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Unscripted Interventions: The challenge Tangled Feet pose to England's theatre culture.

PhD (practice-based)

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Declaration of Authorship

I , Katherine Joyce, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Abstract

My thesis has at its heart an interrogation into the practice I have co-created with Tangled Feet, a physical ensemble who use processes of improvisation and devising, and who make work which includes apertures for audience influence, often outside of traditional theatre spaces. I construct an argument that this practice, which foregrounds the body and its potential for kinaesthetic affectivity, and which privileges liveness over leaving a legacy, poses challenges for mainstream theatre historiographies and critical mechanisms which often fail to adequately include the embodied presence of the artist and spectator in the analysis.

I use other theorists to explore how a 'text-centricity' evident in British culture which arguably shores up existing power dynamics also propagates reductive binaries that ignore the body's capacity to theorise. I highlight how elements of performance such as kinaesthetic affectivity are often neglected or de-prioritised in the written text, and address this through modelling close analysis of my own and others' performance work with due focus on these elements.

In socially-engaged practice like Tangled Feet's, the ways that audiences interact with the work, particularly in public spaces, are of fundamental importance to the political context of the performance. With particular reference to Arts Council England's policies concerning the broadening definition of 'theatre' in the last decade, and attendant focus on 'accessibility', I examine the alternative value system that funding structures create around this type of practice.

By bringing into dialogue different theorists and disciplines, including a neuroscientific view of embodied cognition and my own detailed practice observations, my thesis signals what some of the potentials of physical performance might be if we can release it from textual expectations, and how it can challenge conventions, social relationships and political structures.

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Introduction

Tangled Feet is a devised, physical theatre ensemble, established in 2003. I joined the ensemble in 2007, and have directed or co-directed a significant proportion of the company's work. Since 2011 I have been Co-Artistic Director, with Nathan Curry, steering its strategic course through the UK arts landscape as well as undertaking the creative direction. The work Tangled Feet make is underpinned and guided by a strong ethical perspective and socially and politically engaged creative ideology. The resulting methods and modes of practice that the ensemble employs results in Tangled Feet occupying a very specific niche in this arts landscape.[1]

The ensemble creates work both inside and outdoors, in auditoriums but also in school playgrounds, shopping centres, public squares, on river banks and in nightclubs. Performances are created through a collaborative process, with collective authorship asserted. The starting points and schemes of meaning-making are usually physical, with any text as a lesser, secondary or absent element. Work is generated from improvisation and usually retains elements of improvisation or contingency in performance. Kinaesthetic strategies are selected and employed as important means of intended effect. With a high proportion of work made in response to specific commissioning circumstances, each piece reconsiders the audience relationship anew, nearly always taking account of the audience's embodied presence inside the frame. With a strong commitment to participatory practice, the work often blurs the line between audience and participants, invites the audience to contribute to meaning-making or performed material, and/or may include long-term and in-depth creative participatory processes as central to the making of the show.

As I explore through this research project, each of these characteristics of the ensemble's practice creates frictions or tensions with mainstream theatre culture in the UK. The combination of characteristics means Tangled Feet have few equivalents – we are part of an outdoor sector, but there are few outdoor companies who also work indoors. We are part of a (dwindling) tradition of devising ensembles – only a proportion of these make physical theatre, and fewer work outdoors or site-specifically. Many companies have participatory strands, but it is less common to find this level of integration between participatory processes and professional performances.

The atypicality of this practice ideology means that the work that the ensemble make is, in British theatre culture, often under-represented and little understood. Sitting outside the contexts on which

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[1]   A detailed narrative history of the ensemble and its ideology is included in Appendix 1.

most critical attention is centred, it is rarely reviewed.[2] With a deliberate policy of communal, shared authorship, it subsumes the contributions of a close but shifting network of artistic collaborators under the corporate 'devised by Tangled Feet', meaning it doesn't conform to normative conceits of authorship. The work doesn't have star names involved and deliberately avoids the elevation of any one contributor, meaning it sits uneasily against mainstream marketing strategies. Few of the ensemble's pieces contain a stable or finished script; none have been published. Many of the works, which occur in public spaces and may include large portions of improvised or semi-improvised material, are difficult to document. Despite twelve years' presence, more than 30 shows, over a quarter of a million pounds in Arts Council subsidy, yearly audiences that run into tens of thousands across the UK, and a burgeoning participatory offering which involves hundreds every year, apart from a recent and gradual inclusion on University syllabuses, the work of Tangled Feet has largely failed to register in contemporary theatre historiographies.

Why is the impact of this type of practice - which in my experience, is enjoyed by significant audiences and clearly valued by public funders – not better accounted for in critical practice? Why, in terms of mainstream theatre-making structures, does this type of practice feel (from the outside) as if it remains marginal at best, almost invisible at worst?

Although on the ground, a huge diversity of practice is happening and being celebrated by audiences across the UK, too frequently, British theatre is still perceived to revolve around scripted practice, which is authored by and features the performances of individual named contributors, and which occurs in major buildings. Critical discourse and standards of excellence still focus disproportionately on this narrow definition. This model is, however, under significant pressure, particularly as research which underpins the evolving policies of the major cultural funding body, Arts Council England, identifies the problematic and pervasive inequality of access to the arts that is shored up in part through these reductive definitions of 'excellence'.

Alternative frames of value exist; these often focus on the potential of these marginal practices to produce social outcomes such as community cohesion, engaging new audiences, sector and talent development, increasing access and reducing inequality. Whilst these are welcome, new strategies of critical assessment - which could replace the literary, text-centric models which have been so central in the process of defining theatre in the UK - are under-developed. As a result, the danger for some types of practice is that is they risk remaining hamstrung in an alternative sphere; their

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2   Outdoor work is rarely reviewed at all in the UK, an issue I give due consideration. Tangled Feet's indoor work rarely undertakes the standard three-week run in a London venue which is assumed to be the minimum to gain a journalistic critic's attention. Perhaps crudely demonstrating the lack of correlation between audience attendance and critical attention, The ensemble's *Tangled Feet Take To The Streets* season of outdoor work in 2012 was seen by 18,000 people – roughly the equivalent of selling out the upstairs and downstairs auditoriums of the Royal Court for a month – but despite this audience attention, not one critical review was written.

potential for contributing to radical, insightful political discourse is constrained by a critical failure to examine and appreciate the sophisticated artistic strategies they are using, and by the requirement instead to prove their social value to justify their worth.

This research project seeks to better understand the frames of value which are operating in British culture that constrain the influence of the type of practice which Tangled Feet might represent. At the same time, by investigating and building a body of evidence about how this practice works and what its potentials are, my aim is to add to the case for its significance to be better recognised.

A major premise on which my investigation is predicated is that the 'toolkit' we have at our disposal to understand what physical performance is doing and how is not as developed as the equivalent toolkit for assessing literary work. The result of this is that practice which *starts* from an investigation of physical interactivity and relationships is often assessed through inappropriate frames of analysis. Physical performance is a powerful means of creating new dynamic relationships between agents in specific environments (in and outside the theatre) and as such it is imperative that we interrogate and understand *how* human beings are able to affect each other and their environment kinaesthetically. Even as a practitioner making the work, experiencing first-hand how powerful these performances can be, it is often difficult to understand or explain what is happening. The kinaesthetic relationships in many physical performances are often very consciously structured by artists as central elements of the way the work communicates, but because little formal understanding of kinaesthetics and proxemics exists, these elements are often downgraded in importance when the work is analysed, discussed and studied. By bringing these elements - which I find, on a creative and professional level, thrilling and filled with radical potential - more clearly into focus, I endeavour to articulate a closer understanding of elements of the work Tangled Feet make which are not otherwise adequately accounted for.

The broadening of the definitions of 'theatre' by ACE over the last decade have had a very significant impact on the arts landscape, and part of my contribution is to provide a well-situated practitioner's account of this. One of the major changes has been a development in capacity and ambition in outdoor arts – and Tangled Feet have been well placed to ride the crest of this wave of change. Despite the uplift in investment which occurred as a result of 2007's *New Landscapes* strategy, in comparison with, for example, France, the UK's outdoor sector is still under-developed. There are still few companies in the UK with the capacity to make finale-sized work, fewer presenting opportunities, and (post-Olympics) little commissioning money available. Tangled Feet's 2013 show*, One Million* – a large-scale, free, outdoor performance which explicitly approaches a political subject – is one of only a handful of comparable works made by UK companies this

decade.[3] I have tried to take advantage, in this thesis, of the unusual perspective this affords me, and to bring a full account of this production into academic discussion. This project attempts to conduct a rigorous theoretical and technical enquiry into what my practice is doing and how it functions – on an individual performance level, in terms of the relations it engenders with spectators, and in the context of a wider arts landscape, against a backdrop of arts policy and its interaction with political pressures. Through doing so, I hope to intervene in ongoing debates affecting British theatre culture, to develop and foster a better understand the work we are making and its relevance, and to bolster the case for its importance to be more widely recognised.

Thesis outline:

In Chapter 1, my aim is to begin structuring the case, using theoretical evidence, that bodies can not only actively participate in the production of meaning and interpretation, but that physical performance practice can, through sophisticated kinaesthetic strategies, explore complex theoretical perspectives and contribute to developing political arguments. At the same time, I set out some of the cultural and structural biases which prevent us being able to clearly see and exploit these potentials fully and which sideline the capacity of the body in performance.

I lay some groundwork, mapping out briefly some of the problems of an inherent and pervasive 'literariness' which deeply affects theatre in the UK. It is not my aim to conduct a full analysis of the extent and scope of this textuality, but I conduct a brief survey into some of the influential theatre histories of the 20th and early 21st century, highlighting how these propagate an expectation that a play's thesis should be contained in its script or text.

I define two main problems with this literariness, which set up themes I develop through the rest of the thesis. The first is that the premise, central to much literary theory and critical practice, that thought essentially proceeds via language is fundamentally challenged by recent developments in embodied cognition. The second is that the disembodied and authoritative (and often male) critical voice which is a common feature of this text-centric critical practice often serves to exclude groups of people and sections of practice from the analysis, consequentially erasing them from the historical record.

In an attempt to separate out the problems of disproportionate critical attention paid to a play's script or text from the often inter-related problems of appraising physical performance using textual means, I switch from a focus on theatre to dance studies – a discipline which Tangled Feet's practice straddles. Here, I find dance studies also troubled by overhanging literary tendencies, and

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[3] Other examples include Wired Aerial's *As The World Tipped* (2011) and No Fit State's *Barricade* (2011) both of which have toured extensively (although the latter was created in France), Motionhouse's *The Voyage* (2012) which isn't overtly a political work, Periplum's *451* (2015) and Southpaw Dance's *Rush* (2015).

lay out how attempts to stretch literary terms to reconceive dance have been fraught with problems. I also explore further evidence for the ingrained biases which relegate body-based performance to a lesser form of knowledge and which refuse to acknowledge the contribution of the body, nor its potential to theorise. However, I also find a host of useful textual approaches and strategies to analysing physical performance which I take forward to use in my own performance analysis. These strategies include taking account of the spectator/critic's embodied presence, and a careful appraisal of the kinaesthetic strategies at work, both tactics which I examine in considerable depth though the thesis.

Having begun to progress an argument that the biases which lead to the sidelining of bodily-centred practice (and female work) are closely tied into wider issues of accessibility, in Chapter 2, I return to the issue of what – or who – is excluded from creative practice. Focusing on the Arts Council England's policy developments over the past decade, which are centred on redressing an ongoing and pervasive inequality of access in/to the arts, I place Tangled Feet's ongoing work into a wider context of funding politics. I look closely at research which illustrates what some of the barriers are to accessing arts practice, and also at where misconceptions about the perceived barriers restrict progress in overcoming them. Closely examining the motivations for and the impact of the *New Landscapes* strategy, which sought to develop outdoor arts in the UK from 2007-2011, I draw the conclusion that the Arts Council's 'rebranding' of theatre, to include body-centred practices including circus, carnival and outdoor performance, was a manoeuvre which aimed to increase the perceived accessibility of theatre by capitalising of the already-diverse audiences of these forms. Over the same time period, I locate a new frame of value being developed by our major funder, centring on the social value of public engagement, which was expressed clearly in 2011's policy overhaul, with its founding principle of 'Great Art for Everyone'.

This value structure, however, becomes problematic if we lack the tools to sufficiently appraise the nuances of that public engagement effectively. Accordingly, the second half of this chapter puts under the spotlight some of the fundamental qualities of Tangled Feet's work which are central to the ways we engage with our audiences – a commitment to 'liveness', improvisation, mutability and the ideological framework of dispersing meaning-making across a group. How can these qualities be defended, analysed, and their values established? Finding fruitful answers to this question in the work of Peggy Phelan, Philip Auslander and David George I use these theoretical perspectives to examine these difficult-to-quantify aspects of the ensemble's work, and also contextualise how these qualities create areas of tension in relation to a culture influenced by a capitalist ideology that demands evidence of return on investment. Can appraising these acts of relating in a new framework liberate and empower audiences? Can they help us circumvent the risks posed to socially engaged practice by the increasingly-imposed requirement to evidence social outcomes in

return for investment – which, as Jen Harvie argues, might actually play into the hands of a neoliberal agenda? (Harvie, 2013)

Central to these acts of relating which occur between performers and audience is the kinaesthetic effect. Motivated by a desire to better understand and articulate what I feel is a fundamental element of my practice, and building out of insights developed in the rehearsal room, I turn my focus in Chapter 3 to exploring in more depth how this kinaesthetic reaction functions, and how it ties into a larger picture of embodied cognition.

With an increasing use of aerial, circus and work at height, Tangled Feet have evolved a creative strategy of depicting bodies at risk in their performances, usually in the course of making a larger political point. How does a spectator kinaesthetically respond to the 'body at risk' in performance, and how does this tie into the political effect of these moments? I examine three different performances (including Tangled Feet's *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*) which use the body at risk in different ways, evolving in the process some proposals about how we are kinaesthetically responding to them.

Broadening out to think about the way that crowds function, working from a set of instincts and hunches generated from watching crowds respond to work outdoors and looking to find explanations for these in scientific research and theoretical development, I examine claims that cognition, rather than being a function that takes place in the mind, is an operation that is dispersed across bodies and the environment. I then turn my thinking to how, once these kinaesthetic relations have been accounted for and appreciated, they can be used in performance to social, political and narrative effect. How do these forces charge social environments? How can they be employed to underpin moral operations? How does physical work like Tangled Feet's, which often happens in public spaces, charge and change the places that we share? Such questions are vital to an interrogation of my own practice and how it functions. Finally, in this chapter, I conduct a close performance reading of Hofesh Shechter's *Political Mother,* appraising how this work employs strategic use of kinaesthetic affectivity to build a robust political thesis.

In Chapter 4, I attempt to unify the main themes of enquiry that have developed through the thesis, by means of a thorough textual investigation into two pieces of my own practice, *Inflation* and *One Million.* Both of these performances are explicitly political; both occurred in outdoor public spaces and were free to access. Making performance work, I contest, is inextricably bound with both the politics and the economics of the culture is it made in. These political and economic pressures have their ramifications on performance – but what purchase does performance have on political and economic structures? My analysis of these performances includes a thorough exploration of

the contexts they occurred in, which ties back into wider issues of arts policy and the social functions of outdoor arts as defined in Chapter 2. These contextualisations are essential in terms of answering the larger questions I have surrounding my practice and the culture it is part of. Can performance cultures and ecologies model, feed off, participate in and indeed catalyse cultures of social interaction, civic-mindedness, ethical consideration? What influence on social or political structures might they have? And to what extent are these proposals contingent on or connected with challenging the dominant values of the consumerist ideologies that permeate so deeply?

I attempt to answer these questions partly through an approach that analyses very closely the ways that kinaesthetic effect is used to create meaning in the work and to influence audiences. Drawing on Lakoff and Johnson's theories of physical metaphor, I dissect how these metaphors function in Tangled Feet's work, and how they can be seen as the building blocks from which we construct moral, ethical proposals.

Through this close analysis, I aim to model the type of critical analysis I have been advocating and which I propose is currently limited in relation to physical practice, and almost absent in relation to outdoor work. In doing so, I aim to add to a small body of work which thoroughly interrogates the practice currently occurring in the UK, which better understands and articulates the sophisticated embodied techniques such practice uses to create powerful effects on audiences, and the ways in which this work, supports and subverts various expectations placed on it by funders, commissioners and other influential agents with a vested interest in the social interplay in our public spaces.

The practice element of this thesis: *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air, Inflation* and *One Million.*

This thesis has been produced during the period 2010-2016, with periods of academic research occurring alongside the production activity that I have been involved in over the same period. My practice has guided the direction of my reading and written theorising, and likewise, the development of the arguments put forward in this dissertation have significantly influenced the direction of my work with the ensemble.

The truest statement of position would be to say that all the works I have directed with the ensemble since 2007 inform this research project. However, the three major performance works which tie most closely into the ideas explored in this investigation, and which have most significantly and directly contributed to the development of my thinking and practice and should thus be considered as part of this thesis are *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*, made in 2011 and revisited/toured in 2012, 2012's *Inflation*, also toured with a different cast in 2013, and large-scale spectacle *One Million,* created in 2013 and remounted in 2014. Because so many of Tangled Feet's other works are reference points here in terms of my own discoveries, throughout the thesis I have referenced many of them and built them into arguments. All of Tangled Feet's work to date is archived to some degree on our website: www.tangledfeet.com/productions.

All That Is Solid, Inflation and *One Million* should all be considered in their broader context as pieces of work which made up a larger outdoor season, *Tangled Feet Take To The Streets. Take To The Streets* which was first created in summer 2012 and repeated with different performances in 2013, was an entirely new model of touring, the only 'season' of outdoor work produced by a company in the UK currently to our knowledge. As well as the performances, *Take To The Streets* integrated a participation programme and an innovate online 'hub', Tangled Streets (www.tangledstreets.com) which were designed, according to the ensemble's philosophical principles of shared authorship and 'opensource' creative practice, to involve many others in the making and discussing of the work and the issues at the heart of it.[4]

The process of creating *All That Is Solid* was the catalyst for a significant development in my thinking about the body at risk, and its attendant kinaesthetic effect and how that might be employed in an artwork, which is the backbone of Chapter 3. It also stimulated my ideas about

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[4] A full discussion about Tangled Streets, the successes and challenges of this form of attempted online audience engagement, and how this might tie into the broader philosophical concerns about value, authorship and engagement would be a research project that would very clearly complement the thrust of this thesis. Because of the time constraints of my project, and because Tangled Streets research and evaluation is still ongoing, I have made the choice not to include it here.

employing physical metaphor in performance, a thread which I pick up in Chapter 4 and examine more closely with recourse to Lakoff and Johnson's work on basic physical metaphors and how they shape our moral, ethical and linguistic conceptions of the world. This investigation of the body's inherent instability, and what that instability can be employed to stand for, is further developed through *Inflation* and *One Million*.

Alongside these three performances, which are included as full video recordings on the DVD, I have drawn into the discussion the economic and political conditions that the work was made under, which have informed my learning process and resultant theoretical standpoints, and which I construct as indivisible from the performances themselves. This includes describing or exploring the performer's agency and creative contributions to the work, funding conditions, audience responses, and at points, situated observations of the performance industry and wider investigations into changing economic and funding cultures.

Note on practice writing:
In my practice writing, when talking about performers or other close artistic collaborators, after referencing them by their full name initially, I employ the convention of using their first name only in subsequent description.

The photographs which illustrate Chapter 4 are from performances of *Inflation* at Lyric Hammersmith Theatre in the Square (taken by Al Orange) and from performances of *One Million* at GDIF and Brighton Festivals, taken by Stu Mayhew, Warren King and David Matthews. The rehearsal room photos are my own. Model box images by Rhys Jarman.

Chapter 1: Ignoring the body: the problems of textual and literary strategies for physical practice

Introduction

> For me, the glory of theatre lies in the prospect of an encounter with a visionary intelligence or an enquiring mind ... in the beginning was the Word. (Billington, *State Of The Nation.* 2007. p. 399, 401)

> What if we allow movement as well as words the power to interpret? What if we find in choreography a form of theorising? What if learning to choreograph, the choreographer learns to theorise, and learning to dance, the dancer assimilates the body of facts and the structuring of discursive frameworks that enable theorization to occur? (Foster, 1995 p. 234)

Tangled Feet, an ensemble self-defining as 'theatre', are making work which often sits uneasily in a theatre culture where the genesis of the performance and the Cartesian 'intelligence' that accompanies it is (as Billington articulates) frequently assumed to be found in the script. Susan Foster's provocation (above), from my own perspective as a practitioner working in physical theatre, offers to unfold a wonderfully rich and liberating set of possibilities if her proposals were unrolled across not just the dance culture (which she is here referring to) but to theatre culture, too.

In this chapter, I undertake groundwork which is essential for understanding the context in which Tangled Feet are working. I begin to assess some of the theoretical evidence that bodies can not only actively participate in the production of meaning and interpretation, but that, through physical and kinaesthetic strategies, theoretical operations can be conducted and complex political perspectives explored. But I also bring attention to some of the cultural biases and patterning which *does not* allow movement these powers; which neglects to look for, let alone find, what choreography is capable of as part of performance. This initial focus on what is frequently *not* included in the frame of analysis is important in terms of contextualising the broad tensions which I weave into the discussion around Tangled Feet's work throughout the thesis: what the possibilities of this kind of performance might be, and the factors that currently constrain or challenge these being realised.

I very briefly sketch out a cultural landscape for theatre which has been construed by others (Harvie, Gardner) as bound by an overarching literariness and which (despite an increasing body

of robust work reappraising the relationship between theatre and text) is in thrall, still, to structures and frameworks which define 'quality' according to 19th century standards. I paint an overarching proposal, setting the scene of the challenges posed to performance (particularly marginal performance) by this dominant theatre history which is developed from and around literary models, frameworks and institutions. Tracking the common thread of this reverence towards the text over and above other elements of theatrical communication through some prominent 20th century theatre histories, I construct a proposal that an insistence on theatre's essential literariness is often part of a larger cultural agenda which is deeply respectful of value judgements entrenched in an inherited Western epistemological tradition. This includes the maintenance of a historiography which, as will be suggested, has evolved to exclude the contributions of women and minorities, which (in an argument progressed through Chapter 2) valorises the permanent at the expense of the temporary, with troubling consequences for performance, and which all too often is still underpinned by a residual Cartesian dualism which fails to adequately include the body in frames of analysis. For performance cultures that explicitly require the inclusion of the audience's body *inside* a scenographic frame, which deliberately re-author the proxemic and spatial relationship between audience and performer/s, with the aspiration of very specific political or ideological emphasis behind this reframing, a failure to examine our own embodied experience of this type of work as part of the critical response therefore means a large part of the intended interaction is lost.

Using Stefka Mihalova's 'Whose Performance Is It Anyway? Performed Criticism as Feminist Strategy' (2009) to focus on some of the patterning evident in criticism in which a (usually male) writer constructs a disembodied textual position which sidelines both female artists and physical practice, and play forward how this might impact the histories we construct. I look closely at one prominent example of mainstream theatre critical history (Michael Billington's *State of The Nation: British Theatre since 1945)*, finding in this text and its textual strategies ample evidence of the biases and exclusions framed by Mihalova and Susan Bennett. I place one particular example, Billington's reading of Sarah Kane's *Blasted* - a piece which, I contend, despite being a scripted work, carries much of the weight of its thesis in its physical and kinaesthetic strategies - under close scrutiny, finding that, in its focus on the scripted, textual elements of a performance, the reading lamentably fails to appreciate the sophistication of the physical arguments which are being progressed at the same time.

In search of some ways that textual analysis might develop strategies that accommodate physical practice I examine dance studies for what it can tell us about both the problems that textual strategies can create for a non-textual, physical form, but also for what has been robustly demonstrated that non-textual physical practice can do. The weight of our literary consciousness fundamentally affects how we conceive of human communication. Other, non-linguistic means that

we use to communicate with each other - like kinaesthetic affectivity, movement and spatial relationship, image - and the cognitive processes and intelligences that accompany these means are both drastically under-appreciated because they are so difficult to render in language, and crucially affected when we superimpose onto them the architectures of language and literacy. There are some ways in which, for example, 'movement is like a language' – but there are other ways in which movement is nothing like a language, and this distinction is at the heart of my enquiry. I find dance studies a rich site of both practical written strategy and theoretical possibility, and through this investigation I pinpoint techniques which I aspire to bring to my own written work accompanying my practice research.

A literary theatre culture

I pursue throughout this chapter the argument that British culture still harbours a text-centric bias – which Jen Harvie pinpoints in *Staging The UK* (2005) as 'symptomatic of an anti-theatrical – if not an anti-dramatic – prejudice, neglecting aspects of theatre that are material, embodied, physically expressive, and produced through the work of a group' (Harvie 2005 p. 114), which diverts resources and attention away from practices that do not conform to often unrecognised but very pervasive literary expectations.

Harvie construes the 'narrative that constructs British drama and theatre as uniquely and consistently literary' as one which feeds into and is informed by a larger ideological drive to keep British culture autonomous from European influence. In Harvie's reading, this text-centricity permeates not only attitudes and modes of thought, but also the structures and systems through which theatre is produced, with those things being indivisible from each other:

> ... the intrinsic literariness of British theatre is taken for granted not only as a result of theatre itself but also, importantly, because of the critical and material structures surrounding it and the ideological biases they manifest and produce. Through these structures, the apparent truth of British theatre as fundamentally literary is reiterated so frequently and often uncritically that it is reinforced and naturalised, producing potentially damaging results. (Harvie 2005 p. 114).

Evidence of this apparent literariness as integral to British theatre culture is all around us. While a full survey is outside the boundaries of this investigation, a summary situated appraisal is enough to recognise that a large proportion of British theatre work revolves around a text-centric making process, with the playwright's script commonly (though not exclusively) conceived as both the genesis point for the performance and the published archive of it.[5] This, as I chart in Chapter 2, is

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[5]   A detailed breakdown of work produced in England by category (New writing, Classics, devising, musical etc.) can

changing, in response to the Arts Council's redefinition of theatre which has physical and outdoor practice brought under the umbrella of 'theatre' precisely because research has shown it has the potential to reach a more diverse audience than the one currently engaging with more 'traditional' theatre practice.

This 'literariness' has attendant consequences for companies like Tangled Feet which don't conform to mainstream theatrical making processes, but also for our wider cultural identities, as Harvie argues. Harvie finds that while a range of practice occurs, the historiographies that are constructed around British theatre activity overwhelmingly portrays it as literary, resulting in a naturalised 'truth' of a British lineage of a literary writer's theatre, which doesn't correspond to the wealth of other activity that is occurring:

> Certainly British theatre has enormous and longstanding literary strengths, but paying grossly disproportionate attention to this aspect of British theatre to the neglect of others produces damaging results for the theatre's development, and therefore for the cultural identities that theatre and performance imagine ... it does not necessarily produce a cliché of British theatre and identities as cerebral and only verbally expressive, but it risks doing so. (Harvie, ibid. p. 113)

What falls through the cracks and is lost if British identities are thus imagined? In Harvie's analysis, through its defensive literariness British theatre can also be seen, problematically, to be promoting 'individual creativity, isolationism and anti-theatricality' (ibid. p. 116) – worryingly hostile values to an ensemble like Tangled Feet, who devise work that is collaboratively authored though processes of physical improvisation.

An alternative and radical history of devising, improvisation and ensemble work developing as strong counter-cultural trends throughout the 1960s and 1970s in England of course exists, and Tangled Feet owe a huge debt of influence to companies like Welfare State, the People Show, Joint Stock, Forced Entertainment, Theatre de Complicite, Emergency Exit Arts and No Fit State. Much exemplary work continues to be undertaken to map the complexities of the relationship between text and performance: Radosavljevic's *Theatre-making : Interplay Between Text and Performance in the 21st Century* (2013) is a particularly useful analysis which addresses some of the historical tensions between textuality and performance, and cultures of writing and devising. Radosavljević's calculated employment of the term 'theatre-makers' aims to dissolve some of the

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be found in ACE's *Writ Large: New Writing on the English Stage* report (2009). A sample statistic from this report (fig. 12, p. 61) illustrates that 81% of new work is writing as opposed to 19% devising – although the report notes that these categories are not entirely mutually exclusive.

historical divisions between different types of practice. Her position is that '(i)n the twenty-first century context of increasingly globalized theatre-making, we must recognise that the divide between text-based theatre and devised performance is *no longer* tenable; these methodologies increasingly inform and transform each other, although it is useful to gain understanding as to where particular creative practices stem from.' (ibid. p. 62, my italics) Her study maps out the historical evolution of this division which pervaded well into the 20th century.

While we may increasingly now (particularly in academic fields) see the divisions between different types of theatremaking as crude and irrelevant, these distinctions have not eroded in practice. From a professional perspective, palpable frictions between these modes has felt and experienced by artists during the years I have been practicing professionally through the early years of the 21st century.[6] These frictions are fuelled by residual hierarchical and structural assumptions which have accrued about both kinds of work. The habitual tendencies to assume the primacy of the written text in performance have arguably been reinforced by educational structures (which teach theatre as a branch of literature) and are pervasive throughout theatrical industrial structures and mainstream critical practices.

They are also fuelled by funding cultures: as Alison Oddey identifies in *Devising Theatre* (1994 p. 14-15) Arts Council funding which had facilitated much of the flourishing work of devising ensembles in the 1970s had significantly diminished by the 1990s in favour of maintaining theatre buildings. Tangled Feet, formed in 2003, have only ever existed in a funding culture where achieving subsidy for making costs has been an uphill battle, and where critical discourse – most often undertaken in textual form - is predominantly clustered around the more text-centric of theatrical practices, with a narrow definition of 'success' celebrated. Commenting on the 2012 Stage 100 list of influential theatre-makers, Lyn Gardner (arguably the broadsheet critic currently demonstrating the most curiosity towards theatre practices in a diversity of forms) commented:

> ... it seems to me that it all depends on how you measure influence. What the Stage 100 really highlights is that, while British theatre has changed substantially since the start of the century, and continues to change at grass-roots level at an astonishing rate in the way it operates, where it takes place and how it engages with its audiences, this is not reflected in the way theatre is thought about, written about or rewarded. When the gongs are being handed out, the old theatre culture which operates on models developed in the 19th century, and often tied to those old 19th-century buildings, still holds sway in the 21st

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6 One illustrative example of this antagonism in action would be the well-attended Devoted and Disgruntled satellite event of 21/11/11 "Writers and Devisers: Do writers and devisers have anything to say to each other, or should we proceed directly to violence?" The title of the event is provocative and tongue-in-cheek but aimed at addressing antagonisms which, from my experience as an attendee, were still strongly felt in 2011.

century. (Gardner, 'The Stage 100 doesn't tell the full story of British Theatre' Guardian online 5/1/12)

Authorship theory and the psychodynamics of writing

Our culture is deeply affected by the technology of writing, to an extent that (as Walter Ong has convincingly argued) to consider language and communication without understanding them through and in relation to writing is an almost impossibly difficult task. In his fascinating study of the differences between oral and literate cultures and the associated technologies which allow us to use the written word to preserve, offload, store and accumulate knowledge, Ong charts how 'more that any other single invention, writing has transformed human consciousness.' (Ong, *Orality and Literacy*. 1995 p. 77). It is writing, he argues 'which makes possible the great introspective religious traditions such as Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism and Islam' (ibid. p. 104), and the technologisation of the mass dissemination of writing can be shown to tie into other fundamental Western ideologies – not least, the development of capitalism. The written word – and later, the printed word - has for centuries been the technology that humans have had available to them to fix (even if imperfectly) concepts for posterity and to disseminate knowledge. At least partially as a result of this, both knowledge and economic value are shored up using language. Ong proposes that 'alphabet letterpress printing ... marked a psychological breakthrough of the first order. It embedded the word itself deeply into the manufacturing process and made it into a kind of commodity.' (ibid. p. 116).

The problems of the reflexiveness with which literates (writers, scholars, philosophers) use text and metaphors about writing to refer to other types of communication system ('movement is like a language', for example) is something I address later in this chapter. As Ong argues: 'when literates today use the term 'text' to refer to oral performance, they are thinking of it by analogy with writing'. (Ong 1982. p. 13).

The psychodynamics of our relationship to writing, Ong proposes, are very powerful, and very difficult to overcome theoretically, particularly through the medium of writing – the mode that much philosophical and critical theorising takes. One of the central tenets of Ong's argument is that the written text – particularly in its printed form, by its disembodied nature, cannot be refuted. This affects how plays (whether created initially by a writer as a written text, or latterly transformed into a final playtext and published for posterity) change from being mutable and flexible, to being considered somehow a 'definitive' version;

> Print encourages a sense of closure, a sense that what has been found in a text has been finalized, has reached a sense of completion. This sense affects literary creations and it

affects analytical philosophical or scientific work ...The printed text is supposed to represent the words of an author in definitive or 'final' form. For print is comfortable only with finality. (Ong ibid. p.129/130)

Of course, there has been considerable theoretical work undertaken in literary theory about the agency of the reader and the complex (and historically mutable) relationship between texts, readers and critics. Particularly in relation to playtexts, which are subject to interpretation by actors and directors there is clearly scope for argument that the printed playtexts can and do still remain permeable. It is worth paying attention, however, to the frequency which with (both in criticism and practice) the playscript is treated as the 'arbiter' in any dispute. As Katie Mitchell (who by any account has a sensitive, creative and nuanced relationship with the texts she directs) instructs in her 'golden rules', 'Make the text the mediator of any conflict. Position the text as the arbiter between yourself and the actor if there is any disagreement in the rehearsal room.' (Mitchell, K. 2009. p120). This is undoubtedly a useful practical strategy in many circumstances – but omitting to interrogate the structure of beliefs that underlie the reverence towards the playtext in the widest context contributes to a shoring up of the existing hierarchies of power that I go on to outline in this chapter.

I appreciate that strategies which others (such as Cathy Turner) have taken of expanding the definition of 'writer' - to include other dramaturgical practices as 'writing' and non-lingual aspects of performance as 'text' - do yield significant insights (see Turner, 'Writing for the Theatre: Towards a Radically Inclusive Dramaturgy' 2010). These strategies go some way to diffusing these entrenched hierarchies, and can also illuminate the complexities and contours of the distinctions that are made between different types of practice (for example, the often-crude partitioning of devised and text-based work) and the sometimes prescriptive ideas that accompany these distinctions.

However, an alternative strategy, and one which I pursue in this thesis, is to resist the co-opting of all types of practice as kinds of writing, annexing rather than expanding the writer role. For the purposes of this enquiry, I am not convinced that expanding the definition of 'writer' – the acceptance of a 'radically inclusive dramaturgy', to use Turner's terms – is particularly useful. Firstly, if we stretch the concept of 'writer' broadly enough to cover the different creative inputs which Tangled Feet assume to be jointly responsible for the dramaturgical creation of our work (choreographer, musician, set designer, director, performer) it starts to become an empty term. Secondly, it seems that however hard we try to be conscious of them, our text-centric thought patterns (and language patterns) will tend to emerge and converge if we frame these other practices (devising, choreography, proxemic arrangements) as kinds of 'writing'. (I go on to explore

this in relation to dance scholarship later in this chapter). As Turner herself acknowledges in her article 'Learning to Write Spaces' (2013), which contemplates her students' approaches to and treatments of various theatrical texts, ingrained expectations of how language works in the theatre can be hard to relinquish:

> ...where students have been taught to consider the playscript in terms of plot, narrative and character, it can be a difficult transition to consider the performance text in terms of concept, rhythm, juxtaposition, space and figure. (Turner, 2013 p. 115)

The resultant 'habits of analysis,' which lead us to assume the primacy of a textual score, can be extremely pervasive;

> It appeared that the framework of the written page itself raised expectations of the dramatic form... (the students) continued to imbue the text with an authority and a structural precedence that it does not assert. (ibid. p. 116)

Arguably, one of the reasons why the playwright still finds him or herself located so often at the epicentre of the theatrical event is that the history of literary criticism (the antecedent to dramatic criticism) 'has for the most part been the history of the glorification of the author.' (Burke, *The Death and Rebirth of the Author,* 2006 p. 26). We can trace many structures that surround the ways theatre is studied, published and critiqued directly from literature. Consequently, theatre finds itself affected by overhanging conventions and assumptions derived from literary theory which fail to take account of important ontological qualities of performance – particularly when they are applied to physical work - and which lead to the adoption of a critical value structure which fails to consider these qualities as an integral part of its reading.

Sean Burke's discussion of authorship *The Death and Return of the Author* (1999) is firmly situated in a literary world and with reference to a historical culture of print. As with any discourse which seeks to map theories of authorship which were developed in the field of literature onto the theatrical field, one immediately encounters a problem of terminology. To focus briefly on just one example of this complexity, in Burke's text, the terms of the debate centre on the relationship between texts, authors, readers and critics. At points the terms 'reader' and 'critic' are sometimes distinguished from one another and sometimes not. At certain points Burke also defines both 'passive' and 'strong' readers. When we attempt to map this debate on to theatrical territory, the equations become extremely complex. How do we define what we mean by a theatrical 'text'? Do we 'read' theatre, even if there is no language used? When discussing a theatrical work, we are often dealing with potentially both a written *and* a performance 'text', which would in turn have

readers and audiences; and critics who might be critiquing either a live text (from memory) or responding to a written canon, or any manner of combinations of these modes. This is before we even consider the huge complication of shared or 'corporate' authorial models, which would likely differ from company to company, and from production to production.

While a textual position can be constructed that is 'disembodied' (often for strategic reasons – as I go on to explore, this is often a tactic used in critical writing), the reality for performance is that our conscious engagement with reality in the present is always very much mediated through our embodied presence. This interrelation of bodies in space and the kinaesthetic relationships that occur between those bodies is often at the heart of the physical, devised practice made by the likes of Tangled Feet. Ingrained ideas about authorship and the accompanying theories derived from a literary heritage often fail to take into account this embodied presence and the ways that bodies in a shared space interrelate to each other.

At the centre of Burke's discussion is the notion, which tellingly remains unchallenged in his text, that 'all thought proceeds necessarily and by virtue of language' (Burke ibid. p. 14), an extravagantly logocentric starting point from which all of Burke's subjects construct their arguments. As I explore in Chapter 3, neuroscience and embodied philosophy are producing significant shifts in the ways we understand and conceptualise human thought as being inextricable from the body. If cognition is fundamentally embodied, how can it also possibly hold true that '[c]ognition and consciousness arise as intralinguistic effects or metaphors, by-products, as it were, of a linguistic order that has evolved for thousands of years before any subject comes to speak'? (ibid. p. 15). This Deconstructivist position is problematised by recent developments in philosophy posed by neuroscience, which establish our embodied experience as the base upon which language and metaphor are structured. From the point of view of the performance-maker, I hope to demonstrate that movement can convey as much thought as words can; the capacity for thought does not neatly converge with the capacity to link language to those thoughts. As I will demonstrate throughout the next chapters, discussion and theorising are entirely possible without recourse to language, and indeed, recent work is yielding information about how our emotional and empathetic reactions are embodied rather than cognitive responses.

Looking backwards: the shadow of literary theory on English theatre

In his study of the professionalisation and changing status of the playwright in mid-20th-century England, Dan Rebellato locates a fundamentally flawed 'New Wave' project of pursuing 'vital unities of meaning and expression' (Rebellato, *1956 And All That*, p. 79) which resulted in the promotion of the playwright as 'the fundamental creative voice in the theatre' (Devine, q. ibid. p. 77). In a flawed struggle against the innate iterability of language (to use Derrida's term) this

reverence towards the playwright and their text necessitated, in Rebellato's thesis, the blame for this iterability to be displaced onto other theatre workers – directors, actors, designers – who are consequently reduced to serving the text. 'The discourse at the Royal Court stage silences the complex process which has involved transforming one signifying system (a written text) into another (the performed text) to claim that it has directly performed the play-in-itself.' (ibid. p. 88) The changes around the professionalisation of the playwright delimited the creative expression expected - or indeed allowed - from other creative roles. Consequently, these roles, which were (Rebellato proposes) already in a state of flux, mutated further into a set of fixed relationships with the playwright at the apex, with the eventual naturalisation of a hierarchy which we can still see in evidence today.

A brief survey of some of the mainstream British theatre histories of the last century, the influence of which can be strongly felt in the ways we conceptualise theatre, reveals a set of common tendencies which elevate the importance of the playtext as one part of the theatrical performance at the expense of other, physical elements. These tendencies include the assumed place of the play and the playwright at the centre of the theatrical act, an under-examined notion that there is a purity or accuracy to be located in the text, with performance qualities often construed as troubling to the discovery of the essential theses contained in the literature, and a construction of the critic's role as an arbiter of value.

John Elsom begins his *Post War British Theatre* (1979) with an alignment between theatre and another literary art, poetry:

> WH Auden once remarked that the prime duty of a poet was 'to maintain the purity of the language'. My instinct … tells me that a similar duty rests of the shoulders of those who belong, even indirectly, like critics, to the theatrical profession. Their first task is to maintain the purity of the language. (Elsom ibid. p. 1)

After first discussing how the 'purity' and 'accuracy' of words can be retained as far as possible, Elsom extends 'language' as a loose metaphor to cover all the various sign-systems of performance, at the same time lamenting its deficiencies in comparison to actual language:

> The theatre has a vast vocabulary and a wide range of organisational methods, but it has always lacked that continual, rigorous and patient assessment of aims and usages which characterises verbal (and often less complete) languages. (ibid. p. 5)

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That Elsom seems to wish that other performance systems would behave as reliably as the word allows us to see the prism through which he conducts his analysis. With this rather restrictive and questionable prerequisite (maintaining the 'purity' of the language) being the arbiter against which the whole panoply of theatrical activity is assessed, it is unsurprising that Elsom's account of post-war theatre is structured mainly around plays and playwriting and generally dismissive of more experimental practice. Elsom is pejorative about theatrical movements, such as the theatrical Happenings of the 1960s onwards, in which language took a lesser importance. He reads this trend as leading to 'fruitful, diverse but eventually dissatisfying theatre' (ibid. p. 7) and identifies a 'loss of precision' as coming hand in hand with the 'diversity' (ibid. p. 6) afforded by these radical experiments in theatrical form. With a career that has spanned both academic and journalistic critical worlds, including a tenure as President of the International Association of Theatre Critics (1985-1992), Elsom's work is of some standing both in and beyond the UK.

John Russell Taylor's *Anger and After* (1963) likewise draws a link between theatre and other literary forms. He constructs the rise of the playwright, post-1956, as an inevitable coming of age of the British dramatist, a transformation in the landscape of writing where the play takes over from the novel in cultural space as the prescient prose form. Theatre in this framework is co-opted to revolve around writers and the plays they write. Even Russell Taylor's chapter on Theatre Workshop paints Joan Littlewood as essentially a broker of play texts, and concentrates mainly on the 'Theatre Workshop Dramatists' while underplaying the collaborative spirit of the theatre that shaped the residual texts, and her use of Laban-inspired movement training:

> Whoever was responsible for the revisions (to the texts) has simply arranged things in such a way that the author is shown accurately to the audience (ibid. p. 122).

In both these accounts we can locate the corresponding belief structure that intellectual rigour is conducted through and by language, not through the body. Michelene Wandor, assessing the same period of drama with a feminist perspective in *Post War Drama: Looking Back In Gender* (2001), locates an undeniable gender issue in the relationship between 'the critical establishment' and the 'moral voice' that emanates from theatrical writers:

> With the tradition that theatre (ironically enhanced during the years of censorship) is seen as a potentially subversive medium (the gathering of many in a small space to share an experience), the critical establishment seems to look specifically to its 'leading' playwrights to give public voice to social criticism, to original, moral voice. For a woman writer to take on this kind of public, authoritative voice means that in some

way, consciously or not, she will be challenging the dominant image of the male as moral and literary arbiter (Wandor, 2001. p. 134).

