Becoming Together:
Collaborative Labour in Contemporary Performance Practices

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Noyale Colin
School of Media and Performing Arts
Middlesex University

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Abstract

Performance, in its multi-participant aspects, tends to emphasise the relationship between the individual and the collective. Through an examination of practices of co-working in contemporary performing arts, and with a particular focus on choreographic practices, the thesis develops a theory of co-labouring grounded in the idea of an economy of belonging. Borrowing from Brian Massumi's concept of 'becoming-together' (Massumi, 2002, 2011), this thesis assumes that the development of a sense of belonging is bound to temporal processes of becoming, and that such transient ways of being can be identified as central to an understanding of current collective formations. The thesis argues that the notion of becoming together in performance-making is likely to promote an ethics of belonging which foregrounds the practitioner's affective commitment to the other, to relational modes of working and encompasses multiple and open-ended action modes.

Co-labouring in performance is revealed as a site of human interaction which can yield new insights into the construction of contemporary digital collective identities. Building on post- and para-human ideas of the multiplicity of self (Rotman, 2008), co-working is presented as a way to address the relationship between individual and collective becoming in advanced technological society. A central aim of the thesis is to investigate how far relational modes of working can enhance performance-making and the practitioner's experience and sense of the self. Engaging with post-autonomist ideas of immaterial labour (Lazzarato, 1996; Negri, 2008), the thesis further assesses the extent to and conditions under which contemporary practices demonstrate patterns of resistance to dominant modes of working.

The complexities of modes of co-working are examined through the use of a reflective research metadiscourse, which incorporates distinct registers of practice, commentary and analysis. These include a historical register, the use of case studies, and a practice-led stream of inquiry bound-in to and tied back to the theoretical. This approach allows for a multi-dimensional but also a critical view of modes of co-labouring; it reveals that an informed co-working is bound to the possibility of individual transformation for the co-workers in performance. In other words, the thesis argues that performance mastery (Melrose, 2003) can be seen as partly constituted by the participants' negotiation of the relationship between the individual and collective.

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Introduction

Reflecting on the dynamics of the contemporary relationships between the individual and society, philosopher Brian Massumi argues for the relevance of an economy of belonging which he assimilates to the concept of 'becoming-together'. Massumi posits that 'belonging per se has emerged as a problem of global proportions. Perhaps *the* planetary problem'. 'It offers', he writes, 'a challenge to rethink and reexperience the individual and the collective'.[1] Taking the reference point of a formation such as sport, Massumi suggests that 'players' do not 'relate to each other as discrete terms' but rather 'in their collective becoming that is the condition of a formation'.[2] For Massumi, the 'rules of the game' are post-hoc rationalisations which are 'transcendent to the play'.[3] On the one hand they preserve the identity of the game to allow for repetition, and on the other hand, they prevent any variation from occurring and therefore codify its identity. For the creative dynamic of the game (or any other formation), what matters is the 'state of being' which Massumi terms a sense of 'belonging in becoming'.[4] It is reasonable to ask whether such a 'state of being' is central to the conditions under which people engage in any kind of participative activity including modes of collaboration or working together (in performance-making, but also in terms, for example, of qualitative research practices themselves).[5]

This research undertaking seeks to develop a theory of co-labour grounded in the examination of the multi-dimensional aspects of collaborative processes in contemporary performance practice. Moreover, as an inquiry that draws consistently on a range of research practices, it comprises and records different lines of investigation, including, in the most general of terms, text-based and performance-based modes of inquiry. The main premise of this work is that although performative art forms can be seen to have an inherent collaborative aspect, it is only recently that an emphasis has been placed on

[1] Brian Massumi, *Parables For The Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), p. 88.
[2] Ibid., p. 76.
[3] Ibid., p. 78.
[4] Ibid., p. 79.
[5] See, for example, Peter Reason, 'Three approaches to participative inquiry', in Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1994), pp. 324-339 (p. 333).

problematising the roles and the influence of co-labour within the disciplines of the performing arts. Collaboration has been presented as a process which can enable artists to expand their fields of possibilities and resources.[6] Following the rise of digital, media and associated industries, including the commercial growth of the internet, creative labour has been defined – for example by Maurizio Lazzarato[7] – as a 'collective form' and is often considered to be at the forefront of contemporary economy of services and knowledge-based industries. In terms of performing arts, the use of collaborative processes has often been assimilated, as Sally Banes and David Williams suggest, to an aspiration towards the 'democratisation' of arts practices.[8] However, from a contemporary performance perspective, questions of embodiment, authorship and subjectivity pertain to any interrogation of the ways in which artists work together.[9] Overall, this project is motivated by seeking responses through a range of different modes of research practice to a set of general questions:

1. how can an economy of belonging, based in the idea of becoming-together, be related to the ways in which contemporary performance-makers work together?
2. to what extent can processes of co-working in performance practice generate positive change for the individual involved in these processes and what is the nature of that change?
3. what is the role of time in that transformation? Can these processes still produce alternative space of experimentation for arts practices and practitioners?
4. considering the complexity of co-working in performance practice, what methods of inquiry are available to the practitioner/researcher engaged in the study of creative

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[6] See, for example, Sally Banes, *Democracy's Body: Judson Dance Theatre 1962-1964* (Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1983); Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Dijon: Les Presses du Réel, 2002); and Dorothy Miell and Karen Littleton, *Collaborative Creativity: Contemporary Perspectives* (London: Free Association Book, 2004).

[7] Maurizio Lazzarato, 'Immaterial Labour', in Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt (eds), *Radical Thought in Italy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp. 132-146.

[8] Banes, *Democracy's Body*; David Williams (ed.) *Collaborative Theatre: The Théâtre du Soleil Sourcebook* (London & New York: Routledge, 1999).

[9] See, for example, Charles Green, *The Third Hand: Collaboration in Art from Conceptualism to Postmodernism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001); Bojana Cvejić, 'Collectivity? You mean collaboration', Republic Art Transnational Research Project 2002-2005 <http://www.republicart.net/disc/aap/cvejic01_en.htm> [accessed on 3 July 2009]; Kate Flatt and Susan Melrose, 'Finding -- and owning -- a voice: Kate Flatt and Susan Melrose discuss ownership in collaborative theatre practices', *Dance Theatre Journal*, 22.2 (London, 2007), 41-46; Bojana Kunst, 'Prognosis on Collaboration' (2009) <https://kunstbody.wordpress.com/2009/03/29/prognosis-on-collaboration/>[accessed 22 January 2015]; Alexandra Kolb, 'On the Politics of Interdisciplinary Collaboration', *Brolga: An Australian Journal about Dance,* 35.2 (2011), 27-36; and Rudi Laermans, 'Being in Common', *Performance Research Journal*, 17.6 (2012), 94-102.

processes?

In other words, the central concern of this thesis is to examine the idea of 'becoming together' and to explore how 'becoming together' works in some instances – from the 1960s to the more recent – of performance-making. To this end, the thesis asks whether modes of 'working together' in performance practice can account for what I have widely experienced as an artist's desire to transcend his or her sense of self. This research undertaking is also driven by an interest in alternative modes of performance in contemporary contexts. Its core proposition is that co-labouring in performance practice terms is currently undertheorised in the university research context and in published writing, but can now be theorised with reference to what I take to be the shared aspirations of artists for an economy of belonging which might create conditions within which – through time – the potential of a possible qualitative transformation of the individual artist's subjectivity might be realised. In turn, this approach might allow for a better differentiation of the ways in which we understand working together in performance-making.

While making direct reference to the notion of interdisciplinary collaboration in the performing arts, this investigation aims to gain insights into what I am identifying as the 'qualitative transformation' – in Massumi's terms[10] – of a *cathartic* collaborative process. My interest here is to examine the conditions of artistic labour in specific performance practices which entail the adoption, by all participants, of a collaborative strategy and ethos. The nature of this artistic labour is defined by ways of working which place emphasis on the notion of 'working together' and/or the ways in which decision-making in performance involves negotiating different elements of the performers' internal processes of perception including sensations, memory and the experience of time. Internal processes are inherently challenging to research, however vital their involvement seems to be, in my experience, to practitioners' experience. By way of contrast, actions seem to be, in research terms, graspable, and I would argue that to some extent these actions might be taken as symptomatic of internal processes. Note, however, the ongoing need in research methodological terms, to return to this issue: what is the source of the data? Can it be verified, in research terms, and through what processes? Can we rely, in this area, on our

[10] Massumi, *Parables*, p. 8.

'expert intuition'[11] as practitioner-researchers? Hence I focus predominantly in this thesis on modes of engagement of the performer with collaborative performance making which, I will argue, need to be explored in practice. 'Practice', in this instance, and 'performance-making' practices, more particularly, is engaged in this research undertaking as a means of testing other research findings, as a mode of complementary enquiry, and as a touchstone, that allows me to pause, in the writing, to reflect on and interrogate pre-existing ideas.

This research project articulates the notion that such processes – internal to the performer, collaborative, between performers, and social, in the sense that these practices are pursued within and informed by a dynamic context – function as a complex system. Their investigation, in the present undertaking, has led to the construction of a reflexive research metadiscourse which draws on three related registers: historical, philosophical, and registers specific to my perspective as a practitioner-researcher. This theoretical framework is co-organised by a series of strategic practices including historical and text-based practices, practice-based and self-reflective writing, and Practice as Research (PaR). Each of these practices will be documented and analysed.

The Introduction itself comprises three parts. In Part I, I propose to review key elements of existing literature on the notion of collaboration in the arts, including discussions of historical interpretations of creative collaborative practices from the early modernist avant-garde to post-conceptual practices at the beginning of the twenty-first century. While this section may seem to include aspects of the traditional Literature Review, I draw on these elements here to signal the range of fields of knowledge involved in this enquiry, as well as some of the complexity of the field. In Part II, I proceed then to introduce a number of

[11] Intuition, following Henry Bergson, can be used or adapted for use as a philosophical method to explore notions of perception and expertise in creative practices. Gilles Deleuze, in his reaffirmation of Bergson's methods, considers intuition, not as a 'feeling' or 'inspiration', but rather as a 'thinking' in terms of time. Deleuze highlights the importance of the temporal notion of duration and describes Bergson's intuition as an activity which includes a 'qualitative and virtual multiplicity' (a difference in 'kind'– quality – instead of a difference in 'degree' – quantity). See Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism* (New York: Zone, 1988), pp. 13-35. In the context of performance making as research, Melrose argues that 'expert-intuitive processing' is a critical element of professional practice. For the expert performance-maker, Melrose outlines, such 'processing' will 'allow the practitioner to anticipate what might work, to calculate its possible application, and to test it out'. Drawing on his or her 'singular' experience and 'professional sensibility', the expert can then offer, 'new insights in a field whose orientation is to the not-yet made'. Susan Melrose, 'A Cautionary Note or Two, Amid the Pleasures and Pains of Participation in Performance-making as Research', (2011) < http://www.sfmelrose.org.uk/pleasure-pain/> [accessed on 22 April 2015].

philosophical and theoretical ideas judged to be relevant to framing the notion of collaboration, in the choreographic field, in terms of co-labouring. This Part includes reference to post-Marxist theories of labour and post-human approaches to contemporary subjectivity. In Part III, I address the different aspects of the project through the introduction of the different materials of this thesis as a way to guide my reader as to her or his engagement with the project as a whole. The Introduction concludes with a brief outline of each of the chapters of this thesis, in order to account both for my choice of examples of practice and for the conceptual logic that determines the ordering of material.

Part I: The promise of collaborative work in the arts

Within the narratives of modernism and postmodernism, collaborative methods of working in the arts during the twentieth century have been recurrently assimilated to radical artistic gestures challenging dominant modes of socio-political structures. However, in the last decade a surge of artistic concerns with collectivity and collaboration in advanced capitalist societies has invited a re-consideration of their modern historical development. This first section of the introduction reviews existing scholarship concerned with collaborative practices in the arts with a narrowing focus on choreographic antecedents. It offers a historical analysis of changing terminology, ideals and methods of collaborative creativity. Thus, its aim is to contextualise the overall concerns of this thesis in two ways. Firstly, it establishes a historical and theoretical ground from which to examine the shifting and unstable nature of co-labouring in the arts. As such, consideration will be given to the relationships, ideas, and methods of co-working of the Modernist avant-garde, as compared to those associated with the collective spirit of the 1960s and those of the contemporary era. Throughout, the ways in which collaborative work has sought or can be viewed as promising change - whether aesthetic, personal, social, or political - will also be discussed. Secondly, it introduces a series of key terms used throughout the project including 'interdisciplinarity', 'community', 'collectivity', and 'cooperation'. Critically reviewing historical definitions of these terms, it provides a platform upon which to further examine the ways in which co-working in contemporary performance-making can be resituated in the context of post-industrial capitalism and globalisation.

Avant-garde interdisciplinarity

The call for interdisciplinary engagement in arts was marked by the development of the idea of Total Art as a reaction against the specialisation of arts forms which had reached a critical juncture at the end of the nineteenth century. Divisions within artistic productions reflected wider social and economical circumstances. Following the industrial revolution, the specialisation of production aimed at increasing productivity by reducing its cost. While the English economist William Petty first observed the concept of the division of labour at the end of the eighteenth century, it was further developed by Marx and later by Taylorism. Challenging insular methods of artistic labour, a number of artists associated with the historical avant-garde embraced a decompartmentalising vision of artistic work

crossing music, theatre, dance practices and visual arts. From the legacy of Richard Wagner's seminal synthesis of art (his Gesamtkunstwerk) to Serge Diaghilev's collaborative enterprise with the Ballets Russes, or from Antonin Artaud's scenographic expansion of theatrical language in his 'Theatre of Alchemy' to the collective works of art of the Bauhaus, collaboration in the early twentieth century was adopted as a creative remedy for any narrowing over-specialisation in the arts.

If, as David Roberts argues in his analysis of European 'Total Art', the Wagnerian vision is often understood as the union of the arts into one piece of art work, then this vision 'is tied from the beginning to the desire to recover and renew the public function of art.'[12] Drawing on the work of Roger Fornoff, Roberts argues that modernism in Europe was fundamentally concerned with 'a social function that goes beyond the limits of autonomous art'.[13] Roberts' insights into Total Art stand in contrast to the widely held assumption that the aesthetics of modernism are based on the separation and autonomy of the arts. Further, he argues that there was an intrinsic relationship between Total Art and the avant-garde movements of the early twentieth century. In the first Furturist manifesto (1909) and in the work of the surrealists at the end of the 1930s, Roberts sees this relationship as underpinned by the artistic desire to respond to the combined crisis of autonomous art and the political situation of the European societies.[14]

While dance historian Lynn Garafola in her study of the Ballets Russes recognises the influence of Wagner's Gesamtkunstwerk on Diaghilev's ballets, she argues that the ballets rarely followed a collaborative process; but that 'far more than collaboration' the strength of the work resided in 'the community of values to which their contributing artists subscribed.'[15] Indeed, Garafola demonstrates that Diaghilev's application of Wagner's ideas to ballet with its 'luxuriant opulence' was not always regarded as successful. Quoting theatre historian Denis Bablet, she highlights that the fusion of art forms did not comply with alternative staging theatre reforms: 'painting remains painting and is applauded as

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[12] David Roberts, *The Total Work of Art in European Modernism* (Ithaca: Cornwell University Press, 2011), p. 1.
[13] Ibid., p. 5.
[14] Ibid., p. 4.
[15] Lynn Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 45.

such. The stage becomes an exhibition hall.'[16] If Garafola is critical of the interdisciplinary collaborative process of the Ballets Russes, she argues that the achievement of the company rested on a 'social imperative'; with the initial not-for-profit ethos of Diaghilev combined with the value placed on the individual within a democratised structure constituting the basis of the collective framework of the Ballet Russes. However, Garafola observes that Diaghilev's 'collaborative eden' did not last long. The socio-economic climate resulted in economic pressures distorting relations within the group, creating a different division of labour as the collective framework depicted earlier shifted into 'a contractual arrangement'.[17]

Another connection between the interdisciplinarity of Total Art and the collaborative ethos of the avant-garde is found in a shared quest for spirituality. Roberts notes that the idea of the public life of the polis in antiquity was used as a model for the reintegration of art, religion and politics. Roberts traces this idea through the aim of the theatre reform movement for regenerating the sacred in performance.[18] Influenced by the spirituality of the Balinese theatre, Artaud's ambition to give back to the theatre its magical power is a clear example of the application of ideas of totality to theatre. In Artaud's own words: '[T]o link the theatre to the expressive possibilities of forms, to everything in the domain of gestures, noises, colours, movements, etc., is to restore it to its original direction, to reinstate it in its religious and metaphysical aspect, is to reconcile it with the universe.'[19] Similarly, the unification of art training at the Bauhaus into a collective work of art embraced a search for spirituality in art. Walter Gropius described 'the idea of a universal unity in which all opposing forces exist in a state of absolute balance', adding that 'only work which is the product of inner compulsion can have spiritual meaning.'[20]

Roberts highlights an 'undeniable *affinity*'[21] between the utopian dream of the total work

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[16] Denis Bablet, as quoted in Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, p. 46.
[17] Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, p. 199.
[18] For a discussion of the theatre reform movement of European modern theatre see Roberts, *The Total Work of Art*, pp. 165-168.
[19] Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and its Double* (New York: Grove Press Inc, 1958), p. 70. For Artaud on oriental and occidental theatre, see Antonin Artaud, *Le Théâtre et son Double* (Paris: Gallimard Edition, 1964), pp. 79-105.
[20] Walter Gropius, 'The Theory and Organization of the Bauhaus' in Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (eds) *Art in Theory 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2011), p. 309.
[21] Roberts, *The Total Work of Art,* p. 10.

of art and the social and ideological reforms proposed by the totalising political movements which marked the whole period of modernism from the French Revolution to the Bolshevik and Fascist revolutions.[22] The concept of total work of art is bound to the idea that totalisation of aesthetic forms can transcend the limits of arts to effect a sublime union of art and life through the mobilisation of the mass. In other words, for Roberts, this mirrors a totalitarian aspiration to transgress existing social and political limits.[23] If the idea of interdisciplinary and spirituality encompassed in the collaborative work of the early modernist avant-garde artists was based in a refusal to compartmentalise artistic and intellectual labour, its alienation by totalitarianism reveals a perversion latent in modernism.

Rethinking post-war communities

When I casually told my then ninety-year-old French grandmother that as part of my studies in dance I was researching ideas of collaboration, she shuddered and gazed at me severely but with faraway eyes. Before I had the time to elaborate on the actual project, she replied sadly: 'Collaborators? I was forced to shave their heads!' What my grandmother - a hairdresser by profession - was alluding to is the darker side of the term collaboration which became the slogan of the 1940 Vichy Regime when Philip Petain in a radio speech called upon the French population to collaborate with the German occupiers.[24] If the term collaboration lost its pejorative connotation with the rise of the collective spirit of the 1960s, one might argue that its promise remains bound to a 'darker side of the multitude'.[25]

In the aftermath of the Second World War, on the one hand cooperation became a persuasive political term to describe the solidarity necessary for global reconstruction. This is evident in the fostering of European economic cooperation,[26] and in post-war calls for

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[22] As Roberts observes, after the 1848-49 revolutions, the legacy of the 1789 revolution fractured into 'increasingly hostile camps of socialism and nationalism attaining their extreme expression in the rival totalitarian movements that emerged from World War I.' Ibid., p. 5.
[23] Ibid., pp. 144-165.
[24] The script and the audio recording of the speech can be found on the website of the Institut National Audiovisuel, *Philippe Pétain: Le lancement de la collaboration avec l'Allemagne,* 1940, <http://www.ina.fr/audio/PHD95079031/philippe-petain-le-lancement-de-la-collaboration-avec-l-allemagne-audio.html> [accessed on 17 August 2014].
[25] Florian Schneider, 'The Darker Side of the Multitude', Theory Kit, (2006) <http://kit.kein.org/node/1> [accessed 06 January 2015].
[26] See the emphasis on the term solidarity in the full text of the Schuman Declaration delivered on

'multiethnic cooperation' in North America.[27] On the other hand, the establishment of a post-war order led to new and deep divisions between countries in the age of Cold War; which along with the stirrings of decolonisation contributed to the maintaining of a destabilised and fragmented international community.[28] A number of intellectuals in Europe engaged in a rethinking of the idea of community. For example, the French philosopher George Bataille argued against the religious and utilitarian conception of community used by totalitarian regimes, proposing an open concept of community as a 'community of those who have no community'.[29] Bataille's controversial ideas became an influential source for the reframing of the notion of community. As Benjamin Noys observes, community is understood as 'a fusion or communion'[30] in the work of Jean-Luc Nancy and as 'the heart of fraternity'[31] in Maurice Blanchot's *The Unavowable Community*.[32] Equally, community is a critical topic of discussion in Jacques Derrida's *The Politics of Friendship*.[33] Such developments account for a shift in attitudes towards the idea of community after the Second World War, which will be taken into account when tracing post-war collaborative practices.

From individual identity to composite identities

Art historian Charles Green has made a leading contribution to the study of collaboration in contemporary arts. In his analysis of a number of case studies, Green proposes that collaboration in artistic practice entails a deliberate choice by the artist away from 'individual identity to composite subjectivity', and that this artistic gesture was 'crucial' for the shift from modernism to postmodernism.[34] For Green, the emphasis on

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9th May 1950. Robert Schuman, 'The Schuman Declaration', 1950, <http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/europe-day/schuman-declaration/index_en.htm> [accessed on 17 August 2014].

[27] See Judith E Smith, *Vision of Belonging: Family Stories, Popular Culture and Postwar Democracy* (New York; Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. 2.

[28] For a discussion of European post-war distributions of power, see Dan Stone (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Postwar European History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[29] George Bataille, *The Unfinished System on Nonknowledge*, edited and with an introduction by Stuart Kendall (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota, 2001), p. xi.

[30] Benjamin Noys, *George Bataille: A Critical Introduction* (London: Pluto, 2000), p. 54; and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, edited by Peter Connor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).

[31] Noys, *Bataille,* p. 56.

[32] Maurice Blanchot, *The Unavowable Community* (Barrytown: Station Hill Press, 2006).

[33] Jacques Derrida, *The Politics of Friendship* (London: Verso, 2005).

[34] Green, *The Third Hand,* p. x.

collaborative methods of working represents a change in thinking about artistic identity away from the 'single lone artistic originator and creator'.[35] Green argues that collaboration, as located within the evolution of 1960s conceptualism, subjugated individual signature; and collaboration came to be based on changing and innovative models of authorship. The rise of postmodern theory, with its emphasis upon the limits of the 'author' might not, Green notes, capture the subtleties of these shifts. Irit Rogoff's essay 'Production Lines', Green acknowledges, offers a potential theoretical lens for examining these developments. Green highlights that whereas Rogoff claims that collaboration might symbolise 'an "expansion" of the field of art', she also states that modernist projects engaged artists in 'revolutionary collaborations and subversive collectives' which frequently come to be reduced to 'the cult of individual genius'.[36] Nevertheless, Green takes note of Rogoff's claim that within both modernism and postmodernism 'the practice of subjugating the individual signature is a paradigmatic interrogation of artistic production'.[37]

Participatory art

In the field of contemporary art the ongoing debate around the social function of collaborative practices offers another useful framework to examine what has been called the 'collaborative turn',[38] where the term 'turn' signals, metaphorically, a set of tendencies, rather than a precise methodological tool. Green's emphasis on post-1960s artists who challenge notions of signature relates closely to the position of French curator Nicolas Bourriaud's idea of relational art and the intersubjective relations that it endorses. In his *Esthetique Relationelle* (1998) - published in English translation as *Relational Aesthetics* (2002) - Bourriaud charted a shifting collective sensibility within contemporary artistic practices. Drawing on a range of examples,[39] Bourriaud observes a tendency in contemporary art to place a reduced emphasis on a finished product in order to highlight processes based on the 'realm of human interactions and its social context […] rather than

[35] Ibid., p. xi.
[36] Ibid., p. xv.
[37] Irit Rogoff in Green, *The Third Hand*, p. xv.
[38] Maria Lind, 'The Collaborative Turn' in Johanna Billing and Lars Nilsson Szerk (eds) *Taking the Matter into Common Hands: On Contemporary Art and Collaborative Practices* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2007), 15-31.
[39] Bourriaud discusses the work of a range of international contemporary artists including Pierre Huyghe, Maurizio Cattelan, Gabriel Orozco, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Vanessa Beecroft, and Liam Gillick.

the assertion of an independent and private symbolic sphere.'[40] With the development of new technologies, Bourriaud argues, these procedural social relations occur not only between people and communities but also within digital networks and interactive spaces. Such new spaces, he proposes, allow for the generation of a collective ideal of 'convivial' and 'interactive' sharing.[41] As an example of such conviviality, Bourriaud refers to the work of the installation/performance artist Rirkrit Tirravanija whose recognition emerged from his cooking events in museum and galleries, in which audiences, critics and gallery directors might cook and then share food.[42]

Similarly, Grant Kester discusses the potential of artists working outside of the traditional museum or gallery to generate collaborations with a range of different audiences and communities. Kester describes artistic experiments with empathic communication which he suggests can be seen as an emergent form of 'dialogical art'[43] and a viable strategy against 'an atomized pseudocommunity of consumers'.[44] Bourriaud and Kester assume that the creative power of relational art practices can challenge the fragmentation of contemporary society. However, a number of responses have questioned whether the rhetoric of 'microtopian' cooperation, collective agency and equality associated with relational aesthetics is in fact matched by the relational practices enacted.[45] Nonetheless, this contemporary participatory art is illustrative of the ongoing significance attached to highlighting the socio-political dimension of co-working with concurrent emancipatory hopes.

While adopting a critical approach to Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics*, the art historian Claire Bishop shares Bourriaud and Kester's assumption that collaborative strategies in arts practices remain important in these terms. Bishop points to 'the creative rewards' of a

[40] Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, p. 14.
[41] Ibid., p. 26.
[42] Ibid., pp. 25-32.
[43] Grant Kester, *Conversation in Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 2004), p. 82.
[44] Ibid., p. 29.
[45] See Tony Ross, 'Aesthetic Autonomy and Interdisciplinarity: A Response to Nicolas Bourriaud's "Relational Aesthetics" ', *Journal of Visual Arts Practice,* 5:3 (2006), 167-181; Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectacle* (London: Verso, 2009); Claire Bishop, 'Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics' in *October*, 110 (2004), 51–79; and Stewart Martin, 'Critique of Relational Aesthetics' in *Third Text*, 21.4 (2007), 369-386.

'politicised working process' for artists engaged in participatory art.[46] Bishop has identified a 'social turn' in contemporary arts practice,[47] which she recently redefines as 'a return to the social part of an ongoing history of attempt to rethink art collectively.'[48] From a Western European perspective, Bishop identifies three historical points which marked the transformation of collectivist ideas in society: the European historical avant-garde in 1917, the alternative arts movements leading to 1968, and the fall of communism in 1989. While each phase is clearly bound to political upheaval, Bishop correlates the latter date with her observation of the return of participatory art in the 1990s.

For Bishop, each moment represents the recurrent expression of utopian ideas grounded in the repositioning of arts in relation to the social and political. However, Bishop warns us that aesthetics in contemporary collaborative practices often risk being overshadowed by the emphasis on social change, highlighting that collaborative practices 'are automatically perceived to be equally important *artistic* gestures of resistance: there can be no failed, unsuccessful, unresolved, or boring works of collaborative art because all are equally essential to the task of strengthening the social bond.'[49] While I will return to questions of aesthetic value and the evaluation of collaborative art when considering methodological issues below, Bishop's problematisation of the social agency of much collaborative art does not undermine an emphasis on its promise of social change. If Green was correct to identify collaboration as a crucial element in the transition from modernist to postmodernist art, this thesis argues that the shifting grounds upon which contemporary collaborative activity takes place are equally relevant to any interrogation of artistic production. Performance practice offers an ideal terrain for examining these changes.

Collaboration in performance as an explicitly political activity

In terms of collaboration in performance as an explicitly political activity, much interest has focused on the modes and influence of the 'collectives' of the 1960s. Very often

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[46] Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells*: *Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012), p. 2.
[47] Bishop identifies a range of arts practices that engaged in socially collaborative work including 'socially engaged art, community-based art, experimental communities, dialogic art, littoral art, participatory, interventionist, research based, or collaborative art.' Bishop, 'The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents', *Artforum International,* 44 (2006), 178-183, (p. 179).
[48] Bishop, *Artificial Hells,* p. 3.
[49] Bishop, 'The Social Turn', p. 138.

assimilated to a hoped for 'democratisation' of arts practices, Banes in her account of the JDT, argues that 'the great collective' discovered a practice based on cooperative methods.[50] Theatre director and performance studies theorist Richard Schechner similarly highlights what appeared to be the unlimited possibilities of emancipation and creativity of the era: 'there was such wild, fecund intercourse among theatre people, visual artists, musicians, dancers, social activists, theorists that we believed we could renew the world.'[51] Similarly, Williams, in his study of the collectivist practices of Ariane Mnouchkine's *Théâtre du Soleil*, speaks of a theatre caught up in critical reinventions of democracy, motivated by a desire for 'ethical change and the possibility of renewal through a processual fashioning of self-relation'.[52]

More recently, a re-emergence of interest in artistic collaborations has led to critical reassessments of the ways in which artists work together. In the field of theatre, a number of recent scholarly works have challenged idealised constructs of theatrical collaboration.[53] Other writings have focused on analysing the working and the structures of collaborative theatre; including Laura Cull's study of the performance group *Goat Island*,[54] Tim Etchells' account of the devising process of his company *Forced Entertainment*,[55] Susan Melrose's ongoing inquiry into expertise and signature in performance making,[56] and

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[50] Banes, *Democracy's Body,* p. xi.
[51] Richard Schechner, 'Fall of the American Avant-Garde', *Performing Art Journal*, 5.2 (1981), 48-63, (p. 49).
[52] Williams, *Collaborative Theatre*, p. xix.
[53] For example, in their study of devising performance, Deirdre Heddon and Jane Milling argue that collective creation in theatre is not always politically motivated. They highlight the division of labour in twenty-first century creative collaborative practices. See Deirdre Heddon and Jane Milling, *Devising Performance: A Critical History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). This division is obvious in companies such as Forced Entertainment or Complicite which are seen to follow collaborative methods of devising while, arguably, retaining a distinction between the roles of performers and directors. Alex Mermikides and Jackie Smart, in their examination of the devising process of a range of contemporary British devising companies, reveal the clash and tension inherent to collective creative practices including in the work of The People Show, Station House Opera, Shunt, The Red Room, Faulty Optic Theatre of Animation, theatre O, Gecko, and Third Angel. See Alex Mermikides and Jackie Smart, *Devising in Process* (London: Palgrave, 2010). A broader inquiry into collective practice in theatre across a range of cultural contexts including Algeria, Bali, France, Italy, Mexico, Quebec, Spain, and the United States is offered in Jane Baldwin, Jean- Marc-Larrue, and Christiane Page (eds), *Vies et Morts de la Création Collective / Lives and Deaths of Collective Creation* (Sherborn, MA: Vox Theatri, 2008).
[54] Laura Cull, *Theatres of Immanence: Deleuze and the Ethics of Performance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
[55] Tim Etchells, *Certain Fragments: Contemporary Performance and Forced Entertainment* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999).
[56] Susan Melrose, 'Expert-intuitive processing and the logics of production: struggles in (the

Duška Radosavljević's study of contemporary ensemble work.[57] While my research is predominantly preoccupied by the development of ideas on co-working in the field of choreographic practices, I suggest that these approaches are indicative of an increasing concern around the status of co-working in the contemporary performing-arts.

In terms of historical writing on collective creation in theatre, Kathryn Syssoyeva observes that a broader framing of analysis has emerged in recent scholarship.[58] Syssoyeva challenges what she identifies as an ongoing scholarly tendency to root collective creation in the leftist political rebellions of the 1960s, noting that contemporary discourse is still permeated by ideologically informed readings which prioritise New Left ideas of consensual decision-making and leaderlessness over a more richly textured set of practices in radical collective work.[59] She argues that the idea of collective in contemporary performance can 'be problematised by contemporary philosophical investigations into the concept of an individuated self'.[60]

Syssoyeva offers a chronological reading of three phases in evolution of the practice of Western collective creation. The first unfolds during the first half of the twentieth century and is characterised by the influence of 'often contradictory' aesthetic, social, and political influences. This phase encompasses Total Art and a modernist interest in popular theatre, but also involves divergent political aspirations (nationalism, communism and antifascism). A second phase spanning the 1950s to the 1980s encompasses the idealism and participatory cultures of the 1960s. The third wave is located in the early 1980s and continues into the early twenty-first century and is marked by a veering away from ideological towards ethical imperatives. Syssoyeva defines this period as a 'postutopic' time, marked by the search for an 'ethical leadership' which foregrounds the performer as creator.[61] This historicisation of collective creation in theatre indicates the diversity of

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wording of) creative decision-making in dance', in Jo Butterworth and Liesbeth Wildschut (eds), *Contemporary Choreography: A Critical Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 23-37.

[57] Duška Radosavljević, *The Contemporary Ensemble: Interviews with Theatre-Makers* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013).

[58] See Syssoyeva's introduction to Kathryn Syssoyeva and Scott Proudfit (eds), *A History of Collective Creation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[59] In particular, Syssoyeva refers to the work of Alan Filewod which locates collective work in theatre in the political rebellions of the 1960s. Ibid., pp. 2-3.

[60] Ibid., p. 5.

[61] Ibid., pp. 8-9.

conditions and forms of co-working, and constitutes a broadened framework whereby idealised constructs of collective work are re-assessed with reference to specific socio-political contexts and a more varied set of creative practices.

In dance, a number of writings and practices have indicated a heightened concern with the role of collaboration in contemporary choreographic development. The dramaturge and dance theorist Bojana Cvejić, writing with reference to European dance and theatre, denounced the validity of collectivity and collaboration in contemporary performance. Cvejić argued that these modes of working could no longer facilitate experimentation 'as they are already subsumed under the institutional order and a cultural policy trend.'[62] In an article entitled *'Collectivity? You mean collaboration'*, Cvejić reports her surprise when performance professionals criticised her proposal for a performance project addressing collectivity, asking – as Cvejić summarises – a series of critical questions:

> Aren't you aware of how ideologised and outmoded the term is? Do you mean collectivity as a *modus operandi* or as a topic of research? In other words are you working collectively or on collectivity? We would be happier if you substituted 'collectivity' with term more suitable to contemporary practices – Collaboration, namely – as collaboration involves a space of negotiation of individual differences.[63]

As Cvejić notes, such questioning signals a shift in values shaping the ways in which artists and performance makers are encouraged to work together. Reflecting on her experience of the experimental field of European dance and performance, Cvejić assesses the legacy of the collectives of the 1960s which she defines as one of 'libertarian depoliticising thought' and responsible for 'an end to the interest in collectivism'. While her grouping of examples of the collectives such as Living Theatre, Performance Group, and Judson Dance Theatre (JDT) might result in reifying the processes of these diverse practices of performance, her central argument is clear: the main factor underlying the limitation of those projects in terms of social and political aims stemmed from an attachment to 'the mythology of merging life and art' in the pursuit of individual freedom. She further argues that those creative endeavours have developed 'into a hidden matrix of self-expression, appearing in the format of [contemporary] solo work'.[64]

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[62] Cvejić, 'Collectivity?'.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.

Ramsay Burt, in his reassessment of the works of the members of the JDT, offers a more positive evaluation of the legacy of the new dance of the 1960s. Burt argues that continuities in the concerns of the Judsonites can be discerned in their later work. For example, he illustrates that Trisha Brown's solo work *If You Couldn't See Me* (1994), performed by Brown facing away from her audience, addresses the same ethical issues relating to performance-spectator relationships which had characterised the original work of the JDT. However, Burt highlights that Brown's work is no longer the expression of 'the naïve idealism of an anarchic, underground.'[65] Reminding us of the 1965 manifesto of the then Judsonite Yvonne Rainer – 'no to seduction of spectator by the wiles of the performer' – Burt states that Brown's later work emphasises a respect for spectators but an intention to create a 'disturbingly mobile and fluid position' from which to relate with them. This distinction between the two eras is marked by what Burt calls 'the problem of a political disappointment'.

In contrast with Cvejić, Burt argues that where the avant-garde of the 1960s failed was when demonstrating a 'lack of awareness of issues relating to differences.'[66] In dance, he highlights dancers' seemingly oblivious attitude towards Asian American and African American cultural traditions, needs and aspirations.[67] In contrast to Banes' account of a democratising of the arts, Burt offers a more nuanced interpretation of the relationships between the Judsonites and their times. While Burt does not explicitly discuss collaborative processes, he clearly suggests that contemporary choreography, through a strategic setting-up of relationships between performers and audience, continues to invite ethical questions regarding the ways in which we relate to each other.[68] This is the focus of my theoretical and practical investigation of the legacy of the JDT.

Burt notes that a re-investigation of the ideas of the Judsonites is seen in the work of a

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[65] Ramsay Burt, *Judson Dance Theatre: Performative Traces* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 163.
[66] Ibid., p. 164.
[67] Burt draws on Susan Leigh Foster's powerful observation that the Judsonites' choice of aesthetics 'remained inflected with the power dynamics that had privileged white artists for centuries.' Susan Leigh Foster, as quoted in Burt, *JDT*, p. 127.
[68] We can observe a common interest for contemporary choreographers and theatre directors to use the notion of audience as a physical and an imagined component of the performance. Forced Entertainment, Goat Island, Jonathan Burrows, Jérôme Bel, and Ivana Müller are notable examples of contemporary practitioners and companies that have recently challenged the notion of the spectator as a by-product of the performance.

more recent European generation of dance makers including Jérôme Bel, Boris Charmatz and Xavier Le Roy.[69] He recognises that the use of reconstruction, re-interpretation and citations of the 1960s is a means to learn from history as an open archive which resists closure.[70] Burt quotes the dance scholar André Lepecki's identification of a shared set of concerns around

> [...] a distrust of representation, a suspicion of virtuosity as an end, the reduction of unessential props and scenic elements, an insistence on the dancer's presence, a deep dialogue with the visual arts and with performance arts, a politic informed by a critic of visuality, and a deep dialogue with performance theory.[71]

By way of example of these communalities, Burt discusses Bel's piece *Xavier Le Roy (2001)* which was conceived and realised by Le Roy and signed by Bel. On the one hand, Bel's artistic gesture can be seen to re-address the issues around authorship raised by postmodernist musings on the 'death' of authorship. On the other hand, as the second part of a trilogy of performances including *Le dernier spectacle* (1998) and *the show must go on* (2001), Bel's strategic collaboration with Le Roy allowed him to keep working as a choreographer. Drawing a parallel between Bel's device to 'keep on going' with Yvonne Rainer's switch from dance to film making in the 1970s, Burt argues that the two different generations of choreographers can be seen to be 'resisting the present'.[72] This thesis seeks to build on Burt's analysis, offering a historical and performative exploration of the ideas pertaining to the collaborative processes of the members of the Judson Church group, which I will articulate as 'a choreographic presence through time'.

[69] In the visual arts, Green similarly observes 'the suddenly compelling relevance of alternative 1970s art practices' to the conceptual art of the late 1990s. See Green, *Third Hand*, p. 190.
[70] Burt, *JDT*, p. 196.
[71] André Lepecki, as quoted in Burt, *JDT*, pp. 193-194.
[72] Burt, *Judson Dance Theatre*, p. 197.

Part II: The politics of working together

> If one principle could be seen to inform the opaque surface of what in the 1990s was called a 'new economy' – the shifts and changes, the dynamics and blockades, the emergencies and habit formations taking place within the realm of immaterial production – it would certainly be: 'Work together'.[73]
>
> (Florian Schneider, 2007)

This section begins with reference to post-Marxist theories of labour and post-human approaches to contemporary subjectivity, with a particular focus on key aspects of the politics of working together. Critically assessing ideas about labour in performance, it outlines three related topics that I would argue permeate the overall projects. These include the social potential of collaborative work, the immaterial aspect of contemporary artistic labour, and the impact of technology on contemporary subjectivity. This will further establish the philosophical and theoretical grounding of the thesis.

Co-working beyond democratic processes: from cooperation to collaboration

In 2007, Goldsmiths College (University of London) and the Witte de With Centre for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam co-organised the international platform, 'SUMMIT non-aligned initiatives in education culture'. Designed as a public event in Berlin and as an online remote participative platform, the summit aimed to find 'new ways of analyzing, recognizing, decision making and working together without a common ground from where to operate'.[74] As co-organisers of the event, the filmmaker and academic Florian Schneider and visual culture theorist Irit Rogoff developed a theoretical framework that offers a good starting point, given its focus on contemporary issues of working together.

Centring on issues of education and knowledge production, Schneider and Rogoff – with reference to the wider political discourse around the 'Bologna Process'[75] for the reform of European higher education – proposed to consider the 'potentiality' of a pedagogical

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[73] Florian Schneider, 'Collaboration', SUMMIT non-aligned initiatives in education culture, (2007) <http://summit.kein.org/node/1502> [accessed on 27 January 2015].

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ministers in charge of higher education from twenty-nine European countries signed the Bologna Process in 1999. 'The overarching aim of the Bologna Process is to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) based on international cooperation and academic exchange that is attractive to European students and staff as well as to students and staff from other parts of the world'. See Benelux Bologna Secretariat, 'About the Bologna Process', (2007) <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/about> [accessed on 15 July 2014].

discourse to rethink education 'as a model for a transformative practice within cultural practices'.[76] Schneider and Rogoff argue that one of the ways that this transformation might be achieved is through the exploration of creative forms of collaboration. They observe that although collaborative work has been assimilated by managerial theories with ideas of cooperative methods of working together, it still holds the potential 'to be re-used by pedagogues, activists or internet users in unexpected and imaginative ways'.[77]

In one of the texts published on SUMMIT's blog, Schneider outlines his view of the social potential of collaboration, and argues that a collaborative way of working together is a process that involves 'struggling for the freedom to produce'.[78] Schneider, in an earlier essay, had emphasised the need for 'establishing a new understanding of the term together, within a contemporary dynamic of working together'.[79] In his blog, he advocates methods of collaboration which are not based on a model of cooperation. Rather than the 'romantic' notions of 'commonality' shared in cooperation, collaborative endeavours belong to 'complex realities' which afford heterogeneous singularities; that is, according to Schneider, the expression of distinct and difficult to categorise elements which can only be 'defined out of an emergent relation between themselves'.[80] The 'co-producers' of collaborations develop relationships based on the capacity to 'affect one another'. Schneider discusses the development of 'open source' software as an example of a collaborative structure in which all users are potential collaborators, thereby challenging the hierarchical division between 'authors and producers' and 'users and consumers'.[81]

What is produced in this instance, he indicates, is the migration of 'the democratic or egalitarian ambition [...] into the realm of virtuality.' Schneider's differentiation between cooperation and collaboration is important for considering the shift in understanding contemporary collaborative practice and issues of agency. Indeed, Schneider advocates moving beyond the 'democratising impulses of the working together' by veering away from the pre-determined common goals traditionally expected in the context of teamwork;

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[76] See Irit Rogoff in SUMMIT non-aligned initiatives in education culture, 'Intentions of Summit : Interview with Irit Rogoff and Florian Schneider', (2007) <http://summit.kein.org/node/520> [accessed on 14 July 2014].
[77] Ibid.
[78] Schneider, 'Collaboration'.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.

and to engage in the potential of creativity that the heterogeneous singularities of collaborative practices can offer. Importantly for Schneider, the unpredictability of the outcome of such practices can prevent it from being commodified or reproduced. In this sense, for Schneider, the 'applicable' function of a model of collaboration is bound to the acceptance of this 'inability to predetermine outcomes even while sharing a set of aspirations, or directives of being anchored in a set of recognised problematics.'[82]

Artistic labour in the knowledge economy

In the context of artistic practices, as we have previously seen, there is an assumption that contemporary cultural and socio-political shifts have led to a renewed questioning of the possibilities for politicised, experimental modes of collaboration which are of relevance against a backdrop of economic globalisation. The apparent triumphalism of neo-liberalism has led a number of cultural critics to denounce what they see as the hijacking of collaborative methodologies in art to managerial ends, whereby creative notions of 'experimentation', 'transgression', or 'vitality' are reappropriated and celebrated within a corporate landscape.

Theatre practitioner and theorist Rustom Bharucha questions the nature of the emancipation of performance in a global visual culture:

> [The] valorisation of performance in the public sphere cannot be separated, to my mind, from the growing pitch in corporate culture to sell 'creativity' (and not just 'culture') with the burgeoning multi-million dollar enterprise of 'creative industries'. Now that 'creativity' has been appropriated from artists and extended to larger sectors of society, one should not prematurely applaud this specious democratic gesture. […] Forget subaltern communities, nomads and traditional musicians belonging to hereditary caste groups in Third World countries, whose creativity continues to be sustained by the struggles of everyday life. These struggles do not matter to the new advocates of 'creativity' whose worldview remains relentlessly enclosed within the insularities of the global metropolitan cosmopolis. What matters to this 'class' is the linkage of creativity with the vitality and productivity of personality-driven, profit-orientated yet pleasure-seeking, autonomous performance.[83]

From a Western perspective, Bishop identifies a relationship between the return of participatory art and the 'near total marketization of art and education'. She claims that,

> The paradox of this situation is that participation in the West now has more to do with the populist agendas of neoliberal governments. Even though participatory artists stand against neoliberal capitalism, the values they impute to their work are understood formally (in terms of opposing individualism and the commodity object), without recognizing that so

[82] Ibid.
[83] Rustom Bharucha, 'The Limits of the Beyond' in *Third Text*, 21.4 (2007), 397-416 (p. 398).

> many other aspects of this art practice dovetail even more perfectly with neoliberalism's recent forms (networks, mobility, project work, affective labor).[84]

Erin Manning and Brian Massumi have evaluated the changing conditions under which research and creative activities are pursued against the backdrop of 'the rise of an increasingly speculative, high-turnover, innovation-driven "knowledge economy". '[85] They observe that the new economy, described in terms of 'creative capital' and 'immaterial labour', offered challenges to the traditional division between theory ('pure research') and practice ('applied research'). Alongside this are a set of opportunities and threats to consider:

> What is new, in our context, is the extent to which policies intended to facilitate collaboration across the divides have been prioritized in government cultural and academic policy and in university structures. The way this has been done has created real opportunities – but also highly troubling alignments with the neoliberal economy.[86]

Similar concerns have been expressed by art theorists in regard to the mimetic characteristic between the new dominant type of labour produced by the advanced capitalist society and its incorporation into artistic practices. The project-based nature of collaboration and the new status of the director/choreographer as a facilitator rather than author represent a key characteristic of processes of late twentieth and early twenty-first century performance work. According to Susan Leigh Foster, choreographers tended no longer to

> form companies, but instead worked from project to project, picking up a company of dancers with whom to collaborate. Rather than focus on elaborating the singular artistic vision of an individual, there artists embarked on collaborations that were project driven … the choreographer is seen as the facilitator of the work being made, including the invention of the dance's movement.[87]

Equally, the global spread of digital communication and its possibility for remote collaboration across time and space has influenced the ways in which contemporary artists are working together. For example, the network everybodystoolsbox experimented over four years with the idea of an open source database for research and performance. The

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[84] Bishop, *Artificial Hells,* p. 277.

[85] Erin Manning and Brian Massumi, *Thought in the Act: Passages in the Ecology of Experience* (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), p. 84.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Susan Leigh Foster, 'Choreographies and Choreographers: Four Definitions of the Terms' in Scrutti Bandopandhay (ed.), *Modern Dance: Multifaceted Dimension* (Kolkata: Eminent Printing Works, 2008), pp. 5-33, (p. 18).

network defines itself as a database, a library, a toolbox, a game creator, a publication house, a score container, and as a site for distribution and for long-term investigatory discussions.[88] Similarly, the international performance platform Sweet and Tender Collaborations organises itself as a structure that is intended to 'exist as a myriad of individually produced projects […] centralized only in virtual space and through a board of facilitators'.[89]

Gabriele Klein and Bojana Kunst offer a similar overview of key changes in contemporary artistic labour. They observe a developing necessity for the contemporary artist to adopt a wide range of roles and skills including being a mobile entrepreneur, able to reflect upon one's work, to participate in the presentation and dissemination of one's own production, to network, and to respond to the internationalisation of work.[90] This not only leaves the artist with limited scope for other types of activities, but as Kunst further stresses, it may alienate the artist to 'the temporal totality of capitalism'.[91] The open-endedness of Bourriaud's relational aesthetics,[92] while often associated with the procedural relation between artists and audience, is also indicative of a shift away from the formation of collective identities based on permanent groups working over a sustained period of time, to more ephemeral project-based ways of working together.

Such concerns for the alienation of creative labour within the dominant capitalist economy are linked to a wider debate on the new forms of labour generated by the contemporary economy of services and knowledge-based industries. In the 1990s, following the rise of digital, media and associated industries, including the commercial growth of the internet, this new mode of production was theorised by a new range of post-Marxist writers. Part of the Italian autonomist movement, Lazzarato coined the concept of immaterial labour as applied to work mainly associated with the communication, information, service and cultural industries. According to Lazzarato, a classical definition of the term immaterial labour originates as a way to grasp a change in the mode of production in which life

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[88] See <http://everybodystoolbox.net/ index.php?title=Accueil> [accessed on 14 November 2014].
[89] See *Sweet and Tender Collaborations*, 'Sweet and Tender Collaborations', (2007) <http://www.sweet-and-tender.org> [accessed on 14 November 2014].
[90] Gabriele Klein and Bojana Kunst, 'Introduction: Labour and Performance', *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 17.6 (2012), 1-3.
[91] Kunst, 'Art and Labour: On Consumption, Laziness and Less Work', *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 17.6 (2012), 116-125, (p. 122).
[92] Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, p. 17.

becomes inseparable from work. Following the logic of immaterial labour, 'a polymorphous self-employed autonomous work' emerges, embodied in 'a kind of "intellectual worker" who is him – or herself an entrepreneur.'[93] Alongside other autonomist theorists such as Antonio Negri and Paolo Virno, Lazzarato developed the claim that immaterial labour is 'a collective form' existing 'as networks and flows.'[94]

The notion of immaterial labour is particularly relevant to the context of co-working in the arts in so far as it is characterised by Lazzarato as a mode of labour based on co-operative and creative skills.[95] But, whereas the pursuit of project-based conditions of artistic work and a freelance lifestyle were once perceived as a strategy against the standardisation of aesthetics, these conditions, as Kunst argues, are experienced by artists more as a constraint or an obligation rather than as enabling artistic production. It is in this sense, I would argue, that the collaborative strategies informing choreographic practices might be viewed as having been appropriated by the institutional order. The question of the validity of collaboration in contemporary performance practice, which permeates this thesis, can now be re-formulated in terms of the extent to which the artist/choreographer can maintain and cultivate her critical identity when the immaterial nature of her labour has become central to the dominant economy. The thesis suggests a re-framing of the notion of collaboration in performance practice in terms of the labour produced by the processes of co-working.

The place of the worker within advanced capitalist society is also addressed by Cvejić who states that 'it is the individual and not the collective enterprise of performance which inspires the figure of the contemporary worker in the context of neo-Liberalism'.[96] Given the hegemonic status of the individual in contemporary society, the observation of a turn towards individualist practices in the performing arts might imply affinities with a neo-liberal agenda, but it also draws attention to the question of the intentions that might be motivating contemporary artists to work together. While a 'saturating number' of collaborative groups – which Cvejić perceived to be based on artistic affinities and logistic necessities – have been organised outside the field of mainstream contemporary

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[93] Lazzarato, 'Immaterial Labour', p. 135.
[94] Ibid., p. 145.
[95] Ibid., pp. 144-45.
[96] It is speculated that Cvejić's use of the term 'neo-liberalism' here refers to western capitalist economic ideas which relate to the ability of the market to self-regulate. Cvejić, 'Collectivity?'.

performance production, Cvejić claims that there has been a lack of critical interrogation by artists of the methodologies deployed in collaborative practices.

Combined with an apparently widespread disinterest in political action, Cvejić argues that such practices have narrowed to the extent that they merely reproduce dominant trends.[97] Dance scholar Alexandra Kolb concurs with the view, noting that there is a misplaced belief in the democratic virtues of collaboration, which can be seen acting as a 'corollary of contemporary forces such as globalisation and the modern market economy'.[98] In 2012, Kolb refined this argument at Middlesex University's 'Symposium On Collaboration' by highlighting the influence of funding policies in the choice of collaborative methods in the performing arts. Rather than a democratic process of sharing money across projects and artists, Kolb argues that funding decisions are increasingly influenced by a wish to control the work produced.[99]

Rudi Laermans' exploration of the re-emergence of collaborative methods in dance from the mid-1990s highlights that the hybrid aspect of contemporary modes of collaboration might be reminiscent of the collective strategies of the JDT. However, 'the once influential and romantic rhetoric of moving together freely', Laermans argues, 'has been replaced by the idea of "doing a project with others"'.[100] Based more on shared interest than shared methods, the success of these artistic collaborations rests upon what Laermans terms 'the potentialities of cooperation itself'.[101] In his own words, 'They are realized "now, here", through the actual working together in a studio space, yet simultaneously every momentary realisation of a team's potential hints at prospective possibilities'.[102] For Laermans, those possibilities 'yet to come' – when based on a shared interest in 'genuine' social exchanges whereby dominant forms of labour and 'calculative' individual dynamics are challenged – constitute the persistent promise of collaboration in performance practice. Leaving aside the problematic idea of 'genuine' exchange (which one might argue to be associated with a

[97] Cvejić refers to the influence of the Dutch theatre company Maatschappij Discordia (founded in 1983 by Jan Joris Lamers and Matthias de Koning) on collective theatre groups such as the Belgium collective Tg Stan and the Dutch collective Dood Paard, De Roovers, 't Barreland.
[98] Kolb, 'Interdisciplinary Collaboration', p. 27.
[99] Alexandra Kolb, 'Collaboration and Democracy: A Critique', Symposium On Collaboration, Middlesex University, London, 2012. See < http://oncollaboration.weebly.com/presentations.html> [accessed on 27 January 2015].
[100] Laermans, 'Being in Common', p. 94.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid.

modernist quest for authenticity),[103] such developments in choreographic practice are of particular relevance to the examination in this thesis of contemporary co-labouring.

Technology and contemporary subjectivity

If the autonomist's immaterial labour – existing as 'networks and flows' – emphasises the collective aspect of contemporary work, it also points to two relevant characteristics of contemporary labour: namely its technological nature and its relation to a fluid quality of time. In the performing arts, while the development of twentieth-century theatre, music and dance has been intertwined with the rise of media culture,[104] early twenty-first-century technology has become a seemingly ubiquitous tool of co-working in the arts. The use of online communication such as emails and internet telephony or video conferencing is a prerequisite to the ways in which the international 'mobile entrepreneur' organises her artistic labour. Moreover, a shift in the range of terms associated with collaborative works signifies the adoption of the rhetoric of computer sciences and thus highlights the impact of technology on the contemporary experience of labour in performance. This is evident, for example, in the use of terms such as network rather than group, self-organised rather than organisation, or system rather than composition. Similarly, virtual communications and its possibility for remote co-working across time and space point to multiple and complex structures of relations which have arguably transformed collective identity.

