UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC À MONTRÉAL

*TOWARDS A VAGUE BODY:*
*SITUATING CHOREOGRAPHIC 'BODY-STATE WORK'*
*AS AN EMBODIED PRACTICE OF CRITIQUE*

THESIS
PRESENTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
OF THE MASTER'S DEGREE IN DANCE

BY
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DECEMBER 2020

UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC À MONTRÉAL

*VERS UN CORPS VAGUE:*
*SITUER LE TRAVAIL CHORÉGRAPHIQUE D'ÉTAT DE CORPS*
*COMME PRATIQUE CRITIQUE INCARNÉE*

MÉMOIRE
PRÉSENTÉ
COMME EXIGENCE PARTIELLE
DE LA MAÎTRISE EN DANSE

PAR
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DÉCEMBRE 2020

UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC À MONTRÉAL
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ABSTRACT

For much of my career as a dance professional, I held an implicit conception of my body as a tool, or as an instrument, with which to produce spectacular displays of movement. This study begins, through the lens of Michel Foucault's analysis of power and the docile body, by examining how such a conception reflects the centuries-old discursive and non-discursive legacies of disciplinary power operating broadly in occidental practices of dance creation, pedagogy and production.

Alternative models of embodiment evoked by Michel Bernard's 'corporéité' and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's 'Body without Organs' – which articulate the body as an intensive, de-stratified conjunction of flows – provide a critical conceptual framework within which one's felt sense of being in a body can be subject to invention and vivid experiential shifts. I discuss such invention as commonly occurring in occidental dance creation through a broad collection of practices known as 'body-state work', in which, as Meg Stuart writes, the body is addressed as "a field in which certain mental streams, emotions, energies and movements interact" (2010a, p. 21). I proceed to explore whether such choreographic practices might be framed as embodied modes of critique: in its aesthetic remodeling of the sensible, can choreographic state-work be understood as a critical reappraisal of habitual ways of living and doing, inviting the constitution of dancing subjectivities that are at work "breaching on all sides individuated identity and the organised body" (Guattari, 1995, p. 83)?

This is a qualitative research, aligned with a choreographic creation process I undertook with two dancer-collaborators and a dramaturgical advisor. The data, inspired by ethnographic and autoethnographic methodologies, were produced from June to September 2017, and led to the choreographic étude entitled while_vague. We centered our research on what we have called a 'vague body' – denoting when one's movement and behaviour is not plainly attributable to a central 'doer', but instead emerges out of plural, laterally-dispersed, local desires in the body. By the dancers' accounts, this subtle but richly-lived dispersion of corporeal agency was accompanied by startling (and deliciously weird) impressions of bodily expansion and porosity, of a dissolving of time and space, and of a woozy dampening of the narrative self: attentionalities that diverge widely from quotidian modes of experience. Crucially, these forms of attentionality demanded new approaches to scoring and structuring choreographic material. What arose was what I've called an 'interstitial dramaturgy', concerned not with corralling our work into a coherent whole, but instead with instilling a particular politics of trust in the relationships between collaborators, material and structure; this resulted in emphatically horizontal relationships in the studio.

Key words: Creative process; choreography; dramaturgy; body-states; embodiment; somatics; discipline; power-knowledge; corporéité; Body without Organs.

RÉSUMÉ

Pour la majeure partie de ma carrière professionnelle en danse, j'ai eu tendance à appréhender mon corps comme un outil, ou un instrument, avec lequel je produisais des démonstrations spectaculaires de mouvement. Cette étude commence, depuis la perspective des analyses de Michel Foucault du pouvoir et du corps docile, en examinant comment une telle appréhension implicite est le reflet d'héritages discursifs et non-discursifs du pouvoir disciplinaire qui opère largement dans les pratiques de création, de pédagogie et de production en danse occidentale.

Les modèles alternatifs d'*embodiment* évoqués à travers les notions du « Corps sans Organes » de Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari, et de la « corporéité » de Michel Bernard – dans lesquelles le corps existe comme un processus dé-stratifié ou une conjonction de flux – fournissent un cadre critique conceptuel au sein duquel le sentiment « d'être dans un corps » peut être sujet à l'invention et à des modifications expérientielles vives. J'aborde comment l'invention intervient couramment dans la danse occidentale, à travers des pratiques de création généralement désignées comme un travail « d'états de corps » dans lesquelles, comme l'écrit Meg Stuart « the body is a field in which certain mental streams, emotions, energies and movements interact » (2010, p.21). J'explore ensuite ces pratiques en cherchant à savoir si elles pourraient être envisagées comme une forme de critique incarnée: en remodelant le sensible, est-ce que le travail d'état de corps peut être compris comme une réévaluation critique des façons de faire et de vivre habituelles, invitant la constitution de subjectivités dansantes, « débordant de toutes parts d'identité individuée et du corps organisé » (Guattari, 1992, p. 83) ?

Il s'agit d'une recherche qualitative, en phase avec un processus de création chorégraphique que j'ai entrepris avec deux danseurs-collaborateurs et une conseillère dramaturgique. Les données, d'inspiration ethnographique et autoethnographique, produites entre juin et septembre 2017, ont mené à l'essai chorégraphique intitulé *while_vague*. Nous avons axé notre recherche autour de ce que nous avons appelé un « corps vague » – nous désignons ainsi les moments lors desquels le mouvement et le comportement d'un danseur ne sont pas facilement attribuables à un « acteur » central, mais émergent plutôt de désirs locaux, pluraux et latéralement dispersés à travers le corps. Les danseurs ont témoigné de cette dispersion d'agentivité corporelle, subtile mais intensément vécue, qui accompagnait des impressions saisissantes (et délicieusement étranges) d'expansion et de porosité corporelles, d'une dissolution du temps et de l'espace, et d'une atténuation du « soi narratif ». Il est intéressant de constater que ces formes d'attention ont demandé de nouvelles approches à la structuration et au partitionnage de notre matériel chorégraphique. Le résultat est ce que j'ai appelé une « dramaturgie de l'interstice », qui avait pour but non pas de créer un produit ou une pièce cohérente, mais d'inculquer une politique particulière de soin

dans les relations entre collaborateurs, matériel chorégraphique et structure; ceci a mené à des relations radicalement horizontales dans le studio.

Mots clés: danse; processus de création; chorégraphie; dramaturgie; état de corps; sensation; *embodiment*; pratiques somatiques; discipline; pouvoir-savoir; corporéité; Corps sans organes.

CHAPTER I
PROBLÈMATIQUE

1.1 Motivations

A few years ago, my professional dance practice underwent what I would describe as a paradigm shift – the result of quite singular and quite wholly strange experiences I encountered while immersed in what are known as 'somatic' practices.[1] At that point I had been working professionally as a dancer and choreographer for close to a decade; during that time, I had picked up and internalised a constellation of particularly authoritarian notions of the body, of choreography, and of the relationship between the two. In October of 2014, within a few days of each other, I attended workshops with Linda Rabin and Benoît Lachambre, both highly-respected dance artists and teachers based in Montreal. My time with both teachers led to a series of vivid, expansive and, as it were, stubbornly hard-to-describe bodily experiences, which altered my understanding of my own body, and of what it could to. As a research-creation – an artistic creative process anchored to a written reflection – the aim of this

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[1] 'Somatics' is an umbrella term for methods and practices that explore sensation, in order to deepen one's familiarity and fluency with internal perception. Thomas Hanna first defined the term 'soma' as "the body perceived from within by first person perception" (2012, p. 101). According to Hanna, the Occidental focus on 'third-person', anatomical approaches to knowledge about the body has obscured the rich ways of knowing the body by "immediate proprioception", which are of a different order (ibid.). Somatic practices in the West have been around since the turn of the 20th century, with an explosion of methods in the latter half of the century. Examples include Body-Mind Centering (BMC), Feldenkrais Method, Alexander Technique and Continuum (to name just a few), which are widespread as alternative or holistic approaches to health. They now feature prominently in pre-professional and professional dance training as a complement to more traditional 'technical' dance pedagogies.

master's thesis is therefore to articulate the experiential, theoretical and political dimensions of this shift, while also putting them to work in the studio.

1.2 The Researcher

To provide a measure of context, we'll begin with a brief overview of my artistic career. I have been active professionally in Montreal's contemporary dance milieu since 2004, working and touring both at home and abroad with a number of choreographers and companies.[2] I came late to dance, lacking any formal training, at the age of twenty-four. This happened shortly after I dropped out of a double-major in History and Religious Studies, due to an acute tendinitis that had developed in my forearms (a result of years of bad posture and poor alignment), and which made it impossible to write or type and eventually required surgery. At somewhat of a loss after dropping out, I spent several years getting in touch with my body, so to speak: delving into the martial arts, doing a professional Shiatsu massage training, and exploring such somatic practices as the Alexander Technique and the Feldenkrais Method. While learning to heal my wrist with these ressources, I gradually cultivated an interest in dance training; this culminated in a spontaneous audition for the Contemporary Dance Department at Concordia University, and a (rather inexplicable) letter of acceptance.

My sudden immersion in the practice of dance was by no means an easy one. Not possessed of an apt or easily-trainable body by any definition, I struggled to appropriate or 'own' this new embodied artistic practice.[3] As a bookish and gangly child, I had avoided team sports, and had only grudgingly engaged in any kind of

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[2] Refer to Annex A – Artistic Bios, for specifics.

[3] Over drinks years later, an early teacher described how, judging from my poignant haplessness in trying to follow the audition's technique class, they'd concluded I must be part blind. The story, which never ceases to delight me, concludes with them pleading with the jury-members I be refused from the department – their words were something to the effect of, "kill this sad dream as quickly as possible".

physical activity.[4]  As an adult, I therefore lacked the proprioceptive connections that accrue over years in a dance studio (or on a soccer field), and would continually find learning movement sequences, and the specifics of body placement, to be a challenge.

Nevertheless, while at school and then subsequently in the studio dancing professionally, I developed a personal movement style that, while remaining unpolished, responded to what certain choreographers were looking for.  Being surrounded by seasoned professionals in my early professional gigs, I was able to slowly refine my shaky understanding of the codes and techniques of the milieu, while taking private ballet classes and other workshops to fill in the gaps.  I discovered my martial arts background to be useful for more acrobatic and propulsive coordinations; though still unable to execute a clean *grand battement,* I found myself reliably equipped, for instance, to vault over the roof of a station wagon (as one early contract would require).  This fact illustrates the strange mix of facility and ungainliness I brought to my dance practice.  I was difficult to 'correct' or 'coach', because my body-placement was both imprecise and inconstant – it would shift from one execution to the next, and I would have been hard-pressed to notice the difference.  However, faced with a task such as a back handspring – which requires complex coordination and timing, but which has an easily-visualised goal – I would in some sense feel my body 'take over' and would learn these more acrobatic skills fairly quickly.

1.2.1 An Unexamined Conception of the Body, Pt.1: As a Dancer

It was in this variety of ways that I slowly molded myself into what I understood to be a 'dancer's body', eventually working and touring internationally with a number of companies.  I would say I saw this body as *something I possessed* – as a physical extension of my internal will, upon which I could make various demands, and which

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[4] I have a single early memory of dancing, alone in my kitchen to Michael Jackson's newly-released *Thriller* when I was six, but then putting my arm through a window and spending the night at the hospital. Which, I think, is what put an end to that.

would respond to those demands with greater or lesser degrees of compliance and success. One might say that I thought of my body as the *tool* or *instrument* through which I exercised my profession. This conception, probably drawing on parallels to musicianship, is a fairly common one in dance, colloquially used in conversations about a dancer's self-care: 'you'd better sleep well and eat right; after all, *your body is your instrument*'. This understanding of the dancer's body is also found frequently on the page: former director of l'Opéra de Paris Claude Bessy expresses wonder at witnessing her students discover "that with their body – *this marvelous machine which one must control and surveil* continually – they can, if they so desire, live up to all of their dreams" [5] (emphasis added, Bessy cited in Dryburgh, 2008, p. 19).[6] In similar terms, Martha Graham argues that the purpose of acquiring dance technique is "to train the body as *to make possible any demand made upon it* by its inner self which has the vision of what needs to be said" (emphasis added, 1974, p. 139); and acclaimed Montreal choreographer Ginette Laurin states that "the body has been *my tool* for the past forty years" (emphasis added, Couture, 2014).[7]

The citations above give an apt illustration of how I understood my body and its place in dance creation. My lack of experience likely contributed to an inclination towards what is, as many of my professional colleagues would consider it, an 'outmoded' conception of the body. In any case, this understanding of the body – as a sort of servant to the central authority of my will – was an 'internal policy', an unthought and inexplicit politics that does not necessarily concern itself with the bodies of other dancers. However, in my practice as a *choreographer*, I explicitly adhered to another conception of dancerly embodiment, aligned with that of the 'tool': this was a

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[5] Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent citations in French are free-translated by the author.

[6] Translated from French by the author: "Ils découvrent qu'avec leurs corps, machine merveilleuse qu'il faut contrôler et surveiller sans cesse, on peut si on le veut répondre à tout espoir" (Bessy cited in Dryburgh, 2008, p. 19). Unless otherwise noted, all following translations from French are free translations by the author.

[7] "Le corps est mon outil depuis 40 ans" (Couture, 2014)

conception in which *movement* was understood to be dance's primary material, and in which the body acts as a medium, or vehicle, for 'conveying' movement.

1.2.2 An Unexamined Conception of the Body, pt.2: As a Choreographer

Again, Montreal choreographer Laurin provides us with an illustration of this conception: during a series of promotional interviews for her choreography *Soif* (2014), in which her only mention of the body is the 'tool' citation above, she speaks of the piece as a "return to the source for me, in its manner of bringing movement to the fore" (Dufort, 2014)[8], and of spending time with her dancers to "re-center my focus on the movement" (Vallet, 2014)[9]. New York Times critic John Martin also articulates this view when describing the origins of Modern Dance (once it had divested itself of a former dependence on narrative or music), as the "'discovery of the actual substance of the dance, which it found to be movement'" (cited in Lepecki, 2006, p. 4). In such a conception, the dancer's body acts as the *vehicle* or *medium* through which substantive movement is conveyed, or more generally, as the *site in which movement might occur*.

I began my own choreographic practice in 2008. In line with this conception, the way I went about making dances (whether creating a solo on myself or working with others) was almost wholly with an eye to the rhythmic, dynamic, and spatial composition of gestures and movements, with my body or the bodies of my dancers reproducing as faithfully as possible those compositions. I frequently used a creation method described in Dena Davida's ethnographic study (2006) of Laurin's creative process[10]. This consisted in inventing movements, gesture for gesture, and "fitting

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[8] "Un retour aux sources pour moi par la manière de mettre en évidence le mouvement" (Dufort, 2014)

[9] "J'ai passé un long moment avec les danseurs pour vraiment me recentrer sur le mouvement (Vallet, 2014)

[10] References to Ginette Laurin keep surfacing here because I was an admirer of her work early on in my career, and subsequently danced for her. I watched the premiere of Luna (the subject of Davida's ethnography) in 2001, as a newly-minted dance student; the piece had a strong impact on my view of choreographic creation. Years later, I joined the company from 2011-2013. Laurin therefore features

them together tightly one after another with the attitude of a bricklayer" (p. 138), then modifying these sequences with an attention to dynamics, space and timing. Alternatively, the dancers themselves might participate by inventing their own sequences, to be learned themselves or taught to others. However, even within this more 'participatory' mode of creation, and despite the fact that I regarded my dancers as both collaborators and peers and strove to maintain egalitarian and open working relationships in the studio, I nevertheless took on a role, aptly described by Lepecki, of "dictating steps, controlling gestures, and directing moves to the minutest details" (Lepecki, 2012, p. 77), and subjected them to a process of fairly strict mimesis, in which they were called on to hew closely to a given form and to reproduce it.

This mimetic logic of creation extended to other dimensions of my work. Like many choreographers of my generation, some aspects of my work bordered on 'dance-theatre', incorporating text and verbal exchanges between performers. Although here, too, I would often use a collaborative approach, the final results were invariably composed with an eye to a final product dictated by my own tastes and sense of composition. In these cases, while I might be calling on my collaborators to self-directedly deploy their subjectivity in the making of work, I was nonetheless creating an environment in which, as Gravel warns us,

> "instead of simply a body-object, the dancer becomes a subjectivity-object. S/he becomes a superior tool. An even more subjective portion of them becomes 'thing-ified' ('*chosifié*'), sublimated to the notion of material" (2012, p. 6).[11]

Regardless of the respect I professed for the artists I worked with, therefore, I nevertheless put them in a position where their subjectivities became, as Lepecki

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here not as a target of critique, but rather as an on-the-record and easily-demonstrated exemplar of my own beliefs around dancerly embodiment.

[11] "De corps-objet, le danseur devient subjectivité-objet. Il devient un outil supérieur. Une partie encore plus subjective de lui sera « chosifiée », intégrée à la notion de matériau" (Gravel, 2012, p. 6).

writes, "the immediate (or sometimes even unmediated) and obedient expression of a choreographer's will" (2012, p. 77).

1.2.3 An Accident and Some Consequences

These unexamined models of the body – as an instrument or tool, as a site for the production of virtuosic displays of movement, as a subjectivity-object – worked well enough for me, for a time.  I made choreographies in the ways described above; as a dancer I was thrilled to make improbable demands on my body, and delighted when it responded successfully.  The limitations of this mode of embodiment made themselves known to me in quite spectacular fashion, however, when I (quite spectacularly) dislocated my knee onstage.  This happened while landing a *tour-en-l'aire* off the hood of a Honda Civic, in front of Ottawa's National Arts Center, in Summer of 2013.  This was a piece I had comfortably performed over fifty times in Europe and Canada (and on a variety of beat-up cars).  However, I was exhausted from a heavy touring schedule that season; lacking the proprioceptive sensitivity to realise it, I had pushed myself past my limit.  Our performance was cut short and I was taken offstage in a wheelchair, to the most awkward applause you might imagine.  The diagnosis: a ruptured Anterior-Cruciate Ligament (ACL), a partially torn Medial-Collateral Ligament (MCL), bucket-handle tears in both menisci, a delamination of the femoral cartilage, patellar dislocation, and a tibial fracture for good measure.  Basically, my right knee bent sideways and then snapped back into place; it would mean two surgeries and two concerted years of rehabilitation.

I recount this accident not for narrative effect, but rather to give a sense of how concretely I was forced into a new relationship with my body.  This led to a series of inadvertent developments in my artistic practice which coalesced into the paradigm-shift I want to discuss here, wholly uprooting the understandings of embodiment I have described above.

1.2.4 All Theoried Up and Nowhere to Go

The shift was at first slow in onset: immediately after the injury, I began choreographing a commissioned quartet for presentation the following year; therefore, finding myself on crutches in the studio and unable to 'teach' movement, I had to develop new strategies for addressing the body in creation. I had also enrolled in this present Master's program at UQAM, within weeks of the accident, as an almost instinctive act of self-preservation, to keep myself busy while in rehab. As one tends to be during graduate studies, I soon found myself neck-deep in continental philosophy. Those writings had the effect of contextualising my former (and, as it had seemed to me, self-evident) conception of embodiment, revealing it as wholly constructed and historically contingent. Designed as they are to "free thought from what it silently thinks" (Foucault, 1985, p. 9), these writings uncovered the ways in which my unexamined preconceptions participated in the ongoing constitution of dancing bodies that are at once the sedimentation, the emblem and the vector of wider discursive and non-discursive forces in society at large, subtly but strenuously at work submitting the body to complex systems of domination and control.

I therefore began to suspect that there was something pernicious to that innocuous-seeming phrase, "*your body is your instrument*": that the separation of mind and body, invoked there, might be at work distancing dancers from the mutable and vividly subjective living processes which produce both individual and collective instances of embodiment. I also began to sense a whiff of authoritarianism at work in my former habits of teaching my dancers to do movement in service to formal and compositional concerns: that in making choreographies that treated bodies as secondary material, I might be perpetuating deeply-rooted and inexplicit legacies of disciplinary practice at the very heart of Occidental dance-making. In treating my dancer-collaborators as figures or stand-ins for my own will, to be molded and shaped as I saw fit, there was an innate, inherent and systemic subjugation at work, no matter

how 'friendly' or 'egalitarian' my intentions might be. When the dancer's body becomes a cipher or "repository for the form of the *other*, the choreographer" (Newell, 2007, p. 19), the dance studio becomes a place in which "the dancer's subjectivity is seen as always ready for manipulation" (Lepecki, 2012, p. 77). In this model of dance creation, the body is presented as "a dependent, contingent object, lacking autonomy, lacking the capacity to speak of or otherwise represent itself and lacking a transcendent symbology and function" (Dempster, 1995, p. 24).

Dempster writes that these creative practices do not arise innocently or spontaneously, but rather that they reveal the "residues" (1995, p. 24) of a long history of representations of the body, which act upon it in ways that are inherently political. These actions and representations are not incidental, but rather slow, programmatic and purposeful:

> "Social and political values are not simply placed or grafted onto a neutral body-object like so many old or new clothes. On the contrary, ideologies are systematically deposited and constructed on an anatomical plane, on the neuromusculature of the dancer's body" (Dempster, 1995, p. 24).

Moreover, as she writes, these ideologies do not restrict themselves to the dance studio but rather are reflections of more widespread forms of discipline and surveillance threading their way through society at large (1995, p. 24).

I therefore found myself at an odd stalemate: galvanised, and ready to do something about all this domination seemingly going on, but without ever actually having *experienced* any other way of being a dancer: I had a bunch of ideas, with no traction within my approach to embodiment at the time. Things stayed this way for a time, until a strange thing occurred one morning, that can be best described this way: my body began moving on its own.

1.3 An Experiential Shift

This occurred while attending two movement workshops in October 2014, one by Benoît Lachambre entitled *Transformer Les Notions de Présence*, and another by Linda Rabin, a certified Continuum instructor (a somatic practice developed by American dancer and choreographer Emily Conrad). These workshops were different from more traditional dance classes I'd attended, where you might learn sequences of movement, or hone improvisational skills, for instance. Here, participants' attention was focused almost entirely inwards, often lying prone with very little visible movement happening. While I'd been exposed to practices like this over the years, I'd always had little patience for them, absorbed as I was in my image of dance as an expressionistic display of athleticism. I had been interested in sensation only to the degree that better proprioception might lead to better coordination and 'control' over my body.

However, I had been drawn to these workshops after having seen both Lachambre and Rabin (separately) onstage, and having been captivated by what one might call, in the simplest terms, their 'stage presence'. These formidable movers, with years of experience onstage stored in their flesh, seemed able to harness an utterly singular, otherworldly performativity that emanated from them, *even in immobility* – radiating rich corporeal bandwidths of energy that I had felt I wasn't *watching,* but rather *receiving* wholly with my own body. Still in the midst of my long rehab process, with a damaged self-image as a 'remnant' of my former robust dancer's body, I decided I wanted 'some of that' – hoping to cultivate new performative tools for when I next went onstage.

As attentionally unprepared as I was to the deep proprioceptive awareness required, I spent my first day of Lachambre's workshop by turns restless, sleepy, frustrated and baffled. But then, on the second day, I had a sudden experiential flash in which my body began to move in a way that seemed unbidden.

This felt like a switch had flipped in my body, with a sudden 'percolation' of desires within me, desires for movement that were at once *multiple*, *minute* and *localised* – an aggregation of movement-impulses, each operating at distinct points and at different speeds in my body simultaneously. As I writhed on the floor, no longer sleepy or restless but now fully engaged and awake and eager to follow these various textures of 'impelled' movement, it seemed to me that the distinction between the 'voluntary' and the 'involuntary' had become blurry or porous. Though I remained active and consciously present, it felt as though my self or 'ego' was no longer the main decision-maker – my 'I' had become simply one of several voices acting on the body.

## 1.3.1 A Mobile Dispersion of Agency

After having lived and worked in a body to which I had always 'dictated' movement, a body whose potential for action was exhausted in its more-or-less successful 'responses' to what I asked of it, I found myself now faced with a body asserting its own, vibrant, desire to move – and asserting it with several voices. I'm aware that the picture I'm painting of a body 'asserting its own desires' evokes a separate entity; however, within this mobile dispersion of corporeal agency, there was a sense, more so than at other time, that this body was emphatically *my own*. As messy and confused as the experience was, the feeling of my identity *within* it was stronger than when my body had been a thing I controlled. In those moments, then, the ways I had previously moved and called 'dancing' seemed like a flimsy ersatz of the rich and complex experiences now overtaking me.

Strange, too, was how this new and more 'mobile' proprioception seemed to extend into the space around me – as though a kinaesthetic field of perception expanded beyond the borders of my own body, through which I was able to feel certain bodies and objects in the room. Equally striking to me was the sense that these perceptions and movement impulses were not suddenly coming into existence, but rather that I was 'noticing' processes of movement and perception that had already been underway.

This suggested to me that I was lifting the static surface off of a fluid and fluctuating underlayer of experience. I had the visceral feeling that the more 'stable' and 'customary' body I had inhabited, walking into the studio, might have been the result of an unconscious dampening: a suppression of these truncated, odd, non-logical behaviours and impulses, which seemed to be bubbling up within me at every moment.

I was fascinated and puzzled by this new sense of the 'plasticity of the sensible', as I wrote at the time: how the information coming to me from my body, from the studio I was in, and from the bodies around me, could undergo such a radical and qualitative change, through a shift in the ways I *attended* to them. I was also struck by how, in the hours following, there was a kind of after-glow, occurring to me as a kind of kinesthetic resonance I carried with me out into the street; I found myself paying attention differently to the sounds, sights and bodies on the subway, though this feeling would dissipate over time.

1.3.2 "The Mobility of an Identity"

The experience recurred, with some slight differences, on the following days of Lachambre's workshop, and then again in Rabin's class over the following weeks. The off-hand, matter-of-fact ways in which both teachers reacted to my excited questions suggested that these experiences, which were so surprising to me, were fairly commonplace to them. One of Lachambre's casual remarks stuck with me for months afterward: "This", he offered, "is *the mobility of an identity*". His comment so efficiently put words to my experiences, and thus opened up the possibility for me that the work being done in this class went beyond simple states of awareness in dance, but

penetrated to the level of 'identity', to the level where 'selves' or subjectivities are constituted, revealing them as mutable, plastic entities capable of qualitative change.[12]

Lachambre's casual comment also struck me because it dovetailed so well with some of what I was studying at UQAM. I'll develop further in Chapter II, but for now, these were notions such as Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's Body without Organs (BwO), an entity "occupied... only by intensities", by "waves and vibrations, migrations, thresholds and gradients" (1987, p. 153); an entity with "disarticulation (or *n* articulation) as the property... experimentation as the operation... and nomadism as the movement (keep moving, even in place, never stop moving, motionless voyage, desubjectification)" (p. 159). How similar to the body I had fleetingly perceived – populated by volatile and ever-shifting perceptions, and by interferences between them. Similarly, this seemed to closely resemble Michel Bernard's evocation of the '*corporéité*' – a term he developed in order to subvert the term 'body'/'*corps*' – a "mobile and unstable material and energetic network of forces, of impulses, of interferences between disparate and intersecting intensities"[13] (2001, p. 20). Most vividly, I felt as though I might have stumbled on a concrete instance of Guattari's "I [as] an other, a multiplicity of others, embodied at the intersection of partial components of enunciation, breaching on all sides individuated identity and the organised body" (1995, p. 83): that my seemingly stable self was in fact both multiple and elastic, producing and re-producing itself moment-to-moment through the convergence of 'partial components' of discursive and non-discursive information, all while pushing through and beyond what I understood as my own body.

1.3.3 Towards a 'Polyvocal' Body

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[12] Full disclosure: I've since been working professionally with Benoit and his company ParB.L.eux. In 2019, for instance, we presented the 6-hour durational performance-installation *Fluid Grounds* (with Sophie Corriveau, 2018) for twenty-eight straight days in a barn at Wanas Könst in southern Sweden.

[13] "Un réseau matériel et énergétique mobile, instable, de forces pulsionnelles et d'interférences d'intensités disparates et croisés" (Bernard, 2001, p. 20)

In his *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm* (1995), from which that last citation is taken, Félix Guattari writes how our societal structures are engaged in a "move towards an accentuation of the individuation of subjectivity, towards a loss of its polyvocality" (p. 99). Guattari's argument – that 'selves' exist as a processual interweaving of multiple, polydirectional 'voices' – struck me as particularly apt for these experiences, where my own agency felt splintered into diverse and playful 'proto-intentionalities'. I have therefore appropriated Guattari's term 'polyvocality' as an engine to drive my eventual studio research. Though my team of collaborators and I eventually favoured a different designation,[14] for most of this project I have referred to the states of awareness accompanying this playful splintering as 'polyvocal embodiment' or the 'polyvocal body'.

The thesis that follows is therefore, in a sense, an account of how the writings of these different philosophers went to work on my understanding of the inchoate, difficult-to-articulate experiences I'd had, nudging them this way or that. The descriptions from a few paragraphs above are a direct result of how those texts have, themselves, 'mulled over' my experiences. Through these and other writings, I began to wonder whether the singular embodied experiences that occur in somatic workshops might offer venues for the critical reappraisal of embodiment itself, as it is experienced in a day-to-day manner – rife as that daily experience is with vectors of political domination and discipline (as we will see in Chapter II) – by offering their own, vividly-lived alternatives. Having experienced the blunt efficiency of those disciplinary vectors on a professional dancer's body over the years, I therefore wondered whether I might be able to re-situate my own choreographic practice, with the aid of somatic methods, as a similarly embodied practice of critique.

Lepecki argues that certain approaches to choreography do just this, and that in such cases dance has the potential to become both "critical theory and critical praxis"

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[14] We settled on calling it the 'vague body', or 'vague embodiment'.

(2004, p. 6). His assertion recalls the methods of social inquiry developed at the Frankfurt school by Horkheimer and Adorno, which rigorously interrogated the implicit hegemonies embedded in societal norms, and which suggested paths for "man's emancipation" (Horkheimer, 2002, p. 246) where individuals might become "producers of their own historical life in its totality" (p. 244). For Lepecki, when choreography ventures to subvert of its own embedded architectures of domination – when the body is treated not as a tool but rather as a site of agency and of knowledge-production – it begins to open up just such a praxeology of emancipation. As he writes, this deployment of dance as both a critical theory and critical praxis

> "proposes a body that is less an empty signifier (executing preordained steps as it obeys blindly to structures of command) than a material, socially inscribed agent, a non-univocal body, an open potentiality, a force-field constantly negotiating its position in the powerful struggle for its appropriation and control" (2004, p. 6).

Dancing, that uncanny meeting between the raw materials of existence (particles, molecules, bone, muscle) and time (the lived present moment), constitutes a singular event, an extraordinary moment, favourable to certain types of emancipation. He writes that when dancing occurs,

> "[the] body, visceral matter as well as sociopolitical agent, discontinuous with itself, moving in the folds of time, dissident of time, *smuggles its materiality into a charged presence* that defies subjection" (emphasis added, 2004, p. 6).

The thesis that follows, in any case, is my own response to how the 'charged presence', summoned by Rabin and Lachambre in their practices, effectively re-cast my own culturally-inscribed notions of what it means to move, to dance and to be in a body. That new paradigm took hold of a dancer's body I believed to be irreparably broken, and went to work remaking me into a dancing subjectivity again. Years later and with a mostly-recovered knee (though with my days vaulting over station wagons decidedly behind me), my sense of 'what a body can do' – what it knows, what it feels, what it speaks – has expanded. It plays in fields that an undeniably aging body is happy

to get lost in. The studio research described here is an attempt to explore those fields further.

1.4 Research Goals

As a research-creation, this thesis is a theoretical reflection anchored to an artistic creation. Concretely, the studio research for this project took place over 106 studio-hours, from June 13 to September 15, 2017. I worked in collaboration with dance artists Jessica Serli and Neil Sochasky[15], both seasoned dance professionals, who also held a keen interest and concern for sensation and embodiment. Dramaturg and artistic advisor Thea Patterson also accompanied us, bringing to the project a nuanced sensitivity to performance qualities, to communication strategies within creation, and a keen eye for the political dynamics inherent in dance-making. She was in the studio with us during about forty-five hours of our time. Our research led to the choreographic etude entitled *while_vague*, sixty minutes in length, which we presented in a 'dry' studio setting (without lights or scenography) to two groups of about fifty spectators, on the evenings of September 14 and 15, 2017.

As we will see in Chapter IV, the goals of this research can be understood along three main axes. These axes were densely intertwined in practice, but I've found it useful to consider them separately. The first axis was developing studio practices to provoke 'polyvocal' experiences in the dancers' bodies, and working to render these experiences stable and robust. While my own moments of polyvocality had happened in controlled environments with experienced teachers, we would need to foster similar textures of corporeal awareness that the dancers could instill, and return to, 'on demand', with a fairly high degree of predictability. They would ultimately need to be able to do so under the under the challenging conditions of a public performance.

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[15] Please see Annex _ for the biographies of Jessica, Neil and Thea.

Our second research axis was to develop a common understanding between us as to *just what* these experiences *were*. It would be fruitless to try to replicate my own ultrasubjective impressions in Jessica and Neil. Our understanding and language around polyvocal experiences would need to be built between us from the ground up, and rooted empirically in our unfolding, practice-based explorations. In the confluence of these first two axes – a back-and-forth between practice and discussion – we each developed our own specific notions of a body we weren't exactly controlling, but were not exactly *not* controlling either. These notions were inherently unstable and shifted from one day to the next. This therefore meant questioning together, as I remarked during a post-performance discussion, "what are the variables, what are the constants; what variables do we want to make *into* constants, versus what are the things we can allow to shift from day to day or from moment to moment" (September 15, 2017).

1.4.1 A Question of Choreography

The third axis of our research emerged later on in the process, once the first two were well underway. It consisted in figuring out how to work *choreographically* with these experiences. As we will see in Chapter II, polyvocal experience can be readily understood as an instance of 'body-state work', a choreographic practice with a long and established history in Western dance creation. Harbonnier (citing Godard) describes state-work as creative practices that engender a "plasticity of the respiratory, postural and perceptive phenomena, thus molding the fluctuating structure of that which we call the body" (2012, p. 52).[16] Her description adequately dovetails with my own experience, of particularly immersive, self-provoked states of awareness that dramatically affected my perception and movement.

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[16] "Une plasticité des phénomènes respiratoires, posturaux et perceptifs qui façonne ainsi la structure fluctuante que l'on appelle 'corps'" (Godard cited in Harbonnier, 2012, p. 52

The question of choreography added rich levels of complexity to the later stages of research. Since the polyvocal body we were seeking was a body that moved not entirely 'voluntarily', it seemed clear to us that creating pre-established and repeatable movement-sequences would go against the grain of the research. Jessica and Neil would thus be performing improvisationally, which would mean a nuanced negotiation between the sensations of *leading* their bodies and being *led* by their bodies. Nevertheless, it was important that they be able to settle into a structured format so they could dedicate themselves to the material without having to 'compose' as they went. (Burrows partially defines choreography as "a way to set up a performance that takes care of some of the responsibility for what happens, enough that the performer is free to perform" (2010, p. 105)) However, it was quickly evident that our material was elusive and unpredictable by its very nature, and resisted even the most basic choreographic structures. Polyvocal states of awareness were immersive, but equally fragile: they could easily slip away due to distraction, but also due to an overly-insistent focus, like water through a clenched fist.

This fragile quality, while rendering my own tried-and-true choreographic strategies ineffective, would also be generative: we'd need to come up with resonant choreographic structures and dramaturgical logics with which to corral this unpredictable material: providing enough framework for a degree of constancy from one 'run' or iteration to another, while still allowing the flexibility and leeway for these states to sustain themselves and thrive. These improvisational choreographic logics, as we'll see, can be described less as a structure than a complex ecosystem of tasks and rules, each with a measure of embedded dramaturgical 'agency', acting to constrain or expand the dancers' attentionality from moment to moment. These structures often took on a nebulous character that matched that of the states themselves, and would prove more challenging to work with than choreographic strategies I'd used in the past.