Whose Performance Is It Anyway?

What are the consequences of the prevalence of this disembodied (male) voice as a 'moral and literary arbiter' when it comes to performance? What is left out of the analysis? This skewed historical focus on the literary elements of performance are broad-ranging and can be shown to correlate with a host of other prejudices. Stefka Mihaylova's interrogating and broad-ranging article, 'Whose Performance Is It Anyway? Performed Criticism as Feminist Strategy' (2009) looks carefully and specifically at how dominant reviewing practices concurrently hamper performance and, through a shoring-up of power, marginalise and disregard the contributions of women, although many of her assertions could equally apply to other minority groups, and, as I will suggest, physical performance.

Mihaylova locates her enquiry against a background of an 'epistemological tradition ... the western modernist project of objective knowledge, transcending the contingencies of embodied existence'. She focuses her analysis on the historical development of theatre reviewing practices, bringing this alongside examples of feminist performed critique (Guerrilla Girls, Carolee Schneemann) to highlight how underlying structures of traditional reviewing practices can be revealed and the criteria for assigning artistic merit challenged. Her project locates a 'bias deriving from modernist epistemology: the perception that, as an embodied form, performance, compared to text, is a lesser medium of knowledge.' (ibid. p. 256). In her reading, an invisible hierarchy system needs to be recognised as being in place in which text is equated with knowledge, performance with supposition or suggestion. The concurrent binaries that are created (with, of course, one being necessarily elevated over the other) are mind over body, text over performance, knowledge over suggestion, permanent over temporary, and male over female.

Mihaylova's strong argument (and the focus of her article) is that historically, dominant reviewing and criticism practises reinforce all of these binaries:

> A careful consideration of the history of reviewing also reveals it as one of the practices through which the liberal categories of masculinity and femininity have been performatively (re)produced. Implicitly, reviewing helped associate masculinity with intellectual impartiality and representativeness, and femininity with women's presumed inability to overcome the constraints of embodied living (ibid. p. 256).

Mihaylova takes the feminist position that all critique is produced from a subjective, gendered

standpoint, but that the refusal to acknowledge a subjective position is a continuing strategy of powerful groups who instead work to create an authoritative stance that reinforces existing paradigms (and sites) of knowledge.

Mihaylova identifies several trends that have co-conspired to create a dominant climate that is arguably hostile to the work and viewpoints of women and other disenfranchised groups. The first of these is, as she reads it, the existence of a constructed – but entirely false – journalistic or critical identity as impartial, objective and authoritative. She locates this as developing throughout criticism's history, but notes that:

> even at the turn of the twenty-first century, the central assumption which has defined reviewing throughout its male-dominated history – the possibility of an apolitical and therefore representative and objective stance – continued to underlie the practices of many theatre journalists (ibid. p. 260).

This naturalised dominance of male historians and critics – which, importantly, purports to be objective – is frequently argued to be a fundamental factor in the skewing of attention away from female theatre-makers - or indeed other marginalised groups and practices which don't share an identity or value structure with this dominant group. This often reiterated standpoint is also explored convincingly and in detail by Susan Bennett's study 'Decomposing History (Why Are There So Few Women In Theater History?)'(2003). Focusing on female playwrights in Victorian London, she unearths substantial evidence of artistic activity by women that doesn't correlate with their representation in critical writing of and about the period, and cites research that found that, although this makeup isn't reflected in the historical picture of the period, a full 20% of the plays performed on the London stage in the Victorian era were by women.[7] In Bennett's reading, the 'frequency and density of theatre history's blind spots' (ibid. p. 72) can be attributed to the longstanding habits of both critics and historians.

Bennett's observations about the mechanisms which excludes these female playwrights from the record (because their work didn't fit the existing genre categories nor the associated values ascribed to successful male writers) can also be applied to the ways in which physical-based practice is often either ignored or belittled by text-centric or literary-focused theatrical criticism which seeks to judge the form according to dominant literary models and consequentially finds it lacking.

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[7]   Mullin, Donald *Victorian Plays: a record of significant productions on the London stage 1837-1901* cited in Bennett, Susan 'Decomposing History' in *Theorising Practice: Recomposing Theatre History,* p. 74.

As Bennett succinctly puts it:

> Theatre histories have, too, naturalised the hierarchies on which they depend. My concern is to point up some of those historical categories that underpin a selection of particular kinds of plays to constitute the 'best' representative work of any period and place, and how significantly our knowledge – which is to say, our lack of knowledge – of women playwrights is produced by and through that network of categories. (Bennett 2003 p. 73)

Mihaylova also evidences, from her inquiry into eighteenth and nineteenth century journalism, a habitual dismissal of female attempts to join the debate: 'Routinely ignoring women's willingness to participate in official critical dialogues, as writers or readers, solidified the perception of the "educated individual mind" as masculine' (ibid. p. 257). Depressingly, the claim that women are sidelined from spheres of public influence (as evidenced by their continuing, woefully disproportional numbers) is still being levelled at mainstream journalism and television today. As well as citing evidence of bias in producing and reviewing structures which leads to female artists being sidelined, Mihayalova brings our attention to performances 'authored' by males who strategically persuade audience to ignore the creative contribution of the performing body, and to perceive performing bodies only as a tool of the author, thus arousing and reinforcing the 'unthinking bodies' trope. We can also extend this observation to glean insights into how physical practice, too, is sidelined, by an institutional tendency to 'ignore its willingness to participate' in worthwhile theoretical, social or political debate.

State of the Nation

While it might be easy to suppose that the functions outlined by Bennett, Mihayalova et al are out-dated prejudices, depressingly, many of these tendencies can still be identified as operating today, particularly amongst the 'first string' critics. A close reading of just one contemporary historiography of the British stage (Michael Billington's *State of the Nation: British Theatre since 1945* (2007)) provides startling examples of a fervour for the literary elements of theatre overlapping with a dismissal of the physical – and, as I will explore in the next chapter, a thinly-veiled gender bias and blindness to nuances of social class - which seems surprisingly retrograde and unreflexive given Billington's long tenure at *The Guardian,* arguably Britain's most left-leaning broadsheet.

Billington's account is rightly celebratory of the richness of British writing, but his judgements become troubling when (betraying the patterning that Mihaloya identifies) he brings physical theatre into direct comparison with playwright-driven theatre and uses structures of analysis developed for literary works on devised and physical pieces, and consequently finds them lacking.

While he does praise a small set of examples of physically or devisor-driven practice, briefly mentioning devised theatre's 'long and honourable history often associated with radical protest', his attitude towards theatrical forms other than playwright-driven theatre is on the whole dismissive. Physical theatre, devised theatre and site-specific practices are lumped together in one unexamined entity, accused of being 'navel-gazing', 'mildly titillatory', and affording 'little illumination' (p. 396). Billington blames physical theatre's inability to convince him on the immaturity of the form. While he does have a valid point that material structures have constrained the development of this kind of work, he fails to see the corresponding lack of development in critical modes of analysis which have shaped and restricted his reading; indeed, he decries the idea of a separate frame of analysis for physical or visually-driven work as 'a meaningless ghetto' (ibid.).[8]

Billington misses the point with Kane.

This dismissal of the physical, embodied elements of performance, and refusal to include them in the reading is not only harmful to devised and physical work, but also to the physical and embodied elements of scripted practice. Billington's criticism reveals itself to be a mode of critical writing which often works hard to close down other readings of the performances it addresses, and often reads as though he expects plays to perform a function very similar to an essay, essentially setting up a hypothesis, discussing the thesis and then concluding the investigation. Tellingly, his language is frequently reminiscent of the courtroom.

However, as I explore in this section, placing one prominent example under close scrutiny (Billington's reading of Sarah Kane's 1995 play, *Blasted)*, when a proportion of a performance's intended thinking and theorising is conducted through the use of bodies, those body's actions and movements, and the kinaesthetic effect of those bodies on the audience, these tendencies can result in spectacular blind spots occurring.

In Billington's direct comparison of Kane and Pinter (one almost gets the feeling the two dramatists are rival essayists whom he is marking on their ability to effectively investigate the same theme) he has both set the criteria for success and firmly appointed himself the arbiter of value. According to Mihaylova, this exam-board assertion of the ability to judge worth, complete with its own intrinsic political dynamic is a troubling function of criticism, whereby 'the aesthetic value of theatre lay

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[8]   As a practising (female) artist, it seems clear to me that the influence of Billington and others of his leaning has obvious ramifications: the work that Tangled Feet make happens in a framework where Billington and his 'dead white male' peers (to use Nick Hytner's polemical term) still represent almost the entire 'first string' of mainstream journalistic criticism. As Bennett points out, 'we are attentive to theatre reviewers and critics because their discourse is formative in our understanding of theatrical production in a particular period, and their knowledge and production of a "theatre scene" often plays a significant role in informing what becomes theatre history.' (Bennett 2003 p. 78). These first-string broadsheet critics have a disproportionate amount of influence, not only on which productions are put on and which stay on, but on the canons which are constructed from our theatre practice, and the narratives of those canons.

principally in the dramatic text and that performance not only failed to convey this value, but could also impair the critic's independence of judgement' (Mihaylova 2009 p. 257). Here, in a chicken-or-egg bind which one might locate fundamentally at the crux of how our performance traditions have been formed, we see writing, which has declared itself the site of knowledge, advocating writing over other forms as the source of objective truth. The doubling, ambiguous nature of performance (which, as I discuss in Chapter 2, David George locates as its essential nature and strength) is, in this kind of mainstream and influential written criticism, a troubling and distracting quality which only obscures the 'true' crystallised meaning contained in the written text.

Sarah Kane's play, I contend, revolves around a series of physical acts designed to have profound kinaesthetic effect. Even in his retrospective analysis of *Blasted* (a piece which Billington, along with most of the other male first-string critics, initially failed to appreciate), Billington allows her work 'a raw visceral power' but ultimately, even here, with the benefit of contemplative distance, renders these physical manifestations of Kane's thesis 'shock tactics'. He doesn't conduct any kind of analysis of how Kane intentionally uses kinaesthetic affectivity, or how that affectivity functions performatively and politically. Billington's continued assertion is that 'the key question is whether Kane establishes an iron-clad connection between personal abuse and the larger image of civic chaos, and I am not persuaded she does' (ibid. p. 356). There is no acknowledgment that there might be other analytical frameworks, which of course there are, through which to interrogate Kane's work. Why is an 'iron-clad connection' demanded? Might not the instability of the connection she draws be a strength, not a weakness, of the work? The paragraph that follows (in which he recounts the specifics of Yugoslavian history to illustrate the weaknesses and irrelevancies in the connections Kane is forming) makes it apparent that he misses Kane's insights about incipient and deeply ingrained violence bubbling below the surface which, crucially, she constructs as fundamentally gendered. Concerned with identifying perceived narrative flaws, Billington seems almost wilfully blind to the larger symbolism of the bodies that Kane puts on stage and the physical acts that occur between them.

Billington's next manoeuvre in his text is to compare directly what he views as Kane's unsuccessful attempt to draw the connection between personal and social violence using largely physical means with Pinter's (in his eyes, successful) strategy of making the same connection using 'almost entirely verbal' means in *Ashes To Ashes*. Here Billington's analysis firmly conforms to patterns that Mihayalova identifies in male criticism: Kane (a woman) fails to make her case as watertight through largely physical means as Pinter (a man) does with two seated characters who barely move. He also seems to fail to notice the structural similarities between the devices Kane is using here to make her political point and the ones that he praises Pinter so highly for in his accolade of *Party Time.* The juxtaposition of an unspecified war waging outside a recognisably British room –

and permeating violently into it – is, in Pinter's case, a 'potent poetic metaphor' about 'the danger of letting freedoms slip away unnoticed'; and yet Billington does not (or cannot) draw the connection between the troublesome act of sexual coercion and abuse in the interior room in Kane's play and its metaphorical connection to large-scale physical terrorising outside which takes as its inspiration the Balkan conflict, where widespread rape was used as a weapon of war and systematic oppression.

Kane is talking here, from a situated, female position, about freedoms taken away by force. With her unflinching spotlight on the uneven power dynamic between the ageing hack Ian (who is also an armed British agent) and the barely-adult, emotionally adrift woman, she is – if we pay attention to her own account of writing the play - positing that there is something inherently warped at the centre of male-female relationships, which, when the surface is scratched, can escalate into war and social collapse:

> I knew I wanted to write a play about a man and a woman in a hotel room, and that there was a complete power imbalance which resulted in a rape ... and I switched on the news one night ... and there was this very old woman's face, a woman of Srebrenica, just weeping and weeping and looking into the camera and saying: "Please, please help me, help me. We need the UN to come here and help us."... And I thought: So what could be the connection between a common rape in a Leeds hotel room and what's happening in Bosnia?" And then suddenly the penny dropped and I thought: "Of course. It's obvious. One is the seed and the other is the tree." And I do think the seeds of full-scale war can always be found in peacetime civilisation and I think the wall between so-called civilisation and what happened in central Europe is very, very thin and it can get torn down at any time. (Kane quoted in Sierz, *Modern British Playwriting*: *The 1990s*, p. 199)

Blasted contains a deeply provocative hypothesis which importantly is pursued through its kinaesthetic and physical strategies as much as the written text; that there is a spectrum of male physical intrusion and power-holding over women's bodies, which has the coercion of a some-time-seemingly-complicit younger woman at one end, and the cannibalisation of a baby at the other. Kane is bringing to our attention and making nuanced, incisive points about physical power dynamics between bodies which occur across time and geography – a sophisticated physical tactic which, I also identify in my close kinaesthetic reading of Hofesh Shechter's dance work, *Political Mother* in Chapter 3.

Kane herself drew the conclusion that the male critic's wholesale rejection of the play was

connected to their resemblances to its anti-hero, Ian. In her recollection in a 1998 interview of the play's first night and hostile critical reception, she shows she is alert to the situated identities of the bodies in the room:

> I looked around and realised that the director was sitting near the front and everyone else was a critic. I think there were about three other women in the audience. Everyone else was a middle-aged, white, middle-class man ... And it really was only at that point that I realised that the main character of my play was a middle aged male journalist. Who not only raped his young girlfriend but is then raped and mutilated himself. And it suddenly occurred to me that they wouldn't like it very much. (Kane ibid. p. 199)

On one level it is lamentable that Billington seems completely unable to begin to unpick the theorising undertaken by the performing female body, and perhaps we might attribute this to his text-centric education.[9] Whatever its genesis, this particular example could be held up as one which perfectly illustrates a wider cultural tendency which Harvie pointedly identifies as 'dismissive of the material body and its meanings ... anti-expressive and misogynist' (Harvie 2005 p. 9).

Mihaylova, drawing the same connections as Harvie, identifies in text-centric and often male-dominated criticism a systematic tendency which feeds into and strengthens the alignment of writing/empiricism/mind in dominance over the oppositional qualities of performance/suggestion/body. Harvie, Bennett, and Mihaylova all raise challenges to the ways that we construct our theatre histories. The constructed authoritative voices writing comprehensive, linear histories are understood to be limited in their capacity to understand, cover or contain the complexities of the activity which has occurred and is occurring. Bennett's standpoint is that revisionist approaches are inadequate; what is needed is a total 'decomposition' of the architecture of theatre history.

What if we consider it dance?

Part of the problem I have thus far identified is a critical system for theatre that places disproportionate emphasis on the script and spoken text, even when (as outlined in the example above) these elements only partially house the work's underlying thesis - and, in the case of Tangled Feet's work, also often aren't a significant part of the methodology of creation.

Despite the many formal boundaries the ensemble's work crosses, most of Tangled Feet's

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[9] ".… although I recognise that theatre is a collaborative art, the book undeniably pays more attention to writers ... that is a reflection of my own bias towards text, which itself stems from an education that was geared more towards an analysis of language than to an exploration of sound and image'. (Billington ibid. p. 3)

performances are categorised as 'theatre' (or more recently, 'outdoor performance') by the architecture that we find ourselves working within – funding structures, critical structures, programming structures. However, two performances (*Undercover* and *Remote Control,* both of which I directed and choreographed) were created for and performed in a specifically 'dance' context: The Place's annual *Resolution* festival, ('the UK's biggest dance festival for emerging artists'). Presented as part of a three-work bill, the pieces were shown in a 'dance' theatre, to a predominantly 'dance' audience and reviewed by three dance critics as part of the festival offer.

Although with these two pieces we spent more time on the choreographical elements, neither were atypical for Tangled Feet in terms of the range of performance vocabularies they employed[10] and both used performers from our long-standing ensemble. 'Crossing over' into a different discipline was an enlightening experience, which served to bring into relief how distinct, in many respects, the spheres of influence and frames of reference are in theatre and dance are in the UK. Perhaps illustrating the marginality of our practice and its potential for siting in various contexts, *Undercover* was later performed at Latitude Festival in the theatre tent and at Shunt club night.

Having articulated the frustrations of an overhanging literariness in theatre and the impact of the attendant biases on the kind of physical practice made by Tangled Feet, I began to look at dance scholarship (a hitherto new field for me) and its relevance to my project. What can dance scholarship teach theatre scholarship about the inclusion of the 'material body and its meanings?' Undistracted by a script, can we find, in this field, some useful insights, tactics and approaches for framing and analysing physical performance that better take into account the situated, embodied cognition undertaken by the performers and audience?

I found that many of the problems of overhanging literary perspectives also applied to the dance field, and I include in my analysis a brief appraisal of how some dance scholars have expressed and wrestled with the difficulties of rendering a non-textual form in writing.

Some difficulties of dance scholarship: 'the body is dispossessed of its own capacity for mindful action'

 Although some refreshing changes are beginning to appear as part of what has been termed the 'corporeal turn', a survey of dance scholarship across recent decades reveals a pervasive and

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[10] Initially scratched at Southwark Playhouse for a bill of new pieces which fit the stipulation of containing just a man, a woman and a bed, *Undercover* was a duet exploring sexual power battles which combined some more precise choreography with physical performance, comedy and voice-over spoken text. *Remote Control,* a collaboration with designer Simon Daw and musician Guy Connelly, began as an exploration at the National Theatre studio into the possibilities of using technology to create interactive sound and projection which would respond to the performer's movements live on stage, and visa-versa.

repeated dissatisfaction and frustration by dance scholars with the way dance is often perceived, conceived of and treated within academic and critical spheres. Tracing and analysing the reasons for this could be a project in itself, and has been written about fairly extensively within dance scholarship, so I intend to reprise the main concerns here only briefly.

The manifold difficulties faced by the establishment of dance scholarship are set out by Goellner and Murphy in their introduction to *Bodies and the Text* (1995); in their opinion, dance was 'long viewed as unintellectual, intuitive and uncritically expressive' (p. 3), and for many years (in the US at least) dance existed in universities as part of physical education. The disadvantages to dance of established institutional structuring were pervasive; many reference libraries held no resources on dance, and housed those it did hold in the 'recreation' section. Moreover it took many decades to establish dance studies as a discipline in its own right, long after other comparable art forms such as film studies, art history, theatre studies.

Many dance scholars and feminist historians alike pinpoint an institutional prejudice based on a deeply entrenched mind/body dualism, which can also be viewed as a gendered binary - the male intellectual 'mind' and the female intuitive 'body' - a pervasive set of associations which I have already suggested as being inherent in some critical structures. Though the emphasis differs, one repeatedly encounters the analysis that a patriarchal bias combines and aligns with academic logocentricism to produce a climate which actively stifles dance as a rigorous and worthwhile discipline.

In Elizabeth Dempster's analysis, for example, dance's marginalisation within the academic frame is explicitly construed as a repression to be battled, and inextricably tied in with feminist political concerns. The 'voicelessness' attributed to the dancing body is analysed as part of a wider picture of women's under-representation as intelligent speaking subjects in society and culture;

> Dance has been represented as a secondary, derivative, diversionary and minor art, an art which does not generate its own meanings. It has traditionally been defined in relationship to the male-identified forms of music and drama, and its communicative potential, force and action are commonly misrepresented as dependent upon those relationships. In this (false) representation, the body is dispossessed of its own capacity for mindful action ... dance is relegated to the nether regions of an unthought and unthinking body. (Dempster, 1995. p24)

Tracing the development of dance scholarship from the 1970s to the present day, it is apparent that the centrality of the rising awareness and exploration of the politics of the body is intricately

interwoven with the impact of feminist theory over the same time frame. In *The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory (*2003)*,* Helen Thomas explores the evolution of what she terms 'the body project' (essentially 'the development of the study of the body in social and cultural theory'). In her thorough analysis she charts how feminism and post-structuralism have influenced this project, both being broadly critical of and challenging this ingrained mind/body dualism. Taking into account the many 'theories of the body' which have emerged, she charts a conflict in this sphere between the body's conception as 'socially constructed' as opposed to an approach which frames it as 'biologically determined'. Problematically, Thomas finds that the dominance of the former approach has actually served to reinforce the mind/body distinction, although she also notes some success in transcending this problem in recent work by Nick Crossley which applies Merleau-Ponty's theories to produce a new conception of intercorporeality (Crossley qtd in Thomas; 2003. p. 61).

Thomas's study highlights how deeply intertwined dance scholarship has been with other disciplines (such as sociology and cultural studies) and how influentially developments in these fields have impacted on the development of methodologies in dance studies. In its attempts to find and refine valid methodologies of its own, dance studies has borrowed and appropriated from other fields and approaches, such as literary studies and ethnography. Sally Banes' analysis of some of the similarities and differences between dance criticism and ethnography contains some astute observations:

> Both ethnographers and dance critics share a certain intellectual task: our role is that of a translator of sorts, one who translates, not between two languages, but between experience and language, between experience and, by and large, the page. (Banes, 1994. p. 17)

Sally Banes' insight highlights another significant obstacle which dance studies has to find a way of addressing: that basic problem of how to discuss, analyse, critique and contextualise a form which is extremely difficult to render in written language. Her framing of dance as an 'experience' highlights particularly well the vital acknowledgement that dance is a particularly complex art form to pin down for posterity - because it engages all senses simultaneously, because it relies hugely on kinaesthetic and proxemic relationships with its spectators, and because it disappears as it happens.

Its ephemerality is undoubtedly one of the major impediments to dance studies' development as an academic discipline; dance leaves no trace of its existence. Although several dance scoring methods have been developed, none of them has become universally used and accepted (as is the case with music notation). Choreographies were retained in the memory of choreographers

and spectators, and in the physical memory of the dancers themselves, and the reconstruction of a dance work poses numerous methodological and ideological problems. Helen Thomas provides an excellent outline and in-depth analysis of the attendant issues in the chapter 'Reconstructing the Dance: In search of Authenticity' which includes a detailed comparison of music and dance in terms of creating an 'authentic' performance from score (Thomas, 2003). It can be no coincidence that an acceleration in activity and in mainstream recognition in dance studies broadly coincides with the increasing accessibility of video recording technology. It is also interesting to note that the self-publishing capacity of the internet is leading choreographers to take charge of creating their own publicly-available archives. The recently published Siobhan Davies archive,[11] for example, represents a huge development in the field of dance legacy. However, as many dance scholars note, even video recordings are limited and inadequate records of dances for many reasons; video flattens and distorts choreography with its fixed viewpoint. Perhaps even more importantly, the kinaesthetic element (which I go on to argue is often a fundamental part of how a physical performance work's thesis functions) cannot be captured at all.

Ann Cooper-Albright elucidates this complexity – the 'slippery' and unfixable nature of dance - particularly well:

> Dance is a wonderful example of Derridean *differance.* Based on the motion of live bodies, *the dancing "text" is singularly elusive*. Any isolated movement or gesture is practically meaningless until it is placed in the context of what went before or after it. But that context is continually shifting in time and space, appearing only to disappear an instant later. In order to make sense of the dancing, the viewer must try to remember the flickering traces of earlier movements at the same time as s/he is watching the next series of motions. This ongoing process rarely stops long enough for the connections to catch up, and for this reason dance can be difficult to watch and even more problematic to write about. (Cooper-Albright, p. 159, my italics)

Both Banes' and Cooper-Albright's observations above prompt questions about what happens when dance is rendered in writing. Despite (or perhaps because of) these difficulties, many dance scholars have engaged creatively with literary theory, looking at how dance practice can interact with literature, and how reciprocal relationships can be wrought between these two fields.

Dance interacting with literature

Ellen W Goellner and Jacqueline Shea Murphy's project, *Bodies of the Text: Dance as Theory, Literature as Dance* is one attempt to draw together some of these engagements and frame some

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[11]   www.siobhandaviesreplay.com

of these relationships. The project was born, explain the authors, out of a conviction that fruitful exchange could be established between literary studies and dance, and of finding such exchange lacking:

> We have become convinced ... that a direct consideration of dance *can* focus and enrich many of the structural and theoretical discussions taking place in literary studies. We have become equally convinced that learning to read dance as literary critics read texts – especially given dance's unstable meanings, its dense net of reference to other movements, and its complexity of structured reiterations and variations – can open new areas for dance scholars and writers. (Goellner and Murphy, 1995 p. xi)

The resulting collection of essays is divided into four sections, arranged methodologically, which themselves illustrate the broad focus of the project. The first explores dance as 'text' and how dance may be 'read'. The second examines how 'dance *in texts* – fiction, drama, film*' can be read and analysed. The third section looks at 'dance as a vehicle for developing or explaining theories about writing', and the last at ideas contained within written analyses of dance.

The range of this project means that it is difficult to feel that any overarching analyses or conclusions can be drawn; rather, it is the complexity of the interplay between dance and texts/writing which is illustrated. The divergent approaches of these four sections, united into one project, are indeed perhaps indicative of the paucity of work concentrated on the interrelation of dance and literature. The issue of whether dance can be seen as compromised by conceding to the application of literary structures is not addressed. Some important questions are raised, however, by the strategies that the contributors employ, the content of their essays, as well as the relationship between strategy and content.

In Susan L Foster's contribution, 'Textual Evidances*',* for example, the writer explores the evolution of how dance has been conceived, through a comparison of two histories of dance written in 1682 and in 1754. The first half of her essay is in traditional academic written form, and constructs a fascinating analysis of how dance's perceived potential for articulation has changed over time:

> In Menestrier's time (1682) both practices (dance and writing) are conceptualised as a form of inscription. Each medium is equally capable of articulateness; each can represent many different things ... By the time that Cahusac writes his history, works and movements, while each forming the vocabulary of a kind of language, are apprehended as unique in their expressive abilities ... the body's gestures begin to signify that which cannot be spoken. This unique role for gesture prepares the way for

a complete separation between dance and text that occurs in the early decades of the nineteenth century ... So powerful is the attribution of mutually exclusive functions for dancing and writing throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that its historical specificity has only recently been questioned. (Foster, 1995 p. 234)

The timescale of the changes in the perception of the body and text that Foster identifies throws up the possibility of a correlation between the exclusivity of functions for movement and writing and, during the same time period, the rise of the author and cult of the individual that Roland Barthes outlines, in his seminal essay 'The Death of The Author' (1967). Barthes unequivocally locates the emergence of the authorial presence – coming into focus through time like a once-ghostly figure becoming a solidified concrete statue – as occurring hand-in-hand with the emergence of capitalism:

> The author is a modern figure, a product of our society insofar as, emerging from the Middle Ages with English empiricism, French rationalism and the personal faith of the Reformation, it discovered the prestige of the individual, of, as it is more nobly put, the 'human person'. It is thus logical that in literature it should be this positivism, the epitome and culmination of capitalist ideology, which has attached the greatest importance to the 'person' of the author. (Barthes ibid. 1967 p. 2)

The concept of a defined originator is of course of fundamental importance to capitalism. Ideas and products need to have an author or an owner, to whom appropriate capital is directed, and, in response, our legal system has been designed to protect the rights of these authors and originators, to support our economic system and to shore up value with those who, in a self-perpetuating system, deserve it. Is this historical separation, then, between the supposed functions of dance and text also a divergence of that which can and cannot be securely fixed in terms of ownership? Does the body's gesture – 'that which cannot be spoken' – also become something that cannot be owned? (This strand of argument is pursued in more detail in the next chapter).

In the second half of her piece, Foster goes on to challenge radically the assumed functions of dancing and writing by reading the two dance histories as if they were 'scores for dance,' 'as a choreographer might, looking for evidence of theories of relationships between body and self and one body and another that could be choreographed' (ibid. p. 235). She arranges the page into two columns; in the left she deconstructs and summarises, one after the other, how the two texts work in certain areas ('Constructing the subject, Defining History, Re-viewing the Dance.') In the right-hand column she proposes two imagined choreographies in which the 'textual strategies' are translated into dance.

Foster's experiment is obviously enormously problematic, not least because the choreographies she proposes are an imagined construction based not on the texts themselves but on her very subjective reading of them. Likewise, her plotted choreographies take a textual form for us – we receive her choreographies through her written rendering of them and not through an encounter with moving bodies. The choreographies that result from Foster's theorising are not 'translations' in the literary sense; text here 'translates' to dance, but her dances would never lead back to the original text (and I don't think she proposes that they would.) However, her process does open up an extraordinary and radical proposal of what the interplay between dance and text could be. She demonstrates successfully how exactingly theoretical choreography can be as a practice; how dances can be constructed, in the same way that written texts can, to serve very specific theoretical enquiries.

Foster is explicit that her project relies on the premise that 'theories of representation can translate, even imperfectly, from one form of discourse to another. That is, literary conventions that enable such manoeuvres as the framing and organisation of an argument, the delineation of a subject, or the indicating of authorial presence have choreographic equivalents' (ibid., p. 235). While the assertion that dance can and does consciously use these techniques points us towards the possibility of a more fruitful and complex deconstruction of the form and its potential, at the same time Foster also reveals one of the major methodological problems encountered by this kind of alignment of literary and choreographic concerns.

Dance is like a language? The problems of stretching literary terms to re-conceive dance

Foster's project, like several of the other essays in this collection, suffers from the attempt to stretch literary terms to help us re-conceive dance. Like the use of the term 'translation' cited above, some of the time, employment of these literary terms apply only in the roughest sense and does not stand up to interrogation. In other essays, the usage of literary metaphors strikes as reflexive as often as it is considered: 'Modern dance has clearly developed vocabularies and syntactical conventions' (Dempster; 1994 p. 30). Dance, elsewhere, over and again, requires 'literacy'; has a 'grammar'; is 'read'; bodies 'write' and are 'inscribed'; use 'lexicon' with 'eloquence'. While some of this usage must of course be attributed as a stylistic choice in a collection which explores the literature/dance interplay, I think it also reveals the paucity of alternatives; we don't have a way to talk about dance without falling back on terminology derived from literature. An alternative and equivalent vocabulary hasn't developed for articulating the complex ways

movement works, is constructed, reflects and communicates.[12]

Over and over again, dance scholars define how exactly we should view dance in comparison with language, and even the most cursory exploration reveals disparities.

Foster states that:

> Dance scholarship has hypothesised for dance the status and capacities of a language-like system. It has recast dance as a cultural practice whose discursive function might be seen as distinct from, yet comparable to language; it has reclassified dance as a system of signs. (Foster qtd in Thomas, 2003 p. 78)

Without entering into the semiotics of how those signs might be conceived as functioning, it is difficult not to feel this reclassification of dance as itself somehow systematic is actually quite limiting. Elsewhere, Sally Banes elaborates how signifier and signified might connect (or not) in dance:

> Interpretation is often difficult in dance, since movements, unlike words, have few combinatory rules that guarantee a clear, unambiguous communication of ideas. Dance is unlike verbal language, for it creates meaning only vaguely. (Banes, 1994 p. 28)

Perhaps because politically, her stance is to fight dance's corner as a precise and wholly cognitive form, Dempster would seem to be brought into vehement disagreement with Banes' assessment of dance's meaning being vague:

> Bodies and dances are not only legible, but comprehensible. I have chosen to borrow, in a somewhat illegitimate manner, terms and methods drawn from contemporary literary theory in order to establish the dancing body as a location of signifying practices and to foreground the reflexive relationship existing between the dancing/speaking subject and the dance/language. Because dances have no existence except through the body/bodies which produce and reproduce them, they can be considered as texts written of and through precisely inscribed bodies. (Dempster, 1995 p. 23)

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[12] The attendant question, of whether dance actually can be said to function like a language in any meaningful sense, obviously needs significant critical attention. My perspective would be that 'language' is used habitually as an inadequate metaphorical comparison for dance (as for many other things, including e.g. music) and with little attention paid to how language functions as a system.

So, for Foster, dance is a system of signs and for Dempster, dances are texts. It would take a thorough semiotic analysis to deconstruct whether their terms agreed with each other (which I won't attempt here), but what is immediately striking when these dance theorists are brought into dialogue with one another is that, despite all three commonly using language as a point of comparison, they don't agree on to what extent and exactly how this comparison is warranted.

Whether or not dance can be said to be 'like' language, the larger issue is perhaps whether it is in dance scholarship's favour to continue attempting to draw the comparison, or whether this actually reinforces a logocentric bias. An upholder of the view that academic logocentric prejudice compromises dance might ask the larger question of whether dance *should* be obliged to somehow be rendered in writing in order to earn and keep its place in the academic world, or whether the institutional structures of the academic world need to alter to accommodate the form. Arguably, as long as dance scholarship presents itself as eager to talk to the academic establishment in its own, existing, terminology, the development of specialised terms and theories for dance will be slow to occur. Indeed, there is resistance within the field to the entire project of using other, established disciplines to open and explore dance.

Reviewing *Bodies of the Text* in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism,* A.M. (full name uncited) writes:

> It seems to me that the goal of establishing dance as a serious area of study would more likely be accomplished by focusing on dance itself rather than dance *and* some other art ... Instead of borrowing on theories of literature, or relying on general theories of culture and representation, dance studies would be better served by attempting to develop theories that are appropriate to dance itself. (AM, 1999 p. 96)

It seems that in some analyses, the project of 'rescuing' dance from its conception as 'unthinking', pre-lingual and somewhat primitive has gone too far in another direction. As I move on to investigate more fully in the third and the final chapters, Lakoff and Johnson's theories of the conceptual metaphors which they argue underpin and *precede* language, present a new possibility for viewing all cognition as crucially embodied, and rendering much application of literary theory to movement which seeks to somehow 'translate' the body's fuzzy signals as severely flawed.

The potential of the body: thinking, discussing, theorising

Having set out some of the problems and issues that dance scholarship has faced in terms of establishing itself as a discipline and evolving its own theories, I propose to explore some of the

most interesting hypotheses and claims about the potential of the body that have emerged from the field. With its intense focus on the area, dance studies has offered some radical reconfiguring of how we view the body and its communicative capacities, with (I will later argue) significant ramifications for theatre studies.

Susan L. Foster poses a string of dense, complex questions in response to her conviction that the conception of what the body is capable of changes over time, including the radical proposal: What if we do allow the body to theorise? Foster's main point is the liberating proposal that our conception of what the body can do changes over time, which allows us an aperture to reframe it and question our assumptions – and indeed, as I have signalled, the 'corporeal turn' currently underway signals another significant evolution of our conception of how body and thought interact. Interestingly, in her analysis of Cahusac's text, Foster asserts that it is in the process of creating a '*distinction between the verbal and bodily* that the body loses the capacity to theorize' (ibid., p. 245, my italics). If we can identify such a distinction at work today, how might we go about circumventing it?

Foster's work does set out some interesting distinctions against which we might find a way to measure and assess movement's capabilities. Can we provide evidence that bodies can actively participate in the production of meaning? Do we see bodies as able to theorise relationships 'between time and space or individual and group', or are they only able to 'pronounce the fact of those relationships'? (ibid. p. 245) How can we prove whether or not bodies are able to theorise? If we allow that bodies can theorise, is there a limit to what they can theorise about? In the third and fourth chapters, where I submit my own and other's work to close performance readings I hope to demonstrate that bodies can both participate in meaning-making and conduct complex theorising on their own terms.

In her brilliant analysis of the work of Marie Chouinard, 'Incalculable Choreographies*',* Ann Cooper-Albright conducts a similar manoeuvre. Deconstructing the many layers and presences in Chouinard's performance work *La Faune* (1987), a re-interpretation of Nijinski's scandalizing 1912 ballet *L'après-midi d'un faune* (itself inspired by the Mallarmé poem of the same name), Cooper-Albright identifies in the dance a strategic technique of re-establishing the subjective positions of self and other,

> ... Chouinard "steps" back and forth between writer and dancer, faun and nymph, Nijinski and herself, body and text. As in the writing of Derrida and Cixous discussed earlier in this essay, Chouinard's performance of *La faune* crosses over these boundaries of 'self' and 'other' so frequently that the very categories begin to lose their

meaning. What is left, then, is the dance created by the movement between those places. (Cooper-Albright, 1995 p. 177)

In this, Cooper-Albright explicitly attributes Chouinard with taking and demonstrating a conscious theoretical stance which challenges both the links between biological body and sexuality. Taking the consequences of this theoretical stance further, Cooper-Albright ultimately proposes that Chouinard's work offers a robust refutal of Derrida's notion of *differance;* a challenge, in her undeniable material presence, to 'the slippery post-structuralist notion of differance which, in its most absolute manifestation, seems never to reside in *any body'* (ibid. p. 179).

I think Cooper-Albright's clear, convincing and well-argued use of Chouinard's physical strategies to throw into question some of the tenets of Derrida's writing is a strikingly successful example of how it is possible to bring written and danced evidence into dialogue with one another. What is notable, however, is that this success rests on Cooper-Albright's skill as a writer as well as her situated ability to contextualise the performance accurately. Her descriptions of Chouinard's performances tread a hard-to-achieve balance between necessary description and deconstruction in a way that appears to allow the danced work to re-form in our imaginations as Cooper-Albright experienced it, layer upon layer, uncluttered by unnecessary critical interpretation. She appears to have effectively 'translated' experience into writing, to use Banes' model.[13] However, we have to recognise that what she has translated can only be her (Cooper-Albright's) experience of the dance, and not the dance itself, which remains inaccessible to the reader. These are writing qualities which I endeavour to emulate in my own performance analyses in the following chapters.

Cooper-Albright's works hard to counter-balance her own authorial presence by taking the stance that Chouinard, in an authorial operation, has done the work and framed an argument, and it is her (Cooper-Albright's) job to lay this out for us. There are places where it appears she attempts to minimise her own presence as a writer by explicitly stating for her reader the respect she has for her subject's independently reached and deliberate position:

> *As consciously trained and creatively choreographed*, Chouinard's dancing body enacts a thoughtful engagement with her own representation which urges us to consider a more complex and experiential understanding of physical bodies and social discourse. (ibid. p. 179, my italics)

Chouinard may indeed theorise, but it takes Cooper-Albright's writerly skill to bring this theorising

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[13]   It would be an interesting exercise to use Banes' 15-point model of critical response (described below) to analyse Cooper-Albright's strategies (which, for the most part I find successful) in more detail.

into a frame which outlasts the temporality of its performances. It takes an extremely intelligent eye to be able to discern that Chouinard, for example, is engaging with her own representation, and an extremely skilful writer to deliver the performance to the reader in a manner which allows them to visualise it and engage with it independently of the critic/author's interpretation.[14] How, in this example, is it possible to separate how much of the argument as we (the reader) receive it is down to Cooper-Albright, and how much to Chouinard? This underlines the importance of the relationship between creator and critic, the sensitivity, attention and responsibility which is required towards the work in order to legitimately bring it into dialogue.

Including the spectator's body

Cooper-Albright constructs her strategy, as discussed above, with the aim 'to address what is frequently absent from contemporary theory – an awareness of the material consequences of the live performing body' (Cooper-Albright, 1995, p. 158). As I explored earlier, this acknowledgement and analysis of the embodied reality and attendant kinaesthetic strategies of performance are often elements which are neglected in the text-centric critical culture which surrounds UK theatrical performance. 'The body', Cooper-Albright wants to demonstrate, is not (as Derrida proposes in 'Choreographies') a vague, ethereal construct nor one which (as per his proposals) can remain genderless and unspecific. (Derrida and McDonald, 1995 p141-156).

If an analysis of dance must include an awareness of the material consequences of the performer's body, logically it should also include an awareness of the audience/critic's body. Here we can identify a discontinuity between text-centric critique of literary theatre, which, as I have identified, frequently adopts a removed, non-situated but purportedly objective stance, and dance critical theory, which has developed strategies for including *all* the present bodies in the frame of analysis.

Helen Thomas foregrounds how dance scholars are approaching the methodical problem of the necessity of including the researcher's material body in ethnographic study. She outlines the significance of the researcher including his/her own situated embodied knowledge and perspective in an analysis of other dancing bodies. Thomas looks at *On Dance Ethnography,* in which Deirdre Sklar takes the position that, from an ethnographical perspective, cultural knowledge, history and belief systems are embodied in movement, that 'the way people move provides a key to the way they think and feel and to what they know' (Sklar qtd in Thomas, 1995 p. 82). Sklar's methodology for her investigation into the Mexican ritual festival of the Tortugas included, in addition to qualitative movement analysis, participatory movement research, with the aim of gaining a 'kinaesthetic understanding' which would otherwise be inaccessible. Her conclusions maintain that this multi-stranded methodology did help her to access cultural information which came about as a

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[14] It is of course arguable whether a reader can access a performance to any extent *independently* of the critic/author's subjective reading of it.

result of her increased ability to contextualise. Sklar's perspective comes from the self-reflexive premise that one must acknowledge and identify one's own embodied cultural knowledge in order to analyse the embodied practices of another.

Extending this concept from an ethnographical to a critical analysis requires us to include our own body in the analysis of our audience response to performance. More and more performances are making demands that explicitly require the inclusion of the audience's body *inside* a scenographical frame, by re-authoring the proxemic and spatial relationship between audience and performer/s, and/or an invitation to physically participate in some way in the work, and there is often a very specific political or ideological emphasis behind this reframing.[15] A failure to examine our own embodied experience of this type of work as part of the critical response therefore means a large part of the intended or potential interaction is lost.

This set of tactics, opened up for me by this foray into dance scholarships, brings to bear in the practice-based research and my written accounts of it (primarily in Chapters 3 and 4). I attempt to use these tactics in my own writing, considering both my own and audience's situated and embodied responses to performances, and the means by which the frames of those performance have been consciously adjusted in the artistic strategy to foreground particular relations between people, space, thematic and metaphorical material. In Chapter 3, I pay particular attention to how kinaesthetic effect, so often under-appreciated in traditional theatre criticism, functions as one very crucial element of these sets of relations.

Kinaesthetic effect as an element of the work

Research such as Ramsay Burt's and Ann Cooper-Albright's makes it clear why close attention to the kinaesthetic strategies which dance artists consciously make central to their performances must be taken into account and critically analysed as a central tenet of the work in question. Burt looks at some different approaches to kinaesthetic relationships in his essay 'What the Dancing Body Can Do: Spinoza and the Ethics of Experimental Theatre Dance' (Burt, 2009 p. 204-216). Burt analyses dance performances which, like Chouinard's, strategically refuse to allow the audience to inhabit traditional subject positions in relation to the dancers. He uses Spinoza's discussions of embodied ethics to argue that such performances require audiences to search for new ways to relate to the performer's body (and each other's), thus creating 'new potentials for social and political relations that are underpinned by an openness towards affective experience' (Burt, 2009 p. 206).

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[15] An excellent example of this would be the Nic Green's *Trilogy* (2009) which, after explicitly addressing the way the female body is viewed through a re-exploration of key feminist texts, specifically asks the audience to include their naked bodies in the performance.

Burt structures his analysis around Spinoza's concept of 'affect' as the physical influence on emotional states of one body on another body. Burt contends that this process occurs through kinaesthesia, and goes on to draw attention to the issue of differing perceptions of this term.[16] Carrie Lambert defines kinaesthetic response as akin to identification in film; it is an 'empathetic experience on the part of the spectator' (Lambert qtd in Burt, 2009 p. 208). Spectators, in Lambert's analysis, empathise with the 'actual muscular feelings and physical sensations' that the performer experiences (Burt, 2009 p. 208). This definition would seem to fall short of being at all influential on emotional states as defined by the notion of 'affect'.