While from the autonomist perspective, technology is understood as part of the dynamic and inter-relational system of contemporary labour, post-human theories reframe the production of subjectivities in relation to the technological development of contemporary society. Katherine Hayles' seminal research on virtual bodies argues for the need to articulate human intelligence in relation to computational technologies. In *How We Became Posthuman*, Hayles draws upon social and anthropological perspectives, indicating that from the mid-twentieth century the development of human tools (mechanical and informational) can be defined as 'technological prostheses' which affect the nature of

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[103] See Bishop's comments on 'genuine participation' in Bishop, *Artificial Hells*, p. 283.
[104] In 2009, the Arts Council of England published a report which stated that 45% of the dance workforce engages with film, television, digital production, webcasting, or music video. See Susanne Burns and Sue Harrison, 'Dance Mapping. Executive Summary. A window on dance 2004–2008', Arts Council of England, (2009), p. 9.
<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/dance_mapping_executive_summary.pdf> [accessed on 20 August 2013].

humankind:

> the post human implies not only a coupling with intelligent machine but a coupling so intense and multifaceted that is no longer possible to distinguish meaningfully between the biological organism and the informational circuits in which the organism is enmeshed [...] flickering signification is the progeny of the fascinating and troubling of coupling of language and machine.[105]

Feminist writers such as Donna Haraway and Rosi Braidotti have further thematised the relationship between self and technology. While Haraway's influential work develops the metaphor of the 'Cyborg'[106] to describe the hybrid quality of contemporary subjectivity, Braidotti's analysis of nomadic subjectivity insists on the perverse effects of the global advanced technology society.[107] As with Hayles' 'virtual bodies' and 'flickering signifiers', these approaches are grounded in the tension between individual and collective experiences of subjectivity while also translating the multifaceted and unstable quality of the self into the language of advanced technological societies. The narratives that these metaphors depict are devices that apprehend the entanglement of technology with the formation of subjects. More importantly, these findings account for a tension between self and other. In cultural theorist Brian Rotman's terms, this tension creates a sense of the self 'becoming besides itself',[108] which can be seen as symptomatic of the digitally hybridised or nomadic subjectivities as constructed in contemporary collaboration.

Historian Timothy Lenoir, in his foreword to Rotman's *Becoming Beside Ourselves* contextualises the ways in which Rotman's concept of 'besideness' of self points to viable directions for engaging with contemporary subjectivity:

> As we spend more time in electronically mediated environments, engaging with massively parallel distributed computing processes that are merging ever more seamlessly with the

[105] Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman:* V*irtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 35.
[106] Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: the Reinvention of Nature* (London: Free Association, 1991).
[107] Braidotti observes that 'the technologically driven advanced culture that pride itself in being called the "information society" is, in reality, a concrete, material infrastructure that is concentrated on the sedentary global city. The contrast between an analogy of free mobility and the reality of disposable others brings out the schizophrenic character of advanced capitalism. Namely, the paradox of high levels of mobility of capital flows in some sectors of the economic elite with high levels of centralization and greater immobility for most of the population.' Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York; Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2011), pp. 6-7.
[108] Brian Rotman, *Becoming Beside Ourselves: the Alphabet, Ghosts, and Distributed Human Being* (Durham; London, Duke University Press, 2008).

> material processes and technological affordances of our everyday world, we are, in Rotman's terms, becoming, literally evolving, as distributed machinic multiples, para-selves besides our selves.[109]

In addition, the open-endedness of collaborative works, combined with the fluid quality of its relations, reveals the unstable and hence difficult to grasp identity of co-working activities. According to Kunst, collaboration can be associated to the temporal concept of potentiality as the quality of something that might not happen:

> Through collaboration, we condition our future lives together, which of course means that, in order to open up the time, we have to take time out of the obsession with presence and participate in the time what has yet to happen. Working together is a time constellation which opens a spatial potentiality for proximity, something which appears as a neighbouring space, a space that is added.[110]

Echoing Schneider's claim, for Kunst it is this condition of collaborative practice which offers a resistance to the contemporary problem of the alienation of labour.[111] However, while the ephemeral nature of artistic projects might be explained by the rapidity of processes in the contemporary technological society, the impermanent conditions of artistic labour created within advanced society still need to be assessed. Furthermore, the emphasis on a procedural quality of collaboration in Kunst's notion of potentiality invites questions relating to the nature of collective action. In this thesis, the examination of specific conditions of co-working – including temporal, spatial and performative – through the use of specific case studies and reflective practice questions the role of co-working in the context of the excess of plurality in contemporary immaterial labour. Accordingly, it offers a reflection on the relationships between the plurality of the self experienced by the artist researcher engaged in (collaborative) PaR, the intentions and concerns of the artists discussed in the project, the aims and contexts of their co-working techniques, and the specificity of process and product which has emerged out of these collaborations. It considers whether what is distinctive about contemporary practices of co-working is the potentiality of relationship between individual intentions and the experience of multiple behaviours.

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[109] Lenoir in Rotman', *Beside Ourselves*, p. xxix.
[110] Kunst, 'Prognosis on Collaboration'.
[111] Bojana Kunst, 'On Potential and The Future of Performance' (2009) <http://kunstbody.wordpress.com/2009/03/13/on-potentiality-and-the-future-of-performance/> [accessed on 17 August 2014].

Part III: Methods

This thesis involves different ways of working in a research undertaking that combines different modes of enquiry. This section of the introduction details methodological issues as they relate to this thesis, and provides a brief rationale for the approaches taken in this study of co-working both in performance making, and in the spaces between other writers' published writing and my own complex and various practices. As has already been indicated, the sets of methods deployed during the investigation are primarily influenced by the idea of a reflective metadiscourse as a representation of the project's research activities, and of my own role as a practitioner-researcher, working with others, between practice and complex writing. I am referring here to the concept of the metadiscourse as understood in the field of applied linguistics. According to Ken Hyland and Polly Tse,

> Metadiscourse is self-reflective linguistic material referring to the evolving text and the writer and imagined reader of that text. It is based on a view of writing as social engagement and in academic contexts reveals the ways that writers project themselves into their discourse to signal their attitude towards both the propositional content and the audience of the text.[112]

The rationale for employing a metadiscourse here is based on two main ideas. The first is the non-propositional content of the text-based line of inquiry of the thesis, by which I mean that the written part of the project does not advance a specific model of collaboration for the performing arts. Instead, it allows the artist/researcher's 'intrusion into the ongoing discourse' on creative labour as a way to direct the reader towards the relevance of examining an economy of belonging from a wide range of perspectives.[113] The other evolves from the understanding that, as a discipline, practical performance research encompasses specific ways of working which can reach beyond disciplinarity as such.[114] It comprises five chapters revolving around issues of co-labouring in performance practice in relation to a range of thematics including historicisation and time, creative labour conditions and contemporary subjectivities, together with the audio-visual material that

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[112] Ken Hyland and Polly Tse, 'Metadiscourse in Academic Writing: A Reappraisal', *Applied Lingusitics*, 25.2 (2004), 156-177, (p. 156).

[113] Toumi Naouel, 'A Model for the Investigation of Reflexive Metadiscourse in Research Articles', University of Reading, Language Study Working Paper, edited by L J O'Brien and D S Giannoni, (2009), 64-73, (p. 64).

[114] Robin Nelson, 'Modes of Practice-as-Research Knowledge and their Place in the Academy', in Ludivine Allegue, Simon Jones, Baz Kershaw and Angela Puccini (eds), *Practice-as-Research in Performance and Screen* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 112-130 (pp. 122-123).

constitutes an attempt to document and include, in the thesis, the practices that have allowed me to enquiry differently into the same sorts of issues that are highlighted in the written aspects of this research undertaking. In research-methodological terms, the inclusion of enquiry through theoretically-informed performance practices also prompts a particular reflection on PaR and the written enquiry: what can we theorise, through performance-making (as research) itself, and what limitations, if any, does performance-making PaR impose on the nature and extent of the findings?

As a text-based and writing focused document, this aspect of the investigation adopts different modes of writing including critical and reflective writing. Drawing on ongoing debates about the contribution of art to the knowledge economy,[115] I question how my own artistic endeavours - through the processes of training, rehearsal, presentation, feedback, and the live act of performance (through shared languages and skills) - could participate in the theorisation of my own practice, and for whom or for what audience/s. A number of self-reflective elements in my writing serve to illuminate less visible questions pertaining to collaborative practices. As discussed further below, it is recommended that these sections of the text-based document are to be read in conjunction with the documentation of the three practical projects, *They Tried To Stand [I Am Still Falling]* (*TTS*), *Bodies in Motion* and *Rhythmic Trialogue*, which are key components of this final submission.

In addition, I have engaged in the development of two text-based case studies of recent collaborative initiatives: *Six Months One Location* (*6M1L*) and *Generating the Impossible* (*GTI*). These provide further insights into labour conditions in the context of two different frameworks of creative practice. The analysis of the first project is developed using documentary sources, whereas my critical reflection on the second case study emerged from my own participation in the project. The critical analysis of these case studies – including the self-reflective aspect of the latter and the written articulation of my ongoing collaborative practice as a choreographer/performer and researcher/writer – theorises ideas of different modes of co-labouring in the creative process. This analysis integrates

[115] Whereas Massumi's idea on an economy of belonging does not address specifically artistic labour, Lazzarato's notion of immaterial labour refers to the creative aspect of contemporary labour while Klein and Kunst reflect specifically on relationships between performance work and the knowledge economy. See Lazzarato, 'Immaterial Labour'; Massumi, *Parables*; Gabriele Klein and Bojana Kunst (eds), 'On Labour and Performance', *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 17.6, (2012).

philosophical, ontological and compositional ideas. While drawing on Massumi's notion of economy of belonging to examine the ways in which contemporary performance makers work together, I also discuss how the ideas of Bergson can illuminate the importance of the role of time in performance co-labour.[116] Similarly, I refer to the ontological challenge of the body in performance and its problematic of ephemerality as discussed by Lepecki.[117] These ideas are of relevance to a discussion of the immateriality of collaborative labour, and in particular its relation to the notion of presence in digital communication. In terms of composition, I explore a range of techniques based in contemporary dance training and somatic practices including improvisation, physical theatre and Body-Mind Centering (BMC). Equally, by combining documentary evidence of practical enquiry with the text-based critical analysis that has in significant part driven it, I demonstrate as practitioner-researcher that each of these practices is informed by the other and that both constitute key parts of the investigation of the thesis.

Reflexive metadiscourse: a multi-view of systems of co-labouring

Co-labouring in performance practices can be recognised as inherently complex. Melrose's research on expertise and signature in performance making offers important insights into the complex modes and operations of collaborative processes in performance practice. Writing from the perspective of an 'uneasy expert-spectator',[118] Melrose poses a series of questions about what she calls 'multi-participant' performance practices, which expand across different artistic disciplines and often involve a number of collaborative artists. In her analysis of practices as varied as Ariane Mnouchkine's devising strategies for the Théâtre du Soleil and Rosemary Butcher's choreographic processes, Melrose often highlights the notion of singular (or 'collective individuation') expert signature in performance practice. On the one hand, she argues that the collaborative process is bound to the performance-makers' mastery which operates in 'multi-dimensional', 'multi-schematic' and 'multi-participant modes' that are not visible in the finished work. Yet a complex performance-making process, according to Melrose, 'when it is driven by

[116] Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics* (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2007), p. 75.
[117] See André Lepecki, 'Inscribing Dance' in André Lepecki (ed.), *Of the Presence of the Body: Essays on Dance and Performance Theory* (Middletown: University Press of New England, 2004), pp. 124-139.
[118] Susan Melrose, 'Introduction', (2007) < http://www.sfmelrose.org.uk/> [accessed on 5 March 2015].

philosophical imperative, as well as a creative and a professional imperative' can be theorised by expert practitioners in their practice.[119] On the other hand, Melrose problematises the idea that the level of relationality implied in expert signature in performance practice is foremost bound to the responses of the wider arts community.[120]

Seeing collaborations as complex systems of practices provides a useful framework, which highlights the notion that a collaborative social system is a multi-dimensional model which functions within a nexus of relationships, and might be shaped by a variety of ethos (whether the 'artistic', 'institutional', 'individual' or 'collective').[121] If as Paul Cilliers claims, 'a complex system can not be reduced to a simple one', then by adopting multi-view research methods we can avoid simplifying the impact of complex systems or 'cutting out part of the system',[122] which here implies looking at creative processes, produced performances and spectatorship. The reflective metadiscourse of the thesis includes a 'heterogeneous array of cohesive and interpersonal'[123] elements of analysis in order to highlight that the collaborative process in performance-making operates within a complex mechanism of production, including the evaluative mechanism, which should not be reduced to one register of analysis. Rather, the research activities undertaken for this inquiry draw on a multiplicity of registers including the historical and philosophical, performance and personal.

Evaluation of working together as a mode of artistic production

Drawing on my personal experience in artistic collaboration, at the outset of my inquiry, I had sometimes valued the process of working with others as much as the result that came

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[119] Melrose stresses that this theorisation of collaborative practice, for example in the work of Rosemary Butcher, occurs through specific production choices: the practice of collaborative skills in the rehearsal and the articulation of the outcome of the choreographic inquiry in the composition of the work, 'in terms both of available technologies, and in terms of professional imperatives.' See Susan Melrose, 'Just Intuitive', (2005) <http://www.sfmelrose.org.uk/justintuitive> [accessed 17 August 2014].
[120] Susan Melrose with Rosemary Butcher, 'Rosemary Butcher: Jottings on Signature in the Presence of the Artist', presented at *Bodies of Thought*, Siobhan Davies Studio, London, (2009) <http://www.sfmelrose.org.uk/jottings> [accessed 17 August 2014].
[121] In his writing on complex systems, which weaves philosophical and scientific methods, Paul Cilliers has argued that 'a complex system is not constituted merely by the sum of its components, but also by the intricate relationships between these components'. See Paul Cilliers, *Complexity & Postmodernism: Understanding Complex Systems* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 2.
[122] Ibid., p. 24.
[123] Hyland & Tse, 'Metadiscourse', p. 157.

out of it. As a performer/collaborator, this raised questions as to the implications of how to evaluate collaborative methods as a model for production practice. If what seems to be partly at stake in the previous introduction of the politics of working-together are the combination of humanist ideals of sharing and their relation to a market logic of commodification, further anxieties have also been expressed around the evaluation of collaborative arts. With regards to dance creation, Dorothy Carr's research on appreciation and embodiment showed that viewing the aesthetic experience as an indicator of artistic value can be problematic. Carr suggests that an emphasis should be placed on incorporating a multiplicity of viewpoints to consider the basis of aesthetic judgements.[124] In the field of dance, Anna Pakes is amongst those who argue that in order to provide insights to a wider community, the epistemological value of art resides as much in the artist's intentional activity and creative processes as in the artwork itself.[125] While Pakes' argument is linked to a wider debate on the contribution to knowledge of artistic practices, it echoes Bishop's perspective on contemporary social arts practice. The evaluation of collaboration depends in part upon what is produced rather than judging it systematically in terms of good or bad processes.[126]

In bringing together practical explorations included in this thetic enquiry, the case studies of collaborative practical activities and my own practical process in collaborative improvisation and choreography, this thesis presents a multi-stranded view of aesthetic practices as a quasi-independent mode of inquiry into co-labouring in performance. While the inquiry focuses largely on problematising the artistic processes of working together, and brings to that task a range of discursive approaches, it also pays particular attention to the crucial issue of the evaluation of the products of co-working. If as we have seen, contemporary collaboration is characterised by its open-endedness, we also need to evaluate the arts that it produces; and what the thesis proposes is to examine the relationship between the two.

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[124] Dorothy Carr, 'Embodiment, Appreciation and Dance: Issues in relation to an exploration of the experiences of London based, "non-aligned" artists', Roehampton University Research Repository, (2007) <http://roehampton.openrepository.com/ roehampton/handle/10142/47593> [accessed on 12 July 2009].
[125] Anna Pakes, 'Art as Action or Art as Object? The Embodiment of Knowledge in Practice as Research', (2004) <http://www.herts.ac.uk/artdes/research/papers/wpades/vol3/apfull.htm> [accessed on 26 July 2009].
[126] Indicatively, Bishop discusses the ways in which the work of the Turkish artists' collective Odessa Projeti was judged to be better than other Turkish-based community art projects solely because of the egalitarian process through which its participants engage with their collaborators. See Bishop, 'The Social Turn', p. 181.

The value of individual reflection in collaborative work is implicit in the construction of the self-reflexive metadiscourse. On the one hand, the construction of a reflective metadiscourse which examines the notion of co-labour in performance practice allows for the coherent deployment of the multiple viewpoints of the inquiry, and on the other hand, it offers a strategy to create a critical discussion on the relationship between the processes and the products of co-working in performance.

Conceptual structure

The sequencing of the chapters together with the audiovisual material is organised to allow for the development of a research-strategic narrative which underscores the thesis as a whole. For example, I begin in Chapter 1 with the JDT because while its members retained romantic notions of collectivism, the collaborative strategies deployed by the group represent a shift in the ways in which choreographers and artists work together. Considering the socio-political conditions in which the collective formed in the early 1960s in New York City, I discuss how its leaders generated innovative new techniques in dance; and examine how the Judsonites, while expressing a fierce reaction against the anti-intellectualism prevailing in the art world of the time, encouraged a shift from political engagement to theoretical commitment in dance. Further, we will see how the extended group known as the Grand Union Company*,* while creating a new social commitment in dance, challenged the dancers' altruistic behaviours to the point of rupture of the working-together. This thesis also begins with the Judsonites because their broad scope of experimentation provides us with an opportunity to outline a range of key notions in choreographic practice to which the concept of co-labouring might relate, including the use of group improvisation, a participative relationship with the audience, consensual decision-making, and self-organised collaborative structures.

In Chapter 2, I provide a theorisation of my solo *TTS*.[127] An edited version of this performance can be viewed on the DVD included in the pages of this thesis while reading this chapter. Informed by my analysis of the work of the Judsonites, this solo work primarily explores in practice the ways in which my own dance practice has been influenced by historical developments, and in this sense, it develops a key notion, in this

[127] Noyale Colin, '*They Tried to Stand I Am Still Falling*' in Noyale Colin, *Becoming Together (DVD): Collaborative Labour in Contemporary Performance Practices* (2015).

thesis, concerning the impact of changing ideas on artmaking. From the outset, my intention was to explore alternative ideas concerning processes of reconstruction in dance. My creative process expanded from the use of visual research techniques. Using photographs, video and sound, I focus on the work of three choreographers including Trisha Brown, Steve Paxton and Yvonne Rainer. The research culminated in a performative reassessment of the ideas and the aesthetics that emanated from the era of postmodern dance. Accordingly, the focus on the Judsonites in the opening chapters contextualises contemporary approaches and aspirations to collaboration. Furthermore, the discussion of theoretical ideas of time, affect and self as they relate to the work of the JDT informs my findings on the ways in which decision-making was organised in the creative process of my solo. The reflective written form of the work makes reference to a range of relational methods of performance practice in order to consider how the 'intuitive mechanism' embedded in the artists' skills might function as an apparatus for the production for knowledge.

While the problematisation of a Judsonite 'collaborative ethos' offers a backdrop against which to examine an ethics of more recent contemporary practice, the inclusion of the two main case studies, *Six Months One Location* (*6M1L*) and *Generating the Impossible* (*GTI*), allows for the development of further findings around labour conditions, philosophical and political aspirations, attitudes about 'working together', and actual creative practices and techniques. Offering a critical, reflective and comparative analysis of two specific and bounded cases of international collaborative practice in the field of contemporary choreography, the case studies examine the conditions in which new collaborative structures have developed within the production economy of performing arts that I judge to currently prevail in western countries. I am starting here from the hypothesis that the digital revolution has brought with it a shift in the labour conditions facing artists, and that it may likely operate in advance of an equivalent shift in conceptualisation.

Chapter 3 takes as its focus *6M1L*, a choreographic project which is based within the contemporary European experimental dance scene. *6M1L* provides an ideal case study for consideration of how the working methods of contemporary choreographers might evidence a shift in values related to ways of working together, with a greater emphasis on post-consensual modes. The project involved nine artists committing to working full–time for an uninterrupted period of six months in the same location. I discuss their strategies and

techniques of collaboration, including the way in which the continuous duration of the project was intended to advance alternative working arrangements that might benefit the contemporary freelance dance artist. Elaborating on post-Marxist concepts of labour, I assess how far a number of parameters specific to performance mastery can enhance the potential of contemporary collaboration in the performing-arts to resist alienated modes of working-together.

Chapter 4 focuses on my involvement in the international residency *GTI*, an experimental platform of collaborative and critical practices grounded by philosophical and technological approaches to art-making. Curated by the philosophers Erin Manning and Brian Massumi, the event took place over two weeks in Quebec in July 2011 and involved the participation of an international team of fifty-two artists and theorists. While the preparation of the project took place online through internet telephony conference calls and the building of a multi-authored group hub archive, the actual event was proposed as a 'Potlatch for Research-Creation' that would unfold in two phases: the first part took place at a remote location in a forest in the north of Quebec and the second was located in the city of Montreal.[128] Drawing on cultural anthropologist Paul Rabinow's notion of 'fieldwork in philosophy', I have defined my position as a participant-observer.[129]

The analysis of *GTI* starts with an examination of the process of collaboration through cross-referencing my field notes (recorded during the project) with the online collaborative archive constituted by the web-based project management program 'Basecamp'. This phase of the inquiry aims at examining how philosophy and artistic practices can interact and create new forms of knowledge in collaborative practices. I will explore the ways in which different tools employed in the *GTI* event characterised and shaped the models of collaboration adopted by participants. These elements include, firstly, the use and role of technology as an element of composition; giving rise to examination of questions as to how remote communication through internet telephony, group emails and interactive

[128] For the initial proposal, see SenseLab, 'Generating the Impossible', (2011) < http://senselab.ca/events/technologies-of-lived-abstraction/generating-the-impossible-2011> [accessed on 17 August 2013].

[129] For Rabinow, the collaborative mode of work is important to remediate the practice of participant – observation in contemporary inquiries in so far as it 'entails a mode that puts the self, in its relationship to itself, to others, and to things, in motion as well as in question'. See Paul Rabinow, *Anthropos Today: Reflection on Modern Equipment* (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 77.

whiteboards can shape the arrangement of a physical event. A second key element was the adoption of a potlatch model (related to a gift economy) which can be seen to have informed both the activities undertaken during the event and the shared reading activities which overarched the project. Thirdly, an accent on 'technique' led the project into a process-based experimentation. While the emphasis on process refers to 'a philosophy of becoming', one might argue that it also eschews the materiality of an artwork and the mechanisms specific to the economy of production and presentation. In order to fill this gap, I focus on the actual artwork produced during the event by discussing two different collaborative approaches through two projects developed during the residency.

Chapter 5 brings together my collaborative practice as a choreographer/performer and researcher/writer with philosophical and political questions about the techniques of relation in co-labouring discussed elsewhere in this complex enquiry. I discuss the development of the self in co-working through a self-reflective analysis of two practical movement-based projects created during the inquiry. Both projects were developed between 2011 and 2012. The themes of each project overlapped, and similar techniques were employed in each. *Bodies in Motion*, my collaborative movement practice with performer and then fellow PhD student Rebecca Woodford-Smith, began with a shared desire to find strategies to account for our individual performance practice. To this end, we organised regular practice sessions as a way to set up a situation of *event* for working together in the studio. (An edited version of one of these sessions is included on the DVD presented in this thesis, which I would advise the reader to watch in conjunction with my written reflection on specific aspects of this practice in Chapter 5.[130]) The second practical project entitled *Rhythmic Trialogue* is an interdisciplinary performance research work, which I led in collaboration with dance artist Florence Peake and musician JJ Wheeler. The overall aim of the project was to examine ideas concerning collaborative decision-making in music and movement-based performance improvisation. I suggested focusing our attention on interdisciplinary perspectives of the practice of rhythm in improvisation. Over the course of one month we met several times a week to practise ways of relating our distinct improvisation practices in the space of a dance studio. Concurrently, I was invited to participate in a performance improvisation platform with the theme of 'Atmosphere and Spaces' at Siobhan Davies Studios.

[130] Noyale Colin and Rebecca Woodford-Smith, '*Bodies in Motion*', in Colin, *Becoming Together (DVD)*.

To respond to this curatorial theme, we created a choreographic structure based on the ideas of relationality developed through our practice and specifically adapted it for the improvisation of movement and sound in the top roof dance space of Siobhan Davies Studios.[131] An edited recording of this performance is available on the DVD. In May 2012, an adapted version of the piece was performed at the Symposium On Collaboration at Middlesex University with the additional involvement of Woodford-Smith. An extract of this performance is also provided as part of the DVD documentation. Once again, these practice components were vital in allowing me to test the ideas and theoretical discourses against their practical elaboration.

In this chapter, I account for the ways in which these two practical modes of inquiry have led me to pursue a number of issues concerning the complexity of the practitioner's self in performance co-working. Whereas the previous chapters have emphasised the possibilities for the expansion of the identity and the skills of the performance-maker through the collective process of creative practice, this final section of the research problematises the tensions between self and other which I have identified during my practice-based inquiry. With reference to contemporary debates on the notion of subjectivity in the advanced technological 'network society',[132] I discuss the ways in which the experience of multiplicities of selves in collaborative performance practice research can encourage creative responses to the crisis of singularity in contemporary subjectivity.

I begin my account of *Bodies in Motion* and *Rhythmic Trialogue* by examining the ways in which the different roles and skills that I have developed through this thesis can be linked to the idea of the researcher as distributed self. Drawing on the notion of 'dispersed selves of [the] author' in the context of PaR,[133] I question the relationships between the different

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[131] Noyale Colin, Florence Peake and JJ Wheeler, '*Rhythmic Trialogue*', in Colin, *Becoming Together (DVD)*.

[132] For sociologist Manual Castells, '[t]he shift from traditional mass media to a system of horizontal communication networks organized around the Internet and the wireless communication has introduced a multiplicity of communication patterns at the source of a fundamental cultural transformation, as virtuality becomes an essential dimension of our reality.' See Manual Castells, Preface to the 2010 edition in *The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture* (Southern Gate: John Wiley & Sons, 2011).

[133] Estelle Barrett offers an application of Foucault's idea of the function of the author in PAR and refers to the dispersed selves of author as a useful notion for discussing the multiple positions of the artist-researcher. See Estelle Barrett, 'Foucault's "What is an Author": Toward a Critical Discourse of Practice as Research' in Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (eds), *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Inquiry* (IB Taurus & Co, USA, 2010), pp. 136-46.

economies of practice, including those of performance and writing, which I have engaged with. For example, I discuss the way in which the experience of my collaborative performance practice and writing practice with Woodford-Smith opened up questions of relationality and plurality – for theoretical writing – vis-à-vis the practitioner-researcher's self. I then continue my reflection by integrating discussion of the concept of the para-human as it appears in Rotman's work on the emergence of a contemporary subjectivity 'derived from and spread over multiple sites of agency'.[134] Both projects are concerned with the idea of co-presence in performance practice. In my work with Woodford-Smith, the exploration of performative responses including improvisational techniques such as mirroring, cutting and pasting gave rise to further questions of intention and appropriation of bodies in motion. The interdisciplinary approach to co-working developed in *Rhythmic Trialogue* allowed for an investigation of the notion of presence through specific practices of the attention of the performers. The practice focused on the specific idea of anticipation in improvisation. In compositional terms, the final piece explored the ways in which performative presence can be distributed through time and space. The written reflection offered in the chapter signals further the ways in which attention practice in performance can emphasise the potential for what I have termed a collaboration of perception between participants. Furthermore, it explores how this choreographic mode of collaboration – through the experience of plurality of the performer's self in movement improvisation and performance composition – can intensify the potential of performance practice to reveal the sense of 'being beside' which characterises contemporary subjectivity.

[134] Rotman, *Becoming Besides Ourselves*, p. 8.

Chapter 1
The Judson Dance Theatre: negotiating existence and resistance

> There can't be anything new without something old, the new can only arise through the tension between the two.[1]
>
> (Heidi Wilm, 2006)

This chapter will consider the socio-political context in which the JDT formed in the early 1960s in New York City. The JDT is located at the heart of a debate between modern and postmodern ideas in dance, but the account of the sociological and ideological environment in which 'new dance' was born remains undeveloped. Were the artists involved following a democratic model of working together?[2] Or did they embrace the radical legacy of the avant-garde and merit the description of anarchic dancers?[3] In order to answer these questions, I will divide the analysis of the collaborative work of the JDT in two parts. In the first part, I will identify the influences under which the collective developed. Focusing on the work of four of its choreographers, I will examine its role and position and how it generated seminal new techniques in dance. Trisha Brown, Simone Forti, Steve Paxton and Yvonne Rainer – all contributing founders of the JDT – were among the first generation of artists to have attended university. They expressed a fierce reaction against the anti-intellectualism prevailing in the art world of the time,[4] and I will argue that their methods of working during the 1960s, including a collaborative strategy, ultimately led to the establishment of a new theoretical commitment in dance. In the second part, I will discuss in greater detail the social and political ethos which emerged from the JDT's model of collaboration. The first generation of Judsonites embraced a utopian vision of which the collaborative model is one of its metaphors. If this academic contextualisation of the JDT's era is another result of the institutionalisation of avant-garde performance, one might argue that exploring the histories and theories of dance practice might lead to new theoretical and practical knowledge of relevance to contemporary choreographic practice. This, in turn, contains implications for how we can envision collaboration within more contemporary choreographic practices.

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[1] Heidi Wilm, Tanzwerkstatt Workshop, Munich, 2006, as quoted in Jonathan Burrows, *A Choreographer's Handbook* (New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 63.
[2] Banes, *Democracy's Body*.
[3] Burt, *JDT*.
[4] Peter Osborne, 'Conceptual Art and/as Philosophy', in Michael Newman and John Bird (eds), *Rewriting Conceptual Art* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), pp. 47-65, (p. 50).

Part I: Influences and Compositional Choices

With its base aside Washington Square, the JDT was significantly positioned at the centre of many intersections. Its influences were complex and therefore contradictory; and both fashionable qualities were part of the ethos of the group. For the purpose of this inquiry I will examine critical influences which were important in the formation of the group; including John Cage and Merce Cunningham's collaborative model, and Anna Halprin's inclusive compositional methods.

The JDT's emergence is generally linked with a choreography workshop led by Robert Dunn. Dunn was a student of John Cage,[5] and despite Dunn's experience in dance, he had trained as a composer and his ideas were based on Cage's principles and experiments, especially chance technique. Banes says that, 'Not only Cage's methods, but also his attitude that "anything goes" was an inspiration that carried over into Dunn's class.'[6] All ideas were considered potential equals, or as his friend and critic Richard Kostelanetz highlighted in relation to Cage's work: 'Not only all notes are equals but also all instruments are equals, regardless of their rank in the musical tradition [...and] all venues are also legitimates.'[7] Cage's interest in Zen philosophy shaped his theorisation of his compositional methods:

> there is a plurality of centres, a multiplicity of centres. And they are all interpenetrating and, as Zen would add non-obstructing. Living for a thing is to be at the centre. That entails interpenetration and non-obstruction.[8]

This position is clearly reflected in the ways that Cunningham and Cage influenced each other's approach to time. As William Fetterman states, 'choreography and music, independently composed, shared only a common time and place of performance.'[9] Indeterminacy allowed the chain of a cause-and-effect relationship to become disjointed. The Cage/Cunningham model of collaboration entails the co-existence of independent art

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[5] Banes, *Democracy's Body.*
[6] Sally Banes, 'Choreographic Methods of the Judson Dance Theater' in Ann Dills and Ann Cooper Albright (eds), *Moving History/Dancing Cultures: Dance History Reader* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2001), 350-361 (p. 350).
[7] Richard Kostelanetz, 'The Anarchist Art of John Cage', < http://www.sterneck.net/john-cage/kostelanetz/index.php> [accessed on 15 June 2010].
[8] Cage, as quoted in William Fetterman, 'Cunningham/Cross Currents', *Choreography and Dance*, 4.3 (1997), 59-78 (p. 72).
[9] Fetterman, 'Cunningham/Cross Currents', p. 60.

forms. Interestingly, we can notice that Cage and Cunningham shared strategies but for different reasons. Cunningham, following a purist tradition, defended the autonomy of the dance art form in order to foreground it during the performance. Cage, on the other hand, was an integrationist who was interested (not unlike Marcel Duchamps) in exploring the differences between art and life and the impurities between them. Unlike Cunningham, a number of commentators have pointed out, Cage was not interested in order and he used chance and accidents within the performance itself. For example, in the piece *Water Walk* (1960), he uses a watch from which the I Ching determines the timings.[10] It is through following Cage's reclamation of the ordinary and his relinquishment of hierarchy and linearity – away, for example, from the virtuosity of Cunningham's dance technique – that the dancers of the JDT found the freedom to redefine the structure of dance composition and performance. Kostelanetz argues that

> In creating artistic models of diffusion and freedom, Cage is a libertarian anarchist […] By extension the work implies that outside of music, as well as in, it is possible to create social mechanisms that likewise can function without conductors, without chiefs. In other words, in the form of his art, in the form of performance, is a representation of an ideal polity.[11]

This statement parallels Rainer's references to the utopian vision of the 1960s, which most JDT members aspired to or seem, otherwise, to have recognised to some degree. Cage's anarchic ideal would appear to have resonated through the group's refusal of the hierarchy of virtuosic bodies and movements in favour of pedestrian movements and collaborative processes. Similarly, the dance artists of the JDT drew upon chance procedures to develop methods of composition (including innovative scores to generate indeterminate performances) which would bypass externally-imposed decision-making. However, as Burt demonstrates through examining the relationships between the historical avant-garde of early twentieth century and the new dance of the 1960s

> Cage and Cunningham attempted to save the avant-garde tradition of Duchamps, Satie and Picabia; at a time of social and political reaction they turned it into their aesthetics of indifference, only to have this turned during a less repressive decade into a new, polemic and more disturbing avant-gardism by the dance artists associated with the Judson Dance Theater.[12]

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[10] For a detailed description of this performance see Natalie Crohn Shmitt, 'So Many Things Can Go Together: the Theatricality of John Cage', *New Theatre Quarterly II,* 41 (1995) 72-78. For a TV recording of Cage performing this piece in 1960 see John Cage, *Water Walk*, (1960) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SSulycqZH-U> [accessed on 15 June 2010].

[11] Kostelanetz, 'The Anarchist Art'.

[12] Burt, *JDT*, p. 48.

If what I would describe as the 'juxtaposition model' of collaboration of Cage and Cunningham has been a direct source of influence for the members of the JDT, it is more with Cage's ideas – in keeping with the ethos of the earlier avant-garde (especially Duchamps) – that the dancers engaged closely. According to the dance critique Jill Johnston, and in contrast to Banes' identification of a democratic body, 'the thinking behind the work goes beyond democracy into anarchy'.[13]

Another major influence informing the JDT's development was the work of the Californian choreographer Anna Halprin. Early participants in Dunn's workshop would often come from the Merce Cunningham studios. The class begun to attract more eclectic dancers including Trisha Brown, who worked closely with Simone Forti. Forti had studied with Halprin, and although she never performed in the JDT's concerts, she attended Dunn's workshop and is seen to have brought different ideas to the group.[14] Originally a painter, Forti had studied under Halprin, developing an understanding of Bauhaus principles in the development of Halprin's experimental task-oriented improvisation:

> The idea of these 'tasks' was to set up a structure or an object and to explore the physical possibilities that it offered ... in this way we were able to enrich our corporeal and kinetic imagination directly – without recourse to external referents (literary or psychological) as had been the case up until then in most dance practices.[15]

Brown and Forti's use of improvisation was of crucial importance to the JDT's movement research and its legacy. As Burt notes, 'Brown and Forti were practising during the 1960s what Paxton and others associated with contact improvisation began to practice in the 1970s.'[16]

Halprin's teaching in the west of America brought also another social and political dimension to the aesthetics of indifference of the postmodern dancer.[17] Halprin had a holistic approach to dance, art and life. In her own words: 'My approach comes from this

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[13] Jill Johnston, as quoted in Burt, JDT, p. 11.
[14] Sally Banes, *Writing Dance in the Age of Postmodernism* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1994), p. 208.
[15] Simone Forti, as quoted in Libby Worth and Helen Poynor, *Anna Halprin* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 37.
[16] Burt, *JDT*, p. 14.
[17] See Moira Roth, 'The aesthetics of indifference', *Artforum,* 163 (1977), 46-53. Burt offers a description of the three phases of the development, Duchamp, Cunningham and the Judson Dance Theatre in JDT, p. 44.

humanistic and experiential emphasis with a strong link to the environmental arts...I was into dance as an experience.'[18] Halprin and her dancers were performing outside the traditional theatre to a ready-made audience. Streets, bus stops, parks, and abandoned buildings would become site of explorations and exchanges, and sometime sources of interaction with the law. A march with blank placards, for example, was a rebellion against the restriction of the use of the environment by performing artists and led to larger projects in cities. Halprin's involvement with the Watts riots in 1967, whereby she worked with an all-black group in their studios for more than a year, marked her commitment to community art as life process.[19]

Halprin's practices aimed to be inclusive, as captured in her commenting that, 'movement is the basis of our common language. I consider my approach to movement to be a fundamental and universal approach to the body'.[20] If some of the JDT's dancers might have found this definition of movement problematic, they did engage with her search for kinaesthetic and physiological sensation in improvisation. As Burt notes, it is Halprin's embodied experience that led Rainer to create *Trio A* (1965).[21] Commitment to political principles also informed her work with her husband Lawrence Halprin on scores. Their creative process, as articulated by the RSVP Cycles, was developed to allow a range of different people with different life experiences to create collectively.[22] Equally, writing their methods down represented their effort to render the procedures of the creative process visible. For Halprin's husband, 'In a process-oriented society they must all be visible continuously, in order to work so as to avoid secrecy and the manipulation of people'.[23] If the Halprins shared with Cage and Cunningham a common interest in the articulation of art and life, it is with a different political agenda that they will move away from training artists

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[18] Anna Halprin, as quoted in 'The San Francisco Dancer's Workshop 1977-1986', Theatre Paper Archive, edited by Peter Hulton (Exeter: Arts Documentation Unit, 2004), p. 6.
[19] For a discussion of these performances, see Anna Halprin, 'Three Decades of Transformational Dance', in *Moving Toward Life: Five Decades of Transformational Dance* edited by Rachel Kaplan (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1995), pp. 5-11.
[20] Anna Halprin, 'San Francisco Dancer's Workshop', p. 7.
[21] Burt, *JDT*, p. 76.
[22] The RSVP Cycles are influenced by Carl Jung's analytical psychology and outlined by Halprin as follows: 'Resources are what you have to work with. These include human and physical resources *and* their motivation and aims. Scores describe the process leading to the performance. Valuaction analyzes the results of action and possible selectivity and decisions. The term "valuaction" is one coined to suggest the action-oriented as well as the decision-oriented aspect of V in the cycle. Performance is the resultant of scores and is the "style" of the process.' Lawrence Halprin, as quoted in Halprin, *Moving Toward Life*, p. 124.
[23] Lawrence Halprin, quoted in Worth & Poynor, *Anna Halprin*, p. 71.

to find the artist within ordinary people.[24] This engagement with collective experience can be found in the JDT's choreographic work. For example, *Huddle* (1961) from Forti has been described by Banes as, 'a cooperative game which requires its performers to formulate ad hoc, intuitive and consensual rules in order that the individual plan progress smoothly.'[25] Based on participant improvisation such pieces embodied a different model of collaboration than the Cage/Cunningham: one where the individual is contextualised within the collective experience. However, both models propose to narrow the difference between life and art in such a way that they redefine the social experience of art and performance – a return to the values and ideas of the historical avant-garde led by visual artists and poets before being interrupted by the Second World War.

While some members of the JDT came directly from the visual art scene (Robert Morris, Robert Rauschenberg, Carolee Schneemann), conceptual art and theory also offered different techniques to envisage the relationship between audience and performers as well as the relationship between dancer and choreographer. For example, the concept of *Happenings* had resonance in the way in which the JDT's dancers moved away from the exhibitive aspect of traditional dance shows to become 'events' of choreographic explorations.[26] One of the contrasting categories of the body of work presented by the JDT was the distinction between the theatrical, rehearsed pieces and the non-theatrical work based on sets of conditions which could include scores, rules or instructions to be activated during the performance. Rainer's *Terrain* (1963) gives a good example of work which combined memorised sequences of movements with instruction-based sections.[27] Rainer described the challenge of this piece as

> how to move in the space between theatrical bloat with its burden of dramatic psychological 'meaning' and the imagery and atmospheric effect of the non-dramatic, non verbal theatre (i.e. dancing and some 'happening') - and - theatre of spectator participation and/or assault.[28]

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[24] See Sally Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers: Post-Modern Dance with a new introduction* (New Haven: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), p. 9.
[25] Ibid., p. 27.
[26] The term *happening* is born out of Alan Kaprow's piece *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* (1959). Kaprow's *happenings* were presented in 'intimate' sites whereby, 'The watchers sat very close to what took place, with the artists and their friends acting along with assembled environmental constructions'. Alan Kaprow, 'Assemblages, Environment and Happenings' in Harrison & Wood (eds), *Art in Theory,* p. 717.
[27] See Banes' description in *Democracy's Body,* pp. 107-130.
[28] Rainer in Roselee Goldberg, *Performance Art from Futurist to the Present* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999), p. 141.

The Judsonite appropriation of the procedure of *happening* would not only change the way people would experience dance,[29] but it would also lead to new approaches in collaboration. In contrast with the modernist vision of collaboration of distinguishing separate roles and tasks within a performing art production (choreographer, dancer, composer, writer, set designer),[30] the group would assume that any dancer could be choreographer and that choreographic work was not reserved for trained dancers. If initially the JDT's members were mostly dancers, by 1963 many New York artists interested in experimental live art were involved in the JDT either as direct collaborators or as audience members. The blurring of the borders between roles of production and genres of performance at play in the JDT's collaborative processes led to an integration of elements of composition between disciplines rather than a joining of named entities. Whereas this curiosity from the art world toward dance practices is linked to a growing interest in the body in motion as a central element of artistic expression, it is also possible that the integrative nature of the collaborative process of the JDT helped the visual artists involved to advance the earlier form of happenings beyond moving tableaux.[31]

I have demonstrated that the influences shaping the collaborative work of the JDT were grounded around a desire to narrow the gap between art and social life. This stated intention led the Judsonites to explore new ways of working together. It is at the junction of Cage's anarchist methods, Halprin's humanist approaches and the integration of visual arts strategies that the artists of the JDT started to negotiate a new social commitment in dance. Rogoff outlines a division between what she calls two different perceptions of collaboration: the one 'perceived from within the orthodox narrative of modernism [...] a banding together of a group of artists around a series of formal moves which in turn, presumably, serves to bond them in a cultural and ideological consensus'; and the other

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[29] Kaprow's *happening* does not represent a fixed form of performance: 'It covered this wide range of activity, however it failed to distinguish between the different intention of the work or between those who endorsed and those who refuted Kaprow's definition of a happening as an event that could be performed only once.' Roselee Goldberg, *Performance Live Art since the 60s* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), p. 132.

[30] The ballet *Parade* - produced by Sergei Diaghielev in 1917 with the collaboration of composer Erik Satie, painter Pablo Picasso, writer Jean Cocteau and choreographer Leonide Massine - might be seen as the peak of the modernist vision of collaboration. See the roundtable discussion with Noel Carroll, Roger Copeland, Mary Fleischer, Lynn Garafola, and Yvonne Rainer, 'Approaches to Collaboration: Choreographers and Visual Arts', Philoctetes Center for the Multidisciplinary Study Of the Imagination, (2007) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THuyhgEhkdU> [accessed on 5 March 2015].

[31] See Goldberg's discussion of dance and minimalism in Goldberg, *Performance Live Art*, p. 141.

‘which emphasises a critical interrogation of the process of the production through artistic practice, the loss of the so-called autonomy of the work of art and the subjugation of the heroic’.[32]

If the JDT does not offer an obvious fit with either of these two perceptions, it might still be argued that it sits closer to the second category even if such an agenda, as will be explored further below, was not fully realised. Nonetheless, I have demonstrated that the Judsonites stretched the boundaries of movement composition by integrating strategies from other arts into the composition of the choreography itself, while advancing dance and dancers towards a critical centre of the experimental art scene of the 1960s. I will now turn to examine the practical devices and the ways in which the dancers of the JDT re-envisaged a social commitment in dance.

Choreography, training and theory

For the purpose of this inquiry, I focus below on some of the methods of composition which I argue were important to the Judson collaborative processes. I have defined a number of elements of composition as central to the shift in decision-making observed in the documented practice of Judson choreographers. In my previous analysis, I examined the use of improvisation and chance procedure as instrumental to the dancers in their shift away from aesthetics or even ‘seductive’ movements,[33] and towards more natural (or everyday) ways of moving within non-hierarchical structures.[34] If indeterminacy avoided rationalisation in decision-making it also eschewed direct history and psychology in the creative process. However, a piece like *See-Saw* (1960) from Forti announced the possibilities of including personal material in a detached and indirect way. The piece, based on a playground game – with Robert Morris and Rainer on either side of the see-saw

[32] Irit Rogoff, ‘Production Lines’ (2009), < http://collabarts.org/?p=69,> [accessed 13 July 2011].
[33] The following quotation from Rainer’s own manifesto, notwithstanding the question of how far it represented the JDT’s position as a group, captures elements of the JDT’s radicalism: ‘No to spectacle no to virtuosity no to transformation and magic and make believe no to the glamour and transcendency of the star image no to the heroic no to the anti-heroic no to trash imagery no to involvement of performer or spectator no to style no to camp no to seduction of spectator by the wiles of the performer no to eccentricity no to moving or being moved.’ (Rainer, as quoted in Banes, *Terpsichore*, p. 43). Note also that the absence of punctuation reflects the search for a new grammar in dance composition.
[34] Banes proposes a new definition of the word “natural” for the post-modern dancers: ‘It means action undistorted for theatrical effectiveness, drained of emotional overlay, literary reference, or manipulated timing.’ See Banes, *Terpsichore*, p. 17.

and Forti singing a nonsense song – consisted of juxtaposed fragments. In Rainer's words, *See-Saw* used

> physical properties, like one person lying down, walking back up, tilting it, the other person slides down, walks back up, balancing precariously so the thing is still. It also had some expressionist things in it. At one point Bob Morris read *Art News* to himself, and I had my first screaming fit on the other end [...] And one thing followed another. Whenever I am in doubt I think of that, one thing following another.[35]

The juxtaposed fragments were initiated by task-based improvisations. Forti apparently threw a jacket on the floor, saying, 'Improvise that!'[36] And Rainer reacted with her 'screaming fit'. Here the instruction requests the performer to delve into their personal experience and, eschewing characterisation, to perform one action following the other. The inherently fragmented structure of the piece combined with the non-dramatic performance quality of Morris and Rainer – by this I am referring to the refusal of characterisation of a movement/action – allowed Forti to include personal experiences (autobiographical material) in an impersonal way. Rainer was not be the only one among the group to be impressed by the unconnected structure of the piece, and as Burt notes, 'Forti's refreshingly unconventional approach in these early performances made a significant impact on the way the new dance subsequently developed.'[37]

One of the consequences of a fragmented dance construction is a shift in spectatorship. As there is no proposed connection between the component elements of the dance, the audience needs to make their own. The spectator is thereby invited to collaborate in the construction of the dance which multiplies the work's possible meanings. To this effect, the JDT's choreographers also performed their work in a non-proscenium mode. The changing of physical, spatial relationships between the audience and the work was an artistic approach shared with other live art manifestations in the United States around that time (happenings and Fluxus, for example, played with the participation and inclusion of audiences). In Rainer's words, this unsettling of the performer-audience relationship was 'another device designed to counter the venerable convention of serving it all up on a platter.'[38] Minimalist artists also made such a demand on their audience. Rainer developed

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[35] Rainer, as quoted in Burt, *JDT*, pp. 59-60.
[36] Simone Forti, as quoted in Banes, *Terpsichore*, p. 25.
[37] Burt, *JDT,* p. 60.
[38] Yvonne Rainer, quoted in Virginia Spivey, 'Sites of Subjectivity: Robert Morris, Minimalism, and Dance Source', *Dance Research Journal*, 35.2 – 36.1 (2003 - 2004), 113-130 (p. 120).

another device often associated with minimalist sculpture, namely the durational time of action. In this mode of temporally-focused choreography, the composition of movements is based on the actual time of the action performed rather than on musical counts and tempi. Commenting on the use of repetition and interruption in *Part of Some Sextet* (1965), Rainer stated that

> both factors were to produce a 'chunky' continuity, repetition making the eye jump back and forth in time and possibly establishing more strongly the difference in the movements material ... interruption would also function to disrupt the continuity and prevent prolonged involvement with any one image.[39]

Repetition, interruption and accumulation, rather than narrative sequence, were choreographic motifs introduced by the JDT's dancers to avoid delivering an explicit meaning to the spectator. Instead, what was proposed was a framework allowing the audience to see the seam of the work. Similarly, the practice of improvisation also contributed to a changing relationship between the audience members and the dancers. It is while improvising, in Brown's terms, that 'your senses are heightened; you are using your wits, thinking everything is working at once to find the solution of a given problem under pressure of a viewing audience.'[40] It is the presence of this so-called 'thinking body' that the dancers of the JDT endeavoured to make manifest not for the spectators, but with them.

Despite the debate regarding its broader place in dance,[41] the influence of minimalism on the Judsonites is undeniable. The adoption of minimalism was more of a strategy adapted by some group members rather than an overarching theoretical commitment of the JDT. It was associated with an agenda in reclaiming discourse as a medium of aesthetic activity. For example, words were used as material or score for a dance. Writings became a way to define the particular conceptual issues that the spectator might seek to understand in order to appreciate the work. Rainer's essay, 'Quasi Survey', is illustrative of this process, and gives an insight into the theoretical elements informing her decisions in the making of *Trio A*.[42] Indeed, one might argue that Rainer and her colleagues' tendency to find inspiration in the use of philosophical thinking positions theory as a compositional device itself.[43] The

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[39] Ibid., p. 121.

[40] Trisha Brown, quoted in Livet, Anne, 'Trisha Brown: an Interview' in *Contemporary Dance: An Anthology of Lectures, Interviews and Essays* (New York: Abberville, 1978), 44-54 (p. 48).

[41] See Burt, 'Minimalism, Theory, and the Dancing Body', in *JDT,* 52-87.

[42] For a discussion on how 'Quasi Survey' links tightly with *Trio A*, see Burt in *JDT*, pp.75-76.

[43] See Noel Caroll, 'Theatre, Dance, and Theory: a Philosophical Narrative', *Dance Chronicle*, 15: 3 (1992), 317- 331 (p. 324).

political reframing of the body is at the heart of a critical discourse led by some of the most influential theorists.[44]

The notion of presence in dance has been one of the central concerns for both the dancers of the JDT and resonates with ideas of the body emerging in contemporary philosophy. As Lepecki observes, the wider philosophical trend was towards recognising, 'the body not as a self-contained and closed entity but as an open and dynamic system of exchange, constantly producing modes of subjection and control, as well as resistance and becomings.'[45] 'Quasi Survey' does not dictate how to view *Trio A*, but Burt argues that it changes the way the viewers experience the dance. It does this, Burt observes, 'by indicating the kind of process through which they can engage with it.'[46] Rainer not only encourages the audience to contemplate the significance of the dancing body, but further initiates a system of composition for dance, whereby – as cultural theorist Homi Bhaba observes – she demonstrates the conceptual potential of critical theory for change and innovation.[47] In this instance the theoretical is not only a compositional device. It also becomes the vehicle for a collaborative discourse with the audience which is equally articulated through the non-proscenium presentation of the work. Another major element relating to the theorisation of practice associated with the JDT is the development of release techniques and the birth of Contact Improvisation. Both practices engage with the desire to find a more natural way of dancing: release techniques are based on anatomical knowledge and somatic experiences, and imply an individual search for movement; whereas Contact Improvisation involves duets, in which partners support each other's weight while moving.

I would argue that the flourishing of these particular techniques served three key functions of significance for the JDT's legacy: it provided a means of theorising the ordinary nature of the movement performed by its dancers; it offered a demystification of the creative process; and it allowed an audience that wished to learn technique to engage directly with ideas associated with the JDT. Melanie Bales, in her essay 'Falling, Releasing, and Post-

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[44] See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (Tavistock: Routledge, 1989); Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference* (London: Routledge, 2001); Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic Of Sense* (London: Continuum, 2004).
[45] André Lepecki, *Exhausting Dance* (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), p. 5.
[46] See Burt, *JDT,* p. 78.
[47] See Homi Bhaba in Lepecki, *Exhausting Dance*, p. 6.

Judson Dance', highlights two components belonging to the release technique: 'the *idea* of releasing from many different things - old habits, old styles, tensions, holding patterns [...and] the idea of movement efficiency.'[48] Both ideas permeated the work of the new choreographers of the JDT. Influenced by the development of release techniques, Contact Improvisation was 'invented' by Paxton in 1972 to give a structure to the movement ideas he had been investigating since the beginnings of the JDT.[49] As the practitioner Cynthia Novack observes

> The lack of conscious compositional focus in the form represented spontaneity in life, a literal 'going with the flow' of events, just as the dancers followed the flow of their physical contact. The group with no director symbolised an egalitarian community in which everyone cooperated and no one dominated. [...] distinctions between amateur and professional dancers were consciously ignored initially.[50]

With Contact Improvisation, the collaborative approach and democratic ideals of the JDT evolved into a physical experience of giving and receiving (each other's body weight) and a mix of its participants' skills. However, over time, as choreographer and early Contact Improvisation practitioner Lisa Nelson has observed, the practice drifted away from its social agenda. As it became institutionalised as a highly skilled dance technique, a clear division between amateur groups and professional companies emerged. Nelson has commented on the loss of what she described as the 'folk' of the first phase of development of the practice

> Eventually a lot of people became teachers and that started to change things…if you'd been performing, that kind of become a habit and you wanted to keep performing … after a while, it took you away from just being a 'folk' and spending time with 'the people'.[51]

Novack notes that this later development, 'raises questions about the relationship of cultural ideas to social institution and movements'.[52] Paxton and his peers at the JDT had been university educated, and as Banes emphasises, their audiences constituted of artists, writers, intellectuals who were 'acutely aware of the crises in modern art and

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[48] Melanie Bales, 'Falling, Releasing and Post-Judson Dance' in Melanie Bales and Rebecca Nettl-Fiol (eds), *The Body Eclectic: Evolving Practices in Dance Training* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), pp. 151-164 (p. 157).

[49] For a discussion on the origin of Contact Improvisation, see Cynthia Novack, *Sharing the Dance: Contact Improvisation and American Culture* (London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), pp. 22-52.

[50] Novack, *Sharing the Dance*, p. 11.

[51] Lisa Nelson, quoted in Novack, *Sharing the Dance*, p. 208.

[52] Novack, *Sharing the Dance*, p. 12.

knowledgeable about the history of alternatives to art traditions, eager to be surprised, shocked, provoked.'[53] Moreover, following a long historical lineage, a system of artistic patronage operated in the United States in a way which contrasted with the European system. In other words, I would argue that while the innovative, non-hierarchical, ad hoc collaborative process of the JDT was in step with the upheavals of the 1960s, it also owed something to what was in the US at least a favourable institutional context. Indeed, as the historian Arthur Marwick argues in his comprehensive study of the social and cultural changes of the decade, a vital component of the transformative mechanism operating during the decade was a genuine tolerance in the United States within the institutions of authority towards new subcultures. He highlights, 'the existence in position of authority of men and women of traditional enlightened and rational outlook who responded flexibly and tolerantly to counter-cultural demands'.[54]

The theoretical and practical awareness of this generation resulted from the change in the role and function of the art within the post-1945 university.[55] Banes observes that the relation shifted, 'from training students in appreciation of the arts to a complex, multifunctional support, training and patronage system.'[56] The philosopher Peter Osborne, in turn, attributes this sort of development to the entry of a generation of artists into the US university system in the late 1940s and 1950s.[57] The academic environment in which most of the JDT members were trained not only contributed to the analytical and theoretical aspects of their practice. It also gave them an intellectual confidence in the relevance of their work.