Additionally, since experiences of this type are entirely self-generated, and can't truly be 'imposed' from the outside, this research practice would need to firmly foreground my dancer-collaborators' agency and self-direction. I felt that this type of work would engender relationships that were manifestly horizontal, and I would need to discover new forms of leadership in how I addressed Neil and Jessica, generating dialogues in the studio that honoured these relationships.

1.5 Research Questions

My central research question, therefore, is articulated thus: "**What are the generative conditions leading to a 'polyvocal' body, both during choreographic creation and during public performance?**" These three sub-questions then followed: "What kind of choreographic material emerges from a polyvocal embodiment?"; "How do you provide an audience with the tools for watching this material?"; "In what ways does working with polyvocal body-states change the nature of the choreographer-dancer relationship?"

Throughout the project, each participant would be invited to work in novel ways, both individually and collectively: to inhabit states of awareness that challenged attention and patience; to maintain an (often uncomfortable) agnosticism as to what we were looking for; and to make choreographies which seemed to possess their own emergent rules. Learning to work with these body states, for myself, would mean relinquishing a measure of control over the project, and wholly recalibrating my strategies, expectations, and posture as a creator.

CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will explore how Michel Foucault's notions of bio-power, disciplinary technology and 'power-knowledge' might help me to unearth the inexplicit politics embedded in my professional conception of the dancing body. My hope is that these notions will help in framing that conception as reflective of ideologies of normative embodiment and surveillance at play in society and, most specifically, to normative and authoritarian legacies embedded in pedagogical and production practices of Eurocentric dance. Though I don't plan to argue for a wholesale dismantling of these teaching and production regimes, it has felt important to acknowledge how these legacies have surfaced in my own professional practices of dancing and making dances.

From there, I will move to exploring some of the alternative conceptions of embodiment proposed within the field of 'somatic' practices. While these practices are equally prone to normative pitfalls, particularly when they advocate for a return to a 'natural' body, we will see that in viewing somatics through the lens of 'fictivity' and invention, sensation can take a rightfully central role as a vector for emancipation. Within this reformulation, dance creation can play a surprisingly central role, particularly through creation practices that are commonly known in the field as 'state-work' or 'working with body-states'. I will give a brief outline of that practice while exploring how notions advanced by Deleuze, Guattari and Bernard might theoretically frame these practices as micropolitical vectors for emancipation.

2.2 A Body on the Losing End of the Body-Mind Split

To begin, it bears stating that the inexplicit 'models' of embodiment described in Chapter I – in which I viewed my body as a finely-tuned professional instrument – are in robust alignment with a fairly weighty tenet of Western dualist ontology, in which mind and body are seen as radically separate. I will refrain from an exhaustive history of the body-mind split; I will simply cite Plato here as an early proponent (with the body seen as a foil to true knowledge, within which the divine immaterial soul is "locked… like an oyster in its shell" (*Phaedrus*, 1997, p. 528)), with Thomist Christian theology serving as a long-running standard-bearer, and with René Descartes as a particularly persuasive Enlightenment-era evangelist: "it is mind alone, and not mind and body in conjunction, that is requisite to a knowledge of the truth" (1911, p. 29). A conception of embodiment that has been largely unquestioned for centuries. As Don Hanlon Johnson writes, however, this understanding is not universal but rather "radically Western, rooted in the consciousness-shaping forces of classical Greek philosophy, Christian theology, and modern Western philosophy", with whole constellations of belief around the body becoming "engraved in [one's] neuromuscular pathways by living within the structures of classrooms, exercise, dance, medical practices, and sports... peculiar to Western Europe and the United States" (cited in Mullan, 2014, p. 256).

French philosopher and sociologist Michel Foucault can provide us with a framework to examine how these consciousness-shaping forces have been 'at work' on humans at two levels: materially, at the level of nerve, fascia and muscle tissue, and more perniciously at the level of our understanding of what *is*. We will begin by examining how Foucault effectively reforged the notion of power in the latter half of the 20th Century, providing tools to perceive its workings in ways and in situations that were previously unthought.

2.3 Michel Foucault

2.3.1 A Reframing of Power

Prior to Foucault, power was traditionally conceived of as a *capacity* or *possession*. '*Having*' power therefore meant being '*able*' to force someone else to do things: members of a society would be oppressed because they did not 'have' power. Foucault instead sought to reframe power as inherently *relational*: as a dynamic, circulating force "conceived not as a property, but as a strategy. […] Power is exercised rather than possessed" (1977, p. 26). Rather than a static 'asset' held by a few, power could be found at work in every corner of society, operating not solely from the top down, but also laterally and from the bottom up (1980b, p. 98). This implies that those on the losing end of oppressive relations have as active a role in upholding the dynamic as their oppressors. It also reveals power as generative rather than merely repressive: even the most oppressive measures don't simply shut down certain actions, but are instead productive of new forms of behaviour. "Power is not exercised simply as an obligation or a prohibition on those who 'do not have it'; it invests them, is transmitted by them and through them" (1977, p. 27). Foucault's reframing also suggests that power is not a monolithic force but rather a clumsy, multiple, and unwieldy thing: "an open, more-or-less coordinated (in the event, no doubt, ill-coordinated) cluster of relations" (Cited in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1983, p. 184), acting as a binding-agent that holds a given society together: "[it] is omnipresent; it is in everyone; it is immanent in the structuralist sense of the term" (Harvey & Rail, 1995, p. 166).

2.3.2 Coercive Technologies and the Docile Body

This ill-coordinated but immanent force, for Foucault, exists in a singular relationship with the body, which he sees as inherently malleable or "docile" (1977, p. 136). This notion refers to the human body's readiness to be trained: although possessed of a specific morphology and certain instinctual behaviours, my body adopts new behaviours, such as typing this sentence, or the complex coordination of a *pirouette*, with striking compliance – acquiring and storing these actions in my nervous system, fascia and muscle tissue. This behavioural plasticity, however, also leaves the

body vulnerable to adopting involuntary behaviours in response to historically specific cultural environments. Foucault thus views the body as both radically historical and radically contingent: an "inscribed surface of events… a body totally imprinted by history" (1971, p. 83).

He argues that the body's docility has been programmatically exploited since around the 18th Century. Prior to this, power was primarily exercised on the bodies of individuals in dramatic demonstrations of force. Public torture and executions are examples he gives, in which the state (in the person of the sovereign) would affirm domination over its subjects through ostentatious shows of traumatic force. These and other forms of punishment, including imprisonment and the confiscation of property, posed power as "essentially a right of seizure: of things, time, bodies, and ultimately life itself" (1978, p. 136). Foucault demonstrates, however, how power underwent a profound reframing during the Classical era, in which these massive demonstrations of force were supplanted by more subtle "coercive technologies" (1977, p. 293) designed to shape the behaviour of human bodies, incrementally, but with brutal consistency. This "new micro-physics of power" (1977, p. 139) was in line with a wider sea-change in how both individuals and populations were administered and regulated. He therefore sought to highlight certain practices that have come to be seen as 'natural' in our society by isolating them historically and demonstrating how they emerged.

Foucault examined such spaces as hospitals, prisons, factory floors, schools and military barracks. Though the purpose of each institution was different, these were places whose inhabitants adhered to strict timetables, who were organised in space for maximum visibility and surveillance by superiors, whose activities were dictated with high precision, and whose communication was closely monitored and controlled. The efficiency of these subtle mechanisms was in the constancy and precision of their application – they were "small acts of cunning endowed with a great power of diffusion, subtle arrangements, apparently innocent, but profoundly suspicious"

(Foucault, 1977, p. 139). Factory floors, for instance, where workers might be unable to tell when they were being observed (modeled after Jeremy Bentham's 'panoptic' prison) would cause them to act "as if surveillance is constant, unending and total" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p. 189) – internalising surveillance into their own bodies. Systems of surveillance like these, therefore, did their work on individuals "with the least exertion of overt force by operating on their souls" (p. 192).

In concert with this continual observation, increased attention was paid to individual components of a given task[17]. Due to a constant application, and a constant possibility of surveillance, "a calculated constraint runs through each part of the body… turning silently into the automatism of habit" (1977, p. 135). The body thus entered into a "machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it" (p. 138), reconfiguring individuals at the level of their own habits "not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they *may operate as one wishes*, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines" (emphasis added, ibid.). While these practices were initially confined to certain environments, they had a tendency of "swarming" (p. 211) outwards, in the way that supervision of a child's behaviour at school might lead to questions about his or her family environment, so that "one can speak of a disciplinary society... an indefinitely generalizable mechanism of 'panopticism'" (216).

While these new practices might have been associated with a new and rational modeling of society (imprisoning criminals is demonstrably more humane than torturing and executing them), Foucault argued that these were simply more efficient applications of power aligned with the productive drives of capitalism: a power "bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them" (1978, p. 136), thereby

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[17] Foucault notes that the Prussian army "laid down six stages to bring [a rifle] to one's foot, four to extend it, thirteen to raise it to the shoulder" (citation). Movements, divided into these smaller and smaller increments, could then be accounted for and regularised "extracting, from time, ever more available moments, and from each moment, ever more useful forces" (Foucault, 1979, p. 154).

"distributing the living in the domain of value and utility" (144) rather than simply breaking bodies down. This "art of the human body" is so effective at harnessing the docility of bodies because it "dissociates power from the body": appropriating it and converting it into "an 'aptitude' or a 'capacity'" which it can then optimize, while simultaneously inverting its direction so that it becomes "a relation of strict subjection" (1977, p. 138).

2.3.3 Power-Knowledge and the Constitution of the Self

Foucault further suggests that power has a hand in shaping individual embodiment at the more subtle and pernicious level of our understanding. A tiny backtrack is necessary here to introduce Foucault's notion of 'power-knowledge'. Far from admitting that humans might have access to fundamental 'True Knowledge' ("we must not imagine that the world turns towards us a legible face which we could have only to decipher" (1981, p. 67), Foucault instead argues that all forms of knowledge are invariably made up of historically-specific formations of discourse. As certain knowledge tropes gain in visibility and authority, they then drown out other possible forms of knowledge, consolidating their authority by then determining what can be considered 'serious' claims to truth – and, importantly, by determining who can make such claims. Over time, certain types of knowledge become so authoritative that other discourses are denied credibility, or potentially disappear altogether from what one thinks of as possible (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p. 68). Knowledge and power, therefore, are so intimately linked for Foucault that he coined the compound term 'power-knowledge'. As he writes, "Power produces knowledge; […] there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (1977, p. 27).

With this in mind, we can note that disciplinary technologies of the enlightenment era were also at work producing more and more precise knowledge about human beings. The highly-ordered and observable factory floor, hospital ward

or classroom was also an information-gathering tool resulting in the "constitution of the individual as a describable, analyzable object" (1977, p. 190). And, simultaneously, the more large-scale harvesting of knowledge, by both institutions and states, about "birth and death rates, life expectancy, fertility, state of health, frequency of illnesses, patterns of diet and habitation" (1978, p. 25) led to the production of knowledge of human beings as a species. With one's health, economic status, social standing and temperament becoming the subject of recordings and analysis, these new ways of 'knowing' human beings established *these same categories* as the *ways in which it was possible to be 'knowable'*, or intelligible, as a member of society.

In effect, for Foucault, these new forms of discipline and their resulting new forms of knowledge "produced new kinds of human subjects" (Rouse, 2005, p. 4). Power can thus be seen to be at work shaping 'me' in two distinct but aligned ways: first, directly in the way I 'police' myself whenever I decide against going over speed limit on the highway, or jumping over a turnstile in the subway; and second, in terms of what components of my body, behaviour and thoughts I take to make up my 'self', even though those elements emerge entirely out of historically contingent discursive surroundings. As Foucault remarks, "it is already one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, and certain desires, come to be identified and constituted as individuals" (1980b, p. 98).

2.3.4 Regimes of Power-Knowledge That Produce and Constitute (Dancing) Bodies

While Foucault might be observing phenomena that arose centuries ago, he is in fact grappling with what Dreyfus and Rabinow call a "history of the present" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p. 204): pulling apart societal practices to unearth the mechanisms that define and produce particular 'truths', with the aim of loosening the grip of their ostensible "necessity and naturalness" (p. 203). Out of this rigorous process of analysis, "history becomes a question of the various *knowledges* that have

been produced, the kinds of awarenesses they promote, right down to the very selves that are constituted" (Fillion, 1998, p. 145).

With this in mind, we might turn more specifically to Western dance creation, and to my own conception of embodiment: not as the self-evident truth I always took it to be, but instead as the result of implicit and historically-specific attitudes, advanced and maintained by specific poles of power-knowledge.  These in turn form the ambient, historically-infused environment within which dancers-in-training – and professional dancers like myself –  navigate: an "epistemic field" (Rouse, 2005, p. 6) within which (to echo Foucault) certain bodies, certain gestures and certain desires come to be identified and constituted as dancing bodies and dancing subjectivities.

In briefly looking at this heritage, we find that Lepecki (2006) specifically identifies the conception of the dancing body as a 'medium' as thoroughly embedded in the practice of Western theatrical dance.  He argues that this conception emerged historically at a moment where dance was establishing itself as an autonomous art-form, migrating from the noble courts and dinner parties to the ballet's proscenium stage in the 17th and 18th centuries.  Lepecki argues that it made this move in adjacence to the "unfolding and consolidation of the project of modernity" (p. 7) happening in cities all across the continent: an occidental Modernity that has been characterized, since its birth, by a tendency towards continuous movement – generating increasingly frictionless mobilizations of resources, bodies, labour, information.  Citing Ferguson, Lepecki writes that "the only changeless element in Modernity is the propensity to movement, which becomes, so to speak, its permanent emblem" (Ferguson, cited in Lepecki, 2006, p. 7).  With the professionalization of dancing bodies within large-scale ballet companies, Occidental dance found itself "more and more aligned with the production and display of a body fit to perform this unstoppable motility" (p. 3).  These newly-minted choreographic arts discovered their premise in presenting "dance as continuous motion, a motion preferably aiming upwards, animating a body thriving

lightly in the air" (ibid.). The "ideology" at the heart of this modernist movement-drive "shaped styles, prescribed techniques and configured bodies" (ibid.) in accordance with this drive for unrelenting and weightless movement.

Dempster describes the ballet technique that emerged during this period, and which persists today, as an "overtly synthetic construct", using "a system of precisely coded, highly-patterned abstract movement and incorporating the stylized gesture and deportment of the 16th-century French court" (1995, p. 26). Dempster writes that in the training of a stage-ready ballet dancer, "all traces of the 'natural', the unschooled, the mundane or the contemporary gesture" must be steadfastly erased "in a lengthy and rigorous training which begins in childhood" (ibid.). Examples are bountiful, often bordering on the cartoonish, as when dance critic André Levinson writes that "to make a dancer of a graceful child, it is necessary to begin by de-humanising him" (Levinson cited in Ridley, 2009, p. 337).

The teaching environment that has since emerged frequently stands as a playbook of sorts for disciplinary technologies. As Dryburg writes, the classical dancer is near-constantly "under the control of the other, physically and psychologically" (2008, p. 12)[18], in steady compliance to an "obsessive examination of the body, an endless search for perfection, for the finest detail" (p. 18)[19] in posture and placement. With students constantly visible to their instructors and to themselves in the mirrors that surround them, Green notes that "the teacher does not have to impose outside force to motivate students to perform according to specific standards" (2001, p. 164). Instead "the students learn to discipline themselves through self-regulation and unconscious habit" (ibid.), with the corrections they receive "gradually [becoming] part of their own unconscious inner talk" (p. 165). As Benn and Walters note, this "strong sense of

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[18]"Le danseur classique est presque toujours sous le contrôle de l'autre, physiquement et psychologiquement" (Dryburgh, 2008, p. 12).

[19] "Regard obsessionnel sur le corps, cette recherche sans fin de la perfection, de la moindre détail" (Dryburgh, 2008, p. 12).

surveillance" in the ballet world was prevalent but "was regarded as natural to the culture" (cited in Dryburgh & Fortin, 2010, p. 95).

This heritage of power-knowledge can be equally sourced to Modern Dance pioneers such as Martha Graham or Doris Humphrey. While Modern Dance techniques were originally conceived as personalised repudiations of the classical form (in the search for the 'natural body's' impulses, seen as conduits for inner truths), within a few decades these forms became standardized techniques taught in similar fashion to ballet:

> "Ironically", Dempster writes, "this concept of the 'natural' body was expounded in support of highly systematized and codified dance languages and training programs which inscribe relationships – necessarily conventional and arbitrary – between body, movement and meaning", and which "involve erasure of naturally given physical traits" (1995, p. 29).[20]

While current dance training has certainly become more diverse and plural than these highly codified techniques, Newell writes that "traditional pedagogical practices... are still the norm in most dance teaching institutions" (2007, pp. 30-31): there remains within these pedagogical practices, however they might have softened, the heritage of an adherence to external forms and to authoritative structures of pedagogy. Foster (2010) argues that the current Western dance milieu, while drawing from more diverse styles and practices, continues to produce professional dancing bodies in alignment with capitalist and spectacularizing forces, bodies "capable of migrating, hybridizing and morphing" (p. 25) from project to project so that choreographers can deploy their abilities "quickly and economically" while making work. While the "ballet body" spent a few years in retreat, it has re-emerged as an emblem of "good taste and virtuoso accomplishment" (p. 26), becoming an easily

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[20] As Newell notes, Graham students were taught to understand the 'Contraction' (a signature movement in Graham repertoire that employs a c-shaped spinal curve) as an "introspective forage into the interior realms of the psyche" (2007, p. 18). While this position could elicit any number of personal significations, "for the Graham dancer, learning the technique means not only reproducing external forms, but agreeing to accept the 'lived' experience behind the form" (p. 17).

recognizable "global currency" (ibid.) for signifying 'high' culture. The "industry body" (ibid.), found in more commercial contexts onstage and in the media, "energizes [itself] in response to the appeal of work and sweat", assimilating diverse styles "into a homogeneous affirmation of youth and heterosexuality" and "selling the illusive vitality that is promised when one buys something" (ibid.). Even the "released body" (p. 26), which has emerged out of somatically-informed, softer 'release' techniques, becomes a vector for dancerly efficiency in this context, functioning as a "nearly transparent cipher" (p. 27) for any choreographic material, maintaining a composed efficiency and self-containment: "it takes no responsibility for any actions, only for their efficacious execution", performing "an economy perfectly in synch with global capitalism", (ibid.) as the "perfectly efficient worker" (ibid.).

While taking its more polemic aspects with a grain of salt, Foster's account provides us with the nuance that professional dancers are not simply meek subjugates to systems of authority; they are rather physically sophisticated and empowered artists who nevertheless engage – through positive and energetic compliance with regimes of capitalist production – in shaping and spectacularizing their own bodies. In Green's study of ballet dancers, one of her subjects preferred being subject to disciplinary modes of teaching because "she felt like she was working 'hard' and achieving success in controlling her body through self-discipline and restraint" (2001, p. 167). Foucault would call these pedagogical and professional demeanors "technologies of the self", practices that individuals take on to effect "a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom [or] perfection" (1997, p. 225). I can certainly attest personally to the joys of 'working' hard in the dance studio, and to the positive influence that even the most rigid authoritarian forms of choreography can have. Alsopp and Lepecki write of "the profound love, commitment and responsibility involved in having oneself surrender to the demands or commands

of a voice, of another's desire... whose wishes we fulfill , unselfishly and un-egotistically" (2008, p. 3).

Nevertheless, these forms of enjoyment don't occur entirely innocently, and as Foucault writes, technologies of the self function "not only in the obvious sense of acquiring certain skills but also in the sense of acquiring certain attitudes" (1997, p. 225). It is when these attitudes are acquired unquestioningly, and without an awareness of the consciousness-shaping historical weight behind them, that choreography is in danger of becoming an "apparatus of capture", as Lepecki argues (borrowing the term from Deleuze and Guattari): a machine that "seizes bodies in order to make them into other(ed) bodies – highly trained (physically, but also emotionally, artistically and intellectually) variations of what Foucault calls 'docile bodies'" (Alsopp & Lepecki, 2008, p. 3), or even, as Boris Charmatz writes, making them into "audition-fodder" (Charmatz, 2009, p. 17)[21].

Having laid out the stakes involved in the conception of embodiment I held throughout my career, we can now turn to an alternative conception, proposed by somatic practice, and attempt to put forward the theoretical framework which will guide this present research-creation.

2.4 Somatic Practices

Thomas Hanna, who coined the term somatics, describes the soma as "the body perceived from within by first person perception" (Hanna cited in Fortin, 2002, p. 128). For Hanna, the soma arises entirely out of immediate proprioception and is "categorically distinct" from the body, which is a phenomenon arising from an external perspective: the hands I see at this keyboard, as well as my understanding of them

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[21] "La chair d'auditions" (Charmatz, 2009, p. 17)

informed by physiology textbooks, would belong to my 'body', while my felt sense of *having* hands would be my 'soma' at work.

'Somatics' then, is an umbrella term for a range of methods or practices developed in the West since the 19th Century, designed in one way or another to deepen and sharpen one's felt sense of being in one's body[22]. Though their approaches vary widely from the 'clinical' to the 'creative' to the 'spiritual/energetic', these practices generally use a combination of verbal guidance, imagery, touch, and movement exercises, to focus awareness on sensation (Fortin, 2002; Mullan, 2014; Rouhiainen, 2008; Solano, 2016), and to encourage a "'sensing in' to moment-to-moment experience of the self" (Mullan, 2014, pp. 254-255). Generally, the goal is that, through repeated and regular exposure, one gradually enhances the perception of one's own sensorial field. Don Hanlon Johnson writes that while a primary philosophical question in the West has been "what is the relationship between the mind and body", somatic methods frame the question in this way: "How does the relationship between the mind and body come to be *through cultivation*?" (emphasis added, 2000, p. 40).

In summoning a perceptive awareness that Ginot describes as both "ferociously precise" (in attending to minute regions of the body), and "infinitely vast" (in maintaining a global mindfulness towards their own body and the space around them), the practicant develops a fluency in the body's own language, a form of "sensorial erudition" (2013, pp. 21-22)[23]. The body's previously-ignored or taken-for-granted "tacit knowledge" (Mullan, 2014, p. 254) might then surface to the level of conscious awareness.

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[22] Examples include the Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais Method, Body-Mind Centering, Ideokinesis, and Body-Mind Centering.

[23] "Les somatiques exigent une attention extrême, à la fois férocieusement précise... et infiniment étendue... on pourrait finalement décrire les somatiques comme une discipline d'érudition du sentir" (Ginot, 2013, pp. 21-22).

This sensorial erudition is developed through what Dempster describes as an "imagined anatomy" (as opposed to the one mapped out in medical textbooks) – a "libidinally invested body schema" (2003, p. 49) or subjective map of the body, capable of being transformed, moment to moment, by the flows of perception and desire found there. For Dempster, "images, in the context of ideokinetic [somatic] practice, are emotionally invested thoughts" (ibid.). In using somatic imagery, one is encouraged to ""think *through* the body" directly and sensorially, rather than "along the outside"; in this context, there is "no distance between the body and image" (ibid.), and they eventually fuse into one and the same subjective phenomenon. These images, spoken in the body's own language, offer ways of "introducing new ideas that 'shake up the old order and allow for the experience of new movement potentials to emerge' (Batson, cited in Mullan, 2014, p. 258). With new sensory information rendered conscious, one is equipped with more options, more ways of addressing a given movement; the body therefore learns "as a system" how to improve upon one's movement patterns (p. 254).

We might note a certain search for efficacy in some of the above quotes, possibly in alignment with the productivity-drives of spectacular modes of dance production; however, the scope and significance of somatics is also understood by practitioners to be considerably broad, with a shared assumption that such practice "is transformative in so far as it can produce 'deep change' in our habitual style of embodiment (and thereby our corporeal and intercorporeal life as a whole)" (Behnke, cited in Mullan, 2014, p. 258). Writing of Body-Mind Centering, Hartley explains that the practice "offers a way to deepen ourselves to the intuitive wisdom of the body and to nurture our innate capacity to heal through awareness and touch" (1989, p. *xxix*). Rouhiainen remarks that many somatic practices "consider enhancing bodily awareness as a means of change that supports better bodily functioning, self-understanding, and ethical relationships with others" (2008, p. 242), while Shusterman states that "just as oppressive power relations are encoded and sustained in our bodies" at the level of muscle tension, "so they can be challenged by alternative somatic

practices" in bringing and increased and holistic awareness to one's use of the body (2008, p. 22).

2.4.1 Being Moved: "I Feel a Stirring"

These aspects of somatic practice – the libidinal investment in one's own imagined anatomy, the fostering of new movement potentials that might override habitual patterns, and the goal of deep physiological and personal change – are neatly summed up by Continuum founder Emily Conrad speaking in interview. Her remarks also provide a fascinating glimpse into the perspective Continuum practice offers for my own polyvocal experience of 'being moved' rather than 'choosing to move'.

This experience, which struck me as so singular, turns out to be fairly commonplace to Continuum practice. A routine exercise, for example, involves stimulating sensation by 'sending' one's voice (using specific vocal tones and textures, often in a specific order) through different regions of the body, in gradual fashion. Following this, one lies still in what's called 'open attention', listening in to the body, and 'allowing' movement desires to emerge spontaneously. As Conrad describes it,

> "We go into a state of waiting, and what we're waiting for is a cue from inside our bodies that begins its choreography. So, it may show up as a movement of the shoulder. I don't know where it's going to show up, I'm not pre-forming it. […] I'm not trying to impose anything, and I'm just listening, and *I feel a 'stirring' somewhere,* and so *I follow that stirring*, it starts leading me into an expression, some kind of choreography" (emphasis added Conrad, 2013).

In the perspective of her practice, the choreography that emerges from the practicant's body results from having used one's voice to soften "the conditioning, the adaptive patterns and the inhibitors" they've accumulated over their personal history, which "impede the flow of burgeoning life" (Conrad, 2013). Once free in this way, the practicant is then open to receive a more universal nourishing biocosmic resonant intelligence, which Conrad sees as our "birthright" (ibid.). This birthright is an ancestral evolutionary heritage, present simultaneously in the development of each

species and of each individual embryo.  One's involuntary 'choreography' is therefore seen as the biosphere itself, conveying embodied intelligence to the body: since "the planet does not have a language, it speaks through movement" (ibid.).  Further, as one accesses this inherited intelligence, "the whole description of what it means to be a human being begins to become much broadened" beyond what is dictated by one's personal history (ibid).  For Conrad, this broadening has weighty consequences, constituting "the self-empowerment that is necessary to be able to engage in a healthy way in relation to our social capabilities, certainly our physical capabilities, and our political capabilities as well, and how we shape the world" (ibid.).

## 2.4.2 Grounding Somatic Epistemology in a Framework of Critique

As a Continuum student, I have found Conrad's characterization of this 'involuntary choreography' to be powerfully and poetically evocative – and, moreover, humanely emancipatory.  However, having invoked Foucauldian critiques of how knowledge (and therefore selves) are constituted, I would be remiss if I were to ignore the inherent power-knowledge apparatus that Conrad installs here.  It is necessary, therefore, to briefly unearth some of the implicit disciplinary vectors in her remarks, to hopefully then embed them in a more conceptually 'stable' framework of critique.

The first step in this is with the aid of Isabelle Ginot, French theoretician and Feldenkrais practitioner.  Ginot advances a "radical epistemology" of somatics (2010), in which the historical contingency of thoughts, selves, and modes of embodiment are accounted for.  What Ginot would take issue with, in this instance, is not Conrad's 'biocosmos', but rather her appeal to an 'originary' embodied state to which the biocosmos would return us.  Ginot warns us that this type of "essentialist ideal of the body" reveals the way in which somatic practices are "freighted with innumerable ideologies" (p. 23).  These ideologies, found in much of somatic discourse, put forth the idealised model of "a homogeneous, universal, ahistorical, and occidental body" towards which the practicant must strive, resting on an illusory foundation of "the

natural and the organic" (ibid.).[24]  Though images like Conrad's might be intended as a means to loosen sedimented power relations in the body, they set up new poles of power-knowledge in their very language that go to work defining and producing reality, using the same mechanisms – this can potentially result in a model of embodiment as disciplinary as what we might find in the most rigid ballet studio.

Green argues that we should remain suspicious of "somatic work that simply attempts to free bodies" (2001, p. 171).  Left unexamined, any somatic method proclaiming "a 'true' body" (p. 170) is in danger of becoming a "technique that requires students to 'liberate themselves' by finding a specific 'truth' through personal 'experience'" (p. 159).  These 'liberations' instead reinvest in biopolitical dynamics of subjugation, resulting in individuals subsuming their experiences to a new authority figure.

Ginot's 'radical epistemology', therefore, involves acknowledging that the soma "has always been an artificial composite; that no purity, no innocence, no naturalness resides in our modern sensations" (2010, p. 25).  Divesting itself of a "naïve meliorism" that seeks to 'return' bodies to their 'natural' state, somatics should instead invest in recognizing that it "is itself a technique of fabricating the body" (p. 24).  Somatic methods can then be re-framed as "performative discourses" (p. 18), particular forms of knowledge-production, with their own perlocutionary efficacy in calling new modes of embodiment – and therefore new bodies – into being.

The shift Ginot is effecting here is therefore subtle but profound – a shift equipped to absorb somatics' sometimes conceptually shaky imagery, and to reactivate it as both a form of alternative knowledge-production and a rigorous tool of embodied

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[24] As another quick example, we might cite Plevin's declaration that the somatic practice of Authentic Movement "opens the possibility for the constructed, defended or compliant false self to surrender, *allowing the true self to emerge*" (emphasis added, 2007, p. 111), resting on the reification of a pre-existing and untainted essential self.

critique. Through such a reframing it becomes possible to reimagine Conrad's citations above as a performative refashioning of the body, a pulling-apart of existing power-knowledge tropes of embodiment, repurposing them to new ends. Ginot's proposition of divesting somatics of its normative appeals to the natural frees these practices up to gaze forward, imagining new possibilities of embodiment.

This radical somatic epistemology results for Ginot (after Haraway, 2016) in "the creation of a unique cyborg" (2010, p. 24). With recent cognitive research showing that the body only understands itself in its capacity to act – bodies tend to neurologically absorb both artificial limbs and regularly-used instruments like a pair of skis or a gaming controller into their body schema – Ginot argues that "the body is no more natural than it is artificial" (ibid.). It is instead a fully mutable entity, silently appropriating any objects or knowledges it might deem useful; any form of corporeal knowledge can be conceived as a technology, which prosthetically "grafts" itself onto the body. If as this research suggests, "we are all cyborgs" (ibid.), then somatics is simply another cyborg-like interface between bodies and discursive technologies, a body-enhancement among others. Ginot argues elsewhere that dancers are particularly well-positioned to "push the limits of a practice that is becoming fixed" (2013, p. 25),[25] calling on them to "introduce a bit of the strange... [I]ntroduce a bit of delirium" (idem.),[26] through irreverent practice and inventive exploration, to somatic methods.

2.4.3 "To Fiction Something": A Quick Return to Foucault

This antinormative move by Ginot aligns well with Michel Foucault, who, despite his quite devastating analysis of power's role in the discursive shaping of bodies, did harbor some optimism for the body's capacity for resistance and self-

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[25] "Les danseurs ont une place priviligiéepour éprouver les limites d'une pratique qui se fige" (Ginot, 2013, p. 25)

[26] "Introduire de l'étranger au sein des pratiques... [i]ntroduire le délire dans le syntaxe parfois sévère de ces méthodes" (Ginot, 2013, p. 25)

empowerment. He writes that though discourse might serve as a medium for transmitting and producing power, it also "undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile", since it operates as an uncoordinated series of "segments" without a stable "tactical function" (1978, p. 101). However, such an undermining is done not by setting up new norms and poles of authority (as somatic discourses often run the danger of doing), but rather, as Ginot is suggesting, by steadfastly diagnosing embedded power-relations within the whole-cloth inventions that are our cultural practices. If we are relentless in analysing these constitutive power relations, we can begin to imagine calling forth new social and political possibilities within these inventions:

> "I am fully aware that I have never written anything other than fictions. For all that... it seems plausible to me to make fictions work within truth, to introduce truth effects within a fictional discourse, and in some way to make discourse arouse, 'fabricate', something which does not yet exist, thus to fiction something.... A politics that does not yet exist" (Foucault cited in Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p. 204).

For Foucault, this undermining of power can also happen at the corporeal level, in that power can be "exposed to a counter-attack" in the very same bodies in which it invests itself, when those bodies become curious (1980a, p. 56). Foucault himself enthusiastically sought the 'fictioning' of new discursive body-configurations, immersed as he was in the BDSM[27] community in the 1970's and 80's. There he found unconventional bodily behaviours and enjoyments that escaped traditional norms, in which the cultural grid of coded significations had a looser grip. As he wrote of BDSM, "these practices are insisting that we can produce pleasures with very odd things, very strange parts of our bodies, in very unusual situations" (Foucault cited in Shusterman, 2008, p. 32). Though focused within erotic spheres of activity, his ambition to generate "polymorphic relationships with things, people, bodies" (ibid.) articulates a compelling motif for mutable embodied experience.

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[27] Erotic practices including bondage, discipline, sadism and masochism

We can therefore read Ginot as extrapolating Foucault's argument to imagine how individuals might re-appropriate and repurpose their own sensorial experience, effectively fictioning new modes of embodiment. My own somatic experiences, when framed in this way, take on a new dimension, not as 'discoveries' but rather as acts of invention. As Ginot writes, freed from a backward gaze into an idealized past, somatic practice can gaze forward to ask:

> "what body is it urgent to produce, what theoretical discourse could invent a body that is both conscious and unconscious, a body that can act and resist, a flexible body and an unshakeable body... without renouncing a frenzied uncontrollable warrior body" (2010, p. 26).

2.5 Deleuze and Guattari: A Potential Ontological Grounding

With the notion of the 'Soma' thus revealed as conceptually vulnerable to its own normative tendencies, it seems necessary to me to seek out other tools to bolster the conceptual foundation for my research. One such tool will be Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's 'Body without Organs' (or 'BwO', 1987), a notion that I hope to demonstrate is capable of encompassing the Soma within a broader conceptual framework.

Additionally, as mentioned in the discussion of my career in Chapter I, the question of how the body is treated in dance is essentially an ontological question[28]: an 'instrumentalized' dancing body is a logical extension of the Western body-mind split advanced by Platonic, Judeo-Christian and Cartesian thought[29], which in turn rests on a transcendental metaphysics comprising two separate regimes of existence – with the non-physical human mind participating in a more-perfect realm (of the divine, or of Plato's forms, for example), 'transcending' the less-perfect material world, and yet also (somehow) able to dictate the body's actions within that world. Therefore, in order to

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[28] May succinctly defines 'ontology' as "the study of what there is" (2005, p. 13)

[29] Foucault writes that Descartes "wrote the first pages" of the "great book of Man-The-Machine" (1977, p. 136).

discover a new politics of embodiment in alignment with my 'polyvocal' experiences, and in order to imagine how a 'fictioning' of new bodies might be possible, I want to ground those politics in an ontological model where that split does not operate. As it happens, it is just such a model that Deleuze and Guattari propose with the BwO: a model both endlessly rich and delightfully strange.