For Peggy Phelan, kinaesthetic empathy is put on a par with political and psychic empathy as being necessary for (and produced by) 'generative intelligence' (Phelan, 1993 p. 16). Notably, in Phelan's eyes, there seems little distinction between the emotional and the physical senses of 'moving and being moved'. This would lead to the conclusion that, for Phelan, a kinaesthetic response is inextricable from the emotional response that ties us into other human lives and which influences our ethical behaviour.

Various writers including Banes and Valerie Briginshaw (Briginshaw, 2009) have discussed the fetishism inherent in much dance criticism, which firmly places the spectator outside the spectacle, looking at the dancer as object. Cooper-Albright's in her analysis of Chouinard's performance, defines kinaesthetics as being a state of connection between performer and audience which, importantly, exceeds our normal voyeuristic/at-a-distance relationship with the subject:

> Physical and visible – visible in her own physicality – Chouinard dances at once for herself and for an audience. Her performance is thus both encoded in the structure of its own representation and continually – kinaesthetically – exceeding that structure. At times her body on stage is so clear, so classically beautiful, so much part of our cultural repertoire of 'woman' that *the image of her body takes over the audience's consciousness*. At other times, when the movements of her dancing body exceed the boundaries of her skin and extend out to affect the audience kinaesthetically, *we can actually participate in her embodied experience*. (Cooper-Albright, 1995, p. 164, my italics)

In her definition she shares a perspective with Yvonne Rainer, who, writing fifteen years earlier (and after a period of working intently on re-structuring the performer-audience relations through processes such as live rehearsals) was however less optimistic about the frequency with which this

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[16] I go on to focus in quite some detail on kinaesthetic affectivity and response as part of physical performance in Chapters 3 and 4.

phenomenon occurs. In a letter, Rainer commented that 'the so-called kinaesthetic response of the spectator ... only rarely transcends the narcissistic-voyeuristic duality of doer and looker' (quoted in Burt, 2009, p. 208). Rainer's frustrated scepticism could of course be attributed to the time of her writing, before the significant impact of Mulvey's work on scopophilia and the male gaze, and other influential writings about the reification of bodies and subjects.

Although they subtly differ, all of the above interpretations of kinaesthetic effect place it as something that brings the people closer to one another – a fundamental force at the heart of relating, and thus of performance analysis. A more thorough analysis of kinaesthetic response – perhaps one of the hardest elements of a performance to render in writing, and thus to capture for posterity – would seem to offer us valuable insights into how emotional and physical responses are intertwined. Do we access the subjective emotional states of others, to some degree, physically? If so, then the ramifications for how we understand and critique physical theatre – a form that often structures the communication of characters' inner lives and emotional tensions predominantly through their bodies, rather than through the words they speak - are extremely significant. In Chapter 3 I focus in depth on kinaesthetic affectivity and how we can potentially harness it as theatre makers, proposing that we need to revise the way we approach physical theatre with new strategies that include an in-depth, nuanced examination of our own kinaesthetic responses to the performance. How do we understand our kinaesthetic responses? How can we analyse and articulate how they work? How do we communicate them to others?

A way forward?

Having examined briefly why dance and other physical performance can suffer at the hands of this schism of perspective, what does dance scholarship offer in terms of a way forward?

Sally Banes has written usefully on what the function of dance criticism should be:

> The (dance) critic's job is to complete the work in the reader's understanding, to unfold the work in an extended time and space after the performance, and to enrich the experience of the work. This may be done, of course, even for those who have not seen the work. (Banes, 1994 p. 25)

For dance, which does not leave its own written traces as evidence, the job of 'extending' the work for comprehension after the performance is all important. If dance is to be written about, then it is important to be scrupulous (as I argued earlier that Cooper Albright is) about how 'experience' is translated into 'text'. This scrupulousness, as I hope to have evidenced, demands an acknowledgement that an analysis of a physical form requires the consciously brokered situating of

the analyst's body as a crucial part of the equation. But how does one write effectively about dance? Banes helpfully sets out four distinct operations that criticism may perform; description (what the dancers did – what does the work look and feel like?); interpretation (what they communicated – what does the dance mean?); evaluation (how remarkable it was - is the work good?); contextual explanation (where does the work come from aesthetically and/or historically?) (ibid.).

Given that any piece of writing about dance may or may not undertake each of these operations, in combination, these four operations lead to fifteen distinct modes of writing, the most complete being writing that is contextual, descriptive, interpretive and evaluative. Banes goes on to compare a range of dance writings across these fifteen modes, drilling down further into the various operations and how they can combine. Evaluation, Banes asserts, can include different frames. A dance can be evaluated in terms of its moral or political stance, its aesthetic qualities, and its cognitive functions - how it reveals knowledge. We could, drawing on Sklar, add another facet to Banes' categorisation – that of how the writer/reviewer relates their own embodied presence to the work. Again, these functions of writing in relation to performance are ones I model through my own practice writing.

Banes' prediction is that that the political evaluation of dance will continue to increase in dance criticism, in part because choreographers are choosing to tackle more politically-themed material, and in part because of the cultural tendencies Banes has noticed in which political polarities form along the lines of identity. This would concur with Thomas' analysis that the 'body project' has shed increasing light on the political disparities between bodies and has made the body a project for pressure groups. As I explore with my own performance practice, physical performance can be a rich and fertile ground for investigating political subjects, commenting on them – and theorising about them.

We have seen that bodies can undertake the conscious act of theorising. That bodies can and do unconsciously embody complex cultural information is widely accepted. Going further than this, Sally Banes asserts, in *Power and the Dancing Body*, the ways in which dance can actually challenge and alter the cultural codes that govern societies:

> Dancing has begun to be studied as one of the *channels for*, not just the repository of, the pedagogy of etiquette. Did the waltz, for example, reflect or actually *alter* the acceptable distance between male and female bodies in public? Did Elvis Presley's hip swivels (derived from black dance) change the way white youth in the fifties and early sixties stood and carried themselves? Even more than the macropolitics of states and

governments, dance plays an active role in the micropolitics of how persons interact as bodies. (Banes, 1994 p. 47)

If we accept this premise, then dance is not only able to interpret, illustrate, discuss and theorise; it is also able to catalyse social and political shifts. In Banes' example, above, these shifts occur on an unconscious and non-deliberate level; the social shifts are resultant from the dance, not intended by it. However, this illustration does give us reason to consider how dance or other physical performance could intentionally enact – or even catalyse - political or social shifts.[17]

Conclusion:

The descriptive and the interpretive operations of critiquing dance – or other physical performance - require an understanding of how movement works and how those performers are authoring it. Though wary of her use of literary analogies, I would agree with Elizabeth Dempster's sentiment when she asserts:

> Dance requires its own close watching. It takes time, and the 'reading' of dance is an undertaking which may necessitate the development of new critical strategies. Literacy in dance, from which a political reading proceeds, must begin with attention to the body and to the gravity, levity, spatiality, and rhythms of its movement. (Dempster, 1995 p. 36)

To extend Dempster's point, fluency in interpreting movement requires an awareness of what the body is technically doing, how the bodies are organised in space, kinaesthetically what relationships they construct with an audience. These strategies, as I have illustrated in this chapter, are missing from some very influential theatre criticism, with consequences for the form as a result.

Do these new critical strategies, then, require a physical understanding of the processes of authoring movement? If the answer is, ideally, yes, then how and when should those skills be taught and learned? Is there a case for re-integrating learning structures which have, for the most part, separated out into intellectual and physical learning? Likewise, is a full mastery of the potential of the body for creative theorising, arguing and discussing through performance possible without a clear understanding and appreciation of the history of the politics of the body?

Through this chapter I hope to have demonstrated that we need to be alert to inappropriate critical

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[17] Could we consider, as an example of this, the effects of Matthew Bourne's male swan in AMP's *Swan Lake,* and its referential dance-text, *Billy Elliot,* in terms of the widespread shift in attitude they engendered in terms of the modern male place in dance? Nic Green's *Trilogy* could also be examined as a work which uses inclusive dance performance to make a conscious attempt to instigate political action ('Create Your Own Herstory').

strategies, with their roots in literature and with an often uninterrogated literary (or literate) bias (which is very likely exacerbated by our education structures and priorities, which place much greater emphasis on literary than physical education) being applied to work which places the body, rather than language, at the centre of the act.

My investigation has highlighted some areas of research which have been opened up by dance scholarship (with its focus on the body) but which I think have largely been neglected by traditional approaches to theatre. This is to the detriment of physical theatre, which, as I noted early on, tends in the UK to share platforms and frameworks with more text-based theatre rather than with dance. My aim has been to start to expose these areas, so that they can be applied to physical theatre and to my own practice.

I have found multiple sources of evidence to support the notion that dance is frequently viewed, analysed, studied and discussed through frameworks which have evolved to deal with literary subjects, that are adapted from literary approaches and that co-opt a literary vocabulary, and that are thus inadequate for dealing with many of the complexities of the form. I have foregrounded research that shows that dance is not (as has been commonly assumed) an 'unthinking' practice, nor one that only has the capacity to reflect or to illustrate. Dance can indeed be a channel for the body to discuss, think, theorise and indeed to catalyse social and political shifts. My investigation into the methodological strategies for proving that dance has these capacities, has again highlighted the problem of needing frequently to translate dance into writing in order to 'prove' its abilities.

I have found that, while dance scholars frequently borrow literary metaphors to talk about dance, and often go as far as comparing dance to language, a thorough and satisfactory analysis of exactly *how* and to what extent dance might be comparable to language has not been completed. I would posit that the automatic reflex we have, as writers, to resort to linguistic comparisons reveal an ingrained logocentric bias which we need to be alert to when writing about performance, particularly performance which does not have a textual framework or which uses language only as one of many channels of communication.

My exploration has sought out some specific elements of performance which I have found remain mostly neglected by more traditional theatre studies but which dance studies, with its focus on the body, has begun to explore in detail. This has strengthened my contention that the kinaesthetic relationships in many physical performances are often very consciously structured by artists as central elements of the way the work communicates, but that because little formal understanding of

kinaesthetics and proxemics exists, these elements are often downgraded in importance when the work is analysed, discussed and studied. Important questions remain largely unexamined: How are physical and emotional responses intertwined? To what extent do we access the emotional states of others physically? I have proposed that these questions have consequences for how we view and critique physical theatre, and that new strategies need to be developed which take account of our kinaesthetic responses to performance. These inquiries scaffold the extended investigation into kinaesthetic affectivity in Chapter 3.

I have looked at evidence that dance and choreographic practice can be the catalyst for social and political shifts, noting that in the examples I have found, this catalysing is passive (e.g. changes in body language and physical behaviour which are inspired by dance can alter physical and political relationships between individuals and groups, but that this change is not an *intended* consequence of the dance). I have asked whether dance or physical performance can consciously and actively catalyse political or social shifts (and if so, how?). These are strands of investigation which tie through the rest of the thesis.

I have proposed that there is a cultural indifference to bodily intelligence in the UK, and have contextualised this with evidence that conceptions of what the body is capable of change across time periods and cultures, and that our critical thinking needs to take account of our current position in regards to these shifts. I have questioned whether a true understanding of movement comes about through moving and therefore is only truly accessible to those who dance, but also highlighted some excellent work which has been done in terms of evolving textual strategies that deal adequately with performance work with movement, rather than text, at its centre. Approaching this type of performance through text requires an awareness of the limits of writing, of how writing interacts with and distorts the performance 'experience'. It also requires a careful marshalling of the different functions that writing can fulfil in relation to performance and how these functions might best be balanced against each other in the interest of bringing the reader closer to the performance and enhancing their understanding of it. The underlying question, of whether considering performances as experiences (as Banes suggests) is incompatible with considering them as texts, needs to be posed. I am proposing that new critical strategies need to be developed, to supplement existing ones, which take full account of the 'experiential' nature of physical performance – another thread which weaves through the remainder of the thesis.

There are clearly impediments to the full potential of physical performance's cultural impact being realised in the UK. While movement education is so separate from 'thinking' education, while understanding of body politics remain outside mainstream consciousness, while there is a logocentric bias which means performances are analysed and framed using inadequate strategies,

schisms of perspective will exist between those who author movement and a large proportion of those attempting to approach and understand it.

However, my initial exploration into dance scholarship has found that there is significant activity occurring which is attempting to close this schism, and alongside this, some really exciting investigation which signposts the capacity and potential of physical performance. As a practitioner, these signposts are invaluable pointers, illuminating a pathway of possibility towards physical performance which is resonant, which communicates clearly and directly, and which has cultural impact, with real influence on our political and social structures.

The early part of this chapter looked at ways in which logocentric critical practice unwittingly but very pervasively serves to exclude certain groups of people and types of knowledge and practice from the record. We are undoubtedly at a point in time where, with extremely squeezed public funding and right-wing slash-and-burn reshaping of the social fabric of the UK, defending theatre from accusations that it is elitist and thus an undeserving recipient of public subsidy is an important task. A refusal to acknowledge female work, body-centred work, or, as I go on to explore, to be able to see with any clarity the pressing issues around accessibility which theatre faces are tendencies which are co-dependent. As I explore further through the next chapter, these prejudices are emblematic of broader undercurrents which, although outdated, still have significant cultural purchase.

In the next chapter, I go on to make the argument that these potentials of outdoor work to overcome some of the perceived barriers that make the theatre-going experience feel inaccessible to many has been seized upon by funding bodies. Consequentially, outdoor performance, which is recognised specifically by funding bodies like ACE as 'accessible to all', has been deliberately grown as a sector in the past five years, and positioned as a panacea to the problems posed by theatre's perceived elitism. However, I also raise doubts about the consequences of using 'accessibility' and 'ability to engage new audiences' as a benchmark for success without proper interrogation of what these terms mean. I locate an essential disinterest by the critical establishment in outdoor work, despite this funding uplift, meaning that the complexities of the strategies which are being used by outdoor artists remain largely unrecognised and uninterrogated. There is a danger that without attendant developed critical structures which account for the nuanced and complex ways that the artistic strategies function to engage audiences, and the nature of that engagement, the work risks being assessed on banal and reductionist terms. Going further, as Jen Harvie convincingly argues in *Fair Play* (2013), there is the possibility that even work that seeks to be politically oppositional can end up being co-opted by a neoliberal agenda. What are the risks of allowing these 'blind spots' in our collective analyses to go unchallenged?

Chapter 2: Engaging with our audiences: Liveness, liminality and frames of value in this 'New Landscape'.

Introduction:

Before Tangled Feet begin to make a performance, a number of questions arise about the context of the performance. The range of performance contexts that the ensemble approach mean that many of these questions demand consideration afresh for each new production. Some of these will be answered before starting the work, some will be discovered in the making process, others will only become clear in retrospective appraisal.

Where does the performance take place? What is the spectator's existing relationship to this place? Where is the spectator situated in relation to the performer/s? Are they alone or part of a group? What is the audience expecting? Can they move around and leave or does the etiquette of the situation propose that they sit quietly until the end? How do these factors affect how comfortable, alert, distracted or relaxed their attention on the performance is? Does the performance affect the audience's future perception of that place, and/or the community they were part of during the performance?

Can the spectator see and experience other environments than that contained or affected by the performance? Is the spectator close enough to the performer to see them sweating, to feel their breath or to smell them, and/or is the performer dwarfed by large objects? Are the audience included in the scenographic frame? How do these factors affect the audience's kinaesthetic relationship to the work?

To what extent is the performance relying on rehearsed material, and to what extent is it responding to this particular of circumstances and this audience? How much of this is clearly apparent to the audience, and how much only to the performers? How are they invited to participate? Are any aspects of the performance dependant on a contribution from the spectator, and if so, how is this negotiated?

Is the event a commercial exchange, and if so, what are the terms of that exchange? What does the audience understand about the context for the performance – who authored or created it, who programmed it, funded it, sponsored it - and the motivations of those agents?

In my in-depth analyses of two Tangled Feet performances (*Inflation* and *One Million*) in Chapter 4,

and in my close reading of Shechter's *Political Mother* in Chapter 3, I weave answers (or proposed answers) to many of these questions into the discussion, explore in some depth how we consider many of these issues, and what artistic decisions are made in response to them.

As a result of our creative interrogation over several years to the ways that our work engages with audiences, spaces and context, we have become alert, artistically, and as I hope to demonstrate in this chapter, intellectually, to the subtleties and nuances of these engagements. As a consequence of the ensemble's focus on and experimentation with a wide range of creative audience engagement strategies, we have been well-placed to seize the opportunities afforded as England's major arts funder, the Arts Council has, over the past eight years, shifted considerable emphasis onto this element of creative practice. There is a perceived 'value' to this kind of work which is recognised by the funding structures, if not the critical structures, for its potential to 'engage with new audiences' – meaning, in less woolly terms, to overcome some of the social barriers which prevent a large proportion of the British population from accessing and taking part in the arts.

I begin this Chapter, therefore, by bringing under discussion and placing under consideration some of the major dynamic shifts in national funding policy which have had a strong influence on Tangled Feet's work over the past decade, laying out exactly how Tangled Feet fit into this subsidy economy, in the process providing a brief but contextual interrogation of how the evolving priorities of this crucial funding body play out as a backdrop to the work made by the ensemble. I contextualise some of the relevant policy changes (notable, the Arts Council's shift in theatre policy after 2007, the 'New Landscapes' strategy for outdoor art, and the major overhaul in 2011 around ACE's new set of priorities, 'Great Art for Everyone). I focus in, using assessment reports from Tangled Feet's largest successful grant application, on what qualities, in the eyes of our most significant funder, make the ensemble's work of 'public value' and 'worthy of investment'. In their recent restructuring of funding priorities, Arts Council England have constructed value around the perceived potentials of the live performance to 'engage new audiences'. Looking closely at how the Arts Council used detailed evidence about audience engagement to adjust their funding strategy in recognition of the potential of outdoor arts and other, less mainstream performance forms to achieve this aim, I go on to examine the resultant frames of value that are brought to bear on the wider sector. ACE's realigned priorities are certainly beneficial in many respects to both companies like Tangled Feet (who have received significant project funding as a result) and the wider arts sector, in terms of challenging some problematic misconceptions about the barriers to arts engagement (which, I argue, have in the past contributed to a continuation of theatre's perception as an elite form). However, there are also difficulties to be negotiated if the kind of practice Tangled Feet makes is primarily valued for its ability to 'engage new audiences' without an accompanying thorough critical interrogation (which, as I perceive it, isn't currently taking place in

any meaningful way) about the nature and nuances of that engagement.

Tangled Feet genuinely aspire to make work which *is* accessible, but we couple this with a passionate pursuit of the belief that accessible does not need to mean simplistic or apolitical. The work we have made in recent years, and which I go on to discuss in the following chapters, addresses large and complex social and political subjects in both public spaces and auditoria. Our performances have been designed to generate and hold a type of public attention on a subject which we perceive to be paradoxically lacking, despite the very real and tangible effects on everyday lives of the issues under consideration. This attention might be lacking because the issue is so complex, and often debated and written about using inaccessibly complicated language (like the effects on the NHS of the 2012 Health and Social Care act which we tackled in 2015's *Care*, or the causes and effects of the worldwide financial crisis, which we looked at in *Inflation)* or because it affects a group of people with limited political purchase and without an established social voice (like *One Million*, which examines mass youth unemployment).

From an artist's point of view, interrogating the 'where and why' of performance-making, and making performances designed to bring political subjects into public spaces has a number of inspiring potentials, including the continuation of the radical, disruptive and politicly subversive tradition of European street arts. But can this radicalism be sustained once 'outdoor arts' are co-opted by the major funding organisation for their power to carry out soft social agendas such as 'increasing community cohesion'? There are points where Tangled Feet's aspirations and vision correlate closely with ACE's, but also points where they diverge. The stakes are high, and as I weave into the detailed narratives of our work in the final chapter, there are often obstacles to be negotiated in which the artistic and political vision has to be compromised in the process of getting the work made. One of these issues, as I explore in some depth, is that the ensemble's aspiration towards 'liveness' – retaining a mutability and responsiveness in our performances towards the precise context of each new sharing – poses difficulties inside a capitalist system that requires consistency of 'product' in the performance as 'commodity'.

Tangled Feet's artistic ambition towards liveness was born at least in part as a reaction against performances which are the same night after night (like the franchised McTheatre, a product predictably stable across several major cities, with one star changeable for another and likewise, one night's audience interchangeable with the next). Are the ensemble, therefore, ideologically embracing the idea of a live theatre that, in its inherent instability, stands in resistance to any form of mediatisation, or participation in a reproducible capitalist economy?[18] In the rejection of the

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[18] Issues of interactivity and the individuality of an audience's interaction with the work are not, obviously, incompatible with the creation of an immensely marketable performance 'product'. Punchdrunk, for example, could very easily lay claim to a great many of the same ambitions as Tangled Feet of placing the audience as central to the work,

notion of the commodification of performance, what alternative value system have the ensemble constructed and how well does it stand up to interrogation and investigation? And how do the ensemble negotiate the challenges of a capitalist marketplace, and a funding system that ever more utilises the same language ('return on investment' 'creative industries')? Exploring these questions requires an examination of certain theoretical perspectives alongside an examination of financial and market conditions within which the company is making work.

I reaffirm through this work my artistic ideological aspirations about the ways that devised, collaboratively-authored ensemble work is able to engage with audiences (particularly outside of traditional auditoria) in ways that overcome some of the barriers to arts attendance and anxieties about what the performance is 'supposed to mean'. I explore what the potentials of such performance might be, bringing into discussion some theoretical perspectives about performance's ambiguity, liminality and the challenges it poses to a capitalist economy which seeks to attribute and affix both meaning and value.

Taking account of an audience's situated perspective means acknowledging that not only do cultures of seeing and listening exist (Shepherd, 2006. p. 8) but that these cultures are inextricably bound with a market economy that ascribes value and normalised financial transactions as part of those seeing and listening cultures. We have to acknowledge that the culture of watching live performance communally is if not declining, then at least put under significant pressure by other entertainment cultures (like the rise in 'home entertainment') that see audiences mediating the performances they watch through screens and interfaces, and increasingly in private contexts rather than public spaces.

There is a need for closer consideration of audience engagement in physical and non-literary performance forms in our 'new landscape'. This, as I go on to examine in more detail, ought to take into account that 'engaging with new audiences' is a political act in itself, and to look closely at the ways that these audiences are 'engaged', which might involve markedly different social interactions than those assumed in the usual act of theatre spectatorship in a dark auditorium where the spectator's body is not usually included in the scenography. Are traditional modes of criticism flexible enough to adapt their strategies to interact with and comment on non-text based work, work that might not have a stable end point, where 'play' is indivisible from performance or where author/performer/spectator lines are blurred, that might be co-authored, semi-improvised, reactive to its audience, and potentially radically different night after night?

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allowing a constructed narrative which prevents two spectators experiencing the same thing, and yet their productions are designed to have extremely long runs and are now very successfully monetised. The uniqueness of each audience's journey through a Punchdrunk show could indeed be seen as the company's unique selling point.

In outdoor work, where the specifics of the spectator's relationship with the space are frequently a central feature of the work, and the body of the audience is often part of the scenographic environment, the removed, disembodied critical voice I located as unhelpful in the previous chapter fails to take part in the performance fully. Taken to its extreme, 'engaging with audiences' could mean a dissolution of the traditional hierarchies of artists/critic/audience, the replacing of the constructed authoritative position (which we see having historically influenced our dominant narratives) with a recognition of situated perspective, and a movement towards structures which 'make more evident the historian's efforts to interrogate and reproduce the premises on which the performances were based' (Foster, *Improvising/History.* 2003. p. 208).

We are potentially at a juncture where, optimistically new forms of critical schema could develop around the Arts Council's 'rebranded' theatre which, as I go on to discuss, has consciously brought body-centric and physical practices into the ring, intentionally broadening the definition of theatre in order to increase theatre's perceived accessibility. In the most radical imagining, these new critical schemas could potentially overhaul the patterning that Mihaylova scrutinises, overthrow the 'dead white men' and cast off the literary tropes which fail to accommodate the body politic. Taking into account the possible sophistications of multiple authorship, of improvisation and of theorising bodies, these critical schemas could become more egalitarian, inclusive of a wider range of voices, bodies and identities.

However, it requires the development of both theoretical and critical models and standpoints to do so successfully. The first step is a consideration of why our current structures are inadequate, and the next step is to interrogate what structures or dynamics might replace them. I conduct an exploration of the value of 'liveness', suggesting that we need to take account of the deliberate strategy of some improvisatory performance forms to privilege liveness over legacy.

This, I argue, is a political as well as an artistic strategy, and one which ties back into the issue of valorising 'public engagement'. If we fail to construct schemas for analysing in detail the relationships that artists seek to build with their audiences, which may include very deliberately attention paid to elements of performance other than text, that leave no trace, and which are difficult to evidence and quantify, then the value structures constructed around this 'audience engagement' become crucially flawed.

In overview, outdoor and physical performance is valued by funders, if not by traditional critical structures, for the ways in which they reach audiences. However, if definitions of theatre are broadened in this way, it becomes even more important that increases in financial investment are accompanied by development of critical strategies with which to appreciate and analyse the

varying sophistries of different kinds of theatrical and performance practice. As I have shown, residual patterning in theatre criticism which is governed by text-centric conceits and literary expectations is at best inadequate for and at worst potentially damaging to physically-based practice. But what will it mean to this form that the outdoor 'sector' has been consciously grown with so much emphasis on 'engaging new audiences'? If and when critical discourses evolve around the work, is there a contingent risk that the work's ability to 'maximise' the exposing of new audiences to art forms is going to become the main criterion for success and the focus for much of the analysis, eclipsing any discussion about other nuanced and sophisticated manoeuvres that this sort of work is capable of?

The Value of Public Engagement: 'Great Art for Everyone'

From 2005 to 2008, Arts Council England conducted significant research into both public perception of 'the arts' in England, and into uptake of arts activities on offer. It used the findings from this extensive body of research, which includes both detailed qualitative and quantitive data, to guide the reshaping of national arts strategy, with the announcement in 2011 of a new set of priorities under the banner 'Great Art for Everyone'.

This policy shift in 2011 was also used to undertake a radical restructure of ACE's long-term investment strategy, with the organisations which had hitherto been 'Regularly Funded Organisations' (as oppose to project-funded) stripped of their funding arrangements and required to apply, along with a host of new entrants, to be a 'National Portfolio Organisation' on a rolling three-year investment schema. This mammoth change of funding strategy was used to reshape the arts landscape, with a significant number of organisations who couldn't adequately prove their contribution to a balanced 'National Portfolio' providing 'Great Art for Everyone' disinvested in, and a number of new organisations, festivals and buildings put on the funding map.

A blunt, though objective appraisal could draw very obvious links between the development of 'Great Art For Everyone' and ever-increasing pressures brought to bear on the arts to evidence their intrinsic public value, with ACE explicitly, through its criteria for investment, attempting to counter charges that the arts are an elitist pursuit undeserving of public subsidy.

New Landscapes was a political manoeuvre by Arts Council England (in recognition that traditional theatregoing practices are alienating to many) to direct money and support towards physical, visual, interdisciplinary forms that occur in non-theatre spaces, with the explicit aim of increasing the proportion of the public exposed to the arts. Part of a greater organisational shift which saw outdoor performance and 'street arts' given more priority in ACE's refreshed theatre policy (2007), the *New Landscapes* plan was a three-year set of strategic objectives, running from 2008 to 2011;

it was directly informed by the *Arts Debate* and other ACE research, which sought to invest greater resources in outdoor performance, circus and cross-disciplinary forms specifically because of the perceived abilities of these forms to 'engage with new audiences'. Explicitly, ACE stated in the report an overall 'intention of *maximising the number and range of people* who have high quality experiences of the arts' (my italics) and their organisational 'belief ... that outdoor arts of all types have a particular ability to engage, inform and entertain audiences that might not otherwise attend an arts event' (*New Landscapes*, 2008 p. 2).

The engineered growth of the 'outdoor arts' sector happened against a background funding culture in which it is made explicit that receipt of public subsidy is entirely contingent on organisational ability to 'increase engagement', with the understanding that theatres and other arts organisations have 'obligations' as public service bodies;

> We need to build on the progress that has been made in engaging with more diverse audiences and concentrate on increasing the percentage of the population that participates in theatre ... There remain some theatre organisations that have not challenged themselves robustly to be the best they could. They have not discovered how best to fulfil their obligations to the communities. (ACE Theatre Review, 2009)

The breadth of the range of art forms that are brought under the banner of investment (including dance, circus, carnival arts, physical theatre, street theatre and outdoor installation) is worth paying attention to. It would probably be a fair appraisal to surmise that ACE investment was targeted with the strategic aim of the unification into a 'sector' of practices which already had a record or tradition of cultural and social diversity. Crucially, the deliberate expansion of outdoor performance and subsequent broadening of the definitions of 'theatre' in England by bringing the more culturally diverse practices such as carnival, street arts and circus under the umbrella of 'theatre' can be seen as a manoeuvre which had the direct result of instantly increasing 'accessibility';

> The period of this review has seen considerable changes in the way theatre is made and presented to audiences. We welcome the 'rebranding' of theatre as 'more than plays on stages' and the work that happens outside traditional theatre spaces and infrastructures. We believe this is an important innovation which refreshes the art form and reaches new audiences. (ACE Theatre Review 2009 p. 11)

The 2011 re-organisation of the Arts Council's priorities, with Regularly Funded Organisations required to make a case to be included in ACE's National Portfolio, was an opportunity for ACE to re-align the direction of public funds even more explicitly towards organisations that fulfilled the

strategic objectives of 'Great Art For Everyone'. This included withdrawing funding from those organisations that weren't proving themselves to be 'engaging' sufficiently, and the introduction of sets of benchmarked targets for all organisations in terms of meeting 'obligations to their communities'.

'Not for people like me': pervasive misconceptions about the barriers to arts engagement

The Arts Council's research base over the period in discussion has been broad, but one of the common themes that arises out of the resulting reports is the honest appraisal that publicly-funded arts activities fail to engage a significant proportion of the population, and that there is a perception that 'the arts' retains an aura of exclusivity.

> Overall there was a strong sense that a wider range of voices – both professional and public – should be engaged in decision-making in some way, and this will form an important part of the Arts Council's future strategy. (*What People Want,* 2008 [part of *The Arts Debate*] p. 13)

The 2008 report *Indifference to Enthusiasm* was a substantial analysis, undertaken by sociologists Tak Wing Chan and John Goldthorpe (in collaboration with researchers from ACE) into data amassed in the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's ongoing *Taking Part* survey, which in 2005-6 examined the arts attendance behaviour of over 28,000 people in England. Using sophisticated multivariate analysis methodologies, the researchers were able to scrutinise the effects of certain social factors (for example gender, income, ethnicity or social class) when all other factors were held constant, and thus generate detailed and precise conclusions about the factors that influence arts attendance.

> Two of the most important factors in determining whether somebody attends arts activities are *education and social status – the higher an individual's level of education and social status, the more likely they are to have high levels of arts attendance* ... When other factors – including social status – are held constant, *income*, social class (as measured by NS-SEC), and disability status have little or no significant effect on arts attendance. (p. 7 *Indifference to Enthusiasm* report, my italics)

The detailed and evidenced findings of the *Indifference To Enthusiasm* report pose some strong and robust challenges to some entrenched beliefs that barriers to arts engagement are mostly financial, as Billington asserts in *State of the Nation,*

> Enjoyment of high culture in Britain is determined as much by money as by class or education. When art is made freely available, as in our national or civic galleries, there is ample evidence that it is enjoyed by a cross-section of the public. It is only when a high price is put on it, as in most of our major opera houses, that it becomes uncomfortably elitist. (ibid. p. 336)

The risks of allowing these incomplete understandings of the barriers to arts attendance are clear: if the barriers are not understood properly, the wrong measures will be used to address them, resulting in wasted effort, funds, and little change in audience uptake.

Billington's alertness to issues of representation is even more limited: 'When one talks of inclusion, one is really talking euphemistically about race', he opines, with the solution to this issue lying again with the possibilities offered by the written text; '... if theatre is to escape from its former oppressive whiteness and explore what it means to live in a multicultural society, it will only be because writers of genuine talent emerge' (ibid. p. 395).

The assertion that playwriting – specifically, by sole authors – is the best means of creatively interrogating what it means to live in a multicultural society clearly rests on some rather shaky premises, but perhaps more importantly, this incomplete understanding of theatre's inclusiveness belies a perspective that fails to take into account that factors such as access to education, social class, gender or parenting status might complicate or restrict access to the arts, as practitioners, participants or audience. It also fails to appreciate that the 'emergence' of black creative talent (in terms of it reaching an audience) rests as much with the architecture of the arts landscape, its willingness to programme more diverse artists, and the accompanying mechanisms in place to reach a new audience as with the existence of that talent in the first place, all points underscored in a forthright interview with Dawn Walton, Artistic Director of black theatre company Eclipse, in the Independent:

> Ethnic minorities are as under-represented off stage as on – and attracting new, more diverse audiences is on almost every theatre's wish-list. When Eclipse tour, a quarter to a third of audiences are new to their venue – but that doesn't just happen by wishing and hoping (says Walton). "You have to go out and make specific invitations to people." Postcode marketing, sending flyers to certain areas, doesn't work: they go in the bin, she reckons.
> Instead, Eclipse has a principle of "forming relationships" with communities. "It's an old-school technique: on the street, word-of-mouth. We build a network of people, who we know work in the community." Those "cultural ambassadors" then put the word – and

flyers! – out for them. Walton also often hears theatres saying they just don't know how to market black plays. She points out the obvious solution: employ a more diverse marketing team. Paid internships help widen the pool. (Williams, Holly. *Dawn Walton on what needs to be done to fix theatre's race problem.* The Independent, 31/1/16)

Walton's insight is important: many people simply are not plugged into information streams about cultural events which are often taken for granted by those who have grown up partaking in them. The breakdown in communication is much more complex than these people not being on the marketer's mailing list; the language and forms used to speak about and advertise arts events by venues, artists, marketeers and critics often assumes a layer of prior knowledge and is therefore often inaccessible, inappropriate and ineffective in a number of ways.

Billington doesn't acknowledge that the abilities both to craft and to appreciate writing within traditional critical parameters are, in large part, abilities honed and nurtured through access to high-quality university education, and directly refutes the notion that social or educational circumstances have any significant bearing on arts appreciation. His naivety on these points illustrates the risks inherent in allowing theatre history to be shaped by individual critics who, as Mihaylova identified, refuse to acknowledge their own situated perspective.[19]

Contrary to Billington's notion that high ticket prices are the most significant cause of perceived 'elitism', importantly the ACE research found that perceptions of exclusivity in connection with arts activities was a deeply ingrained attitude in quite significant proportions of the population.

This structural elitism is proving difficult to dislodge: despite recognition by Arts Council England of these entrenched problems, and strategic effort to correct them, progress has been frustratingly slow. Disappointingly, nearly a decade after this restrategising began, movement towards equality of arts access is patchy. Drawing on Take Part survey data, the 2015 Warwick Commission Report (Enriching Britain: Culture, Creativity and Growth, Warwick University, 2015) flagged some alarming statistics about the failures of these measures to address inequality in arts provision and engagement. In some respects, the situation had worsened - for example, between 2008/9 and 2013/14 participation in arts activities amongst children (aged five to ten) had declined markedly

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[19]While *State of the Nation* constructs some undoubtedly brilliant insights on post-war theatrical trends, it is written by someone who has had access to an unparalleled education, who is ultimately comfortable and at ease with the theatregoing experience and who, having spent a working life in broadsheet journalism, is also deeply interested in and engaged with both domestic and foreign political events and trends. That his experience *as a theatregoer* might be extremely atypical of the population at large isn't taken into account when these value judgements about accessibility are made. If we are paying attention to the situated perspective of the critic, then we ought to take account of the anecdotes in his book which reveal him as a man who is Oxford-educated, who lunches at the Ivy and fraternises with peers at Lords cricket grounds – all of which suggest an ease in environments others might well (see Reason, below) find elitist.

across drama, music and dance (ibid. p.33).[20] Perhaps most startlingly, a headline statistic is that arts attendance is still very skewed towards a privileged elite, who are, accordingly, also benefitting disproportionately from public arts funding: the wealthiest, best-educated and least ethnically-diverse 8% of the population are accounting for (conservatively) at least 28% of all theatre attendance, 44% of live music attendance and 28% of visual arts visits (ibid). In recognition of the work yet to be done, equality of access to and participation in the arts forms the backbone of ACE's proposed funding strategy for 2018-22, currently under consultation.[21]

Theatre for 'Other People': Outdoor Arts bucks the trend.

> The importance of social status suggests that *some people feel uncomfortable attending arts events or do not perceive arts attendance as an accessible or appropriate lifestyle choice. Qualitative research backs this up.* The arts debate, the Arts Council England's first public value inquiry, found a strong sense among many members of the public of being excluded from something they would like to be able to access, and a belief that certain kinds of arts experiences were not for 'people like me'. (Indifference To Enthusiasm report, p. 8)

The social and practical experience of attending the theatre – buying a ticket, entering an unfamiliar building, knowing the dress code – are also aspects which research has found enforce the sense of theatre being something 'not for people like me'. A sense of alienation, of being out of place while attending the theatre and of inhabiting an inaccessible world with different social rules, is borne out in Matthew Reason's research 'Young Audiences and Live Theatre' (2006). This project used various ethnographic techniques to examine the reactions of groups of teenagers attending a theatre event, and found that a very large portion of their experience of their theatre visit, as expressed in their reflections of the event, were to do with 'other people' and the unfamiliar experience of being in a theatre, where social norms were not familiar to them:

> For the young audience ... while the cinema audience is one of peers, one largely of sameness, the theatre audience was explicitly constructed as 'other people'. (Reason ibid. p. 223)

Reason's research is compelling, in part, because of the frankness with which the teenagers reveal their thinking about the theatrical experience.

> Many of the perceptions of live theatre communicated by these young audience members

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[20] This might of course correlate with the Cameron government's deprioritisation of and disinvestment in arts education over the same time period.

[21] http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/our-investment-2018-and-beyond/ (accessed 9/3/16)

are probably not surprising to anyone who has their own experience of theatre, although these are experiences that may be known but which are often difficult to put into words' (ibid. p. 240).

To summarise the overarching narrative of Reason's sophisticated research, he suggests that the teenagers were so thrown by the expectations of their new environment that their attention for the performance itself was limited. Revealingly, in Reason's non-hierarchical 'map' diagram of themes discussed by the young people (fig 1, p. 223), terms which closely interlink and cluster include 'Theatre as formal', 'Poshness', 'Can't be oneself', 'Old fashioned', 'Self-conscious', 'Dirty looks', 'Theatre as special occasion' and 'Theatre as unknown'. The language used by the teenagers and captured by Reason illuminates something that the well-worn phrasing used in ACE policy documents ('audience engagement', 'inclusion' and 'accessibility') no longer expresses with any force.

Reason's subjects were responding to a ticketed visit to a theatre, and a great deal of the attention they paid in the assessment was to the experience of partaking in that particular social ritual, in a new space, amongst people they felt fundamentally different to. As Reason acknowledges above, this kind of experiential dynamic, though familiar, might rarely be put into words. How different would their attention on the artwork itself – the play/performance – have been if the alienating effect of being in the theatre building not been a part of their total experience?

Speaking from my own experience informed by watching and listening to audiences, performance work outdoors in familiar public spaces has the potential to engender a very different dynamic in its audience. While audiences (often unsuspecting audiences who did not plan to encounter performance in their local high street) might find the performance itself strange, challenging or unfamiliar in its modes, forms and relations, they will still usually be intrinsically comfortable in the public space they occupy and the range of acceptable social behaviours and codes of that space – even if the performance is changing or challenging those rules in some way. Their encounter with the performance is often constructed so that they can leave at any point that they choose, allowing an engagement with the performance that could be more fairly described as 'on their own terms'. If this theatre is 'not for them' they can leave it – but with all the social barriers to encountering performance removed, many people confronted with performance on the high street stay and watch out of curiosity.

My professional perception is confirmed by an important developing research base. In a compelling and hopeful narrative, significant ongoing research from the Audience Agency[22] shows that, in

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[22] The Audience Agency's Outdoor Arts Audience Finder report is based on 17,000 survey responses submitted through

comparison with other art forms, the outdoor arts are being enjoyed by a much broader, more diverse audience, who are much more closely representative of the general local population. Their second report into outdoor arts attendance in the UK confirms that the sector is demonstrating consistent capacity to reach audiences that other art forms are not. Using a variety of analysis methodologies, the research demonstrates that the outdoor arts audiences match extremely consistently with general expected population spread. One notable variant is that audiences were, on average, slightly younger than the general population (and therefore quite significantly younger than the average theatre audience, which is skewed towards the older demographic), reflective of the 'family oriented' nature of many outdoor arts events.

One interesting conclusion from the report, which correlates with my earlier point that some potential audience are not plugged into a matrix of information about creative work effectively, is that while audiences are rating the work they see and their experience of the arts experience, highly, they are not as satisfied with the contextualisation of that work, which isn't consistently delivering the information they feel they would like to have:

> There is a clear desire for more information about the performances, acts and artists. Outdoor Arts (OA) attenders are sometimes taking in a total outdoor experience moving from one event to another. They are enjoying and engaging with these activities but would like to know more about them. Why are they there? What are the performers trying to do? How does it fit in to the event themes? This is not necessarily about signage but about enabling explorations, perhaps through online and social media....This is both in terms of practical details and more contextual information. It should be remembered that this is an audience that is, for the most part, not regular attenders of the arts and they might not be familiar with the conventions of attendance or used to seeking out background details of artistic work. It is a part of the experience which OA organisers could change in a relatively straightforward way. (Outdoor Arts Audience Finder Report Yr 2, p. 21)

The Experience of Communality

Performing outdoors in daylight, the specificity of each particular audience group and other performance circumstances (place, time of day, weather, other distractions) is very heightened. Often most apparent when the company is performing a show several times a day in a festival context, specific performance conditions can, in my experience, have a very significant impact on the way a show goes. The performers – and, I would argue, the audience itself - gets an acute sense of the nuances and diversity of an audience and their responses to a piece. Part of the

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its Audience Finder data collection tool, which it combines with sophisticated geo-demographic profiling techniques to generate multivariate analyses including mapping outdoor arts audience against Experian's 'Mosaic' lifestyling profile system, and the Audience Agency's own 'Audience Spectrum' profiling system.

experience of watching is seeing other people's reaction to the work, and of sharing the experience of being in this particular place and this particular time together.

In the dominant indoor theatrical model of interrelations where the audience sits in the dark, their very invisibility may well contribute to the sense that Helen Freshwater explores in *Theatre & Audience* of an audience as treated as one plural body which is interchangeable with the following night's plural body, a tendency Freshwater locates as being strengthened by the critic's unreflexive 'we':

> The common tendency to refer to an audience as 'it', and, by extension, to think of this 'it' as a single entity, or a collective, risks obscuring the multiple contingencies which condition an individual's interpretation of a particular performance event. (Freshwater 2009 p. 5)

While there may well exist some sort of sense of community in the audience, in this normal theatregoing scenario, aside from hearing other audience members laughing, the interaction and sense of other people's reaction to the work is intentionally minimised – the lights are off so that we are not distracted by other people who are also watching. The other audience bodies are normally not included inside the scenographic frame. Does outdoor work allow us to be more alert to these 'contingencies which condition an individual's interpretation' – and if so, how do we use that information?