[53] Banes, *Terpsichore*, p. 13.
[54] Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Social and Cultural Transformation in Britain, France, Italy and the United States, 1958-74* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 13. See also Sally Banes, 'Institutionalizing Avant-Garde Performance' in Sally Banes, *Before, Between, and Beyond: Three Decades of Dance Writing*. Edited and with an introduction by Andrea Harris ; forewords by Joan Acocella and Lynn Garafola (University of Wisconsin Press, USA, 2007), pp. 216-242.
[55] For a discussion on the influence and legacy of John Dewey's education method and American modern dance see: Isa Partsch-Bergsohn, *Modern Dance in Germany and the United States: Crosscurrents and Influences* (Tuscon: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1994), pp. 49-51.
[56] Banes, 'Institutionalizing Avant-Garde Performance', p. 231.
[57] Peter Osborne, *Philosophy in Cultural Theory* (London & New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 89.

Part II: Towards a new collective structure

It is with the recognition of these new theoretical positionings that we can start to consider the political implications of the JDT's work. What kind of political discourse emerges from their collaborative model? If collaboration was used as a strategy against the dominant aesthetics of modern dance and, as Banes has argued, as an affirmation of the ideals of democratic freedom, what were the limitations of that strategy in relation to those ideals. In seeking to answer these questions, this part will also chart those factors which led the JDT's collective spirit to transform into individualised signatures.

The active association of modern dance and the Left in the 1930s has been well documented.[58] This association informed the reception of the work of modern choreographers including Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman and Hanya Holm.[59] Although the JDT did not seek such an active relationship with politics, connections can be traced, with hindsight, between its work and a wider socio-political context. Whereas in the arts, the rhetoric around the notion of collective art was associated with alien collectivist and authoritative cultures, for modern dance, a collective process constituted a strategy against elitism. According to Banes, the JDT's 'cooperative nature as an alternative-producing institution was a conscious assault on the hierarchical nature not only of academic ballet but also, most directly, of the American modern dance community as it had evolved by the late 1950s'.[60] Paxton recalled that, 'the system [they] used was a Quaker method, by which you tried to reach consensus. Consensus – nobody disagrees actively.'[61] Decisions were not made following a majority vote. Although there were no specific entry requirements to be part of the group, there were rules to follow. The work of

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[58] Susan Manning, *Modern Dance, Negro Dance: Race in Motion* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004). See also Ellen Craft, *Stepping Left: Dance and Politics in New York City, 1928-1942* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997). Mark Franko, *The Work of Dance: Labor, Movement, and Identity in the 1930s* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2002).

[59] As Manning notes, 'Leftist dance and modern dance were overlapping practices and formations, for many choreographers and dancers participated in both movements…all trained at the studios of Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman, and Hanya Holm and continued to perform with their mentors' companies while taking leadership in leftist dance. Thus modern dancers and leftist dancers shared training methods, movement techniques, and compositional strategies'. See Manning, *Modern Dance, Negro Dance,* p. 62.

[60] Banes, 'Choreographic Methods of the JDT', p. 350.

[61] Steve Paxton, 'Transcript from Movement 12's Salon Evening with Steve Paxton in Brighton', (2008), < http://www.movement12.org/writings/stevepaxtontranscript.pdf> [accessed May 6th 2010].

the JDT consisted of two distinct phases: the weekly workshops whereby the members of the group acted as a critical audience for each other, and the public concerts. When the workshop which Dunn (initially) led in the Cunningham Studios moved to the Judson church, the group chose rotating chairs to decide and lead the focus of the feedback for the pieces presented that day. Similarly, the programming of the concert followed a collective agreement (at least at the beginning).[62] But without following the 'everything goes' ethos with which the JDT has sometimes been associated, Paxton recalled scrapping work that was too weak: 'if people didn't like it they would say "we think this work isn't mature yet – work on it a bit more". Or "it's a bit too long and you already have two other pieces".'[63]

Although non-hierarchical, there were elements of power politics within the group. The personality of some of the members played an important role in the way that the group was organised. As Banes notes, Rainer and Paxton held the label of 'movers and shakers',[64] and personal experience was a natural way to give authority to a proposition. By 1964, both had gathered an impressive body of work which was often performed outside of the JDT's concerts. Paxton, moreover, was still touring internationally with the successful Cunningham Company. What is striking in Banes' account is the precision and clarity of the choreographers in their creative processes. A sense of real determination resonates in the voices of Banes' protagonists. Founder member Elaine Summers reported that, 'people [were] really working on their ideas, and getting their ideas out, and being involved in the opportunity to "do their own thing" with a commitment not to get into each other's way'.[65] This spirit, according to Summers, led to individuals retaining a sense of ownership over specific pieces of work. Unlike in the visual arts where collaboration was used as a strategy against the 'isolated genius', the collaborative process of the group did not diminish the authorship of the choreographers. Indeed, one might argue that it strengthened its power. In response to the hierarchy of classical and modern dance it was expected that every dancer was also a potential choreographer. If the internal structure was the result of collective decisions, the choreographer was pushed and supported to make his or her own decision.[66] Collaboration with other members would happen only if that was needed for the

[62] When the number of participants later increased, elected committees would administrate group concerts.
[63] Paxton, 'Transcript of Movement 12'.
[64] See Banes, *Democracy's Body*, p. 165.
[65] Ibid., p. 210.
[66] See Elaine Summers' description of feedback from the workshop in Banes, *Democracy's Body*, p. 80.

exploration of an idea in the piece. The programming of the concerts presented a mix of collaborations and solos where collaborations were distinguished between collaboration of ideas and collaboration of bodies. For example, *Rafladan,* a collaboration between painter Alex Hay, dancer Deborah Hay and musician Charles Rotmil was seemingly executed without pre-determined agreement. As Hay remembered, 'we just did it'.[67] In contrast, Rainer's piece *We Shall Run* was intensely rehearsed. One of her dancers, Tony Holder recalled that, 'She wanted everybody to learn it. She would walk around and talk to you through it [...] she would say "yes" or "start that part sooner"'.[68] Similarly, Holder commented on Paxton's approach to working with others as being 'very didactic about how to do things, not what I would call flexible'.[69]

One might indeed argue that the 'movers and shakers' of the group held clear expectations of that group. In order to nuance Johnston's claim that the collective was of an anarchic nature, I would note here that the JDT might not have 'invalidat[ed] the very nature of authority'.[70] Conversely, underlying the functioning of the group were strong individual commitments and interests combined with a diligent application of collective rules. This is not to undermine the sense of generosity and openness that some of the members practised, but to offer another view on the social models they have been associated with.

Despite different members of the group holding different statuses, the dancers shared certain concerns for the world around them. As Burt observes, the JDT did not ally itself to any mainstream, democratic, political organisation, but its dancers expressed support for direct action and for 'outsiders'.[71] However, their contribution in resisting the dominant ideologies of the 1960s might seen to have been more of an ontological nature rather than political. In a tribute to the work of the dancers, the minimalist artist and JDT member Robert Morris stated that, 'Perhaps dance is moving toward dance, toward its own free identity and does not have any historical obligation to submit to a metamorphosis into theatre.'[72] Whereas Morris referred to the modernist project of making dance equal to other high art forms, in the sixties a modernist view of dance existed - as the historian Mark

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[67] Ibid., p. 68.
[68] Ibid., p. 87.
[69] Ibid., p. 168.
[70] See Johnston in Burt, *JDT*, p. 11.
[71] See Burt, *JDT*, pp. 117-118.
[72] Robert Morris in Banes, *Democracy's Body,* p. 79.

Franko notes - in ‘a contested space between the choreographic and the theoretical, the corporeal and the ideological, the kinetic and the political’.[73] I would argue that it is in that contested space that the work of the JDT addressed the open question of ontology in dance.[74]

As I noted above when discussing choreographic choices, the Judsonites were engaged in challenging the act of spectatorship. The choreographers were part of a broader movement in art that was concerned with questions of presence and immediacy in an industrialised and increasingly technologised society. Rainer was one of the leaders of this framework in the group but she was also one of the loudest in claiming her resistance. In stating that, ‘my body remains the enduring reality’,[75] Rainer places the body at the centre of a site of resistance joining forces with similar struggles in the visual arts.[76] When later she quotes director Richard Forman affirming that what matters is to ‘resist the present’ she theorises again the desire for an ontological resistance to the politics of time. But in practice, as Marwick highlights, regardless of their revolutionary or ‘counter-cultural’ ideas it was not easy for the artists of the 1960s ‘to escape from the circumstance that everything was being produced within a society in which there was a steadily growing appetite for the new, and an entire commercial and technological apparatus devoted to focusing attention on, and marketing, the daring and exciting.’[77]

In her important study of Rainer, Carrie Lambert-Beatty extends the participative and egalitarian social context to focus on the mediated condition of post-1945 American life. Drawing upon Guy Debord’s critical dichotomy of lived experience and information-based media culture, she posits that while committed to an experiential reception through the use of ‘heterogeneity, stillness, slow motion and repetition, the Judsonites posed the liveness of

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[73] Mark Franko, cited in Lepecki, *Exhausting Dance*, p. 4.
[74] Lepecki in *Exhausting Dance* argues for the pressing need to address the remaining open question of ontology in Dance by posing Bhabha’s question: ‘In what hybrid forms, then, may a politics of the theoretical statement emerge?’ Homi Bhabha, as quoted in Lepecki, *Exhausting Dance,* p. 6.
[75] Ramsay Burt, ‘Genealogy and Dance History: Foucault, Rainer, Bausch and de Keersmaeker’ in Lepecki, *Of the Presence of the Body*, pp. 29-46 (p. 29).
[76] Commenting on the performance, *Eye Body*, Carolee Schneemann said that she wanted her body to be combined with the work as, ‘an integral material […] a further dimension of the construction’. See Goldberg, *Performance Live Art*, p. 17.
[77] Marwick, *The Sixties*, p. 318.

live performance as a problem.'[78] The problematisation of presence and the mediated body in the work of the JDT is more apparent when considering the inclusion of media devices which manipulate temporality such as video projection, photographs, and newspapers. Lambert-Beatty argues that, 'the interest in copresence and immediacy in the 1960s discourse was a case of protesting too much [...] of registering in negative the encroachment of communications technology and culture of spectatorship'.[79] This resulted in contrasting experiences for the JDT's audience; ranging from inclusion (participatory) to exclusion (mediatised). If problematising might have been a way of resisting dominant ideologies, the Judsonites were, as Burt states, 'sometimes only partially successful in imagining or discovering new ones whose logic they did not necessarily recognise or follow through at the time.'[80]

A number of factors can be seen to limit Banes' claims concerning *democratic bodies*. One of the weaknesses of the political agenda of the 1960s' avant-garde artist was a lack of awareness of African American issues. While the theoretical ideas informing the artistic choices of the choreographers constituted a challenge to the appreciation of the work, their formalist concerns were also less appealing to Americans more concerned with other struggles over the inheritance and reformulation of culture. It is also worth mentioning that the claim concerning democracy and inclusiveness in the dance of the 1960s was being undermined by the quasi-absence or underrepresentation of other ethnic groups within its participants or audience members. Another problematic aspect relates to the use of the consensus decision-making, which I have discussed above. Whereas it is difficult to know how close Paxton's understanding that 'nobody disagree[d] *actively*' was to the Quaker model of consensus, my argument here highlights the notion that the consensual decision processes that the Judsonites seem to have adopted did not respond to the complexity of a changing modern society including its multi-ethnic and economically stratified aspects as well as its distribution of power and authority.[81] If consensus as a practice of egalitarian ideology was popular within the university and the art collective scene in the sixties,[82] its

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[78] Carrie Lambert-Beatty, *Being Watched, Yvonne Rainer and the 1960s* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2008), p. 40.
[79] Ibid., p. 26.
[80] Burt, *JDT*, pp. 117-118.
[81] See Marwick, *The Sixties*, p. 10.
[82] See, for example, the call for participatory democracy from the Students for a Democratic Society in Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) Archives and Resources, N.D < http://www.sds-1960s.org/> [accessed on 20 February 2015]; and for a relevant discussion of

anti-hierarchical tendencies have been convincingly reassessed within poststructuralist theory.[83] Cilliers, applying postmodern theory to questions of ethics (drawing on Jean-François Lyotard's ideas of the postmodern condition), argues that consensus, 'as a goal would attempt to freeze the social system into a particular state', and a 'better… policy would be to develop a sensitivity for the *process* of social transformation'.[84]

The limits of 'pure art'

A significant part of the published literature examining the JDT is what has been referred to as the 'Terpsichore in Combat Boots' debate. Susan Manning, in her response to Banes' influential book on postmodern dance, *Terpsichore in Sneakers*, criticised Banes' emphasis on formal radicalism as the basis of a new aesthetic shift in the dance of the sixties. Considering the JDT as 'the last outposts of modernism', Manning claimed that the Judsonites shared the same formal concerns explored earlier by Nijinsky, Wigman, Graham, and Cunningham.[85] Burt noted that the influence of art critic Clement Greenberg led Banes to adopt the problematic notion of 'pure dance'. This formalist view is often associated with the aesthetics of modernism, including the autonomy and separation of the arts.[86] To highlight these ideas of 'pure' art, Burt cites Greenberg's definition of modernism as inextricably bound up with self-criticism. The task of self-criticism, Greenberg claimed, was

> to eliminate from the effects of each art any and every effect that might conceivably be borrowed from or by the medium of any other art. Thereby each art would be rendered 'pure', and in its 'purity' find the guarantee of its standards of quality as well as of its independence.[87]

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consensual decision making in theatre, see: Martin Bradford, *The Theater is in the Street: Politics and Performance in Sixties America* (Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004), pp. 67-70.

[83] See Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

[84] Paul Cilliers, *Complexity & Postmodernism*, p. 137.

[85] See Susan Manning, 'Review: Modernist Dogma and Post-Modern Rhetoric: A Response to Sally Banes' "Terpsichore in Sneakers" ', *TDR,* 32.4 (1988), 32-39. For Banes' response and Manning's subsequent reply see *TDR*, 33.1 (1989), 13-16.

[86] Roberts offers a clear evaluation of the impact of the formalist view on Modernism: 'Separation foregrounds and privileges the internal logic of the individual arts and fails to recognize the countervailing quest for the synthesis, especially in avant-garde theory and practice. Autonomy foregrounds the emancipation of the arts from social controls and fails to recognize the countervailing quest for a new social role of art, especially in avant-garde theory and practice.' See Roberts, *The Total Work of Art*, p. 1.

[87] Clement Greenberg as cited in Burt, *JDT*, p. 7.

For Burt, the advocacy of 'pure art' fails to account for the relevance of social and political and indeed affective factors in artistic endeavours.[88] Banes, drawing on the same notion, argues that the most important dancers in the 1960s moved towards 'pure dance'. But a Greenbergian account of modernism also fails to account for both the experimental interdisciplinary collaborations that the JDT undertook and the composite nature of the group.

The title of Banes' book *Reinventing Dance in the 1960s: Everything was Possible* translates the inexhaustible positive position of dance.[89] However, Burt denounces her systematic affirmative views of the JDT's work given the wider societal context within which the JDT was operating: 'there is no room in Banes' affirmative account of artist's agency and empowerment for any limitation caused by social or ideological factors'.[90] Manning also criticises the lack of political and social reflection on modernism when she observes that, 'it is almost as if the partisanship, the formal concerns, the apologies that recycle "modern-ist dogma" and "post-modern rhetoric" deflect attention away from the sociological and ideological dimensions of modernism'.[91] However, if we consider the JDT's collaborative and interdisciplinary aspects as central to its development, we might begin to accept the tensions and ambiguities that reside in the work of the JDT when trying to define its historical aesthetics. Lambert-Beatty shows that the JDT might be better seen 'as a crux between the still-powerful modernist model of medium-specific thinking about art, and the context-contingent, interdisciplinary mode associated with postmodernism.'[92]

When Rainer resists the idea of a canon in dance, and views the dance of the past as an unfinished archive, open to addition and modification, she is also referring to her own practice and position as an artist. In 1974, writing in the programme notes for *mind is a muscle*, she claimed that, 'Just as ideological issues have no bearing on the nature of the work, neither does the tenor of current political and social conditions have any bearing on the execution'. 'The world', Rainer stated, 'disintegrates around me'.[93] Rainer thus follows the Greenbergian avant-garde aspiration to separate from a 'culture in decline'. But in 1987

[88] Burt, *JDT*, p. 7.
[89] Sally Banes, *Reinventing Dance in the 1960s: Everything was Possible (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003).*
[90] Ibid., p. 11.
[91] Manning, 'Modernist Dogma', p. 37.
[92] Lambert-Beatty, *Being Watched,* p. 38.
[93] Yvonne Rainer, as quoted in Burt, *JDT,* p. 86.

she offers a self-reflective account of her own artistic intention in the 1960s by referring to

> the somewhat romantic ideas of the avant-garde that launched [her] own creative effort: ideas about marginality, intervention, an adversative subculture, a confrontation with the complacent past, the art of resistance, etc. Of course, these ideas must be constantly reassessed in terms of class, gender, and race.[94]

Whereas I accept that failings of the 1960s counterculture in America led to an identity crisis amongst the members of the avant-garde and created what Burt has called 'a situation of political disappointment', it is with the benefit of the hindsight that Rainer could advocate the reassessment of a radical artistic practice in term of political and social factors. Her position represents a moving away from the modernist valorisation of a 'pure' art within which the artist's process would be unaffected by – and disengaged from – her social and historical context. This, in turn, reflects the ways in which the JDT's collaborative processes were evolving as artists sought to explore the possibilities of a new relationship between art and social life.

Political disappointments

Rainer's association of 'romantic' avant-garde ideas with her early creativity demonstrates the legacy of 'the romantic project' on minimalist artists including Rainer and her collaborators in the 1960s.[95] 'The art for art's sake' slogan did resonate in artistic circles of the sixties. Yet, Walter Benjamin in 1936 strongly argued for the politicisation of art:

> "Fiat ars – pereat mundus", says Fascism, and, as Marinetti admits, expects war to supply the artistic gratification of a sense perception that has been changed by technology. This is evidently the consummation of "l'art pour l'art." Mankind, which in Homer's time was an object of contemplation for the Olympian gods, now is one for itself. Its self-alienation has reached such a degree that it can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order. This is the situation of politics which Fascism is rendering aesthetic. Communism responds by politicizing art.[96]

Even if as Susan Buck-Morss argues, 'Benjamin must mean more than merely to make

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[94] Ibid., p. 11.

[95] The reference to a romantic attitude here refers to passionate artistic desires for social and personal change. According to Writer Jos De Mul, 'The Romantic aspiration was directed at reconciling the infinite with the *here* and *now*'. See Jos De Mul, *Romantic Desire in (Post)modern Art and Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999). For a discussion on the relationship between romantic ideas, Avant Garde art and issues of gender in experimental theatre, see James Harding, *The Ghost of the Avant Garde(s): Exorcising Experimental Theater and Performance* (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 2013), pp. 90-110.

[96] Walter Benjamin as cited in Susan Buck-Morss, 'Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's Artwork Essay Reconsidered ', *October*, 62 (1992), 3-41 (p. 4).

culture the vehicle for communist propaganda',[97] it remains the case that for American artists of the sixties any seemingly Communist-informed politicisation of art would have been regarded with suspicion. Indeed, in the climate of the Cold War, the overt representation of politics in the arts tended not to invite popularity. Serge Guilbaut, explaining how the work of American avant-garde artists of the fifties (and in particular the New York scene) was hijacked by a liberalist agenda against Soviet propaganda, argues that, 'the avant-garde even became a protégé of the new liberalism, a symbol of the fragility of freedom in the battle waged by the liberals to protect the vital centre from the authoritarianism of the left and the right.'[98] In the early 1950s, the co-option by the state of the ideas of 'politically "neutral" individualists' transformed avant-garde radicalism into an 'aggressive liberal ideology'.[99] Yet Marwick points out that to rigidly separate '"established society" and the "alternative society", between "majority culture" and "underground culture"' is to oversimplify matters. Marwick notes 'many liberals supported student protest and opposed American intervention in Vietnam.'[100] However, the intolerable spread of McCarthyism coupled with the engulfment of the War abroad would push the American avant-garde of the 1960s to move beyond the duality of politics to engage with new strategies to understand the world around them – stretching out the project of modernism to help form the new proposition of postmodernism.

Grand Union: toward a self-organised collaborative structure

It is with the extended form of the JDT known as the *Grand Union Company* that I propose to continue to examine the factors shaping the development and transformation of the collaborative process of the JDT's dancers. Drawing on Cilliers' model of ethics within complex systems, I examine the possibility that the collaborative decision making in operation under the conditions of the Grand Union – although pushing the dancers' creativity to its utmost limits – did not offer a sustainable model of collaborative practice but rather led to a rebirth of the pursuit of individual signature.

The Grand Union was formed out of Rainer's piece *Continuous Project – Altered Daily* in

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[97] See Susan Buck-Morss, 'Aesthetics and Anaesthetics', p. 4.
[98] Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole in the Idea of Modern Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 202.
[99] Ibid., p. 200.
[100] Marwick, *The Sixties*, p. 315.

1970 and continued to develop and transform as an organisation until its closure in 1976. Initially conceived as a means to share choreographic ideas, the company became firmly improvisationally-based with nine choreographers involved in its creative process.[101] If a full historical account of the group is beyond the remit of this chapter, it is the unique temporal conditions of the company that I propose to examine and consider as a model of postmodern ethics in collaboration.[102]

From the outset, it is important to consider the reported fact that most of the choreographers had known each other for almost ten years, whether as collaborators from the JDT or in class with Cunningham. These long-term relationships, based on mutual interest and shared exploration of ideas, allowed the development of what Paxton has termed 'a collective head'. In his words, mutual understandings were 'the result of countless rehearsals, parties, and late night recaps of performances over the years', creating 'a "head" that can itself provide the basis for near telepathic communication of intent of activity'.[103] In such a manner, The Grand Union's practice might be considered a complex system dependent upon the intricacies of singular relationships. The intertwining of the dancer's past life, on a private and public level, influenced their present collaborative action as much as their decisions (whether collective or individual) concerning their future. The Grand Union's 'collective head' constituted a unique condition of temporality for decision-making in which the collaborative structure is, in Cilliers' terms, 'neither a passive reflection of the outside, nor a result of active, pre-programmed internal factors, but the result of a complex interaction between the environment, the present state of the system and the history of the system.'[104] It was the interaction between the different dancer's temporalities that was at stake in the development of trust as understood by Paxton. In these terms, trust would start with the practice of acceptance, which Paxton explained to be the process of 'bringing in information about the actual state of the other

[101] The founding members of the Grand Union's company (according to Paxton) were: Becky Arnold, Trisha Brown, Dong, Douglas Dunn, David Gordon, Nancy Green Lewis, Barbara Llyod Dilley, Steve Paxton and Yvonne Rainer. See Steve Paxton, 'The Grand Union', *The Drama Review: TDR*, 16.3 (1972), 128-134 (p. 128). Banes mentions only six dancers as being involved from 1973 to 1976: Trisha Brown, Douglas Dunn, David Gordon, Nancy Green Lewis, Barbara Llyod Dilley and Steve Paxton. Banes, *Terpsichore*, p. 209.
[102] For a detailed discussion of the work of *the Grand Union* see Banes, *Terpsichore*, pp. 202-234, and Margaret Hupp Ramsay, *The Grand Union (1970-1976): An Improvisational Performance Group* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991).
[103] Paxton, *TDR*, p. 131.
[104] Ibid., p. 89.

person, and erasing images of the other person as one would have liked him to be'.[105] I would argue that practising time in these terms, was a prerequisite to the development of the 'reinforced communication' used by the dancers to make compositional decisions. Cilliers further demonstrates that complex systems follow a process of self-organisation in which an 'internal structure can evolve without the intervention of an external designer or the presence of some centralised form of internal control.'[106] We can begin to see how Cilliers' theories might offer an empirical fit with the company's constitutive questions: 'where do social hierarchical roles originate and how can they be changed; how to make artistic decisions; how not to depend on anyone unless it is mutually agreed; what mutually agreed means, and how to detect it.'[107]

The process of self-organisation is also reflected in practice in the way in which dancers interpreted the flow of time in performance. Their use of improvisation constitutes another significant focal point around which to discuss ethical issues in collaboration. Paxton recalled that improvisation, 'seemed the form in which all could participate equally, without employing arbitrary social hierarchies in the group':[108]

> I am balanced on my head on the slightly rough floor, pressing painfully, pivoted by an unseen friend at the other end of my body (lower: upper). My arms and hands are busy supporting a beautiful woman, stalling a fall she began, assuming that somebody's hand would influence the outcome, but ready, should she fall unnoticed to the floor.[109]

In the absence of pre-determined structure, the improvising dancers are required to continuously anticipate the future while accepting to not know its outcome. This condition seems to parallel Cilliers' problematisation of postmodern ethics when he questions how we can 'take responsibility for an unknowable future.'[110] Similarly the overall structure of performances evolved as a 'permissive, permutative, elastic, unspecified'[111] form in which – as Banes notes – a 'certain narrative emerged, only to be destroyed. A collective agreement was reached about the frame currently in operation, and collapsed in an instant'.[112] The constant demand on the dancer to reassess the situation, to create a

[105] Paxton, *TDR*, p. 132.
[106] Cilliers, *Complexity & Postmodernism,* p. 89.
[107] Paxton, *TDR*, p. 132.
[108] Ibid, p.130.
[109] Ibid, p.132.
[110] Cilliers, *Complexity*, p.139.
[111] Paxton, *TDR*, p. 130.
[112] Banes, *Terpsichore*, p. 212.

situation of decision-making, to re-invent something new to 'reinforce communication' at every performance pushed the dancers to create coping mechanisms that problematised this mode of performance. One of the choreographers, for example, would take the microphone instead of dancing the next planned sequence and would wail like Bob Dylan, 'Do you know what it's like to be next – do you know what it's like to not to know what you are going to do in a minute, do you know what its like to be in a strange city – DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LI-KE!?'.[113]

It is important to note in such accounts the change of approach from the consensual process of the JDT to the embracing of differences and even incompatibilities. This shift seems to be bound to Lyotard's 'postmodern condition' in which the power of the social system must be based on dissension and destabilising forces:

> it is now dissension that must be emphasized. Consensus is a horizon that is never reached. Research that takes place under the aegis of a paradigm tends to stabilize; it is like the exploitation of a technological, economical, or artistic idea.[114]

If we return to Cilliers' proposed set of conditions for the development of sensitivity to processes of social transformation, one might now find parallels with Grand Union processes. I synthesise below three components of ethical decision-making as understood by Cilliers, which can each be seen to be characteristic of the Grand Union's collaborative processes. The first component of Cilliers' model is the responsibility of every player to know the rules, which we can easily parallel to Paxton's notion of 'reinforced communication', where 'everyone is active and aware'. The second component is based on the capacity of each player to assume responsibility for local rules (limited in time and space) and for the effects of their practice. The Grand Union dancer's practice of improvisation as a mode of composition and performance embodied these rules. The third component is the possibility of not following a rule, which was also shown to be characteristic of the 'instant-to-instant' experience of the Grand Union dancer. However, Cilliers further argues that altruism is an essential component of any successful self-organising system.[115] This idea can help us to develop a less mechanistic view of the dancer's collaborative process and a possible lead towards explaining the closure of the Grand Union. For Paxton, as previously discussed, trust was the force behind the

[113] Ibid, p. 214.
[114] See Jean-François Lyotard in Cilliers, *Complexity*, p. 117.
[115] Cilliers, *Complexity*, p. 111.

possibility of heightened communication between the dancers: 'no expectation, no disappointment, [and] no blame. Just result.'[116] But with time that sense of trust seems to have been weakened to a point that was critical for the survival of the group. Banes elegantly captures this process in her description of the JDT's journey: 'From Great Collective to Bus Stop'.[117]

Whereas it is possible to see links between a postmodern theorisation of complex systems and the choreographer's collaborative process, it is difficult to identify with certainty the causes of the dissolution of the company in 1976. However, when Banes interviewed its members in 1979, the replies tended to carry a sense of what Rainer encapsulated in saying that, 'there was just too much pressure'.[118] David Gordon's answer to the question of why the Grand Union ended underscored in a dramatic way the tensions and exhaustion of the relationships between the members:

> The Grand Union had been my active fantasy world for a lot of years and I didn't know how I could get along without it. Yet there was an enormous sense of relief at not having to come in contact at all with some of its members for a while, or never again.[119]

For Trisha Brown, it was the lack of compositional control in Grand Union performances that led her to shift her attention to her own choreography. Barbara Dilley, another founder member of the company, offers an idea of how instrumental the collaborative process of the Grand Union had been for the affirmation of the work of each choreographer:

> We collectively outgrew the need to stretch ourselves apart from the place we had been stuck to; we had no discipline to see us through the turmoil of heightened constant change; we each found things we really wanted to do and began questioning the indulgence of the form we had created; we came to know each other, perhaps too well; we were in danger of having a solidified notion of what it was that we did, which made it awful when we didn't do it.[120]

It is important to note that the increasing success of some of the choreographers' individual works would have made time management more complicated for some. More importantly, it would have been more difficult to find the creative balance between a challenging collective process and the development of an increasingly well-defined body of signed choreography.[121] I would argue that the lack of balance in adjusting to new economic,

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[116] Paxton, *TDR*, p.132.
[117] See Banes, *Democracy's Body,* pp. 165-215.
[118] Banes, *Terpsichore*, p. 234.
[119] Ibid, p. 233.
[120] Barbara Dilley, as quoted in Banes, *Terpsichore*, p. 231.
[121] Trisha Brown Company registered thirty works choreographed by Brown between 1970 and

political and personal conditions led the group to shift to a less open process. As individual dancers were becoming more confident about their own individual work, the benefits of working together with the same artists over a longer period might have been undermined by tensions and clashing commitments. As Rainer comments, the incompatibilities and hostilities of the group were part of its nature and, 'the way in which they were worked out and acted out and enacted was one of the most fascinating things about the group'.[122]

With time what had started as an open process became closed off and less interactive. The lack of new 'input' in the group combined with a crisis of altruistic behaviour could have contributed, to follow Cilliers' argument, to the degeneration of its system. According to Marwick, 'there is certainly no case to be made that the people in the sixties were somehow more moral, more unselfish or more far sighted than people in any other age: circumstances were different'.[123] In 1976, the decision to disband the group was perhaps symptomatic of the end of what Marwick characterises as the 'long sixties', and the impending conservatism which followed. Nevertheless, the shift of conscience in the work of the dancers set the tone for a new way of apprehending the world: the turn from political to theoretical. It is precisely in that theoretical positioning of new dance that the legacy of the JDT is founded.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the socio-political conditions under which new collaborative practices in dance emerged in the early 1960s. The development of models of decision-making adopted by the group was influenced in part by the ideological intentions of the broader social movement, but also by the specifics of the choreographic choices made by the Judsonites, and by complexities in the social organisation of the group. I have identified compositional tendencies explored by the first generation of the JDT's choreographers, with a focus on the choreographic choices of Forti, Paxton and Rainer. If the expression 'dance composition' – which emerged out of Dunn's experimental

1976, including the seminal solo *Accumulation*. In 1972, Paxton started systematising his work on duets through his ongoing development of Contact Improvisation (see Banes, *Terpsichore*, p. 65). In the 1970s, Rainer continued to develop forms and variations of her seminal solo *Trio A* while she transitioned from choreography into filmmaking with her first film being the *Lives Of Performers* (1972).

[122] Rainer, as quoted in Banes, *Terpsichore*, p. 230.

[123] Marwick, *The Sixties*, p. 806.

composition workshops – signifies a desire to break away from previous choreographic structures, it also refers to the interdisciplinary approach embraced by the JDT's members. I have demonstrated that the collaborative nature of the group produced a new range of compositional devices which critically repositioned the dancing body within the public realm – a repositioning which also led to the theorisation of its practice. This chapter further examined how a new social commitment in dance developed outside and inside the group. If different kinds of relationships with audience members developed through negotiating participatory and media work, when looking at the group dynamic, the claim for a democratic or anarchic ethos weakens. The movement might have been collaborative – but this was not always the case with the creation of work. In fact, the collective commitments of the first generation of Judsonites soon transformed into individual concerns. This is reflected in a rise of solo concerts which for some marks the end of the Judson group.[124] Drawing from Cilliers' model of ethics, I further addressed the openness of the collaborative structure of the Grand Union. The analysis of the collective demonstrates the existence of the complex assemblage of factors which informed choreographic practices during the 'long sixties'. To consider the collaborative process in Cilliers' terms is to recognise the need to move beyond a unique vantage point, not only to describe the multiple views of the collaborators but also to articulate its complex processes in an expanded field.

[124] See Banes, *Democracy's Body*, pp. 209-213.

Chapter 2

***They Tried To Stand [I Am Still Falling]*: choreographic presence through time**

Profile to the audience, I step forward, the weight is on my right leg the left arm centred with the palm of the hand wide open, I find stillness, aching, trembling, the rush of blood to my extremities destabilises me, gravity pulls me out, around and down, I give in to gravity and let the movement resolve itself.

Fig. 2a *They Tried to Stand [I Am Still Falling]* Photos: Gerrit Schraa

This chapter addresses issues of historicisation of postmodern dance through a reflective analysis of the creative process developed during the making of my solo *They Tried To Stand [I Am Still Falling]* (*TTS*).[1] Following the previous chapter's historical examination of the work of the JDT, it seeks to question the influence of dance history in choreographic composition, and in turn explores ways of relating contemporary decision-making processes

[1] As part of this final submission, I have included a DVD recording of the solo filmed at Chisenhale Dance Space, London (2011). See Colin, '*They Tried to Stand*' in Colin, *Becoming Together (DVD)*. Also included is a video document which revisits the process of the work in relation to its outcome. This document incorporates process materials such as notes, drawings, and pictures; and I have inserted extracts of my public performances to compose a layering of process and product. Here I want to suggest that as a method of reflective engagement, the video invites the reader/watcher to consider a differentiation between process and product and yet highlights the importance of making visible aspects of the former. See Noyale Colin, 'They Tried to Stand: Practical Reflection' in Colin, *Becoming Together* (DVD).

with historical development. The chapter explores how the practitioner might draw upon resources of historical knowledge of their field (whether this knowledge is acquired tacitly or in other settings) in devising new material. In order to consider further such processes of 'co-labouring with the past', *TTS* sought to create a space of choreographic appropriation where a sense of historical space and time could resonate.

A recent trend towards choreographic re-constructions reveals an anxiety about the relationship between dance and history. The strategic use of stillness and slow motion by choreographers including Jérôme Bel or Yvana Müller also indicates a concern around the place and meaning of 'time' in live performance.[2] For the anthropologist Nadia Seremetakis, the practice of historical interrogation require**s** a performance of suspension that she calls a 'still-act' working 'against the flow of the present'. Stillness, she argues is 'the moment of exit from historical dust'.[3] The problem of disappearance persists in dance if we consider the body to exist only in a boundary-marked present tense. Bergson proposed we think of time in terms of duration. In his terms, it becomes 'embedded in the substance of particular strata or regions of matter. Each of which may exhibit its own tempo or duration.'[4]

As Guerlac notes, Bergson invites us: 'to explore inner experience – the sensation of qualities and affects – things, he argues, that cannot be measured.'[5] Drawing on such ideas, Massumi affirms that, 'it is not the present that moves from the past to the future. It is the future-past that continually moves through the present'.[6] He observes that 'a body present is in a dissolve [...] A thing cannot be understood without reference to the nonpresent dimension it compresses and varyingly expresses in continuity'.[7] The performance *TTS* is *not* a reconstruction, but instead it draws on visual research techniques to engage with these ideas in its assessment of the legacy of the JDT.

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[2] On perspective in Jérôme Bel's work see Lepecki, *Exhausting Dance*, pp. 45-64. For Müller on her work, see Yvana Müller, 'While We Were Holding it Together' (2006) <http://www.ivanamuller.com> [accessed on 22 February 2015].
[3] Nadia Seremetakis, *The Senses Still: Perception and Memory as Material Culture in Modernity* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 12.
[4] Henri Bergson, as quoted in Guerlac, *Thinking in Time*, p. 3.
[5] Guerlac, *Thinking in Time*, p. 5.
[6] Massumi, *Parables*, p. 200.
[7] Ibid., pp. 200-01.

In the first section of my solo, for example (see Fig. 2a above), I have copied three typical poses of Judsonite aesthetics from photographic documentation of three leading group members, namely Rainer, Brown and Paxton. While in the performance I reproduce these poses, it is worth noting in the DVD of the performance, that these poses change through time – or through duration – by which I mean, in Bergsonian terms, through becoming. Framed in that way, my performing body is unable to hold the pose. Instead, the body, being alive, transforms the pose and then in the absence of impulse the pose dissolves. The body is unable to maintain its fixity with the past. Instead, what remains seems to embody the capacity of the body, in Paxton's terms, to be always in adjustment with the real. What, then, are the implications of the notion that the body is always in such an adjustment? In *TTS*, on the basis of and in tandem with the theoretical enquiry I am recording here, I have sought to problematise the historicising of live-ness in dance. A performance register allows us to explore ways to engage with the non-present dimension (abstract yet real) of dance in the search for what might be called a logic of choreographic presence.

While seeking to problematise the historicising of live-ness, I recognise that the reception of performances may depend upon the context within which work is performed. The previous chapter discusses the relationship between the emergence and influence of the Judsonites and the wider historical circumstances within which the group was formed and found its early audiences. Several historical aspects are particularly relevant to this enquiry. Firstly, in *TTS*, the context of the Cold War is evoked by the inclusion of the voice of Yuri Gagarin, the Russian cosmonaut who became the first person to voyage into outer space in 1961. In this sense 'con-text' – or outside of text – is effectively 'in the text'[8] (or, in this case, in the dance event, and likely to be identified as such by spectators within that same historical period). Secondly, the historical analysis illustrates that if a volatile political context was not initially addressed by the Judsonites, the JDT has nonetheless been associated with a less explicit - but still significant - challenge to mainstream values. This evaluation hinges upon an assessment of Judsonite compositional methods which emphasise artistic process (including Cage's chance method, the use of pedestrian movement, and the place of participant improvisation) as much

[8] See Derrida's observation that there is no 'outside-the-text' (*il n'y a pas de hors texte*): Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 158.

as product. If work produced by the group reflected ideas of anti-elitism, it appears to float upon the countercultural currents of the 1960s.

Furthermore, there is a particular concern in *TTS* with questions of spectatorship, which invites additional contextualisation. The desire for a more immediate engagement with the spectators in the performance of the work of the JDT was part of a wider artistic concern with inclusion and audience participation in the United States. However, the emphasis that Brown, Paxton and Rainer placed on the gaze of the dancer contributed to a reassessment of the relations between audience and dancers. Brown explained that the usual technique at the time was 'to glaze over the eyes and kick up a storm in there behind your eyes.'[9] In *Inside* (1966), Brown challenged that protocol and reactivated the immediacy of the gaze of the performing body through moving close to the knees of the spectators while looking at them straight in the eyes, 'the way you look when you're riding on a bus and notice everything.'[10] By contrast, Rainer refused to look at the audience. In *Trio A*, the gaze of the dancers never engaged with the audience but is carefully choreographed to embody Rainer's famous mantra: 'no to seduction of the *spectators* by the wiles of the performers'.[11] In contrast with those two approaches, Paxton embraced the glazing look of the dancers through de-contextualising it. In *Afternoon (a forest concert)* (1963), as Banes notes, he trained his dancers in the studio focusing on their fixed expression of concentration as material for the choreography. Ensuring that the dancers adopted the glazed look he was seeking, he took them to the forest to perform the piece. Paxton explained his intention stating, 'to me it's a very animal look, they are concentrating on their muscles and their senses, and I [tried] to use that concentration as a theatrical element.'[12] Although these three positions with regard to the dancer's gaze were not prescribed by the Judsonites in addressing spectatorial situations, they embodied the development of an artistic concern with the audience as a physical and imagined component of the performance. The choreographer's interest with the act of seeing also provides a reference to an important paradox in dance: while according to Rainer, 'dance is hard to see',[13] dance watches us! Its forms of spectatorship link

[9] Banes, *Terpsichore*, p. 79.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Sally Banes, *Dancing Women: Female Bodies on Stage* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 226.
[12] Banes, *Democracy's Body,* p. 167.
[13] Rainer, as quoted in Lambert-Beatty, *Being Watched*, p. 1.

the artistic ideas to a wider culture. As Lambert-Beatty argues, the treatment of *watching* needs to be understood in relation to how 'directness of encounter, immediacy and sheer embodiment came to be constituted in opposition to mediatic virtuality, delay and decorporealization.'[14] If these strategies were a response to a perceived crisis of collaboration between audience and modern art, contemporary performance makers remain highly concerned with interrogating the dynamics of relationships with audiences, and in the following section I discuss how the performative aspects of this enquiry reflect on that concern.[15]

Whereas my argument here illustrates the relevance of the historical register, this performance nonetheless hints at the wider potential offered by the performative register. I propose to discuss this matter with reference to two sections of my performance-making – the first instance – where I have sought to deconstruct work associated with the piece *Continuous Project - Altered Daily*. While the work challenged traditional notions of authorship, Rainer has described herself as the 'boss lady' as the work was in development.[16] A description of this piece has been produced by Banes, drawing on film footage of rehearsals and an account from Rainer. Text from this description – 'Dressed casually, a game' and so on – appears on screen during my performance. Taking fragments of this account, I have begun to improvise in order to explore the potential to generate a new narrative, in which the presence of the present body resonates with the original piece while being engaged in the event of making a new piece.

Recognising the notion of gravity as a recurrent theme in the work of the JDT, I am interested here in its abstract connection with the cosmonaut's voice. I have edited the words of both Gagarin and Banes, and with my voice, re-appropriated their words while suspending the movement of the dancing body. Standing down stage, I perform this section gazing at individual spectators. Although the spoken words have been scripted, I improvise their order and their timing according to the moment of contact with the audience. While I proceed below

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[14] Lambert-Beatty, *Being Watched*, p. 12.

[15] During the development of *TTS*, I was invited to perform my solo at a feedback forum session organised by Independent Dance and chaired by choreographer Fiona Millward at the Siobhan Davies Studios, London. The open forum structure of the session allowed me to collect a range of audience impressions, which informs this theorisation of my solo.

[16] Rainer, as quoted in Barnes, *Terpsichore,* p. 206.

to produce a more detailed analysis of *TTS's* compositional structure, I want to posit at this point that this section can be seen as an accumulation of the previous one, by which I mean that elements are repeated, even if sequences are not mathematically duplicated. Instead, I re-present material that the audience has already seen/heard (Gagarin's voice, text from Banes and Rainer, and my own movement) through another form: my speaking body. While the main intention in juxtaposing the voice and the body was to explore the embodiment of the (so-called) 'thinking body' engaged in a process of affective exchange, I also explore the potentiality of narrative in the event of overlapping two distinct stories on the notion of gravity. As I am looking out and in, my body connects to those different potentialities in relation with the spectators, exploring what Brown has powerfully encapsulated when talking of her solo *Accumulation with Talking* (1978): 'the silence suspends my intention while the audience continues with theirs.'[17]

In a similar vein, I am looking for the audience to 'continue' with their 'intention'. However, my interest is less in solving a physical problem such as talking while dancing than in exploring the creation of meaning in inter-subjectivity and lived embodied immediacy.[18] In Gerald Prince's work – see indicatively his *A Dictionary of Narratology* – an event can be an action, act or a happening, and, '[a]long with existents [subjects and/or objects] events are the fundamental constituents of a story'.[19] Whereas this definition offers clear links between events and narratives which might, for example, be located in Paul Ricoeur's notion of 'human time',[20] other definitions of the notion do not refer to the ability of the event to contribute to the sense of plot. For example, in Deleuzian terms, the relationship between events 'seem[s] to be formed [of] extrinsic relations of silent compatibility and incompatibility, or conjunction

[17] Brown, quoted in Livet, 'Interview', p. 48.
[18] See Bettina Bergo, 'Emmanuel Levinas', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward Zalta, (2011) <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/levinas/> [accessed on 19 November 2011].
[19] Gerald Prince, *A Dictionary of Narratology* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), p. 28.
[20] Ricoeur argues that the way that historical time can become *human time* is by the development of a discourse that can account for actions and events and their human context. That discourse is, 'articulated through a narrative mode, and narrative attains its full meaning when it becomes a condition of temporal existence'. See Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative,* Volume 1, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 52.

and disjunction, which are very difficult to apprehend.'[21] My intention in this moment of the performance is to question two related areas of performance composition: first, how might the exploration of the potency of performing bodies to be affected and to affect reconcile – through practice – these theories of the event? Second, how can we challenge the notion of spectatorship as a by-product of performance?

Feminist theorist Elizabeth Grosz reassesses Darwinian theories of evolution through the language of Deleuze and Guattari. She argues for a shift away from notions of deconstruction and representation to a re-grounding of the politics of becoming capable of accounting for *a real* without unity or boundaries and outside representation – a 'non textual real' which she then identifies as chaos.[22] She defines *the event* as, 'the impact of chaos on the body with multiple resonances, fluid, unpredictable and dynamic, [which] is irreducible to a structure.'[23] I propose here to locate the moment of the performance which I discuss above as a space of intensification of the event: a suspension of the time of the performance into a durational dimension, or – in Bergson's terms – as a time of hesitation.[24]

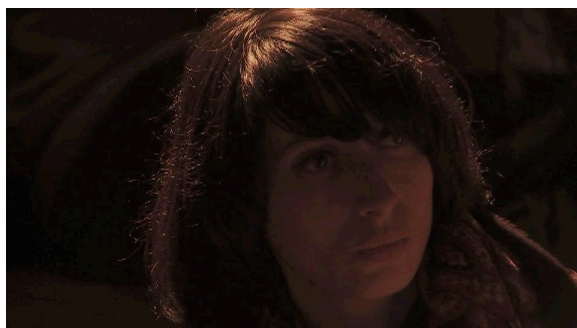

Fig. 2b *TTS*, Audience member
Photo: Marian Mlynarczyk

Fig. 2c *TTS*, Noyale Colin
Photo: Gerrit Schraa

Dressed casual ... I feel great ...A game ... He breaks her fall ... Everything is normal ... Have a good journey ... She couldn't get up and I used that ... The attempted hoist turns into a pas de deux ... The G forces are raising.[25]

[21] Deleuze, *Logic*, pp. 194-5.
[22] Elizabeth Grosz, keynote at the Feminist Theory Workshop, (2007) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mwHoswjw5yo> [accessed 26 June 2011].
[23] Ibid.
[24] 'Thus the living being essentially has duration; it has duration precisely because it is continuously elaborating what is new and because there is no elaboration without searching, no searching without groping. Time is the very hesitation.' Bergson, *Creative Mind*, p. 75.
[25] Extract from the live performance. See Colin, 'TTS' in Colin, *Becoming Together*, DVD.

Although the timing of the light frame is set, in this section I would argue that the perception of time contracts or expands depending on the number and positioning of the spectator(s). While fragments of phrases are being stammered, my speaking body *vibrates* traces of a dance engaged in a kinetic dynamic with the audience – on the verge of movements and words. On the event, Deleuze writes in *The Fold: Leibniz and Baroque* that the first component of an event is extension: 'Extension exists when one element is stretched over the following ones, such as it is a whole and the following ones are its parts'.[26] The second component of the event is its 'intrinsic properties (for example, height, intensity, timbre of a sound, a tint, a value, a saturation of colour)'.[27] If we follow this line, we might consider that the compositional components of performance have similar intrinsic properties; extension, on this basis, is what happens when audience members are involved in the process of sensorial engagement with a performance. What interests me here in terms of compositional technique is the potential for the body *of the audience* to become one of the components of the composition and, in turn, to contribute to the emergence of a choreographic presence in the event – as well as the bodies – of performance.

For this particular section of performance-making, I used a number of key elements of composition: juxtaposition, overlapping, gazing and improvisation. Firstly, as I explain above, I employed juxtaposition and overlapping techniques to create a layering of bodies (dancing/speaking) and narratives. Secondly, I re-visited the notion of the gaze in dance as a way to interrogate the implications for the piece of the presence of the audience. I then performed following a structured improvisation using memorised sentences as impulse. If we consider these compositional devices using a systems theory method, we can argue that a definable logic of production emerges. The relationship between those four components of the compositional system follows the principle of the Rare (in Latin 'Rarus') which, Barthes has pointed out, refers to the notion of intervals or interstices.[28] How can these two ideas of

[26] Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and Baroque* (London; New York: Continuum International Publishing, 2006), p. 87.
[27] Ibid.
[28] In an examination of Cy Twombly's paintings, Roland Barthes has paralleled the Latin notion of the Rare to the Japanese Ma. As Barthes explains, '[t]his notion is crucial in Japanese aesthetics, which does not acknowledge the Kantian categories of space and time but the subtler one of interval (in Japanese: Ma). The Japanese Ma is basically the Latin Rarus, and it is Twombly's art'. Roland Barthes,

interval and audience as compositional components be related? If the dancing body has dissolved, or is made absent, as is the case in this section of the piece, what then is left to be perceived in the still-act of standing while speaking to an audience? Is it still dance? For the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, the other person is an 'event' that can neither be predicted nor controlled. Levinas offers a phenomenological description of the face-to-face encounter. As Bettina Bergo notes, for Levinas 'an "I" discovers its own particularity when it is singled out by the gaze of the other. This gaze is interrogative and imperative [...] because human faces impact us as affective moments or, what Levinas calls "interruptions"'.[29]

Drawing on these ideas, I have explored, in practice, ways in which the potential of the gaze of the dancer to affectively disrupt what we might understand as spectator consciousness can be made central to the compositional structure of a dance piece. In terms of performer consciousness, as I perform this section my body and my mind are engaged in a structured improvisation with a multi-layered task: on the one hand to negotiate the impulses created by the memorised text and, on the other, to tune to the unpredicted interruptions of what I am calling 'consciousness', that occur, hypothetically, when bodies engage affectively and are being affected. The resultant stammering quality of my body and voice invite the audience to fill in the uncontrolled intervals by their presence, provided my work is expert enough to retain their attention and interest. I am therefore arguing that this section of the piece highlights the potential for the audience to be included in the process of composition not as a predetermined component of a performance but as a force which can only be made manifest through the live act of performance. If the practice of choreography is centrally concerned with the composition of movement, and movement is relational, then the practice of choreographic presence could be defined by the exploration of the movement of relational forces at work in dance composition.[30] In this sense, spectator presence is relationally bound-in to performance – but plainly affect as a positivity cannot be guaranteed. I am arguing, nonetheless, that in this way we begin to see how investigating choreographic presence in practice might demonstrate the

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The Responsibility of Forms (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 182.

[29] See Bergo, 'Emmanuel Levinas'.

[30] For Erin Manning, 'the interval created by relational movement is the plane of consistency of [a] circumvolution, elasticity of the plane of composition'. See Erin Manning, *Relationscapes: Movement, Art, Philosophy* (Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2009), p. 36.

additional potential of the performative register over the historical register. Here, in this precise exercise, the two are mingled.

As previously noted, Lepecki has revisited the notion of presence in dance studies through a poststructuralist framework, reassessing the tradition in dance studies to consider the ephemeral nature of movement as a weakness of the form. According to Lepecki, this idea has been influential since the eighteen century, shaping 'dance's constitution of itself as a force-field of absence-presence, a field charged with a lament verging on mourning'.[31] Drawing on notions of deconstruction, Lepecki argues for the ephemerality of dance to be compared to a disappearance. To that effect he uses the Derridean concept of trace to relocate the presence of the dancing body in the realm of absence. In Derrida's words, 'the trace is the erasure of selfhood, of one's own presence, and is constituted by the threat or anguish of its irremediable disappearance, of the disappearance of its disappearance'.[32] Although this description seems to encapsulate the idea of dance's *ephemerality as disappearance*, Melrose argues that this ephemerality hardly applies to the performer's own work, that tends instead to be *re*hearsed and to *re*occur,[33] viewing the unravelling of dance movement as a self-erasure – a predominantly writerly metaphor – would tend to subjugate the field of dance to a literary register and a literary logic. (Melrose calls this, in turn, a spectator-specific knowledge model rather than performer-specific.) One might argue that such a discourse might be more concerned by writing than by dancing.[34] Yet what such critical theories of dancing practice might help to articulate is the potential of the dancing body to negotiate 'its position in the powerful struggle for its appropriation and control'.[35]

[31] Lepecki, 'Inscribing Dance', p. 129. On the notions of ephemerality and mourning in performance studies, see also Peggy Phelan, *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories* (London: Routledge, 1997).
[32] Derrida, as quoted in Lepecki, 'Inscribing Dance', p. 132.
[33] See Melrose, 'Introduction'.
[34] This informed my appreciation of an empirical fit between my work as a dance practitioner and theoretical concerns for a philosophy of becoming. I refer here to the philosophy of becoming as it appears in Deleuze's interpretation and appropriation of Bergson's ideas of time and credited by Matt Hodges as part of the characteristics of the 'Distaff Tradition'; See Matt Hodges, 'Rethinking Time's Arrow: Bergson, Deleuze and the Anthropology of Time', *Anthropological Theory,* 8, 4, (2008) 399-429, (p. 409).
[35] Lepecki, *Of the Presence*, p. 6.

While my intention was not to re-construct historical dance pieces, in this instance of performance decision-making, my creative process was informed by the historical research which is accounted for in Chapter 1. I was interested to explore questions of presence of a dancer’s body in relationship to time and, more specifically, historical time. What were the relationships between my dancing body, its own history of performance and training, and the way in which dance has been historically recorded? If the ephemerality of dance can be compared to a disappearance, then how can dance composition account for traces of process and still generate an affective response for the audience members?

Fig. 2d *TTS*, Noyale Colin   Photo: Gerrit Schraa

If the dancing body, as noted above, may not maintain its fixity with the past, it still remains, in the present, in a state of tension with this past. While there is no faithful, or authentic reconstruction, a space is created in which the resonances or sometime dissonances of that original work are discernable. In another section of my performance, without drawing on techniques of reconstruction, I take choreographic elements instantly recognisable to dance experts in order to develop new choreographic material, which might once again invoke a choreographic presence while offering a reinterpretation of a Judsonite aesthetic. In particular, I use instructions and 'marked dance'[36] to this effect. As Rainer's instructions of a section of *Trio A* are being typed on the screen I begin to mark the dance by performing low intensity movements, choreographed from my own improvisation based on her instruction. Another fully danced version follows in silence, followed by a version filmed in a busy London street (see Fig. 2e) accompanied by Rainer's voiceover.

Fig. 2e *TTS*, Noyale Colin Photo: Tim Fletcher

[36] Marked dance can be defined as 'technical movement performed without the high energy usually expended in performance'. See Banes, *Democracy's Body*, p. 45.