Prior to his collaborations with Guattari, Deleuze spent much of his career formulating such a "metaphysics of continuity" (Adkins, 2015, p. 10), working against dominant trends that put forward discontinuous orders of being in Western philosophy – in which there is a radical separation between, say, 'Beauty' and 'beautiful things', or the 'Good' and 'acts of goodness'. Deleuze develops a "univocal" ontological model in which "a single voice raises the clamor of being" (Deleuze, 1994, p. 35): in which everything that there is (ideals, ideas, minds, bodies, their attributes, etc.) all exist as mobile and complex 'foldings' of a single substance that is an immanent plane of pure Being. This substance is composed, importantly, not of 'things' (constituted identities) but rather of pure '*difference in itself'* ("difference is behind everything, but behind difference there is nothing" (1994, p. 57). Deleuze's ontology is therefore one of pure 'becoming', in which "there is only the ongoing process of substance" (May, 2005, p. 40), and where seemingly discrete and stable things (mountain ranges, languages, humans, perceptions) are instead conceived as "conjunctions of flows" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 72): as migrations of difference moving at different speeds and in different directions on a perfectly smooth plane of consistency.

As May writes, Deleuze's philosophy invites us to move our attention "beneath the stable world of identities to a world of difference that at once produces those identities and shows them to be little more than the froth of what there is" (2005, p. 19), and therefore to "reject the division of being into natural kinds" (p. 40). The hope is that one can thereby grasp Being in "both its temporal fluidity and its resistance to rigid classification" (ibid.). In Deleuze's hands, therefore, ontology becomes both "a

study of what is and what unsettles it": removing philosophy "from the sad, withered task of defending a status quo" to that of inventing "concepts that see the status quo as only one ontological arrangement among many" ( p. 56-57).

2.5.1 The Body without Organs: A Practice, or a Series of Practices

One such invented concept, developed by Deleuze in collaboration with psychoanalyst and activist Félix Guattari, was the 'Body without Organs'.[30] Often frustratingly, the BwO is a concept with multiple and fluid articulations; the philosophers use the term variously to describe – among other things – the infinitely smooth plane of immanence itself, the planet, and the underlying reality to *any* seemingly wholly-formed thing (a book, for instance, can have a Body without Organs (1987, p. 4)). Usefully for the purposes of this discussion, the notion of the Body without Organs is most clearly elaborated when they describe its relationship to one's own body.

In this context, the philosophers specify that the BwO is not so much a concept as a practice (or series of practices), with the aim of evoking realms of experience that surpass the 'organism' – the name they give for our conventional, historically-constituted understanding of the body. The organism is the collection of separately-conceived organs – hands, eyes, brain, etc. – bound into a unified, working form: a centralized model of the body, a living "process which holds together the otherwise disjointed, scattered collection of organs/machines" (Smith, 2018, p. 103). For Deleuze and Guattari, this partitioned, mechanical understanding of the body is both rigid and constraining, "impos[ing] on it forms, functions, bonds, dominant and hierarchized organisations" in order to "extract useful labor" from it (1987, p. 159), and therefore masking the wider potentials of embodied experience.

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[30] A notion borrowed from dramatist and poet Antonin Artaud, and which they developed most extensively over two collaborative works (Deleuze & Guattari, 1977, 1987).

The Body without Organs, then, is not a body deprived of the organs themselves, but rather freed from the imposed configuration of the organism (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 158): the BwO exists as a "connection of desires, conjunction of flows, continuum of intensities" (p. 161).  An image they frequently use to evoke the BwO is that of the egg.  Prior to developing into an animal, an egg is a "field of differential intensities" (May, 2005, p. 89) – a single fluid mass of pure potentiality composed of proteins in varying concentrations.  As the fetus develops within it, these gradients of 'intensity' gradually cross a threshold to become 'extensive' differences[31], differentiating into bone, viscera, connective tissue, etc. (Adkins, 2015, p. 102).  The BwO proposes a body that has held onto its fundamentally intensive character – to consider the materials, organs and functions of which it is composed as more-complex articulations of the intensive flows and energetic potentials of the egg.  Although a human adult "has converted most of its intensive processes into stable extensities" in that s/he "won't grow anymore, change eye color, or develop gills" (Adkins, p. 16), intensive processes of change are still hard at work in digestion, respiration and cell regeneration.  The BwO therefore invites us to conceive of the body as an intensive being: expansive and volatile, an entity traversed by "axes and vectors, gradients and thresholds... by dynamic tendencies involving energy transformation... by migrations" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 153).  It is simultaneously unified and in constant flux, "a fusional multiplicity" surpassing the opposition between one and many (p. 154).

2.5.2 Differently-Sedimented Strata

The Body without Organs, therefore, seems capable of conceptually accommodating the historically-contingent cultural forms of embodiment I have accrued to my body.  Indeed, for Deleuze and Guattari, the organism is merely "a

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[31] *Extensive* or spatial properties, such as volume and mass, which can be easily added to or divided, behave differently from *intensive* properties such as density and temperature, which are indivisible and purely local.  This is illustrated when pouring half of the water out of a cup: its volume (an extensity) is reduced by half, while its temperature (an intensity) remains the same (Adkins, 2015, p. 102).

stratum on the BwO... a phenomenon of accumulation, coagulation, and sedimentation" (1987, p. 159) of understanding, at work overwriting the BwO's broader, mobile reality. The 'artificial composite' of the soma can also be conceived as another 'strata' (among many) on the Body without Organs, also undergoing its own processes of sedimentation and stasis. The BwO could therefore be seen not as an alternative to the soma or the body, but rather a more unformed and primordial substrate, existing *anterior* to both.

However, Deleuze and Guattari would further nuance this model I have proposed in two ways: first, the broader reality of the BwO doesn't simply 'underpin' the organism in a passive manner – "the BwO is not 'before' the organism. It is adjacent to it and is continually in the process of constructing itself" (1987, p. 164). Its multiple and kaleidoscopic nature requires that it be produced and renewed constantly. There are infinite of ways of bringing the BwO into being, and Deleuze and Guattari offer disparate examples: courtly love, Taoist sexual practices, masochism, a few notably devastating forms of mental illness, and variously casual, spiritual or compulsive drug-taking. BwO's are therefore not uniformly beneficial, either, and can cause devastation and death unless they are approached with extreme "caution" (p. 160).

Secondly: for Deleuze and Guattari the organism is, strictly speaking, a BwO in its own right: it is a particular configuration of flows of desire and intensities that happens to have a high degree of stasis ("there is a BwO of the organism that belongs to that stratum" (1987, p. 163). The soma, then, would also be another 'stratic' BwO. Deleuze and Guattari anticipate Ginot's critiques of somatic practice's 'naïve meliorism': in generating unexamined authority-poles and normative languages, and thereby 'coagulating' into something fixed, somatics are in danger of becoming "cancerous tissue": "all a stratum needs is a high sedimentation rate for it to... form its own specific kind of tumor" (ibid.). These 'tumors' are the seeds of authoritarian thinking, always standing ready to proliferate in human minds and bodies. The

question then, for Deleuze and Guattari, "how can we fabricate a BwO for ourselves without it being the cancerous BwO of a Fascist inside us?" (ibid.)

2.5.3 "Adventurous Sensations, Perceptions"

According to the philosophers, the key to navigating these dangerous poles (addicted or suicidal "empty, vitreous bodies", or else "cancerous bodies, totalitarian and fascist" (1987, p. 165) is in cautious experimentation. They notably invoke ritualised psychedelic drug use, through both Artaud's and Carlos Castaneda's experiments with peyote, as a way of revealing the 'self' as a mere "island" within a larger possible field of existence: in such experiences the centralised and solid world of the "me" is disintegrated and fluidly re-composed of porous assemblages of experience, disparate vectors of sensation: "flows of intensity, their fluids, their fibers, their continuums, and conjunctions of affects, the wind, fine sedimentations, microperceptions, have replaced the world of the subject" (p. 162). Taking hallucinogens is only one mode of access, however, and they claim that one can "use drugs without using drugs ... get soused on pure water" (p. 166), gaining access to that "other plane, obscure and formless, where consciousness has not entered and which surrounds it like an unilluminated extension... giv[ing] off adventurous sensations, perceptions" (Artaud, cited in Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 160). This, again, is done cautiously:

> "Lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times. ... Connect, conjugate, continue" (1987, p. 161).

Deleuze and Guattari therefore articulate a powerful and splendidly weird vision of the body, as an expansive and mutable material to experiment with at will. While I find it difficult to imagine exactly what these deskbound philosophers' prescription for 'making oneself into a Body without Organs' would have actually

looked like – and aware as I am of the naïve dangers of taking this notoriously slippery notion too literally – I find the BwO lends itself readily to the adventurous sensations I experienced in somatic practice.  The notion also has an emancipatory efficacy, embedded as it is in these philosophers' larger metaphysical project, whose effects "lie not with the truth or falsity of their claims but with the vistas for thinking and living they open up for us" (May, 2005, p. 22).  It also easily accommodates the 'tool-body' and the 'Soma' within its theoretical framework. The Body without Organs might therefore offer a conceptual foundation for this project.  We might now turn to Michel Bernard's notion of the *corporéité*, which stands to bring our discussion into closer alignment with dance creation.

## 2.6 Michel Bernard: The '*Corporéité*' and the Four Chiasms

We see in Bernard an attempt to reveal how Artaud's 'obscure and formless plane' giving off 'adventurous sensations, perceptions' is in fact available to us at any moment: his writing seeks continually to highlight the "manifestly complex, contingent and evanescent nature of even the most banal of our lived experiences" (2001, p. 20).[32] This complexity is obscured by the Western notion of the 'body' (much like Deleuze & Guattari's 'organism').  He notes that our understanding of the body – as a homogeneous, unitary, organic entity – has no analogue in eastern and far-eastern culture.  He argues that the occidental body is the result of an ideological heritage, rooted in the Western "theologico-metaphysical" view of an ordered and hierarchical

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[32] "la catégorie 'corps' règle et gouverne, par ses implications, la complexité, la contingence et la fugacité apparentes de notre vécu le plus banal (Bernard, 2001, p. 20)

world, invigorated by the capitalist "technico-scientific project" (ibid),[33] a heritage that distorts, calcifies, and ultimately impoverishes our experience of the world.

Bernard therefore develops the notion of the '*corporéité*' as an attempt to re-invest embodied experience with a measure of contingency and evanescence. He seeks to subvert the notion of the 'body' with the introduction of "a new understanding, one that is at once plural, dynamic and haphazard, seen as the network of interweaving (*chiasmatique*) and unstable interplays, of intensive forces or heterogenetic vectors" (2001, p. 21).[34]

The *corporéité* emerges out of Bernard's examination of sensation itself, in which he reveals how I can experience something like the Body without Organs, sitting right here at my desk, without having to dose myself on LSD. He demonstrates any sensation I have as a highly complex, interferential, and ultimately 'fictive' process, a 'chiastic'[35] mingling of heterogenetic data, operating on at least three levels. In the first instance (the 'intrasensorial chiasm'), any perception I have has both an active and a passive aspect to it. When I touch my keyboard, my awareness of the keyboard as tactile data brings automatically with it an awareness that *I have a hand with which I'm doing the touching*. Similarly, looking at my computer screen immediately calls forth the fact that *I am seeing* – and by extension, that I am *a thing that sees*. Each sensory

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[33] "Héritier d'une tradition théo- logico-métaphysique qui en avait fait le support d'une vision ontologique ordonnée du monde, [la catégorie 'corps'] s'est vu investi et envahi par le projet technico-scientifique d'un capitalisme triomphant" (Bernard, 2001, p. 20).

[34] "Une vision nouvelle à la fois plurielle, dynamique et aléatoire comme réseau d'un jeu chiasmatique instable de forces intensives ou de vecteurs hétérogènes" (Bernard, 2001, p. 21).

[35] A chiasm can be understood as any 'interlacing' of two distinct materials. The term is borrowed from rhetorical theory, designating sentence structures in which two separate terms might have the same meaning (etymologically, the term is based on the 'crossed' Greek character "X" (chi)). French Phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty first appropriated the term to describe the complexly 'interlacing' nature of sensation: how the 'flesh' exists simultaneously but irreducibly as both an external object in the world and as an intrinsic part of one's felt sense of one's 'own body' ("corps propre") : "l'épaisseur du corps, loin de rivaliser avec celle du monde, est au contraire le seul moyen que j'ai d'aller au cœur des choses, *en me faisant monde et en les faisant chair*" (1964, p. 178). Bernard extrapolates and complexifies Merleau-Ponty's chiasmatic conception of the body in articulating three distinct chiasms existing at the heart of sensation.

apprehension of the world is simultaneously a pathic and affirmative constitution within oneself of a fictive, virtual body *doing the apprehending* (Bernard, 2001, p. 96).

In the second instance (the 'intersensorial chiasm'), each of my senses is 'worked on' and modulated by my other senses: sitting still, the static image of the objects on my desk in front of me is informed by the ambient sounds of passing traffic, which rhythmically imbue an otherwise immobile scene with a sense of passing time; as I type, the sight of my hands moving across the keyboard is confirmed by the *sounds* of tapping and the *pressure* of the keys. These different sense impressions, though distinct, are unceasingly and indissociably braided together in my experience, weaving together an unstable field of interferences and resonances between them. For Bernard, one navigates within an experiential landscape knitted together from these disparate but hybrid info-streams; a network of sensorial 'metafictions' responding to and subverting each other in an interferential echo chamber (Bernard, 2001, p. 97).

The third, parasensorial chiasm is one in which perception is linked intimately with the enunciative function, posing a tight imbrication between perception and speech. Each perception, for Bernard, is identical to the affirmative projection onto the world of *things which we believe are the things we are seeing*. In a sort of leap of faith, the window I see before me is always-already an image that I believe to be a credible simulacrum of a window. The world I perceive, for Bernard, is therefore simultaneously a world *called into being*, through an act of enunciation irreducibly fused to each perception (Bernard, 2001, pp. 97-98). Finally, a fourth chiasm evokes the relationship of interference between separate bodies ['*l'intercorporéité*'] (p. 93).

2.6.1 An 'Originary Fiction' at the Very Heart of Sensation

For Bernard, these four chiasms result in an apperception of the world, and of our body within it, that is worked and reworked incessantly by heterogeneous vectors of information, an inherently 'fictive' interweaving of the interference between them.

Our sense of having a body, and of how that body inhabits the world, all issue from the "radical and incessant becoming of an imaginary ['*l'imaginaire'*] that is immanent to the sensorium" (2002, p. 534).[36] As he writes,

> "There is therefore, at the heart of each *corporéité*, a subtle, secret, subterranean enmeshing or envelopment of sensation, action, expression and enunciation, to the extent that all four of them are at once inhabited, driven and traversed by a singular and enduring force: the incessant production of fictions" (p. 533).

Taken in this way, Bernard seems to demonstrate that this capacity of bodily 'fictioning', evoked by Foucault and for which I have been searching out a theoretical grounding, is not only immediately accessible to me but in fact *inheres in* every sensory apprehension I have of my surroundings. For Bernard, this is where dancing comes in. As he writes, the "originary fiction" (2001, p. 100)[37] at the heart of sensation renders the *corporéité* 'limitless', prone to being worked and reworked by the "infinitely esthetic" nature of our own ability to sense (2002, p. 534);[38] it is in the dancing *corporéité,* however*,* that this esthetic potency is deployed to its fullest degree:

> "The diversity and intensity of the sensations produced by the dancer's mobility, the multiple postural and gestural forms ensuing from their defiance of gravity, and the fluctuations of their impulses and their affects, all constitute the source of a "fictive kinesphere" which overwrites the kinesphere[39] by its own enunciative potency" (2001, p. 100).[40]

It is within this fictive kinesphere that the dancer navigates, spinning fictions through their own imaginary and affective investment of the space around them.

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[36] "[la corporéité] apparaît maintenant comme l'épiphanie seulement du devenir radical et incessant d'un imaginaire immanent à la sensorialité" (Bernard, 2002, p. 534)

[37] "Fiction originaire" (Bernard, 2001, p. 100)

[38] "'L'infini esthétique' de notre pouvoir de sentir" (Valéry, cited in Bernard, 2002, p. 534)

[39] The term 'kinesphere' refers to the space around one's body that can be reached without leaving one's base of support.

[40] "La diversité et l'intensité des sensations produites par la mobilité du danseur, les multiples formes posturales et gestuelles de sa lutte avec les forces gravitaires, les fluctuations de ses pulsions et de ses affects constituent la source d'« une kinesphere fictive » qui surdétermine la kinesphere visible par toute sa force énonciatrice" (2001, p. 100).

Similar to Gil's argument that the dancer doesn't "move in space" but rather "secretes, creates space with movement" (2006, p. 21), Bernard writes that a dancer's sensorial investment in their surrounding space is what leads to a captivating performance, resulting in what he calls a "poetic 'aura'" perceptible to the attentive spectator.

For Bernard, choreographic practice is most singular, and most relevant, when it "affirms its own power to render visible the fictionary richness of sensoriality" (2001, p. 100),[41] rather than drawing on other artistic domains for its esthetic languages. As he writes,

> "rather than falling back on exterior artifices of whatever sort (narrative, dramatic, symbolic, decorative, musical, etc.) in order to suscitate a counterfeit imaginary (*imaginaire*), dance should instead focus on exploiting the immanent poetics of its own sensorial praxis – a poetics that, as Valery writes, renders it "infinite" (ibid.).[42]

With this in mind, we can turn to specific choreographic practices that seek to deploy such an 'immanent poetics' that rests at the core of the body's ability to feel.

2.7 State-Work in Dance Creation

I'd like to argue that such 'poetic sensorial' work is being widely undertaken, on multiple fronts, in Western dance practices I will refer to using the umbrella term 'state-work' (or work with 'body-states').[43]  State-work is a heuristic term, often used in Western contemporary dance creation contexts as a short-hand, referring to a broad range of practices developed 'on the fly'.  While the notion therefore refers to a wide

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[41] "La danse n'aurait-elle pas à gagner à affirmer d'abord son propre pouvoir à rendre visible la richesse fictionnaire de la sensorialité de son seul exercice corporel?" (Bernard, 2001, p. 100).

[42] "En somme, bien loin d'avoir besoin de recourir à des artifices extérieurs de quelque ordre qu'ils soient (narratifs, dramatiques, symboliques, décoratifs, musicaux, etc.) pour susciter un imaginaire factice, la danse devrait exploiter *prioritairement* sa propre poétique immanente à sa seule praxis sensorielle, ce qui, comme le dit Valéry, la rend 'infinie'" (Bernard, 2001, 100).

[43] While it is certain that similar work is being done in non-occidental traditions, I have cautiously decided to limit this research to Western forms.

diversity of practices and approaches that have seldom been theorised, there is a small number of writings around the practice, which I will try to synthesize here.

2.7.1 A Plurality of Practices

Harbonnier (2012) suggests that body-states constitute a "dive into sensorial experience", often requiring a "distancing from intellectual activity, a form of letting go in order to let "the body take the lead" (p. 51).   Similarly, Montreal choreographer Jean-Sébastien Lourdais describes a moment of state-work in his creative process as a minute examination of pure sensation:

> "We're simply in the experience… working at the level of the saliva, at the level of the heart.  We start with an image, but it isn't mental.  No thoughts, just listening....  Don't think, listen to your heart.  Listen to it right to the end, how does it beat?... Simply technical. ... I wanted to see with [dancer] Annick just how far she could move into such states, a state of trance" (interviewed in Mazo, 2014, p. 98).[44]

This work, as Montaignac writes, "touches on a form of hyperconsciousness", in which the dancer sharpens their own sensorial perception to "the slightest of movements and infinitesimal parts of the body, sometimes invisible, on the order of the organic" (Montaignac, 2015, p. 71).[45]  This heightened perception leads to work that is "resolutely moored in the experience – flickering and unstable – of the here and now" (p. 68).[46]

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[44] "'On est dans l'expérience. Il faut lui donner les outils, les repères: travail au niveau de la salive, travail au niveau du cœur. On part d'une image mais ce n'est pas mental. Pas de pensée, seulement de l'écoute.  Ne pense pas, écoute ton cœur.  Écoute-le jusqu'au bout comment il bat.  Juste technique.... Je voulais voir avec Annik les possibilité qu'elle a à rentrer dans ces états-là, dans un état de transe'" (Lourdais, interviewed in Mazo, 2014, p. 98)

[45] "Elle touche à une forme d'*hyperconscience* en développant une perception des moindres mouvements et d'infimes parties du corps, parfois non visibles, de l'ordre de l'organique (Montaignac, 2015, p. 71).

[46] "Son travail s'ancre résolument dans l'expérience, toujours instable et flottante, de l'ici et maintenant" (Montaignac, 2015, p. 68).

Benoit Lachambre describes his own practice as informed by a sharpened perception of what he calls "the energetic". For him, dance is a "way of defining, or being in osmosis with what is happening in space generally in an energetic way" (2019),[47] different from how one inhabits space quotidianly. This energy-work, while requiring an attention to extremely subtle phenomena, is "very down-to-earth, in fact" for Lachambre (ibid.).[48] By sharpening one's sensation through practice one is able to perceive other levels of information, such as the "thermic body, or the energetic body" (ibid.).[49]

For her part, Montreal choreographer Catherine Gaudet (2012) encourages a precise attention to sensation in her dancers so that they achieve a form of perception she describes in a language of Deleuzoguattarian texture: a perception of their own body not as a "stable substance" but rather as "a 'filter'; a sponge capable of absorbing energies, composed of 'hollownesses', striations, and textures; an entity traversed and permeated by diverse forces which lead ultimately to a form" (p. 60).[50] She seeks in her work to "reveal the self... beneath the layers of conventions that regulate it: a self as multiple, indeterminate and contradictory" (p. 101).[51]

2.7.2 Meg Stuart: The Body as A Field; Bodies in Crisis

American choreographer Meg Stuart has worked extensively with body states, and has greatly influenced how they are understood. This is in part due to her written

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[47] "La danse, c'est une autre façon de définir, ou pouvoir être en osmôse avec, ce qui se passe dans l'espace généralement de façon énergétique" (Lachambre, 2019)

[48] "C'est très terre-à terre, quand même, c'est un travail des sensations très aiguisé pour moi" (Lachambre, 2019).

[49] "On réussit à ressentir le corps thermique, le corps énergetique de façon très très actif" (Lachambre, 2019).

[50] "Considérer le corps non pas comme matière stable et finie qui voudrait se mouler à la forme, mais plutôt comme un 'filtre' , (Peeters, 2004), une espèce d'éponge capable d'absorber les énergies, faite de creux, de stries et de veinures par lesquelles peuvent passer et s'imprégner les forces qui entraînent la forme" (Gaudet, 2012, p. 60).

[51] "Révéler l'être tel qu'il se présente réellement, sous les couches de conventions qui le régissent, c'est-à-dire multiple, indéterminé et contradictoire" (Gaudet, 2012, p. 101).

work *Are We Here Yet* (2010a), an artistic memoire that notably includes a collection of studio exercises. These exercises have served as a choreographic guide-book of sorts for a generation of dance artists, myself included. Flashes of Deleuzoguattarian thinking abound in her writing. For Stuart, the term 'body-state' simply refers to the ambient dynamic of emotion, sensation and energy at work inside us at any moment – "we are always in a state" (2010, p. 20). "Working" with states therefore consists in somatically 'sensing in' to these facets of experience – moment-to-moment emotions, sensations of heat and cold, lightness, heaviness, muscle tension – and to then 'uncouple' them from the whole as fragmentary "samples of experience" (ibid.), to be mixed and matched, much like 'samples' of sound in music composition: to be plastically molded. "The body is a field in which certain mental streams, emotions, energies and movements interact", she writes (p. 21). A given body-state, for Stuart, is therefore an unstable and temporary intersection, of inchoate information flows, which she envisions as "frequencies and temperatures rather than things that can be easily articulated in words" (ibid.). One engenders a subjective body susceptible to dramatic and qualitative shifts in experience, by dialing up or down the intensity of one or another of these extracted streams of information, and by "interlacing them with each other" (p. 15).

Stuart's collection of studio practices suggests a variety of ways to exploit these 'libidinal anatomies' (to borrow Dempster's term from Chapter I). Examples include 'infusing' certain body-parts with intense emotions, imagining the body as a 'host' for outside forces that invade it, or stimulating the nervous system over long durations through repetition, shaking, or breath-work (2010, pp. 154-165). Harbonnier (citing Godard) describes this work as engendering a "plasticity of the respiratory, postural and perceptive phenomena, thus molding the fluctuating structure of that which we call the body" (2012, p. 52)[52] – accessing altered awarenesses and emotional 'tones'

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[52] "Elle organise à partir de là une plasticités des phénomènes respiratoires, posturaux et perceptifs qui façonnent ainsi la structure fluctuante qu'on appelle corps" (Goddard, cited in Harbonnier 2012, p. 52).

through the imagination, or by directly stimulating the nervous system in peculiar ways. For Stuart, one can also access 'samples of experience' by drawing on embodied memory as an archive. "As a person, one has already integrated a huge world" (2010, p. 20), and fragments of memory can therefore also be broken off and manipulated as material. Martin (2012), citing Clerget, describes this memory-work as drawing on a sort of "'unconscious historiography of the dancer'" which is "housed in the folds of one's skin and organs, in each of one's gestures and attitudes, including the most negligible and anodyne among them".[53] Surfacing as corporeal and gestural imageries, such work reveals a "complex and hard-to-decipher constellation" of fleeting affective meanings and situational references, all coming from the dancer's embodied history (ibid.)[54].

As Stuart describes it, these and other elements can be fused together to create a messy and contradictory embodiment that is actualised and activated, from moment to moment, by the dancer while performing. She writes of "turning up the volume on the internal noise" she experiences in the moment of performance, so that the streams of information crossing her body are further troubled by the nervousness, involuntary half-thoughts and partial impulses she is confronted with when in front of an audience, which she then also allows to "leak out" (2010, p. 15). This results in a sort of "meta-presence", as Martin writes, "where the acts of being, doing, and representing clash and interweave" (Martin, 2012, p. 55).[55] The "internal friction and rubbing" between these often mismatched ingredients, for Stuart, results in "unexpected relations and by-products, revealing and concealing" facets of the performer (2010, p. 21). The resulting

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[53] "'L'historiographie inconsciente' (Clerget) du danseur, se [logerait] ainsi dans les moindres plis de sa peau et de ses organes, dans chacune de ses gestes et de ses attitudes, même les plus infimes et les plus anodines" (Martin, 2012. p. 55).

[54] "Une constellation complexe et difficilement déchiffrable" (Martin, 2012, p. 55).

[55] "Présence, voire méta-présence, où vivre, faire et représenter s'entrecroiseraient et s'entrechoqueraient" (Martin, 2012, p. 55).

"partial opacity provokes the imaginations of both the performer and the spectator" (ibid.).

### 2.7.3 A Partial Definition of Body-State Work

Taking these different descriptions into account, the partial definition of state-work that Harbonnier offers seems an adequate summary. She writes that while activating a body-state, dancers

> "render themselves continuously available to various streams of information – originating both from the self and from the external environment – which thus integrate themselves into a network of interactive 'loops' between emotion-attention-perception-action.... This notion [of the body state] refers, therefore, to the creation of an internal relational dynamic, in dialogue with the external environment, capable of fostering a persistent corporeal plasticity, allowing for the integration and interaction of each of the physical, cognitive, and emotional dimensions of the human being. (2012, p. 52)[56]

To sum up this line of reasoning, then: my experiences of a polyvocal body, in which my own subjective intentionality seemed to become laterally and locally distributed in my body – to take the form of multiple 'voices' leading my body into movement – might be best understood as the activation of a particular 'body-state'. This activation emerges out of a loosening of the constellation of sensorial and significatory conventions that tend to overcode quotidian embodiment (and which propose the body as a closed, fixed and hierarchized entity), and out of the careful generation of 'plasticity' in the postural, respiratory and perceptive phenomena constituting my moment-to-moment bodily experience. In accepting Bernard's proposition that all sensation is inherently fictional, I won't consider this 'polyvocality'

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[56] "Les danseuses-interprètes se rendent constamment disponibles aux différentes informations – en provenance du sujet comme de l'envi- ronnement – qui s'intègrent dans un réseau de boucles interactives entre émotion-attention-perception-action ; ces boucles me semblent constitutives de la dynamique de l'état de corps. En danse, cette notion renverrait ainsi à la création d'une dynamique relationnelle interne en lien avec l'environne- ment, dynamique qui favoriserait la persistance d'une plas- ticité corporelle permettant d'intégrer et de faire interagir les dimensions physiques, cognitives et émotionnelles de l'être humain" (Harbonnier, 2012, p. 52).

to be the 'revelation' of some 'true' body – it is not *the soma* but *a soma* – but rather as one fictional form of embodiment among many, or possibly as a brush with the 'infinitely esthetic' nature of sensation itself. Body-state work, then, situates the body as a site for invention and experimentation, allowing for 'adventurous sensations, perceptions', though only insofar as, and for the period of time in which, that body-state is activated.

2.8 The Political Stakes in Fictioning New Bodily Configurations

If Western dance's pedagogical and production heritage has often resulted in bodies that are at once the sedimentations, emblems and vectors of corporeal discourses of instrumentalization (as I hope to have sufficiently argued in Chapter I) – and if state-work in dance engenders an intensive personal agency through self-directed experimentation and invention leading to a plasticity of embodied experience – then the deployment of state-work in dance already points to a certain emancipatory politics, a politics I hope to engender during the studio portion of this study.

For Dempster, somatic practice "constitutes an entirely different dancer" (2003, p. 49) from those engendered by external cues and compliance to idealised forms: a dancer who knows their own body, who inhabits the space around them, and who engages with other dancing bodies, in entirely different ways. As Després writes, somatic practices lead dancers to develop an agency, and eventually a fluency, in populating their own sensorial experience – in transforming perception. This is not easy work, and requires high levels of both rigor and open-mindedness,

> "an immense work in questioning that sensitive and mobile singularity that is the human body; in attending to Spinoza's question 'what can a body do?' Imagining what the body can do means glimpsing its 'possibles', opening onto another body as a body of the possible" (1998, p. 9).

This opening onto a body of the possible, when sensation is placed at the heart of the dancer's experience, becomes a reappraisal of what it is to 'know', and what it

is to 'communicate'" (Després, 1998, p. 11).[57]  The body is thus engaged as a site of knowledge, as a site for knowledge-production, and as a novel bandwidth of bodily communication.  I would argue that in exercising such a function, in offering up new economies of knowledge and communication, dance can become an emancipatory force.  In such a "transformation of the sensible" (1998, p. 5), Dempster writes that dance

> "is not simply reflective of a current social reality, but can be a gesture towards some other; it is able to project other possibilities, alluding to a future, to a past, and to another present....  It offers the possibility of a distinctive mode of action... embracing a conception of the body which is not shadowed by habits of thought based on Cartesian dualism" (1995, p. 24).

In developing creation practices to explore these 'bodies of the possible', and in moving away from reifying historically- and culturally-determined modes of embodiment, dance approaches the form of 'critical theory and critical practice' I evoked, following Lepecki, in Chapter I.  In pursuing choreographic practice in this way, I hope to foster a studio- and performance-environment for my dancers in which "the body, not disciplined to the enunciation of a singular discourse, is a multivocal and potentially disruptive force" (Dempster, 1995, p. 35).

I should note the danger, however, of simply imagining somatic modes of creation as inherently emancipatory, and therefore immune to exploitative use.  For dancing subjectivities to deploy themselves as such – as a multivocal and potentially disruptive force in how the body is addressed – particular care must be paid to the material conditions of *how* work gets made.  As I mentioned in Chapter I, even when dancers are called on to participate more fully in a creation process, there remains the risk that this deeper deployment of their subjectivity be submitted to processes of appropriation and 'packaging' –  becoming "'thing-ified', sublimated to the notion of

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[57] "Les sensations, lorsqu'elles sont placées au cœur des processus de connaissance et des processus relationnels redéfinissent autrement ce qu'est le 'connaître' ou le 'communiquer'" (Després, 1998, p. 11).

material" – (Gravel, 2012, p. 6).[58] by more traditional approaches to choreography and dramaturgy.

Lepecki provides us with a useful nuance in this respect. In attempting to articulate emancipatory vectors in choreographic work, he argues that one should consider "literal and metonymical (as opposed to analogical and metaphorical) relations between dance and politics" (2006, p. 11). This approach to choreography is one in which an esthetic logic of representation rings particularly hollow: portraying or representing 'bodies of the possible' can immediately turn into a new reification, a new truth claim. Instead, dance's best bet at becoming a politically efficacious force is through a rigorous examination of the in-studio, moment-to-moment 'politics' at work while dances are being made. As we will see (particularly in Chapter V), this results in a tighter imbrication between dramaturgical processes, approaches to choreographic structuring and the material conditions and interpersonal dynamics happening day-to-day in the studio. In such an imbrication, as Bauer writes, "dramaturgy is becoming radically pragmatic" (2015, p. 48): creators and dancers alike need to come together in rigorously examining in *what ways* bodies are called on to move in choreography, as well as the modes of spectatorship they develop for inviting a public to watch those bodies.

2.9 Conclusion

In the first half of this Chapter, I explored how Foucault's notions of discipline and power-knowledge might frame my understanding of my own body as reflective of broader mechanisms at work in Western societies, which subjugate bodies to systems of control both materially (literally shaping muscle and bone), and discursively (in how individuals come to be constituted and understood *as individuals*). These mechanisms become acutely apparent in the dancing body when considering the centuries-old

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[58] " Une partie encore plus subjective de lui sera « chosifiée », intégrée à la notion de matériau" (Gravel, 2012, p. 6).

disciplinary legacies entrenched in Western dance's pedagogical and production practices. This heritage, though softened in the past few decades, submits dancers to the norms of authoritarian power-dynamics and idealised forms, working more-or-less overtly in the studio and onstage. Norms which we as dancers ultimately internalise, through a veiled dynamic in which the very skills we acquire are embedded and suffused with particular attitudes about the body, attitudes that are entirely historically contingent but which we perceive as simple truths. This has led to the constitution of highly-trained and capable dancing bodies, but which nonetheless become simultaneously the sedimentation, the emblem and the vector of complex systems of disciplinary subordination, with dancers like myself willfully displaying an objectified and spectacularized body onstage. In this research-creation, I will be seeking ways of creating choreography that, to the degree possible, might subvert these historical legacies, and instead address the dancing body in service to its own singular and self-directed capacities, and (possibly) to its undiscovered potentials.

In the second half of the chapter, while searching for an alternative model of embodiment that might align itself with the uncanny bodily experiences I'd had in practicing somatics, I had hoped that Hanna's notion of the 'Soma' (which advances the primacy of sensation and the body as perceived from within) might serve as a foundation. However, with some critical reflection it becomes clear that Hanna's notion is vulnerable conceptually to its own normative tendencies, particularly when somatic practices are invoked as ways of 're-discovering' or 'returning to' an originary or natural body. Nonetheless, by conceiving the soma, and indeed *any* understanding of the body, as instead inherently 'fictional', it becomes possible to imagine ways of inventing or 'fictioning' new configurations of embodiment.

One powerful tool for imagining these inventions is Deleuze and Guattari's 'Body without Organs' (1987**)**, which proposes the possibility of experiencing the body as a fundamentally expansive entity, composed of volatile flows and chaotic

interferences between heterogeneous vectors of sensation. Various conventional understandings of the body (as well as the Soma) might then be understood as particularly static 'coagulations' of intensive flows on an altogether mobile and mutable corporeal entity. The BwO therefore opens the possibility of a body prone to reconfiguration at the level of experience, and it might be possible to tap into less rigidly-defined articulations of embodiment leading to 'adventurous sensations, perceptions', apt to expand one's conception of reality. This notion is grounded, in turn, within their wider ontological project which sees reality-at-large as also inherently more mutable – an ontology that Todd May argues "open[s] the question of how one might live to new vistas" (2005, p. 17). Deleuze and Guattari therefore offer a theoretical foundation for this project, simultaneously accommodating my former conception of embodiment and the equally 'artificial composite' of the soma, while also proposing satisfying emancipatory tropes I hope to mobilise in this research.

