UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON

Dissolving Borders: The Integration of Writing into a Movement Practice

Item Type	Thesis or dissertation
Authors	Collard-Stokes, Gemma
Download date	2025-05-12 09:06:17
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/2436/620899

DISSOLVING BORDERS:
THE INTEGRATION OF WRITING INTO A MOVEMENT PRACTICE

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of the University of Wolverhampton
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

June 2017

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Abstract

This thesis theorises the practice of three female British dance artists, Miranda Tufnell, Helen Poynor and Hilary Kneale. It engages with the central idea that a combined practice of creative writing and movement improvisation enhances the artist's articulation and assimilation of the experience of dance, consequently developing a deeper connection to the experiences of the body in relation to one's environment.

Refuting common perception that the inadequacy of language fails to embody the experience of dance, I argue that the approaches used by these women contribute to a distillation of experience thus revealing the essence of movement. Importantly, it focuses on practices that have been born of the feminist consciousness that facilitated the development of both British postmodern dance and women's writing since 1970. As a result, I utilise Elizabeth Grosz's notions of *freedom* and *writing otherwise*, and David Abram's Merleau-Pontian ideas on *participation* to underpin theoretical endeavours.

Fieldwork, in the form of interviews and the participation in/observation of various performances, workshops and training programmes, run by each of the dance artists studied, is presented. The development of my own practice resulting from these enquires is documented, analysed and appraised throughout the thesis. The Introduction outlines research questions addressed and methodological approaches undertaken before considering the historical context of each artist's unique practice.

Each case study is preceded by a chapter that identifies biographical circumstances, creative choices, and socio-political conditions that have influenced the careers of these dance artists. The function of writing as a bridge between the subjective embodied experience and objective analysis of that experience is examined alongside an assessment of the scope of each practice as a method of harvesting a [re]connection with

nature and its power to generate self-affirming stories. Finally, the conclusion offers thoughts on the difficulties of such an endeavour within the framework of contemporary thought that maintains its stance on the split between [body]dance and [mind]written language.

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Acknowledgements

I wish to take this opportunity to thank my supervisory and advisory team: Dr Clare Lidbury and Dr Royona Mitra for their unwavering support, inspiration and guidance through the stages of my doctoral study.

My gratitude extends to the generosity of the Miranda Tufnell, Helen Poynor and Hilary Kneale, whose willingness to engage in dialogue through interviews, access to materials and invitations to workshops, performances and rehearsals have been invaluable, and without whom, this thesis would not be possible.

I would also like to thank my family and friends who have tirelessly supported me throughout this endeavour with love, encouragement and good will.

I extend my warmest thanks to my husband and soul mate Gavin, for his infinite patience, positivity, wisdom, for believing in me, and providing me with the next challenge in my life, our son Koby.

And finally, this thesis is lovingly dedicated to the very special women who have guided me throughout my life, not least, my late grandmother Dorothy Joan Seymour, and the dearly missed Dr Niki Pollard.

Thank you, for I would not be where I am today without you.

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For my parents

who raised me to believe anything was possible

Introduction

It is early, about 7:00am, on a bracing November morning. My reluctance to leave the warmth of home becomes increasingly distant as I attend to the purpose of my outing. The rhythm of my footfall settles me into a certain kind of attention, a form of listening that emanates from the whole body. My skin bristles at the tone of a black bird's call. The orb weaver's blanket left hugging the autumn hedgerows draws my eye. Once a week, I trace this route with the soles of my feet, toward the edge of a sheltered woodland clearing. Setting my rucksack at the foot of a tree, I pour myself a cup of warming tea from a flask and spend a moment or two basking in the nature of this place. The track that leads me here each week is widely known and marked by all manner of foot, paw, hoof and tyre, yet this nook continues to be unexplored by most. I exchange my mug for an old kitchen timer and set the digits to 60:00. The floor is littered with tarnished brittle leaves that crackle as I lower my weight onto them. I spread my body out along the surface, lying back to allow my vision to take in the altering light of the sky above. I wait...

Overall, my wait is rewarded promptly and with little effort. Occasionally my wait appears endless. I wait for the impulse, the stirring impetus of the body awakening into movement - the moment when this place I have chosen, triggers a bodily desire to discover its depths and boundaries.

Perhaps the craving to experience variation in freedom and tethering sparks a bodily curiosity in and out of the ground.

Maybe the sensation of dew-laden foliage clinging to skin and garments creates the need to disencumber the body. It might be the twitch of a nerve ending that begins a

journey of energy through the body, out toward the firmness of a tree trunk, one substance meeting another. These are all examples of starting points I have followed. I am attentive to the smallest of ignitions into movement, both eyes seeing, both ears unlocked to the sounds of the landscape, body tissues prickle with sense data, communicating a wish to be moved by this place.

After the dance, when the timer rings out and my moving quietens, I turn to my journal and open my attention in a slightly different way. I welcome language as it rises up, out of the lingering experience of moving with land. I welcome the words that spill from my pores. I welcome images that signal the patterns in my mind, the songs in my heart and the stories of my body. Just as I waited for the impulse to move, I wait for the impulse to write and once it finds me, I do not halt it. I write freely, with no forethought, no pause, no judgement or tracking of sense, grammar, syntax or correctness. My pencil maintains motion and breeds a connection with the page; I continue my dance onto paper. Words, sounds, scribbles and marks merge the familiar with nonsense. I play amongst symbols, digits, letters and characters; placement is curious and mischievous - not because I sense their significance but because they are pleasing to the motion of my pencil; to the detail of my eye. The words may follow one another, forming lines that appear as sentences but read like noise. Words trip along with no regard for their reader. I write,

If I lie back to rest,
She shuffles uneasily toward the back of my rib cage.
Nervous and twitchy,
The urge to fire her needles is too great.
POW – she strikes,
I am curved inward.
A soft stomach cushions my unrest,
She nuzzles at my soft spine.
Showing her impatience,
It prickles as she breaths.

My breath rattles her quills.

To complete this stage of the process I read my writing aloud to myself. I hear the echoes of my moving, sensing and being; resonate through the words that shape the page. I witness myself outlined on paper. I identify my experience within the language, the pace and flow, the size and texture of the letters, the light and dark of the pencil line. The irregularity of structure demonstrates moments of energy or drops into or out of movement. Words fight against meaning and my eyes and mouth are taken on a textual journey toward patterns in thinking through moving.

My body informed the writing. It presents the departure point into understanding the varied sensation, image and the abandon that comes from dancing the inside out.

My body formed the writing. It presents a stimulus, creating a bodily narrative that articulates the essence of my dance.

I repeat this actively, over and over again. With each echo of this evolving process, a certain kind of distillation finds its way into my bones. The cipher of the body taunts decryption, each repetition reveals glimpses of materiality, only to regain a toehold within messiness.

My body echoes the land, forming conversations layered with memory, sensation, imagination and cognition, which resonates through page spaces. Each page grows to form a map that navigates my body story. From here, I find my way into appropriating, tracing, and making.

* * *

This thesis theorises the application of creative modes of writing in a dance artist's artistic and personal practice. In demonstrating how three influential artists use, manipulate and rely upon writing as a means of reimaging the experience of dance, the research unpacks the practicalities of such an endeavour. The literature reviewed failed to provide evidence that the following new perspectives have been explored adequately.

That is to say, there is an absence in current literature regarding the connection between creative writing and British New Dance's contribution to knowledge, and commitment to innovative approaches in teaching and learning. What is more, the literature lacks an alternative history that illuminates the career choices and intercultural inspiration of those responsible for the occurrence of such practices, whereby a feminist consciousness has challenged traditional methods of teaching and learning. In addition to this line of enquiry, the through-line follows the connection between nature and humanity for those who perform such practices.

My initial focus and reason for undertaking a research qualification, was to identify who and what had influenced my own decision to integrate writing into my movement practice. This inevitably led to a desire to locate the origins of, and motivation for this integration within the practices of those who had directly shaped my work. The thesis attempts to introduce and navigate issues extending from the original research question: "what is the function of writing for the dance artist-practitioner"?

Issues explored throughout the case studies reflect on the problem of how one's movement improvisation might open and facilitate language. As all artistic practices studied herein (including the author's own practice) are immersed in the interconnections of three foundational categories - women, nature and moving-writing, this enquiry also questions the role of natural landscape in that facilitation, asking how

one's engagement with language can maintain the transparency, flexibility and fluidity of a body during movement improvisation?

To clarify, the three categories mentioned above serve the following functions in the thesis. W*omen* - endeavours to communicate the therapeutic and empowering nature of a moving-writing practice in aiding the expression of the female voice. *Nature* - the relationship between the human and non-human world is examined in an effort to explore the effect of writing as a tool for deepening one's outdoor movement practice. *Moving-writing* - is presented as a facilitator in the connection of human to non-human world, and a vehicle with which to awaken a profound sense of self.

The past ten years have provided me with a period of progression, contributing to the maturity of my artistic body of work, traversing improvisation, environmental movement, dance making and an experimental writing practice. Page spaces have presented a new dimension in terms of my creative development, providing a perceptual bridge between body, nature and language. I have found that through a meeting of movement and writing, a process of interchange has given form to each of these activities. My research, making and teaching have provided a means with which to share this unique combination.

Along the journey of my investigation, I have witnessed the ways in which performers and participants have embraced the application of experimental writing, allowing interactions with page spaces to feed their own enquiries. Tracing its heritage has led me to conclude that its origins are richly connected to three British artist-practitioners, that this thesis considers the forerunners of such an endeavour. The work of Miranda Tufnell, Helen Poynor and Hilary Kneale continues to influence countless movement practitioners, who in turn, use the discovery of the usefulness of writing to develop their

own practice, making and teaching. Nevertheless, the status and function of writing as a vehicle for personal and performance practice remains relatively unexplored.

This thesis endeavours to define, refine and articulate a distinctive practice within the British postmodern dance paradigm. A practice which has been built upon the reciprocity between creative modes of writing and improvisational movement that is rooted in both a consideration of the benefits to [re]building human connectedness to nature and natural landscapes and anatomical understandings of the body. This comparatively small and unique practice traverses the disciplines of art, contemplative and environmentally sensitive movement practices, and a broad definition of dance that aligns with experiential anatomy and body-based enquiry.

Intended as a methodology for embodied assimilation, articulation and the deeper consideration of the body's anatomical structure, in relation to and negotiation of nature and natural terrain, this combination of moving and writing seeks to amplify the user's perceptual experience. It not only invigorates creativity, but also furthers the acceptance and acknowledgement of one's identity, improvements in physical and mental health, and one's general well-being (Gable, and Haidt, 2005; Joye, 2007; Herzog, and Strevey, 2008; Fredrickson, 2009; Nisbet, et al. 2011, Passmore, 2011).

The Current Relationship between Dance and Writing

The research addresses how writing might be integral to the creative and personal practice of dance artists who engage with it in such ways. The writing explored within these pages is positioned as unique, emerging as a result of the interrelations between perceptual, and cognitive awakenings of the improvisational endeavour. For much of dance scholarship, it has been presumed that the act of composing and performing dance is an act of writing dance into space and time (Copeland, and Cohen, in Adshead-

Lansdale, and Layson, 1994). The need for writing by dance artists has increased in recent years, developing a new branch of literary study that considers the art form from a subjective standpoint, that is, from within the thinking-moving body.

Yet, it is relatively rare to find writing outside theoretical and critical academic responses to the complex, intuitive experiential activity of dance practice. Examples of less formal contributions to dance literature might be counted on one hand. For instance; Jonathan Burrows' *A Choreographer's Handbook* (2010) the most recent of this genre, is an honest and practical guide on *how* rather than *why* one might make dance. Two offerings from long-term collaborators, Miranda Tufnell and Chris Crickmay, *Body Space Image* (1990), and *A Widening Field: Journeys in Body and Imagination* (2004), both propose a creative and endlessly unfolding interrelation between body, language, place and creating. In addition, Andrea Olsen's *Bodystories: A Guide to Experiential Anatomy* (1998) and *Body and Earth: An Experiential Guide* (2002) persuades the reader to take a personal discovery through body, language and story. All, bar Burrows' book, opt for the amalgamation of artistic photography, poetic verse, narrative prose and participatory activities. Yet none of these books assumes that the reader possess a certain standard of academic knowledge, attempting instead to reach the reader on a personal level, endeavouring, to speak *from* the experience of dance, rather than *about* it.

It might be argued that many dance artists have tended to avoid writing based on the assumption that the process of languaging experience is thought to lay in extreme opposition to that of dance. That is to say, one might consider writing worthy of publication to be obtained through rigorous solitary thinking while seated behind the confines of a desk for long periods. This image demonstrates the dualist tendencies of

Western ideas on writing processes, detaching the body from what is alleged to be a solely cognitive activity. Considering the formulation of bodily experience into structured, neat sentences of written symbols as demonstrably 'other' to dance, how might the dancer expect the experience of dance to be transposed into words.

Although this thesis is not concerned with documentation *per se*, this short interjection regarding writing's troubled relationship with dance studies, provides a context with which to ground this study. Writing is understood to underpin many arts practices. In the context of dance practice and performance studies, we might think of writing as the corpus of contributions to critical, philosophical and ideological thinking. Publications commonly provide the communication of logic that strengthens dance performance, and comments upon the methods and intentionality of the choreographer from the performance-reflective perspective of the writer-spectator, thus creating what Barthes (1977) might term an erasure of the choreographer/choreography. Modernity has sparked the appeal of documentation, and discourse surrounding appropriateness of documentation methods in arts practice and live performance are widespread.

With an increasing thirst for documentation of performance practice, the twenty-first century is witnessing a renewed interest in what writing might offer dance, and indeed, what dance might offer writing (Bannerman, 2010). As we find ourselves living within a world affected by disaster, war, economic downturn and crime, technology represents an escape toward a brighter future, liberating us from the past (Allsopp, and Lepecki, 2008; Schneider, 2001), artists, scholars and researchers who fear this letting go of history, heritage and memory, work tirelessly to create both virtual and tangible models for the perseveration of performance practice. The appeal of documentation has sparked an enquiry that aims to rethink the relationship between dance and writing (Allsopp,

1999, 2008; Schneider, 2001; Lepecki, 2004; Pollard, 2007; deLahunta, 2010, 2012; Midgelow, 2011).

This fresh perspective might be initiated through the desire to bring a sense of the tangible to performance, and has led to a paradigm shift in the eyes of performance artists, scholars and researchers (Bannerman, 2010). However, none of these shifts has been quite as remarkable as the reconsideration of the role of writing in dance practice and performance. Andre Lepecki notes this adjustment of opinion in a special addition of the journal *Performance Research: On Choreography*, stating that, "we find an increasing consensus that writing is something profoundly more dynamic, active, fluid, and indeed mobile *and* ephemeral *and* uncontainable than it is usually perceived as being" (2008, p.2 author's own emphasis). Lepecki has carefully chosen words that demonstrate his preference toward language that mirrors qualities associated with the dancing body. However, within this collection of adjectives, both 'ephemeral' and 'uncontainable' (although frequently associated with the act of performance) do not usually find themselves teamed with notions of writing. So why do we find them used to describe an activity commonly portrayed as indelible?

Alongside Lepecki, the chief theorists within this debate are Peggy Phelan (1993, 1997), Mark Franko (1995) and Rebecca Schneider (2001). Phelan's influential argument in *Unmarked: the politics of performance* might be mistaken for a manifesto. Within it she argues that the reproducible document "betrays and lessens" (1993) the nature of performance as disappearance. "Performance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance" (1993, p. 146). In her rejection of the ways in which documentation might

be cultivated as performative, Phelan produces a binary opposition between live performance and trace. This binary reflects a traditional view that language fails to secure the fleeting nature of dance performance. As Lepecki contends, "the problem dance puts before writing is of how movement and words can be placed under arrest" (2004, p.129).

Schneider's opinion that performance remains as "flesh memory", an echo within the witness, presents a counter argument that disarms Phelan's inflexible notion of ephemerality (2001, p.105). In Franko's contribution to *Bodies of the Text: dance as theory, literature as dance* (1995), he voices his unease at the view that dance's ephemerality undermines its importance within dance theory, and therefore should be worked against. However, Franko acknowledges a noteworthy epistemological shift in dance studies, wherein he thanks deconstruction and Derrida's notion of trace. Rather than viewing dance's ephemerality as something to be resolved, dance theory acknowledges *disappearance* as significant to critical dialogue (Franko, 1995).

In *Choreographing History* (1995), Susan Leigh Foster illuminates a blurring of boundaries that exist between dance and writing. Similar to Lepecki's *Inscribing Dance* (2004), Foster highlights choreographic history as that which developed through modes of writing. Foster engages with unresolved arguments circulating language's ability to transpose the physicality of movement (gesture, weight, patterning, travel, time and space), as she articulates the potential exchange of movement into language, she also expresses bodily movement *as* writing, thus further blurring the boundaries between dance and writing.

> How to transpose the moved in the direction of the written. Describing bodies' movements, the writing itself must move. It must put into play figures of speech and forms of phrase and sentence construction that

> evoke the texture and timing of bodies in motion. It must also become inhabited by all the different bodies that participate in the constructive process of determining historical bodily signification. (Foster, 1995, p.9).

Barbara Browning's review of *Choreographing History* problematises the collection of essays Foster brings together. Browning appears troubled by the divisions between the language of dancer and the language of historian, she warns that the very binary that Foster wishes to disrupt continues to widen the gap between dancer/academic and consequently body/mind, a reminder of the restrictions academic writing holds over the writer.

> It may appear to theoretically orientate historians of other fields a modest proposal that dance scholarship should acknowledge that bodies are socially constructed and circumscribed. The irony is that this volume seems to reproduce the very institutional circumscriptions which have held dance scholarship back (Browning, 1996, p.162).

Although there is an unarguably considerable amount of literary works by masters of dance, few attempt to speak *from* the experience of dance. That is, many, if not all, aim to describe dance while engaging theoretically or critically, yet fail to bring alive the images, sensations and memories that are awakened during improvisation and the engagement with their surroundings. To date there are few research projects that engage with the notion of writing as integral to creative dance practice. Yet among these are two significant contributions that informed this research in its early format.

The Range of Research

Research encircling writing's relationship to dance tends to concentrate on documentation, notation or the function of the dance artist's notebook as a means of

recording points of attention during choreographic process.[1] Many have failed to acknowledge what could be termed an underground, yet growing, practice of exploring the experience of dance through written language, yet two dance artist/writers have come close. The first of these is Alys Longley, a writer and performance maker based in New Zealand, whose practice-orientated research expands the notion of choreography by exploring alternative modes with which to exhibit choreographic intention, namely poetic writing. Her work challenges the idea that dance is a physical activity that fails to exist outside of the body witnessed in motion. She therefore produces creatively composed artist books, which seek to demonstrate the cadences, textures and arrangements of dance through poetry, imagery and tactile design.

The second is dancer and writer Niki Pollard whose thesis, *Folding and Withholding: Writing with and by Choreographers* (2007), aims to acknowledge strategies for choreographic writing which exist alongside the creative process. These strategies are applied when supporting the transition to scholarly writing in a dance artist's endeavour to present work in more formal registers. Pollard presents non-formal registers of

[1]The following are projects that fall into the researchable arena that this thesis traverses, yet circumvent written language as a means of furthering the experience of the dancer. Valerie Briginshaw and Emilyn Claid's research project *Embodying Ambiguities* (2001-2004), explores the relationship between performance and written theory. William Forsythe's *Synchronous Objects* (2009) focuses on digital documentation of choreographic process. James Leach, Scott deLahunta and Sarah Whatley's *Choreographic Objects: Traces and Artefacts of Physical Intelligence* (2008-2009), explores the use of handwritten documentation at the site of the studio to form and inform choreographic process. Wayne McGregor and Scott deLahunta's *Choreography and Cognition* (2003-2004), endeavours to reveal new thinking within the disciplines of choreography and cognitive science. In the course of examining the effect of interdisciplinary research methods, the study proves the worth of various innovative approaches to choreography including multimodal writing (deLahunta, 2004). Vida Midgelow's article *Dear Practice ... : The experience of improvising* (2011), begins to explore the exchange between practice and practitioner via critical dialogic engagement arising from her perspective during the research platform, *Choreographic Lab* at the *University of Northampton*. Most recent projects have been Karen Barbour's book, *Dancing Across the Page* (2011), which aims to explicate her auth-ethnographic methods during her PhD research. Rachel Rimmer of Manchester Metropolitan University has recently begun a PhD that also incorporates thinking around documentation and the moment of movement alongside writer Julie Armstrong. Whereas Jane Bacon and Vida Midgelow's *Skript* (2013), explores how an audience might engage with dance further through an encounter with dance writing. The project invites audiences to develop an attention to their own bodies while engaging in a one-to-one typed conversation.

writing as a tool for the facilitation of those who intend to articulate their artistic approach to the wider field. Pollard posits that processes of writing aid the production of a multi-layered understanding, crystallising what matters most in a choreographic enquiry while accessing an appropriate language for the communication of these ideas. It could be argued that Pollard's hierarchisation of writing (as a function of the mind) over the corporeal practice of dance, is a backwards step in terms of the development of the notion that writing is an embodied process.

Longley's thesis, *Moving Words: Five Instances of Dance Writing* (2011), theorises writing as *choreography* and a strategy for the communication and extension of dance concepts, positing the interactivities of dance and poetic writing present a plausible choreographic approach. Pollard, on the other hand, is concerned with the extent to which dance artists might 'word' their understanding of how they work, paying particular attention to the various modes of writing that might facilitate the creative enquiry.

While Pollard puts forward an argument that dance-focused writing aims towards accessing knowledge via dance inquiry, Longley offers that the practice should be acknowledged as a means to enliven performance in much the same way as choreographic devices enliven improvised performance. Both theses suggest the written component of their respective practices provides empowerment, assisting their articulation of tacit, sensorial and experiential discovery, providing the dancer with a previously unheard voice (Pollard, 2007, 2010; Longley, 2011). Pollard maintains that the writing offers space for reflexivity, distance, comparison and contextualisation while remaining an imaginative and creative resource: "writing that works in your

choreographic enquiries; writing as another, unfolding of what unfolds as dance making" (2010).[2]

The effectiveness of writing in or with a dance artist's practice may only be measurable by the artist themselves; that is to say, the dance artist is in control of how writing might feedback into creative endeavours and how one might pursue its meaning elsewhere as choreography. Writing alongside a dance artist's practice is a collaborative undertaking, whether engaged in alone or with a writing partner. As Pollard asserts, no matter the strategy, generating this form of meaning making should be intended to give something back to the work, so it might inform, enrich and preserve creative processes (Lee and Pollard, 2010). Marginalising analytical perspective, this mode of reflective practice extends from the making process and in that sense, is merely provisional - a vehicle with which to reach a result. Therefore, it aims to reveal what can only be gained from a practice-led enquiry.

Just as Pollard might propose, the page presents a crystallisation of one's creative objectives extending from the meeting of imagination, creative consciousness and cognitive analysis. This clarity of thought twinned with a capacity to view one's creative efforts through a subjective lens, facilitates a dance artist's transition to scholarly registers of writing. Although writing which occurs during the process aims to be non-documental in the sense that its purpose is not merely to describe or notate, the writing provides a window through which to view the outcome of a dance artist's dancing from cognitive, emotional, imagined and physical dimensions. In this manner, writing can be

[2] Pollard borrows the term 'unfolding', using it in much the same way as French philosopher Gilles Deleuze, in his concept regarding the connection between the work and the observations of the work. Deleuze used the term unfolding as a "metaphor for interpretation" seeing no differentiation between the act of folding and unfolding (Lambert, 2002, p.xii). Many theorists have used Japanese origami as an illustration of this theory. When the paper is creased inwards on one surface, a crease also appears on the outer surface.

a companion to process, enabling what emerges to guide the dance artist toward clear articulations of intention and process from a practice as research perspective. The companion can be used to whittle out the fundamentals of one's practice and contributes to knowledge that reveals previously undisclosed choreographic methodologies.

Research for this thesis is grounded in materialist feminism and phenomenology. The continental philosophies of Helene Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva are considered via Elizabeth Grosz' interpretation, aiming to take the embodied female body beyond the realm of patriarchal language to reconsider "what the female - or feminist - subject is capable of making or doing" (2011, p.61). Particularly pertinent is Grosz' body of work on the concepts of freedom, agency, autonomy and subjectivity (1994, 2003, 2011, 2013) which has helped to theorise the conflict between the dance and the failure of language to articulate such an ineffable and ephemeral experience. Grosz' argument is that feminism should cease to focus on women's writing that centres on subjugation and the subsequent campaign against control, but should instead consider how women might *write otherwise*.

The main *problem* to be investigated regarding dance and writing reveals conflict between embodiment and language that is able to articulate such a state. This launched a second strand of research centered on questions within phenomenology and anthropology which concern the breakdown of relationship between humans and the non-human world via written language. Concepts from philosophers Maurice Merleau-Ponty, David Abram and anthropologist Hugh Brody have been deployed in order to contextualise the themes of this thesis. Contrasting feminist and gender theory that denote male and female subjectivity and embodiment, these theorists' thoughts are encumbered by the consideration of gendered bodies. This has been useful in the

construction of my ideas around Grosz' *writing otherwise*, as the abstract nature of their writing has been open to translation. Their ideas on participation as perception, reciprocity, attention, and language as experience, have provided imaginative comparisons with which to illustrate how human connection to nature [re]establishes a fundamental link between body and written language.

Methodology

The research undertaken relates to the qualitative research strategy of ethnography. This thesis understands ethnographic methodologies as socially interactive studies, such as interviews, field notes, active and observational participation of a cultural or social phenomenon undertaken over a sustained period. A reflexive approach is utilised to assess primary data and determine knowledge and meaning of the experience affecting the people(s)/cultural group/community studied. Remaining aware of the potential of bias to distort the research outcome, the information gleaned during the investigation was filtered through a focus group, which helped identify the potential threat of partiality. Fieldwork encompasses the majority of the research obtained, a systematic programme of one-to-one interviews provide the backbone of each case study.

However, the interview questions, (which flow from the research hypotheses), are further examined through my personal interactions with the workshops, training programmes and performances of each artist. Running alongside this investigation, I continued to permit the philosophies of each artist to permeate my own practice, keeping a journal of the various transitional stages in order to note the accumulative affects and implications. Knowing that my research would rely heavily upon interactive participation and observation, ethnographic methods, grounded in subjectivity and individual perspective, proved beneficial to the endeavour of immersion.

My enquiry also utilises phenomenological methodology that further develops the qualitative frame. As a methodology, phenomenology seeks to investigate contextual meaning through the actional, embodied and situational knowledge of those studied (Van Manen, 2011). Phenomenology attends to the core (essence) of human experience in relation to a particular phenomenon, intending to illuminate the perceptions of those studied and challenge what is considered normal.

For the purposes of the thesis, I identify the phenomenon as the empowering relationship found through a union of writing and the moving body. As with ethnography, I understood my researcher role within a phenomenological framework was to work with and alongside artist-participants through observation. Methods of phenomenological research rely upon the construction of participant narratives. Within the boundaries of this thesis, this takes the form of gathering of the process writings that result from my artistic practice and the observations of others engaged in the participation of workshops, training, and as members of an audience.

My need to analyse how and why writing provides such sensations as empowerment, reclamation of identity and assimilation of process in relation to movement, steered my decision to explore both phenomenological and ethnographical methodologies. Reasons behind the choice of each case study depended heavily on both my understanding of their relationship to one another, to myself in terms of my training, and fundamentally, to the origins of the practice itself, (that is, the thesis considers each case study subject to be an exemplar of such practices). To reiterate, my own practice materialised as an inheritance of the ways these artists integrated modes of writing into movement explorations, therefore immersive research methods that value the subjective and

reflexive approach of the researcher provide a secure foundation from which to begin the enquiry.

Writing Otherwise

An emphasis has been placed on the act of writing in order to consider its potential to orient us in the world. Embedded in its questioning is the problem of how this particular method of languaging experience might help us understand and think about ourselves in terms of having the *freedom to be otherwise*, rather than dwell upon the negative effects of restriction caused by a phallocentric tradition. Through a consideration of how writing, might contribute to a opening up of the past, present and future, "unfold[ing] it in the suspense of insoluble, unresolvable correlations, between a preterit and a future perfect tense", it is argued that such practitioners have begun to move beyond the limitations of formal modes of writing thus enabling the articulation of bodily experience in nature (Irigaray, 1984, p.257).

This thesis demonstrates how writing has been integrated with environmentally sensitive, experiential improvisation through specific strategies and approaches. The case studies propose that those who explore the relationship between body, nature, self and language in this manner, establish a means of *writing otherwise* (Grosz, 2000, 2003) "becoming more and other than their histories through their engagement with dynamic environments" (Grosz, 2011, p.2).

I first discovered the term *writing otherwise* as an expression used by Elizabeth Grosz in her 2003 contribution, *Histories of the Present and Future: Feminism, Power, Bodies*, in Cohen's and Weiss' *Thinking the Limits of the Body*. At this time, Grosz was thinking through the Irigarayian concept of future perfect tense in order to propose a new direction for the future of feminism.

> Is feminist theory best served through its traditional focus on women's attainment of a freedom from patriarchal, racist, colonialist, heteronormative constraint? Or by exploring what that female - or feminist - subject is and is capable of making and doing? (Grosz, 2011, p.61).

Her proposal at this stage considered how feminism might begin to change the future through a persistent rewriting of the past as articulated via the present. It was later in 2011, that her book *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics, and Art* revisited this notion, fleshing it out further by considering the bones of her argument via a unique pairing of Irigarayian and Bergsonian concepts. Rethinking the concept of *freedom* in ontological and metaphysical terms following a Darwinian-Bergsonian-Deleuzian interpretation of new political concepts and understandings of aesthetics, she posits how an altering of the lens from *freedom from* to *freedom to,* would provide positive political alliance and understanding of subjectivity.

For Grosz, *freedom from* is a negatively conceived basis for understanding concepts of subjectivity and agency as the "elimination of constraint" (2011, p.60). For women (and other minority groups) subjectivity has always been addressed in its negative relation to oppression. Grosz claimed that viewing notions of subjectivity, agency and autonomy in a future positive sense, that is to say, by thinking about freedom in terms of its capacity for action to create, to make, to express, would encourage a new way to frame feminist thinking for the future. Bergson, being a devotee of Darwin, and an influence upon one of Grosz' more regularly theorised philosophical muses Deleuze, provided her with the fundamentals of her thinking behind the notion of freedom. Grosz claims that the limitations of *freedom from* lie in its attempt to remedy the mistakes of the past, yet neglecting to offer "positive direction for action in the future" (2011, p.61).

By removing the negative "force of restraints and inhibitions" that limit freedom, a "natural or given autonomy" is maintained (Grosz, 2011, p.61). In this sense, Bergson's *freedom* aligns with creativity, arts performance and practice, in as much as creating and producing is a luxury achieved only in the absence of limitation (Grosz, 2011). He does not consider whether a person is free, but rather the freedom of the act, there is no such freer act than the arts. As in arts practice, the freedom of the act is measured by the degree "the self alone will have been the author of it, and [...] it will express the whole of the self" (Bergson, 2008, p.165-66). He goes on to state,

> In short, we are free when our acts spring from our whole personality, when they express it, when they have that indefinable resemblance to it which one sometimes finds between the artist and his work (Bergson, 2008, p.175).

Grosz (2011) also highlights that free acts, in Bergsonian terms, are the things that transform us and express us. We never remain the same, from one moment to another we transform and it is our freedom to act that shifts us forward, always becoming other than our histories.

Connectedness

We might consider the process of languaging, and thus of writing, as unrelated to the natural world, yet as philosopher and anthropologist David Abram has demonstrated, therein rests a deeply interwoven relationship between language and nature. Abram's premise rigorously consults the work of phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty revealing the importance of attending to the rhythms of one's subjective experience. Abram's findings suggest that attending to nature (perhaps through the locations and situations in which one explores moving and writing), expresses the "enigmatic and ever-shifting patterns" of experience (1997, p.35).

The perceived split between humans and nature calls many people to explore new ways to further their perceptions of connectedness to the natural world (Mayer, and Frants, 2004; Schultz et al. 2004; Vining, et al. 2000, 2008; Mayer et al. 2009). The practice explored within these pages is one such means of [re]establishing this connection. Populations in Western industrialised countries have developed a sense of themselves as divorced from nature, regarding such places and phenomena as distinct from the modern world (Franklin, 1999). Contributing factors to the split between humankind and nature might be identified as: Cartesianism, which forged the West's treatment of the human/nature relation as a dualism (Plumwood, 1993); the enlightenment period, that sought to reform society through science and reason (Plumwood, 1993); coupling of industrialisation and urbanisation, which alienated people from nature by replacing home farming with grocery stores, importation and exportation (Franklin, 1999); and furthermore, scientific and technological developments that presented people with further confirmation that mass control and management of nature is a legal right. As a result, nature became a farmed landscape serving man's needs and demands which cemented a future of separation (Merchant, 1996).

Despite the work of social psychologists such as Schultz, Shriver, Tabanico and Khazian (2004) who claim that the connection between humans and the natural world is inherent, there is an increasing sense that nature and the non-human world is at a distance from humankind. Schultz *et al.* argue that methods which increase an individual's perception of the bond with nature develop deeper awareness of the connection on a more conscious level, rebuilding confidence in the intrinsic and reciprocal nature of their existence and understanding of the non-human world (Schultz, et al., 2004; Mayer, and Frants, 2004; Mayer, et al., 2004; Clayton, and Opotow, 2003).

Those individuals, who seek to restore what they imagine to be a severed connection with nature, find physical and sensorial enhancing practices useful. It is an aim of this thesis to position writing as one such practice in the re-establishment of this connection. The split identified here might be abstracted to the notion that nature and natural landscapes are places that maintain disconnection from humans (largely untouched and unpopulated spaces). This social consciousness, together with a lack of physical interaction with nature (due to increased contact with man-made environments and artificial surroundings of the home and/or workplace i.e. lighting that provides uniform illumination, technologically controlled temperatures and air circulation systems), causes individuals to feel separation even though many believe their inherent connection to nature exists (Vining, et al., 2008).

Yet environmental psychologist Herbert Schroeder, cited in Vining, et al. (2008), indicates that the perceived human/nature dichotomy is "contextualized by people's experiences of actual places and environments in their lives" (Vining, et al., 2008, p.8). That is to say, as a person experiences nature directly they feel increasingly closer to it, thus identifying with it on a more conscious level (also see Kals, et al., 1999; Mayer, and Frants, 2004 for more on this argument). Responding to Schroeder's (and others) claims, practices such as the one detailed within these pages, intend to minimise the perceived gap between human and the non-human world by exploring, directly, the body in dialogue with nature. The written element of this practice becomes a means of assimilating, articulating and gaining understanding of what is a deeply personal journey of discovery. What follows pays specific attention to the act of writing, questioning how this form of writing bridges the gap between cognitive, sensorial,

emotional and imaginative processes by providing a means of [re]building the sensation of connectedness to nature.

To clarify, the term 'writing' employed throughout this research denotes the use of handwritten, experimental and 'stream of consciousness' prose that works alongside instances of movement practice in response to one's surroundings, specifically, writing that takes place inside the moment-by-moment growth of creative endeavour, writing that becomes "another unfolding of what unfolds as dance making" (Pollard, 2010, p.1). *Writing* is used in this thesis to specify the particular written strategies of the dance artists examined here. The aim of this mode of writing is not simply to write about dance, it is to write *alongside* dance, to write dance as it is experienced in the thoughts, feelings, senses, images, memory and imagination of the embodied dance artist, writing as a way of accessing that which has been released as a result of one's moving. Writing is presented as a result of choreographic transmutation and a method of calling forward the stories which lay latent within the body and the land itself. The nature of this mode of writing provides a method of inquiry, which connects the moment-by-moment 'goings-on' of the creative journey to the images, imaginings, histories and mythologies of both body and place, as Karmen MacKendrick asserts,

> When we write, it is not because we have nailed presence down but because we have felt it slipping away, becoming the memory by which we call to the absence that writing marks (2001, p.34).

Writing is a method of inquiry that supports exploration. It allows the mover/writer to excavate and consider their practice further in relation to processes of kinetic intelligence and tacit knowledge (systems that inform dance improvisation and movement discovery). In order to do this, the act of writing is positioned as the

manifestation of our thinking, "supported by neural enabling processes as well as manipulations of the bodily external environment" (Menary, 2007, p.622).

This mode of experimental writing might also be akin to "kinetic stream-of-consciousness", and is presented as a performative bridge between the practical and theoretical investigations of artistic practice (Skura, 2010, p.33). American dance artist Stephanie Skura creates poetry through experimenting with compositional methods found in dance making. More recently, Skura and interdisciplinary artist Vanessa De Wolf have developed a moving-writing practice they call 'Distillation'. Distillation seeks to reduce the moving and writing to an "extraction of essence" and subsequent "fleshing-out of that essence" (Skura, 2010, p34.). Skura claims that the process refines her sense of the "myriad ways that moving and writing not only are related but can activate each other" (Skura, 2010, p.34). Skura speaks of the relationship between moving and writing as instinctive, comparing the stream-of-consciousness found in both practices, to that of twentieth century literary innovators Charles Olson, Virginia Wolf and James Joyce. By this, she is implying that stream of consciousness is the key to authenticity in a moving-writing practice. That is, one's attempt to write and dance freely and remain attentive to the moment must not be clouded by thoughts of judgement or critique but the freedom to flow directly from the activity.

* * *

This study intends to reveal how writing might participate in a dance artist's effort to unfold the connections between imagination and the land she negotiates with her body. As a result, the research suggests re-thinking the relationship between dance and writing, presenting page spaces as sites of becoming and questioning whether these artists have found a means to orientate themselves in the world. That is to say, the page

space might offer room for abstraction, reflection and understanding in addition to distance, comparison and contextualisation, often materialising as the narrative consequence of improvisation, yet no more or less important.

> We all tell stories. We all recount odd incidents that have happened to us. In so far as we talk at all we are generally telling something of a story... In fact you could not live if you were not continually making up little stories (Hughes, 2008, p.87).

Here poet Ted Hughes hints that life reveals stories of the body, suggesting that our very being nurtures the stories of our world into existence through our speaking and writing, moving and making. These stories surface from within our making, they can creep up unexpectedly or hide within the shadows of our making on the verge of discovery, or they may be present from the very beginning. In whatever way these stories might arrive to our consciousness, they often manifest as images or memory. These stories develop during a period of *listening* to the whole self in conversation with the world we inhabit. Storytelling's innate connection to the lived body is (as with all fictional tales) derived from what we know/witness/come into contact with through experience. As we explore place or object, the lost and remembered voices of history locate us as "we find aspects of our own story in everything around us" (Tufnell and Crickmay, 2004, p.175).

These stories emerge like a road map of possibilities within our creative endeavours. These maps guide us past the edges of our knowing, displaying the landscape of our making and signposting new directions, locations, layers and planes. Our awareness of self opens up a wealth of reflective material via our writing. The moving and sensing body brings our attention to the moment of imagery and memory that spawns a thoughtful journey. The psyche and soma are instinctively entwined, and at the point in which an emotion is activated, the body replies with a felt sensation that confirms the

emotional response.[3] Movement that arrives as a consequence of the opening of the senses to the immediate world, evokes a similar frame of mind to imaginary play, "what you find in the outside world is what's escaped from your own inner world" (Hughes, in Sagar, 2006, p.45). Tufnell concurs,

> Creating [...] moves us out of the abstractions and generalisations of our everyday seeing and language into the particular qualities and feel of the world about us (Tufnell and Crickmay, 2004, p.41).

The opening of the imagination brings fresh perspective, a new layer upon the environment we move in. Our imaginations, memories and experiences enliven the dancing body and in turn fortify our writing. What may appear to have lost voice in the completion of our dancing, seeps through the images present in our writing and finds us again in our reading and comprehension of the text. Interaction with our surroundings is a daily occurrence whether composing a dance for a particular place, taking a walk through the park or trawling the supermarket aisle. When working with sensation and discovery through the body, we open our attention to the details of the world - altering our field of perception. Whether improvising as part of self practice or working towards the composition of performance, finding a voice for our discoveries, and the uniqueness of our perceived worlds is a way of "giving form to the way we feel things" (Tufnell and Crickmay, 2004, p.41).

New theoretical progress in embodied cognition (the notion that mind and body work as one reciprocally dependant system) via neuroscience, phenomenology and psychology, implies that action (motor-sensory) and perception are not only innately connected but co-dependent, providing support to the claim that writing by hand improves the learning and memory processes (Mangen, and Velay, 2010). This may not appear to be a

[3] Terms like *gut wrenching* and *heartrending* are metaphors that describe the experience of these feelings in both physical and emotional terms.

groundbreaking revelation, yet in an era where digital technology dictates a divorce between pen on paper and cerebral processes, we might be forgiven for disregarding the act of writing as an embodied process, assuming it intellectually motivated and separate from the body.

As much as the moving informs writing, the writing, in its imaginative, hectic and disordered composition informs the creative process. This happens through a unique attention to the moment of experience as Hughes claims, "[y]ou keep your eyes, your ears, your nose, your taste, your touch, your whole being on the thing you are turning into words" (1967, p.18). When the attention remains with the sensation of moving and does not become bogged down by concerns with grammar and syntax, the words will fall into place naturally, or as Lewis Carroll supposed, "take care of the sense, and the sounds will take care of themselves" (Carroll, 1931, p.107). Writing relies upon the dance artist's undivided embodied perception and her trust in the words that surface through the body.

The "Things Themselves"[4]

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, opinion on the human connection to nature has altered considerably, modified by new thinking and the reconsideration of factors that have come to form our understanding of the world. In Abram's view, modern science has been built upon the foundation that reality might only be fully understood by means of mathematical examination (1997). Science, he contends, has repetitively disregarded the "ordinary, everyday experience" as evidence of our existence in the order of things (Abram, 1997, p.32). His view supposes that our understanding of the

[4] The *things themselves* is a reference to Phenomenology's claim to assist in our understanding of the things themselves, that is, to see past numerous readings of reality and avoid elements that may cloud one's judgement. It is essentially an invitation to strip our readings of the unnecessary to examine the essence of the 'thing'.

world around us should not be one of mere matter, but that we (the human) relate to the world by way of our sensorial perceptual faculties. Abram challenges Descartes' dualistic separation of the material world and the thinking mind, which he insists to be the first step toward the total domination of objective sciences. The influence of science constructed the false opinion that sensory experience (equated to whimsical notions such as the gut feeling or following the heart instead of the head) is less real than that which might be quantifiable. Abram asserts,

> The world and I reciprocate one another. The landscape [the total environment] as I experience it, is hardly a determinate object; it is an ambiguous realm that responds to my emotions and calls forth feelings from me in turn (1997, p.33).

Via phenomenology, Abram maintains that ignoring the reciprocity between perceiver and perceived limits us to a narrow view of reality. Specifically following the work of Merleau-Ponty, Abram has challenged these assumptions and as such, phenomenology has found its way to support the thinking throughout this thesis. Just as Merleau-Ponty's predecessor Husserl turned "to the things themselves", this study rejects science's instruction to view the components and inhabitants of this world as objects stripped of subjectivity (Husserl, in Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.ix). Rather it opts to recognise both human and non-human entities as subjects like ourselves, "an intertwined matrix of sensations and perceptions, a collective field of experience, lived through from many different angles" (Abram, 1997, p.39).

It might be argued that the cadence and textures of our lived experience are all too easily marginalised, understood only as part of the fabric of everyday life. Our comprehension of such experience channelled through the linear viewpoint of western science, places a restriction on the way we see things. Writer and poet Rebecca Luce-Kapler (2004), referring to Abram, asserts that the written word has potency and history

with the natural world, demonstrated through the cadence of one's speech, the resonance of one's language and the sensory attention accessed through writing. This suggests that writing embeds us in the world, that it is a "relationship of practices and influences" (Luce-Kapler, 2004, p.144). With this in mind, writing aims to bring attentiveness to one's practice and everyday life. Providing a methodology rooted in approaches one might use to imagine language as accommodating, creative, accessible and embedded in the natural world.

Abram (1997) uses Merleau-Ponty's thesis of the reciprocity of perception to support his view that when we engage in attentiveness to our surroundings there is not only the potential of us speaking and listening to the terrain, but also that the terrain both speaks and listens to us. The reciprocity of perception means that we feel ourselves listened to by our surroundings. As Abram clarifies, "just to gaze at the surrounding forest is to feel oneself exposed and visible, to feel oneself watched by the forest" (1997, p.153). The land speaks to us via gestures and signs of which we have a primordial ability to read and discern. Much of what we might currently recognize as superstitious wives' tales, were once considered valuable. These omens were constructed from readings of the signs embedded in the weather, land and nature and were built upon an attentiveness to the environment once routine within our culture. Although this attentiveness appears to have been lost in the West, it remains an active means of reading and living in the natural world in indigenous cultures (Abram, 1997; Brody, 2001). These ideas reject language as the exclusive property of humankind, preferring to favour it as the property of the sensuous life world (Abram, 1997).

However, Abram's conjecture questions the sensuousness of writing, arguing that any connection it had with place, space and time is severed once the act of writing takes

place. His premise presents a consistent argument with which to tussle throughout this thesis. He writes,

> [R]eading and writing, as a highly concentrated form of participation, displaces the older participation between the human senses and the earthly terrain (effectively freeing human intention from the direct dictates of the land) (1997, p.185).

He contends that separating story from place opens up a "pure and featureless space", divorcing story from subjective experience and providing a perceptual wedge between humans and the natural world (Abram, 1997, p.185). Nevertheless, writing challenges this view, seeking to close the perceived gap that Abram holds in such contempt. Yet Abram's premise appears to discount the usefulness and strength of an embodied perspective. Users of writing practices recognise the potential exposure to what Abram might claim as divorce, yet in this recognition their specifically honed attentiveness and ability to maintain a true connection to language and nature through the body, enables experience to play out onto the site of the page, free from fears of disengagement.

Being

Phenomenology is engaged with the question of what it is to 'Be' in the world. Prior to the work of philosophers such as, Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, there had been a noticeable rejection of the notion of 'Being' (Dreyfus, 2007), that is to say, philosophy had developed an explicit knowledge of what it considered as 'Being-in-the-world', but failed to find an adequate means of describing was it is to 'Be'. The failure to fully articulate what the 'is' is, has led to assumptions about, what Heidegger terms Dasein (or 'Being-in-the-world'), that are purely based on our perception of object and other. That is, we pay more attention to the phenomena than we do our relationship to it (as related to Immanuel Kant's transcendental knowledge). In the hands of Heidegger,

for instance, Phenomenology took the view that the world should be assumed true, and therefore real, as a result, it is our connection with it and the things within it that requires philosophical consideration. Dasein is concerned with the notion of describing perceptions rather than the 'objects' themselves, and so fundamental to our deepened understanding of Dasein is action and operation (doing and using).

> The less we just stare at the thing called hammer, the more we take hold of it and use it, the more original our relation to it becomes and the more undisguisedly it is encountered as what it is, as a useful thing (Heidegger, 2010, p.69 originally published 1953).

One of the difficulties with phenomenology in terms of reflection on the self is that there is no abstraction. To offer an example that will better relate to this thesis, the person seeking to describe their lived-experience of dance would require two bodies - one body with which to experience dancing, and one body with which to speak about/from that experience. Therefore, humans have not developed the depth of language required to enable them to talk about 'Being', consequently 'Being' is discussed as if it is an object or something other than the self experienced. Heidegger proposed that as soon as one employs the word 'consciousness' and assumes the structure of 'self as subject' and 'experience as other' (objects of consciousness), there is a danger of making the same error as Descartes.

Heidegger argues that when we engage with the question of what 'Being' is the phenomena tell us that it is not substance. The hammer analogy, which Heidegger uses in *Being and Time* (2010), is an effective way to illustrate this. When using a hammer to knock a nail into wood, the user does not think of the hammer as a means of extracting knowledge, there is no need to analyse the constituent features of the hammer or its uses, it is simply used for the purpose it is required for. The user, therefore, is in no way removed from that experience, the user is however able to identify themselves as

separate from the hammer, and the function of the hammer in the world is in fact, prior to one's theoretical understanding (2010).

At risk of making an epistemological jump, it was Merleau-Ponty who refocused the endeavour to articulate what the 'is' is in his work Phenomenology of Perception (1962). Merleau-Ponty was convinced that Heidegger's phenomenological perspective was still a cognitive model and failed to sufficiently question the body in relation to 'Being' (1962). As it is the body that meets the world rather than the consciousness, Merleau-Ponty considered perceptual interactions as phenomena of the body rather than the mind. His hypothesis sets aside all others that distort experience - intellectualism and empiricism for example. He proposes that we listen attentively to what is happening within our experiences and in this way, the body grasps the 'gestalt' of what is taking place, performing it more effectively next time. If one attempts to intellectually reconstruct experience it becomes distorted, thus one must accept that the body knows more than the intellect. Merleau-Ponty insists there is an intuitive nature to perception - when too close one's perception becomes blurred, when too far there is not enough detail to make sense of it (Dreyfus, 2007). Each case study subject explored within these pages, mirrors Merleau-Ponty's sentiment by insisting that they do not merely have a body, but that they are a body, that they turn to the 'intuitive nature of perception' to explore what the 'is' of their movement experience is informing them about their own 'Being' in the world.

* * *

Through the following chapters, this thesis will demonstrate the paradigm shift within alternative movement practices towards an interrelationship with the act of writing, offering understandings towards the association between moving and writing, that is to

say, how they form and inform one another. The thesis questions the usefulness of such writing practices (known to this study as relating to and resulting from a kinaesthetic experience) to a dance enquiry, tackling the thorny issue and philosophical trap of Western dualist tradition and patriarchal culture that denies the body as a site of knowledge and experience. The chapters have been dedicated to case studies that each analyse and reflect upon the methods and strategies of three dance artists. These dance artists have been carefully chosen due to their mature practices, which utilise modes of writing as a means of creatively expanding the field of dance beyond representation and imagery in order to acknowledge embodied presence and the whole self.

The thesis reveals the function of writing in its reciprocal relationship to body, identity, landscape and other. It does this through three case studies, two of which trace the significant contribution of dance artists Miranda Tufnell and Helen Poynor, who have, until now, remained at the edges of historic corpus relating to the development of the British Independent New Dance movement since the 1970s. As such, I draw attention to their specific involvement in the progression of alternative approaches in the field of contemporary dance, highlighting the fundamental inclusion of writing to a movement practice. Each case study provides a demonstration of the significance of writing to experiential (or what might otherwise be interpreted as somatic) movement approaches, negating the historically turbulent relationship dance has had with modes of writing and languaging.

The third case study brings the practices of Poynor and Tufnell together through the work of Hilary Kneale, a performance artist whose work has been heavily influenced by both Poynor and Tufnell's teachings. Kneale's case study provides an example of how the merging fields of dance and writing are beginning to journey through the boundaries

of self development (that is, finding ways to language experience in order to deepen one's engagement with, and understanding of the body in the context of one's surroundings), and into performance.

Following the introduction, chapter 1 presents a fresh look at the events and key protagonists in the early development of British Independent New Dance. Absent from previous historical accounts, chapter 1 recounts the story of British dance from Tufnell's and Poynor's perspective, detailing crucial developments considered on the fringe. I include a succinct illustration of how the changing shape of British women's writing during the mid to late twentieth century, contributes to this advancement. Connecting new knowledge with previously well-documented events, the chapter explores the intersections of the burgeoning feminist movement, international training, collaboration and the impact of Eastern body-mind philosophies.

Continuing the historical theme, each case study is preceded by concise historical overviews. These introductory episodes, (chapters 2, 4 and 6), offer biographic sketches that delve deeper into the shape of each dance artist's unique practice. Charting both life and career choices, each sketch highlights significant contributing factors such as influential teachers, experiences, events and crucially, the reasons for their inclusion of writing in a movement practice.

Each sketch focuses upon the political platform in which they were immersed during their experiences as students and emerging artists, prior to becoming sought-after, established artists in their field. Painted as a period of significant change in social and cultural consciousness, the time in which Tufnell and Poynor particularly, first experienced a transition from the usual dance practices to postmodern, alternative approaches to teaching and performance was driven by an altering landscape affected by

the rising forces of concepts such as, equality, inclusivity and individualism. This has been demonstrated through the particular influence of feminism and alternative approaches to personal development, such as those adopted from the philosophies, mystic religions and practices of Eastern cultures.[5]

Chapter 3 details the value of language to dance as one of creativity and imagination - for Tufnell to place experience into language is to see things more fully. Writing is positioned, not as discursive or theoretical abstraction driving a wedge between body and mind, but as a method of reclamation. Through Abram's Merleau-Pontian conceptualisation of perception as participation, this reclamation is one of a celebration and empowerment found through language's capacity to aid affirmations of self, provide an expressive alternative to reveal knowledge inherent in the thinking body, and explore the reciprocal dependence of human, nature, environment and other. Metaphor, imagination and experience converge, offering a methodology in order to write *in the mode of* improvised dance - remaining unfixed, transparent and fluid - extending kinaesthetic enquiry beyond the realm of the body, into language, image and story.

While focusing heavily on Poynor, chapter 5 of this thesis draws comparative examples between Tufnell and Poynor in relation to their use of language and writing as a creative departure point for movement-based enquiry. The function of writing is examined to identify its potential to facilitate personal development. The concept of *attention,* as found in the ethical and moral philosophy of Iris Murdoch, assists this venture and provides a lens with which to assess the significance of writing as a means of

[5] An example of the scope of what elsewhere has been termed New Age influences affecting British culture during the 1970s were philosophically informed spiritual and physical practices such as: the introduction of martial arts like Tai Chi, meditation practices similar to the Javanese art of living known as Sumarah meditation, also Japanese movement practices such as Butoh were beginning to be introduced to the UK by individuals who took advantage of the increased opportunities to travel to far away destinations, and religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism and mystic movements like Sannyasin sought to become more dominant in what was to develop into progressive society.

[re]connecting the various levels of consciousness within which therapeutic advantages such as liberation in the [re]discovery of self arise.

Chapter 7 details the development of Kneale's practice and performance - rooted in non-fictional yet creative prose that seeks to articulate the fundamentals of her working process. Her writing dissolves the habitual sense of duality inherent in Western culture, by embracing nature through shamanic and environmentally sensitive body-mind practices. This chapter unfolds the intersections of a practice that aims to [re]connect humankind with an ancient and lost sensitivity, reciprocity and relationship with the non-human world through the anthropological perspective of Abram and Brody, yet tussles with feminist interpretations of the relationship between women and nature. Furthermore, this chapter discusses Kneale's writing practice in relation to Grosz's concept of *writing otherwise*.

Although brief conclusions have been made throughout the thesis structure, the concluding chapter reveals the implications and function of writing to each case study subject. Attempting to demonstrate how a patriarchal tradition has caused distance between body-mind practices, written language and the non-human world, this thesis culminates in a reconsideration of the relationship between these aspects. The 'closeness' between written language, body, nature and self argued in this thesis, enables the field of dance to see the potential of moving-writing practices to encourage health, creativity and change. Rather than writing perceived as resisting linguistic grasp and therefore, following MacKendrick (2001) unable to preserve, capture or re-create, the adoption of unconventional approaches to writing dance are viewed as the means to allow these aspects to form and inform one another.

Chapter One

An Historical Context

This chapter offers insight into the shape and [re]formation of dance teaching and performance practices at the time Tufnell and Poynor were receiving their foundational training. Kneale, a mentee of Poynor and avid follower of Tufnell's work, did not follow quite the same path as her forerunners, that is, her artistic career did not become fully established until the latter part of the 1990s, and therefore she features less heavily in this chapter than her forerunners. With this in mind, the landscape outlined here, helped inform the politics and philosophies circulating the formulation of Tufnell and Poynor's (and by association Kneale's) practices and, in that respect, became the crucial basis for their present day work.

The following pages not only chart the evolution of dance as seen through the eyes of these three women, but also provide connections between dance and progressive shifts in women's writing in Britain. The central focus tracks the consequence of emerging feminism within the consciousness of literature and the dance community, arguing that as acts of resistance these converged within Tufnell, Poynor and Kneale's psyche deeply influencing their individual practices. Reflected within this literary canon, there is also a strong leaning towards the development of health related, holistic therapies and alternative approaches to the body (as influenced by what might be described as the New Age movement), that consequently, infiltrated dance at this time. Interwoven throughout are highlights of the shifts in perspective and style that transpired as a result of international crossovers and the introduction of new ideas, practices, disciplines and attitudes that contributed to altered perceptions of what dance could be, in addition to offering essential recognition to British women's writing.

Britain's Cultural Landscape: mid - late twentieth century

The development of contemporary approaches to dance in the 1960s and 1970s were shaped by the political, economic and socio-cultural environment of the United Kingdom and the direct influences of the cultural shifts taking place in America and Europe (Abravanel, 2012). Dubbed an era of 'counterculture' by recent historic literature, awareness of political and social views grew across the population of Britain (Jones and Addison, 2005). Britain, during the 1960s, witnessed an economy on the rise with low unemployment, providing many individuals with financial opportunities to experience the world outside their own community (Sandbrook, 2006).

Increased viewing of television, cinema and the production of pirate radio stations and the 'underground press' movement, brought together a mix of appealing advertisements, images and current affairs, some of which were coming into the public consciousness for the first time (Donnelly, 2005; Sandbrook, 2006).[6] Although remaining a relatively reserved culture, an increase in media communication engendered public awareness of the political shifts and liberation movements, holidays abroad, fashion, popular music and innovative film and television making, culminating in academic concern that wealth and mass media would sabotage the working class culture (Collins, 2007).

Yet despite concerns that the UK was becoming an increasingly permissive society, Britain appeared reluctant to abandon its traditionalist values (Donnelly, 2005). The abolishment of capital punishment received resistance from the public majority, indicating that young people were maintaining the views of the older generation (Donnelly, 2005; Sandbrook, 2006, Twitchell, 2012). Growing concern on the subject

[6] An example of current affairs entering public sphere during this period would be the state-funded growth of universities, abolition of Retail Price Maintenance (RPM) paving the way for supermarkets and the reduction of small high street business ownership, the legalisation of abortion and homosexuality.

of large-scale immigration sparked the popularity of Politian Enoch Powell who was removed from the front bench as a result of his controversial 'Rivers of Blood' speech in the spring of 1968 (Heffer, 1998; Schofield, 2013). Yet, as historian Mark Donnelly (2005) acknowledges, the emergence of new subcultures and movements created by way of reacting to a conformist society, birthed a sudden surge of entrepreneurialism and individualism. Undeniably, the evolving liberalisation of the 1960s paved the way for political shifts such as feminism, gay rights and race equality, which in turn opened up possibilities for alternative counter groups to promote personal development. These new waves of thinking would alter Britain's cultural and political landscape indefinitely.

Popular culture during this time was a key contributor in communicating socio-politically driven messages. Music endorsed romanticised benefits of love and harmony across race, sex and culture, while film began to break national social taboos on drugs, sex and violence and prompted a vibrant underground avant-garde film scene. Art, in much the same vein as film and music, reflected a period of optimism, prosperity and consumerism, while literary themes included individualism, deep and critical examinations of personal beliefs, a refreshing honesty regarding sexuality, drug experimentation, anti-materialism, which also encouraged a progressive consciousness of ecological, environmental and cultural issues (Donnelly, 2005).

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The marginalisation that threatened women writers - a circumstance that has also plagued the field of dance - prior to the twentieth century has diminished considerably. Owing to the British post-war education system, the emergence of women's writing over the course of the twentieth century, brought both continuity and change to the form. British women's writing since the 1970s has fought to tackle the notion of

Britishness and the *female author*, responding through a reconsideration of standard and formal styles of writing (Parker and Eagleton, 2016). A significant shift towards the acceptance and value of women's writing since the 1960s interrupted the relationship between literature and male dominance. Primarily attributed to the emergence of feminism, which over time, provided increased opportunities for publication through publishing houses dedicated to women's writing (Forster, 2016). In addition, an upsurge of literary prizes for women's writing and the advancement of technology offered further opportunities in the form of online forums, social and literary platforms with which to reach wider audiences (Parker and Eagleton, 2016). With these advances, women have experienced less adversity and can now be pro-active in the production of their writing. As the twentieth century progressed, increased approval and celebration of female British writers played an contributing role in Tufnell, Poynor and Kneale's lives.

Poynor, for example, acknowledges Greer's *The Female Eunuch* (1970) as a pivotal text at the beginning of her journey to explore and accept her sexuality. Parker and Eagleton's recently published history volume reports that work such as Greer's helped shape the foundations of the feminist movement (2016).[7] The advance of feminist attitudes during the 1970s and 1980s affected dance in a similar way to that of literature. The development of feminist consciousness altered attitudes and approaches to both dance and writing particularly in relation to politics. Both British women's writing and performance works at this time began to demystify the myth of objectivity that normalized the masculine perspective. Literature in particular, "questioned andocentric

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[7] In *The History of British Women's Writing, 1970-Present* (2016), editors Parker and Eagleton cite the following text as having a dramatic and unchallenged effect upon the internationally escalating feminist movement. Juliet Mitchell's examination of the Women's Liberation Movement, *Women's Estate* (1971),was followed by Shelia Rowbotham's historical study *Women, Resistance ad Revolution: A History of Women and Revolution in the Modern World* (1972) and then her scrutiny of the impact of a feminist consciousness in Woman's Consciousness, Man's World (1973).

concepts of literary value and undertook a radical reassessment of the overwhelmingly male dominated canon" (Parker and Eagleton, 2016, p.22). Writing during the 1970s and early 1980s confronted female representations by illuminating the damaging implications of stereotypical images that support patriarchal circumstance.

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A Conventional Beginning

Until the mid-1960s, Britain's dance landscape was dominated by a culture of classical ballet adopted from the legacy of French, Danish, Italian and Russian ballet; it had become Britain's most valued art form since the mid twentieth century after gathering steady momentum since its introduction in the early eighteenth century (Greskovic, 1998; Homans, 2010). Those with aspirations of illuminating the stage and pleasing an adoring audience, consequently found their way towards such dreams via weekly classes at the local dance school. Most young students, including two of the three case study subjects within this thesis (Tufnell and Poynor), would grow out of such classes, lured away by the demands of education, work or the new experiences that venturing toward adulthood promised. Yet some, particularly those from a privileged background, and demonstrating promise and an aptitude for the art form, continued their training driven by what dancer and academic Emilyn Claid terms, Western culture's "myth of beauty" (2006, p.19).

The female classical ballet body mirrored the societal ideal of what constitutes beauty and femininity: performing with effortless grace, the ballerina portrays delicacy and vulnerability in a young, white, slender, androgynous appearance (Morris, 2005; Benn & Walters, 2001). As a result of arduous training systems, it might be argued that the classical ballet dancer suffered a loss of identity, stripped of her individualism and

personality (Benn and Walters, 2001; Aalten, 2007; Martin, 2009). It was within these conditions that both Tufnell and Poynor experienced their early dance training. Tufnell's initial foray with classical ballet was brief and so early in her childhood that the negative effects detailed above had very little, if any, effect upon her understanding of identity. However, Poynor practiced classical ballet from early childhood, continuing into her teens and claims that, alongside a few positive consequences, her experience also yielded harmful repercussions (see chapter 4).

Breaking Convention: the dancer as entrepreneur

Initial signs of the independence that dancers sought materialized in a venture by Teresa Early (the older sister of Fergus Early who went on to founder the X6 collective in the late 1970s) in 1963. Portrayed in contributions to dance history as the first definitive move towards independence and experimentation, Early's Balletmakers Ltd., was an organisation that provided a platform and support for performers and makers who wished to work autonomously (Jordan, 1992; Mackrell, 1992; Burrows, et al., 2012c). Early's contribution to the second edition of the magazine *New Dance*, charts the significance of this innovative project, describing Balletmakers as "a self help group for the creation of new dance" (1977, p.16).

Paralleling the early developments in American postmodern dance, the UK witnessed the first phase of resistance against the controlling mentality of ballet companies and schools. The 1960s presented very few opportunities for independent dance makers to share new ideas or be considered seriously outside a classical ballet company (Adair, 1992). Performance venues were monopolised by celebrated companies and dominated

by male choreographers, artistic directors and management.[8] Conversely, the forerunners of American postmodern dance and UK independent dance were for the most part women, challenging patriarchal traditions that identify the body with femininity (the compliant dancer), and the 'mind' with masculinity (the ballet master or choreographer).

Opportunities to explore dance outside the classical ballet company grew peacefully over the passing years. Balletmakers (whose catchment area was south central England due to its London location) policy of equal opportunities meant that the membership was diverse, attracting both dancers affiliated with prominent classical ballet companies, and those beginning to work independently (Early, 1977). As the project progressed, classes orientating towards a more modern approach were added to the programme and subsequently, the performance works began to diversify, interweaving aspects of classical ballet with modern dance concepts (Early, 1977; Mackrell, 1992).

During the development of Balletmakers, Early called upon the assistance of dance researcher Ann Hutchinson (later known as Ann Hutchinson Guest) whose presence, it might be argued, may have contributed to a more modern aesthetic due to her experience under the guidance of Kurt Jooss and Sigurd Leeder at the Jooss-Leeder School of Dance, Dartington Hall, Devon (Lidbury, 2013). Early credits Hutchinson as instrumental in overseeing the development of compositional ideas (1977). At the time

[8]So as not to give a false gender-based distinction of ballet during the twentieth century, it is important to mention here the influence of three female pioneers in particular, who facilitated the development of ballet training in England, Polish born Marie Rambert (originally Cyvia Rambam 1888-1982), Irish born Ninette de Valois (originally Erdis Stannis 1898-2001) and English Lilian Baylis (1874-1937). While de Valois had danced for the Russian Impresario Sergei Diaghilev in his company Ballet Russes in the early 1920s, Rambert establish the Rambert Ballet School in 1920. De Valois, however, then went on to form the Academy of Choreographic Art in 1926, thus formalising ballet tuition for the first time in England (Greskovic, 1998; Gayle, 2011). Continuing the Diaghilevian principles, Rambert went on to open the Ballet Rambert company in 1936, while de Valois formed the Vic-Wells Ballet School (later known as the Royal Ballet School) after her collaborative partnership with Lillian Baylis, theatre producer and manager of the Old Vic and Sadler's Wells, which culminated in the launch of the Vic-Wells Ballet Company (Gayle, 2011).

of her involvement with Balletmakers, Hutchinson was considered an authority on Labanotation and was beginning to form further understandings of how the body works in movement, leading her to develop a compositional and teaching resource, the Movement Alphabet.[9] Early describes Hutchinson's input as providing a "theoretical grasp of movement principles" (1977, p.17).