Whereas Banes records that marked dance was first used by Paxton as a counterpoint to classical dance,[37] a similar desire for reworking the representation of the performing body can be found among Judsonites who used instruction not always as a compositional device but (as Lambert-Beatty highlights in the case of Rainer) as a 'quality of movement', or 'an attitude about movement'.[38] The idea in this section was, in effect, to re-appropriate that quality of movement by a playful exploration of issues of control and instruction-based dance. According to Banes, 'instruction scores given to the dancer by the choreographer exaggerate control, making palpable and objective the normally implicit, hegemonic position of choreographer over dancer.'[39] In this precise instance, as we can see from the single shot (Fig. 2e) above, there are implications, in the street performance, for theories of performance relationality, and of spectator engagement and affect. Dance in *other spaces* may well test, and relativise, dance-theoretical assumptions.

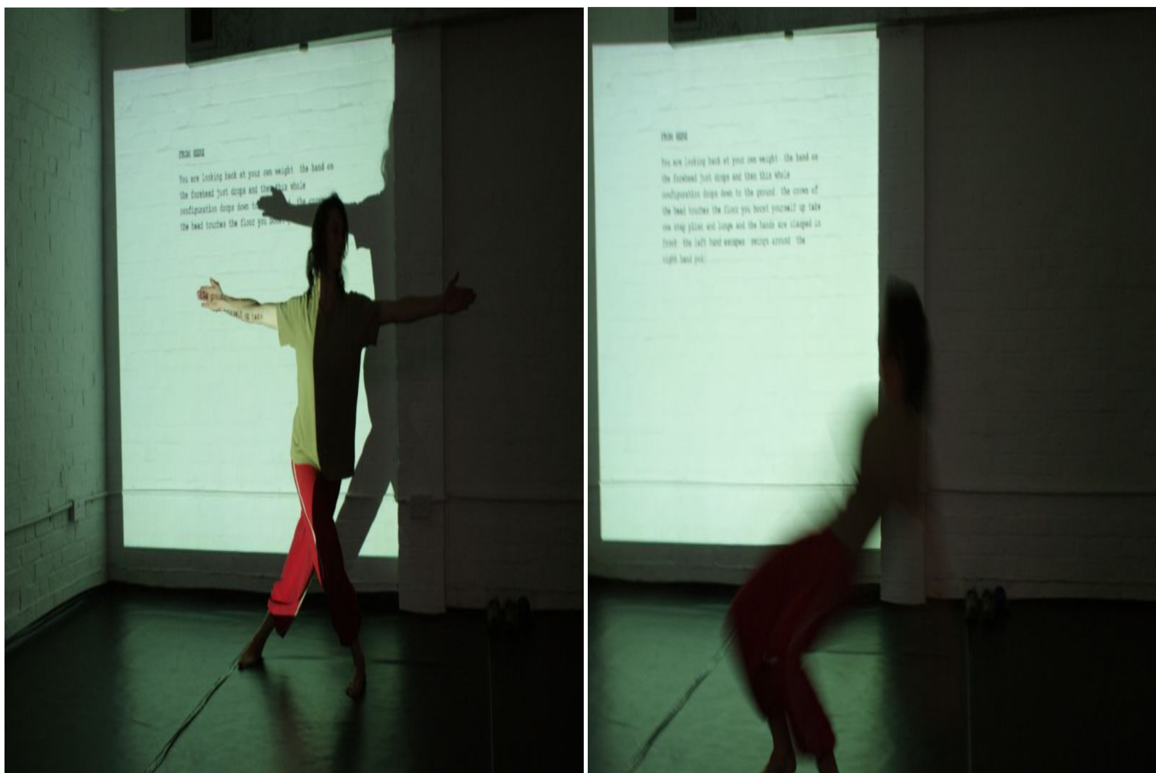

Fig. 2f *TTS*. Noyale Colin Photos: Gerrit Schraa

[37] Ibid.
[38] See Lambert-Beatty, *Being Watched*, p. 153.
[39] Banes, *Writing Dance in the Age of Postmodernism*, p. 217.

In Charles Atlas's documentary *Rainer Variation*, Rainer attempts to teach the Martha Graham impersonator Richard Move some sections of *Trio A*: 'From here, you are looking at your own weight…'[40] Her firm, directive, tone becomes the instruction score for a new appropriation of the dance, which in turn produces a humorous interpretation of the task. For example, I would lift my right arm when being asked to lift the left – a small shift that is only likely to be recognised by dance expert spectator-researchers. Similarly, the use of marked dance challenges the historical representation of the mode of dance of *Trio A*, which has, over time, become familiar within the postmodern dance vocabulary.

The 'marking' of the dance in conjunction with the typing of the instruction (and later with Rainer's voiceover) uncovers another possible means of making a choreographic presence manifest. In literary terms, the notion of hypotyposis is sometimes used to refer to a tension between rhetoric and meaning. Rhetorically, the term is used as a figure to refer, 'to a clear explanation and almost visual presentation of events *as if practically* going on'.[41] Revising Kantian ideas of aesthetics,[42] the theorist Paul de Man has described hypotyposis as a figuration, 'which makes present, to the senses, something which is out of their reach, not because it does not happen to be there but because it consists, in whole or in part, of elements too abstract for sensory representation.'[43] In a performance practice context, Melrose translates the term hypotyposis, as a visual, physical or audio 'sketch or outline' which could enable 'a listener or a spectator to perceive as *present* something complex which, by definition, can not be present/ed, because it operates below the level of sensory representation.'[44] On this basis, I am suggesting that the elements of compositional process used in this section, including the sketchy movement of 'marked dance', alongside the sonic and visual outlining of instructions, operate as '*if practically going on'*. I have suggested

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40 Rainer in Charles Atlas, *Rainer Variations*, (2002) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXgascpElKA> [accessed on 23 February 2015].

41 Cicero, as quoted in Marc Redfield, *Legacies of Paul de Man* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), p. 170.

42 Kant identified hypotyposis in terms of 'making [a concept] sensible', and distinguishes between structural hypotyposis and symbolic hypotyposis. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. Werner Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), pp. 225-230.

43 Paul de Man, as quoted in Susan Melrose, 'Hidden Voices (2004) and The Return (2005): Always Innovate', in Rosemary Butcher and Susan Melrose, (eds) *Rosemary Butcher: Choreography, Collisions and Collaborations* (London: Middlesex University Press, 2005), pp. 170-197, (p. 184).

44 Melrose, 'Always Innovate', p. 184.

above, indeed, that expert-spectator recognition of the operations of hypotyposis in performance is likely to differ from the degree and type of recognition of some other spectators. In Melrose's terms, once again, expert spectators (familiar with Rainer's work) are likely to see and understand more, in performance, than they actually do see. In this given instance, this conditions the experience of some, if not all, audience members to the potential perception of a complex choreographic presence which can be located in the JDT's era. While the marking of the dance in public implies the practice of tracking back and forth between what is being danced and how it is being danced, the combination of strategies discussed above refuses to consent to the notion of the spectators as a by-product of the performance. Instead, it invites each audience member to be part of the creative process of the piece.

This section of the performance loops back to the first part of the piece, following an accumulative sequencing from written words – to quasi-movements – to movements – to re-contextualised movements. It continues in addressing the issues around the capacity of a dancing body to be always in adjustment with the real – hence never real-ly wholly present. Nonetheless, a sense of continuity defies the transformations, which raises questions of how the dance is resisting the context – whether historical, personal or ontological: what is left of the original 'dance'? What has been re-appropriated?

While I am still focusing on demonstrating the additional potential of the performative register, the relationship between memory and time seems to remain at the centre of these questions. Accordingly, I propose at this point to examine how the question of memory, in this performance, relates to the way in which the past survives in the present. If we adopt a Bergsonian approach to *thinking in time*,[45] we can assume that memory is part of time and that time – defined in terms of duration[46] – is a force which is constantly at work in the compositional plane of a performance as well as in the reception of a live piece. What we

[45] 'Thinking in time, Bergson affirms, requires the breaking of many frames. It lets us recognize the obsession with space that orients western philosophy, limiting what we think.' He suggests, Guerlac argues, that thinking in terms of space leads to a 'static conception of time [which] is a defense against the heterogeneity of the real'. See Guerlac, *Thinking in Time*, pp. 2-3.
[46] Guerlac defines Bergson's initial approach to duration with reference to his exploration of 'inner experience – the sensation of qualities and affects – things, he argues, that cannot be measured.' Ibid., p. 5.

cannot fail to notice when examining the notion of time and memory in live performance is its intrinsic relation with the body. Guerlac, in her reading of Bergson's theory of time, offers important contemporary insights into Bergson's views of the relationship between body and memory. Guerlac underscores that whereas, 'the body is a centre of action that acts in the present', consciousness – which is here equivalent to memory and therefore to the past – operates as a *coping* mechanism for the body 'by synthesising the heterogeneous rhythms of duration into temporal horizons of past, present, and future.'[47]

In the given performance-making as research, two compositional devices conditioned the involvement of memory/consciousness – arguably for the audience members as well as for the performer. An accumulative sequencing constantly builds on previous material and re-presents them in another form.[48] For example, Rainer's instructions of the dance *Trio A* appear as a text being typed on the background of the 'marked dance'; and are deployed as a voice-over in a short film following that sequence. If, in this instance, each version focuses on an immediate present – the unfolding action of typing for the first version and Rainer's use of present tense in the film – both reveal a different presence to the same material. The typing of the words combined with the sound and rhythm of the computer keyboard allude to the impersonal presence of a writer whereas the film adds the embodiment of Rainer's voice. Each addition to the composition changes the perception of the whole. While this structure intensifies the spectator's process of consciously thinking through what they have previously experienced, it also intends to stimulate the highly subjective aspect of each participants' perception, which according to Bergson, 'consists above all in what memory brings to it'.[49]

Similarly, I used the intervention of particular musical soundscapes to suggest temporal information potentially retained in the individual as well as shared consciousness. If, however,

[47] Ibid., p. 122.
[48] I chose to use the software Microsoft PowerPoint in this performance as an enabling constraint and also as a reference to the academic context. Accordingly, I have designed the timing of the performance as a series of PowerPoint slides including text, sound and video with which my live body interacts.
[49] Guerlac, *Thinking in Time*, p. 121.

Fig. 2g   Noyale Colin   Photos: Gerrit Schraa

From the soundtrack:

YG: Dawn this is cedar, I am feeling great, I am continuing the flight. The G forces are slowly increasing / K: Wishing you a good flight everything is normal

the soundtrack of Yuri Gagarin's first space flight is a deliberate choice of mine to re-contextualise the work in terms of the year that marked the beginning of Robert Dunn's workshop with the echoes of a highpoint of the Cold War, this might not be an immediately recognisable reference for the spectators who experience the aural montage while seeing me running through space.

However, my intention in this work was not to reconstruct a repertory piece or to represent dance history, but rather to explore the potential of choreographic practice to 'render time sensational',[50] through what I have previously termed a *choreographic presence.* If we return to Bergson we find that the difference between representation and presence is again inherent to the relationship between time (duration) and the body (sensation). Representation forms through memory which refers to the past, and the present is sensed through perceptions which occur in time. The former gives a static view of time while presence offers a dynamic system which in Bergson's words, 'is finally nothing but a path along which all the modifications which propagate themselves in the immensity of universe pass in every direction.'[51] What would be the implications of such a definition for the practice of choreographic presence? If representation fixes to the past, what strategies can we explore to grasp the movement of the past in the present?

Bergson suggests a theory of recognition that he defines as an 'attentive recognition' when (past) 'memory images regularly rejoin present perception.'[52] Guerlac demonstrates that for Bergson 'memory images can serve action, then, by affecting the interpretation of the incoming perception'. If this phenomenon of memory affecting perception is an assumed condition to the state of attentiveness required for a dancer to perform – by which I mean that part of the skills of a performer is the development of enhanced perceptive awareness, via the 'extra-daily' use of the body and mind, and which Eugenio Barba argues is acquired through training[53] - then in thinking about the reception of the piece, it is the potential for memory to *interfere during perception* that I have chosen to use as a material for composition. The production of affects might well emerge from a combination such as the disembodied

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[50] Drawing on Deleuze's concept of the 'force if time' Grosz affirms that the goal of art is to be 'always seeking a way to render time sensational, to make time resonate sensibly. For no art can freeze time or transform its forces except through the invention of new techniques, new forces and energies.' Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), p. 87.

[51] Bergson, as quoted in Guerlac, *Thinking in Time*, p. 109.

[52] Ibid., pp. 130-31.

[53] For the theatre practitioner Eugenio Barba the development of the performer's awareness is central to what he calls 'technique'. He suggests that 'In an organised performance situation the performer's physical and mental presence is modelled according to principles which are different from those applied in daily life. This extra-daily use of the body-mind is what is called technique.' See Eugenio Barba and Nicola Savarese, *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: The Secrete Art of The Performer* (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), p. 7.

recording of a historical moment (which does not occur in space) and the movement of my body running through the space of performance. The intensity of the sound of the space shuttle taking off, layered with the over-triumphant classical soundtrack and the human voices (including Gagarin himself) telling each other that everything is normal,[54] might trigger individual memories (past) and intensify the live (present) repeated (in becoming) action of running. Similarly, I have overlapped Banes' account of the piece – *Continuous Project – Altered Daily* with the music-hall song *Au Cabaret de la Derniere Chance* by French artist Yves Montand. This turn to a highly melodic structure underscores the desire to confront two opposed qualities of performance:[55] the antitheatrical quality of conceptual dance as, for example, encapsulated in Rainer's expression 'boxing movement',[56] and the theatricality of a cabaret song. However, the intention here is not to argue for a retrograde return to the theatrical 'make believe' in dance but rather to encourage the beholder to use their imagination to experience a sense, through the thickness of this over-layering, of choreographic presence. Although the movements are choreographed initially from Banes' description of Rainer's piece, the over-layering of this apparently unrelated sonic element provides a different rhythmic stimulus for the performer, including a recurrent pattern of movements and rhythm.

While in this example the relationship between the perception of the piece and the individual memory of the spectators is still at stake, I propose to proceed from this point by considering the Deleuzian notion of art as *pure sensation.* After theorizing the concept of sensation in his discussion on Francis Bacon's painting, Deleuze further developed his conceptualisation in his idea of art's preservation. He suggests that 'what is preserved – the thing or the work of art – is *a block of sensations, that is to say, a compound of percepts and affects* [...which] are *beings* whose validity lies in themselves and exceed any lived.' (writer's emphasis).[57] What I find interesting here is the potential for choreographic composition to be thought as a 'bloc of sensations' or as an assemblage that could be self-contained and self-sustaining, and

[54] This soundtrack is extracted from the film *The First Orbit* by filmmaker Christopher Riley with original music by composer Philip Shepperd, (2011) <http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2011/apr/17/yuri-gagarin-first-space-orbit-video?intcmp=239> [accessed on 11th November 2011].
[55] The figure of the melody for Bergson 'is the figure of duration'. He points out that 'the identification of a melody implies an act of temporal synthesis'. See Guerlac, *Thinking in Time*, p. 66.
[56] See Banes, *Terpsichore*, p. 205 for this extract as used in *TTS*.
[57] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 164.

experienced as such by spectators. In the spoken section of the piece, the symphonic poem *Also Sprach Zarathoustra* by Richard Strauss – which was famously used in Stanley Kubrick's' *Space Odyssey* (1968) – fades in after one minute of improvised monologue.[58] If the reference to that particular film, again, might not be at the forefront of the spectator's mind the intervention of this new element in the performance is a new invitation to consider movement that does not occur in space, not as a separate component of the piece but rather as a synthesis of what has already happened. The potential for affect in this section lies in the ability of this assemblage of sensations to create a dynamic response through the bringing together of two unrelated elements.

While the musical references relate to precise historical time, this practical, theoretically-informed inquiry has been concerned with an aspect of time which does not refer to the representing of things in terms of the past but rather, following Bergson, to an experiential approach of the heterogeneous rhythms of duration. Bergson demonstrates that this quality of time is only experienced through 'an effort of intuition' which is fundamentally un-representative.[59] I would argue, on the basis of this experimental engagement, that choreographic practice can be considered as an assemblage of sensation which when perceived through the affect of memory (that it seeks to trigger), forms a presence operating at the level of the imagination of the audience members. As such, creative decisions can engage the spectators in what I would define in compositional terms as an *intuited narrative*.

This chapter has been concerned with a reflective analysis of my practical inquiry into the way in which history in dance can inform the creative process of a new piece. I would argue that such insights that it offers could only have been arrived at through the making itself. It centres

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[58] For a discussion of the role and effect of *Also Sprach Zarathoustra* in Kubrick's film see Gregg Redner, 'Strauss, Kubrik and Nietzsche: Recurrence and Reactivity in the Dance of Becoming That Is 2001: A Space Odysey' in *Sounds of the Future: Essays in Science-Fiction Films,* edited by Mathew Bartkowiak (North Carolina: McFarland and Company, 2010), pp. 177-193.

[59] Bergson speculates that 'duration must be defined as unity and multiplicity at the same time? But singularly enough, however much I manipulate the two concepts, portion them out, combine them differently; practice on them the most subtle operation of mental chemistry. I never obtain anything which resembles the simple intuition that I have of duration; while, on the contrary, when I replace myself in duration by an effort of intuition, I immediately perceived how it is unity, multiplicity, and many other things besides.' Bergson, *Creative Mind*, p. 142.

on considerations of the relationship between the JDT's compositional modes and my development as an artist with particular reference to sub-questions including the 'collaborating' relationship between audience and performer. While drawing on my previous historical analysis, I have demonstrated how a performative register might account for the ongoing processes of dance composition that are recognisable in terms of the discipline itself. In discussing the notion of movement composition *in erasure*, I have developed the idea that audience members could be considered as an imagined component of composition *in becoming*. Subsequently, I have argued that choreographic presence could be defined by the exploration of the movement of relational forces – gaze/audience, interval/improvisation, sound and rhythms – at work in dance composition, that provide a way to professionally engage with elements which are of greater significance for the performer. Notwithstanding this position, the body captured through choreographic presence shares the characteristics of the 'open potentiality' of the 'non-univocal body' described by critical theory.[60] This potentiality of plurality of the dancing body revealed here in the practice of choreographic presence is the continuous concern of this inquiry spanning multiple registers.

[60] Lepecki, *Of the Presence*, p. 6.

Chapter 3

Six Months One Location: contemporary choreographic strategies for 'working-together'.

This chapter problematises the ways in which contemporary collaboration in the performing arts might be seen to resist alienated modes of 'working-together'. It draws upon my account and analysis of the activities and practices that took place during the project *Six Months One Location* (*6M1L*) at two performing arts venues in France. Initiated by the artist/choreographer Xavier Le Roy and the artist/theorist Bojana Cvejić, the first phase of *6M1L* unfolded as a full-time residency held between July and December 2008 at The Centre Choreographic National of Montpelier (CCNM). A second phase was held from May to June 2009 at the Performing Arts Forum in St Erme. The project was developed in conjunction with the educational program *ex.e.r.ce*.[1] The initial proposition underlying the project – and it was this proposition that triggered my interest as a researcher into collaborative practices in the present as distinct from the past – was that nine artists would commit to working full-time for an uninterrupted period of six months in the same location. For the purpose of this investigation, I have based my analysis of *6M1L* upon three main sources: the publication entitled *Six Months One Location* (*Six Months*) in which participants recorded their experiences;[2] a project website introducing the artists involved and their different practices;[3] and a short film documentary offering insights into live processes.[4]

In the first part of this chapter, I examine both the stated and what I argue are the implicit motivations and conditions that shaped *6M1L* as an educational laboratory of experimental techniques of collaboration. I begin by outlining the project's collaborative structure, paying

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[1] ex.e.r.ce is a MA programme of choreography in research and performance run in conjunction with the Department of Performing Arts at the Université Paul Valéry Montpellier III. For more details see Centre Choreographic National Montpellier Languedoc-Roussillon, Mathilde Monnier, < http://www.mathildemonnier.com/#!pa_0bc1fe323cca4ae6b19d14c09d00385e> [accessed on 24 February 2015].

[2] Mette Ingvartsen (ed.), *Six Months One Location* (n.p: Everybodys Publications, 2009). At Ingvartsen's request to me, I note here that all the participants listed in footnote 10 should be considered to have co-authored this volume.

[3] *6M1L*, (2009) <http://www.6m1l.com/> [accessed on 12 April 2012].

[4] *6M1L*, *Say It Loud!*, directed by Mette Ingvartsen (2009). <http://www.6m1l.com/index.php?/projects/---in-process/> [accessed on 12 April 2012]

particular attention to Derrida's notion of the 'Politics of Friendship',[5] and to the project's emphasis on an open-source mode of operation. I subsequently define the production conditions under which the project evolved while critically referencing wider developments in European contemporary choreography.

In the second part, I discuss the collaborative strategies and techniques enacted during the project, and how these sought to confront some of the more challenging aspects of the working conditions facing contemporary artists in Europe. Subsequently, I map *6M1L's* collaborative processes during the two residencies onto my reading of a range of performances subsequently produced and performed by *6M1L* participants. The discussion of this collaborative model refers to the artists' decision-making processes as well as to the performance products that emerged from the project. I consider the methods and techniques employed during the residency with reference to their impact on the final performance work.

In the third part, expanding upon these findings, I discuss the ways in which the collaborative practices of contemporary choreographers can be seen to reflect the wider conditions under which artists are working at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Drawing on post-Marxist approaches, I examine the extent to which modes of working together as embodied in *6M1L's* collaborative processes might be seen to enhance the capacity of artistic labour to transform the material of its production.

[5] See Derrida, *The Politics of Friendship*.

Part I: Networks and friendships

The model chosen by Cvejić and Le Roy to form the group of participants is influenced by what they, following Derrida, describe as a 'politics of friendship'. In order to keep the choice of the members of the group open, they adopted an open chain structure, whereby they each issued invitations to two artists. Each of the four invited artists suggested one more artist to take part in the project. Cvejić and Le Roy intended that this method would avert potential drawbacks they associated with other strategies in collaborative group work, and ensure the commitment of participants from the outset:

> It is important to base the coming together on affinity, curiosity and [a] desire to work together, so an open call for participation isn't an option for it would emphasize the meeting and the mistake of collaboration taken for the method 'we come and we see what happens'.[6]

In 'The Politics of Friendship', Derrida asks us to reconsider the fraternalist configuration of Aristotle's politics by a philosophical reassessment of the notion of friendship: 'Let us ask ourselves what would then be the politics of such a "beyond the principle of fraternity"? Would this still deserve the name "politics"?'[7] The main issue at stake in these questions, Sandra Lynch argues, is the Aristotelian claim that politics is the business of friends, like-minded men that 'agree about their interests, adopt the same policy and put their common resolves into effect'.[8] Drawing on Derrida's writing, Lynch highlights the tensions between the self and other in friendship. She argues that, 'the friend in traditional philosophical literature becomes an impossible ideal - a reflection of oneself and perhaps even of one's own narcissism - but never a threat, never a challenge, never a genuine other';[9] whereas Derrida's politics of friendship challenges this mirror effect through advocating the importance of recognising the different and separate identities of friends.

If we return to Cvejić and Le Roy's intention with their strategy for selecting participants, we can now recognise that the assemblage of the group based, 'on affinity, curiosity and [a] desire

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[6] Bojana Cvejić & Xavier Le Roy, in Ingvartsen (ed.), *Six Months*, p. 14.
[7] Derrida, *The Politics of Friendship*, p. viii.
[8] Aristotle, as quoted in Sandra Lynch, 'Aristotle and Derrida on Friendship', *Contretemps 3*: *The Online Journal of Philosophy*, University of Sydney, 2002, 98-108 (p. 100).
[9] Lynch, 'Aristotle and Derrida', p. 101.

to work together' could signal a traditional view of friendship similar to Aristotle's 'like-minded men'. However, the use of an open chain structure allows for a distribution of the decision-making process from the beginning. This, in turn, is illustrative of Derrida's argument for difference and separate identities in friendship.

While this shared curatorial approach characterises the collaborative formation more as a network structure than as an open movement of artists, the involvement of students from the CCNM's training program complicates the identity of the group. In the publication *Six Months*, seventeen participants are named by alphabetic order,[10] while the website divides them into the two categories of *6M1L* and ex.e.r.ce participants. Each source highlights the educational dimensions of the project. With its base within an institutional context, one of the objectives of the project is to reflect critically on trends in education and research from the specific vantage point that the CCNM offers. In order to discuss the dynamics of the collaboration, the status and the identity of key participants must be further identified.

The *6M1L* website illustrates that the project revolved around a range of individual research objectives that participants were seeking to develop during the residency, which reflect broader concerns within the European contemporary dance network. However, online data from Cvejić and Le Roy provides complementary information that contextualises the organisation of the project. Le Roy's website refers to his status as an associated artist of CCNM and his co-directorship of the ex.e.r.ce 08 programme.[11] This detail reinforces his status as an initiator, his links with the venue, and connections with other project participants. In the online journal *Corpus*, Cvejić wrote a preamble to the initial proposal for *6M1L* where she defines the initiative as 'an offspring formation' of a working group set up at a conference on education in dance and performance held in Potsdam in March 2005.[12] She reports that,

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[10] The participants as listed in *Six Months* are: Sasa Asentic, Younes Atbane, Eleanor Bauer, Kelly Bond, Bojana Cvejić, Jefta van Dinther, Juan Domingez, Luis Miguel Felix, Thiago Silva Granato, Mette Ingvartsen, Gerald Kurdian, Xavier Le Roy, Inez Carrasco Lopez, Neto Mashado, Chrysa Parkinson, Nicholas Quinn and Eszter Salamon.

[11] Xavier Le Roy, 'Biography' <http://www.xavierleroy.com/page.php?id=0fc542a6f5bef1a8f8ffb705de19a1d78254b73a&lg=en> [accessed on 24 February 2015].

[12] For more information about the conference *MODE05,* see Marijke Hoogenboom and Hester Van Hasselt (eds), *An Academy*, Amsterdam School of the Arts, (2006).

‘The conference followed an open-source logic of taking part, contributing and shaping discussion in immediate ways on the basis of direct involvement, where topics and interest/working groups arose, assembled and disintegrated daily’.[13] This ‘open-source logic of taking part’ contrasts with the specific constraints of *6M1L*. Moreover, the fact that the project emerged in part from networks formed at a previous academic conference invites us to question the relationship between experimentalism and the institutional contexts (including financial support) within which the project emerged.

Indeed, Cvejić’s earlier writing has problematised the perceived antagonism between theory and practice in the institutions of European dance education.[14] She observes a change of attitude amongst dance practitioners since the 1990s towards a greater emphasis on processes of learning over processes of production. This shift is further defined, she argues, as a ‘learning how to learn in order to make’, which is then associated with, ‘the type of worker in an immaterial economy of services and information, constantly producing outside of the (paid and recognized) labour-time, in a non-calculated productivity’[15]. Advocating a new choreographic practice, which should stretch beyond critical theory towards a more experimental approach to ‘researching conditions methods and tools’, Cvejić cites the Danish choreographer Mette Ingvartsen’s performance research, *Why we Love Action,* as an initiative which addresses precisely such questions of artistic labour with respect to the learning process.[16] Ingvartsen was subsequently invited to take part in *6M1L*. Here, Cvejić introduces Ingvartsen’s work in relation to her ‘user-oriented recourse to theory’ as a model of research for potential development in the field of performing arts. While Cvejić expresses a form of affinity with Ingvartsen’s work, her proposal for a new approach to choreographic practice in relation to education and research informed the conditions under which *6M1L* developed. Although this contextualisation emphasises Cvejić’s leadership in the project and introduces Ingvartsen as an important participant, it also demonstrates the way in which the collaborative

<http://issuu.com/kunsthogeschool/docs/anacademy-voor-ahk> [accessed on 24 February 2015].
[13] Bojana Cvejić, ‘Six Months One Location’ <http://www.corpusweb.net/continuation-8.html> [accessed on 12 April 2012].
[14] Bojana Cvejić, ‘Learning by Making’, (2007) <http://summit.kein.org/node/235> [accessed on 12 April, 2012].
[15] Cvejić, ‘Learning by Making’.
[16] Ibid.

open chain assemblage of *6M1L*, based on artists' 'affinity, curiosity and desire to work together', itself rehearses the idea of a 'politics of friendship'.

The applicant profile and entry requirements for *ex.e.r.ce* are indicative of a highly selective admissions procedure.[17] In fact, the recruitment process is not dissimilar to the highly competitive system of French art schools - including the écoles supérieures - which follow a process of written application, audition and interview.[18] For the 2007 *ex.e.r.ce* intake which contributed participants to *6M1L*, the students for what was then a professional training program were selected through auditions held in Montpellier, Paris and Berlin.[19] Cvejić and Le Roy emphasise the importance of 'the ethic of open-source' participation.[20] However, the curatorial approach, when combined with *ex.e.r.ce's* selectivity, points towards a strategically organised artistic operation. The practice reflects Cvejić's concern with, 'orchestrating larger-scale platforms or contexts of producing through sharing knowledge about working methodology and theoretical discourse'.[21] While the issue of the precise ways in which this can be viewed as a collective practice remains open to further investigation, in the first instance it is important to explore how the open-source method could be applied to the creative processes and products of contemporary choreography.

The notion of open-source originates from Open Source Software, which is a software freely

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[17] The website of the CCNM Languedoc-Roussillon indicates the following admission requirements: 'Program requirement: up to 15 students and is open to applicants of all nationalities who have a predominantly "dance" background. Candidates should be at least 22 years old, should possess an advanced degree or its equivalent in an artistic discipline, should already be pursuing a professional path or have professional experience in choreography (as a dancer or choreographer), or else a background in a different artistic field that is nevertheless concerned with body and movement-related questions in the field of choreography. Special consideration will be given to the candidate's availability during the 2-year period. Entry requirements: On written application and audition before an educational commission made up of teaching coordinators from ex.e.r.ce and members of the Department of Performing Arts of the UPV.' See Mathilde Monnier, <http://www.mathildemonnier.com/#pa_0bc1fe323cca4ae6b19d14c09d00385e> [accessed on 20 March 2012].

[18] For a relevant discussion of French art education see Bernard Darras, 'Policy and Practice in French Art Education: an Analysis of Change', *Art Education Policy Review*, 4 (1997), 11-17.

[19] See On the Move: Cultural Mobility Information Network, (2007) <http://fr.on-the-move.org/nouvelles/article/11792/dance-audition-exerce-07-montpellier-jan-jul-2007/> [accessed on 20 March 2012].

[20] Cvejić & Le Roy, in Ingvartsen (ed.), *Six Months*, p. 13.

[21] Cvejić, 'Learning by Making'.

distribut(ed/able) with its source code. Users can modify the software or use it for other software in compliance with its original open-source licence.[22] If open source projects are a significant social and economic phenomenon,[23] one of the major innovations implied in its model is a logic of collective action which, in the terms of organisational science scholars, 'requires that contributors relinquish control of knowledge they have developed for a project and make it a public good by unconditionally supplying it to a "common pool"'.[24] A number of applications of this ethic of practice can be found in the arts. For example, in the field of cultural research, *Networked Cultures* is a recent international investigation of collaborative agency in artistic and cultural production which is partly built upon an open source database.[25] In performance, the application of Open Source Software concepts can be found in creative processes and performance products. Developed in parallel with *6M1L,* the internet platform *Everybodys* aimed at implementing 'open source methodologies' as an artistic strategy in the performing arts.[26] The site provides practical choreographic exercises and games, performance scores, discussions and accounts of projects including *6M1L*.

These examples illustrate the potential benefits of an open source model for the creation of new resources, promotion of the distribution of information, and the development of cross-cross-disciplinary discourses. However, for theorist Scott deLahunta, contemporary choreography and open source diverge because, 'dancing bodies are extremely complex in informational terms and will resist reified readings'[27]. DeLahunta demonstrates his argument

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[22] For a list of criteria which define Open Source Software see *Open Source Initiatives* <http://www.opensource.org/docs/osd> [accessed on 16 June 2012].

[23] For a review on the economic understanding of the growing open source movement see Josh Lerner and Jean Tirole, 'The Economics of Technology Sharing: Open Source and Beyond', *National Bureau of Economics Research*, USA, (2004) <http://www.nber.org/papers/w10956> [accessed on 20 June 2012].

[24] Eric von Hippel and Georg von Krogh, 'Open Source Software and the "Private-Collective" Innovation Model: Issues for Organization Science', *Organization Science*, 14.2 (2003), 208-223 (p. 213).

[25] *Networked Cultures* was initiated by Peter Mörtenböck in partnership with Goldsmiths University. For more details see *Networked Cultures*, < http://www.networkedcultures.org> [accessed on 24 February 2015].

[26] See Everbodystoolbox, *Everybodystoolbox*, < www.everybodystoolbox.net > [accessed on 24 February 2015]

[27] Scott deLahunta, 'Open Source Choreography', Ars Electronic Archive, (2003) <http://90.146.8.18/en/archives/festival_archive/festival_catalogs/festival_artikel.asp?iProjectID=12520#> [accessed on 20 June 2012].

through an analysis of Jérôme Bel's *Last Performance* (1998) – a piece which illustrates that dancing bodies conform uneasily to a copyright entity as the creative ownership of (the bodywork of) the other is problematic. More recent choreographic gestures also explore the complicated dynamics between dance and copyright issues. Frederic Gies' project, *Dance* (2006), provides an example of choreographic application of the open source method including the implementation of licensing. The score of the dance is available online to download accompanied by a *creative commons* licence.[28] The users of the score become co-authors of the piece and can sell it or use it for commercial purposes without the agreement of the original author (Gies).[29]

If the use of scores and instructions in choreography can be traced back to dance practices in the 1960s,[30] an analogy can be made between software source codes and rule-based choreographic methods, where material produced by a performer is already 'over-inscribed' by the intervention of the choreographer. Shifting away from the score as the notation of a dance, the choreographers' use of instruction can be considered as a tool during the creative process of a new piece. In its open source format Gies' *Dance* is not preserved. The score is not used to restage the dance; but is used instead to propose 'an interface between movements and ideas'.[31] Similarly, deLahunta frames choreographer William Forsythe's multimedia project, *Improvisation Technologies: A Tool for the Analytical Dance Ey*e (2000) as a way to better understand choreographic process. An interactive CD ROM is constructed around 'building blocks' representing Forsythe's choreographic ideas. According to deLahunta, when distributed as an electronic document, the 'building blocks' constitute, 'a form of Open Source code not only providing insight for those who wish to understand more about the process of making dances in general, but making the building blocks themselves available for anyone else to use'.[32] This brief contextualisation of the application of Open Source Software in dance shows that the model of collective action at the heart of its method provides a valid strategy

[28] On the creative commons, see *Creative Commons*, (2001) <http://creativecommons.org> [accessed on 24 February 2015].
[29] Frederic Gies, *Dance (Practicable)*, (2010) < http://www.dancepraticable.net/ > [accessed on 24 February 2015].
[30] I am referring here to the *JDT*'s choreographic work as discussed in Chapter 1.
[31] Joe Moran, 'Ten Statements on Scores', in Alice Chauchat and Mette Ingvartsen (eds), *everybodys performance scores* (n.p: everybodys publications, 2010), p. 17.
[32] DeLahunta, 'Open Source'.

for the development of collective creativity in choreography. It is in these terms that Cvejić and Le Roy's logic of open source should be understood.

The conditions of the collaboration

For Cvejić and Le Roy, a central aim of *6M1L* was to establish, 'special conditions in order to examine what they produce in terms of procedure, working methods, formats, discourse and ways of working together'.[33] In this section, I proceed to define those 'special conditions' in relation to a broader framework of theoretical and artistic practices in Europe.

In their initial draft outline of the project Cvejić and Le Roy outlined three of their conditions:

> 1. Takes place in one location
> 2. Lasts the duration of six months without interruption
> 3. Involves a number of people who apply with a project of their own.[34]

While the first two constraints refer to a distribution of space and time which are key elements in choreographic practice, the name of the project cleverly juxtaposed the conditions and thereby functions – performatively - as an instruction or a score to be performed or activated. More importantly, these requirements of space and time signify a level of commitment standing in opposition to the demands of more flexible freelance projects. This quality is further revealed by Cvejić and Le Roy in their report of a conversation held several years previously between 'A' and 'T' – an unnamed 'artist' and 'theorist':

> *A: Either I am using the opportunities I get by trying to make the most of it or I am rendering services: a lecture here, a lab there, once a symposium, then a workshop, and a residency, and yet another residency, while there is less and less budget for production. Can I make this itinerary more consistent? …*
> *T: Do you know what makes one a good surfer? Being able to choose waves and elegance in style.*
> *A: But imagine if there would be no waves without surfers.*
> *T: You're idealistic.*[35]

Cvejić and Le Roy suggest this conversation would have characterised the attitude of the artist and theorist towards their project-based working conditions and lifestyle, when a freelance mode of working and living was experienced less as a constraint and more as an enabling

[33] Cvejić & Le Roy, in Ingvartsen (ed.), *Six Months*, p. 12.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid., p. 11.

condition of artistic production or a strategy to counter the standardisation of aesthetics. However, Cvejić and Le Roy locate their project amidst a contemporary debate around processes of interaction between economic and cultural systems:

> 15 years ago, this fragmented lifestyle and workstyle was a choice. Nowadays, it's an obligation. *6m1l* is a way to challenge this "liquid life" that's becoming the norm in contemporary society, constantly urging us to be more mobile, more flexible, to keep on changing and producing new things. These dynamics add to the precariousness caused by the requirement for rapid change, even though we don't have the means of changing the ways of changing.[36]

Several thinkers have identified the intermingling of a neoliberal agenda and artistic practices,[37] noting the problematic of the requirement of flexibility imposed upon cultural professionals. In their writings on creativity management, Doris Ruth Eikhof and Axel Haunschild examine work conditions in German creative industries, and trace the development of artists as 'bohemian entrepreneurs'[38] who integrate artistic and self-management activities. From a management studies perspective, Eikohof and Haunschild recognise that for such artists the point at which 'lifestyle meets market' is of significance.

In resonance with these recent debates, Cvejić and Le Roy denounce the appropriation of creative modes of working by performing arts institutions to the advantages of a market-driven logic:

> Projects could only be co-produced and artists in turn were to 'reside', to fill the venues with the display of artistic activity […] The result of this is a free market in which artists are forced to constantly reinvent themselves as the desirable commodity in competition for a limited

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[36] Xavier Le Roy in *Six Months One Location*, CCNM, (p. 4), <http://www.mathildemonnier.com/upload/editor/files/booklet6m1l.pdf> [accessed on 21 June, 2012]. Here, Le Roy's use of the term 'liquid life' refers to Zygmunt Bauman's *Liquid Life* offering a description of contemporary modern society - see Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Life* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005).

[37] For example, Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiappelo offer an influential and aggressive critique of artistic complicity with the establishment. See Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiappelo, *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Verso, 2007). See also Brian Holmes, 'Do-It-Yourself Geopolitics' in Gregory Sholette and Blake Stimson (eds), *Collectivism After Modernism: The Art of Social Imagination after 1945* (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), pp. 273-293.

[38] Doris Ruth Eikhof and Axel Haunschild, 'Lifestyle Meets Market: Bohemian Entrepreneurs in Creative Industries', in *Creative and Innovation Management*, 5:3 (2006), 234–241 <http://www.fox.temple.edu/iei/documents/LifestyleMeetsMarket.pdf> [accessed on 24 February 2015].

> number of opportunities in the narrowed spaces of curation.[39]

On this basis, they argue for the need to reassesses the benefits of the freelance lifestyle. If, in Cvejić's terms, we consider *6M1L* as a large–scale platform for producing through sharing knowledge, we might begin to see the relevance of special conditions to help proliferate questions such as the following:

> How much does [a practice] reflect and is [it] conditioned by the freelance lifestyle and flexible subjectivity as contemporary forms of life and work that performance artists in Western Europe endorse?[40]

We can identify the three 'essential conditions' of *6M1L* as an attempt to create an environment in which such questions could be explored. Another instruction was added to the requirements of participation. Each participant was to have a project of their own and to participate in at least two other projects within the group as, 'having each person responsible for their own project avoids the dead-end blockage of collectivity'.[41] This third condition refers to a system of cross-pollination in collaboration; offering a model based on sharing time and space and on the principle that those involved working on different projects simultaneously will benefit from a circulation of ideas, and which will encourage new ideas to emerge.

While this cross-fertilizing methodological practice has been adopted in the past by movements led by visual artists including Futurism and Dadaism, recently it has returned as a strategy used by new artistic initiatives in Europe to challenge notions of authorship and ownership in performance based arts practices. For example, the international platform *Sweet and Tender Collaborations* (*S&T*)[42] was established as 'an idea for cultural production and exchanges', and shares with *6M1L* a network structure intended to, 'increase the quality of the

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[39] Cvejić & Le Roy, in Ingvartsen (ed.), *Six Months,* p. 12.
[40] Cvejić, 'Learning by Making'.
[41] Cvejić & Le Roy, in Ingvartsen (ed.), *Six Months,* p. 13.
[42] *Sweet and Tender Collaborations,* 'Sweet and Tender Collaborations' (2007), <http://www.sweet-and-tender.org> [accessed 20 November 2014]. As with *6M1L, S&T* also evolved out of an institutional event. In this case the collaborative project stemmed from the international scholarship programme *danceWEB Europe* which aimed at enabling recipients to participate in the international Festival of Contemporary Dance *ImpulsTanz* held in Vienna in 2006. For further information, see Dance Web Europe (2015), < http://www.dancewebeurope.net/ index.php?id=19> [accessed on 24 February 2015].

individual artistic practices as a result of the direct confrontation between self and others'.[43] Large annual meetings act as an experimental laboratory in which approximately twenty international artists live and work together.[44] Smaller local projects are developed at the initiative of participating artists following a structure that is defined to 'exist as a myriad of individually produced projects'. In contrast to *6M1L*'s attachment to a single location, *S&T* is 'centralized only in virtual space and through a board of facilitators.'[45] Their website, designed as a Wikipedia entry, does not offer any contact details of individual participants, and instead invites the visitor to contact 'any artist of [his/her] choice'.[46] If in this case we find a greater emphasis on facilitation rather than named initiators, both projects refer to a self-organisational and non-hierarchical *dispositif*. In a more explicit way, *6M1L* theorises the relation between participants by drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's notion of *intercessors:*

> Mediators are fundamental. Creation's all about mediators. Without them nothing happens [...] It's a series. If you're not in some series, even a completely imaginary one, you're lost. I need my mediators to express myself, and they'd never express themselves without me: you're always working in a group, even when you seem to be on your own.[47]

This affirmation of the mediator's role in creativity echoes *S&T's* idea, 'that any individual who can create the conditions for his or her own artistic production and development can also create the space for someone else'.[48] Both projects bore the mark of 'a politics of differences,'[49] which veers away from a single artistic value or aesthetic to focus on creative methods of exchanges within several co-existing artistic frameworks.

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[43] *S&T* artists describe the rationale of the project as follows: 'It operates on the idea that any individual who can create the conditions for his or her own artistic production and development can also create the space for someone else. It is the idea that a network of individuals can combine their resources to realize a level of access, mobility and growth that would not otherwise be available to each artist alone'. *S&T*, 'Sweet and Tender Collaborations'.
[44] Annual meetings were held in different countries including France, Portugal, Germany and Switzerland. See *S&T*, 'Sweet and Tender Collaborations'.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Gilles Deleuze, as quoted in Ingvartsen (ed.), *Six Months*, p. 13.
[48] See *S&T*, 'Sweet and Tender Collaborations'.
[49] I refer here to a generalised notion of difference as it appears in the development of separate postmodern concepts including Derrida's notion of deconstruction, Lyotard's account of the postmodern condition and Deleuze and Guattari's theory of multiplicities.

Part II: Organisation, communication and practices of voicing

Time and space: self-organisation

In order to interpret the collaborative discourses that emerged from *6M1L*, I examine in what follows the creative strategies developed to correlate individual practices to transversal exchanges between projects. After identifying the key techniques used by the artists, I then evaluate a number of separate projects focused around the use of voice in dance, which I argue emerged as a dominant strategy used across *6M1L* projects.

Several techniques were adopted to encourage the eighteen artists to reflect on their own projects and to offer feedback on those of others. However, a key element of *6M1L* concerned the way in which time and space were shared. A weekly schedule systematised the participants' time into three categories of activities: education, research and production. Whereas mornings were dedicated to group practice open to the public, the afternoons were organised into two separate slots of three hours for individual project rehearsals. An evening slot was allocated for 'sharings', discussion, or further rehearsal. Group meetings between the participants and CCNM staff were scheduled at fortnightly intervals. Group reading (or 'Text Practising') was another group activity that was prioritised in the schedule as a way of engaging with theoretical discourse and to consider a text not only as something to be adhered to, but 'as [an object] standing between partners in dialogue' and allowing for 'thinking aloud further, and drifting'.[50] In general terms, the schedule was designed to facilitate exchanges between individual and collective works, but at the mid-point of the first residency, it was recognised that the structure of the project had become too fragmented. Time was being predominantly spent in smaller groups according to individual research needs, limiting a wider interaction with all the participants. Different elements were added in an attempt to create more communal time for the whole group, including a 'coffee break' designed 'to give room for the emergence of by-discussion and by-product', but the group concluded that 'the potential of bringing everybody was not used enough'.[51]

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[50] For further details see *6M1L*, 'Text-Practicing', in Ingvartsen (ed.), *Six Months,* p. 151.
[51] *6M1L*, in Ingvartsen (ed.), *Six Months*, p. 17.

If we return to Cilliers' theory of complex systems, we can consider that *6M1L* was, 'not constituted merely by the sum of its components, but also by the intricate relationships between these components'.[52] As Cilliers notes, complex systems often need to adapt if they are to survive.[53] Arguably, the organisation of *6M1L* had become too disjointed to enable creative exchanges across the whole group, which was a necessary condition in order to allow for questioning of the relationships between individual and collective practices. A modified structure was established whereby the artists would focus on individual projects for four days a week while one day was kept 'exclusively for communal activities that were decided and planned each week according to needs and desires'.[54] In other words, contingent factors would be taken systematically into account. This organisational shift can be seen to mirror a process of self-organisation whereby the group, 'organises itself to ensure the best match between the system and its environment'.[55]

Whereas internal forces were influential in terms of the structure (as we have seen with the scheduling of participants' interactions), revisiting Cilliers' ideas of self-organisation and dynamism in complex systems, it is notable that information needs to enter the system from outside it.[56] In these terms, it is worth asking what might have been the nature of external forces in the regulation of *6M1L* processes? One aspect of the project, which appears to have become critically undermined, was the idea of public exchanges**.** I am viewing these exchanges as introducing important external factors. In the documentation of the project, a section on 'Planning' outlines the three different public exchanges occurring during the project, which I have read as existing on the levels of practice, product and process. Open to the public, the daily morning practice was based on the body, 'within a perspective of exploring the relations it has with the current and historical practices of choreography.'[57]

A second opportunity for members of the public to engage with the work was through public

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[52] Cilliers, *Complexity*, p. 2.
[53] Ibid., pp. 89-111.
[54] *6M1L*, in Ingvartsen (ed.), *Six Months*, p. 17.
[55] See Cilliers, *Complexity*, p. 89.
[56] Ibid., p. 94.
[57] See Jean-Marc Urrea (ed), *Six Months One Location,* CCNM <http://www.mathildemonnier.com/upload/editor/files/booklet6m1l.pdf> [accessed on 24 February 2015].

performances – '*Les Jours de Spectacle*' ('*J de S*') - which offered the showing of the work that had been produced before the residency. Depending on the 'desires or needs' of individual artists, the public showing of work-in-progress was recommended. However, the decision to show pre-*6M1L* works was justified as a way to eliminate the pressure of presenting incomplete work.[58] According to the schedule provided in the *6M1L* account, 'Les J de S' only occurred infrequently which suggests these events, for reasons that are likely to be complex, did not facilitate responsive public exchange. Although the notion of public exchange is articulated and evidenced in the schedule, the feedback loops that might have been generated have not been recorded or discussed with reference to the evolution of artists' work or the impact on the overall structure of the network.

Such an absence raises the possibility of an imbalance within the system of collaboration and invites questions concerning the relationship between the notion of audience and experimental artistic practice. Nevertheless, drawing again on Cilliers' understanding of complex systems, I have demonstrated that through a careful renegotiation of exchanges of time between the artists, the collective decision making-process in operation during *6M1L* followed a principle of self-organisation which was designed to ensure adequate space for both individual and collective practices.

Questioning as a means of understanding process

As a research project, *6M1L* developed a central approach to its mode of inquiry involving a practice of questioning as a strategic means of creating interaction between projects. One of the techniques used to activate meaningful questions is 'self-interviewing', whereby the individual artist interviews him/herself as a way to develop ideas:

> What are you working on?
> That sounds like a lot of things?
> Can you define what you mean by practice more clearly?
> So a practice is like a structure?[59]

Self-written questionnaires are widely used in creative contexts either as a tool for creativity,[60]

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[58] *6M1L*, in Ingvartsen (ed.), *Six Months,* p. 17.
[59] Edited from Chrysa Parkinson's self-interview. See Chrysa Parkinson, in Ingvartsen (ed.), *Six Months*, pp. 24-33.

or as a strategic way of writing about one's work,[61] or even – as in Le Roy's piece *Self-Interview* – as the compositional device for performance.[62] For *6M1L*, the format of the interview is adapted to a group work situation and deployed as a tool to generate collective reflection. In a group interview, to facilitate this process, each participant can pose a question to everybody in the group. Each person receives a number of questions equal to the number of the participants, which then provide a foundation to conduct individual interviews. Another example of this practice of questioning is through the use of 'chat' on *Skype*. The instruction follows one single rule: 'you always answer a question with a new question!'[63] The transcript of three sessions was published as part of the *6M1L* archive. In order to examine this practice more closely, I propose at this point to look at the beginning of the group's session on the topic of immaterial labour:

Bojana Cvejic 3:39pm

> Do you think the form of immaterial labour we were practicing in 6M1L is singular: collaboration, emphasis on slow creation process and delayed effects, intensive fusion and indiscernability [sic] between work and non-work, art and life as non-art, priority of learning over producing?

Neto Machado 3:44pm

> Do you think the format of individual projects increases the possibilities of the work in between the projects? Is this immaterial labour?

Bojana Cvejic 3:45pm

> What if we abandoned projects, and shifted our attention to creating situations of learning, producing and experimenting?

Ester Salamon 3:46pm

> Can we reflect on our possibility of production, long term instead of entertaining short-term objective in separated activities?

Juan 3:47pm

> Can we build a new context rather than always reacting on the state of affairs?

Sassa Asentic 3:50pm

> Don't we always have to re-contextualise our work, practice and group when we move to

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[60] See for example, the notebooks of Jonathan Burrows and Jan Ritsema for their collaborative work *Weak Dance Strong Questions.* Burrows and Ritsema question, 'how one can ask a question by moving?' See Jonathan Burrows and Jan Ritsema, *Notebooks for Weak Dance Strong Questions*, (2003) <http://www.jonathanburrows.info/downloads/WDSQ.pdf> [accessed 24 February 2015]. Another noteworthy example of questioning in dance can be found in Deborah Hay's performance practice. See Deborah Hay, *My Body, the Buddhist* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2000), p. 53.

[61] See Jackson Pollock, 'Answers to a Questionnaire' in Harrison &Wood (eds), *Art in Theory,* p. 569.

[62] See Xavier Le Roy, *Self-Interview*, (2000) <http://www.xavierleroy.com/page.php?id=a55579f8a1306fbd89389d01068b6e571a686728&lg=en >[accessed on 24 February 2015].

[63] *6M1L*, in Ingvartsen (ed.), *Six Months*, p. 114.

different time, place condition, aims etc.? (Is it a matter of re-contextualizing work?)[64]

The rule of the exercise prevents any questions from being overtly answered. Rhetorical questions are used to facilitate a judgement.[65] However, we cannot fail to observe that different styles of questioning render a different experience for the reader of these questions. Some questions are grammatically structured as direct questions, 'do you think that …', and other questions have an implicit answer, 'don't we always …'. If the use of reader pronouns (you, we) serves as an engagement device, it also 'sends a clear signal of membership by textually constructing both the writer and the reader as participants with similar understanding and goals'.[66] Rhetorical questioning in academic writing can be useful because it 'performs' an interactive engagement, and hence it can serve to arouse interest and engage in a conversation around unresolved issues as well as in order to signpost the direction of arguments.

In this context of live online communication it is difficult to discern a leading argument. For example, the first two questions focus on defining the topic of 'immaterial labour' from two conflicting perspectives: Cvejić refers to the collaborative aspect while Machado mentions individual projects. The remaining questions seemingly shift the focus of the conversation towards the notion of contextualisation. From a reader's perspective the discourse created results in an overwhelming collision of meanings, which suggests either that the matter engaged with genuinely lacked direction (likely to have disappointed those involved), or that an attempt at undirected documentation is pursued for ideological reasons. The apparent fragmentation of ideas combined with the impossibility, for a reader, of following any of them, leads to a degree of frustration with those who have sought to record the process. While the use of the pronoun 'you' and 'we' might seem to draw the reader into the questioning processes, I would argue that the systematisation of rhetorical questioning cancels out its potential effect.

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[64] Ibid., pp. 114-117.

[65] See Daniel Howard, 'Rhetorical Question Effects on Message Processing and Persuasion: The Role of Information Availability and the Elicitation of Judgment', *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 26 (1990), 217-239.

[66] Ken Hyland, 'Stance and Engagement: a Model of Interaction in Academic Discourse', *Discourse Studies,* 7.2 (2005), 173-192, (p. 11).

However, if we turn to communication theory, we find that ‘chat’ challenges some of the norms of traditional linguistic discourse. Whereas the ‘chat’ can be considered as a medium of synchronous communication, it challenges traditional understandings of the differences between spoken and written language.[67] Clearly this mode of chat communication loses some of its qualities when it is recorded in a conventional book-based publication. A further difficulty in assessing this type of exercise also resides in the fact that in the context of artistic research, the aim of the activity is not to produce a coherent piece of writing but rather to activate a process of creativity for the contributors. As part of his ongoing research into the relationships between process and product in performance practice, Le Roy observes that, ‘if you find the question then you find the process’.[68] From the point of view of a participant, Le Roy further notes that the co-existence of other participants’ research questions can encourage a shift away from product-oriented answers.[69] This sort of comment leads us to make necessary distinctions between two types of questioning. Research questions tend to form at the outset of a project and require the articulation of its findings either in writing or in practice. In contrast, rhetorical questions function as a discourse trait aiming to engage the interlocutor in a process of thinking without the prospect of a specific answer that differs from one already held by the questioner. For Le Roy, sharing questions amongst a group is a way to diffuse a focus on finding answers. In this way, research questions operate in the manner of rhetorical questions which (in the context of this collective research-based choreographic project) engage co-workers in a process of thinking about their individual practice without the prospect of a final product of performance.

A systematic way of exchanging questions might provoke participants into an effective way of

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[67] See Elizabeth Reid, ‘Electropolis: Communication and Community on Internet Relay Chat, (1991) <http://www.irchelp.org/irchelp/communication-research/academic/academic-reid-e-electropolis-1991.html> [accessed on 24 February 2015]. Similarly, Susan Herring explained that Computer-Mediated Discourse (CMD) is distinct from written and spoken communication. For example, Herring highlights that computer-mediated exchanges are faster than written exchanges but slower than spoken ones. Multiple participants can communicate simultaneously. While the exchanges are direct and often felt as ‘private’, the messages are distributed to an unseen (and often unknown) audience. See Susan Herring, ‘Computer-Mediated Discourse’ in *The Handbook of Discourse of Analysis,* edited by Deborah Schiffrin, Deborah Tannen, Heidi Hamilton (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), pp. 612 - 634 (p. 615).