I also explored how Bernard demonstrates sensation as possessing an 'originary fiction' at its core, entailing that dancing can be an act of pure sensorial invention, and I went on to argue that this invention is being deployed in the prevalent Western contemporary dance creation practice of working with 'body-states'. 'State-work', while multiple in its forms, is an activation and plastic modeling of sensation-itself within the bodies of dancers, as they extract and modulate segments of the sensorium, leading them into wholly other experiences of embodiment. These forms of state-work, which generally rest on self-directed and empowered activation of one's own body (though the practice isn't inherently immune to exploitative use) stand in firm contrast to the system of command posed by more traditional choreographic apparatuses. The studio research for this project, with dancer-collaborators Jessica Serli and Neil Sochasky and with the artistic advisorship of Thea Patterson, was therefore an exploration of somatically-informed state-work, geared towards moving beneath conventional understandings of embodiment and engendering a plasticity of the sensible.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Methods

The research for this *mémoire-création* was conducted using qualitative methods under a post-positivist epistemological paradigm. Distinguishing itself from quantitative research, in which researchers attempt to render a generalizable, reproducible representation of a given phenomenon through numerical data, qualitative research seeks instead to understand and describe a *particular* situation or event in all of its complexity (Carter & Little, 2007).

The 'situation' being studied here is the creation of a choreographic étude, and how that creation was experienced by myself and by my artistic collaborators, dancers Jessica Serli and Neil Sochasky, and dramaturg Thea Patterson. This mémoire is thus best understood as a "poïetic study" ("recherche poïétique") (Gosselin, 2006, p. 24). Laurier and Gosselin (2004), paraphrasing Passeron, distinguish poïetic research from esthetic research. While esthetics can be understood to examine the relationship between a work of art and the spectator, the 'poïetic' focuses on the relationship between the artist and the artistic material being created: "le rapport dynamique qui l'unit [l'artiste] à son œuvre pendant qu'il est au prise avec elle" (Passeron, 1989, p. 16). At work in the studio, my collaborators and I were elaborating ways of understanding our choreographic material at the same time as we were generating it. These were understandings and significations we developed commonly through discussions, exchanges and self-observation. There was a sense, in the studio, that we were accessing some sort of implicit or tacit knowledge: a knowledge that was hard to circumscribe, but in which there was a strong, palpable sense that sometimes we were

'achieving the thing', and at other times 'not achieving the thing' – in this case the state of awareness I was calling 'polyvocal embodiment'. This is an accounting of how we came to discern, collectively, what that 'thing' was; how we learned to reproduce it and make it a stable phenomenon; and how we made use of if in the context of choreographic creation.

As a practicing choreographic professional, then, embarking on an academic research process, I might be seen to fall within the category of "practiciens chercheurs" Gosselin and Le Coguieg describe, "[qui,] attirés par l'investigation de leur propre pratique comme source de connaissance, sont à la recherche de démarches méthodologiques permettant d'apprivoiser, de saisir, de comprendre des réalités complexes, fugitives, souvent implicites ou tacites" (Gosselin & Le Coguiec, 2006, p. 3).

### 3.1.1 Artistic Creation as Knowledge Production

Laurier and Gosselin suggest that, though artistic creation has long been understood simply as a form of expression, it has in the past decades been increasingly recognised as a form of knowledge-production: "un lieu de construction de savoir, de développement d'idées et d'élargissement de la conscience" (Laurier & Gosselin, 2004, p. 168). When an artist is at work creating, they are in contact with a specific mode of knowledge: "l'artiste éprouve souvent le sentiment d'accéder à un type particulier de connaissance; il se sent 'connaissant' et […] il comprend qu'il participe à l'élaboration de savoirs d'un ordre particulier" (p. 169). This knowledge is often intuitive and of a procedural nature, stemming from practical and professional experience. Bruneau and Burns (2007) similarly argue that this procedural knowledge often remains unexamined and unvoiced : "un savoir implicite, donc muet" (p. 154). While its mute nature in no way impedes the artist from engaging competently, even expertly within their medium, (ibid.), this knowledge operates at the level of sensation, intuition and sentiment, and is distinct from intellectual or conceptual modes of

knowing: "[l'artiste] fait des actions intelligentes (puisque ça fonctionne), et son esprit est sollicité sans qu'il s'agisse pour autant d'une démarche intellectuelle menant à la conceptualisation de ce savoir" (ibid.). They therefore argue that artists doing research in academic contexts take on the stance of a *reflective practitioner* ("le praticien réflexif" (p. 155)), working to render explicit the knowledge both produced and embedded in their artistic practice.

In such a process of rendering-explicit, Laurier and Gosselin argue, artistic-academic researchers find themselves following two distinct logics. "Alors que la création artistique engendre des symbolisations appelant des lectures divergentes, la recherche vise l'élaboration de symbolisations, et notamment de discours, appelant des interprétations convergentes" (Laurier & Gosselin, 2004, p. 170). The process, for our team of collaborators, was to allow our professionally-honed intuitions and habituated decision-making strategies – which Noy and Gosselin qualify as "des processus subjectifs de la pensée, qualifiés d'expérientiels" (cited in Laurier & Gosselin, 2004, pp. 171-172) – to have more or less free reign in the studio. The other side of the coin – "les processus objectifs, qualifiés de conceptuels" (2004, p. 172)) – stemming from research methods in place in the social sciences, would then serve as channels for my analysis of the data produced during this creative process. In this way, I hope to confront

> "la forme de rationalisation, systématique et fermée sur elle-même que revendique la philosophie avec la forme de rationalité non systématique et ouverte à son objet, que représente l'art comme pratique et comme expérience théorique de cette pratique" (Château, 1995, p. 172, cited in Bruneau & Burns, 2007, p. 164).

In providing an account of this specific creative process I hope to add to the body of explicit, discursive knowledge surrounding (or maybe rather adjacent to) choreographic creation practices: "[de contribuer] au développement du savoir

disciplinaire et au développement des praticiens en plus de participer à l'élaboration d'une épistémologie du savoir professionnel" (Bruneau & Burns, 2007, pp. 158-159)

3.2 Creative Process

For this project, I invited two dancer-collaborators into the studio with me: Jessica Serli, with whom I have collaborated since 2011, and Neil Sochasky. I also invited Thea Patterson as dramaturg and artistic advisor, with whom I have worked since 2010. The creative process took place over approximately 106 studio hours, between June 12 and September 14, 2017. The research concluded with two public showings of our research on September 14 and 15, 2017, with audiences of approximately fifty people at each presentation. Both dancers were present at almost all rehearsals, except for three days where I worked with Jessica alone. Thea Patterson was in the studio with us for a total of forty-five hours, mostly towards the end of the process.

I decided to collaborate with other dancers (as opposed to working solo) in order to explore the ways in which communication and the exchange of ideas would factor into provoking polyvocal experience. I had a visceral memory of 'polyvocality', over the years in workshops and onstage, and I wanted to see how other bodies and other subjectivities might arrive at similar experiences. What would be the best tools of communication, the best strategies for conveying what I was looking for? How I chose these two particular artists was fairly intuitive, my choice arriving suddenly and fully-formed. I would be working with an artist I was familiar with professionally (Jessica), and another with whom it would be a first meeting in the studio (Neil). I would also get the perspective of a female and a male artist on this. I knew both dancers to be sensitive and intelligent artists who would ask me a lot of questions.

At the outset, I imagined creating three to four choreographic systems or tableaux, that I planned to present as stand-alone *études* in September. My reasoning

was that, without having to account for a larger dramaturgical arc linking the various vignettes, I could then focus more fully on the specificities of each. However, as the creation progressed, it became clear that these *études* would be presented together as one longer piece. Somehow, the choices that the dancers were forced to make in presenting each tableau as part of a whole informed and enriched the physicality of each section. We therefore presented the material as a one-hour piece, entitled *while_vague*.

I came to my first rehearsal with several strategies for accessing what I hoped would resemble a polyvocal physicality in the two dancers. These strategies included imagery designed to provoke interior textures in the dancers, such as 'to move as molecules would move' or 'to move as a tongue would move'. Other strategies were more procedural, such as moving with extreme slowness, or using repetitive loops of movement and the transfer of weight. However, each of these pre-conceived strategies was merely the seed of something that would be elaborated in dialogue with the dancers, and enriched by their own experiences in practicing them. We would discover together *what* each of these practices would produce, as well as how we would shape what emerged into choreographic material.

This 'shaping' constituted the second step of the creative process: once we had identified a quality of movement that could be more or less stably reproduced, we began to layer spatial and temporal tasks and 'scores' that the dancers would carry out, in order to organise what was happening in space and time.

The third was in creating the piece *while_vague*, placing the different études in relation to one another and observing how these sections would 'dialogue' with each other: how the performing of each tableau would affect the other tableaux and vice versa, both in the bodies of the dancers and from my own, external, point of view.

The fourth and final step of the creation was in bringing the material in front of a public of approximately 50 people, on the 14th and 15th of September.  The fact of a public presentation changes the very DNA of a choreographic research, affecting it at the core of its logic: at the outset it is being subliminally designed for external eyes. In addition, a public presentation of material requires a different level of preparation for the performers, as it requires a level of resilience and stability in their assimilation of the material.  The appearance of spectators in a space affects a dancer's perception of timing, of space, and of their own sensations; when a dancer is aware of an impending performance, there are levels of preparation that automatically occur.

To emphasize the research aspect of this creation, *while_vague* was presented frankly in a studio setting, without any scenographic elements or stage-lighting, and with very simple musical support.

## 3.3. Data Production

The data for this study was produced with following sources: my creation journal; audio recordings of most of our 106 studio hours in-studio and approximately fifty pages of verbatim transcriptions; the transcriptions of four one-hour interviews with the dancers by Myriam Saad, under the model "*entretien d'explicitation*" (Vermersch, 1994, see below), as well as a less formal interview between Neil and myself; and finally the video recording of the final presentation.

### 3.3.1 Creation Journal

My creation journal accompanied me throughout the process, and was a sort of 'catch-all' for recording anything pertaining to *while_vague*.  This included notes and corrections written during our 'runs' of material; reflections, observations and questions that surfaced during rehearsal; as well as concerns and questions that surfaced during my own writing sessions before and after rehearsals.  I followed a model with four categories of observations, outlined by Savoie-Zajc (in Mucchielli, 2004, p. 116):

field notes (a basic description of what happened in the studio); personal notes (my feelings, discoveries and realisations); methodological notes (my decision-making processes while navigating the research), and finally theoretical notes (keeping track of how I made sense of what was happening).[59]

## 3.3.2 Audio Transcriptions of In-Studio Discussions

In addition to filming many of our 'runs', I made audio-recordings of the large part of our in-studio discussions, and exhaustively transcribed them. During the process, my collaborators were continually invited to share their subjective experience of our movement research and improvisations, which meant they had to put words to the often hard-to-verbalize sensations that arose in them while dancing. We spent significant time in trying to put into words moments where they felt they were not 'deciding' to move, but rather 'following' local and plural movement desires. These discussions were important motors for each of us to understand the material in front of us, and to understand what we, collectively, were looking for. Transcribing these discussions then made it possible for me to revisit the rehearsal process and witness the shaping of the material that would become *while_vague*,[60] highlighting and categorizing certain recurring themes of discussion.

## 3.3.3 Audio Transcriptions of '*Entretiens d'Explicitation*'

Additionally, Myriam Saad was hired to perform two sets of interviews with Jessica and Neil, a style of interview called *l'entretien d'explicitation*. Myriam is an accredited practitioner. *L'entretien d'explicitation* was developed by French Psychologist Pierre Vermersch, and aims at guiding an interview subject to verbalise, with as much detail as possible, the actions s/he takes to accomplish a given task ("la spécificité de l'entretien de l'explicitation est de viser la verbalisation de l'action"

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[59] Refer to Annex D – Excerpts of Creation Journal.
[60] Refer to Annex E – Transcriptions of In-Studio Discussions.

(Vermersch, 1994, p. 17)). Since most of our actions are composed of non-conscious acts – raising my arm to bring a cup of coffee to my lips, for example, is something I simply know how to do – speaking about *how* I bring a coffee to my lips is counter-intuitive and quite hard. ("L'action est, pour une bonne part, une connaissance autonome [qui] contient par construction une part cruciale de savoir-faire en acte, c'est-à-dire non conscient" (p. 18)). *L'entretien d'explicitation* is therefore quite literally an attempt to *render explicit* the tacit knowledges embedded in a given action. A typical one-hour Entretien d'explicitation will focus on a single moment from the interviewee's past, with the interviewer facilitating the re-construction in words, with as much incidental detail as possible, the moment as it was lived by the subject. By the end of the interview, that moment has been re-created in remarkable and granular three-dimensional detail, with the subject's decision-making and information-capturing laid out, point-by-point, from one second to the next.[61]

For this reason, I decided to include two such interviews for each of the dancers, one conducted a few weeks before the performances and detailing a moment in rehearsal, and another the day following the first performance. These interviews therefore provided me with freshly-remembered, detailed accounts of each dancer's experience of a given exercise.[62]

3.4 Methods of Analysis

3.4.1 Théorisation Ancrée (Grounded Theory)

To structure and elucidate the meaning contained in the data produced, I in part used "Théorisation Ancrée", a method translated and adapted by Paillé (1994) from Glaser and Strauss (1967), as well as "analyse en mode écriture" (Paillé & Mucchielli,

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[61] While this sounds gruelling, the process is often quite enjoyable for both parties – since these interviews generally focus on a moment of enjoyment, reliving and generating an almost holo-deck-like virtual memory of such a moment is a lot of fun.

[62] Refer to Annex F – Excerpted Transcriptions of Interviews ('*entretiens d'explicitation*').

2003, p. 101).  I tend to prefer the French term coined by Paillé, *théorisation ancrée,* to the original English Grounded Theory*,* as it implies a process ("une démarche de théorisation" (p. 149)) rather than the establishment of a finalised theory: a 'going-towards' rather than the 'arrival-at' a theoretical understanding of the phenomenon being observed.  This 'theorisation process' consists in combing through one's textual material – in this case field notes, field-recording transcriptions and interview transcriptions – in six successive iterations of analysis, much of which happen concurrent with the field research.

The first step, "la codification" consisted in combing through the pages of my creation journal, the transcribed interviews and the transcribed in-studio discussions, 'coding' or labelling each remark or comment that might be relevant.  While the coding of my journal could be done more or less from day to day, transcribing our discussions was very time-consuming and would be done whenever there was a break of several weeks between creation periods.  This first step, parsing though our remarks and exchanges and observations, would go on to influence my discussions going forward with my collaborators.  The second step, "la catégorisation"[63], consisted in winnowing these remarks down to a more tightly-focused collection, and under more tightly-focused thematic 'categories'.  This second layer of theorisation began towards the end of our time in the studio, when we were beginning to prepare the public presentation, and while I was starting to recognise certain patterns and themes arising out of the written data.  The third step, "la mise en relation" (establishment of connections and relations between the different elements)[64], occurred once our studio research had ended, when I was able to devote more time to combing through our data: grouping it into thematic categories, which eventually would form the sub-sections that feature in Chapter IV.

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[63] Refer to Annexes D, E and F
[64] Refer to Annex G - Catégorisation

The strength of this process is that the researcher is in a constant cycle of re-validation: returning to the original text with each new step, observing to see whether one's emergent analysis of the previous step "works" or not – "une théorie ancrée est construite et validée simultanément par la comparaison constante entre la réalité observée et l'analyse en émergence" (p. 150).  Previous steps of analysis are re-evaluated constantly as new discoveries retroactively affect previous discoveries ("les boucles de rétroaction sont nombreuses" (Paillé, 1994, p. 154).  As rigorous as it is intuitive, this method calls on the researcher to 'feel' whether a particular treatment of one's data, be it a category or a link between elements, 'resonates' (or not) with the material at hand.

3.4.2 Analyse en Mode Écriture

Full disclosure: after lengthy consideration, I completely ignored Steps 5 and 6, "la modélisation" and, "la théorisation".  After years wrestling with squaring the circle of dance-making within academic methodology, following Paillé's thérosiation ancrée to its prescribed conclusion was ultimately a bridge too far.  It neither seemed pertinent to attempt the re-creation of dynamics produced and lived within a specific creative process (taking place during a specific summer), nor did I believe creating a 'theorised schematic' of this research would be useful to anyone.

Finishing, therefore, with Paillé's fourth step – 'l'intégration' – I proceeded using the method "analyse en mode écriture".  This method of analysis consists in

> "s'engager dans un travail délibéré d'écriture et de réécriture, sans autre moyen technique, qui tiendrait lieu de reformulation, d'explicitation, d'interprétation ou de théorisation du matériel de l'étude. L'écriture devient ainsi le champ de l'exercice analytique en action, à la fois moyen et la fin de l'analyse" (Paillé & Mucchielli, 2003, p. 101).

This step of analysis was quite the process: it consisted in writing draft upon arduous draft of my fourth Chapter[65], in which I slowly disentangled the tightly-interlaced threads of experiential, affective, formal, choreographic, and interpersonal observations produced in-studio. Then, once these threads were extricated, I went to work smoothing the surfaces drawn by these multi-vectored strains of information, into a somewhat cohesive whole.

The hoped-for result in 'analyse en mode écriture' is to coax out, to bring to the surface, meanings embedded in the body of one's varied texts and to bring them into a more-or-less modellable whole: "de faire surgir le sens qui n'est jamais un donné immédiat et qui est toujours implicite et à la fois structurant et structuré" (Paillé, dans Mucchielli, 2004, p. 183). The following 'Results' Chapter, therefore, is very much a 'production' itself, generated from the ruthless triage of a superabundance of material, and from my own curiosities and interests as I combed through it. Another researcher, using the same procedures and in-studio practices (or even basing themselves on this same data) would inevitably deliver an account entirely different from this one.

3.5 Limits of the Study

The primary and most obvious limit to this study, as I've just alluded, is its low possibility of reproduction. The creative process I've modeled here is a particularly unique phenomenon, occurring among a specific group of individuals and at a precise moment in time. Although my hope is that the data collected and analysed here will be of interest and of use to other artists in the future, there is no way to conceive this data, or the analyses produced from them, as in any way universal or even generalizable.

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[65] At some point in mid-April of last year, to her horror, I sent an over 50-page version of Chapter IV to my research advisor, before slowly, over the course of two subsequent drafts, paring it down to its current 30 pages.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The data for this study were collected and analysed in accordance with the requirements laid out in UQAM's policy on the ethical conduct of research involving human subjects. The project received certification from the university's Comité d'éthique de la recherche pour les projets étudiants in 2017. All participants in the study were required to sign consent forms,[66] and were clearly informed that they could withdraw from the project at any time, without consequence or reprisal. In addition, although each of the participants were given the option of participating anonymously or being referred to as a synonym, none of them chose to do so and are therefore referred using their given names.

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[66] Refer to Annexes F and G

CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

4.1 Three Axes of Research

In this chapter, I will lay out the qualitative data produced during the studio-research phase of this study. This phase developed over 106 studio-hours, during the creative process leading to the choreographic étude *while_vague,* in collaboration with dance artists Jessica Serli and Neil Sochasky, and dramaturg Thea Patterson. Rehearsals took place between June and September 2017, and concluded with two public presentations. Our research centered on the following question: "**What are the productive conditions leading to a 'polyvocal' body, both during choreographic creation and during public performance?**"

As I wrote in Chapters I and II, I'd settled on the term 'polyvocal body' to describe states of awareness I'd experienced in somatic practice – in which it seemed that 'intention' in my body had been multiplied, leading to a sort of laterally complex, vividly felt dispersion of corporeal agency. I also suggested it's possible to understand these moments of 'polyvocality' as emerging out of a loosening of the constellation of "forms, functions, bonds, dominant and hierarchized organisations" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 159) that determine conventional embodied experiences. A 'polyvocal body' might then be conceived as a particular conjunction of flows of sensory information, less 'sedimented' by convention and stasis. Accepting Bernard's (2001) suggestion that sensation is inherently 'fictive', prone to being worked by the 'infinitely esthetic' nature of our ability to sense, I suggested that these 'reworked constellations of the sensible' have a fairly long history of use in Western contemporary dance creation, known as practices of 'state-work' or work with 'body-states'. My

hope was that in this studio research I might be able to re-situate choreographic state-work for myself as a "critical praxis" (A. Lepecki, 2004, p. 6), a form of embodied critique examining habitual modes of embodiment as historically-contingent productions, responsive to intentional and aesthetic re-castings and re-modulations.

However, having established these more conceptual considerations for myself, the fact of getting into the studio with my collaborators would be a different game. While the reflections detailed above might serve to ground the work in theory, it would be equally important to keep the studio research self-contained. This meant, to the degree possible, keeping the conceptual jargon out of things. Rigorous research, in this case, would imply ensuring that our studio-work was motivated and informed, moment-to-moment, by the four artists in the room – by our collective intelligence and curiosity as professional creators.

As mentioned in Chapter I, our studio research can be understood along three main axes. These were: first, learning how to reliably incite or provoke polyvocal body-states in the dancers, and how to render those states resilient in the face of challenges to attention; second, developing a common understanding of the features of polyvocal experience; and third, developing strategies for working choreographically with these body-states.

4.2 First Axis: Building Practices to Incite Polyvocal Body-States

Our starting point was to develop diverse somatic practices together, all designed to foster specific 'textures' of sensorial experience that might potentially produce 'polyvocal' experiences. Each practice required that the dancers quiet their minds and introspectively 'dive' into sensation for lengthy periods of time, and demanded a high level of meditative concentration. Moreover, many of these practices called on Jessica and Neil to populate their sensorial landscapes with fictive images and qualities; I was repeatedly struck by the level of professional embodied

commitment they demonstrated, transforming what might otherwise be simple games of make-believe into vivid and richly-lived subjective experiences.

4.2.1 Collective Preparation and Warm-Up: The Body Scan

A good part of our time was spent in collective warm-ups and somatic preparations of the body. Because the work demanded such calm and extended focus, it was important to introduce a mental and physical buffer at the beginning of rehearsals – suspending the concerns of the day and wholly arriving in the studio. After experimenting with different forms, a simple body-scan became our primary warm-up. This would last about thirty minutes. Everybody in the group would find a comfortable position on the floor. Closing my eyes and 'diving' into my own sensorial field, I would bring my attention to the subtle expansion and release of my breath cycle (for example), or the feeling of gravity traversing my body and settling it into the floor – from there, I would verbally guide the other participants' to the same sensations. In this way, I sought to slowly migrate our collective attention to different regions of the body – guided by my own curiosity, but paying precise attention to the rhythm and speed of my verbal prompts, and taking great care to word them with a particular balance of specificity and openness.[67] I hoped to provide a broad framework without imposing specific textures of experience, and to provide enough space so that each participant might let their own sensorial curiosity play itself out. According to the dancers, these scans led to a granular attention to detail in their sensation. Jess remarks that these scans would render her attention so acute that "it's as though I've got a thousand eyes inside of me. I have eyes everywhere"[68] (Interview with Myriam Saad, August 21, 2017 – Jessica 1), while Neil describes it as a process of "narrowing what you were listening to so that you could listen to it with increasing amounts of depth...

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[67] Refer to Annex F - Transcription of Body-Scan
[68] "On dirait que j'ai milles yeux intérieurs. J'ai des yeux partout à l'intérieur" (Jessica 1)

like how there's an infinity between integers" (Interview with Andrew Turner, September 13, 2017 – 'Neil 3').

This group preparation offered us a moment to acknowledge and take stock of the quality of embodied awareness we'd brought with us into the studio, in whatever form it presented itself. In bringing these constellations of sensation into our awareness, without judgement or avoidance, and in noticing similarities and differences from one day to the next, we were able to cultivate a fairly steady 'baseline' of embodied attentionality within the group. As Neil remarked, fostering this kind of awareness "is not about staying in a spot, it's about returning to a spot, practicing the return... you have to practice returning to it enough that you can figure out where it is" (Neil 3). Over time, we would become more consistent in returning to this baseline, fostering a sharpened but spacious attentionality that the dancers could then carry into the rest of the work.

4.2.2 Movement Practices Stemming from Fictive Body-Landscapes

A first collection of creative movement practices might be described as 'fictive experiential scores', and consisted in layering on imaginary attributes to our already-stimulated sensorial awareness. These would proceed directly out of our body-scan: having stimulated a granular attention to sensation as described above, I'd begin to add various 'fictitious' verbal prompts. I might, for instance, guide us in imagining our bodies as composed of a teeming mass of highly excited particles, each moving in several directions at once; or that, while attempting to perform a task (such as getting up to sit in a chair), our every movement was met with resistance or discoordination in our limbs, rendering the task 'impossible'. I'd begin by participating myself (to explore the effects of each prompt), but would then later disengage to observe the dancers. These practices demanded long durations so that the dancers could settle in and integrate each fiction at the level of muscle and tissue. Again, it was the dancers' remarkable commitment and focus that transformed these games of 'pretend' into vivid

qualitative shifts of experience; this would often, in turn, activate dramatic shifts in their movement qualities. The 'Tongue Practice', our longest-running experiential practice, provides a good example.

4.2.3 The Tongue Practice (1): Transposing A Local Curiosity

As a group, we'd become interested in the tongue: a muscle-organ under our voluntary control, but which seemed governed by a form of innate and local 'curiosity' when left to its own devices – a liveliness that kept it in subtle but constant movement from one moment to the next. We were fascinated by the tongue's quiet deployment of this curiosity, as well as by its singular sensitivity and dexterity as it presided over the space of the mouth. The tongue seemed to us to be in dialogue with our conscious attention when we spoke, took breath and ate, but also to be constantly 'astir' when we weren't paying attention to it. Our 'Tongue Practice' was therefore an attempt to translate the 'curiosity', motility, and intense sensations of the tongue to the body at large; from there, we sought to observe how this translation might affect the qualities of our awareness and movement.

A brief description: after leading the group in a global body-scan, I would guide our attention to settle minutely on the tongue: the nuanced feedback it provides of shape, texture, temperature; its agility and precision; its malleability in molding itself to the structures of the mouth. We observed how, when at rest, the tongue appeared to float and undulate on its own in constant micro-movements. I would then guide us in observing the tongue's role in swallowing, emphasizing how it could be felt as a series of seamless transitions: while we'd initiate the action voluntarily, this would then set off a series of involuntary (but still perceptible) muscle contractions backwards into the throat, leading finally to the wholly unconscious and imperceptible peristaltic action of the esophagus. As the sensation of swallowing gradually 'disappeared' in the region of the throat and upper chest, we found that it tended to leave a sort of spacious sensorial 'residue' in its wake – we couldn't actually feel peristalsis happening, but we

could feel the volume of the throat with an expansive sensitivity. This sensitivity readily lent itself to being populated by the sensorial textures and 'qualities of agency' we had been at work imprinting in our imaginations from the tongue.

4.2.4 Tongue Practice (2): A Blending of Sensations

From there, the practice consisted in producing and maintaining an 'attunement' between the tongue and the body at large. This attunement was constantly shifting, and required tenacity and inventiveness to maintain. In her *entretien d'explicitation* with Myriam Saad (August 21, 2017 – 'Jessica 1'), Jessica provides a detailed account of her moment-to-moment actions and perceptions while maintaining this attunement.

Having already 'swallowed' the tongue's sensations as described above, she begins by "letting go. I lie still and make myself available to what's there" (Jessica 1).[69] Rendering herself present to her sensations, she perceives two sets of data – the porous, undulating sensation of her tongue, and the larger undulation of her breathing – which she sensorially 'blends' together, calibrating their speed into a single, rippling impulse of movement. This begins in her chest "in the region I'm listening to, but then it amplifies itself quickly" (ibid.),[70] leading to "a total connection with my body's 'envelope' – the skin and the muscles becoming supple... causing me to drift into a sensation of viscosity... my body begins to glide and to undulate" (ibid)[71].

The global gliding and undulation she describes provides her with "new connections" of sensation, generating "impulses, movements and spaces in my body that I wasn't previously aware of" (Jessica 1);[72] an environment in which a motion of

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[69] "Je lâche prise. Je ne bouge pas et je reste disponible à ce qui agit" (Jessica 1).

[70] "Au départ ça suit la région que j'écoute mais ça s'amplifie assez rapidement" (Jessica 1).

[71] "Une connexion totale avec toute ce qui englobe mon corps – la peau et les muscles, qui deviennent souple. Et ça me fait glisser dans une sensation qui … ressemble à une qualité visqueuse" (Jessica 1).

[72] "M'informe sur des nouvelles connections […] et crée des impulsions, mouvements, espaces dans mon corps que […] je ne connaissais pas" (Jessica 1).

the tongue will cause movement to materialise elsewhere "in a logic that surpasses me" (ibid.).[73]  For instance, while twisting or constricting in the tongue, she finds that certain muscles have released or contracted in her torso in a similar way, "resonating up to my head, leading it to turn without my having directed it to turn" (ibid.).[74]  Jessica's account exemplifies the dynamic of 'attentive action' she would continually re-invest in during the Tongue Practice: summoning a high degree of sensorial listening and, from there, 'permitting' her sensations to move her.  This was a moment in which more than one 'voice' seemed to be dictating Jessica's behaviour, and therefore might be a moment of 'polyvocal' embodiment.

4.2.5 The Rocking Practice

Our second main practice, which we referred to as the 'Rocking Practice' or simply 'Rocking', used an entirely different strategy to access non-voluntary movement: it was way more dynamic, more concrete, and required a less esoteric approach to awareness.  It consisted in repeatedly looping a single whole-body movement over long durations (from a few minutes to half an hour).  Rocking our weight from one foot to the other, we'd allow our body to follow through in any way – with a swing of the arms, for instance, or a rotation in the hips – while trying to repeat the same sequence with each loop.  These repetitions were something we could more or less automatize, becoming a dynamically hypnotic 'groove' – a sort of background noise within which our attention could wander freely.  We would choose our own speed and dynamic level, from slow and deliberate to fast and vigorous.

From there, we'd follow a simple score: we could alter 1) the speed of the motif, 2) its amplitude, or 3) the trajectory of a single body part – with the injunction that any change be minimal and incremental.  The score was designed to facilitate the distinction

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[73] "Dans une logique qui me dépasse" (Jessica 1).
[74] "Des muscles se sont relâchés, et ont eu une résonance jusqu'à ma tête, qui la fait tourner sans que je le dise de tourner" (Jessica 1).

between the body-movements that were 'automatized' in our repetitive motif, and movements that were willful choices. In his *entretien d'explicitation* (Interview with Myriam Saad, August 21, 2017 – 'Neil 1'), Neil recounts his experience of this distinction. Engaged in a whole-body oscillation, he describes moving from a global awareness of the whole body to a tightly-focused attention on the trajectory of his ear in space. He then directs a minute shift, giving the ear's linear 'back-and-forth' a slight curve; over several oscillations, the ear now begins to describe an oval 'orbit'. This small change then leads to a cascade of reactions, "a highly complex rippling of sensations throughout the whole of my body, [because] my body is so much more complicated than the choice, and there's a whole range of results and messy sort of complications" leading from it – a compensation in the hips, or a new circular pathway in his chest. These 'messy complications' are then resolved and regulated by momentum, by the body's pre-conscious mechanisms for maintaining balance, and by the degree of elasticity in his tissues. From there, "I can begin to focus on those repercussions" (ibid.), which have coalesced into a new repetitive motif; his process of observation and change can then begin anew. Throughout the practice, his Rocking motif therefore results in "an accumulation of repetitions and an accumulation of reactions, so that I'm never doing exactly the same actions to the same bodily environment" (ibid.), in a minimal but constant evolution of form.

For Neil, in the Rocking Practice, "what's intriguing is what I'm *not* choosing to do" (Neil 1). The practice provides him with a structure within which "I'm actively trying to make fewer conscious choices.... If I'm only getting foreseeable results" – say, lifting his arm in a way that is not necessary for retaining his balance – "then those are things are unambiguously 'mine', or a result of my choosing" (ibid.). In such a case, he can tell that he is being 'overly willful' in his movement. In contrast, "unforeseen results" emerge more or less unbidden from "the way vectors pass through my body and the way gravity is influencing my tissues" as well as "the necessity of not falling over [laughs]" (ibid.). He therefore describes his "delight" in realising that,

while he was focusing on his ear, his left arm had begun tracing its own trajectory in space without his noticing.

> "I was focusing on one dance – witnessing that dance change – only to discover that there were other, simultaneous dances I was not aware of, that were on their own evolution. And there's a certain liberty in that, less the need to conform to the structure, and more of discovering some hidden aspect of consciousness, or presence. With the play of gravity and rebound, there was a sense that one was dancing with physics, that there was some sort of partnership between consciousness and 'the universe' [laughs]" (Neil 1).

Another aspect to the practice is that its durational repetition almost invariably aroused in us a form of spacious and expansive presence, which would last long after we were done.[75] Neil described the practice as creating a "cylinder of experience" (August 9, 2017) around him, Jessica remarked, "I feel I'm not far from trance, from meditation" (August 9, 2017)[76].

### 4.2.6 Synesthetic Massage

Another practice was called 'Synesthetic Massage'. Though in this exercise we weren't presuming to incite actual synesthetic experience,[77] it was an attempt to produce extremely close associations between sound and sensation in the body, to the point where the two might become fictively interlaced. The practice had two steps: first, while a given piece of music was playing, one dancer would perform an active 'sports-massage' on the other – vigorously kneading, shaking and mobilizing the different parts of their body – with the task of stimulating their tissues while trying to mimic the music's mood, tonality and phrasing. I also suggested certain imagery to

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[75] Bayer Constantinescu et al (2011), in a series of sleep studies, attribute a calming effect of rocking in both adults and infants to a synchronisation within the thalamo-cortical networks; D'aquili (in Schechner, 1990), meanwhile, in discussing rhythmic or repetitive ritual acts, describes a simultaneous arousal of both sympathetic and parasympathetic autonomic subsystems.

[76] "Je sens la trance, le méditation, proche" (August 9, 2017)

[77] Synaesthesia is described as a perceptual phenomenon in which the stimulation of one sensory pathway leads to involuntary experiences in a second sensory pathway: as when, for example, one "sees" sounds as colors.

the massage-giver, such as treating their hands as the 'source' of the music, or imagining they were "soaking or drenching" (Creation Journal, August 14, 2017**)** the receiving body with sound. Similarly, I invited the recipient to imagine their body as being energetically 'infused' with the sounds that they heard.

In the second step, the same piece of music would be played,[78] and the recipient would listen to the music again, while scanning through the sensory residue the massage had generated. I would invite the dancer to imagine the music as directly 'permeating' the tissues of their body. Their focus, therefore, was simultaneously on the music and their sensations, with the attentional task of imagining them as interlaced together – Neil describes the task as though he is asking, "how does music cascade through this whole aspect of self, down and out?" (Neil 3). The recipient might then move or dance if they were so inclined, but I'd continually invite them to stay focused on the experience itself, with movement as a sort of by-product – 'less' was 'more'. Again, I proposed that they pay particular attention to the tonality, mood rhythm and dynamics of the music, and observe how that affected the quality of their sensorial experience. Over time we experimented with varying levels of amplitude and dynamic. As well, though the experience was more easily done with eyes closed, I'd invite the dancers to keep their eyes open, which gave me as a spectator access to the 'how' of their listening.