The specifics of how Hutchinson provided compositional feedback are not apparent in Early's article. Yet from what is known of her expertise (that is, her skills in notation, her training and experience in European modern dance, classical ballet and a considerable time dancing on Broadway), it might be speculated that her contribution involved interweaving language (writing and/or mark making) and modern dance aesthetics (chiefly inspired by Jooss and Graham, whom she discovered during her time America), into the process and practice of dance. The work undertaken by Balletmakers did not escape critique, as Early recalls, "[o]pinion was generally extremely unfavourable" (1977, p.17). Nevertheless, the pathway that Balletmakers initiated for the future of independent dance was not ignored.

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Throughout publications dedicated to charting dance's postmodern maturity, the voices of the forerunners echo one another. They seemingly suggest that classical ballet's suppression of individuality and artistic ingenuity led to unrest and dissatisfaction

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[9] Ann Hutchinson Guest is identified with being a leading authority on dance notion, specifically Labanotation. She mastered Labanotation under the guidance of Sigurd Leeder as part of the ballet and modern dance training she received at the Jooss-Leeder School of Dance at Dartington Hall during the 1930s (Dartington became a college of arts in 1961 and finally closed in 2008 after merging with University College Falmouth (Nicholas, 2007)). Hutchinson Guest is the founder of Language of Dance a uniquely intellectual method of studying movement built around her idea of the Movement Alphabet, wherein each letter of the alphabet represents a movement motif that are in turn divided into a structured language with verbs, adverbs and nouns (Language of Dance, 2014). Once explored a range of movement possibilities is achievable, leading to a vast non-stylised vocabulary. The Movement Alphabet is predominantly used as an effective way to engage children in creative movement activities (Language of Dance, 2014).

(Adair, 1991; Claid, 2006; Lansley and Early, 2011).[10] Initial breaks away from the power dynamic and conventional performance structures of classical ballet, suggest an urgency to discover freedom of expression in movement and find new ways to excite both dancer and audience. The majority of the UK's first generation postmodern dancers, who had grown up in the 1950s and 1960s, relinquished their youth to the power system of classical ballet.

Following the feminist views of Novack (1993), Jordan and Thomas (2010), Fraleigh (1999, 2004) and Daly (2002), ballet is thought to have drawn impressionable young girls and boys via the allure of beauty and illusion. The language of ballet shapes and prepares its subjects, driving them with the hope of mastering the skill required to progress. The dance classes and performance opportunities experienced by many aspiring young dancers might be described as weekly ritualistic repetitions of the fundamentals of the art form, as Claid demonstrates in the following excerpt from her 2006 monograph *Yes? No! Maybe... Seductive Ambiguity in Dance*.

> There she sits and glares; she presses on her stick. Nothing is right. I try, keep trying, but my feet are cold, my toes won't stretch, I can't get up on pointe. 'Lift your leg higher, higher, higher. Now hold it, hold it. Straighten your supporting leg, keep your back straight, lift your arm to the side', the stick swaggers around in the air gesticulating upward-ness. 'Balance! I did not say you could drop your leg...' I want her love so I take more pain. I long for praise but her stick only thumps harder and the abuse rages on (2006, p.43).

The traditions of classical ballet condition the dancer to speak through a language of form thus cultivating a silent body. Enveloped in this silence is a presence vital to the dancer's power of communication. This silent agency enables her to command an

[10] To add weight to this argument, those who addressed these issues, members of X6 for instance, Jacky Lansley, Fergus Early, and Emilyn Claid all received classical ballet training and as such have firsthand experience of what they might term the creative and personal restrictions of such codified techniques extending from a patriarchal tradition.

audience's attention transcending the real body and becoming a spiritual being, an image of unobtainable beauty and the ideal. The argument posed against nurtured muteness is that silence comes at the cost of pain and confinement within a codified system of ballet that penetrates the lived body of the dancer, scarring her with the threat of inexpressibility. As Geraldine Morris argues in her article *Problems with Ballet: steps, style and training*, ballet remains

> preoccupied with training at the expense of choreographed movement and [...] reluctant to acknowledge the effects of training styles on dancers' bodies [...] As a result, the expressive elements of the dance movement are ignored and the unique features of each choreographer's dance movement diluted (2003, p.26).

Yet, the dancer's silence rouses a desire within us all, it escapes us and in its void places the demands of language upon us. As literary theorist Maurice Blanchot writes, "[s]ilence is impossible. That is why we desire it" (1986, p.11).

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Dissolving Borders

Since the 1970s, women's writing has evolved its objective to address the limits of representation, bringing a renewed focus to domestic ideology and carving out a platform for the silenced female voice. Feminism identified *family* as the site of women's oppression and took up task to subvert its traditions (Hanson in Parker and Eagleton, 2016, p.35). Interestingly, it was this subject that stirred Kneale to begin her artistic journey. Kneale's work commented on her assumed role as mother and homemaker, in addition to her matriarchal lineage. Supported by her own reading of trailblazer feminist literature, Kneale began to dig at the conflict between professional

ambition and domesticity.[11] Literature by Margaret Drabble, A. S. Byatt and Anita Brookner for example, presented self-reflexive oppositions to gender roles and made connections between domesticity and social and political power (Parker and Eagleton, 2016). Women's literature continued its political grind in the 1980s where Tufnell (2013a) and Poynor (2013a) recall the influence it had upon shaping social values in response to Thatcher's government, the welfare state and unemployment (Blackburn, 1995).

Tufnell, Poynor and Kneale all acknowledge witnessing a shift in literary perspective from male to female working-class lives. These narratives gave voice to women at the forefront of change - from industrial to post industrial economy - illuminating the violent impact of a fractured society upon the female body (Parker, 2004). Supported by the notion that identity is relational, this writing uses empathic humanism to reach its audiences (as exemplified in Muriel Spark, Angela Carter and Jeanette Winerson's work, all author's recognised by Tufnell, Poynor and Kneale as being influential works). Narratives of this kind often demonstrate an experimental structure, fragmented disruption (as demonstrated in Maggie Gee's writing), or freewheeling narrative form in the work of Winterson or Carter for example. These experiments in structure and delivery have infected Tufnell, Poynor and Kneale's ideas on the written voice. The research examines this in more depth through the case studies, but suffices to say, the use of fragmentation, freewheeling and interruption are all common elements of the constructed acts of writing exercised by these dance artists.

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[11] Kneale's literary exploration initially absorbed the work of Sheila Rowbotham, Margaret Drabble, Jeanette Winterson and Angela Carter, and later writers who explored women and land through nature writing, Mary Chamberlain's *Fenwomen* (1975) for example.

As Claid details so affectively in her autobiography, Britain journeyed into the 1970s, political awareness of feminist perspectives grew and sparked the rejection of power systems that repressed the voice of the dancer, and required that the inexpressibility of pain find another way to be articulated. The feminist endeavour to rethink silence as oppression, that is to say, to rebel against the voiceless-ness forged by a patriarchal system of knowledge and power, brought empowerment to the independent dance artist through liberation of verbal and political personal voice. As a result, a small collection of classically trained dancers realised the potential of dance to break away from this tradition. Those that tired of the restraint and rigor required to attain ballets "constructed dance illusions" eventually sought pastures new (Claid, 2006, p.118).

Rather than turning their backs on ballet, a group of individuals began to seek out alternative approaches to learning and teaching the art form. During what might be described as a period of research, they discovered various new alternative movement approaches and non-stylised forms along the way. Urges to explore outside the mainstream context grew predominately from the need to extend the form towards more creative and less standardized structures. These included the steady amalgamation of different disciplines and approaches (for example: art, architecture, theatre), the introduction of practices and philosophies from European or Eastern cultures (including martial arts, meditative practices, and body-self practices such as the Feldenkrais Method and Alexander Technique) and the adoption of new ideas from the postmodern dance movement in America.[12]

[12] A serious knee injury drove Judo practitioner Moshe Feldenkrais to develop his movement methodology by amalgamating two lines of enquiry: Awareness Through Movement (ATM) and Functional Integration (FI) (Alon, 1996). His work incorporated the principles of Judo with physics and human developmental stages and is used by individuals with complex movement limitations like those with Cerebral Palsy. Frederick Matthias Alexander, on the other hand, was an actor who suffered frequent bouts of laryngitis. Researching ways he might cure himself of this affliction, he found that by observing habitual movement patterns and altering and controlling these physical reactions, benefits include a

As autobiographical and historical texts inform us, classical ballet training of the mid-twentieth century continued to follow tradition, dangling the carrot of success at the end of a stick of pain, discipline, powerlessness, exploitation and silence (Claid, 2006; Aalten, 2007; Fisher, 2007; Martin, 2009;).[13] Criticised for maintaining its alignment with patriarchal Western dualism, classical ballet maintains the binary representations of illusion and beauty over the real body. The mentality of the classical ballet tradition, considered through a feminist poststructuralist postmodern perspective, preserves the knowledge power construct in order to create subjects for control and exploitation.

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Changing Times

Large scale classical productions became a financial drain for many theatrical companies during the 1960s. On realising the costly implications of elaborate classical productions, Rambert decided to shift the direction of the company from classical to contemporary. Rising talent Norman Morrice (formerly dancer and choreographer for Rambert) travelled to American on a Ford Foundation Grant (1961-1962), where he studied Graham Technique and learnt of the developments dance had undergone to progress the art form (Kisselgoff, 2008). Returning to the UK, he was appointed Associate Artistic Director (1966). Influenced by what he had learnt in America, Ballet

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greater range and ease of movement, and the expulsion of tension which leads to pain, discomfort and illness (Nettl-Fiol, and Vanier, 2011).

[13]Many feminist anti-ballet critiques of the 1980s and 1990s declared ballet a representational and oppressive form, reflecting the attitude of those who rebelled against it (Hanna, 1988; Adair, 92; Novack, 1993; Daly, 2002). Maintaining that ballet denied women agency (Daly, 2002), much critique concentrated on how ballet "upholds the dominant ideology, for example by continuing to select dancers on the basis of a classical ideal of beauty, by reinforcing traditional sex roles and by the hierarchical structures of both the training institutions and the ballet companies. (Adair, 1992, p.88-89). It was not until the late 1990s that attitudes began to alter and critique took an alternative path reflected in the work of Susan Foster (1996, 1997) and Sally Banes (1998), which rejected the notion of women as victims in ballet. Current contributions have turned to the more pressing issues of health and well-being (Benn, and Walters, 2001; Martin, 2009; Kolb, and Kalogeropoulou, 2012) and concerns regarding the effects of ballet training and its contents leading to loss of creativity in both dance making and dancing (Morris, 2002).

Rambert downsized to become a smaller company and altered its philosophy to include three aims: the creation of new works, the development of new choreographers, and the preservation of its best repertoire (Gilbert, 2013). Graham technique was integrated into its training programme and alongside its developing contemporary style the company began to practice equality across its infrastructure by becoming a company of soloists (Gilbert, 2013).

Instrumental to Rambert's reformation as a contemporary ballet company, Norman Morrice's work at this time was directly influenced by his time in America, studying Graham technique and witnessing the foundational shifts towards postmodern dance (Mackrell, 2005).[14] Tufnell recalls being in the audience for the performance of Morrice's *Blind-Sight* (1969), and specifically remembers seeing Mary Prestidge perform.[15] Describing the dancers as "stumbling and feeling around" the stage with their eyes closed, withdrawn and apprehensive (Burrows et al, 2012c), Tufnell recalls how she witnessed a momentous shift in the way the dancers performed when they suddenly opened their eyes and began to move with energy, sensitivity and presence in response to what they were seeing (2004). Realising the correlation of sensation, aliveness and gesture that informed the dancer's physical expression, *Blind-Sight* inspired her to explore this relation further through her own body. Referring to the senses and specifically the sight in this instance, she remembers how the work made "visible, something of the invisible" (Tufnell, 2008). Her invested interest in this dimension of dance prompted her decision to attend movement classes at London Contemporary

[14]Morrice was the protégée of Marie Rambert in the 1950s who, according to Norman Lebrecht's historical account of British popular culture and the popularity of Covent Garden, is credited with being one of the first choreographers of contemporary dance in Britain. This is mainly a consequence of his training with Martha Graham (1894-1991) and his subsequent role as Associate Artistic Director for Rambert's contemporary company circa 1966.

[15] Mary Prestidge was originally an Olympic gymnast before retraining to be a dancer. Her first professional dance work was with Rambert under the directorship of Morrice, but she later went on to join Jacky Lansley, Emilyn Claid, Fergus Early and Maedee Dupres as a founding member of the radical X6 collective.

Dance School, (1973-1975), and Dartington College (1977-1978) (Karczag and Tufnell, 2011; Burrows et al, 2012c).

Newly appointed Head of Dance, Mary Fulkerson, was credited with bringing Dartington's dance department into the realms of contemporary and alternative approaches.[16] Selected in order that she might direct and teach dance and choreographic practices at Dartington College, Fulkerson (who had moved to England from America where she had trained in release-based dance - a style that was virtually unexplored in the UK until her arrival) set about introducing radical changes within the department (Lepkoff 1999). A significant change was the integration of guest international teachers, (to the curriculum) such as Steve Paxton, who brought with him the fundamentals of contact improvisation.

Larraine Nicholas' book *Dancing in Utopia: Dartington Hall and its dancers* (2007), ascribes the development of dance during the 1960s and 1970s to key progression of

[16]Mary Faulkerson trained under Joan Skinner (originator of Skinner Releasing Technique) and Barbara Clark (Ideokinesis) whose paths crossed while teaching at University of Illinois during the sixties (Skinner, et al. 1979; Buckwalter, 2010). Clark's work was directly influenced by her training with Mable Elsworth Todd (1880-1956). Todd a pioneering movement specialist during twentieth century America founded what later came to be known as Ideokinesis. Todd made a seminal contribution to the physiology and psychology of movement by publishing *The Thinking Body* (1937), a book that remains fundamental to modern dance education throughout America and Europe (Buckwalter, 2010). Skinner, also associated with Todd, received early dance training from Cora Bell Hunter, another former student of Todd's (Agis and Moran, 2002). Connecting these selected forerunners of somatic movement practices is the foundation of their individual techniques and the influence it has had upon the development of postmodern dance. In this context, the term 'release' is used thereafter as an umbrella term to describe the method of contemporary dance associated with Fulkerson's lineage and is a particular influence upon Tufnell's methodology. The term 'Anatomical Release Technique' is used to describe the specific practice devised by Fulkerson as a refinement of release-based approaches. Release denotes the experience felt in the muscles, tissues and joints of the body when this particular technique is applied to the thought process that supports the moving body. For example, Fulkerson's students explored the use of imagery to channel action along "structurally sound lines of compression and support" within the body (Lepkoff, 1999). In this way, weight and effort is directed through the centre of the body's architecture to the muscles closest to the centre, this then releases the outer muscles from unnecessary holding and tension. This leaves the body to move free from tension developed in deep-rooted physical preconceptions, (the short cuts that the body adopts because of the socio-cultural environment we are exposed to, or the physical pressures placed upon the body as it develops, in this case: specialist technical dance training).

dance programmes at two of the UK's leading contributors in performance education. Naming Dartington as a pivotal protagonist, she writes,

> We could call this an explosion of interest in modern dance performance, coming about through a generation of dance students from both Dartington and The London Contemporary School of Dance, who were pushing the boundaries, trying to find work and trying to raise the profile of the art form while the institutions were struggling to keep up with them (Nicholas, 2007, p.169).

Changes such as this were made easier during the 1970s due to economical stability, a factor which provided freedom and incentive for growth in the arts. An example of this might be the Dartington Festival, which first took place in June 1978. Running over the course of a weekend, the festival showcased workshops and performances involving Paxton, Richard Alston, Janet Smith, Nancy Topf, Rosemary Butcher and Tufnell, to name a few. The festival ran as a means of celebrating the security of Dartington's programme of dance and as a result of its success, it grew in popularity not just through Britain, but internationally attracting a wide range of overseas dance professionals and in doing so securing a second generation of practitioners influenced by new dance (de Wit, 2000). The festival ran yearly until 1987 when organisational changes during the mid-1980s halted the festivals progress (de Wit, 2000). Today the festival continues once again, yet has been reshaped in order that it celebrates the former glory of 1978 to 1987. However, it now focuses primarily on contact improvisation and is hosted by Falmouth University.

Over the years, Dartington maintained its vision yet began to show cracks in the foundations of its innovative educational programme. Fulkerson left Dartington to newly appointed senior lecturer Katy Duck in 1986, who began her journey seeing the college through some troublesome financial times that placed constraints upon its pioneering ethos. Yet, Dartington remains marked by its philosophy of social

consciousness, branding its students in such a way that their experiences at the college were not just a degree but became a way of life (Archdeacon, and Oldershaw, 2007). As funding ceased, the college began to struggle and it finally closed its doors, merging instead with University College Falmouth in 2010. However, its counterpart, LCDS, continues to flourish notwithstanding the economic effects of altering governmental policies and changes in organisation resulting in varying management strategies.

Dartington was also home to a popular and innovative theatre course, which during the 1970s looked to Black Mountain College, North Carolina for inspiration regarding the relationship between performance and writing (Auslander, 2003). Poet Charles Olson had been dean of Black Mountain College when he formulated his thoughts for a new performance-writing course, *The Act of Writing in the Context of Post-Modern Man* (1952). It had been groundbreaking ideas like those that surfaced from Olson's course description, which permeated Dartington College's hopes for a progressive means of understanding writing's relationship to performance. Olson wrote, "each person [...] may more and more find the kinetics of experience disclosed - the kinetics of themselves as persons as well as of the stuff they have to work on, and by" (Olson, in Butterick, 1974, p.28). Representing the kind of thinking that seeped into Dartington's course models, Olson's "sense of the materiality of writing and the essentially performative quality of the materials of writing" (Allsop, in Auslander, 2003, p.121), suggests that those connected to the college (as Tufnell was at this time), would understand the act of writing as intrinsically connected to both mind and body.

Conversely, the progression of London Contemporary Dance School (LCDS) can be linked to an integration of Eastern body-mind practices. Having been inspired by the Martha Graham Dance Company in 1954 philanthropist and dance patron Robin

Howard was responsible for the formulation of the Contemporary Ballet Trust (1957, renamed Contemporary Dance Trust in 1970), an arts administration that supported the advancement of modern dance in the UK that eventually became the parent company of LCDS. The school, which initially opened as a rented studio in 1966, became a hub for modern dance classes and performance. In its early years, LCDS welcomed anyone to enrol on the dance and performance programmes, regardless of background or social class. The result of increased interest in cross-form practices over the years can be traced back to the forerunners of the independent movement.

As Judith Mackrell's *Out of Line: the story of British New Dance* (1992) indicates, a significant group of individuals came to dance from backgrounds outside the art form.[17] Under the direction of Robert Cohan (a successful student of Graham and ex-soloist in her dance company), the school was shaping up to became a dominant institution within mainstream dance education and performance. Although maintaining its narrowed focus on formalist modern dance, students might expect to be educated in ballet and classes that explored the expressionistic movement style of Martha Graham.[18] As the school progressed, the link with Graham lessened and the school provided access to complementary body-related practices and teaching methods outside its dance programme, such as Tai Chi and Alexander Technique (see chapters 2 and 4 for further

[17] Among them, Richard Alston (attended LCDS from 1967-1970 and was made Artistic Director in 1994) who previously studied fine art and theatre design at Croydon College of Art. Siobhan Davies (attended LCDS from 1967-1971, in 1994 she became Associate Choreographer, and 1983 Resident Choreographer) left art college in order to turn to dance after taking classes at Contemporary Dance Group (which went on to become LCDS). Sally Potter (attended LCDS from 1971-1973) came to the school from an art and film background. Miranda Tufnell began taking classes at LCDS (from 1973-1975) as a reaction to the restrictions she felt after completing her English Degree. Julyen Hamilton trained at LCDS during the mid-1970s (briefly danced with London Contemporary Dance Theatre in 1977) yet his previous background was in acting and gymnastics. (Mackrell, 1992; Bremser, and Sanders, 2011; Claid, 2006; Alston, c. 2013; Tufnell, 2013b).

[18] Formalism can be defined as the essentialist view that movement should be the primary objective of dance making, rather than narrative, expression or meaning. Formalism can be clearly seen in the work of celebrated abstract formalist Merce Cunningham, whose focus on line and shape of the body in motion, signify form as crucial, reducing dance to the essence of movement (Fraleigh, 1987).

details on how these techniques influenced both Tufnell and Poynor) (Burrows, et al. 2012c).

Mindful body practices provided a tool for individual research and for that reason thrived in a culture of independence. These approaches to the body brought with them new methods of defining and refining a new aesthetic. What these practices provided in terms of direction and aesthetic were ways to attend to movement, that is to say, they provided a means with which to investigate what mattered to the dancer. Elements of conventional dance technique were spliced together with elements of body-mind practices, to create approaches unique to that generation. Jonathan Burrows recalls the sentiment of that time as one of earnestness, that although much of the work was channelled through a parodic or ironic sense of humour and self-subversion, it was generated through a strong sincerity to the cause of creating serious work (Burrows et al, 2012c).

These alternative approaches to movement captured the imaginations of both Tufnell and Poynor, who happened to stumble upon such classes during their early forays with dance. Yet there were several contributors to the shifting landscape at this time. In line with the societal progression toward individualism and entrepreneurialism, key organisations such as Strider, Rosemary Butcher Dance Company (both of whom Tufnell worked closely with in her early career. Strider: 1974-1975; Butcher: 1976-1982), X6 Collective, and a maverick counter group known as The Natural Dance Workshop, (which Poynor joined during the development of her teaching career), sought a means of becoming independent from conventional dance training and performance.

* * *

While dance has continued to break away from convention and tradition, women writers and poets have increasingly explored the realm of performance as a platform for their work (Parker and Eagleton, 2016). Conferences like *Rethinking Women's Poetry 1770-1930* (1995) and *Kicking Daffodils* (1994, 1997, 2006) have generated critical and creative interactions regarding past and future poetic and literary endeavours. Events like these have worked to blur the conceptual oppositions between women, poetry, feminism and literature (Parker and Eagleton, 2016). Poynor's connection to theatre practices (examined further in chapter 4) meant that she was privy to the development of performance writing and the cross fertilization of poetry with different media which, "foreground and transgress the limits of page writing" (Dowson, in Parker and Eagleton, 2016, p.48).

Tufnell's and Poynor's proximity to London during the 1970s and early 1980s places them in the privileged position of being witness to an increase of theatre by women due to second wave feminism. The first women's theatre festival took place at the Almost Free Theatre London in 1973, just a thirty-minute walk from The Place, where Tufnell and Poynor regularly frequented classes during their early training. Left wing feminist politics made a significant contribution across theatre, dance and women's literature by primarily making women visible, and providing space for women in previously male dominated industries. By granting opportunities to reclaim histories, foreground women's concerns and support women in their endeavour to be pro-active in their creative ambitions, the women's liberation movement provided a distinctively inspiring culture for Tufnell, Poynor and Kneale as emerging female artists.

Alongside increasing narratives of autonomy and power for women, both fiction and theatre illuminated the previously ignored subject of the control of women in the third

world. Engaged in anger and resentment, these theatrical interventions used women's bodies as both expression and object for the release of such tensions. "The plays were aligned with the rising presence of sexual exploitation, of violence and of gang culture in popular cultural productions such as video games but also on film and television more generally" (Griffin, in Parker and Eagleton, 2016, p.58). For Poynor in particular, understanding the multiple implications of such violent forces as oppression and suppression upon women's connections to their bodies became a key element of her later work (see chapter 5).

* * *

International Exchange

Due to the development of dance in education and an increase of independent artists and companies, the UK was speedily catching up with the American postmodern phase of experimentation, the influences of which would penetrate the UK in two key ways. Firstly, via the Atlantic exchange of ambitious young British dancers like Tufnell, and later Poynor, who trained and performed in America, giving their careers the advantage over many UK trained individuals. Secondly, via visits from key American practitioners who brought with them fresh ideas and experiences to enrich the UK dance curriculum. Those who did cross the Atlantic commonly undertook training in the techniques of Humphrey, Graham and Cunningham yet also witnessed the innovative work of many of the prominent East Coast artists of the time.

Returning to the UK, these dancers possessed a perceptual toolbox full of new approaches and concepts in minimalism and pedestrianism, courtesy of the Judson cohort, in particular the work of Brown, Childs, Monk, Paxton and Rainer. These experiences were subsequently interwoven into their developing interest, chiefly the

intersections of dance and visual arts. An economic boom and rise in funding opportunities for the arts saw a period of both British and American Atlantic crisscrossing by artists wishing to impart their skills and knowledge in exchange for new experiences and expertise.

Poynor's visit however, was a little different and took her to the West Coast of America where she trained with Anna Halprin in San Francisco. Halprin's work had a very different intention to that of artists based in New York - she was intrigued by how movement integrated with visual arts, performance and therapeutic approaches could support personal developmental growth, social transformation and physical and physiological health. Halprin's opinion, much the same today as it was forty years ago, considers dance as a transformative art with the power of healing. Her aesthetic centres upon the present, that is, she invites her participants to express their current mental and physical states through authentic movement and arts practice, rather than conveying beauty through technique, virtuosity and mastery (see chapters 4 and 5 for more details) (Ross, 2007).

Through the newly found independence, dancers began to explore political and social frames fuelled by the surge of women's liberation demonstrations in London throughout the 1970s. Feminism provided awareness of the female body as a site of supposed inadequacy, weakness and subjugation, and refused it as a site of violence. Dance began to focus on process rather than product by which the codified styles that gripped the body were stripped away as dancers opted to explore individuality, creativity, dynamic embodied presence and naturalistic movement generated from a body-mind methodology. In a bid to reject the marginalisation of experience, dance learnt to communicate *from* the body. In *Thinking through the Body* (1988) Jane Gallop

demonstrates how theorising through embodied experience might shed new light upon one's thinking. Gallop challenges the mind-body split, so central to patriarchal thought, claiming, "[i]f we think physically rather than metaphysically, if we think the mind-body split through the body, it becomes an image of shocking violence" (1988, p.1).

In the language of psychoanalytic feminist Western philosophy, and therefore mainstream culture, dance follows a patriarchal economy of desire. Within this structure, it is said that women seek self-realisation and acceptance through the *Other*, thus passivity, physical weakness and muteness are projections of characteristics rejected by the male/self/subject (de Beauvoir, 1953; Phelan, 1993). During the 1970s, the inscribed need to self identify encountered feminist thinking, providing many women with the tools to become actively conscious of the patriarchal culture they lived within. Dance did not escape this scrutiny.

* * *

As the UK shifted out of the 1970s and in to the 1980s, it began to witness a cultural shift in terms of developing arts practices. British New Dance, which today is more commonly referred to as British Independent Dance, quickly gathered momentum, expressly expanding the boundaries of dance beyond popular genres and techniques of classical ballet and Graham technique, to include forms with a less punitive approach to the body. The philosophy of the new dance movement upheld the concept of inclusivity as cultivated in postmodern American dance, and instilled a belief that art should not be divorced from life or politics (Mackrell, 1992).

Companies and institutions, such as those mentioned earlier in this chapter, now widely recognised as having a significant role to play in the development of dance in the UK, were the originators of new ways of teaching, making and dancing. These new ways of

delivering dance marked the beginning of the Independent Dance movement. New dance symbolised the beginning of a conceptual shift in approach to, and representations of, the performed body. This altering perspective brought about an increased interest in therapeutic body-mind practices for "new ways of conceptualising an integrated thinking, feeling, moving unity" (Nicholas, 2007, p.185). The newly acquired independence brought an increase in choreographic collaboration with dancers joining forces to create collectives built on common objectives. The security of the collective provided a foundation on which to experiment and expand their creative capacities.

In the spirit of Balletmakers, collectives facilitated choreographers in their independence, providing support and comradeship against the dominant mainstream arts culture. Notably, the philosophy of this movement marked the beginning of a debate that continues in dance today: the need to rethink and reconfigure ideas of what dance might be. Conversely, economic growth during the 1960s provided an increase in state bursaries and expenditure on the arts, allowing individuals the opportunity to rent space within the industrial buildings that lay vacant after a post war decline (Mackrell 1992). For emerging dance makers during the 1970s, the appeal of cheap studio and performance space cemented the need for freedom to experiment and make original work.

X6 is a widely known example of a group of dancers who took advantage of this opportunity. Figuring prominently in the history of British Independent Dance, they were originally based at an abandoned warehouse in Butler's Wharf, London during the mid-1970s. The founding members were privileged to have the freedom to follow new ideas independent of organisation or company conventions. The founding member,

Fergus Early, recalls the principle of the project: "we wanted to forge a fundamentally new approach, to fuse dance with politics and performance art" (O'Mahony, 2011).[19]

Not only did the collective carve out a space within the dance scene for their own unique explorations and performances, but they also created the iconic *New Dance* magazine (1977 - 1988). Fusing a regular reporting style with theoretical perspective, the magazine continued the exchange between America, Britain, and the Continent by reporting the experiences of the artists themselves as they participated in, and led classes, workshops, performances both in the UK and internationally. In 1980, X6 left Butler's Wharf when it was sold as a redevelopment project. The collective reconfigured and moved to new premises at the Chisenhale Works in Bow, now known as Chisenhale Dance Space. Yet during its formative years, the X6 Dance Space was home to a radical rethinking of what dance might be, underpinned by a wildly critical position on the gender structures of dance (MacPherson, 2011).

The realisation that identity is not synonymous with the gendered body, that is to say, one's capabilities or life experience should not be defined by gender, became the inspiration for exploring culturally inscribed body stories. As a culturally loaded term, being *female* began to shake off the stigma of suspicion. While postmodern thinking enabled dancers to lay claim to the feminine and reinterpret it in terms of individual experience, it has not escaped criticism. Susan Bordo's *Unbearable Weight* (2003) condemns postmodernism for being as disembodied as Cartesian philosophy. She claims that the postmodern incentive to [re]invent indicates, "the postmodern body is no body at all" (Bordo, 2003, p.229). From Bordo's perspective the standpoint of the Western culture remains an impingement on women's lives due to, "certain feminist

[19]Founding members of X6 included Emilyn Claid, Maedée Duprès, Fergus Early, Jacky Lansley and Mary Prestidge.

appropriations of deconstructionism" that are "animated by [...] fantasies of attaining an epistemological perspective free of the locatedness and limitations of embodied existence" (2003, p.217-18).

In general terms the consensus of postmodern dance makers around this time might be contextualised as a rejection of cultural conformity to physical ideals and the Foucauldian 'docile' body (Claid, 2006). This reconsideration of objectification perpetuated a project of rethinking the feminine/masculine body in performance. In order to fulfil this rebellion, dancers, such as the members of X6 developed what Claid terms "survival tactics" (2006, p.56). Prior to its closure the X6 Dance Space provided a platform with which its affiliates had the freedom to explore politically conscious themes within new ways of moving and making.

I argue that the current landscape of contemporary dance has been built on interdisciplinary foundations, rooted in the inquisitive nature of those mentioned herein. Diversity is common to dance in the current climate, often identified by performance works that incorporate literature, theatre, film, technology and visual art. Justified as a mode of finding new ways to express one's self, Forced Entertainment's Tim Etchells writes that artists integrate characteristics from one form into another as they have "a need to communicate differently, to change the kind of experience they are offering up" (Etchells, 1999, p.33). If one applies his thinking to a reassessment of artist intention during the development of early interdisciplinarity in dance, it might be argued that dance artists of this time crossed disciplines in order to better articulate their intentions and reach a wider audience.

Much of X6's work, for example, made use of interdisciplinarity and borrowed methods from alternative fields of expression in order to shape their message regarding dances'

forced political silence. Resulting from independence, inclusivity has become a distinctive trait synonymous with the postmodern dance movement. Common to mainstream dance today, integrated dance groups, companies and workshops emerged as a direct result of the attitudes that were developing during at this time. Paxton's Contact Improvisation, for example, has been built on the foundation that anyone (the non-trained, non-dancer) can contribute to the form. Movement classes began opening doors to all participants regardless of gender, race, class, sexuality, age or disability. This guiding principle paved the way for socio-political advancement in dance performance. Open classes, like those Tufnell and Poynor would have experienced at that time, represent the rethinking that was taking place in terms of how dance might be taught and used.

In a talk presented at the Siobhan Davies Dance Studios after a weeklong residency entitled *A Thousand and One Stories of Breath*, Tufnell and Karczag described the experience of being in what was a unique environment at the time, as non-competitive and introspective (2011b). Each participant had time and space to really focus on themselves rather than critically comparing her/himself against others. Following the conceptual shift in the political landscape, techniques that cultivated the objectification of the dancing body were sidelined for those that took a subjective approach (Novack, 1993; Fraleigh, 1987, 2004).

At this time, techniques that aligned with these characteristics were considered outside mainstream movement practices in the UK. According to advertisements found in *New Dance* magazine (1977-1988), the following are examples of typical classes and workshops available. Among the classes that one might expect to see on a timetable such as this (for instance, physical combat and body conditioning practices like Tai Chi,

Aikido, Yoga and Alexander technique), are classes that explore improvisation and composition. These classes were frequently led by dancers such as Lansley, Prestidge, Butcher and Claid, who are considered influential in the development of independence in UK dance. The influence of American postmodern dance can be found in the numerous listings for contact improvisation and release-based movement workshops that, for the most part, were run by acquaintances and students of Fulkerson and Paxton or those associated with the Natural Dance Workshop.

The Natural Dance Workshop (see chapter 4 for more details) described as popular with non-dancers by Poynor, a former facilitator of the Natural Dance Workshop, was founded by James 'Jym' MacRitchie, who was later joined in collaboration by his then partner American Anna Wise (Poynor, 2013a). Wise specialised in Biofeedback Consciousness Therapy and MacRitchie was a visual artist and Acupuncturist who had previously discovered Halprin's work during his time in America in the late 1970s (during his time with Halprin he co-authored *Exit to Enter - Dance as a Process for Personal and Artistic Growth* in 1974). Neither had received formal dance training but both were open to the benefits of physical expression. Wise had enjoyed a brief foray with contemporary dance, yet other than his affiliation with Halprin, MacRitchie's background was martial arts and Eastern meditative practices.

Wise, who was the Director of The Franklin School of Contemporary Studies in London (an alternative institute for self-development), met her future husband McRitchie in the early 1970s, and they both developed a movement practice around biofeedback meditation and the Awakened Mind State (a deep meditative state) (Poynor and Worth, 2004; Poynor 2013a). This led to the creation of *The Evolving Institute: a Centre for*

Personal and Social Evolution, which amalgamated Acupuncture and Chi Kung with Biofeedback Consciousness Training (MacRitchie, 2014).

> Somatics and the modern dance movement are linked. Both movements were born of the same time and possibly for many of the same reasons. They are both body-based forms that value the whole human being. The two fields also share some of the same personalities, pioneers of the modern dance movement [...] have contributed to the field of somatics. While not all of these individuals may not strictly be considered somatics pioneers, their influence is significant. (Mangione, 1993, p.27).

As Leena Rouhiainen indicates in her research paper, *The Evolvement of the Pilates Method and its Relation to the Somatic Field*, the 1900s to the 1930s saw a vast increase in activities that led pioneering methods of "self-healing [...] and the overall well-being of people" (2010, p.59). Among these first generation innovators to break new ground, were Frederick Matthias Alexander, Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, Else Gindler, Rudolf Laban, Bess Mensendieck, Joseph Pilates and Mabel Todd (Eddy, 2009). Movement therapist Michele Mangione (1993) suggests that further development of such practices until the 1970s was due in most part, to both cultural changes and a surge in international communication.

As if seeping in through the foundational cracks of dance, practices aligned with the field of somatic enquiry, or more loosely, associated with experiential, therapeutic and holistic approaches to body-mind practices, have slowly yet surely infiltrated teaching philosophies since the late nineteenth century. These methods of working with the body focused most crucially on promoting ease of movement and a curiosity about the workings of the body in order that students of the various techniques might be released from pain, limitation and illness, through a better understanding of the complexities of human anatomy and behaviour (Eddy, 2009). Benefits of an internally focused body awareness are associated with freedom of movement, pain relief, efficiency, economy in

movement, and increased energy and an enhanced ability to self-express (Eddy, 2009). As Eddy suggests, the "transmigration of people and ideas" from east to west, formed and informed these enquiries, building upon such ancient philosophies and practices as martial arts and meditative movement practices (2009, p.7).

The field of *somatics* (a term coined by Philosopher Thomas Hanna who studied Feldenkrais during the 1970s) has progressively permeated dance studies and scholarship over the last fifty years (Hanna, 1985, 1988, 1995; Mangione, 1993; Eddy, 2009; Rouhiainen, 2010). As a result, its basis of "listening to the body and responding to these sensations by consciously altering movement habits and movement choices" (Eddy, 2009, p.7) has become increasingly more accepted and appreciated in mainstream dance, although Eddy has argued that the field "remains on the fringes of academic inquiry" (2009, p.10).

Tufnell, Poynor and Kneale have all had the privilege of experiencing practices that fall under the umbrella of experiential, therapeutic and holistic. Kneale's path has taken her toward Gabrielle Roth's 5Rhythms, before discovering the work of Poynor and Tufnell (see chapter 6 which elaborates on Kneale's training), while Poynor has been fortunate enough to train under (and maintain a relationship with) Halprin whose work reflects Expressive/Creative Arts Therapy. Yet she also deepened her roots in this area of expertise by becoming a Somatic Movement Therapist and developing her practice through Amerta, Tai Chi and Feldenkrais (see chapter 4 which explores this further). Tufnell's fondness for Alexander Technique has heavily informed her work since its conception, yet she is also familiar with the principles of Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen's Body-Mind Centering, experiential anatomy as practiced by Somatic Movement Therapists and Tai Chi (see chapter 2 for an elaboration of this).

Eddy argues that a theme of "[d]iscovery through internalized and conscious exploration of a physical or emotional challenge, supported at times by exposure to cultures or thinking that values 'diving inward,'" recurs through the generations of somatic orientated practitioners (2009, p.16). These practices choose to work in a way that does not "impose knowledge or hold a fixed truth about the body" but rather promotes heightened awareness through proprioception and interoception (Williamson, 2009, p. 31). Participants find support and knowledge from their engagement with the moving body and the kinaesthetic, spiritual and emotional journey on which they travel, as somatic innovator Emilie Conrad notes "movement is what we *are*, not something we *do*" (in Gintis, 2007, p.16). The seminal legacy of the approaches detailed within this chapter is the refocus of attention from product (mastery and virtuosity) to process (the how, what, why and where of the body) (Brodie and Lobel, 2012).

* * *

Writing

It is this preoccupation with process that drove each artist to consider ways to unpack and comprehend the details of their endeavours. Tufnell drew on her previous relationship with literature, Poynor looked toward her training with Halprin and Gestalt Therapy to utilise journaling and Kneale took to words as her artwork began to explore narrative. Therefore, to close this chapter, there should be a concise consideration of the function of writing within a movement practice for all three artists.

This research finds Tufnell, Poynor and Kneale responding to the twenty-first century campaign that urges a suture between humans and nature. At the core of this endeavour is a commitment to integrating writing into movement practice. As it has been outlined in this chapter, dance has set the goals and values of such an endeavour, but literature

has also offered new ways of thinking and doing. The principles behind the practices of Tufnell, Poynor, and Kneale adhere to shifting perceptions and cancelling out past acts of refusal or denial that might be linked to traditions of writing. A moving-writing practice, in the instance, shifts mindsets and breeds fulfilment. Yet, the specific function of writing within Tufnell's, Poynor's and Kneale's movement enquiry includes more complex purposes.

The practices cultivated by each artist come from a wish to negate the threat of separatism that breeds a disconnection of humans from the natural world. Recent years have seen significant shifts toward an ecological way of thinking that places considerable worth in the human-nature relationship. This is a consciousness that has embedded itself within the worlds of ecologically mindful literature and body-mind practices, which have come to inform Tufnell's, Poynor's and Kneale's work.[20] This values the success of nature to flourish, rather than diminish, within the hands of humans. Yet more accurately, it seeks reconnections between humans and the landscapes that shape their behaviour and well-being. Each artist examined in this research, considers their daily lives an extension of their art - moving and writing with nature.

Tufnell's, Poynor's and Kneale's work expresses a slight anxiety at human neglect, (or perhaps ignorance) toward the benefits of natural landscape to both physical and mental health. Their work revolves heavily around understanding how the body moves as a result of the landscape it shifts within and it is this relationship that they use to solicit

[20] [20] More explicitly nature writing and those who advocate an ecological consciousness. For example: Jules Pretty's *The Earth Only Endures: On Reconnecting with Nature and Our Place in It* (2012); Barry Lopez's *The Future of Nature: Writing on a Human Ecology from Orion Magazine* (2007); John Parham edition of *The Environmental Tradition in English Literature* (2002); Carolyn Ross's *Writing Nature: An Ecological Reader for Writers* (1995); and the work of Robert Macfarlane (2003, 2005, 2007, 2012 and 2016), which is regularly utilised throughout this research and extends from an ecological mind-set.

political and social change on conservation. That is to say conservation of the self, as an addition to nature conservation.

Phenomenology suggests the human capacity to make sense of one's situation is intrinsic to action or motion, rather than extending primarily from a linguistic thought. Defended here by Best, movement can be explained as a primal response to experience, "thinking and rationality are implicit in, inseparable from, and spring from the activity" (Best, in McFee, 1999, p.116). Therefore, it can be argued that movement is fundamental to one's exploration of humanism. Yet, writing in and of itself is an act of distancing oneself from the world. It might be considered isolating and introversive, severing the connection one works so hard to enforce. Yet, Tufnell, Poynor and Kneale maintain their connection by taking up the act of writing within the landscape itself, through a body that remains in resonation of its vigorous response to the earth.

Tufnell and Poynor found themselves guided toward an urge to explore what it is to be human and have a relationship with the earth through their negotiations of body-mind traditions, ancient ritualistic land practices of indigenous peoples and innovative movement trainings that reflected a need to embrace nature. Each artist then uses writing to further unpack these aspects in relation to their impact upon the anatomical self and the psychological self - to reveal how the natural landscape and their own human nature interface. In this manner, writing offers a refreshing distance with which to look upon the experience with a fragment of objectivity.

Kneale's writing, like that of Tufnell and Poynor, retains its personal angle until such a time that it transforms by becoming the foundations on which a performance is built. Used as a method of awakening the knowledge that lies latent within the body, the writing functions as a vehicle for the growing performative voice Kneale cultivates from

her explorations with nature. Kneale's relationship with writing is different from Tufnell's and Poynor's in that it enters into a particular kind of autonomy in order that it shift into performance. The process of reshaping her writing relies upon a combination of Kneale's memory and the residual kinaesthetic sense of her movement experience. For Kneale the purpose of writing is to give flesh to the ineffable.

Tufnell, Poynor and Kneale's employment of writing is both complex and contradictory - celebrating the ephemerality of lived experience yet exercising an ability to capture the seemingly unutterable sensations of such an activity. They wish the writing to be understood as the simple delicate thread that connects sensation of place to sensation of person. Reflecting Octavio Paz's concept of poetic prose, the function of writing reveals "a thing made of words, for the purpose of containing and secreting a substance that is impalpable, [and] resistant to definition" (1991, p.77).

For these artists the moving-writing practice is a method of writing the body into its relationship with nature for the purposes of negotiating intuitive physical wisdom, creativity, and psychological growth. Fundamentally, it has become a means of assessing how an ecological consciousness might be restorative, creatively beneficial and permit discovery of the whole self in response to nature. This research also positions it, in relation to Kneale's work in particular, as an auto-ethnographic method for the development and dissemination of the artist’s voice.

Chapter Two

Miranda Tufnell: Collaborations and Compositions

I am supported by today's 'Yes Manifesto' co-authored by Tufnell, Karczag and Crickmay, an acknowledgment of Yvonne Rainer's 'No Manifesto' (1985) and Eduardo Galaeano's lecture 'We Say No' (1988). It beats a rhythm in my heart that regulates my own circulatory system, I sense the pulse and repulse that manoeuvres through my veins as I tussle with the notions of freedom and constraint. I ask myself how I might see my way through this, how is it possible that I might answer all these appeals and that, in my writing, I might make the connections necessary to finally reveal clarity. Clarity about myself, my work, my intention, my direction. Clarity about how moving in this way, with this kind of attention, unfolds within my writing and then again within the verbal sharing of my experience.

I am drawn into a space of my own by the soft, warm tones of Miranda's voice. Aware of the pillars of bodies that join me in this otherwise empty arena, I begin to finely tune my attention, to play between an inwardly focused gazed and an outwardly focused gaze, catching hold of the moments where my attention lies between these points. Receiving sensory stimulation from my body, noticing my breath, the tempo of my heart, the weight spread across my feet and the subtle play of Paxton's 'small dance' in joints, muscle, and tissue, I also become aware of what else is happening in the room; my proximity to others, what catches my eye, and how I see it, the way in which I might travel through, and within this cluttered space of bodies.

The invitation gently lowers me down into the task. Immersing me within the task like the sensation of cool waters cupping my head before beginning to travel up over the top of my skull as my head finally disappears from surface view. Her voice now sounding as

if it emerges from within me, invites me to explore the slightest of movements in my toes, my ankles, the fleshy outer sides of the feet and the firmness of the heel. I sink deeper into my examination, playing at balance, shifting weight, edging towards tipping points and revelling in the repercussions rippling throughout my body.

Slowly, the stirring of movement in these extremities brings life and vitality to the legs, rousing movement in the three folds of the ankles, knees and hips. Introducing a desire to step in multiple directions, to find increased mobility elsewhere in the body and allow the energy to travel upwards. My range of movement erupts like the butterfly from its chrysalis. Shaking off uncertainty, awkwardness and rigidity, my body bounds about the space, unearthing novel ways to rummage through the breadth of my physicality. "Consider the alive ends of your body" she reminds us, "how does the movement of your extremities extend you into space [...] how does it move and shape the legs, pelvis, hips and spine".

Casual prompts twist my attention towards the places I might forget or resist. Eva asks us why we "take the highway when there is so much to see on the scenic route". They are careful not to allow us to wander too far into our worlds, always bringing us back; alerting us to what is outside the body, in the room, the other bodies that we share this space with. They harness us cleverly with their words - reel us in when we go astray. Guide us toward the breath as an anchor point, how it enters, inhabits and leaves.

* * *

Miranda Tufnell's teaching methodology reflects her history. She learnt that familiarity breeds contempt when the literature and language that she cherished, began to feel alien and remote through the lens of academia. Through dance, she discovered that stepping into the unknown brought with it new ways of seeing and being in the world.

Approaches that valued body-initiated movement and experiential anatomy opened up a means for her to revisit literature and language through a body in its relation to the world.

Using a cross-fertilization of ideas, Tufnell's work carries inspiration and creativity nurtured from a diverse assembly of influences. For example, the early Eastern traditions that value experience as knowledge. The inspired European influence that places worth in listening to the needs of the body, and the culture of indigenous peoples for whom the significance of the wider community (being in touch with the land, its seasons and nature), supports a reciprocal relationship with the natural world. The imaginative curiosity and physical playfulness harboured within experiential approaches to anatomy, and an enduring interest in how the body is formed and informed. Finally, the reach beyond what is tangible to a place of creativity, adventure and found voice through (poetic, metaphoric, illustrative) language and writing.

The following chapter aims to embed these influences in Tufnell's work with the historic shape of Britain's emergent independent dance scene during the mid twentieth century. In order to contextualise a feminist phenomenological analysis of her practice, the chapter aims to confirm the significance of an enquiry into the relationship between body, writing and landscape, while theoretically engaging in the elements that shaped her career.

Early Years

Many young children take a dance class in the pursuit of a hobby or activity that promises friendship, confidence building, health and pleasure, Tufnell was no exception. Although dance failed to fascinate her at this age, movement would play a vital role in shaping her identity, career and life in later years. Remembering how she

found her way into dance and performance, Tufnell's earliest memories begin with images of exploring the outdoors, of playing, running free and working her body over, around, through and under natural or man-made obstacles in the garden, parkland or playground. For young people growing up during the 1950s and 1960s, entertainment depended heavily on outdoor activity. The majority of children, like Tufnell, maintained a culture of social interaction, imaginative and physical recreation outside the home environment. Tufnell's early years seemingly provided her with body-mind intelligence that allows her to engage with the world in vast detail and sensitivity.

In the autobiographic preface of *A Widening Field: journeys in body and imagination* (2004), Tufnell traces her fascination with movement back to a childhood exposed to nature and the outdoors. Noticing the effect of movement on the landscape, Tufnell writes of how she invited these images to penetrate her awareness, moving her both physically and emotionally. Here she talks simply of how, as a child, one might notice a bird soar through the air, spontaneously sparking her youthful imagination and the motion of her body. Running, arms extended at shoulder height, feeling the air rush against the skin as speed increases, skipping and jumping in an effort to sustain that brief moment of suspension before gravity takes over. She writes of her desire "to metamorphose and move" as another entity (2004, p.xiv).

Growing up in a household of keen writers, her parent's apparent love of literature, is illustrated in Tufnell's memory of a home filled with books. She recalls a childhood spent surrounded by the gleanings, life experiences and anecdotes of the voices contained within the pages. Fascinated and occupied by the stories, the way the words played on paper, the manner in which they sung to her and drew her ever deeper in touch with the feeling of that experience, Tufnell speaks of her displeasure at the failure

of her own language to act in the same way as the poetics of others. Feeling unable to express the delight, freedom and heartiness felt during her outdoor adventures, Tufnell plunged into the imaginations of others and begun to cultivate her own vocabulary and approach to language.

In an interview for this thesis, Tufnell acknowledges the importance of reading as part of developing a personal approach to writing. She speaks of her love of "moving beyond" her personal understanding of the world to "meet all kinds of people" that she might never ordinarily encounter (2013a, See Appendix A). Yet despite her seemingly innate awareness of self, others, environment and nature, educational constructs intervened and delayed her realisation of the potential clarity of awareness and embodiment contained within environmental cognition.

> Why does one write, if not to put one's pieces together? From the moment we enter school or church, education chops us into pieces: it teaches us to divorce soul from body and mind from heart (Galeano, 1992, p.32).

Reflecting the government's failure to secure a modern economy, many young working class people during the mid 1970s were choosing to follow in their parents footsteps and sought employment on finishing school rather than furthering their education. Tufnell's upbringing might be described as privileged white and middle class, offering her the benefits of a good higher education and career prospects. Considering her parentage and exposure to literature and language, it might be argued that she took a seemingly natural progression toward the completion of an English degree at University College London. Yet Tufnell speaks of feelings of discomfort and unease surfacing as a direct result of her time in academia. She claims that academic structures ultimately damaged her fondness for writing and poetics at this time (2013a, see Appendix A). The connection she once felt building between her felt bodily experience, the language of poetry and the

poetics she sensed through nature seemed to have been lost. Tufnell declares a deep frustration at academia for the loss of a connection she actively cultivated.

Going as far as to label her experience as a feeling of being "silenced" by what she recounts as academia's encouragement of a 'narrow' application of language, mind and perception (Tufnell, 2013a, p.309 of Appendix A), Tufnell became aware of the growing detachment between body, experience and emotion in her writing, and assigns this to the intellectualisation of others work. Feeling that academia gave her no option but to let go of the delicious, colourful language of poetry and resist the ways of seeing she had grown familiar with, she adopted an approach that outwardly isolated her from the rich prose of body and nature.

Tufnell describes educational constraints as effectively severing the senses, that is, she suggests the narrowing of the imagination and creativity that she experienced during her studies, was designed to focus one's attention upon objective and concrete analysis. On completion of her degree, Tufnell felt forced to "let go of that whole idiom, that whole vocabulary" in order to regain a sense of the whole self (2013a, p.309 of Appendix A). Pollard’s research seems to support Tufnell's theory, suggesting that formal registers of writing that endeavour to convey something of the body collapse as a result of trying to gather and funnel a vast pool of experiential knowledge down a very narrow channel of language and logic, a process that can leave the subject dissatisfied (2007). Tufnell's dissatisfaction with the systems that she claims reduced her creativity, her connection to the body and nature, and her ability to be *touched* by the writing that she produced as a result of her education, caused her to seek new ways to [re]connect to what had been lost (2013a, see Appendix A).

As a result of feeling shut down by academic convention, Tufnell speaks of suffering a year after her degree "completely silenced by that kind of language and that use of my mind" (2013a, p.310 of Appendix A). During this period, Tufnell was unexpectedly drawn to dance after witnessing several dance works celebrating an innovative genre known as 'contemporary', the most significant of these was a piece entitled *Blind Sight* (1969), performed by Rambert under the choreographic direction of Morrice. Her introduction to contemporary dance brought with it a realisation that was to become the driving force behind her change of course. What she witnessed in these performers was a pure abandonment to movement and an innate understanding of the fundamentals of how the body works in movement and a reflection of the relationship she once had with her own body. At this time, there were few schools offering opportunities to explore this new approach to dance and as a result, Tufnell found herself at LCDS.

During Tufnell's time at LCDS, Graham Technique was at the core of the dance programme, yet changes were becoming evident regarding the cross fertilisation of disciplines and techniques. For example, Fergus Early, who had previously trained and danced with The *Royal Ballet* and *Ballet for all,* ran classes that interweaved and traversed the disciplines of singing, music and speaking, alongside more formal ballet classes. A portion of the faculty were guest teachers with connections to training in American or Europe, who brought with them fresh ideas and new methods of teaching.[21] Among Tufnell's peers at LSCD, was Sally Potter (1971-1974) who came to dance after establishing herself as a young film maker. Royal ballet trained Jacky Lansley (1971-1974) who after forming a company with Potter became a founding

[21] Among the second wave of choreographers who came to Britain from overseas to teach were Twyla Tharp, Meredith Monk and Merce Cunningham (the first wave commonly attributed to Americans Duncan, Graham and Humphrey and Continentals' Laban, Ullman, Wigman, Jooss and Leeder) (Nicholas, 2007; Burrow et al, 2012c). There were also members of faculty from both Graham's company and Cunningham's company and school, for example Viola Farber and Margaret Jenkins who were both Cunningham protégés (Slayton, 2006; Jordan, in Banes, 2003, pp.151-164).

member of X6. Furthermore, Canadian ballet dancer Dennis Greenwood (who she would later meet at Rosemary Butcher Dance Company) trained at LCDS between 1970 and 1973.

After her three years training, Tufnell (like many individuals discovering dance for the first time in the 1970s), would go on to train exclusively through body-oriented approaches that might now fall under the category of somatic or experiential practice.[22] This was due to a growing development of new approaches to dance teaching that incorporated Eastern approaches to body-based work and an increased interest in the health and well-being of the dancer, rather than the mastery of technique. The inclusivity of these new approaches to dance brought with it many routes and opportunities to join dance classes and performance projects, regardless of a person's previous training or experience.[23]

Becoming discontented with the drills of conventional dance training and the mimicking of other people's techniques and vocabularies, Tufnell consequently proceeded to seek out movement forms that encouraged a greater sense of freedom, expression and creativity (2013a). Her childhood foray with ballet meant that she barely experienced a fraction of what became a life of technical training and discipline for the many classically trained ballet dancers. Yet, having experienced the feeling of demoralisation and derealisation as a result of restricted expression and the prevention of creativity in

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[22] Among those who found somatically influenced training more conducive than traditional methods were, Gaby Agis, who practiced Graham Technique for only one semester at LCDS before finding release-based approaches more favourable. Laurie Booth came to Dartington as a theatre student and transferred to the dance programme after experiencing release and Contact Improvisation (c.1975-1977) (Burrows et al, 2012c). Gill Clarke found dance while studying English and Education at York University and joined Yorkshire Movement Study Group that was heavily linked to Rudolph Laban via its faculty, which included Lisa Ullman, Geraldine Stephenson and Arthur Stone (Burrows et al, 2012c; Yorkshire Movement and Dance, 2009).

[23] X6 and subsequently Chisenhale Dance Space ran a busy schedule of daily open dance classes that covered a range of styles and approaches. Local classes were advertised in X6's magazine *New Dance* that aimed to inform and encourage anyone with an interest in movement of the developments in dance during the 1970s.

higher education, one might query why Tufnell would replace one form of discipline with another. Tufnell was drawn to dance through her assumption that body-based activities would offer her a means to reconnect with identity, nature and poetic language (Karczag, and Tufnell, 2011; Burrows et al, 2012c; Tufnell, 2013a, see Appendix A). Yet the discipline of ballet or Graham class had not managed to open her perceptions or bring to the foreground the poetics of *Being* that she craved.[24]

New approaches to dance were gradually gathering speed and, as mentioned in chapter 1, can be traced back to two key factors in the development of ideas: the contact and exchange between artists and teachers in America, Europe and Britain (Burrows et al, 2012a; 2012b, 2012c), and the progressive craving for emancipation, empowerment and agency within society, that might be found through a meeting of modern dance, body-mind practices and a socio-political consciousness embedded in the artists and their work.

Contact and Exchange

One artist successful in distracting Tufnell away from the narrow trajectory of modern dance training was Eva Karczag.[25] Tufnell's journey into the evolving landscape of

[24] In this context, the notion of *Being* is understood as one's state of being, that is, the common meaning in the context of personal experience. For Heidegger the notion of Being is both fundamental to our understanding of who/what we are and our place in the world among other entities and things, yet impossible to define or speak of, due to our inability to explain what 'is' is. In his influential work, *Being and Time* (1927/1962), Heidegger coined the term *Dasein* for this particular mode of being, maintaining that Dasein indicates the particular entities that we are (Overgaard, 2004). He argued that *Being* or *Dasein* connects one's sense of the body to one's perception of world (Dreyfus, 1991). Heidegger's successor, Merleau-Ponty, believed Heidegger's ideas to over play the cognitive model and paradigm of 'looking at things'. He went on to question the absence of the body in relation to Dasein (Being), thus his main analysis in *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962) concludes that everything is a phenomenon of the body, therefore it is the body, not consciousness, that makes the world. Merleau-Ponty's hypothesis resonates within the philosophies that surround independent dance and alternative movement practices, specifically, perception is a bodily act.

[25] Hungarian born and raised, Eva Karczag comes from a traditional approach to dance training. Growing up she desired to be a classical ballet dancer, on realising her dream she later found alternative approaches more compelling and shifted direction by taking opportunities to explore Release Technique and Contact Improvisation (mostly her experiences of this was through Mary Fulkerson during her early dance career in Britain) (Crow, and Sager, 2006; Karczag, 2012). Karczag also studied Alexander

postmodern dance might be said to have been triggered by viewing Karczag's performance at the Royal College of Music, London. She likened the experience of watching Karczag dance to being able to see "beneath the surfaces of her body to the moment by moment flow of impulse and thought with her tissues" (2004, p.xv). It might be argued that Tufnell's immersion in release-based dance, Tai Chi, and Alexander Technique can be directly traced to Karczag, a trained dancer who was a member of Strider at the time that they met.

Tufnell had an innate sense of body and took to dance training as if it had been present in her body all her life (Tufnell, 2013a, see Appendix A). Yet the detachment and awkwardness that grew in her body stemmed from feelings of being new to the form. The accompanying feelings of judgement and failure within a competitive training structure produced feelings of confusion and resentment between how she wanted to move and how she was trained to move. LCDS hosted Tai Chi classes with Gerda 'Pytt' Geddes and, intrigued by what it had to offer Tufnell wandered into class on Karczag's suggestion (Karczag, and Tufnell 2011).[26] Tufnell recalls that the approach offered by Geddes nurtured an organic, instinctive way of moving that felt like a return to the

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Technique (with Williams), Tai Chi (with Geddes) and worked with Strider between 1972 and 1975 (Independent Dance, 2011). Continuing her diverse training with a stint at the Cunningham Studio in New York, she discovered Authentic Movement through Aileen Crow in the mid 1970s, closely followed by Ideokinesis taught by André Bernard (Karczag, 2012). Karczag danced for Trisha Brown's company for six years (1979-1985), however, she preferred to work independently and collaboratively so from the mid 1980s she worked alongside artists such as, Chris Crickmay, Sylvia Hallett, Miranda Tufnell, Lisa Kraus, Vicky Shick and Gaby Agis (Decoda, 2014c).

[26]Norwegian Gerda 'Pytt' Geddes (1917-2006) is credited as being the first person (and one of the first women in the world) to practice and teach Tai Chi in Britain, after her training in Shanghai (1948-1958) (Robinson, c.2013). Geddes' background prior to Tai Chi had been in modern dance (she had received some training from Mary Wigman in the early forties) throughout her exile in Stockholm during the Second World War (Woods, 2008). She had also studied psychotherapy and psychoanalysis and eventually combined the practices (Tai Chi, dance and psychotherapy) for her role in theatre and opera companies, where she helped performers' analyse and develop the characters they were playing. She also taught Tai Chi at various performance institutions: RADA, Central School of Acting and The Place (Geddes, 1991; Woods, 2008).

childhood freedom of movement that she desired to revisit (Tufnell, 2013a, see Appendix A).

Geddes taught movement meditation as a bodily expression of a symbolic journey through life, using images of the developmental spiral to support participants (Woods, 2008). As Karczag confirmed in her interpretation of Geddes' work, the Japanese Buddhist school of thought, Zen, combines control with economy permitting the practitioner to move with "effortless effort" (Karczag, 2012). Zen also teaches the practitioner to develop a sense of being present in the moment and perceive the detail of each moment within that awareness (Woods, 2008). Tufnell acknowledges that the practice of Tai Chi maintains her physicality, focus and energy, her teaching reflects this by teasing out participant attentiveness to control, force, weight, suppleness and speed. These elements facilitate the participants understanding of fundamentals like the experience of being 'grounded', encouraging the awareness of internal expansion and letting go of unnecessary holding within the body during movement, and an understanding of the reciprocal reliance of movement on the breath.

Tufnell took up classes in Alexander Technique during her time at LCDS and immediately found solace within its rationale. In much the same way as Tai Chi, she felt fulfilment in her movement needs, discovering the sensation of spaciousness, and the awakening of bodily perception (Irme, 2009). Claiming it was her Alexander teacher Bill Williams who really taught her how to dance, Tufnell muses, "before that I was just making a noise with my body[...] I could do all sorts of things but it didn't quiet feel real" (Karczag, and Tufnell, 2011a). Fundamental to her practice is the way Williams, through sensitive touch and verbal instruction, confirmed how the relationship between

body and mind is interwoven, instigating Tufnell's long standing interest into ways of expressing this relation (Karczag, and Tufnell, 2011a).

In conversation with Suna Irme, Tufnell maintains that this enduring curiosity was the initial reason why she began to make performance work: "as a way of training myself to express what it was that interested me" (2009, p.116). Williams had developed a unique meditative way of working. While discussing her attraction to the technique, Tufnell reveals the manner in which Williams worked to renew and distil kinesthetic and sensory awareness (Karczag, and Tufnell, 2012; Pinkas, Rootberg, and Hauser-Wagner, 2012).

> He broke down the moments of your perception so that you were aware of the kind of multitudiness nature of each moment as it was at play in the body, as a completely integrated mind-body approach (Tufnell, in Karczag, and Tufnell, 2011a).

Fundamental to Tufnell's practice was the discovery of easeful movement, energy and fluidity through the dynamic balance of body and mind. Applied to dance, the Alexander Technique allows the dancer to pay particular attention to the body while moving, placing the emphasis on process (how movements feel and how they are achieved), rather than outcome. The relation to the body is changed and instead of taking 'short cuts' to achieve movements that might potentially cause tension, injury or discomfort, Alexander Technique provides anatomical understanding and a deeper sense of the body's architecture, allowing the dancer to find economical and easeful ways to perform the same movement without comprising dynamicity.

For a short time, Tufnell continued her dance classes, amalgamating the principles of Alexander Technique and Tai Chi, with release-based classes and contact improvisation. In 1975, Tufnell had the opportunity to accompany Karczag and Alston to America and

continue her training at the Cunningham studio in New York with Nancy Topf and Simone Forti (Tufnell, c.2010; Karczag and Tufnell, 2011a). Tufnell became fascinated by the simplicity of everyday movement and gesture explored in the experimental works of Trisha Brown, Lucinda Childs, David Gordon, Meredith Monk Steve Paxton, dance artists synonymous with the East coast postmodern dance explosion during the 1960s and 1970s (Karczag, and Tufnell, 2011a; Burrows et al, 2012a; 2012b; 2012c). Describing the appeal of minimalism as a need for "what was real", Tufnell became engaged with the 'downtown' New York dance scene, witnessing the investigational performances that drew on pedestrian movement, and particularly the walking work of Lucinda Childs and experimental dance of Judith Dunn (Karczag, and Tufnell, 2011a).

During a recorded conversation as part of the *Crossing Boarders* (2011) event at Independent Dance, Tufnell and Karczag both acknowledge that it was the "non-dancer, non-dancing" that drew them deeper into their own engagement with the body (Karczag, and Tufnell, 2011a). Subsequently, Tufnell acquired a fresh perspective on creativity, concepts and values for her return to UK soil. Experimenting with the ideas she had witnessed in America, and combining her training and understanding of the body with Alexander Technique and principles of Tai Chi, she began to develop her own unique practice and performance style. Her interests and experiences drew her to the work of Rosemary Butcher, who had also been influenced by postmodern minimalist performance and improvisatory methods during her own time in America and was forming her own dance company in London. Tufnell remained a prominent member of Butcher's company until 1982.

Emancipation, Empowerment and Agency

Swept up by the waves of "*jouissance* dancing", Tufnell entered the world of dance at a time when feminist politics influenced a campaign for liberation, creativity and individual expression; key elements that have lodged themselves within the roots of Tufnell's practice today (Claid, 2006, p.9). Tufnell posits that mindful body practices taken up by dancers at this time (yet perhaps more particular to her own enquiry), were fundamentally a means to subverting the techniques and cultural codes that "straight jacket the body" (Burrows et al, 2012c). Whilst training at LCDS and her subsequent involvement with dance related activities, Tufnell's attention was drawn to the growing popularity of mindful body practices, yet it was not until her return from America that she embraced a full commitment to Alexander Technique and Tai Chi. [27] Viewing the tentative new work extending from those involved with Strider, Tufnell was enticed away from formalist, expressionistic modern dance techniques, and encouraged towards new experiential approaches to movement (Jordan, 1992; Burrows et al, 2012c).

