrical let's call it that, it's very very theatrical.

VESTY: But it's something I think about quite a lot because this work can often be perceived to be not about character is not about theatre I'm not saying it isn't because I think it very much is but it can often be perceived that this isn't the place for character or mask. That this is much more about revealing, this kind of work, and draws on the resource of the self somehow.

HANNE: I think in the theatre the mask is used as a way in to reveal, not to disguise, that's why we put on the mask. It is to reveal something, and I think that what we do is the same thing. I think all the arts want to reveal something, like a painting wants to reveal composition and colour and go through deeply into colour and we see all these colours and these transitions between colours and it goes deeply into that and I think any art wants to reveal

something by amplifying it and deforming it and compressing it. It shows you something else about reality, and I don't know much about it but I imagine the work in the theatre with the mask, it is to open up something when it's done well, and it's the same that we do here but we do it in a different way. Different generations do it in different ways at different times. We do it in different ways, different art forms do it in different ways but in the end everybody wants to learn something about life, and it's an opening up. There are many different pathways to do that.

VESTY: So how does character feature in this work, and your work?

HANNE: I think it's impossible to do anything without character, it's just, why would you want to first of all? And how would you do that? Because you're never working in a vacuum, you're always in a context and every context as a character has a texture, has a rhythm to it; has a width, has a length to it, and all these things so it's impossible to do it without character. What is important is to allow it to have its full character. Any good art will be full of character and full of meaning in whatever way we can abstract meaning, it can be a fairytale-like; it can be musically in the way colours are arranged it to be many things, but I think it's impossible to do anything without character, and character is allowed by going very deeply into technique; into...I think for almost any art it will come with very rigorous work. Not rigorous in the sense to limit it to certain proportions or to certain principles, no it's, it's doors in. It's your way into the tunnel, which will lead you to the bigger place.

VESTY: A bigger place yes, I kind of imaginal world that we enter that has its own character.

HANNE: Yeah it is a world of a place of imagination but that is deeply anchored in reality, it is not imagined out of us. Out of this world, no it is right here, we must imagine it right here and right now.

VESTY: How does creating poetry in this space differ from creating poetry on paper, fixing poetry?

HANNE: I don't know. It's pretty...not mysterious...but I don't know so much about how it is different because when it is being made somehow I go to the same place. Whether it's on paper or whether it is in the three-dimensional theatre or performance space. What I know

about it is that when it's written on paper and it goes into a booklet or it is to be published in a poetry magazine or it is to go onto a website there is this end form which will continue to live after I've made it, so that the way it's arranged on the paper, it is complete then without me. I'm gone. I write it, I put it in a form and then I'm gone. And, of course, when I'm on-stage it happens the moment I'm there because when I'm gone the poetry is not happening, and because I am there or there with other people also making poetry the poetry will happen with the space between the people, with the words and with the dancing that's being produced. On the page, they will happen with the words, with what happens between the lines in-between the words on that paper, in relationship to the person reading it at that moment in that person's life in the place that that person is. Maybe I have to go back and say also on-stage it happens between the performers, spatially, with where they are on-stage in the space where they are with the dancing movement, with the words and the poetry and with the audience; where they are at that moment in their life and where they are architecturally in the space, when they're sitting on the edge they have a different view when they are sitting in the middle of the room or in the middle of the audience. Yes, so that's where you're playing...and that's not so different, in the end it's not so different but within that, yeah of course, it's very different because I have to go and practice and work my body in the studio and see what needs to be said, what does not need to be said, where do I place it in the fifty minutes of performance, when do I say it, do I have to say it or can someone else say it with different words, all these things. Same on the paper is, what do I have to say what should I not say; where should I break my line.

VESTY: Those same sorts of decisions are being made in both spaces?

HANNE: Yes...

VESTY: The editing part of it?

HANNE: Yes, and part of that is knowing your form very well. You have to know the paper, you have to know how to arrange something on paper and when you're working in the theatre you have to know where to hang your lights, you have to know about dimension you have to be able to see your back you know...So yes you do have to train differently for these things.

VESTY: This is a spatial concern isn't it...this brings us to space. What might we have considered this week if we if we had been more explicit about space? Because you said in the workshop...