[68] Le Roy, in Ingvartsen (dir.), *Say It Loud!.*

[69] Ibid.

brainstorming ideas, but I would argue that it requires someone to take control of the utterance and hence the exchange if it is to develop into a research discourse. In fact, the succession of rhetorical questions might lead to a dizzying experience of communication: an aporetic discourse structure based on the impossibility of really communicating interactively with each other.[70] This communicative challenge is highlighted in Ingvartsen's account when she outlines her struggle to synthesise what she describes as, 'a huge collection of different questions and answers, totally inorganically produced and impossible to organize'.[71]

In contrast with the use of rhetorical questions, the use of direct questions in the form of an instruction was more successful at communicating ideas. For example, in a group interview Cvejić asks one of the artists (Eszter Salamon) to describe a scene of her – at that point imagined – performance: 'how do you see it, what happens, what is the atmosphere, the sensation, what is the spectator's experience?'[72] A compelling description follows: 'there is depression…depression is before the storm…everything is kind of stuck and solidified…just before an explosion…'[73] Her answer encapsulates an imagined world of sensations and a sense of narrative which is arguably more revealing than any discussion of process. Indeed, if we look at another question preceding Cvejić's intervention, Salamon was asked if she had an image of how she wished a piece to look. Although her response provides an insight into Salamon's process of thinking about the image of the piece – 'I think this piece would need a physical space and an immaterial setting' **-** it also communicates the uncertainty and hesitation of a practitioner who makes decisions in the making**:** 'I don't know what I want it to look […] I don't know what to imagine'.[74]

If the 'instruction questions' such as the one I have discussed above – the imaginary description of a potential performance's scene – offer a good strategy to communicate ideas between artists during the creative process, the second example accounts for the difficulty of

[70] The use of 'aporetic structure' here is in reference to the figure of 'aporia' as understood in Derrida's writing as the experience of impossibility. See Jacques Derrida, *Aporias: Dying-awaiting (one another at) the "Limits of Truth"* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), p. 23.
[71] Ingvartsen, in Ingvartsen (ed.), *Six Months*, p. 8.
[72] Cvejić, in Ingvartsen (ed.), *Six Months*, p. 56.
[73] Eszter Salamon, in Ingvartsen (ed.), *Six Months*, p. 56.
[74] *6M1L*, in Ingvartsen (ed.), *Six Months*, pp. 55-56.

questioning the emergence of ideas characteristic to the different phases of the creative process. Indicatively, this approach can be paralleled with Lerman's 'Critical Response Process' (CRP) whereby questioning is used as a way to receive constructive feedback on choreography.[75] The focus on communication and exchange in the collaborative creative process refers to a wider set of concerns including those that I proceed below to identify in the practice of voicing in choreography.

Choreographic Modes of Production of Speech

> How can the voice give access to the affective level of expression, when the major medium of enquiry, in research, remains published writing?[76]

Through an analysis of a number of individual projects, I aim in what follows to cross-reference central characteristics of the artistic practice of voice during the residency with its manifestation in finished pieces. Bringing together artists' statements and accounts of their work, my further aim is to consider the influences of practices developed during *6M1L* on the longer-term working strategies of the artists.

In 2009, echoing Martha Graham's 1939 talk entitled 'A Dancer Speaks', The *Dance Research Journal* produced a special issue exploring an apparently new trend in dance under the heading of 'A Dancer Writes'.[77] If, as this special issue points out, to hear the spoken word in contemporary dance practice is not uncommon, I propose to explore here how voice**,** viewed as another form of corporeality**,** became a material for *6M1L* artists to inscribe dance into a wider context of critical-theoretical writing whereby co-working in choreography can facilitate the role of the dancer as writer/theorist. The work of Barthes in the 1970s on what he calls 'the grain of the voice' provides an account of the materiality of the voice (in place of its traditional idealisation). Barthes proposed to consider the notion of voice as 'body-ness' or as

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[75] Lerman's CRP system is now being applied to many situations beyond the arts including within collaborative relationships. It is divided into a number of steps including the artists' direct questions to audience members and the responders neutral question to the artist. See Liz Lerman, *Critical Response Process* <http://www.lizlerman.com/crpLL.html> [accessed on 02 February 2015]

[76] *6M1L*, in Ingvartsen (dir.), *Say It Loud!*, (19:57).

[77] See Mark Franko, 'Editor's Note. Hybridities: Dance, Writing and the Voice in Transatlantic Perspectives', *Dance Research Journal*, 41.02 (2009), pp. v-vi.

a quality of the body:

> The voice […] has us hear a body which has no civil identity, no 'personality', but which is nevertheless a separate body […] The 'grain' is the body in the voice as it sings, the hand as it writes, the limbs as it performs.[78]

For *6M1L,* choreographer Salamon proposed a project that investigates a similar idea to Barthes's 'grain of the voice'. Exploring the musical as a genre of performance, Salamon questioned the possibility of 'not having a body in the society of today' and developed a practice centred on the idea of voice as a 'separate body'.[79] In a group interview, Salamon explained that the research for the proposed project did not start from a choreographic or staging concern. Instead her group commenced by focusing on 'voice techniques, singing text in choir and writing texts'.[80] She links this choice with an interest in creating environments rich in sensation, and away from 'formalism and representation'.[81]

Similarly, Le Roy sought to offer an alternative to representation. In his initial proposal he formulated the following hypothesis:

> The representations of the human are often limited or delimited by the ones of the animals and the machines. By including one and the other and moving between and within these limitations we could produce movements that could go beyond these representations.[82]

While this definition of human representation in correlation with animals and machines remains over-generalised and possibly idealised, further on in the process Le Roy refers to issues of representation specific to the field of performance. Using the analogy of a performance as a zoo, he argues for an inversion of the role of spectators whom, he claims, are too eager to see.[83] Similarly, Le Roy reflects on his interest in the idea of landscape in relation

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[78] Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text* (London: Fontana Press, 1977), pp. 182, 188.
[79] See *6M1L*, Eszter Salamon, 'Proposal' <http://www.6m1l.com/index.php?/projects/presentation-anglais-eszter/> [accessed on 12 June 2012].
[80]Salamon, in Ingvartsen (ed.), *Six Months*, p. 55.
[81] Ibid.
[82] See *6M1L*, Xavier Le Roy, 'Proposal' <http://www.6m1l.com/index.php?/projects/-presentation-anglais/> [accessed on 12 June 2012].
[83] 'Y a beaucoup de spectators qui disent qu'ils veulent voir et ca c'est pas bon! On est un peu dans un truc ou il y a un peu une inversion des roles et ca voila il faut que ca change'. (There are a lot of audience members who say that they want to see and that is not good! We are a bit in something whereby the roles are reversed and that is what needs to change). Xavier Le Roy in Gerard Kurdian,

to contemplation; or in doing, ‘something which is given to contemplate and not something that is given to follow, to look at’.[84] Although Le Roy’s critique of the avid onlooker might seem to point to the notion of the ‘male gaze’ (although his onlooker is not gender-specific), traditionally articulated as part of a critical-theorist discourse, what is interesting here is how Le Roy makes reference to it from the outset of his choreographic project.[85] In these terms, as is common in the working of creative practitioners, theory does not enter at the point of reflection upon work already made (by others), but rather at a different point, and often notionally, as a means to inform and stimulate a singular way of working.

The work of Gerard Kurdian during the course of the project provides an interesting nexus to those concerns regarding representation and the visual in performance. As a performer working primarily with sound, Kurdian’s proposal was, ‘to use contemporary dance theory as a basis to compose songs and/or sounds pieces’.[86] In addition to work around musical methods with other artists he created a sound diary that reflected his perspective on the dynamic of the group. The retrospective description of this project on his website accounts for his production of ‘several micro-bricolage sound pieces’, in which he focused on documenting the ideas generated by other participants’ projects; as well as reflections on the borders between others participants ‘bodies and the instruments of [his] studio.’[87] These three brief accounts demonstrate how different projects shared affinities in the way in which each foregrounds sound and voice as a strategy to explore choreographic practices beyond the representational aspect of bodyness in performance. Salamon, Le Roy and Kurdian’s projects (*Tales of the Bodies*, *Low Pieces*, *6 months 1 location and the ensemble’s behaviour* respectively) were independently produced after the end of the *6M1L* residency, gaining national and

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Sound Diary (2009) <http://www.geraldkurdian.fr/index.php?/radio/6-mois-1-lieu-et-le-comportement-de-lensemble/> [accessed on 3 July 2012].

[84] Le Roy, in Ingvartsen (dir.) *Say It Loud!*.

[85] I am referring here to the notion of the ‘male gaze’ as understood by feminist British film theorist Laura Mulvey, who used Freudian and Lacanian’s psychoanalysis concepts - including scopophilia - in order to theorize the representation of women in film as the object of male desire. See Laura Mulvey, ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative’, *Screen,* 16.3 (1975) pp. 6-18.

[86] Gerald Kurdian, in *6M1L*, Gerald Kurdian, ‘Proposal’ <http://www.6m1l.com/index.php?/projects/-presentation-anglais-gerald/> [accessed on 5 July 2012].

[87] Gerald Kurdian, ‘6-mois-1-lieu-et-le-comportement-de-lensemble’, (2009) <http://www.geraldkurdian.fr/index.php?/radio/6-mois-1-lieu-et-le-comportement-de-lensemble/> [accessed on 5 July 2012].

international reviews.

It is important to note at this point that this sense of affinity that I identified earlier - including the contextualization of the politics of friendship - is not the product of an accident. Indeed, it is easy to trace this affinity in the body of the past works of Salamon, Le Roy and Kurdian, with their individual concerns around the relationship between sound and bodies, and the impact of sound on perception and representation. It is already obvious in Le Roy's research on the movement of conducting Stravinsky's *Rites of Spring* in his piece *Le Sacre du Printemps* (2007); or his work with composer Helmut Lachenman in his piece *Mouvement Fur Lachenman* (2005) in which he explores the relationship between the visible and the audible. In *Low Pieces* (2009-2011), Le Roy's choreographic research explores human conditions in relation to three binary divisions: object/subject, human/non-human, and nature/culture. *Low Pieces* emerged from *6M1L* and I was fortunate to experience the work at the Royal Festival Hall in London in 2010. Around half of the cast of twelve performers participated in *6M1L* project, but the link between the final piece and its process is easily identifiable: the main theme of the project he proposed for *6M1L* is developed in a series of three tableaux presented as a landscape of bodies and groups moving in exploration of the relationship between machine, 'animal' behaviours and the state of contemplation. While the juxtaposition of these different worlds – mechanical, animal, vegetal – evokes different modes of being in the world, the manipulation of time in the performance refers back to Le Roy's initial intention of challenging issues of representation in performance.

As an audience member, I experienced in the final piece a number of compositional elements, which play with my gazing at the performers. For example, in the first tableau, on the floor, a group of five naked performers wearing headphones move individually in a mechanical way to a rhythm that spectators cannot hear; their precisely performed gestures seem to have been reduced to an automatically executed gesticulation. This section lasts for twenty minutes on a fully lit and bare stage without any changes in space. This opening scene (which follows fifteen minutes of black out) initially sets the conditions for a scopophilic gaze. However, over time, and in the absence of scenography and sound, I am forced to watch the performers in terms of the duration and repetitive rhythm of their small gestures. The particular act of

watching through time requested from the audience constitutes the basis for time to be considered as a central ontological characteristic of performance, but also foregrounds the theoretical understanding that time - when perceived in its continuity - can induce the nature of the gaze to change. At the same time that the composition puts forward 'the body' as the only thing to see on stage; with time, as Derrida suggested in another context, there is 'nothing to see.'[88]

Turning to Salamon, we find a concern in her previous piece *Nvsbl* with the development of choreographic patterns that can be perceived in duration.[89] Using Body-Mind Centering techniques to source movements, she explores the threshold of what is visible and invisible in a body in motion.[90] *Tales of The Bodiless* (2011) is the final title of the work which was first proposed by Salamon during the residency. While she stretches her initial idea of a musical to what she terms a 'musical fiction without science';[91] she elaborates on the notion of 'not having a body' with the creation of four tales bound to a world without human bodies**.** The piece is credited to Salamon and five other collaborators including Cvejić. Again, the original focus on sound described during *6M1L* is evident in the final piece, and there are no bodies on stage. According to Cvejić, 'The only human organ left is the voice, but divorced from the bodies, an acousmatic voice whose power lies in demanding: '"listen to me".'[92] It is not difficult to connect such descriptions of the piece with Salamon's original aim of exploring vocal expressions and creative writing in an attempt to veer away from formal visually-focused representation.

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[88] Jacques Derrida, *Given Time: 1, Counterfeit Money* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 6.

[89] Salamon, in Ingvartsen (ed.), *Six Months*, p. 80.

[90] Body Mind Centering® is a registered trademark owned by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen. In this chapter, the trademark symbol is omitted after the word, because the reference is made to Salamon's individual encounters with this practice. Drawing on an experiential approach to anatomy, Body Mind Centering is a movement practice applied to body-mind disciplines including contemporary dance. See Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, 'Body Mind Centering® : An Embodied Approach to Movement, Body and Consciousness', 2001-2014
< http://www.bodymindcentering.com/> [accessed on 15 March 2015].

[91] Eszter Salamon, *Tales of the Bodies*, (2011)
<http://www.esztersalamon.com/WWW/talesofthebodiless.htm> [accessed on 24 February 2015].

[92] Bojana Cvcjic, 'About the Making of the Performance *Tales of the Bodiless',* in Salamon, *Tales of the Bodies*, (2011) <http://www.eszter-salamon.com/WWW/talesofthebodiless.htm> [accessed on 24 February 2015].

Although Kurdian is not a choreographer, he took part in the previous *ex.e.r.ce* program in 2007, in which he developed his interest in choreographic research. He describes himself as 'a spy-spectator working for one (or more) spaces located between the choreographer and his audience.'[93] Following the *6M1L* residencies he produced the radio production *6 months 1 location and the ensemble's behaviour*. Composed as a sound diary, Kurdian's composition mixes participants' intimate memories of childhood and training with sound recording of rehearsals and the choreographers' reflections on working processes. This soundscape documentary represents an alternative way of documenting dance in the way in which it accounts for an assemblage of singular experiences expressed through the different voices of the performers, including their cultural and political voices. This artefact is the disembodied manifestation of the voice of the group in which the personal, theoretical and practical intertwine to bring fragments together and produce a recording - in practice - of the project. However, this apparent disembodiment of the participants manages to render another materiality of the body. It offers a sense of the body as a quality, bearing in Barthes terms, 'traces of *signifiance*'.[94] These subtle meanings emanate from Kurdian's composition of environmental and accident sounds (such as the creaking of doors, dancers' feet rubbing on the floor or birds singing) with accents, hesitations, laughing, coughing and melodies of voices.

These examples demonstrate the practice of voicing as a set of tendencies during the process of *6M1L*. However, as Le Roy warns us, the use of voice needs to be differentiated between the different projects. He identifies distinctions between three aspects of voicing: firstly, voice as singing, in its capacity to produce music; secondly, voice as a non-verbal communication, in its capacity to produce utterances; and thirdly, in Le Roy's case, voice as the sound of animal and machines. As described above, this practice of voicing can be traced back to a wider theoretical field. Indeed critical-feminist theory is centrally concerned with women's historical voicelessness. However, in the context of dance, the use of the voice of the dancer is also related to a challenge of an ontological nature. Foster accounts for the place of the voice in what she calls, 'the collision between two incommensurate images of dance - one

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93 Kurdian, in Ingvartsen (ed.), *Six Months*, p. 159.
94 Barthes, *Image, Music, Text,* p. 185.

speechless and transcendent, the other analytic and pedestrian.'[95] Foster notes that if dance traditionally cultivated the dancer's subjectivity based on a mute body, this subjectivity was challenged in the 1960s by the use of speech in dancing, including in the choreographic work of *JDT*. For example, Foster contrasts Graham's movement interpretation of Emily Dickinson's poems in her piece *Letter to the world* with the 'mundane casualness of the talking dancers' of postmodern dance:[96]

> Silence perpetuated the assumptions about the dancers' genuine involvement with the act of expression, whereas talking opened-up a critical distance from movement that staged the dancers' reflexive awareness of their own actions.[97]

It is this reflective quality which is searched for by *6M1L*'s choreographers in their practice of voice. If Cvejić notes that, 'voicelessness or being mute is the characteristic of the dancer', the focus on vocal expressions by some of the choreographers becomes a symptom of repression and a strategy to access other affective levels of expression - hence Ingvartsen's film documentary being entitled *Say It Loud!*

This concern that the artists share for self-expression could be linked to a broader movement in contemporary choreographic practices which, one might argue, has signified a post-1990s departure from some of the minimalist aspects of postmodern dance. Two peripheral projects by two other participants of *6M1L* also point to this change. Choreographer Eleanor Bauer interviewed several choreographers in Belgium, Berlin and New York City about the position of dance 'in the world at large'.[98] Bauer asked, 'Is there anything that you would like to see change?'[99] While a desire for a widening of the dance community – including a larger non-dance audience and more interdisciplinary exchanges – emerges out of the answers edited in the book, a sense of the exhaustion of an aesthetic can be encapsulated in this answer: 'I've spent so much time, being anti-movement, anti-frills, I think the frills are back. I think that

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[95] Susan Leigh Foster, *Dances That Describes Themselves: The Improvised Choreography of Richard Bull* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2002), p. 12.
[96] Ibid., p. 182.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Eleanor Bauer, 'Good Move', *At Large*, (2009) <http://www.goodmove.be/files/at-large.pdf> [accessed on 01 May 2012].
[99] Ibid., p. 97.

fantasy is back'.[100] Similarly, Ingvartsen's *Yes Manifesto* refers to a reactionary u-turn away from part of the legacy of 1960s choreographers.[101] In her playful effort to detach herself from particular values, Ingvartsen prescribes self-expression as a supposedly new and radical strategy in dance. In 1967, the same year Guy Debord wrote *Society of Spectacle*,[102] Rainer had argued that, 'action or what one does [on stage], is more important than the exhibition of character and attitude, and that action can best be focused on through the submerging of the personality; so ideally one is not even oneself, one is a neutral ''doer'''.[103] Written in 2009, Ingvartsen's manifesto - 'Yes to expression/Yes to excess/Yes to un-naming, decoding and recoding expression'- is in clear opposition to the idea of the 'neutral "doer"' advocated by Rainer.[104]

Ingvartsen's initiative in its mimetic aspect remains a gesture equally inscribed in a political agenda not dissimilar to what Banes – accounting for the new dance of the sixties in America – encapsulated as 'reinventing dance'.[105] Together Bauer and Ingvartsen's gestures reinforce apparent differences between dance-practitioner knowledge and the knowledge particular to dance historians. In each case, their work complements and extends ideas which emerged during the *6M1L* residencies. In particular, they provide creative responses to the previously analysed methods of questioning, which were practised during the residency. Whereas for Bauer, the desire to interview fellow choreographers can be interpreted as a way to objectivise answers, for Ingvartsen, offering 'yes' as a response to what was historically recorded as being denied to dancers challenges a canonical idea.

While these projects affirm certain tendencies of the current preoccupation of contemporary choreographers, they also rehearse another kind of artistic voicing. In the context of dance

[100] Ibid., p. 98.
[101] Mette Ingvarsten, *50/50*, 'Yes Manifesto', (2004) <http://metteingvartsen.net/2011/09/50-50/> [accessed on 1 May 2012]. The manifesto clearly references Yvonne Rainer's *No Manifesto* produced in 1968 in the program for *The Mind Is A Muscle.* See Banes, *Terpsichore*, p. 43.
[102] Guy Debord, *La Société du Spectacle* (Paris: Buchet/Chastel, 1967).
[103] Yvonne Rainer, *A Women Who: Essays, Interviews, Scripts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), p. 33.
[104] Ingvarsten, *50/50*
[105] See Sally Banes, *Reinventing Dance in the 1960s* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003).

history, as I have previously suggested, dance exists in what is sometimes defined as 'a contested space'. Following Mark Franko, Lepecki develops the idea that dance happens, 'in the contested space between the choreographic and the theoretical, the corporeal and the ideological, the kinetic and the political'.[106] In 2006, as part of the Dance Congress Germany, Lepecki and the artist Myriam Van Imschoot curated a salon entitled *Choreographic Modes of Work* which focused on questioning issues of knowledge and productivity in contemporary choreographic practice. In his notes on the event, Jeroen Peeters emphasises on the relationships between the status of knowledge in dance and the production of speech.[107] Drawing on Michel de Certeau's notion of 'Capture of Speech', Peeters proposes that the production of speech in choreography can offer alternative ways of producing knowledge which in turn allows for 'new language and forms of expression to emerge'. For example, Peeters accounts for Lepecki's observation of 'an epistemological break' in dance with Pina Bausch's use of language in her creative process.[108] In addressing questions to her dancers, Bausch's choreographic mode points to a collective process of making dance which challenges the traditional hierarchical order of knowledge between choreographer and dancers.

This discussion of the role of speech in choreographic modes of working, allows us to see how the collaborative approach of *6M1L* resonates as a critical *practitioner* voice and facilitates the 'capture of speech' of dancers in the contested space of dance studies. Moreover, as I have demonstrated, the self-organising strategies deployed by the artists, including a focus on voice expression combined with interviewing techniques, suggests a critique of representation. In turn, *6M1L* offers a collaborative model engrained in practice which I have verified to be committed to a wider set of production values in contemporary dance. Such practices answer Cvejić's call for a new choreographic approach which stretches beyond critical theory towards a more experimental approach to 'researching conditions methods and tools'.[109]

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[106] Lepecki, *Exhausting Dance*, p. 4.
[107] See Jeroen Peeters,'How Do You Want To Work Today? Notes on Alternative Choreographic Mode for the Production of Speech', in Sabine Gehm, Pirkko Husemann and Katharina von Wilcke (eds.), *Knowledge in Motion: Perspectives of Artistic and Scientific Research in Dance* (Bielefeld: transcrip Verlag, 2007), pp. 110-118.
[108] Ibid., p. 115.
[109] Cvejić, 'Learning by Making'.

Part III: Assessing artistic labour

> It tries to look, observe, find the relationships, the bridge […] between labour and art […] Art is labour? Which kind of labour? Labour is always associated in some kind of organisation.[110]
>
> (Xavier Le Roy, 2009)

Questions of artistic labour can be found at the centre of the critical and artistic concerns of the artists involved in *6M1L*. In this section, I aim to synthesise the range of thematic concerns I have identified as important in evaluating the collaborative processes of *6M1L*, through a framing of the notion of collaboration as a mode of labour. The ensuing conversation explores the relationship between collaboration and labour in two ways. Firstly, before commencing my analysis of *6M1L's* mode of labour, I propose to locate this section in context via a brief overview of the concept of artistic labour in relation to broader theoretical frameworks concerning labour in society. How can we conceptualise the labour internal to performance production? I problematise the notion of labour in relation to Marx's ontology of productivity and discuss its implications for the idea of artistic labour in the twenty-first century. Secondly, I discuss the existing debate around the use of the concept of immaterial labour in relation to artistic practices from two contrasting post-Marxist theories. Is this notion appropriate for examining collaborative labour, and to what extent can it be seen as a mode of resistance against dominant modes of labour? The last part of my inquiry examines the specificity of the labour generated by choreographic practices, including collaborative practices amongst these.

In *Capital*, Marx considers labour-process in its abstract and ahistorical form, 'as a process between man and nature'.[111] He further develops the subject of labour process in relation with a capitalist logic of production whereby the production of commodities – the process of exchange of use values of goods – is extended to a production of surplus value:[112]

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[110] Le Roy, in Ingvartsen (dir.), *Say It Loud!*, [6'00].

[111] Karl Marx, *Capital* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 299.

[112] See Marx's two factors of a commodity, use value and value: 'To become a commodity a product must be transferred to another, whom it will serve as a use value, by means of an exchange'. Karl Marx, 'Commodities', in *Capital*, Marxist Internet Archive (2005) <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch01.htm> [accessed on 25 February 2015]. According to Marx the production of absolute surplus value is the groundwork of the capital system. He defines its production as being based in the exploitation of the worker: 'The prolongation of the working-day beyond the point at which the labourer would have produced just an equivalent for the

> The labourer produces, not for himself, but for capital. It no longer suffices, therefore, that he should simply produce. He must produce surplus-value. That labourer alone is productive, who produces surplus-value for the capitalist, and thus works for the self-expansion of capital.[113]

Here productive labour is characterised by the relations between the worker (labourer) and his employer (capitalist). Marx further emphasises the irrelevance of the nature of that labour to the production of commodities through an example based on non-material production:

> [A] schoolmaster is a productive labourer when, in addition to belabouring the heads of his scholars, he works like a horse to enrich the school proprietor. That the latter has laid out his capital in a teaching factory, instead of in a sausage factory, does not alter the relation.[114]

Accordingly labour is 'productive' if it implies a specific social relation of production or, in other words, if the worker is employed by a capitalist consequently becoming living capital. However, in Marxist theory, another important element in differentiating between productive and non-productive labour is the distinction between wage labour and productive labour. If productive labour is always waged, waged labour is not always productive. Waged labour is productive only if it is 'incorporated in the process of capitalist production'.[115] It follows that the productive nature of labour is not defined by the activity of the work or by its remuneration but strictly by the social relations between, in Marxist terms, the producer and the buyer of labour power.[116] So we can deduce, following this Marxist tradition, that any kind of labour - material or non-material - could potentially become productive and therefore be incorporated into the process of capitalist production.

For that reason, one might argue that artistic labour – whether material or non-material – seems not to be ontologically distinguished by Marx from productive labour and therefore it

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value of his labour-power, and the appropriation of that surplus-labour by capital, this is production of absolute surplus-value.' Marx, *Capital*, p. 300.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Karl Marx, 'Productive and Unproductive Labour', *Economic Works of Karl Marx 1861-1864*, Marxist Internet Archive < https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1864/economic/ch02b.htm> [accessed on 26 February 2015].

[116] This relationship is defined by Marx as follow: 'The capitalist buys labour-power in order to use it; and labour-power in use is labour itself. The purchaser of labour-power consumes it by setting the seller of it to work.' Marx, *Capital*, p. 115.

could potentially be integrated to a capitalist process of production. However, interestingly Marx clearly did not associate artistic labour with productive labour. Using three different examples of non-material labour, including that of a writer, a singer and a teacher, he demonstrates that while the production of art could follow the law of value, he does not see it as being productive due to its 'microscopic significance'.[117] Marx concludes that labour which can be considered as a service indivisible from the worker could not exist as commodities separate from the process. While they may potentially be 'directly exploited in capitalist terms', they are not of significance when set besides 'the mass of capitalist production'.[118] Accordingly, Marx argues: 'They may be entirely neglected, therefore, and can be dealt with under the category of wage-labour that is not at the same time productive'.[119] Art would then escape the capitalist logic of labour not because of its 'specific content' but because of its insignificant impact on the economy as a whole. Accordingly, as we will discuss further below, Marx arguably denies the power of the qualitative transformation of artistic labour.

As Marx was developing this labour theory of value, artistic labour might not have been of quantitative significance for the economy as a whole. However, the proportion of artistic and cultural labour in relation to the overall production of contemporary society is harder to overlook, not least with the post-twentieth-century reduction of material production in certain societies, in favour of the so-called service economy. Indeed, creative labour is often considered to be at the forefront of the contemporary economy of service and knowledge production. This shift, primarily rooted in the development of a post-Fordist capitalist society in the west, is the result of a transformation of labour from working in factories, to providing non-material based services.

As previously noted, for post-Marxist theorists, the new contemporary modes of labour are based on co-operative and creative skills. In Lazzarato's own words, the shift: 'results from a synthesis of different types of know-how: intellectual skills, manual skills, and entrepreneurial skills. Immaterial labour constitutes itself in immediately collective forms that exist as

[117] Karl Marx, *Capital,* Volume 1 (London: Penguins Group, UK, 1990), pp. 1044-1045.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid.

networks and flows.'[120] Under these sorts of terms it is difficult to not associate immaterial labour with the type of labour produced during *6M1L*. In addition to the circumstances of a residency whereby the boundaries between living and working time disappear, the notions of open source, self-organisation and the politics of friendship veer toward similar understandings of production. The potential for collective creativity associated to the logic of an open source system was articulated by *6M1L* through the multiple involvement and commitment of the artists to collective and individual projects. The collaborative focus within this structure is upon an interdisciplinary practice of choreographic research skills including intellectual and theoretical skills (collective reading of theoretical texts), manual or physical skills (daily practice sessions), and managerial skills (the ability to manage your own work as well as coordinating other participants' projects)[121] – or what is currently known as *knowledge transfer*.[122] Similarly, the collaborative system of decision-making in operation during *6M1L* based on the idea of a politics of friendship – or on affinity, difference and separate identities – forefronts the cooperative and creative spirit of immaterial labour as described by Lazzareto.

However, Lazzareto's description of the *new* dominant forms of labour appears symptomatic of the form of labour that *6M1L* intended to challenge:

> A polymorphous self-employed autonomous work has emerged as the dominant form, a kind of "intellectual worker" who is him- or herself an entrepreneur, inserted within a market that is constantly shifting and within networks that are changeable in time and space.[123]

This account echoes Cvejić and Le Roy's observation of an expanded system of project-based and freelance work as becoming a central mode of production in the performing arts. *6M1L*

[120] Lazzarato, *Radical Thought in Italy*, pp. 144,5.
[121] Lazzareto argues that immaterial labour is 'characterised by real managerial functions that consist in (1) a certain ability to manage its social relations and (2) the eliciting of social cooperation within the structures of the basin of immaterial labour'. Lazzareto, *Radical Thought in Italy*, p. 138.
[122] The term *knowledge transfer* refers to a broader framing of the post-industrial society as a knowledge-based economy in which knowledge and creativity constitute significant driving forces of economic growth. Alan Weber, former editorial director of Harvard Business Review, wrote that, 'the revolution in information and communications technologies makes knowledge the competitive resource'. Alan Weber, 'What's So New About The New Economy', *Harvard Business Review*, (1993) <http://wiki.douglasbastien.com/images/e/e1/Harvard_Business _Review_71-1-What's_So_New_About_the_New_Economy.pdf> [accessed on 12 July 2012]. In this context, *knowledge transfer* might arguably better reflect the idea of education within a new economy.
[123] Lazzareto, *Radical Thought in Italy*, p. 140.

was defined in response to that situation. Furthermore, qualifying performance work as immaterial might only emphasise a problematic ontological conception of performance as the art of ephemerality and disappearance, and lead to an undermining of the value of performance as a material artefact and a product of the institution of performing arts.[124] If immaterial labour is signalling a shift in contemporary labour production, to what extent can it be seen to resist capitalist modes of exploitation when it has already been absorbed as a dominant practice of labour? How can artistic labour transform its alienated aspect? How can collaboration still be considered as a radical strategy to inflict change? How can we answer *6M1L's* recurrent questions: 'How is *6m1l* positioning itself towards the notion of labour in art? Is it creating new ways of labour in art or actually reproducing old strategies within a frame that functions more organised? [sic]'.[125]

From the autonomist's perspective, the labour of the contemporary artist is not separate from other productive labour because it has become emblematic of the changes of the post-Fordist labour process. In his article 'Metamorphoses', Negri argues that contemporary society has taken the transformation of labour beyond the postmodern idea of the immaterial: 'From being immaterial, cognitive, affective, it is becoming ever more *bios*: it is *biopolitical labour,* an activity that reproduces forms of life'.[126]

This shift is based on the assumption that in the post-industrial economy, production of commodities and production of life have merged. Artwork, therefore, claims Negri is – 'like every object of production' – a commodity and an activity.[127] In these terms, artistic labour can be associated with what has been identified as the 'affective turn', referring to the way in

[124] Lepecki's perspective on dance as critical theory argues for the consideration of the body as 'a material, socially inscribed agent'. Lepecki, *Of the Presence*, p. 6. In dialogue with theoretical explorations of the presence of the dancing body, I suggested the potential of the concept of choreographic presence - developed in practice in my solo *TTS* – to explore the dynamics of the dancing body's movement of relational forces at work in performance practice.
[125] See Ingvartsen, in Ingvartsen (dir.), *Say It Loud!*
[126] Antonio Negri, 'Metamorphoses', *Radical Philosophy*, 149 (2008), 21-25 (p. 24). The term biopolitical in this context draws on Michel Foucault concept of 'biopower'. See Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (New York: Vintage, 1978), pp. 135-45.
[127] Negri, 'Metamorphoses', p. 22.

which affective labour is bound to the body's capacity of affecting and being affected.[128] Negri's metamorphoses of labour lead to an ontological transfer in artistic production: from the ontological link to 'creation' and 'sublimation' to 'the power of being creative in the world'.[129] This transformation, in turn, allows Negri to deduce that, 'artistic labour gains the *ontological relevance* possessed by all forms of labour in their creative facet'.[130] On the one hand this thesis appears in continuation with the post-Kantian conception of the artist/worker in opposition to the artist/genius,[131] and on the other hand it foregrounds 'innovation' and 'creativity' in productive labour as 'something beyond measure' - a 'creative excess'. While Negri's specific reference to the ontological relevance of artistic labour within capitalist production is a way to emphasise the creative aspect of contemporary labour, establishing the impossibility of measuring the creativity of labour prompts him to make the claim for a new autonomous labour-power: 'Labour power as a free bird in the forest of life'.[132] In Negri's theory of labour, creativity is the key to depart from the logic of capitalism.

Creativity for Negri implies an internal resistance to labour which then escapes exploitation. Immaterial labour for Negri finds 'an ethical legitimacy' by defining itself 'as forms of life'. However, 'Metamorphoses' - specifically focusing on artistic labour - does not provide any example of artistic processes which might have illuminated the way in which the artist might create new 'rich forms of life'.[133] Nonetheless, Negri does offer an approach to 'artistic production today', within which the use of the metaphor of the swarm is indicative of another dominant characteristic of Negri's theory of contemporary labour:

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[128] The increasing interest in 'affective labour' has emerged partly from the reviving of Spinoza's *Ethics* in the writings of Deleuze, Guattari and Massumi; and partly from the work of autonomist theorists including Negri and Hardt. See Michael Hardt, 'Affective Labour' *Boundary 2*, 26.2 (1999), 89-100. The relationship between bodily experience and affect has been central to the articulation of the 'affective turn'. See Massumi, *Parables,* pp. 23-45; and Nigel Thrift, *Non-Representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect* (Oxon; New York, Routledge, 2008), pp. 220-254.
[129] Negri, 'Metamorphoses', p. 22.
[130] Ibid.
[131] I am referring here to a shift from Kant's notion of genius expressed in *The Critique of Judgment* – 'The talent which gives the rule to art' – towards a post-Kantian view of the artwork developed in the critical writing of theorists including Walter Benjamin and Roland Barthes. See Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' in Harrison &Wood (eds), *Art in Theory*, pp. 520-527; See also Barthes' 'Death of the Author' in Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, pp. 142-148.
[132] Negri, 'Metamorphoses', p. 22.
[133] Ibid., p. 25.

> The first stage consists in the *immersion* into the infinite movement of the bodies and events that surround us […] We find ourselves partaking in the composition of the *swarm* of singularities. These singularities want to converge in the common while keeping their freedom.[134]

In *Multitude*, co-written with Michael Hardt, Negri draws on artificial intelligence and computational methods research to develop an analogy between 'the new network political organisations' and the notion of swarm as observed in some animal behaviour:[135]

> When a distributed network attacks, it swarms its enemy: innumerable independent forces seem to strike from all directions at a particular point and then disappear into the environment. […] If one looks inside a network, however, one can see that it is, indeed organized, rational and creative. It has swarm intelligence.[136]

Negri's new labour power (the 'free bird in the forest of life') can be organised in a way to potentially attack - 'as something like a swarm of birds or insects in a horror film'.[137] '[T]he swarm model' refers to a type of contemporary labour based on a 'collective intelligence' emerging from the 'communication' and 'co-operation' of creative workers. It is in these terms that Negri's theory of contemporary production – including artistic production – is based on creativity and co-operation and therefore forms through collaborative modes of labour defined here as the distributed and organised network.[138]

Returning to *6M1L's* productions, the question remains as to whether its collaborative process produced 'rich forms of life'. I observe, at least, that several characteristics of the production process are illustrative of Negri's modes of labour. Firstly, as previously discussed, *6M1L* formed from a network of artistic affinities and was conceived as an open chain series with two initiators but no central direction. Secondly, the artists shared time and space of work within a self-organised system, which needed to be revised and modified according to the need of individual and collective projects. Thirdly, the collaborative work was based on

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[134] Ibid.
[135] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude, War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004), pp. 91-93.
[136] Ibid., p. 91.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Negri and Hardt define the notion of biopolitical production as 'immanent to society and creates social relationships and forms through collaborative forms of labor'. Ibid., p. 95.

communication and cooperation, and a questioning of each other's ideas and methods while enforcing differentiation between artists. However, if the process of collaboration of *6M1L* can be considered as in dialogue with some of Negri's theoretical positions, I would argue that it also problematised the enormous emancipatory potential credited to contemporary labour by the autonomists, including its collaborative and creative feature.

Increased concern has been expressed by art theorists regarding the mimetic characteristic of the relationship between the new type of labour produced by the advanced capitalist society and artistic practices. As previously discussed, the debate around Bourriad's 'relational aesthetics' revealed a division of views over the value of collaborative strategies in art and, more generally, over the role and purpose of art in society at large.[139] On one side, supporters of the positive 'open-endedness' of visual art argue for a new emphasis to be placed on 'the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an independent and *private* symbolic sphere' (writer's emphasis).[140] On the other, critics warned that a neo-liberal agenda was encompassing the appropriation of creative strategies for managerial purposes to the detriment of art.[141]

In dance and choreography, as Kolb observes, a politics of interdisciplinary collaboration has spread which incorporates a belief in its democratic virtues: '[I]nterdisciplinary collaboration in dance, like Bourriaud's relational art works, is often accompanied by a wide-ranging rhetoric of democratization. "Democracy" is attached to various facets of collaborative dance practice, scholarship and teaching.'[142] However, Kolb argues that collaboration can instead be seen, 'as a more problematic corollary of contemporary forces such as globalisation and the modern market economy.'[143] Kolb further notes that in Foster's historical genealogy of choreography, the notion of collaboration figures as the main characteristic of choreographic

[139] See Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, pp. 14-18.
[140] Ibid., p. 14.
[141] For a discussion on the impact on collaborative practice within the visual arts context see Nikos Papastergiadis, 'The Global need for collaboration', Collaborative Art, Conversation on Collaborative Arts Practices, (2008) <http://collabarts.org/?p=201> [accessed on June 2012].
[142] Kolb, 'Interdisciplinary Collaboration', p. 29.
[143] Ibid., p. 27.

work since the 1980s.[144] Foster observes that, 'the choreographer now leverages different funding opportunities in the same way that s/he facilitates the collaborative interaction among all participants'.[145] Drawing on these findings, Kolb discusses the practical consequences of such developments. Firstly, she questions how we can still define dance and its purpose when borders with other disciplines are blurred. She highlights the need to reassess performance evaluation in the context of interdisciplinary collaboration. Secondly, she interrogates the influence of funding policies in the choice of collaborative methods in dance. She demonstrates that instead of a democratic process of sharing monies across projects and artists, the funding of the collaborative project is increasingly motivated by the potential to control the type of work produced.[146] According to Kolb, the risk is that 'the resistance to the "hegemonic" nature of disciplinarity and single-authored works might morph into an interdisciplinary straightjacket'.[147] From this perspective, we might still question how the collaborative work of *6M1L* could therefore challenge the hegemonic nature of its process and avoid 'reiterating the societal status quo'.[148]

John Roberts' post-Adornian labour theory of culture offers another perspective on how artistic labour might maintain its critical identity and autonomy vis-à-vis post-capitalist systems of production. In contrast to Negri, Roberts argues that artistic labour is ontologically different from productive labour. Through a discussion of Duchamp, the readymade and the commodity, Roberts posits that the capacity for artist labour to transform the material of its production allows for artistic commodities not to be subjected to the law of value.[149] Drawing on Theodor Adorno's idea of the 'sensuous autonomy' of the artwork, Roberts highlights that the driving force of this transformation is the capacity of the artist's subjectivity to determine

[144] In her essay 'Choreographies and Choreographers' Foster offers four definitions of the term choreography from the seventeen century to the twenty first century: 'Choreography as Documenting'; 'Choreography as Testifying'; 'Choreography as Making'; 'Choreography as Collaborating'. See Foster, 'Choreographies and Choreographers', pp. 5-33.
[145] Ibid., p. 20.
[146] Kolb, 'Interdisciplinary Collaboration'.
[147] Kolb, 'Interdisciplinary Collaboration', p. 34.
[148] Cvejić, 'Collectivity?'
[149] Roberts explains that Duchamp's readymade transforms the commodity of the work: 'The commodity's metamorphic function is made transparent by the act of artistic transmutation which occurs. By transforming a reproducible non-art object into an unreproducible art object in the form of a reproducible art object, the logical relations of artistic labour and productive labour are exposed and inverted.' John Roberts, *The Intangibilities of Forms* (London: Verso, 2008), p. 33.

all the moments of production:

> What is purposeful about the labour of art is that it is transformative of its materials in ways that are non-subsumptive and non-heteronomous, thereby allowing the subjectivity of the artist to penetrate the materials of artistic labour *all the way down*.[150]

According to Roberts, the transformative process of artistic labour can be articulated by, '*a dialectic of skills, deskilling and reskilling'*. This accounts, he argues, for the misconception in post-conceptual art that deskilling represents an '*absolute* loss of artistic sensuousness'.[151] Roberts suggests that, on the contrary, the presence of the hand in artistic labour 'remains key to the "aesthetic re-education", and the emancipation of productive and non–productive labour'.[152] This presence is vital because the immaterial production of art generates 'other, non handcraft, hand-to-eye skills' enhancing 'the totipotentiality of the hand'.[153]

If we consider contemporary choreographic practice within the context of post-conceptual dance, a parallel could be drawn between Roberts' idea of the deskilling in arts after the readymade and the deconstructive process of 'detraining' associated with postmodern dance.[154] As previously examined in Chapter 1, Duchamp's Readymade was a major influence on choreographic composition in the 1960s. Running, walking, crawling and talking while dancing were considered as 'found' movements. In turn came the development of pedestrian movements; instruction or score-based choreography; and the rise of somatic practice associated with dance training.[155] In the context of contemporary dance training, the

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[150] Roberts, *Intangibilities*, p. 87.
[151] Ibid., p. 3.
[152] Ibid., p. 4.
[153] Ibid., p. 95. Roberts draws on the writing of Raymond Tallis in *The Hand: A Philosophical Inquiry Into Human Being*. Tallis demonstrates that the ability of proprioception and protension of the hand is key to human evolution: 'The hand opens up the body to itself as an instrument, awakens the sense of self and of the (cultural) world to which the self relates'. Raymond Tallis, as quoted in *Intangibilities*, p. 94. Roberts further concludes that 'we owe our escape from biology, therefore, to what Tallis calls the *totipotentiality* of the hand.' Roberts, *Intangibilities*, p. 94.
[154] See Elizabeth Dempster, 'Women writing the body: let's see a little how she dances', in Alexandra Carter and Janet O'Shea, *The Routledge Dance Studies Reader* (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 229-235, (p. 235).
[155] An obvious example of the relationship between deskilling and reskilling in dance is the trend amongst European choreographers in the 1990s to use stillness and durational devices to slow down movement rhythms as a critique of representation. In this instance the virtuosity of the dancers is not in the execution of movements but rather in the capacity of not doing them.

emergence of a tension between the nature of contemporary dance teaching and the eclecticism of the dancer's training demanded by dance markets is a problematic development facing postmodern dance.[156] For Boris Charmatz and Isabelle Launay, this tension has led to a conflation of the knowledge of dance with the accumulation of skills which they describes as 'a collection of technique'. In response, they develop a concept of 'undertraining' that would promote the physical and academic skills necessary 'to not merely suffer contemporary techniques but instead construct meaning'.[157]

This approach is also characteristic of *6M1L's* collaborative practice, being evident in the use, for example, of somatic practice for training or as a source of choreographic movement; of Feldenkreis technique as a group practice; and of the Body Mind Centering approach to voice training. Moreover, Bauer's 'Got Skills' morning practice resonates with Roberts' notion of reskilling in its collaborative approach to training. Bauer suggests that the sessions, which were based on the sharing of information brought to the class by each participant, 'approach training as an opportunity for any mover with any history of training to access and develop his or her own unique tools'.[158]

If the collective sharing of skills is in keeping with a politics of friendship, Bauer also highlights the aim – through collaborative practice - of diffusing 'authorship within the group'. The claim that collaborative practice challenges the power of authorship is also developed by Roberts in his foregrounding of the role of artistic critique of authorship in transforming alienated labours.[159] However, such calls for collaborative authorship should not be mistaken for a naïve egalitarian attempt to democratise the arts. If, as Kolb argues, collaboration can be seen as a contemporary force of the global market, then the use by artists of what could be perceived here as alienated collaborative modes of labour would result in the deskilling of the

[156] Drawing on Foster's idea of the contemporary dancer's 'hired body' Bales reflects on the homogenising effect of the eclectic styles of contemporary dance training. See Bales in Bales Nettl-Fiol (eds), *The Body Eclectic,* p. 63.
[157] Boris Charmatz and Isabelle Launay, *Undertraining: On a Contemporary Dance (*Dijon: Les Presses du Réel, 2011), pp. 95-97.
[158] Eleanor Bauer, in Ingvartsen (ed.), *Six Months,* p. 34.
[159] Recalling Marx's assimilation of cooperative work to the logic of capitalist production, Roberts argues that artistic 'processes of cooperation and collaboration result in forms of complex labour, rather than simple labour, at the level of the collective intellect.' Roberts, *Intangibilities*, p. 125.

artists. For Roberts, the *dialectic of skills, deskilling and reskilling* implies that deskilling in art occurs when artistic techniques are integrated with the general social mode of production. Whereas, in contrast, the process of reskilling develops through the acquisition of new skills, and emerges in relation to general modes of production, reproduction and distribution but cannot be fully appropriated by them.[160]

As I have established above, the motivations which have shaped *6M1L* are bound to the desire to veer away from dominant modes of performing arts production. This is primarily grounded in a concern with the freelance and project-based modes of working imposed on the choreographers. Similarly, the proposition to avoid hitching the collaboration to a symmetric reciprocity of exchange ('I give – you give') arguably represents a shift away from an egalitarian mode of collaboration. Instead, the collaboration focused on developing experimental techniques and skills in order 'to discover potentialities beyond the known competences' of each participant – a process that we have defined as reskilling.[161] The aim of sharing skills during Bauer's morning sessions was not to find a common technique for the group but rather to develop individual 'unique tools' which, as previously examined, could then be used and transformed by individual projects in relation to each artist's personal research questions. Therefore, collaborative authorship, as practised by *6M1L*, generates the reskilling of the collaborating artists. While this process involves a certain decentralisation of the author, it does not eradicate the individual author. Instead it offers the potential to locate authorship in relational terms – or what Roberts calls 'expanded authorship'.[162]

However, when we look back at the finished pieces produced after the *6M1L* residencies, as these were located within contemporary modes of distribution (i.e. website, press review), the collaborative process or expanded authorship is made invisible for the spectator. Each individual work bears the name of a single artist with only rare references made to *6M1L*. For example, the performer and dance critic Maxime Fleuriot - in his review of *Low Pieces* - associates the work to Le Roy's previous choreographic theme: 'Xavier Le Roy thus plays on

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[160] Ibid., pp. 86-89.
[161] Cvejić & Le Roy, in Ingvartsen (ed.), *Six Months*, p. 14.
[162] Roberts explain that 'the reliance on collective learning, the praxis of authorship becomes intellectually and culturally *expanded*.' Roberts, *Intangibilities*, p. 123.

our senses and *once again* (my emphasis) questions in this creation the way we perceive a body'.[163]

This observation refers to the recognition by Fleuriot of a signature, which is here associated to the name of Xavier Le Roy. However, Melrose in her inquiry into 'signature' offers important insights into what the nominative aspect of artistic signature might mean and how it might be theorised in the context of expert arts practice. Melrose observes that in 'signature practices', the name does not 'simply' signalise 'notable practices', but it refers to 'the quality of those signature practices through which the name has achieved its professional as well as aesthetic significance for us'.[164] After pointing out that signature refers to the making of a judgement, she highlights that signature is 'relational and not simply immanent to "the work itself".' Here, Melrose suggests another type of relationality for the artistic practice of expanded authorship in that signature practices are partly constituted in relation to the 'responses of the wider arts communities'.[165]

If Le Roy's signature thus operates as, in Roberts' term, a *necessary* relation with general social practice, Le Roy does not claim the choreography of the piece but only its conception. Indeed, nobody is credited for the choreography which might represent a hidden recognition of its collaborative aspects. In addition, the practice of crediting the conception of an artwork is often found in visual art when a division of labour has occurred. Similarly, the term 'conception' is also frequently used in multi-disciplinary, large-scale performance. Rarely employed in dance presentations, Le Roy's authorial intention, while implicitly implying an expanded authorship, demonstrates the potential of the transformation of artistic labour, *all the way down.*

At the level of reception and presentation, the collaborative aspect of *Low Pieces* has disappeared but its signature points to 'a relational mark', which recurs, according to Melrose,

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[163] Maxime Fleuriot, as quoted in Xavier Le Roy, *Low Pieces* <www.xavierleroy.com> [accessed 16 March 2015].
[164] Susan Melrose, 'Rosemary Butcher: Jottings on Signature in the Presence of the Artist', (2009) <http://www.sfmelrose.org.uk/jottings/> [accessed on 27 July 2012].
[165] Ibid.

‘across a body of work and between that work and its contextualising framework/s’.[166] For example, one cannot ignore Le Roy’s academic background in molecular biology when associating his work to questions of the perception of the body. Similarly, his playful negotiation between the notion of authorship and ownership in his collaboration with Jérôme Bel, *Xavier Le Roy* (2000) – claimed by Bel as his own but choreographed and conceived by Le Roy – is relevant when assessing Le Roy’s choice to sign only the conception of *Low Piece*. What Melrose’s notion of signature of practice helps to illuminate is that it refers to ‘*a way of working* that is specific to a particular artist’.[167] In the case of Le Roy, this might imply an experimental, conceptual and often collaborative way of working.

These observations on artistic practice return us to the issue of subjectivity – but also of singularity – in artistic labour and how the focus on individual development in collaboration, through its potential of transformation, *all the way down*, leads to the emancipation of its mode of labour. We find in Roberts’ emphasis on the ‘totipotentiality’ of the hand that artistic autonomy is assured by the reflective power of the author to make manifest ‘world knowledge’ - empirical knowledge based in senses and gained ‘laboriously’ - through the presence of the hand. He identifies this process as ‘aesthetic thinking’.[168] In the context of performing arts, aesthetic thinking is a process of ongoing decision-making related to knowledge which is specific to performance practice expertise. This mode of thinking implies a judgement of expertise by performance makers informed by ‘world knowledge’, which in this instance includes a heightened sense of proprioceptive, tactile and visceral sensibility, in addition, perhaps, to advanced operational skills of one kind or another.[169] It operates often collaboratively and in relation to the economy of production particular to the making of the work which is qualitatively transformed by the artists’ ‘*singular* ways of seeing, doing and knowing’.[170] Such accounts give us an insight into Negri’s ‘rich forms of life’ emerging from

[166] Melrose, ‘Introduction’, (2007) < http://www.sfmelrose.org.uk/> [accessed on 5 March 2015]
[167] Melrose, ‘Rosemary Butcher: Jottings on Signature’.
[168] Roberts observes that in the context of 1920s avant-garde – with the new reproductive technologies subjected to capitalist development – the hand became the site of ‘aesthetics thinking’. He wrote that, ‘Retaining the sovereignty of the (totipotentiality of the) hand, in contrast, was a way of retaining the sovereignty of aesthetic thinking as a form of labour qualitatively different to that of heteronomous labour.’ Roberts, *Intangibilities*, p. 218.
[169] See Massumi, *Parables,* pp. 58-59.
[170] Melrose, ‘Rosemary Butcher: Jottings on Signature’.

creative production, and how the process of complex labour - understood as ongoing decision-making - involved in performance related artistic productions, and articulated by Melrose as 'performance mastery',[171] resists the determined alienated type of labour characteristic of productive labour. If this is the result of a process of infiltration by the subjective skills of the performance maker into the material of his/her production, the way in which a new work emerged is often bound to a movement of collective thinking. By this I mean that the process of performance-making in its multi-participant aspects emphasises the relationship between individual and collective thinking. The negotiation of this relationship is constitutive of performance mastery, which here, as I suggest above, includes collaborative skills. *6M1L's* subscription to a *collaborative process* represents literally a resistance to determinism; its outcome cannot be individually imagined; it cannot be predetermined, but must be uncovered collectively in the practice. Similarly, *6M1L* points to a collaborative process rather than a collaborative product: the idea articulated by Ingvartsen was 'practicing [sic] performance without actually making one'.[172]

If this emphasis on process places weight on the undetermined characteristics of performance practice, part of this practice might include 'a production', or a 'showing', or what is presented as a 'finished work'. As sociologist Karin Knorr-Cetina points out, in another context,[173] performance – like research itself – can be defined by its 'lack of completeness of being'. Its processes of production, 'must simultaneously be conceived as *unfolding* structures of absences'.[174] What is important to note here is that it is within these gaps that the future work finds its force: each 'failure' to complete an idea, feeds back, over time, into the development of the artist's research inquiry which unfolds across his/her body of work. In a collaborative practice, in optimal terms, the participants experience 'failure' differently and therefore the

[171] In the context of arts criticism, Melrose's inquiry into performance mastery might be situated as in dialogue with recent academics debate around the shift from a 'textual turn' in the late 1960s and 1970s to 'a practice turn in contemporary theory'. See Susan Melrose, 'Who Knows and Who Cares (about performance mastery)?', (2003) <http://www.sfmelrose.org.uk/e-pai-2003-04/performancemastery/> [accessed on 31 July 2012].
[172] Ingvartsen, in Ingvartsen (ed.), *Six Months,* p. 154.
[173] Karin Knorr Cetina, 'Objectual Relations', in Theodore Schatzki, Karin Knorr Cetina and Eike von Savigni (eds), *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory* (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 184-197 (p. 185).
[174] Ibid.

potential for exploration in future work is multiplied. This result is the re-working of skills and competence, a process that provides further additional production of value. On the one hand, the elimination of predetermined outcomes in collaborative processes makes it a difficult mode of labour to commodify, while on the other hand, the incomplete nature of 'the production' functions as an excess of production, or as we have seen, according to Negri, as 'something beyond measure' which frees labour from a capitalist logic of production.

Whereas Roberts argues that artistic autonomy consists in the capacity of the artists' subjectivity to determine the central moments of production, we have seen that the modes of practice specific to performance mastery - grounded in the artists' 'singular way of seeing, doing and knowing' the world - are constitutive of an aesthetic thinking which always operates according to a logic of production bound to its 'unfolding ontology'.[175] It is in these terms that collaborative practice, when its conditions allow individualised qualitative transformations, creates the expansion of performance mastery and might subsequently resist alienated modes of labour. However, as previously discussed, collaborative work runs the risk of being subsumed under a capitalist logic of production. It follows that the capacity of the type of labour generated by *6M1L* for resisting the dominant mode of labour - characterised in this instance by the alienating experience of time and place - can only be assessed in relationship to its power of transformation, *all the way down.* In summary, I set out below a number of elements which in this sense appear as central to *6M1L* collaborative process of transformation.