Fortunate enough to have arrived into dance training during a period of experimentation, Tufnell witnessed a significant shift in interest towards dance that valued the subjective experience over the objectification of the body (Karczag, and Tufnell, 2011; Burrows et al, 2012c; Tufnell, 2013a, see Appendix A). It might be argued that increased accessibility and equality made it easier to participate and contribute to the succession of new dance. Tufnell claims that as independent dance developed through the 1970s and 1980s it became clear that the driving force behind

[27]Speakers (Siobhan Davies, Miranda Tufnell, Gaby Agis, Emilyn Claid, Jacky Lansley) at Jonathan Burrows and Ramsay Burt's *Remembering British New Dance* event, recall several influential body-based practices that were available in the UK from the 1970s onwards. Including ideas that emerged through the early beginnings of dance therapy, Tai, Chi, Aikido, Capoeira and Body-Mind-Centering were all noted as being popular with dancers (and non-trained dancers) who were looking to broaden their physical horizons (Burrows et al, 2012a; 2012b; 2012c).

reaching out to new approaches, was a need to find one's own path rather than the prescribed path of one's culture, a journey in both cross-discipline and cross-culture (Burrows et al, 2012a; 2012b; 2012c).

At this time, Tufnell also commenced what became a ten-year commitment to Alexander Technique with Williams. Tufnell claims that Williams opened her awareness to the intellect of the body, teaching her how to "listen to the subtle, inner music... and delicate fluctuations" of bodily response to stimuli, an approach that remains an essential part of Tufnell's work ethic (2004, p.xv). A highly tuned ability to listen to the body in movement and stillness, via the placement of the hand enabled Tufnell to observe "the many simultaneous, often conflicting, layers of thought, emotion, memory, and how swiftly the body transforms in response to a thought or image" (2004, p.xv).[28] Ironically, it was through stillness that Tufnell admits she really began to find what interested her about movement (Karczag, and Tufnell, 2011).

In order to progress her endeavours further, Tufnell formed collaborative relationships that instigated a performance-making phase in her career.[29] One such partnering was with fellow Alexander Technique student and dancer Martha Grogan; together they explored basic motion and structural components (exploring places of initiation in the body and how the structure of the body enables certain postures/motions), ideas Tufnell had taken from her experience in America.

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[28] Hands-on guidance is a widely accepted approach to guiding and listening to the body's needs and movement patterns in contemporary dance practices yet is currently more frequently known to be used in body-based movement practices such as Body-Mind Centering, Skinner Releasing Technique, Rolfing, Feldenkrais and Alexander. Tufnell includes the hands-on approach (a direct influence from her years of Alexander training and teaching) in her workshops to help participants develop a deeper awareness of the structure of the body and its movement patterns.

[29] It is also important to highlight the strong collaborative relationship built between Tufnell and Karczag that began at much the same point in time as the Grogan partnership, yet Karczag's busy dance career meant that her collaborative work with Tufnell would only take place at times when she was back in the UK between performances with the Trisha Brown Dance Company (Tufnell, and Karczag, 2011a).

The challenge of investigations so deeply driven by the configuration of the body was further complicated by the echoes of other peoples movement vocabularies within her tissues, "my body could not hear itself and instead spoke only in other's [...] movements" (2004, p.xv). Tufnell's statement mirrors the similar frustration she developed for the academic conventions of the English degree, and the physical disciplines of her initial experiences of dance at LCDS. Tufnell and Grogan worked solidly for a year exploring the detail in pedestrian movement, likening this reconditioning to a detraining, or rather re-shaping, of linguistic skills, Tufnell demonstrates how she shuns the rules and regulations that she feels encumber the freedom of movement and language.

> Our bodies, as our lives, are shaped by movement – from the changing pulse of our hearts, tides of our breath, to the movement of thoughts, feelings, sensations, dreams. In each moment of life we are touched and moved by a myriad of impulses and stimuli, which the body registers and responds to, whether we notice it or not…. Movement informs us to how and where we are; without the sensation and stimulus of movement we lose a sense of what is going on within us (Tufnell, 2000, p.9 and 11).

Tufnell speaks about how entering into the world of adulthood brings with it certain 'reins' that cut us off from the body (Burrows et al, 2012c). During her contribution to *Remembering British New Dance: New Dance and Somatics*, she illustrates this sentiment by drawing the audience's attention to a baby amongst the spectators (Burrows et al, 2012c). Tufnell's point is that the whole time the audience has sat silent and still in an effort to *listen carefully*, the baby has constantly been moving, sounding, and responding to its immediate experiences. In an argument that echoes the work of Piaget and mirrors the opening paragraph of this chapter, Tufnell points out that this is a condition that remains with us throughout our lives. However, this is educated out of us through the repression of schooling and conformity to cultural ideals. Tufnell's aim is to

demonstrate how being *still* in order to concentrate, cuts us off from knowing what is happening around us.

Politics of Invisibility

Continuing to explore the human structure and origins of natural movement, she sought pathways into dance that emerged from within the body, rather than piecing together 'steps' from techniques that aimed to shape the body. Alongside her long-standing collaborative partnerships with Grogan and Karczag, Tufnell also forged on-going conversations and a productive performance career with dancer Dennis Greenwood, during their time dancing for the Rosemary Butcher Dance Company. Likening their collaborative approach to making to 'magpies' - piecing what interested them together - she declares that a feature of their work was the element of surprise (Burrows, et al, 2012c). Her need to be surprised by the practice led the work to push beyond the cultural ideals of what a performed body looked like and accomplished.

Tufnell's work with Greenwood continued the exploration into minimalism and pedestrianism, yet received mixed reviews from critics struggling to contextualise new dance within the established frame of classical and modern ballet. Tufnell admits that the appeal of minimalism was "endlessly fascinating" to her yet "probably bored all the audiences" (Burrows, et al, 2012c). Mackrell notes that Tufnell and Greenwood's work played generously with imagery through sound, light and visual effect, encouraging critics to argue against the categorisation of the work as dance (Mackrell, 1992). Finding "it harder to survive than most [...] receiving minimal funding and review space", Tufnell's contribution to dance might be said to come under the political banner of 'invisibility' (Mackrell, 1992, p.75). The work produced by Tufnell and Greenwood

presented a challenge for the critics in terms of labelling the genre and might be a reason for Tufnell's consequent lack of prominence in dance studies readers.

It could be safe to say that Tufnell's upbringing gave her the confidence and security she required to develop a clear sense of herself. Claiming that throughout her career she has always felt like a dancer, yet not quite a dancer, she failed to develop a need to prove herself in the social milieu of mainstream British popular culture (Burrows, et al. 2012c). Invisibility for Tufnell was liberating, in as much as she was able to embark on original and experimental work that challenged the establishment. With this in mind, Tufnell's position in relation to the postmodern turn during the 1970s and 1980s has been viewed by both her peers and historians (and indeed by herself) as on the fringe of developments in dance (Jordan, 1992; Adair, 1992; Mackrell, 1992; Claid, 2006; Burrows, et al. 2012c). Tufnell was never a member of X6 and for the most part is described as sitting on the outside of much of the progressive work that X6 carried out, for this reason her radical contribution to dance at this time is often overlooked in historical contexts. Several of her later works reflect concerns in a lack of community and humanity, perhaps reflective of the seemingly isolated existence she experienced as a result of being on the edge of dance's progression.

Yet, it was during her partnership with Greenwood that Claid described their work as "at the forefront of the new dance experiment" (2006, p.115). Nevertheless, Tufnell and Greenwood received harsh criticism from critics and columnists of magazines and newspapers, which contributed to the invisibility of experimental dance in the eye of the public (Crickmay, 1982). As innovative dance performance began to break into the public domain, work existing on the fringe of dance and visual arts found the reception frosty. Critics were not used to dance outside mainstream dance, and might be forgiven

for having little background knowledge or experience of viewing experimental forms (Mackrell, 1992; Claid, 2006; Burrows, et al, 2012a). However, this presented a challenge when trying to attract new audiences. Positive press coverage proves a useful incentive for audiences, providing the public with essential contextualisation. Funding bodies also favoured those who successfully marketed their work through the media, whereas minimal or negative journalistic exposure led works to be deceptively branded as 'underground' or facetious.

Mackrell (1992), Moore-Gilbert (1994) and Claid (2006) use Crickmay's article *The Apparently Invisible Dances of Miranda Tufnell and Denise Greenwood* (1982) as case in point. Appearing in *New Dance*, Crickmay compares a review by David Dougill in *The Sunday Times* alongside observations by Steve Paxton on Tufnell and Greenwood's seminal work *Other Rooms* (1981).[30] Crickmay's argument demonstrated the intolerance of such critics against experimental dance and proposed that readers might develop similar ill-informed judgements.

> It was during *Other Rooms*, at the point where Miss Tufnell was crawling on all fours with a table on her back and a lamp dangling from her teeth, that I realised these people have never grown up (Dougill, in Crickmay, 1982, p.7).

Dougill is cited within the article as declaring the work "British rubbish..." having no referential capacity or ability to read outside conventional structures and narratives associated with conventional dance performance. Dougill goes on to describe the activities of the performers as if to disparage or even ignore the intelligence of the work (Mackrell, 1992; Moore-Gilbert, 1994; Claid, 2006).

[30] Claid cites Crickmay's article in her monograph *Yes? No! Maybe...: Seductive Ambiguity in Dance* (2006) to illustrate the serious effect of negative or minimal press on the development and popularity of certain artist's work in the historic frame of British Independent/New Dance.

Figure 1: Tufnell, M. (c.2014) Tufnell and Greenwood in *Other Rooms* (1981). Photograph. [Online]. [Accessed 29 February 2016]. Available at:<http://www.mirandatufnell.co.uk/trial/trial-Pages/Image10.html>.

Crickmay concludes that although artists anticipate occasional unfavourable reviews, Dougill's trivialisation of the work made little attempt to comprehend its meanings (Mackrell, 1992). "To get anything from this work the audience must be willing to enter the same arena. If the work must be categorised in order to be considered, then it will remain truly invisible" (Crickmay, 1982, p.8). It might be argued that Tufnell and Greenwood's 'invisibility' led them to develop a certain sense of freedom towards their commitment to experimenting with pedestrianism, sound, visuals and object. Escaping obligations as dictated by funding bodies enabled them to continue to experiment with interdisciplinarity and blur the boundaries between dance and visual art without having to justify their actions. Tufnell muses that although audiences were important at this period in the development of new dance, they were not integral. "The important thing

was digging about in the work, trying to get out of the straight jacket of technique to something that felt more human, alive and present" (Burrows, et al, 2012c).

For example, *Whitechapel* (1980) was a series of collaborative projects by Tufnell and Greenwood, alongside dancer and fellow member of Butcher's company Sue MacLennan, visual artist Tim Head and sound artist Huge Davies. The work was first performed at Dance Umbrella and subsequently toured the Netherlands. The patterns of light provided by Tim Head's design prompted Tufnell's curiosity into the various interpretations and stories that lay within the presences and absences made possible by the lighting. This developing interest of Tufnell's launched a new direction in her performance making as she embarked on an exploration into imagination, perception and story.

Figure 2 Tufnell, M. (c.2014) Tufnell, Greenwood, Grogan and Head in *Whitechapel* (1980). Photograph. [Online]. [Accessed 29 February 2016]. Available at:< http://www.mirandatufnell.co.uk/trial/trial-Pages/Image5.html>.

Tufnell and Crickmay began a collaborative exchange in 1977 after finding themselves working on a film for television called *Dance Without Steps.* This educational programme funded and sanctioned by the Open University sought to introduce the notion of dance making for non-dancers. Crickmay, with whom she co-wrote *A Widening Field* and *Body Space Image* (1990), has been a key collaborator in both performance and teaching projects since this period. Crickmay's influence has enabled Tufnell to bring the worlds of art, movement and writing just a little bit closer together. A culmination of nine years work, *A Widening Field* has been a continuously generous resource during the development of this research. Within its pages, Tufnell and Crickmay initiate an unearthing of the particularities of their individual practices as well as their converging interests. Much effort has been made to sketch out the strategies that they use to generate creative dialogues between body, writing, nature, art and landscape. Aside from their creative uses, these exchanges are used as a way to arrive at a sense of self within the landscape.

The function of *The Widening Field* is to encourage and engage the wider use of imagination, intending to enhance the practitioner's perception of the body by a process of de-familiarisation. A mixture of auto-ethnographic text, poetic verse, carefully selected literary passages and imagery are designed to lay bare the possibilities of the body. Pitches illustrates, "it is used mentally to 'unfuse' the fused vertebra of the sacrum, to spread outwards the wings of the ilium or, even more radically, to 'imagine you have no bones' at all" (2009, p.86). Within its pages a discussion arises that details their employment of an interdisciplinary mode of creativity as offering multiple viewpoints from which to consider process.

Crickmay's and Tufnell's collaboration has been fundamental in shaping Tufnell's practice. Their experiments with the points at which art, movement and life intersect, impelled Tufnell's interest in investigating the body in relation to object. Over time, their work has developed to explore the effects of dynamic shifts of landscape through the positioning and repositioning of body, object, media, visuals and sound to the improvised performance. Their mutual interest in these aspects and the search for a language that might express something of the experience was examined at length in *Body, Space, Image* and *A Widening Field*.

Although Tufnell has never ceased to perform or make work, there was a period within her career where her attention became redirected. She turned away from performance and towards creative, personal process, the intricacies of bodily construction and well-being. The 1980s brought about a considerable change to Tufnell's personal life which subsequently effected her artistic interests. On meeting anthropologist and filmmaker, Hugh Brody circa 1980, Tufnell found herself leaving the UK and her role within Butcher's company and moving to Northern British Columbia where Brody had secured a research opportunity with the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs to live and work with the Dunne-za and Cree peoples (Rymhs, 2011).

Brody's influence can be seen in Tufnell's curiosity in the social body. The interwoven interest in movement with enquiries into how one might increase understandings of the sensing, imaginative, perceiving body; how one might articulate a language that can express the bodily experience and its application to the quality of everyday living, reflect a socially conscious anthropological approach. Brody remains a presence in Tufnell's life for example; he contributed to *A Call for the Living Body* (2007) alongside Tufnell, a project initiated to explore how arts, in dialogue with other disciplines, might

promote health and well-being through fresh perspectives. In the case of Brody's contribution, these perspectives were channelled through knowledge provided by the study of diverse cultures and oral peoples.[31] Brody's expertises continue to intersect Tufnell's interests and practice as it shapes and develops a keener focus.

The shift she experienced from the wild expansive British Columbian landscape to the modest urbanism of British towns and cities, led her to gravitate toward rural parts of England. In 1987, Tufnell made the radical decision to relocate her young family to the rustic surroundings of Eden Valley Cumbria (Cumberland and Westmorland Herald, 2002; Tufnell, 2013a, see Appendix A). After a brief hiatus, Tufnell shifted her focus towards the enthusiasm she had established for the field of health and community practice. Tufnell considers the following eighteen years of changing Cumbrian seasons and climate to have profoundly informed her movement practice.

> The land connects us to a sense of time and space beyond the scale of our own lives. As we look to the horizon, go out into the weather, sense the slow rhythms of growth and decay around us, we feel our selves entering a larger realm of action (2004, p.242).

Throughout her time in Cumbria Tufnell hosted a weekly movement group, which was instrumental in shaping her theories and enquiries around how nature and landscape shape the body and assist in a deeper reflection of the body (Tufnell, c.2010). Having gained her Alexander Technique teaching qualification in 1990, she taught a series of classes at Fellside Alexander School that began to merge aspects of her dance training and personal movement research, the principles of Alexander Technique and Tai Chi

[31] The *A Call for the Living Body* project was a collaborative workshop for Independent Dance's Winlab event in 2007 and involved artists with a specific interest in the benefits of the arts to health and well-being. Artists included;Miranda Tufnell, Gill Clarke, Chris Crickmay, Niamh Dowling, Sylvia Hallett, Lucinda Jarrett, Cecilia MacFarlane, Brenda Mallon, Will Menter, Filippa Periera, Helen Poynor, Lucia Walker and Simon Whitehead.

with elements of basic developmental psychology and biology.[32] Tufnell's move to Cumbria commenced a fourteen-year spell delivering Alexander classes and sharing the principles of her movement training as part of a community health initiative at the Temple Sowerby General Practice, Penrith.

Dance, or rather, body-based movement practices have gradually gathered scholarly recognition throughout the health and community sector (under the umbrella term 'somatic') since the early twentieth century and might now be considered acceptable, and frequently prescribed, complementary alternatives to traditional methods of convalescence.[33] These practices offer fresh perspectives and restorative advantages to those in remission, dealing with physical limitations or challenges in mental health through a deeply refined process of *listening* to the body's needs and finding solutions via internal bodily attentiveness. In this regard, Tufnell's work exploits the fundamentals of Alexander Technique to offer participants breathing space, tools that enable them to listen to, and look closely at the needs of the body transcending the culturally dominant appeal of objectification that places value on the external view of the body.

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[32]Many enquiries similar to Tufnell's might be identified as somatic movement education due to the work bringing fresh perspective and therapeutic benefits to those with illness, bodily restriction or mental health challenges, assisting them in *listening* to the body (Eddy, 2009). Tufnell however, rejects the term 'somatic' as a label for her work, deeming it a superficial academic term chosen to brand all practices which might be identified as alternative or on the fringe of movement education and therapy (Burrows, et al., 2012c; Tufnell, 2013a). Although Tufnell does not deny the therapeutic nature of her work within the health and community sector, she takes the stance that her work is no more or less therapeutic than other complementary practices or art therapies. She maintains that she is first and foremost a dance artist.

[33] In support of the current credibility found in bodily-orientated approaches to health and well-being Martha Eddy (2009) requests that thanks be extended to the work of scholars like Merleau-Ponty, for his contribution to existential phenomenology, Freud and Jung for their fresh perspective on understanding the body in relation to the psyche, and the culturally related work of eurhythmics founder Émile Jaques Dalcroze, and Francois Delsarte's system of expression. Eddy also cites the work of Heinrich Jacoby and John Dewey for their contributions in formulating notions that education benefits from socially interactive processes, sensitivity and awareness in the development of the 'self', and finally Edmond Jacobson's research evidencing the connection between unnecessary muscular tension and mental and physical illness are ideas with which 'somatic' fundamentals align (see Eddy, 2002, 2009).

What Dancer's do that other Health Workers don't...[34]

If Tufnell's work can be considered to align with alternative medicine, arts therapy or somatic movement education, (that is to say, her philosophies and methodologies parallel the ethos that underpins much of this therapeutic work by enabling people to find physical and emotional connections and support), what might this work look like? In her paper *Formative Support and Connection: somatic movement dance education in community and client practice* (2009), Amanda Williamson addresses the common needs of 'clients' in community practices such as the work undertaken by Tufnell. Williamson writes, "[c]lients often articulate an uncomfortable feeling of ‘estrangement’, sensing their body needs some attention and care" (2009, p.32).

Yet even outside the remit of therapeutic practice, the need to address feelings of separation and detachment draw individuals toward practices such as Tufnell's. Perhaps she might agree with Williamson that "[c]onnecting to the innate and mysterious intelligence of body helps people to feel part of creation again: connection and exploration of mystery is a definable aspect of practice" (2009, p.32). As Gaston Bachelard's admonition recommends, keeping the weight of our world unspoken and buried deep within us, shuts us off from the world, the things we need in order to feel 'well' and 'ourselves'. "What is the source of our first suffering? It lies in the fact that we hesitate to speak. It was born in the moments when we accumulated silent things within us" (Bachelard, in O'Driscoll, 2008, p.418).

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[34] This subheading is taken directly from the title of Penny Greenland's publication *What Dancer's do that other Health Workers don't...* for which Tufnell is a contributor. The book aims to highlight the effect and potential of a dancer's training to therapeutic art practice and complementary medicine. The title seems appropriate for this section of the case study as it begins to explore Tufnell's change of direction into health and community arts that brought about her current stance on the [dancing] body and [body] writing as informing and forming one another. Greenland, P. (ed.) (2000) *What Dancer's do that other Health Workers don't...*Leeds: JABADAO.

Within the sphere of holistic health, Tufnell uses movement as a method of returning to language that extends beyond the "explanations and descriptions that seem unable to carry the meanings we need to body forth" (2000, p.14). Tufnell works from a belief that the stories of our lives are stored within the feeling/thinking tissues of the body, rather than in a memory thought to be localised in the mind. Insisting that movement returns us to our "senses and to listen with our imagination to all that flows within us as body", inviting the images and metaphors of our experiences to seep into our consciousness (2001, p.18). Describing the metamorphosis of a client she calls 'Mary', Tufnell's words illustrate how movement invites imagery and metaphor that bridge the internal feeling/thinking world of the body with the landscape of our lives and provides a means by which to arrive at language.

> She wrote,
>
> 'So small ... she felt so small ... smalled by the all of it ... wearing away ... wearing down... almost too tired to rise her eyes skywards, to see the stars and breathe ... how many hours beating down. The unicorn had vanished - it seemed - she missed the flick of its tail, light of its eyes. She waited ... for the sound of its returning hooves'.
>
> Mary said that in the daily pressure of her mother's illness she had forgotten all that she loved. The image of the unicorn reminded her of what she had forgotten, yet needed to bring back into her life, like her love of being outside in the wind (2001, p.22-23).

Through bringing holistic approaches to health and therapeutic healing together with body-based movement practice, what has arisen might be categorised philosophically as a postmodernist 'East meets West' comment on the human condition. The socio-political developments that transpired as a result of late twentieth century disillusionment in conventional political ideals, contributed to a shift in the value placed upon individual body-mind and well-being (Powell, and Owen, 2007). Eddy (2002, 2009) and Williamson (2009) remark that as fields such as philosophy and psychology began to

draw inspiration from Eastern beliefs, movements and practices (for instance, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, mysticism, Paganism, shamanism and spiritualism) which paved the way for new ways of thinking about ecological, spiritual, personal, economic and global concerns (Van Otterloo, 1999; Sutcliffe, and Bowman, 2000; Houtman, and Aupers, 2007).

As the alternative values of these beliefs entered society's awareness, people continued to search for new approaches that valued such things as consciousness, personal and spiritual development, community and empowerment. Pockets of political movements challenging traditional perspectives sprang up across America, Britain and Europe following the adoption of unity between science and spirituality, and the rejection of Cartesian dualism. Expert in the field of esotericism, Nevill Drury provides a useful definition of this attitude that is often generalised as *Alternative* or *New Age*. He writes, "[D]rawing on both Eastern and Western spiritual and metaphysical traditions and infusing them with influences from self-help and motivational psychology, holistic health, parapsychology, consciousness research and quantum physics" (Drury, 2004, p.12).

As these elements began to infuse traditional approaches to the human condition, activities like Tufnell's blend of movement practice with psychotherapy, anatomical awareness and creativity, developed within a non-hierarchical, passive, reflective framework. Following Williamson, it might be argued that Tufnell uses dance as a "process to reflect and enhance life within a community context through non-invasive methods of listening and creativity" (2009, p.30). Tufnell may not consider her work to engage with politics or feminism, yet the indication of what draws the predominately-female demographic to her workshops echoes a resistance to cultural models that

debilitate women. Kathryn Crowley argues that the values articulated by women within [New Age] worldview practices are the same claims made by feminism: community and empowerment (2011).

Seemingly supporting this claim, sociologist Ciara O'Connor (2011) argues that activities falling under the banner of New Age are strongly gendered. Although her research is geographically narrow (its specific focus is on Ireland rather than the UK), O'Connor's results might serve as a general justification for the female dominant field of holistic health where Tufnell's work can be located.[35] O'Connor observes that women largely engage in the tendency for alternative health, in an attempt to refuse demeaning objectification of the body and insensitive and intrusive approaches formulated by the traditional medical system (2011). As a replacement for these systems, women have found more compassion and empowerment through alternative therapies and well-being clinics.

Following a history of lecturing engagements at Dartington College in the 1980s, Tufnell has developed a sought after reputation as a guest lecturer and frequently contributes to the dance related MA courses at Coventry University, University of Central Lancashire and Independent Dance. It was during her appointment at Coventry University that her unique practice of integrating acts of writing with movement exploration became suitably acknowledged for its potential in dance education. Instigated by the current Associate Dean of Performing Arts Mark Evans, and former senior lecturer of community arts practices and independent dance artist Cecilia

[35]An alternative perspective that highlights the dominance of women practicing approaches that align with the New Age movement is Kathryn Crowley's study on women of privileged white American origin. Although there is a deficiency in contributions to knowledge that address feminist significance that might be found in women's worldview practices, Crowley's current research offers an acknowledgment ofthis area. See, Crowley, K. (2011) *Feminism's New Age: Gender, Appropriation, and the Afterlife of Essentialism*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Macfarlane, the *Another Kind of Writing* (2004-2005) project sought to develop the notion of reflective practice throughout the performing arts department at Coventry University. Evans writes about the conception of the project and his initial enquiry into "developing a richer engagement with... reflective writing that supports and nourishes the processes core to disciplines" (2007, p.69). To tackle the thorny issue of progressing reflective capability in emerging performance artists, the projects three objectives clearly outline the need to open up ways in which performers might use writing more effectively.

> [1]...what ways can writing also participate in the *generation* of knowledge, understanding and practice; [2] is it possible to use writing as a tool to discover, develop, (re)present and understand the writer's own processes (emotional, creative, physical or intellectual); [3] what is the best way to facilitate such a form of learning activity...[that] appears to be at odds with some of the usual conventions of academic study (Evans 2007, p.70 author's own emphasis).

As a result, of initial findings Evans asserts that academia cultivates a misunderstanding of "reflection as something that is language/thought based, rather than creative and practical" (2007, p.70). Evans and Macfarlane enlisted the help of Tufnell to facilitate workshop situations that interweaved her expert perspective with practical tools and strategies for a project of reflective writing. Evans details that the motivation behind a useful mode of reflective writing emanated from Tufnell's theory that the body is layered with a lifetime of awareness, memory and emotion. Following this concept, Evans claims that writing not only becomes a consequence of movement, but also contracts the whole self in response to moving, attends to the experience, and is process-orientated rather than product-orientated. In this way he states that the dancer[writer] is able to "continually and confidently... inhabit the creative process" by

means of creative play with words (2007, p.72). Thus, acts of writing develop as a site of becoming and an entering into dynamic and corporeal self-understanding.

Present Endeavours

> Awaken imagination and develop a deeper connection to the experiences of the body and connection to our environment (Tufnell, c. 2010).

Currently, Tufnell independently produces an annual programme of seasonally inspired workshops with themes built around the needs of the body; she has shifted her remit in order to cater for a participant network comprised of acquaintances' in arts, health and education sectors.[36] Following her interest in how collaborative working breeds creativity and security during experimental processes, these workshops are shaped in such a way as to provide an open communal setting for shared creative experiences. The exploratory environment cultivated by Tufnell tends to offer ways to [re]think structures, systems and narratives of the body in order to "be curious, to go beneath the surface of our bodies and deepen our sensing and understanding of the nature of bone, of form, of boundary, and of support" (Tufnell, 2013b).

Tufnell continues to exercise her practice as a means of awakening participant fields of perception, body and creativity in order that they become more informed about their bodies and their presence in the world by means of paying more attention. Her hope is that the tools provided within these workshops stir the self, aid emotional balance through the acceptance of the physical and mental incapacity, bring peace of mind through multi-modal creative expression and retune the participant's capacity for understanding their place within the landscape and how it shapes them (Tufnell, 2013a,

[36]Although she remains active in the community and health sector, Tufnell hosts workshops near her home in Oxfordshire for professional artists and practitioners providing her with opportunities to continue to research and refine her own approaches through the feedback of the group and also to enjoy another level of creative work, with which the focus might be less introspective and shared more openly as artistic process.

see Appendix A).

Tufnell's most essential aims in teaching are to stimulate each participant's physical, mental and emotional pleasure in movement, to invite them to explore their bodies in relation to their environment and find creative ways to access the emotional voice that so often gets ignored or excluded in a culture of perceived normatively. Tufnell creates working environments that welcome curiosity, intellectual involvement and imagination, provoking enquiries that bridge the boundaries between dance, art, writing, performance and healthful activities. Anatomy is introduced through a sensorial and playful way with metaphoric imagery, poetic text and gentle hands on guidance supported by anatomical information that brings the sense of the internal self to life. The material is always offered in an inquisitive, good-humoured manner. Beginning with the body, the explorations are rooted in its materiality - its weight, energy, size and presence in space. Reflecting Alexander, the explorations are twinned with verbal instruction that guides a quality of touch to bring the participants attention to specific areas, sensations and inner expansions. The participant is led into moving via these channels and the journey they find themselves upon leads to creativity and freedom in a physical context.

Tufnell's aim is not to complicate the body with scientific information that places distance between the self and the body. Each individual experiences their body at basic level of movement, reminiscent of Tufnell's early performance enquiries. Participants learn to consciously trace the true paths of movement as it travels through the body. By seeing and feeling what is happening within the body, participant's gain clarity and fresh perspective that amends the misconceptions held within culturally accepted ideas of how the body works, and what it should look like if you are doing it 'correctly'. The

cultivation of play and creativity in her work provides participant's with open freedom and unlimited scope with which to investigate and carry out the tasks. The atmosphere Tufnell creates is a community of trust, permission and respect, where all responses are valid. Participants are encouraged to explore the edges of their bodies, dancing and imagination in a process that accepts the differences among them. Tufnell's practice is emergent and relies upon the wealth of her history and experiences as assimilated, restructured and regurgitated to form a thinking process in the body.

*   *   *

I listen as she speaks, faint and measured in her tone. She tells of how we form around the heart, as if developing an instinct to hold, to protect ourselves, a need to nuzzle inward. I am warmed by what I witness in her. Her right hand guides the curve in the upper back and nape of the neck as she rolls her skull forward allowing it to drop toward her pelvis as she sits. A gentle stoke of her palm lifts the hair from the back of her head up and over her face as it dangles. Wrapped around, over and under the heart, I notice its pulse as it radiates to the edges of her skin. I am jealous. I can sense the sensation in her and yearn to feel it for myself, to hold my heart as closely as she does. Unfurling tenderly, she whispers us to disband and relocate at will within the space. I stand amid a wooden womb of shelter alongside my friends and co-explorers. I wander with intent to find my heart and I'm surprised to discover it in my mouth. I write...

A hard pill to swallow
it pops and squirms a little to my touch
She catches my eye
Pin pricked by her beak

I carry on
advancing

But a curious point of recollection
holts me at each turn

I kiss her forehead and the pill is loosened
Dropping deeper

Warmed like the sip of whiskey on a cold evening
I am not forgotten
nor is she

Funny...I am not lost here, yet I have no home...
Vast open space rises up to greet my tissues -
I embrace it as I would a friend.

Golden threads escape and gently graze my skin
... those long light tresses become entangled around my quickening limbs.
I shudder and grin like a cat at the response my body has
Vibrating with joy, my shoulder blades ache as my imagined wings exercise their span

Chapter Three

Miranda Tufnell: Of Body and Imagination

It is approximately 10:30am on Saturday 5th November 2011, in an otherwise ordinary Village Hall in Oxfordshire. A gathering of individuals, both male and female and of various ages and backgrounds, have travelled from a range of locations across the UK. Call them what you will, dancers, practitioners, movers, enjoyers of improvisation, the curious... They can be found buried in layers of warm loose clothing, sat, knelt or cross-legged forming a semi-circle that closes around one corner of the room. These bodies, easy in their condition, prepare to wake from daily movement imprints that grip the body. Prepare to become open and receiving. Prepare to invite the sensorial self, to [re]connect with the mindful self, the environment and the others that share the space.

From their position within the semi-circle, each individual's attention is directed toward the person that holds that very space, towards the facilitator of that gathering. She rests among a happy jumble of books, photographs, diagrams, objects usually found in natural landscapes and anatomical materials that one might otherwise expect to find at holistic therapy centres. One by one, and very matter of fact, she begins to unpack a collection of human and animal bones from a plain cardboard box, placing each one upon the floor; she decorates the circular space carved out by the circumference of bodies. As her task completes a generous invitation is extended to the room.

Each person present runs an appraising eye over the items on display and, with as little soul searching as possible, takes up the offer of selecting an artefact. Taking full advantage of time, each bone is subjected to an extensive expedition of touch and imagination. As if seasoned explorers of bony geographies, every sense plays its role in discovery. Determining the very characters of these structures, the textures, weight,

topographies and narratives they carry. Each mind searches its own unique archive, seeking to identify their relic, to put a name to it, to place it somewhere within the body, to assign meaning. A second invitation encourages a lengthening of that engagement into the process of language. A telling of stories, a fleshing out with words that brings about new dimensions and ways of seeing. One hand leaves this arid terrain to take up a more familiar object. With writing implement skilfully embraced, the words fall to page. Imagined stories and associations combine with fact, memory and experience. In sharing these playful narratives they discover the life of the bone is present and living rather than disguised by a shadow of its past. Saved from the tedium of mundane description, the stories break away from tales of past and plunge into the very moment of existence.

* * *

As a dance artist, writer and teacher, Tufnell's practice over the past 37 years has extended beyond the edges of traditional performance practices to include the influence of many body-based movement approaches, while bridging the gap between the wider fields of literature and visual art. In bringing the various qualities of these practices together, Tufnell has created her own unique style that interweaves dance with multiple creative strategies.[37] This interdisciplinary methodology enables the subject to explore a multidimensional experience of the body through a crisscrossing of art forms. Tufnell's work is underpinned by improvisational practices that draw upon both experiential and anatomical knowledge valuing the origins of movement within the body and acting as stimuli. This way of arriving into moving encourages a particular mode of

[37] Tufnell has an affinity to literature and creative writing; a particular art form that uses many techniques with which to approach its creation. She utilises these approaches to writing in her practice and teaching, yet in doing so, these strategies leak across art forms and double up as ways in which one can also approach dance. Similarly, approaches often associated with dance making and/or arriving into improvisational movement might be used to approach writing. The phrase 'multiple creative strategies' is used here to describe this pleating of methodologies across arts forms.

consciousness, one that is rooted in understandings of how the body connects with nature, environment and identity. The body in motion is considered the vehicle with which the anatomical senses and receivers might be stirred.

Tufnell might characterise this sensorial rousing as an arrival into imagination, the transformation of what we perceive through movement into creativity and cognition (Tufnell and Crickmay, 2004). Pitches points out Tufnell's invitation to connect imaginatively to the body is underpinned by a curiosity in human structure and substance. He notes that mirrored throughout her creative work and writing, is a meeting between "the entropic forces of creativity and imagination and the more measured and objective descriptions drawn from science" (2009, p.86).

Tufnell's multi-modal approach to extracting and elaborating what might be perceived through the body includes the use of experimental writing. Until fairly recently, this curious meeting of what might be termed "two very different beasts" had been lost within the corpus of contributions to critical, philosophical and ideological thinking (Root-Bernstein, 2001, p.134). The particular *coming together* of writing and movement examined within these pages has a reciprocal nature, whereby each discipline forms and informs one another. The commonality between these two fields leads the user towards clarity and awareness of the multiplicities of self in association with physical structure, socio-cultural inscription, identity and the wider world. In this manner, the function of writing is not to appear as document, notation or analysis. The writing is not intended to replicate dance in another modality, nor is it intended to become an autonomous art form. The purpose of this mode of writing is to extend kinaesthetic enquiry beyond the realm of the body into language, image and imagination.

The act of writing maintains its somatic connection, continuing a sense of freedom. Refusing to cling to, or replace movement in movements' absence, dancing and writing work together, to be in touch with, and extend from the body. As Carl Lavery observes through his creative research on walking and performance writing, these elements are "intimately connected: one leads to the other" (2009, p.42). Yet it might be more helpful to describe the intersection of Tufnell's dancing and writing as a cycle; moving leading to writing which in turn feeds back into moving and so on. Furthermore, Tufnell might identify her yearning to write with the words of feminist literary critic and philosopher Hélène Cixous, who writes; "I do not write to keep, I write to feel. I write to touch the body of the instant with the tips of the words" (1998, p.121).

Tufnell bases her philosophy of practice on the function of the body in the course of imagination, language and perception. With this in mind, it is important to analyse the phenomenological framework with which Tufnell situates her thinking. The following section is dedicated to tracing Tufnell's stance to the origins of her conviction. In doing so, this segment of the chapter will discuss the ideas of phenomenologist and cultural ecologist David Abram, who follows Maurice Merleau-Ponty's radicalisation of Edmund Husserl's transcendental phenomenology (Abram, 1997). Not only does Tufnell frequently cite Abram's work throughout *A Widening Field,* it is evident from her writing, teaching and the interview carried out for this thesis, that she has wholly embraced Abram's Merleau-Pontian engagement with the world as a structure for her practice and teaching.

Abram's work investigates the reciprocal nature of the bodily senses and the sensuous earth, arguing that bodily participation is a crucial feature of perception. In *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World* (1997), Abram

moves his enquiry towards the development of language in indigenous oral cultures in comparison with educated societies, revealing how writing has affected human capacity for communicating body, time, space and earth. Tufnell utilises Abram's thinking to support her theories on harvesting a [re]connection with the earth and its power to generate self-affirming stories.

In line with Phenomenology, Tufnell associates the body (as rooted in direct participatory experience with substances of the world: earth, rock, plant, animal), with the process of imagination and language. Believing that Western culture continues to cultivate a separation between human self, other creatures and substances in the world, Tufnell seeks to re-establish some of the earthly bond that indigenous oral peoples still cling to, in order to attune a sense of self to the world. In Tufnell's view, this connection drives the imagination and language - opening the perception beyond normal capacity, welcoming both sense and nonsensical stories to the forefront of artistic interaction, thus widening the potential for creativity. Tufnell asks,

> How can we be more imaginatively awake to our selves, our environment and to the needs of others? Through movement and stillness, through writing and play with materials we discover gestures, images and stories - a poetic language of metaphor that is unique and particular to our own experience. In exploring what we have made, stories emerge that make visible a deeper sense of meaning and creative connection to our lives (c. 2010).

On many occasions I have sat among the participants' of a dance class or workshop as we are collectively asked to speak *from*, or more regularly, *about* our experiences of moving. I notice the subtle shifts in the bodies around me as tension emerges, the dropping chin towards chest and closing of eyes as those I sit among begin a deep internal excavation for words that might satisfy. I am aware of the challenge brought by communicating the non-linguistic, as Maxine Sheets-Johnstone might argue, "[t]he lived

experience of dance is ineffable: it has no kinaesthetic equivalents any more than it has any verbal equivalents" (1979, p.65). The class falls more silent as each person struggles to uncover a language suitable for such a seemingly impossible endeavour. How might we begin to bridge the gap between the body and language? Why is it necessary to give voice to dance? How might we find a way into language that feels as transparent, unfixed and fluid, as the body during improvisation?

For many years, Tufnell has been collaboratively working through questions similar to these in her own practice and alongside investigative dialogues with long term collaborator Chris Crickmay. Tufnell interweaves modes of writing and languaging movement into her teachings. Tufnell's practice builds on an awareness of the interrelated systems of bodily experience, language and landscape, paving the way toward the discovery of full-bodied, colourful and playful poetics, rather than the generalised, descriptive and everyday turn of phrase. In simple terms, Tufnell's use of writing allows the fruits of her movement to breathe into an additional creative modality.

Drawing on the body, Tufnell uses movement and writing as vehicles through which imagination and felt experience can feed back to the participant affirmations of the multiplicities of self. In this way, arriving into the moving and writing process encourages a particular mode of consciousness, one that is rooted in understandings of the body as connected to environment and identity. The body in motion is viewed as the means by which the senses and receivers are awoken, expanding the capacity for

embodied perception. This statement is founded on the work of David Abram who interprets Merleau-Ponty's perception as participation.[38]

In order to perceive, the subject becomes involved in a process of interactivity connecting the perceiver (body) and the perceived (object/environment). Reading Husserl's theories on direct experience, Merleau-Ponty rejects Husserl's 'transcendental ego' for the emphasis it places on disembodiment. For Merleau-Ponty, phenomenological concepts should be considered as directly relating to the body; therefore, he identifies the *self* with the material body as opposed to the long-established association that the *self* is a spiritual essence. As Merleau-Ponty asserts "we are our body [...] we are in the world through our body [...] we perceive the world with our body" (1962, p.239). The view that the body is our essential presence in the world, positions it at the centre of all interactions with other presences, and thus participation is central to perception (Toadvine, and Embree, 2002; Flynn, 2011).

Equally, in his interpretation of Merleau-Pontian 'perception', Abram asserts, "without this body... there would be no possibility of experience [...] the body itself is the true subject of experience" (1997, p.45). Tufnell might go one-step further, asserting her view from the perspective of body rather than the mind. She writes, "[w]e cannot separate and ignore what we sense, know and understand, from the body through which we feel" (2000, p.19). Tufnell believes that the basis for all our intensity of understanding and connectivity hinges upon the bodies relationship to imagination, specifically, our capacity to "inhabit our worlds and [...] create in what we find", the imagination "shapes our ability to connect and find meaning for ourselves" (2000, p.23).

[38] "By asserting that perception, phenomenologically considered, is inherently participatory, we mean that perception always involves, at its most intimate level, the experience of an active interplay, or coupling, between the perceiving body and that which it perceives. Prior to all our verbal reflections, at the level of our spontaneous, sensorial engagement with the world around us, we are all animists" (Abram, 1997, p.57).

In order to clarify what is meant by the idea that *movement increases our ability to perceive by amplifying our attention to the sensible*; it is important to introduce the concept of imagination in order to elaborate on the theory of participation. A recent study by Leslie Stevenson attempts a taxonomy of imagination. Stevenson proposes twelve concepts ranging from, “the ability to think of something not presently perceived, but spatio-temporally real”, to “the ability to create works of art that express something deep about the meaning of life” (2003, p.238). Stevenson's twelve concepts might be divided into three sub groups, as prompted by philosopher Michael Beaney in his publication *Imagination and Creativity* (2005). The first being an awareness of phenomena that is not present to the senses. Followed by an awareness that imagination manifests as imaging that may include fantasy, and finally an awareness of the integral role of creativity in imagination.

Beaney's categorising of the concepts of imagination facilitates this enquiry by providing a clear separation between memory and imagination. Beaney confirms the implication that memory is the recollection of actual events, whereas imagination does not necessarily involve the use of truth or reality (2005). For Tufnell, there is a required blurring of the boundaries between these two processes, as the reality of experience journeys into creativity. The following excerpt from *A Widening Field* demonstrates Tufnell's impression that imagination is triggered through an entering into the world of memory.

> Memories lie as shadows beneath our day to day activity, adding their emotional charge to the way we see and feel things... [I]t is through excavating and exploring the layers of our memory through images, through stories, that we begin to perceive and feel the past differently (2004, p.177).

When we experience the world through the interface of the body, all the senses engage to produce a conceptual map of both the body in relation to the phenomena, and the phenomena itself. For instance, as the dancing body makes its way through a woodland landscape, the bare skin of the lower arm and hand might meet the brittle coarseness of a bed of desiccated autumn foliage, and the eyes see what the skin meets. Our sense of smell and taste, working together, pick out an earthy, peaty aroma. The ears notice sounds of crunching and rustling as the skin makes contact with the flaky coarseness of dried frail leaves crumbling under our weight, or weakly scraping along the outer surface of the flesh. Through kinaesthesia, our proprioception becomes alert to the position of the body, and a mental picture is created that enables us to imagine how and where we are positioned in relation to the phenomena we experience. The combination of these sensations are met by associations gathered from previous experiences (memory), perhaps stories told to us or knowledge gained via our interactions with similar phenomena (living foliage) or environments (garden or allotment).

On a practical level, the imagination steps in when particular sensory information is unavailable. Perhaps we are unable to view the whole object, a lamp for example viewed from a single position. We might initially use our imaginations to visualize what the other side of the lamp might look like. The brain might simply predict that it is the same as the side that is being viewed because experience dictates that lamps are commonly designed with a sense of regularity. In more extreme cases, the imagination maybe called upon to enable us to envisage something we may never be able to truly experience. That is, we might be invited to imagine how the clavicle connects the scapula to the sternum. Our imagination might combine experiences such as memories of diagrams and photographs viewed in physiological textbooks, graphic visuals from television documentaries, with felt sense. We might feel our own clavicle with our

hands or working with a partner, we might trace the outline of our partner's clavicle. We may also have access to a human anatomy model, where is it easy to see, feel and manipulate the clavicle and its connecting points. In order to bring the bone to life, the imagination might fill in gaps regarding placement, weight, texture, colour and substance of the bone and related connective tissues.

Yet in terms of creativity, imagination might play a very different role. We require imagination as a method of *seeing* things more fully.[39] Formerly proposed as a power of the mind, imagination has now come to be known as a feature of the senses. Imagination works in direct response with the sensible; a means of reaching beyond what is known in order to draw the imperceptible near. In the passage that follows, Tufnell demonstrates her own take on the link between imagination and participation.

> [D]etails of what I am seeing or sensing find resonance with my internal, feeling world. These are moments when our sensing comes into connection with the wider field of who and where we are, and we seem to move out of ourselves - we begin to imaginatively participate in the world around us (2004, p32).

Although this short paragraph mirrors much of what is written above, the notion that imagination might cause us to "move out of ourselves" provides confusion in terms of Tufnell's body-orientated ethos. This statement could be confused with the view that imagination is a spiritual, mind-orientated process that leaves its bodily origins in order to progress to a superior, intellectual plane. More accurately, it might be better to identify imagination and participation as processes of becoming - guided by the senses while the moving body and the imagination work together, - delving and expanding upon what the body senses during its movement journey. As the head rolls against a

[39]For an interesting study of how imagination contributes to creativity, mental and material imagery, see Huppauf, B. and Wulf, C. (ed.) (2009) *Dynamics and Performativity of Imagination: the image between the visible and the invisible*. New York and Oxon: Routledge.

gritty rock surface, as the scapula melts into soggy mosses, imagination satisfies us with the sensuousness of experience.

> For everyone whose guiding principle is adaptation to external reality, imagination is for these reasons something reprehensible and useless. And yet we know that every good idea and all creative work are the offspring of the imagination, and have their source in what one is pleased to call infantile fantasy. Not the artist alone, but every creative individual whatsoever owes all that is greatest in his life to fantasy. The dynamic principle of fantasy is play, a characteristic also of the child, and as such it appears inconsistent with the principle of serious work. But without this playing with fantasy no creative work has ever yet come to birth. The debt we owe to the play of imagination is incalculable (Jung, 1976, p. 63).

For Psychotherapist Carl Jung, imagination is a remnant quality of childhood, his statement above implies that imagination requires intense concentration and energy. Human attention is focused on comprehending how we react to all possibilities and eventualities via our imagination and consequently Jung acquaints this with the act of play. With much the same sense as a child playing, Tufnell's attention to movement improvisation is relaxed and curious yet demands a certain concentration and energy to remain focused on the self yet open and receptive to the outside world. Tufnell might disapprove of Jung's judgement that imagination is below those 'whose guiding principle is adaptation to external reality', in the belief that imagination is a "necessary angel" (2001, p.25).

* * *

> The painter 'takes his body with him', says Valéry. Indeed, we cannot imagine how a mind could paint. It is by lending his body to the world that the artist changes the world into paintings. To understand these transubstantiations we must go back to the working, actual body - not the body as a chunk of space or a bundle of functions but that body that is an intertwining of vision and movement (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 162).

Merleau-Ponty may be speaking about painting in this excerpt from *The Primacy of Perception*, yet whether the task at hand is painting, writing or dancing, it requires that

we think metaphorically. As Tufnell's practice implies, thinking metaphorically entails embodiment, that is, to be aware of how one is involved in the world. Tufnell's understanding of embodied practice requires that she adopt a practice of remaining open to how she is implicated in the world and beyond, specifically, what is real (related) and what is imagined (unrelated).

Embodiment is a process whereby the body, in Merleau Pontian terms, *lends* its self to the world "and accept['s] its complexities, tastes, structures and smells. Such is the path towards seeing, hearing and feeling the world" (Stoller, 2009, p.34). As phenomenology encourages, embodiment requires that we acknowledge the multi-dimensional self and how it effects, or is affected by its existence in the world, viewing it from the body not from the mind as situated within the body. T. S. Eliot's essay *The Metaphysical Poets* (1921) compares 'ordinary' experience to 'poetic' experience in an attempt to outline how the metaphysical poets make use of both emotion and intellect in order to capture the real sense of human condition within their work.

> Those who object to the 'artificiality' of Milton or Dryden sometimes tell us to 'look into our hearts and write'. But that is not looking deep enough; Racine or Donne looked into a good deal more than the heart. One must look into the cerebral cortex, the nervous system, and the digestive tracts (Eliot, T. S., in Black et al, 2008, p.474)

His argument posits that poets whose work affects its readers on an intellectual, emotional and physical level, does so through the imaginative use of metaphysical conceits, which are “constantly amalgamating disparate experience” (Eliot, T. S., in Black et al, 2008, p.474). Eliot concludes that poets, who express their thoughts through bodily experience, unite sensation with thought and therefore *speak* more clearly to the reader. His observations illustrate how experience for the everyday person is "chaotic, irregular, fragmentary", while the experience of the metaphysical poet is organised and

connected as though feeling "their thought as immediately as the odour of a rose" (2008, p.474). Combining metaphoric thinking and embodied experience, the writer organises the chaos and fragmentation of ordinary experience into "new wholes" (2008, p.474). Poetic writing exercises proficiency in creating organisation in experience, encouraging the reader to shift their perspective. Boldly summarising, Eliot took the view that the process of thought should engage all the senses; that is to say, thinking is experience.

For Tufnell, the metaphor offers a particular depth and clarity to our understanding of how we are implicated in the world, which might otherwise escape our ordinary experience (2013a). By exercising metaphoric thinking, she considers this shift in perspective as a way to access expression that can be more readily shared and understood - a sort of common language among her workshop participants' that breeds unity and solidarity. Regarding metaphor, Tufnell indicates the extent to which she feels it aids the sense of involvement in the world and opens perception to implications of everything beyond the self.

> "[U]nderstanding or being *touched* by something is not a linear thing it's an all round multi-dimensional thing... [the metaphor] is all kinds of bits and pieces that come with an image, that kind of fertilise it and wake up your senses and engage you... it's so powerful and evocative... a kind of solar system of other associations and qualities" (2013a, p313 of Appendix A).

As with Eliot's metaphysical poets, Tufnell's use of metaphoric thinking requires that the dancer/writer utilises an openness of body that welcomes the experience to develop through her. Writing then emerges from within the bodily experience rather than from the mind, that is to say, the mind reflects upon experience from outside or at a distance from the body. Literary critic F. R. Leavis informs us that writing poetically "invites us, not to 'think about or judge' but to 'feel into' or 'become'", arguing that poetic text

considers its relationship to an *object* differently than any other method of writing (Leavis, cited in Lennie, 1966, p. 212).

In his chapter 'The Body as Expression and Speech' in *Phenomenology of Perception,* Merleau-Ponty writes that "[i]t is the office of language to cause essences to exist in a state of separation which is in fact merely apparent, since through language they still rest upon the ante-predicative life of consciousness" (1962, p.xvii). Here he proposes that the facility to separate one's self from the 'concrete' determines human order, he views this separation as the shift towards language. Merleau-Ponty's chapter fundamentally sets out to disprove both the behaviourist and intellectualist theory of language, by insisting that "word has a meaning" (1962, p.206). Seemingly reflecting Eliot's notion that 'thinking is experience', Merleau-Ponty suggests that language (understood by this thesis to include writing) does not merely convey thought, it completes it, indicating that thought and word are interconnected. This implies that Merleau-Ponty supports the notion that writing is an act of thought. Linked to this concept, Merleau-Ponty's contribution to a gestural theory of language indicates, "human experience will and always must be communicated" given that language is a consequence of being in the world (McLane, 1996, p.107). Merleau-Ponty writes,

> Our view of man will remain superficial so long as we fail to go back to that origin, so long as we fail to find, beneath the chatter of words, the primordial silence, and so long as we do not describe the action which breaks the silence. The spoken word is a gesture, and its meaning the world (1962, p.214).

Criticised for being idiosyncratic (Quinn, 2009; Stevens, 2009; Collins, 2010; Stewart, 2010) Merleau-Ponty's writing style might be described as poetic, using phrases that indicate a particular aliveness and animate nature to denote the 'sensible': "takes possession of my ear or my gaze", "sets a kind of muddled problem for my body to

solve" (1962, p.246 and 249). Tufnell might argue, that his method of speaking about the forces that enliven the body on a daily basis, demonstrates the act of imagination at play. Eliot, on the other hand, might praise his aptitude for writing from an embodied perspective, and Leavis might support his poetic tendency, arguing that theoretical writing is "abstract and poetry concrete" (1966, p.212).

Yet what is determined by Tufnell's approach to writing is that it might unburden language from the discursive and descriptive binds of its cause. Following Karmen MacKendrick, this study asks that we accept writing's' failure to "preserve - or even [...] to create - a presence", but to acknowledge that writing might act, as the body does during improvisation, as a furthering of perceptual awakening into imagination and creativity, one that glimpses presence within an absence (2004, p.142).

In line with continuous debate within dance studies concerned with "dance's flawed materiality" (Lepecki, 2004, p.130), the problem facing writing has always been how to pin dance down. It can be argued that dance is always moving toward its own erasure, that, in its coming into being, it arrives at absence. The inability to grasp hold of dance is, in a sense, one of its most desirable features for those who take part in improvisation. Within a framework of freedom from thought, structure and technical mastery, the use of mind that accompanies improvisation practices does not commonly involve memory. Tufnell describes this mode of movement as "water going through a sieve" (Tufnell, 2013a, p316 of Appendix A).

The release from certain technical structures allows the body to find change and break away from habitual movement patterns. The senses become permeable as they open up to receive more information than what might usually be required in average day-to-day activities, and as the body explores a deeper attentiveness to the inner and outer

exchanges of perception, the movement develops beyond the grasp and control of memory. This condition of attention (cultivated through movement), creates an opportunity in which one can arrive at writing. By unsettling the habitual perceptions and disrupting the categories of the self, the consciousness enlivens. It becomes forced to enter processes of sense making in an effort to sift through experiences that are beyond the everyday occurrence, shuffling through the possibilities within the cortex and stirring up the imagination.

The purpose of writing in relation to dance is not only different dependent upon the critical perspective (description, evaluation or analysis) and the resulting method of dissemination (magazine, academic journal, book), but also the form of dance being practiced. The particular kind of writing explored here is not concerned with notation, documentation, or critical thinking. This form of writing is meant primarily as a direct interplay between the dancers perceiving moving body, and the landscape it inhabits (including all phenomena and other bodies it might encounter). For the dancer, this mode of writing is "another unfolding of what unfolds as dance" (Pollard, 2010). This personal process seeks to link body, imagination, landscape and creativity, requiring adaptability it shifts the movement investigation forward into language rather than becoming a descriptive haunting of dance's past. For this reason, it might not sit well with technique classes or company rehearsals - where the body-mind is engaged in processes of memorising and problem solving - but lends itself to unrestrained, improvisational forms of movement practice.

Tufnell argues that her particular method and function of writing is specific to improvisation that is underpinned by the contemporary independent dance philosophy, and practices affiliated with body-mind and image-based approaches. Susan Leigh

Foster offers a concise treatment of improvisation in Albright's and Gere's publication *Taken by Surprise* (2003). Her writing is divided into several perspectives, these she calls 'manifestos' (phenomenological, historic, discursive, analytic, epistemic), which aim to throw light upon the constituent features of improvisation. Within 'Manifesto (Phenomologically)', Foster discusses the intersections of the known and the unknown as an experience of improvisation. She writes,

> [i]mprovisation presses us to extend into, expand beyond, extricate ourselves from that which was known... we could never accomplish this encounter with the unknown without engaging the known (2003, pp.3-4).

There is an implication towards the complexities of interactivity in improvisation, and there is no doubt that by the term 'unknown', Foster is hinting at the dancer's insistent dipping in and out of imagination. Foster also describes improvisation as a foray between the "familiar/reliable and the unanticipated/unpredictable" (2003, p.3).Perhaps this is what Tufnell has in mind when she describes the function of movement as "shak[ing] up your categories [...] shak[ing] up your habitual perceptions", eliciting a whole new level of consciousness and attention (2013a, p.300 of Appendix A).

The alteration from an everyday occupation of one's consciousness and attention, to what one might term a form of hyper-awareness, is what Tufnell considers the initiation into metaphor, poetics and imagery for the dancer. Tufnell suggests that these forms of expression are the means by which the consciousness makes sense of, or stands in for the experience. She writes, "[w]hat I have done, or seen, returns to me with its own connections - the images, stories, metaphors that arrive, amplifying my sense of it" (2004, p.65). Tufnell claims the writing that grows on from this process is infused with the metaphor, poetics and imagery that arise out of the experience of dance, and a "wider, deeper sense of what has happened" making connections between one's inner

world and the larger world (2004, p.65). The ideology that accompanies Tufnell's attitude to the writing is all about trusting that what has been activated in the moment-by-moment unfolding of dance which will come through into the writing. Tufnell considers the writing as a way of supplementing the enquiry of dance, extending the experience in order to come to know it better, and as a means to sharing the experience without merely describing or making objective observations.

> If, as in moving, I continue to improvise, letting words and phrases come of their own accord, a world of imagery appears that, piece by small piece, makes visible an inner, felt sense of what has occurred (Tufnell, and Crickmay, 2004, p.65).

In her teaching Tufnell often encourages the use of touch and words as a way to introduce the connection between moving and language. Participants' are invited to work with their hands on their body or on a willing partner in order to gain direct experience and understanding of particular areas of the body, to come to know composition, texture, weight, shape, size and differentiation in human body structure. Throughout the process of identifying and exploring the intricacy of the human form, participants' are encouraged to consider the language they might use to speak on behalf of the body. Tufnell maintains that she has no hard and fast methodology for developing people's use of language, other than the way she attempts to persuade them into "thinking imaginatively with language way before we get to writing" (2013a, p.312 of Appendix A). For example, during the 'hands on' task participants' might be asked to speak of the landscape of the bones or tissue that they have contact with, using words to explore the textures, the qualities, the weather of the landscape.

Tufnell might call this a rediscovery of your 'storyteller', welcoming the use of metaphor, imagery and poetics. Participants' might speak of the body part as if an animal; assign a taste, a smell, or a story. These narratives might directly reflect the

sensations that they have while exploring the body part, or simply be a creative form of expression and thought - moving back and forth between the known and unknown. The following excerpt is a quotation from a longer score published in *The Widening Field*, and demonstrates how Tufnell uses her own language and poetic structuring to encourage her participants' to invite their *storyteller*.

> Be still.... empty.... as a room
> open the doors/windows.... of your body.... listen
> let your attention/your heart.... soften and spread open
> What word.... phrase... image or sensation... comes to you?
> Let it onto the page
>
> Sense... what other words or phrases follow it... one phrase calling up another
> feeling for a thread... of connection between: word.... association.... story
> follow its sense... until it comes to an end
> Breathe.... feel the body again... listen.... wait
> until another thread.... appears (Tufnell and Crickmay 2004, p.64)

A brief analysis illustrates how the score might persuade a participant to explore metaphor and poetics. The words 'still' and 'room' in the first line, conjures up a strong primary image that encourages the participant to focus on containing their thoughts within the space of their body, narrowing the scope of their focus toward something manageable and immediate rather than outside the body, unfamiliar or difficult to imagine in detail. Likening the primary senses to *doors* and *windows*, welcomes attention and acknowledgement of what these sensory drives have to offer in terms of association, memory and story. For example, the sound of a radiator clicking as it expands and contracts might remind a participant of the sound of an old grandfather clock keeping time.

Reminding the participant of the heart can encourage the attention to drop back into the body, while *soften* and *spread* will settle the body-mind inviting more images to float across the mind's-eye. The score attempts to remind the participant to think outside the

box (*association* and *story*), giving permission to allow the imagination to play yet grounding this play in the body by prompting them to *breathe*, *feel* and *listen* to their own physicality. The score also generates a sense of development in the skill of storytelling by welcoming the participant to let go of the *threads* and take up another with a view to seeing where that might take the imagination.

When touch is not an appropriate method, that is, it feels too soon for a group to work on that level, Tufnell will ask participants' to focus on particular parts of the room - anything from a light switch to a large a window. The participants' focus is encouraged to soften and open to all the possibilities that might be included in the story of their object - the real/visible, the fantasy/invisible. What is important here is to note that an accurate description is not the aim of this exercise, rather participants' are led along a pathway that aims to gain access to a more creative frame of mind. The following passage (offered as an example of what Tufnell describes as the "surprise and delight" that comes from exploring this approach to writing), is from a collection of unpublished writings by Tufnell and Crickmay during their collaborative partnership (2013a, p.316 of Appendix A).

> She teases the moth, which flutters in an agitated manner flaps off but not far,
> feebly lands and then falls to the floor.
> A cat sniffs at it and then losing interest walks away,
> neither she nor it know more about this encounter than is immediately apparent.
> As if a ghost meets a living being.
> Now we are playing dominoes,
> some of the pieces have fallen on the floor
> Then we are standing under trees looking up.
> There is a inexplicable sense of panic, of the need for light with a strange lassitude.
> Accepting ones fate.
> The moth has only one aim to reach the light,
> once this has been achieved it becomes simply prey

Both moving and writing are intended to work together, to be in touch with or discover something within the moment of abandonment to the dance that is in danger of slipping from the mind's eye. The writing is a means to "discovering and gathering up imagery latent within moving" (Tufnell, and Crickmay, 2004, p.43). This point of view assumes that improvisation has little to do with memory, that is to say, dancers learn to remember movement in certain ways. 'Marking' for instance, is a form of schematically and physically sketching out the dance phrase yet avoids performing each action to its full capacity.[40] The emphasis during marking is on the mental processes rather than the physical. At this point, a skilled performer's execution of the dance steps will be second nature however, if mental processes of recollection need reinforcement, 'marking' provides the strategy for this.

Improvisation does not typically allow time for retracing the execution of movements or employing systems of recall such as 'marking'. Manifesting as spontaneous and impulsive, improvised dance unfolds in the moment and has no certain trajectory other than the parameters set in place by the facilitator prior to engaging in the act. When Tufnell speaks of improvisation, she claims to be drawn by the affect of losing herself in the playfulness and unstructured nature of free movement. She maintains that the "discipline of attention" in improvisation, is "right on the edge of the moment", and it is

[40] Marking also includes the use of talking through the spatial, temporal and textural qualities and directions of a dance phrase. Often visualisation is used to strengthen the memory and provide positive imagery of well-executed dance steps. In this multi-dimensional process, visualisation maybe carried out by way of a first or third person perspective so the performer may imagine performing the steps or watching herself perform the steps from an audience perspective. For a detailed analysis into the current use of imagery (both anatomical and metaphorical) in dance training see: Franklin, E., 1996; Cumming, J. and Nordin, S. M., 2006a, 2006b, 2006c; Fish, L., Hall, C., and Cumming, J., 2004; Smith, K. L., 1990.

this mode of awareness that she endeavours to maintain in the act of writing (2013a, p.302 of Appendix A).

* * *

> Opening somatic experience to the page is a technique of translation between modes of attention, where somatic movement sensations enter the kinesthetic actions of writing and drawing; the technical work is as much about undoing tendencies to analyze, undoing the fear that words scribed on paper must be the 'correct' words, and allowing writing to be (at times) unpredictable, responsive, ambiguous – a mode of exploration and discovery (Longley, 2011, p.51)

This quotation from Longley, highlights the process of translation that takes place in the transition from body-centered processes to acts of writing that remain engaged with the body. Here she positions the translation as the point in which a change is made from one form of attention (listening to the body) to another (attending to the body). Yet how useful is this 'exploration and discovery' to the dancer? When we write from Tufnell's open and permeable place of attention, thoughts and images configure differently from the natural generalised thinking patterns of everyday life. Creative expression invites our words to play at the edges of the unknown, fantastical and mythic; narratives build on metaphor and image that call to our emotional, creative, intellectual and physical processes. In many ways, our language becomes clear and simple, speaking to us more directly when engaged in attending to the body.

During her interview (2013a), Tufnell paraphrases twentieth century novelist E. M. Forster in her attempt at illustrating a principle for expression through writing: "How do I know what I think until I see what I say?" (Forster, 1927). Her aim here is to suggest that, in speech, we often experience moments when our language fails to express the accuracy of our feeling. Therefore, she proposes writing as a method of sifting through the rubble of our everyday language in order to find words that feel more concrete.

Tufnell uses the story below to illustrate how effective a distillation through words can be in reaching and evoking the self.

> I had someone come to the workshops I was doing in Cumbria; it was working with various health problems. She was really frozen and didn't seem to be at all engaged, she was absolutely ridged. I gave people clay, we messed around with the clay for a bit, and then she said she didn't want to do anything with it. That's when Someone else in the group said: I've written something for you, can I read it? And she just nodded, and the words he'd written were something like,
>
> Sleep little pod sleep,
as long as you need
Wake up little pod,
when you are ready
>
> And he had absolutely caught her story and the permission she needed. She had done endless therapies and they had told her 'well you just have to accept how you feel', those kinds of words [...] But coming in the metaphor like that, it was like a spell had been released. We didn't know it straight away, but she came back the following week and started to talk - she became one of the leaders in the group (2013a, p.306 of Appendix A).

What Tufnell is expressing here is something about the clarity of metaphor and the quality of language that comes through a genuine connection to one's own body and an empathy for the body of another that arrives through body-centered practices. Tufnell is not suggesting that these elements do not exist within ordinary language but that there is a tendency to deny this kind of communication, opting instead for a reserved, distanced and impersonal approach. Tufnell believes that within the writing lies a layer of deeper understanding, that is to say, the core of what the body is trying to say. This notion is evocative of Derrida's paleonyms namely, there is a need within us to move forward in language but in its resistance to change, it limits us - we become bogged down by the old ways of naming - a word is tarred "by the entire thread of its history" (Derrida, in Pluth, 2007, p.20).