When Jessica and Neil successfully invested themselves in the fiction of their body as a "medium that resonates" (Neil 3), this became a willful exaggeration of Bernard's third, 'extrasensorial' chiasm, with the dancers taking a vector of information that was both external and heterogeneous to pure sensation, and fictively folding it into their own tissues. In those moments, the practice became a strategy for the dancers to move not as dictated by their own centralised or willful motivations, but rather to allow

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[78] The music went anywhere from J.S. Bach's 'Well-Tempered Clavier' to Patti Smith's 'Redondo Beach', though it was a Bach piano sonata that featured in our public presentations.

movement to emerge spontaneously, informed by the subtle play of their attention over a body fictitiously but vividly 'infused' with sound at the level of perception.

4.2.7 Extreme Slow Motion

Our fourth main practice consisted in performing a given concrete task with extreme slowness. One example was rolling across the floor at an almost imperceptible speed, often taking fifteen or twenty minutes to execute a single roll. The practice began as a warm-up for sharpening and sustaining focus, and we became fascinated by how singularly challenging it was, and how much investment it took for us to approach 'getting it right'. At normal speeds, the simplest of lateral roles involves several staggered coordinations, done more or less automatically. This level of slowness forced us to activate these coordinations consciously – folding an elbow for immediate leverage, while sending one's knee out as a strut for later, while also tilting one's pelvis into just the right angle – and all at a snail's pace. While often excruciating to do, we found the practice quickly aroused in us a specific awareness, which was spacious but also sharp and mobile: expansively attending to the whole, while also flickering from region to region, minutely monitoring and adjusting each of these simultaneous, differently-rhythmed processes of movement. The practice was different from the others in that it involved no improvisation, and no 'letting go' – everything about it was both rigid and willful – but our fascination with this sharp and mobile awareness never faded, and it therefore stayed with us to the end of the process.

4.3 Second Axis: Building a Common Understanding

These exercises, then, were our experiential testing grounds. Given the shifting, evanescent nature of these body states (and the textures of awareness that accompanied them), developing a coherent understanding of them was inherently challenging. It would often happen that one person's experience would contradict another's, or else

that an observation agreed to by the whole group might prove completely inapplicable the following day.

In this regard, Jessica and Neil were remarkably committed to remaining authentic to their experience in the face of these shifting awarenesses. This meant steadfastly attending to what was *there* – what was in front of them in the moment – and relinquishing any attachment they might have to past experiences. Ironically (and frustratingly), a particularly 'convincing' exploration on one day would often leave a sort of 'experiential residue' that clouded what was actually occurring on the following day: on one such occasion, both dancers speak of "yesterday's baggage" (Jessica, June 20, 2017)[79] or of being "attached to a particular experience from yesterday" (Neil, ibid.). At another point, Neil describes finding himself spontaneously exploring movement qualities that contradict the exciting discoveries he had made the day before. In the studio, he asks me,

> "If that's the direction my 'Tongue' is going in, should I be true to that evolving experience? Or should we try to stick with what we had discovered yesterday? ... What is the intrinsic thing? When do I know I'm slipping into the imitation of the thing rather than doing it? And how do I learn more about it rather than just trying to catch it?" (July 11, 2017)

We agreed that the dancers would need to find balance between searching for identifiable and reproducible features of these awarenesses, and remaining present to the flickering particularities of the here-and-now. The understanding we developed was therefore prismatic. Conceiving our observations as facets of a complex reality helped to resolve their sometimes-contradictory nature. Keeping this understanding flexible and subject to revision, we gradually established a collection of 'constants' and 'variables', and began to identify their underlying qualities, which I will attempt to synthesize here.

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[79] "Le bagage d'hier" (Jessica, June 20, 2017)

4.3.1 A Shift in the Space, and Coming Back into The Room

As I moved away from participating in the practices, towards more frequently observing from the outside, what I found continually compelling was the distinct impression of *displacement* that came with these body-states: a sense that when the dancers would "plug in" to their sensations (Journal, July 10, 2017), they were somehow shifting into a qualitatively different realm of perception and experience. This shift was palpable, almost tactile, from where I sat – as if the whole room had been subtly reconfigured by the breadth and depth of their concentration, charged with an "intangible frequency of information" (ibid). A new quiet seemed to settle on the space. This feeling of spaciousness could linger for several minutes afterwards, dissipating slowly as we sat down and began discussing. Indeed, as the dancers exited a practice, there was a distinct sense they were transitioning towards more quotidian perceptions as they stood up, smiled, and took a drink of water. It felt appropriate to allow time for them to "come back into the room" (Journal, July 12, 2017) before beginning to discuss, and they professed that there was a slight, though pleasant, *effort* in shifting the registers of their senses towards formulating words and sentences. A sense of calm generally accompanied this transition.

4.3.2 Sudden and Emphatic Onsets of Abandonment

By the dancers' accounts, they did indeed seem to be 'coming back' from richly-lived and absorptive experiences. One compelling aspect to this research was that while the careful construction of attentive presence might be a *necessary* condition, it wasn't *sufficient*, on its own, for instilling a 'polyvocal' body-state: the final 'step' essentially remained out of our grasp. Though we might get better at bringing ourselves to the threshold, these polyvocal states would invariably arise unbidden. This was most clearly illustrated when the sleepiness, inertia and resistance that would sometimes settle on us (which, given the slow and subtle nature of the work, happened regularly enough) was pierced by a sudden onset of emphatic, absorptive physical engagement.

This was like a switch had been flipped – with this abrupt discovery, we could then 'mine' these rich veins of sensory information into explorations of movement, with a newly effortless curiosity.

Jessica describes such a moment: having spent an unavailing fifteen minutes idly observing the play of muscles across her face, she is unexpectedly overtaken by a wave of clear and vivid sensation. Suddenly, she says, "a connection was made with something 'more powerful' ('*plus fort*') ... a quality unknown to me but that inhabited me fully... and to which I could abandon myself" (July 6, 2017).[80] The muscles of her face begin to fire asymmetrically almost of their own accord, a sensation gradually spreading down to her torso, impelling her into quick, disjointed, fluttering movements. At that moment, "you no longer have to think, my body was agile within that sensation... you're no longer searching, you're now inhabited by that information. I'm not giving shape to anything, it's just happening" (ibid.).[81] These transitions from 'nothing happening' to 'something definitely happening' – in their very suddenness – were always gratifying confirmations to us: while that 'something' was difficult to grasp or articulate, it was nonetheless tangibly 'operative', effecting qualitative shifts of awareness. Even when these shifts happened in less dramatic fashion, there was still a sense of becoming aware of a process already underway.

4.3.3 "It's Like I'm Beside the Movement"

Jessica is quick to nuance her description of 'abandonment'. As she remarks, "when it kicks in it *resembles* 'possession'... but that doesn't mean *being* 'possessed'" (July 6, 2017).[82] Judging from her descriptions, her experience isn't of a trance-like

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[80] "Il y a une connexion qui s'est fait avec quelque chose de plus 'fort' - une qualité qui n'était pas connu mais qui m'habitait pleinement... [à laquelle] je pouvais m'y abandonner" (Jessica, July 6, 2017).

[81] "T'as plus à la chercher, c'est que t'es habité par cette information là… Je ne suis pas en train de rien figurer, c'est juste que ça arrive" (Jessica, July 6, 2017).

[82] "Quand ça 'kick in', ça ressemble à "possédé... Mais ça ne veut pas dire "possédé" (Jessica, July 6, 2017).

'evacuation' of awareness; on the contrary, this 'abandonment' rests on a vigilant and constantly renewed hyper-awareness. As an example, I'll return to the episode mentioned in Section 4.2.4, where, during the Tongue practice, Jessica finds her head moving without having 'directed' it to do so.

As we saw, Jessica describes how, within the granular sensorial focus she's activated, certain "impulses, movements and spaces in my body which I wasn't aware of"[83] (Jessica 1) have now come to the fore. For Jessica, "as soon as you're connected to the Tongue, you can feel the skin moving at the same rhythm. The palms of the hands as well."[84] This awareness extends inwards as well, to "something resembling the organs... certain textures or movements from the lungs, the esophagus, the act of digestion" (ibid.).[85] We might imagine these as specific frequencies of sensory information, with Jessica having finely calibrated her attention into alignment with them, and with the resulting 'resonance' drawing her body into movement. Raising her tongue in her mouth, "I use that impulse to shift my body in the direction of the tension it suggests" (ibid.).[86] It is this specific action that "takes a certain abandonment.... I *am* moving [myself], but in order to do so it seems I have to let go of all volition, all 'muscularity'" – when she is successful at this 'letting go', "the simple listening to this impulse or internal energy reshapes my body, or reconstructs my position in space" (ibid.).[87]

Jessica is therefore struck by how she can't precisely attribute her head's movement to a conscious choice: "between what we might believe is involuntary or

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[83] "Des impulsions, mouvements, et espaces dans mon corps que je ne connaissais pas" (Jessica 1).

[84] "Dès qu'on est connecté à la langue, on dirait qu'on sent la peau bouger au même rythme. Les paumes aussi" (Jessica 1).

[85] "Quelque chose qui s'apparente aux organes... les textures ou le mouvement dans les poumons, l'œsophage, [des mouvements] de la digestion" (Jessica 1).

[86] "J'utilise l'impulsion de sa remontée pour déplacer mon corps dans la tension suggéré" (Jessica 1).

[87] "On dirait que ça prend un abandon... en même temps je bouge mais j'ai l'impression qu'il faut que je relâche toute volonté "toute muscularité"… et que la simple écoute de cette pulsation, ou une énergie interne, remodèle ou reconstruit à ma position dans l'espace" (Jessica 1).

voluntary, there's an immediate ambiguity in the description".[88]  She characterizes the moment thus: "I'm not guiding it, it's like I'm *beside* the movement, and I permit it, with a subtle intent, to take form" (Jess 1)[89].  It is within this discerning and lucid attentionality that Jessica's 'abandonment' occurs, an abandonment both carefully and continually revived.

4.3.4 "There Was This Undoing of Borders": Highly-Immersive Experiences

The granular sensorial awareness mobilized in these explorations – with the dancers' attention wholly occupied by the textured mobility of their sensations – appears to have left little 'bandwidth' for the ambient mind-chatter of day-to-day awarenesses.  Jess remarks, "there's something that chases away your thinking" (July 6, 2017),[90] while Neil describes how, in the Tongue Practice, "my intellectual or my critical self was really reduced – I just *became* the sensation of the thing.  *I* wasn't there, that talking person was mostly gone when I was in that space [laughs]" (Neil 3).

With this loosening of narrative or intellectual forms of thinking, the dancers' perceptions could become strikingly elastic, and they seem often to have been navigating immersive and even oneiric sensorial landscapes.  Neil explains, for instance, how the Tongue Practice

> "kind of removed all environment and time and space and self, and I became this sort of rolling entity in some great void … The environment I was in seemed to not exist, and all that I'm experiencing is this sort of roundness, and a certain type of colour [laughing], and a certain type of wetness while everything else dissolves" (Neil 3).

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[88] "À travers ce qu'on croit soit involontaire ou volontaire, il y a une ambiguïté immédiate dans la description." (Jessica 1).

[89] "Ce n'est pas moi qui guide… Je suis, comme, 'à côté' de ce mouvement-là, puis je le permets, par une légère volonté, de prendre forme" (Jessica 1).

[90] "Il y a quelque chose qui fait perdre la pensée" (Jessica, July 6, 2017).

Indeed, whenever Neil talks about the practice, things get decidedly and delightfully weird. Neil has a 'Tongue Voice', for instance, that often appears when he is describing his experience. During one interview, to give an example, he says to me in a neutral tone, "Here I am in a room". After a brief pause, he continues, deepening his voice and slurring his cadence, "... *what room*?" (Neil 3), while his eyes glass over and his body begins to slowly melt sideways. Watching him, it's as though he's inhabited by a kind of drugged-out, primordial troll-entity. He explains this as a depiction of the viscous and 'formless' awareness aroused in him by the Tongue. While Neil's generous sense of humour requires a grain of salt, I find this exchange speaks to the singular and professional embodied commitment both he and Jessica brought to our sensorial research. He evokes a differently-textured apprehension of the environment, one that diverges markedly with the 'speaking self' of day-to-day awareness.

Often present, as well, were sensations of expansion, or of porosity, in the dancers' bodies. At one such point Jessica reports feeling "like my body is in a space that's vaster than I've known until now... I no longer feel my limits, I no longer feel the ends of my body" (Jessica 1).[91]   Neil, for his part, exclaims after another exploration, "oh my God, my body is larger than I think it is...!" (August 21, 2017). In that moment, "there was this undoing of borders" (ibid.) between himself and the space around him. At other points, he similarly speaks of "having a sense that the edges of things can dissolve" (June 20, 2017), or else attempting to make "the edges of me and the air become interchangeable somehow" (September 15, 2017). These statements speak to emphatic and richly-experienced sensorial attunements standing in stark contrast to, say, our state-of-mind while taking the elevator to the studio.

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[91] "J'ai l'impression que mon corps est dans un espace plus vaste que ce que je connais.... Je ressens plus de limites. Mon corps ressent plus les fins" (Jessica 1).

4.3.5 Fragilities

As immersive and captivating as these experiences were, however, they also proved to be frustratingly *fragile*. Though I've written above of the 'effort' required for the dancers 'come back into the room', at other times we'd find that the attentionalities we'd so carefully constructed might simply evaporate, particularly when the dancers were required to make self-driven choices or actions. For example, Neil recounts a moment of particularly satisfying immersion, but describes how "when I wanted to *do* something, I would lose that sense [of immersion]" (June 22, 2017): his overly goal-driven impulse causes that engagement to dissipate. This happened when I asked the dancers to move rapidly during the Tongue Score. For Neil, "this thing is slow: when I try to play with more speed, other voices take over" (ibid.). In this case, the reflex-habits of his trained dancer-body have come into play, obscuring his 'open' attention.

Jessica recounts another moment where my external directions caused her body-state to vanish. The example is rather anodyne: I asked her to stand up. Enveloped in her practice, she intuitively knows this request is mis-aligned with her state of listening – she says to herself, "ah, I'm not ready. Not ready to stand up" (July 5, 2017).[92] She complies anyway, and immediately her engagement evaporates, with a surge of habitual movements and over-self-awareness intruding on her awareness: "I was like, "ah, the *I* is back!"[93] Once this *I* appears, it invades every level of decision-making, down to the smallest detail,[94] and muddies the freedom and engagement she'd had only moments before. This 'I' refuses to recede, in "a struggle against everything, against myself";[95] and Jessica eventually exits the practice frustrated and dissatisfied.

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[92] "Ah, je ne suis pas prête. Pas prête à me lever" (July 5, 2017).
[93] "Je voyais 'ah! Le *moi* revient!'" (July 5, 2017).
[94] "Dans l'infiniment petit" (July 5, 2017).
[95] "Une lutte contre toute, contre moi-même." (July 5, 2017).

For her, this evidences the strong pull of habit: "our past is too strong!"[96], standing in the wings, ever-ready to reclaim the body from unfamiliar experiences of embodiment.

We therefore found ourselves developing respect and patience for these body-states, as well as a less-directive approach in our engagement with them. Foregrounding the dancers' attentionality became our priority: Neil states, he "would want to practice being a little less obedient" to my choreographic indications, to "remain more in tune with what the body wants to do" (June 22, 2017). This is because each of these body states "has its own blood, there's a life that it wants to live.... It's not about taming it, it's about moving alongside it" (July 20, 2017).

4.3.6 Pragmatic Contractions and Dilations of Awareness

As the project progressed, the dancers were indeed clearly developing a tangible *agility* in navigating these body-states, in order to 'do' things: with increasing fluency, they began to identify nuances within these fleeting awarenesses, which facilitated their ability to make decisions while avoiding an unwanted 'exit' from a given body state. For example, in her second *entretien d'explicitation* (Interview with Myriam Saad, September 15, 2017 – 'Jessica 2'), Jessica recounts a moment in which she is lucidly, *geographically* aware of the various vectors of her attention. Interestingly, she's also able to identify how sending her focus to one or another region can in turn shift her general state of awareness and performance quality. In her account we can observe Jessica pragmatically modulating the scope of her attention and physical engagement while accomplishing a concrete goal.

This happens during our first public presentation. During the Rocking Practice, while minutely attending to those sensorial qualities of elasticity and vastitude mentioned above in Section 4.3.4, Jessica notices that she can specifically locate these

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[96] "Notre passé est trop fort!" (July 5, 2017).

qualities as being in the back and sides of her kinesphere, and that they seem to be completely absent in front: "a whole world without borders opens, except in the front... it's quite vast behind me, but everything is fixed/defined (*défini*) in front of me" (Jessica 2).[97] She associates his 'vastness' in her back-space with a sense of 'abandon' – a feeling of freedom in her breath and an openness in her gaze – while her front-space has a constrained and 'quotidian' texture. She then describes carrying out a delicate and sophisticated navigation between these two opposed sensations, in order to effect a change in the 'motif' of her rocking. "I let go of the sensation of my faraway gaze" (ibid.)[98] in order, delicately and with the slightest nudge, to let her gaze slide downwards to a new point. In this moment of voluntary direction, Jessica seems to strategically sacrifice that feeling of 'vastness' she mentioned, just long enough to create a voluntary shift in movement, before returning to her backspace, so that this vastness can restore itself: "the fact that my attention comes forward and I begin to direct things, I lose that sensation" (ibid.),[99] but then "once my gaze has settled on the new point, and I accept what I've chosen, the sensation behind me returns" (ibid.).[100] Jessica's adeptness in negotiating these evanescent qualities of awareness speaks to the strange and specific skill-set the dancers were developing while engaged in these practices.

4.4 From a 'Polyvocal Body' to a 'Vague Body'

Before discussing the choreographic stage of our research, I should note that as we became more familiar with the qualities of these body-states, the term 'polyvocal body' began to feel less appropriate. It was a clumsy metaphor, which I quickly discovered whenever I'd have to explain the term to anyone: humans already have

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[97] "Un monde s'ouvre sans frontières, mise à part de l'avant […] c'est très vaste à l'arrière mais c'est très défini devant" (Jessica 2).

[98] Je quitte la sensation de regard profondément lointain" (Jessica 2).

[99] "Le fait que je suis à l'avant et que je dirige, je perds légèrement la sensation" (Jessica 2).

[100] "Dès que je refixe [le nouveau point], et que j'accepte ce que je choisis, la sensation derrière revient" (Jessica 2).

voices, on the one hand, and the multiple movement impulses I was trying to get at with the term neither made sounds nor seemed to be saying anything in particular. But most importantly the term 'polyvocal' pointed at something too specific to account for the shifting and evanescent experiences we were having. The notion of a *vague embodiment* began to emerge in our discussions, referring to our collectively-developed sense that "with the right cues and the right level of attention" (Andrew, July 6, 2017), one could access these acutely-experienced states of *doubt*: doubt as to whether one's motivations and preoccupations could be easily attributed to a centralised decision-maker; a 'vague body' seemed to better describe this fuzzy collection of awarenesses in which, to borrow Neil's expression, the 'I' "wasn't there, that talking person was mostly gone" (Neil 3) – a self-hood that had experientially become smudged, blurred, or porous. This new term also resonated well with the fleeting and intangible nature of the experiences, and how hard they were to keep afloat. *while_vague* eventually emerged as a name for this project, in which the dancers were busy doing things while also being busy *being* vague: the piece would essentially be a duration of time in which Jessica and Neil's behaviour played out on the porous border between the voluntary and the involuntary; in which they were both leading the body and being led by its emergent, often plural, and often inscrutable desires.

4.5 Third Axis: "What is A Container That's Going to Hold This?"

Once we were able to reliably provoke these various 'vague' body-states, and had developed a stable understanding of what they felt like, we began experimenting with choreographic structure. Working from the notion of vagueness, in which the dancers' movement and behaviour was not uniquely voluntary, we agreed that creating learned and repeatable 'movement sequences' or 'dance phrases' was out of the question. Our strategy would therefore be for the dancers to work from improvisational 'scores': structured systems of tasks and constraints, within which they would exercise

different degrees of liberty, but which would provide some measure of constancy from one iteration, or 'run', to another.

An inherent challenge remained in place, though, even while working with these more flexible structural forms. As we've seen, these vague body-states were prone to dissipating unexpectedly – due either to distraction, or to an overly-insistent focus, like water escaping a clenched fist. It was Thea who observed that, in their fragility and in the continual re-investment they required, our states exhibited a subtle but clear – and recalcitrant – form of agency. As she remarked, "these kinds of things, they defy structure. They don't want to be structured" (July 10, 2017). This 'defiance' of structure would show up immediately, whenever a section would 'fall flat' because the dancers' engagement had suddenly disappeared. Thea would help me to understand that these frustrating episodes were not simply logistical problems, but rather revealed the core dramaturgical question, "what is a container that's going to hold this?" (ibid.). I will discuss these dramaturgical questions further in Chapter V; what follows here is an account of our fitful attempts at constructing an appropriate choreographic vessel while 'following the lead' of our various body-states. This vessel would need to be mobile and porous: flexible enough to both encompass and nourish the shifting nature of these body states and of the registers of awareness that accompanied them.

4.5.1 Dances of Attentional Mobility

During our process, I developed a growing interest in the *materiality* of this awareness itself, and in its potential to be deployed choreographically. Having spent so much time probing and discussing the nuances of our experiences in these body-states, we developed a collective sense that our practices were not only activating specific qualities and textures of movement, but equally specific attentionalities, which were unmistakably mobile, shifting and geographic – and therefore prone to choreographic intervention.

We can see this clearly with one of our first choreographic structures, which became known quite simply as 'coming out of it'. As mentioned above, I'd been fascinated by the palpable shift in the energy of the room when, ending our explorations, the dancers would uncouple from their body-states and return to more quotidian registers of awareness. I eventually began asking the dancers, to perform this same 'attentional action' at moments of their own choosing during the Tongue Practice – to disengage from their deeper sensorial experience and 'come back into the room' for short periods, before then re-immersing themselves again. I did this initially as a sort of 'resiliency exercise': to try to familiarize the dancers with these active shifts back and forth, so they could eventually do so fluently, but I found myself increasingly captivated by how palpable and dramatic these shifts were.

Such shifts presented themselves tonally in the dancers' bodies, moving from the ambient, rolling motility of the Tongue Practice to something stiller and more pedestrian. They also manifested with remarkable clarity in the dancers' eyes: from a floating and introverted peripheral gaze to a foveal gaze, alighting on and registering objects. For me, this created a marked shift in the space the dancers' bodies were evoking, from an implosive space focused introspectively on their sensations, to one in which they saw and recognised the room around them. In my journal I wrote that these were "moments of magic... subtle but fundamental shifts in the space their bodies are 'secreting'. It seems as though they're becoming people again" (July 17, 2017).

This simple game of contrast therefore occurred to me as a way 'in' to the work – a mode of access for my own curiosity as a spectator: "you realise that the dancers were previously busy with something – you're not sure what, but you can tell how hard they were working" (Creation Journal, July 17, 2017). This provided Thea and me with a model for the potential 'dramaturgy of attention' that might be embedded in this material. The nomadic, flickering attentionality at work in the dancers while they were dancing, and the ways in which it contrasted with normal modes of experience, was a

principle driving force for our research, and so we made it a choreographic goal to highlight this attentionality. We spent a good deal of time throughout the process discussing the dancers' gazes, and attempting to render them as transparent as possible in reflecting the movement of their attention as they danced.

4.5.2 Certain Structures Hamper Awareness

As mentioned above, it was also difficult to ignore the quality of the dancers' attention, because of the tendency of their focus to suddenly evaporate in response to specific choreographic demands. A good example of this occurred in mid-July – with consequences that were unexpectedly logistical.

In mid-July, Jessica and Neil had been developing an improvised motif in the Tongue Practice, in which they would travel to different regions of the studio, remaining acutely aware of the other's presence without looking at each other – tracking the other's position with their peripheral vision, hearing and proprioceptive awareness. I'd decided I wanted to 'set' their pathways: I found this mutual listening to be a compelling motif, and I wanted to enrich it with (what I imagined would be) a satisfying, dynamic compositional investment of the stage-space. I also felt that making a repeatable sequence would free the dancers up from having to improvise 'interesting' pathways during each run. We therefore built a spatial score together, using traditional 'stage-blocking' terms (e.g., 'Neil quickly moves stage-right while Jessica more slowly moves upstage').

Immediately in the next few runs, however, the dancers' engagement with the practice became visibly diluted, and they seemed distracted and restless. More intriguingly, they also now found themselves unable to read each other's position in space. Their attempts to meet at certain 'landmarks' in the score became hesitant and ambiguous, with one or the other inevitably abandoning the attempt and moving on to another part of the score. As Jessica remarked afterwards, "that was so strange – when

we were improvising, I could tell that Neil was downstage and passed in front of me. And then, once we set it, I couldn't tell what he was doing. It's so weird, it's supposed to be easier!" (July 10, 2017).[101]

So, the exercise was an abject failure on both counts, with the dancers now simultaneously less engaged, and unable to convincingly follow my score. But this failure was fascinating to me: it implied that the dancers, in inhabiting the 'vaporous' or 'spacey' state of the Tongue Practice, were mobilizing forms of perception not available in the cognitive 'contraction' necessary for remembering and reproducing my spatial patterns. I'd therefore created a score that restricted the perceptual tools the dancers had been employing spontaneously, and which had made this moment compelling to us in the first place. In attempting to render the section predictable, it seemed I was instead putting any chance of predictability out of reach.

4.5.3 "Listening from Near and Far": Inward-Facing Choreographic Scores

Neil offered a solution, suggesting that the stage directions I'd imposed were to blame: "certain parameters are more complicated in the Tongue" (July 10, 2017), he said. "Thinking about space simultaneously is hard. Because it's such a different type of listening" (ibid). He proposed that we re-word our task from "working with space" to "listening from far and near". In this way, he said, "I wouldn't be thinking about stage-space, I'd be thinking about 'proximity-to [Jessica]'" (ibid.). Rather than attempting to perceive and work from a 'Cartesian' grid-space, he could maintain his focus on 'listening' to Jessica from within the body-state, and observing how his listening changed as their distance varied.

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[101] "c'est vraiment drôle, quand on improvisait, je savais que Neil restait devant et passait devant moi; je pouvais donc travailler tout ce qu'on vient de nommer. Puis là, on le 'set', puis je ne sais pas s'il est en train de le faire. C'est bizarre! C'est supposé être plus clair!" (July 10, 2017).

This led to a glimmer of understanding of how to find a proper 'container to hold this thing'. Up until then, our research had been almost entirely experiential: we'd taken extreme care to create conditions in which the 'doings' of the dancers – their impulses to move, their behaviour – could emerge as directly as possible out of the shifting textures of their own experience. However, with my clumsy stage-blocking score, I was now proposing to submit these 'doings' to an entirely different logic – an outward-facing, 'representational' logic driven by compositional concerns –which was wholly incompatible with the research. In using one of my own tried-and-true strategies for composition, I was causing the dancers to work with two clashing frequencies of information, which were visibly cancelling each other out when the dancers' engagement fell flat. Thea would later remark, "in certain acts of structuring you create something that is a 'thing': a 'thing' that's different from the thing you're doing" (July 10, 2017); this was glaringly true here.

This new structure, based on the dancers 'listening' to each other 'from near and far', offered an entirely different template for choreographic scoring: an 'inward-facing', experiential score focused on and motivated by shifts in the dancers' own awareness. Testing it out, our next run was immediately more convincing, with the dancers now immersively engaged with their own sensations, while also minutely attending to each moment-to-moment variation in proximity between them. Intriguingly, though there was a wide latitude of variation in their timing and spacing, they were even able to more or less recreate the trajectories I had originally imposed in my blocking score. As Thea eventually explained it, "the material, or the content doesn't change, but you now find yourself attending to it differently" (August 23, 2017): the question was not of *what* structures could work, but rather *how* structure was addressed.

We thus began finding new ways to structure our material by developing tasks that were continually informed by, and reinvested with, the dancer's own curiosity, and

which somehow acknowledged how Jessica and Neil were subjectively negotiating their relationship to both the score and their own listening states. "There's your experience, and there's the experience of trying to stay in your experience", I said on one day (July 12, 2017): by keeping these subjective experiential phenomena front-and-center, we might avoid the trap of representational logic that had so clearly dead-ended.

4.5.4 Tasks and Scores for Complexifying the Dancers' Experience

A few examples of these types of scores will suffice. For instance, we built a score around the Rocking Practice that was an intricate spatial map, within which each dancer would chart their own trajectory, at times facing towards or away from each other; at certain times joining and travelling together, or separating. Throughout, they were at work observing how their awareness of the other was enabled or hindered by distance, by facing, and by the dynamics of their own movement; from there, they would allow this awareness of the other to re-calibrate their own rocking motifs. At certain moments, they were invited to experiment with synchronizing their respective motifs, or else, to create discalibrated or interferential frequencies between them. This led to a high state of vigilance, since they were constantly on the edge of failing within this surfeit of layered tasks. In his *entretien d'explicitation*, Neil recounts a moment in which he and Jessica were in close proximity, pushing their own rocking motif to high intensity for an extended duration; his description offers an apt portrait of the subjective effects of this task:

> "the fatigue demands more commitment, and starts to eliminate distractions – so there's an experience of continually committing. It's a physical challenge as well as a sensorial one, so *more* of me is involved because of the fatigue. It adds to the satisfaction. One feels that one is fully alive, or more fully engaged. Highly invested" (Interview with Myriam Saad, September 15, 2017 – Neil 2).

The narrowing of focus and the heightening of Neil's investment were the prime motivating factors sustaining this part of the score. Although the constraints here of

continued exertion and high intensity are externally imposed, it is Neil's experience that remains front and center.

We elaborated the Tongue Practice by interlacing it with further experiential tasks, so that the dancers were at work attending to their own bodies, to the body of the other, and to the space of the studio, through a shifting array of perceptual registers and imaginary constructs. For instance, we layered in a practice called 'futuring' (borrowed and modified from Canadian choreographer Ame Henderson), which Thea proposed as a method for attuning the dancers to each other. While 'futuring', each dancer would become minutely attentive to the muscular tonality of the other's body (never looking at each other directly and using only their peripheral vision), and would try to '*do the movement the other dancer was about to do'*. Obviously, this is a sort of 'impossible task', and the goal was not for the dancers to succeed. It didn't matter to us whether the dancers actually managed to 'future' each other, but the *attempt at it* generated particular textures of embodied 'listening', so that they were attending to each other in a very specific way.

This Futuring Practice, affecting the '*inter-*' (dancer-to-dancer) relationship, sat in tension with the Tongue Practice which was governing the '*intra-*' (dancer-to-their-own-body) relationship: Jessica and Neil's attentions were being pulled in several directions at once. Other constraints would then be variously invoked to further complexify the picture, such as a 'flocking' practice in which they would attempt to face in the same direction as the other. Accommodating these different, difficultly-reconciled tasks (maintaining a deep connection with the sensations of the tongue, *while also* minutely attending to the other's movement, *while also* attending to distance and orientation) led to a highly complex sensorial landscape that the dancers navigated with varying degrees of success.

At other times, they were less-solicited by this surfeit of experiential tasks, and could relax into focusing on one thing. Our Extreme Slow Motion Practice was

basically a simple score in itself: sitting side-by-side, Neil would reach for his water bottle, and Jessica would begin rolling to the floor, in excruciatingly slow motion (after five minutes, Neil would never manage to touch his bottle and Jessica would only manage to incline her body). Maintaining a keen awareness of each instant was their only task, while their eyes were free to roam and settle on items in the room – giving me access, as a spectator, to the lively intelligence busily suscitating this slowed down moment.

These different scores were therefore motors to constrain or expand the dancers' attention. While they did have compositional consequences – bodies were moving through space, at varying speeds, and with different intentions – these scores were invariably 'inward facing', foregrounding the dancer's experience. In response to a run which had been satisfying from both the dancers' perspective and our own, Thea told the dancers:

> "what's beautiful is how you're attending to the emergence of this material, and to your own relationship *to it* as it's happening. How knowledge is currently being produced in your body. There's work, there's labour, we see you noticing these nuanced differences in your relationship to the material. It's very juicy" (July 11, 2017).

Her remark dresses a fair portrait of the dynamics of mobile moment-to-moment attentionality we hoped to encourage throughout the project.

4.5.5 An Interpersonal, Rather Than A Formal, Complexity

Having given this account of the eventual form they took, I should note that the process of implementing and maintaining these scores, as nourishing performative environments, was lengthy and complex. This work was altogether different from the more 'traditional' creative procedures I was accustomed to – of formally composing relatively stable choreographic phrases and scenarios, almost wholly informed by my own tastes. While I had worked with improvisational scores before, and was generally

confident about giving over choreographic decision-making to dancers who were composing in the moment, here the dancers were at work trying to "make fewer choices" (Neil, August 22, 2017), while sustaining a sophisticated dynamic of listening and abandonment to plural, hard-to-ascribe, often hard-to-detect, bodily desires. I was therefore frequently at a loss, faced with such a dizzying and often laughably complex dynamic: to be yielding choreographic agency to two dancers who were themselves busy yielding their own agency to parts unknown.

Thea gradually made clear that this complexity was not formal in nature, but specifically *interpersonal* – that activating and sustaining these experiential scores required activating and sustaining precise relational dynamics in the studio. When I brought Thea on as a 'dramaturg' for this project, I'd had a fairly defined idea of what a dramaturg would do: basically, I was looking for help managing the thematic or affective 'takeaways' of a potential audience – "how to get this stuff to talk", as I expressed it one day (July 17, 2017). As we will see in Chapter V, Thea slowly remodeled my vision of her role. During our creative process, she was at work conveying to us the dramaturgy embedded in *how* we chose to work together as a group. She encouraged care and precision in the ways we behaved towards each other, and how we communicated about the material at hand.

4.5.6 Creating Conditions, Rather Than Trying to Locate Something Exact

For instance, while I had certainly expected a measure of unpredictability in our improvisational material, our scores were brazenly erratic, with one element or another happening too fast for my taste, or too slow, or not at all; this went against every instinct of my inner *auteur*. However, whenever I would "give in to the instinct to correct them" (Creation Journal, July 19, 2017), this would have the effect of "shutting down [the dancers'] options" (ibid.) and inhibiting their engagement.

Thea went to great lengths to make clear that the dancers' actual execution of this or that element of a score was of only incidental consequence in this research – this work was "about creating conditions, rather than trying to locate something exact" (July 11, 2017). My role, therefore, was not to dwell on the *specificities of their action*, but rather to attend rigorously to the *specificities of the setting* in which they were working, in order to enable their authentic engagement within it.

This required a delicate balance of establishing precise scores and tasks, of continually ensuring that their parameters were well understood by everybody, and of expressly acknowledging (and accepting) that the dancers' capacity to carry them out would vary from iteration to iteration, from moment to moment. As Thea remarked, "if it was always succeeding it would be boring" (September 13, 2017). This was a seismic shift in how I conceived our work: it meant expanding the notion of 'choreographic material' to include failed executions and failed attempts – or, more precisely, folding 'failure' into the choreography itself.

Our discussions after a given run, therefore, were in marked contrast to the more-traditional 'notes' sessions I was used to as a dance professional, in which a choreographer would sit with the dancers and give corrections. I strenuously wanted to avoid reproducing that dynamic: I had observed that it often resulted in dancers performing in such a way as to avoid correction, and therefore with the unconscious intention of "not being noticed" (July 11, 2017). I told the dancers therefore to take any perceived 'corrections' with a large grain of salt: "feel free to make any 'mistake' again the next time, and stay in touch with what you have to do in the moment" (ibid.). Our discussions here, therefore, were not 'notes sessions' but rather 'debriefs', in which we talked through the run in detailed fashion while avoiding any overly-corrective or directive language. In these discussions, the dancers would give voice to their in-the-moment decisions, rather than them listening to me tell them what should have

happened. As I mentioned in a post-performance discussion, "I needed to be listening to them a lot, and letting them finish their sentences" (September 15, 2017).