In works like *All That Is Solid, One Million* or *Inflation*, which is designed to happen outside in a public space in broad daylight, it is impossible not to include each spectator seeing and experiencing other audience members as a fundamental part of the experience. All three shows included moments where audience members are acknowledged and spoken to as individuals as well as addressed as a larger group. Street theatre and outdoor performance have always had a radical and counter-cultural edge perhaps because of the raised awareness in the of the audience group of their temporary communality. Even if the term 'community' is not a wholly satisfactory term to describe the audience, by choosing to give their attention and focus to the same point (the performance) and in doing, adopting the same physical behaviours (stopping still, watching and listening) each spectator shares a communal experience with the larger group. Denied the opportunity to blank out the other spectators that the dark auditorium often affords us, there is, in this daylight public action, the implicit agreement by the individual to become part of a collective assembly, at least temporarily. To adopt Parvieinen's term ('Choreographing Resistance', 2010. p. 319, explored further in the next chapter) the performance can make use of the 'kinaesthetic fields' (existing and habitual qualities and patterns of movement and physical relationships) already existing in the public place which inform people's expectations and memories of public behaviour. A

performance can thus potentially draw on parallels with other happenings that occur in public spaces when large numbers of people come together and exhibit similar communal responses towards a common focus point – for example, in the shared acts of protesting, rallying, trading or celebrating. Each of these reference points is, of course, heavily imbued with political and ideological expectations. Each is also a situation where the individual potentially gains greater agency and/or power as part of a group. I return to this discussion of the function and power of performative communality and the staging of social interdependence in my close analysis of One Million in Chapter 4.

Public subsidy: £100,000.

From a professional perspective, I have experienced the effects of *New Landscapes* strategy first-hand. The launch of the strategy corresponded neatly with Tangled Feet's first show for non-theatre spaces (*Home*)*,* and in 2008 we were fortunate in finding our artistic desires to find a more diverse audience than we were regularly encountering in fringe spaces reflected strongly in ACE's organisational and funding priorities. In the intervening years, increased investments in the outdoor arts has enabled Tangled Feet to create several new works of increasing scale and ambition in an expanding sector. In 2013, ACE funded *One Million* with a grant of £100,000 through Grants for the Arts as part of a season of outdoor work (Take to the Streets 2013) which also included the creation and touring of smaller-scale outdoor show *Push,* and re-touring of 2012's outdoor show *Inflation.*[23] This was a significant investment amount; at the national upper limit for a GFTA bid.

What does the fact that Arts Council England are prepared to place significant subsidy in work like *One Million* affirm about ACE's value structures and priorities? Artistic merit is only small part of the equation: ACE's funding priorities are rigorously and scrupulously applied, through a complicated system of assessing applications and evidence against nationally and regionally determined priorities and aspired outcomes. The ways that Tangled Feet's work correlates with ACE's funding priorities is perhaps best evidenced through ACE's own rationale for endorsement of the work. To use ACE's own terminology, *One Million* (or, more specifically, the Take To The Streets season) very strongly 'met the criteria for investment'.

> This application demonstrates *great value for money* and the potential to *reach a significant number of new audiences*... *High quality outdoor arts are a priority* and this application demonstrates the potential to contribute to this ecology and audience development of the artform. (Stephen Freeman, National Commenter, Arts Council

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[23] The total ACE subsidy for the season was £100,000, with other income to the value of approximately £50,000 coming from commissions, tour bookings and some other trust and foundation support. Of this, the making costs of *One Million*, including all the participatory elements, was approximately £100,000, not including some site costs (toilets, stewarding, security, PA hire) which were fronted by GDIF and which equated to a further £20,000.

England. From Grant Assessment Report 23206535, 5/4/2013, company archives. My italics.)

Tangled Feet's success with achieving a grant of this size[24] not only secured the means to create this show, but also marked the company, in the eyes of ACE and more broadly in the sector, as a company making work of significant note, at least in this idiosyncratic corner of the theatre ecosystem. As Co-Artistic Director of the company and charity, and co-writer and named applicant on the successful application for this significant subsidy, I was responsible for delivering not only the artistic 'products' attached to the grant but also an array of soft social outcomes expected of us by the funder as a condition of the grant. This apparent alignment of Tangled Feet's practice with ACE's priorities is most clearly evidenced in the elements of the application picked out for the attention of the panel by the regional and national assessors in the assessment document:

> Tangled Feet has an impressive track record of strategic and artistic growth in recent years, and a particularly strong commitment to *accessible free performances* and *successful community engagement.* This is reflected in the strong engagement and professional development initiatives within this application - eg partnership with A New Direction to offer youth apprenticeships, which their track record suggests will be delivered to full potential ... Chosen venues and festivals are well suited to their aims of *bringing accessible free theatre to diverse audiences with low arts engagement ..*. I have ... witnessed the impressive quality of their work, particularly in its intelligent responses to some of the key social issues of our time ...Tangled Feet is one of the most innovative, accessible and prolific outdoor theatre ensembles working in the country, and this application represents the logical next stage of development in terms of artistic ambition and profile on their impressive growth trajectory over recent years, reflecting the strong strategic management of the organisation. *The application aligns strongly with many Arts Council priority areas including social cohesion, audience and talent development - particularly their planned engagement activities with young people, and digital engagement, making this activity highly worthy of suppor*t.
> (James Hadley, Regional Manager - Theatre, London, Arts Council England.)

The funding that allows us to make work of the scale and ambition of One Million is contingent, then, on this social agenda: we are expected to develop talent, develop audiences and foster social cohesion. I return to discuss the impact of these pressures on the creative process in the final chapter.

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[24] Grants of this size from GFTA are, in 2015, almost unheard-of, with arts organisations currently advised by relationships managers to apply for no more than £50,000.

While the *New Landscapes* strategy was doubtless instrumental in energising the UK outdoor sector – which, as I have shown, has translated into a success story in terms of engaging broader and more diverse audiences - in other respects, retrospectively, the *New Landscapes* strategy was not wholly successful in its objectives. Importantly, one of the barriers to the development of outdoor practice identified by the Arts Council in *New Landscapes* was the lack of critical debate around the form, and one of the strategic aims for success outlined in the plan was for '(m)ore intelligent and thoughtful critical debate about the work'. At a panel discussion reviewing the legacy of *New Landscapes* at the ISAN (Independent Street Arts Network) Conference in late 2011, there was discernible doubt expressed by contributors about whether this aim had been achieved in any meaningful way. Professional experience backs up this instinctive misgiving; despite drawing an audience of 11,000 to performances of our four shows during the *Take To The Streets* season in 2012 (roughly equivalent, purely in numbers, to filling both the downstairs and upstairs auditoriums at the Royal Court for a four-week run), Tangled Feet didn't receive - and didn't expect - a single review in 'traditional' media. It is perhaps the lack of formal critical attention paid to outdoor performance which has allowed it to retain its radical promise. However this lack of attention also means that those performances risk disappearing into the mists of time, leaving us in danger both of losing a heritage in street arts that has at times been extraordinarily rich and diverse, and of continually reinventing the wheel as a consequence. It also means that this practice is being charged with undertaking increasingly substantial social 'soft outcomes' (as outlined above) with little interrogation from outside the echo-chamber of the funding system's own assessment process how (and indeed, if) these social expectations are being met.

The difficulties of quantifying public engagement.

Currently, 'How the public will engage with the activity, immediately or in the long term' is one of the four assessment criteria that artists score points for in their Grants For the Arts application. In a process that feels ever more like procurement, the emphasis is abundantly clear: 'Does the activity specifically increase opportunities for people who don't currently engage in the arts, or are only engaged a little in arts activity?' The more hard-to-reach or uninvolved in the arts your intended audience are perceived to be, the greater the chances of you as an artist receiving public subsidy to undertake it.

But how are the nuances of this engagement appraised? Of course, any attempt to quantify 'public engagement' is highly circumspect, particularly as the artist who is trying to fund their project is the one providing the numbers that no-one will audit.[25] The complexity of the situation that occurs

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[25]   In the GftA application, one is asked to estimate several sets of numerical data about who the activity aspires to reach. In the evaluation report, one is asked to give updated 'actual' figures for the same metrics. There is obviously an incentive (future funding success) to be able to provide numbers which at least meet if not exceed the original

when an audience gather for a free performance is hard to quantify, and certainly isn't easily expressed in numbers. In the absence of ticket receipts in the outdoor world, it is virtually impossible to quantify accurately how many 'audience' engaged with the work. What counts as 'engagement' anyway? Does the commuter who pauses for a few minutes on their lunch break in a city square to see what is drawing a crowd count as a 'live' audience member? How about the person who idly scans the Tangled Feet Twitter feed or clicks a post on our Facebook page - are they 'online audience'? Filling in project evaluation forms, it is often difficult to quantify whether some people who 'engaged' with the work were 'artists', 'participants' or 'audience', to use ACE's categories.

Blast Theory's Matt Adams rightly interrogates the function of audience in interactive work, and the questions he asks do not have easy answers:

> When does a consideration of the audience slide into a banal and redundant form of market provision? Does giving the public a voice within an artwork result in a collaborative work or merely provide pigeon-holes for pre-scripted interventions? Is there any seriously democratic thread to this process or does the artist merely establish a benevolent dictatorship with him or her at the apex? (Matt Adams cited in Freshwater 2009 p. 72)

In my experience, the system that exists to fund work through ACE is definitely vulnerable to charges of encouraging a cynical exploitation of 'audience interaction' techniques, precisely because it incentivises artists to think explicitly about 'public engagement'. For every artist carrying out diligent and well-planned 'participatory work', there is probably another who has hastily constructed a bolt-on 'participatory programme' to increase their chances of funding, and every artist has a story about encountering a 'participatory programme' for which there was little discernible appetite. Much noise is made about 'placing audiences at the heart of the work' though, in practice, as Adams identifies, this is often within a rigorous framework where audience options are strictly choreographed. In a traditional economy, audience pay performers for the experience of live performance. With the one-way nature of this exchange dissolving, there is (despite earnest intentions) a real risk of audiences/participants developing a cynicism towards work which, ultimately, has their presence and 'participation' – or, in works with a digital element, their role as 'creators of content' - built into the financial architecture of the project.[26]

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estimates. Cynically, it is also in ACE's interest to collect this data of 'success' in order to provide statistical 'proof' of the success of their investment strategy against objectives up the chain to Governmental level.

[26] Jen Harvie looks in some detail at the consequences on social power dynamics and our changing perceptions of labour of the audience member/participant as 'prosumer' in performance in Chapter 2 of Fair Play. (2013). I address some of her insights in more detail in Chapter 4 with a discussion the staging of collective labour in *One Million*.

Given that it has become so valorised, and given even the major public arts funder's increasing tendency to adopt the terminology as well as elements of the rationale of the capitalist marketplace there is certainly need for rigorous scrutiny of the nature of 'engagement'. The Arts Council uses many of the same processes as commercial/capitalist systems to calculate 'value' (with social benefit calculated in economic terms) before investment is made. Artists need to be alert to the potential risks of their erstwhile aims being co-opted to serve a different agenda:

> Might these proliferating forms of socially-turned art contribute to neoliberal governmentality? Might they sometimes offer a spectacle of communication and social engagement rather more than a qualitatively and sustainably rich and even critical engagement? (Harvie 2013 p. 3)

Creative work, according to the major public funding institution, *must* be evidenced and documented; your previous and proposed work *must* be shown to have a measurable effect, which ultimately seems to relate to a complex numeric formula. In a distinct echo of commercial language, those of us in the 'cultural industries' are not exempt from the requirements of capitalism: there must be *evidence for demand* for the 'product' that one is being funded to produce. The pressure to make the case for arts participation in capitalist, economic terms is perhaps nowhere more apparent than in this introduction to the Warwick Report:

> ...the government and the *Cultural and Creative Industrie*s need to take a united and coherent approach that guarantees equal access for everyone...There are barriers and inequalities in Britain today that prevent this from being a universal human right. This is *bad for business* and bad for society. (Warwick Report, p. 8, my italics)

Peggy Phelan's *Unmarked* (1993), illustrating the distrust of the non-reproductive in a capitalist world, discusses the consequences of disappearance. In the case of an artist's negotiation with Arts Council England, the consequences are quite clear: if your live performance 'disappears' and remains undocumented and therefore remains un-evidenced, you legally fall foul of your contract with the organisation, and you are unlikely to leverage any future funding.

In the next section I start to look closely at some of the elements that are fundamental to the ways that Tangled Feet engages with audiences but which are difficult to quantify or value inside a capitalist system. How do you account for liveness, improvisation, mutability, ambiguity and responsiveness to the audience within the framework of performance – all qualities that are ideologically prioritised and may have a strong political element - in a system that asks for

evidence of return on investment? Exploring some of these key elements, and how they tie into larger concerns about collaborative authorship and the generation of meaning by a group, I augment a discussion of the ensembles' process and ideology with theoretical perspectives.

The call for a new system of value that rescues both temporality and ambiguity – both, as I have outlined, key features of Tangled Feet's work - is one made convincingly by both Phelan and David George in his article *On Ambiguity: Towards a Post-Modern Performance Theory* (1989) which I approach further on. Phelan argues persuasively that dominant cultural and economic institutions and systems have an innate distrust of the non-reproductive and that which disappears without trace (an accusation that it would be fair to level against ACE, which remains duty-bound to evidence return on public investment). Phelan asks: what would it take to value the immaterial within a culture structured around the equation 'material equals value?' (Phelan 1993 p. 5). She proposes through her work a complex manifesto *for* disappearance/loss (as opposed to the status quo, which she aligns as being *for* acquisition and control) through which she attempts to 'find a theory of value for that which is not "really" there' (ibid. p. 1).

To participate in an economic system within the rules that that economic system demands, an artwork needs to be contractable: stable, predictable and documentable[27]. The appreciation of ambiguity, fluid temporality, liminality and disappearance that George and Phelan call for are, as I go on to discuss, difficult to locate here.

Considering the impact of 'liveness' in a cultural economy

True 'liveness', for Tangled Feet, is synonymous with the ephemeral and fleeting moment which is only accessible to those who were there at the time; once this particular performance moment is over, it is gone for ever. Peggy Phelan's summary in *Unmarked* that '(p)erformance honors the idea that a limited number of people in a specific time/space frame can have an experience of value which leaves no visible trace afterwards' (Phelan 1993 p. 149) while an ideological strength of performance in Phelan's thinking, is conversely a disadvantageous limit of the marketplace and barrier to the commercial exploitation of theatre as a commodity. West End theatre marketeers have overcome these limits by making theatrical production reproducible in line with capitalist demands in a number of ways including mass franchising, high advertising presence and a range of merchandise for sale in foyers. Some performances, it could be argued, honour Phelan's vision more than others; the enduring visual presence of the production brand and the guaranteed stability of the West-End performance product are keys to its commercial success.

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[27]Although 'artistic risk-taking' is seemingly encouraged by ACE, this 'risk-taking' needs to be both calculated, justified and mitigated against. In an equation not unlike the investment in the commodity of a share position, the calculated risk is drawn into the fundamental purchase price (or in this example, funding level) of the commodity (or artwork).

Seen in opposition to this commercial model, a performance style or production model like Tangled Feet's which deliberately resists exact reproduction and instead tries to maximise the uniqueness of each performance or which fails to guarantee the outcome, form, stability of its product has significantly and seemingly intentionally limited its market share.[28] Tangled Feet's creative processes have evolved with a conscious motivation to increase the volatility of its performances, and the work is characterised by attempts to privilege liveness by leaving open apertures for uncertainty and by binding the specific qualities and circumstances of the particular performance situation into the work. Some examples of this include the possibility for live contact improvisation in *Remote Control,* the interaction with any performance space in the nomadic *Home*, the treatment of unaware passers-by as the subjects and landscape in *The Hide,* the invitation to share an intimate secret in *I Confess,* the taking of the audiences' measurable information in *Measurement Shop,* or the distribution of glowsticks and the incitement to dance in the final moments of both *Showtime* and *Shepherd Tone.* These performance are all documented, many with accompanying video material, on Tangled Feet's website (www.tangledfeet.com/productions), but these choices unavoidably make the work difficult to record (at least in a singular form) for posterity. The specific interactions that happen within these improvisatory apertures are perhaps the hardest parts of the work to document; without specifically framing the work as semi-improvised and designed as responsive, it might be hard for a retrospective viewer of, say, a video recording, to discern where these moments of spontaneity and reaction are occurring. Artistic choices such as constructing shows which deliberately prevent two spectators receiving the same information, consciously limiting audience numbers, and resisting 'reproduction' (alternative productions of the same text) by making texts which are entirely contingent on individual performers, are all choices that limit both potential audience revenue and exposure, both from future bookings and from dissemination of the work. Unlike a playtext, there is no cultural artefact which can stand 'for' the performance, marking its legacy in a dramatic canon.

In Phelan's reading, which aligns closely with George's in many respects, doubt and uncertainty have generative powers but these are undervalued and feared by dominant capitalist/colonialist/patriarchal systems (she includes pedagogical and cultural institutions) which instead try to capture and control meaning through a process of naming, labelling, documenting, possessing, surveilling, acquiring, and constructing dominant 'scripts' for both history and cultural commentary:

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[28]*You Me Bum Bum Train*, winner of the 2009 Oxford Samuel Beckett Award, is a good example here: it took the form of an immersive experience for one audience at a time, with the audience catapulted from one extreme situation to another and finding themselves the central character in each scenario – a boxer in a ring, a translator to a foreign dignitary, a patient in a dentist's chair. The spectacle took over 70 volunteer performers/technicians to mount for each audience member and could never conceivably be profitable. Underlining this point, in 2012, the show received considerable criticism and scrutiny from others working in the industry for its over-use of unpaid labour.

> Institutions whose only function is to preserve and honour objects – traditional museums, archives, banks, and, to some degree, universities – are intimately involved in the sterilising binaries of self/other, possession/dispossession, men/women which are increasingly inadequate formulas for representation. These binaries and their institutional upholders fail to take account for that which cannot appear between these tight equations but which nonetheless inform them. These institutions must invent an economy *not based on preservation but one which is answerable to the consequences of disappearance.* (Phelan ibid. p. 165, my italics)

The scope of Phelan's examination is large (taking in art, film and protest as well as both theatrical and conceptual performance), but, like George, she employs a strategy of reconsidering binaries for what occurs in the relationship between two poles. Her final chapter ends with a call to re-plot the relationships between self and other, performer and spectator, subject and object, and an uncompromising critique of the system which Phelan sees as maintaining a repressive and guarded power.

How, though, can these theoretical aspirations to honour the disappearance of performance be actualised in real situations, underwritten by economic and political pressures? Philip Auslander asserts, in his detailed and persuasive meditation on the subject, that when 'live' and 'mediatised' compete in a capitalist marketplace, live loses[29]. His account treats 'live and mediatised performance as parallel forms that participate in the same cultural economy' (Auslander 1999 p. 5). If live performance cannot be definitively proven as ontologically different and separable from mediatised forms (a point which his text works hard to illustrate) then it can *not,* as Phelan claims, be heralded as 'a site for ideological and cultural resistance'. In Auslander's eyes, even a discourse about liveness '(cannot actually stand) outside the ideologies of capital and reproduction that define a mediatised culture' (ibid. p. 45).

Despite this claim, Auslander's study focuses only intermittently on live performance's location within and interaction with an economic system, and, even then, he only examines in any depth commercially successful, dominant models, ignoring almost totally the avant-garde, the fringe, the experimental. Nowhere in Auslander's study does he address a model of performance (live or otherwise) which *intentionally* sites itself in conscious opposition to the dominant 'rules' of the cultural economy. How does such a practice operate? Can such a practice survive without compromising its ideology? Going further, can it (perhaps like the 'opensource' software

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[29] Auslander's study obviously predates the digital age, which radically alters the terms of the debate around mediatisation, with the arrival of user-created content. However, his wider argument about the interrelation between live and mediatised forms is still broadly useful.

movement) affect the system in which it operates?

Auslander's study provides a convincing narrative of the ways in which television has, through an initial process of formal imitation, colonised the cultural space (and share of the economic marketplace) which theatre once occupied (this argument would of course today need to be updated to include internet/online media). However, a narrative of a counter-movement in theatrical spheres could be easily evidenced; finding the position of 'TV's poor relation' untenable, theatre has worked hard to capitalise on those unique qualities it has which television lacks. 'Liveness' is the most obvious of these qualities, although I agree with Auslander that it is a term which requires interrogating.[30]

Simultaneously, finding that, with the exception of West End commercial successes, it cannot compete in a capitalist marketplace with a 'profitable product', pockets of theatre-makers have attempted to consciously reject commercial viability in favour of a different set of 'values.' But what are those values? How do they stand up to interrogation? Importantly, can they sustain a theatre-making practice?

At the root of this theoretical debate are questions as to whether or not an artistic ideological standpoint is separated from the economic conditions in which the work is being made. In contrast to Philip Auslander, who frames live performance as inextricably situated in a 'ubiquitous' mediatised culture with which it unavoidably interacts, Peggy Phelan locates live performance as susceptible to, but crucially, *not unavoidably* bound by the 'laws of reproductive economy' (Phelan 1993. p. 146). Her assertion that '(t)o the degree that performance *attempts to enter* the economy of reproduction, it betrays and lessens the promise of its own ontology' (my italics) is revealing; her argument revolves around the premise that live performance *can choose* whether or not to engage. She continues: 'The pressures brought to bear on performance to succumb to the laws of the reproductive economy are enormous.' Her political standpoint is that these 'laws' *might* (albeit with difficulty) be circumvented or avoided. Her optimism in this respect is incompatible with the framework that Auslander constructs.

How, then, do we avoid these oppressive 'laws of the reproductive economy?' Moving from the realm of the theoretical to the practical, as Co-Artistic Director of Tangled Feet the pressures to 'succumb' to the laws of economic reproduction often appear unavoidable. Like a great majority of

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[30] Qualities associated with liveness which Auslander discusses in limited detail and which warrant further deconstruction include a fuller sensory experience, sense of community, perceived symbolic capital of live attendance. I would add to these the use of audience as a scenographic element, the potential for participation and interaction, intentional use of kinaesthetic response and the calculated use of physical proximity, all elements which I discuss in Chapters 3 and 4 below.

experimental theatrical production, Tangled Feet's work is, looking at the balance sheet, 'uneconomical'; the financial costs of making a 'commodity' (series of live performances) is always greater than the economic 'value' that commodity can be sold at. Resources (financial and otherwise) to create work speculatively, without a definite programming context and fee agreed are almost non-existent: in order to access funding, particularly from the Arts Council, 'evidence of demand' for the work must exist. The process of finding investment (resources or finances) for a work yet-to-be-made and which therefore cannot be prefigured evidentially is a constant challenge, regardless of ideological concerns.

Where Tangled Feet's work differs from much other theatrical work is the extent to which the mutable elements of the performance are consciously engineered to be left in the hands of the performers as much as possible, giving them apertures to respond 'in the moment' as they judge best. However, like much other theatre work - scripted or otherwise - Tangled Feet's pieces tread a careful line between being responsive to each new audience and situation, while at the same time retaining a stability and structure that ensures the work is engaging with its audience in a satisfactory way. There is consequently a double-bind at work; because performances need to happen more than once - to justify return on investment with economies of scale, if not necessarily because we want to tour work as widely as possible - we are trying to make work that is predictable enough to sell to programmers, but 'live' enough to make audiences feel like they are being responded to. Predetermined structure aims to ensure that a work is dramatically robust, that it adheres to enough of the audience's expectations not to confound them, and crucially, that its close-up interactions with the audience are safe (due careful consideration in *One Million,* for example, where large metal and scaffold structures moved through large crowds).

Improvising History

In her essay 'Improvising/History' (2003) Susan Leigh Foster proposes that 'improvisation has most frequently eluded the historian's focus. The improvised event, even the fact that improvisation has occurred as part of a performance, is frequently omitted from the historical record or glossed over as insubstantial or indescribable' (Foster 2003 p.197). Foster's radical solution is to 'use improvisation as a catalyst for a new consideration of how history is researched and written' (ibid. p. 196). She does this in essay form, through three experimental approaches to writing about performances over the course of which she moves through three different written 'voices', drawing attention both to the range of stances we can take while still using writing to engage with and critique performance, and as a result to the ubiquity of the removed, authoritative stance so frequently taken.

Foster understands improvisation as something that fundamentally rearranges the power dynamic

between performer and spectator, because the spectator is aware of the process of decision-making and discovery, as well as the presence of the unknown and unprepared as integral elements of the performance event. She considers the potentials of applying these shifted dynamics to the act of criticism:

> Often perceived as incommensurate, the simultaneous doing and reflecting on that doing could provide a new perspective on the activity of writing history. Conceptualising history writing as a kind of improvisation could move us past objective/subjective binaries and also provide new models for how to situate the historian as part of the research project. (ibid. p. 208)

Improvisation, in Foster's analysis, has the potential both to perform the interlinked functions of challenging 'dominant masculine politics' and of being 'a tool for opening up new forms of embodied knowledge' (ibid. p. 208), thus dislodging some of the entrenched hierarchies and unhelpful binaries of text-centric critical practices as explored by Mihaylova.

Foster is fully appreciative of the need to develop sophisticated strategies both for appreciating and talking about improvisation, which she conceptualises as

> a continual negotiation between known and unknown physical experience, between previously mastered skills and impromptu discovery, between learned patterns for choreographic thought and fresh insight, between established protocols and spontaneous deviation from those protocols. (ibid. p. 200)

How might a consideration of this strategy of playing with established protocols and deviation from those protocols aid our critical thinking about outdoor work, which often reimagines familiar social spaces, changing their rules and thus provoking the emergence of new kinaesthetic and political relationships?

Do the integral dynamics of some types of performance experience lead us towards a liberating – and potentially empowering – comprehension that we create meanings collectively through our interactions with the world and each other? Can these performances mount a challenge to a cultural and social theocentricity which would have us believe that the world is essentially authored and that there is a grand scheme or design which has already been created and is predetermined regardless of our presence?

Sean Burke concludes, in his analysis of Roland Barthes' seminal work, that what Barthes was

ultimately arguing was not for the 'death of the author' but against the 'closure of representation' and an elevation of the power of the reader to a position no longer submissive to that of the writer and the critic. In that respect, Barthes' manifesto shares ideological premises with Tangled Feet. Barthes notion of the 'modern writer (scriptor)' who is 'born simultaneously with his text' (ibid. p. 4) seems however, to be an optimistic proposal, which relies on the reader being able to overcome the deeply-embedded connections and associations which Ong draws between writing and fixedness and to conceive of a writer thus. Is such a liberalisation possible? 'We know' asserts Barthes 'that a text does not consist of a line of words, releasing a single "theological meaning" (the "message" of the Author-God)'; however Ong would contest that even if we do 'know' this, we often *treat* written and printed texts as if they contained a final, closed, intended meaning. As David George proposes (below), writing is associated with a fixing of states, which is more easily avoided in the world of performance, which harbours more room for paradox to exist. In his reading, there is still a 'hidden but knowable' false belief at work that in an adult world, past the childhood state of play, 'paradoxes are there to be resolved; the world is meaningful once we suss it all out' (George ibid p. 78).

Even if we stretch Barthes' 'author' to include, for example, a dancer as an originator, his inferences are coloured by an association specifically with text and written practice. Pushing the problems of interpreting Barthes' text further, Ong draws attention to the complications posed to what he terms 'textualists' (to include both Deconstructivists and Structuralists) by an 'historically uncritical, unreflexive literacy' (Ong ibid. p. 166) which fails to investigate the orality out of which writing emerged (ibid. p. 76) nor to bring into full account recent considerations around the shift from orality to literacy, and which as a result never effectively locates the origins of 'logocentricity' against this historical shift.

Through the following sections I make the case that, in the theatrical landscape, the operations and revolutions that Barthes describes, in terms of the dispersal of meaning-making, are perhaps more readily located in performance generally, and most specifically in the type of co-authored, devised practice that has sidelined the use of text and/or script (in part, because of its associations with an authority that exists outside of the performance moment) and which places importance on apertures for improvisation. As I suggest, the deliberate strategy of creating work using methodologies that prioritise liveness, temporality, flexibility and adaptability (expressed in a quest for 'liveness') at the expense of adhering to normative definite structures of ownership or legacy can be construed as a political strategy which consciously sites it in a position of counter-discursive, critical opposition to capitalist forces.

David George and uncertainty, Writing and 'fixedness', resolution of paradox

In his essay on performance's integral ambiguity, David George takes up a deconstructionist baton and critiques Western culture as compulsively seeking efforts at binary closure (attributing all things securely as one thing or the other), and writing as an integral part of this fixing of states. Words 'erase the uniqueness of events and experiences and replace them by the false security of classes and categories' (George 1989 p. 75).

> Certainty is safety, and uncertainty is dangerous, all things must be one thing or the other: traditionally in our culture, 'doubling' is a characteristic of the contemptible (double-faced, double-dealing, double-cross), the equation being ambiguity = duplicity = deceit. (ibid. p. 78)

In George's reading, two curious functions occur in Western culture. The first is that binaries are created and then, importantly, not allowed to remain equivalent to each other, but played off against one another with one elevated and one denigrated. He cites Mark C Taylor's *Deconstructing Theology*, which identifies and explores some of these key binaries:

> Like its intellectual twin, philosophy, theology does not regard these opposites (Eternity/Time, Being/Becoming, Permanence/Change, Origin/Imitation) as equivalent. It refuses to allow the possibility that oppositional terms can co-exist peacefully. Invariably, one term is privileged *through the divestment of its relative.* (Taylor, M cited in George 1989 p. 73, my italics)

Through this function we can see that the permanence and 'fixedness' which writing appears to signify is elevated above the slippery, temporary, disappearing nature of performance. The second, interconnected function that George identifies, as a consequence of this, is that the ingrained logocentrism leads to 'the adoption of the Text as epistemological paradigm, for it is the notion of the world-as-text which creates the assumption that it is authored – and, therefore, authorised, purposeful, meaningful' (ibid. p. 74).[31] The distrust of ambiguity and the sense of insecurity that it arouses in us, in George's reading, leads ultimately to the promotion of fixed over the fluid, the author's attempts at structure over the chaotic and meaningless world, the text as an anchor to keep this system in place. As a consequence of these functions, ambiguity is devalued in order to privilege certainty, temporality sacrificed to secure permanence, with profound consequences for

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[31] As I argued in Chapter 1, we can also locate a habit in our criticism to complete the same function, because criticism, to use Barthes' reading, is essentially theological. If an ambiguity or a dualism exists, the job of criticism is often to elevate one of these elements at the expense of the other, and thus create an 'authoritative' reading.

performance:

> since the particular cannot ever possibly be as perfect as the generalised abstraction, they
> are inevitably devalued: events can only be inferior to systems, experiences inferior to
> interpretations, the temporary inferior to the permanent. (ibid. p. 74)

In this analysis, the temporal 'event' nature of performance will always be repressed by the 'system' of the text. In his call for a writing/text/utterance which is 'eternally written here and now' (ibid. p. 4), Barthes appears to be attributing to writing the qualities which a performative moment could be argued to much more effectively achieve. To my mind, and in the value system I think is fundamental to Tangled Feet, live performance is an ideal and fertile ground for the rearranging of relationships which Barthes proposes, despite being hampered by overshadowing literary conventions and systems of value.

A dispersal of meaning making; an embodied audience

In *Orality and Literacy,* Ong posits convincingly that a writer's audience is always a fiction: 'The writer must set up a role in which absent and often unknown readers can cast themselves' (Ong 1982 p. 100). This is one example of literary theory being directly transferable to theatrical setting, Ong's observation still stands if we substitute 'writer' for 'playwright', who will often do the majority of their work outside the rehearsal room, and 'reader' for 'spectator'.

However, many performance-makers do not work this way, with a sole author creating alone for an imagined audience. Frames of analysis and systems of value which presume (and often elevate) an authorial role are inappropriate and inadequate for this practice; we need instead analytical tools which pay attention to the nuances created in the interactions between artists, audience and environment. Meaning-making, and authorial intention, is in this process dispersed onto a network of people and a number of difference systems, which include choreography, proxemic relationships, kinaesthetic effect, sound, image and atmosphere alongside language.

Encountering a collaboratively-authored work, created and performed by a group, there is the potential (although this may not be uniformly realised) for an awareness that each performer is a producer of his or her own meanings, and that the effect of the work is created out of the places in which those meanings overlap and clash, are continuous and discontinuous with each other. Multiple ambiguities are created – but it is no longer possible to define specifically who is responsible for them. Can this process lead to the binaries of author/reader, actor/spectator, performer/role being dissolved? At its most radical, my proposal is that, while evidently also

problematic, this performance circumstance can be fundamentally empowering

Performers, argues David George convincingly, revel in contradiction and in liminal states.

> [L]iminality is not just stepping over from one role to another but the space in which 'we' exist in between, for the difference in the process of performing is that it does not transform one reality (person, space, time) into another but exhibits their dialectic, their in-betweenness. (George, ibid. p. 79)

An analysis of Tangled Feet's working practice reveals a dense set of complex and concurrent contradictions and tensions in the performer's relation to the material that is created which refuses to adhere to pervasive (narrow) conceits of authorship which tie individuals to the creation or intention of meaning. When actor and founder member Mario Christofides (for example) is performing, as both co-author and performer he is simultaneously representing something and creating it. As an improviser, creating concurrently with other people, Mario's authorial intentions may be being countered by another performer's, as each person's authorial attempts to control or direct meaning are potentially scuppered or redirected by their co-performers, creating a tension; a plurality of intentions. Of course, in the devising process these initial improvisations are used to generate material that is then discussed, refined and collaged together (with, in Tangled Feet's case, significant input from the director). However, this devising process means that material is always a negotiation, and the performance is a product of a continuous feedback loop which broadens out to include the new audience members.

Because material is generated from the experiences and specific qualities of the ensemble members, performers also phase between 'being' a character and being themselves. Often, Tangled Feet 'characters' only ever have the name of their originator, further blurring the classical distinction between actor and character (*All That Is Solid* and *Push* being examples where the actors use their own names). The work the performers create will always be layered by all the other performances they've made with this group; whatever the character Mario plays, he might always simultaneously be read as Mario to anyone who has previously encountered Tangled Feet's work.

Crucially, the physical embodied presence of the spectator is located in the frame of the moment right from the beginning in the Tangled Feet process, as the directors and spare actors cast themselves as proto-spectators responding directly to the action at every rehearsal. This enables the kinaesthetic relationships that are occurring between bodies to be deliberately authored as part of the action. The process of 'engaging with the audience' happens in a different way to a script-

centred process where the work takes its initial shape with only an imagined audience in place and with ideas explored and communicated primarily through language (though I of course acknowledge that, as with Kane's *Blasted,* discussed in Chapter 1, a performance created through a scripted process can still carry part of its thesis through the physical acts and kinaesthetic relationships imagined in it). Importantly, this physical devising process enables ideas to be explored and communicated primarily through arrangements and movements of bodies, and, crucially, through dynamic and evolving relationships *between* bodies – performers and performer, performer and spectator. (Of course, *in addition* to this role as the spectator, the director/s will be structuring the rehearsal and making choices that can be viewed as 'authorial'; my point is that the audience/reader role crosses over with the author/director role at certain points in the process).

In an 'interactive' moment, the planned and rehearsed events may be in continual tension with the unplanned of the live circumstances or the impulses of the spectators or other public. If the audience is aware that some form of improvisation is taking place (perhaps because the work is demonstrably reacting to 'unique' live circumstances) then the spectator potentially becomes aware of the process of decision and discovery, and their relationship with the performer and the work is rearranged as a result.

 In the rehearsal room, a feedback loop is created between the performers and the directors (and other performers in the room not participating in a scene or exercise) as those watching make suggestions and proposals and offer up the associations they have drawn.There is recognition, by the ensemble, that each watcher will make sense of the information he/she perceives in a way personal to them, drawing on their own unique sets of associations, memories and narratives. In the transition from rehearsal room to performance, this watching space is broadened out, often firstly to an invited audience who will offer feedback, and latterly to an unfamiliar public. It is a political decision to divest authorial control to many people and make them visible in the flesh, and one which changes the whole power dynamic in the live performance moment.

> The actor-character 'binary' is - really – a polarity of performer and role in which it is not the disappearance of one in(to) the other which is experienced but the creative dynamism of their interplay. The actor-audience relationship is, similarly, *not one in which either the former predicts the reception or the latter dictates the meaning but in which the spectator complements the work of the performers by the act of relating.* (George ibid. p. 80, my italics)

Can the anxiety of achieving 'the definitive reading' of a performance work be alleviated if we view meaning-making as personal, subjective, individual, informed by identity and situated politically?

Our experience of being part of an audience, in such a case, might allow for us to have an awareness of both the points of connection we make with other spectators, and the points of divergence and difference between us. As Peggy Phelan proposes in her manifesto for a reconsideration of the value of temporality, 'it is in the attempt to walk (and live) on the rackety bridge between self and other – and not the attempt to arrive at one side or the other – that we discover real hope' (Phelan 1993 p. 174).

Conclusion: What's the prognosis for an 'Age of Performance' celebrating uncertainty, paradox and ambiguity?

> How in such a (capitalist) culture can a form such as theatre, whose structural subjunctivity is distinct from the liminal movement around it only through the marks and signals of exhausted convention and demarked prestige, possibly hope to assert its significance at all, let alone in a critical or dissident way? Which is partly to say, can theatre change in response to the change around it, and in that change can it rediscover the compelling saliency of its social promise? (Chris Goode, The Forest and The Field, 2007 p. 10)

Chris Goode's question above opens up a number of intertwined questions about the cultural place occupied by theatrical performance today. Is it an exhausted form, put under increasing pressure by other, more spectacular and easily and cheaply reproduced forms of entertainment? Is it doomed to bow to the commercial pressures which are now, perhaps more than at any other time, seeking to capitalise on the monetary value of the live performance? Or, in its ontological resistance to (capitalist) value systems does performance remain – or perhaps grow ever more important – as a site of resistance?

Janelle Reinelt suggests that performance's promise is dependant on it surpassing the act of uniting individuals into a group, and in addition, allow them to discover or enact a meaningful sense of agency:

> Spectators are, at the least, an implied community for the time of performance – even if riven with antagonisms and contradictions that make *community* a weak signifier. Moving beyond this minimal baseline to a truly radical form of civic spectatorship involves negotiation and contestation, and *a fundamental transformation of the traditional 'spectator' function from consumer to agent.*
> (Reinelt, Janelle, 'Notes for a Radical Democratic Theater'*, in Staging Resistance* p. 286, my italics)

How is this complex transformation to 'radical civic spectatorship' achieved? Reinelt's distinction between consumer and agent is perhaps overly simplistic (do we not have agency as consumers?), but her wider point is one about cultural experiences which promote passive consumption versus those promoting active engagement in wider political, social or civic life. Despite the many difficulties, the conscious interrogation or reengineering of the performance relationship might at least provoke an alternative to the provider/consumer relationship, and thus throw that exchange under interrogation.

For this possibility to remain open, spectators need to be acknowledged and encouraged to have agency in the performance situation: they are completing the performance through the act of relating to it and to each other; her reading is important and valid. If, as Susan Leigh Foster suggests, improvisation offers an alternative means of considering and also of writing history, there exists the theoretical possibility of audiences being active participants in the ongoing process of shaping and making both meaning (in relation to performance) and the resultant dramatic canons and historical cultural configurations.

> ...the role of performance as fundamentally subversive of all unitary ambitions may have succeeded so well in keeping open an awareness of existential ambiguity that it may now be about to replace the old cultural paradigm by a new one, one which instead of trying to heal a split world, reverses the procedure: explodes all units, locates the kernel of doubt in all securities, the paradox in all truths, the difference in all identity. An 'age of performance' – not as diversion or even commentary, but as a fundamental way of seeing the world, living it. And even enjoying it. (George 1989. p. 74)

Can we make performance with a conscious attempt to hand the process of making meaning gently back to an audience, to encourage a flourishing of interpretation, to circumvent the internal voice that a spectator might have that says 'I know what I think it is, but I'm not sure I'm thinking the right thing'? The ideological incentives that both George and Phelan offer us are wonderfully promising:

> Performance ... becomes a significant demonstration of Phenomenology's general belief in multiple, parallel ontologies ... (performance models) an indeterminate, relative universe in which the actual is only ever one possible manifestation of multiple potentials. (George ibid. p. 78)

Companies/artists can – and do - make work with this ideology firmly embedded in the artistic strategies – but there's a rupture or danger of misreading when they are doing so inside a system that largely subscribes to more traditional notions of authorship, and in a capitalist economy that needs evidence and concrete 'product' in return for investment, and where, as I've pointed out, the parallel economies of 'participatory value' begin to create their own problems and challenges. If Auslander, rather than Phelan, is correct, and no ontological quality can be attached to liveness, and securely evidenced, then is Tangled Feet's strategy of privileging liveness over legacy essentially a futile manoeuvre, functioning only to ensure that the ensemble's work disappears effectively from the canon and can have no meaningful future influence? The risks are high.

In the short-term, the strategies Tangled Feet are pursuing allow them to eke out a living by playing along with a system that seeks to place a public investment value on the ideological concerns the ensemble hold, anyway, at their core. How long this value system will stay in place remains to be seen – and in a politically volatile climate, with post-Olympic slump in government arts investment meaning that competition for funds is ever more fierce, many in the arts are fearing that artists are increasingly to be supported by public subsidy only if they can evidence results akin to social work. With the pressures of our text-centric, evidence-driven culture even harder to alleviate at a time of intense austerity, there is a very real risk that increasingly sparse money and resources will accumulate around the processes of documentation and evidencing of 'public engagement' results (as they are already crystallising around 'development' positions and 'digital strategies') rather than around the artists and the live work itself.

I hope to have raised some provocations about the potentials of collaborative authorship for rearranging the relationship between spectators and artists, and to have defended a group ideology centred around the celebration of flux and doubt while at the same time staying alert to the problems of practically and theoretically justifying that ideology.

'The unity of the text' Barthes proposed, 'is not in its origin, it is in its destination'. This destination reader (or, as we might consider it, audience) as Barthes conceives it, is not an individual but a plural one 'without history, without biography, without psychology; he is only that someone who holds gathered into a single field all the paths of which the text is constituted' (Barthes 1967 p. 6). Tangled Feet's work, as I hope to have shown, is made plurally: by many people, over long periods of time, changed, renegotiated and re-'written' every time it is attempted in rehearsal, performance or discussion. If we distil this rather metaphorical 'destination' that Barthes proposes, we might conceive of a correspondingly plural reception of Tangled Feet's work: the reception-point that we ought to place under analysis is not a specific performance, but rather includes every audience, in

every place, at every time any of the work was performed, from the earliest scratches and scraps of ideas to the retoured shows. Each performance, in this conception, is an incomplete part of a meta-text, a greater 'unity', which revels in its own unfinished nature, just as it revels in its avoidance of one definite originator.

However flawed the attempts to quantify 'public engagement' in return for public subsidy, the consequence is that a system built around doing so is an enormously influential force on the arts ecology in England; artists are under immense pressure to subscribe to this system of value (and to make their work appear to subscribe to it) if it is to allow them to both make work and pay their bills. Although, viewed through one lens, this system appears to be valorising the exchange between artists and audience that lies at the heart of 'public engagement', what is abundantly obvious is that it can never be free of the pressure to quantify, evidence and create a legacy. David George's optimistic analysis examines in superb detail how performers and performance utilise the various potentials of ambiguity, labelling performance as 'the radical and fundamental creation of difference' (George 1989. p. 74) forging a path into a 'brave new world'. He does not, however, explore how it suffers from or might be limited by its existence inside a system that, as he convincingly argues, actively resists the inherent doubt of ephemeral, unstable temporality for the safety of permanence and resolution.

As Phelan observes, problematically in such a political climate, '(p)erformance resists the balanced circulations of finance. It saves nothing, it only spends ... performance art is vulnerable to charges of valuelessness and emptiness'. (Phelan ibid. p. 148). The needs of public funders – to evidence that money has been spent wisely – are, I have argued in this chapter, at odds with performance's ontological tendency to disappear without trace. Under pressure to be at all times transparently accountable in its decision-making, ACE has been forced to find a 'theory of value for what is not really there' (Phelan ibid. p. 1). This nascent value system (as I hope to have shown) is not accompanied by rigorous or sophisticated mechanisms for assessing in detail the nature of that interaction – nor can it escape the language and some of the underlying assumptions of a commercial industrial model.