Words offer ways into and out of moving, they provide energy, quality, pause and silence, above all, they propose a fresh perspective with which to contemplate our place within the world. Tufnell does not proclaim this concept of writing is anymore therapeutic than other creative activities, alternatively she feels that the role of the complete process (moving and writing) is "a connecting process" - a way of making links between the whole self, the landscape, others and to the creatures and objects within that landscape (2013a, p.305 of Appendix A). Tufnell speaks of writing as a way of arriving at a renewed sense of self. By this, she indicates that the practice in its entirety permits a kind of stripping back to the basics of who we are - sifting the grains of who we are in order to acknowledge the constructed self. To some extent, and perhaps as illustrated in the *Pod* story, this promotes shaking off the versions of the self that we manage day-to-day, in order to embrace the primary self.

Judith Butler might support notions of cultural inscription, that is to say, the *self* is deeply ingrained with assumptions of how we are to feel and act as dictated by society (1993, 1999). Following Derrida's concept of the 'cut that binds', philosopher Avital Ronell expresses, "we are cut to each other's size" and as a result, we develop many versions of the self in order to negotiate the complexities of our lives: daughter, sister, wife, friend, writer, dancer, learner (Butler, J., Cixous, H., and Ronell, A, 2011). Tufnell's practice provides a method of tapping into the primary self, a research approach that unpacks the cultural inscriptions that Butler claims impinge upon the self and enables one's acceptance of how the self came into being.

In this practice, the moving is for yourself, taking place in the non-bias location of nature or a sparse village hall; this allocated time is set aside for the practice alone. In granting oneself permission to move in ways that satisfy the core of the self and the

body, the wider mind of our attention opens to invite emotion, imagination and sensation. The writing that emerges from this process is rich with acknowledgements of the true self as it embraces the multiple selves as a strategy for engaging in the world. The writing offers a place of confidence to be who you are, a safe place to engage in potential risk and failure in creative development.

* * *

> Censor the body and you censor breath and speech at the same time. Write yourself. Your body must be heard. Only then will the immense resource of the unconscious spring forth (Cixous, 1976, p.880).

Registers of writing that attempt to engage with the body in an academic context are at odds with the failures of language to express bodily experience. Thus, it might be argued that the disciplines of literature, art and humanities in Western education are grounded in philosophy that appears to work against the body. Despite referencing the body, postmodern philosophical thinking maintains the traditionalist view that the mind be freed from the earthly bound constraints of body and in doing so, seldom refers to embodiment. It might be argued that this disembodied standpoint renders philosophy ill equipped to engage in discourse of a bodily nature. Discussing the symptom of disaffection within the body, Tufnell notes,

> Despite a culture in many ways obsessed with the body, its fitness, appearance etc., we are curiously estranged from the feeling world of our bodies – from the constellations of sensation, memory, intuition, emotion, instinct and dream that our bodies generate to keep us in touch with ourselves and the world (Tufnell, 2001, p.10-11).

Attempting to theorise the body in an academic frame is limited by the constraints of the field chosen to do so. For Judith Butler, philosophy presents challenges in the shape of the "vocational difficulty" of those “always at some distance from corporeal matters, who try in that disembodied way to demarcate bodily terrains; they invariably miss the

body or, worse, write against it" (1993, p.ix). Returning to Tufnell once again, it is important to note that her teaching and writing is saturated by an enduring need to speak *from* the body rather than about it. This might be interpreted as a refusal of the gap between practice and theory, soma and psyche. In his article *Spinal Snaps: Tracing a back-story of European actor training,* Pitches highlights how Tufnell and Crickmay's *A Widening Field* smudges the line between body and theory, he notes the

> coupling of the terms 'making' and 'writing', their almost seamless manoeuvring between the page and the studio, is part of a strategy to collapse these traditionally separate activities into one fluid continuum of performance practices – a provocation to find enduring and tangible meeting points between earthbound modes of making and the limitless horizon of the imagination (Pitches, 2009, p.86).

For Tufnell's endeavour, writing as a consequence and continuation of the experience of dancing, is problematised by Western dualist thinking that privileges the objectified body over the lived body (Gallop 1988; Butler, 1993; Braidotti, 1994; Bordo, 1995). The distrust of bodily knowledge affects the acceptance of embodied writing, raising questions such as; how is meaning transmitted from the body to the page? How is this writing helpful for performance/personal/artistic development? How does the writing inform the body/dance? What is the function of writing? Is the body not enough?

One might contest the idea that writing can be approached through the body or that writing is an embodied practice, owing to common thinking that acts of writing privilege mind processes rather than bodily processes. As Ann Copper Albright suggests in *Choreographing Difference: The Body and Identity in Contemporary Dance*, Tufnell's practice refuses "tidy separations of the physical from the intellectual" rendering the moving body into language (1997, p.105-106). The poststructuralist psychoanalysis of Jacques Lacan tells us that the self is constituted through the acquisition of language. The language that we acquire through our parents inscribes us

with the concept of body as object by separating us from material objects of the world, or the 'Real' (Fink 1995). This developmental stage results in the marginalisation of nonverbal communication, interaction and knowledge. Following developmental psychologist Daniel Stern, Ann Daly challenges this notion by asserting that movement and physical interaction are foundations by which the developmental stages build a sense of self in relation to others and environment. Contesting the notion that nonverbal communication is preverbal, therefore condemning movement to the damaging position of the *other*, she writes,

> [Stern's] argument defuses the rhetoric of the "pre-verbal" by pointing out that (i) the infant does experience a sense of self before learning to talk, (2) the infant does relate to others through movement before learning to talk, and (3) these bodily senses of self and means of interpersonal communication persist even *after* the acquisition of language.... Movement and language share in the process of creating the self and communicating with others (Daly, 1988, p. 49).

The shadows of dualist thinking remain - we speak of our relationship with the body yet not of our relationship with the mind - we identify the self with the mind and the body with *other*. Tufnell's practice challenges the body-mind split by providing a perceptual suture of the gap between self as subject and body as object. Moving and writing is wrapped in an approach that invites full inhabitation of the body, listening, respecting and working with the body, rather than forging a relation with it based on use or abuse, ownership or control. As historian Amelia Jones (1998) and sociologists Bryan Turner (2008) and Mike Featherstone (1991) point out, social and cultural change as brought on by modernity, might be responsible for the increase in popularity of the body as subject. Practices that encourage the body as a site of creative expression advocate that the participant take control of their own body. Following Bordo and Grosz, feminist thinker Kathy Davies (1997) writes that the body is a cultural metaphor for control and as such a site of manifestation for this control.

Tufnell's practice fights against the notion of control, always advocating a flexible, intuitive, spontaneous and free approach to moving and writing. For Tufnell, control is in conflict with her work, reminding her of the hierarchical constraints placed upon language and expression in academia. Furthermore, her rejection of the patriarchal systems of control and dominance she observed during her time at The Place, have secured her dislike of forms and approaches that quash human potential. The function of movement and writing in Tufnell's practice and teaching aligns with the notion of reclamation, reflecting her continuous effort to reclaim what she believes to have lost to patriarchal academic structures that ultimately damaged her fondness for writing and poetics. Her mourning for the connection she once experienced between the moving/thinking/feeling body, and the thrill of touching sensation with the tips of words teased from a playful engagement with nature, drives her to encourage others to see the potential of reclaiming this voice.

Tufnell's reclamation is one of celebration and empowerment through the dismissal of rules and conventions that envelop both the act of writing, and moving. Echoing both Cixous' and Irigaray's ideas regarding writing as a reclamation that speaks of women, for women and from the female body, Tufnell's work highlights the need for individuals to find a voice - a different grammar, another language - with which to share the uniqueness of embodied experience (Cixous, 1976; Irigaray, 1985). Tufnell's writing is not, I suggest, another form of expression that articulates the feminine, but rather a demand for acknowledgment of other types of knowledge, namely knowledge that emerges from embodied experience rather than abstract thought. In this way Tufnell's writing functions in much the same way as Grosz' writing otherwise, that is to say it is an invitation to go beyond debate of how one writes like a woman by beginning to think

about how one might *write otherwise* (this argument is further developed in chapter 7) (Grosz, 2003; Luce-Kapler, 2004).

*   *   *

> Words strain,
> Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,
> Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,
> Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,
> Will not stay still (Eliot, c.1936).

We crave the words that 'slip, slide, decay with imprecision'. They come closest to our feelings about how we move, make, teach, and learn in dance. Dance is in a constant state of becoming - as are we..., and we fear the tradition of language to preserve, to cement, to grasp, to hold, to [re]create and burden the freedom of our movement. However, through metaphor and poetics we are gradually finding a way to speak from our body/practice/moving and beginning to enjoy the liberation that informal, creative and experimental writing brings to our efforts of articulating our work to those in[and out]side the field.

As artists and people interested in exploring the edges of our discipline, we embrace creativity through language in an effort to deny fixing, preserving, cementing what it is we do. We aim to be adaptable, spontaneous and free from constraint. Playing at the edges of language/poetics/metaphor enables us to continue this tussle. Just as our moving requires space and time to gestate, our language also requires this. To enable it to spread, roam, wander, meander, pour, run, stumble, pause, fall, fly, stutter, and leap. If the site of the page can offer a way, or perhaps could give permission for this to happen, then I think page spaces might offer something surprising and breathtaking to a community that is desperate to be accepted as something other than merely a body.

Chapter Four

Helen Poynor: A *Walk of Life* Perspective

I am fighting to be heard, fighting to be seen, the site is so strong it fights me off, drains me and yet I continue to come back for more. Something here draws me to it. The air is sweet and the cover provides shelter, preventing others from noticing my play. I can venture inside myself and safely acknowledge that it is a different version of myself. It is one that is wild with attention to detail. One that is childlike - oddly addictive. A fidgeting, awkwardly graceful self.

When slow, I focus upon the qualities that communicate themselves to me through eye, skin, bone and muscle. I noticed how when the fleshy matter of my upper arm sunk down deeply into the pebbles, there was a twist and a pinch as the skin on the outside moved in a different direction to the skin on the inside. The inside, ready and open to receive, adapt. The outside, still resisting, holding tension and feeling cautious about being out in the open. I take some time to clear my mind, to remain with the moment and allow my thoughts to wander as my attention, senses and body does. It requires concentration at first. Heat gushes into my face as I force myself a little. But then something shifts. I lose sense of the things that caused me to pull out of myself before. I am here, in the now and I rest here, riding the waves of my investigation.

Seeing what I see, smelling what enters my nose as it changes more frequently than I am able to keep up, acknowledging each time my mind wanders away from my consciousness of palm/shoulder blade/thigh/ankle/skull/hip socket. I resume a kind of check list. This is my back.... this is where it rests.... this is how it rests.... this how the rest of my body rests in relation to my back... I can feel the fullness of self through the places where the 'I' meets 'other'. Little pictures swell within my mind. My palms graze

the surface of the rock - I am reminded of childhood memories, scrapping my knees upon the sides of rock pools. My eyes take notice of the richness of pinks and creams within these shells - I taste of a particular ice cream that went out of manufacture years ago. My toes curl under as I lose my footing on the slippery surface - There is the smell of strawberry plants in the back of my mouth when I hum gently and I engage in different levels of seeing. I see near and without thinking, shift my focus too far away. I enjoy this play between the micro and the macro. It satisfies me to open and close my senses in this way.

The last words I hear...
Pebbling...
...Helen tells me that Miranda calls this pebbling
Nudge... settle... roll... rock... rocks... knuckle... joints ache...
I recall as their tiny paws, sharp claws and soft moist cold noses scrapple and scrap across the hard wood floor.
Reaching her feet, they climb up her legs and clothing, up and up they go, reaching her mid point and beyond before... like a domino, she falls, she folds at the waist stoops and bends her knees to find the floor, they engulf her now.
I watch.
I feel them on my skin, at my hair.
Slice, scratch, gnaw, drool.
I want them on me.
To scurry over me... to need me... to need me to disappear.
Her clothing alters - she is altered.
Dirt where once was clean.
Hair and mats where once was immaculate and scrapped back across her head.
Filth where once was cleanliness.
Brown, grey and black where once shimmered bright.
Shrivelled roots where once a red pout blushed shamelessly.
She is transformed a picture of another - a 'he' it would seem.
Able to blend in more easily, able to hide in plain sight.
I catch her eye - for it remains female - I let her know that I see 'him' for who she really is.
I knew her and will not forget.. forgive... time forgot.
A pace that suits my temperament washes me a fresh with time.
It passes and cleans me out.
A new... washed a new

* * *

Describing herself as an independent dancer working with non-stylised movement, Helen Poynor's international popularity is three fold. She is renowned for the uniqueness of her training programme, the *Walk of Life*, her capacity to read the body as if stories were written upon the skin, and lastly her pedigree, with which she attracts the worldwide attention of dancers, visual/fine artists and creative's alike. Her particular blend of movement practice is peppered with diverse influences such as: Anna Halprin's work that focuses on the potential healing power of expressive arts, Amerta movement as founded and taught by Javanese movement practitioner Suprapto 'Prapto' Suryodarmo, martial arts such as Capoeira (in the work of G. Hoffman Soto); and Tai Chi following her training with Gerda 'Pytt' Geddes. Furthermore, her work is informed by her role as a Senior Registered Dance Movement Therapist and Somatic Movement Therapist with both the Association for Dance Movement Psychotherapy UK (ADMP UK) and the International Somatic Movement Education and Therapy Association (ISMETA) (Poynor, 2013a, 2013b).

Alongside this assortment of stimulus, Poynor is thankful for her many years of classical ballet and expressive theatre training during the radical developments in British dance during the 1970s and 1980s. She claims that the shift to a more progressive attitude to dance training both helped to shape her practice into what it has become today, and provided the current political dance landscape in which her work has become accepted and acknowledged (Poynor, 2013a).

Early Years

Poynor's personal journey, which has culminated in her current respected status among alternative movement approaches, somatic and arts practitioners alike, was not a linear route. She openly admits that had she not studied dance as a child, her life may have

taken an altogether different turn, that is to say, she views her early exposure to dance as her only way into the form (2013a). At much the same time as Tufnell, Poynor began to take classical ballet and 'stage dance' classes from the age of four, yet unlike Tufnell she remained a student until she was fourteen (2013a). Although far from a professional training, Poynor recalls her ballet mistress, Miss Watts, as a stickler for detail. As a Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) examiner she was a respected teacher, renowned for her rigor and low tolerance of students who did not make every effort to succeed (Poynor, 1995, 2013a).

Poynor recalls the sense of pride she took in understanding she was being taught "real ballet", rather than the "frou frou" dancing described to her by her peers who attended a different dance school (2013a, p.349 of Appendix B). Over the course of her early training, low confidence and developing teenage insecurities regarding her physique generated a growing distaste for the genre (2013a). Poynor's emotionally vulnerable state meant that comments she received like "pigeon chested with hands like bunches of bananas", have remained within her consciousness to this day, fuelling her opinion that classical ballet was delivered in a punitive and disrespectful manner (2013a, p.349 of Appendix B).

However, describing herself as a relatively unhealthy child, in as much as she suffered from emotional stress, and possessed a weak and slight frame, Poynor's low self-esteem did not prevent her from remaining at the dance school for ten years of her childhood (2013a). She confesses that the only thing that really kept her enthusiasm in class was the energy, power and feelings of liberation that came in the shape of character dance

(2013a).[41] Recounting how, as a child, she needed to express herself yet did not find it an easy task, the freedom and joy that she experienced in the permission to strike the floor hard with the heel of her character shoe, and swirl her skirt about her, provided a sense of vitality and power that coursed through her body (2013a). Imagining herself a vibrant and strong Cossack dancer, Poynor believes that this element of her early training was very useful in terms of shaping her own character and the manner with which she delivers her training programme. That is, permission to express oneself in any physical way is a strong thread that runs throughout the ethos of *Walk of Life*.

It would be inaccurate to say that Poynor became angry or disillusioned with ballet in the same way that Tufnell had experienced during her training at The Place. Yet Poynor recalls a period of approximately ten years after abandoning her dance classes in 1967, before she felt able to really appreciate the form and its masters (2013a). During this time she discovered how ingrained the rigor of her training had become in her body and began a process of releasing her body's grip upon that conditioning (Poynor, 1995, 2013a). The next step of her journey took Poynor into improvisation and movement based theatre, where she desperately struggled to alter the precondition to always point her toes, to maintain a poised stance, or to stand in one of the five positions of the feet (Poynor, 2013a). As acting required a very different awareness and use of the body, Poynor invested time in re-finding her own bodily structure to facilitate characterisation (2013a).

Although she never returned to what might be termed mainstream dance practices, she places high value in the lessons she learnt from her experience. None more so than the notion of rigor experienced as part of Miss Watts attitude to both her teaching and the

[41] Character dance is an element of the RAD syllabus that incorporates Hungarian, Russian and Polish national dance styles into a short theatrical presentation

art form. For Poynor, the quality of rigor created both a sense of security for a young and nervous child, and a sense of pride in the accomplishment of her training (2013a). Later, while training with Halprin at the Tamapla Institute, Poynor came across a different type of rigor within Halprin's approach. For Halprin, rigor was demonstrated through her expert knowledge of anatomical structure and the attention to detail with which she observed her students before delivering her observations and guidance (Worth and Poynor, 2004; Poynor, 2009, 2013a).

Poynor's current work attracts many professionally trained dancers travelling from around the world to participate in the *Walk of Life* programme. For them the familiarity of characteristics like rigor in a body-based training provides an ease of transition into the work (Poynor, 2013a). It is Poynor's understanding that few practitioners who work in alternative, somatic, environmental or therapeutic movement approaches, have their own experience of what it is like to undertake intensive dance training, nor do they understand the effects of such training on the body and psyche (2013a). She also fears few demonstrate the necessary rigor to make these approaches really work for their participants' (2013a).

Poynor feels that a combination of these negative factors have damaged the field in terms of gaining respect from mainstream dance establishments (2013a). Yet, she remains surprised by the increasing number of dancers who seek to work with her. Even though the training is movement orientated, it is not targeted specifically at dancers, but rather anyone with a desire for self-discovery and a deepening appreciation of nature, self and others (Poynor, 1995, 2005, 2013a, 2013b).

Her surprise is mainly due to a recent shift in who has become attracted to her work. During the early years of her training programme, she found participants' from a health

and therapy background were regular visitors, but now she receives more applications from those with dance and art backgrounds (Poynor, 2013a). This might be explained by a growth in the arts towards approaches that align with holistic, therapeutic, health and well-being, rather than pure virtuosity and mastery (Poynor, 1995, 2005). While she has never rejected male participants', she notes that, over the years, her training and workshops have witnessed a second shift, given that her work has gained more male interest than previous years. At one time, Poynor was known to run workshops exclusively for female participants', echoing her political leaning towards feminism and the encouragement of women to seek ways of expressing themselves and escaping the objectifying regard. Although her work remains largely attended by women, the ethos of the work remains unaltered; open, accepting and inclusive Poynor welcomes the growth that comes from mixed gender groups reflecting the inclusive philosophy of her training in the 1970s and 1980s (Poynor, 2013a, 2013b).

Natural Dance Workshop

As has been demonstrated, freedom of expression for Poynor was particularly important. Growing up in a household where emotion and self-expression were not encouraged, Poynor and her siblings felt stifled, yet luckily for her, dance and theatre provided not only an opportunity, but an excuse to release energy in a physical and verbal effort to express herself behind a closed bedroom door (2013a). Describing her upbringing as average and typically English, Poynor's upper working class suburban background afforded her the opportunity to take both dance and theatre classes.[42] She

[42]What Poynor refers to as *typically English* refers to her personal view that to be English (as opposed to British) is loaded with certain cogitations and myths extending from a 'tongue in cheek' view of the traditions of the country. She in no way assumes that this view is universal and draws on it only to make light of the stern and emotionally detached upbringing that she experienced as a white, female, upper working class British child during the 1950s and sixties. Typically English, in this respect, alludes to such ideas as always being apologetic, enjoying wit or sarcasm, not wanting to make a fuss or demonstrating unpleasant emotional responses in public, referred to otherwise as maintaining a stiff upper lip.

attended an all girls high school from where she later accepted a place at Bristol University (2013a). It was Poynor's degree that eventually led her back towards dance when she encountered the work of social arts project Natural Dance Workshop (NDW) (Poynor, 1995, 2013a, Worth and Poynor, 2004).

Initially founded and run by MacRitchie, who was later joined in collaboration by his former partner, Wise. NDW provided Poynor with an opportunity to work with the body once again but in a less punitive manner. She began participating in classes during 1974 and just a year later started facilitating the classes (Poynor, 1998). By returning to dance in her early twenties, Poynor's fall into a system of movement that promoted the essence of authenticity and self-expression, allowed her to find solace in the expression and liberation of a supportive group. NDW encouraged the joy of movement and freedom of expression via an open door policy, where all were welcome no matter what their age, background, experience, gender or orientation. With no pressure to assume coded systems of movement or adopt a 'dancerly' presence, Poynor recalls the project appealed to people from various day jobs like dentistry, journalism, the building trade and alternative healing (Poynor, 1998, 2013a).

Due in part to its diverse collection of participants and its relaxed attitude to what constitutes 'dance', NDW failed to be taken seriously as 'real' dance (Worth and Poynor, 2004; Poynor, 2013a). Poynor expresses her frustration that the NDW became a generic term, misleadingly described as "free form contemporary folk dancing" by Jan Murray in *Dance Now* (1979, p.54). Poynor recalls that classes were popular and successful in London, because they endeavoured to make dance accessible as a creative, pleasurable and meaningful experience for all (1998).

MacRitchie had studied with Halprin at her San Francisco Dancers' Workshop between 1972 and 1973, during which time he co-authored *Exit to Enter: Dance as a Process for Personal and Artistic Growth* (1972) with Halprin. Yet during her initial training with Halprin from 1980-1981, which paralleled the launch of Tufnell's collaborative career with Greenwood, Poynor discovered that elements of Halprin's approach had not penetrated the ethos or methodology of MacRitichie's work (Poynor, 2013a). For example, Halprin's detailed kinaesthetic knowledge, which is fundamental to the way she works, was not evident at NDW (2013a).

As a result, NDW had no physical base to help the practitioner move beyond habitually restrictive movement patterns of her own potential movement vocabulary remained unavailable (Poynor, 1998). Halprin's work, (which Poynor understood to be grounded in the structure of the body, listening/responding to the body and increasing one's potential for movement), enthused Poynor to explore the limits of own potential (Worth and Poynor, 2004). The lack of progression in NDW drove practitioners like Poynor, to travel to California in order to work with Halprin (Poynor, 1998, 2013a). Shocked by the striking contrast she experienced between the work of NDW and Halprin, she states that although both practices placed high value in the power of physical expression and imagination, Halprin's work remained much more advanced owing to her expertise and the quality of rigor that she employed (Poynor, 2013a). Here both Halprin and her daughter Daria opened Poynor's eyes to how dance, expressive arts, environmental consciousness and therapeutic healing were converging.

Before revealing Poynor's experience under the instruction of Halprin, it is important to note that as early as 1978, two years prior to her work with Halprin, Poynor had already began to contemplate how she might amalgamate movement with the notion of health

and well-being. As a result of her increasing interest, she applied to attend the newly formed MA in Dance Movement Therapy at Laban Centre of Movement and Dance in South East London circa 1985. However, after the application process and much to her disappointment, the course administrator informed her that the general consensus was that she would be better suited to the MA in Dance Studies instead and offered to defer her place (Poynor, 1995, 2013a). Rejecting the offer, Poynor enrolled at the Boyesen Centre for Bio-dynamic Psychology in London and studied Gerda Boyesen's neo-Reichian body therapy and massage (Poynor, 1995). Poynor claims this to be a significant marker point in her journey, believing it to be the first step in a process of 'stripping away' the restrictions of cultural and learnt conditioning that continued over the course of many years and through the influences of many alternative training systems (Poynor, 2013a).

Describing this process as a dissolving of the "physical and emotional blocks to the development of [her] movement potential and... ability to work creatively", rather than an adding of prescribed techniques and vocabulary that might otherwise conceal her personality and imagination (Poynor, 1995, paragraph 35). She understands this route to have crucially altered her relationship to, and understanding of, her body in a way that dance training at the Laban Centre of Movement and Dance would not have achieved (1995). Poynor claims that she spent many years prior to her training with Halprin agonising over how to frame her work (2013a). That is to say, she felt forced to chose between the classifications of therapeutic and artistic, she writes, "the prevailing climate in dance circles implying, as I think it still does to some extent, that the two were mutually exclusive" (Poynor, 1995, paragraph 30). Halprin's approach married the worlds of life and art and for this reason was attended in equal measure by both therapists and artists. She writes that Halprin's image of the double spiral, - a

synchronized process that involves moving inwards towards a deeper personal experience, and outwards to broaden one's artistic expression, - fuelled her lifelong engagement into how one's attunement to the self in relation to others and environment provides authentic performance material (Poynor, 1995, 2004, 2009).

Halprin's programme ran full time and intensively for three months and then again for the same length of time after a brief hiatus. Poynor recalls her biggest transformation as a performer and an individual came through her work with G. Hoffman Soto (2013a). Soto was a full time member of Halprin's staff at the Tamapla Institute and a former student of the San Francisco Dancers' Workshop (Mertz, 2002; Worth and Poynor, 2004; Ross, 2007). Soto first studied with Halprin in 1973 before continuing to remain with her as a collaborative partner and teacher at Tamapla from its establishment in 1978 (Worth and Poynor, 2004; Ross, 2007). Soto's practice was informed by African and Brazilian dance, specifically Capoeira, yet he had also studied martial arts like Tai Qi Chuan and Aikido for many years, and also trained in the art of Japanese Butoh (Worth and Poynor, 2004; Poynor, 2013a).

It was the influence of Capoeira in his movement practice that really helped transform Poynor's attitude to her body and physicality. In particular, she felt her weakness lay in a lack of upper body strength, yet Soto showed her how she might develop strength and slowly over a period of time as his student and later a member of his company, the Capoeira influenced vocabulary shaped and developed her upper body strength and confidence (Poynor, 2013a). Poynor recalls how the dance steps derived from handstand and cartwheel type movements, required discipline, balance and poise (2013a). She notes that his classes would be fast paced, energetic and set to reggae music causing a humid, sweaty yet vibrant and powerful atmosphere in which to train (2013a). Soto

encouraged Poynor to push her physical and mental limitations, yet she notes, had it been "another teacher I would have had a terrible time" (2013a, p.353 of Appendix B). This statement alludes to the fact that Soto had a particular manner with which he gently and positively encouraged his students to work outside their comfort zone, a quality that Poynor has adopted for her own teaching.

Not only has Poynor developed her own nurturing manner with which to guide her participants, but she has also adopted Soto's interest in working at, what Poynor terms *animal level*. Encouraging her participants to move at all levels, Poynor feels that her participants avoid the level which yields the most movement potential, because it requires the use of both hands and feet. Moving at his level nurtures the participants' understanding of the structure of the body as a complete unit (rather than a floating torso that relies upon the legs for transport), and promotes a sense of upper body strength and symmetry between upper and lower body. Poynor credits Soto with being the only teacher who really taught her about muscle, tone and power and more importantly how to acknowledge that capacity in her own body (Poynor, 2013a).

By the time Poynor had joined the training programme its focus was already clearly immersed in personal development, reflecting the progression of New Age philosophies (also commonly referred to as Growth movement in America), that were influenced by the adoption of alternative Eastern approaches to spirituality, healing and quality of life. However, Halprin's approach was profoundly influenced by her formative training with Margaret H'Doubler (1889-1982), who was herself influenced by the educational philosophy of John Dewey (Halprin, 2003; Worth and Poynor, 2004; Ross, 2007).[43]

[43] Margaret H'Doubler pioneered the first dance degree in the world at the University of Wisconsin in 1926. She was one of the first to rethink dance education in terms of alternative approaches and used anatomical knowledge to facilitate movement that expressed what the dancer felt.

H'Doubler championed for accessible dance, disliking the codified and reductive process popular within developing modern dance techniques. She wished "to revive, through some kind of movement education, the impulse to move expressively, to dance, to develop adequate techniques for artistic expression" (H'Doubler, 1940, p.44), an approach that Halprin mastered and Poynor followed. Due to this legacy, Halprin had developed a holistic approach to dance, whereby she stresses the importance of not just integrating the mind, body and emotions, but "the inter-relationships between dance and life experience of the dancer, while being grounded in a thorough knowledge of anatomy" (Poynor, 2009, p.122).

On returning from Halprin's training in 1981, Poynor spent five years intensively concentrating on the development of her practice in the environment local to her, the Devonshire Jurassic Coast. This period of deep excavation, personal refection and progression not only bore the fruits of her commitment but also brought with it considerable challenges. For Poynor, the biggest challenge of all was finding her own vocabulary, she knew that no matter how long she practiced she would always carry the weight of other people's movement vocabularies within her body. As much as she relied upon and believed in the power of the landscape to teach her, she understood that she required more complex creative resources in order to move forward and identify her own unique approach to movement.

Suryodarmo's Amerta movement has played a significant role in breaking down and rebuilding of Poynor's personal practice, not least her training system. Both complimenting and providing healthy challenges to Halprin's influence, Suryodarmo has most importantly provided a new framework from where Poynor could engage with her sense of self on an altogether deeper level (1995, 2013a). Poynor came to find out

about this work through her network of friends and colleagues associated with Halprin. Those who had experienced Suryodarmo's methods claimed he could bring Poynor what she desired in terms of a personal movement approach.[44]

It was through this training that Poynor came to value the notion of practising in any condition (Poynor, 2005). That is, the condition of one's physical, mental and emotional state and the ever-changing environmental conditions that one is working within. This is the skill of maintaining open and receptive perception, wherein the senses work to be alert and adaptable, acknowledging and acting upon each alteration in condition. To be clear, 'acting upon' does not mean acting against, Poynor is adamant that embodied response is a positive process in which the change in condition is simply a guide to steer the movement forward in response. Embodiment in this respect denotes Poynor's ability to "incarnate fully in a physical body in a material world in order not only to be able to function effectively but also to be able to fulfil our life's purpose" (2005, p.15).

It has been through Suryodarmo's approach that Poynor has been able to deal with certain personal and artistic questions surrounding the body. The intensity of the Amerta movement training taught her to follow her body through movement both physically and by maintaining awareness. This process aims to acknowledge, yet deny any tendencies to disrupt, make judgements upon or question what the body needs in its physical response, "allowing the movement to emerge as if clearing away sand which has blown over an ancient carving" (Poynor, 1995, paragraph13). Recalling the challenges of such an approach, Poynor speaks of how she felt disassembled mentally and physically, to the point where she really questioned why she had put herself through such an intensive and abrasive process. Among the many exercises Poynor experienced

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[44] For video footage of Suryodarmo's movement practice see http://www.youtube.com/watch? v=VzAJh12jNXQ [Accessed 8 April 2014].

during this training, she recalls tasks designed to push the body through repetition and concentration until patterns of habitual movement fell away, leaving only the new, unexpected and organic.

The range of different people that have contributed to Poynor's extensive training have helped her to positivity alter and develop her own attitude to her body. She feels that it is fundamental to an individual's personal growth, well-being and happiness to learn to accept and appreciate the full potential and capacity of the body. Poynor made calculated choices regarding the direction she wished to take both her career and personal development. For example, she chose to undertake a movement therapy course rather than a degree at Laban because she knew that the benefit of a course with an ethos on nurturing and possibility would be more suited to her personality than one that might potentially reflect the early training she received in classical ballet.

The effects of cultural influences from her training are also important to mention at this juncture. Poynor admits being grateful to have trained with Halprin prior to Suryodarmo in Indonesia (2013a). She believes that Halprin's work is much more accessible to the Western mind, and for a self-confessed *typically English* woman with low self-assurance, California during the early 1980s felt worlds apart from London (2013a). However, Suryodarmo's work is fundamentally Asian and Poynor still finds it difficult to articulate in language what she experienced from his training, noting that it would have been too far from anything she had known previously to be of any use if she had trained in Java first (2013a). She asserts that no one training is any more or less important to her than the rest, believing them to all hold pearls of wisdom that remain absolutely equally important to her work (2013a). Yet although she refuses to value one

training more than the other, she admits that it is these two lineages that she is proud to be renowned for.

For it is both Halprin and Suryodarmo's influences that attract her many participants. In some ways, the work of Suryodarmo went deeper in to her psyche and soma, yet she acknowledges that this might be due to her increased maturity at the time of training (2013a). However, this may also be due to her sense of immersion in a very different culture. Suryodarmo did not speak much English at the point when Poynor was training with him, and she recalls learning everything kinaesthetically rather than through verbal instruction (Poynor, 1995, 2013a). She acknowledges a skill in Suryodarmo that she herself is also now associated with. That is to say, she speaks of Suryodarmo's ability to "put his finger on me", meaning he was able to read her as though he could see through her (Poynor, 2013a, p.354 of Appendix B). Many of Poynor's participants credit her with this skill, referring to it as a feeling as though she sees through the unnecessary and learnt behaviour, encouraging them instead to reveal the foundations of the movement, rather than hiding behind learnt vocabulary.

* * *

Poynor's legacy carries with it the uniqueness of environmental practice. Both Halprin and Suryodarmo work with elements of environmental awareness and outdoor movement practice and performance in very different, yet complimentary ways. Suryodarmo's Amerta movement emphasises his observation of people's relationship with nature and the non-human world through a focus on the moving body within its environment (Bloom, 2006; Pitty, 2001). By teaching his participants that the moving self is a multiplicity of selves in constant flux, changing as it responds to an altering environment, Amerta's Buddhist roots aim to "lessen our sense of identification in life and movement" (Northfield, 2013).

Suryodarmo believes that our movement holds the key to reintegrating the self in to nature, that is to say, we become part of nature, part of the environment, rather than merely objectifying it (Bloom, 2006). In this manner, Amerta goes beyond the scope of movement practice by becoming an attitude to life. Meaning 'nectar of life', Amerta engenders practitioners to listen to the moment-by-moment flows and pulses of the environment as it affects the body, acknowledging and responding as the body dictates. Dance/movement therapist and movement psychotherapist Katya Bloom suggests that Amerta is a "skill which can be glossed over in therapy training - how to practice making one's own bodily experience more conscious as a resource, to sense oneself as a three dimensional container, able to receive and reflect the transference, projective identification and counter transference more fully" (2006, p.39). These very same features are the cornerstone of Poynor's practice and teaching.

Halprin's work, on the other hand, grew from her collaborations with husband and architect Lawrence.[45] A significant feature of their work together was their focus on how the natural landscape presented a source of inspiration for both dance and architecture (Worth and Poynor, 2004, p.31). Halprin's dance work had always had a close relationship with environment, whether she was moving outside on her custom

[45] Lawrence Halprin was an established landscape architect educated at the prestigious Harvard Graduate School of Design, he met his future wife Ann (Anna) Schuman during while doing his Masters Degree (Ross, 2012). Both Lawrence and Anna were influenced early on by Walter Gropius who led the Bauhaus movement in 1920s Germany (Worth and Poynor, 2004). Anna felt that the Gropius approach resonated with the work of H'Doubler and Mabel Todd due to the Bauhaus philosophy of allowing students to find their own way rather than imposing an approach upon them (Worth and Poynor, 2004). Where Anna would have preferred to stay on the East coast immersed in the New York City dance scene, it was Lawrence's decision to move to San Francisco after his return from the Navy in 1945 (Worth and Poynor, 2004; Ross, 2007). The move to San Francisco also signalled the move away from modern dance as she began to immerse herself in the landscape and ancient culture of the indigenous peoples of the area. Throughout her journey, Lawrence remained a significant figure in Anna's work from this point on, building her the famous outside dance deck at Kentfield and supporting her whilst the San Francisco Dancer's Workshop grew and became established (Ross, 2007). Their shared commitment to broaden public involvement in creative endeavours led them to develop community based projects, the diversity of which compelled them to find new ways of communicating within artistic collaborations (Worth and Poynor, 2004). Thus the RSVP cycle was devised and has become Halprin's most renowned contribution to the artistic methodology of collaboration.

built dance deck in Kentfield, surrounded by the famously ancient redwood trees, or on the slopes of Mount Tamalpais overlooking the pacific coast near her Sea Ranch retreat. As well as rejecting the limitations of codified systems that dictated what dance should be, her work has also challenged where dance should take place. From the urban locations of her *Citydance* (1976-1977), to her more recent collaborative work with Eeo Stubblefield *Still Dance* (1981) and Andy Abrahams Wilson's documentary *Returning Home* (2003) they demonstrate Halprin's ability to re-establish a sense of relatedness to the natural world (Worth and Poynor, 2004).

Halprin's work in nature is underpinned by three key principles. Firstly, the body as a "microcosm of the earth" (Halprin in Worth and Poynor, 2004, p.32). And secondly, she asserts two points connecting humans with their environment, that is, "processes of nature offer aesthetic guidelines and nature is a healer" (Halprin in Worth and Poynor, 2004, p.32). Her work encourages the increased awareness and opening of sensory perception in order to really 'see' what nature has to offer, as Worth and Poynor propose the "multi-sensory approach and a sensuous, tactile engagement with places immediately undercuts the notion that the landscape might merely serve as an attractive backdrop for performance" (2004, p.32). The natural landscape element of Halprin's work receives little public visibility, performances taking place within workshops rather than public forums, mostly owing to the site's inaccessibility, the sensitive nature of the work or the unpredictability of weather (2004).

> Clearly, there is a close and ancient rapport between humans and the natural environment. We have become too separate from this innate relationship, and we suffer a spiritual loss because of this... I believe that reconnecting to nature will lend us a vocabulary for our art and for our lives... It is my hope that this experiential contact with nature...will...move us... towards a deeper understanding of the sanctity of the earth and our place upon it (Halprin, 1995, p.225).

Poynor follows, to some extent, the 'three-phase experiential cycle' to working with nature that Halprin formulated during her research and practice endeavours that spanned a thirty year relationship with the indigenous Pomo people of California (Worth and Poynor, 2004, Poynor, 2009). For Halprin the phases run as follows:

> Contact: In which participants are invited to connect with the elements via their whole body, assessing and understanding for example, the rock's mass, form, texture, smell, sound, capacity, "becoming familiar with the materiality of the element through the physicality of the body and senses" (Worth and Poynor, 2004, p.89). It is important that participants reach beyond their everyday perceptual capabilities to discover the depth of their engagement with the element. As the first phase of the process the emphasis on the present tense, the moment that observations and sensations occur and the reality of the moment (Worth and Poynor, 2004).
>
> Explore: Participants then engage actively with the elements exploring an assortment of physical actions that may include but are not limited to, rolling, crawling, walking, pushing, pulling and tussling. "Responding physically to the variety of terrain and conditions in the environment challenges participants' habitual movement patterns" allowing them to extend their personal movement vocabulary (Worth and Poynor, 2004, p.89).
>
> Respond: Where participants then engage with the elements on a more subjective level acknowledging personal associations, emotional responses and stories that arise as a result of this commitment. The participants are invited to respond to these personal experiences in movement (and through voice if they so wish), as these stories or their meanings arise. At this point writing or drawing is encouraged "to bring the underline meaning more clearly into consciousness" (Worth and Poynor, 2004, p.89).

Although Poynor has adjusted this system for her own practice and the needs of her participants, it remains deeply influenced by the process described above. What outlining this process demonstrates is how, following Halprin, Poynor understands the relationship between the internal [body] world and the external [natural] world as intrinsic. In this manner, encounters with nature are always personal and offer potential

ways of understanding the human condition while providing the therapeutic effect of healing.

In understanding some of the influences Poynor has taken from both Halprin's and Suryodarmo's work with environment, it is easy to see how she might consider movement as a metaphor for life. The relationship between movement and life is at the core of her practice, that is, she sees that all life is in perpetual movement. Even during times of stillness, the breath remains active and the rhythms of the body continue within the biological systems. A seemingly empty landscape continues to be enlivened by the flow of air, the disturbance of rain, the activities of creatures and the movements of grasses and trees. In this, Poynor recognises the potential of movement to make us feel complete, to engage our full-bodied awareness, sensations, emotions and imagination. This feeling of becoming whole allows one to have a tangible understanding of who they are within the context of their surroundings, histories and culture.

The three interconnecting strands of her work in nature - the body, creativity and the natural landscape - are underpinned by the notion that the elements become the teacher. The shapes, textures, densities, flows, rhythms and weight discovered during a meeting of body and element, body and terrain, teach the mover about their own structure, capacity and potential. Poynor argues that a high volume of her participants take part in the training due to a diminished sense of self and/or physicality, highlighting deep rooted cultural conditioning that undermines the potential power of women's movement (Poynor, 1998). Admitting that Iris Marion Young's work is now outdated, yet citing the research undertaken by the political philosopher in her 1990 essay, *Throwing like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment, Motility and Spatiality,* Poynor notes how Young's work reflects some of the characteristics she observes in her

participants. Namely, she notes that her participants demonstrate a perceptual split, rooted in their divided experience of their bodies as both subject and object (Poynor, 1998, 2013a).

Poynor finds her participants to exhibit particular qualities such as the fragmentation of the body, preferring instead to isolate parts of the body for certain activities, rather than using the whole body. An example might be a resistance to placing one's whole weight behind a push into a rock, preferring instead to centre one's efforts into the arms or legs, thus not experiencing the full potential or capacity of one's body and not being fully present in the task. Another symptom Poynor observes in her participants might be described as an 'apologetic' presence in space. Participants demonstrating this often fail to use the whole space available to them, preferring instead to avoid crossing paths with another participant, or remaining in one solitary position within a large space, rather than moving through space to explore all available space. Many participants display low confidence and a lack of trust in their own body to perform physical tasks. In doubting their ability to achieve, the participant appears tentative, withholding full body commitment, which reduces their chance of successfully working through any challenges and, counter-intuitively, decreases their sense of embodiment, presence and ability.

A common symptom observed by Poynor is what she describes as 'contradictory movement'. This signifies the participant's reluctance to follow through with a movement, finishing a movement before it has had chance to reach its potential. This is often due to participants' predisposed ideas of what constitutes dance, meaning that they defer to vocabulary learnt during dance training that fragments movements into 'steps'. Poynor encourages her participants to follow the energy and flow of a movement, to

become aware of where a movement begins and allow it to travel with natural progression through the body. In this way movement becomes fluid and organic, constantly moving forward rather than pausing and jumping from one body part to another in an inconsistent and contradictory manner.

By following the movement, Poynor, following Suryodarmo, believes that the participant moves beyond habitual movement patterns and enters a space of discovery, finding new and unexpected ways to move. Finally, other common symptoms, that also mirror some of the challenges Poynor faced as a young woman prior to her training with Halprin and Suryodarmo, are: the under use of physical potential in terms of size, strength, weight and coordination; underestimating one's physical capacity; and not directing movement clearly through the space (Poynor, 2013a).

After many years of listening to participants concerns and reflections on these indicators, Poynor hypothesises that reasons for this behaviour lie in fear, illness or trauma, yet most decisively these characteristics are driven by an individual's conditioning, processes of self-critique and shame. Poynor's training programme aims to break these learnt behaviours down, not only offering alternatives but also opening a space with which one can feel cleansed both physically and verbally, of the negativity of cultural conditioning, and specifically, women's experience of being in the world. She argues that contrary to past theoretical approaches to women's bodies that tend to focus on sexual/reproductive organs,

> A women's embodied sense of herself in the world, is influenced as much by the certainty of her feet on the ground, the power of her legs, the strength and flexibility of her back and the expressive and functional capacity of her arms and hands, as by her awareness (or lack of it) of her sexual organs (Poynor, 1995, p.20).

The behaviour of Poynor's participants demonstrates how some women might experience a sense of confinement in the body, inertia or dissociation from their bodies, as though unable to feel them, or a sense of being absented from the body. She maintains that "inhabiting a freely moving, expressive female body challenges objectifying regard", that becoming visible to the world might otherwise "activate fear of punishment for over stepping the line, of being criticised or rejected as unseemly behaviour" (1995, p.22). Poynor reveals that working with nature enables these participants to find ways of acknowledging and accepting their own physicality and their place in the world (1995). She maintains that moving freely in the public domain, self-absorbed and noticeably not performing, challenges several preconceptions (1995). Poynor claims that working in the environment, especially a public site, is empowering, participants receive a renewed sense of connection to nature providing them with powerful, liberating and healing effects (1995). She notes that encountering the land kinaesthetically brings individuals more strongly into their bodies, awakening their creative energy and vitality - movement practice that responds to nature activates a sense of wholeness, heightened awareness of, and connection to one's environment, rebalancing the physical, emotional and mental functions (Poynor, 1995, 2013a). This connection forges a renewed respect and awareness of the environment in which one enters into a relationship with it rather than merely using it.

If Poynor understands movement as a metaphor for life, her philosophy might incite her participants to break habitual conceptions that force them to judge themselves by others standards. Poynor might agree that shame is not a natural sensation, but rather it is a learnt response that British photographer Jo Spence has called "the cultural imposition of a negative self image" (1995, p.185). Poynor acknowledges that shame damages our sense of self-acceptance and with it comes the ability to cast myths upon others with

whom we compare ourselves to, favourably or otherwise, in an endeavour to restore our fragile self-esteem (Poynor, 1995). Irigaray writes,

> [W]e have a lot to take off. So many representations, so many appearances separate us from each other. They have wrapped us for so long in their desires, we have adorned ourselves so often to please them, that we have come to forget the feel of our own skin. Removed from our skin, we remain distant (in Price, and Shildrick, 1999, p.90).

Poynor continued to facilitate NDW through her early career and as a leading member of the project, she views it as running in parallel to the work of X6 during the later part of the 1970s. She acknowledges the difference between NDW and X6 as one of perspective - as professionally trained dancers, X6 were motivated to change dance from the inside, yet NDW wanted to change dance from outside, they wished to infiltrate the field of dance and bring their diverse backgrounds and interests into partnership with dance. Due to the classical training that X6 partners shared their aim, to seek new approaches, was considered radical and acknowledged by mainstream dance as alternative. However, the "mavericks" (Poynor, 2013a, p.355 of Appendix B), who embraced and championed for NDW were, as she recollects, frowned upon even by members of X6, although Poynor names Fergus Early as an exception to this, stating that he was always supportive of NDW's work and ideas (2013a).

X6's contempt for NDW grew from a discomfort that many of the facilitators and leading members of the group had little or no formal dance training. The paths of X6 and NDW crossed on countless occasions at meetings held by the Association of Dance and Mime Artists (ADMA), yet Poynor notes that the worries that may have concerned X6 were never addressed directly due to them concentrating on their own political agenda (2013a). Perhaps mirroring this contempt, there is no reference to NDW in historical accounts of British dance, reflecting a sense that what NDW were attempting

was not considered a contribution to dance, even by those trying to break established boundaries.

Poynor adds that while X6 might have been considered left of mainstream politically, NDW were considered left of left, meaning that their work was thought of as deeply underground and extremely alternative (2013a). This aligns the work of NDW with other projects linked to the New Age movement that swamped London during the 1970s and 1980s. Poynor's recollections of this period do not cast it in the same 'wacky' light that some historical texts suggest, moreover she describes it at a time when London, in particular, felt as if it was segregated into various counter groups influenced by a variety of alternative approaches to personal development, like the prominent Sannyasin (or Bhagwan Rajneesh) movement for instance (Barker, 1990, 1997; Storr, 1996). As Poynor suggests, if X6 was the dance version of the New Age movement, then NDW was its counter group (Poynor, 2013a).

Poynor claims that owing to the work of X6 and individuals like Tufnell, who also sat to the left of X6's revolution, the dance landscape changed for the better, now accepting both her as an artist and practitioner and her training programme as valued and respected, particularly in the context of somatic education (2013a). However, Poynor is keen, as is Tufnell, to justify her position on somatic practice, stating that although happy to be associated with somatic approaches (due in part to being truly received by the field), she prefers to term her work more specifically, as non-stylised, environmental movement. This does not prevent her from aligning her work with somatics in the right context, after all her association with movement therapy also links her to the field of somatics. She admits her work is still not considered mainstream, yet she is happy that it

is respected by a significant portion of the dance world both in the UK and internationally (2013a).[46]

Despite this, she hints that many members of NDW have now moved into the mainstream dance sector. She cites Libby Worth as case in point, stating that Worth (who met Poynor as a participant at NDW and who later trained with Halprin as Poynor had), went on to become a senior lecturer in theatre at the Royal Holloway University London, notwithstanding her humble dance origins with NDW (2013a). Poynor no longer feels it necessary to prove herself as a *real* dancer, a concern that plagued her throughout her twenties and thirties (2013a, See Appendix B). Yet there are still those who remain sceptical of alternative approaches to movement and, as a result continue to be unaware of the gentle impact practices such as Poynor's are having upon the current dance landscape. In this Poynor likens her work to occupying the space that X6 once occupied in the transitional period of British new dance. That is, she acknowledges that her work is not completely outside the field, yet not entirely embraced either (2013a).

The essence of Poynor's approach to movement practice and performance stems from the notion of embodied presence, which connects the lineage of her work so crucially to the feminist campaign in the 1970s. Embedded within the *Walk of Life* training is the refinement of both Halprin's and Suryodarmo's methodologies, carved from a feminist, phenomenologist perspective which Poynor has carefully developed as philosophical thinking has progressed over the passing decades. That is to say, current feminist theory criticises approaches spanning 1960s to 1990s for falling foul of the philosophical trap of becoming entrenched in a conflation between the material body and body as metaphor. As Kathy Davis notes, little attention has been paid to the actual lived body,

[46] Poynor is often invited to give workshops in Europe, Australia and America, however the majority of her work is delivered from her base in Devon and Dorset.

remarking that feminism walks on the edge of two conflicting ideas "towards the material body and a tendency to privilege the body as metaphor" (1997, p.15). For Poynor, the body and land meet in terms of materiality; however, she is quick to defend her idea against ecofeminism, stating that the connection she makes is not one of gendered connection to nature, but rather it stems from the integration of human and environment to increase awareness (2013a).

Poynor recognises that her participants represent a minority, who are developing a growing concern in an era preoccupied by technology. She considers relations between the body and the environment as becoming increasingly pessimistic and disassociated, suggesting that as humans, we have lost a "natural ordinary daily relationship" with nature, which is beginning to initiate an awareness of insufficiency and desire to be closer to it (2013a). The connection between the body and land is very much concerned with materiality, physicality and being in the world, rather than the virtual world provided by computers, mobile phones and the development of smart building technology which is beginning to dominate working environments (2013a). Using a simple example Poynor demonstrates how dissociation from nature might affect a person's well-being, and in doing so claims the necessity of programmes such as *Walk of Life* to provide the reconnection that people desire.

> Just going out this morning to give a session down in the hall, just walking out and feeling the air and like, you know, it's really sweet, it's really soft; sit inside and its really grey and muggy and not very nice weather [...] people sitting in offices, sitting in front of computers, being very engaged with the virtual world, the dissociation from both, from *both* body *and* land, from materiality in general, which is where those two things meet and I'm not connecting that with gender, is getting more and more and more acute. [...] now people are offering retreats in the country [...], which are sort of technology free retreats (2013a, p.).

Poynor's practice brings together three interwoven components; the body, the natural environment and creativity in such a way that participants of the practice begin to understand themselves within the context of their surroundings, culture and history. Therefore enabling them to identify and overcome the effects of societal subordination still prevalent in the social order. As part of her training, Poynor has identified writing and drawing as crucial tools for facilitating the process of acknowledgement, acceptance and assimilation, thus writing and drawing become the perceptual bridge that permits participants to find ways to speak from their experiences within a group environment. The act of writing or drawing is viewed as an empowering interface - the point where an individual makes the leap from personal inner experience to public sharing as a way of voicing their progress.

Poynor understands her training as a way of coming to know one's place in the world by actively participating in a relationship with it. Poynor argues that it is challenging to find language that serves to express these experiences, understanding them as both "paradoxically intangible and physical" (2005, p.15). Her argument is based upon the notion that language escapes our efforts to express such complex and spiritual experiences. She writes, "the attempt to understand our humanity solely through the sense of logical reasoning so fundamental to and highly valued by Western culture ultimately fails us, that we need to turn to the body in order to experience our wholeness" (2005, p.15-17). She believes that each person's movement is their true expression of self, which is why she discourages the adoption of other people's movement vocabularies via the teaching of codified dance 'steps' (2013a).

Yet even though Poynor argues that, for the movement artist, there is "no gap between our impulse to express and our expression" (2005, p.17), she does believe that writing

and drawing, as a method of making sense of the bigger picture of our experiences, is undeniably useful (Poynor, 2013a). As a result, both writing and drawing are actively encouraged during her training programme in the hope that they remain within a participant's creative 'toolbox' as an apparatus of meaning making (2013a).

Poynor first began to use writing during her training with Halprin. She recalls being issued with a kit that comprised of a large A2 sketchpad, oil pastels and a thick, heavy ring binder that consisted of sections for written tasks. Each student was expected to complete these tasks as they progressed through the programme, even though the binders were never formally checked (2013a). Poynor notes that Halprin actively encouraged the development of a writing practice alongside the training programme, including a journal for the purpose of clearly recording experiences throughout the training. She recalls the structure of this particular written task useful in its delimitation, as it forced her to find clear and relevant language for description (2913a). There was also a section that required an experiential written response that echoed the sensuousness and kinaesthetic experience of the activities. Connected to this was gestalt writing which required the writer to write from the perspective of every element involved, for example, if one's task was to write from a particular aspect of movement, then they might write from the perspective of their left knee or from their heart, or the patch of grass they moved upon.

Much of the initial period of training was facilitated by Halprin herself, this involved much work that concentrated on the different areas of the body, therefore, much of the writing would trace the experience of certain bodily perspectives, for example, the words might speak from the viewpoint of the right thumb, or the navel or the shoulder blades (2013a). This exercise increases one's awareness of the three-dimensional body

and promotes thinking differently depending upon the perspective one takes. Poynor recalls that due to Halprin's past work with Fritz Perls, and her daughter Daria's training as a gestalt therapist, gestalt dialogue had become a prominent method of reflection and was also strongly encouraged during verbal sharing (Worth and Poynor, 2004, Ross, 2007). There was also a dream journal in which one was expected to record nightly dreams in the hope that closer examination might reveal connections, fears, or breakthroughs that help to build a better understanding of one's progress and boundaries. Poynor notes that Halprin always offers a clear differentiation made between documentation, writing from experience and the gestalt dialogue; for Halprin the distinctions are not to be confused as they each offer very clear benefits to the development of individual practice (Worth and Poynor, 2004).

Connected to this is the Five Part Process (or the Five Stages of Healing), with which writing (and drawing) are central components. Formulated over a period of time in which Halprin researched the healing properties of dance responding to her experiences as a cancer sufferer and survivor, the Five Part Process is a way of creatively dealing with a range of contemporary issues affecting the self, specifically health and well-being, family, community and environment (Buckwalter, 2010). This process includes *identifying* the problem, *confronting* personal arguments, *releasing* or *expressing* it through movement, writing and or drawing, *integration* and *assimilation* of a new state of being into everyday life (Worth and Poynor, 2004; Buckwalter, 2010).

The excerpt below has been taken from the article, *Dialogue* written by former Tamapla student Tessa Barr. Within it, Barr uses instances of experiential, stream of consciousness writing gathered during her training to speak about the benefits of making friends with her body, her art making and her creativity. The quotation below

demonstrates how building a dialogue with one's self and work facilitates a particular type of interaction that can easily be lost between education, social and cultural conditioning and the habits one might develop.

> I struggled to release into my natural art-making. I struggled to stifle what my gut wanted to create because I could not name it. I ‘closed it down' and held fast to my self inflicted rules. I confined my spirit and pushed so hard to understand my creations. I could not sit back and interact with my work. It did not speak to me. I tried to strangle it loose. Instead everything went silent and I continued to make and make and make. I followed through no matter what else called to me... As my repertoire grew my understanding shrank. I tried to develop a relationship and create some boundaries. I lay on my back to keep afloat (Barr, c.2011, p.2).

Figure 3: Poynor, H. (2012) Gemma Collard-Stokes participating in the *Walk of Life* training programme. Photograph.

In terms of dialogue, Halprin not only encourages various modes of writing but also asks that her students explore drawing as an expressive outlet (a notion that mirrors Tufnell's work). Drawing has also become another tool that Poynor actively encourages her participants to take up. Halprin calls processes of drawing 'psychokinetic visualisations' (also known as psychokinetic imagery) which involves an active, reciprocal relationship between moving and drawing (Halprin, 2003, Ross, 2007). For

instance, images may come to the forefront of one's mind in response to movement, these are freely and matter or factly drawn on to large pieces of plain paper before one is encouraged to dance the image - bringing it to life. The process becomes an endless cycle of movement leading to drawing, which leads to movement and so on (Worth and Poynor, 2004). Halprin believes the visualisations to reflect deep emotions and feelings resonating from the dance (and indeed the health of the dancer) and in the drawing and subsequent dancing of them, these emotions are brought to the forefront and celebrated rather than dismissed or ignored (Ross, 2007).

Drawing came into Halprin's practice through her work with children, finding that the ephemerality of dance challenged children's ideas of accomplishment and having something to show for the work they did, drawing was a way of providing them with something concrete to take away with them (2013a). Halprin also quickly understood drawing as a bridge into speaking about or from the experience of dancing which worked particularly well for children who struggled to find words to talk about dancing (2013a). The function of both writing and drawing in Halprin's work is communication, the expression of sensation and experience to oneself and to others in a multitude of ways not only to make clearer the benefits of movement, but also to be become more aware of how the body communicates with the world prior to language. That is, the introduction of language enables understanding of nonverbal interaction.

For Poynor, drawing is especially beneficial for her own practice, when she requires validation and a bridge that takes her from the ephemeral experience of movement into verbal sharing or identifying and delineating. The integration of writing and drawing is a very important central aspect to Halprin's training, and Poynor although picking up on this practice and carrying it on through her own work, acknowledges that it is less

crucial to her work, however no less important to the progression of her participants (Poynor, 2013a). For Halprin, the writing and drawing were (and still remain) fundamental to personal development, containing much emotional and psychological work, Halprin realised the potential of this process to facilitate grounding and containment during such a demanding programme (2013a). Thus she strongly encouraged writing and drawing practices to be ongoing therefore, Poynor contends, many former participants of the San Francisco Dancers' Workshop and students of Tamapla, now incorporate this into their teaching (2013a). Somewhat dissimilar to Halprin, Poynor prefers to use writing and drawing as integration tools, facilitating personal assimilation. Yet she acknowledges the wider scope that Halprin held for the activities in terms of therapeutic benefits, and recognises writing (and drawing) as being able to offer an individual the means of analytically yet creatively looking at one's practice from another angle (Worth and Poynor, 2004; Mertz, 2002).

* * *

Soaring through this moving
I invest in my little adaptable self
My malleable self
A self stored within this exterior shell
I am the origami swan
I fold

and unfold ... and refold

Open to all
Touched by everything and nothing all at once
Familiar and unfamiliar meet
They are tasted

swilled and spat

I need no answer, crave no knowledge
Keep silent in me now little one

we will venture far today

Chapter Five

Movement as a Metaphor for Life

I am resting here, on this rock, conscious of its jagged edges as they dig a little deeper into fleshy matter. My consciousness begins to distance itself from the task and regains its hold upon a wider perspective. Eyes opening wider, the sights that lay in front of me become crisper, altered by an increasing subjectivity. Once again, everything returns to the sense of 'them' and 'us'. I notice the sea but this time it has distance. I watch the horizon, yet now I notice how the line defines water from sky.

Time ticks unnoticeably by. The chime enters my awareness as she calls the task to an end. It rings out along the beach, cutting across the silken waves and echoes of gull cries. With effort, my head lifts from its somewhat awkwardly angled position and I settle my eyes upon a surprising sight mere feet from where I recline. A gathering of surfers, who seem to have appeared from nowhere, are right here under my nose. My cheeks grow rosy and warm. I recognise the familiar sensation of embarrassment. What must they think? They will have noticed me dancing - stuck out like a sore thumb between the rocky outcrops. Yet I kept my attention open, how did I not notice them arrive? I realise they are as happily merged with the waters as I am with the rocks. We have learnt to simply exist with our landscapes and I shrug off what is left of this embarrassment. In any case, there are ten of us here, dotted about the place in unusual physical arrangements. There is security in our numbers.

I gaze about me, trying to spot where the members of my group have scattered themselves. I notice a familiar shape heading towards to the prearranged meeting place. Then another emerges from behind a seaweed-roofed rock, hair flying wildly against the sea breeze, carefully placing one bare foot after another negotiating a

prickly and slippery terrain. Then more come into view. Gradually they wake to the sound of the chime, and gently trace their original journey back towards Helen. Senses beginning to realign with everyday duties. Focus readjusting, eyes shifting from close up to far and wide. Hearing, shutting out the immediate sounds reopens to the noises of distance. Smell rejecting the acidic scents that encircled this special place, re-finds the fresher air that fills my lungs. Yet the tangy taste of the seaside stains my tongue and clings to my teeth. Beginning to experience with fresh senses the vastness of what surrounds me. We have all begun the journey of letting go.

Figures, slightly fragile, make their way from the comfort of their chosen locations. As if new born to the world, we might appear tender, sensitive, overly alert, retiring, and tranquil. I peal my skin away from this found sanctuary and notice a sudden discomfort in my legs. I gather myself, my thoughts, my limbs, and begin to find my footing once more on the uneven ground below. My eyes focus upon the pebbles at my feet, picking their way through the obstacles. My hearing becomes less acute and my ears are flooded with the voices of happy tourists on the far side of the beach, the boat engines murmuring as they cut the surface of the sea, the occasional dog bark and the unmistakable sound of the ice cream seller's jingle. These sounds, whilst present while I danced, were distant against one another. Yet now they take over.

I fear I might lose my sense of the tiny sand fleas that flickered across warm seaweed surfaces. I fear I might lose the spiral presence of fossilised Ammonite etched into the underside of my rock. I fear I might lose the sound of pebbles cracking and rolling over one another as they are shifted by the tide. I fear I might lose the various warbles and woops of coastal birds as they soar close to the cliffs above me. I fear I might lose the unmistakable bitter smell of salt and fish as my sea soaked clothing begins to dry white

in the sun. I fear I might lose the feel of smooth, dry, firm stone under my palms and the gritty debris from the salty air leaving its trace upon my lips.

I reach my recently gathered peers. We organise ourselves in a silent circular pattern, Helen at the head of the gathering. We remain unspoken, directing our ears to listen to her instruction. She invites us to take up paper and writing or drawing implement and indulge ourselves, furthering the experience through a secondary medium. She does not keep us for long, for fear of our connections dissipating. She sends us on our way to rest close by the place we ate our picnic lunch earlier in the day. Silently yet full of voice, I begin to allow the echoes of my moving to find new expression in line, colour, rhythm, texture, word, and cadence. The words that find me are...

Let us see little friend
Let us feel our growth
A progression in time, in space
We walk together you and I
We have similar lines
If we part, we wonder how the other is
Do you play across my mind?
Yes, you are there
In my hands is left the skin of you
Your smell distant in the air around my clothes
Tastes lightly present upon my lips and my teeth recognize your grit
We are weight, body and mineral you and I
Our layers complex and not visible unless we are cracked open to view
We are aware how we can irritate
How unforgiving our texture is
How unpenetrateable our surface
Yet we are porous you and I
Sponges
Monsters that only a select few witness
Our eyes grow large
Our mouths gape
Our nostrils suck on the air about us
Our ears, like the animal, prick at the slightest sound
Our skin blemished by pores, clings to air... object... other...
Let me see you little friend
Let me feel you grow

* * *

Poynor's practice seeks to unlock the potential within one's natural body structure, to create an individual's unique movement vocabulary, rather than merely adopting the stylised vocabulary of another practitioner. As a continuously evolving process, Poynor's practice is a constant one, endlessly adapting to the altering state of her maturing physique, emotional health and the everyday modifications one experiences in reply to the journey of life. Located in the South West of England, she utilises the extremes of this particular landscape for her work. Her body has grown in response to the diversity of this terrain and as such, the Devonshire and Dorset landscape, and its nature, are integral components of her practice. Working within the realms of the authentic kinaesthetic experience, Poynor's practice is quite different to that of Tufnell's. Yet the two women share something of a connection in relation to the focus of this thesis. That is, they both use language as a nurturing departure (and arrival) point, from which movement may emerge. The following chapter seeks to unpick this unique approach to movement-based work and asks how working in nature assists the harvesting of expressive language.

As it has been outlined in chapter 4 Tufnell not only views the written aspect of her practice as equal to the alternative creative outputs that she explores during her work, (namely drawing and sculpture), but also equal to the movement itself. Tufnell might argue that her writing would cease to exist if it were not for the movement, yet however focused her enquiry is upon movement as instigating source, her workshops and teaching represent a different loyalty; the loyalty to language. To be clear, the direct influence of her own practice upon her teaching causes Tufnell to often begin workshops by first exercising her participants' imagination and perception through language. This more often than not includes a warm up of the participants' expressive languaging skills, either by verbal or written communication depending on the

needs/experience of the group. Movement is then offered as a method of waking up the potential of these aspects further, providing a clarification of the union of body-mind through combined physical and mental activity. In this way, Tufnell understands alternative creative processes such as movement, writing, drawing, sculpture and verbal languaging as extensions by which one might go beyond, or discover more from the initial departure point - the stirring of movement within the body.

Similarly, Poynor also uses language (most often verbal but occasionally written) as a regular departure point for her teaching. It is important to note that in both cases, Poynor and Tufnell often begin and finish their classes with language-based tasks. Poynor for example will often begin with a simple sharing circle, inviting each participant to speak as and when they feel ready, conveying information such as, how they interpret their 'weather' at that very moment. The weather reading exercise encourages each participant to speak from inside the moment rather than forming narratives prior to speaking or conducting a deep soul-searching examination of one's feelings. For instance, the thought behind the task is to express one's current condition in response to mood, physical sensation, awareness of time, space and relationship to others, including any thoughts that are at play upon one's mind.

This exercise is intended to be positive and heart-felt yet spontaneous, exploring language as a potential method of assimilating, validating and grounding one's body-mind state. Of course, many people's experience of movement workshops and classes is that they, more often than not, begin with movement-based tasks or physical explorations led by facilitators who often prefer to use as few words as possible. Both Tufnell and Poynor begin from a place of language, albeit a language that resists habitual patterns of rational or critical thought. To be precise, they prefer awakening

imagination and creativity through the least confident area of expression that participants' possess, namely, their personal vocabulary.