1. *Reskilling performance mastery*

As demonstrated above, the physical collaborative training developed during *6M1L* – which follows a dialectics of deskilling and reskilling of labour – leads to the acquisition of new technical and collaborative skills which can then be developed and transformed in relation to the particular making of a piece. This process contributes to the enhancement of performance mastery. Similarly, the theoretical focus of the project structured by collective reading sessions, while signalling the cognitive characteristic of immaterial labour or Lazzarato's 'intellectual workers', provided *6M1L's* artists with the ability to theorise their practice in

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[175] See Knorr-Cetina, 'Objectual Relations', p. 191.

dialogue with broader theoretical frameworks.

2. *Reflective authorship*

The collaborative technique of questioning and interviewing practised during *6M1L* (and subsequent documenting of practice) contributed towards an individualised theorisation, *through practice*, of aesthetic thinking processes. What I mean by this is that the creative process in operation during *6M1L* was bound to the artists' skills to reflectively think through his/her decisions in his/her own terms, as well as in terms brought by their peers. In addition to the finished pieces, which account for an aesthetic thinking in terms of composition, the edited version of the artists' reflective account of *6M1L* indicates how the artists retrospectively could identify a qualitative transformation. This process of reflective authorship is illustrated in the following accounts:

> [T]he specificity of this time-space, all-inclusive situation where we practice making art rather than just making it, has led me to question more my methodology rather than my outcome. (Kelly Bond)
>
> While investing in the work of others I realise that what I could be interested in working on is not the same as what I am working on, so I change. I readapt what I am doing to what I am thinking which changes my practice. (Mette Ingvartsen)
>
> I work collectively here on steps of a working process that usually would take place as a solitary activity. (Xavier Le Roy)
>
> I have separated my self, my ideas, and my drives a little more. I sense that my interests are the same but sharper, more consolidated, more crystalised, less reactionary or constructed in terms of influence and circumstances. (Eleanor Bauer).[176]

3. *Economy of affect*

The collaborative model of *6M1L* draws on the skills attributed to affective labour, referred to as the ability to affect and be affected. If, as Deleuze and Guattari theorise, this process may occur independently of the intention of the subject,[177] in *6M1L* the influence of the politics of friendship – concerned with artistic affinities – in conjunction with the open logic of sharing information and skills, forefront the subjectivity of each artist, along with her relationships

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[176] Four weeks after the end of the residency, a number of artists who participated in the residency, wrote a reflective account as an answer to a collective questionnaire. See 6*M1L*, in Ingvartsen (ed.), *Six Months,* pp. 152-156.
[177] See Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus,* p. 288.

with others. Through a collective process, it is at the level of individual subjectivity that a qualitative transformation is expected. The artists' reflective accounts of the collective process underscore the relationship between individuality and collectivity. In the words of one participant, there the responsibility of the individual is to not disappear 'in a unified voice' while 'all efforts towards discovering one's own voice provoke collectivity'.[178]

4. *Reciprocal modulated systems*

While the *6M1L* residency was institutionalised within a recognised programme of culture and education in France, its self-organised structure ensured 'the best match' between the collaborative system and its environment. The non-hierarchical *dispositif*, or sets of *dispositifs*, in turn, allowed a renegotiation of the logics of production, which on the one hand was modulated by the need of the artists at the time of the making process, and on the other modulated the creative process by the enforcement of its specific condition of production.

[178] Ines Lopez Carrasco, in Ingvartsen (ed.), *Six Months,* p. 153.

Chapter 4

Generating the Impossible: towards a collective thinking

A growing number of performance scholars and practitioners have been working with philosophical frameworks – hence in a genuinely interdisciplinary manner – partly as a result of the rise of interest in Practice as Research (PaR) in international Higher Education institutions over the last two decades. They have thereby joined an already-existing interest in practice, in certain academic fields (for example, sociology, anthropology and ethnography) in what was eventually identified as the 'practice turn'.[1] Such developments have contributed to the emergence of a sub-field of Performance Studies – 'performance and philosophy'. In 2008, the Performance Study International (PSi) created a Performance and Philosophy Working Group to promote the 'engagement in Philosophy as it intersects with Performance Studies.' While the group aims at exploring 'the nature of the relationship between philosophy and performance', the initiative is linked to a wider concern for the reconsideration of knowledge practices within academic research.[2]

Meanwhile, the *SenseLab*, a studio based in Montreal and curated by the artist/philosopher Erin Manning, has supported the development of projects which explore the interaction between philosophical research and artistic creation.[3] Involving artists, academics, dancers and writers, the *SenseLab* has produced a series of international events entitled *Technology of Lived Abstractions* (2005-2011) which focused on developing original modes of collaboration in thinking and creative practices. In 2010 I was invited as a practitioner-researcher to join the last international event of this series, *Generating the Impossible (GTI)*, initiated by Manning and the philosopher Brian Massumi. Although the event unfolded over two weeks in Quebec in July 2011, *GTI* was a year in the planning and expanded into a project involving an international team of fifty-two artists/theorists.

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[1] Following in the tradition initiated by Pierre Bourdieu in the 1970s – see Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) – the 'practice turn' emerged in the mid-1990s as an interdisciplinary concern with 'practice'. See Schatzki et al (eds), *The Practice Turn*.

[2] For a further description of the aims and objectives of the group see Performance Studies international, 'PPWG Aims & Activities', (2014) <http://psi-ppwg.wikidot.com/ppwg-aims-and-activities> [accessed on 27 February 2015].

[3] Founded in 2004, the *SenseLab* is defined as 'a laboratory for thoughts in motions'. See *SenseLab,* 'About', (2015) <http://senselab.ca/> [accessed on 27 February 2015].

In the following account of *GTI*, I investigate in some detail two areas of relevance for my overall inquiry. In Part I, I investigate the techniques developed during the project to enhance collaborative processes. I begin by contextualising the use of 'techniques of relation' in the project. To this end, I refer to the influence of Deleuzian ideas on the development of 'collective thinking' within *GTI*; including the relationship between digital communications, and notions of event and chaos. Secondly, I analyse the creative processes which informed the residency phase of the project. I cross-reference the theoretical ideas framing the use of relational techniques – and in particular the notion of 'attunement' – with the logistical conditions of collaboration enacted during the project. To this end, I use a number of examples of practical activities to map out the processes through which a cross-fertilisation of ideas occurred. Finally, I examine the way in which the collaborative process of *GTI*, grounded in notions of exchange and reciprocity, tended towards a non-capitalist economy. Central to this approach, the concept of the gift was used during the project as a creative mode of relations between participants. I examine how the model of the gift economy as practised during *GTI* might create new ways of relating to each other in an interdisciplinary collaborative project. I then draw analytical conclusions on the relationships between the process of sharing and the potential of collaboration in creative practices.

Part I: Conditioning relational techniques

GTI developed in three phases. The first was built upon an extended online discussion whereby propositions and ideas were exchanged using *Basecamp* – a web-based project management program – and was punctuated by fortnightly international group meetings via *Skype*.[4] The second phase unfolded in a remote camp in the north of Montreal where for one week all participants shared meals and accommodation in eco-built cottages surrounded by forests and lakes. This arts residency focused on practically and collectively engaging with a number of techniques and activities, including group reading, somatic practice, filming, cooking and swimming. The participants were divided into smaller groups of five to ten people formed on the basis of shared affinities.[5]

While this 'affinity group' structure was used to provide focus as well as to potentially facilitate future work, its main purpose was to assist participants in developing a number of tasks for each other. One of the main collective tasks consisted in conceiving and sharing an experimental meal each evening. Similarly, each member of each group was required to bring to the event an individual gift to be distributed as an exchange game on the first night of the arrival on the campsite.[6] The final, shortest phase of the project aimed to relocate the experience and the work generated during the residency to the urban setting of the city of Montreal for three days. Ten months before the final phases, Manning and Massumi presented their 'Propositions for an Exploded Gallery, *Generating the*

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[4] The *SenseLab Basecamp* is a private blog containing *GTI* participants' posts and email exchanges (from before and after the *GTI* Event held in July 2011), pictures, videos, scores, audio clips, texts, and other documentation pertaining to the project. I have access to this collective blog as a participant of the project, and I draw upon this documentation as primary material in the analysis of *GTI* which I present in this chapter. *SenseLab*, 'Generating the Impossible: International: 2011-13', <https://thesenselab.basecamphq.com/projects/3565062-generating-the-impossible/log> [accessed on 1 March 2015].

[5] Massumi described the affinity groups in the following terms: Each of the groups are founded on 'affective grounds, rather than according to more formal categories, membership criteria, or platform-style statements of principle'. A number of functions and qualities were associated with their formation: fostering creativity through small group synergies, 'maximizing individuals' ability to participate and inflect collective activities'; they would function by internal consensus autonomously and could change and reform according to internal dynamics. As organizational units, they would also take care of the emotional and physical well-being of their members (food, transportation, medical needs). See Brian Massumi, *SenseLab*, 'Generating the Impossible: International'.

[6] For a detailed account of the gift exchange, see Pia Ednie-Brown, *SenseLab*, 'Generating the Impossible: International'.

Impossible', in which they offered a detailed outline of a set of twenty propositions.[7] For the purpose of this inquiry, I will refer to this document as a way of contextualising some of the key ideas of the project.

This case study is in continuity with the previous analysis of collaborative practices in the arts as they relate to the prevailing socio-economic conditions. As noted in the Introduction to this thesis, Manning and Massumi have highlighted the 'troubling alignments with the neoliberal economy' in the development and organisation of politically-driven collaborations (crossing, say, 'pure' and 'applied' research) aimed at boosting the so-called 'knowledge economy'.[8] If pressure to collaborate 'across the divides' informed new debates around the relationship between theory and practice, these issues are also linked to a broader international movement in universities toward PaR.[9] For example, in Britain, the PARIP project (Practice As Research In Performance) based at Bristol University developed as a collaborative investigation into practical-creative research within academic contexts.[10] Similarly, in Canada, a new funding scheme entitled 'research-creation' was introduced in 2003 to encourage a range of research activities, which would 'link the humanities more closely with the arts communities'.[11] However, Manning and Massumi highlight that at the same time that these events signalled an appreciation of 'the potentially transformative nature of research undertaken by artist-researchers',[12] there was a concomitant implementation of structures of accountability involving the quantification of artistic results. For Manning and Massumi, these systems of control appeared intended to format artistic work into more economically driven 'forms of

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[7] See Erin Manning and Brian Massumi, 'Propositions for an Exploded Gallery: Generating the Impossible', first published on the *SenseLab Basecamp*. See *SenseLab*, 'Generating the Impossible: International'. These propositions were subsequently reprinted in Manning & Massumi, *Thought in the Act*, pp. 83-133.

[8] Manning and Massumi, 'Exploded Gallery', p. 1.

[9] See Department for Education and Skills, Department for Business, 'The Future of Higher Education Report', Innovation and skills, UK Government Web Archive, (2003), <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/BISCore/corporate/MigratedD/publications/F/future_of_he.pdf> [accessed on 17 July 2013].

[10] PARIP was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board, and operated between 2001 and 2006. Practice as Research in Performance, (2006) <http://www.bris.ac.uk/parip/introduction.htm> [accessed on 27 February 2015].

[11] See Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Research, 'Creation Grant in Fine Arts', (2013) < http://www.sshrc.ca/funding-financement/programs-programmes/fine_arts-arts_lettres-eng.aspx> [accessed on 27 February 2015].

[12] Manning & Massumi, 'Exploded Gallery', p. 2.

delivery to stakeholders'.[13] 'The neoliberal idea', they suggest, 'is never far that artistic activity is most productive and socially defensible, when it feeds into industry tie-ins helping fuel the "creative economy"'.[14]

While Manning and Massumi warn us of the consequences of capitalising creative activity, they also recognise that 'research creation' constitutes a viable economic 'laboratory' for the development of both 'knowledge-based product' and new modes of collaborative practices which in turn would participate in 'expanding and diversifying the pool of immaterial labour'.[15] This ambivalent position led them to use 'research-creation' as the starting point for the development of the S*enseLab.* The premise for this venture is to consider 'research to be creation in germ, and creation to produce its own concepts for thought'.[16] However, as part of the wider discussion around neoliberalism and collaborative activity, Manning and Massumi's proposal focuses on exploring 'the reciprocity of research and creation' before they merge into institutional systems which are seen to 'capture and contain their productivity and judge them by conventional criteria for added-value.'[17] Drawing upon the notion of 'immanent critique', their approach posits 'research-creation' as a strategy to focus on new processes rather than new products.

The notion of immanent critique has been an essential feature of critical social theory (or Marxist critical theory).[18] Manning and Massumi situate themselves as followers of Deleuze and Guattari, and the propositions articulated for *GTI* - with their references to immaterial labours - point to post-Marxist influences including that of the autonomist movement. Similarly to Negri's claim that the 'collective intelligence' of contemporary labour can create new 'forms of life' (as discussed in Chapter 2), here Manning and Massumi argue that within a knowledge economy, 'collaborative processes compose new forms of relational life':

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[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Erin Manning, 'About SenseLab', <http://senselab.ca/wp2/about/> [accessed on 25 July 2013].
[17] Manning & Massumi, 'Exploded Gallery', p. 5.
[18] Robert Antonio argues that critical theory: 'is based on an interpretation of Marx's thought. It adopts Marx's analytic categories, continues his critique of capitalism and embraces his goal of emancipation.' Robert Antonio, 'Immanent Critique as The Core of Critical Theory: Its Origins and Developments in Hegel, Marx and Contemporary Thought', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 32.3 (1991), pp. 330-345 (p. 330).

> Movements like open source, peer-to peer sharing, and tools for collective web-based authorship, are seen as harbingers of [emancipation from dominant systems], particularly to the degree to which they become self-affirming 'ways of life'.[19]

These ideas seem to chime with the autonomists' claims concerning the new powers of contemporary labour. Considering those movements as creative processes that 'have a potential for self-organisation'[20] implies an internal resistance within labour which might allow for an escape from exploitation. As for Negri, Manning and Massumi view cooperation, which is central to the digital economy described above, as a key to departure from the logic of capitalism.

It is interesting to note here the association of a Marxist tradition with the perspectives of Deleuze and Guattari within the experimental context of *GTI*. This analogy highlights a commitment to social reform. For as Ian Buchanan and Adrian Parr note, 'Deleuze's conception of philosophy's purpose [is] Marxian to the extent that, like Marx, they hold that the point of philosophy is not simply to understand society, but to change it.'[21] If this conception has led a Deleuzian approach to be seen as offering an empirical fit with artistic pursuits at the turn of the twentieth century, I would argue that it is drawing on such thoughts that *GTI* seeks to develop relational techniques that might encourage 'self-affirming "ways of life"'.

The invention of techniques of relation is central to the *SenseLab's* research-creation and to the collaborative process of *GTI*. For Manning and Massumi these techniques operate as 'devices for catalysing and modulating interaction' and point to the idea of an 'ethics of engagement' which overarches the project.[22] Manning highlights the notion of technicity as a handle to grasp the idea of 'making collective' from an ethical and aesthetic perspective. The techniques developed during the series of projects, Manning explains, are 'modes of existence' which create the conditions for affect and change during 'a singular' event. They might be re-appropriated in other projects but they are 'always immanent to

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[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ian Buchanan and Adrian Parr, (eds), *Deleuze and the Contemporary World* (Edinburgh Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p. 1.
[22] Manning & Massumi, 'Exploded Gallery', p. 7.

the event in its unfolding'.[23] In a similar vein, Massumi invokes a new ethics of engagement for cultural studies which would substitute affects for interest, arguing that

> [a] political knowledge-practice that takes an inclusive, nonjudgmental approach to tending belonging-together in an intense, affectively engaged way is an *ethics* – as opposed to a morality. Political ecology is an amoral collective ethics. Ethics is a tending of coming-together, a *caring for* be-longing as such.[24]

Massumi's theory of affect has been credited with significantly contributing to the emergence from the mid-1990s of what has been recognised as the 'affective turn' in humanities and social sciences.[25] If the idea of affects has a long-standing place in the history of philosophy,[26] proponents of the contemporary 'turn' to affect can be located in shared interests in the work of thinkers such as Gilbert Simondon, James William and Alfred North Whitehead.[27] The term can be seen as signifying a shift away from the post-structuralist 'linguistic turn', which tends to underline the medium rather than its impact on others (i.e. relationality).[28] For the sociologist Patricia Ticineto Clough, the affective turn 'expresses a new configuration of bodies, technology, and matter instigating a shift in thought in critical theory'.[29] From a philosophical perspective, La Caze and Martyn argue that the term might be better understood 'in terms of renewed and widespread scholarly interest in corporeality, in emotions and in the importance of aesthetics'.[30] In his study of Spinoza's philosophical ideas, Deleuze underscores Spinoza's notion of affect: '[b]y affect I understand affections of the body by which the body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained'.[31]

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[23] Nasrin Himada and Erin Manning, 'From Noun to Verb: The Micropolitics of "Making Collective "', *Inflexions: A Journal for Research-Creation*, 3 (2009), 1-17 (p. 1).
[24] Massumi, *Parables*, p. 255.
[25] See, for example, Patricia Ticineto Clough (ed.), *The Affective Turn: Theorising the Social* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), Gregory Seigworth and Melissa Gregg (eds), *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).
[26] For a critical discussion on the study of affects in the history of philosophy, see Marguerite La Caze and Henry Martyn Lloyd, 'Philosophy and the Affective Turn' in *Parrhesia*, 13 (2011), 1-13 <http://parrhesiajournal.org/parrhesia13/parrhesia13_lacaze-lloyd.pdf> [accessed on 26 July 2013].
[27] See Isabelle Stengers, *Penser avec Whitehead : une libre et sauvage création de concepts* (Paris: Le Seuil, 2002) and Marie–Pier Boucher and Patrick Harrop (eds), 'Gilbert Simondon: Milieus, Techniques, Aesthetics', *Inflexions,* 5 (2012) < http://www.inflexions.org/n5_boucherharrophtml.html> [accessed on 30 July 2013]. On the renewed interest in understanding the role of affects in the work of Hellenist philosophers such as Descartes, Spinoza, Hume and Kant, see La Caze & Martyn, 'Philosophy and the Affective Turn', pp. 1-6.
[28] See La Caze & Martyn, 'Philosophy and the Affective Turn', p. 4.
[29] Clough, *The Affective Turn*, p. 2.
[30] La Caze & Martyn, 'Philosophy and the Affective Turn', p. 2.
[31] Spinoza, as quoted in Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* (San Francisco: City Light

Deleuze emphasises the understanding of affect as an ability of the body to affect and to be affected. He highlights the Spinozian differences between the term affection (*affectio*) and affect (*affectus*):

> The *affectio* refers to a state of the affected body and implies the presence of the affecting body, whereas the *affectus* refers to the passage from one state to another, taking into account the correlative variation of the affecting bodies.[32]

Drawing on Spinoza, Deleuze argues that it is the capacity of the body to qualitatively transform (to affect and to be affected) which defines a greater or lesser force of existing.[33] Massumi highlights the political agency of affect by noting that affect differs from emotion because it is not qualified and neither can it be 'ownable' or 'recognisable'. Notwithstanding these characteristics, Massumi argues that

> [t]he ability of affect to produce an economic effect more swiftly and surely than economics itself means that affect is a real condition, an intrinsic variable of the late capitalist system, as infrastructural as factories.[34]

In these terms, *the autonomy of affect* resists the transformation into added-value of the capitalist logic of economy and foregrounds the development of new processes rather than new products. This theory of affects underlies the collaborative process of *GTI* to the extent that it enables the production of relational techniques as modes of existence in a Spinozian sense. The ability of the body to affect and to be affected is an essential condition of relational techniques. We might begin to identify the link between the nature of these techniques of collaboration and the ethical engagement in Manning and Massumi's practice of immanent critique.[35]

Books, 1988), p. 49.

[32] Deleuze, *Spinoza,* p. 49.

[33] Ibid., pp. 49-50.

[34] Massumi, *Parables*, p. 45.

[35] Massumi's more recent work continues to reflect on the impact of relations on the autonomy of creativity. Drawing on Whitehead's notion of 'contemporary independence', Massumi suggests that the 'paradox of relation' can be problematised by 'the concept of the relation of nonrelation'. He argues that relation is '*not connective*' but that elements 'com[ing] into relation' are 'disparate' and individually 'self-creative'. For Massumi, as a 'necessary' constitutive element of creativity, 'the nonrelation of relation […] preserves the emergence of novelty, rather than conformity to the present, as the principle of activity'. This aspect of contemporary relations is important to Massumi's 'activist' philosophy in so far as it foregrounds the idea of a 'world of change made of self-creative expression'. Brian Massumi, *Semblance and Event: Activist Philosophy and the Occurrent Arts* (Cambridge, The MIT Press, 2013), pp. 20-21.

Collective thinking through technologic displacement

Due to the rapid expansion of online communication in social exchanges, the impact of digital technology in the creative process has been the focus of increased scholarly attention across disciplines including psychology, business and management, and education. According to Negri and Hardt, the 'informatisation' of product and business practices is the main characteristic of the service economy of contemporary society.[36] However, in the arts, although online communication is considered as a collaborative tool, the influence of communication tools in the development of creative processes is still rarely problematised from the perspective of the artist.[37]

In fact, from a policy-making point of view, the 'digital switch' is integral to the recovery of the economic market. According to the UK government report *Digital Britain*, the media and communication industries have experienced 'a severe downturn' which has made clear a number of weaknesses in the areas of policy and regulation.[38] The paper highlights that the UK's digital 'dividend' needs to be invested in a competitive model for growth and success;[39] and that a digital shift in the creative industries has already overturned old business models.[40] Similarly, the current economic climate has further deepened the rise in interest of art funders in audience participation. With Web 2.0 technologies, computer users are able to generate their own content. This shift of mode of interaction – from passive consumer to active creator – encouraged the perception of social media as 'powerful platforms for cooperation, collaboration and creativity'.[41] The Arts Council of England (ACE) has recently commissioned several digital programmes to research the current provision of the arts in digital technologies. Interestingly, the research

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[36] Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 280-303.

[37] The potential impact of online social media upon artistic practice is considered in Sophy Smith, 'The creative use of online social media to increase public engagement and participation in the professional arts through collaborative involvement in creative practice', Proceedings of the Computers and the History of Art (CHArt 09), (2009) <https://www.dora.dmu.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/2086/3233/Smith%20Final%20CHart%20paper%202.pdf?sequence=3> [accessed on 12 June 2013].

[38] Department for Culture and Media and Sport and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 'Digital Britain', (2009), p. 207 < https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228844/7650.pdf> [accessed on 28 February 2015].

[39] Ibid., p. 47.

[40] Ibid., p. 16.

[41] Matthew Fraser and Soumitra Dutta, *Throwing Sheep In the Boardroom* (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons Ltd, 2008), p. 278.

themes prioritised by ACE included the potential of digital technologies (e.g. social media networks) to promote public engagement and participation in the arts.[42] A number of projects using dance, web-based platforms and social media environments have been considered to facilitate participatory choreographies and performances insofar as they specifically challenge the boundaries between audience and performers.[43]

However, in terms of artistic labour, it is arguably the case that the early experimental use of social media was quickly integrated into the dominant modes of communication between artists. If in the early twenty-first century artists were exploring digital devices as part of their strategies to develop methods of working together, as we have discussed with *6M1L* and the use of chats, just a few years later artists have been expected to communicate, perform and document their practice via digital networks – hence the spread of artists' websites and blogs that operate as interactive portfolios and spaces for the ongoing live archiving of artists' practice, and as marketing tools for current and future productions. Similarly, in the academic context, the emergence of a discourse on the notion of 'social presence' in online learning[44] points not only to the impact of the phenomenal growth of online communication on the social sphere but also to a crucial shift in the ways in which knowledge can be constructed and disseminated.[45] The bold title of a recent report by HEFCE's Online Learning Task Force – 'Collaborate to Compete' – evidences the importance attached to collaboration in this shift. Collaboration through digital technology has become a key feature of the knowledge economy.

Drawing on communication theory, the following analysis of a *GTI* online meeting provides an insight into the role of technology in the development of *GTI*. As a further

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[42] Themes included 'making archive public', 'public attitude' and 'digital audience'. See Arts Council of England, Digital Research Programme Results <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/research-and-data/digital-opportunities/results/> [accessed on 10 June 2013].

[43] See Harmony Bench's discussion on dance and social media which provides examples of three strands of practice including crowdsource, flash, and viral choreographies. Harmony Bench, 'Screendance 2.0: Social Dance-Media', Participations: *Journals of Audience & Reception Studies*, 7.2 (2010) < http://www.participations.org/Volume%207/Issue%202/special/bench.htm#4a> [accessed on 5 March 2015].

[44] Heather Kanuka and Randy Garisson, 'Cognitive Presence in Online Learning', *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*, 15.2 (2004), 21-39.

[45] See Charlotte Gunawardena, Constance Lowe and Terry Anderson, 'Analysis of A Global Online Debate and The Development of an Interaction Analysis Model for Examining Social Construction of Knowledge in Computer Conferencing', *Journal of Educational Computing Research,* 17.4 (1997), 397-431.

example of the use of chat in collaboration, it also allows for a comparison with the use of digital communication in *6M1L*. The analysis specifically examines the conditions under which computer-mediated communication might be seen to enhance collective thinking processes; allowing me to further develop my observations on the place and role of remote collaboration within artistic practices.

During the online preparation of the residency, a *Skype* conference call was scheduled. All members of the *Basecamp* hub were invited to participate. However, due to technical difficulties, we could not hear each other clearly and it was decided to use a 'chat' mode instead. Published overleaf are the first and the last few minutes of the transcript of the chat.[46] Throughout the first phase of *GTI*, digital processes of communication were generally used between participants (e.g. via *Skype* and *Basecamp*). In this particular chat session, fourteen people interacted and contributed to an hour-long discussion during which a collective thinking emerged from a decentralisation of the conversation. This transfer is mainly manifested through a process of differentiation of time and meaning. For example, as in a verbal conversation, different rhythms of conversation developed throughout the written discussion. In chat mode, responses are randomly timed, allowing for faster and slower responses to be expressed. On the one hand, some participants used brief replies such as 'yes', 'it's not' or even just replied using punctuation, and on the other hand, some contributions contain more than two sentences, as in the description of William's artwork ([4:02:12 PM] Nathaniel Stern). This ongoing shifting between immediacy and delay allows for several conversations to co-exist in smaller groups. Following an overlapping structure, the co-existence of discourses contributes to the decentralisation of the meeting.

[46] *SenseLab*, 'Generating the Impossible: International: 2011-13'

[3:04:45 PM] *** Conference call *** [3:06:29 PM] bianca scliar: the sound is not so good [3:06:42 PM] bianca scliar: I barely hear whoever is talking now? [3:06:59 PM] bianca scliar: YES! [3:07:21 PM] bianca scliar: leave her on video [3:07:30 PM] Saara: the sound quality is really bad here... [3:11:15 PM] Mazi Javidiani: It would help if the mic is muted and we only unmute it when we wish to talk. [3:11:32 PM] bianca scliar: it is a great idea [3:12:14 PM] Mazi J avidiani: I think there is a confusion [3:12:21 PM] Mazi Javidiani: I'm on two conversations [3:12:32 PM] Troy Rhoades: I am not hearing anyone [3:12:37 PM] laura balladur: how to mute the mic? [3:12:40 PM] Saara: I'm not hearing anyone either [3:12:55 PM] Troy Rhoades: My mic is not muted. [3:13:10 PM] *** alannathain added Andreia Oliveira *** [3:13:30 PM] Troy Rhoades: What is going on I am not hearing anything. [3:13:38 PM] Saara: It's all completely mute... [3:13:50 PM] Saara: (for me, too) [3:13:53 PM] Troy Rhoades: AHHHHHHHHH Skype! [3:14:34 PM] Saara: we'll just have to have our own side meeting here, a mute one [3:14:54 PM] *** Call ended, duration 10:00 ***	[4:00:19 PM] bianca scliar: yes- but cutting is a way of drawing [4:00:32 PM] Alan Prohm: a line is a crack - arakawa [4:00:49 PM] anyplacewhatever: erin sweden: conference cho techniques (?) [4:01:23 PM] anyplacewhatever: films of ketridge (alanna) [4:01:29 PM] kev-mitch: will we write our way through the forest? how will the forest write us? [4:01:32 PM] Erin Manning Skype: choreograpphic thinking [4:01:41 PM] rt.simon1: What about the creation of simple noise-makers, that when performed by many people at once will create a score for an unseen event? [4:01:44 PM] Erin Manning Skype: kentridge [4:02:05 PM] anyplacewhatever: cartography of repetition [4:02:08 PM] Troy Rhoades: We can use elements of the forest to do the drawing. Thinking of Goldsworthy [4:02:12 PM] nathaniel stern: william's work is also very much about the archive - the vestigial traces of the erased charcoal. His body is involved in his drawing then stepping away to photograph, and repeating that process over time [4:02:16 PM] bianca scliar: i agree with repetition [4:02:58 PM] Marie-Pier Boucher: http://www.countercartographies.org/about-us-mainmenu-28 [4:03:05 PM] anyplacewhatever: triangle game posted this morning [4:03:30 PM] Patrick Harrop: some of you may be interested in this: http://www.philipbeesleyarchitect.com/sculptures/9707haystack_veil/haystack.html [4:03:40 PM] anyplacewhatever: games involving distance calling... laura [4:04:02 PM] anyplacewhatever: as a varaition of the triangle game writing tracing in the forest [4:04:04 PM] nathaniel stern: like a voronoi diagram? [4:04:33 PM] nathaniel stern: "traces" again alludes to the kentridge work... [4:04:41 PM] anyplacewhatever: watch out for the needles needling needlessly [4:04:43 PM] laura balladur: precisely! [4:04:54 PM] bianca scliar: yes-i think cutting as a map could work. […] [4:11:51 PM] nathaniel stern: i like the idea of moving away from goal-oriented-ness, goes back to "conditions" for attention. [4:12:05 PM] bianca scliar: yes [4:12:07 PM] nathaniel stern: yes [4:12:13 PM] Troy Rhoades: Sounds good [4:12:13 PM] anyplacewhatever: adventure of ideas objects and subjects next reading [4:12:17 PM] anyplacewhatever: ? [4:12:47 PM] anyplacewhatever: Alanna and erin wanna call it quits for today....

It should also be noted that the lack of images and sounds associated with the chat mode of communication contributes to another displacement for the participants. The disembodiment of the exchange makes visible the process of thinking within a particular social environment. In the digital world, the erasing of the body has raised ontological questions regarding the nature of presence in digital communication. In our particular case, participants may experience the disembodied interaction as if they were engaged in a face-to-face interaction even though physically they are not. Essentialist views define face-to-face interaction as the natural way of communication and all other communications media are seen to operate as a mediation of the original act.[47] For the sociologist John Thompson, '[w]hereas face-to-face interaction takes place in a context of co-presence, the participants in mediated interaction are located in contexts which are spatially and/or temporally distinct'.[48] This dualistic aspect of digital communication emphasises a separation between embodied and disembodied and real versus virtual, which I would argue undermines the impact of the erasure of the representation of the body (e.g. gender and ethnicity) on the politics of presence in collective and digital communications.[49]

However, from the perspective of contemporary communication theory, David Holmes's work on virtual politics offers useful insights into the issues at stake for the notions of representation and identity in virtual corporality. Holmes argues that whereas a traditional perspective on interactive communication focuses on data exchange, digital relations create social bonds and therefore can be located within the same 'ritual' perspective as face-to-face interaction.[50] For Holmes, Thompson's view of mediation considers communication technology only as an instrument and cannot see it 'as substantively capable of its own context'. Conversely, with the ritual approach of digital

[47] See John Thompson, *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).
[48] John Thompson, as quoted in David Holmes, *Communication Theory: Media, Technology and Society* (London: Sage, 2005), p. 136.
[49] For a discussion on gender and virtual community see Mark Poster, 'Cyberdemocracy: The Internet and the Public Sphere', in David Holmes (ed.), *Virtual Politics: Identity and Community in Cyberspace* (London: Sage, 1997), pp. 222-228.
[50] David Holmes point to the distinction between communication as information and communication as ritual. The latter refers to the idea that 'individuals exchange understandings not out of self-interest nor for the accumulation of information but from a need for communion, commonality and fraternity. In its technologically extended form, ritual communication does not need to draw its meaning for the face-to-face exchange that it partly emulates.' Holmes, *Virtual Politics,* p. 232.

communication, 'the medium *is* the context'.[51]

Whilst a full examination of the notion of embodiment in digital culture is outside the remit of this chapter, I have observed that the contributions to the *GTI* chat sessions differed in comparison to other types of interactions experienced during the project (including other audio *Skype* meetings, emails or group readings). Some of the participants, who were more active during the chat, would rarely contribute openly to group discussion. It is interesting to note that the *Skype* meetings were purposely addressed to the international participants. Potential problems in cross-cultural communication could arise out of this global setting. On the other hand, in this particular case, the disembodied nature of the exchange seems to have enhanced creativity for some of the participants. Yet the conditions under which creativity was enhanced were accidental - and therefore not repeatable. As such, the practice of chat might at first sight be seen as an unreliable tool to promote creativity and therefore a weak relational technique. However, the techniques that we are concerned with here refer to a procedural knowledge, or in other words a knowledge that is manifested in the performance of the creative skill through digital communication and produced by a collective thinking. A further examination of the conditions under which participants' creativity has been enhanced might establish a possible relationship between the nature of computer-mediated communication and artistic creativity.

As evidenced in the beginning of the transcript, the impossibility of hearing each other generated a certain anxiety amongst the participants:

> I barely hear whoever is talking now?
> I think there is a confusion
> How to mute the mic
> Leave her on video
> What is going on I am not hearing anything.
> AHHHHHHHHH Skype!

In the second part of the meeting the participants seem to have found a way of communicating, but the conversation remains fragmented and random. Yet, this randomness can be perceived as a key component of the collaborative potential of chat practice.

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[51] See Holmes, *Communication Theory*, p. 140.

If fragmentation and indeterminism are postmodern characteristics of the information society, human-computer relationships can also be characterised by some degree of randomness. Indeed, digital media technology allows random access to information which appears as a feature of contemporary multimedia devices. Psychological studies have problematised the role of randomness in creative processes. For some theorists, the creative process is seen to be qualitatively different from ordinary thinking and requires different conditions to break the rules including random stimulation.[52] For others, creativity is only quantitatively different from everyday thinking and needs to be recognised from within a fixed frame of reference.[53]

From an artistic point of view, we can recognise that both positions would hold for different artistic processes. A process applying chance methods to creative decisions might be in opposition with the determinism of more internalised processes of making creative decisions. However, I have argued elsewhere that in most cases the use of randomness in artistic processes has a philosophical and political dimension which is more inclined to a collaborative way of making work.[54] In this particular example, I argue that the random (or even accidental) nature of the session has enhanced the creative exchange between the participants in ways that allude to the French surrealist technique Cadavre Esquis (Exquisite Corpse):[55] a folding of poetic fragments which historian Nicolas Calas described as 'the unconscious reality in the personality of the group' emerging from what Max Ernst called a process of 'mental contagion'.[56] Analogous to the surrealist collective literary writing process, this particular instance of use of chat during the project exploits the accidental aspects of digital communication – sound failure, delay of responses, and the synchronised multiplicity of ideas – as a constitutive element of the collaborative creativity.

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[52] See, for example, Joy Paul Guilford on the notion of divergent thinking in Joy Paul Guilford, *The Nature of the Human Intelligence* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967).
[53] See Robert Weisberg, *Creativity: Beyond the Myth of Genius* (New York: Freeman, 1993).
[54] As discussed in the chapter on Judson Church Theatre Group, largely influenced by John Cage 's anarchism, Judsonites used chance procedures to develop methods of composition (including innovative scores to generate indeterminate performances), which would by-pass authoritative decision-making.
[55] Cadavre Esquis is a collective collage based on an old parlor game. Each participant writes a phrase on a piece of paper, folds the paper and passes it onto the next one for his/her contribution.
[56] David Pysh, 'Collecting Actions', in Corey Saft, W. Geoff Gjertson, Michael McClure, Hector Lasala (eds), *2005 ACSA SW Regional Proceedings – Improvisation,* SW regional proceedings (Lafayette: University of Louisiana, 2006), 85-98 (p. 91).

If we return to *6M1L,* we find that the use of chat was aimed at a different purpose and generated writing of a collective thinking of another nature. *6M1L*'S practice was focused upon a creative activity centred on the technique of questioning rather than upon the production of a coherent piece of writing. Similarly, in the case of *GTI*, the discourse created might appear ambiguous. However, the point of the activity here is to *meet* to discuss a common project. Given the sense of direction that this shared ground provides, the idea of meeting rather than discoursing creates a different sort of collective thinking - one that is bound to what Holmes identifies as a 'ritual communication'.

During the *GTI* chat meeting, the exchange of ideas occurs at multiple levels including the philosophical, practical and social. While most of the conversation (around forty minutes of it) evolves around the notion of 'attention', practical questions pertaining to the logistics and organisation of the event are also addressed (for example, concerning internet access or a new reading for the next meeting). Following the suggestion by one participant of a 'cooking event', the whole discussion shifts into a playful exchange of ideas for recipe ingredients. In this instance, the difficulties encountered with technology allowed for the use of 'chat' as an alternative and unplanned way of *meeting*.

As a social context for group communication, chat operates in a non-linear way following a system of networks characterised by the potential for the formation of new (unpredetermined) sub-groupings. Indicatively, the use of cutting and pasting of external links by some of the participants as a way to share ideas represents the way in which chat can serve as a means to archive thoughts for the ongoing development of the project. Furthermore, its written format is simple to reproduce and disseminate in further communication. I have chosen to extract here the beginning and the end of the session as a way to demonstrate how the accidental and chaotic premises for the start of the conversation self-organised into a collective thinking bound to the participants' adjustment to a ritual communication.

It is important to note that my intention in this analysis of the use of chat in *GTI* is not to assess the value of telecommuting in relation to face-to-face communication. Nevertheless, in this analysis, I have demonstrated that chat as a mode of communication can be integrated into the development of a collective thinking in collaboration, in terms of its capacity to substantively create new contexts of social bonds. On the one hand, the

practice of 'chat' might appear abstract and in some ways homogenising (its written form removes the personal attributes that oral speech can communicate), and on the other hand, the disembodied character of the interaction can also promote a freer exchange and the transgression of cultural boundaries. In research and creative contexts, this technological approach allows for the conception of collaborations not simply as exchanges of discrete pieces of information/data (or ideas regulated by administrative and technical protocols) but rather as ritual environments that shape and are being shaped by their own context. Holmes observes that

> At the level of the personal, the individual's sense of place can be seen to achieve a new sense of security when control over 'simulated' environments becomes more attractive than negotiating inflexible institutional worlds.[57]

With reference to the chat session, I would conclude in this particular example that two main factors have contributed to the generation of a creative context of exchange. On the one hand, the disembodied aspect of the chat meeting has promoted a freer conversation marked by a different quality of participation. On the other hand, the accidental exploitation of the randomness of digital communications by the participants has increased the potential for a collective thinking within the group. Consequently, the role of digital communication in *GTI* might be considered – beyond an instrumental perspective – as a constitutive social environment capable of self-organising creative relationships within the collaborative context of the project. I propose to discuss further examples of the role of digital communication in collaboration below in relation to the residency phase of *GTI*.

Conceptual Speed dating: an example of collaborative concept-work

Manning and Massumi advanced *GTI* as an event whereby the traditional model of disseminating knowledge through 'communication' was to be avoided for the benefit of the development of concept-work. This idea of collaborative concept-work is important in contemporary anthropology including in the work of George Marcus and Paul Rabinow.[58] A leading force in this field, the Anthropological Research on the Contemporary (ARC) aims at developing 'collaborative inquiry into contemporary forms of life, labor and

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[57] Holmes, *Virtual Politics*, p. 232.

[58] See George Marcus, 'The Legacies of Writing Culture and the Near Future of the Ethnographic Form: A Sketch', *Cultural Anthropology,* 27. 3 (2012), 427–445; Paul Rabinow, *Anthropos Today: Reflections on Modern Equipment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

language'.[59] In a joint paper instigated by Tobias Rees and co-written with Marcus, Rabinow et al., the ARC explains the collaborative focus of its research:

> This work has shifted understandings of how scientific knowledge is generated from concerns with theories of scientific method to an emphasis on concept development, material practices of experiment, and informal norms that make possible trust and credibility.[60]

Questions about the nature of knowledge are of shared concern here, although what is interesting in Massumi and Manning's use of the term concept-work is its potential to be applied to non language-based artistic works. In other words, the techniques of relation developed during *GTI* point to the relatively recent establishment of the artist as researcher within academia. The articulation of the development of these techniques can be seen to account for modes of knowledge that are intertwined with artistic practices, including collaboration. In the international context of *GTI* the notion of concept-work does not refer to a description of artistic processes, but in contrast implies a process that can only 'be activated collaboratively on site' – hence the adoption of the artist-in-residence structure enacted during the second phase of the project.[61]

GTI was conceived as an opportunity for academic and non-academic researchers from different artistic fields to generate a self-organised collaborative process of experimentation.[62] The project represented the culmination of an evolving repertory of techniques for collaboration, which was otherwise called the 'Process Seed Bank.'[63] Each participant was invited to share ideas, exercises or projects that could potentially contribute to the enhancement of participation in collective activities including reading, playing, moving and cooking. Amongst the different propositions, one was particularly relevant to the development of a 'collective intelligence'. All participants had been invited to read a series of selected texts in advance of the event, and a group reading was

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[59] Anthropological Research on the Contemporary, Welcome, <http://www.anthropos-lab.net> [accessed on 8 June 2013].
[60] Tobias Rees, 'Concept Work and Collaboration in the Anthropology of the Contemporary', *ARC Exchange*, 1 (2007) <http://anthropos-lab.net/wp/publications/2007/08/exchangeno1.pdf> [accessed on 8 June 2013].
[61] Manning & Massumi, 'Exploded Gallery', p. 6.
[62] The idea of self-organised structure had been explored in the previous event *The Society of Molecules* (2009) with the development of an international network of local groups working as a 'self-organising hub'. See *SenseLab*, 'Generating the Impossible: International: 2011-13'.
[63] See SenseLab, 'SenseLab Process Seed Bank', (2008) <http://processseedbank.blogspot.co.uk/2008/09/please-contribute-to-our-process-seed.html> [accessed on 14 August 2012].

scheduled as one of the daily group activities of the residency. These collective readings of philosophical texts presented some challenges stemming from the differences amongst the group in background, experience and field of work. The use of 'conceptual speed dating' was suggested as a technique to address this issue.[64] Defined as a 'technique of relation', the process was described as follows:

> Take half the group and classify them as 'posts'. Their job is to sit or stand or lie in position in a circle-like formation at the edges of the room. The other half is 'flows'. Like speed dating the flows move from one post to another, clockwise, at timed intervals.'[65]

From its original use, speed dating has developed as a tool across a range of fields, including in the arts, education and social science. Recent research demonstrated that since their initial use at the end of the 1990s, 'speed-dating protocols' have been increasingly adopted in higher education institutions across the world.[66] The focus on a particular concept in the text was announced prior to the start of each exercise.[67] The speed dating would last for one hour after which we would reform as one group for the second part of the reading. On the last day, we used another variation of the exercise. The technique of 'flocking' was introduced as a way to move the flow/post pair model around the room. 'Flocking' is a simple group movement exercise used in dance and theatre practice. The idea here was to flock through the empty space of the group and exchange fragments of ideas gleaned from the speed dating, then to find ways of re-grouping to generate further movement. Notwithstanding that some people were already familiar with this flocking technique (including participants with a dance or movement practice background), the experience resulted in a cacophonous composition of bodies and words, close to an impossibility of meaning. Yet, the experience was highly rated by the participants and for some it represented a highpoint of the project.

From a dance practitioner perspective, the philosophical ground of this exercise

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[64] *GTI* participant Andrew Murphy coined this term during a previous *Senselab* event. He explained that its aim is 'to foster less hierarchical and distributed discussion'. For more detailed instructions see Andrew Murphy, 'Adventures in Jutland: Conceptual Speed Dating', (2011) <http://www.andrewmurphie.org/blog/?p=389> [accessed on 25/06/2013].
[65] Manning and Massumi, 'Exploded Gallery', p. 11.
[66] Olav Muurlink & Cristina Poyatos Matas, 'From Romance to Rocket Science: Speed Dating in Higher Education', *Higher Education Research & Development*, 30.6 (2011), 751-764 (p. 753).
[67] This tactic is influenced by Deleuze's idea of 'minor' concept. Manning and Massumi explained that 'the concept has to be understated enough to that it has yet entered common understanding and undergone the generalization that comes with that, but it must be active enough that the whole conceptual field of the work feeds through it'. Manning & Massumi, 'Exploded Gallery', p. 11.

represented a challenging task. During the course of the residency, I gained comfort with the reading practice. With more experience, I began to navigate more easily through the range of ideas - as well as their ambiguity – as expressed during the sessions and I made valuable connections with my own artistic practice.[68] Retrospectively, I account for the success of this practice in its potential to develop a creative tolerance which I would argue constitutes a crucial feature for artistic practice and collaboration.

The psychologist Katya Stoycheva has developed a theory of ambiguity which demonstrates that ambiguity, tolerance and creativity are interrelated and mutually enhance themselves. She posits that:

> The ability to withstand the discomfort of an ambiguous situation and to cope with induced uncertainty contributes to one's willingness to embark on the exploration of new possibilities, unusual ideas, and uncommon pathways.[69]

As a collaborative skill, the ability to cope with uncertainty is bound to allowing a delay in making decisions. In creative practice, tolerating the ambiguity of ideas or situations permits the holding 'long enough an open-ended approach to the decision making process' by slowing it down.[70]

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[68] In a next chapter, I will account for the connection between my own collaborative practice and the philosophical notion of appropriation as introduced during these speed-dating sessions.
[69] Katya Stoycheva, 'Tolerance for Ambiguity, Creativity and Personality', *Bulgarian Journal of Psychology*, 1.4 (2010), 178-188 (p. 186) <http://rcp2009.files.wordpress.com/2009/10/bjop20101-4-seercp2009-papers_part_two-910-pages.pdf> [accessed on 4 July 2013].
[70] Ibid.

Part II: Creative chaos

Recognising the emphasis placed on the notion of event by the initiators of *GTI* is important for understanding some of the key concepts advanced during the project, but it also offers a framework within which to consider the meaning of the 'impossibility' embedded in the project's title. As I have discussed in previous chapters, the Deleuzian understanding of the event is bound to Bergson's theory of time. The time of the event is duration, therefore it unfolds in continuity and can not be repeated or predetermined. The impossibility of the event is arguably bound to what Deleuze calls 'processes of actualisation' in the way in which those processes are going toward a state 'they never quite attain'.[71]

The foregrounding of the notion of the event in this project places emphasis upon creative processes which can never be completely translated in terms of outcomes. If we return to Knorr-Cetina's argument for the 'lack of completeness of being of knowledge objects', we are reminded that it is this impossibility of being completed that maintains 'the dynamism of research'.[72] She highlights that 'only incomplete objects pose further questions, and only in considering objects as incomplete do scientists move forward with their work'.[73] In Deleuzian terms, the processes of knowledge can never be fully actualised. One might argue that the empirical fit between Deleuze's philosophy of the event and creative practices is defined by the imperative for research to remain incomplete and irreproducible. Deleuze states that:

> The best of all worlds is not the one that reproduces the eternal, but the one in which new creations are produced, the one endowed with a capacity for innovation or creativity: a teleological conversion of philosophy.[74]

In these terms, the Deleuzian nature of the event provides the conditions for new creations to be produced. Furthermore, Deleuze argues that 'events are produced in a chaos, in a chaotic mulitplicity',[75] hence no new creations can be guaranteed, nor pre-given in terms of type of mode. These ideas ground the relationship between the collaborative process of

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[71] Daniel Smith and John Protevi, 'Gilles Deleuze', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (2012) <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/deleuze/> [accessed on 27 August 2012].
[72] Knorr-Cetina, 'Objectual Relations', p. 185.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold, Leibniz and the Baroque* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), p. 89.
[75] Ibid., p. 86.

GTI and the aim of the project to generate the impossible. Indeed, for Manning and Massumi, 'it is only out of chaos that the impossible can come'.[76] Their declared intention was to focus on the potential that the chaotic aspect of the *event* might generate. Therefore, the key condition for the development of *GTI's* research was the activation of a collective thinking process within what they labelled a 'creative chaos'.[77]

If we revisit the notion of creativity, we find that the term is often metaphorically associated to the idea of movement. The creative 'leap', or 'impulse', or 'flow' encapsulates the idea of a process of thoughts moving into something unknown. However, what Bergson's theory of time demonstrates is that the creative mind is not bound to the movement of thoughts in space but rather to the movement of thoughts in time – or to a temporal mobility of thoughts. Creativity, in Bergsonian terms, is the process of engaging in an effort of intuition that can be understood as one's experience of the duration of time, in its qualitative 'confused' multiplicity.[78] Guerlac points to this temporal aspect of creativity in Bergson's work. She highlights the fact that Bergson's intuitive thinking occurs when there are no clear choices available but, quoting Bergson, involves

> a multitude of different and successive states [and] a self that lives and develops through the effect of … hesitation, until the free action separates from them like a fruit, which has become too ripe.[79]

Intuition is the mode of thinking of the creative event which, in the case of *GTI*, is apprehended as a Deleuzian chaos (philosophic and artistic) that is incomplete and irreproducible. In her study on Deleuze and performance, Cull discusses the relationship between intuition in performance and philosophy, and the notion of waiting, for the practitioner. In reference to the work of the performance company Goat Island, Cull demonstrates how performance and philosophical practice 'might reconfigure itself as an intuitive practice'. Following Bergson and Deleuze, she argues that intuition is a creative experience 'of philosophical concepts or artistic affects'[80] – although this does, in Bergsonian terms, omit reference to the notion of 'method', which we might link back to Manning and Massumi on technicity. While she offers insightful accounts of performance

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[76] Manning & Massumi, 'Exploded Gallery', p. 22.
[77] Ibid.,
[78] Guerlac underlines that "confusion" for Bergson 'literally means *with fusion* here, since feelings are fused together; they overlap such that each lends a particular coloration to the other.' See Guerlac, *Thinking in Time*, p. 83.
[79] Bergson, quoted in Guerlac, *Thinking in Time*, p. 83.
[80] Laura Cull, *Deleuze and Performance* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 142.

creative process, Cull also points to the ways in which Goat Island's waiting practice reflects a shared ethical and political value within the group. For director Lin Hixon, waiting is a way to resist the hegemony of capitalistic rhythms.[81] Cull observes that from the audience's perspective, this endurance of time in some of Goat Island's performances can be perceived through a feeling 'not only of impatience or boredom, but also of confusion'.[82]

According to Cull, this 'painful affect' is central to the audience's engagement in the performance.[83] Moreover, she shows how from the practitioner's point of view, the performance of waiting is central to the development of ethical techniques of intuitive practices.[84] Similarly, relational techniques in *GTI* tend toward an intuitive practice which in some cases implied a degree of ambiguity, as seen in the examples considered above of chats and speed-dating. I have argued that ambiguity – including its 'painful affect' – can operate as a catalyser of ethical engagement in a creative process. In collaborative work, I would argue that the emergence of a collective thinking is bound to a shared ability to cope with uncertainty. In turn, this practice of 'ambiguity tolerance' can be considered as a resource for collective creativity insofar as it is experienced as a slowing-down of the decision-making process.

Attuning Chaos

Defined by Manning and Massumi as a further key concept for the project, the notion of attunement, or 'being in tune', is grounded in studies of infant development. The term refers to non-verbal communication which is focused upon the *affect* rather than the *content* of the exchange between infant and parents.[85] In this context, the process of attuning is defined as the development of 'mutual empathy' between parent and child which (in turn) provides the necessary emotional response to enhance the child's ability to

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[81] 'It's like you have to be moving in order that your worth as a person is appreciated. You have to be in motion, you have to prove your productivity as a person, and that's very scary for those that are not in motion. For someone that is ill, or doesn't have money, or is not in motion in this capitalistic way: those people are cut off the chart now, in terms of being considered a part of our culture…repair has to do with stillness…People have to stop for a moment…and wait.' Hixon, as quoted in Cull, *Deleuze and Performance*, p. 141.
[82] Ibid., p. 140.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid., p. 142.
[85] See Judith Kestenberg, *Children and Parents: Psychoanalytic Studies in Development* (New York: Jason Aronson, 1975).

develop a sense of self.[86] This concept is applied in therapeutic situations including in dance therapy. In this instance, the work of the therapist is centred on the use of movement to support the reorganisation of the patient's relationship between affect and their experience of self. [87]

For the psychoanalyst Daniel Stern, such work is practised through a process of 'mirroring' (by the therapist or the parent) which needs to go beyond the imitation of behaviour. Stern argues that in order to enhance the development of selfhood, the exchange has to pay attention to that underlying the behaviour by focusing upon the integration of one's 'inner states' rather than the external conditions of behaviour.[88] What is interesting in this conception of attunement as it relates to collaborative practice is that if the process begins with an emotional resonance amongst the group – as with processes of empathy – according to Stern, attunement 'does something different with it'. It draws from the 'experience of emotional resonance and automatically recasts that experience into another form of expression'.[89] In these terms, attuning as a group practice might point to heterogeneous expressions of individuality grounded by a collective emotional resonance.

While generating the conditions for 'emergent attunement' was a central aim from the outset of the project, it was also a key concept for the development of techniques of relation between participants. A number of exercises around the notion of attuning were discussed and experimented with in practice. For example, 'The Triangles' – a game devised by choreographer Lisa Nelson – was practised outdoors as a group exercise. This practice is part of Nelson's *Tuning Scores* which are described by her as 'an approach to spontaneous ensemble composition'.[90] In this instance, the score provides a structure for a

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[86] Kestenberg, *Children and Parents*, p. 161.
[87] For a discussion from a dance therapy perspective, see Sandra Kay Lauffenburger, 'Attunement', (2010) <http://selfnmotion.com.au/site/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Attunement-LMA-and-DMT.pdf> [accessed on 31 August 2012].
[88] According to Daniel Stern, 'The reason attunement behaviors are so important as separate phenomena is that true imitation does not permit the partners to refer to the internal state. It maintains the focus of attention upon the forms of the external behaviors. Attunement behaviors, on the other hand, recast the event and shift the focus of attention to what is behind the behavior, to the quality of feeling that is being shared'. Daniel Stern, *The Interpersonal World of The Infant: A View From Psychoanalysis and Development Psychology* (New York: Basic Books, 1998), p. 142.
[89] Ibid., p. 145.
[90] Lisa Nelson, as quoted in Alva Noë, 'Making World Available', in Sabine Gehm, Pikko Husemann and Katharina Von Wilcke (eds), *Knowledge in Motion: Perspectives of Artistic and Scientific Research in Dance* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2007), 121-128 (p. 122).

group improvisation of simple movement (such as variations of walking or running) where group members maintain visual contact with each other. What was interesting in relation to the collaborative process of *GTI* was the way in which the score - based on pedestrian movement – did not require previous dance knowledge. Accordingly, this provided a relevant framework within which a heterogeneous group could work. Furthermore, the essential requirement of the score is that participants should be equally involved in the act of performing/playing and observing. Dance theorist Alva Noë, in his analysis of Nelson's *Tuning Scores*, highlights that the practice points to 'the world as a domain for action'.[91] Drawing on James Gibson's understanding of the notion of environment as a '*surrounding*', Noë suggests that the environment and the player is 'co-determining'. It is a practice of the 'other' as an *environment* to co-determine actions, or as Noë encapsulates, as 'we *encounter* the meaningful world of our possible action' (writer's emphasis).[92]

In the context of *GTI*, every group or sub-group activity (including social activities such as cooking) was presented as a potential means of practicing 'attunement'. Manning and Massumi observe that:

> What is being attuned, in the final analysis, is not only the individual involved, to each other. More fundamentally, it is the quasi-chaos of the initial conditions that is attuning itself to the singularity of the coming event of co-composition.[93]

This 'quasi-chaos of the initial conditions' was generated by a variety of factors encompassing the cultural, economic, and social. If the online arrangements allowed people to interact remotely, we have seen that communication was sometimes difficult due to the number of participants, and the spatial, temporal and cultural distance between them. These conditions shifted when we entered the phase of the residency and newly chaotic conditions emerged. The main source of the chaos here was the experience of time. In contrast to *6M1L*, the limited time to work together in residence was an obvious factor facing participants. In this context, 'attuning' was facilitated by a pre-determined structural organisation. A daily schedule was designed to allow free time and optional practice alongside planned activities. The intention was to attain a balance between fluidity of thought and focus of action. This was evident in the previously described daily structure of

[91] Noë, 'Making Worlds Available', pp. 125-6.
[92] Ibid., p. 126.
[93] Manning & Massumi, 'Exploded Gallery', p. 26.

activities,[94] but also in the commissioning by Manning and Massumi of two artists to propose their own conceptual sub-projects which were subsequently to be developed in collaboration with the rest of the *GTI* participants.