HANNE: In other workshops we worked with the space of the room. What we worked on this week is the space between the words we worked space inside the words a lot and because we did that and because we made it very physical and we took it into the body, the arrangement in the compositions was very very good. So we touched, (we definitely worked space), but we touched upon a different zone to get to the same thing basically.

VESTY: So, grammar?

HANNE: Grammar. I love grammar, I love everything about grammar. I don't like correct and wrong grammar. I don't care about that. Grammar is structure, and it is how you put the words together. 'And' or 'not'. It's binary. It's using the computer language. I think it's magic; I really think it's magic. "Billie and Robert" and "Robert, not Billie", it's strong "one and not the other" or "one or the other", or "the other and one". It's basic, how you connect them. It's the relationship between things.

VESTY: It was a good thing to get hold of for me, in the workshop. It was, let's say, manageable. It was a firm simple structure or rule of grammar that I could get hold of which took away a whole layer of, to come back to the anxiety of using words and performance, because I didn't have to worry about the content, so much, because I was attending to the structure. This seems really important somehow.

HANNE: Oh, it's vital. It's absolutely vital because if things are structured, they have content. We don't have to do anything, and they will speak, and they will be so full of meaning and they will be rich and there is nothing to do, we just focus on...grammar has nothing to do with rules, we are born with an innate grammar. As with dancing, when we go into words everybody's grammar will be revealed and it's exquisite, it's very beautiful to see and it is so natural, and that's the real place where words live, they live in relationship to each other and by arranging them in a certain order, rearranging them in another order something, something is shown and poetry is revealed in that. That is poetry, that's basically it. And good poetry appeals to our emotional beings our social beings our political beings, it appeals to all

that we are and all that's around us, and that can be said in two words or three or a hundred or six thousand. And I think every time, every time it is being said it says something else and it says something about that specific moment, and it's always heard by a room, by a tree, by a person, by an audience, by people watching on the *YouTube* or something, something is listening, so it's always important that it is being said and it is being made and it has been given that length of time that it takes to say it or to write it.

VESTY: Is this big space, big-time?

HANNE: Yes, it is in a sense. Everything lives in big space in big time if we zoom out far enough and we zoom out by going into the specific words and the specific movement. Yes sure, it's big space, big time.

VESTY: And going into the word?

HANNE: There is infinite time inside a word, this is infinite time. Every word has a heart and in the heart of every word has infinite time, how could there not be? If you take the word 'apple', 'apple' has existed for as long as apples exist, it has been named, no probably 'apple' did exist before it was named, yeah no I take that back, apples did very likely exist before they were named but that word has travelled through so many cultures, through so much time, and apple has been transformed into so many other things, from juice, to being displayed on paintings, it's very simple, it's just anything that has a life has infinity in it. And 'one apple' doesn't have an infinite life but 'apple' has quite lengthy expectation and it goes out into all directions.

HANNE: It points and by naming it and by pointing at something it can be given life and it can be given duration and it can come into being and it's a very human thing. Of course! It's a very human thing to name in that way. But we have to go into the structure of it. Words are just words, and if they don't have this underlying base they can fall upon, which is the grammar, they're pretty meaningless.

Extract D

HANNE: I'm very well aware that not just in the society now but for the words there hasn't been a tradition where the person speaking the words is also the one making the words. You have it a little bit in poetry where people write their poetry and then read it. But in a full embodied way I don't know of many traditions or any, where the person saying the words, with a full body performing or dancing...I...yeah that's not just now I feel it goes way way back and I don't know where or when that would have happened but at the same time it must've happened, throughout history because it's so natural to do it.

VESTY: That oral tradition of storytelling?

HANNE: Yes, but that is different I think in the folkloric it's handing the story to the next..., although it might be that that would be a good example, I don't know. It's not one that I can readily see – “okay I take from that tradition”, no. And in the theatre tradition the actors don't speak their own words, mostly. Maybe there is some where someone writes their own monologue or changes things or where that is just common practice, I don't know I can be wrong I want to be careful about that.

VESTY: Well, you know, we can go wrong in the theatre because we have those words that aren't ours, and we have to get them right because we have to honour the writer that wrote them.

HANNE: Ah, that's very beautiful too.

VESTY: Yeah, oh absolutely, and I love it. I love speaking, that process of speaking someone else's words and the way that they grab inside and become ours.

HANNE: You're sparking. It's very very valid and very beautiful to do that.