It may not be fair to describe Poynor's practice as actively exploring the potential of movement to language (or visa versa), nor might it be fair to class her practice in the same vein as Tufnell or Kneale's work. To be precise, in her personal practice Poynor uses verbal and written language as a means by which she might practice communicating her work to a wider audience just as many dance artists and scholars do. That is, rather than approaching writing as a creative tool for furthering and expanding her own experience of movement or an imaginative extension of her body in motion through another medium, Poynor uses writing in a very pragmatic way, a means of expressing her work for academic journals and books. However, this should not overshadow the reasons for selecting Poynor as an example of alternative written approaches to expanding the experience of dance. To begin with, Poynor's dance training with Halprin provided an initial and crucial introduction to the exploration of creative and experimental modes of writing in conjunction with movement practice. This prompted Poynor to become an active advocator for the potential of writing to aid personal development and performance processes.

Also contributing to Poynor's value as a case study, is her resistance to the programming Westerners receive during education. She perceives the education system as dictating the 'correct' position for the body in relation to the act of writing, a notion that corroborates the myth that the body is separable from the mind (Poynor, 2013a). Poynor may agree that there is an unshakeable restriction held within academic writing, one that both Longley and Pollard consider 'monstrous'. Longley for example, notes that formal registers of writing are "violent – in [their] ability to disfigure, maim and destroy the life

of live arts", suggesting "[b]y the time this rhetorical style and its grammatical forms are done with a dance, all the life will be sucked out of it" (2011, p.5-6). Poynor advocates an alternative approach to writing on, for, about and from dance, echoing writer Mary Paterson's assertion that although writing is a "tool for disembodied communication over time and space" it is also "a bodily discipline" (Liveart.dk, 2014). In this way, Poynor attempts to utilise the many ways to explore expression through language that she retains from Halprin's training as well as her own experience and beliefs in the potential of writing to be a site of validation.

Yet, whether Poynor is writing about her work for an academic journal like the *Journal of Dance and Somatic Practices,* or inviting her participants to write in response to their physical enquiries, the approach she advocates is much the same. Poynor supports the use of writing (what she terms 'wild' writing or as it might commonly be termed stream-of-consciousness), initially as a method of arriving into the act of writing that resists rational thinking and the restrictive censorship that impedes one's ability to allow language to flow on to the page. For Poynor, writing is a distinctive process that enables the user to speak from the body. Escaping the urge to find the right words, be grammatically correct and stumble over syntax, writing aims to connect and integrate various levels of consciousness in an approach which yields not only therapeutic benefits, permitting a discovery of a true sense of self, but can be creatively liberating. Writing evades rational thinking in order to access an inherent perceptual knowledge that intends to facilitate psychological and spiritual growth.

If used as a precursor to formal registers of writing, Poynor claims that it is useful to discover the root of one's thinking prior to crowding it with critical objective perspective. The approach to writing as held by Poynor incorporates maintaining an

advanced consciousness of the body and its participation in the world (as during the movement process), with the physical act of writing. The mover/writer endeavours to tune into the body in its present, alert and sensitive state, having recently been stimulated through a movement task that works in direct response to one's environment. In terms of its intention, writing seeks to [re]connect the mover/writer with knowledge that is held deep within the body. As it has already been said elsewhere here, the spontaneity and bodily focus of this mode of writing, bypasses the centrality of processes one is likely to be programmed to use (for instance logical, critical, disciplined consciousness), opting for a more liberated form of expression.

Due to her history with Halprin, Poynor's practice and subsequent teaching presents commonalities with the phenomenological healing treatment, Gestalt therapy. Inherent in her movement approach is the Gestalt methodology of developing phenomenological awareness, wherein one's ability to strengthen perception, tune into emotion and act upon those qualities of experience, are identified as different from one's interpretation of habitual attitudes (Yontef, 1993). As a result, a line is drawn between a) the recognition and acceptance of the experience and b) the interpretation and justification of that experience, thus emphasis is placed on the directly perceived experience, while interpretation is considered less reliable.

For Poynor, participants of the *Walk Of Life* training programme learn to open up to, and become more receptive to, their inherent (yet often little exercised) perceptual capacity. Through movement, the ability to respond to directly perceived and felt experiences is key to altering one's perception of oneself and thus key to that individual gaining a well-defined sense of self as a whole. Specifically, one harvests qualities like empowerment, self-esteem, a sense of one's materiality and an intuitive sense of one's

place within the order of things (Poynor, 1995, 2005, 2013a). Qualities such as those highlighted here, present the individual with enormous potential in terms of refining a sense of self and a sense of one's practice, providing endless material for both autobiographic and environmentally sensitive performance.

Poynor's aim is to offer her participants the tools they require to become aware of what they are doing, how they are doing it, and how it might be altered in a way that increases self-acceptance and worth. As a participant begins to feel settled in their skin (that is to say, they become more acutely aware of the socio-cultural impacts upon their identity and learn to accept and work with these aspects of character), they become increasingly receptive to the potential held within their bodies to explore the world creatively (Poynor, 1995, 2005). By fully incarnating their physicality, they become better equipped to delve into creative challenges from an intuitive, subjective and authentic point of view (Poynor, 2005). Poynor teaches her participants to focus upon process rather than content, the emphasis here is on what is experienced, felt and thought at the very moment of its happening, rather than on what might be, could be, should be or has been. The emphasis is on a positive progression forward rather than a dwelling on the past, self-criticism, judgment or the common human bias to interpret negatively.

Although many aspects of Poynor's movement approach have been built upon Gestalt values, the diversity of her training and inclusion of alternative influences (such as Amerta, Tai Chi and movement therapy), have significantly shifted her practice beyond the perimeters of Gestalt. Yet what remains of the influence of Gestalt therapy is most significantly present in her philosophy on writing[drawing]. Viewing this component of the practice through a holistic lens, the writing[drawing] becomes as valuable to the

mover as the physical experience and in some ways, the key to providing the validation, assimilation and grounding required throughout this complex process.

It is important to note here that Poynor urges her participants to explore both writing and drawing, yet freely admits that, for her, drawing holds more potential than writing in terms of its approachability, this is particularly true with regard to the continuation of physical activity. If one is to proceed into drawing on a large scale, (very large pieces of paper with easy to grip and manipulate materials like oil pastels and charcoal), the body can continue to be more dynamically engaged in the activity, thus the body remains an integral part of the process of assimilation. In writing, the mover/writer reverts to a habitual pattern of introversion. The body supports the activity of writing only by becoming the tool by which imagery, memory, thought and so forth might be expressed through the articulation of the writing implement.

Even after these bodies have enjoyed the sense of openness, fullness and aliveness that comes with movement's full abandon, writing appears to force the writer to close up around the notebook, to drop their gaze from the room/landscape and immerse themselves in the page. The act of writing, Poynor might agree, seems counter-intuitive after spending a good proportion of one's time and effort cultivating skills of increased awareness and full-bodied physical expression. Nonetheless, acknowledging that drawing is not for everyone, that it might conjure up as many fears and boundaries in some people as writing does, Poynor always offers the two mediums as equally useful and appropriate responses for the reflective stage of both her training programme and workshops.

Poynor perceives the 'problem' to lie in language, that is "we go into rational thinking very quickly" (Poynor, 2013a, p.326 of Appendix B). Revealing her preference for

"wild writing" '(2013a, p.324 of Appendix B), she notes that it provides a way of avoiding the analytic, logical thinking patterns that one might fall into when trying to put experience into words. "I just think we are very clever at kidding ourselves and we can do it with images as well as with writing, because our conscious mind naturally [does not] want to deal with the unconscious stuff so we are very programmed to avoid it" (2013a, p.327 of Appendix B). Movement, for Poynor, evades the conscious mind, allowing thoughts, feelings and images that lie latent within the body to surface, a process she also believes can transpire through drawing, yet to a lesser extent, writing. For instance, for Poynor the act of writing[drawing] tunes into what images, kinaesthetic residue or thoughts happen to be passing one's consciousness at the moment the writing/drawing implement connects with the page.

Akin to Tufnell's work, the spontaneity of this action and the precondition to release all other thoughts to focus on those that emerge on impulse only, resembles the act of movement improvisation. Yet Poynor admits that writing is more of a challenge to most people because of the inherent programming that extends from education. She notes that the restrictions that get in the way of writing are too entrenched or complex to allow us to embrace a new way of thinking about writing that allows us to articulate experience without merely describing what happened (2013a). Moreover, these restrictions frequently prevent us from really saying what we wish to say due to hesitancy via self-criticism.

Despite a growth in Practice as Research and philosophy which acknowledge corporeal processes as sites of knowledge, the Western educational system teaches us to fear and respect writing, to view the written source as the indelible truth and a place reserved for 'getting it right'. The writing of David Olson (1977), Michael Cole and Sylvia Scribner

(1981) and Peter Elbow (2000) suggests the 'crime is speech and punishment is writing' theory used in education, supports the Western attitude that writing is something to be feared, an indelible truth that, following Barthes (1974), separates the knower from the known, giving the author authority and power. The binary of speech/writing has developed as a result of educational constructs. Speech is freely encouraged in early child development, yet writing (as introduced through the schooling system), is neither encouraged as free nor spontaneous, but rather a quality controlled activity, driven by mental processes (Olson, 1977; Gere, 1981; Cole and Scribner, 1981; Elbow, 2000).

For Poynor, it is useful to advocate particular modes of writing whereby the mover/writer can explore thinking outside mere discursive registers of reflection. By encouraging a more spontaneous and fluid approach to languaging experience, Poynor hopes that participants will refrain from the temptation to describe an exercise or negatively analyse the outcome in relationship to what they think should have happened. As explanations and interpretations are not considered necessary or conducive to a positive personal developmental process such as this, Poynor steers the response toward experiential writing. Inviting participants not to think about what they will write before hand, but rather appealing to them to allow the words to emerge on the page without judgement, unnecessary censorship or a planned direction. For Poynor, the apparent nonsense and messiness of this mode of writing is still acceptable and useful when finally read and considered.

In this way, the writing often resembles unformed poetry; leaning towards imagery and narrative that emerge in the wake of one's heightened perceptual capacity and experience. The written responses may at first feel unrelated to the experience but as one reads it back to them self (or another participant), glimmers of connection,

recognition and understanding begin to fall into place and one is more able to find routes into the expressive verbal language with which to communicate and share experience with others. This acts like a bridge between ephemeral experience (which is especially hard to express in verbal language without any pre-assimilation), and something that can actually be talked about and shared with somebody else.

This frames writing as a site for thinking through practice and creatively forming and informing the user's perspective. Just as Scott De Lahunta suggests in his lecture/demonstration *Choreographic Objects: artifacts and traces of physical intelligence* the "page is coupled to the body and becomes an extension of one's own body" (2012). Writing that emerges as an expansion of a bodily practice is undoubtedly a beneficial research methodology that continues the journey of personal and creative process to the site of the page. As it manifests through an awakened sense of self in the world of the mental (Damasio, 2000), it provides something akin to the record of the hand moving. The hand continues the dance onto paper, playing at the edges of word, texture, impression, space, flow and time. The written impression left by a moving hand, De Lahunta explains, might be interpreted as a record of one's attention during movement. These traces provide the mover/writer with a sense of what draws their eye during movement, what stirs certain body parts to flicker into action, what passes across the mind as it maintains its effort to remain open, receptive and with the moment of experience (2012). Yet, what are the features of the particular kind of attention that Poynor exercises?

> It is important too that great art teaches us how real things can be looked at and loved without being seized and used, without being appropriated into the greedy organism of the self. This exercise of *detachment* is difficult and valuable whether the thing contemplated is human being or the root of a tree or the vibration of a colour or a sound. Unsentimental contemplation of nature exhibits the same quality of detachment: selfish

> concerns vanish, nothing exists except the things which are seen. (Murdoch, 2001, p.64 author's own emphasis)

For Poynor, the notion of attention is not one of egocentrism. The participant is constantly reminded of the world outside the self and encouraged to see it and others with the same level of attentiveness as they afford themselves. Iris Murdoch's adoption of Simone Weil's *attention* is built upon the notion of the power of beauty to destabilize the severity of egocentrism, and can be of help here. Murdoch writes,

> The appreciation of beauty in art or nature is not only (for all its difficulties) the easiest available spiritual experience; it is also a completely adequate entry into (and not just analogy of) the good life, since it *is* the checking of selfishness in the interest of seeing the real (2001, p.63).

Murdoch reveals that art (for the purposes of this thesis I take that to include the process of establishing one's art namely, by practice) firstly, uncovers the reality of the human condition and improves moral perception of what is real via the artists' unique way of seeing the world (Lin, 2012). Secondly, art provides us with "spiritual exercise" which cleanses our psyche by guiding our attention positively, providing a perceptual "salvation through art" (Lin, 2012 p.316). This mode of attention denotes a highly observant way of looking, as Robert Macfarlane validates,

> When we exercise a care of attention towards a person, we note their gestures, their tones of voice, their facial expressions, their turns of phrase and thought. In this way, by interpreting these signs, we proceed an important distance towards understanding the hopes, wishes and needs of that person (2005, p.34).

In the case of Poynor's understanding of attention, morality is an issue of seeing the world outside one's closed perspective. This leads to an understanding of how the world forms and informs us in multiple ways and how we might interact with others differently as we come to know ourselves better. Following this train of thought, it might be helpful to discuss another dance artist (who also uses writing in the context of

her creative enquiry) whose ideas on attention validate it as cultivating the asset of positivity and warmth towards other(s). Longley's research observes that her own mode of writing (known to her as movement-initiated writing: see chapter 1), and her subsequent artist books, assume a *writer-as-spectator* stance, something which is indicative of *witnessing* in Authentic Movement practice.[47]

Although, as a dancer she has a writing practice which works alongside her movement explorations, Longley is a great advocator of the activity of witnessing. Using this approach in much of her collaborative work, she exercises the freedom that comes with witnessing to write from the unique position of how her body feels during observation.[48] Yet, in doing so, it must be pointed out that the writer-as-spectator stance removes agency from the dancer, inserting misplaced focus upon the spectator and reducing the dancer's subjective experience to one of little worth. Even though Longley argues for acceptance of the writer-as-spectator's endeavour to be acknowledged as authentic and irrefutable, her attempt at *listening* with her whole body in an effort to discern the physical and mental shifts in relation to her mode of awareness, has little hope of being

[47]Authentic Movement is described as a pioneering therapeutic movement practice, founded by Mary Starks Whitehouse in America in the mid 1950s. The practice combines Jungian psychology and somatic principles, inviting its participants to move with closed eyes in a safe environment while being witnessed by a watching partner. The approach claims to awaken the awareness of physicality and instil a sense of knowing the bodily self through therapeutic negotiations of moving, witnessing and verbalising. Finnish researcher Inari Pesonen's provides a useful description of what might be sensed by the witness. "[M]eaning arising from the inside of the dancer: meaning that may not be possible to define with words, meaning that may be similar to a feeling or an atmosphere, that may touch the viewer's unconscious mind" (2008, p.92). Furthermore, an excellent introduction to Authentic Movement principles can be found in the following collection of essays: Pallaro, P. (ed.) (1999) *Authentic Movement: Essays by Mary Starks Whitehouse, Janet Adler and Joan Chodorow*. London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

[48]What is meant here by the term *freedom*, is that Longley's position on the outside of the activity is one of relative stillness. It is presumed that her body is seated at the edge of the space and, although she argues that her full attention is opened toward the dancer in an effort to tune into how it might feel to be moving in manner, her perspective is an objective one and can in no real way speak for the action of the dancer. Freedom must then designate the autonomy of the mind in its effort to be attentive to her personal physical, emotional and cognitive responses during the activity of witnessing.

able to speak of the same quality of attention and experience held by the dancer herself.[49]

Longley contends that it is the way she opens up her attention (which in this case might be better described as empathy), that places the writer's perspective as equal to that of the dancer. For Longley, the writing aims to illuminate the corporeal process of dance, capturing embodied, cognitive and sensorial response in addition to narrative and image that resonates within the dancer's performance. In this manner, she claims that the writing (although formed exclusively from the writer-as-spectator perspective) generates a sense of interactivity, communicating what transpires for both writer-as-spectator and dancer during the creative moment. Longley's argument positions this writing as a body-full response, emerging from a spectators' creative engagement with the performance.

Longley pins the legitimacy of her written response on the fact that her somatic training has attuned her awareness of the moving body allowing her to listen at a cellular level, generating "texts that emerge through attention to sensory, mobile and felt perceptions" (2011, p.157). The manner in which Longley positions the role of the writer challenges notions of authorship. By positioning her authorial voice in the first person, she was able to write; "what I might be thinking or sensing if I was inside another's body" (2011, p.153). In her choice to locate herself as writer, Longley is somewhat separated from the felt experience of dancing, and rather relies upon her ability to read another's movement experience and imagine what that might feel like. It could be interpreted that Longley is speaking for the dancer, rather than as the dancer, which begs the question, how can

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[49]The art of *listening* is described by Mary Stark Whitehouse is a particular physical attention in the spectator (Whitehouse, [1979]1999). An attention which opens up the spectators frame of mind to encompass their own physical state as well as what is displayed within boundaries of their vision. This deep-rooted form of listening allows the spectator to notice and acknowledge all that is alive within their body as they respond to the movement of another human.

writing be initiated through movement if it does not originate from the dancer's own unique experience?

To answer this, I turn to both Poynor and Tufnell who assert that movement amplifies one's awareness of kinaesthetic sensation - thus it is the way the dancer attends to her body that is key in understanding and languaging experience. Arousing the nervous system, enlivening the primary senses, emphasising the feel of textures and pressures upon the skin, and stimulating the biological systems in response, as Tufnell remarks, "moving clears the windows of our senses, to let the world in and to let us 'see' out" (2004, p.12). This particular mode of attention allows the dancer to be wide-awake and open in the moment of her movement, to receive and acknowledge every impulse. With each felt sense comes a physical urge that shifts the inner bodily landscape and the emotional state of the dancer too. This state of mindfulness might be likened to Abram's reading of the Merleau-Pontian ontology of Flesh, in that it connects the internal landscape to the external environment.[50]

For Poynor, this form of attention is achieved through specific key skills developed within her training programme and encouraged in her other teaching. These skills aim to cultivate the open and attentive form of awareness that dance artists who work with writing, like Tufnell and Longley, operate. This form of attention is common practice in many improvisatory practices such as Skinner Release Technique and Contact Improvisation, yet requires certain differences in approach in all of them. Poynor's practice holds great stead in the ability to *see* what one *sees*, that is, the participant is actively encouraged to take acute notice of the detail in objects, surfaces, and the

[50]"The Flesh is the mysterious tissue or matrix that underlies and gives rise to both the perceiver and the perceived as interdependent aspects of its own spontaneous activity" (Abram, 1997, pp.66). Also see Bannon, B. (2011) Flesh and Nature: Understanding Merleau-Ponty's Relational Ontology. *Research in Philosophy,* **41**, pp.327-257.

placement of certain body parts or the position of things in the environment within which one moves. For example, as one moves, the body might twist and turn and shift its position in space, one minute laying flat the other hanging upside down or hurtling at pace in an upright position. As the body does so, the world can become a blur of colour, shape and texture and the mover may often close their eyes when working slowly and quietly, or simply glaze over and lose clarity of vision as they become lost in the momentum and excitement of movement.

Poynor has an analogy for these responses; she associates the closing of one's eyes or an indirect, averted gaze with "disappearing down a rabbit hole" (2016). Poynor believes movement to be an outwardly expressive activity, rather than inwardly focused and self-immersive. Even though she feels that one can be equally expressive in introversion as in extroversion, she feels that eyes that really *see* provide two benefits. They afford the mover a direct engagement with their environment and for example, validate (for both mover and spectator) authenticity of embodiment: it is clear that the mover knows where she is, and how her view of the space is affected through her moving. Presence: the mover's gaze validates her understanding of how she impresses herself upon the landscape, and finally confidence: as a direct gaze with eyes that clearly see and thus acknowledge what they see symbolizes self-assurance.

This thesis has mentioned numerous times that the activity of writing might provide the mover/writer with an opportunity to express images and imaginative responses that emerge in the mind's eye during movement. Yet, by maintaining open and seeing eyes during physical enquiry, those images happen to be significantly informed by what is real in the surrounding landscape. This leads the written response to be more clearly rooted in the actual moment and place of the exploration rather than being solely

embedded in the body-mind of the mover. Neuroscience might also support Poynor's work for, as illustrated by Shaun Gallagher (2005), he notes that vision has a reciprocating function whereby it "contributes to a proprioceptive sense of posture and balance" and in return posture and balance aid how we "visually perceive the surrounding environment" (2005, p.145). Yet, by singling out the notion of sight in Poynor's practice, it might appear that she privileges the primacy of this sense; however, that would be a misrepresentation. Poynor considers all senses equal in their contribution to experience.

> The enigma derives from the fact that my body simultaneously sees and is seen. That which looks at all things can also look at itself and recognize, in what it sees, the "other side" of its power of looking. It sees itself seeing; it touches itself touching; it is visible and sensitive for itself. It is a self, not by transparency, like thought, which never thinks anything except by assimilating it, constituting it, transforming it into thought - but a self by confusion, narcissism, inherence of the see-er in the seen, the toucher in the touched, the feeler in the felt - a self, then, that is caught up in things, having a front and a back, a past and a future (Merleau-Ponty, in Donkel, 2001, p.90).

This excerpt from Merleau-Ponty's essay *Eye and Mind* (Merleau-Ponty in Donkel, 2001, pp87-116) helps to illustrate the manner in which Poynor considers the senses to form and inform one another. The reciprocity of the human sensorial capacity is emphasised through much of Poynor's work and is integral to the function and affect of environmentally sensitive engagement. Poynor's work teaches participants how to respond to the feeling of nature, that is to say rather than imagining oneself as the tree, participants learn to recognise and acknowledge a clear sense of body boundaries, leading to an awareness of separation between self and surroundings, and self and other(s). The boundaries support one's physical investigation with the surroundings, highlighting various placements of the body and instigating a particular thought pattern that underpins one's exploration.

For example, a mantra of quiet yet prominent guidance runs through the consciousness as the journey of movement unfolds. These thoughts might range from the obvious and simple: Where is my arm in relation to this tree trunk? How am I experiencing support in this position? What points of contact can I tune into and understand? When is it possible to trust this connection and allow my body to move on? To the more complex: How am I experiencing space between the scapular and the hip socket of my right side? In sensing the width of my back, am I able to feel the full expansion of my chest? Can I sense the structural composition of my skeleton in the pushing/pulling activity between this rock and me?

These passing thoughts are not necessarily spoken internally as they have been written here. Instead, they might be likened to a back-story, or subconscious internal monologue that one instinctively engages with during the movement task, yet does not actively aim to answer. This way of connecting with one's body in its relationship to the terrain, is a way of establishing how the body interacts and communicates with the earth and the objects that inhabit these spaces, providing an inner connection with which to arrive at dialogues of movement, spirit and imagination. These dialogues offer the participant an opportunity to discover who they are outside of the everyday environments and activities that shape them. Through these engagements our embodied sense of ourselves in the world is influenced, by "the certainty of [our] feet on the ground, the power of [our] legs, the strength and flexibility of [our] back and the expressive functional capacity of [our] arms and hands" (Poynor, 1995, no page number).

The culture in which we live disrupts our sense of self and body through media, religion, race, sex, class and so forth. How can we [re]discover what it is to be

ourselves, to understand and accept our identities as constructs of our culture, yet be strong enough to challenge these aspects of self - to investigate them? Feminist thinkers have provided us with countless ways that the female body and space has been constrained in the past (and continues to infect the present), from Susan Bordo and Christy Adair's idealisation of progressively slender bodies (Bordo, 1993; Adair, 1992), Iris Marion Young's restrictions on behaviour and movement (1990), to Grosz' socio-cultural limitations placed upon women in the occupation of space (1994, 2000).

Reminding us of our skin, both literally and metaphorically, Poynor's work facilitates a recognition and acceptance of the continuing echoes of these correctional philosophies in our present situation. Poynor views the salvaging for a positive sense of self and body as being complexly interwoven with a sense of space, claiming that it is impossible to exist as an embodied self, if there is no space available to us (Poynor, 1995, 2013a). The awareness of body in space is fundamental to one's sense of self. Again, Merleau-Ponty's words assist this notion:

> [F]ar from my body's being for me no more than a fragment of space, there would be no space at all for me if I had no body. [...] By considering the body in movement, we can see better how it inhabits space (and, moreover, time) because movement is not limited to submitting passively to space and time, it actively assume them, it takes them up in their basic significance which is obscured in the commonplaceness of established situations (1962, p.117).

Poynor's viewpoint is informed by the thoughts of Grosz, following Irigaray, who argue that women have long since experienced denial of both body and space, Grosz writes, "men place women in the position of being 'guardians' of their bodies and their spaces, the conditions of both bodies and space without body or space of their own" (in Borden et al., 2000, p.219). Many of Poynor's participants attend her training and workshops because of a growing necessity to inhabit the physical space of their bodies without fear,

and claim personal space as belonging to them (a space where one can chose who enters). They seek the right to move through the world unencumbered and without apology (Poynor, 1995, 2013a).

Yet, how does it become possible for someone to experience a renewed sense of self through an engagement with the natural landscape? Poynor's work aims to argue against the notion that an open, fully inhabited body, moving and expressing itself freely is inviting objectification and the threat of invasion (1995, 2013a). She argues that bodies displaying these qualities challenge objectifying regard, and that her work assists its participants in resisting the fear of punishment and criticism that is associated with public visibility. Moving in a public and/or open space is considered empowering and healing by many of Poynor's participants (1995). Connecting kinaesthetically with the land brings the participants more strongly into their own body, awakening vitality and creativity.

The unfamiliarity of the landscape and the unusualness of the task provide the participant with experiences that challenge both their comfort zone and belief system, that push them to explore new ways of moving and new experiences of being. Escaping one's comfort zone opens us up to new creative ideas, inspires and energises us. Within this process, a sense of wholeness, heightened awareness of, and connection to the environment intensifies, bringing with it a physical, mental and emotional rebalancing (Poynor, 1995, 2013a). Being part of nature helps participants come to terms with their own morality, these experiences are permeated with personal meaning, as participants' speak of returning to the sensual pleasure of childhood or reconnecting with their sexuality (Poynor, 1995). Altering perception of nature via the lens of the body rather than the mind's eye, it holds a mirror up to life processes, reminding us that we are not

in control of either. In order to really know nature and ourselves, this practice advocates full immersion, that is to say, one is unable to fake it or view it from afar, as Macfarlane asserts,

> Landscape cannot, on the whole, be mocked up; cannot be dreamed into descriptive being. Light, water, angles, textures of air, water and stone, the curves and straights of horizon and slope: these are the basic components of natural places, and they combine in ways too subtle and particular to be invented (2005a, p.34)

Macfarlane (2005, 2007, 2012).has often used the story of Henry Williamson's life changing commitment to the writing of *Tarka the Otter* (1927) as an example with dual purposes. Firstly, he uses the story to demonstrate how our relationship with natural landscapes shift and shape us as human beings. Secondly, he applies it in order to validate how the natural landscape provides healing and re-establishes our sense of self. He likens the period of Williamson's lengthy and intensive fieldwork in Devon, to turning "feral" (2005, 2007, 2012). Describing the author's endeavour as one of "living through the moor's different weathers" forging an affinity with the wildlife, the earth and the waters of the moorland, experiencing everything from an otter's perspective, and in a sense, becoming an otter-man (2005, p.34). As a result, the book gives detailed and unique descriptions of a landscape just inches from the ground. Macfarlane deduces that Williamson's ferality was not only necessary to the "pursuit of a literary ideal" but also an essential escape from the scars of his service in the First World War (2005, p.34).

Poynor's movement practice reflects the ideas that Macfarlane is trying to demonstrate through Williamson's story. Specifically the practice is offered as a way to experientially comprehend the body in its many relations, with self, nature, land and other. In an interview with Fergus Early for *The Wise Body: Conversations with Experienced Dancers* (2011), Steve Paxton speaks of the fundamentality of dance to

those who live in urban environments. He claims that living in rural surroundings might provide such a rich physical education that dance classes become almost unnecessary. Unknowingly Poynor proves Paxton's point, having grown up in an urban area she confesses to only feeling truly *in* her body and *in* the world when in immediate connection to nature.

In contrast, Tufnell for example, speaks freely of her childhood love of the outdoors, expressing her desire to watch the world and the things that move within it. She described her body as "silenced and somehow numbed" by relinquishing her outdoor realm to the architecturally constructed world (2004, p.xiv). As if beckoned by wild landscapes, Poynor's work now consciously invites a widening perceptual field beyond an urban architecture that grips us so tightly, in order to redeem the sense of freedom that resounds throughout the body when working in nature. Poynor's sentiment resonates within the following passage from Paxton.

> I think [dance] provides a model for the body, which means the body is not encapsulated only by what the urban architecture situation is, which is really minimal and degrades the body to a very simplified version of what it could be. Potential is minimised (in Lansley and Early, 2011, p.92).

Poynor might agree that exploring the body's potential in movement is unfeasible without deep consideration of its innate capacity to negotiate and converse with its environment. There is no better place for testing the body, the senses and the mind than the natural landscape, as she reiterates, "the natural environment becomes both partner and teacher" (1995, paragraph. 45).

Luce-Kapler, following Abram, states that the sites and conditions in which we write (particularly those that connect us more closely to the natural world) affect both our work and ourselves; she asserts, "writing gathers up the threads of my living" (2004,

xiii). The increased stimulus of being outside during movement practice affects the very depths of the body, placing all the senses in a state of full of attention. Alive with the force of sensitivity, this fully charged perceptual awareness is extremely conducive to powerful imaginative and creative endeavours, fuelling richness and vitality in one's writing that does not emerge in the quite the same way when working in a studio setting. Writing which extends from indoor practice can remain dry and preoccupied with the everyday and the mundane. Whereas, outdoor writing is forged from a bodily experience that has found a new lease of life in the unfamiliar, constantly altering conditions of self, weather and landscape. These tantalising territories breed imagery, memory and impressions that weave a fantastical narrative on the site of the page.

Discovering what the nooks and crannies of a landscape has to offer, the mover/writer ventures toward sights, sounds and sensations that might otherwise go unnoticed in more hurried and less observant situations. Writing aims to retell the journeys of discovery and exploration through words that remain connected to the experience through a body still lingering at the moment of its happening. These writings are a heavily interweaved pattern, or a varifocal prose, to borrow an idea from Macfarlane (2005b). The landscape resembling the bigger picture through the richness of a panoramic view, the self in relationship to land is clearly visible at a macro-level, while microanalysis highlights the detail and density of one's internal landscape. In this manner, details become the anchors of perception, and writing becomes intrinsically individual (not general), gripping at the idea of the transcendental power of nature. As Macfarlane might argue, the writing becomes a work of hope "set against the unbalance and ignorance of the present time" (2005c, p.34). As a culture, we find it challenging,

> to express this sense of what landscapes do to us. We have devised highly efficient metric systems for saying what they do for us: cost-

> benefit analyses of per-hectare yield, or tourist draw. But it is difficult to speak of their effects upon us without lapsing into the blithe or the mystical. And so, on the whole, we remain silent (2005c p.34).

Nature writer, Barry Lopez defines the quality of wilderness as something that forces one to *stumble*, that is to say, it attracts our attention away from the "narrow impetuosity of Western schedules", he continues to explain, "this landscape is able to expose in startling ways the complacency of our thoughts about land in general" (1986, p.12). Of course, Lopez is speaking specifically of the vastness of the Arctic. Yet the same principle may be applied to those who happen to explore the eerie isolation on the moorlands of Devon, the intimidating mountainous topography of the Cairngorms, or the eighteen-mile stretch of coastal line at Chesil Beach, Dorset, as an escape from their lives in the inner city. Landscapes such as these afford us the opportunity to really look between the layers of ourselves, they give time and space with which to [re]connect with the essence of oneself and a writing practice might help to reaffirm this connection. Luce-Kapler might agree that writing is embodied, that the traces of our embodied histories reside in language and that it shapes and is shaped by the texts that we create/read.

For Poynor, everything we need to know can be located somewhere within the body. Yet she believes that in order to tap into what might be termed *kinaesthetic intelligence* held within the body, one might benefit from a physical, emotional and imaginative engagement with diverse natural environments. As mentioned earlier within this chapter and echoing Paxton's sentiment, Poynor maintains that there is no greater teacher than the natural landscape. Speaking to us through complex textures, forms, ebbs and flows, our physicality is reflected in every placement of weight, every shift of a hand or foot. We begin to see ourselves differently, to feel the truth of our three dimensional capacity through the tactile mirror of the landscape. For Poynor, the process of shifting into

words is about affirmation and reclamation. Writing offers the mover/writer a sense of grounding that affirms their experience as useful, significant and special, culminating in a sense of reclaiming something uniquely individual yet completely valid in its contribution to one's personal development. The words facilitate the mover/writers forward progression, they provide a portal into verbal sharing and as part of their indelible nature, they are the footprint or the trace of what is otherwise known as dance.

* * *

Overall I class my experiences during the training (and the underlying reason why I chose to do the training) as an affirmation of my need to grow as an individual. I have recently felt the pressure and restriction of my nature (self) as a manifestation of my parentage, education and culture and was beginning to question my individuality. What this training has done is provided a [re]focus, a means to situating my nature within the context of my environment. But crucially, it has provided me with a sense of how I can find the strength to be the person I want to be, and not fall into place like those around me. As you might say Helen, giving yourself 'permission' is the key to this journey.

With regard to my practice, I feel that there is a long road ahead. I have not quite found the underlying glue of how I might be able to really put this thinking into practice/movement. Perhaps these ideas have already started filtering through but I have not recognised them yet. There have been many questions circling my mind about my reasons for choosing dance as an expressive/creative medium. I wonder if my need for the dance to become something other than just 'my body in space moving', clouds my judgement. Perhaps I should not imagine myself as 'dance artist', 'practitioner', 'aspiring academic', perhaps it is time to be happy to be 'Gemma' who happens to love dancing, writing and playing outdoors, as it helps her become more visible to herself.

It feels such a relief to voice my true feelings through writing - it provides a distance and shelter from something that remains unnamed and that I am always afraid of (even during movement). I do not yet understand why I find it difficult to verbalise these things in the structure of 'normal' conversation. I think my lack of confidence to speak out says a lot about my current need to reach beyond the culturally inscribed me.

It sounds like it makes a lot of sense on paper.

Chapter Six

A Multifaceted Practice

Although Kneale had always demonstrated an artistic leaning while growing up, it might be more accurate to describe her as a latecomer with regard to her artistic career. On placing high value in the time a mother shares with her children, Kneale made the decision to stay at home in order to bring up her young family between 1981 and 1995. During this time, she took various part time and temporary art-based jobs that maintained her interest in crafts. Now in her sixtieth year Kneale has been a practicing artist for the past twenty years. Regardless of this relatively short career (compared with the other case study subjects within this thesis), Kneale articulates an ingrained, self-assured attitude to her practice that one might otherwise expect to find in an artist with a more established career.

She describes the time she spent as a mature student at art school as a seminal moment in her life, yet this declaration is coated with the emotional strain of such a life diverting decision. Feeling satisfied that she had fulfilled her engagement with motherhood, Kneale sensed the time was right to begin to cultivate the career that compelled her. Now an established independent artist making work of an interdisciplinary nature, Kneale's decision to explore a novel career route allowed her to take back the reins of her life. Returning to higher education in 1996, Kneale embarked upon a degree in fine art at Oxford Brookes University. Pursuing the creative trait she had always harboured, Kneale's move towards an artistic vocation was not about escaping the portion of her life she had dedicated to rearing her children; rather it was the right time for her to begin the next stage of her life.[51]

[51] Kneale had previously gained a Certificate in Education and ceramics at the Froebel Institute (1974) and spent her early career as a primary school teacher in London. She then studied photography (Oxfo

Realising the significance of such a shift in direction, Kneale speaks of this period in her life with great affection. She notes how returning to education as a mature student brought with it many emotional challenges and complications regarding her role as a mother. Although during the 1980s many more women in positions of power demonstrated Britain's development in equality[52] and a change to attitudes regarding working mothers, there remained a significant difference in earnings between men and women and patriarchal tradition maintained that women had a social obligation to stay-at-home and raise their family (Vickery, 2001).[53] However, Kneale acknowledges the importance of freeing herself from the isolation that accompanies the role of 'stay-at-home-mother', she writes, "the surfaces of my eyes were peeled away and I could see out of the window of 'home' once again" (Kneale, 2012, p.2).

Returning to education as a mature student brought with it feelings of self-judgment regarding the disruption to her home life and intimidation, as she realised how much this change of direction mattered (Kneale, 2012). Her decision to re-train was fuelled by a longing to hone her natural artistic tendencies, Kneale craved the notion of carving out her own artistic identity, providing a sense of substance to her knowledge and skills. (Kneale, 2012). The philosophical process of personal enlightenment that seems to be the driving force for Kneale's artistic path, demonstrates her need to regain a sense of

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rd Brookes) and book arts (Oxford Printmakers) during 1996-1997. Whilst raising her children to school age, she worked part time in art based jobs to maintain her passion for craft and creative expression.

[52] Although traditionally women have been greatly underrepresented in British parliamentary roles, the following represent notable women in power placed in the public eye via the media during the 1980s: 1979, Margaret Thatcher becomes Britain's first female prime minister. 1980, Lesley Abdela forms the 300 Group to push for equal representation of women in the House of Commons. 1981, Baroness Young becomes the first woman leader of the House of Lords. 1983, Lady Mary Donaldson becomes the first woman Lord Mayor of London. 1987, Diane Abbot becomes the first black woman member of the Westminster Parliament. 1988, Elizabeth Butler-Sloss becomes the first woman Law Lord when she is appointed an Appeal Court Judge. (See Vickery, A. (ed.) (2001) *Women, Privilege, and Power: British Politics, 1750 to the Present*. Stanford University Press).

[53] The 1970s saw the introduction of The Equal Pay Act, founded in order that women might receive payment for their labour equal to that of their male colleagues.

self outside the gender specific roles of mother, daughter, wife, and granddaughter to which she had become accustomed. There appears to be a very conscious decision to move away from the life that she had cultivated as a result of social conformity, and towards a life that she fantasised about living. Kneale craved an organic sense of self rather than the one she saw as a reflection of society; this would become the basis for her later (more prominent) art works. Yet the initial change of direction carried with it a sense of drifting away from everyone and everything that had shaped her life up until this point. In personal communications Kneale commented that it felt like learning a language that all the people closest to her could not understand (2012).

Early Years

Not dissimilar to Tufnell or Poynor, Kneale also experienced difficulties with the conflict between artistic expression and the uncompromising strictures of academia. Through describing how the fractions of education and her desire to make work that explored creative expression, Kneale believes that the system of dividing courses into modules interrupted her endeavour to generate a linear and meaningful body of work (2012). For Kneale, the educational system was a hurdle to overcome, and she looks back upon its challenges with fondness for the scope that it provided her. Kneale has become an experienced claimant of arts funding and her entrepreneurial skills have enabled her to find openings and platforms for both her art and teaching endeavours.

Regarding her aptitude for both creative and formal registers of writing, she recalls how the structures attached to academia taught her a way of languaging and formulating thought that tussled with different rules to that of the creative writing she preferred. Kneale acknowledges the place where that particular way of writing and thinking holds within her current understanding and use of writing. Recognising how, in the act of

writing, she has become as fond of organization as she is of resisting it, she admits that there is a "certain kind of perverse enjoyment" obtained through an academic endeavour that rejects the disorder that accompanies creativity and imagination (2012, p.373 of Appendix C).

Despite her concerns at composing a suitable body of work for her degree, Kneale successfully accomplished a substantial foundation of early work, with which she launched her career as an artist. Initial pieces centered on themes of the domestic environment, ritualisation, and memory associated with domestic chores, demonstrated through a mixed media approach to installation. The live body did not feature within her work at this early stage yet notions of body were present via iconography and photography. Objects as symbolic representation were the main modes of making the body visible. For instance, a chair would serve to illustrate the body and as such, became a recurrent image. Even as her work developed the later use of live body, the chair in its many guises, (for instance the backstool, milking stool, tall chair, bar stool, piano bench), remains a repetitive theme within her work. For Kneale, the chair echoes the image of its human occupant typically representing binarised extremes: fear/comfort, contemplation/disregard, and grief/praise.[54]

Born in 1953, Kneale experienced childhood during the 1950s and 1960s, and identifies much of her adult philosophy on life and the self with the lessons she learnt from her maternal grandmother. Kneale's family life would have been shaped by the influences of modernism and as a result, her early work demonstrates the tensions of finding one's

[54]The chair in Kneale's art plays a dual role, representing the body; it also denotes self expression signifying the changing state of her identity, from feelings of power to self punishment. Kneale's use of a chair or stool embodies her need to create work that draws an audience in, perhaps creating intimacy by being positioned forward and toward the spectator, or rejection when turned away. The chair is a continued theme within her work although it is used to hold her body in a familiar, non-threatening and welcoming posture in order that she might communicate her 'stories' honestly and openly to an audience.

identity within a male gendered modernity. Following Genevieve Lloyd (1984), Hilde Haynen (2005) assigns the masculine tendency of modernity to the notion that historically, reason and objectivity are associated with 'maleness'. Heynen also reflects on Rita Felski's (1995) findings that heroic figures of modernist literature position men as representations of power, progress and logic, that demonstrate "new forms of male subjectivity, which manifest themselves in the public arena" (2005, p.102). The resulting influence of Kneale's modernist upbringing will have surrounded her with images of men as the gallant 'homeless' explorer, free of domestic ties, active, dominate and heroic, while women maintained passive, nurturing and compassionate roles confined to the domestic environment.

Kneale's work began by commenting upon the ritualisation of housework and domestic activity, and the underestimated, undervalued concept of 'home', following other British female artists with a particular interest in the effect of patriarchal dominance on how women live their lives, (for instance, Lucy Orta, Paula Rego, Sarah Lucus, Tracey Emin and Rachel Whiteread). Experiencing firsthand the effect of modernisation via labour-saving appliances in the home, Kneale witnessed the alleged liberation of the 'housewife', and observed the developments as women commenced the fight for non-discriminatory employment rights, pay and maternity benefits. As such, her postmodern perspective re-evaluates the notion of domesticity by exploring it first as site of independence and empowerment, and secondly as a site of subjugation within later work.

On completing her Fine Art degree in 1998, Kneale entered a pivotal phase in her artistic career. Developing a growing body of work that was formed under the umbrella of fine art, Kneale had no idea that there was a whole branch of dance where her work

might also fit (2013). She began a collaborative enquiry with interdisciplinary artist Ann Rapstoff that would facilitate a nourishment of both her professional skills set, and creative ideas. Through their activities, they formulated the artist-led events organisation *VAIN Liveart* (c.2001-2003), providing access to, and support of visual and performance arts in Oxfordshire. Kneale pinpoints the period in time with which this venture launched, as the seed of her experiments for placing the live body inside her work. The *VAIN* platform was nominated as a selection event for the Nation Live Arts Review (NLAR) in 2003 funded by Southern Arts Federation, and the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation. As a result of the curatorial and organisational work Kneale carried out for *VAIN,* she has maintained relationships with galleries, museums and arts organisations in Oxford to continue to support, build access to, and promote fine, visual and live art for the region. The professional profile that she has built along the way has worked to facilitate her making and performance endeavours.

Her initial curatorial work with Rapstoff led to the formulation of a collective trio known as *Kitchen Antics and Appliances* (2005- 2006). Arising from an 'artist in residence' call, a partnership commenced between Kneale, Rapstoff and Barbara Dean with the Museum of Domestic Architecture and Design (MoDA) that was funded by Arts Council England. The residency led to several interventions that invited museum visitors to participate in the re-evaluation and celebration of the postmodern notion of 'home'. The work drew attention to the three women's lived experiences of the suffocation, isolation and restriction that accompany duties of the housewife and aimed to contrast the political, philosophical and patriarchal perspectives that circulate this contention.

Following Theodore Zeldin's 'conversation menu', *Kitchen Antics and Appliances* hosted tea party events in the museum, an endeavour that aimed to encourage dialogue between visitors and the artists that sought to identify the postmodern attitude to home. Historically, the tea party represents a traditional upper class social gathering that can be traced back to Victorian times (Broomfield, 2007). Although the formalities that accompany this custom have discontinued since the dramatic change to Britain's economy and culture after World War II, the concept is still associated with the luxury of time to converse with friends over light refreshments, served upon good quality tableware. With this in mind, the inclusion of such a tea party with its social conventions and rigidity would suggest the artist's intention to reject modern culture by returning to forgotten traditions to facilitate building a new cultural synthesis.

The trio used the imitation domestic setting of the tea party as a springboard into enquiries that addressed identity, transient community and the dissolvability of human communication in a technological and progressive age. It is interesting to note here that although Kneale insists that the installations and performances were non-gender specific, the trio of women all reflected upon domesticity from their individual female perspective and, like Kneale, they drew upon memory and experience relating to the matriarchal figures of their upbringing (Mothers, Grandmothers and Aunts) (2013). Moreover, the documentation of the events ran by *Kitchen Antics and Appliances* (2006) evidences a distinct female majority dominating the audience, supported by a claim on the website (see www.kitchenanticsandappliances.com) that these audiences were invited from a pool of female orientated projects such as The Women's Institute.

This enquiry led to a three-part theory of home as, reinvention, subject to cultural and consumer influence and, an expression of identity. The artists assailed these themes

culminating in various solo and group, performative works. Mimicking the tea party research strategy, the work extending from these findings also involved the participation of, or interaction with an invited audience. These audience members were also required to bring along an object that held memories of home that they were happy to share in an informal exchange. The object stories, personal histories, investments and themes brought fresh and diverse histories into the museum, which Kneale recalls as the real intention of the trio's work (2013). In this way, individual and group histories were given voice. Their contributions gave life to objects otherwise destined to be placed behind glass and accompanied by the dreary factual description of its intended use.

The work mediated between artist, audience and the world as a means by which both artist and audience member might comprehend their surroundings. Echoing the influence of feminist thinking, this work illustrates Kneale's emergent desire to speak from experience about the world through an engaged material practice. Kneale's period of collaborative exploration with Dean and Rapstoff opened a new phase in her creative endeavour with which she began to invest more of her own body into the work. Initially this took the form of being present in her work. Remaining silent, unless persuaded to engage in conversation with a spectator, she always remained immersed in a simple, contemplative task. Under Dean and Rapstoff's guidance, the resulting works of the residency placed an emphasis on live and interactive strategies, used to sift, and distil public responses to continual resuscitation of the domestic environment under the pressure of culture and consumerism. Consequently, the alterations in her enquiry that resulted from the residency began to shift and shape her practice toward what it is today.

At the very same time that Kneale began to explore introducing her body into her work, she began to attend weekly movement classes provided by her local 5Rhythms teacher.

5Rhythms was Kneale's gateway into a much more committed phase of using body-based practices to form and inform both her life and work. Its founder, and subsequently its teachers and practitioners describe 5Rhythms, as a mindful movement meditation practice (5Rythyms, c.2013). Originator Gabrielle Roth's own experience of injury and following depression, combined with that of her observation of rehabilitation patients, led to her theories that negative experience and emotional trauma stored within the body over time, leads to a physically and emotionally dysfunctional human condition. Kneale found 5Rhythms in 1996, the same year she decided to re-educate herself and as such the practice has supported her every turn thereafter. Certifying her admiration for its values and benefits, she became an accredited teacher in 2005.

Considering 5Rhythms as a way of releasing body-mind tensions and stresses that can cause our bodies to feel burdened, ungrounded and painfully stuck in unnecessary bodily holding patterns, or emotional paralysis, Kneale understands the practice not as movement therapy but as having therapeutic potential for those who practice over time (2012). The number of men participating in 5Rhythms is increasing yet it remains a practice dominated by women (Thron, 2010). The beneficial factors of confidence building, self approval, freer movement, and enlightened disposition suggest the ever present need for women to reassign themselves permission to reveal their inner selves, and acceptance of their physicality and emotionality (Cook, Ledger, and Scott, 2003). Kneale's commitment to the practice and teaching suggests that these liberating factors might have been a key attraction to her at this stage in her life. As such, Kneale's objective is to offer 5Rhythms participants alternative ways of creative expression, positive self-image, confidence and facilitation of life changes that might breed stress and anxiety.

> [The rhythms] reveal ways to creatively express aggressiveness and vulnerability, emotions and anxieties, edges and ecstasies. They reconnect us to cycles of birth, death and renewal and hook us up to the spirit in all living things. They initiate us back into the wisdom of our bodies and unleash movement’s dynamic healing power (5Rhythms, 2013).

Having not participated in any formal or recreational dance prior to taking up 5Rhythms, Kneale's apparently whimsical launch into bodily practice appears to come out of nowhere. Offering weekly classes to people over fifty, suggests that the trigger for her sudden interest came as a result of her middle-age conclusion to revisit education and implies that the change in career was coupled with a change in social life and pastimes. A note on her website alludes to her perspective that age is something that requires a flexible attitude and will to adapt, something she claims to have learnt from her Grandmother, who lived until 102 years of age (2015).

Yet hidden within her teaching is an essentialist line of enquiry that also permeates her artwork. Kneale's desire to [re]awaken the indigenous human potential to share, converse and empathise with one another's experiences, is mirrored in the philosophy of equality that she extends to the dance floor, but more interestingly is also a constituent feature of her art. Kneale's work attempts to suggest how similarly rooted we are as human beings who experience, live and sense the world as it surrounds us. The subtle hints amid her work request the spectator to recall a comparable memory or identify with experiences that Kneale herself is privileged to have encountered. In her endeavour to reach out through the medium of shared experience, there is a divide that might cause her work to be misdirected and consequently misunderstood.

As Kneale ventured upon the independent phase of her career, her interest in the value of shared experience, communal memory and personal story telling grew to a great degree. Kneale began to gather interest in private oral stories, and how the ease of

mundane, repetitive action (like walking, washing up, hanging clothes out to dry), might open up scope for these stories to emerge in dialogue. Kneale believes that ordinary actions such as walking, hold meditative potential that enable participants to engage in open and heartfelt dialogue that might normally be held back by normative modes of conversation (face to face, eye contact). An example of this idea is provided by the durational installation *Peel* (2006). *Peel* explores the extent to which the British public has a relationship with a particular object and action, in this case peeling a potato. Kneale hopes that the everyday, non-threatening and familiar image of peeling potatoes, coupled with the invitation to walk freely and alter one's proximity to the installation, might encourage spectators to speak of their own stories connected with this action, with the aim of finding common ground across generations, cultural backgrounds, beliefs, race, class and sex.

Figure 4: Kipp, C. (2015) Kneale in *Peel* (2013 and 2006). Photograph. [Online]. [Accessed 29 February 2016]. Available at: <http://www.hilarykneale.com/peel/>.

Kneale peels potatoes, one after another, after another and so on, retrieving the earth covered potatoes from an everlasting pile around her feet, scraping them clean with a modern plastic vegetable peeler and dropping them to one side, to gather. As she peels, the skins accumulate in the oversized marsupial pocket of her extra long apron that hangs from her lap as she perches on top of an abnormally tall chair. In a Lewis Carrollian style, the oversized everyday objects of the apron, chair and enormous pile of potatoes, together with the ordinary task with which she is immersed - yet open and approachable - play at the edges of the unfamiliar and absurd. Yet the playfulness of the task and the unusualness of the scene mean that the boundaries between performer and audience are blurred and spectators feel able to approach Kneale and fall into conversation organically.

Constructed by Kneale, the *Manual of Domestic Incidents* (2006) is an artist's book that seeks to bring the traces of other people's lives together through her own observations and memories of the notion of home. A response to the research that she performed during the *Kitchen Antics and Appliances*' residency, the book was designed as an autonomous artistic response to the process and discoveries that accompanied her individual perspective. Composed to merge impressions of "discomfort or control run in tandem with pathos and humour", the book is a collection of stories, quotations and sayings, some individual, some universal, that have been sourced through writing, memory or spoken word (Kneale, in Dean et al, 2006). However, most importantly Kneale acknowledges, "it has been collected from a distillation in my very core through years of participation in family life" (2006, paragraph 4).

Kneale's research during the residency at MoDA concentrated on the hidden archive - the records kept from visitor view and stored as a memorial. Drawn to the collections

of instruction manuals and leaflets, DIY publications and home management books, she became occupied by the simplistic images and impassive language as it educates its reader via normative claims to living. Kneale became fascinated by the physicality of everyday chores, how the routines, rituals and learnt skills inscribe the female body. Furthering this interest, she explored how the thoughts, emotions and stories that emerge within a mind allowed the freedom to wander within its task, might come to be held in time/memory/body/object/act. Kneale recalls,

> My sister in law knits and knits and as she knits she adds thoughts into her work of the person she is knitting for, she un-knits the stresses and strains, joys and sorrows of the everyday into the continuum of her work. My grandmother, Margaret Alexander, punctuated her day with sayings that now add sense and her memory to my own 'daily round' (2006, paragraph 3).

Echoing a postmodernism of resistance, Kneale conceived the artist book as a way to imagine, and comment upon what humanity may have lost to an era of information and technology. Its pages, with their repetitive teacup emblem invite the reader to share further thoughts over tea with another. The pages are sliced into with disconnected quotes and short prose, the nostalgic character of black and white suggests a period in time unfamiliar to a younger audience, making the points at which the reader is confronted with familiar images of 'home' very few.

Toward the front of the book, an unreferenced, unpunctuated quotation could be interpreted as an indication that Kneale was beginning to consider the postmodern effect on the body, "after the birth of appliances where does the body go" (2006, p17). This led to the present phase in her work that harks back to what Abram might term the indigenous roots of Western culture prior to its separation from nature (Abram, 1997). In an effort to explore this sentiment, Kneale opened a new chapter in her work that

researched human connections to natural elements, which birthed several works that became the seeds of her practice today. A marker of this directional change came in the form of a long engagement entitled *Silent Vessel* (a project that developed over an eight-year period, consisting of made objects, poetry, performative installation and an artist book), a work that bridged Kneale's interest in identity, body and nature.

Kneale's exploration into artist books as a further mode of expression, led to the development of her own writing voice. A defining moment in Kneale's practice can be identified in the production of her seminal work *Silent Vessel* - originally conceived in 2003 as part of her degree portfolio, then subsequently reconceived as a performative, durational installation between 2005 and 2011, during which there have been several sharing's of the work since its earliest conception. The original installation of this work marks a significant move away from collaboration, into independence.

Consisting of over a hundred handcrafted ceramic bowls, the bulk of which bear the mark of a carefully etched word upon its surface, the culminating artist book aims to tell the story of how the pots came into being and is her first effort to forge a whole book in her own words. The pots that carry a word do so as a symbol of the image that came into Kneale's consciousness as she brought the vessel to life in her hands. Each pot has its own uniquely penned haiku poem providing a further layer of narrative to the life of the pottery. Those that do not have a word pressed into their surface are no less important than those that do, yet they might be interpreted as representing a silent pause or moment for contemplation in the unfolding story of the work.

For the viewer of the installation, the words might signify the biographic nature of the work, seemingly trying to communicate a story that merely remains translucent and ungraspable, tantalising and elusive. Critically, the words provide too few 'dots' to assist

the viewers effort to make feasible connections between the artist, the concept and the remaining pots, yet Kneale's contemplative conviction to place, frame and position the pots in response to space, time and embodied sense, gives just enough information for the viewer to imagine what the word might stand in for. Significantly, the installation does not include the haiku poems or the artist book for audience viewing as these were produced some time after the discontinuation of the installation. Might it be reasonable to assume that the story of *Silent Vessel* is the real work?

Continuing to nurture her fondness for collaboration, Kneale joined Rapstoff in 2007 to create a body of work entitled *The Go-between.* The work was commissioned by The Frauen Museum in Bonn, celebrating the sixtieth year of the Oxford-Bonn link since 1947.

Figure 5: Clawz Moon (2012) Kneale in *Silent Vessel* (2011). Photograph. [Online]. [Accessed 29 February 2016]. Available at: <http://www.hilarykneale.com/silent-vessel/>.

Demonstrating how Kneale's interest in literature was beginning to filter into her work, the project takes not only its name, but also its intention, from L. P. Hartley's *The Go-Between* (1953). Revolving around Kneale and Rapstoff's joint interest in water, the work involved an exchange between the River Rhine near the site of the museum and

the Thames River at the site of Kneale and Rapstoff's home in Oxford. In the exchange, river water from both sources was collected and transported over land, by foot, before being emptied into the opposing river site. Joined by participants in silence, walking journeys interrupted the act of water exchange "transcending differences in language and leaving traces that formed another dialogue" (Kneale and Rapstoff, 2009).

Kneale grew increasingly interested in locating water through the practice of dowsing. In the years after *The Go-between* project, she began to incubate the creation of *The Alchemists Garden* (2009), an experimental installation which would be nurtured further during her residency at the *Summer Dancing Festival* in 2012, and which would form the basis of her later series of work *With Water*. Extending from *The Go-between* endeavour, she began a campaign among friends, family and acquaintances to participate in the collection of water and the stories concerning its collection process. As a result, Kneale received hundreds of stories and containers of water from all over the world, these were eventually put to use as part of a weeklong performance installation (Decoda, 2014).

It is important to note that prior to 2009 the growing body of her work and the umbrella that she was working under remained defined as fine art (2013). Although she had adopted a performative presence within her work since 2005, the close network of fine art within which she immersed herself, had meant she had little awareness of contemporary dance platforms where her work might also exist. Kneale claims that even though she was dancing and teaching 5Rhythms, it was only through her work with Helen Poynor (who she met via the testimonies of other 5Rhythms practitioners) that she began to finally exercise her own voice as an artist and move her work to what she terms a more fitting audience (2013). Between 2000 and 2006, two body-based

practices came into Kneale's awareness that would have lasting effect and influence upon her practice, namely Poynor's *Walk of Life* training, and Native American Shamanism.

Kneale speaks of the personal and emotional challenges that she experienced via Poynor's *Walk of Life* training programme as, "sometimes mentally excruciatingly uncomfortable and challenging", claiming that Poynor's holistic approach to the body and environment was key in assisting her understanding of the correlation between personal process and artistic expression (2013). The training programme, (developed from an amalgamation of Anna Halprin's body-based approaches to creative expression and inclusivity in dance, and the philosophy and teachings of Javanese movement practitioner Suprapto Suryodarmo, see chapter 4), opened Kneale's perceptual capacity to the world she desired to embrace more entirely and taught her the benefits of fully inhabiting the body-mind (Kneale, 2013). Categorising her experiences during the training (and potentially the underline reason why she may have chosen to embark on the training in the first place), as an affirmation of her need to grow as an individual. Sensing the pressure and restriction of the identity she assumed as a manifestation of her parentage, education and culture, Kneale questioned her individuality and sought to regain purchase of her identity in the hope that it would drive a fresh creativity through her work (2013).

The training (with its intense workshops aimed at investigating free-form moving beyond discipline and cultural inscription) provided Kneale with a means to situating herself within the context of her environment yet crucially, enabled her to reject the temptation to fall into her assumed place in society. This refined approach to life, study and work, as emulating from Poynor's philosophy of giving one's self 'permission', is

fundamental to understanding the difference between this movement practice and alternative, stylised practices. What Kneale experienced was the permission to explore the movement possibilities offered by the physical landscape she immersed herself with, as fundamental to the development of her sense of self, embodiment and the ability to be fully present in her own body. With this, she has developed an increased understanding of how her body interrelates and converses with nature and the objects that inhabit these landscapes, providing a deeper sense of connection with which to arrive at dialogues of movement, imagination and written language.

The training provided Kneale with a way to open up a "voice in the writing" (2013, p.371 of Appendix C). Describing her renewed practice, she likens "moving [to] an inhale", allowing her the ability to open her perceptual field, feel and perceive the immediate landscape more vividly than one might without the ability to engage in full embodiment (2013, p.374 of Appendix C). "The writing is an exhale" she claims, suggesting that the language that bubbles forth from moving in response to a landscape is a different type of language to that which might be used in everyday situations (2013, p.374 of Appendix C). She maintains that her approach to writing is intuitive, subconscious storytelling, rather than reflective or matter of fact description, and is aimed at communicating something of the essence of what she experiences and perceives to a third person (Kneale, 2013). The issues that this throws up are addressed in the chapter that analyses Kneale's practice. Yet it is important to note here that this implies that although Kneale claims that the practice has roots in a solid approach to embodiment and focus on subjective bodily experience, the written element of the work shifts to a future-orientated perspective, indicating an emphasis on cognitive activity rather than a holistic body-mind engagement.

In much the same way as many 5Rhythms practitioners/teachers, Kneale has made connections between the roots of the 'Rhythms' practice and Native American shamanic philosophies.[55] Roth's autobiographical text (1990, 1998, and 1999) admits that the work is influenced by the ancient stories, histories and medicine practices of the native peoples of her homeland, but Kneale goes a step further by linking the prayer dances of North American Indians to Roth's rhythms. This parallel led Kneale to eventually engage in shamanic practice and teaching under the guidance of Chris Lüttichau at the Northern Drum Shamanic Centre, where she is a member of the council and Vision Guest Guardian.[56]

Guardianship is an honoured position within the shamanic community, involving the skills necessary to hold and support a group, build and secure a base camp, lead in song, prayer and storytelling and hold a position of authority, respect and dominance for the participants of such quests (Lüttichau, 2013). As a rite of passage, the quest was originally carried out by young Native Americans who would venture off alone into the landscape to immerse themselves in nature, returning only having received the unique 'vision' of clarity and perspective required to move onto a new chapter in one's life

[55]Examples; Cathy Ryan is a 5Rhythms certified teacher who has, like Kneale, trained with Helen Poynor and Chris Luttichau. Lee Bolton is a dancer, teacher and contact improviser who combines contact improvisation with influences from 5rhythms and Helen Poynor's *Walk of Life*.

[56] Chris Lüttichau founded the Northern Drum Shamanic Centre in 1998. The centre has been utilised as a hub for shamanic education where it supports many workshops and retreats for those interested in Native American Indian practices and beliefs. Luttichau has practiced shamanic approaches since 1980 which led him to study North American practices in 1982. Sharing his knowledge through various workshops and training programmes, his teaching covers a variety of subjects from healing to self-development. Luttichau has also authored a book based on his work; *Animal Spirit Guides: Discover your power animal and the Shamanic Path* (2009). See www.northerndrum.com. In order for Kneale to gain the trust and knowledge required to lead workshops for Northern Drum, she has had to complete a series of training programme over the course of several years (c.2008-). Her specific interest is in medicine teachings and she is a member of the medicine lodge, a group of individuals who have completed the full three-year training programme (she now facilitates this training course alongside Luttichau). The group studied the many outdoor ceremonies and spiritual practices that include "personal empowerment, awakening and raising consciousness, healing methods, spirit contact, meditation and dream" (Luttichau, 2013). Kneale works in wilder places in the UK, running creative retreats, Vision Quests and Sweat Lodges that support and assist the work of Northern Drum.

(Meiklejohn-Free, 2013). Again, representative of Kneale's own journey and a significant reflection on the creative process she has cultivated (particularly with her latest collaborator, photographer Christian Kipp whom she met during her installation of *Alchemist Garden* in 2009).

Kneale asserts that she appreciates both the *Walk of Life* and Shamanic practice as "two sides of the same coin" (2013, p.371 of Appendix C), enabling an opening of her perceptual field to a 'real' sense of inhabiting her own body. This also enables her to understand how embodiment can provide a connection between the self she desires to be, and the nature she wishes to [re]connect with in order to establish greater creative potential and a fuller sense of life. Referring specifically to the *Walk of Life* training, she claims, "I unwound myself from the inside out and the outside in", enabling, under Poynor's expert guidance, a restructuring, not just of her practice but of her identity and sense of Being (2013, p.371 of Appendix C). These practices set in motion a re-shaping and redefining of her as a person, as flesh and blood yet also as an artist and performer. For Kneale, it was expressly these 'two sides of the same coin', that brought her back to the body she felt she had lost ownership of, only to rediscover through colourful story writing and connecting with the land, that in telling her stories, she might encourage others to find their own [re]connections.

* * *

Through Poynor, Kneale met independent dance artist Katye Coe (Artistic Director of artist-led dance project Decoda and Senior Lecturer in Dance at Coventry University), and applied for the Making Space artist residency programme at the Summer Dancing festival in June 2009 (Decoda, 2014). This event represented a turning point for Kneale who discovered a whole family of like-minded practitioners and artists she had not been

aware of previously. Interestingly, Kneale names Tufnell and Karczag as two of the most influential figures with whom she developed a rapport during her residency (2013). Kneale claims that she was drawn to Tufnell and Karczag's work as a result of their holistic philosophy, teaching methods and the similarity between their practices and her own (see chapter 2) (2013). The residency also provided Kneale with a new pool for her work to seamlessly slip into, and one that continues to offer countless opportunities and discoveries in terms of expanding her practice within the field of dance (2013).

A shared aesthetic interest had drawn Kneale and Kipp to work together, they forged an ongoing collaborative partnership and friendship that birthed their current body of work, *With Water* (2012, 2013, 2013b). Kneale and Kipp's collaboration materialised through a mutual fascination with the embodiment of natural landscapes as both a way to look at the world and a way of delving into creative process. Both share a love of nature writing and combine this in a unique methodology merging moving practice, embodied observation, photography, wild camping and the philosophy of nature. During each period of collaboration in a new environment, Kipp and Kneale take time to develop a physical relationship with the land before beginning to work, immersing themselves in the environment. They then continue the work while developing a visual, physical, sensory relationship with the land through walking, and exploring the texture, surface, scent, tide, nooks, crannies and, in particular, each landscape's relationship to water, past and present.

Figure 6: Kipp, C. (2012) *With Water* series (2013). Photograph.
[Online]. [Accessed 29 February 2016]. Available at:
<http://www.hilarykneale.com/with-water/>.

> She held the tiny ocean between her hands. A wave of water wild enough to surf is conjured out of a moment. The dark colours and glints of silver, sense the skin of her, kiss the water (Kneale, 2015).