From collaborative thinking to collaborative doing: negotiating between proposition and action

The American artist Alan Prohm conceived the first project. Entitled *Tubular Loom*, Prohm described his idea as a 'philosophical construction' inspired by Christian and Buddhist meditational diagrams. Built from ropes and threads the loom would function as a device for embodied meditation through 'physical participation'.[95] Prohm's declared intention was to create an interactive structure which would offer users 'insights' and 'inner experiences' through the action of threading and tying ropes. He also referred to the work of the renaissance philosopher Giulio Camillo and his 'Theaters of Memory' as another inspiration for the construction of the *Tubular Loom*.[96] The detailed and complex purpose of Prohm's proposal was received with enthusiasm by several participants. However, the sketches and the computer-generated images of the diagrams sent with the proposal raised questions relating to the timeframe for the loom's construction.

Given the varying levels of participants' technical knowledge and the limited resources that we could bring in situ, it was difficult to collectively reconcile the aesthetics of Prohm's proposal with the logistical realities facing the project. There were only four afternoons dedicated to sub-group activities and each session was of an approximately two-hour duration. Nevertheless, one central component of Prohm's proposal was also common to the second proposition and was used as a metaphor for the framing of the collaborative process, namely the development of string theory. String was referred to as a material for some of the creative work and as an idea linking the collective nature of the working process, or in the words of another participant, 'as strings (of data) unwinding and crossing. A mapping movements' exchange.'[97]

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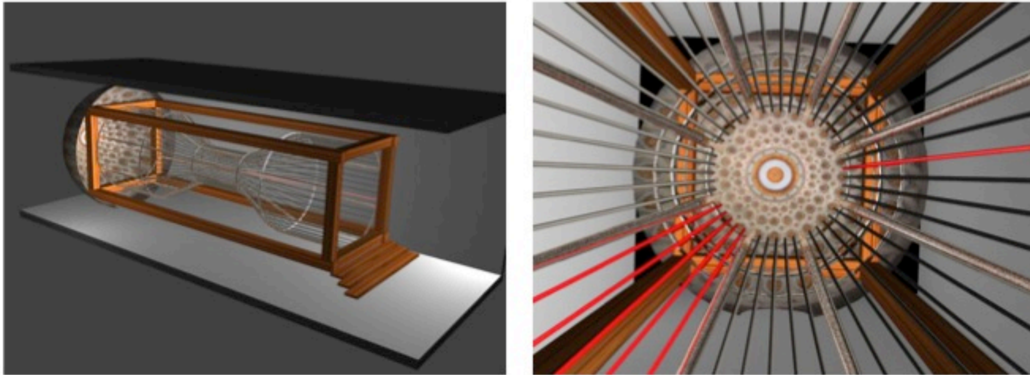
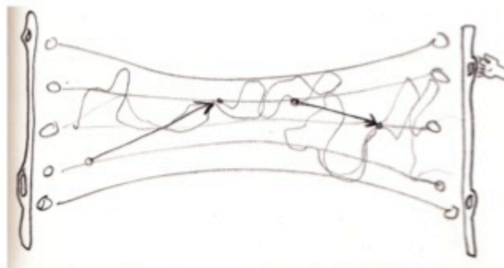
[94] The session included the reading of the work of Alfred North Whitehead, William James, Felix Guattari, and Isabelle Stengers.
[95] Alan Prohm in SenseLab, 'Generating the Impossible: International: 2011-2013'.
[96] See Francis Amelia Yates, *The Art of Memory*, (London: Pimlico, 1992), pp. 135-174.
[97] SenseLab, 'Generating the Impossible: International: 2011-13'.

Alan Prohm's Tubular Loom Sketches





SenseLab, 'Generating the Impossible: International: 2011-2013' Photos: Ronald T Simon

Fig 4a. *Tubular Loom* sketches

The Tubular Loom actualised

SenseLab, 'Generating the Impossible: International: 2011-2013' Photos: Ronald T Simon

Fig 4b. The *Tubular Loom* actualised

Manning and Massumi commissioned the American artist Nathaniel Stern to facilitate a second workshop. Stern put forward a proposition based upon his series of works entitled *Sentimental Constructions.* Stern's concept consisted of site-specific and interactive architectural structures made of rope held up by performers. The idea of the work was to stretch the notion of public spaces through the interaction of the structure with the live performers and members of the public. Whereas *Sentimental Constructions* had been already conceived and performed prior to *GTI*, Stern's approach to the collaborative process was not to be a 'default leader'. Instead, he insisted on the notion of emergent space and the possibilities of clusters of ideas, seeing it as important to experiment with the ideas underlying the *Constructions* rather than attempting to reproduce the designs already performed. As with Prohm's proposal, Stern's idea attracted some interest during the online preparation phase – even if it is important to recognise that for many participants the volume of preparations (in terms of email exchanges, *Basecamp* updates, fortnightly *Skype* meetings, and wider logistical planning) for the project was bordering on the overwhelming. Accordingly, while the *Basecamp* hub offered a viable tool to communicate the propositions, Prohm and Stern's ideas remained largely at the level of proposition until the residency.

Nonetheless, the *Tubular Loom* and *Sentimental Constructions* projects provided *GTI* with an orientation. A list of materials to bring to the forest was closely linked to the technical requirements of the two propositions. Equally, potential links with relevant theoretical frameworks were advanced. For example, in my affinity group, a thematic emerged out of the online discussion in relation to the notion of attunement. One of the participants suggested a link between two other participants' ideas through which she then pointed toward the work of writer Michel Serres on the idea of 'mist'.[98] She identified this process as 'a conceptual and material intersection' for the development of affinity amongst the group which she then further expanded through her following suggestion:

> I wonder if the mist of the forest is something we could bring to the city, the mist itself as an example of mingled senses where binary oppositions dissolve and the skin becomes extended. The uncontainability of mist could be worth investigating? I wonder how we

[98] '[M]ist resembles both the medium and objects, what covers and what is covered […] Night unsettles phenomenology, mist disturbs ontology. Shadow reinforces the distinction between being and appearance, mist blurs it'. Michel Serres as quoted in SenseLab, 'Generating the Impossible: International: 2011-13'. See Michel Serres, *The Five Senses: A Philosophy of Mingled Bodies* (London; New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2008), p. 70.

> could bring attention to mist, its uncontrollable intensity, the interesting dynamics of its materiality, in order to explore attunement?[99]

In response to her questions, other participants suggested practical ideas to be explored during the residency, including Allan Kaprow's idea of 'activity'. From the reading of the online archive of these exchanges, it seems that no decisions were made as to how to advance the propositions, with discussion drifting between topics. However the concept of the 'mist' reappeared at a later stage in the collaborative process and became a central idea in the collaborative development of Stern's *Sentimental Constructions*. This example provides an insight into the process of cross-fertilisation expected in collaboration and the ways in which online communication shaped *GTI's* collaborative activities. I would argue that this framing is bound to the ways in which participants might have experienced time throughout the project.

Potentiality

From the online archive of the messages exchanged between participants before the residency, the topic of the mist appears somewhat dissociated from other ideas. This is partly due to the fragmented aspect of the exchange. This fragmentation can be linked to broader issues around the format of discussion in blogs and similar modes of communication as previously discussed. However, in this instance, I would argue that the fragmentation of the discussion created gaps in the collaborative process. For example, when the idea of exploring attunement through Serres' notion of mist was initially advanced, it did not receive an immediate response from the majority of the members of my group. However, having been 'shared' it was later taken up by participants. In temporal terms, this process of sharing operates in a mode of potentiality, initially created by digital communication; by which I mean that the exchanges of the participants via blogging are real but at the moment of their writing they have not yet happened - they are virtual. According to Deleuze's ontology of virtuality, the virtual is 'fully real' without ever being actualised.[100] It exists in potential (*en puissance*), or in tension.[101] Reflecting on

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[99] SenseLab, 'Generating the Impossible: International: 2011-13'.
[100] As quoted in Smith and Protevi, 'Gilles Deleuze'.
[101] In his translation of Deleuze and Guattari 's *Thousand Plateaus ,* Massumi indicates the distinction between the two translations of the word 'power': puissance and pouvoir. He highlights that '[i]n Deleuze and Guattari, they are associated with very different concepts. […] *Puissance* refers to a range of potential'. See Brian Massumi, 'Notes On The Translation and Acknowledgement', in Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London; New York: Continuum, 2004), xvii-xx (p. xviii).

the notion of 'potentiality and the future of performance', Kunst argues for the 'opening up [of] the collaborative and creative processes as potentialities'. She points to the notion of potentiality as 'a temporal constellation' which can only be made manifest 'when not being actualised'.[102] The delayed responses identified above correspond to exchanges of ideas not yet actualised. In other words, it refers to future relations. Accordingly, it is because they are not actualised that those virtual exchanges represent a creative potential in the collaborative process through the manifestation of delayed responses. It is interesting to note here that the conditions of the residency, in terms of its limited time and the low technology environment of the forest, constituted an appropriate territory for the notion to remain in the non-actualised dimension of the collaboration. Put simply, there was neither the time nor the facilities to enter into a production process.

If we circle back for a moment, the examination of Deleuze's notion of event pointed to the impossibility of the actualisation of the creative act. For Manning and Massumi, the conditions of this impossibility are the conditions of new creative works. Similarly, Kunst observes that: 'when the potential of a thing or a person is not realised. A certain failure, an impossibility of actualisation, is then an intrinsic part of potentiality'.[103] The idea of generating the impossible for Manning and Massumi is bound to the exploration of the conditions of new creative practices. These conditions frame collaborative processes – including digital communication – in a mode of potentiality which encompasses failure as an essential feature of human agency. For Kunst, the impossibility of the actualisation of these processes operates as a resistance to the capitalist system within which 'collaborative forces have been constantly actualised and appropriated as economic and cultural processes of producing and adding value to the market'.[104]

It does seem to me that the undetermined nature of collaborative exchanges makes it difficult to anticipate the knowledge gained through collaboration. As potentialities, collaborative practices become a challenge to systems of practice grounded in predetermined conditions and quantitative outcomes such as gaining access to funding networks. Manning has reflected closely on the nature of the knowledge in web-based interactive environments. Distinguished from a 'verified and completed' knowledge, the

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[102] Kunst, 'On Potential'.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid.

process of knowing through on-line interaction, according to Manning, refers to a 'knowing as in transit and on its way'. As an ongoing process, collaborative exchanges develop a type of knowledge based upon 'a quality of openness and undecidability',[105] and thus generate what she defines as 'a feeling for immanent relational potential'.[106] If the paradoxical conditions of potentiality account for the role of time in the transformative power of collective and creative activities, we might question what would be the artistic result of such potential processes. Kunst proposes the image of a performance 'with no total experience and burning out'.[107]

In the example previously discussed, the un-decidability expressed in the blog's fragmented exchange was collectively transformed by the actualisation of Stern's *Sentimental Constructions*. Indeed, by the third day of the *GTI* residency, a majority of the participants, including Manning and Massumi, merged into a bigger group to map the idea of *mist* onto Stern's sentimental constructions. A group momentum was then created and by the final day of the residency most participants had contributed on some level to the construction of *The Mist*. The structure consisted in linking two sides of the surrounding lakes with mosquito netting fabric. This was a simple idea that encapsulated the complexity of the theoretical and technological ideas previously exchanged, which included string theory, the notion of attunement, and Serres' idea of mist. As an installation *The Mist* created an intimate and atmospheric space as captured by the images of documentation.[108] Built as a temporary structure, *The Mist* must have naturally disintegrated, I imagine, almost bringing to mind Kunst's image of 'burning out. The participant Sean Smith captured the fleeting sense of *The Mist* in a poem:

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[105] The notion of undecidability can be found in Jacques Derrida's theory of deconstruction. It is interesting to note that for Derrida the term is not a synonym of undeterminacy. According to philosopher Leonard Lawlor, 'The undecidable, for Derrida, is not mere oscillation between two significations. It is the experience of what, though foreign to the calculable and the rule, is still obligated. We are obligated – this is a kind of duty – to give oneself up to the impossible decision, while taking account of rules and law. As Derrida says, "A decision that did not go through the ordeal of the undecidable would not be a free decision, it would only be the programmable application or unfolding of a calculable process"'. See Leonard Lawlor, 'Jacques Derrida', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (2014) <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/derrida/> [accessed on 27 February 2015].

[106] Erin Manning, '7 Propositions for the Impossibility of Isolation or, the Radical Empiricism of the Network', *European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies*, 2011 <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0811/manning/en> [accessed on 03 July 2013].

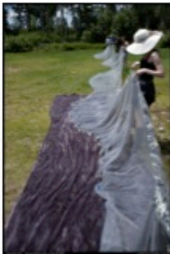
[107] Kunst, 'On Potential'.

[108] See *The Mist* (2011) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1QPTR6ndEQ> [accessed on 1 March 2015].

rose petal bathing
on the freckled memory trace,
the operatic voice
gnawing. hold my hand to
our heart's trebled pulse

thick sweaty breath
weeps my evening happiness,
a heavy Mist diffused,
dispersed.
circles of red dress eyes
to wipe the misty mourning dawn.
bitting and byting our way
back to the network
ongoing
and then a flight[109]

The Mist



SenseLab, 'Generating the Impossible: International: 2011-2013' Photos: Ronald T Simon

Fig 4c. *The Mist*

Whilst the feeling of potentiality cultivated throughout the duration of *GTI* project can be seen to have contributed to the development of transformative experiences, questions remain as to the extent that the potential of relations between participants – and the ideas

[109] Extract from the poem 'Fragility' written by *GTI* participant Sean Smith as part of his reflections on the project. See SenseLab, 'Generating the Impossible: International: 2011-2013'.

generated by them – can be seen to have transformed into collective actions. For Kunst, a potential can be related to a present action because it is not actualised 'and always stay[s] as an act that [is] less than itself'. Following Artiom Magnum, she defines potential 'as something that happened in the past'. This phenomenon would imply that it is through the operation of memory that the present can be apprehended as a remnant of time.[110] If we return to Bergson's ideas of time, potentiality (virtuality) refers to memory and intuition. The notion of intuition is interpreted here as a way of thinking which is unconscious and based in feelings – a thinking as a movement between contemplation and action.[111] In terms of collective creative practice, and more specifically, in relation to the collaborative processes of *GTI*, I would argue that the potential of relationality between participants can lead to transformative and collective actions only if the conditions of an intuitive thinking are enabled, which in this instance includes material and immaterial exchanges. Following Bergson, the example of *The Mist* accounts for the role of intuition in the collaborative process in so far that the mist as an idea could be kept dynamic and open to 'differences or singularities'.[112] The idea of the mist can be associated to Bergson's metaphor of a 'cloud' constituted of multiple drops of water, a state that he calls 'the nebulosity of the idea' which might recall those aspects of un-decidability in the planning for *GTI*. According to Bergson, this 'cloud' of ideas follows a process of condensation into singular and personal images, which in turn might transform into general and impersonal images. The conditions of these transformations are bound to the 'vitality' of the movement of thoughts and constitute, for Bergson, the basis of the distinction between dynamic and static ideas.[113] In the context of *GTI*, identifying the ways in which ideas were shared between members is crucial for an understanding of the impact of this distinction on the collaborative process. If we compare Prohm and Stern's approaches in terms of how they shared their proposition with the other participants, we find that the latter facilitated a dynamic and collective thinking while the former appeared to fall into a static way of sharing ideas.

Whereas both artists circulated clear sketches of their ideas in advance, their stated intentions with the drawings were different. Prohm's expectation was for the rest of the group to work with him on the execution of those plans while Stern's images were shared

[110] Kunst, 'On Potential'.
[111] See Leonard Lawlor, *The Challenge of Bergsonism*: *Phenomenology, Ontology, Ethics* (London; New York: Continuum, 2004), p. 50.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid., p. 52.

as starting point for a new project. The difference of approach is made clear in an online comment in which Stern problematises Prohm's direction:

> Hi Alan:
> I'm torn here [...] You've got a very specific design that you want implemented by the group; I've got images of pre-formed older pieces I want everyone to challenge, re-conceptualize, and re-make (per-form). I'm hesitant to marry anyone to the ideas they come up with in their own heads/spaces of what my form may be (or of what I've imagined it to be), and you don't want your form to change until after you've had the group build it [...] Perhaps we actually need to disaggregate these further. I know it's weird to have two rope projects separate from each other and taking up so much time, but our designed vs performed approaches might not gel well.[114]

Following this comment, a number of tasks composed by Prohm and Stern were given to the rest of the group. These were related to the construction of both the loom and the sentimental constructions. However, in situ, the *Tubular Loom* remained, in essence, Prohm's project, while the *Sentimental Constructions* were appropriated by the participants and collectively transformed into *The Mist.*

From a post-Marxist perspective, the notion of sharing is at the basis of contemporary production whereby affective and intellectual knowledge is exchanged. Sharing is seen to challenge the traditional division of labour.[115] In the performing arts industry, the division is greater when the collaboration implies a pre-determined performance outcome (as identified in one of the cases above). While this model of performance production involves a number of different skills, it often follows a hierarchical order of decision-making and the composition consists of an assemblage of pieces created separately from each other. Conversely, an approach which involves the interdependency of different professional experiences at the level of judgement and decision-making leads towards a collective experience of making work. *Sentimental Constructions* accounts for this heterogeneous approach to the creative process in the way in which Stern opened his ideas to differences and singularities. As we might begin to see how Bergson's concept of intuition might be related to the collaborative process, we can equally deduce that focusing on the vitality of

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[114] SenseLab, 'Generating the Impossible: International: 2011-13'.
[115] Virno, for example, offers a differentiation with the notion of craftmanship. In his own words: 'All the workers enter into the production as much as they are speaking-thinking. This has nothing to do, mind you, with "professionality" or with the ancient concept of "skill" or "craftsmanship": to speak/to think are generic habits of the human animal, the opposite of any sort of specialisation'. As quoted in Kunst, 'Prognosis'. For a discussion on the division of labour in cultural industries, see Florian Schneider, 'Notes on the Division of Labour', Exhausting Immaterial Labour in Performance, *TKH Journal for Performing Arts Theory,* 17 (2010), 53-56.

the exchanges was a leading strategy for the collaborative endeavour within *GTI*. If the process of sharing between participants was not always successful at maintaining a dynamic flow of ideas, it nonetheless remained central to Manning and Massumi's approach to research-creation.

Collaborative modes of existence

As part of its framework, *GTI* adopted the model of the potlatch. In contrast to a capitalist logic, the potlatch refers to a gift economy. The practice of potlatch originates from the American Indians of the Pacific Northwest coast and was described by French sociologist Marcel Mauss.[116] In general terms, the potlatch refers to a feast which emerges from a tradition of 'paying respect to each other' through a ceremonial action of 'giving away'.[117] According to Mauss, 'potlatch' as a verb means 'to nourish' or 'to consume' and as a noun it is associated with the term 'feeder'.[118] If the content of the gift is usually food, potlatches included other, more durable goods. However, the point in these sometimes week-long festivals was to consume the gift. Therefore, the gift must perish, whether it is food or other goods.[119] Arguably, this requirement constitutes the fundamental difference between the capitalist system of the industrial world and the gift economy of Mauss's archaic society. Both follow a system of exchange based on consumption, but the 'consumer goods' found in industrial society refer to products consumed by the owners of the goods. In the practice of potlatch, the gift is consumed by the exchange itself – a process in which, according to Mauss, 'wealth is continually being consumed and transferred'.[120]

The legacy of Mauss's research can be found throughout many fields.[121] Technological

[116] Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Society* (London: Cohen and West LTD, 1966).
[117] Ibid., p. 84.
[118] Ibid.
[119] The tribe Haida called the potlatch feast the 'killing of wealth'' whereby durable goods such as house and furniture could be burnt or destroyed. See Mauss, *The Gift*, pp. 1-6.
[120] Ibid., p. 36.
[121] Mauss's research influenced anthropological studies on the notion of reciprocity, including the work of Claude Levi-Strauss, see Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1963) and Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economy* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1972). In literature and philosophy see Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share* (New York: Zone Books, 1991); and Derrida, *Given Time*. In science, see the work of Hagstrom Warren, 'Gift Giving as an Organising Principle in Science' in Barry Barnes and David Edge (eds), *Science in Context: Reading in The Sociology of Science* (Milton Keynes: Open University, 1982), 21-34.

developments have led to a resurgence of the gift economy as digital exchanges have been widely seen to challenge the quantifiable capitalist logic of ownership. Open access, file sharing, commons licensing and Open Source Software can all be viewed as technological applications of a gift economy. The parallel between artistic practices and the practice of the gift as understood by Mauss has been explored by writer and poet Lewis Hyde who comments that the 'artist's labour is not creation so much as invocation'.[122] Hyde develops the idea that the creative spirit, guided by intuition, must be given and received as a gift.

I have already highlighted the ways that intuition contributed to the development of a collective thinking. Equally, the practice of potlatch was key to the development of the collaboration and was applied in various ways. Two main activities during the residency accounted for a rather literal interpretation of Mauss's theory. Firstly, a game of gift exchange occurred on the first night of the residency with all participants having brought wrapped gifts to be opened in a group exchange. Secondly, evening meals were conceived as a gift from one group to the rest of the participants. A menu had previously been agreed amongst each affinity group and food ingredients purchased in accordance with the need of each recipe. Cooking for fifty people became the central task for the group on duty that evening. Similarly to Mauss's 'big feed', the food offered was abundant in relation to the campsite setting.

While both activities focus on the act of giving as a way to foster relations between participants, they also account for potlatch as a practice of excessive gift giving. In the example of the game of gift exchange, the game structure allowed for a playful negotiation of the acts of giving and receiving while acting as an ice-breaker. More than fifty gifts brought by participants were given out and opened one-by-one. The game lasted several hours into the night. In the second example, the cooking task led to the making of (sometimes) intricate international meals. Different ritualistic, performative and social approaches to the presentation of the meal were offered every night.

Structured around the completion of tasks – bringing a gift, cooking – these activities developed a sense of reciprocity in the exchanges between the participants which according to Manning and Massumi foreground generosity as an etiquette of relation. In

[122] Lewis Hyde, *The Gift: How the Creative Spirit Transforms the World* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2007), p. 145.

terms of group work, the strategy is to frame the act of giving as a technique of attunement toward a collaborative experience. If, as Mauss argues, the gift (material or immaterial) is a dynamic force which creates a bond between the giver and the receiver, the focus on the act of giving in collaborative creative practice puts forward a future time of relations. In other words, collaborative relations are presented as exchangeable gifts which operate in a mode of potentiality based on the capacity of reciprocity of the exchanges between collaborators.

While Manning and Massumi drew on Mauss's research on the social and economical role of the gift in traditional society, they wrote that they also had been influenced by other philosophical understandings of the notion of exchange.[123] Indicatively, Deleuze and Guattari identify the process of exchange as a series of relations which can be collectively evaluated by the value of the last exchange of the series. Drawing on the example of an exchange of seeds and axes between two groups, they write that:

> The last as the object of a collective evaluation determines the value of the entire series. It marks the exact point at which the assemblage must reproduce itself, begin a new operation period or a new cycle, lodge itself on another territory, and beyond which the assemblage could not continue as such.[124]

In terms of social relations, this 'exact point' refers to a point of transformation from which the exchange can be evaluated. In the same vein, Deleuze and Guattari highlight the distinction between points of 'limit' and of 'threshold'. They propose that 'the limit designates the penultimate marking a necessary rebeginning, and the threshold the ultimate marking an inevitable change'.[125] It is therefore when a threshold is passed, that a transformation occurs.

Upon the return from the forest, most of those group members based in Montreal returned to their homes. The international participants were scattered around various accommodation options throughout the city. During this final phase of the project, the structure of the groups changed. Some splits emerged within the group, with sub-groups emerging out of affinities or practicalities. I would define this period as the 'determining phase' for the series of relations which had occurred during *GTI*, including material and

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[123] Manning & Massumi, 'Exploded Gallery', p. 30.
[124] Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*, p. 483.
[125] Ibid., p. 484.

immaterial exchanges. For some participants, this was a crucial moment in the negotiation between a point of limit and a point of threshold, this is to say the assessment of a threshold of tolerance. It is difficult within the scope of this inquiry to evidence these assessments. Nonetheless, the reading of post-event emails renders a shared sense of gratitude by all the participants accompanied by the desire to continue the exchanges.[126]

In the logic of the gift economy, the potential of transformation in collaboration is based on the reciprocity of exchanges. However in the course of *GTI*, the exchanges were not oriented toward a general sense of harmony between participants but pointed towards dissensus. In order to explore this idea briefly, I propose to turn to some of the feedback expressed by Manning and Massumi during an interview conducted toward the end of the project. While reflecting on the issues around the transformative role of the event, they draw on Stengers' concept of 'reciprocal capture' to articulate a way to reveal moments of changes.[127] According to Massumi, collaborative practice does not require a loss of personal 'self-interest' in favour of a 'general interest', rather it demands 'staging your self-interest' in relation to 'the self-interest of someone else'. Both interests then depend on each other and 'a symbiosis' may surface.[128] Thus, the collaborative process develops as a 'reciprocal becoming' which implies for Manning a degree of disequilibrium in the way that change is surprising and destabilising. On the one hand, Manning argues that not all participants will go through a transformation, and on the other she highlights the difficulty of knowing when change has happened.

If transformations at the level of the participants are difficult to pinpoint we might still want to think about ways to account for the value of the collaborative practice. From an organiser's point of view, Massumi evaluates the success of the project in relation to the proliferation of the event into independent sub-projects:

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[126] *SenseLab*, 'Generating the Impossible: International: 2011-13'.

[127] Stengers' philosophical inquiry *Cosmopolitics* argues for a politics related to the cosmos which challenges scientism. She uses Plato's notion of pharmakon to describe the kind of knowledge cultivated by cosmopolitics. 'Reciprocal capture' for Stengers, refers to the construction of collaborative identities. Those identities are jointly developed in the ways in which 'each integrates a reference to the other for their own benefit'. She argues that this 'ecological' perspective on the politics of relation, 'doesn't understand consensus but, at most, symbiosis, in which every protagonist is interested in the success of the other for its own reasons.' Isabelle Stengers, C*osmopolitics I* (Minneapolis: University of Minesota, 2010), pp. 35-36.

[128] See Brian Massumi, Interview with Noyale Colin and Laura Cull, Montreal (July, 2011).

> When we first started the events, we said that we would know that they were successful when they generated things that we had no way of doing ourselves. We weren't doing it, we weren't connected to it. That they had spun off into their own activity, going places we could never go. And it was never the idea to bring it back.[129]

In the context of interdisciplinary collaboration, this statement accounts for the evaluation of the relational techniques' potential for transformation into other creative practices or modes of existence. From my perspective, the value of the collaboration is partly connected to a similar feeling of appropriation of these techniques. More importantly, I would argue that the significance of such collaborative processes is based on the ability of each participant to reassess the value of his/her discipline in relation to other practices. Stengers' notion of 'reciprocal capture' offers a useful perspective on the question of value in collaborative practice. She argues that human practices imply a certain degree of instability of relations which is created by the particularity of these practices. Therefore, fact and value cannot be opposed in the way that the first refers to 'the order of "facts" [and] the second to a purely human judgement'. Yet for Stengers, 'Whenever there is reciprocal capture, value is created'.[130] Rather than imposing a judgement, the creation of value helps to explore the identity of a practice as it points to the 'question of what "counts" and "could count" for that practice' and how 'each practice defines its relationship to others'.[131]

Indeed, my participation in *GTI* as a choreographer/researcher led me to question new areas of my practice. The project provided important insights into the relationship between philosophical concepts and movement-based performance – including techniques of attunement and dance improvisation. My experience of *GTI* also allowed for a framing of the role of online technology in collaboration and led me to further question how digital exchanges and virtual representation might impact on the development of choreographic work. Equally, this experience offered invaluable insights into how collaborative work might support me to think about my creative practice in a symbiotic way. These developments are evidenced in the practical research around the notions of co-presence and the networked self in dance improvisation, which I undertook subsequent to my participation in *GTI* and are addressed in Chapter 5. A further example of the link of these ideas with my own practice can be found in my research on the distribution of the artist's

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[129] Ibid.
[130] Stengers, *Cosmopolitics I*, p. 36.
[131] Ibid.

self in collaborative practice and choreographic composition. Moreover, the reflective theorisation of this project allowed for the reaching of significant conclusions on how collaborative practices in arts can be seen as dynamic relational modes of existence.

Conclusion

I have contextualised *GTI's* approach to 'research-creation' as a case study of interdisciplinary collaboration which takes into account the tension between processes of collaboration in creative research and the potential risks in aligning with neo-liberal agendas. I have drawn parallels between the autonomist's claims for a new cooperative and creative labour – associated with the communication, information, service and cultural industries – and Manning and Massumi's development of new relational techniques for social reform. With reference to the 'affective turn' and the notion of attunement, I have explored how these techniques promote new ways of working together which foreground the effect of affect in the construction of an ethical engagement in collaboration. This offers a perspective on the nature of creative work which builds upon recent research into art practice and its potential to resist the economic parameters of productivity.[132]

The analysis of particular moments of the online preparation provided insights into how digital exchanges in collaboration can maintain a ritualistic aspect of communication when the exchanges of individuals are understood as arising from a desire for belonging. This perspective allowed a parallel with ritualistic practices which are rarely associated with the culture of advanced technology. Yet, contemporary ethnographic research highlights the distinction between ritual in traditional and modern society. Whereas ritual in traditional society functioned, according to Steeg Larsen and Thomas Tufte, 'as a more or less institutionalized emotional confirmation of an existing social order', in the modern world rituals occur 'much more sporadically and are characterized by playful experimentation and often involve an element of social critique'.[133] Modern social structures are not static organisations but rather they can be considered as networks of social relation in which ritual contributes to their dynamic processes. However, as ritual practices, remote collaborations can enhance a dynamic collective thinking if it remains open to differences

[132] See Klein & Kunst, 'On Labour and Performance'.
[133] Ben Steeg Larsen and Thomas Tufte, 'Ritual in the Modern World: Applying the Concept in Media Ethnography, in Marwan Kraidy and Patrick Murphy (eds), *Global Media Studies: An Ethnographic Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 92-93.

and singularities.

Drawing on temporal theories, I have examined how the chaotic dimension of collaboration can be seen as a necessary condition of the creative process in that it implies the activation – through techniques of attunement – of an intuitive practice of collective thinking. In the context of collaborative arts practice, attunement techniques can be developed on two levels of the creative process: firstly, in group improvisation, relational techniques (including speed-dating and relational movement practice) can be deployed to generate ideas or actions co-determined by the members of the group. Secondly, the use of attunement techniques in compositional terms implies a veering away from permissiveness as "laissez-faire" in collaborative work and points to the need for collaborators to invent structures and constraints which permit a rigorous creative process without rigidity.

I have explored how the potentiality of collaboration is based on a particular temporal condition, which is characterised by its ongoing, non-predetermined and incomplete nature. Furthermore, I have demonstrated that the chaotic aspect of collaboration can lead to a slowing-down of the ways in which decisions are made but might thus enhance the cross-fertilisation of ideas. However, this process remains creative only if *an affective commitment* is shared between the collaborators. From a psychological point of view, I have associated this commitment to a practice of ambiguity tolerance, whereas from a philosophical perspective it can be seen to run parallel with Manning and Massumi's ethics of engagement in collaborative practice. In *GTI,* this engagement was also encapsulated by the proposition that in collaboration, relations, ideas and techniques could function as a gift.

While the overall intention of the project problematises the ideal conditions for new modes of collaborative interactions, it also questions the implications that the development of such events might hold for more established ways of exchanging knowledge in the academic and artistic fields, including formats such as the conference, artist's talk, or gallery exhibition. Furthermore, an overarching focus on the notion of technique (or technicity) also invites questions around the ideas of training and skills in relation to academic and artistic practices. This approach refers to a re-assessment of the ways in which knowledge might be produced. This chapter has centred upon a number of issues concerning the relationship between collaborative practice and knowledge production

including the impact of digital communication, the emphasis on collaborative methods of dissemination of knowledge and the temporal conditions of creativity.

From a contemporary anthropological perspective, Rabinow argues for the necessity of creating new modes of inquiry, writing and ethics. Rabinow draws attention to the challenge of 'how to rethink and remake the conditions of contemporary knowledge production, dissemination and critique, in the interpretive sciences.'[134] To this end, he suggests the notion of the 'laboratory' as a set-up for the production of scientific knowledge not as 'general theories' or 'universal truths' but rather mapped on a practical model, focused on 'specific concepts, technologies and experimentation' and involving '[a]bove all … learning of a collaborative sort'.[135] Rabinow's anthropological laboratories are imagined as 'hybrid organizations, adjacent to and in many parasitic on, the university'.[136] Yet, Manning and Massumi consider collaboration as a 'tendency' of capitalism and therefore situate their project as 'an overcoming of capitalism from the inside out'.[137] Drawing on my experience as a participant of *GTI,* I have intended to theorise its collaborative practice through the logicalisation of its processes of experimentation with contemporary technologies and with a specific concept of time (duration), relation (attunement) and creativity (chaos). As a laboratory of relational techniques, *GTI* provides an example of how artistic interdisciplinary collaborations can contribute to the problematisation of contemporary knowledge production and dissemination – not through the generation of artistic products but through the potential of *meeting* and sharing in an environment that is carefully structured, discursive and creative.

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[134] Paul Rabinow, 'Steps toward an anthropological laboratory', Anthropology of the Contemporary Research Collaboratory, (2006) <http://www.anthropos-lab.net/wp/publications/2007/08/conceptnoteno1.pdf> [accessed on 5 August 2012] (p. 1).
[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid., p. 3.
[137] Manning and Massumi described this approach as 'a playing out of one of capitalism's own immanent tendencies – that of creatively productive collaborative relation'. Manning & Massumi, 'Exploded Gallery', p. 28.

Chapter 5

Stepping besides 'I' co-laborate: the distributed self in collaborative performance research

This chapter provides a critical self-reflection of my ongoing collaborative practice as a choreographer/performer and researcher/writer. In the discussion that follows I develop a concept of collaboration based upon my work in two specific practical inquiries: my collaboration with performer and fellow PhD student Rebecca Woodford-Smith; and *Rhythmic Trialogue*, a collaboration with musician JJ Wheeler and dancer Florence Peake. While both of these research practices bear different sets of motivations, intentions and outcomes, I reflect on the ways each practice accounts for a collaborative site of what are arguably multiple selves; or – and perhaps this is clearer – I suggest that collaboration in performance-making and/as research may well not only reveal the tension between self and other; but that it also belongs to a process that tends towards the experience of a plurality of the self.

The critique of the self as an individual or monolithic entity is hardly new. However, the entanglement of digital and computational technologies with human experience has further deepened the gap between the notion of the subject as a singular, unified individual, and the sense of multiplicity expressed through computational associated terms such as networked or distributed selves. Contemporary immaterial labour implies collectivist forms for the human psyche existing 'as networks and flows' or – as we have seen previously with Negri – as an 'immersion into the infinite movement of the bodies and events that surround us'.[1] In the context of collaborative performance practice, while I have demonstrated the ways in which collaborative artists have developed strategies to escape an appropriation of their techniques by a neo-liberal agenda, I would argue that this excess of multiplicity of subjects might yet lead us to question the validity of collaboration, or even to posit the potential redundancy of the term. When the self can be described as a site of plurality, why might we need to collaborate with a socially-distinct human other? As I have acknowledged in Chapter 1, above, if the solo artist/performer is always situated in relation to the 'other' in the occurrence of what I have identified as a 'choreographic presence', and if contemporary subjectivity is first and foremost relational and relationally-defined, then what might collaborative performance research illuminate in

[1] Negri, 'Metamorphoses', p. 25.

relation to distributed subjectivities and otherness? In the simplest of terms, perhaps we need to explore the differences between the otherness within the self, in contrast to what might be brought to performance-making by the social other. The following discussion of my collaborative work aims at providing some insights into these questions. To this end, I will reflect on the relationship between the plurality of the self that I have experienced as a performance-maker engaged in (collaborative) PaR and the specificity of process and product which has emerged out of these collaborations.

The trans-discursive self of the artist-researcher in collaborative PaR

The premise of this multi-modal Performance as Research inquiry into collaborative practice rests upon a number of parameters including time, space and the contributions of my artistic collaborators, in contrast with the findings linked to published writing from a number of disciplinary fields which I have begun to explore above. My making practices have developed across a series of temporal encounters, involving a short-term series of rehearsals and residencies and longer periods of training in various performance places (including studio spaces and public venues) with the participation of a range of professional performers including dancers, musicians and performance-makers. From the outset, the complex nature of the investigation led me to develop a research metadiscourse which incorporates a historical, philosophical and performance approach. Each of these methods can be considered as *thinking practices* which – as we have seen – are relational and (partially) collaborative. Moreover, I have engaged in a range of activities requiring different sets of skills, sensibilities and which involve, above all, an ongoing negotiation based on the relation between multiple senses of self and others. I have previously considered in *They Tried to Stand* the ways in which performance – through the multiple and varied processes of training, rehearsal, presentation, and feedback – might be argued to theorise its own practices. Indeed, continuing debates on PaR and the role of the artist as researcher still tend to presuppose a duality between artistic practice and theoretical exegesis. In my project, this assumption leads to a questioning of the tension between practising collaboration with others (which might include writing) and the self-reflective nature of writing about it. As Melrose highlights, both activities belongs to '*two complex*

economies of practice'.[2] In the case of my inquiry, a range of economies of production – choreographic, academic, institutional, social – come into play in the decision-making process of my collaborative practice and in turn, inform my undertaking of several related, yet, distinct functions. By way of illustration, I have represented in the table below the relationships between my ongoing collaborative practice, these functions (which here I have defined as choreographer, performer, producer and writer), and the generic notions of self and other.

Practising		Researcher	
Self	Observing Organising Communicating instruction Responding Questioning Reading Creating sound tracks Working with images Designing lighting	Other	Choreograph
	Finding collaborators Making phone calls to venue Booking rehearsal time Sending e-flyers Editing video clips Sourcing materials for props/ costumes		Produce
	Notes Funding applications Budgets Rehearsal schedule Papers Abstracts Blurbs Blogs Reading		Write
	Training Listening Observing Interacting Memorising Following Questioning Responding Reading		Perform

[2] Susan Melrose, 'The Eventful Articulation of Singularities - or, "Chasing Angels"' (2003) <http://www.sfmelrose.org.uk/chasingangels/> [accessed on 5 March 2015].

What this simple listing of activities tends to demonstrate is that as a practitioner/researcher I have distributed my self across a range of tasks which require different degrees of relation with others but also tend toward an inscription of a multiplicity of selves dispersed within different functions. For Barrett, in 'Toward a Critical Discourse', the dispersed selves of the artist-researcher are divided into two separate fields of research practice: the artistic practice and the practice of 'reporting and writing up of the studio process and its outcomes'.[3] However, what I propose here is an extension of this binary view of the range of activities undertaken during my research. As a complex, composite and dispersed self, the practitioner-researcher in this inquiry is not confined to studio practices or writing practices which would differ largely in terms of the type of approach to a single, monolithic entity ('my practice'); instead, she appears as distributed selves across a diversity of lived experiences, operations and procedures (as described above), each of which belongs to a radically different economy of practices.

In the context of the development of my research metadiscourse relating to performance-collaborative practice, the potential of trans-discursivity (or trans-praxiology, in Melrose's terms)[4] of self – which is also put forward in Barrett's approaches to creative research – may apply to discourses or practices of different natures or modes. What follows from this issue of multiplicity and heterogeneity is the use of different registers and modes in this inquiry through the development of historical, philosophical, personal and performance accounts. It might be worth adding, at this point, the self-reflexive observation that *I write differently*, as a practitioner-researcher, from the discourse modes I adopt in – for example, the literature review component in the Introduction. Authority in writing is, in this sense, easier to master in text-based 'thetic' traditions of thesis writing. In 'practice-writing' I am tentative, sentences tend to be shorter, points of view shift and change, and the register tends in the main (if not always) to be speculative. While the articulation of a trans-discursive and trans-praxiological self might allow the multiple selves who have emerged and co-existed during my project to interact, the juxtaposition of different registers in my research on collaborative practice aims at reconciling the particularities of lived experience of practice and discourse. Moreover, drawing on Peter Reason's approaches to participative inquiry we can posit that collaborative inquiry is based on experiential

[3] Barrett, 'Toward a Critical Discourse', p. 140.
[4] Susan Melrose, 'Entertaining Other Options: Restaging "Theory" in the Age of Practice as Research' (2002) <http://www.sfmelrose.org.uk/inaugural/> [accessed 26 May 2015].

knowing which 'arises through participation with others.'[5] Reason's concept of 'interpenetrating consciousness' is similarly of interest in the context of collaborative research. Reason writes that, 'Collaborative inquiry involves the individual practitioner in continually reflecting on their own behaviour-in-action while simultaneously behaving in a fashion which invites other members of one's community to do the same.'[6] The idea of interpenetration of consciousness highlights the relational aspect of self-reflection in collaboration not only between participants but also between ways of thinking about discourses and other practices. It is then not a question of a singular self that may emerge from this self-reflective account of collaborative research but one of relational and multiple selves. This heterogeneous self, I argue here, emerges – sometimes unexpectedly – where difference is underlined and celebrated as productive in creative practices.

In a co-written reflective article exploring our collaborative movement practice, Woodford-Smith and I – as two performance-makers from different backgrounds (dance and theatre) – developed a theoretical and practical framework to reflect on the relational and multiple selves that have emerged from our past practice together.[7] The reader should note that, as in the box below, I use a different font when quoting from this article to highlight the provenance of passages from the co-written article. While I will discuss the overall project in more detail in the next section, the opening section of the paper illustrates the ways in which the trans-discursivity of self might apply to the artist/researcher self in collaborative inquiry. At the outset, our collaborative reflection was informed by Rotman's ideas on the relationship between the self and the development of new technologies - what Rotman encapsulates as 'becoming multiple and parallel'. In this extract, Woodford-Smith and I began by expressing our individual motivations by describing our own current physical and geographical situation in relation to three parameters: the memory of our shared practice, the activity of writing and Rotman's ideas.

Rebecca: In this auto-ethnographic practice-as-research account, I attempt to describe the performer-self as experienced in collaboration. I am aware of the complexities of attempting to account for such an embodied experience through writing, and doing so through a self-reflective account. I write this sat on a train, glancing at the Welsh landscape of estuaries, snow

[5] Reason, 'Three approaches', in Denzin and Lincoln (eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, p. 333.
[6] Ibid., p. 331.
[7] Noyale Colin and Rebecca Woodford-Smith, 'Bodies in Motion: Working through Plurality', *Skepsi*. (De)parsing bodies, 5.1 (2012), 20-36.

clad hills and barren windswept trees silhouetted against the quickly darkening pink sky; and later sat on a plane hovering over a bed of white clouds, below which I imagine is Scandinavia. Later still — as I write at this moment — I am jetlagged in an unfamiliar room in an unfamiliar district of Tokyo and have the strange (yet familiar) sensation that my body has not yet caught up with its self and is perhaps still hovering somewhere over Siberia. In the act of reflecting on, and remembering, the multiple actions in the multiple (and contrasting) studio spaces through the act of writing, and whilst sitting at home and travelling, I have the sense that I am experiencing the plurality that Rotman describes.

Noyale: I feel at the moment quite settled, in a rather steady position, not travelling. Shortly, I will stop writing and go to collect my daughter from the childminder and follow the toddler's routine before going back to the space of the screen.

How does this screen relate to what happened between Rebecca and me?

As we have decided to start to compose the reflection about our work through individual voices, I am paragraphing myself into the design of a word document. I find my way in this reflective account of my collaboration with Rebecca in the tension between a notion of 'extension of self' in terms of the work we have done together during the past ten months and a sense of myself as a professional dance practitioner, be it as a dancer, teacher or researcher. It is perhaps this sense of fixity which leads me to focus on the tension that I identify in collaboration between knowing what is me and what is not me nor someone else or as Rotman puts it 'becoming multiple and parallel' (Rotman 2008: 104).

Reflections of unfamiliar Tokyo from the 45th floor
Photograph: R. Woodford-Smith

Noyale in Wales
Photograph: R. Woodford-Smith

Fig. 5a *Bodies in Motion*

In these juxtaposed statements, we find an affinity in the idea of experiencing plurality: Woodford-Smith and I were simultaneously engaged (although writing at a physical distance from each other) in a remote but yet direct 'interpenetration of consciousness' in the sense that we were seeking to inspire the other to further reflection. In my case, the process of self-reflecting through collaborative writing further developed the idea of an 'extension of self' as it is pinpointed in my statement extracted above. The relationship between our memory of past practice and our shared engagement with theoretical ideas, encapsulated in the activity of writing, led to the affirmation of our individual intentions in the project. Yet, the potentiality of collaborative self-reflective writing is here revealed through the articulation of a trans-discursivity of self which embraces a sense of heterogeneity, relationality and plurality.

The potential of collaboration to make manifest multiplicities of the self

What the previous schematic representation of my activities during the research process does not reveal is the ways in which technology and, more specifically, digital media communication in this instance, might have contributed to the distribution of these multiple and trans-discursive and trans-praxiological selves of the practitioner/researcher involved in collaborative practice. For example, I have used several digital tools throughout the project - including collaborative blogs, *Skype* conference calls, chats and emails. While these common tools in contemporary collaborative practice have shaped the emergence of my practitioner/researcher trans-discursive self 'over multiple sites of agency' – including crossing boundaries of time and qualities of places – this possibility of remote collaboration in my performance practice further complicates my understanding of the plural self in this inquiry.

Whereas it is clear now that human subjectivity has always been entangled with technological devices – or as Andy Clark has powerfully insisted, 'we have always been cyborgs'[8] – then how can we think (and act and sense and perceive) beyond the use of rhetorical devices specific to virtual bodies? How can we explore human embodied subjectivities as they emerge from the continuously developing technological specificity of

[8] Andy Clark, as quoted in Timothy Lenoir, 'Foreword: Machinic Bodies, Ghosts, and Para-Selves: Confronting the Singularity with Brian Rotman', in Brian Rotman, *Beside Ourselves*, pp. ix-xxix (p. xiii).

the contemporary world? Such questions are relevant to the practice of co-working in performance-making. Indeed, as we have previously seen, the use of blogs, chats and other virtual communication tools has recently had an important – even constitutive – role to play in collaborative performance-making practices. According to Rotman, '[m]ultiple networks of person to person connectivity' alter contemporary subjectivity by intensifying a sense of plurality of selves. In Rotman's words, this sense contributes to circumstances which demand, 'a recognition of the incipient plurality of a psyche in the process of becoming beside itself'.[9]

In continuity with the theoretical ideas of posthuman subjectivities in contemporary society,[10] Rotman suggests that computational media not only emphasise a multiple experience of the self but also they perform the distribution of subjectivity as a central characteristic of human evolution:

> Whether through cell phones interchanging private and public spaces; through the plurally fractured lineraliity of so-called multi-tasking, through the manipulation of external avatars of the self in communally played computer games; through engaging in the multifarious distribution of agency, intelligence and presence that immersion in networked circuits put into play; or through a still unfolding capacity to be in virtual contact anywhere, at any time, with unknown human or machinic forms of agency – these computational affordances make the who, the what, and the how of the parallelist self radically different from its alphabetic predecessor.[11]

Rotman demonstrates that alphabetic text has become incompatible with the monolithic self and subjectivities that have emerged in relation to new technologies and networked media; or in his terms, ' "I" is *plural* and *distributed* as against the contained, centralized singularity of its lettered predecessor'. Thus 'I' refers to a self 'becoming beside itself, plural, trans-alphabetic, derived from and spread over multiple sites of agency, a self going parallel: a para-self'.[12]

Movement improvisation in collaborative performance practice

It is within this theoretical context that I have sought to demonstrate the potential of

[9] Rotman, *Beside Ourselves,* p. 103.
[10] See Haraway's feminist approach to the hybrid quality of contemporary subjectivity in Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women,* pp. 149-181. See also Braidotti's assessment of hybrid subjects which denounced the alienation of nomadism by the contemporary globalised world. Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects,* pp. 4-10.
[11] Rotman, *Beside Ourselves,* p. 92.
[12] Ibid., pp. 8-9.

collaboration in performance-making and its event/s to engage the performer/researcher in a rich and complex distribution of selves. I propose to argue that on the one hand, collaboration can heighten our sense of self through continuously calling on a sense of recognition of our plurality; and on the other hand, it can lead to a decentralisation of the self of the performers, which may collide when individually-embedded in the act of performance/improvisation. In other words, this dispersed and heterogeneous self/selves may find, in possible confrontations with the other, that experience may be delicate, as well as eventually productive.

My collaborative inquiry with Woodford-Smith unfolded as an extended multi-modal research undertaking. Over a year we developed a practice centred on movement improvisation, which led to a practice-theoretical inquiry into the relationships between the self and bodies in motion, or the embodied self.[13] This project was based on the question of affinity - or a number of affinities including our mutual concern for the process of embodying our individual practice as researchers.[14] In more specific terms, we maintained a shared interest in examining the presence of the performer and how two practitioners might be able to account for each other's presence. The practical element of the collaboration was structured around regular practice sessions between April 2011 and May 2012. Additionally, we shared extended periods of practice during two residencies: the first in August 2011 based at the Performing Arts Forum (or PAF) in northern France, and the second in January 2012 at the Aberystwyth Arts Centre. During these sessions we explored a range of performance responses particular to collaborative performance-making processes including structured improvisation, feedback techniques and the integration in the creative process of digital communication tools.[15] This project led to two outcomes: the publication of a co-written article entitled 'Bodies in Motion: Working through Plurality',[16] and the performance of *Polytempi* - a structured improvisation bringing

[13] The issue of the relationship of self/selves and performing body/bodies is central here, but some of its complexities lie beyond the scope of this inquiry. The term 'embodied self' may however be of use.
[14] At the time of our work together Woodford-Smith was working with *Gekidan Kaitaisha* (Theatre of Deconstruction) in Tokyo as part of her practice based doctoral inquiry: 'Working with Gekidan Kaitaisha: Addressing the Complexity of the Self of the Performer as Other'. See Rebecca Woodford-Smith, 'Practice as Research PhD, Middlesex University: 2009-2014', <http://rebeccawoodfordsmith.weebly.com/research.html> [accessed on 2 March 2015].
[15] Documentation of the sessions was compiled in Noyale Colin, 'nc-lines of flight: Rebecca', (2012) <http://parallelintervals.blogspot.co.uk/search/label/Rebecca> [accessed on 2 March 2015].
[16] Colin & Woodford-Smith, 'Bodies in Motion'.

together a range of performers (musicians and dancers) at the symposium *On Collaboration I* held at Middlesex University.[17] This project and its outcomes provide a useful terrain to break down some of the mechanisms particular to collaborative performance research processes, and in turn they can illuminate the ways in which the experiences of the collaborative artist-researcher might be seen to be distributed across multiple and heterogeneous sites of the dispersed self.

For the purpose of this reflection I will draw out some examples from my practice with Woodford-Smith, which I argue are of particular relevance to the development of practitioner understandings of a concept of collaboration grounded in the idea of the *distribution* of the presence of the collaborative performer researcher. To this end, I intend to consider two themes central to the discussion generated in the co-written article. Where I extract quotes from this article, these will again be presented in an adjusted font.

Firstly, as we explored ways to make our individual practice interact, we developed a strategy of performance response in the studio. We have listed these activities as follows:

We stretch, talk, run, move, dance, and improvise; create solo and duet choreographic sequences that blend old work, new movements and repeated gestures; introduce to each other various exercises, techniques, props, costumes, images, texts and sounds; give each other a list of tasks and perform them together in an extended improvisation; attempt to respond to each other by extending our senses; and write 'butoh-fu' image 'poems', and take turns reading them to each other as we improvise responses.

We also create solo sequences based on the memory of the gestures of others; mirror and give each other impulses to respond to; undertake mutual interviews and observations; record our experiences in notes, sketches and marks on large sheets of paper taped to the walls; film and photograph ourselves; attempt to trace each other's danced pathways with masking tape, and endeavour to create a map of practice in the space that maps the network of the self.

In an attempt to extend our practice and respond to each other through the environment outside the studio space, we play in gale-force winds on a jetty by the sea and then try to embody the experience in the studio. We think and write about, reflect upon, struggle with, and share our experiences about our training and our failing bodies. We talk about our digital selves and our online identities.

[17] *Bodies in Motion*: *Polytempi*. Symposium On Collaboration, Middlesex University, London, 4 May 2012 in Colin, *Becoming Together (DVD)*. *Polytempi* was an adaptation of my work with Peake and Wheeler (which forms the second example of practice discussed in this chapter).

Responding to and embodying the experience by the sea in the studio

Fig. 5b *Bodies in Motion* Photos: N. Colin/R. Woodford-Smith

While this extended practice is outlined both inside and outside the studio, it points to a mutual desire, among collaborators, to account for the idea of co-presence in performance which is embedded, in this case, within the notion of the dispersed but networked self and is enhanced by the collaborative creative process. In the studio, we experimented with feedback techniques, using drawing, text and movement responses, over time. For example, I used a technique of interview to question Woodford-Smith on her sense of relationship between herself and her online identity.[18] While having engaged in contrasted physical and verbal responses, Woodford-Smith reflected on that experience as a constant 'state of flux',[19] a feeling which she can recognise in the history of her own collaborative practice – which has been extensive and ongoing. In the paper we published, I offered another account of the idea of 'co-presencing' through performance:

> *[W]e seamlessly shifted between being an audience for each other as* much *as a co-performer, from solo to duo, from 'you', 'us, 'I', from thinking to feeling and bounding ourselves to what Merleau Ponty advocated as 'the flesh that thinks'. We explored the notion of active viewing, an observation technique, which aims at focusing on the threshold just before the observer starts to interrupt with the unfolding action. This technique allowed us to go away from verbal or rational writing feedback and led us to veer toward performative responses in relation to our individual work. For example, the writing of*

[18] See transcript in Noyale Colin and Rebecca Woodford-Smith, '(De)Parsing bodies dialogue: Aberystwyth notes 2', (2012) <http://bodiestrialogue.blogspot.co.uk/2012/01/aberystwyth-notes-2.html> [accessed on 2 March 2015].