4.5.7 Even Positive Notes Can Have an Adverse Effect on Engagement

Installing this different dynamic was nevertheless a complex thing, and it was equally a challenge for the dancers. Neil and Jessica were contending with their own long-established work habits, their own professionally-ingrained desires to 'get it right', and their own conceptions of what constituted 'successful' or 'failed' performance. As Neil said to me one day, "the problem wasn't your directions, it was that I wanted to fulfill them in a certain way" (June 22, 2017). This challenge had to do with the congealing effects of words on the mobile and nomadic experiential textures at hand. We'd find that sometimes notes of encouragement needed to be avoided: telling the dancers I'd 'liked' a given choice of theirs could often instill an implicit desire to repeat that choice in the next run – which was, often, no longer an authentic response. As Thea said, any compelling decision in an improvisation usually "isn't really the 'thing' – it's more about what was around it, the conditions leading to it" (July 13, 2017). For this reason, she often felt hesitant to mention the 'good' moments in an improvisation, "because when you put words to it, it crystallises things somehow, and then suddenly those words are there in the space with it" (ibid.).

As we approached our public performances, I learned more and more that, counter-intuitively, my role as choreographer was in "not getting in the way of your creation" (July 11, 2017) as I said to the dancers: to the best of my ability, to let these independent agencies play out in the precise environment we had established.

4.6 Presenting *while_vague*

As mentioned, our research concluded with two public presentations of material. As the project progressed, it became clear that I wanted the presentations to mirror as much as possible the 'research' aspect of our work, and for these

presentations to be as 'bare' as possible. We presented four of our practices (the Tongue, Rocking, Moving in Slow-Motion, and the Massage). The dancers would transition from one practice to another in as simple manner as possible. For instance, the source of music for the presentations was a laptop computer set up to the side of the studio, and the dancers, when possible, would be responsible for starting and stopping each track. It was equally important that we present in a technically 'dry' setting, without any scenography or lighting design: I did not want to dramaturgically 'shade' the work they were doing with the presentational trappings of stage performance.

### 4.6.1 Decision to Include a Participative Body-Scan in The Presentations

Late in the process, we decided that at the beginning of the presentation, I would invite members of the audience to occupy the space of the studio, and to participate in more or less the same body-scan we did at the beginning of our rehearsals. This scan lasted ten to twelve minutes, with my guiding the attention of the participants through their own sensorial field, ending with a minute exploration of the sensations of the tongue. This finished, the spectators would return to their seats, and Jessica and Neil would continue their Tongue Practice (and proceed with the rest of the presentation). The idea was to bodily prepare the public for a certain type of viewership: one the one hand, giving them a moment to 'arrive in the room', which had proved to be so important to us during rehearsal, and on the other hand, hopefully generating a similar sensorial experience to that of the dancers and calibrating the room to a similar textural frequency of attention.

### 4.6.2 "Not Trying to Be Interesting": Performance, as Practice, as Research

Two comments from the dancers are evidence, from my perspective, of at least partial success at establishing an environment of mutual trust during this project, in which the dancers' own subjective research took precedence over other concerns. The

first is from Neil who, in one interview, remarks that during our public presentation, "I wasn't worried about being interesting" (Neil 2). He goes on to say,

> "[This] is different from most dance processes I've been involved with, in terms of what we're trying to share. I've felt particularly unstressed about impressing an audience, or about being able to 'make the piece happen', This process was more about my ability to be present in my experience of the 'thing', rather than it being about the 'thing' itself" (Neil 2).

Neil's comment indicates to me that our focus on developing 'inward-facing' experiential scores facilitated him in taking ownership of the material, so that even in front of an audience he managed to foreground his own experience.

The second comment comes from Jessica. At the very beginning of the first presentation, while engaged in the Tongue Practice, Jessica becomes aware that one windowed end of the studio, which had always been light and spacious during rehearsals, had now become darkened and crowded by the fifty or so spectators sitting there. Faced with this new information, and with a simple desire to acclimatize herself, Jessica immediately and flagrantly breaks the 'fourth wall' and draws her gaze across the crowd as she dances. She explains, "I wanted to accept them. I wanted to stay genuine (*je voulais essayer d'être juste*)" (September 15, 2017). As a choreographer, I am highly gratified to note Jessica's desire to authentically remain connected to her own curiosity, and, further, to note that she felt empowered to make such a candid decision.

4.6.3 An Injury and Some Consequences (Take Two)

Before concluding, an occurrence bears mentioning – one that lends a measure of nuance to the notion of liberty I have evoked just above: during our performance on Friday September 14th, Jessica suffered a fairly severe injury to her right knee. While the performance happened without incident, and though she went home without any pain or indication of injury, Jessica woke up early the next morning with her knee the

size of a football[102] – the result of an acute bursitis. To everybody's dismay, Jessica was visibly limping when she arrived at the studio for the performance Saturday night.

Though I freely offered the option to cancel, after lengthy discussion we came to the collective decision to pursue that night's presentation. The notion of a 'collective' decision in this case, however, is complicated. I made it as clear as I could that the choice was entirely Jessica's, and that I would cancel the presentation without hesitation at her slightest indication. Nevertheless, having often performed with injuries (an evening-length solo with a subluxated shoulder, for instance), I'm quite intimate with the impulsion to 'play with pain'; the bare fact is that Jessica's decision to proceed was done under pressure. Such decisions are the result of a complex mix of pride, expectation, wanting to share what you've been working on for the past months, and not wanting to disappoint the institutions and individuals you are working with. Though Jessica has fully recovered and her career is unabated, her injury persisted for several months afterward. I am therefore left to wonder whether a truer form of leadership would have consisted in proactively cancelling our presentation – to take that difficult choice off of Jessica's plate.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I gave an account of the research process towards the choreographic étude *while_vague*. As we've seen, my collaborators and I were engaged in building practices that would provoke what I initially referred to as 'polyvocal body-states', but later settled on naming 'vague body-states'. Simultaneously to this, we were also building a collective understanding between us of the experiential features of these strange, effervescent states of attentionality. A third branch of our research was in learning to work these attentional states into choreographic structures.

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[102] That's an exaggeration but that's the way these stories go.

The singularity of the modes of embodied attention the dancers were inhabiting while dancing *while_vague* – or, I should say, their singular divergence from habitual or quotidian forms of embodiment, leads me to believe it's possible to view these choreographic practices as a form of Lepecki's "dance as critical theory and critical praxis". I find it compelling that the tricky mechanics of these body-states, in a sense, *obliged* us as a group to install radically horizontal and anti-authoritarian relational dynamics in the studio, dynamics that were in marked contrast to the studio environments of my professional past. In Chapter V, I will discuss how I have come to understand the politics of such a 'critique as practice', how it might operate in a performance setting, and how it is possible to see these horizontal relationships in the studio as embedded with dramaturgical importance.

CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

My intention here is to articulate what the qualitative results of this study, as outlined in the preceding chapter, might offer my artistic practice going forward. I will discuss this along three lines; this will consist first in framing choreographic state-work, as I had initially intended, as a form of embodied critical praxis; second in how that praxis might operate through performative presence; and third in addressing the shift that occurred, during our research, in my understanding of both the locus and function of dramaturgical processes in dance-making.

As we saw in Chapters I and II, I hoped to deploy choreographic state-work as what Lepecki calls "critical theory and critical praxis" (2004, p. 6): as an immersive and corporeally-experienced reappraisal of historically-constituted and habitual modes of embodiment. Observing the growing fluency with which Jessica and Neil were able to willfully modify the scope and texture of their attention to their own bodies, their environment, and each other, and noting the uncanny nature of their descriptions of these occurrences, it seems clear that the dancers were in states of embodiment widely divergent from quotidian modes of attention. For instance, while discussing the Tongue practice, Jessica remarks how

> "I've never felt 'life' through my tongue before. I don't *see* in the same way, when I'm present to that sensation [of the tongue] – my eyes don't *look* in the

same way. It affects everything I know. Thirty-six years old, and I'd never read space in that way, never moved in that way" (July 6, 2017).[103]

Jessica further asserts elsewhere that this experience "summons a sort of confidence and calm", going so far as to say, "it allows the discovery of another self" (Jessica 1).[104] In a similar vein, Neil notes how

"it was really wild, because my very experience of my own borders shifted. It's like "oh I'm physically larger than I have the habit of experiencing myself". It was satisfying to be like, *'Oh, there's more there'*, or 'Oh, my normal perception of my reality is diminished, and can be blown up...'" (Neil 3).

Let us recall that these expansive experiences were far from easily accessible, and demanded particular and refined attentional dynamics – constantly renewed and rigorously re-interrogated – in which the dancers made delicate and sophisticated negotiations between perception and action. When they were capable of fostering these dynamics of attention, they had vivid experiences of 'vague' embodiment in which their behaviour was not plainly attributable to a central 'doer', and emerged instead out of a plurality local micro-desires. This subtle but emphatically-felt dispersion of corporeal agency accompanied startling (and deliciously weird) sensations of bodily expansion and porosity, of a dissolving of time and space, and of a woozy 'dampening' of the narrative self.

These body-states, therefore, were in marked divergence with quotidian modes of embodiment – what Deleuze and Guattari call the "organism", that "coagulation, and sedimentation" of discursive and non-discursive normative overcodings (1987: 159) that determines day-to-day experience of the body. This sense of plasticity to

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[103] "Je n'ai jamais senti la vie par ma langue. Je ne regarde pas de la même manière quand je suis dans cette sensation – mes yeux il regardent plus de la même manière. Ça affecte tout ce qui est connu, quand même. Jusqu'à 36 ans, je n'ai pas lu l'espace comme ça, je n'ai pas bougé comme ça" (July 6, 2017)

[104] "Ça amène une sorte de confiance et de calme. Ça permet de découvrir un autre soi." (Jessica 1).

one's experience, as I hope to argue below, can further lead to the plasticity of subjectivity itself.

5.2 Guattari: Subjectivity-Production and Aesthetic Creation

To flesh out this argument, let us re-visit Félix Guattari who, in his final work *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm* (1995), provides a succinct assertion of the radical contingency and historicity of identities, as well as of their radical mutability.[105]  Despite my tendency to see myself as a closed and fixed entity, fully formed and ontologically distinct from my surroundings, Guattari argues that this 'I' is an open-ended "machinic assemblage" (p. 24) of diversely-textured real and virtual materials – continually composed and re-composed out of cellular proliferations, chemical reactions, and sensorial data, and simultaneously out of discursive, technological and institutional processes.   Many of these processes wholly traverse and exceed a narrow definition of the 'individual' and, furthermore, "cannot be described as human" (p. 9).

According to such a model, the individual I take myself to be (as I sit here writing this paragraph) is an 'assemblage', continually in the process of being produced and reproduced at the intersection of such things as the luminosity of my screen, the specific way I grasp my chin (inherited from my father), a peripheral awareness of the sounds of surrounding conversations, of an approaching thesis deadline, of non-explicit codes of acceptable behaviour in a café, as well as a vague notion of the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship and a continually thwarted desire to take a nap[106] – this tangle of differently-textured data form a "sensible and significational chaos" (1995, p. 16) that I am constantly at work 'cohering' into the experience of being a person.  Though I might have the impression of moving freely within all of

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[105] Similar to what we have seen in his earlier collaborations with Gilles Deleuze, and in the writings of Michel Foucault.

[106] Among other things.

this, certain (or most) of these vectors, as we saw in Chapter II, are embedded with discursive and non-discursive – and often oppressive – overcodings.

Guattari argues that by conceiving the self as a machinic assemblage – as "a fuzzy aggregate, a synthesis of disparate elements" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 345) – we can learn to swap out or tinker with certain of these moving parts. Doing so with the proper critical awareness and attention means that a "reappropriation, an autopoiesis of the means of production of subjectivity" (Guattari, 1995, p. 13) becomes possible, providing us with an agency to enter into new assemblages with other discursive and material components; such a conceptual shift might thereby produce a subjectivities that are resilient, self-directed and "auto-enriching [their] relation to the world in a continuous fashion" (p. 21).

Such 'tinkering', for Guattari, is a process already active in the field of art-making: in acts of aesthetic creation,  artists "detach and deterritorialise a segment of the real" (1995, p. 131), in order to bring that segment into new configurations.  This detachment-and-deterritorialization schema applies just as well to the composition of a symphony as to my rhythmically tapping my pen against this table – in both cases, portions of the materiality of 'sound' are extracted and reorganised (with different degrees of complexity) into 'music'.  Each portion becomes a "partial enunciator" (p. 45): the tapping of my pen, detached from the sounds in the room, is bestowed with the partial capacity to 'speak' or signify, in what he calls a "quasi-animistic" (p. 131) transformation.[107]  By shifting perceptions out of the "semiotic net of quotidianity" (p. 90), such a creative act (however simple) confers "a function of sense and alterity to a subset of the perceived world" (p. 131).

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[107] The same extraction-and-deterritorialization mechanism is at work in more conceptual organisations of the 'real' effected in 'ready-made' artistic creation.  Were I to record a soundscape of this café, or invite spectators here for an active-listening session, those sounds – being listened to in a certain way – would similarly become aesthetic partial-enunciators.

Guattari's characterization of art-making enters into a satisfying resonance with the quasi-animism of our particular vague-body research – in which Jessica and Neil sought to confer functions of sense and alterity to portions of their own sensorial fields, and where we were treating these plural and local corporeal desires as 'partial enunciators'. But in a larger sense, body-state work in general, as an immersive and experiential choreographic practice, places the dancer in direct contact with the striated apprehension of their inner and outer worlds, dialing up or down the frequency and intensity of one strand or another; when taken in a certain way this can result in a plastic reshaping of the texture of experience. Conceiving the body as a "field", as choreographer Meg Stuart does, composed of "mental streams, emotions, energies and movements" (2009, p. 21), which are capable of colliding, interlacing and fusing together in different configurations, is just the sort of machinic assemblage that Guattari is addressing, and I would argue that this type of work consists in temporary and playful, but nonetheless rigorous, aesthetic remodellings of the dancer's self.

In severing percepts and affects from their contextual surroundings, and in disrupting habitual codes of signification, the aesthetic act, for Guattari, is fundamentally emancipatory:

> "Every aesthetic decentering of points of view, every polyphonic reduction of the components of expression passes through ... a chaosmic plunge into the materials of sensation. Out of them a recomposition becomes possible: *a recreation, an enrichment of the world (something like enriched uranium), a proliferation not just of the forms but of the modalities of being* (emphasis added, 1995, p. 89)

The fact that Jessica and Neil's own 'chaosmic plunge' into the materiality of sensation seems to have led both to the 'discovery of a new self', and to a sort of *'Oh, there's more'* epiphany, resonate for me with the kind of 'nuclear enrichment' of experience I'd had in those workshops with Benoit Lachambre and Linda Rabin that had originally prompted this study. I would therefore maintain that these practices approach the "paths leading to radically mutant forms of subjectivity" (p. 131) Guattari

writes of. Put another way, such practices begin to resemble the creation of Foucault's "polymorphic relationships with things, people, bodies" (cited in Shusterman 2008, p. 32). Finally, following Dempster, I would argue that our research managed in its best moments to generate modes of dancing that are "not simply reflective of a current social reality, but can be a gesture towards some other", capable of projecting "other possibilities, alluding to a future, to a past, and to another present" (1995, p. 24).

However, the fact of producing these experiences in the studio, within our team of collaborators, represents only part of the equation. The larger question for this project, since its inception, was 'how to get this stuff to talk', as I once bluntly put it. My choice to invite spectators into our research at the end of the process was motivated by a desire to develop strategies for sharing these mutant forms with a public. As we will see, my conception of just how this stuff was 'talking' – or more precisely whether it was even talking at all – would undergo a few fundamental shifts over the process.

5.3 'How to Get This Stuff to Talk' (1): Performative Presence

One thing that became clear was that, in addition to the more bluntly perceivable phenomena of the dancers' movement and behaviour, we were also working in fairly concrete ways with a broader spectrum of information - information that was at once material and immaterial, corporeal and incorporeal, signifying and a-signifying. I therefore became interested in how this subtler, immaterial, incorporeal information might be treated choreographically – might be deployed in time and space.

A concrete way to discuss this 'incorporeal information' is from the perspective of 'stage presence'. I have had the experience (I will assume that the reader has had the same) of having my attention drawn to a singer, dancer, actor (or bassist, or orchestra conductor) without exactly being able to say why. I would tend to chalk this up to their 'stage presence' – though let us call it here 'performative presence'. A fairly ill-defined notion, but with a fair degree of anecdotal or common wisdom around it: as

something hard to teach – you either 'have it or you don't' – but also as something that deepens with age and experience – older actors and dancers can, happily, 'do more with less', because they 'possess presence' in greater degree than their younger counterparts.

5.3.1 Barba's Dilated Body

Italian director and theorist Eugenio Barba calls performative presence an "elementary energy which seduces without mediation... a 'seduction' which precedes intellectual understanding" (1985, p. 369). Barba ascribes this unmediated seduction to how performers adopt extraquotidian muscular 'architectures' (obeying different rules from day-to-day muscular tonus), causing the "particles" in their bodies to become "excited and produce more energy" (ibid.): moving faster, farther apart, taking up more space. The resulting energetic "waste, [or] excess" (p. 370) emitted by the performer, even in immobility – a "pre-expressivity ('*pré-expressivité*')" (p. 255) that is already at work prior to any action – leads to what Barba calls a "body-in-life" or "dilated body" (1985, p. 369).

Barba's examples mostly draw on classical dance and theater forms (Kathakali, Balinese Theatre, Ballet) that rest on clearly-defined postural codes, which result in 'muscular architectures' designed to facilitate such a pre-expressive transmission. We might extrapolate from Barba's model, in imagining the pre-expressivity of a 'dilated' body as mobilized, in turn, by the performer's perception: that the particular qualities of a given 'body-in-life' might be engendered by the singular ways in which they attend to their own bodies and surroundings – what Leao calls "extra-quotidian perception" (2002, p. 212).[108] This enables us to incorporate into our notion of performative presence the less-coded but no-less potent embodied and energetic 'sheddings' of Benoit Lachambre and Linda Rabin during the performances that, years back, had so

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[108] "Le passage d'une perception usuelle passive à une perception extraquotidienne active" (Leao, 2003, p. 212).

inspired me. In those moments onstage, both performers were managing to transmit with their body the specific and manifestly extra-quotidian ways in which they heard the sounds in the space, saw their surroundings, 'felt' the attention of the public.

Our research, then, might be usefully understood as a particularly choreographic mobilisation of performative presence: we could say that our focus on the specifics of the dancers' extra-quotidian perception had the effect of 'exciting the particles' in their bodies in precise and changing ways. 'Particularly choreographic' because, as we've observed, this extra-quotidian attentionality was quite mutable, and even geographically mobile – it was prone to expansion, contraction, and migration, as well as to shifts in texture and tone. We therefore sought to address the plasticity of this attentionality *as* choreographic material – developing the dancers' fluency in modulating their attention, and in effecting willful, geographical, time-based and textural shifts in their extraquotidian attentionalities.

5.3.2 The Affective Investment of Space

To further this line of reasoning we might invoke Jose Gil's observation that a dancer doesn't "move in space" but rather "secretes, creates space with movement" (2006, p. 21). Gil therefore provides us with a model of performance in which performers transform their surroundings through embodied imagination: they bestow on their surroundings a "diversity of textures", rendering them "dense or rarified, invigorating or suffocating" through the work of their "affective investment" (p. 22). We might equally recall the "fictive kinesphere" posited by Bernard which, as he writes, "haunts and 'overwrites' (*'surdétermine')* the visible kinesphere through its power of projection, both enunciative and expressive" (2001, p. 120).[109] This expressive projection, for Bernard, constitutes a "poetic 'aura'" emanating from the

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[109] "Une 'kinesphère fictive' qui hante et surdétermine la kineshpère visible par toute sa force de débrayage ou de projection, à la fois énonciatrice et expressive" (Bernard, 2001, p. 120).

performer's body, which in turn "touches the imagination of the attentive spectator" (p. 100).[110]

We can therefore qualify the research for this study as producing precise *qualities of enunciative investment of space*, as a function of moment-to-moment sensorial experience. As we saw in Section 4.5.1, I continually called on the dancers to modulate the space evoked, or secreted, by their bodies – shifting, for example, from an 'implosive' introspective spatiality, confined to the borders of their bodies, more or less 'erasing' the objects around them, to a firmly quotidian space in which those objects returned to their habitual significance. Our scores also invited the dancers to attend to their surroundings in diverse ways, for instance by moving in near-constant and intensive relationship with one another, without ever looking at each other directly or making eye contact (Section 4.5.4). These scores were designed to complexify their perception of space, requiring them to engender, and continually calibrate themselves to, a subtle but sophisticated network of attentional registers. These 'acts of perception' effectively populated or invested their energetico-spatio-temporal surroundings with the enunciative force of their imaginations.

This is esoteric terrain. These were certainly phenomena that hovered at the threshold of perception; as the reader might imagine, I found myself differently-able, from one day to the next, to apprehend the phenomena described above. When I was more distracted or 'in my head', it would seem as if nothing was occurring at all. However, as the project progressed, I found myself learning how to watch this material, and how to perceive these subtle frequencies of information. As the dancers' bodies-in-life 'went to work' on me, and as I became successful in fostering a sensorial receptivity similar to that of the dancers – attuning myself to the frequencies of information their dilated bodies were emitting – I would become rapt with what was in

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[110] "Cette 'aura' poétique qui émane de la danse des meilleurs artistes interprétant les écritures chorégraphiques les plus riches ou les plus variées et qui touche les imaginaires des spectateurs attentifs" (Bernard, 2001, p. 100).

front of me, not so much *watching* Jessica and Neil, but rather *receiving* their bodies-at-work with my own body, in a way that was calming and profoundly satisfying.

Barba writes that a dilated body does its work not only by emitting energy, but in effect "dilates the cenesthetic perception of the spectator" (1985, p. 253).[111] [112] This, therefore, provides us with a model of the esthetic and communicational specificity of vague embodiment (and by extension other choreographic body-state work): as a creative practice in which performers invest somatic attentionality in order to generate singular modes of extraquotidian 'attending-to'; a practice in which they deploy these attentionalities through the secretion of particular textures and tonalities of space – phenomena which, because they reside on the porous frontier of the visible and the invisible, require a dilation of the perception of those watching. Such a dilation requires of the spectator a form of attention more that closely resembles simply 'settling into one's own body', than the more restricted mode of 'watching'.

5.3.3 Offering Strategies of Attunement to the Spectator

I should note here that, during creation, it occurred to us that I had become a particularly 'attentive spectator' (in Bernard's words), as a result of my daily participation in the Body-Scan Practice – that my cenesthetic perception was already prone to being 'dilated'. By including an audience-participation body-scan at the beginning of our presentations, we hoped to invite a similar perceptual attunement in our spectators: a buffer that might conceivably loosen the quotidian frequencies of perception with which they had arrived, allowing an easier alignment with the extra-quotidian awarenesses the dancers were mobilizing.

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[111] "Il dilate la perception cénesthésique du spectateur" (Barba, 1985, p. 253).
[112] Cenesthesia is defined as "the general feeling of inhabiting one's body that arises from multiple stimuli from various bodily organs" (Mirriam-Webster online dictionary, n.d.).

## 5.4 A Dramaturgy for Vague Bodies

### 5.4.1 'How to Get This Stuff to Talk' (2): The Wrong Question

It was becoming clear that "how to get this stuff to talk" was perhaps not the most appropriate question to ask – that it failed to address the specific mechanics of the material in front of us. A more useful way to think about our work was, as Thea suggested, not in terms of how it was communicating, but rather of how it was *operating*. During one meeting, she observed that our material was behaving in different ways from my previous work: it was "asking for a different kind of viewership" (August 23, 2017) from the representational, entertainment-based spectatorship I had formerly sought in my past work: "it's not asking me to be titillated, it's not trying to entertain me. It's at work; the work is working" (August 23, 2017). Her remarks reflect a wider post-dramatic performative paradigm that rejects the traditional esthetic mechanics of 'representation' and instead addresses the materiality of performance itself (Lehman, 2006) – a perspective that, as articulated by Barton, invites "creator-performers and audience members alike to recognise and work with what a performance is *doing* rather than what it is trying to *be*" (Barton in Hansen 6).

The impact of Thea's collaboration cannot be overstated in this regard. By way of her casual but information-dense, almost *koan*-like remarks, she facilitated a second, meta-paradigm shift in my artistic practice, which was as consequential as the first, somatic paradigm shift at the heart of this study. While it had its own distinct implications, this shift entered into resonant conceptual, esthetic and political alignment with that first, and it was essential in bringing the project to term in front of an audience. This shift essentially consisted in a new understanding of the locus, texture and function of dramaturgy in dance-making.

### 5.4.2 Making a Product

Thea had already collaborated with me as dramaturg on several professional productions in Montreal, and she was a close confidant in my dilemma as a creator: between an instinctive penchant for creating humorous and virtuosic 'crowd-pleasing' work, and a desire to delve into more focused choreographic research; striking a balance between these two poles was an ongoing, years-long conversation between us. In those collaborations, I held to an inherited understanding of 'dramaturgy', grounded in "modernist coherence and poetic unity of composition", which sees choreographic projects as more-or-less successful – read: legible – performance-products or event-objects, to be more-or-less easily 'consumed' by the spectator in apprehending them. Imschoot observes that since the "Flemish new wave" of the 1990's[113], working with a dramaturg became a sort of capitalistic "fetish production model of collaboration" (cited in Hansen, 2015b, p. 9). As Hansen writes, Imschoot warns of the neoliberal hazards of seeing the dramaturg as an "agent of stability" who might "direct, contain, or translate raw or risky experiments of choreographers into a form that was valued and comprehensible to organisations and audiences alike" (ibid.). I'll refrain from an evaluation or critique of historical approaches to dramaturgy but suffice it to say that at the outset of our project this was the kind of guidance I sought from Thea: that she might help me grapple with the thematic, affective and conceptual drives at work in my choreography, and to corral those drives into the legible 'takeaways' of a piece.

Essentially, for me, the dramaturgical process as I understood it consisted in constructing thematic 'superstructures' for choreographic material – building conceptual or significational frameworks that *surrounded* the actual choreographic work, in order to brace that content into coherence or stability. To continue this perhaps clumsy architectural metaphor: during our research, Thea instead went to work *collapsing* these superstructures *into* the material, *into* our studio-time itself, and into our interactions themselves, so that dramaturgical processes threaded their way through

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[113] (when certain collaborators began to be credited as 'dramaturgs' in the programme credits of Jan Fabre, Anna Theresa de Keersmaeker and Meg Stuart)

each choreographic choice, and importantly, into the interpersonal space of the studio environment. As we moved closer to our presentations, then, our work was in discovering the dramaturgies already residing in our *approach to* our research: the ways in which we, as a group, attended to the dancers' experience of that material, to the structures we imposed (or refrained from imposing) to shape it, and to the kinds of things we said (or didn't say) to each other about the work being made.

5.4.3 A Distributed Dramaturgy: Bodies as Sites of Knowledge-Production

Throughout our time in the studio, Thea worked to dispel the notion that dramaturgical responsibility rested solely with her, and instead invited us to consider the unfolding processes of dramaturgy at work in the dancers' bodies and subjectivities while they were navigating these vague body-states. Re-visiting Thea's remarks, we can observe her highlighting the import and significance of the dancers' experience itself:

> "what's beautiful is how you're attending to the emergence of this material, and to your own relationship *to it* as it's happening. How knowledge is currently being produced in your body. There's work, there's labour, we see you noticing these nuanced differences in your relationship to the material" (July 11, 2017).

In viewing Jessica and Neil's dancing in this way – as a process of emergent knowledge-production – it became possible to understand their richly-lived and singular experiences of embodiment *as* the content of the work. Rather than searching out dramaturgical logics that would shape these experiences 'into' material, we needed to look no further than, as we just saw in Section 5.3, recognizing the plastic materiality of the experiences themselves – their capacity to expand and contract, or to shift in tone and consistency. This was therefore a matter of 'drilling down' into the specifics of the dancers' perceptions: their plasticity and mobility, their palpable divergence from quotidian forms of attention, and the challenges inherent to sustaining them.

These attentional qualities *themselves* formed a sort of 'danced dramaturgy' when the dancers would (for instance) modulate the speed, intensity or amplitude of their explorations, or else disengage from their body state or shift into another, all while remaining aware of each other's location and activity. While dancing in this way, Jessica and Neil were also constantly attending to the intensity, amplitude and location of their own mobile, extraquotidian attentionality. These scores for "constraining or expanding" the dancers' awareness (Thea, August 23, 2017) generated particular textures of listening in them, which in turn generated particular textures and porous modes of behaviour and movement.

Midgelow writes that by "locating the body as a site of meaning, interaction, and perception" in this way, "the body and dramaturgy are intertwined" (2015, p. 109): a dramaturgy embeds itself in the dancer's moment-to-moment experience. In such an approach to experience,

> "the body – its corporeality, its knowings, and implicit memories – is recognized as the dramaturgical content that is simultaneously emerging as it is being performed (p. 110).

By considering the dancers' experience as a performative, emergent and embodied dramaturgical process, Thea therefore would seem to have been nudging us towards approaching dramaturgy "as a distributed system", a model advanced by Vass-Rhee (2015, p. 89). This model stems from the theories of 'cognitive distribution' developed in the 1980s, which argued that cognition, far from an internal and solitary 'computational' activity, is an inherently embodied and social process "carried out across distributions of individuals" (2015, p. 90). While realising a common project, individuals working locally on specific tasks and with specific tools form a robust, complex and responsive cognitive network that is larger than each of them. Such a model aligns readily with Foucault's analysis of power "as something which circulates.... [n]ever localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never

appropriated as commodity or piece of wealth", but rather "employed and exercised through a net-like organisation" (1980b, p. 98).

In a choreographic context, such an approach shares dramaturgical knowledge across a "wider and spatiotemporally shifting environment that includes the social and material settings of activities," in our case with Jessica and Neil themselves as poles or sites of dramaturgical process. As we will see, however, our work of structuring our material was a matter of bringing to light the dramaturgical processes circulating in other – manifestly immaterial and non-human – locations: of recognising the proto-agencies embedded in and exercised by our choreographic practices, tasks and scores, in the various ways they intervened on the dancers' behaviour.

5.4.4 A Further Distribution of Dramaturgical Agency

Hansen argues that, by approaching choreographic projects in certain ways, a dramaturg becomes "a facilitator of a particular way of thinking and looking at the effect of interactions" (2015b, p. 1) – instilling certain perspectives on how information is exchanged between members of the group and within the material itself. Such an approach "can distribute dramaturgical agency and responsibility among collaborators and spectators, or embed it in a task-based system of dance generation" (p. 1-2) – installing a perspective in which dramaturgical processes are at work in locations other than the human bodies and subjectivities in the room. In this way, as Hansen writes, "a dramaturg in the studio means more dramaturgy" (p. 9). Such a distributed notion of dramaturgical agency already seems to align with our research into vague embodiment, in which we were seeking to provoke a similar distribution of corporeal agency.

Hansen's expansive framing of dramaturgical agency, as not limited to human doings, necessarily opens this discussion onto a 'New Materialist' perspective, which considers vitality, agency and generative capacity as not limited to human

subjectivities, and instead as inherent properties of matter. From such a perspective, the ability to 'do' exists in different measures across ontological types, and supposedly inert matter can be seen as "promiscuous and inventive in its agential wanderings: one might even dare say, imaginative" (Barad, 2015, p. 388). Viewing agentic capacity as "differentially distributed across a wider range of ontological types" (Bennett, 2010, p. 9) allows us to dress a more accurate portrait of the mobile and porous dramaturgy Thea brought to this project.

5.4.5 Attentional Tensegrity

Such a perspective renders it clear that the dancers weren't 'doing' these dispersions of corporeal agency on their own. Rather, these dispersions resulted out of precise couplings *between* the dancers and our studio practices (whose parameters and constraints channeled their experience and behaviour). The interaction between these two actants – the demands of the practice and the response of the dancers – in turn produced sophisticated and hard-to-generate *attentional dynamics* of listening-and-doing: dynamics which *exhibited agencies of their own*, in their recalcitrant tendency to slip out from under us when conditions weren't favorable.

Therefore, in turning to the question of structuring our work, it becomes more evident why our body states 'defied structure', as Thea remarked. Each body-state was an unwieldy porous assemblage, composed of dancer/practice/attentional dynamic, as well as the heterogeneous tangle of affective and sensory data produced therein – a "confederate agency of many striving macro- and microactants" (Bennett, 2010: 23). In activating a vague body-state, the dancers were invoking a collectivity of 'motivators': the parameters of the Tongue Practice; a lingering confusion about those parameters; the stimulation of caffeine; an itchy nose; the glimmering, twenty-year-old residues of a former ballet teacher's remark. Bringing these heterogeneous elements into a particular constellation caused certain types of things to happen for a certain length of time.

These constellations were held together by the most delicate binding force: a brittle form of 'attentional tensegrity',[114] formed out of plural, fine-spun threads of actions, habits, perceptions, affects. It was this weakly-bound confederation of actants that 'went to work', so to speak, navigating the choreographic structures and tasks we put in place.

As we saw in Section 4.5.2, the confederate agencies of our body-states would 'slip out from under us' when they were forced into blunt or rigid structures: structures that might be easily-identifiable and therefore compositionally satisfying to me,[115] but which did not account for the shifting textures of the dancers' awareness. These were instances, as Thea pointed out, of creating "something that is a 'thing': a 'thing' that's different from the thing you're doing" (July 10, 2017). In their easily-legible solidity, therefore, these *things* – these rigid structures – were essentially cutting through the weak binding-energy holding our body-states together. The dancers were certainly capable of following such structures but, in doing so, had already slipped out of their fugacious body-states: they would be doing the choreography, but no longer doing the research.

The sophisticated and delicate mobility, evanescence and sensitivity of these attentional states, which went into system-failure when faced with overly-blunt or rigid choreographic structures, were thus 'demanding' equally sophisticated, sensitive and mobile choreographic structures: responsive frameworks with a similarly delicate but plural network of weak binding-energies – providing enough focus to channel our explorations, but also possessing enough flexibility to encompass the many variables that surface in the unpredictable environment of improvisation. As we've seen, these

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[114] Buckminster Fuller's elision for 'tensional integrity'

[115] The reader might imagine such hard-edged compositional motifs as both dancers coming to a sudden full-stop, or drawing clear spatial trajectories; as seen in Chapter IV, we might arrive at something approaching these motifs, but only when the dancers were singularly unconcerned with *hitting their marks*, and were primarily engaged in their own experience.

structures were grounded in what I've called 'experiential' or 'inward-facing' scores, which, rather than being focused on external effects (spatio-temporal configurations of bodies), were in direct articulation with the dancers' subjective experience. The resulting agentic assemblage, in entering into articulation with a choreographic score, would immediately result in the emergence *of a new assemblage*, with its own complex confederation of striving human and non-human agencies.

## 5.4.6 A Dramaturgy of the Interstice

Our dramaturgical process therefore consisted, first, in identifying and differentiating the various dramaturgical poles present – the sites at which dramaturgical processes were playing out: the dancers' bodies and subjectivities, and the various disincarnate sites of agency that constituted our embodied practices, the attentional dynamics issuing from them, and the structures put in place to channel activity and attention. The second step was a process of investing care and attention in the relationships *between* these poles – and therefore in recognising that there were further dramaturgical meta-agencies produced at the site of each coupling.