The work originated in watery environments in some of the wilder places of Norfolk, Wales, Ireland and most recently Scotland. The duo complied five books: *Sky* (2010)*,* *Pool* (2011), *Island* (2012), Eigg (2013) and their most recent work *Fall* (2014) as part of the *With Water* series. Installations are hosted as a way to open up their process to outside eyes. The individual books are accompanied by the materials of the process - the rough sketches, photographs, writings and stories, which evidence their extensive investigations into the element of water, endless conversations around campfires and the inhabitation of the vast wild places Britain offers.

Exhibitions of the works are always durational installations whereby both Kneale and Kipp are present in the space, a combination of artist, participant, storyteller, character and surveyor of their own installation. Appearing as everyday bodies, or perhaps lying, crouching, sitting somewhere in the space, calling on the memory or embodied experience once more, moving in a contemplative manner, steering themselves through,

around, in between unseen landscapes as if back within the wild place once more. Kneale might be found reading her stories aloud one minute and then chatting in a familiar manner to a spectator the next. Kipp might be seen photographing the happenings of the event from obscure angles or simply listening to the hum of the energy that ebbs and flows throughout the duration of the exhibition.

At the end of each day, they will disassemble the installation and at the beginning of each subsequent day, they will assemble it once more. Each time will be different, as Kneale and Kipp respond to the energy of a new day, the feel of their own weather and drive of a fresh focus brought about by the reflections of the previous day. As follows, their exhibit continues their methodology, spontaneous, ever present, listening and receptive to the shifts of landscape, whether those are inner landscapes or the immediate space the installation exists within. Since Kneale's collaboration with Kipp the established artist voice that she assigns to Poynor's training and the insight that has arisen from her interest in shamanic practice, has meant that her most recent works, (*With Water and Coat*), are slower, longer pieces of work that have been born out of the fusions and shifts in her life, studies and artistic development since 2000.

Kneale's most recent work *Coat* shifts her work up a gear, in terms of its amalgamation of storytelling, writing and the physical discovery of natural landscape. It follows the journey of its own making delighting its audiences with a seemingly fanciful tale of a wild woman who combs the earth in search of animal remains, gathering them so as to honour the memory of creatures that would otherwise remain unacknowledged due to their existence in wild unpopulated places. The story Kneale reads from a huge old storybook, is one she has written as a result of her many hours immersed in natural wild landscapes, it speaks of a place familiar yet unknown to its audience, a place that has

been pieced together from the various locations Kneale has worked in. She mentions key landmarks as if hinting at the impossibility of this landscape being one single place, naming the deer of Wytham Wood Oxford, the Sheep of Dartmoor and grey seals of the Norfolk coast. Her story encourages the audience to reflect upon each of the varied landscapes the British Isles offers, alongside the multitude of wildlife often taken for granted.

Yet there appears to be more behind Kneale's effort to implement an environmental consciousness upon her audience. Within the story are echoes of the relationship between women, animal and land, hinting at the comparison of women to nature (as men are often compared to culture).

Figure 7: Kipp, C. (2012) Kneale in *Coat* (2012/2013). Photographs. [Online]. [Accessed 29 February 2016]. Available at:< http://www.hilarykneale.com/coat/>.

The ecofeminist concept Kneale's writing tussles with, is one which proposes that women (and other subordinated groups: people of colour, children, the poor and the elderly) are aligned with nature due to the endless oppression and domination suffered

by both nature (earth and creature) and subordinate groups since civilisation (Ortner, 1974; Griffin, 1978; Warren, 2000; Cook, 2008). The foundation of this concept is that historically, women have been identified with a symbol of devalue, in this case nature, thus women have experienced inferiority and subordination in the shadow of men (Ortner, 1974).

Yet, more recent anthropological perspectives on this concept argue against both the universality of women's subordination, and women's comparison to the inferior spectacle of nature (Sanday, in Warren, 2000; Ciotlaus, 2010). With this in mind, Kneale's argument appears out-dated, and on closer inspection, it might be proposed that her stance is a more personal one. I suggest that Kneale's story symbolises her own experiences of feeling overlooked, undervalued and inferior. It emerges as a story about the notion of mourning, or a plea against forgetting those entities that might be deemed secondary in one's culture.

> The cells of all these creatures, are her cells, they are painted on her skin, printed, tattooed. [...] As she tells the very last of the stories of the long forgotten, a great cacophony arises that fills the canvas of the coat with life. The sounds that arise and the sounds she sings, call her to dance, she and the coat and the bones begin a dance, they dance until all the ancient songs have been woken from their sleep and echo once more through the oceans and the rivers (Kneale, 2012/3. See Appendix D).

The story and performance of *Coat* reflect the place that Kneale finds herself in today. That is to say, her work has begun to acknowledge the length and breadth of the journey she has taken from young woman, mother, homemaker, and dependant, to mature woman, independent artist, sole earner and free spirit. "The coat itself ends where it touches the earth, in a long, long tail, an old, old, tale" (Kneale, 2012/3. See Appendix D). The bones she collects and wears in the story of *Coat* represent the multiples of self she has experienced along the way, each one acknowledged, each one remembered.

Kneale's current work tentatively treads the line between personal/private and personal/public. Taking the form of a palimpsest, her story uses female gender roles as a tool to develop environmental consciousness within her audience, skilfully masking the underline narrative of the story. Kneale maintains her desire to expose herself through her art, yet remains concealed by the overlapping environmental issues that are illuminated throughout *Coat*.

*   *   *

I write...
...I enter

Angry and uncomfortable at first as if torn from the womb too early
Greasy air fills the void between flesh and cotton
I notice my shadow emerge timidly from behind me
a small child
I write...
...I am calmer now

I am conscious of the joyful nervous energy that arises from my solitude
Travelling now through vein... nervous system
I rampantly project myself upon this place, cutting its silence with every heartbeat
(She stopped her chores to peek at me through gaps too large to conceal her..)
I hurried my pace and gagged under strain
Hammered my torrid heart hard against its bony shelter
Its hangs mere millimetres from ear
Breath bounced back and forth in boundless effort, hitting hollowed walls and paper thin glass
Cushioned by beaten up turf and rejected by unforgiving masonry...

I write...

Something slides yet remains gritty between these tiny soft bones
Warm in the sun I bend and twist to full capacity... noticing skin ruffling... creases evident upon its surface
Opening up all forgotten joints and separating tightly woven muscle tissue...
Quieter now I steer my energy toward... I write... I write...
I pause for breath and close my eyes to listen to my heart against the solemn tired vintage tick-tock, tick-chime that curls the hair back upon my arm
...lip back upon my teeth

my knees... I exist...

I write... I exit... I write

Chapter Seven

The Story Teller

I find a patch of space upon the black theatre floor and kneel. As others join in forming a semi circular border of spectators, I shift my position and scoot along the floor on my hands, feet and buttocks, wondering if I will be too near, too far, or at an unsatisfactory angle. I have an inkling of what I imagine will unfurl within the large darkened space. I am familiar with the space - a home to me for four busy years, this room has accommodated many dance related classes, workshops, discussions, seminars, conferences and performances - I know its layout, its quirks, its nooks and crannies. I am surprised to be here.

The artist I am about to view is also familiar to me. I expected to be stood, wandering or perched uncomfortably somewhere in the open air. I expected to be shading my eyes from the slither of July sun that graced us with its presence these last few days. I expected to be as assumed by the performance as I am with the puzzled reactions of passersby, as they stumble upon something they understand is not directly offered to them and yet it causes them to divert their path or stop and take in a few minutes to observe the curious happenings. Yet, I am here.

It is overwhelmingly warm under the theatre lights that have been angled in such a way to throw a pool of light over the centre of the space, casting the rest of the box in to shadow and gloom. Here, she enters, a robust squat suitcase in hand, I notice its age and I imagine it as the style one might carry aboard a nineteenth century steam engine. It has elegance, its shape is bulbous yet its handle is delicate, I imagine this in a female hand just as it is presented in fronted of me now. She places it just inside the shadows at the back left hand corner of the lit space and leaves it there. It joins several other

objects, which prior to the audience's entrance were placed in some imagined disarray and uncertainty. A stool prominently positioned front and centre, stands amid a small array of brown leather boxes and cases.

Standing tall and confident amongst these belongings is an androgynous figure dressed ordinarily in a plain dark t-shirt topped by a neat cotton cardigan and bright yellow braces that frame a well fitting pair of slim leg trousers tucked lovingly into unseasonably thick toeless socks. Our barefoot host says nothing initially, remains composed, looks about us as if to establish we are all present and simply allows us (the audience) to have a moments quiet to take in the scene. She moves toward a large luggage chest and crouching before it, proceeds to lay it on its side fold back the lid on its hinge and peers inside. While clinks, thuds, and chimes are heard, she begins rummaging tactlessly in the depths of this container, suddenly popping her head up over the upright lid she addresses the audience for the first time.

Matter of factly, she holds up an object from the chest and commences to enlighten us of its individual story. A clue of nervous energy echoes in the background of her voice, I am with her all the way. I understand what I hear to be a combination of honest recollection and playful fiction as a story emerges instinctively, yet hints at a previously decided storyline to assist waking up the audience's imaginations and stir up a sense of make believe and wonder. To accompany these tales she often moves bout the space, bringing them to life with the help of her body and offering them out to members of the audience for closer inspection. At the end of each short tale, she dives back into the chest and eventually we are faced with a scattering of extraordinary bits and pieces, as if the National Trust had a frenzied attic sale.

I see items that once had life, walked the earth, served a rare purpose, entertained small children, entertained adults, yet I see much more than this now I have witnessed their stories. These objects are now part of my story and somehow I feel as though my presence here among these quiet listeners, is now part of their story. A sudden shift in events. She takes up a large heavy book from the chest and closes the lid loosely. Setting down upon the tiny wooden stool, she makes herself as comfortable as she might upon such a scrawny surface and flicks through the book, as if no programmed earmark exists.

She leans forward and begins to read. I hear her story now. She tells of lands and seas, of rock, bone and grasslands. She tells of air, earth, water and the fire within a belly. She calls forth the voices of lands, animals, of birds and those that go unseen amongst the waters, rocks and soils. She tells of night and day and I am there amongst these earthly bodies, her words invite me to smell, taste and hear the scene. The wind cools my face and the streams moisten my clothing, I sense tiny eyes upon me, as the souls of the land look on from their hideaway. She speaks of collecting bones on her travels. I am reminded of her earlier meander through the space, walking vertebra on a lead of red fabric; she spoke to us of the creatures she promises never to forget. She speaks of her own body yearns to merge with the land.

My mind's eye flicks from a picture of her strolling the bostles, causeways, driftways and holloways, to a picture of the metaphoric mother of nature. The story moves to offer the image of a coat fashioned from artist canvas. A tailcoat, or might this be a tale-coat. Popularly worn by Regency gentleman, to appear here in the factual-fiction of how this performance came to exist, it protrudes uneasily from the story for a time until its use becomes clear. On finishing the tale she returns to the suitcase she appeared with

earlier. As if handling a precious fragile relic, she lifts the coat from its hiding place and laying it upon the floor that we occupy; she gently unfurls its length to reveal the "pocket, more a slit, down the centre of its back, an opening lined with a blood-red velvet and filled with possibility" (Kneale, 2012).

She stoops and lowers her body to the ground where she welcomes the coat upon her back. It twitches slips and slides up over her form and wraps tidily around slender shoulders, chest and back. It holds itself, partly due to the rigid material of its construction and partly due to the life that it possesses. They move slow and at odds at first, but then they come together, the coat with all its stories and the woman who gave it the life it now maintains. They journey together as if the space is suddenly filled with a haunting of rock obstacles, rugged pebbled shores, thick ancient tree trunks, hillocks, ditches and rivulets. Manoeuvring with a sense of here and there, now and then, present and absent. I am aware of the multiple layers of what I witness and I understand my role, as the role of all those present. We provide the next layer to what will continue to unravel as a story called Coat.

* * *

Artist Hilary Kneale sits abreast the disciplines of art and a broad definition of dance, which intersects with the wider artistic and cultural field. Unique aspects of Kneale's practice break into the spheres that surround installation and performance art, body-mind practices and nature writing, creating work that is at once real and of the moment, yet fabricated, existing only as a result of her own recalled experience. The past fifteen years have provided Kneale with fundamental influences that have directly shaped and refined her practice, allowing her work to be appreciated by both dance and art audiences alike. Her work has altered dramatically in a relatively short period, shifting

from a focus on "hidden aspects of the domestic environment" to contemplating the postmodern body's connections to, and departures from nature and landscape, expressly the element of water (Kneale, 2013b). As her work progresses, language and the written word continue to become increasingly valued as a medium of expression, currently manifesting as creative non-fictional threads that tell the story of her practice in book form.

Her work aims to play with the intermediary space between authentic and illusionary, ephemeral and indelible. Celebrating confusion and fragmentation, Kneale's poststructuralist attitude to writing questions what it is to 'be-in-the-world'. Like many contemporary British writers (for instance: Kingsley Amis, Iris Murdoch, Muriel Spark, Jeanette Winterson, Irvine Welsh), who attend to the artificiality of literature, her work addresses a perceived technological threat to humanity. In turn, her words hark back to a time in which humankind did not face the anomic struggle of the twenty-first century. Kneale's writing transmutes the real with the imaginary, establishing text as a space of multiple realities and thus a palimpsest. In this manner, her writing tells the story of how she might dissolve her habitual sense of duality (with regard to civilization against the natural world and self against other), by embracing nature through shamanic and environmentally sensitive body-mind practices.

The recurrent theme of her work hints at a personal yearning to [re]connect with an ancient and lost sensitivity, reciprocity and relationship with the non-human world (mirroring the theories of those she follows, for instance; philosopher and anthropologist David Abram, nature writer Robert Macfarlane and poet Mary Oliver). Her immersion in practices that promote the rejection of humankind's divorce from

nature continues to be nurtured through the view that interrelations between humans and earth are a source of wisdom, self-understanding, life affirmation and meaning making.

> In due course, as the number of bones grew, she began to thread the vertebrae together, a multitude of animals in one long spine. As she threaded each bone she sang songs of long forgotten sounds. The songs she sang were of the sounds of trees on a silent night, the sound of daisies in the summer sun and she sang the sounds of dewdrops and raindrops as they wet her tongue. As she sang, she threaded the bones one at a time until all those she had gathered came together and begun to quietly sing their own song (an excerpt from *Coat*, Kneale, 2012/3. See Appendix D).

Kneale's practice might be best described as personal, alternating between indoor and outdoor environments. When indoor, the work centres solely upon the body and the self, yet when outdoor it operates with the intention of opening up the body-self to embrace, perceive and align with the natural world (Kneale, 2013). Kneale's practice is held by particular parameters set in place during her training with Poynor (Kneale, 2012, 2013). In this sense, the indoor environment, for example, acts as a containing space, free from distraction and a place to concentrate upon the body's physical and emotional needs. The practice provides time and space with which Kneale has complete freedom and permission to answer the call of her body. This may include, but is not limited to: non-stylised movement, meditation, and verbalising, signing, drawing, writing and emotional release. She confirms that what takes place within these moments forms both a re-establishment and affirmation of her self-schema, providing her with space to check in with the felt sense of who she is (Kneale, 2013).

Following Poynor, Kneale describes this felt sense as *weather*, a metaphor that easily enables her to tune into, and express the underline aspects of her persona as it may be perceived at any particular moment (Kneale, 2013). Following Suryodarmo, the notion of attending to one's weather can be traced, as Poynor claims, to the concept of

practising in any condition, that is to say, the condition of the self (how one feels mentally, physically and emotionally) and the conditions that one faces in the environment (Poynor, 2005). The moving that emerges in response to Kneale's individual weather forecast might be best described as intuitive and a consequence of her deepened physical awareness. The luxury of this private practice provides stillness within the rhythms of daily life, a space in which she may explore the edges of her movement, free from judgement and self-consciousness. Whether in stillness, meditative movement or wild abandon, her physical reactions are an honest and intuitive response to the needs of her body - contemplative, self-orientated and indulgent.

Emulating from the refreshed physicality of a body that has moved freely, intuitively, and without judgement in relation to the land, Kneale claims that she encounters a fresh sense of how to continue to be in her body, that is, how she wishes to be accepted in her body by society (Kneale, 2013). The renewed sense of presence, embodiment and confidence arising from her personal practice facilitates her need to be seen, to be accepted and to feel equal among others. Kneale's renewed sense of self rejects the feelings that might be adopted in a society that, through its campaign for individualism, has developed communities of people that feel shunned, detached, ignored and invisible (Nayar, 2010).

Ultimately seeking the moment when the three strands of her practice (working with the body, with creativity and the natural environment) 'come together', Kneale identifies this alignment with embodiment a crucial element in her creative process (2013). Describing her understanding of embodiment as a feeling of harmony and a quieting of the mind, free from internal distractions, she is able to remain absorbed in her movement and held

at the brink of the unfolding moment, yet maintains a sense of presence and awareness of her surroundings (Kneale, 2013). This practice is connected to the notion of following one's internal rhythm and more complexly the rhythm of one's life, establishing a renewed sense of self and fresh alignment with purpose (5Rhythms, 2013). Embodiment, in this sense is Kneale's ability to fully incarnate her physical form in the material world, to be able not only to function effectively, but fulfil her life's purpose which she achieves and demonstrates through her writing.

The holistic approach that underpins both Kneale's artistic practice and in turn her life, provides her with a sense of overall well-being, a way to inhabit her body and express herself successfully through it. Due to these combining factors (embodiment, increased awareness of body, self and environment and the stirring of creativity that this invites), Kneale might describe her movement as authentic, touching and validating her need to continue exploring what movement practice holds for her (Kneale, 2013). Therapeutically, Kneale's practice supplies her with a way to transform personal experience, enabling her to look into the human condition. She claims to receive strength, courage and the understanding necessary for endurance and growth as an individual and as an artist (Kneale, 2013). These attributes are communicated through her work, providing a foundation that grounds the work in human experience.

The overarching focus of her work in natural environments is to welcome into her awareness the land and all the entities that enrich and inhabit it. Kneale's outdoor movement engages with the immediate land, that is, in direct contact with the soil, foliage and naturally formed topography, adapting to the various terrains. Different landscapes provide different movement possibilities, reading the land with her body Kneale traverses it with what she determines an appropriate physical response (Kneale,

2013). Rocks teach her of bone, of support and clarity of movement, trees teach her of balance and verticality, and the flow of water teaches her of moving forward. She learns of the animate natural world in reciprocal relation to her own body, that is to say, she observes the tree yet remains conscious that she is also in the tree's awareness (Kneale, 2013).

Kneale's moving enables her to understand her physical self in relation to the land. Moving in various conditions and terrains helps her explore the volume of her body, its three hundred and sixty degrees, its edges, its weight, form and strength. As she feels her way along the earth, she can feel her own structure and mass against the body of the tree, rock or hillock. The support she feels from her back pressed against a rock and her seat dug into the sand allows her to sense the expansion of her back spaces, to notice how the holding in her muscle tones or releases and allows for a new range of movement elsewhere in the body. She can choose to tune in and out of the various parts of the body to excavate the sensation, the way it moves, adjusts, balances, shifts weight, pulls, pushes and relaxes. Feeling the drive of movement as it initiates her body to follow into dance - wherever that takes her. The following quotation from Abram reinforces how Kneale's work demonstrates the experience of an interdependent relationship between her sense of the land and the lands sense of her.

> Both the perceiving being and the perceived being are *of the same stuff*, that the perceiver and the perceived are interdependent and in some sense even reversible aspects of a common animate element, or Flesh, that is *at once both sensible and sensitive* (Abram, 1997, p.67 author's own emphasis).

Kneale's personal practice never fails to include an allotted portion of time for writing. She considers this activity a furthering of her perspective and is carried out with the same attention and value as the movement (Kneale, 2013). In much the same way as

Tufnell's practice, the function of Kneale's writing is to move out of a language of the body and into alphabetic language, which articulates the resonating images extending from her activity. The writing, she explains, is not about reflecting on what has happened in the movement, nor is it concerned with describing what has transpired since or remains (Kneale, 2013). For Kneale, the writing is a way of manifesting the blurred line between real and illusion that she experiences during her embodied practice. The story that emerges becomes a way of making sense of the whole thing (Kneale, 2013). Yet, if the writing is not considered reflective or able to carry value as part of the articulation of dance - what is its function?

In Kneale's personal practice she gives time for writing after every movement session regardless of whether she has 'moved' sufficiently or not, and regardless of whether she writes or not (Kneale, 2013). This suggests that the written element has as much importance in the role of practice as moving. This would also suggest that, for Kneale, there is always something more than movement that needs to be explored. In order to move the enquiry forward, she shifts into cognitive activity in conjunction with the felt experience. By introducing a cognitive activity like writing, she redefines her moving as a physical preparation that facilitates a certain way to enter creative thinking processes. This mirrors the thinking of two performance artists, improvisers and writers, Andrew Morrish and Crosby McCloy, who both utilise movement as a means of *warming up* the creative thinking process and a preparation tool for creative writing (2011).

> [Words] radiate knowledge of an ancient age, and they let us know that they, the words themselves, are treasures trying to be freed, vibrations whose auras await our awakening ears (Daly, 1984, p.4).

The creative process, which she claims to be an extended version of her personal practice, incorporates a period of assimilation between the experience/moving and the

writing. In place of the usually immediate written response to moving, Kneale's collaborations substitute writing for conversation. This suggests that Kneale places a different emphasise on the writing when working collaboratively on an art project. This shifts the overall perspective of the writing from the subjective frame adopted during her personal practice, to a future-focused product-orientated frame during creative process. Kneale's writing as part of a creative project is conscious of its audience and in this manner finds ways to explore bridging the gap between personal-private and personal-public. Her words seek out ways to empathetically reach her audience - *how can this be more green/rocky/wet, how might these words bring the audience closer to the experience?* Kneale brings characters into play, humanising aspects of the land and identifying it as 'he/she'. By personifying both the familiar and unfamiliar features of nature, she animates the inanimate.

Her writing enthuses nature with its own voice, as Daly and Abram contend, language is not a strictly human capacity yet we have conditioned ourselves not to notice it. "All Elementals are unheard in patriarchy. The Earth, the Air, the Fire, and the Water are not Heard" (Daly, 1987, p.51). Kneale's attempts at creatively embellishing and exaggerating experience, in the hope that her words will reach across the void between artist to audience, effectively reshapes her experience in a way that resembles a child's storybook. Her desire to grab the audience's attention and speak at a level that might reach them more effectively, reflects Kneale's view of what it means to be an artist, to share something of the world through one's own eyes. Following Tufnell, Kneale's practice aligns moving with opening the senses and perception, seeing things differently and thinking things differently, although neither one (moving or writing) is more important than the other, as both are needed in order to complete the work (Tufnell, 2004, 2013; Kneale, 2013).

Similar to Tufnell's outlook on writing, Kneale believes the potential of writing to orient the self in the world, enabling her to think in new and surprising ways, to artistically articulate her explorations into the human condition (Kneale, 2013). Kneale's view of this writing positions it as creative *enrichment*, *re-enchantment* (following Suzi Gablik, 1992), and *attentiveness* that reminds us of who we are and how we work with or against the world around us (Kneale, 2013). Kneale intends her stories as rhetorical devices that might encourage readers/listeners to rethink the ways in which they see and interact with the world. By inviting a little magic, poetry and fantasy, that lifts the postmodern veil of how we see the world around us, even tempting her audience to view the inanimate (rock, stone, cliff face) through a lens of colour, character and emotion.

> I am not separate in my work, to the self that inhabits any other part of my life. What I find in physical exploration, I find everywhere else. I teach myself, through experience, allowing my internal weather to unfold through the layers of my physical, emotional and sensory landscape within this weather filled land. I unfold myself into and onto the physical land, into woodlands, at the base of cliffs, over pebbles, onto the edge of the ocean, into streams and between rock pools. I unfold into the field of the hidden within the physicality of my body and the land (Kneale, 2010, p.213).

Through my reading of Kneale's musings on "physical philosophy" (Kneale, 2010), I propose that she has begun to blur the edges between body and writing. That her practice engages in the deeper experience of the moving body, and also assists in providing access to ways of representing that experience, generating "interpretable structures for that experience" (Luce-Kapler, 2004, p.xv). Just as Richardson suggests in her significant paper, *Writing as a Method of Inquiry*, writing is a "way of 'knowing' - a method of discovery and analysis. By writing in different ways, we discover new aspects of our topic and our relationship to it" (2000, p.923). Kneale's use of writing

provides her with a space within the world that is private, in turn providing a unique place with which to view the world (Kneale, 2013).

Kneale argues that her writing enables a development of insight and perspective (evolving from her physical experience) that provides her with a sense of centre (Kneale, 2013). In this manner, writing facilitates the author's own pursuit of identity and unfolds the aspects of one's subjectivity. Identity is locked into writing and can be found latent within the lines that one writes in addition to the lines that write the self (Luce-Kapler, 2004). Kneale claims that due to her ability to wholly occupy her body and remain present in her physical, mental and emotional capacity, she is better equipped to access the stories present in the body (Kneale, 2013). Kneale feels that these stories are ever present within everyone, yet often ignored because of an objective cultural stance that prevents us from delving deep enough and sharing what is found (Kneale, 2012, 2013). She adds that if we listen to the body with more intensity, we might be surprised to find it is full of stories that will guide us forward, teach us something about ourselves, and our relationship with the natural world (Kneale, 2013).

Kneale's view that story and meaning are tied to the body and its relationship with the natural world extends mainly from her understanding of indigenous oral cultures associated with her study of shamanism (yet it is also an inherent belief in the work of Kneale's mentor and teacher Poynor, and Roth's 5Rhythms). Comparing her ideas with those of Abram and Brody, it might be possible to imagine how Kneale came to this conclusion. Brody, who has studied, lived among and been accepted by North American indigenous peoples for over three decades (particularly the Innu, Inuit, Nisga'a, and Dunne-za societies), traced the disruption between humanity and nature back to the book of Genesis and the story of creation (Wroe, 2001).

In his book *The Other Side of Eden*: *Hunters, Farmers, and the Shaping of the World* (2001), Brody argues that the story of Adam and Eve's expulsion from the garden of Eden could be the catalyst for the spread of agriculture and migration to New Worlds (Brody, 2001). In turn, the disastrous effects witnessed by indigenous hunter-gatherers resulted in the Western attitude of domination over nature, mass farming and the violent takeover of lands from peaceful peoples who had developed a harmonious and reciprocal relation with the land (Brody, 2001). Abram's theories, as cemented in *The Spell of the Sensuous* (1997) and *Becoming Animal: an Earthly Cosmology* (2010), revolve around the question of how modern cultures became so divorced from the non-human world. Abram's hypothesis benefits Kneale in as much as it supports her ideas that perceptions develop from our relationship to the natural world around us - that we might *return to our senses* through the experience (Abram, 1997).

Yet Abram and Brody's ideas contradict Kneale's practice in which she endeavours to articulate her bodily [re]connection with the land through written language. Writing is precisely at the heart of both Abram and Brody's claims resulting in Western civilisation's divorce from the natural world (Abram, 1997, 2010; Brody, 2001). Hemmed to the notion that oral cultures experience themselves and the natural world very differently from modern cultures, both theorists' express the benefits of pre literate cultures to both humankind and the environment. They claim that the wisdom inherent in prayer, song and storytelling represents ways to obtain well-being and sustainable living. Abram evidences his theory by asserting that scripture developed as a way of documenting societal progression after the agricultural revolution. He explains that the advancement of writing from hieroglyphics and ideograms (directly derived from man's experience in nature), to the now abstract alphabet, forced a distance between the shape and image of the letters (and thus words) and what they represented (Abram, 1997).

Abram suggests that written language by its very creation is an abstraction from the body, claiming that only verbal language (in the guise of narrative, chants, myths, legend, and tales) remains truly of the body. Furthermore, he argues that writing stories down disembodies them from their place of origin and belonging, rendering their power diminished or irrelevant.

> Once the stories are written down, however, the *visible text becomes the primary mnemonic activator of the spoken stories* - the inked traces left by the pen as it traverses the page replacing the earthly traces left by the animals, and by one's ancestors, in their interactions with the local land. The places themselves are no longer necessary to the remembrance of the stories, and often come to seem wholly incidental to the tales, the arbitrary backdrops for human events that might just as easily have happened elsewhere (1997, p.183 author's own emphasis).

Both Abram and Brody agree that one significant difference between pre literate and literate cultures could be assigned to the way Western cultures now think about time (Abram, 1997; Brody, 2001). Rather than time being regarded as cyclical (a recurrent theme in almost all mythological stories), "[a] new sense of time as a non repeating sequence begins to make itself felt over and against the ceaseless cycling of the cosmos" (Abram, 1997, p.195). Consequently, as stories were written down (enabling them to be recited at any given point in time), their intrinsic relationship to place and time was severed (Brody, 2001).

> A story must be judged according to whether it *makes sense.* And 'making sense' must here be understood in its most direct meaning: to make sense is *to enliven the senses* ... to make the senses wake up to where they are (Abram, 1997, p.265 author's own emphasis).

Opposing Abram's claim that writing divorced oral stories from their ability to *enliven the senses*, Kneale's approach has found ways to bridge the gap between felt sense, body, place and time. Her stories offer audiences a window with which to glance

through the mind's eye at landscapes that are at once alien yet familiar. Due to the way she transmutes her experience into something magical, colourful and curious, one feels able to relate to even the most wild and foreign of terrains. Kneale's stories might be naively misinterpreted as childish or misguided yet they should be judged on their validity in the eyes of the author. For Kneale, her stories hold truths and ways to comprehend experience; they support her well-being and thus teach her how to accept herself. Importantly they provide a means to creatively articulating what is essentially private and personal in a manner that respects her privacy yet provides confidence to share the personal (Kneale, 2013). As American novelist Don DeLillo affirms,

> Writing is a form of personal freedom. It frees us from the mass identity we see in the making all around us. In the end, writers will write not to be outlaw heroes of some underculture but mainly to save themselves, to survive as individuals (in Franzen, 1996, p.54).

Her efforts to articulate the experience of being-in-the-world is at best a method of demonstrating humankind's relation with the natural world and holds the potential for liberation that transforms paradigms. At worse, Kneale displays an artistic and whimsical approach to creative non-fiction, echoing her physical experience of certain environments through a phenomenological lens.

Abram suggests that the rift between humankind and the natural world has resulted in the objectification of nature. Humanity has forgotten the benefits of a reciprocal relationship between the two - always at odds with and breeding a destructive attitude to nature (Abram, 1997). Therefore, it could be argued that there is an increase in expressions of and reflections on the non-human world that bear no reference to, or experience of the sensuous experience of nature. Kneale's nostalgic compulsion to compose stories mirrors Abram's own romanticised image of the lost bond between human and nature. Kneale appears to yearn for a time when happiness and balance were

thought to be products of a reciprocal bond between the human and non-human world. Developed and carried through generations of storytelling, thought to aid the process of making sense of one's identity, or place within a community and the path one must follow in order to continue living as harmoniously as one's ancestors (Abram, 1997; Kneale, 2013).

Following Abram, and Brody, Kneale ceases to believe that human's have lost their capabilities to engage in powerful and significant dialogue with the natural world altogether, but instead of placing all blame upon the written word, Kneale has chosen to find ways to interact through and with written language. While Abram for example, seats his argument in the harmful effects of the written word, his distrust and denial of the possibilities of writing renders it abstract, dislocated and false (Abram, 1997). Kneale's work presents an argument for the potential of writing to reconnect humankind with nature, arguing that the real cause of this divorce is patriarchy. Following radical thinkers like Mary Daly, Susan Griffin and Adrienne Rich, Kneale's stance locates patriarchy as the claimant of all alienating symptoms for women and nature (Griffin, 1978; Rich, 1979; Daly, 1968, 1987).

As Anne Zavalkoff points out in her cross examination of Abram and Daly, humanity's connection with writing has replaced the connection with the natural world, yet Abram neglects to examine how perception might affect language, a constituent feature of Kneale's work (Zavalkoff, 2004). Zavalkoff notes, "written words are only alienating to the extent that they themselves have been alienated by patriarchy" (2004, p.129). If our relationship with the non-human world is innately reciprocal, as Abram's phenomenological argument asserts, then humanities relationship with the written word should also be a reciprocal one (Abram, 1997; Zavalkoff, 2004). Yet Kneale's writing

resists the trope of women's writing, opting not to confine her experience to that of being 'female'. Her writing moves towards a new way to express experience. In its awareness of the limitations placed around written language, it also draws attention to gaps with which to wriggle through, create a new space and think differently. It hangs on to the sensory nature of language inviting its audience to rethink the world we live in, to find new language and structures with which to express it.

In *Representing Insight: Mapping Literary Anthropology with Fractal Forms*, Sumara et al. identify stories as able to "elaborate and fold back [...] each part is included not so much to add more detail, but to compel re-interpretation and elaboration of what has already been written, thus giving rise to new interpretive possibilities" (2000, p.17,18). This point argues that writing, is at once "grounded in the world and in the body, creative and revolutionary" (Annas, 1989, p.10). Annas refers here to such female poets/philosophers as Adrienne Rich, Susan Griffin, Audre Lorde and Alice Walker, comparing them with French feminist writers for example Cixous and Irigaray. She asserts that similarities within their approaches to writing might be described as a sensuous connection to the body - to be sensuously connected to the body is to be sensuously connected to the environment it inhabits.

Theorists, who endeavour to write from an embodied perspective, as Kneale does, often write in order to highlight female morphology, demonstrating how the male body has become the model by which all have been measured. Yet Kneale's writing does not intend to communicate a purely female perspective, merely a perspective that is aware of its femaleness yet addresses experience as a constantly altering state in relation to her gender. As such, Kneale might argue that women's difference cannot be traced to 'lack',

but to their ability to know and experience the world in other ways (Belenky, et al. 1986; Hayes, 2001). Pam Morris clarifies,

> As women enter language, learn to name themselves, so they are put in their place within the social order of meaning [...] There is masculinity and there is its absence (1993, p.133-144).

Feminist conscious theorists have frequently taken up the subject of phallocentric language and the restrictions it places upon the female endeavour to exercise voice (as a self-concept) and independence.[57] Irigaray for example, discuses the female struggle to assert voice within the symbolic order, claiming that maternal and feminine discourse had facilitated patriarchy in overwhelming female experience (Irigaray, 1985). To be woman, Irigaray posits, is to be a signifier for the man, to be viewed as lack or opposite of the male subject, that is to say, women do not exist in their own right within a patriarchal culture (Irigaray, 1985). Language places women in a negative position and due to the ingrained nature of this view, women chose to change language in order to change opinion (Cixous 1976; Kristeva, 1984).

Thus, literature bore witness to the development of *écriture feminine* - women's writing - a phenomenon of the 1970s and 1980s. The driving force behind the surge of women's writing was the desire to "overcome this verbal suppression", and "speak through a

[57]See the following theorist for a comprehensive analysis of patriarchal-dominated language: Cixous, H. (1976) The Laugh of the Medusa. (Trans. by Cohen, K. and Cohen, P) *Signs.* The University of Chicago Press. Conley, V. A. (1991) *Helene Cixous: Writing the Feminine*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. Cornell, S. (1990) Hélène Cixous and les Etudes Féminines. In Wilcox H., *The Body and the Text: Helene Cixous, Reading and Teaching*. New York: St. Martin's Press. Foster, S. (1990) Speaking Beyond Patriarchy. In Wilcox H., *The Body and the Text: Helene Cixous, Reading and Teaching*. New York: St. Martin's Press. Kristeva, J. (1984) *Revolution in Poetic Language*. New York: Columbia University Press. Lechte, J. (1990) *Julia Kristeva*. London: Routledge. Leclerc, A. (1987) Woman's Word. In Cameron D. (Ed.), (1990) *The Feminist Critique of Language*. London: Routledge. McConnell-Ginet, S., Burker, R., & Furman, N. (Eds.) (1980) *Women and Language in Literature and Society*. New York: Praeger. Morris, P. (1993) *Literature and Feminism*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers. Sellers, S. (1991) *Language and Sexual Difference: Feminist Writing in France*. London: Macmillan. Included in this is the work that focuses upon the historical and mythical roots of dominance, an example of this would be Irigaray's reading of Plato's analogy of the cave as womb, discussed in Irigaray's own doctoral thesis, (1985) *Speculum of the Other Woman*. (Trans. by) Gillian C. Gill. Ithaca: Cornell University Press; and Whitford, M. (1991) *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine*. London: Routledge.

language not dominated by the phallus" (Foster, 1990, p.67). Writers of *écriture feminine* claim that finding their voice and articulating the female experience was impossible in the male dominated language (Irigaray, 1985; Lechte, 1990). Women began to explore "alternative modes of expression [...] experimenting with new forms of writing and speaking" in order to reject the language of oppression and resist imitating men (Mcconnell-Ginet, et al, 1980, p.xi).

As argued further by Kristeva, language was established via the male phallus and the female lack, thus women remain unable to use language to express the female voice, female body or female experience (Lechte, 1990; Ellmann, 1994). Kristeva calls for a return to the semiotic, the pre-Oedipal (Sigmund Freud) or pre-mirror stage (Jacques Lacan) that she claims is repressed when the infant enters the symbolic order (Sellers, 1991; Ellmann, 1994; Schippers, 2011). Kristeva's semiotic is free from repression and born of the emotional and maternal body, related to poetics, movement, and rhythm, resisting structure and meaning (Barrett, 2011). She invites women to write from this place, a place "as full of movement as it is regulated" (Kristeva, 1984, p.25). Yet although it is subject to processes of ordering these are not the same as the law of the phallocentric symbolic order (Morris, 1993).

> Part of the aim of masculine language is to make itself appear universal, and she argues that this endeavour to remove obvious male bias and neutralise language not only serves patriarchy's purpose but is also dangerous, since it gives women the impression of change. For French feminists like Irigaray, women will only begin to speak as women by refusing the current order altogether, since to adopt this order, which exists to express men's perceptions, modes of organisation, needs and desires is necessarily to speak as a man (Sellers, 1991, p.96).

Following Lechte's (1990) and Sellers' (1991) reading of Kristeva, poetry is free from the law of symbolic order. Punctuated by eruptions of the semiotic, poetry is literature's

weapon in the act of expressing what the symbolic has repressed. Sellers notes, poetic writing disrupts the signifying order, destroying "beliefs and traditional modes of signification, preparing the way for revolutionary change" (1991, p.99). Yet Kristeva warns, a total denial of the symbolic is ill advised, by "rejecting the symbolic order which sustains social identity a woman leaves herself unprotected and open to the full force of unconscious desire, of which the most powerful is always the death drive" (Morris, 1993, p.148). She asks instead that women's semiotic expression be carried through the lens of the symbolic (Morris, 1993). Endorsing Irigaray's and Kristeva's assumption, Cixous (another heavyweight theorist in the argument for écriture feminine), also contends that women writing within the patriarchal language ignore their bodies and uphold the "classic repressions of women" (1976, p.878). She invites women to write their bodies and in doing so, reclaim their bodies, exercise their voices and carve out a place for the female body within the symbolic order (Cixous, 1976).

> Though I am female, I walk a line between the two in my mind. Because I think either in that moment is loaded. I don't want to load myself with either of those. Of course I am feminine but within the context of the story - I like to imagine stepping outside of both of those - but holding them both. (Kneale, 2013, p.11).

Here, Kneale attempts to demonstrate how she plays between notions of 'male' and 'female', yet her denial to express an overtly female experience is arguable. Her writing aims to speak more openly, about what arises from bodily experience for her, rather than call into question her gendered perspective. Kneale's practice and knowledge which surfaces as a result of the story, challenges the idea of women's writing in much the same way as Grosz advocates fresh attempts to conceptualise the subject in terms of "forces, agencies (in the plural), operative vectors, points of intensity, lines of movement, resistance, or complacency" (Grosz, 2003, p.14). Grosz hopes this might

alter current feminist thinking that understands women and femininity as an absence from knowledge, defined by unique characteristics, loss of identity or as unacknowledged roles through history. She argues, "concepts of the subject conceived as victim and the subject conceived as agent are equally fictitious" (Grosz, 2003, p.14). Grosz is arguing here for a new way of thinking, writing and historicising, creating "the production of futures for women that are uncontained by any of the models provided in the present" (Grosz, 2003, p.18).

Grosz' stance is typical of current thinking in feminism and feminist phenomenology (Grosz, 1994, 2003, 2011, 2013; Kruks, 2001, 2006; Weiss, 2003, 2006, a2008, b2008; Weiss, and Olkowski, 2006; Olkowski, 2011). These scholars are striving to encourage fresh thinking on the paradoxes of historical research. For Grosz this is obtained by reconsidering the theorists of power and knowledge namely, Foucault (*Discipline and Punish* (1977)) and Deleuze (*Difference and Repetition* (1994)). For instance, both Foucault and Deleuze's thinking (through an Irigarayian lens), reject traditional presumptions that knowledge of the present is inherently tied to our understanding of the past, Grosz believes a close reading of the past will enable the present to recognise mistakes and prevent future repetitions (Grosz, 2003). Her view urges towards a "history of singularity" in which the fear of repetition is not the priority but rather, history "welcomes the unexpectedness of the future and the new as it makes clear the specificities and particularities, [...] of history" (Grosz, 2003, p.15).

Grosz argues that feminist knowledge should not be centered on women's absence via history or women's writing, but should contemplate how to *write otherwise*. Therefore, history should originate from a future orientated perspective - a future perfect tense - as

prescribed by Daly (*Beyond God the Father* (1974)), and Irigaray (*This Sex Which is Not One* (1985) and *Divine Women* (1986)). In which Grosz contends,

> [...] not to simply take women as the objects of intellectual investigation [...], but rather to open up the position of knowing subject to the occupation of women. To enable women to inhabit the position of knower so that knowing itself may be done differently, different questions be asked, different criteria of evaluation be developed, different intellectual standards and goals to emerge (Grosz, 2003, p.22).

Campaigning for an Irigarayan perspective in terms of resisting the "containment of [...] identity" (2003, p.22) in a phallocentric framework, Grosz invites feminist discourse to leave behind questions of how to *write women*, and become dedicated to revealing the experience of being woman. Grosz asks that we find new ways to imagine what is at risk or left out of dominate models - "how to think, write, and read otherwise, whether one is man or a woman, how to accommodate issues, qualities, concepts that have not had their time before" (Grosz, p.22). *Writing Otherwise* is to acknowledge women as other than that defined in relation to men.

In her most recent article, '*The daily round the common task' Embodied Practice and the Dance of the Everyday* (2014), Kneale uses a quotation from social anthropologists Tim Ingold and Jo Vergunst, to frame her writing in relation to her performative installations.[58] Kneale's decision to use this particular quote illuminates her understanding of the moving and writing process as a call on the past, - a way to bring one's histories into the present. While exercising techniques for remaining alert and receptive to the moment-by-moment unfolding of experience, the process with which Kneale undergoes to develop her work, also beckons to her past. These histories are sifted through the current lens with which Kneale views the world afresh. In all her

[58] "Since to follow a trail is to remember how it goes, making one's way in the present is itself a recollection of the past [...] onward movement is itself a return" (Ingold and Vergunst, 2008, p17).

writing and performances, but particularly *Coat, With Water* and *Peel* (Kneale's most current work), the story itself not only communicates the unfolding narrative of the work but also transmits something of Kneale's personal history within it.

As a palimpsest, Kneale's stories utilise female gender roles as ways to develop an environmental consciousness within her audience, skilfully masking the underline narrative of the story. In this manner, Kneale is able to walk the line between personal/public and personal/private, revealing herself through the work yet remaining modestly obscured by the overarching issues she raises within it. Her work might be interpreted as creating a palimpsest through its rewriting (its performance) it traces experience, endlessly deferring to the roots of its origin. What Kneale calls her *stories*; are representations of body sensations, tracing experience that, for example, remains at once the experience of moving on rock and writing as a result of moving on rock.

As already touched upon in chapter 6, *Coat* explores the dualist view in patriarchal society that women and nature are 'other'. Speaking from the perspective that both men and women can [re]discover their relationship with the non-human world through an increased participation with the land, the story of *Coat* reminds its audience how the non-human world remains undervalued even during an age of increased environmentalism. Within the story lay undercurrents, which hint at Kneale's own thoughts and experience of subordination, subtly inviting her audience to reconsider their history from a current, privileged perspective.

> She fills and empties, fills and empties, fills and empties the marsupial pocket of the apron. Her hands become painted with the starchy juice of the root crop as she peels. The lifelong stories of the creases on the palms of her hands become ingrained and enriched with the pigments of the earth. The earth colours now fill the life-line that had been scored around the base of her thumb even before her birth, her fate is now highlighted by the paint of the soil (Kneale, 2015, p. 182).

Kneale's *writing otherwise* can be further explicated in the work *Peel*. Again, *Peel* tells two stories, the first reveals the story of the work, delicately explaining what the audience will experience but from Kneale's personal perspective from within the work. Although she frames the work as abstract, Kneale wishes to bring its audience a little closer to the work through her story, to open their perceptions and imaginations via a sharing of her thought process - a sort of poetic, embellished programme note. Her words deliberately evoke images of fairytale characters immersed in ceaseless chores, held by some invisible magical force or suppressed by a tyrant superior family member. The scene appears familiar yet distorted, but through it, the audience is reminded of the biological life cycle.

The second story is caught between the lines of the first. It rises up out of the words in relation to one's viewing of the performance. If one chooses not to linger and merely passes by the work, one might miss its elusive presence, yet it hangs in the air around Kneale and settles on the page. It recalls a time almost forgotten from current society, where a woman's place, it might be said, was in the home. Kneale's words speak of her sense of duty to uphold the traditions and expectations passed down her female lineage. The endless task to clean the asexual tubers of their earthy birthing appears futile. As her hands, marred by starch and soil, mark each potato they scar the white flesh with the marks of their own histories. The image of potatoes, heaped one upon the other, peeled in an effort to rid them of their tarnished skins, calls to mind a passage from the book of *Leviticus*. It conveys the message inherent in traditional Christianity that women, after childbirth, are to be deemed ceremonially unclean, thus advising steps towards their purification. For example,

> But if she bares a female child, she shall remain unclean for two weeks, as at her monthly period, and stay at home for sixty six days, while the blood flows, till she is purified (12:4 James Moffatt New Testament).

Careful not to assume universality, Grosz asserts, Western women, throughout history, have been cast as *unclean* as a result of their own sexuality (Grosz, 1994). Represented as vessels and the "conduit of *other men's* 'dirt'" (Grosz, 1994, p.197 author's own emphasis), "has enabled men to associate women with infection, with disease, [...] no longer contained simply in female genitals but at any or all points of the female body" (Grosz, 1994, p.206). It is clear today that, due to feminist reform, these slurs upon female corporality are, as Merleau-Ponty lectured circa 1951, "a fact of culture and not of nature" (in Welsh, 2010, p.377). Grosz wishes us to remove of the notions feminine and masculine in order to *writing otherwise*. As Luce-Kapler reinforces this asking that we "reconceptualise the world that we live in and find a new language to describe our experience and those of others and to search for new structures of writing in which to represent our lives" (2008, p.156). I contend that the latent story of *Peel* echoes these sentiments and is therefore an attempt at writing otherwise.

*   *   *

Good morning, it has been several days since we spoke. Time moves so quickly these days and I find myself at odds with everything. Unconditioned, lost, lacklustre, washed out - Maybe that is why this practice will be performed - I need to utilise it, but not share it. I am wondering what the leftovers are, the themes, subject, ideas, and feelings. What came from this writing, this language, this imagination?

I guess a great sense of avoidance - there I said it, how brave - dismissing and unconsciously ignoring. My stories are of and about being woman - playful, childlike and curious, multifaceted, escapist and I mumble the phrase 'sticks and stones etc....'.

Getting to know myself amongst the messy muddy waters of daily happenings. How can I remain true and tell my story, let go of the shame that surrounds my thoughts. The shame I feel when I admit defeat, fail miserably, bend to find my feet and suck air sharply through my teeth when something twinges in my hamstring. The shame I feel when I leave the house without checking my face in the mirror, or brushing my hair. The shame I feel when I fail to muster the motivation to slide from tree root to trunk. The 'voice' that arises in my writing, that I once proposed the true voice of my practice, is in fact the echo of my multiple selves. The things I long to say but do not possess the courage to utter. It is the meeting of all the 'Gemmas' I wear - converging in the space made possible by the freedom of my moving and writing. My moving and writing is the freedom to be unconditionally me.

This thing I call writing (the activity, not the content), is so distant yet so close to my moving. It is a contradiction - a place of endless consideration and I have yet to define the edges. I find it is not a question of language failing, because the interesting thing is, the key to expanding my expression [articulation] in writing is the act of moving. Without one another, they simple do not exist. The attention I give movement, the way I alter my focus and tune into my condition, the way I adapt, let go and look outward beyond myself, is carried over into the writing. How I move becomes how I write. I am never lost for movement therefore; I am never lost for words. I am simply [never] lost.

Sometimes there is a pause or stillness, sometimes there is a gap or space. Sometimes I change direction, sometimes my train of thought just... The writing picks up where the movement left off. At this point, I must trust myself not to return but to write as I now see the world. The journey is of translation, from bodily experience to written language but only in as much as translation is a process of adapting, accepting and committing to

forward thinking. I cannot make work about myself, of myself, without being in relation to others - other selves.

*   *   *

Drawn to my feet
Letting my eyes wonder over the shifting patterns of physical murmurs
Body as focus... yet resting eyes on a face I do not know
Eyes that watch me in return
Watch us...gather us up
Her mouth like a moth beating wings against cloth
The fragments of her words fall like dust upon my ear
leave a mark
bleeding...seeping
Lists cut deeply across the narrative, they have little place here
It makes me question this...
My muscles cough for attention
I have wandered off again... and again... and...

Conclusion

Some Thoughts Toward Completion

The thesis title indicates that the research pursues connections between a bodily practice (improvised movement) and a cognitive activity (writing). The practices interrogated belong to three white, middleclass, mature, British women, whose contributions to British new dance, it is argued, have been neglected in historical literature to the detriment of the field. The research question enquires: "What is the function of writing for the dance artist-practitioner?"

In response to the central question, three lines of enquiry have been identified and discussed in the introduction. The purpose of this is to dissect the function of Tufnell's, Poynor's and Kneale's moving-writing practice by an examination of the intersections and motivations behind the marriage of two commonly perceived incompatible disciplines - dance and written language. These aims are described as follows: Firstly, understand the capacity of writing to facilitate deeper layers of awareness in the experiential movement practices of Tufnell, Poynor and Kneale; secondly, set out an alternative history that illuminates the multifaceted, interdisciplinarity of British dance training undertaken by Tufnell, Poynor and Kneale that led to the formulation of such unique practices. And; finally, question how these practices challenge Western tradition and underscore the importance of intercultural contribution to the developmental stage of British new dance.

The lines of argumentation supporting this thesis have been developed alongside careful consideration of both the research question and subsequent aims outlined above. As a result, the outcome fell into three categories: women, nature and moving-writing, which underpin each artist's rationale for integrating writing into their movement practice.

These are as follows: Women - the thesis articulates a continued need for the assertion of female experience and voice in society. The research centres on three mature women, whose work reaches out to communities of women still experiencing the resonating effects of a patriarchal society. Nature - there is a concerted effort within the research to dissolve the habitual sense of duality inherent in Western culture; it does so by arguing for body-mindfulness. This approach is outlined as crucial to the forming of a successful moving-writing practice in reconnecting humankind with the ancient and lost sensitivity, reciprocity and relationship it once held with the non-human world. Moving-writing - the thesis considers moving and writing in equal terms, never favouring one over the other, nor does it consider one in the absence of the other. Moving-writing is positioned as an emergent practice, constantly involved in a forming and informing dialogue with itself. Moving-writing practices such as those discussed here, emerge as a result of their innate interrelation with the body, and as such are embodied.

Reviewing the Thesis Architecture

The theoretical literature specific to this subject matter was found to be inadequate regarding the extent to which British dance history circumvents the significance of intercultural body-mind values into Western dance training.[59] This included the neglect of literature to outline the specific function of stream-of-consciousness writing practices

[59] A reminder of the literature considered inadequate: Allsopp's *Performance Writing* (1999); several of DeLahunta's works in relation to choreographic process (2004, 2006, 2010, 2012); Franko's *Mimique* (1995); and *Writing for the Body: Notation, Reconstruction, and Reinvention in Dance* (2011), Foster's *Choreographing History* (1995); Lepecki's *Of the Presence of the Body: Essays of Dance and Performance Theory* (2004); Longley's *Rethinking Dance Writing* (2009); and *Moving Words: Five Instances of Dance Writing* (2011); and finally Pollard's *Folding and Withholding: Writing with and by Choreographers* (2007).

within systems of experiential movement, in particular, focusing on improvisation as facilitator. Consequently, the thesis endeavours to specify factors that facilitated an increase in dancer's engagement with body and language, for example, the physical relationships with the non-human world and strategies for rethinking an approach to writing.

The argument continues to flow from this point of departure, predominately circulating several factors that connect with this notion - initially, the advancement of human communication (notably, the development of the alphabet); secondly, the disruption of the bond between humans and nature due to this advancement, and as a result it continues to grapple with notions of disengagement between body and written language due to the mind-body distinction. Furthermore, it acknowledges the communication barriers that complicate the act of forging an embodied approach to writing, (including the trap of negativity, identified in this thesis as dwelling on histories entrenched in phallocentric ethos), and addresses the insufficiency of our everyday language to represent or reproduce the experience of dance by suggesting an alternative approach.

It is now the responsibility of this conclusion to formulate concise responses to this enquiry, yet it does so tentatively, for even as this sentence unfolds, my thinking shifts in response to the intelligence of my body. This conclusion could not be written without the rumination of the shifting rhythms of my practice as it responds to the ideas herein. My conclusions attempt to clarify these discoveries and contemplate the advancement of my own practice as a consequence of this investigation.

* * *

I made an early mistake by perceiving the writing to be a direct response to my dancing. My assumption was that the writing is intrinsically linked and therefore an embodied

process. Yet, Tufnell's approach tells me that I should be encouraged to resist the temptation to linger on the dance itself and write from it, or, forward. I understand this to mean I must use the experience of moving as a tool for the preparation of writing - a vehicle with which to access an idea that manifests itself through written language.[60]

During my moving, I am aware of the chemical shifts within my body, the increase of oxygen, the rapid circulation of blood feeding muscles, nourishing organs. It is my understanding that dancing increases cognitive function by aiding new cell generation, and therefore the way we move alters the nature of our thoughts, and vice versa - the faster I move the quicker my thoughts flow - it is more likely my thoughts will resist and hesitate if I move slowly and contemplatively. Dancing creates a feedback loop between the rhythm of my body and my mental state. I notice that the location of my moving also holds significance. Moving in natural, wild or green spaces has the desired effect (that is, having danced in nature, my imagination attention and thought process is far more willing, and able, to express itself) than moving in relation to manmade cityscapes, which over stimulate and deplete my awareness. My moving organises the world around me and writing organises my thoughts.

Working with Poynor has altered my perspective on my writing. Until now I have been solidly dependent upon Tufnell's assumption that moving opens us out to the world and welcomes a certain kind of 'outward'ness' into our writing - creating a departure point for our musings to leap forward toward all possibilities. Now I feel that I have misinterpreted this outward'ness, this open attention, this wakefulness, for something other. My moving in the non-human world has not been primarily about the world itself, but rather my own inner world. In seeking to open my awareness, I have created an

[60] To suggest moving is a preparatory exercise for the long term goal of writing, is to diminish dancing's significance, that is not what is being suggested here, after all, those who practice moving and writing place as much (if not more) emphasis upon the importance of movement as the value of writing.

inversion. My moving and writing are introspective and therefore I must be practicing some degree of alienation between myself and the environment/other(s).

* * *

Fundamentally, this thesis has uncovered both the strategies for dealing with the preconceived contention between dance and writing, and the origins of their harmonious union as demonstrated in Tufnell's, Poynor's and Kneale's practices. In the unearthing of issues circulating this practice, the research has interrogated the success of Tufnell, Poynor and Kneale to forge an amalgamation between autonomous movement practices, and the limitations of written language. The following section recapitulates the aims of each chapter.

Chapter 1 outlines the cultural, socio-political circumstances that shaped the early careers of both Tufnell and Poynor primarily (Kneale was then exposed to these influences indirectly when she encountered them through Tufnell and Poynor's work). The chapter details both Tufnell's and Poynor's place within the development of British dance and as a result, illuminates the significance of their respective contributions to experiential movement practices. A vital part of this contribution is the integration of, and engagement with, creative writing as a means of steering teaching and learning toward a more reflective, student-centered approach.

Continuing the historical contextualisation of a moving-writing practice, chapters 2, 4 and 6 delve deeper into the lineage of each dance artist to ascertain their rationale for integrating writing into a movement practice. Chapter 2 proposes that Tufnell's curiosity for writing is impelled by a desire to return to the freedom of expression she once enjoyed as a child. Chapter 4 argues that Poynor, on the other hand, experiments with sourcing authenticity in one's expression through uniting movement with writing and

drawing. Alternatively, in chapter 6, Kneale channels life and bodily experience through imagination in order to reflect upon what it means to her, to be human.

After an extensive contextualisation, chapter 3 - the first comprehensive case study - initiates the enquiry by questioning the ability of writing to extend kinaesthetic experience into the realm of language. Taking Tufnell as exemplar the chapter examines ideals that support the notion of participation (namely, in nature) as key to unlocking perceptual capacity. It understands the potential of including writing/languaging in physical investigation as aiding the participant's endeavour to increase imagination and creativity. Proposing that imagination underpins all human interactions with other presences, the chapter suggests that in order to cultivate this faculty the introduction of a range of artistic outlets to one's movement practice becomes essential. What is apparent from this chapter's disclosure is that including writing in the culmination of one's movement practice seems to compel the participant toward imaginative narrative responses, where perhaps formal registers and approaches have failed.

The chapter finds the gap between bodily practices and writing a result of academic registers, explaining that activities associated with the mind have become disembodied - not only severing writing from the body, but also forcing the mind to disassociate from body and the environment it inhabits. Academic writing will always problematise an endeavour to bring language to dance. The conventions and restrictions within such a mode cause separation and difference that dislodge dance from the notions it aligns with (freedom, creativity, autonomy and expression). Returning once again to Franko (1995), academic text must resist classifying dances' ephemerality as lack, in order that dance and writing might liberate one another (Goellner and Murphy 1995). Emphasis had been placed on how change will not occur until this concept is fully realised, an argument

that continues further into Poynor's case study. That is, rather than bringing language to dance, it should be acknowledged that language radiates from dance.

Chapter 5 highlights how, particularly for Poynor, writing's relationship with movement is a process of validation and assimilation of experience, facilitating the [re]construction of a positive self-concept. It secured the proposal that writing closes the gap between inner and outer self during times when verbal exchange is necessary yet confrontational and exposing. Poynor is mindful of the culturally ingrained fear associated with written language and her approach attempts to break down these apprehensions. For Poynor, the communication barriers that she and her participants face impact upon the journey to alter self perception and complicate physical and mental processes to shift one's potential (whether this is a shift in spiritual potential, artistic potential or facets of self concept).

Poynor's multimodal approach characterised by the bringing together of three forms of self-exploration; movement, writing and drawing, trace the unfolding of a process as it is experienced. However, for Poynor, writing is the mark of an absence, the point at which one acknowledges their shift away from previous self-perceptions and toward an acceptance of one's self anew. As part of this function, written language offers the mover-writer a means of setting out a visual and profound representation of their bodies interactions. In this way, the writing becomes a *filter* that enables them to observe movement experience through the unique lens of their habituation.

Taking into consideration the foundational principles of Tufnell and Poynor's stance on writing, chapter 7 demonstrates how moving intuitively with nature while practicing open attention in order to [re]connect with the non-human world, enables Kneale (or the practitioner of such approaches) to orient herself self in the world. Writing is found to

have a sensuous connection to the body, acquired through a deep connection with the environment it inhabits. For Kneale, the function of writing is part of a process that enables her to distil the essence of what it means to be human. Her words are the artistic product of a range of stimuli and sources written *on*, and in some ways *within* the body during exploration. Functionally different to Tufnell and Poynor, Kneale holds on to her experiences until they make sense to her within the confines of a story, and only then will she spill them onto the space of the page. Rather than allowing the order of the words to fall, as they wish from her consciousness, she takes control and manipulates them, shaping them into the narrative cast by her mind's eye.

Outcomes

For Tufnell, Poynor and Kneale, to write otherwise offers a means of moving beyond the imposed patriarchal structures that they continue to resist. As this thesis recounts, the effort to establish as sense of *freedom to*, extends from the escalation of the British women's movement. Tufnell, Poynor and Kneale's early artistic endeavours were permeable and open to the changing landscape of political thought. As a result, they became thirsty for the challenge of patriarchal traditions ingrained within the classical dance disciplines they were immersed in at this time.

Following Luce-Kapler (2004), writing otherwise offers Tufnell, Poynor and Kneale the opportunity to move beyond the tireless endeavour to express the female voice and release experience from the male model by which everyone is measured. Through this, we come to understand women and femininity not as an absence from knowledge or an object as discerned by certain characteristics (that is, lack), but as a reconceptualisation of the subject in terms of what has been achieved, rather than ensnared by gender. As Grosz asserts,

> In other words, how to think, write or read not as women, but more complexly and less clearly, how to think, write and read otherwise, whether one is a man or women, how to accommodate issues, qualities, concepts that have not had their time before (Grosz, 2003, p.22).

As stated in the introduction, writing otherwise extends from Grosz's reconsideration of freedom, attempting to release the concept from the notion of emancipation (as is most common in feminist thought), and proposing feminism positively reassess freedom as the condition of action. This research aligned the work of Tufnell, Poynor and Kneale with writing otherwise by way of demonstrating the power of a moving-writing practice to facilitate the mutual rejection of rectifying, or making up for the absence of the female voice and experience in their subject. Instead, these women uphold the notion that their practice and subsequent art work is the free act of expression and transformation that demonstrates the moment-by-moment emergence of becoming. In this manner, writing otherwise is framed as a vehicle for the expression and celebration of all differences, thus moving toward a positive future where divergence and dynamics are discerned by what they create, make and produce, not for what they have overcome. Grosz provides a fuller illustration of this notion,

> The problem of feminism is not the problem of women's lack of freedom, or simply the constraints that patriarchal power relations impose on women and their identities. If women are not, in some sense, free, feminism could not be possible. The problem, rather, is how to expand the variety of activities, including the activities of knowledge production, so that women and men may be able to act differently [...] The problem is not how to give women more adequate recognition [...] but how to enable more action, more making and doing, more difference. That is, the challenge facing feminism today is no longer only to give women a more equal place within existing social networks and relations but to enable women to partake in the creation of a future unlike the present (Grosz, 2011, p.73).

In refusing *women's writing*, favouring instead the possibility of a fuller awareness and acknowledgement of the potential that writing otherwise has for the future, Tufnell,

Poynor and Kneale demonstrate how writing is a means of extending the experience of dancing. Although different for each artist, the function of their writing holds the potential for them to examine and extend life, art and practice. It provides a way to think differently about the many connections to sensation, memory, experience and imagery that swim within the pools of improvised movement. They do not wish to confine women's experience but rather they invite ways to write in flux, to be unclear, to be messy and spontaneous. They wish to preserve physical connection outside the realms of the body, they enjoy being constantly surprised by the way something feels as they move in, on and over their environment, and the way their thoughts spill out from the sensation of bodily discovery. For Tufnell, Poynor and Kneale, this practice does not have a fixed outcome, it is an endless experiment supported by transformation.

Drawn to the uncertainty of improvisation, Tufnell, Poynor and Kneale are occupied by enhanced senses while moving in unfamiliar territory. They thrive on the complexity of juggling embodiment with heightened awareness of presence, place and change. Writing otherwise re-imagines the world about them, seeks out new language with which to explore experience from body to page. Writing is the consequence of physical enquiry and does not divorce them from the experience but more accurately, elaborates it, inviting them to pay attention to the details, rhythms and form of their lived experience, attuning them to the multiple possibilities of their endeavour.

* * *

When the act of writing integrated itself into my practice, (for that was how it seemed to me - it never felt like a decision I made but rather that writing chose to be present within my practice), it was as if it intended to show me how to express myself in ways that had felt alien and unclear previously. My practice was developing within an

academic environment and constant pressure to demonstrate how the progression of my process was unfolding, assimilating, transforming and being understood, were reminders of the inadequacy of formal language to validate my experience. My efforts to verbalise were spoilt by hesitation, uncomfortable fumbling for words and the embarrassment that complicates expressing private experience.

For me, working with the body means surrendering to the likelihood that I will have little idea of what I am doing until I am doing it - how could I possibly verbalise this notion? As I began to explore the benefits of writing as a continuation of moving, the page spaces offered distance, comparison and contextualisation of what had previously felt like an incomprehensible network of mental stimulation and residual physical sensation. The act of writing felt like a vast warm sea against the ruggedness of speaking. A breathing space that invited my cognition to keep up with the pace in which my body had experienced such variances in speed, force, tone, energy - the dynamicity with which I encountered my body in movement.

The freedom of these pages, the impartiality they represented, the lack of line, margin and order, embodied openness and truthfulness. These pages begged to be trampled upon by my clumsy footed vocabulary. Yet, as my hand drifted across these surfaces, words felt airy and unladen. Defying rules by playfully scattering the body parts of sentences, littering notebook pavements with cheeky flashes of their presence, within these writings unfolded a story that awakened a specific form of awareness within me. Not only was the experience emerging with renewed clarity but also I was sensing the movement as a driving force behind my writing.

The verbal sharing in the wake of writing felt easier, less cumbersome and direct. The process of writing had provided me with a clearer sense of the effect of moving upon my

body. I understood a little more about who I was, how my body had responded and where the movement had taken me, both figuratively and literally. Striped of the gut wrenching dread of facing others with a pelican's bill full of half-conceived ideas, the words now had purpose and met the ears of those surrounding me with assertion forged from the foundations of trust. Trust that the words that followed my moving would aim true and spear the core of what had taken place. By allowing the words to come of their own accord, not hampering their existence by forcing two or more together or resisting the violence of unnatural compliancy - the words had found sense even in the apparent non-sense.