Bishop alerts us that there is a huge risk of

> instrumentalizing art to fulfil policies of social inclusion – a cost-effective way of justifying public spending on the arts while diverting attention away from the structural causes of decreased social participation, which are political and economic (welfare, transport, education, healthcare, etc.). (Bishop in Roche, 2006. p. 180 qtd in Harvie ibid p. 9)

From a situated perspective, these warnings are deeply troubling and frighteningly prescient. Tangled Feet often find themselves in a delicate balancing act, trying to create work with a greater ambition for political criticism than programmers or commissioners are comfortable with[32] - but which we find audiences have an appetite for. Particularly in the outdoor sector, where most shows are heavily dependent on public funding and thus abiding by the metrics of 'public engagement', but not held to account for the critical quality of the show content by reviewers, the risks of banal spectacle are very real.

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[32]One example of this would be Greenwich Council's nervousness about *One Million,* which I explore in Chapter 4. I other instances, we have been subject to nervousness about presenting our work by venue commissioners who are funded by their local Conservative council. Brigid Lamour, Artistic Director of Watford Palace theatre, determinedly (but unsuccessfully) campaigned for us to remove the nightmarish vulture images from *Care* (a metaphor for private investment preying on the NHS). The compromise that was reached was that we wouldn't use that imagery in a short 'preview' performance at the festival launch which was to be attended by local Council, politicians and Mayor, instead at her insistence, showing them the beginning section of the show, which contained no 'controversial' imagery.

Chapter 3: Kinaesthetic strategies: The political influence of the body

Introduction

Kinaesthesis (from greek: *kinein* "to move" + *aisthesis* "sensation") is often used in performance theory and criticism without significant interrogation, usually in connection with performative moments where a particularly visceral physical sensation is somehow foregrounded. As a theatre-maker, the term 'kinaesthetic' frequently feels like it is the right term to describe something that one knows is happening but is at a loss to explain. Something tangible and crackly happens between performers and spectators, and this element is sometimes the inexplicable thing that transports a performative moment from being 'good' to being 'extraordinary': a moment where some sort of connection happens between bodies in a room and something very specific, on a level that seems to be beyond the realm of language, is shared and understood.

But what is this apparently 'mystical' moment? It is clearly unsatisfactory to leave that response (which theatre-makers would probably widely recognise) to be glibly filed under 'the magic of theatre'. However, even the most rigorous critical theorising often uses the term 'kinaesthetic' unreflexively, failing to define or interrogate the term.

While written text can record the spoken word, and video can capture (even imperfectly) movement, the ontologically experiential nature of kinaesthetic affectivity is problematic to evidence. Perhaps it is for these reasons that it is an element of performance which is often overlooked. Through the first chapter I developed the argument that dance studies and a consideration of movement intelligence can show us that we are constantly using broad channels of communication aside from and beyond language, in ways that are little understood, rarely consciously acknowledged, and therefore radically underestimated in terms of importance. What do bodies understand of each other? What is the flow of information between bodies? Do we understand the subjective emotional states of others, to some degree, physically? These are huge questions at the centre of both theatre and politics.

Through this chapter I explore the idea that as theatre-makers, we *do* use the term to talk about something very specific but about which we have a lot of hunches, a very low level of conscious awareness and almost no empirical understanding. This investigation stems from a belief that, broadly, kinaesthesia is an important part of perception and communication, but one that is not fully understood because it is so integrally a part of our embodied perceptual 'background noise' that it happens on a layer below conscious apprehension, and, for reasons I will discuss, has until very

recently been difficult to evidence neurologically. The aim of this investigation is to attempt (at least partially) to rescue 'kinaesthetics' from the strange netherworld in our collective understanding, to make some inroads in unravelling what we are referring to and what we mean, and to detail evidence that exists to back up the 'hunches' that we feel when we work physically in performance situations.

Outside of performance studies, the term 'kinaesthetic' is appropriated for use in fields as diverse as sports physiotherapy and transcendental meditation. A quick collection of references in performance studies to kinaesthesia or kinaesthetics will throw up an array of terms – kinaesthetic 'awareness', 'intelligence' or 'empathy' are inferred, kinaesthetic 'responses' and 'fields' are invoked, kinaesthetic 'strategies' are used and kinaesthetic 'understanding' reached (I will unpick some of these references later in this chapter). However, with no common understanding or consensus as to what these terms mean, it is difficult for the extent of our knowledge to move very far, and the ways in which our bodies are interrelating when we construct performances are under-explored and under-articulated to such a degree that they remain in the realm of something ineffable, akin to mysticism. Is 'kinaesthesia' actually a lot of smoke and mirrors – a catch-all term for something vague and unsubstantiated?

Despite the recent 'corporeal turn', remarkably little has been written about kinaesthetics in performance; for once one starts searching for some kind of definition one enters a confusing field where performance studies, philosophy and neuroscience have staked methodologically incompatible corners. It becomes apparent that enormously complex issues - emotions and musculature, atmospheres and perception, neural and sensorimotor systems, cognition, ratiocination, reason, attention, metaphor, bodies and spaces, awareness and subconscious - are all somehow connected. The challenge is to bring these sources into dialogue with each other to try to exhume evidence that is useful for thinking about kinaesthetic response in performance.

Neuroscience, while providing significant recent insight into how embodied cognition works in the individual (specifically, within the boundaries of placing under examination one person and a set of environmental constants) still remains limited in its ability to begin examining the interactions between human beings. As Jaana Parviainen concisely explains in her excellent article 'Choreographing Resistances',

> An important part of social interaction is based on motor and sensory mirroring between individuals. Until the 1990s, most study paradigms in human neuroscience were highly simplistic, trying to eliminate or control all variables such as the subject's state, motivations or attitude. The current challenge for brain imaging is to bring

everyday human interaction occurring in a complex natural environment between two or more subjects into the laboratory. (Parviainen; 2010 p. 318)

My tactic has been to investigate both the securely evidenced information about embodied cognition that cognitive science has revealed (which has moved on since the constraints of the 1990s), as well as some of the less secure claims which this field of research is forging towards, and to bring them into dialogue with other performance theorists and my own analyses of several performances. My task here is not to attempt to demonstrate the scientific validity of various claims around kinaesthetics, but rather, to use them to provoke thinking and develop observations around Tangled Feet's practice, and the practice of other artists.

As I will demonstrate, choreography is a powerful means of creating new dynamic relationships between agents in specific environments (in and outside the theatre), but it is imperative that we interrogate and understand *how* human beings are able to affect each other and their environment kinaesthetically. Politics is more than words spoken and speeches made in the seats of power. As the London riots in 2011 or the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012 evidence, large-scale structured movement of many bodies in specific environments can have surprisingly profound and transformative effects on our shared construction of community, city or nation. This is something I follow up in more detail in the discussion of Tangled Feet's *One Million* in the next chapter.

How do we understand our kinaesthetic responses? How can we decode how they work? How do we communicate them to others? Would a thorough examination and analysis of kinaesthetic response lead us to a better understanding of how emotional, physical and moral responses are intertwined?[33] Lakoff and Johnson, in *Philosophy in the Flesh* (1999), have constructed a theoretical case for morality, amongst other constructs, being fundamentally embodied. If it can also be shown that we access the subjective emotional states of others, to some degree, physically, then the ramifications for how we understand and critique physical theatre – a form that often structures the communication of characters' inner lives and emotional tensions predominantly through their bodies, rather than their speech - are extremely significant. We need to revise the way we approach physical theatre with new strategies that include an in-depth examination of our own kinaesthetic responses to the performance.

In this chapter, I do not propose to lay out an entire theory of kinaesthetic relationships (which

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[33] This would need to take into account work undertaken in neuroscience, which is only recently developing an awareness of how our brain responds to other people's movement. For example, a brain system has been identified which is specifically concerned with processing the motion stimulus caused by the action of other individuals, and neuroscientific work is being conducted which includes attempts to understand how watching dance affects the brain (explored in Calvo-Merino et al; 2007)

would be beyond the scope of this study). Instead I aim to shine some light on what we might be talking about when we employ the term 'kinaesthetic', and to edge towards an understanding of kinaesthetic relationships and how they might function in live performance, which I then build from in my close analysis of practice in the next chapter. I intend to explore some speculative hypotheses about the complex ways in which human bodies relate and respond to each other, and to extend the understanding of how kinaesthetic responses can be provoked in performance. How do those kinaesthetically affective relationships function in public space? Having set this groundwork, I go on to investigate how physical work like Tangled Feet's, which often happens in public spaces, might charge and change the places that we share.

Through this chapter I will open up speculation about what, as theatre practitioners, we can harness kinaesthetic effect to do. I will propose that as well as deepening experience as one of many layers in the performance exchange, exploiting the potential of kinaesthetic relationships – a uniquely powerful element of physical performance that does not rely on access to a shared language but instead on the similarities between our bodies and the ways they respond - can catalyse political and social dynamics.

Broadly, through these manoeuvres I aim to examine how concepts which lie at the heart of theatrical performance but are traditionally thought of as processes occurring in the mind – empathy, morality and emotion – can be shown to be embodied operations. I hope to make a convincing case about the power of kinaesthesia and the extent to which it can be judiciously used for effect by theatre-makers. As I have demonstrated in previous chapters, it is my position that in British theatre culture, a dominant working methodology which revolves around scriptwriting sidelines kinaesthetic in favour of textual effect. To create work which most fully is sensitised to and exploits kinaesthetic potential requires a process of creating which centres around bodies working together, paying close attention to making kinaesthetic discoveries. The traditional script-writing process – the sole author working with words on paper - rarely allows for kinaesthetic relationships to be explored, authored or placed central to the work (although they may, of course, be discovered or invoked in the rehearsal room). This is unfortunate because I contest that kinaesthetic relationships allow us to access layers of experience together communally as human beings in a way that written language does not, and accordingly, they deserve fuller attention than they often receive. Understanding kinaesthetic response, and creating new critical strategies to rescue it from its undervalued position, could bring another complex, nuanced layer to British theatre culture, a new and complementary set of tools for political and social influence and leverage.

Thinking about kinaesthesia and beginning to make sense of it requires a perceptual shift away

from Cartesian dualism and logocentricism, with the basic starting point being an acknowledgement that the mind does not stop at the head. Recent developments in embodied cognition (philosophy and neuroscience) have a significant impact on how we are able to think about this problem. I make use of the idea that huge swathes of our cognitive processes are going on below the level of our conscious perceptual awareness, using Lakoff and Johnson's *Philosophy In The Flesh* (1999) to reposition the body as a thinking entity and re-draw the boundaries of what we think of as cognition. Making a case that our bodies 'cognise' things as well as 'recognise' them, I introduce the idea that what we refer to as processes of kinaesthetic empathy, understanding etc., fall into this plane of sub-conscious cognition.

In what follows, I focus attention on to the ways that we can intuit, without the benefit of neuro-imaging, that our bodies divulge and perceive information. I construct a case that our embodiment affects the spaces we inhabit in manifold ways that we cannot stop or control. Despite our phenomenological perception of our bodies as discrete entities, separate from the environments they exist within, we effect and are affecting each other in a myriad of ways of which we are not fully conscious.

The proposal that I make is that kinaesthesia, rather than being one physical process solely concerned with the comprehension of movement, is a collection of responses to the world around us which are complex, dynamic and interrelating, which take place predominantly beneath the level of consciousness, and which make use of all our senses as well as our sensorimotor systems and our motor reflexes. It is my position that when we talk about 'kinaesthetics' we are actually using a blanket term to cover some of these interrelations, which are starting to be illuminated by research into embodied cognition. Our embodied understanding of our own body in space is indivisible from these other systems, and I think there is evidence to suggest that our understanding of *other* bodies also makes use of all these systems.

I then go on to consider why we respond to other bodies and the information that is embedded in their everyday movement, using some very basic propositions about evolutionary advantage and bringing into play observations using Laban's effort theory to analyse movement. Our kinaesthetic responses are founded on our human form, the ways that our neural and sensorimotor and nervous systems work, and the way we move in and perceive the world. I posit an argument that we consistently scan movement for information about abnormality, and respond to signals of atypicality, which could be evidence of potential threat, at an instinctive and automatic level. I also propose that we tap into group awareness and distribute our attention to receive and respond to information from crowds, often without being aware that we are doing so. This is of significant importance to the practice I unpick in Chapter 4, which explores how the crowd functions and is

foregrounded as a social system in *One Million.*

Seeking to understand the perceptual and cognitive systems that underpin these responses, I turn to a neuroscientific view of embodied cognition - a movement towards the idea that 'the mind must be understood in the context of its relationship to a physical body that interacts with the world' (Wilson, 2002 p. 628). Using Margaret Wilson's review of the field, 'Six Views of Embodied Cognition', I apply two of the major claims of embodied cognition: that cognition is 'for' action, and that the environment is part of cognition.

I use one of the more secure neuroscientific findings (that visual stimuli can prime the motor reflexes that would be required for action, without actually triggering physical movement or visible response in the individual) to construct a case that empathy with others can happen kinaesthetically. I use this reasoning to interrogate three examples of art that revolve around a body apparently in peril or under threat: Antony Gormley's *Event Horizon* (2007), surgeon Roger Kneebone's performed simulations of operating theatre procedures, and Tangled Feet's *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air.* Through these examples I propose a spectrum of ways in which our bodies as spectators could be interacting kinaesthetically and empathetically with the imperilled bodies in the artworks. I make a case that we are unable to remain physically disengaged from the unstable body, mapping our own body isomorphically onto it, and that crucially this happens irrespective of whether we are consciously aware that the body we are responding to is not 'real'.

I move on to explore the claim that the environment is part of cognition, a claim that neuroscience has theoretical evidence to propose but difficulty in proving, and to think about what performance situations – where most meaningful analysis focuses on the system rather than on an individual within that situation - might be able to add to this theoretical proposal and routes into thinking about it.

Using Jaana Parviainen's article, 'Choreographing Resistance: Spatial-Kinaesthetic Intelligence and Bodily Knowledge as Political Tools in Activist work' (1999), I expand the idea of kinaesthetic affectivity outwards to consider larger scale social-political situations rather than uniquely at the level of the interaction between two bodies. Again, this lays groundwork for the chapter that follows.

My final manoeuvre is to consider a recent dance performance (Hofesh Shechter's *Political Mother*, 2011) with an analytical eye on the kinaesthetic affectivity consciously used in the piece to extraordinary effect. Following up on the conclusions drawn in the preceding chapters, and experimenting with how I site myself as a spectator and a writer, including my own body in the

frame of analysis I conduct a textual exploration of the live work. The argument I develop is that Shechter develops a complex thesis (*'where there is pressure there is folk dance'*), which we comprehend in large part through our kinaesthetic relationships with the performers. I will examine how these effects work (with reference to my research and my own experience) and, by scrutinising them, attempt both to make some headway at coming to a closer analysis of how bodies kinaesthetically respond to each other in performance, and to be reflexive about my own kinaesthetic intelligence.

This chapter plays forwards into the final chapter, where I explore in more detail how Tangled Feet employ the potential of embodied metaphor in performance, and some proposals about how we can include a better critical understanding of kinaesthesia in our analysis of performance as a fundamental relational aspect of the work, alongside its political and economic circumstances.

Embodied minds: our bodies are thinking

Considering kinaesthesia and beginning to make sense of it requires a shift in the way we frequently conceive of the mind and the body. The notion of Cartesian mind/body dualism, although widely discredited, is still perniciously present in our language and the way we use it. As Lakoff and Johnson have convincingly argued in *Philosophy in the Flesh*: *The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought* (1999), several central tenets of Western philosophy are founded on the principle that reason is disembodied and transcendental, that it is a construct of consciousness which separates us from other animals:

> The evidence from cognitive science shows that classical faculty psychology is wrong. There is no such fully autonomous faculty of reason separate from and independent of bodily capacities such as perception and movement. (Lakoff & Johnson; 1999 p. 17)

The reappraisal of much conventional philosophy that they conduct, in the light of what cognitive science reveals about the extent to which the 'mind' and 'body' are essentially indivisible, produces some startling and radical insights which have significant impact on the way we think about theatre and the ways in which bodies relate to each other in performative situations.

According to Lakoff and Johnson, 'the mind is not merely embodied, but embodied in such a way that our conceptual systems draw largely upon the commonalities of our bodies and of the environments we live in' (ibid. p. 6). At the crux of their argument, the pure fact of our biological similarities to each other as humans, which structures the way we negotiate, perceive and make sense of the world, is the basis for human reason, the base layer for most abstract thought and the only possible basis for construction of any stable 'truth'. In this light, our bodies are the points of

contact we have with other individuals. The mind and the body, often conceived and assumed as separate and opposite entities, are actually embedded within one another. Similarly so, we discover, are reason and emotion, and indeed it is possible that these apparently incompatible things are not separable at all.

Lakoff and Johnson raise the issue that for philosophers and neuroscientists, the word 'cognitive' means different things - which has substantial impact for this investigation. For scientists, cognition includes any kind of mental operation or structures that can be studied in precise terms, which would include things such as sensory processing, memory and attention as well as thought and language. For philosophers, a much more narrowly-defined range of mental operations might be conceived of as cognitive. The breadth of the definition that Lakoff and Johnson include as cognition is worthy of our attention;

> We will use the term cognitive in the richest possible sense, to describe any mental operations and structures that are involved in language, meaning, perception, conceptual systems, and reason. Because our conceptual systems arise from our bodies, we will also use the term cognitive for all aspects of our sensorimotor systems that contribute to our abilities to conceptualise and to reason. Since cognitive operations are largely unconscious, the term cognitive unconscious accurately describes all unconscious mental operations concerned with conceptual systems, meaning, inference and language. (ibid. p. 12)

Clearly, this definition radically restructures the terrain. We now need to include the processes of, for example, the sympathetic nervous system (which operates our flight/fight response to stimuli, triggering responses in the respiratory and digestive systems, dilating the pupils etc.) inside the bounds of what we conceive of as cognition.

It could be the subject of an entire (semantic) investigation to unpick the distinction between 'thinking' and 'cognising' (and would probably be an investigation whose findings were limited to the English language).[34] However, I do want to draw attention to the negative associations we commonly draw to notions of 'unthinking' and 'mindlessness', which (as I have argued in the first chapter) prejudices huge areas of body- or movement-related investigation, as well as having political ramifications (for example, the categorisation of perpetrators of violence as 'mindless' and thus incapable of rational thought and perhaps 'unworthy' of humane treatment).

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[34] Spanish has two verbs for 'to know' (*saber* and *conocer*), as do Italian and French, and German has two nouns for 'body' (*Korper* and *Leib*); clearly semantic distinctions around embodied cognition in these languages would be differently nuanced if not markedly divergent.

Lakoff and Johnson pose the questions 'can reason make use of the sensorimotor system?' and 'can rational inferences be computed by the same neural architecture used in perception and bodily movement?' and answer both affirmatively. This gives us robust ammunition to challenge the 'unthinking body' prejudices, and also open up a world of enquiry into what is going on in the estimated 95%[35] of thought that is unconscious and deeply entrenched in the body, and how it gives rise to the 5% of thought of which we are consciously aware.

It also requires us to restructure our concept of aspects of our body as mere communication systems which receive and deliver messages which are authored by the brain. The recognition that cognitive processes are deeply rooted in the body's interactions with the world overturns deeply held conceptualisations of the mind:

> Traditionally, the various branches of cognitive science have viewed the mind as an abstract information processor, whose connections with the outside world were of little theoretical importance. Perceptual and motor systems ... were not considered relevant to understanding "central" cognitive processes. Instead, they were thought to serve merely as input and output devices. (Wilson; 2002 p. 625)

This brings us to reconsider the notion of intentional thinking as performable only by individuals, rather than by groups or systems. I will propose throughout this chapter that the theoretical erasure of some entrenched boundaries between what we conceive of as discrete entities (the 'five' senses, mind and body, individual and group, body and environment, self and other) is a useful strategy for leading us towards realisations that otherwise would remain inaccessible to us.

Our bodies do a huge amount of work and process almost inconceivably vast of amounts of information below the level of conscious thought. This information and our embodied response to it, underpins our emotional and rational landscape, feeds into how we conceptualise the world around us, which gives us a vital reason to begin an attempt to understand this level of cognition. We are constantly engaged in negotiations with other beings and our environment, of which we are for the most part unaware but which can affect our bodies, systems and behaviours in profound ways. Performance shows us that these negotiations can be constructed, manipulated and affected, and is a site where we are able to begin the monumental job of attempting to focus our conscious attention onto these influential but unheeded forces. In a performance, how is my body relating and negotiating with the body of the performer on an unconscious level? As a director, how can I capitalise on the potentials of those negotiations? In addition to its relevance to performance,

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[35]   Quoted by Lakoff and Johnson; obviously this is a very rough estimate and could be challenged, and begs the associated question of where exactly unconscious thought becomes conscious.

in my opinion, it is of deep political importance that we recognise these influences and pay them the attention that we do to language. If reason emerges from bodily capacities, it is obviously worth our while to investigate properly how those bodily capacities are structured. I will contend that what we refer to as processes of 'kinaesthetic' empathy, understanding and response fall into this realm of sub-conscious cognition. To begin to unpick how these processes work, it is useful to turn our conscious attention on to some of the basic ways that our bodies divulge and perceive information.

Indiscrete bodies: our bodies leach information

Despite our phenomenological perception of our bodies as discrete entities, separate from the environments they exist within, it is easy to construct a case that they are not, either on a biological or an information-system level. There is an enormous flow of information leaching from our bodies at all times, and simultaneously we are absorbing significant amounts of information without being consciously aware of it. We are adapted to respond to our environment, which includes other people and social structures. We do not notice it happening because we are able to attend to other, conscious, complicated tasks at the same time.

Without intending to do anything, or consciously moving, we affect the immediate area and other living beings in it in manifold ways, and are in turn affected by it. Our bodies change the temperature, moisture and carbon dioxide level of the space we are in. We release smells and scents, some of which others can be consciously recognised and some of which cannot. Pheromones and hormones that we release influence the behaviour of others around us. If we were endowed with the olfactory capabilities of a dog, for example, a huge array of new information about other bodies would open up to us, which might include places those bodies had recently visited, the foods it had eaten, when it had last had sex and what invisible diseases it might be suffering from. The fact that our perception of this information is limited, at least consciously, does not mean the information does not exist in the world – our phenomenological apprehension is directly limited by our human form and the way we habitually use it.

Nor are we able to control our auditory affect; even a totally restful living body is breathing, rustling, gurgling, swallowing. We cannot stop ourselves creating sound. Neither can we stop ourselves from taking up space, which obviously cannot be simultaneously occupied by anything else. Our weight affects the surfaces that we lean or stand on, while our corporeal architecture continuously adjusts and responds to such surfaces.

On top of all these biological and material influences, our presence has subconscious influence on other beings. We have presumed territorial and spatial norms, which are both cultural and human. We constantly and unconsciously absorb the information that others are giving out and deduce -

without needing to call this information to our conscious attention - when others are distracted or concentrating, well or in pain, tense or relaxed, active or resting. If we are in an intense emotional state – one of rage, joy, distress, anger or anxiety – we will have difficulty disguising this information, despite attempts to do so.

Rather than being one physical process solely concerned with the comprehension of movement, kinaesthesia can be seen as in integral part of our embodied cognition; a collection of responses to the world around us which are complex and interrelating, which take place predominantly beneath the level of consciousness, and which make use of all our senses as well as our sensorimotor systems and, as I will examine later in more detail, our motor reflexes. Our embodied understanding of our own body in space is indivisible from these other systems, and there is evidence to suggest that our understanding of *other* bodies makes use of all these systems, too.

Neuroscientists have discovered that there are specific areas of our brain which, seen with neuro-imaging technology, 'light up' in response to the movement of others.[36] To begin to forge an understanding of how kinaesthesia is useful to us, it is worth posing the question of what purposes the ability to respond to the movement of others fulfils in an evolutionary sense.

Clearly, it is hugely advantageous for us to be able to predict what other people might do before they do it so that we can respond to sources of danger as swiftly as possible. We infer scenarios moment-by-moment from the movement of others at an instinctive level - whether an individual might pose a physical threat to us, for example, or whether a child is about to fall from a climbing frame.

Choreologist Rosemary Brandt[37] has developed a position is that movement has a recognisable structure, enforced by the structure of our bodies (the way our limbs and torso join and move, for example), governed by gravity, and patterned by the learned interactions that make up our social lives. Brandt's account of Laban theory, movement is categorised as organic or inorganic.[38] In very

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[36] Interestingly, research has also shown that the same areas of the cortex are activated when looking at a still photographic image where movement is implied (Kourtzi and Kanwisher 2000, 52, quoted in Reason, Matthew, *Dance, Photography and Kinaesthetic Empathy* 2008)

[37] Brandt's research and scholarship is highly developed and well-known in dance fields as being outstanding. One of the major focuses of her work is to develop the awareness in dance practitioners of the importance of rigorous understanding of both the physical necessities of a movement (what is practically involved in its execution) – and the perceptual properties of the same movement (what that movement serves to create). My own knowledge of Brandt's practice comes from engaging in several practical workshops, which have greatly extended my own capacity to analyse and construct movement more methodically. To my knowledge, Brandt does not publish her work, but disseminates it widely through her practical teaching at the Laban centre, London, and throughout Europe. As a dance scholar, Brandt is most probably representative of a large group of people leading the field in world-class dance institutions; her work has a significant impact upon dance practice and choreological development, and yet makes very little impact outside her direct sphere of practical influence, most likely because it doesn't take textual form and thus remains unpublished.

[38] Brandt's model breaks movement down into five interacting segments; relationships, body, action, space and dynamics. These areas are then broken down further until classifications which can apply to all movement are

simple terms, the way the human body is constructed and the natural influence of gravity on our bodies as we move create movement patterns that use energy efficiently in response to forces, and this produces movement structures and patterns that are organic to our form. For example, an arm swinging at the shoulder or a golf club being swung produces a rhythmic pattern in which the hand or club, starting at its apex, starts slowly, speeding up at the lowest part of the swing, and then slowing down again as it rises into the air at the other side. Inorganic movement is that in which the rhythmic quality of the movement changes so that it now uses more energy to sustain or complete than it naturally or most easily would do. If we imagine the golf swing again, it would look distinctly odd to see a swing which started fast, slowed right down as it hit the ball and then speeded up as the club rose on the other side of the arc. It would use up far more energy and would also be absolutely inefficient.

Working in a rehearsal room watching movement, I have developed the observation that instinctively, our eye appears to be drawn to an inorganic movement more than an organic one, even in a busy space with many people in it. Insights gleaned from the rehearsal room lead me to hypothesise that this may well be because when human beings perform movements that are inorganic, they are often a sign that something is wrong or untoward, or that conscious effort is being deployed to resist the natural forces of gravity. For example, a person who has a back injury and is in pain will endeavour to move in a manner that is slower than is perceived to be normal, which is rhythmically 'continuous' (to use a Laban term, meaning that the movement neither speeds up nor slows down but retains a constant speed) and which minimises impacts or jolts. They may distribute weight onto their limbs in an atypical way, for example transferring weight to the arms and hands when sitting and rising to ease themselves into a chair. This movement will be inefficient and tiring, but the person performing it will be absorbing this 'cost' so as to prevent further pain (or, more likely, transferring the pain elsewhere through their compensatory adjustments).

As observers, we do not need to perform any conscious act of analysis to deduce that someone is in pain; it is implied in the abnormality of their movement. My contention – a theory I have developed out of extensive practitioner observation, but as yet without evidential proof -   is that this constant offline scanning for abnormality in movement is a function that helps to keep us safe, and that, going further, we turn this function off only when all movement in our environment is predictably stable – until that point a function of our cognition is alert to assessing the potential consequences of the movement around us.[39]

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reached. For example, Brandt's model proposes that there are eleven actions the body can perform: travel, stillness, jump, fall, lean, transfer (of weight), open, close, turn, twist, and gesture. These actions are defined by the shape of our bodies and our attendant physical abilities (we cannot fly, for example) and the entire possible range of our human movement can be named using these actions, in combinations and sequences.

[39]   This inbuilt programming to predict constantly the movement of others might be why we respond to still

As a social species, it is obviously advantageous to us to be able to quickly ascertain that others are in pain, injured or weakened, or when they are agitated, distressed or potentially violent; such qualities of perception are at the root of compassion and social integration. I would also contend that, like other higher mammals, we have a function of reflexive attention to the physical safety of others, particularly if we comprehend them as physically vulnerable. Just as we automatically correct our own balance when we become unstable, we often respond to try to correct others, which is why we will automatically shoot out a hand to stop a stranger's child falling over without necessarily consciously choosing to perform the manoeuvre.

My other contention, also developed through practice observations[40] (including of crowds) is that we have ingrained physical group responses to stimuli. In a hostile environment, obviously it pays to have the perceptual power of all members of a group open to potential danger, and a flagging system which triggers a mass awareness if one member of the group senses something unsafe. Like a flock of sheep, who will all start running away if one individual sheep startles, or a school of fish which appear to move as if one mind is controlling the movement pattern, my belief is that human minds are deeply programmed to respond instinctively and en masse to the physical signals of distress given off by others. This would explain panic atmospheres, mass hysteria and crowd surges, and the strange sensation of feeling oneself, in such a situation, become noticeably agitated and aroused even when one cannot discern the specific source of the danger.

It is fairly obvious why an understanding of these concepts is useful to a theatre-maker or theatre critic, particularly one involved in 'physical' theatre, where we are often authoring movement or manipulating groups of bodies, including the audience's. But how exactly do these responses work? Looking closer, what perceptual systems are at play when we respond to other people's movement? And how does our perception of movement tie in to our other perceptual senses?

The analytic tools of neuro-imaging are also (contrary to popular conception) still, for many reasons, blunt instruments with limited application. One of the limits of the application for performance of much neuroscientific research into embodied cognition is that neuroscientific methodologies focus on the responses of the individual, and much of the insight gleaned thus far appears to revolve around how individuals use cognitive processes to handle certain types of

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photographs where movement is inferred (see previous note). If we look at a photograph of, say, a footballer or dancer in an unstable pose or in mid-air, we attempt on one level to ascertain how and when the movement will stabilise again. This might be what makes such images so compelling and attention grabbing, and hence why such images are used with frequency in advertising and news spreads.

[40] As well as watching performance audience crowds, this includes creative analysis I have conducted, as part of research for Tangled Feet's *Crowd* and *Remote Control* on footage of crowd behaviour in charged situations – during riots, protests, mass demonstrations, etc.

problem or situation, with limited light shed on the responses of groups of people together. For reasons explained well by Margaret Wilson's thorough deconstruction of some of the major recent claims in neuroscience, 'Six Views of Embodied Cognition' (2002), in the interests of determining a scientific constant, it has been necessary to isolate the 'system' under study to one person as a 'closed' system, rather than studying groups of people, or a person and their environment as a larger 'open' system around and through which information flows. Therefore, the strongest and most secure findings in a neuroscientific view of 'embodied cognition' revolve around the architecture and processes of a sole mind. The claim, which Wilson discusses throughout the article, that 'the environment is part of the cognitive system' (the environment here includes other people) is still under contention and without significant scientific proof. Whether methodological gulfs can be bridged enough that theoretical insights gleaned in fields such as performance studies or sociology might feed in to neuroscientific research in this area clearly remains to be seen, and I will be looking more closely at how the environment and the cognitive system can be looked at together later in this chapter.

Firstly, however, I propose to consider some of the more secure (as defined by Wilson) claims of embodied cognition and speculate as to what they might mean for our theatrical enquiry into kinaesthesia. Margaret Wilson's article offers an overview and evaluation of some of the major theoretical claims which have emerged during the movement, in cognitive science, towards the overarching principle of embodied cognition:

> There is growing commitment to the idea that the mind must be understood in the context of its relationship to a physical body that interacts with the world. It is argued that we have evolved from creatures whose neural responses were devoted primarily to perceptual and motoric processing, and whose cognitive activity consisted largely of immediate, online interaction with the environment. Hence human cognition, rather than being centralised, abstract and sharply distinct from peripheral input and output modules, may indeed have deep roots in sensorimotor processing. (ibid. p. 625)

The notion of cognition being embodied is one that, in Wilson's reading, has emerged out of diverse fields, including psychology, linguistics and artificial intelligence. As previously discussed, embodied cognition holds that bodies and the sensory-perceptual systems they contain are no longer seen as merely tools or channels to transport information from one mind to another, but are a fundamental part of the cognitive system under scrutiny. Wilson places under examination six common and entangled claims - that cognition is situated, that cognition is time-pressured, that we offload cognitive work onto the environment, that the environment is part of the cognitive system, and that cognition is for action and that cognition is body-based. She finds more validation for

some claims than others, but her article holds helpful starting-points for thinking about situated cognition in regards to performance. [41]

Of the claims Wilson places under pressure, the two that are of most relevance for this enquiry are the claim that 'cognition is for action' (for which Wilson finds significant support) and that the environment is part of cognition (Wilson's challenge to this claim opens up insights into the difficulties of applying cognitive science to performance situations, and I will address this secondarily).

The claim that cognition is for action has gained support from research showing that cognitive processes of vision and of memory actually function to serve action, and supports 'a variety of observations, both formal and informal, that we conceptualise objects and situations in terms of their functional relevance to us, rather than neutrally or "as they really are"' (ibid. p. 631). In Glenberg's (1997) view, quoted by Wilson, memory as a process is first and foremost 'the encoding of patterns of possible physical interaction with a three-dimensional world' (ibid.). We create memories in order to enable ourselves in the future to negotiate as yet unexperienced situations and physical interactions. If we hold with this view and extrapolate from it, it means that we are unconsciously building simulations for ourselves based on previously physically experienced stimuli – this might explain why, for example, we can imagine if we try a first-person perspective of a view or situation we've never been in. This has obvious repercussions for performance (where we often imagine ourselves to be in situations which we haven't 'really' encountered), which I will return to in the conclusion.

The most striking research findings in support of this claim, from the perspective of our inquiry, are those that show that certain kinds of visual stimulus can prime motor activity. Wilson cites evidence that visual input 'can activate covert motor representations in the absence of any task demands. Certain motor neurons in monkeys that are involved in *controlling* tool use also respond to *seen* tools ... the visual system can engage motor functions without resulting in immediate overt action.' (ibid. p. 631). The location of mirror neuron processing as a site of investigation into kinaesthetic empathy has since been taken up elsewhere, including quite extensively by the Watching Dance project (www.watchingdance.org).

These findings have significant implications for our consideration of kinaesthesia and how we respond to other moving bodies. Relating back to our thinking about how we are susceptible to the

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[41] The sixth claim that Wilson interrogates, that cognition is body-based, for which she finds strong support to, also offers a wealth of evidence for my wider enquiry. Wilson breaks down several cognitive operations that we can directly recognise ourselves using in performance, which yield real insights about the experience of 'liveness' under interrogation, and I briefly return to this in the final chapter.

movement of others, could our own motor responses be being primed when we watch others move? And, if they are, does this motor representation have any further, knock-on effects on our cognition?

This 'covert motor priming' could be used to explain how we relate to particular art or performance situations. Our muscles and neurones prime themselves for tasks or responses automatically to visual stimuli, but are those motor responses able to distinguish accurately and reliably between authentic visual stimuli and simulated versions of the same stimuli? While on one level our conscious mind has an awareness that a performance situation is constructed, our motor responses might be responding to it *as if, to all intents and purposes, it were real.* Perhaps this is a central principle of our understanding of how kinaesthetic relationships might be working in performance.

Let us use this reasoning to consider three diverse body-based art or performance situations: Anthony Gormley's *Event Horizon,* the series of life-size cast figures which appeared on rooftops and high spaces around London's Southbank in 2007; surgeon Roger Kneebone's performative demonstrations of open-stomach surgery (2009 - ongoing); and Tangled Feet's physical aerial outdoor show, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air* (2011/12). Each of these works includes a body (or bodies) that is apparently in peril, and, I will argue, each potentially activates our motor responses in a related way.

The body at risk: analysis of three works

In Gormley's work, following 2006's *Another Place,* where one hundred figures were erected at the edge of the sea on Crosby Beach near Liverpool, the life-size casts of his own body were situated in places where they stand at the edge of things. At the Southbank, thirty-one figures were installed standing on the edges of rooftops. The figures were situated so that, from many viewpoints, two or more figures were visible simultaneously.

The effect of the work was, at first encounter, unsettling. The precariousness of the figures' positions, their 1:1 scale, their stillness and fixed gaze on the horizon, engineer a moment where one's immediate and unprepared response to the initial sculptural form is one of powerful, physical, vertiginous and jolting connection. What are our 'covert motor responses' doing with this visual stimuli?

Adrian Searle, reviewing the work for *The Guardian*, commented that:

It is ... surprising how the eye can pick out these silhouetted figures from such a long way off, among the rooftop clutter of chimneys, pipework, masts and antennae. The eye is a sniper, homing in unerringly. And as we do so, we might for a moment forget our groundedness, joining the figures above us.[42]

I would argue that it if we interrogate it more deeply, it is not surprising that, as Searle so accurately puts it, 'the eye is a sniper'. As I have outlined above, we have cognitive processes running that continually rake our environment seeking bodies in peril or undertaking unusual, inorganic movement. Gormley's sculptures are doing the unnatural – standing so close to the edges, their intentions appear either brazenly daredevil or suicidal. As Searle notes, 'someone looks up, and, as realisation dawns, grabs their neighbour and starts to point, to look again and point again ... many people appear so oblivious to their surroundings, or so insulated from the incursions of modern life, that they really do need someone to stand in front of them, signalling wildly, before they raise their eyes and look.' (ibid.) In Gormley's work, other people's jolted reactions to the figures are part of the work. He is consciously manipulating what I would describe as our public physical, or, perhaps more accurately, kinaesthetic empathy. When we see Gormley's figures, in a time so short we are unable to recognise it happening, our bodies unconsciously map ourselves onto the figures standing on the edge of a roof. [43]

In Roger Kneebone's surgical demonstrations, conceived of and refined as a training simulation for trainee surgeons, then adapted and first publicly performed at the Cheltenham Science Festival in 2010, the body in peril is on the operating table. The descriptor 'visceral' is for once literally apt – the fake patient's intestines are visible as the real surgeons perform a laparotomy (opening the abdomen to find the source of an internal bleed, in this simulation after an admission to A and E of a patient with a stab wound).

The simulation has been constructed around Kneebone's premise that traditional surgical simulators, which simulate the environment accurately but not the body of the patient, have something inherently missing:

"In most simulations, the bits that do not need to be realistic are, and the bits that do need to be realistic — the patient — are not," (Kneebone) says, referring to the computer simulations and obvious mannequins used in many teaching hospitals.[44]

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[42] 'Anthony's Army' http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2007/may/15/art1 (accessed 2/5/12)

[43] This would not, of course, be to limit our reading of Gormley's work, which is complex and affecting in many other ways that I will not explore here; merely that this kinaesthetic aspect, a relationship we establish with what appears to be a body that might be imperilled, is a central part of the work.

[44] Whipple, Tom. 'Scalpel...swab...fairy liquid'. *The Times* Online, 1 June 2010.

For a surgeon, obviously, the body of the patient is the central focus of their attention, unlike the figures Gormley places so cleverly at the peripheries of our public attention. However, it is conceivable that our kinaesthetic response to Kneebone's hyper-realistic surgical bodies works on the same principle as our reaction to Gormley's bodies:

> And what is interesting, is that — when coupled with a new approach to the operatee himself, as opposed to the peripheries — trainee surgeons often do not notice the difference. "In studies, we've shown that half the surgeons do not spot that the machines are not real," Dr Roger Kneebone, Reader in Surgical Education at Imperial, says. "They're concentrating so hard on the action that, so long as there are beeps and the normal bustle, all they see is the patient." (ibid.)

Having experienced Kneebone's simulation in two instances – once as an in-hospital training simulation, filmed for posterity (the occasion covered in this *Times* article) and again performed for a public, non-medical audience at Cheltenham Science Fair, what is remarkable about it is the real physical affect the simulation has on the participants. The experienced surgeon leading the simulated operation, who has performed the simulation numerous times, has her stress responses visibly aroused by every performance of it. Performing the simulation, on a body she knows is fake, still activates her sympathetic nervous system, raising her pulse, dilating her pupils, increasing the rates of respiration and perspiration.

> "I know it's a simulation," she says afterwards. "But when the heart rate monitor gets going, you get stressed just as if it's a real patient. And afterwards, when it's over, you get that feeling like you want a big G and T." (ibid.)

For Kneebone's team, this physical response is one of the aims of the simulation, the rationale being that surgeons are not properly trained until they are able to cope with the interpersonal relationships – which include kinaesthetic relationships - in the operating theatre, between members of the team and between team members and the patient. Anecdotally, Kneebone acknowledges that the response to the patient's vulnerability can be physically experienced in an extremely strong manner:

> 'The whole process is about putting danger, and realism back,' Kneebone says. 'It's about that awful feeling in your gut when you've just cut something you shouldn't have,' he adds, providing a not especially reassuring insight into surgical practice. 'You need

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http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/science/eureka/article7141842.ece accessed 12/5/12

to believe it's real.' (ibid.)

To make a generalisation, it is evident that surgeons have a differently nuanced relationship with the interior of the human body than non-medically trained people. Speaking to Kneebone's team, while extreme reactions to open or injured bodies vary enormously from person to person, many surgeons have to learn to overcome their 'squeamish' response as part of training (moving on from the classic first-year medicine stereotype of fainting in autopsies) and according to Kneebone, some doctors do not conquer this response, choosing instead to practice in an area that minimises their exposure to open wounds. While surgeon Alex Cope's physical responses could be attributed in greater or lesser part to stress induced by being placed in a highly pressured professional situation, rather than her response to the fake body, the non-medical audience at Cheltenham Festival would have had a different physical and kinaesthetic relationship with the body on the operating table. As one would probably expect, a small but recognisable proportion of the audience had some sort of 'squeamish' response to the simulation, despite it being explicitly presented as a simulation on a fake body. But what is this squeamish response? Why does the sight of blood, or even a photograph of an open wound make some people dizzy and nauseous or even faint, or in its milder forms induce a creeping feeling in the skin or an involuntary clenching of muscle sets? [45] Clearly, some of us have a physical response to this visual or situational stimuli which – regardless of our conscious knowledge that the situation poses no immediate threat to us – activates an adrenal surge or a sympathetic nervous system response, which in turn, in some situations, might lead to a definite emotional response, as in Alex Cope's description of post-operating relief, above. [46]

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[45] The medical term for this dizzy, nauseous or faint reaction which occurs in some at the site of blood is a 'vasovagal syncope'. An emotional response to the stimuli (fear, anxiety) triggers a complex chain reaction of body responses involving the vascular system, hormonal system, heart and oxygen processing, which upset the normal calibration of these systems. Background factors are usually involved (low blood volume, or a hot room temperature causing dilation of the vascular system) but the syncope is caused by an adrenalin response ('flight or fight response') to fear or anxiety provoked by the situation, which in turn provokes a raised heart-rate that the already-strained vascular system is unable to cope with.

[46] Interestingly, I have had anecdotal evidence of women describing their tolerance level for seeing even simulated bodies under threat to decrease markedly after having children. Does the process of childrearing, when one becomes acutely aware at all times of the physical needs of another human being, tune the body's physical empathetic response? My personal experience of directing performers at height before and after childbearing would certainly correlate with this observation, although robust evidence about why this occurs is only beginning to emerge.