[19] 'It is such a state of flux that I experience when in the studio with Noyale; I am constantly changing, adapting and adopting my approach and my physicality to find a common fit with this other dancer-body, and to extend myself to the studio space'. Woodford-Smith, 'Bodies in Motion', p. 28.

[20] 'Butoh-fu' is a form of notation, developed by Tatsumi Hijikata, whereby a series of word images are interpreted and embodied by the dancer to create movement. Hijikata's notations were

Butoh-Fu[20] *as a poetic instruction invited a personal yet connected response.*

A starting point to my improvisation was one of Rebecca's Butoh-Fu 'poems':

> *Gaze extending for a 1,000 miles, seeing something*
> *Hair falls behind*
> *Breeze brushes cheeks*
> *Gaze pulls her forward, limp hands pulls her back*
> *Skirt bellows around legs, like an ocean.*

Noyale performing the Butoh-Fu 'poems'

Fig. 5c *Bodies in Motion* Photo: R Woodford-Smith

The second theme developed in the paper is focused on the process of appropriation in collaborative movement practice, that may lead to collisions both internal to the performer and between performers. If we return to Rotman's concept of experiencing plurality, we find that

> the process is not to be identified with imitating, reproducing, splitting oneself; or identifying with, or assimilating another; or being reborn as a new being (though it can couple with and be traversed by all these). It is rather a form of a temporal change.[21]

In the DVD documentation accompanying this thesis, our use of improvisation in rehearsal is evidenced. In my reflection upon this aspect of our performance responses, I argued that techniques found in improvisation practice such as mirroring, copying, cutting and pasting can be understood as the appropriation of each other's movements and thoughts, and that as with the state of flux that Woodford-Smith experienced in our sessions together, these responses are bound to a spatio-temporal process.[22] Drawing on William James'

often taken from images, such as paintings, and were written in a poetic form.

[21] Rotman, *Beside Ourselves,* p. 103.

[22] See Colin & Woodford-Smith, 'Bodies in Motion: Rehearsal Session. Clip 2' in Colin,

philosophic notion of 'appropriation' by the 'I',[23] I highlighted the importance of time and trust – an under-theorised notion in discourse formations like Performance Studies – as essential resources in my collaborative process with Woodford-Smith:

> If one of the characteristics of the collaboration between Rebecca and me is its on-going nature, what, more importantly, seems to be the driving force behind our work together is the combination of time and trust. I remember feeling more patient for the work to uncover than if I was working on my own. The involvement of someone else's body in the studio — as an active observer, a reporter of sensations — heightened my sense of respect for the work in a way that is very different from that when I am engaged in a directing role. I have a better conviction that there is something in what we are doing that is worth pursuing. The worth of the moment shared together. Whether we are stretching, laughing about our bodies being tight from spending too much time at the computer or working on concentration and internal processes, we are constantly learning about who we are in relation to each other.

Similarly, I further reflected on how my memory of past experience with Woodford-Smith in these sessions – as recorded in the DVD documentation of this thesis[24] – contributed to the process of experiencing multiplicity in movement improvisation (which by definition in this research context is driven by the combined desire for invention, interaction, reflection and analysis):

> Whereas some of our exchanges could be quite verbal, direct and intentional, other moments of intense exchange manifested themselves indirectly and unintentionally during improvisation. For example, when Rebecca responded to my instruction 'dance like your father for three minutes', the conviction of her rhythmic presence immediately engaged me in a complex network of possible family relationships between father and daughter. Her stamping of the feet, her clapping of the hands remained with me as an internalised rhythm of past memories of our work together, memories which not only add to what I already know of Rebecca but also add to what I know of myself. I am then developing in James' words a 'consciousness of still wider scope'. When later on we experimented with stealing each other's movements during our improvisation, I found myself involved in rhythmic patterns, which came directly from earlier observation of Rebecca, from another time and space. While the branching out to other spatio-temporal experiences feeds my imagination as I perform Rebecca's movement, this rhizomic view of the improvisation's process is bound to what Rotman describes as '[b]ecoming party to a condition other than [my] own'.

Becoming Together (DVD)

[23] William James explored the idea that two minds could be conscious of one thing. He suggests 'that to be "conscious" means not simply to be, but to be reported, known, to have awareness of one's being added to that being; and this is just what happens when the appropriative experience supervenes'. William James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism* (New York: Longman Green and Co, 1912), p. 132.

[24] For examples of practice drawn upon in this extract, see Colin & Woodford-Smith, '*Bodies in Motion: Rehearsal Session. Clip 1'* in Colin, *Becoming Together (DVD)*.

While I have previously accounted for the capacity of memory to affect perception in performance,[25] this practical exploration of the notion of the performer's self led me to further problematise the relation between recognition and intention in live performance. Whereas in my solo practice I was arguing that the potential of memory to interfere during the reception of a dance piece could enhance the collaborative relationship between audience and performer, my improvisation practice with Woodford-Smith further revealed the importance of the relationship between intention of movement and the role of memory in collaborative performance practice. I suggest here to return to the particular moment of the improvisation discussed above, in which we played with the idea of stealing each other's movement. With reference to my training as a dancer, I reflected on the ways in which movement intention in dance improvisation is bound to a process of recognition through a complex relation of space, time, the embodied self, and other bodies:

> Having trained in front of a mirror for many years, I am easily able to reproduce other people's movement; however, the intention of the exploration was not to copy Rebecca strictly but rather to grasp something of the essence of the movement, what in dance can be identified as movement's intent or in other words, as Randy Martin has observed, 'the aesthetic content' of a dance which he calls kinetic intention (Martin 1985: 62). If a dancer's intention of the movement constitutes an elusive component in choreographic composition, including for the dancer herself, in the case of the relationship between a dancer and a choreographer the ability of the choreographer to communicate (more often verbal) clear intention of movement for the dancer is crucial to the rehearsal process. For Martin, 'Kinetics [intention] are the dancers' response to a motional situation, though the choreographer must find the means to create those situations' (Martin 1985: 62). However, the collaborative practice with Rebecca is concerned with the relationship between two practitioners using improvisation as a mode of performing. In dance improvisation, movement is the foundation of the communication between dancers. In this particular improvisation with Rebecca, the idea was primarily to focus on the repetition of her movements and to use improvisation to access the communicative aspect of movement. In improvisation the recognition and understanding of the intention happen while moving. Because dance unfolds through time, intention cannot be perceived at once; it is in becoming and in relation with other internal and external factors including space, time and other bodies.

A central idea of my argument here, and one acknowledged in the article (and also addressed above)[26] stemmed from Guerlac's understanding of the relationship between body and memory. While the human body acts in the present, memory synthesises past,

[25] See, for example, my discussion in Chapter 2 of the intereference of memory during perception and its use as a material for the composition of my solo *They Tried to Stands*.

[26] For example, in Chapter 2, I examined Guerlac's understanding of time in Bergson's work to discuss the relationship between a performative register and a historical register.

present and future.[27] In the context of the collaborative practice of two practitioners using improvisation as a mode of performing, it might then become apparent that my effort to grasp Woodford-Smith's intention, or in other words to appropriate her movement, has created what I have encapsulated as, 'a junction through which we both collide':

When Rebecca later watched the video of this moment which only framed me in the shot, she could recognise herself in my movements and I could recognise myself doing the movements, but they belonged to both or neither of us.

The distributed performer's self/selves in composition: an insight into interdisciplinary structured improvisation

In continuation with the idea of the distribution of the self in collaboration, my following reflection focuses on the notion of attention in a specific context of interdisciplinary performance practice, examining how a distribution of the attention of the performers (which effects a shared set of actions) can be considered as a collective thinking process whereby the collaboration can be strategically located at the level of perception.

Rhythmic Trialogue is an interdisciplinary project which I initiated in collaboration with a range of practitioners in dance and music. From the outset, the work was premised on the idea that rhythm in performance could be used as a tool to grasp some of the complex spatio-temporal relationships in operation in a collaborative structure and composition. While the notion of rhythm is a fundamental element in both music and dance improvisation technique, this collaborative practice focused on the 'undisciplined' nature of rhythm; and more specifically on rhythm as an element that could provoke affect between the performers. The intention of the inquiry was to compose a choreographic structure based on the patterns of interaction of the performers which had been generated from a range of techniques of relation for performance-making. During five months, the project developed in two phases which each culminated in a public sharing of the work. Running parallel to my research on bodies in motion with Woodford-Smith, this project confirmed the potentiality of collaborative practice to render multiplicities recognisable. In this instance, a different set of conditions offered additional insights into how the distribution of performers' selves can be applied to choreographic composition in the context of the production of performance-making.

[27] Guerlac, *Thinking in Time,* p. 122.

Rhythmic Trialogue: a collaboration of perceptions with Florence Peake and JJ Wheeler

For *Rhythmic Trialogue*, I invited two expert improvisation practitioners – jazz musician JJ Wheeler and contemporary dancer Florence Peake[28] – to collaborate on a piece to be performed on 28th January 2012 at Siobhan Davies Studio in London as part of an event dedicated to improvisation in performance. (An edited version of the performance is included on the DVD documentation submitted as part of this thesis.[29]) Specific moments of the performance, and video clips (also included on the DVD) of rehearsals, are referenced and analysed in greater detail below. As a certified Skinner Release Technique (SRT) teacher, Peake has developed a practice rooted in her experience of movement improvisation and in her background in visual art.[30] In contrast to the somatic and visual aspects of the practices of Peake and myself, and given the specific focus of the project on the notion of rhythm, I wanted to emphasise the multi-disciplinary aspect of the inquiry by involving an expert in the field of music. Trained in classical percussion, Wheeler has extensive experience of improvisation which he developed through his drum practice in jazz performance and composition.[31] It is therefore apparent that what was also important for me in the choice of my collaborators was the strength of their individual expertise, alongside their ability as professional practitioners to reflect upon each other's processes. These expert skills constituted an essential resource for my collaborative inquiry which is here presented as an informed performative trialogue. In contrast to my ongoing process with Woodford-Smith, the collaborative process for *Rhythmic Trialogue* followed a short and intense period of one-month rehearsals punctuated by a public performance.

During the first stage of the process we experimented with a range of techniques focusing on the notion of rhythm as a way to organise our collaborative decision-making in improvisation. Initially, this practice was informed by the hypothesis that rhythm in performance could be used as a tool to perceive and produce a range of variation of

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[28] I had previously worked with Peake in various contexts related to my dance practice.

[29] Colin, Peake & Wheeler, '*Rhythmic Trialogue*' in Colin, *Becoming Together (DVD)*. Low-level lighting was used in the piece as part of the scenography. The film recording does not accurately capture the lighting conditions (i.e. making conditions appear particularly dark at points), but the footage remains of good quality and helps to account for ideas developed in the text-based discussion.

[30] Florence Peake, 'About', < http://www.florencepeake.com/about/> [accessed on 2 March 2015].

[31] JJ Wheeler, 'Biography', <http://www.jjwheeler.co.uk/Biography.html> [accessed on 2 March 2015].

changes in the performers' relationships. This idea derived from the conceptualisation of the undisciplined character of rhythm which implies a qualitative difference between the notion of rhythm as a mechanical and controllable unit (which can be defined as beat, meter or cadence) and the immeasurable continuous flowing characteristic of rhythm as found in natural and physical phenomena.[32] Whereas this second conception of rhythm coincides with Bergson's notion of duration, the act of perceiving rhythm is bound to a temporal organisation of successive changes in the body.[33] We have previously examined how a body expresses in continuity, and that, in Massumi's terms, a body in movement, 'does not coincide with itself. It coincides with its own transition: its own variation'.[34] In the context of our collaborative performance practice, we explored how these changes or variations of the body could model our exchanges, and in turn how the characteristic traits of rhythmic perception (an ordered variation of changes) could constitute a potential for composition. This attempt was formalised by means of different strategies which related to the field of expertise of both dance and music, including attention-training practice, use of accentuation and pulse, multi-directionality and resonance, and scoring.

The use of these strategies led to the development of a relational structure for the improvisation of movement and sound in the space of the studio. As a way to organise our process of decision-making we defined a number of ways to relate to each other based in the following principles: release-tension-resolution, anticipation and dissociation. Through practice, we developed rhythmic patterns to tie together moments of changes in our improvisation process. The reader is directed to view footage of rehearsals included in the DVD documentation.[35] What is interesting in this practice is the prospect of locating the collaboration at the level of the perception of the performers, what I would term here the potentiality of a collaboration of perceptions in performance. Moreover, I would suggest that our process has revealed a specific aspect of the notion of attention in collaborative practice. Traditionally understood as the ability to be in the present moment, I want to argue here that attention in collaborative practice is more about a capacity to grasp a sense

[32] The psychologist Paul Fraisse offers an analysis of the notion of rhythm in which he accounts for the artist 'rhythmic experience'. See Paul Fraisse, 'Multisensory Aspects of Rhythm', in Richard Walk and Herbert Pick (eds), *Intersensory Perception and Sensory Integration* (New York; London: Plenum, 1981), 217-248.

[33] For Deleuze and Guattari, rhythm 'ties together critical moments or ties itself up in passing from one milieu to another. It does not operate in a homogeneous space-time, but by heterogeneous blocks. It changes direction.' Deleuze & Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus,* p. 313.

[34] Massumi, *Parables*, p. 4.

[35] *Rhythmic Trialogue*. Rehearsal session: Clip 1.

of multiplicity, which developed through acute attention to the co-presence of the participants.

The strategies adopted during the projects point to techniques of training of the quality of attention. For example, drawing on the Body-Mind Centering approach to movement and as movers in space, Peake and I experimented with moving following internal non-voluntary rhythms. We based our improvisation on different types of body systems from which we located different pulses, including breathing, circulatory and digestive systems. This led us to move with a particular focus and to further develop specific qualities of movement.[36]

One idea was to layer anatomical information with metaphorical sensations. For example, Peake and I created movement inspired by the combination of heartbeats and the imagery of blood pumping, or the location of digestive organs with the idea of liquid or fluidity. Then, Wheeler would join us with the drum, by layering his own pulse to our movements with one hand and then marking the accentuation of Peake's and my movements with his other hand.[37] What these tasks revealed very quickly was that any pulse in our body was a living process which continuously changed with or without movements. While we engaged in our individual motion, the nature of our relationships as performers was determined by our collective effort of perception of these changes. Similarly, we practised with modifying our visual perspective of each other with the use of exercises derived from somatic practices.[38] We alternated between focusing intensely on something very specific in the space and expanding the field of vision by reversing the gaze out almost to the point of closing the eyes. The instruction was complicated by two simultaneous tasks of noticing how the weight was distributed down through the body and observing differences between each cycle of breath. The aim here was to build sensorial information from noticing patterns of changes. In the context of our interdisciplinary practice, this attention-training was based on questioning how visual information interferes with our collective actions while being connected to the changing sensations of our individual rhythm of breath.

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[36] See, for example, Colin, Peake & Wheeler, *Rhythmic Trialogue* (05:50-07:50).
[37] *Rhythmic Trialogue*. Rehearsal session: Clip 2. The reader should note that in more general terms, this clip shows a process of structured improvisation (the practitioners are working from individual scored movement which is then being explored in improvisation).
[38] This particular exercise is an adaption from Rolfing movement practice which I was then studying with Giovanni Felicioni, teacher of Rolfing® Structural Integration. See Giovanni Felicioni, 'Rolfing® & Yoga', <http://www.rolfing-yoga.com> [accessed on 12 January 2014].

Another example of attention training used during our creative process was the scoring of silence (adapted from John Cage's *4'33)*. The idea of this improvisation was to individually record with the use of pen and paper what we heard during four minutes and thirty-three seconds of silence. We then explored with layering the three scores as a map for the following movement and drum improvisation. As with the observation of our patterns of changes, this layering of perceptions tended to bring to the fore of our attention a sense of multiplicity which is here expressed through the mutual interference of our variation of changes. While these exercises are used, arguably, more towards preparing for performance than in performance itself, they account for the development of a collaborative perception in performance practice which operates as a collective effort of attention to track changes of sensation in the body – and arguably, again, this collective effort of attention will be perceived as such, and variously interpreted, by spectators.

This concept of collaborative perception can be placed alongside the idea of *collaborative emergence* as theorised by Laura Cull. In her discussion on the work of Chicago-based group *Goat Island*, Cull draws on the Deleuzian concept of emergence to define their collaborative performance as 'a field of emergence' in which the bodies of the performers are not linked to 'a self-coincidence' but are rather bound to a 'presence in passing'.[39] Quoting Massumi, Cull further describes this presence, 'as the immediacy of a body '"to its own indeterminacy (its openness to an elsewhere and otherwise than it is, in any here and now)"'.[40] It is this transient aspect of presence in performance which I retrospectively speculate to be the source of the enhanced sense of difference and multiplicity felt during the rehearsal sessions. While engaged in complex relational tasks, our practice became a field of emergence in which our bodies did not coincide with themselves in a present moment. On the contrary, the distribution of our attention across the range of our improvisation enabled the emergence of a collaborative perception grounded in the experience of the immediacy of our body to be opened to, 'an elsewhere and otherwise than it is, in any here and now'.[41] Distributing attention through collaborative perception in performance practice points to collective thinking processes that cannot be articulated on the level of an individual and fixed self. Such processes facilitate the experience of open-

[39] Laura Cull, 'Confronting "emergence" with Deleuze and Goat Island: an interdisciplinary experiment', (2008), 1-7 <http://www.academia.edu/208414/Confronting_emergence_with_ Deleuze_ and_Goat_Island_an_interdisciplinary_experiment> [accessed on 2 March 2015] (p. 7).
[40] Ibid.
[41] Massumi, *Parables*, p. 5.

ended, multiple and parallel behaviours, which are here embedded in our practice.

Moreover, if we return to Rotman's concept of the para-self derived from parallel computational processes, we find that the idea of 'parallelism' unearthed in collaboration 'foregrounds co-presence, simultaneity, and co-occurrence' and that parallel and distributed thinking cannot be predicted.[42] According to Rotman, collective cognition and collaborative thought are not only open-ended and heterogeneous, but they are also 'un-schematised and emergently surprising'.[43] Considered as a collective thinking process, the distribution of attention through collaborative perception in our practice of improvisation embraces the temporal indeterminacy of the multiple self and thus intensifies the process of 'becoming plural' inherent to collaborative practice in performance-making.

The distribution of the performer's self in composition

The concepts of parallelism and distribution in collaborative performance-making are also relevant in terms of their application to the compositional aspect of the piece. The degree of indeterminism resulting from the practice of a collaborative perception led to particular compositional strategies. Our strategies were also informed by the intention to produce a site-sensitive work adaptable to the theme of 'Atmosphere and Spaces' as chosen by the curator of the performance improvisation platform at Siobhan Davies Studios.

I have defined a number of parameters which influenced my compositional choices:

- The curator's theme: "Atmospheres and Spaces"
- The venue: the roof studio at Siobhan Davies Studios
- The performance slot: twenty minutes
- The anticipated 'absence' of Peake

While these conditions were known to myself and to my collaborators from the outset, as the initiator of the project my role in the group shifted mid-way through the creative process. From an exploratory phase, the collaborative process moved onto a compositional phase in which I was leading rehearsal sessions to organise performance material. My intention was to create a choreographic structure whereby the constraints of space, time and bodies would enable a distribution of relationships in the performance between the performers and the audience members and between the performers themselves. The piece was composed of seven sequences of variable length which developed successively in

[42] Rotman, *Beside Ourselves,* p. 83.
[43] Ibid., p. 92.

conjunction with a progressive change of light from black out to house light. The first section began as follows:

The audience members were prompted to enter the obscured studio and to place themselves in a circle around me at the centre of the space.

From one corner of the space, Wheeler engages with me in a duo through the manipulation of three metronomes initially set to the natural pulse of our hearts.

While the audience members were entering the space, Wheeler and I progressively transformed the palpitation sound into a mechanical rhythm.

Our beats overlap and accelerate to a maximum speed and terminate in unison in the sound of a heart rate monitor flat line.

Wheeler hit the drum kit to perform an intense solo based on the tension of two contrasting ideas: affected and affecting rhythm.

For one minute, Wheeler's hectic strikes fill the space of

resonance and vibrations.

At the centre of a tight ring

of forty audience members' bodies

I remain still throughout.
While I could sense the visceral proximity of the audience, I felt my own erratic pulse, affected by the multiple sensations created by the impact of the sounds passing though my body.

A task comes to me: remembering

At the end of Wheeler's performance, the sound of the heart rate monitor flat line is still resonating

I think about Peake's absence

My thought is shortly interrupted by the electric mechanism of the blinds rolling up the windows revealing the flickering urbanscape of London by night.

I turn on the flash light attached to my hand and start circling around to invite the audience to take their seats at two opposite sides of the rooftop studio.

While hundreds of feet are criss-crossing the floor, I set an alarm clock to twenty minutes.

The projected image of Peake's hand appears on the wall diagonally to Wheeler's corner.

I lay down at the centre of the diagonal.

Six more sequences followed.

This descriptive version of the beginning of the piece attempts to account for a desire to set

down or account for the composition of our collaborative practice as a choreographic distribution of presence in time and space. As anticipated, Peake was not able to perform at the public performance at Siobhan Davies Studios. The anticipation of Peake's 'absence' became a constitutive element of composition of our live interaction. A number of her improvisations were recorded in the rehearsal studio; including the filming of movement and voice sequences and the use of modelling clay to imprint our interactions. Following different choreographic instructions, Peake's improvisations alternated between the forms of solo, duet and trio. In the process of filming, the focus of these improvisations was re-composed by the camera which sometimes frames only selected parts of Peake's body – feet, face, hands and torso. During the public performance, Peake's disembodied presence was distributed throughout the space of performance in six successive time-based sequences of projected images, still and moving images, voice recording; and in an installation of her clay sculptures.

Whereas in the rehearsal studio, the notion of resonance in rhythm was crucial to building the pattern of interaction of the three performers, the fragmentation of Peake's presence in the larger performance space of Siobhan Davies Studios helped to preserve the degree of intimacy of our interactions which had been developed in a smaller rehearsal space. This was particularly effective during the projection of close-up video recordings of Peake's body which were intermittently layered with either the sound of her breath or feet or voice. In turn, Wheeler and I interacted with Peake's traces of presence following the six consecutive sequences which when combined constituted the twenty-minute performance slot.

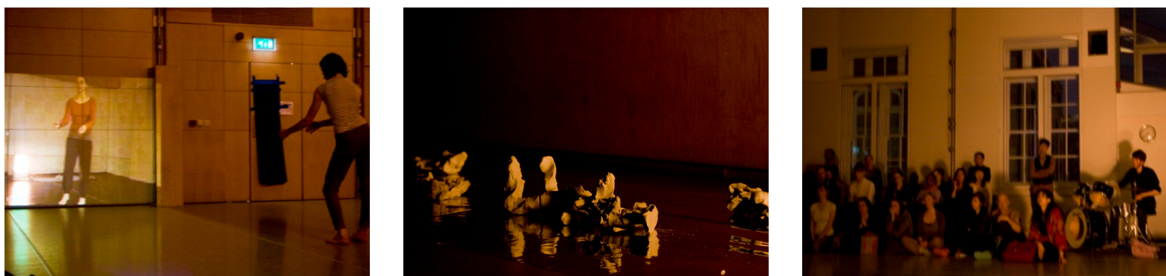

Fig. 5d *Rhythmic Trialogue* Photos: Dafne Louzioti

As a trialogue, the performance rehearsed the performers' negotiation between processes of temporal presence and the representation of presence and absence. In compositional terms, the exchanges between the performers are based on a number of parallel systems of

perception including the visual and oral perception of Peake's mediated presence and the memory of our rehearsed practice of collaborative perception. In other words, the trialogue, in the instance of the public performance, was constituted by a dynamic relation between the determinist nature of representation and the indeterminism of a collaboration of perceptions. This compositional structure aimed at further emphasising the distribution of affects embedded in the performer's experience of plurality. From a neurological perspective, Rotman offers an analogy between the ways in which affects and feelings are distributed throughout the brain and the distribution of processes intrinsic to most natural phenomena. He highlights that the 'myriad forms of simultaneous action and collective cognition that surrounds us' demonstrate a high degree of distribution. The 'behavior of crowds, workgroups, packs, networks, couples, families and theatre audience' are organised according to 'a distributed mode'.[44] For Rotman, the notion of parallel selves points to a 'belated recognition of the presence of collectivities' in an unexpectedly wide range of sites. Following on from this set of observations, I want to suggest that as a structured improvisation *Rhythmic Trialogue* operated as an assemblage of 'simultaneous action and collective cognition' – including disembodied and mediated acts – and followed a particular distributing mode of affects and feelings which I would further argue is bound to the specificity of the interdisciplinary nature of the project.

As I have suggested above, the relationships between the performers in this improvisation practice were bound to the rehearsal of a collaborative perception which followed a process of distribution of the attention of each performer. This enhanced the perception of *becoming multiple* in a collaborative process. However, this capacity of perception can be further examined in relation to the interdisciplinary conditions of this project. From the point of view of movement, the use of *BMC* techniques in conjunction with Peake's expertise in *Skinner Release* work emphasised the multi-directionality of the movement in the organisation of the dancer's body. The focus in these approaches is on the fluidity and capacity of the body to follow a multiplicity of impulses. From a musical point of view, rhythm is considered to account for the horizontality of music as in melodic lines. While in our practice we focused on the rhythm created by a change of duration of both sounds and movements, the ways in which we defined each other's presence in the improvisation was

[44] Ibid., p. 90.

bound to this horizontal plane of composition.[45] Attention to the resonance and vibration of our movements and sounds was key to recognising the quality of our presence as performers.[46] For example, Wheeler proposed a way to explore the perception of the duration of a movement. He highlighted the fact that recognising the phrasing created by the movements of our dancing bodies was challenging. He questioned the visual location of the end of a movement. It seemed that there was something he was seeing in the resonance of the movement that he could use as an impulse to his own action with the drum. He suggested that the visual recognition of a pulse from the bodies' shift of weight could be defined as a downbeat from which to build further impulses.

Whereas the idea of weight shifting is central to the understanding of impulses and multi-directionality in release-based movement improvisation, this approach to a kinaesthetic perception of each other's presence (which here includes the use of peripheral vision by each performer) constituted a viable strategy from which to set our patterns of interaction. Similarly, the use of mirroring techniques offered interesting ways to associate 'togetherness' in improvisation. I have previously discussed the potential to expand the understanding of individual movement patterns through copying someone else's movement. However, in this instance, the immediate reproduction of each other's movements led to the development of a duet between Peake and myself based on the ability to grasp a 'rhythmic deviation' in the sequencing of movements through concentrating on how one moment resonates in the next.[47] This interdisciplinary perceptual inclination towards the notion of resonance in performance improvisation was a constitutive element in the development of our collaborative perception which is here

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[45] Deleuze and Guattari developed the concept of a 'plane of immanence' which is useful here to account for the horizontal plane of composition. 'There are only relations of movements and rest, speed and slowness between unformed elements, or at least between elements that are relatively unformed, molecules and particles of all kinds. There are only haeceeities, affects, subjectless, individuations that constitute collective assemblage. Nothing develops but things arrive late or early, and form this or that assemblage depending on their compositions of speed. Nothing subjectifies but haeceeities form according to composition to nonsubjectified power of affects. We call that a plane of immanence'. Deleuze & Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 293-94.
[46] The reader is again directed to *Rhythmic Trialogue*, Rehearsal session: Clip 1, where the practitioners can be seen to be engaging with and working through these ideas.
[47] I borrow this term from choreographer Kim Brandstrup whose choreographic research illuminates the dancer's analytical skills in specific duet tasks. Brandstrup compares these skills to those of a musician: 'It strikes me that a dancer's specialised sense of the duration of motion and sound in space and time is an analytic competence, in the way that a sense of pitch is to a musician.' See Brandstrup in Kim Brandstrup and Niki Pollard, 'The Instant Before Choice: A Choreographer's Practical Speculations on Time and Perception', (2007) <http://kimbrandstrup.org/category/ academic_research> [accessed on 2 March 2015].

defined as a technique of kinaesthetic connection between the three performers.

The notion of anticipation in improvisation practice is central to both dance and music. However, as a strategy, Foster suggests, collaborative perception specifically emphasised the capacity of the anticipatory quality of attention to contribute to the decision-making process of the performers.[48] Anticipation, through attention to the perception of others in the space of performance, aimed at choosing the best possible strategy for the next action. Furthermore, choreographically, the quality of movements was not characterised by form (as might be seen in ballet) or functionality (as in task-based improvisation). Movement emerged as the *effect* of multiple qualities of bodily movement. Therefore, as an interdisciplinary collaboration, the nature of our trialogue was not a matter of form or content, but more a matter of a relation of forces. As I have sought to demonstrate, a dynamic relation between the deterministic nature of representation and the indeterminism of a collaboration of perception was embedded in a collective effort to track variation of changes in the body. In turn, this led to the development of a model of collaboration in which open-ended, multiple and parallel behaviours could be distributed through performance composition.

In this chapter, I have sought to demonstrate the potential of collaboration to make manifest multiplicities of the (collaborating) self. While both of these examples of my collaborative practice account for the idea of 'co-presencing' in performance, my reflection on my work with Woodford-Smith illuminates the notion that a specific process of appropriation in collaborative movement practice may reveal the collisions of performers' multiple and fragmentary selves. In my account of the interdisciplinary collaboration with Peake and Wheeler, I have focused on the notion of attention to foreground how a distribution of the presence of the performers can be considered – and arguably conceived by spectators - as a collective thinking process, with implications for eventual interpretation. Through this process, my collaboration with Peake and Wheeler was strategically located at the level of perception, thereby facilitating the experience of open-ended, multiple and parallel behaviours. Whereas contemporary subjectivity has

[48] Drawing on neuroscientific research findings, Foster in her research on kinesthesia in performance discusses the idea that, 'as we watch someone moving, motor circuits in the brain are activated that […] rehearse their movement', illustrating 'the mutuality of sensing and physical action'. Susan Leigh Foster, *Choreographing Empathy, Kinesthesia in Performance* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 123.

been defined as relational, first and foremost, the account of my practice demonstrates that collaborative dance research can contribute to a wider discourse of distributed subjectivities. According to Rotman, collective cognition and collaborative thought is not only open-ended and heterogeneous, it is also ‘un-schematized, and emergently surprising compared to the more transparent and predictable cause and effect logic of linear thought’.[49] Considered as a collective thinking process, the distribution of the self through collaborative perception in performance practice embraces the temporal indeterminacy of our multiple selves and thus intensifies the process of ‘becoming plural’ inherent to collaborative practice in performance.

[49] Rotman, *Beside Ourselves*, p. 92.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have explored the ways in which the shifting and unstable nature of co-labouring in contemporary performance can be considered as a field of practices interconnecting a range of economies of production specific to the discipline of performing arts. Through a practical exploration of co-working methods and the theorisation of my own practice as an artist, I have foregrounded the co-working body and its activities within its practice. The consideration of the socio-political contexts of different historical moments in the evolution of co-working in performance led me to focus on the role of affects within the specific set-up of performance production. In turn, this reflective metadiscourse has argued a number of points. Firstly, I have argued that collective forms of contemporary artistic labour need to be understood in terms of an ethics of belonging which extends beyond the democratic and anarchical ideas of the historical Avant-Garde. My research has insisted that it is through the practitioner's active and affective commitment to relational methods that modes of working together in performance can be expanded and understood. Secondly, and with reference to the impact of technology on working methods in contemporary creative labour, I have assessed the effectiveness of co-labouring processes aiming to resist alienated modes of labour and dominant modes of knowledge production in performance practices; and defined the value of co-working in the potentiality of a qualitative transformation of the material of performance production which is bound to the aesthetic thinking of individual co-workers. Thirdly, my research has supported the notion that the co-labouring self is symptomatic of a crisis of singularity in contemporary subjectivity. The entanglement of digital and computational technologies with our human experience produces an excess of multiplicity of subjects which can be embraced in the process of working-together in performance practice. In this thesis, I have advanced a concept of co-working grounded in techniques of kinaesthetic connection which situates the practitioners in an enhanced experience of open-ended, multiple and parallel behaviour. Emphasing the role of time in performance labour, I have argued that such practitioners engage in a process of becoming together through performance-making. Finally, my research has suggested that it is necessary to consider co-labouring processes in performance making as complex systems of production of knowledge. The development of a reflective metadiscourse has offered a multi-dimensional view of these systems and revealed different modes of co-labouring in creative practices. While all the practices discussed in the project have been concerned with renegotiating the logics of performance

and creative production, I have demonstrated through the articulation of their complex processes that a mixed register of analysis can contribute to wider discourses encompassing the practice of ethics, creative labour, and distributed subjectivities.

The reformulation of creative co-labouring through ethical engagements

The historical analysis of creative co-labouring pointed towards a wider enquiry into the politics of working together. It revealed a recent shift away from the egalitarian and utopian ideas which have permeated the theorisation of collective labour. While the aspiration to work together appears to be still rooted in a desire for social change, contemporary artists' sense of togetherness tends to be bound by a new ethical engagement, embracing the recognition of differences and the coexistence of multiple perspectives. The thesis has argued that this shared ethos amongst contemporary practitioners allows for a reformulating of co-labouring in performance in terms of a new ethics of belonging. I have identified that this ethics of belonging tends to involve a reformulation by practitioners of creative co-labouring whereby labour is grounded in an economy of affect (the ability to affect and to be affected). The research outlined a reformulation of five related areas of performance practice: performance technique, authorship, spectatorship, subjectivity, and production.

For Massumi, collective ethics can be understood as affective engagements with 'a coming-together or belonging-together of processually unique and divergent forms of life.'[1] In a performance practice context, I have argued that collective actions, when its conditions allow for the potential of an individualised qualitative transformation of the artist's subjectivity, can lead to the expansion of modes of working in performance. This is not to say that all participants in collective modes of working will experience a transformation, or that specific forms of personal development can be guaranteed by specific methods. Throughout the research project, I have examined, developed and practised a range of strategies relevant to collective practice in performance including structured movement improvisation, performance feedback and digital communication. While I have evidenced a range of artistic transformations through the analysis of artists' reflective statements and through the inclusion of my own reflective practice, I have not offered these techniques as a toolbox which would generate artistic improvement or

[1] Massumi, *Parables*, p. 255.

‘success’. Rather, I have underscored that these artistic methods operate within specific social and political contexts which change over time; and I have proposed that such collective endeavours in performance can be understood as representative of an ethical engagement by artists with the ever-shifting relationship between the collective and the individual in society.

With reference to the choreographic work of the JDT, I highlighted the importance of differentiating between the egalitarian ethos that characterised the workings of the group in the 1960s and led to the development of interdisciplinary and participatory methods of composition, and the contrasting level of dissension embodied in the Grand Union’s ‘collective head’ at the beginning of the 1970s. It remains significant that these two phases of the work of the JDT were overarched by an integrative approach to co-labouring which challenged the division of labour prevailing in dance at the end of the 1950s. Following Banes’ account of its choreographic processes,[2] I noted that the collaborative movement of the JDT – through the combination of experimental multi-disciplinary elements of composition, flexible roles of production, and blurring of genres of performance – led the dancers involved in the group to identify their own distinct artistic directions. While through time these differences contributed to the end of the collective, artists’ statements have highlighted the instrumental aspect of the collaborative labour in the affirmation of the work of the individual choreographers. I suggested that rather than an all-encompassing model of democratic participation, through time the dancers developed ways of working together which followed an ethical decision-making process based on trust (‘reinforced communication’), mutual responsibility between performers, and open systems of composition (improvisation). However, the crisis of altruistic behaviour overshadowed the short-lived and experimental collaborative process of group working and led to a rebirth of individual signature.

In terms of the more recent creative practices examined in this thesis, it is evident that the strategies employed by contemporary artists in working together place less emphasis upon consensual decision-making processes and more weight upon the way in which co-workers relate to each other through differences. As part of the case study of the international choreographic residency *6M1L,* I have shown that rather than an open call to work

[2] Banes, *Terpsichore*, p. 231.

together, contemporary collaborative practitioners established structures using a network of friendships based on affinities and differences. Equally, the analysis of the project *GTI* highlighted the affective commitment shared by co-workers through an engagement with intuitive practices and with reference to the notion of a gift economy. Throughout the inquiry, my examination of specific practical methods developed in chosen projects pointed to the application of the collective practice of individualised skills including relational techniques, open source methodologies and movement appropriation techniques. For example, the development of collective methods of training pointed to a negotiation between collective and individual artistic interests. Defined as a reskilling of performance mastery, these techniques are not aimed at developing shared artistic visions but instead – as I observed was evident as a tendency in the writings of practitioners involved with *6M1L* and *SWT* – the intention of the artists involved in those collective practices is to create personal tools to be used in individual projects. Similarly, the focus on open source methods allows for the negotiation of the relationship between collective and individual endeavours through its potential for creative and multiple commitments of the artists to both distinct and shared projects. Furthermore, the consideration of remote collaborations – for example via digital communication – as ritual practices of belonging demonstrated that the potential of these practices to remain open to differences and singularities could enhance both a dynamic collective process and the process of the individual 'becoming multiple' in co-working contexts.

These approaches, in conjunction with adoption by artists of an open source mode of sharing information and skills, tend to prioritise the subjectivity of each artist/participant. Therefore, within the collective process, it is at the level of individual subjectivity that a qualitative transformation is sought. Consequently, notions of collaborative authorship, while seemingly involving a certain decentralisation of the author, do not erase the individual author. Instead, the author is formulated in relational terms as an expanded and reflective authorship. Drawing on the work of Roberts and Melrose, and the practical exploration of the idea of appropriation in movement improvisation, this research undertaking links authorship in creative collaborations to a dispositif of performance production; and more specifically to two related areas of developing performance mastery: wider social practices (including the views of the arts community) and the individual

artists' skills to think reflectively through his/her decisions in his/her own terms.[3] In the context of this thesis, the deployment of these reflective skills confirmed the significance of the trans-discursive and trans-praxiological self of the artist-researcher, which was experienced both in physical practice (including in movement group improvisation) and in written practices including reflective writing.

As part of this reappraisal of creative co-labouring, I have also highlighted the ongoing renegotiation of collaborative work with audience members. The collaborative relationship between audience and performer was specifically discussed in relation to the work of the JDT. It was further considered in the practical element *TTS*, in which the movement composition defined *in erasure* led to consideration of the audience members as an imagined component of composition *in becoming*. The practice-led research undertaking rehearsed the idea of choreographic presence as the exploration of the movement of relational forces which include the physical and collaborative relation with audience members.

Resisting dominant practices through potentialising creative labour

The research project has acknowledged that co-working in performance practice runs the risk of being subsumed under a capitalist logic of production. We might think, for example, of Complicite theatre and the ascension of Simon McBurney as its artistic director,[4] or performances such as *Zero Degrees* by Akram Khan, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Anthony Gromley and Nitin Sawhney. These might be considered as examples of collaboration which arguably fail to fulfil a radical agenda of social emancipation owing in part to their alignment with the prevailing values of currents arts policies.[5] However, I have argued that contemporary co-labour can still subvert dominant forms of labour

[3] Roberts, *The Intangibilities of Forms*; Melrose, 'Jottings on Signature'.
[4] While Complicite's principles are often characterised by its collaborative mode of making performance (see Complicite, 'Information', (2015) <www.complicite.org/flash> [accessed on 3 March 2015]), a number of interviews and journal articles have prioritised giving voice to Simon McBurney's artistic choices, methods and accomplishments (see, Maddy Costa, 'A life in theatre: Simon McBurney', *The Guardian*, (2010) < http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2010/sep/11/a-life-in-theatre-simon-mcburney> [accessed on 09 February 2015] and Matt Trueman, 'Interview: the founders of Complicité', (2013), < http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/6afbab60-c14c-11e2-9767-00144feab7de.html> [accessed on 09 February 2015].
[5] On the conservatism of *Zero Degrees* (and further examples), see Alexandra Kolb, 'Current Trends in Contemporary Choreography: A Political Critical', *Dance Research Journal*, 45.3 (2013), 29-52 (p. 45).

(including freelance and project-based modes of working) in performance production. Drawing on post-Marxist theories of labour, the thesis has demonstrated that creative co-labouring, when bound to appropriate conditions, can alter predetermined and market-driven structures of labour. However, my research found fault with the autonomist's views that artistic labour is inseparable from productive labour; and that as the creative power of contemporary labour is constituted in collective forms, so it can be seen to escape a capitalist logic of production. Rather, I have argued that co-working in creative practices can only maintain its autonomy from what I have described as the contemporary alienating experience of time and space, if working processes allow for the transformation of its material of production, including a potential individually-experienced qualitative transformation of one or more of its co-participants.

In 2012 and 2013, I co-organised with Stefanie Sachsenmaier successive *Symposia on Collaboration* held at Middlesex University. While embracing a wider range of themes and opening up avenues for further research including in the areas of cross-cultural studies, disability studies and performance philosophy,[6] it was evident from these symposia that the notions of 'self' and 'time' remain central to contemporary discourses of collaboration. This thesis has demonstrated that the role of time in the transformative power of co-labouring is indeed crucial. I have developed an approach to the notion of time which is informed by Bergsonian ideas and is focused on the qualitative and sensual aspects of time.[7] In turn, this approach defines co-working in performance practice as an irreducible and unrepeatable event of relational potentials, from which expertise might nonetheless be developed. From this perspective, the analysis of artistic collective actions across different political contexts revealed a common aspiration shared by artists engaged in creative co-labour, namely the desire for an ontological resistance to the politics of time. For example, the ways in which Rainer, as one of the leaders of the JDT, positioned her body as 'the enduring reality' of the 1960s also resonated in Le Roy and Cvejić's choreographic critique of the logic of productivity of contemporary creative labour.

Moreover, in my practical inquiry, I have contributed to the ongoing critique of the self as

[6] For an outline summary of conference themes and proceedings, see Noyale Colin and Stefanie Sachsenmaier, 'On Collaboration Symposium: Introduction', (2012) <http://oncollaboration.weebly.com/index.html> [accessed on 2 March 2015]

[7] See, in particular, Guerlac, *Thinking in Time* and Deleuze, *Bergsonism*.

an individual entity; exploring the ways in which the experience of time in co-working performance practice can illuminate the notion of plurality in contemporary subjectivity. I have also reflected on the different experiences of time in my ongoing practice with Woodford-Smith and the short-term project *Rhythmic Trialogue*, developed with Peake and Wheeler; and highlighted the importance of the role of time in the development of a trustful environment in co-working. Furthermore, the movement improvisation practice with Woodford-Smith revealed the ways in which performers' memory – through its capacity to synthesise past, present and future – can lead performers to experience a multiplicity of selves. *Rhythmic Trialogue* demonstrated the potential for becoming plural in the process of composition in interdisciplinary co-working. In Chapter 4, I have also discussed how Massumi and Manning's 'creative chaos' in collaborative material and immaterial exchanges operates as a slowing down of the decision-making process facilitating the formation of a collective thinking based on the cross-fertilisation of ideas. I have argued that the economic value of this type of co-labouring is also difficult to define because its slower creative process can include delayed, iterative responses from the participants outside of the timeframe of specific projects.

While allowing different rhythms of exchanges to coexist and thus enhancing creative inclusions, I have argued that such co-labouring challenges the quantification of productive labour.[8] Moreover, my research undertaking has recognised that the self-organisation of collaborative structures can enable group processes to adapt according to the creative needs of individual participants. In turn, such a self-transformation of creative labour, I have argued, allows for the avoidance of predetermined structures of production. In this respect, this inquiry reviewed a number of strategies deployed by artists to co-determine actions during creative processes. These techniques included the use of choreographic scores, reading groups, collective somatic practices, group improvisation, performance responses, and digital exchanges.

The examination of the relationship between time and creative labour leads to the conclusion that co-working belongs to a specific temporal model of potentiality whereby the condition of new creative practices can be explored. On the one hand, it demonstrated that the potentiality of collaboration is characterised by the ongoing, un-predetermined

[8] See also Massumi, *Parables*, p. 45.

nature of its labour, and on the other hand, it has shown that the outcome of collaborative works - while being unimaginable individually - is never fully completed because it is always bound to future individual artistic practices, which will differ. This last aspect of co-working was particularly relevant in relation to the notion of failure. Each failure to individually complete an idea can be re-invested in subsequent work. In collaborative practice, the potential for exploration in future work is therefore multiplied.

In this research undertaking, I have insisted that the co-working labour of performance can resist dominant practices if the material of its production can be transformed throughout the creative process. I have demonstrated that the conditions of this transformation are bound to the capacity of the participants to remain open to differences and singularities. This capacity is likely to be unevenly shared. The notion of intuition - as understood in Bergsonism - was central to establish such an affective commitment. The potential of relationality between co-workers is such that it can lead to transformative and collective actions only if the conditions for an intuitive thinking are enabled. For example, I have discussed the notion that the conditions of transformation in *GTI* were bound to a shared ability to cope with the uncertainty of the creative process insofar as a dynamic process of exchange could be maintained. In this regard, the thesis has highlighted the necessity of a balance between the participants' affective commitment to a certain degree of 'ambiguity tolerance' and the need for self-organised co-labouring structures which enable participants' fluidity of thoughts as well as a shared focus of action. This engagement was also encapsulated by the proposition that in collaboration, relations, ideas and techniques could function as a gift. However, my inquiry has underlined the notion that the potential of contemporary collaboration relies neither upon a reciprocity of the exchange between participants (as might be expected in the gift economy) nor upon the elimination of self-interest, but rather that it is based on the ability of the individual participants to stage their different interests in relation to others - a skill that was defined by the capacity of *attuning* to one another.

I have also discussed the possibility that collaborative structures in contemporary choreographic practice may resist the economic parameters of productivity if the collective action of the artists involved can be transformed through time by the individual subjectivity of the one or the other. In terms of performance practice, this process was catalysed by a range of relational techniques, including collective movement training,

feedback methods and reflective practice. For example, I have shown that contemporary choreographers have maintained a critical voice towards dominant conditions of production by the collective re-working of performance skills and competencies. I have demonstrated that this reskilling process functions as a re-education in aesthetics and as such provides further additional production of value associated with creative and relational potentials specific to collaborative performance labour. With reference to a range of choreographic and artistic works, I have assessed the importance of the relationship between co-working values and the unfolding ontology of performance mastery; establishing that in modes of practice specific to performance mastery, each artist's '*singular ways* of seeing, doing and knowing'[9] the world constitutes – through time – the artist's thinking process. The condition of an effective collective action is therefore not only bound to the 'vitality' of the exchange between co-workers (cross-fertilisation), but it is also premised on the continuing ability of the individual artists to think and act in a state of becoming. If we return to Massumi, we have found that, 'belonging is unmediated and under way, never already constituted. It is the openness of bodies to each other and to what they are not – the incorporeality of the event. In direct channelling […] in becoming is belonging'. As an open-ended process, belonging 'is the effective condition of collective change.'[10] The individuation of performance mastery is one undetermined expression of a potentially collective becoming. Critically, the potential of co-labouring in performance is based on the potential of becoming together. In other words, the body-in-becoming, as this body, has the possibility to qualitatively transform through channelling the relational potential of '*singular ways*' of being.

The co-labouring self in the crisis of singularity

The range of conditions for the emancipation of co-labour in performance (including undetermined temporal conditions and affective engagement) points to the reciprocal value of artistic co-labouring processes as they relate to dominant modes of contemporary labour. In the argument I have developed in this thesis, the focus on performance mastery led me to emphasise individualised qualitative transformations in collective labour. In other words, I have argued that ongoing processes of decision-making, while implying a judgement of expertise by performance makers, operate in relation to the economy of

[9] Melrose, 'Jottings on Signature'.
[10] Massumi, *Parables*, pp. 76-77.

production particular to the making of the work which in turn – through collective processes – can qualitatively be transformed by the artists' subjectivity. For example, in Chapter 3, I have discussed how specific ways of working such as Le Roy's collaborative processes and expanded authorship can transform the logic of performance production. From a practical perspective, in Chapter 5, I have also highlighted how interdisciplinary approaches to performance making can enhance the expert knowledge of the practitioner, including the development of a heightened sense of proprioceptive, tactile, and visceral sensibility.

Foregrounding the significance of individualised qualitative transformations in collective labour should contribute to an ecological perspective on the politics of relations whereby contemporary subjectivities and identities develop in connection with others but in accordance with their own expertise and understandings of practice. In this respect, I have assessed the effectiveness of the event of co-working through the self-organisation of distinct artistic thinking (that might operate according to different logics of individual performance-making production and temporal modes) but that might more usefully be seen as networked systems whereby the same event can repeat in divergent ways. The research I have undertaken has signalled that co-working modes of production emerge in relation to general modes of production, reproduction and distribution but cannot be fully appropriated by them. In addition, following Spinoza's idea of affect, I have defined relational techniques as modes of existence. In Chapter 5, I focused on the plurality of the self that I have experienced as a performance maker engaged in co-working. The ethical engagement in co-labour – the artists' affective commitment to relational practice – can now be redefined to take account of the value attached to the multiplication of modes of existence (or 'becoming plural').

This research inquiry has put forward a series of arguments regarding the theme of contemporary subjectivities. In particular, I have returned to the debate on the individual entity of the self. I have discussed how subjectivity can no longer be considered as 'singular', or an 'integrated whole', but that the ubiquity of technological devices and digital environments enmeshed in contemporary experiences has led to the re-definition of 'human nature' away from the singular self towards the nomadic and multiple expressions of selves. In turn, as I have shown, the bleeding of a singular 'I' into the 'collective' potentially produces a phenomenon of co-presence. In collaborative practice, and as

demonstrated in my practice with Woodford-Smith, the process of what Rotman defines as 'becoming besides oneself' is enhanced. Whereas contemporary immaterial labour implies collectivist and open-ended forms of identities, specific processes of performance practice confirm the relevance of co-labouring for grasping the excess of plurality in operation in the construction of contemporary identities.

My research has demonstrated that co-working in performance can heighten our sense of self through continuously calling on a sense of recognition of our plurality. Moreover, as I have argued with reference to my own collaborative practice (*Rhythmic Trialogue* and *Stepping Besides*), co-working can lead to a decentralisation of the self of each performer; and this may create what I termed a 'junction' through which these selves may 'collide' in the act of performance. For example, the practical experience of this collision of selves – through the exploration of movement appropriation in dance improvisation – demonstrated the potential embodiment of an expanded authorship in performance. Furthermore, my practice with Woodford-Smith showed that specific characteristics of co-labouring embrace the temporal indeterminacy of our multiple selves. The potential of a slowing-down of the creative process combined with the possibilities of remote collaboration across space can lead to a reformulation of the technologies of the self. In this respect, qualitative transformation in co-working might be considered as an extension of the self, emerging through relational practices and through the sharing of a plurality of experiences.

In *Rhythmic Trialogue*, I focused on the notion of attention in multidisciplinary performance practice. I examined how the distribution of the attention of the performers can be considered as a collective thinking process whereby the collaboration can be strategically located by the performers at the level of perception. I have shown that the practice of these collective actions of perception had the potential to engage the performer/researcher in a rich and complex distribution of selves. I have argued that the temporal indeterminacy of selves in co-labour intensifies the process of 'becoming plural' and in turn reveals its inherent function to the collaborative process, and the individuals concerned, in performance. This was verified in practice by the development of a score whereby multiple and parallel physical movements could be choreographed and articulated – in compositional terms – by the distribution of performers' presence through time and space. Distributing attention and presence through collaborative perception in performance practice enabled me to identify collective thinking processes that cannot be articulated on

the level of an individual and fixed self. My argument has been that such processes facilitate the experience of open–ended, multiple and parallel behaviours.

In research terms, the idea of a trans-discursive and trans-praxiological self, as developed in the collaborative PaR element of this inquiry, allows for the reconciliation of the dispersed self of the artist/researcher. While the potential for interpenetration of consciousness between co-researchers stimulated their self-reflective skills, it is the use of different registers throughout the project that has allowed for the interaction of the multiple selves who have emerged during the research. Grounded in the relationship between the particularities of lived experience of practice and theoretical discourse, the construction and use of a metadiscourse revealed the ways in which the specific creative processes of collaborative performance labour can contribute to a wider understanding of contemporary subjectivity. This research undertaking has shown that far from being redundant, co-labouring in performance, as an intuitive practice, operates at the level of collective experience whereby other ways of being in time allow for the recognition of an unfixed subject and its potential to become plural.

Renegotiating the logics of performance production

The *prima materia* of performance labour is sensation. Hence, throughout the thesis, I have consistently focused, as lead researcher, on the performer's internal processes of perception. This has included an emphasis on the ongoing capacity of the body to affect and to be affected, and on the transformative experience of a composite identity. Sensation, as Massumi repeatedly demonstrates, 'is never simple'.[11] Throughout this thesis, I have demonstrated that at a micro level, the organisation of the performer's sensations is bound to a multiplicity of potential variations and follows a distributive mode of affects and feelings. That is, they cannot be located precisely in advance. In collaborative practices, the ongoing process of decision-making is complicated by the multiplicity of the relational potentials between the participants. At a macro level, these modes of working were defined as reciprocal modulated systems capable of varying the dispositif of creative productions. The different projects examined in the research undertaking have themselves functioned as a complex dynamic unity of co-labouring. Nevertheless, different apparatus of production and temporal organisations are linked by their intrinsic capacity for self-organisation.

[11] Massumi, *Parables*, p. 13.

Informed by a non-hierarchical ethos (evident in the politics of friendship and the use of open-source methods), these self-organised structures, specific to the discipline or disciplines, allow for a renegotiation of the logics of production by being modulated by the subjectivity of the artists – or the needs, experiences and expertise of the artists at the time of the making process. Equally, the development of specific conditions of production offers effective variations to the creative process including a modulation of time (delay, slowing-down) and space (digital and physical exchanges), and a re-working of performance skills and competence (reskilling).

This research project has highlighted the fact that the 'success' of these collaborative modes of labour, as complex modes of working, depends largely on the effectiveness of the interaction between internal processes of production (including the undetermined logic of an ethics of belonging whereby the potential of an individualised qualitative transformation is enhanced) and the dispositif of production. What the research metadiscourse developed throughout the inquiry has reinforced is that these relationships cannot be broken down in predetermined ways or from a singular perspective. Complexity, as Cilliers points out, 'cannot be simplified into direct relationships without losing exactly [the] capabilities of the system',[12] which here include the capacity to expand performance mastery and to resist dominant modes of labour.

Since by nature collaborative labour is constantly changing, this thesis has not proposed a model of practice for co-working in performance. Rather the reflective metadiscourse has presented an interpretation of the nature of this mode of labour in performance as a way to professionally engage with those aspects of performance which are of the greater significance for the practitioner-researcher. Through the juxtaposition and comparison of different collaborative structures, the reflective metadiscourse combined them in sequences that develop a narrative around the practice and ethics of working together whereby, in a perhaps more creative way, we can develop a wider understanding of the essence of performance labour. Questioning 'togetherness' through performance practice allows for the affirmation of an ethics of belonging in performance as an overarching set of values.

[12] Cilliers, *Complexity & Postmodernism*, p. 80.

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