In the act of writing, something shifted in my consciousness - I grew apart, yet ever closer, to my moving body. In the act of writing, something became visible - the patterns of my moving in relationship with the environment spoke of bone and muscle and tone and weight and density and shape and... In the act of writing, something became equitable - for once, I was not at a disadvantage, I was, in fact, ahead of myself, understanding how change becomes a consequence of my exchange with the environment and accepting of the subsequent transformation.

* * *

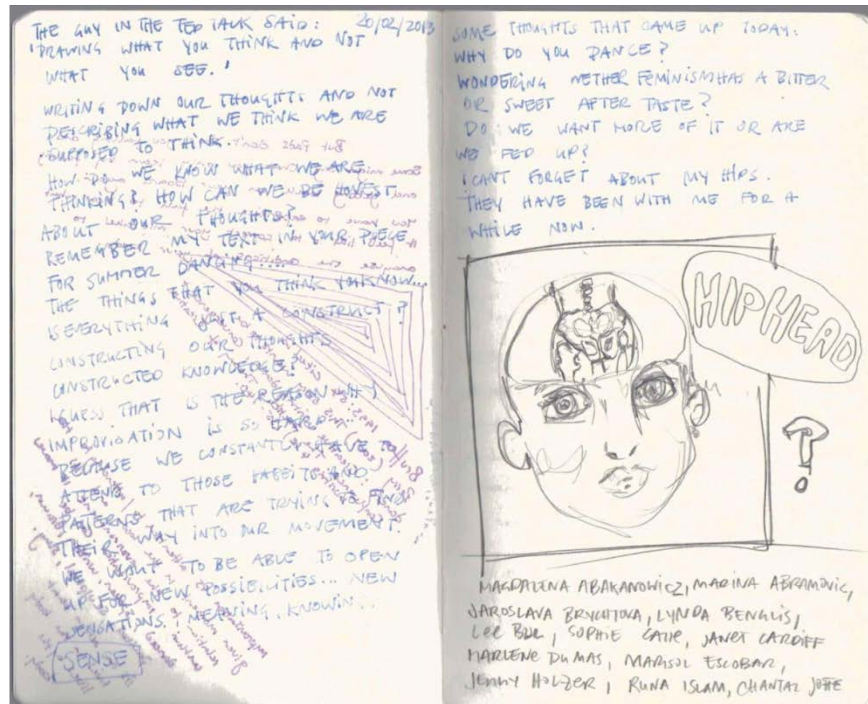

Figure 8: Collard-Stokes, G, (2012) Notebook. Photograph.

The overarching connection between Tufnell's, Poynor's and Kneale's practices is a celebration of their intolerance for, and avoidance of formal vocabulary. They opt, instead, for open and accessible registers. They write with the intention that, if someone were to read or listen to the text, it should not alienate or distance, but form an empathetic connection with its subject matter. This research suggests that their writing has a certain kind of sensitivity, evading vocabulary that insights detachment, favouring instead that which builds empathy. The writing is personal and attainable, it seeks to welcome others, to intrigue, even tantalise them.

These factors exhibit themselves primarily in the visual presence of writing on paper. The process behind this idea is more complex than merely using the concept of movement improvisation as a way of arriving at writing. The thesis explains that action and perception are co-dependent, thus the act of writing (namely, with a pen rather than a keyboard) enhances one's assimilation, comprehension and memory processes.

Maintaining a physical connection, that is, the movement of the body is replicated in the movement of the pen, sustains the activities of the neurons already engaged in the task. Continuity within the practice leads to increased clarity of judgement and the avoidance of that which may cloud thought process.

The dance artists discussed here have developed a dependency on a fanciful marriage of incompatible objects and conditions. The recurrent use of metaphor and simile is a manifestation of this rhizomatic thinking, demonstrating the usefulness of poetry to view relationships with the *other* differently than alternative registers of writing (Leavis, 2008). Although Tufnell and Kneale would argue that this method of writing offers them clarity, it is the position of this thesis to argue that complex analogies obscure meaning. Consequently, the writing is in danger of being highly abstract, obtuse and bordering on melodramatic. It should be remembered that the writing is a distillation rather than a capturing of the experience of dance. Writing is a process that reveals the essence of one's dance experience.

This research agrees with Lepecki's (2004) contention that language places movement under arrest, and any endeavour to capture dance should be comparable to recounting a dream. Just as the fragments of our retelling become sparse, disjointed, dreary and incomplete, so the emotions and sensations fail to remain as alive and vibrant as they did within the dream state. Our physical state and thought process alters as a consequence of waking, which is similar to what happens after intense and prolonged movement improvisation.

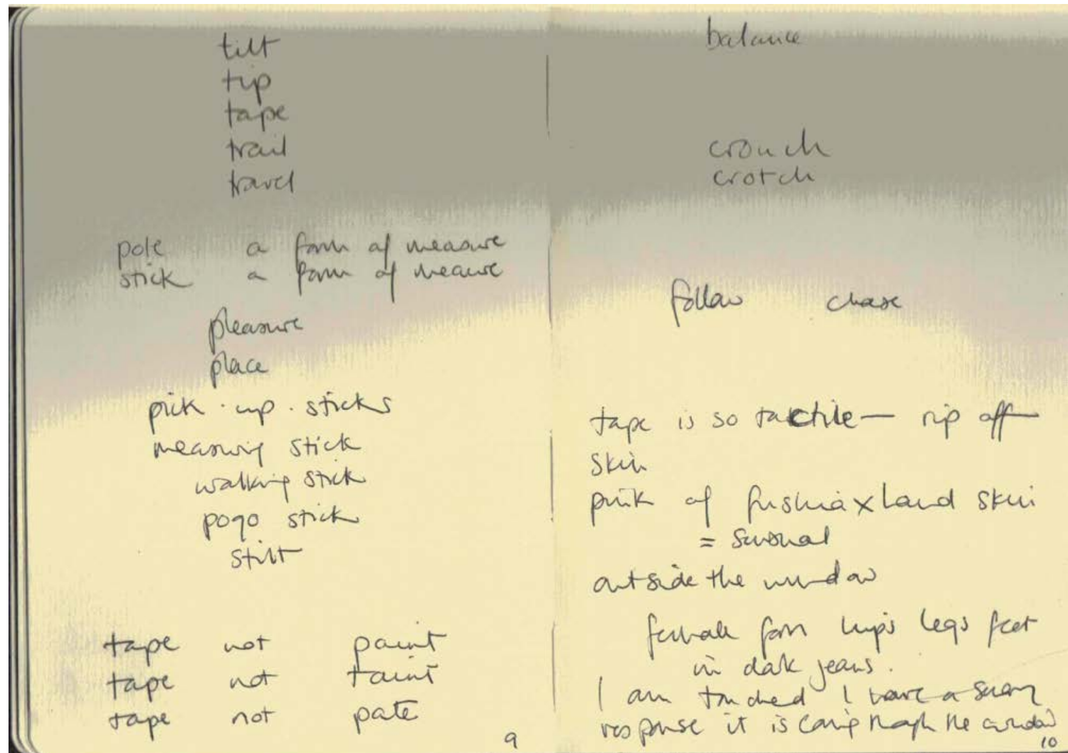

Figure 9: Kneale, H. (2012) Notebook. Photograph.

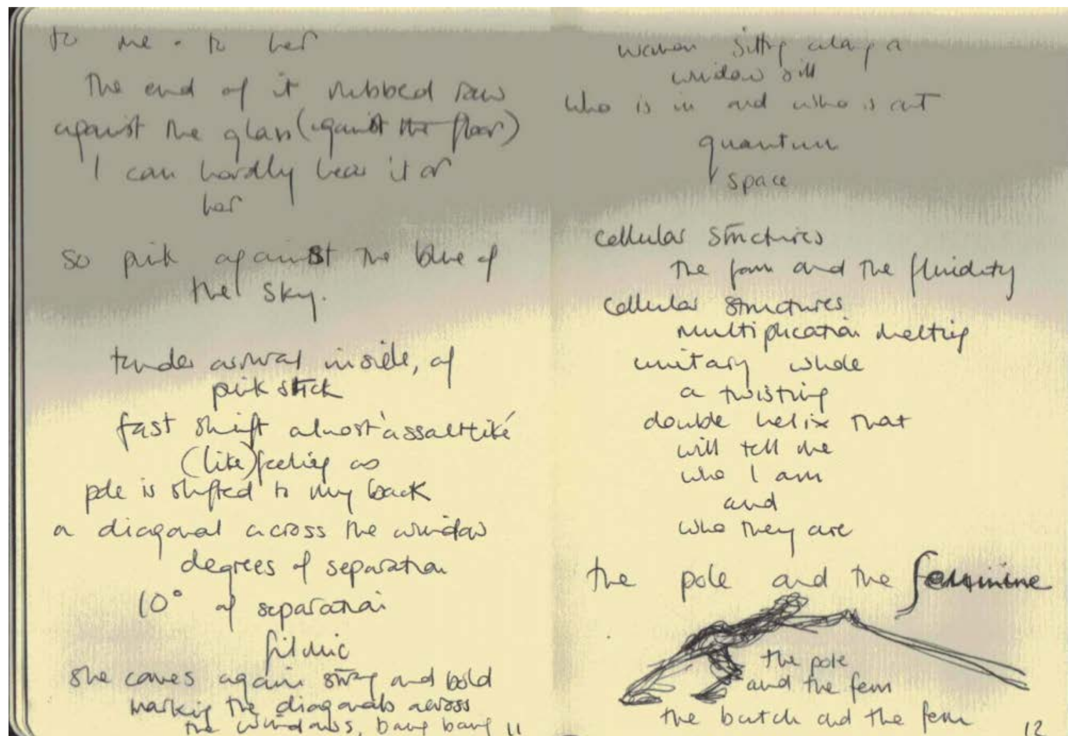

Figure 10: Kneale, H. (2012) Notebook. Photograph.

The research boldly suggests that what lies within the metaphor is not the essence of experience but the evidence and acknowledgement of one's transformation into an altered body-mind state.

Just as the narrative of life might be described as change, the narrative of one's experience might also be considered *change*. We should acknowledge that even in the short time that passes between the culminations of one's moving and one's written activity, physical and mental states will have shifted significantly. As my movement comes to a close, I am already gravitating towards a future self, a new self. I write from this constantly shifting, ever evolving process. Reflecting upon a moment or activity that has passed only limits the scope of the writing and that is why language fails. To remain in the past is quite impossible.

*   *   *

However, Kneale's art work conflicts with this argument somewhat. That is to say, her writing is in fact the conscious composition of a story rather than the assembly of stream of consciousness. Her stories are contradictions, they reveal the truth of her process, yet they are dressed as fiction. Kneale's writing seeks to be as alive as its origins (those origins being the body and the earth), capable of growth, change and reproduction. Mirroring oral moralistic stories, her text aims to teach others something of our relationship to the natural world. These stories offer both Kneale and her audience a means to make sense of their lives, to make life more interesting and demonstrate connectivity. Speaking of how stories encourage humans to advance, Neil Gaiman offers, "[a]s individuals, we are cut off from humanity; as individuals, we are naked — we do not even know which plants will kills us" (2015).

I have discussed how Kneale's writing offers her audiences new possibilities for interpretation by appealing primarily to their emotive imaginations. However, a reconsideration of this through a Merleau-Pontian lens brings an opposing argument. Maintaining, "no language ever wholly frees itself from the precariousness of the silent forms of expression, reabsorbs its own contingency, and melts away to make the things themselves appear" (in Smith, and Johnson, 1993, p.115). This idea posits that visual arts (expressly painting, yet for the purposes of this thesis I interpret his thinking to include dance), returns the audience to the pre-linguistic stage, "the source of silent and solitary experience on which culture and the exchange of ideas have been built in order to take cognizance of it" (in Smith, and Johnson, 1993, p.69).

Merleau-Ponty believes that visual art is capable of both uniting and complicating the binary elements through which we view the world. He writes, "[e]ssence and existence, imaginary and real, visible and invisible - painting scrambles all our categories, spreading out before us its oneiric universe of carnal essences, actualized resemblances, mute meanings" (in Smith, and Johnson, 1993, p.130). This is echoed in Tufnell's understanding of her practice, namely, the flesh of the dancer and the flesh of the world as entangled in a complex reciprocal relationship that is revealed through the product of movement and writing.

In his essay *Eye and Mind*, Merleau-Ponty uses the analogy of the swimming pool to clarify his thinking - it might also useful here. He states that one can see the detail in the bottom of a swimming pool despite the reflections and surface movements that potentially obstruct one's focus. He claims that these elements help the viewer to see the reality of what is being viewed, that "[i]f there were no distortions, no ripples of sunlight, if it were without that flesh that I saw the geometry of the tiles, then I would

cease to see it as it is" (in Smith, and Johnson, 1993, p.142). The *distortions* Merleau-Ponty refers to here, could be interpreted as the felt, emotional, cognitive and imaginative experience of the dancer as she explores her environment, first through kinaesthetic enquiry and then through writing.

The findings within this thesis conclude that this produces a *narrowing* of one's attention rather than the *opening* proposed by the case study subjects (predominately Tufnell). The act of writing stimulates the reticular activating system (RAS), a collection of cells responsible for processing information to the brain and focusing our attention towards the object/subject that is important at that specific moment.[61] One's attention is subsequently steered away from influences (both internal and external), deemed a distraction. By focusing on the pulse of sensation and thought, Tufnell, Poynor and Kneale, believe they are practicing the concept of *open attention*. Yet the brain instinctively seizes control of the activity, channelling one's attention to what it considers the focal point. Questions arising from this point of view, for instance, 'what effect does this have on the union between a body danced and a body written', and 'how then should this thesis address authenticity', are beyond the scope of this thesis and therefore hold potential for future research endeavours. Nevertheless, it is not the intention of this thesis to disbelieve the conviction of this artists but it does suggest that perhaps the notion of *open attention* might be explained another way.

*   *   *

As this project has unfolded, I have witnessed my attention deviate from the mutually engaged dialogues of academic literature to more arresting tensions and

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[61]The stimulation of the RAS process enables the brain to sift through the information received through the body to concentrate on what is significant. The physical act of writing essentially brings crucial information to the forefront of one's awareness and invites the brain to consider it carefully

misunderstandings between the disciplines of bodily practice and writing. Philosophically speaking, the frustration of theorising an art form that lacks words, text, and/or written structure, has caused friction, and the need for research to explicitly address the relationship of dance and writing. That is, their sameness and as well as their difference. Franko writes, "contemporary thought on dance is frequently split between a concept of dance-as-writing and a concept of dance as beyond the grasp of all language, especially written language" (2011, p.322).

The body-mind has given rise to division and misinterpretation between dance - and writing as a mental process. Perhaps contention originates from the misconception that body-mind practices are indulgent and idiosyncratic. Yet, the openness and wakefulness that I experience as a result of my practice, enables me to arrive at conceptual and philosophical thinking through experiential understanding. I experience a greater critical engagement because of my body's activity.

Consequently, in order for me to think more clearly and process information more succinctly, my body has to be engaged in a physical activity of some kind. Sitting here with pen to paper, I am munching on Jaffa Cakes and gulping back coffee, my feet periodically swing back and forth under the table. I rock on my sit bones and bounce my torso the way a small child does when they are tucking into a yummy teatime treat. Perhaps it is nervous energy, yet just as the Tufnell's infant analogy, it occurs to me that my body always twitches and squirms when I am required to learn, assimilate and concentrate. I am a daydream addict, and for that matter, I believe my habit of eating or drinking is the strategy I have invented to sharpen my attention. While giving my body some small activity to indulge in, my mind can be released to engage more fully in acts of contemplation. If my body is busy fulfilling its need to move and be in touch with its

immediate surroundings, then my mind is free from thoughts of restlessness and the insignificant happenings elsewhere that bring distraction.

This relates to the concept of thinking as experience - or Menary's thinking as writing. What this idea offers dance studies and in particular our understanding of dance and writing as an integrated practice, is that writing after the act of dance is thought in action. That is, writing is the material account of bodily and neuronal, processes resulting from our dancing, thus demonstrating an embodied approach to cognition. My eating or swinging feet or improvised movement should be considered an activity that functions without necessity of perceptual monitoring, thus freeing the mind to engage on a deeper critical level.

What I am trying to say is, that the activity of improvising, when done expertly, is an amalgamation of following spontaneous bodily instinct and trust that the body is able to act without the interruption of mental instruction/problem solving. This means that perception (image, sound, body movement and touch) and cognition (abstract ideas) are inseparable - they co-exist, form and inform one another, thus the thoughts that find themselves resting on my paper should be considered the essence of my experience as I understand it.

Many dancers might appeal against writing in favour of dancing together. Whereas dancing with others provides considerable depth of exchange, and I argued, offers the unique experience of releasing oneself from the primacy of the mind, it simply avoids the difficult task of transposing knowledge harvested in the body to the discursive realm.

Tufnell, Poynor and Kneale are writing from their preoccupation within practice.[62] *They are invested in ways in which the field of dance might be further engaged with and understood - creative, informal registers are the result of this. Agreed, this is an activity practiced by very few individuals and the writing that results from it might not be met with resounding acceptance (except for perhaps those mentioned in footnote 61) in terms of providing straightforward, scientific and reliable knowledge on the subject of experience. This practice invites dance scholarship to engage in dialogue on the value of unsettling and complicating agreed understandings and complacencies about practice.*

* * *

During the course of my continued reading, it has become apparent that there is a growing surge of newcomers to this practice. Much of this fresh body of work enquires after the transcendence of moving-writing, finding ways that written language might support and validate performance. Artists like Rachel Rimmer who is currently researching creative pedagogical practices in higher education, has begun to collaborate with writer Julie Armstrong in order that she might discover how her lived bodily experience might be articulated, portrayed and contextualised for personal reflection (Rimmer, 2014). Emerging writer and movement artist Faye Green is another example. Green's work explores the intersections of body and the performative function of text, she describes her enquiry as one that opens up the kinaesthetic intelligence held within the body, and how it might be spoken about (Davies-Crook, 2013). Artists like Rimmer and Green are still wrestling with notions of ephemerality, as their work tries to excavate the problem of capturing the moment of dance/experience.

[62] Notable dance artists for which writing plays (or has played) a significant part in their creative practice might be; Simon Ellis, Alys Longley, Emilyn Claid, Carol Brown, Fearghus O Conchúir, Michael Klien and Rachel Rimmer.

In final thoughts, this thesis has resisted the phallocentric proposal to present a closing revelation, opting instead to reveal several smaller truths throughout its theoretical content and structure. It has required that the reader rethink the hierarchical binaries of writing and dancing, mind and body, offering comprehension of how the mutual exchange between writing and moving work to facilitate the dance artist. It has questioned the usefulness of writing to a dance enquiry, making a case for the reconsideration of body as a site of knowledge.

In this enquiry, writing and reading might be analysed as physical acts, emerging from, and connecting with all multiplicities of self, including the living, breathing body. Just as poet Charles Olson supposed in his concept of *projective verse* (1950) - poetry he advocated, should be composed in an improvised form, replacing conventional forms in favour of the text more accurately reflecting one's vision of the world and existence within it (Young, 1993). Having written this thesis on the subject of personal practice, it is left facing another enquiry, specifically, if writing *through* movement is considered to hold the potential to orient us in the world, how might these ideas hold the potential to shift performance practice.

Moving-Writing: a manifesto

In final thoughts, the overall aim of this thesis has been to demonstrate the potential of a moving-writing practice to bring about [re]connections. This suggests that the ideas of Tufnell, Poynor and Kneale, can support one's effort to see past the compulsion to work against dances ephemerality; arresting movement in its writing down, by dissolving the binds of writing's existence. Formulating my concluding thoughts as a manifesto (channelling Rainer's 1965 *No Manifesto*, yet not following its structure), the

methodologies of Tufnell, Poynor and Kneale endeavour to do one thing - to write with a sense of *freedom to*,

> ...write forward "dancing the dance on in language" (Tufnell, and Crickmay, 2004, p.63).
> ...write in the mode of... that is, to move toward writing with the same methodology as one approaches improvisation.
> ...voice the body.
> ...cultivate a progressive, creative frame of mind.
> ...misbehave with structures.
> ...resist mere description.
> ...write messily.
> ...be adaptable.
> ...arrive into writing as you might arrive into improvisation.
> ...be spontaneous.
> ...write with your body in attendance.
> ...resist censorship.
> ...misspell.
> ...write from a process-orientated position, writing as a way of knowing, rather than a way of telling (Pollard, 2007).
> ...refuse writing as mournful and "haunted by disappearance and absence", (Phelan, 1997; Lepecki, 2004, p.128).
> ...adopt an internal, writer-centered approach rather than an external, reader-centered approach.
> ...embrace playfulness, curiosity, digression, unpredictability, ambiguity and chaos.
> ...place the weight of your body onto your words.

The combined force of movement and writing that, via a feminist lens, resists negative reflection (that which represses the freedom, agency, autonomy and subjectivity of a creative endeavour), contributes to a conceptual shift in the way Tufnell, Poynor and Kneale might come to be understood. These artists have been illuminated as expressers of a future perfect tense, consciously (or not) opposing the trap of considering *female and femininity* as a "self contained, given [...] powerless [and] robbed of agency..." (Grosz, 2000, p.98). Instead of *écriture féminine*, they celebrate the independence and activity of women in and through dance. Components such as freedom and subjectivity are channelled through their moving and writing activities, mirroring characteristics that set postmodern independent dance apart from modernist traditions.

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Appendix A

Miranda Tufnell Interview Transcript

15 March 2013 at 11am

Gemma Collard-Stokes (GCS): I sent you all my bits and pieces through, and...

Miranda Tufnell (MT): You sent me this through... [gestures to the interview questions]

GCS: Yes and you know..., and what bits of it don't make sense then it's probably to do with the way that I'm trying to think through things still at the moment umm...

MT: I wanted to ask you. There was one thing I wanted to ask you about which was about the relationship to women and feminine. Because I think it's a human need rather than a you know... All the dancers that I know, like Simon Whitehead and Chris (Crickmay), we all use this practice and it's a human thing rather than a feminist thing, a feminine thing. It might draw on the feminine in that sort of analytical language, but it's that human need to find meaning, to bring one's pieces together that's what I think impels it, rather than it being a particularly feminine thing... Well I would really push against that, because I think one of the principles of the practice is about breaking down boundaries, we live in a world that's so full of different kinds of boundaries...

GCS: I appreciate that...

MT: I feel kind of... The politics of the work are human, you know. Whether disabled or black or over sixty or whatever, it's the fact that you're a human being seeking meaning, that's what really matters. And, that's what I feel the whole revolution since the seventies has been about. It's about a reclaiming for everyone, you know particularly the ordinary person in the street. That was the politics really.

GCS: Yes of course, so do you feel that we are still on that route?

MT: Were still on that route. We're so much on that route, so it just made me feel somewhat wary.

GCS: Yes, sure I can understand that. Sure, I can really understand that and I believe the confusion is rooted in my awkwardness of wording the questions... I am finding difficultly in wording my questions as I am still trying to discover where I would like this thesis to go.

MT: Well I think you have to. I think you have to, you really have to make a stand for that because otherwise you're going to narrow the relevance of what you're doing. And, you're, I mean, you're doing it for your enquiry, and, I have to say it's not just your enquiry because I think writing is becoming more and more of a place of interest. Did you meet Crosby, Crosby McCloy?

GCS: Yes

MT: Her whole thing is around writing, and erm... she wants to write a book about it, or not a book *about* it but a book *for* it. Because you know, there were people, like Natalie Goldberg, writing what there was in the seventies and things have come so far since then. Practices have evolved. And I think what we're trying to get at is a truth of a practice and that is easy to say in words it's actually quite difficult. What are we really doing with this? And it's so much bigger than a feminist perspectives. That's all I have to say about it.

GCS: Let's begin by discussing how important this practice is to you.

MT: Yes, I think it's a really important topic because it's so much part of a practice and there are really different ways that people are approaching it and I think it's interesting to look at those differences, just as one has differences in your moving. Whether you're working from an anatomical release, or your working from an improvisational cue it, you know... there are these different ways of engaging with this, with writing. I think it's a fantastic topic, and there needs to be more written about it. I think - to refine the practice really and develop it. And, it's really interesting because Chris and I keep coming back to it. We say the writing is still the missing piece. We haven't really harvested it to the degree that it could be harvested. So for us it's a real edge, and I was thinking... I was looking back and thinking I hadn't done any since widening field. Actually, I think I use the words there 'writing as reflection' and I don't think I do think that anymore. I think it was that for a bit, but I think something different is happening now.

GCS: Can you explain what that difference is for you?

MT: It is more, its more about perception. That, almost the moving prepares the way for the writing to arrive - rather than the writing reflecting back on the moving. Because what I think moving does is that it opens this multi dimensional sense of self. It sort of shakes up your categorises it shakes up your habitual perceptions, and I think that almost... and then to find a language that grows on that, grows on from it rather than looking back on it. That's my perspective, because I know that Crosby very much works from the looking back and revoking what's been there and Chris and I always said -

write forward from it - write the dance - write on as if your dancing on. That's what we've always said, and what has been there will come through. And I think that's true in this indirect way because if your consciousness and your perceptions are waking up there, you're in this place of becoming. And, the er.. the writing, the writing takes you a step on again. And what I've been doing is erm... trying to take the writing back into the body and seeing what happens to the body. I think we're probably all doing something like that you know. And I've been working with touch and words and trying to bring together the sensing silent body with language. So there's lots of people now beginning to use text when working, in fact, I've been interested in that and I'm interested in the point when I don't want any more words, you know? And the reason I don't write and write is because so much comes up with writing that I'm interested now in a sort of distilling. Because I'm not really feeling completely satisfied with the writing, I feel like there's somewhere, somewhere else to go...

GCS: That's interesting to me. Do you mean you wish to take the writing back into the body?

MT: No back into the writing, distil from the writing. I really love, if people get it and I'll talk about what I mean by that, I think the writing is just so wonderful and so curious, and I did print out some stuff that Chris and I had done together and thought it would be quite interesting to look at this together and see well, what's actually happening. Just because I was having this conversation with him and he said actually I don't think we're doing writing as reflection anymore, maybe we thought we were back in the early part of this century but...

GCS: That's really important what you're saying because a lot of the work that out there at the moment is still considering writing as a tool, a method of documenting process as if the only purpose of it is...

MT: To refer back to the dance...?

GCS: Yes - to keep, yes to hold on to the past if you like. I have to agree with the people I've worked with and spoken to - it's so much more than that, because like you say it is about moving forward, it is about after the moving, where you are, what state you're in, what are you open to? And I think that writing - as you've just articulate yourself - that's what the writing is offering and whatever you do after that is another unfolding of that...

MT: it is. Its' about really being in touch with the moment. There’s a quote either Hélène Cixous or Eduardo Galleano - two quotes were used in there [Widening field] - "why do I write if not to bring my pieces together?" So that’s one piece... to be in touch with the finger tips of the moment, I think she [Cixous] says something like that. And I think that discipline of attention - to be right on the edge of the moment - that’s what interests me. The writing is a practice in as much as movements a practice. Because it's our everyday form of communication it feels enormously important to make it more vivid, more alive, more able to connect to our experience rather than our usual sort of flat and generalised way of speaking and talking about experience does that make sense to you.

GCS: It does make sense to me. I think, again, with what I'm reading, people who are looking into the negotiations of writing and moving they are really trying to find what that actually is. What you've just described there. What actually is in language - what is different about it - how can we accept the differences - people find it very hard to understand when they are outside the practice. They imagine that it all looks like this [points to formal printed text], that it all flows into sentences, it's all so neat and tidy and structured, and it's really... and then we fight to be accepting that it's not all like this, it's so much more and it's very playful and it misbehaves with structures...

MT: Misbehaves with structures, I love that... That's a great way to put it. There's a kind of anarchy to the whole process, which is very, very important which is why I like your thinking. To keep upsetting the habitual in order to refresh, feel, and see more clearly, you know? And, then the writing, you know, Chris keeps saying that we should really gather the writings because they are so wonderful and I think they haven't yet reached what they could be. And I think there's still something were seeking. How are you experimenting with writing?

GCS: In many ways really. I have a regular moving practice and set aside time for writing… I am experimenting with the transition from moving into writing - how we move from full bodied moving into small and quite introvert process of writing and how the body can remain active in this transition. The next step is to go big, with the writing. To explore writing while moving perhaps.

MT: It's very important that, I love the fact I think you’ve got a plain notebook there you can write all over it, you haven’t got lines

GCS: Oh no…

MT: I love that, because it is. Can we…? In as much as we are playful in the movement, and we really don’t know what movements going to come, can we have that same process with our writing? It's not clearing of the head, its quietening your head so that the rest of your body is speaking. We are so controlling up here, it's about losing that.

GCS: In some of the workshops, I have experienced that participants seem to feel so concerned that what hits the paper needs to be ‘right’.
MT: Yes

GCS: And I believe that to be an effect of educational constructs.

MT: We are so programmed.

GCS: And the voice that plays within us is so often an editor that rules over our participation.

MT: We are so programmed, we’re so trained. That’s a terribly important thing to identify, for you to write about actually, that de-training of our linguistic habits. I think you need to have a little paragraph or two on that because actually it's very similar to what one's doing as a dancer. It takes time to tune your awareness, it takes time till you can lie on the floor and be happy in doing as it were nothing… it’s a kind of re.. it’s a re… It’s a training of your body and this is a training of your linguistic skills, your language skills not linguistic…word skills. And they need just as much, you know,

encouragement and playfulness and I don’t think, I don’t think that we’ve really got the methods yet, that we’ve found the ways to really help people in that. And I often find people do... sorry... such dreary descriptions of what they just did. And I think oh goodness, we’ve really missed the point here, but how quickly they’ll switch once they’ve... once a certain permission has been achieved inside themselves. But it does take time and usually it's not till the second day that someone begins to re... to recalibrate their language and their approach to language.

GCS: I thinks it's about discovering a joy in the use of language isn’t it?

MT: Yes

GCS: I’ve heard so many people say that they have a fear of writing or a fear of languaging something, and the first time I came to understand what writing could offer me in terms of exploring my body and my artistry. The writing happened because I feel that when I speak, there are barriers, even speaking now, I feel the hesitation, something inside saying 'hold on think about what you're saying first', have I got the right words? You know?

MT: Absolutely, absolutely…

GCS: There is always an opportunity to talk at the end of a class/workshop but words did not flow a freely for me in speaking, but they did in writing. I can turn to the paper/journal and it becomes so much clearer, I can just allow words to happen. No judgement. There's something in that to do with privacy and public.

MT: Yes, there’s that wonderful thing that Gertrude Stein says “how do I know what to think till I see what I say” and you don’t know and that’s why this, as a dealing of something in to language, is so tricky. We’re all experiencing feelings like 'I’ve just said something that’s not what I meant to say'. Elliot you know... “words slip slide decay with imprecision”. It's so hard it’s the most difficult medium that we have and there are all kinds of taboos around it – class, gender, generational ones, and I think we need to acknowledge the amount of strictures and rules that we’re imbued with around language which is why the writing is so great so delicious, if you can dare it.

I had, this is a little story that I find incredibly moving, I had someone come to the workshops I was doing in Cumbria; it was working with various health problems. She was really frozen and didn't seem to be at all engaged, she was absolutely ridged. I gave people clay, we messed around with the clay for a bit, and then she said she didn't want to do anything with it. That's when Someone else in the group said: I've written something for you, can I read it? And she just nodded, and the words he'd written were something like,

Sleep little pod sleep,
as long as you need
Wake up little pod,
when you are ready

And he had absolutely caught her story and the permission she needed. She had done endless therapies and they had told her 'well you just have to except how you feel', those kinds of words... But coming in the metaphor like that, it was like a spell had been

released. We didn't know it straight away, but she came back the following week and started to talk - she became one of the leaders in the group. It was... to have something said in a way that, in that metaphoric, it really freed her… it was magic, absolutely magic.

And I suppose I'm interested in the words that we come up with from the writing that I think those things exist in all of them but we tend to just, we tend to, because we want to unblock the flow, just write, write, write, write write… And we have to do that but then I think there's another layer that I think would be, is fascinating to play with. Sometimes I get people to just underline three lines and then make that a poem and then repeat the first line again as your forth line, you know. And it just reduces it down just so, you know, sometimes you want it to be a river and go everywhere and other times you want it to, well... what am I saying here?

GCS: Of course, I get it...

MT: So I suppose there are different, there are different needs in the writing perhaps, you think?

GCS: Yes, yes. Shall we enter some more of these questions? Shall we start at the beginning of the 'Usefulness of writing' section? You have begun to start excavating that question already… However, I've written... My research has led me to question the notion that Carol Brown articulates well in the following quote: "Dancing, in which bodily movement is the primary mode of significance, is commonly perceived as being beyond or before language and therefore 'by nature' untheorisable. That is, dancing is

commonly regarded as something that one *does*, and does not talk or write or theorise about" (1997, p.132-133). I am particularly drawn to the final statement that dance is something one cannot write about. As someone who uses writing as a method of enquiry into the body and imagination what are your feelings on the general assumption that dance is *beyond* linguistic grasping.

MT: Well, therefore by nature untheorisable… There's a conflation of writing and theorising that I'm not sure how helpful that is really. One's not writing about, one is writing in the mode of. I mean the extraordinary thing about language is we all struggle with articulateness and a sense of failure in language, and yet think of the lines of poem that absolutely sing for you. So it [language] can have that incredible potency but mostly we don't use it that way but anyway, I don't think. What are your feelings on the general idea that dance is beyond linguistic grasping. I'm not… dance is, dance and writing is writing, I think there's a linguistic grasp… I'm not trying to capture, so I think, some people might be. They are wanting to describe something but I'm aware of the sort inadequacy of that. And I think, I'm not sure if its, if I'm looking, if I'm looking to capture the dancing. I think I'm interested in dancing as a way of experiencing and a way of perceiving, so the writing is in the same place of enquiry and there not in any way in opposition, that is I'm trying it another way. Is that very contradictory?

GCS: We need to release our thinking from always being centered on writing 'about', or describing and living in the past of the moment to document it.

MT: That it's on an absolute par, its yes, we are a bit stuck with that I think.

GCS: Carol Brown... her thinking is wider than this of course, but in some ways she also supports what's happening here, because you know, it says that we can write or theorise about dance, that is because we are dancers, its physical bodily process – why should we have to?

MT: No, absolutely, equally, equally. Nothing can become something else, what about painting what about sculpture, what about the tree in my garden? Writing is writing and dancing is dancing, is how I think about it really. Not trying to place a different value on it, I mean that's my particular interest not necessarily other peoples, because I am somebody who tussled with writing. And I tell you writing *Widening Field* nearly killed us. Trying to find how to write it in a way that felt commemorate with the practice. So the layout and the mixture of word and image is incredibly important. It took nine years to put that book together, writing and rewriting, and it's still got turgent [sic] bits where it's not transparent enough. But writing, like dancing is hard, a difficult practice, it's a challenging practice.

But I found that having been in academia, I did a degree in English, that I was completely silenced by that kind of language and that use of my mind, I found it a very narrow use of my mind and of my perceptions. And I couldn't see, I felt as if I couldn't see very well afterwards and I had to let go of that whole idiom that whole vocabulary, I spent a year completely silent, just to feel that I could use language again actually. So you know, going back to the way we are dominated by certain hierarchical methods of language and approaches to language, in as much as our movement the challenge to come to spontaneous place to be grounded in the moment to be present, those are all very difficult things to achieve, it's much easier to trot off a sequence or something like

that. It's not what we've been trying to do, am I going in circles, I think I went in a circle just then.

GCS: That quite alright, Can you tell me about your relationship with writing, what role does it play in your personal practice?

MT: Let's make a distinction, there's this kind of creative writing, I mean there are many kinds of writing that I do. I've always kept notebooks and journals, I scribble notes all the time. I can't remember anything so I have to jot things down and my notebooks are terribly precious. Every ten years I burn them, you know, but I always have a note book because I need, I think, I do hold myself together through words, my memory is often in words. You know through my writing, if I'm thinking about something, planning a workshop its away of tracking my process.

GCS: I'm quite shocked to hear you burn your notebooks.

MT: Well because by my age you would have rather a lot yes, or a large house. And I just thought, in my notebooks I have lots of things, my work thoughts, my dreams, my personal stuff, I have jottings towards whatever I'm writing on, and I just don't want anybody else to have them… my children especially when I die, I'd hate them to have to sort of wade through that.

GCS: Do you feel that you lose something by letting go of them or...?

MT: I think one has to let go, the discipline of dance is letting go and staying present. You know I don't… I wait ten years or so, before I do that. And I do, I just check through, I mean I don't go through them, is there something in that that I'm thinking. I often think I will go through my notebooks more but I've had to move so much, kids grow up and downsizing, and you think what am I carting around with me? But I would never be without a notebook. I always have a notebook I feel undressed without a notebook, so it's a very crucial part of my... you know, what I have with me. Just as important as my purse, probably more. Somebody broke into our car a long time ago, and my bag was nicked. I wasn't upset about the money but I was upset about my notebook, I felt as if I'd lost myself. So I know how important it is, a sort of writing to kept track in this age where everything goes past us so much, its one way of holding my ground. Yeah

GCS: Do you always use writing in your workshop?

MT: I nearly always do because I think it gives people a chance to personally articulate what they've been through. It moves them out of been passive receivers of information into actively assimilating and digesting. So I almost invariably do one way or another. Not after everything but I do offer time to write. And I love the quite when people do turn in to their notebooks. I love that, you know, I find that very beautiful, almost like prayer time.

GCS: Has writing ever been a challenge?

MT: Oh yeah.

GCS: Do you have a method for dealing with that?

MT: No method, I'm always trying to find ways. I try to get people used to thinking imaginatively with language way before we get to writing. So if we were doing anatomical release. I'd say, as you put your hand on, what's the landscape you're beginning to feel here, what's the weather, the time of day? I'll try to introduce another dimension or something. I'll go around the room and I'll get people to focus on parts of the room and speak about what they see in a sort of playful place and their trying to find words. I'm trying to kind of warm them up to writing all the way through the workshop. I'm always trying to think about strategies for that. Because I think it's something about recovering your 'telling a story' person. And, we don't do that very much, we don't tell stories.

What else do I do to get them going? Yes, in fact I had a very sticky workshop up in York the other day. In which they weren't use to writing at all, and erm, I think they just wrote the odd descriptive word. If I had had them for a bit longer I, realising that this wasn't something that they did, I would of... What would I have done? Oh I would of probably have done, you know, associations, games with associations of words. So ok, so you say that this dance was quite, ok so let's call up all the words around it, what's the taste of that? Is it like a cat? What object would you put with the word quiet? So I try and expand it into metaphor because I think metaphors the clue, metaphors the key - you have to make this leap into metaphor.

GCS: Why do you think metaphor speaks to us so clearly?

MT: If we are literal about it, the words can bounce off us somehow... Well Sir Thomas Aquinas says 'Man cannot understand except through images' because understanding or being touched by something isn't a linear thing it's an all round multi dimensional thing. And I think what it does is, there are, you know, supposing one takes erm... what would be a metaphor? you know erm, well that pod... it evokes all kinds of things, the peas in the pod, you know? Being inside something that's growing, having brother and sister peas, if you were a pea in a pod. So it's all kinds of bits and pieces that come in with an image, that kind of fertilise it and wake up your senses and engage you. So that's why I think it's so powerful and evocative and erm, you know there's a kind of solar system of other associations and qualities that wake it up. But I think people think its airy fairy, you know, in their ordinary life they think someone's being a bit, a bit erm, 'arty farty'. But actually in its ironic way it's actually more precise, because its more complex, we simply... our everyday language is so simplified isn't it, flat and washed out, uncolourful. That's why it's wonderful when you hear someone from another language speaking whose a foreigner to English - how delicious how they put the words together? It's very wonderful...

GCS: What would you say the act of writing offers the participants of your workshops?

MT: What would I say the act of writing offers participants? Well it's time for their own words. Its time... it allows for that sharing that you're saying, I think it's lovely what you wrote. And because I'm interested in the whole person, I'm really interested in not just the dancer but who they are how they express themselves and their life's. I think as an artist, we are interested in freeing expression so I think it's just another..., another..., another waking up as it were, you know? Question five is, why do you suppose dancers

and somatic practitioners might be drawn towards creative writing? [Gestures a pretend yawn] sorry... Ok, ok, well I think I would use, instead of dance and somatic...I would use the word...improvisers. I think we are trying very hard to be on the edge of the moment. To be in that mind does not involve your memory. So you can think, well where was I? What have I been doing? So it gives you that little bit of time, to kind of..., well here I am now and maybe it reflects on what I was doing but they're close. So I've given a little voice to this renewed me. So that's why I think it's really, really, really useful. And I think that other kinds of dancers if you're working in a traditional technique, you see what you're doing, you repeat it, you repeat and you repeat it. And you know, you don't need to reflect upon something. But I think it evokes this kind of creative movement I mean I call it a sort of 'creative space'. It evokes and creates a reflective frame of mind. You know, where suddenly the walls are not simply the walls, you know, everything comes alive and you hear and perceive differently. It's like bringing things to life. You probably found that with Helen you know, when you move outside you see it much more clearly and vividly don't you?

GCS: And it also surprises you when afterwards you've walked through a landscape and you didn't take notice of it...'what was I thinking not engaging with it?'

MT: Yes. I don't really use this word somatic. I have to say it makes me uncomfortable. Um, Eva and I were talking about this and we both agreed that it made us feel sleepy. I think because it refers to bodily experience and I think we want to say experience is more than bodily, and it's also going back to the politics we talked about right at the beginning. It's a very..., it's an academic word, it's not a word that's in the streets. So... aaa..., anyway I'm not going to nitpick about it.

Do I imagine it has a therapeutic effect, a therapeutic impact? In as much as anything creative as a therapeutic value. I think the word 'therapose' [sic] means connecting to your gods does it. And I think what the work is doing is it's connecting you to the environment, to yourself, to other people, to your own mind, to..., it's a connecting process, that's what I would say it was, yeah.

Is it possible?...

GCS: Is it possible to write the somatic? I think it's asking can we give ourselves the same attention to writing that we do in moving and I think to a certain extent we do, and obviously it's something we have to practice...

MT: Well when you talked about play. This playful approach to, you know, words as gesture, words as colour, words as movement, you know. You've said it very, very well actually I think.

GCS: Since co-writing *Widening Field* in 2004, has your thinking in relation to writing shifted?

MT: Yes, I think I've said it has but I don't think about it. We've called it writing as reflection but I suppose if you don't take reflection too literary. It's being in a reflective space. I do think of the writing as being kind of magical in its own right, I think it conjures something like that, those words for the woman but... I was thinking.... You see what I find fascinating is you get two bits of writing by two people of the same

event. So Chris would write in response to me, I'd write in response to me. And they absolutely apply, which shows you how multi faceted every moment is. And I think that's a wonderful..., I think that's one of the great benefits is just to realises there's more than one's blooming mind can ever imagined. And its miraculous isn't it? what people, in the wider mind, what they pick up about another person and about yourself, you? I mean it always surprises me. And that surprise and delight is what I associate with the writing actually. And therapeutic... I'd put somewhere further down the list because it's more than that. Unless one unpicks what we mean by therapeutic. This is wonderful... [she reads from a collection of writings by Crickmay and herself]

She teases the moth which flutters in an agitated manner

Flaps off but not far feebly lands and then falls to the floor

A cat sniffs at it and then losing interest walks away

Neither she nor it know more about this encounter than is immediately apparent

As if a ghost meets a living being

Now we are playing dominoes

Some of the pieces have fallen on the floor

Then we're standing under trees looking up

There is an inexplicable sense of panic of the need for light coupled with a strange lassitude

Accepting one's fate

The moth has only one aim to reach the light

Once this has been achieved it becomes simply prey

I think..., I think the writing has a thousand different applications and values. And because the movement mode is like water going through a sieve you, I never know what I've been doing movement wise. I get lost in it and that's part of what I seek, because I want to let go of all my boundaries, I want to see differently I want to open up I want to change, I want that. So that leaves me in a very permeable open place when I emerge, and when I write I'm still in that open place, but things are going to configure differently and then the words might offer me an energy, might offer me all kinds of... Like they did to that woman, that it's alright to be seen, if you reduce it down, it's alright to be sleepy and sort of stay in your pod, it's ok. Or it might be, you might discover a character. You talk wonderfully. I love when you say about the multi..., multiple selves or something like that. And you know we give them all an airing. We have got stuck in one box or person and you suddenly find there's another energy and character and each time, each modality, whether its painting, writing, moving, it's an opportunity for a bit more of this cast of characters to emerge. And, so you feel more fully there. Does that make sense?

GCS: It really does...

MT: Ok next question, What are the specific ways in which moving connects with imagination - what makes writing an accessible/appropriate tool for exploring this connection further? I've been finding myself thinking, as you're talking, about Ted Hughes. Do you know this wonderful book by Keith Sager called *The Laughter of Foxes*?

GCS: I haven't been able to get hold of it but I know of it.

MT: I've just order a copy for myself, I had one and then lost it in one of my moves. He talks and writes about the nature of imagination, I think it's fabulous stuff but I've actually got *Winter Pollen* upstairs, I'll put the kettle on... It's funny because some of this stuff I've been talking about in that workshop... I'm just trying to think what's it's called... There's a great thing that Ted Hughes says about... [Disappears upstairs] It's so mysterious I can't find my copy. Look it up in the library. There's a wonderful thing in there about imagination that I think ort to be more... I think it's really important you doing this because I think it will open up something that's got a bit narrow, the thinking around the field, it got quite narrow. So it would be great if you can manage to get this together and do it your way. I love this you see, what erm... this is Berger, The *Shape of a Pocket*, page 14. Isn't that great? See I think the writing... we're in this zone we're moving all the time between visible/invisible and I think it's just a way of trying to become more visible. He has this wonderful thing, he says "we do not know" he's talking about, you know Lasgo: page 15. I think there's something in there that we are trying to do with the writing because it does bring things into a visibility. I hope I'm not muddling you.

GCS: No not at all, no.

MT: Imagination... It's definitely a mixture between our sense, you know, it's our...I don't know what is it? 40sq yards of skin wakes up, everything wakes up doesn't it and the senses wake up. If one's got into a one track of mind which we tend to be into. Then it wakes up everywhere else so the first thing is that sensory awakening and then there's the sense that we make of our sensing and I think that's at the heart of then our

imagination. What Hughes says, he says the imagination is the most energetic use of the whole mind, our rationality, our reasoning, our dreaming, our intuition, our instinctual, our memory. They all come into play so he says the imagination is an activity of the whole mind it's not separate... so that would sort of make sense you know? When we're moving the brain becomes active, there's a lot of information coming in to the brain isn't there?

GCS: Yes and its busy trying to filter it all though to make sense and connect the dots, make predictions about our environment/experience.

MT: We've come to the sticky bit of questioning now along the lines of feminine writings of the body... I think dance does itself a dis-service when we say that our other voices don't matter. I think that It's been the poor relation of the arts, you know? A sort of mindless dancer and all these stereotypes that actually dancers need to counter. That's why it's wonderful when Mable Todd called her book T*he Thinking Body*. Isn't that just brilliant? Because we have to be thinking, speaking, being and movement is our main tool and our main source of insight and our greatest joy probably, but it cuts us off from the rest of humanity if we don't also cultivate our language and our capacity to share our experience. in some way or another. And there really is a sharing, my sense is there really is a sharing, you know, I see people so animated when they share their bits of writing, the pleasure and the sense of feeling known and recognised on some level is very, very special don't you feel that? And I love that, that sort of murmuring of bees, like there all coming close to their honey, they feel seen by the other person and understood you know? Something is understood I'm not quite sure what it is, you can't pin it down, but something about the nature of who you are is shared with the nature of

who another person is. And in that you find this common humanity and that's why again I think this thing of our common humanity is so important to the practice. Which is why, you know, one could talk about the feminine but I know that Chris would be really upset you know, as a artist who uses writing he'd fell excluded somehow

GCS: I can see how that might be...

MT: Its very much part of his practice. If one comes up with that argument [feminist practice] one is denying the whole drift of contemporary dance that's just slightly worrying, which has been about creating a common knowledge. Pedestrian movement erm, valuing that, it goes right against the grain. To claim this practice for the feminine is excluding. I'd like to support you in it, because it's interesting. Talking to Chris this morning, I said I don't think I've got anything to say to Gemma, all I feel is that I'm in a place of transition with this work, I don't you know what I think..., but actually I've found it really interesting talking to you about what we're unpacking.

GCS: Could you say more about your educational view of writing..

MT: I think you need to have the word in there, 'reading' as part of writing, when it comes to education. I don't think I would of survived without the written word, I think I would have withered up. That's how I found a freedom. I don't know how it was for you, but I've always loved books and reading and other voices, you know, moving beyond my own experience and books have been a complete life line, and it's the way I meet all kinds of people I'd never meet. Like the ideas of Ted Hughes or whatever. So my writing, in terms of education was flattened into a particular mode and it trained the

mind to manage things in a certain way and I found dancing exploded all that kind of mind, that kind of sense making, that kind of linearity, and that's why it's been a complete life line, dancing. If I'd been stuck in those frameworks, those academic frameworks, I'd have been bored off my rocker. Instead of which, I've never stopped being fascinated and delighted because I feel like what we're doing in this work is always about opening doors of your perception, and its rooted in the body, and it goes into all kinds of modalities maybe dancing, maybe writing, it maybe..., but it's about being embodied. It's about an embodied knowing, embodied seeing, embodied presence. And that..., that is so important, I think it's so needed. It's the only thing that gives us the ability to say no to what goes on in the world out there, to say this is where I stand this is what I feel. And I remember when I was teaching at Dartington, you know I'd see people come in from school and I could see they did have a clue who they were... any sense of body. They weren't really standing, didn't have that sense of standing on their own two feet. They'd been shaped and manicured and, you know, drilled by the school education system, and I use to think 'ok we're going back to first base, let's go back and recover something that you had, you know, that you trusted in yourself'. Got to go all the way back to reclaim that. Still there but it's been overlaid by the way education patterns. The sitting still, the valuing of the, you know, the spoken or the written. And we're saying no, lets value in seeing and sensing the touching, the tasting all those other ways of experiencing, it's a..., yeah..., yeah... is that enough?

GCS: Would you consider this writing as documental?

MT: No, I'm writing spells not documents

GCS: Its believed that this writing is about holding on to something in the fight again ephemerality.

MT: It's not about repetition. I think some people might use the work as documentation. At what point does it become documentation? That's quite an interesting question I think. I know Chris and Eva did that piece at Coventry, with Sylvia in the big..., they had some writing up that came from their writing, would we say...?

GCS: It might be documentation because it's connected to something. It's not descriptive, it's not about something, it's working with or alongside something.

MT: I didn't start in middle age, I started in my twenties and I can't really say anything to this... I remember Simon Whitehead was an early friend of mine and we started writing. There was something about moving beyond the wordlessness that seemed really important... I don't think it's... I think men feel loss or lack of voice too. And it's true there's more women in this culture dance than men, we're not a culture that dances much sadly. But actually it's this kind contemplative dance isn't it, because you know, we have Morris dancers round here, line dancing...

GCS: It offers something that is not elitist, it offers something to all.

MT: It's very different when someone talks about their dancing and what's shared in that as opposed to what's shared when they share they're writing which is a thousand times more vivid, and personal, and you know, you get the feel of that person. You're moved out of generality and when I talk about what I've just done movement wise I find it

completely inadequate I find my words just feel so benign. But if I give myself the permission to enter it through this more, sort of conjuring magical use of language, then I, you know..., it somehow conveys something and it's the dance and it's more than the dance... our sensitivity and creativity gets suppressed. Writing is a chance to own the self. It really allows one to explore one's embodied knowledge, embodied knowing.

Appendix B

Helen Poynor Interview Transcript

30 September 2013 at 2pm

GCS: SO, You've had a little read of the questions and the contextualisation?

Helen Poynor (HP): And I have to say I didn't need to read it twice although at times I thought I should. But I have looked at the questions in more detail and ranted in response. Firstly, I just wanna respond to something that you've written hear about 'you do not discount creative or wild writing'. I would put it slightly more positively than that. The reason why perhaps more often I suggest that people draw than write, is because most people, not all, because I get a lot of people who are very visually, you know? People like Antony who are very, you know..., visual stuff is their primary mode of expression.

Erm... For most people writing is more familiar and therefore a little more tricky, because there is also a tendency for people to write *about* rather than *from*, which I think I say quite often. And so, I mean that can happen in drawing as well but particularly as there are quite a lot of people who do come from academic or intensional [sic] backgrounds, there are also a fair amount of people who come from a creative writing background too. But it's like..., and people who really wanna get the material... it's very tempting if I say 'write', for them to write either a description of the exercise or about it rather than from it. So that's why I tend to favour the drawing more. Though I'm not particularly artistically orientated in that way myself, but it's like it gets round those problems. But, what I will say in terms of my experience and my training about writing,

which connects to one of the later questions, and, you know, some of this might not be new to you so tell me if I'm just reiterating stuff.

When we trained with Anna (Halprin) and her team, we were issued with a massive ring binder at the beginning of the training, did I tell you this? It was just a huge ring binder with all these different sections in, which were all to do with writing. We were all also issued big pads and oil pastels, you know? The big A2 whatever that size is. Erm, so it was part of the kit and in terms of the writing practice that we were very actively encouraged to follow, and that were in different sections of this ring binder. There was a section that was a log, which was very precisely, what did we do. And, that was clear, and these were clearly delimitated which I think is very useful, and we were expected to keep thoroughly up-to-date, nobody checked it as far as I can remember. So that was one thing. There was another section which was experiential writing which was more..., yeah..., writing from our own experience and connected to that was quite a lot of Gestalt writing. I don't know how much you know about Gestalt therapy so, Daria was... is I mean she's moved her own work now so I don't know whether she still identifies as a Gestalt therapists. She..., she's a trained Gestalt therapist and Anna had been involved in some of the beginnings of Gestalt therapy in the States with a guy called Fritz Perls. And, one of the things that Gestalt..., I mean Gestalt works really well with body stuff, but also there's a lot of speaking. So for example if you Gestalt a dream, then you write or speak as all the elements of the dream, not just the person that's you in the dream. So if there's an elephant in the dream or a carpet, they all speak. And because of lot of work with Anna, in first training at least, was divided into, you know, we worked through the body, different areas of the body, so you would do a lot of writing with for example,

from the head which is where we started speaking, or the left arm speaking, or the right arm speaking. and that would be written. So there were a lot of Gestalt dialogues.

And you can also apply that to something like working in the environment, if you work with a tree you might write to the tree, but you might also write as the voice of the tree. So that was all part of the experiential writing and there was a dream journal. We were asked to document our dreams and I think there is another section, I might have merged two. But, the differentiation between logging and experience was made very, very clear. Erm..., and the Gestalt writing was something else really as well, I think maybe it was more logging than experiential in the Gestalt writing. So the way I was training with Anna, writing was a very big part of it and different types of writing were part of it. But that's also where the drawing came from. So in her background of the drawing, and she calls them 'psycho kinetic visualisations', which you've probably read about. She basically as I understand, started it with kids, she was doing a lot of work with kids when her kids were little, and I think there were two elements to it. One was something to do with the ephemerality of the experience and that the drawing gave the kids something to say 'oh I did that' you know? They could see something that they could take away, but also as a bridge to being able to talk about it. Kids can't dance and then talk about dancing, it doesn't work. Those two things are still very active for me, but for me I just articulate it slightly differently. I think the problem with most of us when we go into language is that we go into rational thinking very quickly which is why the wild writing is useful. And Miranda Tufnell does a lot of work with writing it's really part of the practice that she offers. So the drawing is a way of, if you like making a bridge between an ephemeral experience that is go, and something that you can actually talk to somebody else about it. Do you see what I mean. So for me that's still par to the function of it. Erm, does that answer your question?

The other thing I think, is it provides a journal - it's a bit like a dream journal when you suddenly realise 'oh those guys pop up in my dreams often' or you know 'I've always dreamt about older guys and now their 13' you know, so when you keep, and this is something about the ring binder and also about the big pad, if you keep all your drawings and your writings you can actually see a lot of links across, you know - it's like 'of I always use red at the centre' it's not like 'why' do you see what I mean? It gives you a way of charting your journey, and I think, I just think we are very cleaver at kidding ourselves and we can do it with images as well as with writing. because our conscious mind naturally doesn't want to deal with the unconscious stuff so were very programmed to avoid it. And stuff that comes through when we are moving does side step the conscious mind - and the same can happen with dreaming and the same can happen with drawing, and it can happen with writing but it's more difficult just because of all the programming we've got. It's not that writings less valuable, it's just that there's more rubbish to get out of the way of. So if I'm working with I'm working with highly trained ballet dancers there's a lot to try and get out of the way. It's the same for most people with writing.

GCS: Do you think that perhaps some of the ease that comes with drawing rather than the writing is that there is a more of a speediness with the drawing - with writing, it can be quite a long process to get through a sentence - do you think that has anything to do with keeping present?

HP: Not necessarily, more I would say, particularly if people are drawing on large pieces of paper, is that because it's a more physical activity it keeps them more

connected to the body I don't think it's to do with speed. And it doesn't work for everybody, for some people the invitation to draw is appalling. But what's been interesting for some of the people training that it's happened for, is to see how that shifts. Also for you it's not your favourite mode - but I think the bridge is more to do with you know, ideally if we always were drawing on large pieces of paper, that's why I never put out anything as small as A4 to draw on and why when people bring smaller journals, I tend to encourage the bigger ones. But actually the big ones that we were given were even better. I think there's something about drawing for a lot of people, not for everybody because it also gets loaded if you've been told you can't draw or if it's your main form of creative expression you can get blocked in different ways, but for a lot of people it takes them back to childhood. Particularly if they are given permission not to draw representations. The other reason I use oil pastels is that you can smear them and that's very kinaesthetic - so for me it's more to do with that than speed. I think if you really do what I understand as wild writing then you don't lift the pen form the page and you just keep it going but it's true the mind can go faster than the hand.

There's also that erm, trying not to know what you're putting down before you do it. Just allowing it to come out... So did Anna communicate the functions of the writing to you during the training. The log was the... how to write the journal basically, the different sections of it were really clear and I'm not saying I remember them totally accurately. Erm, I don't know at what point I learnt more about where with all for the drawing, because I can't separate what I did in the training with what I did in the research for the book. I don't know in terms of the others stuff that I've said I can't always tell where it came from. But the integration of drawing and the writing they were both much more central than they are at the training that I run. They were absolutely ongoing, I think it

was also because the training was very intense it was full time for 3 months and then again for another 3 months. There was a lot of emotional and psychological work, I think it was also a way to try and help us contain that process.

GCS: Yes I mentioned somewhere in here [questions] the therapeutic qualities of.. or the healing qualities of the activity - I think that the writing for me, certainly when I'm speaking to other people who use writing, there is this element of helping to digest everything.

HP: I think it's a way of integrating and erm, oh there was some artistic quote I heard recently on 'front row' that 'all arts therapeutic' but the word therapy is so loaded but I think digestion and integration yes for sure - and that was the intention of the writing and the drawing in the Halprin work. And, if you look at the 5 part process which became more articulated after I left, they were just beginning to articulated it, you know they talk about integration, they talk about the need for it, they talk about, I mean I always forget it but talk about identifying the issue, confronting the issue, expressing the issue, integrating the it and assimilating it. It's all in the small Halprin book. So you can look at that. Because there's definitely an argument that that's where the writing can sit.

When you say 'I see the act of writing as a way into speaking about my experiences' I mean that makes complete sense to me. And I think... I was going to say writing is easier that speaking... but I think its differently easy and differently difficult. I'm very aware of the difference between talking about my work and writing about it. So I think when you're talking about something, you can just mouth off which can be very useful

and it can also be very ungrounded and it can be really not what you want to say but it can be very free flowing and something can happen because this is an embodied conversation it happens between us, it happens in the space between us something different can come out of that - I think writing is necessarily a more private thing. And, I think that all these choices that we all make are also temperamental. So for you speaking in the group, as I understanding it wasn't necessarily an easy thing to do or a particularly comfortable thing to do, but writing worked very well as a way of enabling you to speak in the group, so for me that's totally valid.

So there's something you go on to say in the question here, I mean there's lots in this we could dissect it - 'certain therapeutic nature to act of writing in this manner its wild not judgmental....message' all of those I think are you know great statements to be making and I would totally support them and agree with them. So I'm a bit thrown by the next bit, I was a bit hummm.. I mean it would be good to... I'm aware you want to interview me but I could also interview you. "I feel my writing....submissive" that sort of blew my mind that you might think that...

GCS: It just came from all these complications in my head - my thinking is..., if I am not... if I'm retreating back into writing could it be that I'm not being embodied and not being present. Could it be that I'm doing this sort of thing? [demonstrates introversion with physical gesture]. I think about being embodied and present as this [gestures open face, chest, arms] and commanding space and attention and the act of writing feels the opposite to that.

HP: You see for me what I see you doing with your body is being extrovert or introvert, that's the difference, not whether your embodied or not. You can be curled up asleep

and be very embodied so for me there's a contradiction in your own question here. You say you feel empowered by you written voice and you say it connects you with yourself so I would say that's what the works about. That's exactly what the works about. So if one of the channels for you, that also allows you to communicate with others, is through writing then fantastic. It's out of moving you find writing and that makes you feel empowered and connected to yourself in a way that you can communicate with others..., there is for me absolutely no contradiction in the work. When you said "I feel my writing... work" I wrote here 'no it doesn't!'

But the other thing that I feel quite strongly about, that is that your writing is not patriarchal, I mean it might be when you play the game [she refers to academic writing], but that writing that you that you gave as the value action and the stuff that you've read in the group is not patriarchal - and if you collide, that's not the right word, it's one beginning with 's'. But if you somehow slide writing, you know put together writing 'p' the word will come in a minute, then you let the patriarchy own the written word, don't do that - somehow implicit in here is that writing is a tool of patriarchy and that patriarchy owns the written word. So somehow your completely giving up your female voice in that, and I mean Cixous is very on that and so is Irigaray, so I'm just sort of shrieking about that really. Because it's really important to not confuse - to not say patriarchy owns language therefore I can't write without colluding with that or whatever. Of course language has been shaped by patriarchy, all of our culture has, but don't give them writing.

And then I had some sort of comments about the relationship writing and speaking and moving and how do those three things relate - I think that's something to think about - what's that relationship? And writing and speaking being different but both being

linguistic and you know I think again it's like trusting that what works for you is ok and is valid, your that type of person where some quite time writing actually is empowering and does keep you connected to the world, does keep you connected to yourself, does give you the bridge to you know... Other people find writing unhelpful but do you know what I mean, it's like a lot of what we've talked about on the training is all about you trusting your way of moving, your dancing, your perception of yourself as a woman. The same is true of the writing, and of course because your working within academia which is unfortunately still a very patriarchal space form my view, then it's tricky because you, you're using the same tool and you're having to jump through these hoops so of course it's very confusing. Of course you get muddled in your head because it's very difficult doing what you're trying to do. Trust that you have something really important to say, and that you will say it as well as you can both in terms of articulation and understanding at this point in your life - ten years down the track you might go 'ah yes but...' do you know what I'm saying?

GCS: I spoke to Miranda about her work, and she was adamant that the practice should not be framed by feminism. Yet the writing is about exercising one's voice and exercising empowerment through one's voice - which extends from a feminist perspective. Of course feminism does not feel adequate in terms of Miranda's world view...

HP: Of course that is about recognising your world view and Miranda's world view as different and recognising where Miranda comes from is different and respecting that, but you don't have to have the same perspective. I have a feminist take on my work because I identify as a feminist, you know, so as far as that's concerned you know, that's

the lens I see through. And you can get into a debate, you know, where do you locate your sense of inspiration and I don't even want to go there, but you see what I'm saying, Anything I say to you, comes from my world view, and anything that Miranda says to you, who I love, and you know we're just doing something up north together and laughing about how very different what we do is, and yet how connected it is, and we're very different kinds of women. It's having the confidence of your own convictions and being able to see that all of us, all the people we speak to or Anna or Suprapto, we can only ever come from our own perspective, which of course is a feminist position because it's says there is no such thing as objectivity. Do you see what I'm saying, you know, I totally respect Miranda, her works great I love her, I'm very fond of her and that's her perspective, and you will be talking to lots of different people with lots of different perspectives, some of which resonate with you, but the perspective you take for your PhD needs to be your perspective. It's about original, i.e. unique to Gemma research. It's not just that original thinking in terms of the academy. The uniqueness to you... so long as you're not appropriating Miranda's work as a feminist practice, then you just talk about it and you locate it within the context that she locates it in. Do you know what I'm saying. Because I think the work she does with the writing is very valid in relation to this. Have you done any movement work with her?

GCS: Yes I've done many workshops with her.

HP: Ok so you have done quite a bit, that's good, because the movement work is also very different to what I do. What I feel when I'm writing about my work, is that the only way I can do it is to rant onto the page and then look at what I've writing, and the shape comes out of that too, but it I start checking my thoughts or words before I put them

down, I can't write anything. You need not to boycott your ideas. write them down and if there a red herring you can block them out - and later when you come to look at them you might think 'well do I really think that?' but you can't block them out because it's the same as you know, stopping the impulses to move. You need to let your thoughts play and then you can also choose which to develop, the same as you can choose which movements to develop, you know, if your then gonna make a piece of work.

GCS: Did you have any thoughts about this third question? Writing as another unfolding of dance?

HP: What I have written is that you've answered your own question, if other words, this answers the question and the question before I think. Again as a description of what I would hope would be a happening: "writing paves the way towards a greater sense and acceptance of who we are and how we work, providing a reclamation and celebratory space" is a fantastic statement, great! I don't quite get the logic as to.. "This is where movement plays its most significant role" what I've written in connection to the last sentence". It is through movement that we practice the embodiment of the multiplicities of self found within our writing", I said yes that to and visa versa of course. One of your underline themes seems to be that the two go into each other in both orders - that writing goes into moving, moving in writing - and I think yes of course. So I think that sentence is reversible and I agree with both versions of it. So yes I agree. Don't worry it's not a question, you've just written a wonderful statement about what you believe. I think one of the things it may be interesting to play with and maybe it's counterproductive, is to allow yourself to write those sort of sentences - write a manifesto or philosophy 'a la Gemma' and then find out how you can weave that into an

academic context rather than the other way around. Because you're very good, this and the value action, you were very coherent about what was going on, do you see what I'm saying? Because you might not felt so fuzzy, give yourself permission to write from your core and be like, this is what I want to say how can I put it into an academic context? "on the outside", by that do you mean the outside environment?