'Even before a woman gives birth, pregnancy tinkers with the very structure of her brain... After centuries of observing behavioural changes in new mothers, scientists are only recently beginning to definitively link the way a woman acts with what's happening in her prefrontal cortex, midbrain, parietal lobes, and elsewhere. Gray matter becomes more concentrated. Activity increases in regions that control empathy, anxiety, and social interaction. On the most basic level, these changes, prompted by a flood of hormones during pregnancy and in the postpartum period, help attract a new mother to her baby. In other words, those maternal feelings of overwhelming love, fierce protectiveness, and constant worry begin with reactions in the brain.' (Adrienne Lafrance, http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/01/what-happens-to-a-womans-brain-when-she-becomes-a-mother/384179/, my italics. Accessed 6/1/16.)

The relationships between the spectator/audience and the simulated body in Gormley's work and Kneebone's simulations illustrate, for me, two different responses which begin to illustrate the spectrum of kinaesthetic empathy. In both examples a body which seems to be real but which is not provokes a response from the spectator which illustrates how indivisible our emotional responses are from the physical responses – the intake of breath, the dilation of pupils, the adrenalin release which accompanies the light-headedness or queasiness which can accompany (for some people) exposure to blood.

The third body-under-threat example I will use to expand this idea is Tangled Feet's *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*, a physical theatre/aerial theatre outdoor show that I co-directed with the company in July 2011, and remade in 2012.[47] Performed on a scaffold rig, the show revolved around the theme of regeneration, and intertwined several stories set across seventy years located at moments of change where one way of life was wiped away and a new one implemented (World War 2 bombings, the rise and fall of social housing, the elevation and collapse of financial sector, Olympic regeneration.) Throughout the piece, the precarious position of the human body was repeatedly foregrounded.

Midway through the piece, a suicidal plummeting financial trader falls, and on the other end of his counterweighted rope, a couple (who we have previously seen moving out of a housing estate as their property is sold) emerge, dressed in their pyjamas. The woman sits inside a hoop holding 'baby' and the man dangles from a strop. They then perform a sequence of passing the baby from one to the other while whoever does not hold the child attempts to get some sleep in a series of precarious positions, hanging in mid-air. But why was this moment one of the most effective in the show, according to many spectators? And what enabled us to discover it in rehearsal?

Get down you will fall

Having spent long periods in the rehearsal room watching performers climb the scaffold (mostly unharnessed and so relying totally on their own climbing skill for safety) I became aware of my own very physical responses to the unstable bodies of the climbing performers. Watching one of them walk across the truss at the top of the rig for the first time it occurred to me that my body was extremely invested in their stability – I was tense, leaning forward, flinching with them. As we watch someone who is balancing, and wobbling, I asked myself, are our muscles responding empathetically to their instability? When a performer slips or makes an error that leads to a moment of flailing instability, or even sometimes when they are attempting something over which they do not yet have full practised control, there is a moment, similar to the 'awful feeling in your

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[47] See trailer of performance: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qA9bvsRc2Go . The section I am referring to here occurs at 1.24m

gut' that Roger Kneebone describes, of what feels like one's 'heart lurching'. Is this borne of pre-existing emotional connection and care for the performers, or is it, like our connection to Gormley's precarious figures, actually in part an unconditional kinaesthetic response of one body to another? Is our response to the toy baby being passed in mid-air by its dangling parents in *All That Is Solid* a response just to what the baby symbolises, or a physical response to the body of the baby and its parents themselves? Or, more likely, does one underwrite and make more affective the other?

In any balancing act, the body undergoes complex and subtle reaction, which involves the vestibular system and a push-and-pull process of muscular auto-correction. This is not a deliberate, consciously chosen movement strategy; but rather, using Wilson or Lakoff and Johnson's definition, it is a cognitive process. The body is using all the information available to it from several different channels (visual, inner-ear balance, proprioception etc.) and, in response to these streams, muscle groups twitch against each other to bring us into stability. As anyone who has ever tried to learn to back-flip or has thrown themselves off a bungee-jump will testify, it actually takes a considerable conscious force of will to make our bodies give up their stability for the unknown moment.

My practice experience, augmented by the research materials I have referenced, leads me to propose that, aside from our logical and articulatable concern for another person up high in an unstable position, which could increase or decrease according to many factors (is the individual emotionally important to us? Are they obviously a skilled and trained professional? Do they have a safety net if they fall?), something else is going on over which we have far less conscious control or, usually, perceptual awareness. The programmed inclusion of other bodies in our cognitive but unconscious processes means that the potential exists for our bodies to map themselves on to the unstable body of another, and in some extrapolated way to experience the frantic correction and re-correction of those muscle groups as they strain to keep an imperilled body in alignment. Does watching a performer wobble across a high wire prime the motor neurons that would control our own balance? As situated experience of working on *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air* and *One Million* informs me, circus, stunt, gymnastic and aerial performances capitalise on this capacity, or perhaps more accurately, this inability to remain physically disengaged from the unstable body. Going back to the example of a hand shooting out instinctively to catch a child who is falling over, this potential exists in us because our bodies know and are monitoring the child's instability like a programme running in the background of a computer, below the level of our conscious engagement.[48]

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[48] This is perhaps a ripe example of what Wilson identifies as 'Time-locked perceptuomotor activity: situated cognition in an activity which requires continuous updating of plans in response to rapidly changing conditions' (Wilson ibid. p. 628). Examples might include physical improvisation, capoeira, playing football. Does 'time-locked perceptuomotor activity' correlate with activities that we view as being 'in the moment', which audiences

Cognitive science, as far as I have found, does not yet provide proof for these contentions, merely theoretical pointers that would support them. Motoric stimulation is used to imitate others isomorphically by mapping them on to our own bodies – and, as Wilson puts it, 'there are good reasons to believe that this isomorphism provides a special foothold for robust and non-effortful modelling of the behaviour of other people' (ibid. p. 634). However the suggestion that empathy is a physical process is well supported. Other studies have shown, by conducting experiments in which Botox is used to paralyse certain facial muscles, that emotional empathetic response is impaired when those muscles are unable to partake in this feedback system of imitation:

> The way we understand others' emotions is to experience those emotions ourselves. We do this with facial micro-mimicry. So if you are wincing in pain I immediately do a micro-wince, and that sends signals to my brain that this person is experiencing pain, and by experiencing it myself I now understand what you are going through. (Tanya L Chantrard qtd in Tucker, Ian, 'Botox impairs our ability to relate to others', The Observer, 17/7/11)

This research obviously opens up an area of significant potential investigation into acting and how the manufactured or performed emotion is able to impact upon audiences. Professor Helen Storey's investigation with her installation *Eye and I* (2006), which explored the effect of actors simulating emotions using just their eyes, throws more light on this question.

Storey designed *Eye and I* in collaboration with neuroscientist Jim Coan, who had conducted extensive work on isolating the facial musculature involved in various emotional states. Performers were trained to accurately mimic the facial muscle contractions around the eyes for four distinct states – fear, joy, rage and sadness. In Storey's installation, these performers were situated on the outside of a constructed room, looking in through many eye-slots at various heights in the walls. The audience entered the room to experience, for example, being watched by a room full of sad eyes, or a room full of angry ones. Although no 'authentic' emotion was generated by the actors, audiences inside the installation expressed being deeply affected by the 'emotion' inside the installation room. Storey's investigation can be seen to provide more evidence that we respond subconsciously to physical signals of emotion (perhaps, as Chartrand's experiments show, by producing a mirrored impression of them), irrespective of whether that emotion is real or manufactured.

In summary, there seems to be a strong case for thinking about physical empathy as a kinaesthetic

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invest in as being truly live?

response, which has roots in the ways our motor responses are triggered by visual and other stimuli in a cognitive operation of which we are not fully conscious, and that, going further, it does not necessarily matter if the original stimuli are 'real' or constructed. Edging closer to a definition of the 'kinaesthetic', this is understanding or knowing (consciously or otherwise) formed from the sensation of movement – or, more accurately, the sensation that movement of another generates in one's own body.

In extension, if, like many other neural responses, the covert motor-priming responses that connect us to the movement of others are embedded more strongly with repeated activation (e.g. by attention paid over time to watching and performing complex, unusual movement), this could go some way to illuminating the ways that movement intelligence works in dancers and other highly-skilled physical experts. When dancers watch other dancers dancing, they often appear to be undertaking a kind of micro-mimicry, with focused attention on the act of mapping the moving body onto their own (or vice-versa). This proposal is supported by MRI research on dancers (Calvo-Merino et al; 'Action Observation and Acquired Motor Skills: An fMRI Study with Expert Dancers. 2004) which soundly evidences

> a clear effect of acquired motor skills on brain activity during action observation. The network of motor areas involved in preparation and execution of action was also activated by observation of actions. (ibid. p. 6.)[49]

In addition to constructing a visual memory of the dance as a reference point, are these twitching, bobbing, watching dancers laying down motor responses in their musculature which aid them later to perform the movements themselves?[50]

If a fundamental part of our embodied learning is the act of using other humans for reference points, and that we incorporate the movement of others in our cognitive operations, this has important ramifications for theatre, and would seem to lead us towards supporting the third claim of embodied cognition that Wilson interrogates in her article - that environment is part of the cognitive system:

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[49] Significantly, the aforementioned study (which tested ballet dancers watching both other ballet dancers and capoeira players, and vice-versa) found that dancer's response to other dancers movements was stronger when the movement being performed was within their own movement capacity. This evidence suggests that movement intelligence – the ability to perceive and appraise the movement of others at levels of advanced complexity – is brought about through moving. For a practical application (in very simple terms) this suggests that kinaesthetic response in audiences will be stronger when the movement they are watching bears relation to the repertoire of movement they themselves possess, and starts to become less intense as the movements being performed diverge from their own everyday experience.

[50] Thanks to Leon Smith for this insight.

> The forces that drive cognitive activity do not reside inside the head of the individual but instead are distributed across the individual and the situation as they interact. Therefore, to understand cognition we must study situation and situated cogniser together. (Wilson p. 630)

Wilson unpicks the insight, which she accepts, that 'body and environment play a role in assisting cognition', but ultimately rejects the strong form of this claim, that 'cognition is not an activity of the mind alone, but is instead distributed across the entire interacting system, including mind, body and environment.' (ibid. p. 629)

Wilson's reasons for challenging this claim revolve mostly around the scientific impossibility of drawing empirical conclusions from the study of what would be (if cognizer and situation are studied together) an open and endlessly changing system. However, from our point of view as performance analysts, this poses a problem. If cognition is to include (in Lakoff and Johnson's definition) operations such as empathising, emoting, thinking and reflecting as well as dealing with and reacting to situated stimuli, then the resistance to study cognition as part of a system is clearly a sticking point for examining performance situations, where the event, rather than the individual, is the thing under analysis. The limits of cognitive science in this direction are quite clearly drawn by Wilson, although she does concede that

> ... we can reject this strong version of distributed cognition and still accept a weaker version, in which studying the mind-plus-situation is considered to be a promising supplementary avenue of investigation, in addition to studying the mind per se ... It remains to be seen whether, in the long run, a distributed approach can provide deep and satisfying insights into the nature of cognition ... Whether this problem can be overcome to arrive at theoretical insights with explanatory power is an issue that awaits proof. (ibid. p. 631)

Picking up Wilson's challenge, studying the cognizer as part of a situation may not have the capacity to provide further insights about cognition, but the premise that human cognition could be spread across the environment and other people certainly gives us a radical perspective with which to interrogate or recast performance, even if we can gain no empirical proof from doing so. The paradigm shift that would require us to accept that cognition is distributed across groups of people and the environment would severely disrupt the disembodied critical voice (as located in Chapter 1) which refuses to examine its embodied presence as part of the live event. It also might have significant ramifications for an enhanced theoretical consideration of 'public engagement' as

discussed in the last chapter (a project too large to attempt here).

My analysis so far has concentrated predominantly on how our bodies might – at one, very basic level – be interacting with each other. Jaana Parviainen's persuasive and imaginative paper, 'Choreographing Resistances: Spatial-Kinaesthetic Intelligence and Bodily Knowledge as Political Tools in Activist Work*' (2010) expands on the premise of kinaesthetic interactivity and examines how these interactions can be consciously manipulated to political effect. In terms of theoretically interrogating how kinaesthesia functions and influences bodies interacting in public spaces – a question of huge relevance to outdoor performance - Parviainen's fairly brief paper is one of the most detailed contemporary sources I have found.

Parviainen shares my stance that 'choreography is an integral part of our social world' and should be analysed accordingly, with the aim being to understand movement in a strategic sense rather than an aesthetic sense. In this paper she shows convincingly how 'moving bodies and choreographies can become tactics themselves, not just *represent* symbolic or physical power' (Parviainen; 2010 p. 312) – an important distinction. Acknowledgement and judicious use of kinaesthesia is an integral part of these tactical strategies – the thinking body in each of these political choreographies is indivisible from its environment in terms of constructing a meaningful analysis.

Parviainen takes for consideration three political protest 'choreographies': an urban crawling protest in support of nurses' rights, a Greenpeace occupation of a power station building site, and the famous incident, relayed on film around the world and which has doubtless burned itself into the visual memory of millions, when an anonymous Chinese man stepped in front of a tank in Tiananmen Square. The crux of her argument is that 'these resisting choreographies were not based on highly skilled voluntary activities, but *on capabilities of perceiving and modifying kinaesthetic interactions between different agents*' (p. 324, my italics). Expanding outwards from the body-to-body relations I have explored, and the individual mind which Wilson prefers to place firmly at the centre of her analysis, Parviainen's investigation necessarily takes into account the entire environment of the political scenarios in which these choreographies took place:

> Agents were animate and inanimate, material and immaterial, visible and invisible, organic and inorganic ... These political activists attempted to create interactions between ordinary people, authorities, animals, urban or natural environments, vehicles, weapons and online media. (ibid. p.324).

How does it enhance of our understanding – particularly for performance situations - to broaden

our view out to look at how kinaesthetic relationships might be functioning in the more complex and open systems that Parviainen examines?

Parviainen's paper, focusing secondarily on kinaesthesia, primarily explores the moving body's role in political activism. While her tactic here is to focus on political acts which hold a performative element, I think many of the insights gleaned can be applied to events which are first and foremost performances, happening within a framework of 'performance event', but are nonetheless deeply political in their content and effects. Parviainen draws some very effective conclusions about the three specific performances under consideration, and more broadly about the power of choreography to affect political dynamics (it could be argued that in each case it is the individual - or a group of individuals sharing a movement strategy - kinaesthetically affecting the system).

Parviainen has evoked her own definition and understanding of kinaesthesia, drawing on the theorising of Husserl and Howard Gardner amongst others. While these theorists both to my mind fall short of affording a comprehensive explanation of kinaesthetics, and are divergent from each other, they are useful in Parviainen's context for shedding light on and reconceptualising the specific performances focused upon. Finally, she examines the concept of embodied morality and suggests that these performances create moments where 'performers question our embodied limits of morality by receiving the spontaneous responses of authorities and spectators'. (ibid. p. 312).

Parviainen's analysis adopts and appropriates Husserl's notion of 'kinaesthetic fields' as 'the characteristic motion embedded in a certain place or location' (ibid. p.320) to define a useful term (in the context of the article's enquiry) for analysing the dynamic relationships between agents. We are always involved in 'kinaesthetic fields'; each place has a characteristic 'kinaesthetic field' which, once it is registered and acknowledged, can be modified or interrupted. According to Parviainen, the intelligence and power of the three resistance choreographies is borne of conscious skill in this area, which I have argued elsewhere in my thesis is a grossly undervalued form of intelligence:

> the core element of kinaesthetic intelligence is not only control of one's bodily motion but also capabilities for working with the kinaesthetic fields ... of perceiving and modifying kinaesthetic interactions between various agents ... the most elementary operation, upon which other aspects of kinaesthetic-spatial intelligence rest is the ability to understand the dynamics of kinaesthetic fields (ibid. p. 324).

Parviainen makes an extremely strong case that this kind of intelligence is demonstrated in these particular operations. Kinaesthestic intelligence is as yet un-measurable but, if we construct the

right frame of analysis, its effects do not have to remain invisible. Understanding kinaesthetic functioning and strategising is one part of a better appreciation of body and movement intelligence (which, as I argued in the first chapter remains compromised by academic, political and legal structures which rely on textual evidence). In the next chapter, within a detailed analysis of my own practice, I describe our own artistic strategies of intervening in the 'kinaesthetic fields' present in our performance site in Woolwich for *One Million.*

Jaana Parviainen explores how the vulnerability of the body is exploited in the three political choreographies on which she focuses:

> In normal life people avoid being vulnerable for reasons of self-preservation. Activists do not only consider the reasons for risking their bodies but also for taking advantage of the vulnerability of the body and its expressive power (ibid. p. 314).

In the manufactured vulnerabilities of these three protests, as with the three artistic examples I have previously explored, the body gains enormous power in its vulnerable position. Pushing Parviainen's conclusions further, this power is gained not only through the symbolic vulnerability of the body 'paying the price' for a political belief (which we as onlookers know, rationally, is a consciously chosen position) but also through our kinaesthetic empathy towards that vulnerable body, activated below our conscious awareness and thus whether or not we agree with the cause. We do not have to perform a theoretical imaginative operation to understand the literal and metaphorical 'point of view' of the Chinese student who stepped in front of a tank in Tiananmen Square in 1989. Our body has already mapped itself isomorphically onto his body without us asking it to do so; it is a process of embodied cognition that enables us physically to recognise his position.

The protests that Parviainen cites, and the artistic bodies-under-threat I have explored, all benefit from very conscious and deliberate framing which cause us to hone in on the body in question. I am not arguing that we inevitably map ourselves onto the body of every other individual we ever encounter to the same degree; that process would probably overwhelm us, particularly living as we do in densely populated cities. However, is it possible to speculate that this kinaesthetic empathy is a sense that is always on and that we have to switch off to cope with our crowded and emotionally dis-invested living situations, rather like one unconsciously filters out background noise. This 'thickening of the skin' would explain acts that on one level appear to be a kind of shocking social callousness to the un-indoctrinated: the wilful ignoring of sick street-children in second- and third-world cities, for example, or the ability of abattoir-workers to cope with animal panic and death-throes. One of the political powers of work like Gormley's is that it serves to

illuminate both our kinaesthetic empathy and our habitual loss of it.

Mindlessness, oppression and resistance

Parviainen works from the premise that '(t)he moving body is a site of both oppression and resistance, not only because physically stronger individuals can overpower weaker ones but also because social systems operate through the body' (ibid. p.313). Along with protest, physical theatre (which is frequently interwoven with and referential to protest) is an incredibly potent playground for exploring and making visible this highly political position:

> As Foster (2003) notes, many theorists in political studies have perceived the physical power of the body as an agitated irrationality, propelling individuals into the chaos of mob performance. They have viewed protests as irregular and irrational beyond the range of normal human motivations and experiences. (ibid. p.313)

The consequences for disregarding the body as 'irrational' in this way are enormous. The denigration of 'mob' actions as somehow outside the boundaries of 'normal human motivations' (a sentiment widely expressed, for example, in the British media following the riots of summer 2011) ensures that no worthwhile attempt will be made to understand these actions or the reasons that precipitate them. If physical acts are not understood as strategic, and fully connected to the mind and the intellect, the ultimate conclusion is that proponents of physical acts are essentially symbolically lobotomised and attributed the strange social status of some zombie-like mass, feared and yet denied full human rights. That this bizarre manoeuvre seems to be accepted as a more instinctive social/political 'solution' to the cognitive dissonance caused by large groups of protesting, rioting or criminal individuals rather more quickly than an interrogation into the social forces which might underlie and propel such strategies, is perhaps an indication of how deeply entrenched this 'mindless body' conceit runs. Ironically, it is a position often adopted as a 'knee-jerk reaction'. Placing kinaesthetic strategies closer to the centre of analysis in all arenas – political, historical, social and artistic - is one tactic for overcoming this collective myopia. In the next chapter, I describe how we creatively engaged with this image of the 'mindless body' in *One Million,* adopting and subverting its power to draw a wider point about disenfranchised youth.

Working through a thesis kinaesthetically: Use of kinaesthetic affectivity in Hofesh Shechter's *Political Mother.*

> By using public spaces, resistant choreographers have helped people articulate formless intuitions of which they have been barely aware, bringing them into a new light in our everyday lives. (Parviainen, 2010 p. 326)

Many of the insights which Parviainen reaches about political choreographies in public spaces are equally useful for thinking more broadly about how kinaesthetic relationships function in physical performance in traditional auditoria. In this section I experiment with exploring the kinaesthetic strategies I perceived in a live performance, Shechter's *Political Mother*, attempting (with an awareness of my own situated perspective) to render them in text. By conducting this kind of close analysis on another artist's work, I aim to model an appraisal of how the use of kinaesthetic strategies can be unpicked, and to demonstrate how effectively a work's thesis can be conducted kinaesthetically.

As well as being immensely skilled in the choreography of original movement, having in a few short years constructed an unmistakeable physical style, dance artist Hofesh Shechter is extremely adept at harnessing the potential of kinaesthetic relationships. That bodies relate to each other kinaesthetically is, I would propose, as innately obvious to Shechter as it is to a child that a drum makes a noise when you hit it. In this final section, I would like to attempt to analyse some of the manoeuvres he undertakes in what I read as an overtly political work, and examine *why* they work, on a kinaesthetic level, and, with reference to the ideas and themes I have developed in this chapter, *how*.

The 'viscera' are the internal organs of the human body – its guts, heart, lungs. A term that is frequently used metaphorically rather than figuratively, when we talk about performance being 'visceral', we are saying on some level that the internal workings of the body are exposed. Shechter's *Political Mother* is filled with the 'visceral', bookended as it is with an opening and closing image of a warrior falling on his own sword, the blade emerging from his back. In between these images – which we logically infer are using well-crafted illusionist techniques – Shechter's dancers' bodies open up to reveal things which our own bodies recognise. The on-stage bodies in the work (which includes a dozen musicians) are, I contend, operating on a spectrum where performed physical reaction oscillates between the constructed and the 'real' at such a speed that we can't unpick this distinction. Where is the point that their performed state of 'exhaustion' is separable from the effects of the considerable effort they are expending? Where is the quality that reads as fervour, which is embedded within the constructed rules of the choreography, distinct from the actual endorphin enhanced elation that is triggered in the body performing those moves? While we know in our 'rational' conscious minds that the warrior hasn't plunged his sword all the way through his own torso 'for real', as I will explore in this section, there are many other moments where the power of Shechter's work derives from the indivisibility of the performed body's actual (and in my reading, kinaesthetic) effect and its concurrent symbolic representational effect.

Shechter knows that the moving body has the potential to illustrate flux powerfully, to occupy two seemingly incompatible or irreconcilable states. In other sections the points-oscillated-between seem to be religious elation and furious, explosive, violent potential. In drawing these states into dialogue with each other, he provides us with a middle ground between two extreme points from which we can recognise, and somehow understand, both. We are returned here to David George's observations about the performer's ability to revel in liminality, chaos and ambiguity, and thus 'heal a split world'. (George 1989 p. 74)

This rapid oscillation between points is also a feature of how the choreographer manipulates the strands of the social/historical fabric of the work. Shechter collages intensively, creating a palette of visual and musical reference points that include shirt-and-braces 1940s Mediterranean (Israeli?) folk, concentration camp prisoners, Planet of the Apes, fascist dictators, samurai warriors and modern-day pan-European dance-culture youth. As well as the dancers, Shechter's set includes musicians staged on three levels; a rock band, a string sextet and a quartet of drummers, one stacked above the other, segueing in and out of layers of Middle-Eastern folk music, hard techno electronica, monster rock, baroque strings and samba drumming. At the centre of the top level, the choreographer himself takes the microphone as, alternatively, punk/thrash metal vocalist and a series of ranting but incoherent dictators and political leaders.

Mercilessly exploiting the unfixed and unfixable nature of both the moving body and of music, a large part of the power of the work comes from the shifting allegiances and juxtapositions in these reference points. Images and relationships emerge and dissipate at a rate which eludes the establishment of a legible narrative but builds into an immensely tangible physical illustration of power and fervour, oppression and resistance, strange exaltation and historical struggle. In this union of oppositions, even the passage of time is denied a firm hold; the piece (using a device Shechter has worked before) runs for over an hour up until the revelation of his thesis. Then, in four minutes, against Joni Mitchell's *Both Sides Now* – the only pre-recorded piece of music used - the entire piece replays in an abridged, speeded-up, reversed version. We re-view the past as the images and sequences which have unravelled over the last hour re-spool back in to each other until we return to the warrior and his sword (*I've looked at life from both sides now/ from up and down, and still somehow / it's life's illusion I recall / I really do not know life at all).*

Shechter's thesis, illuminated in neon handwriting, is revealed at the end of the piece, slowly enough for the punchline to get a laugh:

> *where there is pressure*
> *there is*
> *folk dance.*

Subverting the supposed logic that we dance for pleasure, in this thesis, 'folk dance' is an evolving popular form that runs through diverse times and places, which includes the breakdancing, headbanging, and electronic tranced-out dancing that has been referenced, as well as the recurrent motifs of 'traditional' folk-dancing we have seen performed by robust leaping men in sepia braces and shuffling pyjamaed prisoners. Folk-dance, Shechter persuades us, is a communal, physical response to outside forces – we are compelled to dance, rather than choosing to do so. Like Parviainen's resistant bodies, Shechter's dancers become bodies under pressure, and our kinaesthetic empathy with them prompts us to complete an act of re-cognition, to search out the reason for their compulsion.

Nowhere is this clearer in the piece than in a moment of duet between a man and a woman, which comes after an extended sequence featuring prisoners dressed in uniforms which connote Auschwitz. The couple, who look as if they are dancing even though it is killing them, are trapped in a vicious circle of attempting simultaneously to restrain each other and to escape each other in order to perform their own compulsive moves. Their movement is compelled by some terrible state of furious grief - a post-traumatic tension between keeping-alive and forgetting, or between reliving something and trying to exorcise it.

Political Mother has a clear political charge, and the imagery contained in the work makes it impossible to ignore Shechter's Israeli nationality. At its most distilled, *Political Mother* could easily be read as an exploration of the concurrent and intractable legacies of suffering and aggression which underscore the Israel/Palestine position. According to Debra Cash, this oblique exploration of flux and unrest is a feature which recurs in Shechter's earlier work:

> Neither *Uprising* nor *In Your Rooms* speaks directly to the Israeli-Palestinian crisis — it would appear that Shechter left his native Jerusalem in part to avoid making all of his art in a context of permanent conflict. Nonetheless, it can't help shadowing them. *In Your Rooms* incorporates a voiceover text about the challenge of creating harmony out of chaos, gibberish polemics studded with nuggets of truth and a stunned man who stands with a sign that reads 'Don't follow leaders' and then on the opposite side 'Follow me'. (Cash, Debra: States of Unrest. http://www.jewish-theatre.com/visitor/article_display.aspx?articleID=2934)

Show the workings of the body:

How does this performed tension work? Breaking it down to its core elements, how are we kinaesthetically 'reading' the moving bodies? What information is encoded in the movement?

In another moment in the piece, the dancers move across the stage in a short-strided, forward-leaning trot. They are dressed in the greying concentration camp pyjamas, which immediately both contextualises them and locates them simultaneously in several potential time-frames and geographies. The movement is constructed to make us read bodies fixated on a single point ahead, propelled forwards by a combination of fervour and gravity. They are using as little energy as possible to perform the actions they need to do. Only arms and legs move; torsos and necks are contained, shoulders tight, heads low, eyes fixed straight forward. We see repeated phrases of movement vocabulary from the explosive folk-dance earlier: the patterns are retained, but now energy is conserved or unavailable, strides are truncated, the previous elated jabbing of skyward hands has turned to flicks of the fingers only. The gait and the marked-out/burned-out dance speak of enormous conflicting pressures on the physical body: these are people on the edge of physical exhaustion, moving as fast as one efficiently can, driven towards or away from something. Kinaesthetically, we comprehend this preservation of energy as indicative of a body suffering, under endurance, and we seek to locate the reason that they keep on moving in this state. What is driving them, compelling them forwards? Why do they keep moving? Is it fear or dogged resistance, or a combination of both? Stripped of any ability for aggression, dance in a concentration camp is a protest against death, against a life stripped down and inhumanely diminished, and against the extinction of a culture. Movement is the most basic proof of life[51].

Lights come up and down illuminating small groups of dancers isolated in half-light, keeping a dance going in its just-alive state, shuffling in circles as if round an extinguished bonfire. Couples hold each other up and force each other to keep the choreography going.

This evolves into a series of images of surrender. Three pyjama-clad dancers, facing away from us, stand stationary, holding their arms in the air. The string sextet behind them is illuminated and plays a piece of baroque music. The dancers continue to hold their arms in the air. In the absence of movement we focus on the structure of the music, which is soothing, reassuring and measured but the predictable structure of its phrases allows us to understand it's not going to end soon. We become acutely aware that the performer's arms must be getting tired. There's a palpable sense of endurance. We understand, on both cultural/referential levels and on a personal, physical, kinaesthetic level, that no-one stands with their arms in the air out of choice – it is the position of a body under duress, compelled or commanded by an outside force. Are our own motor responses activated here, in kinaesthetic empathy with the surrendering figures? Are our bodies isomorphically mapping us on to the dancer's bodies in order to comprehend this position?

The image is sustained long enough for us to inhabit the physical and mental space of the three

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[51]   Thanks due to Simon Carroll-Jones for this insight.

bodies on stage. Eventually, one by one the dancers seem to be allowed a shambling release, and they exit the stage using the same truncated jog. The strings continue. A haze has enveloped the stage and there are no longer any clear edges.

Darkness again; and then a huge row of (what we are now all surely reading as) prisoners is illuminated at the front edge of the stage. They face us with their hands in the air, eyes to the floor. The sound has changed to a loud wind echoing in a broad empty landscape. A male figure in a general's uniform, wearing an ape mask, walks very slowly across the stage close behind the backs of the prisoners, looking at them. There is an enormous sense of threat from this figure.

We have all experienced the strange sensation of shivers running down the spine when you suddenly become aware, without seeing them, that someone is behind you. Having mapped ourselves already on to these pyjamaed bodies, Shechter at this point directly brings our attention to this powerful and inexplicable response between non-touching bodies. We comprehend the experience of the performers/prisoners on a kinaesthetic level.

Further darkness, and then another image is illuminated – prisoners sit cross-legged, spaced, facing away from us, hands in the air. Wind sound continues. The images have become filmic in nature. The cutting from one image to the next constructs a narrative of long periods of time passing.

Darkness again, and then two prisoners are illuminated, a man and a woman, in standing surrender at the front edge of the stage again, facing us. Another figure holds a gun to the head of the man. There is a space of about 30 centimetres between the gun and the man's head. This image is sustained. The male prisoner flinches slowly and minutely away from the gun. His muscles are rigidly tight and he seems to be holding his breath. The distance between the gun and the man's head wavers. With our attention focused on this small area of the stage between gun and head we become acutely aware of the physical markers of tension – the muscles straining, the shallow breathing of the victim, his sweat. It is an unbearably tense moment.

Analysing this image, several things are happening at once. We do not understand on any circumstantial level why this man is holding a gun to another man's head; in narrative terms this act is not specifically contextualised. We are not offered the exact circumstances that have lead to this moment. Of course, simultaneously we understand it in a wider cultural and historical context; it's an explicit reference to the execution of millions of prisoners in 20th century concentration camps. The Hasidic/Arabic music qualities and the repeated image of a fascistic speech-giver spitting and roaring into the microphone construct specific associations of the Holocaust.

In the performative moment, while we are cognising these associations, physically, we are also incredibly tense. Even though on one level we are absolutely aware that the gun is not real and that the moment is entirely constructed, our motor responses are simultaneously mirroring those of the man with the gun to his head. Perhaps we have been prepared, through the preceding series of images; our physical empathy has already been activated as we mapped ourselves on to the pyjamaed figures. Our muscles are taut and we are flinching and bracing ourselves for a bang. When the bang comes, the entire audience seems to jump in shock. People grab the arms of those sitting next to them. Hearts lurch and adrenalin floods physical systems – our sympathic nervous system responses are all activated by what we are watching - and as individuals, we become aware of the unanimity of this group response. There is a murmur of relief, reassurance, laughter, as the choreography continues.

Shechter explicitly includes his audience's bodies within the scenographical frame of the work. The stalls seats are removed and a proportion of the audience stand in front of the stage as if at a rock concert. As a seated audience, your consciousness comes regularly back to include this body of people as part of the image. As a standing audience, you can't help but be aware of the other bodies around you as you are all regularly readjusting physical positions and seeking sightlines. Near the end of the piece the standing audience section is illuminated, and the performers on stage, dressed now in modern day clothes, duplicate their stance, looking up watching Schechter himself who occupies the microphone at upstage top centre. We are directly encouraged to view the dancers' bodies as part of the group we belong to.

Of intense interest to Shechter, importantly, is not only what the individual body does, but the process by which, kinaesthetically, bodies appropriate each other's fervour and suffering. He brings us to a comprehension that both deep empathy and violence are understandable positions; both, through this process of embodied cognition, are contagious. Wider politics, he seems to be saying, need to be comprehended through the politics of the body. History repeats itself through bodily constants.[52]

Dance is rescued, in one swift manoeuvre, from entertainment to strategy: where there is pressure there is folk dance. Pressure is expressed but, like any form of energy, it cannot dissipate, only change form. Pressure shored up in bodies and passed along. Shechter's occupation of bellowing rock frontman and screaming dictator persona presents us with the possibility that there is a

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[52] We could apply the same understanding – that history repeats through bodily constants - to Sarah Kane's assertion in *Blasted* about the rape in the hotel room and the Balkan conflict being, as she saw it, part of the same 'branch' and 'tree' - an association that, as I explored in the first chapter, Michael Billington failed to accept as a 'watertight' strategy.

lineage from one to the other. Would death metal – a form with an intense and repetitive fascination with mass war deaths - have evolved without the Holocaust? Participation in the audience of a live event, for Shechter, is a both a physical and a political act; through the kinaesthetic relationships he engineers as part of the performance it is impossible to remain physically uninvolved with other bodies. We do more than bear witness to the performance; our involvement with it, as I have demonstrated, includes not just our eyes and our minds but our entire system. We comprehend the pressure kinaesthetically because our cognition is embodied.

On some level, we are all implicated: we take on this pressure ourselves and store it up.

Conclusion

Our kinaesthetic perception is so embedded in our experience of the world that it is incredibly difficult to isolate and unpick. Kinaesthetic affectivity is currently impossible to evidence empirically because there is no way to capture or to isolate it (although inroads are being made). Because of a lack of thorough understanding or interrogation, writing about kinaesthesia is still a very difficult and complex task.

However, kinaesthetic fields and kinaesthetic responses can be and are consciously authored in performance to enhance affect, and there is growing commitment to the idea that kinaesthetic responses are fundamentally tied in to our ability to empathise, as performance theorists have proposed and as cognitive science is beginning to make an evidenced case for. Clearly, the way we relate kinaesthetically to others informs and underwrites our political existences as well as influencing the way we move around the world. Performance is a rich site of investigation to begin to shine light on exactly how – and conversely, valuing and understanding the sophistry of kinaesthetic affectivity strategies is imperative in terms of moving us to appreciate those performance works fully.

Using appropriated elements of Laban's effort theory along with rehearsal room insights, I have proposed that a layer of our unconscious cognition is concerned with scanning the other bodies in our vicinity and honing in on evidence of difference, anomaly, deviation from normality or instability which might indicate danger, distress or flux. Applying this idea to three very different artworks which include a body under threat (Gormley's *Event Horizon,* Kneebone et al's surgical stimulation and Tangled Feet's *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*), I have structured the outline of a case that our kinaesthetic empathy operates despite us knowing consciously that a body is in only simulated danger, and, going further, might extend towards human-shaped objects as well as other live bodies.

There is clearly a need to raise the status of kinaesthesia as part of the framework of critical analysis of performance, alongside other formal elements. This is a complex manoeuvre because kinaesthetic relationships cannot be adequately evidenced or captured for posterity.[53] For, as I have shown, kinaesthetic dynamics and relationships occur predominantly below the level of our conscious awareness, because we cannot switch them on or off and thus are such an ingrained part of our experience we hardly notice them (like background noise); detecting our own kinaesthetic affectivity in a performance situation is a difficult operation which requires an acquired sensitivity and awareness. Writing about what one has detected and analysing it as part of the overall artistic or political strategy of the performance then involves a further, distinct skill-set.[54]

Parviainen's writing argues convincingly that an intelligent understanding and appreciating of kinaesthetic interactivity can be deployed, through 'resistant choreographies' to charge social environments, bring intuitions to the surface and generate political awareness and effect. I have attempted to build on Parviainen's achievements by conducting a critical analysis of one performance (Shechter's *Political Mother),* paying particular attention to the kinaesthetic strategies that the choreographer has employed and analysing how and why they work, as part of a wider framework of relationships, symbols and affects in this piece. Kinaesthetic affectivity is at the heart of the hypothesis he proposes; *where there is pressure there is folk dance*. I have attempted to show how Shechter works through a complex thesis kinaesthetically, with huge sophistication, bringing us to an embodied understanding of this central idea. In doing so, I have discussed how kinaesthetic relationships can become a central and integral part of a political strategy in a physical performance.

In the course of this chapter I have touched briefly on the difficulties of bringing together research from different traditions, with different methodologies, assumptions, motivations, internal sector politics and end-goals. There is an obvious reach across the art/science divide occurring[55] but this ground is full of tensions. The performance situation is an immensely rich site of potential discovery when it comes to furthering knowledge of embodied cognition, but also an incredibly complex one, missing the distinct system boundaries that Wilson argues in her article are necessary to have in place to reach meaningful empirical understanding from a scientific point of view (Wilson 2002). Fruitful cross-disciplinary collaboration in this area (such as the AHRC-sponsored Watching Dance project) is developing methodologies such as combining TMS and FMRI imaging with other

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[53]   Whether traces of kinaesthetic affectivity can exist in videos of live performance, or in a scripted record, would be another complex investigation. The Watching Dance project is currently undertaking interesting work in ways of capturing spectators' impressions of kinaesthetic empathy in performance.

[54]   I have explored the process of writing about dance more thoroughly in Chapter 1.

[55]   The Wellcome Trust, in its 2011 portfolio review of twenty years of MRI, identified 'a continued need for support for multidisciplinary and multi-sector research hubs' as one of its main ongoing challenges. (http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/News/Media-office/Press-releases/2011/WTVM052612.htm, accessed 20/12/12)

qualitative audience research methodologies to develop models for evidencing kinaesthetic empathy.

How, as artists, do we constructively become involved in furthering these discoveries without compromising our artistic aims? As theatre-makers, we start each piece of work with a set of hunches and concerns that fascinate us, and a desire to step into the space between humans to gently unfold those questions together through performance. With the new set of vested interests that come with scientific scrutiny or formal investigative research aims and which inevitably come to bear on how the work is developed, how do we tread a path of avoiding this communicative space becoming completely instrumentalised as laboratory, and thus devoid of the possibilities of distinct and open-ended creative purpose?

Chapter 4: Deploying embodied strategies in socially-engaged practice – *Inflation* and *One Million*

Introduction:

Liminality and the indicative: not representing but doing.

Chris Goode, in his recent book *The Forest and the Field,* sets out a manifesto for re-establishing theatre's transformative power;

> And here, then, is our model. A theatre that in setting itself against the prevailing mood of its social context occupies not a subjunctive, but an indicative zone. A theatre that does not exist to ask what if ... but to say what is. To do this, it may continue to incorporate performance, and performance may continue its experiments in thought and feeling, but in itself it will continually reassert *the primacy of the preliminary, the non-virtual and the indicative. The liveness of theatre thus comes to bear weight as part of its political argument;* likewise the base of communal experience and social constitution that underwrites the multiplicity of readings that it will inevitably continue to foster. (Goode, Chris. *The Forest and The Field* p.11, my italics)

Physical theatre and performance which foregrounds the body reinforces the 'primacy of the preliminary, the non-virtual and the indicative'. Of course, all performances blend the actual doing of things with their representation of doing things, but while it obviously has the potential to demonstrate, to signify, to pretend and present the 'as if', the performing body also has its own unassailable physical veracity. The body has weight, mass, and responds to gravity. It passes through phases of stability and lability, wobbling and correcting itself. It breathes and sweats, it cannot hide the evidence of exertion. It responds to chemical releases that occur as part of the performance tasks – adrenaline and endorphins flood the body. As part of a group, the body behaves habitually, relying on previously ingrained patterns of social interaction and use of space. As artists we can focus on harnessing the qualities that the body evidences which are not representations or simulations, but real and actual. This is not to say that scripted work cannot also do these things – but that work which begins with a physical process is very well placed to capitalise on this potential.

As spectators our bodies cognize and recognise the physical processes that performing bodies undergo, and react kinaesthetically to them. If we accept Lakoff and Johnson's compelling and well-grounded work (which I examine at the beginning of this chapter), we are at the same time

comprehending the world through metaphors which have their grounding in common sensorimotor experiences. How can we harness this 'non-virtual and indicative' physical connection with our audience to draw a larger point?

In this final chapter, through detailed writing about two performances, their contexts and making processes, I show how Tangled Feet have employed a set of techniques which, throughout the thesis, I have argued have considerable but under-appreciated power. As I hope to show through my close analysis of two performances, these physical relations that we plot as artists can underpin the thrust of the thesis carried in the work, with the performance's spoken text being a complementing element (rather than the other way round). Through a discussion of my own work, my aim is to propose some suggestions about how various levels of comprehension (several of which might be happening simultaneously) occur, and to draw attention particularly to the embodied information, which is consciously manipulated by the artists but which often gets neglected in the critical appraisal.

By employing different functional modes of writing about physical performance (as defined by Sally Banes in Chapter 1; contextual, descriptive, interpretive and evaluative) my aim is to complement the performances by bringing the reader to a closer understanding about the strategies employed in the creation of the work. The learning I have undertaken in researching this thesis has sharpened my awareness of these creative strategies and how they function, allowing me to deploy them consciously rather than instinctually.

Both of the performances I focus on have a strong moral and political stance, which, as I will argue, is created through and via these physical strategies, with the embodied spectator firmly in mind (and usually in the room) when these stances are creatively developed. Both were also created to be democratically accessible to a broad and diverse audience, in free-to-access pop-up and/or outdoor festival contexts. I aim to illustrate how such work can be simultaneously accessible *and* complex, spectacular *and* intelligent, able to engage with risk averse funding and commissioning systems *and* remain subversive, despite being challenged by the tensions I mapped out in Chapter 2.

In my analysis of *Inflation*, I explore how we employ the commonality of experience and the kinaesthetic empathy generated by the experience of jumping on a bouncy castle (an experience many British people will have shared) and couple this with a number of physical embodied metaphors to make an accessible show about an inaccessible subject: the complexities of the 2007 global financial collapse.

In my analysis of *One Million*, I continue to highlight the use of embodied metaphor, laying out how the set and the journeys of our protagonists through and up it was carefully designed to illustrate an essentially broken labour system which wastes potential and energy. I also draw into the discussion how this work drew on and responded to the social contexts and existing 'kinaesthetic fields' (to use Parviainen's term) which existed in Woolwich post-Olympics and in the shadow of the 2011 riots. Through comparing how the show worked in its initial context in Woolwich and subsequent remounting in Brighton on a different site which necessitated a rearranging of some of the proxemic relationships, I evidence how fundamental the careful plotting of these proxemic relationships are and how much they influence an audience's reading of the work.