Extract E

HANNE: Sometimes it will be vulnerable, sometimes it will be strong and powerful other times it will be authoritative. It can be demonstrative, it can be so many things, it can be childish yeah. The work is vulnerable but it's not the theme. Sure, also because performance lives on this thin line where it can break any moment. That's the danger, that's why people love it, that's why people want to watch it because it has this element of risk, so it has to be vulnerable. That way you can't go on-stage and be 100% certain that it will all work out perfectly. It's not the point. I would love to make large pieces with many people. I would love to work towards that, with many people speaking and moving at the same time.

VESTY: Yeah, how are those challenges different to the challenge of performing solo?

HANNE: I guess there's a time for everything and of course solo on a practical level is a bit lighter, maybe on other levels it's also not heavy. But there is also, yeah having people able to do the work because there's not like a school where you can train poetry and go through a....

Extract F

VESTY: So, rehearsal?

HANNE: Is very welcome at times, but at other times maybe is less possible but also less needed, it depends. Every situation depends. It's very practical in that way. You know, the painter who can only buy the small tableaus he can only make small paintings if you get a big one, he'll make a big one and at times in life you get different possibilities and one thing opens up. It's very practical.

VESTY: And what kind of decisions do you make about, when you're creating a performance then, décor, and design, lighting, and those aspects?

HANNE: Also that is very practical depends can I see the space before am I making a piece that I want to perform more than once, am I making it for one time, do I know the space and that every time there is a performance the space is transformed and elevated to something theatrical; something where people can enter into the performance right away. So, it's very

much taken care of; it doesn't mean that if it's made for one time, or a small set up or a big set up, it's...everything is taken care of, yes.

VESTY: So, the frame is attended to...

HANNE: Yes. And from that, the performance is realized. And, also in the moment of making, the décor and choosing the costume, it is fully conceived. Whereas before maybe it's a seed and you follow a certain intuition, but at that moment you're making it real and actualizing.

VESTY: Like the title?

HANNE: Like the title. And the same for...no, when I write poetry, I write the titles after, because I don't have to announce my poem.

VESTY: Yes

HANNE: I've never, maybe once or twice, but I wouldn't usually start writing the poem with the title, because I don't have to make a flyer for it. I would love to if that was so I could make one for in six weeks and I could announce it now, or do it, but that's not been the case, of course not. Not for most poets it doesn't go that way.

Extract G

VESTY: And in this conception, even the conception of it must already spark the imagination? In some ways this is a rehearsal, no?

HANNE: I wouldn't call it a rehearsal; I don't know what I would call it. But it is a very important moment, that you, yeah, you have this image of a performance you can do, and sometimes it's the title, sometimes it can be costume, it can also be a practice in the studio. And you say I want to make a whole performance out of this, you find something, you say I want to actually work this and do this for fifty minutes, and yeah you trust that intuition. That it is strong enough to invite an audience to come and watch that.

VESTY: It seems like really obvious question, but presumably fifteen minutes is very different to fifty in terms of the demands it makes on us?

HANNE: Yes. I've gone through all kinds of minutes. When I did Hamlet in Paris, I did it the first time in London, I did seventeen. And I knew I could do seventeen because it was a prime number; and I knew eighteen would throw me off. Could not do that, I needed seventeen and I think I went from seventeen to twenty-five; from twenty-five to thirty-four, and then I brought it back to twenty-seven. I was very emotional and knowing like that number of minutes, those minutes I can handle that – and that, not. And I've worked, I've done a lot – it's playful. It's like playing in the studio with numbers and doing ten times three minutes, or ten times two minutes, but not six times thirteen. And you learn about time, by going into that you really learn what ten minutes is, what...and then you feel completely.

VESTY: Do you have that inner clock?

HANNE: Yes, and sometimes it works and sometimes not. And you want to train that. You want to know what two minutes is, what twenty minutes feel like. There are numbers I know – I know seven and seventeen, I know them very very well. And then thirty-four is usually good for me. Forty-two also. Forty-eight is alright but I have to do some extra work before going on. That's for the solo. But then in company work that changes too.

Appendix VII: *Audio-Video Documentation (Online)*

Audio and Video documentation has been edited and collated on a digital canvas hosted by the Research Catalogue. This can accessed online via: www.researchcatalogue.net/shared/17617a83d1b8e769dc8e89627493dac2 and by clicking 'Open Exposition'.