GCS: Yes,

HP: I was interested about, when you say "I feel out of place in my environment", does that mean in the rural environment or in any environment?

GCS: In any environment...

HP: Oh ok, because of the split?

GCS: Yes...

HP: |And something about the etiquette of these spaces - is that any spaces or all spaces?

GCS: All spaces - the space that I find myself within at that moment. What I mean is, if I happen to be in the countryside, the etiquette of that is different to the city, yet I feel similarly challenged when in the city.

HP: What do you mean the etiquette of that?

GCS: I mean that there are ways that we act in relation to certain environments and people we might find in these environments that are a sort of unwritten rule. And it is this that places me in conflict with myself. I am unhappy with these social variants as it places me in a vulnerable place (confidence wise).

HP: What happens if you go into a wilder space?

GCS: The issues are irrelevant, there is no social- cultural frame with which to work within, there is no threat to my sense of self, I can be me without the need to exchange pleasantries with strangers in rural places, or deal with feeling of detachment or insignificance that I have when in the city.

HP: This isn't about the your environment in the sense of the physical environment - it's about a cultural environment and the sort of morays of... it's about a socialised environment. So you're not unhappy with the builds, cows or fields, your unhappy with the what you're supposed to do in the street or on the footpath. I think it's important not to confuse this. But just to complicate the matter slightly more. "It is my understanding that we are shaped by our landscape, yet so few of us recognise or acknowledge this" I think we are shaped by all the landscapes that we are brought up in and on the one hand I think that includes what I think you're talking about, which is the sort of geographic landscape but it also includes the cultural, psychological and familial landscape. We experience a lot of different environments - what we call landscape is only one part of it. It was just to flag that... I think we are culturally shaped by both our landscape (to go back to your original use for it) and the weather. The way people are in Yorkshire and

the way people are on the commuter belt in Surrey is different for a lot of different reasons which are also cultural.

Once this was very, very clear, you know, I spent a lot of time in Australia and there are things I know and love about that landscape and have worked in. but it's not where I belong, it's not where I come from. But where I come form is the suburbs, probably not dissimilar the type of environment you were brought up in. But I know after one trip to Australia I was unusually on the bus from Heathrow, because I'd left my car at a friend's, going though you know, Wiltshire, and not Devon and Dorset - and I felt, sitting on that bus, that my bones re-found there right configuration - I literally had a kinaesthetic feeling that my bones where going back into the right places and that was very curious, and interesting to me - I think it was a level of connection to an English landscape, in terms mainly of scale, because they weren't landscapes that I'm particularly familiar with. So I think there is a very real way that landscape does affect us and I think the weather does to. I would say, and it may not be immediately apartment, but I am quite an introvert person. I think you are too, different version of that... I would say that England as a culture is a more introverted culture than somewhere like Australia for example, and I think that's partly to do with climate. So when I'm in an Australian winter, when I was actually living there and I'd get up in August, which is winter there, and I'd draw the curtains and every morning the sky would be completely blue and no clouds anywhere, this is just Sydney, it's not anywhere particularly hot. I began to get really depressed, because fuck it, it was winter... where my Sydney friends were (laughing) that's exactly their reaction, where as my Sydney friends were going 'we've got to go to Queensland because we're getting sad, we're getting that light deficiency thing for winter. And I'm going, I can't bare this - there's no

movement in the sky, there are no clouds there's no change. It's light light light even though it gets dark at six. Where's my winter, where's my season of introversion? And I started fantasying about ancient churchyard walls covered in ivy with snails, and it's like, there's nothing in this climate that allows me to be an introvert. So that's why I think weather is also part of it.

So maybe it's easier for Gemma to feel herself when she's in the Cairngorms than when she's walking a well trodden footpath or the city street that's an interesting proposition. Have you read, a Scottish woman, Kathleen Jamie? She's fabulous. She's written, *Sightlines* (2013) and *Findings* (2011), you could call them 'nature essays', which would make me not want to read them, because I actually find reading stuff about nature really difficult. People give me stuff and I'm like..., why would I read it I just want to go sit on a rock, but it's stunning. Well it resonates with me a lot. The more people you can read who validate what you feel, who help you trust your own experiences the better I think. The thing that's interesting about Kathleen Jamie's writing apart from the fact that she's really an astute observationalist and she goes to some very wild places, is she totally integrates that with her daily life, as a mother of two kids and somehow she really integrates the human and environmental. An interesting proposition, but I don't think it's probably true, why does this type of work relate more to introverts than extraverts? Looking at psychological types, my understanding and these are really potted definitions, that introverts are people who get nourishment from not being with other people, but extraverts get their nourishment from being with other people, you know? So if an extrovert is miserable they might sit in a cafe and have indirect contact with people and watch people go by, if I'm miserable the last thing I want to do is talk to anybody so I'll go sit on a rock somewhere, do you know what I mean? But I would say

there were certainly extroverts in your training, definitely extroverts, so I don't think that's... definitely, no not a rule... but I think it's also true in your other questions, when you say, how important is movement in 2013? Because peoples connections with the environment and their bodies is becoming, if one is pessimistic, more and more disassociated. It's more important than ever. So on the one hand you could say there are certain types of people who wilderness appeals to because they like to be alone or because they like to do really extreme things with their bodies or both, in your case... but also we don't any longer have (most of us) a natural ordinary daily relationship with the land around us. It's not built into our lives.

So I think there's a real hunger for it and I think there's a real deficit. And then how that relates to also a disassociation from the body and how one doesn't fall into some of the traps that some feminist would object to about the body being equated with landscape, you know, you don't have to go there, but for me there is a connection and the connection I would say is something to do with materiality, physicality... It's something to do with being in the material world rather than a virtual world or a world that it somehow... cushions us from something a bit more visceral or, you know... Just going out to give a session down the (village) hall, just walking out and feeling the air, you know, it's really sweet it's really soft, sit inside here, it's really grey, it's really muggy, and not very nice weather. Do you know what I'm saying? It's like people sitting in offices, sitting in front of computers being very engaged with the virtual world - a disassociation from both body AND land, from materiality in general, which is where those two things would meet and I'm not connecting that with gender, is getting more and more and more acute. See? And now people are offering, now people are offering retreats in the country. I mean it's happening in Devon, which are sort of technology

free retreats. Where people don't have a mobile... and these are being offered as something, you know, these are being offered... anyway point proven... It's sort of ridiculous. Yet I was delighted when I read it because I thought, well I could have told you that, but it's...is... you know..., the need for it. I think part of the attraction is also the fact that we don't have that in our daily lives and there's a hunger which gets more acute in some people than in others so that the disassociation is not tolerable or bearable for some people for whatever reason. And at the same time there is a preoccupation with environment and society, desire to reengage with it because of fears of global warming. That's also going on, so that's also going on in parallel so those are all reasons why people might be attracted to this particular type of work at this particular time. But I think it's crucially important and that's not just because I do it. I mean I wouldn't do it if I wasn't passionate about it, but I don't think it's becoming less important. I think it's becoming more important and more necessary.

GCS: I was reading Lansley and Early's *The Wise Body,* and Steve Paxton's interview/chapter, in which he talks about the benefits of growing up in rural landscapes might be considered a substitute for what one might gain from an average childhood hobby of dance class if one grows up in urban/city landscapes. By this he means that the function of the body in outdoor/rural landscapes are far more diverse and challenging than those in urban/city landscape thus one feels physically challenged and satisfied and does not seek classes like martial arts or dance to fulfil that need.

HP: I would say he's also making it an 'either/or', why can't you have both? Of course, that's where I'd be coming from, but let's go back to the bigger statement here. "I ascribe this *split* to a fear of commanding space and being present", so I think what you're

saying is that your discomfort in a social cultural space, you've put down to a fear of commanding space and being present. What do you mean by commanding space, what does that mean for you? I will answer your question but just...

GCS: It means, for me, being the centre of attention and being confident in myself. Projecting my self... in order to be recognised and seen. I feel it's either that or be subjected to impoliteness and patronisation, as if I am not on the same level as others.

HP: There are various things going on there, one is that that's the way women get treated per say, particularly if they are not playing by the rules, by doing all the things women are suppose to do in order to get noticed. Or if they get a bit older, you know I hear a lot of older women talk about feeling invisible, I actually don't, but then I'm a bit bolshie so... So it's partly that, and it's partly, you know, does one have to really command space and be really extrovert to get noticed and then there's partly the thing which is something about being happy in one's skin, not being apologetic for being there. I was talking to..., we (Helen and Annie) have a couple of lesbian feminist writer friends who are a bit older than us, who are actually very well known, happen to live not very far from us, and we were round there the other day talking about... why is this relevant? oh because I told them this example, I was in the deli in the village and there was a perfectly nice woman there, I would say young woman, but she was probably older than you, or about the same age actually, no older she had an older daughter of maybe 12. Attractive, long fair hair, and the daughter was fairly similar, and I went in after her, she was looking at something, somebody was finished serving and I said "oh I think your next", it was completely obvious that she was next. She was so grateful, she was so, you know.., and then she was so apologetic in her asking for what she wanted,

and I was so upset, because it's like, you know, well dressed probably articulate not apparently browbeaten not with a body that was collapsed but she didn't feel that she had a right to her turn or a right to ask for what she wanted, do you know what I'm saying? That's culturally inscribed, erm... so there's something about being happy in one's skin, that is not having to be Ta Da!

But is just like, you know, I'm standing here and I'm here and if you ignore me I'll say excuse me that was my turn, I'd say excuse me because I'm English if I was German I wouldn't, do you know what I I'm saying? So there's something about.., and also seeing there's the you know, the cultural inscription there's our own personalities, our own tentativeness, but I think if we can actually just be comfortable in our skin and fill the space that our body occupies, some people are still going to ignore us because of all the things we've just talked about but also if one is fairly comfortable in one's being then you can simply tap them on the shoulder... do you know what I I'm saying? But I think for you to identify this issue in terms of your own personal perception is useful, and interestingly the words 'command space' in its self is a very masculine word and the thing about being present is it's so tricky isn't it? Because one can be present in any position but there was something in the woman's body that was apologetic already and her manner was doubly apologetic. And the fact that she should be so grateful in the fact that I just recognised that she was before me do you know what I I'm saying? I'm going to say something really personal, I think we've talked about it before, because we've talked about it in relation to your comedy. It's that sense that if your nature is naturally introverted you find ways of compensating and one of them is your comedy and it's great, I wouldn't want you to be without it. Whatever the reason for it, it's great, but it's almost like the feeling that in order to be present in the world or out there in the world

you have to jump over quite a big gap and so force yourself into a level of extroversion which is just a compensation for the introversion, do you know what I'm saying?

So I don't think one has to be big and brash - which you're not in case you take any of this wrong - and really aggressively out there, in order to be present, because otherwise we're just all gonna be terribly stressed. So in terms of the practice of clear positioning, if you like, which I'm sort of changing my terminology, but I can't remember what I'm changing it to, but I was working recently and thinking this is much better. When I was first working with that for myself, because I'm such a squib in terms of structure, I had to work with really high tone which is very stressful, very exhausting, because I couldn't feel myself in the space without high tone. It's not about high tone, so over time one might have to initially practice if one isn't very good at being clear physically in the space, one might have to practice by doing a physical overcompensation which is what we are talking about, until one gets more confident and is actually 'oh I am in my body I can feel my body, fill out my skin, I don't have to work hard and tense my muscles to do it but I might have needed to do that to understand it in the first place'. And if you can look at it elemental for example, so you look at some peoples' bodies and it's like 'oh they do have a strong sense of earth or this person has really clear form and its not to do with how bog they are, or this persons really fluid but they have no boundaries' do you know what I I'm saying? So I think it's quite subtle what that being present means...

GCS: Your MA thesis, written 18 years ago, strongly suggests that *space* is the key to developing a sense of rebalance, empowerment, reclamation and an unapologetic approach to being in the world. These attributes signify a need for healing or therapeutic effect - this is still the case?

HP: I think space and body go together I think the two things are inseparable so I think it's about the body inhabits the space - the body occupies space. We inhabit the body and all of those are taking with a split vocabulary because that's how are language works. So I think I would separate space and body it's the ability to be in the body in the space. And what I've started to talk about more is about form - the form of the body rather than clear positioning. Because position implies the external too much. But that sense of recognising the position of one's body, the form of one's body in its self and then the form of the body in space and then where you are in the context. But the first layer of that is filling the space of the body, occupying the whole of the body, feeling the substance of the body having a sense that there's a difference between your body and the space around you, having a sense of where you begin and end, having a sense definition, if you like, but again that doesn't have to be high tones. So when you talk about being fuzzy round the edges', you're talking about it in a mind/brain thing, but it's also true in a body sense. So I wouldn't separate the notion of space from the notion of body. I wouldn't separate a notion of space from a notion of materiality.

When I'm teaching about space, it's not easy for people to get. Because space for me is real and material. The space between us is not empty, for me it's real, it's just got a different density. And someone whose worked with me a lot and has done the foundation training, they did a workshop sometime this year and they said: "I've just got it, I've just got what you mean when you talk about the space between two bodies". So it's quite difficult for people to sometimes and equally space/environment. I used to work a lot in a wood in Australia and the only person who understood what I meant was an architect. It's a difficult concept and a difficult material for people to get their head round, as something concrete. There is a density that exists between us that changes.

When you say "these attributes signify a need for healing or therapeutic effect, this is still the case?" I haven't changed my mind, I might articulate it differently from the way I articulated it there. What for me is interesting is what I've written in the margins here: 'also the basis for performance... so what interests me in a lot of the scores that I use is that they interest me both on a personal development level and on a choreographic level. Because what I'm interested in artistically is not separable from the personal. What I would say is that I wrote... it was very specific what I was writing in the MA dissertation, in that I had to focus on something, for example I didn't focus on the environmental work. I focused specifically on a) women because it was feminist, and b) on their specific issues. The title, *non-stylised movement as a process of empowerment and expression for women,* that's specifically what the dissertation deals with it doesn't deal with anything else so that's not the whole story.

GCS: Am I right that your work is predominately aimed at and practiced by women or has this changed?

HP: No but that's the impression you get from the MA dissertation. And I do like to offer one thing a year that is just for women. Is it predominately practiced by women? yes! Those two things are different. I have my own theories about why it's easier for women to work with me, both because of who I am and because of work, but it isn't primarily aimed at women. For me because I'm a feminist and I think that's crucial to my practice, not as something that I think about but it's also what I was informed by and it does inform all my work. But I don't tend to advertise myself as feminist, and I think, and again this friend I was talking to, she said that somebody asked, and these were women who were very active in early feminism and now is a feminist author. Someone

asked her the other day what it meant to be a feminist, and she said, 'well it's very easy, you take the female perspective as normative' rather than the male perspective, which is interesting... I mean I wouldn't have defined it like that, so if one does define it like that, and that's her definition not mine, then of course it's easier for women to locate themselves within that. But I'm very happy to be out as a feminist in my immediate environment but I wouldn't advertise myself as feminist, because it's like any label, there are so many difficulties and badges and alienations about that.

I had four guys on the summer school, which was great. I think one dropped out before he arrived, if you see what I mean, but I had a bigger proportion of guys. I think I had five registered in a group of twelfth and four came - that is more unusual, but is interesting. It was equally unusual to have just one guy in the training, so I've had three, two, none and one. And there are two going on to the continuation. So it isn't aimed at women, but primarily practiced by women. But I think you'll probably find that's true even of the people who are not coming from a female orientated perspective. You know if you did a straw poll of the somatic arts practices across the country I would think you'd find more women are involved than men.

GCS: And we could argue that more women orientate towards movement work...

HP: Yes or more women orientate towards somatic work. And when you say what do men seek from this practice? I say ask them, ask Antony for example...

HP: When I did the first training, it was very, you know, because it was the first time I'd offered it, everybody who came had worked with me a lot. And when we sat down in

the first circle, I thought this isn't going to work, because they'd come from such different backgrounds and wanted to work with me for different reasons. Two of them had come primarily for health reasons, some of them were deep into self development work, some of them were dancers - there was that whole range. And actually it was wonderful, it really did work, it was just that moment of sitting down... I didn't understand what I'd drawn together because it was a pilot, but actually the circle reflected the types of people I work with and the types of reasons why people come to work with me. So that's true of the workshops and the training. You know, some people come just for recreation, some people come because they want to be outside, some people come for health reasons. These are not mutually exclusive. Some people come because they're dancers and because their bored, they've had an injury or they know there's something else, do you know what I mean? Some people come because there visual artists and they know that the movement practice changes this.

There was a women from Lancashire who I'd never met, who had done very little movement and is a poet, and you know, she just sent me a load of poems and she wrote from the... so people come for very different reasons. And what's important for me is that they're committed to the process, that they know what they're entering, that they know me, that they know how I work, that they know what's going to be demanded of them and that they therefore can commit to the process, this is for the training. Obviously, workshops, they are open to all comers and people sometimes check out whether they are going to be able to manage the environments or you know. So I think the fact that people come for very different reasons also keeps the work very healthy and you know, it's important to me that the training groups are going to be that diverse - in terms of, what happened incidentally in that first training group - made me think, that

actually for this to be a very good learning environment, learning landscape for people, the different that people bring to it is important. And I can't give you a specific reasons without quoting people and I can't. But there's also stuff you know from your experience of being there, that I don't know because I haven't been there. I don't know what it's like to be on the training, maybe that's a good thing... I can only give you my perspective but that's different from a participants perspective. I think people are fairly honest with me, but it's still.. you know - I don't know.

And then "Moving within an unfamiliar landscape might bring about awareness's of the self that may evade us elsewhere, do you agree?" Yes... because more particularly, if you think about the environment as a teacher when you're working outside, then yeah, very definitely. And we recognise ourselves differently, you know, you recognise yourself differently in the Cairngorms to in your local park.

GCS: Yes that's very true and relates to the Paxton thing I was talking about earlier.

HP: Shall we answer some more of these questions, Some of these cracked me up... "Where did you find dance?" and "have you ever trained in classical/modern ballet or modern dance technique", and "how (un)helpful have you found them?" I did classical ballet form the age of 4 to 14 and alongside that, what they use to call stage dancing, which was sort of, well it was stage dancing but it wasn't quite musical theatre, it wasn't quite contemporary either.

GCS: Was that at a local dance school?

HP: Yep, and my mum was always very pleased to say that, and I didn't know this originally, but Miss Watts, who was our ballet teacher was an RAD examiner, so it was actually quite a rigorous training. It was not professional training, it was once, twice a week rather than you know, erm... She was a very rigorous teacher and we didn't get to do lots of frou frou stuff. I had a friend who went to another ballet teacher and they got to wear the tutus and..., but I didn't care. I think I was quite proud of the rigor, that it was real ballet rather than just flouncing about. My journey with it was, 10 years doing it, 10 years furious with it, 10 years forgiving it and then being able to take it back onboard. I don't know if I hadn't done that whether I'd be dancing now. I don't know, because it was my way in. It was in the same way as that, you know that rigor, it was pretty punitive, and I just remember being told I was pigeon chested with hands like bunches of bananas. I can remember not being strong enough to hold my leg up and stuff. It was good in the sense that she didn't put us in pointes. Erm, I mean I was a gangly kid, so I wasn't in good shape really. So I'm you know, very glad that I wasn't put on pointe, and she wouldn't have done that, that young. I stayed that long because I liked the stamping. We used to do, it was the RAD syllabus, and I think I went to grade 5, so just before you went to elementary and all of that stuff. But there use to be a quarter of an hour at the end of an hours class which was for character dancing. Where you got to put on the character shoes and the skirt, the shoes you could really stamp in, so I probably stayed for the character for the last few years. Because I was a child that needed to express and didn't very easily. So to be able to stamp my feet and swirl my skirt if I could find the button on the edge to pick up... it was quite useful... so that really gutsy feeling.

Actually, I wanted to be a Cossack dancer, a male Cossack dancer is what I had in mind. So that was certainly part of the formation. It did take me quite a long time to forgive it. It took me, not so much to forgive it but to, it wasn't so much I spent years being angry that's wrong, it took me 10 years to get it out of my body. It wasn't actually that I spent 10 years being angry. It was 10 years doing it, 10 years getting it out of the body, in other words that I didn't automatically point my toe, you know, that training goes very deep particularly when you've started young and your sitting on the floor doing good toes, naughty toes, which they still do. Flexed foot is a bad foot, but yeah... So 10 years to get it out of my body and 10 years to forgive it. And at that point I could go back and watch Baryshnikov and go 'he's amazing...', so it certainly was part of the journey. I think what I got form that which I'm pleased to have and which suits me as a character - is rigor. And I think that, and the ability to know a little bit where people might be coming from if they are coming from a dance background as well. I think quite a lot of people of my ilk who are working in alternative approaches to movement, who don't necessary have the rigor and don't have any sense of what people might have gone through or come from.

But that rigor got taken up by Anna Halprin in a very different way you know, her anatomical knowledge and her way of working the body is very different from ballet rigor but it is very detailed. And as I said it suits my character. I think, you know, I do get quite a number of dancers coming to work with me, and I think sometimes they also recognise that quality and it makes it easier for dancers to work with me than perhaps some of the teachers who are working in the same sort of field but don't have that back ground. But I didn't know that, erm, I do work with quite a lot of people who are dance trained, that sort of surprises me but its, you know, I probably these days work with

more people who come from a dance and arts background then people who come from a therapy or health background. It seems to have swung that way.

GCS: "What was your attitude to your body before you began dancing and what was it after you started dancing?"

HP: Well I can't remember because I was only 4, but, I was a wimp really, I was a sickly child, I was skinny and not very strong and I had a lot of physical ailments, and was not a very happy kid - I was sort of emotionally quite stressed. So I think working with my body was good. I think the abasement of bodies when they're not 'right' was dreadful. I think being told your pigeon chested when you're already not very confident is not very helpful. I always got to dance the boys because I was so skinny, erm, but I did that in theatre too because I went to an all girls school. To do something with my body and I wasn't sporty, was probably important. But I think there are plus and negatives. But the expression was very important and then I moved gradually at about the age of 10 I started moving into theatre. So there was a cross over and then I went more into theatre, and by 14 I'd stopped the dance and I was totally involved in theatre. And there the expression was very very important. So in a household where expressing emotions was not the done thing, English after all, but for other reasons, I could go up to my room and shout and when my mother would say "are you alright?" I'd say yes I'm just practicing my elocution. So expression was important, so that's to do with the childhood stuff but obviously that really changed as an adult when I'm moving in...

So I went from 10 years ballet, cross over into theatre, three years theatre degree, but before that getting very involved in theatre improvisation and but doing a fairly classical

degree at Bristol which wasn't that practical but still had interest in improvisation that led me back into movement and the Natural Dance Workshop, to answer some of your other questions. So in other words, to a way of working with the body that wasn't punitive in terms of putting one down and telling you what's wrong with your body and whatever, that was expressive, which was, you know, joyous and fun, but then going from that to Anna... So that Natural Dance Workshop was instigated by somebody, you've read this... who'd worked with Anna but then Anna has a very detailed kinaesthetic knowledge which is fundamental to the way that she works even though she works very imaginatively and expressively and whatever. And one of the people on her staff at that time was a guy called Soto, G. Hoffman Soto, who was a large, large as in tall 'mulatto' guy, he described himself that way, who's still working and actually has been in England up to a couple of weeks ago, for a couple of years. And he at that time was really into capoeira where nobody here knew what it was. And he sort of did a lot of work which was handstand based and whatever and I had the type of arms, where if I tried to climb up a rope I just slid all the way down to the bottom. If I had a tennis racket and I hit it, it was just.... And here was this guy saying, you know, have a go at a handstand over someone else's back, and be like... And he also had a company, which I was part of, which he based the dance training on capoeira but we did it all to reggae so it was hot, sweat, you know. He was great for me and he got me through some fear barriers. Because I knew he liked me and liked my work I trusted him and let him do it. Another teacher, I would have had a terrible time - appalling - but he got me standing on my hands. So he taught me about muscle and I'm very grateful to Soto because of that because I didn't know I had any strength, I was always bendy but I didn't know I had any strength. And Soto really taught me about the fact that I was strong. so different attitude have changed due to the different trainings and in there is the body therapy

training also changed my body more than doing the Laban (institute) dance training, you know that was the choice at that point.

GCS: Am I right in saying that it's not just different bodily trainings but different cultural aspects...?

HP: Yes, I am grateful that I trained with Anna before I trained with Prapto because it's much more accessible to a Western mind, the work that she's doing. Even though California was quite a shock to your average Brit. It was only in California that I really realised how English I was. And Suprapto's work is fundamentally Asian so it's like East and Western approaches. So it's still much more difficult for me to articulate, in language, what I got from Prapto but it's absolutely equally important. In some ways I don't value one training more than the other, they are the two lineages, and there are lots of other things in there but they are definitely the two lineages. In some ways for me, the work with Suprapto went deeper but that might just be because I did it later and so I was more amenable to it. But it might also be because it was so culturally different, and because at that point he spoke very little English, that it was all happening on a kinaesthetic level, it all happened through the body.

So what I felt with Prapto was that, he put his finger on me, and I felt that I was very good a alluding others and myself through my movement and I had a physical experience of someone sort of... So what I felt what happened was a stripping away and a going back to a crack in a foundation and that that crack got dealt with. It didn't in my psyche, you know, it wasn't that I got completely repaired you know, and then got rebuilt on top of that. So there have been lots of influences on my career, those are the

two obviously lineages, the voice and therapeutic work was also very important. The healing practitioners that I work with now for myself influence me in different ways. The fact that I did Tai Chi for years influenced me, the Capoeira element influenced me, there's an awful lot in there.

GCS: Was it both the Capoeira and Tai Chi you picked up from California or here?

HP: No Tai Chi was here, I worked with a wonderful teacher called Gerda Geddes who use to teach Tai Chi at The Place, who was older, fabulous teacher. Erm, I do Tai Gong now but I lost the Tai Chi form at some point along the way, I practiced it for years. The Capoeira was through Soto, it was bastardised Capoeira, we learnt the basic forms but we weren't actually training in Capoeira, he was using Capoeira as a basis for dance training.

GCS: Did your path ever cross Tufnell or Karczag while you were at The Place?

HP: Not those two, but when you ask: "What was the political landscape during your time dancing in the UK (before travelling to San Francisco)? The feminist movement during the 1970s brought about a shift in perspective on ballet and the drive towards an independent dance scene, was there a sense that this was happening at the time?, Do you remember seeing any works by British dance artists at the time, what was your opinion of the work?" and do I remember whatever..." I only went to Tai Chi at The Place and it use to give me the hebejebes because it was full of anorexic women, you know, I use to go into the changing room and go 'you hate your bodies what are you doing here'! They had different classes, but she did work with them. What was going on? In terms of

'politics' politics I couldn't tell you but in terms of cultural politics around the dance scene, there were two things going on. It was parallel to the time of X6, so if you know Emilyn Claid's book Yes, No Maybe, it was exactly in parallel to that.

GCS: What she writes in there, is that pretty true to form or... have you read that?

HP: Yeah I have read that, not for a while, and I thanked her for writing it and she wondered why I was thanking her, it was very funny actually. But that was completely indicative because there was X6, and there were people like Fergus, and Fergus I've always been very fond of, and Jacky, who were around then. But they were all coming from a traditional dance background, a classical dance background, ballet background. And they desperately looking for a new form, so there was the versioning of what got called 'New Dance' and which now tends to be referred to as 'postmodern dance'. Then there was a whole mob of us mavericks who were, so you had mainstream dance, you had X6 and Fergus and Jacky and all that lot, I wasn't aware of Miranda at that time, and AND, you had us lot. SO they were left of the mainstream and we were left of left. So what else was very very strong in London, because it was London I was based at the time, was the Growth Movement which was the precursor of what now gets called New Age, but it was a bit less wacky in terms of that it wasn't all crystals, it tended to be in counter groups, and a lot of, you know there was the whole psychological, psychiatric field, Bhagwan Rajneesh who was very strong at that point, the whole Sannyasin Movement, so there was a lot of personal growth work going on, it was a complete explosion of that. So there was that and X6 going on, which was the dance version of it, and there was us lot who were sitting between those two.

GCS: When you say us lot - whose that?

HP: What I would say is basically the Natural Dance Workshop, and of which I've just heard that the guy who set it up, whose Jym McRitchie and again this is all in the dissertation, has just come back to the UK. Somebody has just told me. I'm in touch with some of those people still, and some of them have infiltrated the mainstream. And that work was sourced by Anna, that, and I have all the brochures still in the attic somewhere. Jym was a social artist who had worked with, he had come through dance, but he'd worked with Anna, he's worked with St. Georges community arts project, he went a worked with Anna for quite a while, he co-wrote one of the very early books, he came back and set up Natural Dance Workshop, he got involved with a woman called Anna Wise who sadly is not still alive, who was very skilled in the biofeedback field. I was introduced to Natural Dance Workshop by a woman who I'd worked with a lot who was a contemporary dance trained but I'd been an armature dancer I wasn't professional so, my partner then who had done the same theatre degree I had done but was also a journalist, later an engineer, a dentist and a healer, we were the mob who sort of ran it. And it was about making dance accessible to everybody. It was very radical at the time, it's sort of obvious now but it was very very radical at the time. So the X6 lot were a bit sniffy, they were very sniffy about us actually, it was a bit like, 'dance? you think that's dancing?" I mean they weren't actually saying that... They had their own battles to fight and their own struggles, and Fergus was never like that... But there was the sense that we were not real dancers.

GCS: Right...

HP: But what we were doing, we were breaking the boundaries of dance but coming from outside the establishment. What Jacky and Fergus and others were doing was breaking the boundaries of dance from inside the establishment. So... it ran in parallel, so it was really interesting to me to read Emilyn's book because it was happening at the same time and we did cross paths, we went to the same meetings of the National Dance and Mime Association. Erm..., but it's interesting to me that Natural Dance isn't mentioned in Emilyn's book... and it wouldn't be, but it was exactly parallel, it was exactly the same era.

GCS: It's been actually more than difficult to find any reference to it at all really.

HP: There's one reference in Val Bourne's..., who was the Time Out dance critic at the time who really liked our work. There's one reference to it in that which, is inaccurate, but at least she included it, it's called Dance Now, her book and it talks about it as a type of folk dancing. But Val was on our side... Well that's answered some of those [referring to the questions]

HP: How do you feel the dance landscape has changed since you began dancing?.... Just enormously because the work that people like I do is no longer... I mean it's not mainstream but it's no longer right off the radar. You know, it is respected. And people like Libby who worked with me at the Natural Dance Workshop, she's teaching in a theatre department, teaching dance... So I no longer feel that I have to prove that I'm a real dancer, and I did feel that, I did feel that in my 20s and 30s. If you like, we occupy the space now that X6 use to occupy, do you know what I mean? I don't feel that we are completely outside the fold, I feel that we are in the fold. And there are people that, you

know, Miranda and I work very different but I'd say that we're the same part of the fold... so that's a big change.

How is your body doing nowadays? - that had me hooting with laughter - the short answer is its getting older. I'm not going to go into detail [laughing]

GCS: OK!

HP: I'm lucky because I'm not overweight and I'm still relatively bendy and still able to climb rocks when I want to and all the rest of it. But it's getting on, it doesn't not happen...but that's a much longer topic of conversation.

GCS: What do you do better now than when you were younger?

HP: That's an interesting question... I've written, all sorts of things, but I would say I am practicing at all of them. So thinking, listening, being compassionate, more able to hold others, more consciousness of my own patterns and more capacity to relate. I'm not good at any of them but I'm a lot better than I use to be. So my capacity has increased, you know? I am aware that none of those are physical...

GCS: How important is dance to you?

HP: Very, I mean how could it be anything else... Although I tend to use 'movement' rather than 'dance'...

GCS: where do you sit in terms of the category of 'somatic', do you use that word to describe what...?

HP: I sought of have to now. Just because it is where my practice get located, but I've just taken it on, but it's not a word that I ought, you know, it's not a word that I was using... But it's clear in terms of the way the environment is that is where my practice belongs, but I didn't use to. I would say in certain movement context that it's somatic movement practice. But it's not my main description, my main description would be environmental and non-stylized. But I'm happy to locate myself within somatic practices... and it's also the part of the world that receives my work you know, receives my writing, do you know what I'm saying?

Appendix C

Hilary Kneale Interview Transcript

21st January 2013 at 1pm

GCS: Hilary, firstly thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for my research. Therefore, this interview follows my current inquiry into notions of writing the feminine and writing as methodology. Let us begin with writing the feminine, as it seems to me that women who dance and those who write eloquently of the experience of dancing have appeared to avoid revealing this information for fear of its insignificance to the body of work publicised in dance studies.

It is my feeling that these dance artist-practitioners, possess extraordinary knowledge of how the female body moves, feels and (most importantly) thinks when moving. Through that development of understanding, they are able to enunciate those experiences and sensations in remarkable detail and in ways that seemingly extend the dance to the site of the page. I think that this information has a lot to offer fields outside the performing arts that are still governed by male orientated philosophies and perspectives.

Feminist thinkers such as, Judith Butler, Elizabeth Grosz, Avital Ronell, Helene Cixous and Julia Kristeva, argue for difference and individual identity in the face of subjectivity, which has "always been appropriated by the masculine" (Irigaray 1974,

p.133).[63] Women have a distinctly different voice to that of men and following Grosz and Ronell, women speak from a place of multiplicity: the self as many. Moreover, when they do so they translate as self to self, self to other, other to self and so on...

'Ecriture feminine' as formulated and practiced by Cixous, Kristeva, Irigaray (to name a few) means the inscription of the female body, and feminine uses of language. I have noted in my research that those experimenting with writing alongside movement and performance practices are for the most part women, and I ask why women (for I am a woman), might be drawn toward such a medium as a companion for dance. What can be found in the meeting of dance and writing that forms and informs one another?

In terms of the shift within contemporary dance practice towards an interrelationship with uses of writing, I aim to specifically focus upon bodily-informed dance approaches. Those commonly expressed as extending from experiential or somatic movement practices. Among its practitioners, somatic movement practice promotes a particular type of consciousness which maintains an approach rooted in experiential understandings of anatomy, the relation of the moving body and the self, and the kinship of body, land, identity and environment. As part of this approach to movement, mark making - in the form of writing and drawing, is encouraged, becoming a perceptual bridge that builds recognition and interpretation of sensation, memory, activity and creativity. This connection aids the participant in cognitive processes, concerning the corporeal and the psyche. Harvesting the impression that we are shaped by the landscapes in which we move (Macfarlane, 2008, 2009, 2012).

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[63] Irigaray, L. (1974) *Speculum of the Other Woman*. (Translated by Gill, G.) New York: Cornell University Press

Somatic principles align with philosophies of the body-mind, such as Phenomenology. Heidegger for example, might argue along with Merleau-Ponty, that human beings understand being-in-the-world (Dasein) by a process of doing and using. Heidegger might say that self-reflection is problematic in that there is no abstraction, no language that enables us to talk about Being, therefore we are forced to talk about Being as if it is an object. Continuing this line of inquiry, Merleau-Ponty argued that perception is bodily intentionality. A map, for example, is just a collection of lines on paper unless you have a lived experience of what those lines indicate. If somatic movement practice thinks in much the same way as Phenomenology: that experience is the font of all knowledge; to what end is the act of writing-the-self, an act of knowing-the-self?

HK: So my initial thoughts are that it's really interesting to be questioned about my practice. By somebody else, because it makes me have to investigate what it is I'm actually doing. You know, it's just formulating what it is I do with writing because I do lots of diffident things, so that's really interesting. I see that you're interested in the feminine perspective and that seems to be a very strong thread that you're looking into. You know, I'm female but whether I... how I fit with that I'm not quite sure, so that's quite interesting and that you seem to have discovered that female artists who work with their bodies in their practice are often likely to write as well.

GCS: Exactly..

HK: I don't know how you discover that, but that's interesting to me.

GCS: Because that's what I want to unpick actually. It seems that that's what I am noticing first off... What are the layers of that? What is that about? I am aware of men who also write but it just seems so interesting that there seems to be an age where that relationship between moving and writing comes into play. Its seems to start later on, not very early in the career, and I think that is really interesting. I'm thinking along the lines of yourself, Helen Poynor to a certain extent and Miranda Tufnell particularly, and just reflecting on myself as well; how I am in my early thirties and it is something that has just come to me when turning thirty. I am at the stage where I have just found this way into writing. It seems to come at a particular point in the development of a practice, rather than always being there.

HK: Yes. Well you had a time when you were working alongside Niki Pollard, she must have been an incredible influence and also demanded you to have some kind of a writing voice of your own, so helped you to connect with that.

GCS: From working with her, I realised her connection deepened to writing and dance, as she got older. Coming from an English [degree] perspective and then moving towards dance and finding a meeting of the two. So it is something I'm having a look at now and seeing if that has something to do with the feminine - if that has a voice. So shall we start?

HK: Yes.

GCS: So we shall talk about identity and writing the self because I had a sense last time we spoke that the writing that happens alongside your movement practice, that

reflective journaling process that you go through has developed from an interest with writing in your artwork. I think it's quite interesting that you said [last time] that your outside writing was so much different to your inside writing.

HK: Yes, so the writing in response to movement. They are different from inside to outside, but there's something very much the same in the way that I respond to practice. There's a quality that comes when I respond to practice that is different to any other kind of writing.

GCS: When you say quality...could you put that in words?

HK: So for instance, these are writings in response to practice in a hall. So what comes in the writing... firstly it wouldn't have come if I hadn't moved first of all, but it may feel like it has absolutely no relationship to the moving at all. That there's a kind of, a story telling that comes out because I have moved and I sit down and write and see what happens when I write, I've activated my body-mind if you like, I then work with my intuitive story teller mind, to see what comes.

GCS: And you mentioned that the writing somehow gives a voice which I take to mean a certain identity or a certain 'something' that happens through the moving?

HK: It is certainly a part of my practice that I need to move in order to access. I can't just sit down and find that voice. I can't explain exactly how it happens but it's curious you know... I'm hesitating with finding the words to explain it because it's... It is what happens when I move and it's not what happens when I move. Extraordinary, you need

examples of it you know, you need examples... because what it looks like in the hall, you know; I may have what I consider as a completely uninspiring session in the hall, you know I have an hour and part of that hour I set aside for writing at the end - if writing comes... but sometimes it doesn't. I might feel that I'm drifting here, there and everywhere and sometimes I'm really inhabiting my body and sometimes I'm, you know, just going through the motions of movement. It doesn't matter in a way because when I sit down and write, then things become clear, but not in a way that I might necessarily have experienced at the time of moving or imagined, as long as that makes sense.

GCS: Yes, it's does make sense. While I'm listening I want to ask if you maintain that embodiment...a sense of whole self, while you write - can you maintain that or does something happen that breaks you away from the body in order for the words to come out?

HK: I feel the writing comes because I have inhabited my body and therefore there's room for the storytelling to come. It's not just about what's happened in the room. It opens up an awareness to a period of time in between perhaps the last time I recorded from movement. For instance the last movement session, last week; so the movement didn't feel particularly inspiring but it happened to be January 31st. Then I wrote...

So the end of the first month in the year, 31 1 13

Interesting number

Because I'd written it at the top of the page

The numbers for the years and the months are arbitrary

Born out of an end of something

In the middle of it all, I sense the sun coming closer again

So it's coming...I'm kind a out there in the cosmos the whole, kind of unified field of the earth

Calling the spring

I sense the cycle of the moon

I do not see the numbers in these shapes

The numbers of the 31 1 13

And there is an order

So I'm talking about the kind of the arbitrariness of the human structure and the order of the whole cosmos if you like. And that comes from moving...

So I move after weeks of sloth

Move after weeks of disjointedness

I am now 60 of these years old

From a 53 to a 13

Body drifts in practice as I drift in thought

The sun baths me as I sit here in the light and the warmth

So it's to do with... my whole organism seems to come together, you know? My whole organism seems to come together with the cosmos. I know that that sounds huge, but I've kind of found my place in moving...

GCS: And that manifests in writing?

HK: And it's different always, you know... because I am in a different... it different, it's always different, but it's always my language, whatever that is you know.

GCS: I wondering about text being vulnerable to interpretation and more specifically thinking about the text offerings that you give in a performative manner, for instance, I'm thinking of *Coat* and the books that you offer out for *With Water*. I'm wondering about how you feel about putting that writing out there, because this [journaling] is a very personal act and if you hadn't offered to read that excerpt just now, I would never know it. How do you feel about sharing your writings?

HK: So I wrote a note here in my response to that question. So what I consider my most personal writing is not available out there and I do consider the line between personal/private and personal/public. Sometimes I take a risk and offer out things, which might not feel altogether comfortable, and at the same time, they bring another kind of layer to the work. But I'm happy to be visible and I'm prepared to take the risk of, you know, whatever people think about it, because that's the kind of work I'm doing. When I wrote the article for The Journal of Dance and Somatic Practice, there were two sections from my journal within that, and I really wanted to take the risk of those being in an academic journal. Just because I really felt that, I wanted the heart of my practice

to be visible. People can attach what they wanted to it, you know, and it might be that that's an attachment that sticks on me, that I wouldn't necessarily choose. But I really wanted to take that risk, I wanted to show myself as clearly as I could without being too, I don't know... There a fine line between public/personal, private/personal for me, there is a very fine line.

GCS: What are your feelings about the constraints of the academic writing style we have to adhere to for those publications?

HK: I think there are occasions where it [personal writing] is not appropriate, for example if your writing a PhD or maybe your final piece for an MA - there are very structured forms that you have to stick within. Not having done those things, I don't know how close to the line I would be able to go in the way that I work. I'm not constrained by that, my only constraint when writing for the journal was whether the piece would be accepted or not. I wanted to be true to the piece in that I was able to take as many risks as I felt comfortable with and then the selection panel would make the decision as to whether they would take the risk themselves. Personally, this is a very personal thing and nothing to do with academic structure, but I think it's the job of the artist to speak... that's what we're doing, we're speaking. We're speaking.

GCS: When you are writing with the knowledge that this will be presented publicly does that affect your attention to the writing?

HK: If it's an artwork - for instance, *Silent Vessel*, there were many short haiku poems that came from the name that was on each of the pots. Quite a lot of those wouldn't have

been suitable; I'd written them maybe nine years before and so I edited them quite heavily. But the story that brought them together, I knew that that was going to go into the book and so it was really just the story of the work. When I had my editing head on, it was from the point of view of the run of the words rather than what they said, although I was writing in a way that I write when moving out on the landscape. The whole thing was poetic. Of course there's editing that goes on, of course there is, but it's very different to the editing I might do for an academic journal. Because it's an artwork - I have my own constraints and not someone else's.

GCS: When did you first begin writing your stories?

HK: You can sometimes feel where things begin but what feels like the beginning point... often the thread goes much, much further back. I've always been interested in philosophy and poetry, but I think the point when the words began to come out of me was when my body began to be more incorporated into my artwork and practice, when I started to perform. That was about ten years ago or so. That was the first time my words became part of my art practice. Oh no, it's not true, I've already got earlier thoughts...words became part of my art practice early on. I would collect bits of text, not use my own. That's what happened to start with. I collect text then I would make a silk screen and make a 3 dimensional object. Yes many ways I collected text and used that in my work. Then it was not until I started making the pots that actually had words on them, that I began to use my own words. That was about ten years ago. In a way I don't know why I began to put words on pots, they just seemed to tumble onto the pots. I had these old hard type letters that I pressed into the pots and from that something drew me to make a small haiku poem out of each of the words. It arose in a way, I was ready to

start using my own words and take the risk because the last artist book, which I published in 2006, all the text, almost all the text in that was collected text, not my own words. So even from 2006, I've expanded hugely into my own words even form then.

GCS: I hearing something about courage in what you're saying?

HK: Courage, practice, and I just think I found my voice. I found what I wanted to say, or not as structured as that. I found words that just arrived on the paper. Of course I wrote them and I imagined them and everything else but before that they weren't really pouring out of me. So there was a point something change - I think with the pots, my own words began to arrive very clearly on paper.

GCS: Just thinking wider than the context of your artwork. Was there anything shifting outside of your arts practice that could have perhaps helped that voice to develop?

HK: Absolutely, I'd already been writing words to go with the pots... but I guess... so the two trainings I did with Helen [Poynor] starting in 2008, then I started to keep a continuous record of all the writings in one book. I wouldn't call it journaling because it's not like that, it's not a kind of morning practice, it's a practice in response to movement out on the landscape. That has really assisted the doorway to open into me working a lot with my own words. I must have started working with Helen 7 or 8 years ago, and in the last 5 years, I've worked with her consistently. Two trainings, one personal continuum over a year that I set up with her like a mentorship. Then the mentorship training; so 4 years consistently. My indoor/outdoor practice on my own is not so regular, but it still exists so it's important.

Somehow Helen and studying shamanism moved into my life at almost the same time, I experience them as two sides of the same coin. Suddenly everything seemed to take shape at the same time, you know? I was including myself in my work like Silent Vessel, a seminal work, and I was moving out of collaboration with others at the same time, I had a need to find my own voice as an artist for a while. I value working in collaboration and I have had some of my most rewarding learning curves, most productive times and most challenging periods of practice working in collaboration, long may those opportunities arise.

Anyway, arm... Helen, yes... To begin with, I found working with Helen incredibly challenging. Although I was teaching a movement practice it wasn’t until I moved into the field of Walk of Life work that I began to have a sense of fully inhabiting my body and the land around me. I unwound myself from the inside out and the outside in into the practice with Helen’s support. I thank her and myself for the huge commitment and maintenance it took to call myself again and again and again, sometimes it mentally was excruciatingly uncomfortable and challenging! I came to my body and the land through Walk of Life practice and the study of Native American Shamanism within the context of Britain, the body and the earth and spirit united by two practices.

GCS: I'm making links to intensity, in building up particular practices and developing a sense of knowing the self. Can this writing speak to others through a kind of empathy?

HK: Yes its interesting. Do you imagine those words..., so if you think of Miranda [Tufnell] whose written a lot, do you imagine that everybody can hear that voice, or do you imagine that you need to be able to recognise that voice in order to hear it? My training with Helen and certainly what I have experienced through Miranda's work has helped shape my voice in the writing. Given me a voice through writing... You can hear my voice because you have your own practice, which is not the same as mine, it's

different, but you can hear the voice so it kind of resonates with yours. I am just wondering how people meet that - how people meet that without that background?

GCS: I believe that people outside that can adopt a certain amount of empathy through that reading. As human beings our bodies can speak volumes and even if we have just a little bit of knowledge of that, we can connect to it in some respect. My knowledge is going to be so much greater than the average viewer because of my practice. I can say, 'oh yeah' because that means something to me, I can connect to it because I can see myself in it, hear myself in it, but I can't assume that someone outside the practice won't be able to tune into it on some level too.

HK: Some of the poets, like Wordsworth, spent a long, long time out in the landscape; how that voice, landscape, and body comes through... a lot of poets are all walkers as well. Robert Macfarlane. Yes he's a man who has a... it's very interesting, I've read a lot of people's books about landscape and land, male and female voices, that are often very different, but actually Robert Macfarlane has, from my perspective, quite a, if there is such a thing, a feminine take on how he's perceiving. I feel closer to his work then many other men. I need to read women that work in the land. There are other male writers; I am not anti male writer or anything, it's just some pull me in more.

GCS: Could you talk a little about your relationship to notions of writing (constructs extending form educational/social/artistic/gender frames).

HK: I'm marginally dyslexic so until I came into computer land later in life, you know, in fact having a computer has taught me to spell really. I can check whether my

spellings right or not. I did have early discomfort about never getting spellings right. I think I only began to learn to write, well after I left school. The school structure was not a place for me to learn to write, certainly, or build even a curiosity or interest around it. I think reading is so important. If I'm open to a new art project, quite often I have piles and piles of books around the place. I have a whole shelf up there to do with writers to do with the wilds and landscape. I immerse myself in different forms of writing while I'm exploring a new project - so other peoples writing is a huge influence and has taught me how to find my own voice. I have also found it useful in the past to have to write within an academic structure. Before when I was writing various essays for a BA, it did teach me something else about writing. It taught me about the beginning and the end, constructs of what you want to say and how you want to say it in a form that is quite structured. I really enjoyed learning that structured form as best I could and learning ways to say things within that. I don't say I use it particularly now, but it's probably somewhere within my writing. I could go back to doing those ridiculous bibliographies, with dots and commas in exactly the right place. I could do that and there's a certain kind of perverse enjoyment that I get out of doing that as well you know.

So, other peoples writing, I do love structure then I love to just let go and see what comes. And just feel totally uninhibited in the way my voice comes forward. I think initially privacy is useful for that. Without having to spill your guts on to a page, what is it that you want to say right this morning, you know, having moved is very, very useful... What is the body saying? What is the mind saying? Where's the mind going? What's the body experiencing? - It's just such an incredible healing process actually because we live in societies where the mind is one place and the body is another place and we cram so many thoughts in to our small systems, if you like. Our computers on

over load and we forget the body, so it's fantastic to join the two up. I feel well, you know.

GCS: Would you agree there's a certain therapeutic tone to the whole practice?

HK: It could be therapeutic and there's another word... Because I just think that nowadays you might say it's therapeutic, because we have so many draws. Our attention is drawn out of the body so much, all over the place so we look for that return and maybe the word is therapeutic but actually there's another word. I'm not quite sure what the other word is. It's like a kind of... it's not wholeness... there's a word... Therapeutic sounds like there's possibly a sickness, which in a way that can be the case if we are too pulled out of the body... I think of the whole process like, my moving is an inhale, and my writing is an exhale, you know?

GCS: Do you consider the writing to be documental?

HK: I have written, I don't really see my writing as documentation, more a further perspective of the work, which is slightly different. I'm not saying what I'm doing, its more another... using the second voice if you like. So I have this fantastic resource, I do physical practice and then within that out comes writing practice. Another form of expression, both of them are intuitive. I allow intuition to take over in both of them. I might go back to what I've written is I'm trying to find a thread through something. When I wrote the article, I use some text directly written from having moved in the landscape because they held examples of something I was trying to get to the nub of in the article. They are [journal writings] not dead, they're very much awake, even though

they're in books. And they are helpful - this voice that comes after moving is a voice I need to access, so if I'm writing to express something about the practice then I need to have them to remind me what that voice is and how it comes, if you see what I mean.

GCS: What is the difference between journal writing and performative art-writing - is that document or is that art?

HK: The text that joins the book of *Silent Vessel* together, which is actually the story of the work - the story of ten years work. Also wasn't just documentation, it had a poetic form, it was not written as a poem, but for me it was important that the words did their best to conjure up the essence of what was happening in the environment, within my body over the time that that work was active within me. They [the words] have the essence of the feeling of the clay as they tumbled out of my hands - to try and work with words in the way that I work with them after I've moved to bring them into, if you like documentation - so that both of those were sitting together. The art of the word through expression of form and of body and landscape - my intention was to keep it awake while I was writing. *Coat* is interesting because the writing of the story of *Coat* - again the work of *Coat* began way back before it became a piece of work. I was collecting bones for a long time, vertebra, which I probably said before. I had a lot of different animal vertebra and thought - what would it be like to put them into one long spine? Lots of different animals in one long spine. Then the story began to come backwards in a way, the story is what I began to do. The story is like a documentation but written in story form so people might not necessarily know that everything that happened in the story has actually happened and is continuing to happen. I am a woman and I did go out into the landscape and I collected animal bones, but not in the way the story writes that I

did, because I am the character and not myself. There's that very fine line but yes so they are, both those writings are documentation of a long period of time where a piece of work was evolving even before I know it was evolving.

GCS: I want to focus on your work *Coat* for a moment. Does the story of *Coat* alter from performance to performance as more stories are gathered?

HK: The story itself, the story that I read, if I do read it in the performance is the same, I might leave a bit out depending on the context, whose there and what's needed. But it is me reading a story. The performance part of it, the speaking part of it, where I'm working with objects changes all the time. Because it depends on which object I bring forward or which object comes out, so there's a whole part of it which is extremely fluid and still storytelling but it's all improvised within the framework/structure. Similarly, when I actually put the coat on and begin to move, that has its own life and its own story every time it comes on to me - or I put it on. The story is more or less fixed and maybe I edit it.

GCS: When you performed in Coventry, you wore the coat and walked through Coventry, collecting stories of the earth as you went, in preparation for the performance. How did that alter for your performance in London?

HK: I just carried it in the suitcase, I wasn't wearing it through London, I could have. I was walking around London with the suitcase in preparation, but I didn't put the coat on until I got down on to the... you know the low tide... Every time I put the coat on I arrive in a space between, its time, in this moment but also I enter a story. The story is

contained in the suitcase until I put the case down and put the coat on, then I enter the story. I can do that at any point. I've walked round woods and talked to people, to children and parents with children about what I'm doing if they come across me in the middle of a wood - I don't shy away from having conversations with people even if I'm in the story, and partly that's myself and partly that's the story, because it's all the story if you see what I mean.

GCS: I have a theory that the ways in which we (you and me, dancers, artist-practitioners) are utilising writing within our practice, might allow writing to slip from its historicized and documental binds and enter into dialogue with the ontology of performance. What is your take on this idea?

HK: Yes I think this is the nature of my writing. For me it's a very exciting turn in my work that what I write is actually active in the moment of my work - its meeting the world and meeting the viewer. *Coats* the first piece of work that that's happened in, that the writing is present in the performance, but that's not true - because I had the pots, so it's not the first time.

GCS: Could you speak a little on your methodology for writing and particularly your work with Christian Kipp on *With Water*?

HK: With, *With Water* - the writing that comes through the work with Christian Kipp is again different but similar, to put it in context. Christian and I go away for a week to a relatively wild place and we generally camp so we were very close to the land and we go to a place that has a relationship to water. What happens when we're on the land... so

for the first two days we inhabit the land. We walk, we sit, we talk, we a picnic, we sleep in our tents. We leave our tools, we don't take camera/notebook, we just take our bodies. so we enter, I don't know what Christian would say, we enter a kind of unknown of the land and let it soak into us and see what we find there. After two days, then we take our tools or explore our tools. In fact, in this body of work I very rarely do any writing at all while we're working together for the week. What happens is that we talk a lot, when we are eating and when we're, we talk about the land our experience, we muse about things for hours on end. So what happens is that, Christian captures things within his camera that may or may not be used, and I capture things in my mind and my body in relationship to our conversations and the land, which may or may not be used.

And then after a period of time, so this is all informing how we're seeing what's around us, how we're experiencing what's around us, what builds in the relationship between both of us being in the environment, we have kind of signifiers that we begin to adopt when we are entering. We are in the land all day, very day but then are moments when we fully enter, it's like we go through a doorway. So a signifier might be that someone puts their knapsack down and you know that they're going in, that's only how that's arisen. So we are in that kind of relationship with the land for as long as we are. We might come out again and chat. All the chatting, all the banal, interesting, weather, you know, all those things. All of that is feeding, feeding...there are words feeding the developing practice. Also his relationship with the other, which is the part of the earth that we are on and the water in particular. The water, that doesn't have to be water as in wateriness, it can be water as in millions of years of water passing over something to change the shape of something, it can be any kind of form.

Eventually the writing comes, that's a kind of other process that we've developed. Christian tends to choose the images and I accept the images he has chosen, that tends to be what happens, but we're moving that a little bit. Then when I receive those images all those stories, all those conversations are in every single image and so the writing comes from all that is stored up inside me. It's a longer process of moving and then writing - this is much more spread out. There's two of us in it and its much closer to what I would call poetry. Though I don't know if anyone else would consider it poetry. It's a very different, it is storytelling but it's a very...It's interesting that's developed another... some people might say there's no difference in that writing, but for me there really is significant difference. In that writing and the way in that works, very different to *Coat* and completely different thing altogether.

GCS: Will *With Water* develop into a performance piece, as I remember the exhibition in Coventry had a very ephemeral quality.

HK: We are offering, showing the work if you like, again in June in the village hall in Ashton, where Christian lives. So we are going to experiment again. Our intention with how we show the work, although it has arrived in books; that work, from our perspective, it doesn't really belong in books. Our intention with the way we showed *With Water* in Coventry was, to the best of our ability, show the work in a way that demands a physical engagement from the viewer. So the photographs were in pools on the floor, tiny ones propped up in corners or big images from the projector which was affected by the amount of sunlight so either the image might have been quite pale and darker later on. We wanted the natural environment to have an effect on...even though it was inside a gallery, to have as strong affect as possible. Plus I was still writing, I hadn't

finished the writing of the next body of work so that was happening at the same time. That we were available for conversation - people might not have a clue with what were attempting, we might not be successful. It was successful for some people, some people spent literary hours, extraordinarily. It was extraordinary.

People really immersed themselves, some people cried, and it's was quite astonishing. Other people might not have even seen what was in the room really, because it was almost impossible to take a photograph of what was happening, because you could not really see what was happening in there. I think humans have such an inherent longing to return home and what is that, I don't know - is it the land is it the...I don't know what it is, you know. What can we see or hear when we see other peoples work, a painting a photograph or a bit of writing? We're just experimenting with how we bring an essence of our experience as we gather the work- harvest the work. How we bring that and share it with other people and can we? Those are our questions. Can we? Is it possible? Is this just for us? Or is this something that we can share. I do not know the answers to that but that's what we're experimenting with.

GCS: Through my research I have noticed the fact that this type of writing appears to be taken up mostly by women, what ways might you describe your writing as feminine?

HK: I am female, in a female body. I am female and I'm not sure I come from a blatantly feminist perspective. In *Coat* for instance, I do talk about a woman and a kind of freely, in a way I find myself moving through that performance into androgyny. You've written what is your response to my statement about - that's about Kristeva etc, would you class your writing as feminine? I cannot separate the work from myself as

female. At the same time, when I work I call in androgyny, and the stories I work with are through the land before time. In the story I refer to 'she' the 'she' in 3D becomes blurred by the story. 'She' as earth the archetypical feminine not so much 'she' as woman. It could as easily be the feminine of the male, where the two meet to create a third. I don't know how to answer, because I can't be anything other than the female, that's what I am and at the same time I don't feel bound by the fact that I'm a woman when I'm practicing. It's difficult for me to say because I am female, so I can't say whether I am or whether I am not something else when I'm performing. At the same time I am aware that when I wear the coat, particularly when I wear the coat, I am not adhering to the masculine or the feminine at that point, although the writing refers to 'she'. Specifically, at the beginning of the performance when I put on trousers and braces and I put on my walking boots, I am very specifically not aligning myself with masculine or feminine. Though I am female, I walk a line between the two in my mind. Because I think either in that moment is loaded. Either distinctly with costume and everything, becoming feminine or distinctly becoming masculine with costume. I don't want to load myself with either of those. Of course I feminine but within the context of story then I like to imagine stepping outside of both of those but holding them both. I can't write from any other perspective other than the feminine because that's what I am. But I don't consider it feminist. I do think there is a particular voice that can come from a women's relationship to earth, that's different.

GCS: Different how?

HK: It's something to do with...is it something to do with the female body and birth, I'm not giving any answers. It's something about the physical line of the next generation

coming through the female body that's different. Like in the form of all the creation stories, and the unknown old stories that I don't even know what they are, that I'm imagining that I'm catching in the tail of my coat. But in a way, the tail of the coat is quite a masculine form; I'm kind of androgynous and the tail is, if you like, caressing and absorbing the ancient stories so there's a very direct relationship to the physical earth. I'm not even sure I can really answer the question any better than that.

GCS: Yeah, it was a provocation to find out where you position yourself and your work within this idea of 'women's writing'...

HK: I think I get a little bit nervous when I think about feminist thinkers, you know: 'the face of subjectivity, which has "always been appropriated by the masculine"...women have a distinctly different voice to that of men'. Then we were talking about Macfarlane, it's very interesting and obviously I have made some actually really clear decisions about how to present myself with the context of the work. I mean clearly I needed to say 'she' in the story and not 'he' and then I place myself as close to androgyny as I can find but I'm wearing the coat. It may have been different if I was a bigger woman, you know, with large breasts and wider hips. The story would still come through me, but I would have had to take on different persona. My persona would be 'written on', if you like, by the structure of my own body, my physical make up. Because I am the shape I am, then I can chose. Maybe I stand in a more feminist perspective than I think. I like being able to manoeuvre within the picture of what that might mean - feminine and masculine. Try on both coats if you like. I have to leave that open, because I don't know what my own answers are...

GCS: What happens when language fails you? How do you negotiate the gap left behind by language's absence?

HK: My response to that is I either write or not. Which doesn't answer the question. I think sometimes, so sometimes...look... that day's three lines and I'm sure there's another day where there's absolutely nothing. So I open the page and I don't panic about it basically, there's nothing much to say. I never actually feel that language fails me, generally I have moved, that's one part of the language. So it's not necessary, or I don't feel that it's necessary for there to be a written aspect of the language. I don't consider it a gap that's left behind by language absent because I've already spoken by moving. Sometimes that's all that's needed, or that it, that is all that's necessary. I'm talking about what's needed or what's necessary but you could scrub out both of those words, as it's my commitment to practice. I've committed to practice therefore I practice and that doesn't always happen either but in outline; I've committed to practice therefore I practice, the practice looks like moving and sometimes that moving is very, very little. I'm always breathing because I'm still alive and therefore I'm moving on some level. For there to be writing as well, there is the space for writing to be there. It's not always there but it's not an absence. Not all of the pots had words on them. It's like a resource isn't it? And for the purpose of your study it's kind of central to the study and maybe that's why the questions comes - is there an absence? Writing in response to movement can come a long after, like writing in *With Water*, I leave it for ages, just because form my perspective that's what's needed - it can be months. So what is an absence is it because nothing comes right away? Is it because you don't feel like moving? If you look at it the other way around, what is the absence? When is it not there, because it has to do with time lapses and what looks like completion or not.

Appendix D

Coat by Hilary Kneale

An original programme note from the June 2012 performance at DECODA's Summer Dancing festival.

Coat

She cared for life and looked for bones. She came from her home in the forests to comb the land for bones with the strings of her heart and the dark pools of her eyes. She combed beaches where the highest storm waves had pounded the land and left their gifts, she wandered the high places under ravens flying high in their aerial mystery, she combed through the grasses of the flat lands where starlings gather to sculpt the spaces in the sky with the glisten of their multitude in motion. She found them, animal bones, in all these places, the memory of their lives already seeped away, returned to the earth, their stories left behind in the bones, she breathes the stories in, gathers them into her heart as she gathers the bones

From time to time as she travels through the lowlands, carrying her suitcases filled with the stories of this and that. She tells stories and speaks of animals to those she meets. She speaks of the gentle deer that move silent and alert, through Wytham wood, of the tribes Dartmoor sheep that nibble the heads of the ancient grasses and sleep under the stars, in the shelter of the tors. She speaks of grey seals that, even now, birth their pups in the high dunes of the Norfolk coast.

She also tells stories of mysterious animals and birds of distant lands and oceans, animals that swim through her heart and walk through her dreams. Stories of grey whales that give birth in salty lagoons off the coast of Mexico and of the guanaco with its timid nature, strange cry and monumental leap, that lives in the far lands beneath circling condors.

The cells of all these creatures, are her cells, they are painted on her skin, printed, tattooed.

She had collected animal bones from the land, so that she would not forget them, she collected their bones so that they would not be forgotten. She collected their bones as though she were Noah, two of every kind.

In due course, as the number of bones grew, she began to thread the vertebrae together, a multitude of animals in one long spine. As she threaded each bone she sang songs of long forgotten sounds. The songs she sang were of the sounds of trees on a silent night, the sound of daisies in the summer sun and she sang the sounds of dewdrops and raindrops as they wet her tongue. As she sang, she threaded the bones one at a time until all those she had gathered came together and began to quietly sing their own song.

Deep in her suitcases she has a coat, a coat made of artist canvas, a once blank canvas fashioned with a pocket, more a slit, down the centre of its back, an opening lined with a blood-red velvet and filled with possibility.

The coat itself ends where it touches the earth, in a long, long tail, an old, old, tale. From time to time, she takes the coat from the suitcase, opens the long pocket down its back and puts it to use. Carefully she lays the gathered vertebrae, lays them inside the blood red velvet envelope. She pulls the coat on then, wraps it about herself and feels the creatures of the bones. She senses them in her own spine, as she pulls the coat tight about her.

Now, as she wears the canvas coat, she carries their bones against her spine, wears their animal magic and weaves with their magic. The bones of the animals rub against her back through the coat, she feels their fur upon her legs, their breath upon her skin, the pulse of their beating hearts in time with her own. The creatures fold in her, about her, through her and over her as she sits quietly in the falling rain or silent with the rocks or high in the canopy of trees.

As she walks the land, ancient memories of the earth, are called by the bones, stir from their slumber and leave their mark upon the skin of the coat. When the cold winds blow from the north, the blank canvas of the coat calls the weather into its warp and weft and is painted by the chill of the wind and then coloured by the warmth of her breath. As she nears the sea, she begins to feel the ocean mammals she senses them through their bones, and as the tail of the coat dips into the waves in the turning and returning of the tide. The stories gather about her and call to be sung once more.

As she tells the very last of the stories of the long forgotten, a great cacophony arises through the bones, between the threads and in the coloured places and spaces that fill the canvas of the coat with life. The sounds that arise and the sounds she sings, call her to dance, she and the coat and the bones begin a dance, they dance until all the ancient songs have been woken from their sleep and echo once more through the oceans and the rivers, echo from the highest mountains and the deepest valleys, echo from deep within resounding caves and from the depths of the wildest lakes, and through the weather filled, bird filled sky and echo up between the multitude stars, echo, echo, echo.

'Memory is the song which we sing to ourselves, a path of hieroglyphs and perfumes with which we draw nearer to ourselves.'
Eugenio Barba. The Paper Canoe. 6 : 81

'Coat' written and created by Hilary Kneale

Developed with the support of the Making Space residency and the Walk of Life mentorship programme
With gratitude to Katye Coe, Christian Kipp, Helen Poynor, Maddy Rooke, Ally Stott, Margaret Varney and all my relations.

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