I would cautiously call this a 'dramaturgy of the interstice' or of the 'in-between', a dramaturgy continually circulating within the space *between* dancers, textural attentionalities and choreographic structures, in a multidirectional network that, eventually, includes the spectator's attention. Such a porous, interstitial conception of dramaturgy brings this later phase of the project's creation and structuring into stronger conceptual resonance with the initial physical research. If, returning to Deleuze and Guattari, we imagine vague embodiment as a genus of the Body without Organs, an entity "defined by axes and vectors, gradients and thresholds" (1987, p. 153), then an expanded notion of agency allows us to view the project itself as a similar intensive multiplicity: a grouping of vaguely-attributed movements, affects, speeds and slownesses; a sedimentation of perceptions, thoughts, notions.

5.4.7 A Rather Unexpected Pragmatism

Paradoxically enough, despite the complex and (conceivably) headache-inducing schema I have just drawn – of potentially infinite circulations of human and non-human agentic capacities at work in the studio – installing such an interstitial dramaturgy was actually a matter of focussing on purely procedural, even prosaic details of the work.  As Bauer writes, when it relinquishes the goal of creating specific outcomes and products and instead focuses on creating conditions for complexity and emergence, "dramaturgy is becoming radically pragmatic" (2015, p. 48) .  Such a pragmatism "neither aims at a particular result nor rests on a priori principles.  Instead, it is concerned with action, or the capacity for action" (ibid.).  Maintaining the agentic capacities of our mobile choreographic architectures, and the dancers' dramaturgical engagement with them, was therefore not a matter of long discussions about how all of this was working, but instead about instilling an environment of mutual trust in the studio.

Thea's main work, here, was in encouraging conscientiousness and care in the ways we spoke to each other about the material, and about each given exploration.  As we have seen, this was a matter of continually re-stating the dancers' authority and expertise in their own moment-to-moment research, and actively working against the ingrained legacy of power-relationships in the studio.  This required a great deal of emphasis, considering the dancers' habitual, professional propensity for trying to 'get it right',[116] and required a softening of my approach to rehearsal.  This meant such things as continual encouragements to "feel free to make any 'mistake' again the next time" (July 11, 2017), to "stay in touch with what you have to do in the moment" (ibid.) and to not allow me to "[get] in the way of your creation" (July 20, 2017).  As we saw, it also meant expanding the scope and definition of our research to incorporate 'failure'

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[116] We might recall Neil's comment to me, when he told me "the problem wasn't your directions, it's that I wanted to fulfill them in a certain way" (June 22, 2017).

into our notion of 'material' – further emphasizing the dancers' *work* over any specific results.

These interpersonal dynamics were also active in more intangible ways: in the time we took to arrive in the studio; in the ritual of warming up collectively; in the slower pacing of rehearsal; in the tones of our voices; in the fact that I found myself "listening to them a lot, and letting them finish their sentences" (audience discussion, September 15, 2017). These extra-choreographic, affective, in-studio choices, manifesting a particular care towards the relational and interpersonal space between collaborators, and instilling a particular attitude and tone in relation to the material, was a primary circuit of this interstitial dramaturgy.

5.4.8 A More Porous Authorship

Another effect of this interstitial dramaturgy is that it severely troubles the notion of authorial stability. My sense of authorship necessarily threaded its way outwards, to circulate in the spaces between the bodies of the dancers, the material, and our choreographic structures. This was a matter of learning that, as Thea said, our work was "about creating conditions, rather than trying to locate something exact" (July 11, 2017). It was also a question of reconciling myself to material that would be 'boring if it was always succeeding', and that I had little control over our results. Lepecki writes that processual approaches to dramaturgy requires "an 'anexact yet rigorous methodology not aligned with knowledge and knowing, but with the work of errancy... to err, to drift, to get lost, to go astray" (2015, p. 54). This rigorous, methodical wandering, coupled with what he calls an "ethical persistence" (ibid.), is a process of steadfastly travelling alongside the work, letting go of one's expectations, and instead attending with care and intention to the material conditions of creation. This meant keeping my head down and making sure that conditions were in place for emergence and complexity. Rather than solely heeding my own desires about our material, this

meant acknowledging that "it is the work itself that has its own sovereignty, its own performative desires, wishes, commands... its own authorial force" (p. 60).

To me, the most gratifying examples of this porous authorship are the dancers' comments, about their experiences performing *while_vague* (cited at the end of Chapter IV). As we saw, Neil remarked that he felt

> "particularly unstressed about impressing an audience, or about being able to 'make the piece happen', This process was more about my ability to be present in my experience of the 'thing', rather than it being about the 'thing' itself" (Neil 2).

Such a lack of 'performance pressure', and such a firm commitment to the research, overriding his own concern for the gathered spectators' expectations, demonstrates to me that Neil took on full-bodied authorship of the work. We also saw, in a similar vein, that Jessica began her performance by passing her gaze over the audience, in order to, as she describes it, 'get used' to their presence. The reader can likely imagine the centuries' old discursive heritage of the 'fourth wall' – that performance convention invisibly separating performers and spectators – and its weighty disciplinary persistence. Even when we as performers are invited to 'acknowledge' the audience, this is never anything less than a fraught and anxious moment – "Do I welcome them? Confront them? Am I being too intense? Who do I look at, for how long? Be casual, but don't *perform* casual: don't look like you care, but don't look like you don't want to look like you care."

The fact, then, that Jessica's motivation for passing her gaze across the spectators was entirely somatic[117] – that she sensed the freedom to do so, for the purpose of absorbing the presence of new bodies into her sensorial experience – is an immensely satisfying aspect of this project for me. It implies that she took this research on in ways I would not have imagined at the outset. However, a closer look at this

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[117] I am aware that using of the term 'entirely' here is problematic, but bear with me.

scene reveals an even more porous form of authorship at play: in Jessica's account, the audience's presence manifested itself to her as a 'shadow' on one side of the studio (sitting as they were in front of a window that had formerly been unobscured). Our expanded view of agency allows us to imagine that moment (and every following moment) of the performance as partially authored by those spectators, or, more precisely, by the shadows cast by their bodies.

5.5 Metonymical Rather Than Metaphorical Politics?

As mentioned in Chapter I, Lepecki contends that choreography's best bet at political efficacy is in "considering literal and metonymical (as opposed to analogical and metaphorical) relations between dance and politics" (2006, p. 11).[118] We might therefore understand Lepecki as arguing that choreography cannot enact a politics, or at least not effectively, through presentation or portrayal[119] – but rather by steadfastly examining the codes and power structures at work in the studio, and, from there, by infusing the material conditions of both creation and performance with an intentional politics.

In this light, it is fascinating to me to imagine this research – in which we were evoking a porous, democratic and horizontal inner-politics of embodiment – as 'proposing' to us a porous, democratic and horizontal politics of creation: a politics playing out in the studio, necessitating careful and conscientious communication and relational dynamics between collaborators. A politics also, furthermore, manifesting

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[118] Metaphor describes the mechanism through which two separate ideas are combined into a single articulation, while metonymy makes use of the close association between two things. For example: were I to call somebody 'a real Deleuze', I would be metaphorically referring to their style of analysis or, possibly, the impenetrability of their writing. Conversely, were I to say that I must 'go back to Deleuze', I would be employing a metonymy – using 'Deleuze' as a stand-in for one or several of the philosopher's writings.

[119] A straw-man example of such an unexamined, metaphorical mobilization of dance-politics would be, say, a ballet production using fictional tableaux to denounce inequality, produced under hierarchical power-structures, presented in the rarefied environment of the theatre, before an audience that knows to sit quiet and watch.

itself in the thoroughly porous, horizontal authorial dynamic at the heart of the project – whose authorship was so radically distributed that it became shared not only between myself and the other artists in the room, but even further outwards with a shifting constellation of non-human agencies, exercised by our practices, our structures, and the shadows cast by those watching.  I would argue then, that this research did indeed manage, in Foucault's words "to fiction something... a politics that doesn't yet exist" – or at the very least, a politics of artistic creation that hadn't previously existed in my own choreographic imagination.

Which, as a final thought, is as good anargument as any – after these 130 pages of metaphor-heavy, theory-driven academic research – for me to go back into the studio and get to work.

CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary of Results

This study was motivated by my growing awareness of certain disciplinary discursive legacies embedded in my understanding of my own body, legacies that had played out in unexamined ways in my professional choreographic practice. Following a series of startling and emancipatory embodied experiences I'd had while practicing somatics, in which my relationship with my body was wholly transformed, my intention here was to experiment with somatic practice during choreographic research. My goals were twofold: in a pragmatic sense, I wanted to better understand what specific challenges somatic experience would present to choreographic creation, and what creative strategies might emerge to treat the choreographic plasticity of such radically subjective experience. Secondly, the embodied experiences I'd accessed in somatic practice – widely divergent as they were from my habitual modes of embodiment both in- and outside of the dance studio – seemed to offer a form of experiential or embodied critique: these self-generated heterogeneous experiences of the body seemed to have "loosened the grip, the seeming naturalness and necessity" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p. 203) of those habitual modes. I was therefore curious whether, by choreographically addressing the plasticity of experience fostered by somatics, dance-making might emerge both as "critical theory and critical praxis" (A. Lepecki, 2004, p. 6): a practice gesturing towards other, firmly emancipatory approaches to the body and its inner and outer worlds. I wondered whether dancing bodies, addressed as entities "occupied... only by intensities", by "waves and vibrations, migrations, thresholds and gradients" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 153), might constitute a pacific but radically political creative practice.

I therefore undertook the creation of the choreographic étude *while_vague* with two dancer-collaborators and a dramaturgical advisor. Over time, our somatic studio practices reliably engendered a vividly *porous* sense of agency in the dancers – in which their movement was less firmly attributable to a 'centralized' intentionality, but rather emerged from within a wider field of plural and local bodily desires. We eventually referred to such states of attention, in which movement was difficult to precisely source, as 'vague embodiment' or being in a 'vague body'.

As we saw in the previous Chapter, I came to understand that in order to become vectors of critique, these vague forms of embodied research required an approach to choreography, a relational ethics of the studio, and a politics of spectatorship that were all radically different from those I had begun the project with. Most succinctly, this was a transition from product-oriented to process-oriented choreography, or working with what a performance is *doing* rather than what it is trying to *be*.

The 'interstitial dramaturgy' that thus emerged here was "radically pragmatic" (Bauer, 2015, p. 48), in the sense that, rather than addressing the thematic consistency of an eventual finished product, our dramaturgical process hewed closely to how our work was *operating* in the studio: it required paying specific care to building relations of trust between collaborators, and fostering within the dancers a sense of freedom and expertise in addressing the research. In this way it also led to a 'piece' that was less easily or univocally attributable to me as 'choreographer'; whose authorship was instead thoroughly and porously shared across the group, as a shifting and unstable entity emerging out of the plural and local agencies exercised by each collaborator.

Furthermore, as we also saw, bringing these forms of research into a choreographic assemblage required an epistemological paradigm shift towards textures of knowing in which the research might essentially call these choreographic approaches, relational ethics and spectatorship politics into being. This meant that the horizontal distribution of agency in the body we were invoking, in order to be

structured choreographically, required a similar horizontal distribution of agentic capacity writ large, in which the ability to 'make things happen' was no longer the sole province of living subjectivities, but was instead shared across diverse ontological types brought into loose and occasional confederations. Due to some deliciously circular logic, this worldview of distributed agency supports the possibility that specific states of attention – as federated agencies of bodies, practices, movements, discourses and air currents (among other things) – can speak: can suggest or propose, in sophisticated and remarkably precise ways, how to structure one's material, how to structure one's rehearsals, and how to share space with a potential public.

6.2 Pertinence and Limits of the Study

I am aware that the context of academic research, removed from the stresses and pressures of production, allowed us to explore zones of creation that would not have been afforded me in my professional practice. I also found myself in this project surrounded by three outstanding collaborators whose intelligence, sensitivity and commitment lent this research a fluidity and organic quality that only occurs rarely.

The results of this study represent the experiences of a particular group of artists during a specific period of time in a fairly rarified context, and therefore cannot be considered as generalizable in any sense. Qualitative research in a general sense is not concerned with the generalisation of its data, but rather with an attempt to render its data in detailed description, while also teasing out, to the degree possible, certain lines of reflection that other researchers might then appraise from their own perspective, to then judge whether to apply to their own future research. Both somatic experience and choreographic creation are plural entities with many strata, and the reflections surfacing here are the results of the constellations of data that our group of collaborators happened to concern ourselves with. Other, no less pertinent, constellations would certainly emerge from the diversely-textured esthetic and interpersonal exchanges arising out of a different group of choreographic collaborators.

ANNEX A
PERSONNEL BIOS

Thea Patterson:

Thea Patterson, is a choreographer, performer, dramaturge, and researcher. Her practice revolves around an experimental performance practice working with an acute set of questions around the nature of objecthood, perception, vitality, and time. From 2007 to 2015 she was dramaturge, and co-artistic director with Peter Trosztmer on seven works including *Eesti: Myths and Machines* (2011)selected as top dance work of the year by the Voir. She was also co- founder of the collective The Choreographers (2007-2011). In 2016 Thea completed her Master's at DAS Choreography, Amsterdam. Currently she is working on projects in Montreal, Portugal, Amsterdam, and was recently selected to participate in a choreographic residency with Deborah Hay in Austin, Texas. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Performance Studies at the University of Alberta and is co-editor-in-chief of *Intonations, an* interdisciplinary peer reviewed journal.

Jessica Serli:

Graduated from LADMMI (2005), Jessica Serli is active on the Montreal scene as a dancer, choreographer and rehearsal director. As a performer, she has participated most notably in the projects of Estelle Clareton, Line Nault, Milan Gervais, Andrew Turner, Bouge de là, Audrey Bergeron, Amélie Rajotte, Normand Marcy, Jacques Poulin-Denis and Emmanuel Jouthe. As a rehearsal director and outside eye, she has also collaborated with, among others, Annie Gagnon, les Archipels, Bourask, Esther Rousseau-Morin & Sylvain Lafortune and Alan Lake Factori(e). As choreographer, Jessica has presented -40 Degrés (2005), Entre-Deux (2008), La Fièvre (2013), Petite faille solo (2015) and Faille: Deux corps sur le comptoir (2016-2018).

Neil Sochasky:

Originally interested in the visual arts and athletics, Neil Sochasky discovered contemporary dance via philosophy, and studied dance science at York University under Dr. Donna Krasnow MSc PhD. Immersing himself in anatomy and somatic studies, he developed uncommon abilities for analysis and synthesis which have enabled him to overcome major injuries and pursue parallel careers in multiple fields. Since 1999, he has worked as an interpreter, rehearsal director, dramaturge, and choreographer with theatre and dance companies in France (Cie Pavlov, Transborder, Theatre Naranja, etc.), Canada (Margie Gillis Dance Foundation, Holy Body Tattoo, O Vertigo Danse, Sylvain Émard Danse, Toronto Dance Theatre, etc.) and in the United States (Belinda McGuire Dance Projects). Neil has taught on the faculties of L'École de danse contemporaine de Montréal, at L'École Supérieure de ballet du Québec, and

as a guest at La Sorbonne, Concordia University and Ballet Divertimento. His own choreographies have been performed in Paris, in Los Angeles, in Melbourne, and in Montréal.

Andrew Turner:

Leaving studies in history and philosophy behind him, and without any prior training, Andrew Turner was inexplicably accepted to Concordia University's Dance Program in 2001. He has since performed extensively both in Montreal and abroad, with such companies as Par BL(eux), O Vertigo, Human Playground, PPS Danse, Trial and Eros, Pigeons International, Maribé sors-de-ce-corps, Bouge De Là, Cie La Tourmente, and others.  As a choreographer his work has received a number of awards (including Prix OQAJ, Prix OQWBJ among others), and has been presented in Canada, France, Sweden, Belgium, Switzerland, Mexico and the United States.

ANNEX B
VIEWING INDEX OF VIDEO DOCUMENTATION


Video documentation of *while_vague*:
https://vimeo.com/234597337

Viewing index:

|   | Section | Time Code |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Somatic Body-Scan (audience participation) | 1:10 – 14:00 |
| 2 | Tongue Practice | 14:30 – 28:45 |
| 3 | Rocking Practice | 14:30 – 41:45 |
| 4 | Extreme Slow Motion | 41:45 – 49:45 |
| 5 | Les Particules | 49:45 – 52:05 |
| 6 | Synaesthetic Massage | 52:10 – 59:30 |

# UQÀM | **Département de danse présente**

### *while_vague*
un mémoire de recherche-création du programme de maîtrise en danse



*while_vague* est le résultat d'une recherche de création menée avec deux collaborateurs-artistes dans le cadre de mon mémoire de maitrise.

Celle-ci se centre sur la façon dont une attention raffinée vers la sensation somatique peut laisser émerger des impulsions et désirs existant sous le seuil de l'*embodiment* fonctionnel ou quotidien. Lors de nos expériences, une porosité apparaît entre le mouvement volontaire et involontaire, et le "je" se confond à travers les multiples voix exerçant une influence comportementale sur le corps. Un subtil décentrement de la subjectivité du protagoniste en mouvance résulte en ce que je nommerai un "corps polyvocal". Le fruit de nos recherches sera présenté sous la forme d'une série d'études chorégraphiques, développant certaines des stratégies employées en studio.

Recherche-création: Andrew Turner
Directeurs de recherche: Armando Menicacci et Johanna Bienaise
Équipe de Création et interprétation: Jessica Serli, Neil Sochasky
Durée: 45 minutes

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**14 et 15 Septembre, 2017, 19h30**
**Local K-1150, Pavillion de Danse | 840 Rue Cherrier (Metro Sherbrooke)**
**Entrée libre sur réservation | bolduc.alain@uqam.ca | 514 987 3000 #7852**

# ANNEX D
# EXCERPTS : CREATION JOURNAL
## (*THÉORISATION ANCRÉE*: *CODIFICATION*)

**Tuesday, July 4, 2017 / Rehearsal #8**

Context:

Solo rehearsal with Jessica (Neil is out of town for work). 13:00-16:00 (3rhs) at the Pavillon de danse UQAM, Studio K-3220

Summary of activities:

Warmed up with a body-scan, Jessica and myself. Spent time introducing her to a practice by Swiss choreographer Thomas Hauert called the Quiet Scientist, for generating a separation of movement in the limbs. You can practice first with the arms, then with the legs. A slow progression of exercises, that treats each movement of each joint (shoulder, elbow) separately. By the end of the progression, you're trying to initiate movements each joint of each arm separately from each other, in a highly-complex, challenging coordination exercise. It's a huge mind-puzzle and you can feel your brain overheating, but Jessica had a lot of fun, and we tried it in the space.

Also re-did a version of Meg Stuart's Your Own Personal Future Body score (from Are We Here Yet), where you pretend that you are in a completely unfamiliar corporeal vessel, and all of your sensations, your perceptions, the connections between body parts, everything is totally new to you. Taking nothing for granted, letting micro-movements play across your whole body. Trying to experience the body without the over-coding of familiarity of habit. Some very interesting moments of what seemed like totally discoordinated behaviours. Had a very interesting conversation with Jessica about what happened in the same score yesterday. Began an exploration in 'infusing' different body parts with emotion or affective qualities, also from M. Stuart. Not sure if that is going anywhere but will continue to explore

Comments:

I have been enjoying the research with this Quiet Scientist practice, in that you end up getting your body-parts to move in independent ways. But I'm afraid it's leading us a bit astray – it's very virtuosic, and very much a cognitive exercise: it's not and can't be a body-state, it's not leading to any specific texture of experience. I think I'll have to let it go. On the other hand, Jessica had a super-interesting moment while working in Future Body, where she was kind of bored, and then suddenly in a flash she was super-engaged, and moving in very unexpected ways, and feeling impulses driving her in all sorts of different directions. But then I messed it all up!! I asked her to stand up, and the quality of the thing changed, she was distracted afterwards and never found the original feeling again... Super-interesting, she said that when I asked her to stand up it was like her old way of moving came back and settled on her.

State of the dancers:

Missing Neil's presence for sure, but it's never not a pleasure to work with Jess, she's extremely funny and engaging, and always highly-engaged with the work.

**Monday, July 17, 2017 / Rehearsal # 12**

Context:

Group rehearsal with Jessica and Neil. 11:30-15:30 (4hrs), at the Pavillon de danse UQAM, Studio K-4110.

Summary of activities:

Began with a collective warm-up body-scan. Then went into the Tongue Practice, and tried to introduce simple scores into the practice: 'landmarks' for them to try and 'hit' during their explorations. We talked these through beforehand, made a list of each element, and the dancers would try to the best of their abilities to 'agree' while dancing, that they were doing one or another

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**Commented [AT1]:** Continual Body-scan collective warm-up

**Commented [AT2]:** Quiet Scientis Practice (which we eventually dropped)

**Commented [AT3]:** Stuart's Future Body Practice

**Commented [AT4]:** Infusing body parts, eventually dropped.

**Commented [AT5]:** Not looking for 'cognitive' material where the dancers are thinking through things. Non-virtuosic as well

**Commented [AT6]:** Textures of experience

**Commented [AT7]:** A sudden onset of engagement

**Commented [AT8]:** Evaporation of the body-state...

**Commented [AT9]:** Continual collective Body-Scan warm-up

**Commented [AT10]:** Beginning phase of scores and structuring material

of the landmarks. Also worked more extensively with 'Coming out of it', where they disengage from the Tongue body-state to simply it in the room, the way they would normally.

We did one run like this, then discussed everybody's impressions, then did a second run with a few modifications and discussed again.

Comments:

I'm trying to get to a point where there are dramaturgical concerns operating in the material. How can I get this stuff to talk? There are moments of magic that happen when Jess and Neil are at work. These moments are fragile. They seem to have to 'do with transformation: when somebody goes from a state of deep internal concentration to a state of more or less quotidian attention. Subtle but fundamental shifts in the type of space they are secreting.

It feels like magic when they shift into something quotidian, you realise then that they were really busy with something, you're not sure what it was but you can then tell how hard they were working previously. How they were inhabiting a different space, a more internal space.

Or, today, suddenly both of them found themselves sitting, facing front, kind of breathing together – minimally moving up and down – I become aware of this as a presentational space with a left, a right, a "front". Had them follow eachother in terms of facing, sort of flocking exercise. Very effective, creates a unity between them, becomes choreographic

**Wednesday September 6, 2017 / Rehearsal # 25**

Context:

Group rehearsal with Jessica, Neil and Thea. 12:00-16:00 (4hrs) at the Pavillon de danse UQAM, in the old Agora Space.

Summary of activities:

Began with a group warm-up body-scan. We also did an exercise with the gaze, where I guided the dancers in different ways of seeing: widening and narrowing the focus, using peripheral vision versus foveal, moving the gaze 'into' the body, beyond the horizon, onto an object. Wanted to invite them into different uses of their eyes.

In the Tongue score, we're trying to introduce more speed into the explorations, the architecture practice is now officially part of the score. Had them 'flock' while doing architecture, which we are calling 'flockitecture'. Also continued to practice flocking in the Tongue, which is coming along better than in previous days.

We did a full run of most of the practices we're working with. We are experimenting with this structure:

1. Tongue Practice
2. Dancers leave the space, re-enter
3. Rocking Practice, using Eliane Radigue's 'Kyema' as music
4. Extreme Slow Motion. Using different folk songs as soundtrack
5. Synesthetic Massage

Comments:

I'm not 100% sure this is the structure that works for a presentation, but in its present form we might as well try it a few times and see how it goes. Right now, the transitions between each section are very frank, there's no attempt to make a 'nice' transition and this feels right, feels unforced – it also contrasts quite nicely with how 'guilelessly' immersed the dancers become in their explorations. It gives everything a matter-of-fact quality that is almost funny considering how weird what they're doing is...

**Commented [AT11]:** "Coming Out of It" task

**Commented [AT12]:** "how can I get this stuff to talk?" How to make it choreographic, enunciative...

**Commented [AT13]:** Secreting space in different ways depending on their level of concentration

**Commented [AT14]:** Retroactive effect of shifting out: you see how they were working before

**Commented [AT15]:** Shift in my own awareness because of their shift of awareness

**Commented [AT16]:** "Flocking" exeercise

**Commented [AT17]:** Continual Body-scan collective warm-up

**Commented [AT18]:** Exploring the gaze. Never became a practice

**Commented [AT19]:** Continuing to try to get them to work with speed.

**Commented [AT20]:** Flockitecture practice

**Commented [AT21]:** A draft of structure, which ends up being our final structure

**Commented [AT22]:** Frank transitions. No attempt at finessing them in a representational way

**Excerpt #1: Tuesday July 11, 2017 (beginning at [35m 11s])**

Andrew: What I was really digging was the... before I asked you to go into speed, was the communication of dynamic, like I find that you were really 'calibrated' energetically, or that you were calibrating yourselves...

Neil: Today was totally different for me. My experience of tongue was almost opposite to my regular experience. And so I'm learning *more* about it. So, I was really aware of where my tongue ends. And particularly the sides and the bottom back here, which is totally new so my experience of being without edges was like 'ptptp' [onomatopoeia]. It's like, I'm very aware of my edges right now. So, I was conflicted, "am I tonguing, or am I not tonguing". So, it was really… I was doing a lot less listening. So, whatever you were reading was not something I was intending, or experimenting with, except for very small portions of it.

> **Commented [AT23]:** Difference in day-to-day experience

> **Commented [AT24]:** What is 'authentic' Tonguing?

Jessica: J'ai oublié que hier on s'était dit d'être le même corps, d'être à l'écoute, fait que, je n'ai pas écouté du tout!

> **Commented [AT25]:** Seems to completely negate my comment about them being 'calibrated'

Neil: But it was super-weird, so I'm wondering, if that's the direction my tongue is going in, should I be true to that evolving experience of my tongue? Or should we try to stick with what we had discovered? What is the intrinsic thing? When do I know I'm slipping into the imitation of the thing rather than doing it, and how do I learn more about it rather than just trying to catch it?

> **Commented [AT26]:** What is the intrinsic thing? Authentic experience rooted in the present moment versus attachment to past iterations

Andrew: Absolutely, I really think this is... It's an evolving thing and the evolution is going to be dictated by what you discover. So, like go into it, it's the same thing with speed, like, it's an evolving thing and it's going to involve… that's why I was saying 'making forays' into speed is a way to come back into your comfort and your remembered sensations, and go out into it. And you're going to fuck up, too.

> **Commented [AT27]:** Self-directed exploration

> **Commented [AT28]:** Encouragement to not worry about 'getting it right'

Neil [37:43]: Yeah, yeah! But I mean 'slow' too, slow wasn't a place of knowing, like "it's all foray"! But because things were *sharper*, when I went faster, I was like "what I'm doing is I'm losing 'that thing there', with 'this there'. And it was like "ok can I maintain that and go fast?" "no, I can't!" [tongue voice] "Where is that living? Oh, maybe…" so it was like. It's something I'd like to do more of.

> **Commented [AT29]:** Attempting to access speed

Thea [38:39]: You guys were already 'doing' speed, but when he asked you to do speed you started '*doing*' speed. Which is that weird thing when you get a direction that you kind of have to, like… *perform it*. So, it's interesting to see how different those two things were, and how they read differently. But, you had already 'forayed' into speed, and then you would come back to it, so I think the indication was to see if you could re-enter that space that you'd actually already been in. [39:14] What I noticed when you started doing speed rather than just being in speed, was that you did lose a bit of this connection with each other, not that you guys were overly attempting to emote connection to eachother, you just were… like when you were saying 'I wasn't listening in the same way', that you actually maybe were, you were just maybe not conscious or it was actually much more somatic. [39:48] Because there was something happening with speed that was not about choosing to move fast. So that's something just to say, you know, "oh, it was an interesting terrain to start to tap into. [...] Like you were into a mode of moving where you were just moving

> **Commented [AT30]:** 'doing' speed versus 'being in' speed

> **Commented [AT31]:** Unconscious connection to each other, and how that can be more compelling than 'trying' to connect...

without thinking and speed can be a good tool for that sometimes. Where I move before I have time to be conscious of the movement.

> Commented [AT32]: Speed as a way to get out of one's head

Thea [40:30] I still have this weird desire, somehow, cause I see it as I'm watching, and it's coming off strongly, of being one body, and I feel like somehow, I don't know if articulating it will just be the same thing and then you just try and do it, but I'll just say it anyway, which is this idea to, even [...] trying to, even though probably you will never do the thing the person's going to do next, in your own body also be like "what I'm doing now is what he's going to be doing next". And it won't be, in fact you won't ever be, probably, but there's a [moment] where you take your own subject position and move it into the other person's body so you're adding another layer of task where you're like his body is there with you... it's like a sideways way of seeing." [41:34]

> Commented [AT33]: Getting a note and then trying to 'do' it

> Commented [AT34]: Futuring

> Commented [AT35]: Multiple layers of tasks

**Excerpt #2: Wednesday August 9, 2017 (beginning at [26m 14s]**

[Andrew: how did it feel?] Jess: Ben, moi je sens la méditation, le trance proche. Me sentais partir. Tu parlais d'état de trance, ça l'amène assez rapidement. La sensation… Je sentais tout mon énergie monter, descendre, puis comment la contrôler.

> Commented [AT36]: Meditation/trance states during Rocking

Neil [26:31]: I felt like I was more "aware" than "tranced". Mais, c'était super-agréable. Et la façon que je peux me séparer de moi-même. Like, I do it with my eyes closed, or mostly with my eyes closed. It was really interesting how I could create just a cylinder of experience. And it was really funny how … I like playing with my eyes leading, and then if I decided to switch to my 'esquions' leading'… There was this really [onomatopoeia; clumsy-sounding] - I didn't know how to connect those two and it was fun. I could get really aware of that cylinder of air [in the trachea], I could make adjustments in myself based on it, it was really satisfying. It was a whole different thing to do the spiral with the arms, like to have the arms initiate it. It felt way more *aggressive*. But the play between locking the eyes versus leading with the eyes or following with the eyes, like they were really fun experiences, also with the eyes closed, that felt very different.

> Commented [AT37]: Nuance: hyper-awareness rather than a trance state

> Commented [AT38]: Different experiences depending on the initiating from different body parts

Jess 28:56: Moi j'ai aimé jouer avec tout ce que t'as nommé mais on peut jouer avec beaucoup de choses. Tu sais, t'as dit qu'on pouvait rester dans une globalité ou fixe, de jouer avec le mouvement qui vient, redescendre dans le pied, tu sais, il y avait plusieurs couches qui font que t'es occupé tout le long et il y a de quoi de calmant.

> Commented [AT39]: Keeps them experientially busy

Neil [29:14] I'd have a hard time getting bored.

> Commented [AT40]: Idem

Jess [29:20]: Je ne sais pas de l'extérieur mais de l'intérieur je pourrais faire ça longtemps.

Andrew: [30:29] I'd say visually becomes more sort of dynamic when there's... when you're working with asymmetry. If it's always symmetrical, then it looks a little more like Qi Gong... [exasperated sound]. [whispering] I'm just giving corrections here.

> Commented [AT41]: Clumsy, very directive note

Neil: Well exploring asymmetry is totally interesting...

> Commented [AT42]: I like how Neil reformulates my note here into something positive

Andrew: Yeah, there you go. Exploring asymmetry is good. And playing with speed is also very interesting.

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*Entretien d'explicitation*, conducted by Myriam Saad with Neil Sochasky
August 21, 2017 (beginning at [19m 30s])

M: So, you're facing the window in the studio?

N: Yeah. And standing in a slight fourth, left foot front, parallel-ish, rocking from, ah, in sort of semi-curve between front and back leg, and I think that after having spent a while just sort of finding my center of weight oscillating, I ended up switching more to witnessing the way the ear was in space. … and realising that it had become more of a circular trajectory than a back and forth, sort of like the shape of the border of a piece of rice. And I let that transform more into a full circle and found that my head was beginning to tilt towards the right ear, as that transition happened. I was there for quite a while. And then as I sort of opened my focus to a more general sense of what the body was doing, realised that my left arm had risen and that my arm had its own not-parasitic but sympathetic gesture that was happening in space. And it seemed to be very comfortable – I hadn't noticed it happening – but it wasn't… it didn't feel like an extraneous part of the experience, and it became a really refreshing thing to then notice and focus on, and witness its own sort of evolution in elbow and hand.

M: Ok, so, you're standing, you're facing a window? Do you hear anything? Or do you see anything? Are you alone?

N: No, both Jessica and I are there, and then Andrew is sitting near the wall to which I'm facing. And there would have been music playing, it would have been a repetitive drone, or something of that sort, but I don't have a particular memory of which track it was.

Myriam: Ok, so there's music. Where is Jessica?

Neil: Jessica is behind me and to my left.

M: Ok, she's behind. So, you're aware of her?

N: I'm aware that she's there but I have no idea what she's doing. [...]

M: So, you're rocking, you said something about your legs? Ok. One leg is in front of the other. And you're rocking. And as you were describing it, I could see you were also rocking on your chair. So, you're rocking. Ok. So, I'll repeat the question. How do you know that you're following or listening to your body rather than leading it?

N: I am leading my focus. So, there is sort of … I'm always asking a question, along the lines of "what is happening *here*?"

M: So, you're rocking and you're asking yourself questions?

N: Yes. So, I'm tracking a trajectory a lot of the time.

M: How do you track your trajectory?

**Commented [AT43]:** Arm doing its own thing without him realising

**Commented [AT44]:** Asking the question, what is happening here?

N: I'm focusing on my perception of the body part, or part of the body part, and using that sensation to try and focus very specifically upon limiting my perception more or less to that spot. So, that's where the choice is happening. But as I'm tracking it, I go from a generalised sense of "oh yes this body part is feeling something" to "what is this thing feeling?" "Is it feeling the entire trajectory or only part of the trajectory?" "Where are the holes in the perception of the event?" "Can I become clearer about where that is? Yes or no?" If so, great, if not, "how can I focus more specifically on that part?" Sometimes, within that trajectory, I realise for example – [rocks in his chair] I'm presently rocking, and if I'm focusing on my right ear, I'm actually also feeling my left temple, uh my right temple, closer to my eyebrow. So, if my ear isn't as able to perceive its trajectory, and my temple is, then it might just be easier to feel my temple. So, I might slide my focus in that way. But often in that attempt to improve or clarify my perception of the space I'm listening to, I'd have there be a change in speed, or I'll realise that the form isn't very regular, and in attempting to figure out its irregularity, it becomes more regular. So, the imposition of my focus adapts the motility, or the coordination, in a way that I'm not intentionally doing. There are very clear … when I'm imposing movement rather than listening, it's a very distinctly different experience. And my perception is diminished. When I'm attempting to listen and avoid imposition, the perception of that zone is increased, and other parts of my body appear to be diminished in their perception and it feels like curating something within my own perceptual sphere. And that's part of what led to that surprise, at finding my body had been doing something without me noticing it until I became aware of it. Not sure that I responded to that question.

M: well it's ok, well I suggest to you … I mean it was quite clear, but let's go back to that experience. So, you're standing in front of that window, your eyes are open, most of the time your eyes are open. How do you start moving?

N: Uh, from back foot to front foot. Pushing my right foot into the ground and causing me to rotate forward and to my left.

M: Ok, what do you do with your attention?

N: I start with… because of the way that I teach in the anatomy course (at l'École de danse contemporaine de Montréal) I have a general habit of focusing into specific places, which are ones that are related to other body practices and ones that seem to help myself and others remove extraneous tensions, and focus on coordination more cleanly, so, generally, when I begin and in this example I began with feeling the press of the center of my arch of my right foot, and the way that pushing down through that affects the center of my right knee, moves force behind the greater trochanter of my right hip, and then through the space between my sitz bones, to connect my pelvic floor to the earth.

M: So, but let me stop you there. How do you know that you're listening to a movement impulse rather than deciding on a movement choice, within what you just described?