Prior to language: using physical metaphor to explore and reveal social/political structures

> Because our ideas are framed in terms of our unconscious embodied conceptual systems, truth and knowledge depend on embodied understanding. (Lakoff and Johnson; *Philosophy In The Flesh.* 1999 p. 555**).**

Lakoff and Johnson's re-thinking of fundamental aspects of Western philosophy provides a fruitful starting point for underlining the power of the physical body in our conceptual systems of meaning, and challenging a logocentric bias. They propose that our spoken language is densely packed with building blocks of metaphors which have their basis in our embodied understanding of the world – essentially, that embodied reality precedes and underpins the idioms of language. According to Lakoff and Johnson, we use our fundamental sensorimotor experiences to produce subjective judgements via the production of basic conceptual metaphors, which pervade both our thought and, by extension, our language. The sensorimotor experiences – which we all share - thus underpin our basic conception of abstract notions like similarity and difference, importance, security, risk and morality. This system of primary metaphors is acquired unconsciously from our earliest years, and informed by common experiences of moving about and inhabiting the world. So, for example, our experiences of being small and dependent on others shape the associations that warmth = affection and that big = powerful. Many of these concepts are so ingrained we do not think to question the automatic association, nor the very physical point of their origination.

Following Lakoff and Johnson's proposal, if our understanding of the world is based in large part on primary metaphors which are constructed out of the basic experience of the human form which we all share, how might these commonalities between people be accessed through physical performance? How can we make use of the physical, sensorimotor experiences which automatically command a myriad of associations and equivalences? And can kinaesthetic empathy

(which I explored in the last chapter) be harnessed to create links between the physical bodies of performers and spectators and the larger more abstract concepts which are the subject of the performance?

Here, and elsewhere throughout this chapter, I will expand the idea that physical performance lends itself to the creating of situations in which people are able to share an experience of embodied recognition of situations or concepts which we feel to be fundamentally 'true'. This embodied 'truth' might have the potential to be commonly shared across a group of people – in this case, a group of spectators - cutting across the divergent stances and experiences created by political, religious, social, language or cultural differences. Far from being simplistic, vague or non-specific, I will try to show how these physical metaphors can be employed as a central part of a performance to build complex, sophisticated webs of meaning that the audience communally draw from.

Lakoff and Johnson's theory of metaphor describes how primary metaphors, rather than being the result of conscious and interpretative operations, are actually rooted in physical experience. Acquired as a natural consequence of the physical experiences and discoveries we make from childhood, through movement, primary metaphors are laid down as part of our neural programming:

> Just by functioning normally in the world, we automatically and unconsciously acquire and use a vast number of such metaphors. Those metaphors are realised in our brains *physically* and are mostly beyond our control. They are a consequence of the nature of our brains, our bodies and the world we inhabit (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, p.59).

If Lakoff and Johnson are correct, the idioms which litter our language have their basis in embodied experiences (for example 'my heart sank/my hopes plummeted/the news felled her/she dragged her feet/he crumpled to the floor/he seemed to collapse'). This in turn gives us an interesting way to think about performance, and the relationship between performed physicality and language and how we deduce meaning from them. There is an important difference between whether we think of a performer's process as one of finding a representation of physical imagery contained in the language, or whether we recognise that the idiom itself contains a unifying physical experience which an astute physical performer will tap into and use to construct an embodied experience. At the end point, are the spectators translating the physical representation back to the idiom in language, or is the experience comprehended physically by the spectators via kinaesthetic empathy – or are both processes happening simultaneously?

Lakoff and Johnson propose that fundamentally embodied primary metaphors are produced through basic universal experiences (for example, that 'Important is Big' is predicated on the experience of being a small child and finding that larger adults dominate your experience and can exert forces on you). They function to link together sensorimotor domains (in this example, size) with subjective judgements (importance).

Many of the physical sensorimotor experiences on which these primary metaphors (as suggested by Lakoff and Johnson) rest are very keenly felt in aerial work and work at height:

> Stability is safe
>
> Instability is risky
>
> A firm hold means security / understanding is grasping
>
> Falling is disaster / climbing is achievement
>
> Organisation is physical structure
>
> States are locations/ Change is motion/ Movement is the transition from one state to another state/ Change is difficult
>
> Up is good / bigger is more powerful
>
> Down is bad / smaller is weaker
>
> Expansion is success / collapse is disaster/failure

When we unpack these, it is very easy to see how embodied experiences can be translated into more complex, blended metaphorical concepts which in turn link into larger shared understandings of the world around us and how it is arranged:

> *A city's story is an epic and perpetual tale of regeneration and change. Industries have changed, bombs have fallen, **tower blocks have soared** and **markets plummeted**. The **past is wiped away** and new futures promised. How does **a city survive** as **all that is solid melts into air**? What does it take to **let go of the past** when the **future is still out of reach**?*
>
> *The piece explores the social and human process of regeneration – particularly the point in time when a place and **a community is suspended** in a moment of change, between the **old but dying traditions** and an uncertain future.*
>
> (from the publicity material for Tangled Feet's *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air,* my emphasis)[56]

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[56] At the time of making *All That Is Solid* in 2011, my awareness of the process by which we were activating the linguistic unconscious through the use of physical embodied metaphor was instinctual, rather that conscious. During the process of making and reflecting on that making in the course of this research, my grasp of these concepts from a theoretical point of view has extended, allowed me to deploy them in later work much more strategically.

This brief extract from the publicity material from Tangled Feet's *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air* reveals, amongst its densely packed idioms, a host of primary metaphors which combine and blend to produce other metaphors. These can all be located in the list of primary metaphors which Lakoff and Johnson have defined (table 4.1, p50, ibid.) and through which we translate sensorimotor experience (e.g. vertical orientation) into subjective experience (being in control) through the production of a basic metaphor ('Control is Up').

In Lakoff and Johnson's theory of metaphor, these primary metaphors then blend together to create complex metaphors. They give a thorough account of the process by which primary metaphors are combined with simple facts to create chains of complex metaphors which underpin very strongly held cultural assumptions. These metaphors which underpin so many facets of our shared cultural belief structures and behaviours, might be expressed in language, but are, importantly, not originally produced *through* language but through our embodied experience in the world.

Elsewhere in the thesis I have argued that the potential of live performance is hindered by a British theatre making system that, for reasons of both habit and economics, often habitually treats the script as both its the starting point and the legacy of a live performance. If we accept Lakoff and Johnson's proposal that the embodied reality precedes the idioms of language, this underpins a solid argument for efforts to explore and endorse a creative process which *begins* with the moving physical body, as opposed to the all-too-common practice of attempting to construct in the rehearsal room a resonant physical reality from the idioms contained in language on the page. Is there also an accessibility to this kind of embodied metaphor – because their resonances are based on very fundamental and commonly shared physical experiences rather than requiring a level of educated literacy – which makes them more immediately potent to certain audiences?

> The heart of metaphor is inference. Conceptual metaphor allows inferences in sensory-motor domains (e.g. domains of space and objects) to be used to draw inferences about other domains (e.g., domains of subjective judgement, with concepts like intimacy, emotions, judgement, and so on). Because we reason in terms of metaphor, the metaphors we use determine a great deal about how we live our lives [Lakoff and Johnson, 1980:244].

Importantly, there is a broad-based commonality to these metaphors which feeds into our emotional worlds, our judgements and our moral coding, which is therefore of significant use to an artist making work for an audience. When we interrogate some of our very ingrained cultural assumptions (for example, concerning values around employment and the job market, or about

fairness, competition and nurture) we can find at their root commonly-shared physical constructs which can be expressed through movement and through the relationships between people and space. Our audience's connection to and understanding of these metaphors is not dependent on a certain level of literacy, but rather on our shared embodied experience.

In both *Inflation* and *One Million*, as with previous shows, we used a technique of employing layers of physical metaphors based on shared and communal physical embodied experiences, to encourage our audience to make collective interpretations about larger socio-political structures which are themselves predicated on these basic metaphor units, and in which they/we are implicated.

I am describing here artistic strategy and intention; whether these strategies succeed in encouraging an audience towards these larger socio-political interrogations of capitalist structures, and to what degree, is of course subject to scrutiny and perhaps ultimately unverifiable; and it is not a task I intend to undertake here.[57] However the conviction that we were at least partially successful might be supported by this reviewer of *One Million*, who draws clear inferences from the physical metaphors ('hopeless well', 'career ladder') and comes to a reading about the 'existential difficulties' connected with the corporate job market:

> Several vignettes lingered in my mind long after the performance: young people climbing stairs in cyclic waves, throwing ever-increasing reams of paper representing their CVs down a hopeless well. ...rarely are we allowed to express these kinds of deep feelings in and around the workplace, or during the process of obtaining a job. This is especially true of the types of corporate jobs and graduate schemes to which *One Million* appeared to be alluding most of the time...The performance ends with an exhortation to escape the existential difficulties of climbing the corporate ladder and the hegemony of the international banking system by accepting the "new world order". (McDonald, Caitlin; *One Million* Review, onestoparts.com http://onestoparts.com/review-one-million-tangled-feet)

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[57]The lack of formal reviewing of outdoor work makes this task harder. My personal appraisal of the audience's response to this work (and resultant commitment to an artistic strategy I believe is working) is based on multiple sources of information and experience, including; subjective experience of close watching of and listening to audience reactions during performances, on exploratory conversations with participants involved in the making of the work, on detailed conversations with certain audience members after the event, and on Twitter appraisals of our shows from audience.

Inflation: The unstable body as metaphor for the global financial system.

When adults or children first get on a bouncy castle, their responses are fairly unanimous. Most people bounce excitedly to the point, rapidly reached, of exhaustion. Interactions with others on the castle, in the absence of the need to be safe, and influenced by the impossibility of predictable movement, quickly become uninhibited. People ricochet off each other like pinballs. The bouncy castle's propensity for flinging bodies against each other encourages many people test the limits and play quickly heads towards exploring the parameters of violence and rough-housing. Add in some inflatable projectiles, and within a very short space of time people are throwing them at each other, thrilled by the use of force against another with the absence of pain, testing how far they can go. In a nutshell, bouncy castles encourage risky behaviour, and reward it with a flood of endorphins and adrenalin that leads to shrieking, laughing and increasingly volatile physical behaviour to the point of exhaustion. This bouncy castle play is a common denominator – jumping on a bouncy castle is not something that is removed from most people's experience. When we are watching people on an inflatable, we know what it is like to undergo that experience and our physical empathy with them is activated.

If, as I have proposed throughout this thesis, we access the emotional states of others to some degree physically and kinaesthetically, how can we as artists utilise this strong kinaesthetic memory which is awakened when we watch performers jumping? If the functions which I outline in the previous chapter stand, then as spectators, we map our own bodies onto these volatile performers. What embodied reaction does it provoke in us as they take heady advantage of the bouncy castle's thrills, and eventually, struggle as they are enveloped in its inevitable collapse.

In this piece of practice analysis, I attempt to demonstrate how, by considering carefully how a spectator relates their embodied presence to this performance, we as artists can build a set of complex physical metaphors which are predicated on a physical state that the audience *know*. By scaffolding our artistic enquiry about a very complex subject – the global financial crisis of 2007 – onto a seemingly simple and commonly shared physical knowledge, we can invite our audience to consider a very complicated political question in a way that remains accessible.

Context, commissioning and creation process

Inflation was conceived in response to a commissioning invitation from a consortium of festivals/producers (Lyric Hammersmith, Greenwich + Docklands International Festival (GDIF), Latitude Festival and Imagine Watford) to make a work which would tour to each place for 2-6 performances over Summer 2012. Being familiar with this consortium circuit, having created

another piece, *The Hide,* for the same tour the previous summer, we were familiar with the sites, framing, likely audience demographic and technical demands/limitations of the tour. We knew the piece would have to work in different situations: at GDIF, much of the audience would be attending intentionally, as part of the festival programming, whereas at the Lyric, the piece would be sitting outside of a festival context and playing to a lunchtime crowd who sit in the deckchairs laid on in the square – many of them comprising a casual walk-up audience rather than people who have consciously engaged with a programme. At Latitude, we knew from past experience, many of our audience would be inebriated, and we'd be competing with sound spill from other stages. At all sites – and with an eye on future bookings –– being able to set up and pack down quickly is an advantage.

Working against a tight deadline to submit a commissioning proposal, we brought together two concepts which had been sitting on a long-list of 'Things We Want to Explore' – firstly, making a show on a bouncy castle (which we had a hunch would work well in public spaces as a quick pop-up outdoor stage with huge audience attraction and brilliant physical potential) and secondly, making a show which dug into the numerous questions we had about the global financial crash of 2007 and the seeming impossibility of grasping why it happened. Despite not really having any idea what the show would look or feel like, "a show about the banking crisis performed on a bouncy castle" provided a neat publicity soundbite that easily persuaded the commissioners.

We augmented the small commissioning budget of £8,000 by rolling the commission into a wider season of work, *Tangled Feet Take To The Streets 2012*, which also included *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air* and *The Hide* as retouring shows. The season was supported by Arts Council England.

After an initial day of R and D where we hired a bouncy castle and invited a host of our usual performers to come and test out some improvised ideas, the show was devised in three weeks in the rehearsal rooms at Lyric Hammersmith. The creative team consisted of me as director, Al Orange as Stage Manager / Sound Designer, John Hinton, Cristina Catalina, Sara Templeman and Mike Humphreys (in his first job with Tangled Feet) as performers, and Seb Muzy and Charlotte Penn as stage management interns. In week one, we worked without the bouncy castle, doing performance improvisations and researching together the banking crisis, mechanisms of the financial system, the governmental narrative of austerity in response to the crash, and the history of castles together (fittingly, one essential function of castles was to shore up and protect the wealth of specific individuals). In week two, we started to use the bouncy castle and a host of other inflatable props, and spent much time improvising physically on and off the castle. These improvisations included, for example:

- Technical experimentation: What is physically possible in terms of entering, exiting, moving physically on the castle, using it while it is inflating/deflating? We explored performing controlled and tightly choreographed moves on the castle with a level of control, working against the naturally wobbly chaos state that the castle encouraged. These improvisations led to the 'Austerity Dance' which opens the 'show' once the castle is inflated (5.00).

- Situation-based improvisations: These might start with a suggested set-up from me but often develop over a number of days/tries. They frequently take surprising turns when improvisations go on for a while and evolve as performers inject an idea and try it out 'live'. Performers are often inspired, during a long-form improvisation, by the selection of props that are lying around the room, or might find a particularly successful quality when Al tries a piece of music as we are improvising. The Mike/Sara couple section (12.58) was developed from this kind of improvisation, as was the savage bludgeoning with a hammer (17.00) and Bouncy Cameron image which arose during separate improvisations but which were later amalgamated.

- Clowning improvisations: The task-based set up of the show, and the personalities and conflicting agendas of the four characters were developed over lots of longer improvisations which were refined and honed as I specified sets of tasks for each actor to accomplish during the set-up.

After a two week break, we spent the third week putting the show together, finding its shape and honing it. The resultant final show is a result of the alchemy between a team with a wonderful complement of skill-sets.[58]

Early experiments on the bouncy castle confirmed our initial instinct that there was a connection to be made between the instability and risk-taking behaviour that a bouncy castle generates, and the qualities of the global financial system. Through the devising process (with the benefit of reflection) our experiments enabled us to uncover a series of powerful physical metaphors to exploit.

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[58] All strong, sensitive and intelligent devisors, Cristina (a Romanian who grew up in Germany) brought a very European sensibility and an ability for deep intellectual analysis of complex issues. John Hinton, who trained at Lecoq, has in addition to his own sharp intellect, an incisive practical and theoretical knowledge of clowning techniques. Sara is, at heart, a 'show girl', naturally driven to win over an audience with charm, flirting and professional musicianship, and she matches this with a phenomenal sensitivity for touchingly honest emotional work. Mike is an ex-gymnast, a wonderfully funny and generous improviser; he and also possesses an innate 'everyman' likeability and peculiarly old-fashioned irreverence. Mike and Sara also brought an extremely really useful political ignorance about the banking crisis to the process;: by their own admission, they didn't follow it, didn't understand what had happened and found it all too complicated to engage with properly. (Mike compensated for this by persuading his friend, a financial trader, to join us for rehearsal, and we spent an afternoon grilling him with our many, many questions about the workings of the financial system). Al Orange is a phenomenal devising powerhouse with a keen instinct for what 'works' peformatively, coupled with an intensive political curiosity, able to digest and reframe very complex material. As well as technically managing the show and designing the sound, she was instrumental at working with me, often late into the evenings, at structuring the argument of the piece and crafting the improvisations and research we had done together into the explanatory verbal sections of the piece.

One of the conundrums that we discovered during our research process into the financial crash, and which we decided to integrate into the piece as a formal device, was the inability of most of us to grapple with and properly understand the language which is used to explain financial instruments, trading or the global crash. Because the language is often so impenetrable, and the concepts so complex, many people have difficulty engaging with the subject at all, let alone forming an opinion on the moral or legal premises behind the collapse from which they might develop a political standpoint. Developing a device of using forms of clowning (including Lecoq-inspired *bouffon*) gave us the possibility for the questions about the banking crisis to be hosted by characters with both a strategically-useful level of naivety and the capacity to critique the system and its leaders with a level of grotesque ludicrousness. (This is exemplified in the 'Bouncy Cameron' section at 17.00, in which we witness Mike's character, who has just lost his house and relationship in a spiral of debt, being punished by a sadistic henchman (Cristina) who bludgeons him mercilessly with an inflatable hammer while John, wearing a David Cameron mask, appears and jumps gleefully behind them holding a pair of scissors).

As a framing device, these naïve clowns and their shambolic travelling sideshow facilitate a narrative structure which we know from the beginning is about massive failure. From the beginning

they work hard to befriend the audience: John, employing the persona of an enthusiastic tour guide, uses direct address to attempt to interest them in his speech about the history of castles. Meanwhile, Sara flirts with them as she accompanies him on Melodihorn, and Mike charms children and their parents by making slightly-too-phallic balloon swords. The tone is inviting, silly, playful and slightly daft – there is no need to worry that this is a highbrow performance. Ineffectual and slipshod, the characters' competing agendas in a performance situation allow for constant interruptions and quick-changes that inform and support the collaged structure of the piece. (Cristina wants to be in charge, John wants to educate the audience about history, Sara wants to show off for the audience's attention, and Mike is the dunce, easily distracted).

Physical metaphor: the inevitability of deflation and failure.

As well as the volatility and sense of reckless risk that the bouncy castle encourages in movement qualities, there was also of course the metaphor of inflation and deflation, and these were instrumental to the physical metaphors we created. We used air and the act of expanding/deflating a structure with air to represent financial instruments at several different points in the piece. The use of air (which is usually intangible and valueless) became an apt metaphor for exploring the innate ludicrousness of a system which allows worldwide financial 'value' to be created out of essentially nothing. This system, goes the show's argument, leaves people vulnerable as tangible assets (houses, food) are inextricably linked to intangible assets (bundled sub-prime mortgage products, the derivatives trade) which can collapse in value, leaving debt which has escalated out of all proportion with any tangible original assets being traded.

HOW DID WE GET HERE? (07.15)

John: Economics now!

Sara: To most people, what happens in the financial markets remains a mystery.

Mike: ……Even when we try to work out what went so wrong over the past decade, we come up against phrases we don't really understand , such as...

(All, reeling off a list):

APR. Bailout. Bond. Capital Flow. Default. FTSE. Hedging. Inflation. ....Leverage. Liquidity. NASDAQ. Pip. Risk reward. Stop loss. Trending. Volatility index.

John: And that's before you come up against Equity Derivatives

Cristina: Foreign exchange derivatives

Sara: Interest rate derivatives

Mike: or credit derivatives.

Cristina: ....Most of us understand the concept of trading on goods or commodities

Mike: Like gold, sugar and oil

Cristina: Or on companies

Mike: Like Tesco, British Petroleum

Sara: Or more recently, Facebook.

John: But derivatives, right, derivatives have nothing to do with trading on actual goods or commodities. They are a way for traders to speculate on the future ....possible outcomes of other peoples bets. Basically, investing on investments. Or betting on . .bets. In the early noughties there was a massive explosion in this type of trading, and people were making massive amounts of money off trades that had no equivalent in physical paper money or actual physical goods.

Cristina: So, by 2007, the global financial system was trading annually in derivatives to the value of one quadrillion dollars.

(they unveil a series of signs to reveal the number 1000,000,000,000,000)

Cristina:….(continuing) That's the equivalent of $143,000 for each of the 7 billion men, women and children on the planet. Per year. Each.

(They reverse the signs to reveal the second statistic.)

In the next section (which pays homage to the Greatest Show On Legs' famous 'Balloon Dance'[59]), we see the characters, playing traders, frantically barter untied balloons (which, of course, deflate and escape) against a voiceover which explains in simple terms the events that led to the collapse of the global markets:

BALLOON TRADING: (09.10)

The characters strip off their waistcoats to reveal red braces like financial traders, and begin to barter for untied balloons which appear over the sides of the bouncy castle. As the section progresses, the balloons deflate and escape, while the traders become increasingly desperate, until only one deflating balloon remains.

Voiceover, *over music: 'Flight of the Bumblebees':*

These fantastical sums of money could not possibly have existed in the real world. Banks issued debts far in excess of their ability to cover those debts, in a process known as 'leveraging up'. Economists developed mathematical formulas, such as the Black-Scholes Equation, which attempted to predict the value of derivatives. The early success of this equation led traders into increasingly risky and speculative deals. The markets began to rely on these equations, using them to value potential deals, and to guarantee the debts issued to finance them. Huge financial corporations were now operating on the very edge of financial viability. They leveraged themselves up to the point where a very tiny change in their fortunes would bring the whole thing crashing down. Because of the ways these debts had been extended internationally, the effects of this crash extended all over the world, leaving the banks with a massive black hole of debt, which they had no way of paying off.

(the characters fall backwards onto the castle with a handful of deflated balloons)

Having set up this device, in a later section depicting the age of sub-prime mortgage lending which preceded the 2007 crash, air and balloons again symbolise financial instruments (beginning at 12.58). Sara and Mike play a happy couple, the castle their home on which they perform and choreography in which they start out as happy newlyweds. Two 'moneylenders' (John representing an unscrupulous mortgage lender, and Cristina a loan shark, bedecked with an array of inflatable props, including a guitar and a life ring with 'E-Z Credit' written on it) appear at the sides of the castle. John starts offering Mike a series of letters, which he reads with some anxiety and hides from Sara. After a few of these, the moneylenders signal for the castle pump to be switched off,

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59   This was a three-person stand up-routine devised by Malcolm Hardee and Martin Soan and regularly performed from the 1980s onwards. In it, three naked men shuffle sidewise onto stage clutching six balloons which they use to cover their own and each others genitals. As they swap the balloons during the choreography, some of them deflate, meaning that the skit descends into ever more frantic and ridiculous attempts to salvage some modesty.

and Mike and Sara's house begins to collapse around them. The choreography breaks down as Mike is distracted from his role by money pressures and Sara ends up literally dropped. As they panic, the loan shark offers Mike a balloon of 'credit', which he grabs eagerly and inhales, triggering a temporary re-inflation of the castle. This happens a couple of times, until Sara catches him, finds the letters and they have an enormous argument. At this point, the moneylenders, in cahoots, merrily foreclose on the house, singing in harmony as they unravel crime scene tape over the entrance of the castle.

The collapse of the bouncy castle as the air pump is turned off was one of the most arresting physical images, particular when performers are left floundering and entangled as it collapses around them. The castle is set up as fragile by the performers; they are concerned about it puncturing ('no sharp objects on the castle!''take your shoes off!') and on several occasions of doom-laden foreshadowing it threatens to collapse but temporarily recovers.[60]

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[60] *Inflation* was created over the summer when the Eurozone crisis and threat of a Greek exit from the Euro was particularly acute. Greece's (and by extension, Europe's) knife-edge economic situation, threatening total collapse, informed the piece. During the interactive game 'Who Wants To Be a Thrillionaire?' where an audience member is invited onto the castle to attempt to answer a series of boggling questions about the banking crisis, the final question, 'How do we solve the Eurozone Crisis' is revealed to be a question which no-one can answer and time runs out on, thus ending the game in a loss.

Eventually, the show ends with the castle completely collapsing as performers make desperate efforts to 'rescue' the situation, and the show. Increasingly desperate, they prompt each other to try various set-pieces while the castle sinks miserably behind them. John is thrust forward to distract by making a speech, which begins by attempting to impart the history of decline of the castle in Europe but which segues into a desperate and rather parochial patriotic rant about how English Heritage are maintaining our glorious history. When this fails, finally, Sara performs a cover of Vera Lynn's 'There'll Always Be An England', which for a few moments still holds the triumphant promise it appears to have been planned with as a closing number. The performers valiantly try to hold the castle up as it deflates around them, a clearly hopeless effort which ends with them one by one one by one giving up – on the sad pile of the flaccid castle, and tacky Jubilee bunting which has come to stand for England - and on their show, which has ended in failure. As the closing lines of the song play out, in a funereal moment they throw their hats onto the castle in tribute, and, holding hands, leave the stage:

> *There'll always be an England*
> *And England will be free*
> *If England means as much to you*
> *As England means to me.*

By the end of the show, the bouncy castle has come to represent the system: the banking system, 'Britain PLC', Glorious England.

Kinaesthetic strategy: activating endorphins and a sense of risk

On a bouncy castle, there is a thrill that comes of jumping, a natural endorphin rush from being airborne. This endorphin rush is augmented by the risk involved – the innate volatility of one's own movement and others, which creates the almost inevitable consequence of falls and crashes accompanying the highs. In this inherently unstable microcosm, one person's recklessness affects everybody else.

Making *Inflation*, we needed to make the decision of how to employ this quality of the castle, which all of our audience would instantly recognise. A discovery we very quickly made in rehearsal is that while this kind of physical rough-housing play is enormously fun to do, it becomes uninteresting to watch after quite a relatively short time. However, we felt there was enormous potential in the parallel between uninhibited financial trading – fuelled by testosterone and adrenalin to increasingly risky levels – and this aggressive, overexcited, childish play style that the castle encourages. In both examples little regard is given to the welfare of others; both are exacerbated by short-term and reactive decisions made in a volatile environment; both incur contagious spirals of risk as players attempt to outdo each other.

We built in to the show a section of this intensely rough play which occurred simultaneously with Cristina's character delivering a section of text, in the style of a fairground ride attendant ('s*cream if you wanna go faster!'*) about the deregulation of the banking sector throughout the 1990s, which follows the previously-described balloon-trading section at 10.28.

During Cristina's explanation to the audience of the various legal acts and their effect on creating a massive expansion of unannexed derivative trading, the other three performers whipped themselves into a frenzy of rough play in a section which began with aggressive, masculine choreographed moves before descending into improvisation focused on frenzied bouncing and attacking each other with inflatable props. The section ends with John's character, having been bullied by the other two, making the transition from overexcited to overwhelmed, and as Sara and Mike leave with their haul of inflatable goods, John becomes the victim; a traumatized child, alone on a deflating castle, crying for his parent to rescue him.

As often is the case in a Tangled Feet performance, Cristina's text here is semi-improvised, but she hits all the main points in roughly the same order.[61]

> **No Limits (10.28)**
> **John:** Now. You're probably asking yourself, 'How did we manage to get into this terrible situation' -
>
> *Cristina steals the microphone*
>
> **Cristina:** And we're heading into the '90s and across the world it's Banking Deregulation Time.
> *Music starts: 2Unlimited's 'No Limits'. Mike, Sara and John get on the bouncy castle and start to perform aggressive synchronised 90s dance moves.*
>
> **Cristina:** Let's get rid of all those rules that say you can't gamble what's not yours to lose. Those strict capital reserve and liquidity ratios are OFF!
> Isn't that great?

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[61] Having co-devised this text, and with a thorough grasp of the consequences of the legislative changes she is talking about, Cristina is able to adapt it and make changes to it during the performance. For instance, during one performance she started to ad-lib around the lines in German (this being one of her other languages). In a week where the German dominance of discussions around the future of the Euro had been a prominent news item, this added an additional layer of nuance that some of the audience clearly appreciated.

Mike, Sara and John, in time with music: BONUS BONUS BONUS BONUS!

Cristina: We've got the 1999 Gramme-Leach-Bliley act for you here, we're taking DOWN all the safety barriers. SO that means traditional banks, investment banks, and insurance companies, the brakes are off, you can now all participate in all three markets at once! NO regulation of swaps and derivatives!

All: BONUS BONUS BONUS BONUS!

Mike, Sara and John abandon their dancing and start to wildly bounce around. Various inflatable objects are thrown onto the castle – a guitar, a rubber ring, a globe. They play aggressively with these props and throw them at each other.

Cristina: EVERYONE's a winner with all this free credit.
Are you having fun? Don't slam into each other!
Remember, you've got to speculate to accumulate!
DO YOU WANT COMPLETE BANKING DEREGULATION?
Everybody say YEAAAHHHHH!

All: Yeaaah!

Cristina: And here comes the year 2000 Commodity Futures Modernization Act which is going to deregulate ALL your over-the-counter derivatives.
LEVERAGE YOURSELVES UP PEOPLE! THIS IS GOING TO GET CRAAAAZY!
It's VOLATILE in there! Let's hope no-one starts defaulting!
We're heading for SUBPRIME MORTGAGE MELTDOWN!

Mike and Sara, who have been aggressively throwing things around, gather as many inflatables as they can and run off the castle, leaving John shocked and traumatized. He cries out in overwhelmed gasps, reels as if in shock, and eventually crumples into a corner.

John: Daddy! Daddy! DADDY!

He sits at the back of the castle and the music changes to a dark and menacing piece. As he cries in fear, the bouncy castle starts, for a moment, to collapse around him, which makes him cry out in fear. Mike enters from the side, playing a parent

Mike: David? David!

John: Daddy!

Mike: (escorting John off the castle) It's all right David ... (improvised dialogue)

The metaphor at work is using physically aggressive and risky childish play to represent an era of free market capitalist expansion, which we all know ended extremely badly. We are playing on the scenario of parents watching children on a bouncy castle, warning them 'someone is going to get hurt'. We are laughing at Mike, Sara and John's rough play, but at the same time braced for the inevitable fallout. When it comes, the transition from funny to darkly tragic is extremely swift – one moment we are all enjoying ourselves immensely, the next, a music shift and John's physical portrayal of terror move us into a place which is unsettling and uncomfortable to watch.

There is of course a political agenda to the physical metaphor. In the wider piece, we overtly question the resultant policy of punitive austerity which is taken out on the weakest members of society, despite their lack of culpability. Here, we are drawing the audience's attention to volatility, to lack of control, to irresponsibility, aggression and the point where lack of care for others tips over into cruelty. We create a situation when the fun gets out of hand and leads to rescue being necessary.

We are also questioning whether there is something innate in the human experience of intense excitement – something that is governed by hormonal prompts, rather than careful judgement – which leads to increasing gambles in situations of risk. Is the architecture of the financial system fundamentally flawed, with its innate volatility, its boom-and-bust, shaped by the fight-or-flight physiological responses which govern our bodies? Recent studies which have measured the effects of brain chemistry changes on financial trading systems are fairly unequivocal on the correlation (see for example 'Cortisol and Testosterone Increase Risk Taking and May Destabilise markets', Cuerva et al; 2015)

> (T)he associations found in this experiment support the hypothesis that cortisol is
> related to trading behaviour in the direction of greater risk-taking and mispricing at the
> market level ...the fact that *ex-ante* cortisol was predictive of subsequent price
> instability is consistent with the hypothesis that variations in this hormone can have a
> destabilizing effect on financial markets. (ibid p. 4)

Behind the impenetrable language and the mind-boggling mathematical formulas, is the financial system structurally predicated on human physical constants? And if so, what are the consequences of frighteningly influential global systems being steered by something as fickle as our human flight-or-fight response?

Moral Structures

I have already drawn attention to how the often-impenetrable language of finance makes understanding the ethical and moral principles behind the 2007 financial crisis a difficult task for many. In our research period it became painfully apparent how difficult it is to digest some of the circumstantial, technical and political information about how the crash happened and why. Even in the quiet and concentration of a rehearsal room, we would need to explain things to each other four or five times and would struggle immensely to translate complex written articles into succinct verbal summaries. Sara admitted at one point "I just stopped understanding this stuff. It's in the newspapers but I just feel like I'm supposed to know a load of stuff that I don't know just to understand the news article. So I just switched off." This, we surmised, was probably a very common public response – political apathy borne of the impenetrability of the issues in the forms that we have them presented to us.

We needed another toolkit to unlock this information for a street audience: In *Inflation,* the use of the physical metaphors in the show are as crucial to the advancement of the piece's exploration and thesis about the fundamental flaws of our global financial system as the verbal arguments put forward. The piece is often operating on two or more levels concurrently (for example, the physical illustration of deflated balloon-trading which accompanies the aural explanation of over-leveraged banks, as previously described). When dense text like this is used, the language is used primarily to carry complex technical information, it is always accompanied by a physical metaphor, a demonstration, a performative nuance which does the work of progressing the thesis or the argument.

We employed the volatility of movement caused and affected by the bouncy castle with due specificity, and built a careful symbolism connecting inflatable (and therefore vulnerable) objects to stand for financial instruments, structures and ultimately nations. Our hope was that this intensely physical, visual and comedic sideshow would enable a political discourse about a fiendishly complex subject to be accessible at a high-street level, to a broad and diverse audience, many of whom were 'walk-up'. At just under 30 minutes, the show had enough fast-paced physical humour, slapstick and direct engagement with its audience to carry the weighty intellectual and often technical argument contained in some of the dialogue and which would have gone over the heads of some of our younger family audience. Broadly, however, the show seemed to succeed at

attracting and keeping an audience who responded on the whole extremely positively:

> *Inflation* should be mandatory viewing for everyone (Audience member on feedback
> form, Imagine Watford Festival)

The show also has an emotional offering, with the care – or lack of care – between the protagonists in their different manifestations being a crucial part of the kinaesthetic experience that the audience have. The huge levels of physical violence and risk taking in the No Limits and Bouncy Cameron sections are juxtaposed with, for example, the clear tender adoration in Mike and Sara's newlywed couple, the care with which Mike escorts a crying and terrified John off the castle in a fatherly fashion at the end of No Limits, and the ultimate tenderness with which the performers join hands and help each other leave the stage in the midst of their grief.

Lakoff and Johnson make a strong case that our moral structures, and indeed concepts of rationality, are defined 'relative to idealised family models (e.g., the Strict Father and Nurturant Parent Models)' (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, p. 559). They illustrate how popular conceptions of abstract concepts (such as evolution) are filtered through these models, becoming corrupted in the process. They offer the compelling example of the theory of evolution being extrapolated through the Strict Father model, which leads to the metaphor 'Evolution is the survival of the best competitor' in comparison with the divergent metaphor as filtered through the Nurturant Parent outlook, 'Evolution is the survival of the best nurtured'. The stark difference between these two metaphorical conceptions of evolutionary theory, and the importance of recognising the fallacies

inherent in these extrapolated metaphors, is apparent when we consider how the naturalisation of aggressive competition is co-opted by the supporters of free market economics using the flawed logic that 'survival of the best competitor' is an order which is natural and thus inevitable, rather than manufactured and thus challengeable and changeable. The value of care has no place in this schema.

We can see the disjuncture between these two competing 'logics' clearly in the recent failure and bailout of major financial institutions. Were the banks that survived the 2008 crash 'the best competitors' or, in the case of those institutions propped up by governments, 'the best nurtured'? When John transforms from aggressive risk-taker to crying child, broken and rescued by a parent in *Inflation* he is physically bringing into being this disjuncture and drawing our attention to the fundamentally embodied conceits behind the abstract principles of economics. By encouraging the audience towards a scrutiny of the banking crisis in terms which are innately accessible, *Inflation* sought, through its physical metaphors, to utilise and expose these underlying concepts, and the irrationality behind many of them.

One Million: Kinaesthetic effect in large-scale outdoor spectacle

As artists, we consciously use our understanding of the effect of kinaesthetic connectivity with an audience (mostly gained through practical application), to create a number of effects. This is often more important than, and designed prior to the textual elements that are included in the performance. In this analysis of Tangled Feet's *One Million* (2013/2014) I attempt to lay out how elements such as the set design and its movement, the movement of performers' bodies, the site, space and audience configurations were intentionally authored to create relationships between audience, objects and performers which created both kinaesthetic and symbolic effects. By bringing into discussion Lakoff and Johnson's theory of embodied metaphor, and dissecting how we used embodied metaphor in the work, I aim to show how meaning can operate on several levels simultaneously (kinaesthetically, symbolically, linguistically) and how this is part of our intentional artistic strategy. Our aspirations, as I explore, were for these effects to play out not just on individual audience members, but on the crowd as a social system. At its most ambitious, the ideological aspiration, as expressed through the show, was to create a new cultural memory for Woolwich which would feed into and inform a complex geographical identity.

Context

Jen Harvie has produced a convincing body of work analysing and critiquing the disparities between the 'brand vision' constructed for London, (particularly East London) for the 2012 Olympic Games, and the realities of persistent underrepresentation for many communities living in 'the most unequal city in the developed world' (Harvie p. 486). Focusing particularly on the enormous creative act of this attempt to construct an international 'brand' for our capital city, her analysis includes 'a consideration of the ways that London and (selected) Londoners were visually and spatially represented and invited to be seen – or not seen' (ibid p. 488).

It is in this immediate post-Olympic context that *One Million* ought to be viewed. As one of the five 'Olympic Boroughs', the previous summer had given Greenwich Council the opportunity to celebrate Woolwich as a town centre in the midst of a surge of regeneration, and an attendant strategic opportunity to diminish the recent memories of the London rioting which badly affected Woolwich in 2011. Outdoor art had been an important and visible part of the celebrations in 'London 2012', but (with perhaps the notable exception of Danny Boyle's bold celebration of the NHS on the world stage in the opening ceremony) the overall cultural 'offering' had left little room for reflection on those left behind by these changes;

> This 'vision' effectively buried East London's problems of comparative poverty, overcrowding and post-industrial under- and unemployment ... (The vision) privileged,

not the comparatively disadvantaged and sometimes recently immigrated people of East London, but rather an established, already-privileged ruling elite business class. The consequences of the Games' visual emphases, inclusions, exclusions and suppressions were twofold. First, they de-prioritized the social and material challenges of improving living conditions for the people of East London by effectively refusing to witness East London and the conditions that precisely needed (and continue to need) regeneration and redress. Second, they prioritized neoliberal market privilege and power in ways that tend to exacerbate – not eradicate – the kind of economic inequality the 2012 Games – nicknamed the 'Regeneration Games' – were precisely meant to transform. (Harvie ibid p. 488)

Telling the story of the one million young British people who were languishing in unemployment at the start of 2013 (part of a Europe-wide endemic), and creating this story large-scale and in a public place was an artistic attempt to refocus some attention back onto the economic and social inequalities that Harvie identifies. Doing so within the constraints posed by the conventions and limitations of outdoor work (funders' and commissioner's concerns and agendas; the expectations of 'finale-scale' work) meant negotiation and compromise, and I have attempted to reflect some of these tensions in this writing.

Harvie shares an ideological perspective with Richard Sennett, whose body of work, in her reading;

> make(s) the case that people are socially interdependent; that neoliberal structures of work damage people by, for example, exploiting, alienating and isolating workers; and that it is necessary to reclaim, repair and/or invent work structures that restore constructive, human social relations. (Harvie. 2013. p. 56)

This perspective chimes closely with the ideology we expressed in *One Million.* The performance, conceptually, is the story of a demographic – a large-scale story made for a large-scale canvas. Made by a sizeable ensemble (including crew and chorus, over 140 people) and for a sizeable crowd (between 1500-3000 people attended each performance), it was an explicit artistic decision to create a work in which sheer numbers of people interrelating in one system are placed firmly within the scenographic frame. The protagonists in One Million are not defined as individuals – they are a group. None of the characters have names, and the aesthetic is designed so that at points, the ten in the main ensemble are indivisible visually from the 80+ young people in the chorus. It is, at its heart, ideologically a work which critiques a neoliberal capitalist agenda (with its intrinsic celebration of individualism) and attempts to place focus onto our social interdependence; how we function socially as one system, and what our responsibilities are to each other as a group and a community.

One Million was performed on two separate occasions – in 2013, for two nights in Woolwich, South East London as part of Greenwich + Docklands International Festival, and in 2014 for two nights in Brighton as part of Brighton Festival. The physical sites which the piece was situated on were vastly different in these two locations, and we had to make considerable adaptations to the piece as a result. To explore and evidence the effect that spatial relationships have on audience behaviour and their reception of the work, near the end of this chapter I describe and analyse the effect of the Brighton site, and the challenges that the new proxemic relationships, dictated by the site, had on the piece and its audience.

The detailed performance analysis which follows is structured roughly against a linear timescale as experienced by me as a director, starting with the first conception of the performance and ending with its reception and impact.[62]

I begin this analysis by laying out the precise commissioning context for *One Million* – what we as directors had to work with when conceiving the show*,* drawing attention to our consideration of the rioting which occurred in Woolwich two years prior to us making the show, and describing how this informed some artistic decisions. Building on Jaana Parviainen's observations (founded on Husserl's work; explored in depth in the previous chapter) that places have their own kinaesthetic fields and normal patterns of kinaesthetic interactions, I show how we plan for the performance work to respond to, alter and disrupt these embedded patterns. We use the existing kinaesthetic and spatial relations in the performance site, taking account of and mapping the work onto social and political dynamics in the place, which, crucially, are contained and exhibited in the ways people move and inhabit space, currently and historically. How does the work we make build on existing dynamics operating in public spaces? Can we (as artists) both make use of and influence social and political dynamics by employing these techniques in works in outdoor public spaces?

I then lay out the making process, illustrating the order that certain fundamental decisions were reached. The major creative decisions about spatial and kinaesthetic strategy, and use of embodied metaphor as deployed through the space and set were developed first, with the set design and narrative structure of the piece evolving in tandem from this. Demonstrating the relative importance given to these theatrical tools, notably, the spoken-word element of *One Million* was developed subsequent to this, roughly at pace with the music score.

I analyse in some depth how the set and structure are designed to operate as a systematic metaphor for the neoliberal labour market in which our protagonists must attempt to ascend, in which success and failure are located on a vertical axis. I lay out a brief narrative outline of the

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[62]   I have already laid out a very detailed survey of the funding landscape in which this piece occurred, and some of the expectations of our funders, in Chapter 2.

show, and a concise summary of the action that happens in each of the main sections of the show (complete with time codes which reference the accompanying DVD).

I then develop a written exploration of the performance experience, attempting to locate the reader amongst the crowd of spectators, bringing attention to the spatial and kinaesthetic relationships that develop during the show. Where appropriate, I link these through to explanations about creative process, contextualising and foregrounding pertinent factors that influenced decision making.Moving from the performance at Woolwich in 2013 to its remounting at Brighton Festival the subsequent year, I tease out how a new performance site and context affected the spatial, kinaesthetic and physical relationships between the audience and the action, foregrounding how carefully calibrated these are and how easily disrupted or altered. Finally, I draw some appraisals of the performance's impact, drawing on critical and commissioner's judgements as well as my own reflection on the work.

Don't Mention The War: working with existing kinaesthetic, spatial and social relations:

One Million was commissioned in December 2012 by Greenwich + Docklands International Festival (GDIF) as their finale for the festival in July 2013. The piece was pitched originally as a large-scale, mass-participation spectacle about youth unemployment (the one million unemployed 18-25 year olds hitting headlines at the beginning of 2013) with live music and large kinetic structures moving through the crowd. The festival stipulated that the finale should happen in Woolwich town centre, and the eventual site (Artillery Square parade ground) was chosen via a process of elimination from several large sites, according to practical and event licensing concerns.

When GDIF first started to negotiate with Greenwich Council about an event license for the show in Woolwich, the Council expressed considerable nervousness. Woolwich had been badly affected in 2011 by the riots that spread across London and the council were concerned that the show might reignite the memory of this event.[63] They expressed their concern that Woolwich ought to be presented in a positive light (specifically mentioning the increased employment opportunities that a new, large branch of Tesco presented in the area).