N: Ah, well, to begin with, the beginning of each of these scores is a choice to begin. So, after I've made that initial choice to sort of begin the Rocking with that push of the foot…

**Commented [AT45]:** Sliding focus to where it's easiest to feel

**Commented [AT46]:** By bringing attention to a spot, immediately have an effect on the movement

**Commented [AT47]:** Rocking practice makes it easier to perceive when you're imposing movement

**Commented [AT48]:** Surprised by the sympathetic movement of his arm

**Commented [AT49]:** Neil is extremely intentional and present to his choices

*Entretien d'explicitation*, conducted by Myriam Saad with Jessica Serli
September 15, 2017 (beginning at [36m 42s]

Myriam : Est-ce que c'est l'état de présence que tu cherches à expliciter?

Jessica: Je pense que oui au bout du compte – par ce que ce n'est pas tant le mouvement, ou [c'est] le fait que j'enregistre une sensation, un mouvement, puis qu'à travers ça je ressens beaucoup de choses, puis qu'à travers ça je suis encore plus à l'intérieur ou plus derrière, genre et je suis capable *d'encore* voyager à travers tout ça.

M: Ok, tu viens de dire quelque chose d'intéressant. T'as dit, je suis "derrière".

J: Mais, je suis, comme… je me sens très à l'intérieur et présent mais on dirait que je suis *derrière*, dans une attention [rires].

> **Commented [AT50]:** Sensation of being 'behind'

M: Où, derrière se situe ton attention?

J: Donc, il y a quelque chose qui est plus *vaste* que mon corps [rires].

> **Commented [AT51]:** Sensation of vastness

M: Est-ce que c'est un lieu physique dans l'espace? Est-ce qu'il y a un endroit?

J: Mais, il me semble que je le sens *derrière* moi.

> **Commented [AT52]:** derrière

M: Derrière tout ton corps?

J: Oui. Oui. Assez vaste, [inaudible]

M: Comment sais-tu que c'est vaste, et plus vaste que ton corps? Comment sais-tu?

J: Euh, il y a une grande liberté… et justement c'est pourquoi je pense que je suis à l'intérieur, c'est que je… ça me ramène, si je me questionne sur cette "vastitude", je *sens* la respiration aussi, donc…

> **Commented [AT53]:** grande liberté

M: Ou se situe dans ton corps ce sentiment de liberté, ou cette sensation de liberté? Est-ce que c'est un sentiment ou une sensation?

J: Ouf il faut définir un sentiment...

M: Non, je ne veux pas que tu définisses, c'est … la question est que… est-ce que ça se passe quelque part en particulier dans ton corps? Tu la situé dans l'espace, tu as dit que c'était derrière.

J: C'est comme si je sentais le devant assez clairement, comme ma peau, mon regard, face au gens, mais qu'à partir de là, de mes oreilles et mon torse, c'est, comme, à partir du *côté* [rires], tout est ouvert. Je m'abandonne à quelque chose, c'est comme si j'étais assise sur l'air, et que je ressens la respiration en même temps. […] Donc je ne me sens pas derrière des frontières.

> **Commented [AT54]:** sensation of openness on the sides..

> **Commented [AT55]:** assise sur l'air

M: Puis il y a quelque chose qui s'ouvre sur les côtés, c'est ça t'as mis les mains près de tes oreilles?

J: Oui. Mais à partir des oreilles.

M: Puis la liberté de … t'a parlé de "liberté".

J: Par ce qu'il y a comme un réconfort c'est comme si j'étais… à cause que le mouvement se fait par lui-même, et que j'ai une écoute périphérique on dirait – et à la fois à l'intérieur - on dirait que je suis, comme, soudainement "supporté", "assis" sur quelque chose.

M: Tu es "assise" sur quelque chose bien que tu sois debout.

J: "Déposée", je ne veux pas dire assise. Mon corps est complètement déposé. Et pourquoi [je dis] "liberté" c'est que je respire au fait, je ne sens rien d'autre, plus de tension musculaire.

M: Serais-tu intéressé à creuser un peu ce moment?

J: Si tu veux...

M: Mais c'est plutôt toi… est-ce que c'est quelque chose qui t'intéresse?

J: Oui, oui. Ça me surprend d'être rendu là [inaudible].

M: Oui, c'est intéressant, selon moi. Si tu veux bien, je vais t'inviter juste à te remettre dans ce passage. Donc, c'est un passage ù on sait que t'as commencé par l'oscillation. Et ton … que fais-tu de ton attention à ce moment-là?

J: Je pense que je suis à la base concentrée à respirer, puis à lâcher prise sur les tensions, ou les surfaces, ou les quoique ce soit, qui pourrait m'intéresser d'autre.

M: Ça se situe à quelque part dans ton corps? Cette tension?

J: C'est que juste avant si je vais "avant" ce moment, c'est que j'avais une volontaire de faire partir le mouvement oscillatoire et j'en ressentais ma force, mon musculaire, et là soudainement c'est comme "*foum*", ça se fait tellement toute seul que, à l'intérieur, tout devient vaste, et je respire, et je sens plus cette tension-là, et je sens plus que… [rires]. Je sens le bras qui sont déposé sur quelque chose mais qui sont libre de ma volonté. Il y a beaucoup de choses qui se passent, boy! [inaudible]. Mais je pense qu'il y a un gros lâcher-prise, puis j'ai vraiment concentré mon attention [inaudible] sur respirer à l'intérieur de cette forme, puis, le fait que je me concentre là-dessus, soudainement un monde s'ouvre sans frontière, mise à part de l'avant.

# ANNEX G
## *THÉORISATION ANCRÉE – 'CATÉGORISATION'*

Each example below is referenced to its page number in my audio-transcription master document.

Neil: It was really nice to have that and have a sense of really the edges of things super-dissolving. But then when I wanted to do something my edges would I would lose that sense. So, it's like I had to make fewer choices, and I didn't really succeed in making fewer choices. I had to more just witness what my body would do p.4

> **Commented [AT62]:** Body porosity

> **Commented [AT63]:** Making fewer choices

N: It wasn't your directions, it was that I wanted to fulfill them in a certain way p.4

> **Commented [AT64]:** Outside directions hampering awareness

Jessica: On dirait que mon corps il est vraiment plus intelligent que l'autre fois. [...] On dirait que je n'ai pas besoin de penser puis ça m'amène dans des positions tout seul confortables… on dirait que ça écoute partout, les pieds, les mains p.4

> **Commented [AT65]:** New skills and awarenesses

> **Commented [AT66]:** Whole-body listening

N: It's definitely working as like inviting a more intelligent body in when I'm not doing it, or when I'm not doing it. P.4

> **Commented [AT67]:** New skills and awarenesses

N: My body is so different. Like, where the listening parts are has really changed. [...] It doesn't feel like it has to be "there". It is easier to... like there's a mid-focus. I'm becoming more aware of the parts that can't tongue. P.4

> **Commented [AT68]:** Awareness, and its location, changes from day to day

N: It's clear that I have to introduce the experience to different ways of locomoting (in the sense that handstands are difficult to do when in tongue - the mechanics of that are hard to maintain while keeping the proper attentionality) Body-habit. You've done this! P.4

> **Commented [AT69]:** Maintaining awareness while trying different ways of moving

N: This thing is slow and when I try to play with more speed other voices take over. This is the problem of being a polyvocal body. For example, if I'm missing vocabulary in French, my habit will be to switch to English. I'm less fluent in the thing that's newest. But I can feel it growing. p.4

> **Commented [AT70]:** Tongue seems to bring slow, languorous movement

J: Non, t'as dit d'ouvrir et je me suis mis à jouer, je jouais avec pleins de niveaux, ça allumait pleins de parties du corps p.5

> **Commented [AT71]:** Awakening different body parts

J: Une fois debout puis vu qu'il y a des tâches, dans l'infiniment petit je voyais "ah le moi revient", là je luttais contre p.5

> **Commented [AT72]:** The 'self' returns!

J: Là j'étais là, "ah, fuck!" Oui, il y avait une lutte contre… toute, debout, contre moi-même p.5

> **Commented [AT73]:** The 'self' returns

J: Notre passé est trop fort! p.5

> **Commented [AT74]:** The 'self' returns, relationship to one's past, one's habits

J: Ça dépend ce que tu cherches, mais on dirait que, oui, pour voir ou ça va, si ça c'est un [besoin] – je questionnerais si c'est un besoin pour atteindre cet état-là. Ça serait le fun de le faire, comme, au pire, trois fois cette semaine pour juste voir, est-ce que c'est ça qui fait … puis, de le faire une autre fois sans ça. Puis, ça donnerait, en tout cas, une réponse à si c'est pertinent de les faire. p.5

> **Commented [AT75]:** Question of whether the Body-scan warm-up is a necessary daily activity. Here Jess is saying no

J: Dès que tu me ramenais à ça, là, je savais… sans savoir ce que je faisais, il y avait une 100% abandon à des nouvelles informations, que je ne contrôle pas, puis qui me disent quelque chose partout p.6

> **Commented [AT76]:** Abandonment to 'something else'

J: Vu que moi, j'étais dans des nouvelles affaires, me faire donner une tache, ça l'a brusqué, mais ça va toujours brusquer, par ce que tu m'as posé une question aujourd'hui, puis, là, ça m'a brusqué p.6

> **Commented [AT77]:** Être 'brusqué': being pulled out of abandonment by outside tasks

J: "Ah, je ne suis pas prête. Pas prête à me lever" p.6

> **Commented [AT78]:** Pas prête: being pulled out of abandonment by outside tasks

J: Ce qui me parle sans même que tu m'explique toi, c'est comme les… ce qu'on est en train de faire, tu sais, de former plusieurs nouvelles consciences ou nouvelles manières d'écouter, ou de vivre ou de percevoir, comment on peut les inscrire dans le corps et devenir habile à naviguer à travers tout ça. p.7

> **Commented [AT79]:** New skills and awarenesses

> **Commented [AT80]:** New skills and awarenesses

J: Puis juste, les portes que ça ouvre rapidement, juste le visage hier, après je m'en allais puis je le vivais autrement, longtemps, je suis resté longtemps avec la sensation de ça p.7

> **Commented [AT81]:** Awareness that lasts beyond the rehearsal

J: Je suis juste dans… le plaisir de découvrir, je ne sais pas si j'intègre quelque chose mais je sens qu'il y a quelque chose qui est en train de s'ouvrir. p.7

> **Commented [AT82]:** New skills and awarenesses

J: Comme hier je sentais que je cherchais puis je savais pas qu'est-ce que je faisais puis j'étais pas dans quelque chose, puis quand tu me parlais de revenir dans le visage (je vais prendre cette exemple-là), il y a une connexion qui s'est fait avec quelque chose de plus "fort" - que je n'avais plus conscience mais que je reposais sur… euh, je veux dire qualité mais tant… une qualité qui était pas connu mais qui m'habitait pleinement… dans ma tête c'était ça qui est inconscient, c'était là, il y a une porte qui était le visage, puis à partir de là, que ça soit l'imagination ou non il y a une dimension qui était pleine. Ben pleine par ce que je pouvais m'y abandonner. Puis j'étais plus dans la demi-heure d'avant, que je suis entre quelque chose de nouveau qui me … que je prends conscience mais en même temps [inaudible - je me bats?] contre mon volontaire contre ce que je connais, tandis que dès que tu m'as ramené au visage je fais "ah" je me suis connecté à quelque chose que je pensais plus. Ce qui était.... Exponentiellement riche dans plusieurs… dans le corps dans la perception…. C'est excitant. p.7

> **Commented [AT83]:** Sudden onset of abandonment to 'something else'

> **Commented [AT84]:** Sudden onset of abandonment to 'something else'

> **Commented [AT85]:** Pleine: Abandonment to 'something else'

> **Commented [AT86]:** Sudden onset of bandonment to 'something else'

J: Exponentiellement riche [1:03:09] - c'est ce qui me fait dire "complet" dans le sens que ça a fait "ah" puis là j'avais plus à penser, mon corps était agile dans cette sensation-là. p.7

> **Commented [AT87]:** 'Complet': same as 'pleine'

J: Il y a quelque chose qui fait perdre la pensée puis qui devient une lecture complètement nouvelle, ce qui me fait dire inconscient. p.7

> **Commented [AT88]:** Abandonment; leaving behind the 'narrative self'

J: T'as plus à la chercher, c'est que t'es habité par cette information la, qui était déjà en toi dans le fond, c'est *ma* langue!… Je ne suis pas en train de rien figurer, c'est juste que ça arrive. p.7

> **Commented [AT89]:** Abandonment to 'something else'

> **Commented [AT90]:** This 'something else' is inside of you…

> **Commented [AT91]:** Abandonment to 'something else'

ANNEX H
*THÉORISATION ANCRÉE – MISE EN RELATION*

| CATEGORY | EXAMPLES<br>* Each example below is referenced to its page number in my audio-transcription master document) |
|---|---|
| Sensations of body porosity | • Mon corps a *éclaté ses limites*… ma structure au complète lis l'espace comme toutes des particules p.3<br>• N: it was like "oh my God my body is *larger than I think it is*. There was this *undoing of borders* p.37<br>• J: là je sens *plus les limites* de mon corps p.37<br>• Ce que je note c'est que ça vient chercher une *porosité* dans mes sensations, une manière *d'absorber* puis *d'écouter* p.10<br>• J: "cette espèce de *corps poreux*" p.10<br>• J: à quoi je l'ai attaché pour moi le vivre, c'est: avoir *une écoute poreuse* de l'environnement P.10<br>• N: [how can I] then also make the edges of me and the air become more **i**nterchangeabl**e** somehow? p.49<br>• T: when you were not feeling with your hand somehow it felt like your *edges* were less clear p.10<br>• N: "it was really nice to have that and have a sense of ***really the edges of things super-dissolving***. But then when I wanted to do something my edges would… [come back?] … I would lose that sense. So, it's like I had to *make fewer choices*, and I didn't really succeed in making fewer choices. p.4 |
| | • J: on dirait que mon corps il *est vraiment plus intelligent que l'autre fois*. On dirait que j'ai *plus besoin de penser* puis ça m'amène dans des positions tout seuls confortables. On dirait que ça écoute partout, les pieds les mains. p.4<br>• N: It's definitely working as like *inviting a more intelligent body* in p.4 |

| A sense of developing new skills or new awarenesses | • J: ce qu'on est en train de faire c'est de former *plusieurs nouvelles consciences ou nouvelles manières d'écouter,* ou de vivre ou de percevoir, comment on peut les inscrire dans le corps et *devenir habile* à travers tout ça. p.7<br>• "les *portes que ça ouvre* rapidement, juste le visage hier, *après je m'en allais puis je vivais autrement, longtemps, je suis resté longtemps avec la sensation de ça*. p.7<br>• "Je ne sais pas si j'intègre quelque chose mis je sens qu'il y a *quelque chose qui est en train de s'ouvrir* p. 7 |
|---|---|
| Sense of abandonment to 'something else' | • J: (future body) sans savoir ce que je faisais, il y avait une 100% *abandon* a des *nouvelles informations* que je ne contrôle pas, qui me disent quelque chose partout p.6<br>• Quand ça kick in *ça ressemble à "possédé"* dans le sens que justement il y a quelque chose de *plein* qui *nourrit,* une *nouvelle capacité.* p.8<br>• C'est *proche de possédé* dans le sens que, la minute que ça fait sens, **puis je ne sais pas avec quoi** *ça fait sens* p.9<br>• C'est comme être *possédé* par ce que *je deviens rempli d'une nouvelle information qui fait sens soudainement* avec beaucoup de choses, donc je *m'abandonne* à ça donc c'est *comme être possédé* Mais ça *ne veut pas dire "possédé"* p.9<br>• C'est comme un *corps qui se comprend* par lui-même p.9<br>• I feel the *inevitability* of a certain thing p.10 |
| Not having to think, just letting the body take over (?) | • Il y a quelque chose qui fait *perdre la pensée* […] puis qui devient une lecture complètement nouvelle, ce qui me fait dire inconscient. p7<br>• T'as plus à chercher, c'est que t'es *habité* par cette *information-là,* qui était déjà en toi dans le fond. p.7<br>• Je ne suis pas en train de rien figurer, c'est *juste que ça arrive* p7<br>• (it seems to work) si je me fais *juste écouter* p.7 |

| | |
|---|---|
| "Making fewer choices" | • N: "it was really nice to have that and have a sense of really the *edges of things super-dissolving*. But then when I wanted to do something my edges would… [come back?] … I would lose that sense. So, it's like I had to *make fewer choices*, and I didn't really succeed in making fewer choices. p.4<br>• N: I'm trying to let that [the architecture] inscribe my movement while trying to make *fewer choices* p.38 |
| Outside directions that deflate the body-states/ dialogue with the 'self' | • N: It wasn't your directions, it was the fact that I wanted to *fulfill them in a certain way* p.4.<br>• N: I would want to practice being a little *less obedient* in order to try and remain more in tune with what the body wanted to do p.4<br>• J: ah, *le moi revient*, là je luttais contre. p.5<br>• Notre passé est *trop fort*!! p.5<br>• J: j'étais comme, voyons, c'est-tu *le danseur*? P.25<br>• N: when I play with more speed *other voices take over* (going to more familiar places) p.4<br>• So, it's like an awareness that needs to grow slowly and *be introduced to other coordinations* and ways of moving…P.4<br>• it has its own blood, there's a life that *it wants to live* […] it's not really about *taming* it, it's about *moving alongside* it. p24 |
| Structure hampers listening | • Moi ce que je trouve dur c'est *comment reproduire* ça ou le mettre dans un *contexte*. On dirait tout le temps que tu *perds quelque chose* quand tu le mets en présentation ou en forme. p.8<br>• What is the intrinsic thing? When do I know I'm slipping into the *imitation* of the thing rather than doing it? And how do I learn more about it rather than just trying to catch it? P.10<br>• T: These kinds of things, they *defy structure*, they don't want to be structured. Or, in the act of structuring you create something that is a "thing", that is a thing that's different from the thing you're doing. p.10 |

| | |
|---|---|
| | • What is a *container* that is going to *hold* this? That isn't just going to *flatten it out*? And make it conform already to the things that it's already in active resistance to? p.10<br>• J: Mais c'est vraiment drôle, quand on improvisait, je savais qu'il restait devant, puis là on le set, puis je ne sais pas s'il est en train de le faire. C'est bizarre, c'est supposé *être plus clair*. P.22<br>• Thinking about *space* simultaneously is hard. Because it's such a different type of listening. But I think I could start listening to is as "listening from far and near" Because then I'm not thinking about the stage-space, I'd be thinking about *proximity-to*. p10. |
| Importance of 'verbal economy | • T: when you see something and try to put words to it (me: it crystallises somehow) and then *those words are now there in the space* with it. P.17<br>• It wasn't really a thing, it was more about what was around it. The *conditions leading to it.* P.17 |

ANNEX I
TRANSCRIPT OF AUDIENCE- PARTICIPATION BODY-SCAN
PUBLIC PRESENTATION, SEPTEMBER 15, 2017

Je[120] vais vous inviter à trouver une position confortable, soit assis sur votre chaise ou sur votre dos. Je vous invite aussi, si jamais vous sentez le besoin de changer de position, sentez à l'aise de le faire. And I'm going to continue in English, actually, here. So, if, at any moment, you need to change positions, or wiggle, whatever you need to do that will help you sort of stay present, please feel free to do so. And I'll invite everybody to close their eyes, and take a second to allow yourself to notice the points of support against your body. And from there, feeling the force of gravity as it gently traverses your body, ever-so-slightly caressing your body into the floor. And we'll take a breath here... and a breath out. And again... noticing how your body changes as you breathe in, and how it releases as you breathe out. And a third one, breathing in...

And now, bringing your attention to the whole body as a field of sensations. Noticing, maybe, without judgement, any a-symmetries that might be there. Staying in touch with the breath. And maybe working with this image of allowing the body to spread. Maybe like a puddle would, against the ground. And, from this wide lens, we will narrow down, into the feet: feeling the interior volume of the feet... feeling the space of them, as they gently spread outward. And with the breath in, moving the attention up to the lower legs, feeling, again, the interior volume of the legs. Feeling them spacious and spreading. Moving up into the upper legs, the thighs, feeling them as a spreading entity. And up, into the pelvis...

Moving the attention up again into the lower torso, feeling the belly inflating slightly as you breathe in, feeling is as a container of liquids. And up into the chest, and we allow the chest to fill in all directions as we breathe in... feeling the back, the sides, the front. Feeling the chest as spacious and spreading. Moving out, through the shoulders into the arms, through the elbows into the lower arms, down into the hands. Feeling the vibration of sensation there. Before moving back up into the upper chest. Into the neck and the throat. Just noticing the breath, as it slides in and out of the throat, before moving up into the cavities of the head. The brain cavity, feeling the volume of it. The different cavities of the head, the sinuses behind the forehead, behind the cheekbones, behind the nostrils, before settling into the cavity of the mouth. Feeling the volume of the mouth, before settling into the organ that is the tongue.

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[120] This is a transcription of the Body-Scan I guided at the beginning of our public presentation on Friday, September 15, 2017. It provides a good example of the kind of collective warm-up I would guide at the beginning of most of our rehearsals, as well as, in the last three paragraphs, of the somatic prompts that led the dancers into the Tongue Practice.

Allowing the tongue to lightly move inside the mouth. And first we'll just look at the tongue in its more tool-like function. Its dexterity, playing with the tip of the tongue against the backs of the teeth, the upper teeth, the lower teeth. And noticing the precision with which you are able to ascertain the shapes of the teeth. Running along the top, along the bottom. Bringing the sides of the tongue into play... allowing them to feel the teeth. Maybe even chewing gently on the sides of the tongue, allowing yourself to explore the hard pallet with the top of your tongue... the soft pallet... Running it out to the fronts of the teeth. Again, just feeling the precision of sensation there. There's a lot of information. Exploring with the backs of the lips, maybe even allowing it to emerge from the mouth. Feeling the air out there. And then just letting it settle back into the bottom of the jaw. Feeling the volume of it. Now, noticing its capacity to spread. I guess almost as a 'manta-ray-like' rippling and undulating surface. Playing with subtly shifting the texture of that surface, the tonus. Allowing it to ripple. Seeing how far back you can allow this ripping to happen, this spreading... how far back can you feel it? How far back into your throat?

And now, maybe take a 'swallow' here. Just noticing the dexterity, again, of that action. It's sort of a mixture of voluntary and involuntary movement. A very precise series of actions that are happening. And taking another swallow, and seeing how far back, and how far down you can follow the 'swallow'. And with that, just again, allowing the tongue to float. And seeing if you're able to allow that undulation to inform your head. Seeing if you can follow the tongue, the movement of your head. Doesn't have to be big... allowing the head to float, to ripple, almost as though it weren't composed of bones, just of soft tissue. Now bringing that quality of movement down into the neck, following it down to the upper-chest, the shoulders. Allowing the shoulders to ripple and to undulate, to spread, down into the lower chest, the torso. And we'll take thirty seconds or so, to allow that to play out...

Checking back in with the tongue, checking back in with the head. Again, imagining that you're only composed of soft tissue. And now, we'll allow this exploration to bring you into a roll on your side. Slowly, no rush. Before, eventually, using your arms to push you into a seated position, and slowly allowing yourself to take a seat, back where you were sitting. And turn off your cell-phones.

**UQÀM** | Comités d'éthique de la recherche
avec des êtres humains

## CERTIFICAT D'APPROBATION ÉTHIQUE

Le Comité d'éthique de la recherche pour les projets étudiants impliquant des êtres humains (CERPE 2: communication, science politique et droit, arts) a examiné le projet de recherche suivant et le juge conforme aux pratiques habituelles ainsi qu'aux normes établies par la *Politique No 54 sur l'éthique de la recherche avec des êtres humains* (Janvier 2016) de l'UQAM.

| | |
|---|---|
| Titre du projet: | The Dancing Body, the Production of Subjectivity: A Biopolitical Study |
| Nom de l'étudiant: | Andrew David TURNER |
| Programme d'études: | Maîtrise en danse |
| Direction de recherche: | Armando Amos MENICACCI |
| Codirection: | Johanna BIENAISE |

### Modalités d'application

Toute modification au protocole de recherche en cours de même que tout événement ou renseignement pouvant affecter l'intégrité de la recherche doivent être communiqués rapidement au comité.

La suspension ou la cessation du protocole, temporaire ou définitive, doit être communiquée au comité dans les meilleurs délais.

**Le présent certificat est valide pour une durée d'un an à partir de la date d'émission.** Au terme de ce délai, un rapport d'avancement de projet doit être soumis au comité, en guise de rapport final si le projet est réalisé en moins d'un an, et en guise de rapport annuel pour le projet se poursuivant sur plus d'une année. Dans ce dernier cas, le rapport annuel permettra au comité de se prononcer sur le renouvellement du certificat d'approbation éthique.

Mouloud Boukala
Président du CERPE 2 : Facultés de communication, de science politique et droit et des arts
Professeur, École des médias

ANNEX K
*FORMULAIRE DE CONSENTEMENT*

**Titre de l'étude:**
The Dancing Body, the Production of Subjectivity: a Biopolitical Study
**Chercheur responsable (directeur de recherche) :**
Armando Menicacci, directeur, 514-987-3000, poste 4794, menicacci.armando@uqam.ca, Faculté des arts, département de danse

Johanna Bienaise, co-directrice, 514-987-3000, poste : 5500, bienaise.johanna@uqam.ca, Faculté des arts, département de danse
**Étudiant chercheur :**
Andrew Turner, Maîtrise en danse, 514-276-4285, okthisisandrew@gmail.com
**Préambule**
  *Nous vous demandons de participer à un projet de recherche qui implique d'être un danseur-interprète dans le cadre d'une recherche-création. Avant d'accepter de participer à ce projet de recherche, veuillez prendre le temps de comprendre et de considérer attentivement les renseignements qui suivent. Ce formulaire de consentement vous explique le but de cette étude, les procédures, les avantages, les risques et inconvénients, de même que les personnes avec qui communiquer au besoin. Le présent formulaire de consentement peut contenir des mots que vous ne comprenez pas. Nous vous invitons à poser toutes les questions que vous jugerez utiles.*

**Description du projet et de ses objectifs**
  Mon projet est une recherche-création en danse contemporaine. Il vise à mieux comprendre les modalités productives d'un « corps polyvocal » dans un processus de création chorégraphique. Le terme « corps polyvocal » implique que les choix de mouvements du danseur émergent de multiples points d'initiation dans son corps. La distinction entre mouvement conscient et inconscient devient alors poreuse, ce qui demande que le danseur cultive un haut niveau d'attention et de sensibilité auprès de ses sensations internes. Je cherche à me familiariser avec les conditions qui favorisent cette attention, et à découvrir comment il est possible de reproduire ces conditions de façon durable dans le studio et devant un public. Ce projet inclura deux danseurs-interprètes, qui seront les participants à l'étude, et une conseillère artistique qui sera ma principale collaboratrice. Pour mener cette étude, je ferai la création de trois à quatre études chorégraphiques d'un total de 30-40 minutes qui seront présentées à la fin du processus devant un public invité et le jury.
  Cette recherche s'inscrit dans des préoccupations actuelles du milieu de la danse sur l'apport des modalités "somatiques" à la recherche chorégraphique, la collaboration entre chorégraphe et interprètes, et la nature de la relation entre corps et esprit dans le milieu de la danse. Elle s'inscrit également à la suite d'études sur les stratégies de création chorégraphique impliquant la sensation corporelle, le non-contrôle, et le rôle de l'interprète (Newell 2007, Gaudet 2012, Gravel 2012, Mazo 2014, Juteau 2016). Elle contribuera à mieux saisir l'utilisation de la sensation corporelle comme matériel chorégraphique et lancera de nouvelles pistes de réflexions sur la création impliquant des processus non-conscients.
  Durée prévue du déroulement du projet : Le projet se déroulera sur deux mois consécutifs (de juillet à août 2017)
  Nombre de participants impliqués : 2 participants plus le chercheur-chorégraphe et une conseillère artistique.
  Objectifs poursuivis : Les principaux objectifs sont d'observer les conditions productives d'un éveil actif sensoriel chez le danseur qui peuvent mener à la conscience de multiples impulsions de mouvements localisés et de noter les moments d'émergence d'un corps polyvocal lors du processus de création.

**Nature et durée de votre participation**
  À titre de participant à la recherche, vous aurez le rôle de danseur-interprète au sein d'un processus de création chorégraphique. Vous devrez participer à la création d'une oeuvre en collaboration avec le chorégraphe (le chercheur). La totalité du processus de création s'effectuera sur 120 heures, maximum. Les répétitions seront planifiées selon les disponibilités des participants et dureront quatre heures maximum avec une pause de quinze minutes au terme de deux heures de travail. Un calendrier des répétitions sera remis aux participants au début de la recherche sur le terrain et pourra être modifié au besoin (indisponibilité, imprévu, etc.).

La période de suivi : Vous serez sollicité(e) sur une période allant de juillet à août 2017.

Les répétitions auront lieu dans les studios du Département de danse de l'UQAM, au 840 rue Cherrier, Montréal, Québec.
  Vous serez observés en studio lors des répétitions, et enregistrés de manière audiovisuelle.
  Vous devrez répondre à deux entretiens semi-dirigés, d'une heure chacun, un qui aura lieu au milieu du processus en juillet, et un autre vers la fin du processus, en août. Ces entrevues seront menées par Caroline Raymond, spécialiste en entretien d'explicitation. Lors de ces entretiens, les questions porteront sur votre expérience à titre d'interprète-participant à la recherche. Ces entretiens seront enregistrés par vidéo et fichier sonore et seront par la suite retranscrits. Une copie de cette transcription vous sera fournie pour corroboration.
  Vous répondrez également à un questionnaire portant sur votre expérience à titre d'interprète-participant à la recherche, à la fin du processus. Ce questionnaire prendra à peu près 45 minutes à remplir durant la fin d'une répétition en studio. À ce moment, je quitterai le studio pour que vous puissiez remplir le questionnaire sans pression.
  - Vous devrez danser lors de deux représentations publiques de l'œuvre qui auront lieu au mois de septembre 2017. Les participants seront sollicités pour une répétition avant les représentations. Vous serez filmé(e) lors des représentations

publiques qui aura lieu à la fin du processus de création au Département de danse de l'UQAM, au 840 rue Cherrier, Montréal, Québec.
- Le chercheur participe à cette recherche en tant que chorégraphe.

**Avantages liés à la participation**
Vous bénéficierez d'une nouvelle expérience de création et vous aurez contribué à l'avancement de réflexions au sujet du corps polyvocal et de l'apport du travail somatique à la création en danse.

**Risques liés à la participation**
Comme tout processus en danse, un risque de blessures physiques est possible. Si vous vous blessez lors de la recherche, vous serez référé(e) à un professionnel de la santé compétent identifié expressément. Si vous éprouvez une douleur ou une fatigue physique intense, vous devrez le signaler verbalement au chercheur. Si cela survient lors d'une répétition, elle sera ajournée immédiatement.
Il sera impossible d'assurer votre anonymat, vu que la recherche inclura des représentations publiques de l'œuvre. Cependant, le chercheur s'assurera que toute donnée qui pourrait nuire à votre vie privée, à votre carrière professionnelle, ou votre réputation personnelle sera omis de toute publication écrite de la recherche.

**Confidentialité**
Tous les documents audio-visuels et écrits seront conservés sur un disque dur protégé par un mot de passe. Le chercheur et ses directeurs de recherche seront les seules personnes à avoir accès aux données recueillies et au mot de passe. Étant donné la nature du mémoire de recherche-création qui inclura deux représentations publiques, votre nom sera dévoilé dans la recherche.
Une captation vidéo des représentations sera effectuée et conservée par l'étudiant-chercheur. Elle ne sera jamais diffusée publiquement sans le consentement de tous les participants. Également, si dans la publication de sa recherche, le chercheur souhaite publier des images photographiques ou des captures d'écran des images enregistrées des participants, leur accord sera demandé au préalable.
La biographie complète de chacun des participants sera inclue en annexe. Les participants seront nommés par leur prénom dans le reste du mémoire. Tous les documents relatifs à la collecte de données seront conservés sous clef durant la durée de l'étude. L'ensemble des documents sera détruit après cinq ans après la dernière publication ou communication.

**Participation volontaire et retrait**
Votre participation est entièrement libre et volontaire. Vous pouvez refuser d'y participer ou vous retirer en tout temps sans devoir justifier votre décision. Si vous décidez de vous retirer de l'étude, vous n'avez qu'à aviser verbalement Andrew Turner au 514-276-4285 ; advenant un retrait du projet, toutes les données vous concernant seront détruites.

**Indemnité compensatoire**
Les participants danseurs-interprètes recevront une indemnité compensatoire (montant à confirmer en fonction du budget attribué à la recherche par le Département de danse de l'UQAM) pour l'intégralité de la recherche, à condition qu'ils la complètent. En cas d'arrêt prématuré, un montant compensatoire sera remis au participant selon la durée de sa participation.

**Assurance santé**
Dans le cadre de cette recherche, chaque participant sera responsable de s'assurer personnellement.

**Clause responsabilité**
En acceptant de participer à cette étude, vous ne renoncez à aucun de vos droits ni ne libérez le chercheur de leurs obligations légales et professionnelles.

**Des questions sur le projet?**
Pour toute question additionnelle sur le projet et sur votre participation vous pouvez communiquer avec les responsables du projet:
Armando Menicacci, directeur, 514-987-3000, poste 4794, menicacci.armando@uqam.ca, Faculté des arts, département de danse

Johanna Bienaise, co-directrice, 514-987-3000, poste : 5500, bienaise.johanna@uqam.ca, Faculté des arts, département de danse

Andrew Turner, étudiant chercheur, 514-276-4285, okthisisandrew@gmail.com

**Des questions sur vos droits?**
Le Comité d'éthique de la recherche pour les projets étudiants impliquant des êtres humains (CÉRPÉ) a approuvé le projet de recherche auquel vous allez participer. Pour des informations concernant les responsabilités de l'équipe de recherche au plan de l'éthique de la recherche avec des êtres humains ou pour formuler une plainte, vous pouvez contacter la présidente du CÉRPÉ Mouloud Boukala, (514) 987-3000 poste 5504, ou boukala.mouloud@uqam.ca

**Remerciements**

Votre collaboration est essentielle à la réalisation de notre projet et l'équipe de recherche tient à vous en remercier.

**Consentement**

Je déclare avoir lu et compris le présent projet, la nature et l'ampleur de ma participation, ainsi que les risques et les inconvénients auxquels je m'expose tels que présentés dans le présent formulaire. J'ai eu l'occasion de poser toutes les questions concernant les différents aspects de l'étude et de recevoir des réponses à ma satisfaction. De plus, je déclare dégager de toutes responsabilités la chercheuse et le Département de danse de l'UQAM en cas de blessure survenant lors de la recherche en studio. J'ai pleinement conscience des conséquences assimilées à une blessure. Je, soussigné(e), accepte volontairement de participer à cette étude. Je peux me retirer en tout temps sans préjudice d'aucune sorte. Je certifie qu'on m'a laissé le temps voulu pour prendre ma décision. Une copie signée de ce formulaire d'information et de consentement doit m'être remise.

Prénom, Nom: _____

Signature_____ Date _____

**Engagement du chercheur**

« Je, soussigné (e) certifie(a) avoir expliqué au signataire les termes du présent formulaire; (b) avoir répondu aux questions qu'il m'a posées à cet égard; (c) lui avoir clairement indiqué qu'il reste, à tout moment, libre de mettre un terme à sa participation au projet de recherche décrit ci-dessus; (d) que je lui remettrai une copie signée et datée du présent formulaire.

Prénom, Nom : _____

Signature : Date : 14 juin, 2018_____

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