The council's anxiety about the show appeared to be twofold: firstly, that Woolwich's somewhat fragile public image was at risk if associated with the theme of large-scale unemployment. Secondly, that our performance might somehow bring back to the surface the spectre of the recent riots. That they endowed performance with the potential to do the latter of these seems worthy of

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[63]   Woolwich was badly affected by the riots, though the unrest was generally acknowledged to have been under-represented in the media coverage. Most of the shops on the main high street were smashed in and looted. Three major fires were started, including in the Great Harry pub. Bystander footage of riot police retreating as they overwhelmed by angry male rioters was broadcast on several news stations. There was justified speculation that a large contingent of English Defence League supporters had seized the opportunity to confront police.

our attention.

Putting aside for a moment the trigger or cause for the rioting and viewing it in objective, movement terms, the normal, everyday kinaesthetic and social relations of Woolwich were disrupted by the riots, in which a large minority undertook physical repertoires quite different to the usual range of behaviours, movements and interactions experienced by the inhabitants of Woolwich (and elsewhere in London). This atypical behaviour was aggressive, violent, often intruding over property or social boundaries and frequently damaging to property. Highly territorial displays took place; in one piece of video footage which was widely broadcast, groups of men throwing implements face off against riot police in one of Woolwich's major streets, with each group advancing and retreating as the situation escalates and evolves.

The broaches that occurred were not just in terms of property and territory, but also normally-respected social codes. The breaking of these deeply entrenched social rules of behaviour doubtless triggered significant amounts of both fear and adrenalin in the local population. Social interactions became charged, with 'fight or flight' mechanisms activated in individuals and groups.

Arguably, the riots' disruption was long-lived rather than a temporary; social rules have lost their sanctity and therefore their reliability, local physical boundaries which were traversed no longer have the same sense of impermeability, social patterns were changed as buildings which were damaged (like the Great Harry pub) were put out of action. The elevated adrenalin and cortisol levels in the systems of those who closely encountered the rioting might for many have had mid-to-long term ramifications; conceivably triggering stress and anxiety in response to spatial, aural or physical movement stimuli for some time after. It would be very difficult to measure, but speculatively, the echoes of the riots which continued to resonate long after the night of disruption could be argued to have affected not only the individual physical and psychological systems of individuals, but also, by extension, social systems and kinaesthetic systems in the shared public spaces.

This was our background canvas to making *One Million* in Woolwich; the context in which the Council's nervousness can be understood. Making the work, we knew we had to demonstrate extreme sensitivity. The aftermath of the riots (and, arguably, the root cause of them) was at the centre of our thematic material, but risked becoming an 'elephant in the room' if, influenced by the Council's nervousness and their pressure to create a positive narrative, we did not adequately incorporate into the work something that was still such a tangible part of local peoples' experience of Woolwich public spaces ('don't mention the war'). At the same time, we had responsibilities not only to the commissioners but to our family audience, who needed to be 'delivered safely' at the end of the show. These concerns had huge bearing on the plotting and narrative arc of *One*

Million; during the process of developing the concept, set and narrative arc (described below) we were also required to share ongoing storyboards with the Council. The potential for radical critique, and, arguably, the very justifiable anger that we heard expressed by many young people had to be sited extremely carefully in the piece (I explore this in more detail in the performance analysis). The tensions between these agendas perhaps had a bearing on the success of the work, which I address in the conclusion.

One Million: practical information

The piece was developed initially developed by a small, core Tangled Feet team: conceptually by Nathan Curry and me, practically and technically by Luke Gledsdale and with participation led by Alex Ramsden. Later input (from March 2013) came from designer Rhys Jarman. We engaged the poet Anthony Anaxagorou to develop the spoken-word score, and long-term musical collaborators Nick Gill and Guy Connelly to co-compose the live score. Over the same short time frame, we undertook a week's initial Research and Development (R and D) in May 2013 with a cohort of seven actors and input from Anthony. Out of this evolved the narrative arc and firm design concepts.

Photo: testing movement possibilities on moving structures in R and D process

Participation workshops (see appendix) took place for two months prior to making the show, and dovetailed into the making process. With most of the music score necessarily complete before we entered the rehearsal room, the show was created and rehearsed in a three-week period in June

2013 (with Anthony's script undergoing significant development and revisions during this time), with a final tech week on site before two performances on 28 and 29th June.

The decision to work with a spoken-word poet for the first time warrants analysis. We knew that we were painting on a broad canvas; although we plotted for much close-up interaction during the show, we also knew that the nature of finale-size spectacle means that performers would be often viewed from a distance. The ramifications of this, in our experience, are that outdoors and at a distance, it becomes difficult to performers to communicate the inner world of the protagonists with the precise emotional nuance that is easier to achieve indoors. For our story, the evolution of the inner world of the protagonists (representative, as they are, of a broader demographic) needed to be a crucial part of the storytelling. An external narrator, using poetic form which allows a degree of remove and the ability to both inhabit the protagonist's emotional world and to comment on their situation seemed to offer us a solution.

Anthony Anaxagorou convinced us on first meeting that he was the right person for the job. He clearly had a strong autobiographical connection to the themes and his broad experience of working with underprivileged young people contributed to the correlation of his strongly-held (and voiced) political beliefs with ours. His approach to his work and process, and his willingness to work as an ensemble player and to write and edit in response to a developing devising process gave us the confidence that we could work together to create a spoken score which would complement the visual, spatial, physical and aural scores that were already well underway.

The set as the structure and system: success and failure = up and down.

Designed originally to be sited on a flat, empty parade ground in Woolwich, the set consisted of several elements. From the conception of the work, it was central to our aspirations that *One Million* should happen in amongst and above its audience. Denying the audience the opportunity to remain stationary, we wanted to create circumstances where the relationship of the audience to the structures and the space altered several times during the show. By using lightweight ladders moved and deployed by the performers in amongst the audience, and by creating large and overbearing scaffold-based staircase structures that moved on wheels, carving through the centre of the crowd, we were able to make our audience physically move, rearranging themselves in relation to the action. The structures, which loom above the audience and force them out of the way, are endowed with a power to which humans and their social configurations must (at least, until the show's final rearrangement of this dynamic) be subservient.

Some of the representative primary metaphors (listed and expanded on in Table 4.1, Lakoff and Johnson 1999 ibid p.52-54) which have a clear relevance to *One Million* and which underpin the vertical direction of travel our protagonists aspire to as they 'climb the career ladder' include:

- Important is Big
- Happy is Up
- More is Up
- Linear Scales are Paths
- Organisation is Physical Structure
- States are Locations
- Change is Motion
- Purposes are Destinations
- Control is Up
- Understanding is Grasping

(extracted from Table 4.1, Lakoff and Johnson 1999 ibid p.52-54)

The conceptual metaphor of journeys in an upwards direction is firmly embedded in language that we use to talk about careers – 'scaling the career ladder' 'reaching a glass ceiling' 'career path', achievement created by 'standing out above the crowd'. That aspiration is intimately connected with height is also a concept embedded in the architecture of our cities, with visible skyscrapers coming to represent business districts and the concentration of wealth and trade, with the penthouse office one of the prizes on offer for success in this schema.

Our cultural attitudes towards certain premises often remain uninterrogated, perhaps because they rest on a string of complex metaphors which we don't realise are operating. Lakoff and Johnson give a step-by-step mapping of the complex metaphor 'A Purposeful Life Is A Journey' (ibid p.63), which ends by exposing some of the assumptions that develop, and how these govern our emotional and attitudinal responses to others. 'A Purposeful Life Is A Journey' defines the meaning of an extremely important cultural document, The Curriculum Vitae (from the Latin, "the course of life") The CV indicates where we have been on the journey and whether we are on schedule. We are supposed to be impressed with people who have come very far very fast and less impressed with people who are 'behind schedule'. People who have not "found a direction in life" are seen as being in need of help - and we are supposed to envy those who have gone much further and faster than we have. The protagonists in our show go on a journey – onwards and upwards.

What does it mean that success, in this metaphorical schema, equates to working against gravity? All human movement involves a struggle against gravity; our upright posture is threatened each time we take a step (moving from a state of stability to lability) and our musculature, proprioception and balance systems have to stay actively working to keep us vertical. In our development from child to adult we gain the ability to control our movement and to establish our verticality, developing from lying prone through crawling to standing, walking, climbing and jumping. Just as this

acquisition of upward movement is associated with success and growth, downward movement (genuflecting, bowing, kneeling, crawling, falling) is associated with loss of dignity, subservience and a reduced level of control. In purely physical terms, continuing to move upwards requires an ongoing expense of effort. As our feet leave the floor (jumping, climbing, balancing), there is also an increasing level of peril: as you get higher, the cost of failure is greater. Structurally, in this schema there is an inevitability of failure at some point: humans can't fly.

The apparatus upon which upwards motion is achieved in *One Million* is pyramid-shaped. The set was designed to encourage and facilitate these aspirational, upward journeys, and to represent the hierarchical nature of the jobs market: many applicants for each place at entry (ground) level, fewer and fewer opportunities as the ultimate goal (a physical destination in this embodied metaphor) is approached. it is inevitable that a smaller number will reach the high levels than begin at the bottom. It is also inevitable that the upward trajectory is finite. In the narrative journey of *One Million*, therefore, we make explicitly visible and physical how this pyramid structure of success (an essentially capitalist premise), in its promotion of the few, also generates the failure of many others, like a Ponzi pyramid scheme. What happens when we shift our collective attention from those who succeed – so often celebrated in the limelight of neoliberalism - to those who are not served well by this system, who tried but failed?

The set designs were created after the week of R and D (in which we discovered the usefulness and dramatic possibilities of what was to become the three main elements, described below). Nathan Curry and I, along with our designer Rhys Jarman, evolved the design in parallel with the storyboard, which roughly sketched out before the main rehearsals started the main narrative arc of the piece, and how that would be supported by the moving set elements. The set was comprised of several elements, some stationary and some mobile. The largest set element was a 12 metre tower, constructed mainly of industrial scaffold. This tower was visible at the beginning of the show and housed the band, who began the show with an opening of mournful, long violin and guitar notes.

The tower consisting of three levels, topped with a metal tangle of exploded, twisted ladders. It was designed so that there were several routes up the tower available to the performers. The first platform on this tower structure, at 3m, housed the band (pragmatically, so that they could be seen throughout the performance and were housed somewhere we could keep their equipment dry). Above the band, the next platform was smaller and accommodated only a few performers, with long truss arms extending outwards to provide opportunities for counterbalancing performers off the sides of the tower. The very top level was only 2m square, and was taken up with the 'exploding ladders' – actually a precisely designed and engineered asymmetrical tubular structure which was weight-bearing despite looking extremely precarious.

(Picture: Rhys Jarman's original model of the scaffold tower)

Complementing the tower (but not visible at the beginning of the show) were two additional 'staircase' scaffold structures, each 8m long and 6m high at the taller end. Inspired by 'rolling stairs' which meet aeroplanes for embarking and disembarking, these staircases on heavy-duty wheels each took eight people to move, and could accommodate five performers moving all over the structure while it was in motion, and many more when they were stationary.
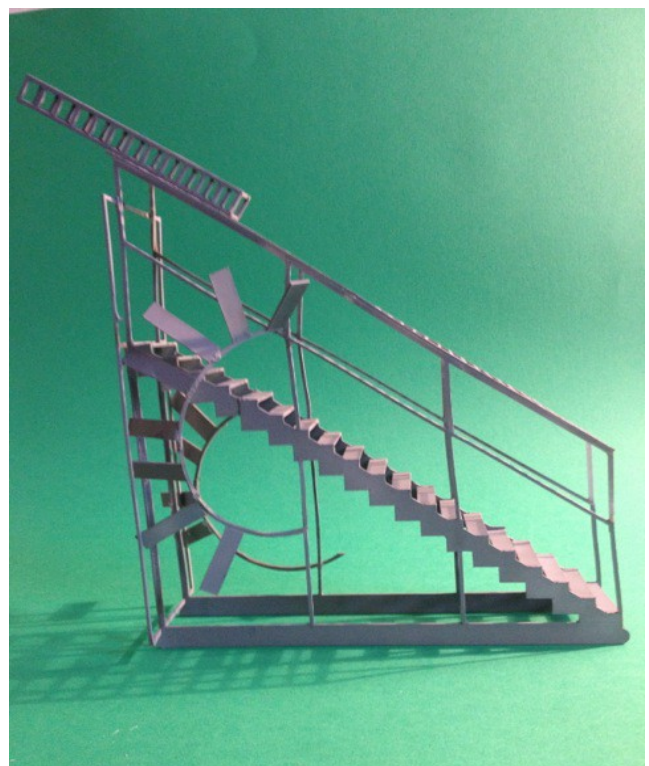
The staircases housed aerial rigging which allowed a performer to dangle inside the 'chamber' at the top of one staircase and from the 'horn' (a piece of truss extending from the end) of the other, either clipped in (so dangling from a fixed-length rope) or counterweighted by other performers (and thus rising and falling on a vertical axis). These giant staircases first entered the audience standing area, cutting through the crowd, about one third of the way into the show.

The final set elements were a collection of aluminium ladders – five-metre access ladders and everyday step ladders in different sizes, which were manipulated by the performers; and sometimes they stood on them individually, and at other times they were brought together and interlocked to create quickly-assembled configurations of multiple ladders. Some of these were pre-set in a 'pyre' formation, from which Anthony the poet began his prologue.

The narrative arc

In a succinct form, the story arc of *One Million* sees a cohort of young people (our main cast of ten, later augmented by a chorus of 85 volunteer performers) attempting to gain height as they 'scale the career ladder' in pursuit of the elusive opportunity. The search, which begins playfully, loses the early sense of collaboration and mutual assistance as our protagonists become single-mindedly focused on their goal. The journey gains height, moving from ladders to the moving staircases and finally onto and up the main tower, becoming in the process more frantic, more risky and competitive. In a tense and urgent middle section, the characters physically obstruct and fight each other in their attempt to scale the main tower. Only four of the 10 are successful in reaching the second tier platform, represented in our story as an interview; and we see one of these (Eric Mitchell) called in to perform in the interview room – the top tangle of ladders. As Anthony Anaxagorou narrates stanzas about a candidate's nervous presence, and their knowledge that they have failed, we see Eric first perform a set of increasingly precarious acrobatic balances on the twisted ladders, and finally fail – and fall.

At this point our narrative takes a bleak twist, and our characters, now listless failures, descend the structures as if slowly falling. Crushed by rejection they slink and slide down the scaffold and descend down fabric silks on each side of the tower into industrial rubbish bins which have been wheeled through the crowd to collect them. Disappointment at failure leads to disconnection and anger, but this anger builds into an energy for rearrangement and change, and the final section of the show sees our protagonists taking control of the structures that have thus far controlled them; rearranging the landscape from a hierarchical to a circular configuration, ending the piece with an optimistic and uplifting sequence which proposes the potentials of collaborative social effort.

One Million: sections

In order to further orient the reader, the following is a brief summary of *One Million*, broken down into sections as used by the team in rehearsal.

Prologue: Wasteland (00.00)

The space is empty apart from the main scaffold tower on which the band are sited, and a collection of ladders assembled into bonfire formation. Anthony speaks a prologue from the top of this pyre, and from the edges of the space our main cast appear and raise themselves above the crowd on top of individual step ladders.

Ladder Playground (1.58)

With an explosion of energy, the main cast engage in a playful, boisterous game of acrobatic displays and creative ladder play, working in small groups and then one large configuration.

Constellations (05.25)

The main cast are joined by thirty volunteer performers, and break off into three 'constellations' –

groups searching for a job opening or opportunity.

The summit is revealed (08.21)

As Anthony narrates, the full height of the scaffold tower is illuminated for the first time, daunting our protagonists.

Arrival of the stairs (09.25)

Stepping up their game, the protagonists enter riding two enormous wheeled staircases which push through the crowd and 'dock' against each other in the centre of the square.

C.V.s (12.10)

More volunteer performers join to create a giant rotation of young people mounting the stairs hopefully and delivering Cvs by hand into a void, which culminates in a plume of paper blown into the sky by huge fans.

The Orb of Ambition (15.05)

The Orb arrives in the sky, occupied by a solitary, elated, basking performer, focussing everyone's attention. The orb hovers over the audience and then moves into the sky above the scaffold, where it bursts into pyrotechnic sparks.

Everything Escalates (17.50)

Buoyed with a new energy and focus generated by the Orb, the protagonists turn their attention (and the giant staircases) towards the tower. The staircases move through the crowd and dock at the foot of the tower.

Assault on the Tower (20.39)

The protagonists try to scale the tower using different precarious routes. They become ruthless and urgent, sabotaging each others' ascent, and many of them fail.

Interview (24.50)

Only four protagonists have made it to the top of the tower, which becomes an interview waiting room. Eric is called in to interview and attempts to impress the panel with a series of acrobatic feats. Ultimately, he fails to impress.

Failing and Plummeting (26.50)

Gutted by the rejection and failure, the protagonists listlessly descend. Giant bins are wheeled through the crowd and hopeless bodies slide into them.

Apathy (30.14)

From their apathetic slump, our protagonists arise as back-to-front, zombified beings. They are a distorted and sinister representation of hopelessly forgotten youth. They begin an eery, disjointed movement on the staircases.

Storm (32.55)

As a grime beat kicks in, the protagonists seem to be awakened, ripping the hoods from their face and casting them aside. They begin a wild, euphoric, electrified dance. This progresses to a rumbling which seems to come from the floor and inside the bins, shaking the staircases. The protagonists harness this unrest, throwing their weight collectively to create a momentum which

swings the staircases free from their moorings and hurtling off through the crowds. The staircases and bins all reassemble until they come to rest in a giant circular formation around the edge of the crowd, creating the feel of an arena.

Unity (37.15)

A heart-beat sees all cast and chorus pumping arms aloft, adorned with glowsticks. Anthony performs an epilogue about a 'new world order'. A unified choreography develops performed by the entire cast, atop ladders, bins and structures at the edge of this arena. As the music climaxes, a pyrotechnic display bursts over the crowd.

Our relationship with the protagonists as it develops over the show

The audience relationship with the protagonists is carefully plotted, both physically and emotionally. It was important that our audience invested in the fate of our characters and the effort that they were expending, and stayed on side with them as their failure led to disillusionment and anger in the final third of the piece. In the following descriptive sections, I aim to describe for the reader the action as it unfolds around the spectator in the crowd, bringing into the discussion how our proximity and relation to the protagonists and set elements is carefully plotted for intended effect.

We meet the young people as they move amongst us, on the ground, holding small ladders which they use to pop their heads up above the crowd. They are playful, vibrant, carefree, optimistic and collaborative; the first sequence they perform, coming together in small and then larger groups in jostling shows of ladder skill, was entitled 'Ladder Playground' (01.58).

They cheer each other on, bringing their ladders together to create increasingly daring and silly acrobatic tricks and visual gags which they all enjoy.

In the next section 'Constellations' (05.25), they define a nebulous goal and begin to move towards it. At this point our main cast are joined by a section of volunteer performers, splitting off into three small teams who each commandeer an access ladder. In a cyclical sequence that moves through and around the crowd repeating itself, one person thinks they see something; (pointing) "it's over there". The team then moves the access ladder and a collection of stepladders in the direction indicated, talking excitedly. They set the ladder down and the originator runs to the top, egged on by their peers; "Can you see it, is it there?" But as they reach the top of the access ladder the thing they were seeking has disappeared. They descend the ladder, disappointed and are briefly consoled, before someone else thinks they see another target, and the sequence repeats again.

The cyclical sequence fulfils a number of purposes. It is designed to be easy and quick to teach a group of non-professional performers, giving each an elevated and featured role. It can be improvised, so the exact dialogue and the order of the people leading the group in a direction is never set. The pathway of the sequence can be altered around the crowd as necessary, with minimal stewarding. Repeating the sequence with three teams working though different physical locations and pathways through the crowd gives a large proportion of the dense audience a close-up experience of this piece of storytelling, where the emotional experience of the protagonist whose goal keeps disappearing is contained in the minutiae of facial and physical reactions which are best experienced in proximity. The section ends with the constellations' focus finally coming to rest on the scaffold tower, which is for the first time illuminated upwards to reveal its full height (08.21). We have aimed, in these initial close-up sections, to calibrate the audience emotionally with the infectious excitement and hopefulness of our young protagonists. Now, in the first moment of narrative realisation, the audience's eyes are drawn slowly upwards with our protagonists as the realisation hits: the scale of the task at hand is daunting, far larger than our protagonists first appreciated. The small ladders with which they came equipped are clearly inadequate. There is still such a long way to go.

At this point, accompanied by an urgent music shift which signals to the crowd a development is occurring, the giant staircases make their first appearance. They arrive from behind the audience who are all at this point focused on the tower, and who now must turn to see these giant shapes surging forwards. Small ladders won't do here; our innovative young characters have a new and formidable solution to the problem of ascent . Our protagonists ride the structures in two teams, and the physical movements conducted on them by the group is designed to look as if the young protagonists are powering their movement with a fresh wind of determination. One staircase has aerialist Gemma Creasey suspended horizontally in its front chamber, walking on a vertically-rigged treadmill, looking steadfastly at the sky as she puts the miles in. The other has Tunji Falana counterweighted in a harness dangling from the protruding horn at the front, tapping determinedly at his laptop as he rises and falls above the audience.

The staircases forge a pathway through the crowd (particularly visible at 10.25), and come to rest in the middle of the space, end to end in a pyramid formation.

At this point, a large section of our chorus amasses at the foot of the staircases, forming seemingly endless lines of young people ready to ascend ('C.V.s' (12.10)). This is the first time we have seen the chorus as a mass, and the intended effect was to bring into focus, in this moment, the dauntingly large demographic who are all competing for jobs in the same system. The arrangement of bodies here referenced the iconic 1980s Tory poster featuring the endless dole queue ('LABOUR ISN'T WORKING') which had been pinned to our rehearsal room wall. In our research (reading articles and speaking to young people about their experiences) something that came up time and again was the demoralising experience of applying over and over to jobs, often without any feedback or recognition of the effort of the application, or sometimes, even of its

receipt.[64] Importantly, in its illustration of the frustration and futility of being lost amongst a sea of faces, this section also works to foreshadow and give emotional grounding to the narrative shift which occurs in the next section.

One behind the other, the young people (our main cast plus 50 of the volunteer cast) mount the stairs, CV in hand, working themselves up to the delivery of this important document. At the top of the staircase they hold their CV out and 'post' it over the void, their expectations deflated as they let go and watch their CV drift downwards before descending the staircase again and joining the back of the queue. The music is trudging, repetitive, relentless – this is a loop that seems to play over and over, with the only change being the density of the flow of bodies attempting to 'apply'. As a representation of a system, we can see the futility: the young people power up the stairs, motivated by hope, their energy apparent. But at the top of the stairs there is no-one and nothing to receive their aspiration: their CV falls, listlessly, into a pile with many others.

This section builds, with the protagonists swarming up the stairs closer and closer together, the hopefulness of each individual becoming slowly consumed by an image of overall futility as they are lost in a crowd, and a flood of carefully-crafted applications meet the void. At its climax, a giant fan at the bottom of the void turns on and blows a torrent of swirling paper up into the air (14.30) - the system cannot cope with this volume of applications; it is broken, chaotic, hopeless.

Representing 'success': the Orb of Ambition

We spent a long time in the development and design of *One Million* struggling with the conundrum of how, physically and visually, to represent 'success'; the goal or destination towards which our protagonists are orientated. We seemed to need 'success' to exist in our schema as a physical destination, but how to represent such an abstract concept in any kind of physical form? It seemed to need to be something ethereal and untouchable, separate and removed from the machine of apparatus upon which our protagonists found themselves. Politically, we also wanted to comment on the nature of success as we so often see it celebrated in the distorting but pernicious and influential pop-culture narratives that inform young people's lives. One individual, 'one in a million', is plucked from obscurity, their unique and special qualities finally recognised, and they are rapidly elevated above the crowd, basking in the glow of instant fame. There are no steps featured, no pathway outlined, in this narrative, between the here-and-now obscurity which makes this fantasy so attractive, and the destination of the fantasy: the transition is instant and magical – far removed from the reality of most peoples' careers.

Bound by the limitations of both cost and physics, eventually our solution was The Orb; designed

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[64]Perhaps illustrating the permeability of the rehearsal process to the creative input of our volunteer young chorus, the seeds of this section were developed in one of the exploratory workshops with a section of the chorus. The image of the system/pattern that was set up and created by these participants was so arresting we worked it into the structure of the show as a significant section.

to appear like an illuminated planet inhabited by one solitary, basking performer, and, crucially, apparently completely inaccessible from the ground. In its manifestation it was a spherical form made of tubed metal which span on an axis and designed to hold pyrotechnics, mounted on the basket of a cherry picker. With an extremely careful and precise rehearsed choreography of engineering, the cherry picker[65] raised the Orb from behind the pyramid structure, floated it above the heads of the crowd to dangle temptingly above our protagonists, before returning to an apex point high in the sky above the pyramid's top. Here, operated manually by performer Susan Hingley in the cherry-picker basket, the Orb's spin accelerated before bursting into a shower of pyrotechnic sparks like a giant Catherine Wheel and marking a physical point in the sky in the minds of our audience and protagonists where 'success' resides. It was a very carefully calibrated moment of 'pay-off', and the pyrotechnic explosion unanimously drew a round of impressed applause from the crowd. This highly theatrical moment is designed to inspire awe, but perhaps we have been conditioned to appreciate 'success' celebrated thus: spectacle, height, pinnacle, the confident, assured flourish with which Susan performs her moment all draw heavily from the conventions of pop spectacle.

The appearance of the Orb marks a turning point in our narrative, with all protagonists now focusing their energies much more directly on reaching that physical destination. Inspired by the lone figure of 'success', they become more individual, autonomous, acting independently of each other. The sense of a group, so present in the opening images, is intentionally dissolved here: motivated by the goal of being the solitary individual at the top of the pyramid, our protagonists become self-interested and competitive.

The giant staircases swivel to angle towards the tower like two giant warships preparing to make

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[65] Perhaps more specifically, skilled crew member and cherry-picker operator Anya Fox

an assault. As they 'dock' next to the tower, completing the physical pyramid shape, an increasing sense of urgency builds, and performers appear to swarm up the tower, fighting each other to get to the top. On each side of the tower, performers Cristina Catalina and Jessica Andrade (counterweighted by Mario Christofides and Simon Jones) attempt to ascend via the dangling ladders, hanging from the horizontal truss, which fall in space as they climb them (21.05 – 22.46).

As the performers climb, the ladders descend in space, meaning the effort they are expending is not translated into gaining height. When they get to the 'top' of the ladder, in an Escher-like conundrum, their balance alters and they flip upside down and find themselves climbing headfirst down the opposite side: this game, we infer, is rigged. After a desperate attempt to leap from the falling ladders and catch the truss with their fingertips, they fail and plummet (22.46). This cues a horde of chorus performers to ascend each of the giant staircases now docked at each side of the structure, but as each person reaches the top they are pulled off by those behind them and pushed

to the end of the queue. The sense of competition grows yet fiercer.

As this is happening, up the centre of the tower two duets featuring unharnessed and free-climbing performers (Eric Mitchell and Tunji Falana, Gemma Creasey and Conor Neall) carry out a very carefully crafted upward stunt sequence with the performers battling upwards (featured from 23.05).

This uses the hitherto unfeatured Chinese pole[66] up the front of the tower as well as two sets of ladders. The performers pull each other from the apparatus, fighting and sabotaging each other's efforts engaging in a series of precarious hangs and falls which culminates in Eric and Conor reaching the top level, both men hanging by their fingertips (24.30). Suddenly, Conor appears to lose his grip and fall in a plummeting six-metre stunt drop – a moment which always created an audible intake of breath from the audience (his safety stop at the bottom of the pole being out of eyeline for all but the very front row of audience). The music has brought us to a stunning crescendo, which completes on Conor's fall. This climactic moment always drew a spontaneous eruption of applause from the crowd.

Why are we applauding? The considerable skill of the immediately-preceding section? The heart-stopping adrenalin burst it has just created in us as we witness Conor's 'fall'? Is our applause a

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[66] This was designed to be an un-noticable feature of the scaffold architecture, rather than obvious as a piece of circus equipment. This aesthetic choice is illustrative of Tangled Feet's broader artistic strategy of attempting to integrate circus disciplines seamlessly into the structure of the show, rather than featuring them as set-pieces.

release of tension, which mirrors Eric's release as he climbs over the final hurdle to the top level? It is probably all these things – but there is also, possibly, a vicarious gladiatorial thrill that we are complicit in: do we enjoy watching a savage competition: two fight, one wins, one, spectacularly, loses?

At this point of high tension, the music drops out to just a heart-beat drum throb, and a stillness falls, bringing our attention to Eric as he scrambles on to the top platform to join Mario, Cristina and Simon, the only other three who have succeeded in the ascent to the summit (24.50).

The Interview Room

Anthony's narration at this point resumes, and establishes the narrative transition to an interview situation, with the four protagonists who have reached this platform cast as competing candidates in a waiting room. Still visibly sweating and panting from the effort of the ascent, they become hyper-aware of the scrutiny they are suddenly under. They cast us in the role of judges; themselves as competitors at the final stage in the event. Utilising the audience's focus on them, and playing on it, they smooth their hair and clothes, straighten their ties, facing the audience with wide unconvincing smiles as they wipe sweaty palms on their trousers (24.50).

Eric is cast as the candidate called in to perform in front of the panel. He makes his way to the very top platform, 12 metres off the ground, and begins an acrobatic response to an invisible interviewer's challenge to impress. The whole section is choreographed tightly against Anthony's poem, with the three remaining characters in the waiting room also conducting a synchronised physical choreography in chorus, in which they alternate between the physicality of stern and judgemental interviewee and desperate-to-impress candidate overcome with nerves. Language and physicality play against each other here in a complementary and multi-layered form of storytelling. Anthony's text here was actually developed in response to a session in R and D rehearsal, where he watched actors physically improvising the experience of a candidate under immense pressure before an interview. He was aware that the section he was writing would be staged as this pivotal moment in the show, as one candidate reaches the top of our scaffold, and the language he employed riffs on the intense physical sensations of nervousness, pressure and fear:

> In the interview room
> nobody ever speaks,
> mouths become old wood
> until a name gets called
> then suddenly, with an explosion of yes
> all fear is buried in the stomach of the past
> hands shake as confidently as an earthquake

eyes dart and roll heavy like

heated casino dice,

holding onto their fingers

as if promising their sensuality that it'll work out,

like a dying relationship

balancing delicately

on its last leg of air

Eric's performance (for us the audience, and for the imagined interview panel) on this top section is fraught with very real physical risk which crucially underscores the emotional risk we read the character to be undertaking. I have already, in the previous chapter, analysed in some depth how the body-at-risk functions in performance. Broadly, our bodies respond with an unconditional kinaesthetic response to their instability, and this, coupled with a perhaps more conscious appreciation of the precariousness of Eric's situation and the risk involved, has the potential to bring us into an acute understanding of the stakes at hand for that character.
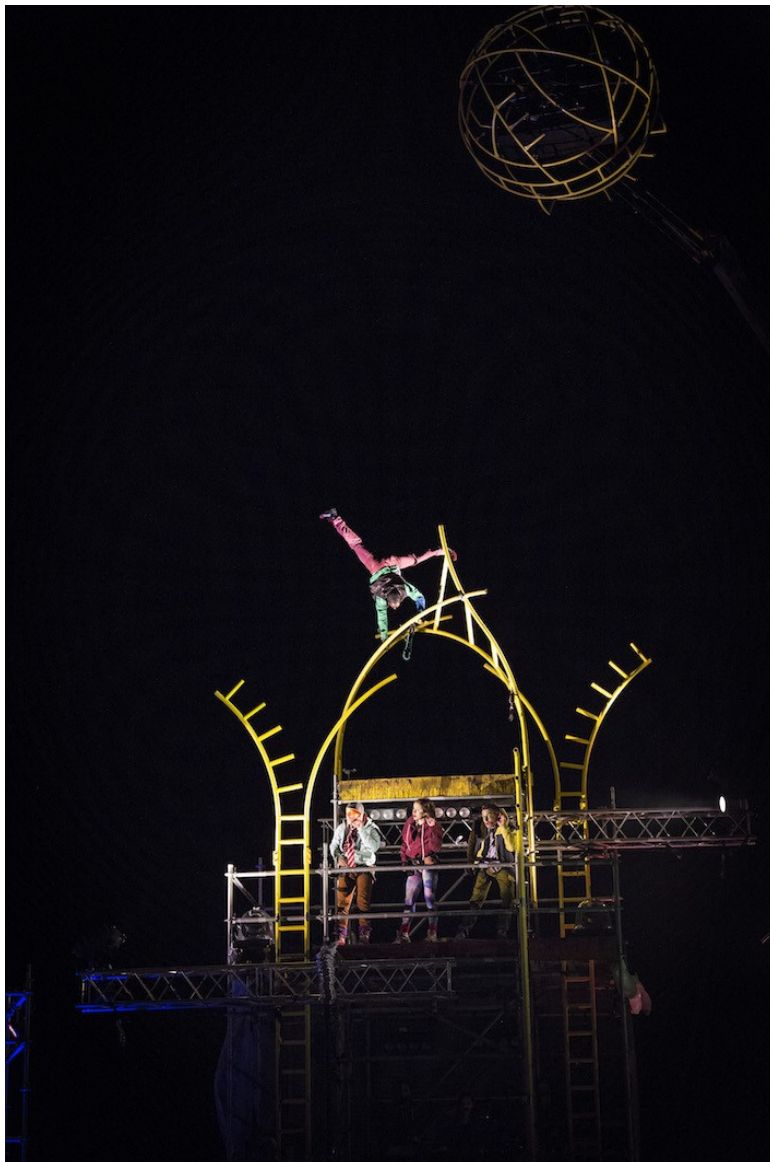
As Parviainen outlines in relation to the 'resistant choreographies' she studied ('Choreographic Resistance', 2010), bodies who intentionally expose themselves to prominent public vulnerability gain huge symbolic power. We knew when structuring the show the potential power of a solitary, vulnerable, balanced body at the top of the 12 metre tower, but the creation of this section in the show was entirely contingent on Eric's very specialised skill-set (he is a trained stuntman as well as acrobat, gymnast, free-runner, actor and dancer). In the process of devising the material, Eric led the decision-making about risk appraisal and assumed responsibility for his own safety. As a director, devising this scene required a delicate negotiation: I was always conscious of not asking Eric to attempt anything which might compromise his safety, and was led by his detailed sense of his own limitations, which were often far beyond my own imagination of what was possible. The roof height in our rehearsal space meant that we couldn't rehearse with the top section of the scaffold tower in place - we created the movement sequence with the top section on the floor (so Eric was only three metres off the ground) but this meant that the first time Eric tried the sequence at full height was outside, with wind and rain causing extra potential hazards.

During the performance, I personally found the scene almost impossible to watch at full height and I often found the moment so tense that I watched it with every muscle clenched, forcing myself not to avert my eyes. Ultimately, as was entirely clear to the audience, Eric's unharnessed acrobatic choreography at this height had a potentially deadly outcome as the consequence of failure. Watching amongst the crowd, it often felt as if the entire audience were holding its breath, people audibly gasping at some of Eric's manoeuvres – a reaction we calculated in to the storyboarding of the piece as the pinnacle of the storytelling; the moment where a character's success or failure hangs literally in the balance.[67]

The pinnacle of his choreography sees him extend himself upwards in an asymmetrical handstand, silhouetted against the sky (26.40). It is a moment of physical achievement and virtuosity which we could calculate would probably be completely outside the capacity of the entire audience, and which is calculated, in the performance situation, to capture their absolute attention, literally taking their breath away. They are heavily invested, physically, kinaesthetically and emotionally, in his success.

It is crushing, then, when in our narrative, it fails to impress the imagined hirer.

Anthony: A 'thank you for coming' and 'we'll be in contact soon
              Is dropped like a lover's swoon.

On the word 'dropped', Eric's 'interview' choreography ends in failure, with a stunt fall – he slips

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[67]   Greenwich + Docklands Festival, after watching the dress rehearsal, rushed to produce a legal disclaimer for Eric to sign which absolved them of any liability in the case of him injuring himself.

through the bars of the twisted ladder he is standing on, catching himself on his armpits. His failure at this point catalyses an endemic reaction in all the protagonists (26.50). The three candidates in the interview room receive and read a rejection letter, which visible deflates them. In the next section, 'Falling and Plummeting', apparently slack, listless bodies slide and melt down the scaffold tower (in reality, descending slowly and with control is a physical feat which takes considerable effort). Mario and Simon counterweight head-first down the ladders, raising Gemma and Jessica into the air, cocooned in long swathes of 'silks' fabric which begins to drop and unravel as they perform a choreography depicting bed-bound listless inertia, trying to hide shame between the sheets. (28.10) Choral performers wheel giant metal bins through the crowd, and the performers who populated the staircases descend and are collected in the giant bins, disposable and redundant human rubbish waste in a production line of clearing the debris.

Making *One Million*, we wanted to throw light on the consequences of the failure to succeed – the accumulative cost of the waste of potential and energy (in our metaphor, expended physically) that this broken engine generates. In our research into the long-term effects of unemployment, we discovered robust evidence that a period of early-career unemployment frequently creates a 'scar' which reaches long into the working life, significantly reducing future life chances, reducing pay levels and increasing the risk of mental illness.[68] Dramaturgically, we attempted to repeatedly cast the problem of mass youth unemployment as a problem of structural inadequacy (too few meaningful opportunities, represented through pyramid-shaped structures, in patterns of movement which result in their hopeful applications being cast into a void, and a warped, unsafe-looking equipment of ascent) which results in a lamentable waste of human potential. Politically, this is a strong and conscious rejection of the cultural counter-narrative, perpetuated by the worst excesses of neoliberal ideology, of failure to progress being a consequence of inadequate effort on the part of the young. Accordingly, our narrative is structured so that we witness the super-human effort to impress in the urgency of the climb, and in Eric's awe-inspiring feats. With an aspiration that the piece feel as if it were powered by the optimism and energy of the young generation, we created a set-up whereby our protagonists display urgent and continued physical energy which is thwarted, again and again, by obstacles of a physical, structural nature.

We made a choice never to portray any senior or authority figures, avoiding the representation of a more powerful, repressive human force, choosing instead to search for a more subtle theatrical language. In Anthony's text, the interviewers who put Eric through his paces are similarly absent and disembodied. In part, this choice enables a reading of the absence of the controlling force as structural disinterest and remove, and allows the audience to focus their energy on the emotional journeys of our very present and embodied protagonists. It is also a choice which negates us having to artistically explore the motivations of the designers, perpetrators and advocates of this

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[68]   Summarised in http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/multiple-scarring-effects-of-youth-unemployment/ (accessed 12/11/15

system – a huge task which would have been outside the scope of a 35 minute outdoor spectacle.

The costs of this system's wastage – the emotional repercussions of failure and rejection on the young are heavily foregrounded in the Falling and Plummeting sequence, which sees our many young protagonists apparently abandoning hope as they fall out of the system. Their ensuing dejection is brought close-up to the audience as they are wheeled through the crowd inside and atop of giant bins.

That our characters attempts at success in this system are doomed is clear from the start, as the pyramid cannot hold them all. Projecting forward, the trajectory of our characters' story arcs is clear. Bounded by unassailable physical constants (what goes up must come down; humans cannot fly; the structure they are climbing culminates in a small twist of ladders) we know that their upward progress will be curtailed, and that therefore, failure in this equation is inevitable. The audience can see that the game is rigged; that these young people's earnest striving is not going to equate to elevation within this faulty system. The aspirations our protagonists are working towards are revealed to be flawed; the journey has no attainable destination.

Anthony: The dream
                ends in the sky
                In a nest of twisted ladders

Accommodating anger on a public stage: moving from fury to unison

Anger borne of hopelessness was referenced again and again in our research and workshops as an almost inevitable response to failure and exile from opportunity. Accordingly, we thought carefully about how we situated this set of emotions and images in the work. It felt like the piece had to utilise and comment on the 'mindless mob' stereotype so frequently attached to young unemployed people in mainstream media (which I have discussed in some detail in Chapter 3, in the section entitled 'Mindless, oppression and resistance'). Despite the nervousness on the part of council and commissioners about invoking negative images of angry and dispossessed youth in *One Million*, we felt it was impossible to address the subject properly if this pervasive imagery was completely sidelined or erased. Given the touch-paper sensitivity surrounding this depiction, it was clear that the imagery surrounding disengaged youth had the potential for profound political affect. How could we accommodate this imagery? And how could we, narratively, both include and move past the ghosts of Woolwich's rioting past to deliver the audience into an optimistic, future-facing place? At times it felt like an impossible creative conundrum.

In a very typical illustration of how such complex problems can sometimes be solved in the rehearsal room through play, the solution was in part provided to us by the actor Mike Humphreys.

Unprompted and during a spare moment in R and D rehearsals, Mike turned his hoodie back to front, put a pair of goggles on the back of his head and began to walk up and down one of the giant staircases in strange, shambling gait. The result was freakish and unnerving, and at the same time darkly comical. The hood opening and goggles created a mask-like face devoid of expression, and Mike's attempts to make it look like he was facing forward instead of backwards, contorting his limbs, gave him a twisted, wholly inorganic gait.

(picture: the moment of discovery: Mike Humphreys in R and D rehearsals)

Mike's image stopped us all in our tracks – it was one of those performative moments where everybody in the room displays the same reaction; in this case, surprised, repelled and amused in equal measure. Crucially, as an illusion, it took a while for us as audience to process what was 'wrong' with the person we were confronted with, and there was a profound kinaesthetic response in those moments of uncertainty, when we are trying to map and understand a body that appears broken, distorted and whose movement is closely related to our own, and yet so very clearly 'wrong'. Unpicking the image further, there is also perhaps inherent in the within it a useful disconnection or distancing effect between the actor and the faceless character he has presented

by turning his back to us.

We built from the image Mike created. At the end of the section of descent after Eric's failure ('Falling and Plummeting'), the main cast of ten are huddled in two amorphous clumps on each of the staircases, at which point they switch their hoodies back to front and affix their goggles out of audience view (30.40). Then, as the music changes (31.50) the 'Back-to-front Hoodies' arise from their clumps, taking up a series of distorted poses (we developed this physical language collectively, with actors feeding back to each other on strategies which successfully confused the eye, including the use of techniques like isolation, lifted from body-popping dance styles.)

However this faceless, unreadable and disconnected state is transitory; as the music segues into an aggressive grime beat (32.50), the protagonists seem have an electric moment of awakening. They turn and rip the hoods from their faces, then tear the hoodies off and throw them. A movement quality of convulsive, violent impulses transforms over the space of a few bars into dancing with wild abandon. Fury seems to overlap with hedonism, and then an enjoyment of this state of release. They have built up, from their state of despair and anger, an enormous head of energy, and for a few moments it is unclear in which direction this energy will be unleashed, or what its ramifications might be.

As they dance, a rumbling arises (33.48) and the steps begin to shake and tremble, as if breaking loose from their moorings. The music lands on a thunderous drumroll. The protagonists become aware of this, and become to accelerate the shaking. Making eye contact with each other, they make a collective decision, and together throw their weight to one side of the bannisters, and then the other. The stage crew, in synchronicity, with this movement, begin to move the staircases so that the front of the stairs swings from side to side. With each new effort the giant staircases seem to be breaking free, and then suddenly they spin off into a kind of orbit, rumbling towards the crowd. Jubilant and elated, the protagonists take positions on these vessels as if sailing ships though a storm. The staircases carve trajectories through the audience with pathways that cross, so that the whole audience, who for fifteen minutes have been facing the direction of the scaffold tower, are forced to move out of their paths, reorganise themselves. In the space of about a minute, the configuration of the audience is completely altered from end-on to an arena, with the staircases, ladders, metal bins and access towers forming a large circle with the audience at the centre. The performers (including the chorus of 85) are suddenly all visible above the crowd in a huge ring, and they have all lit glowsticks which they hold above their heads in rhythm with the drum beat, which echoes a heart's beating.
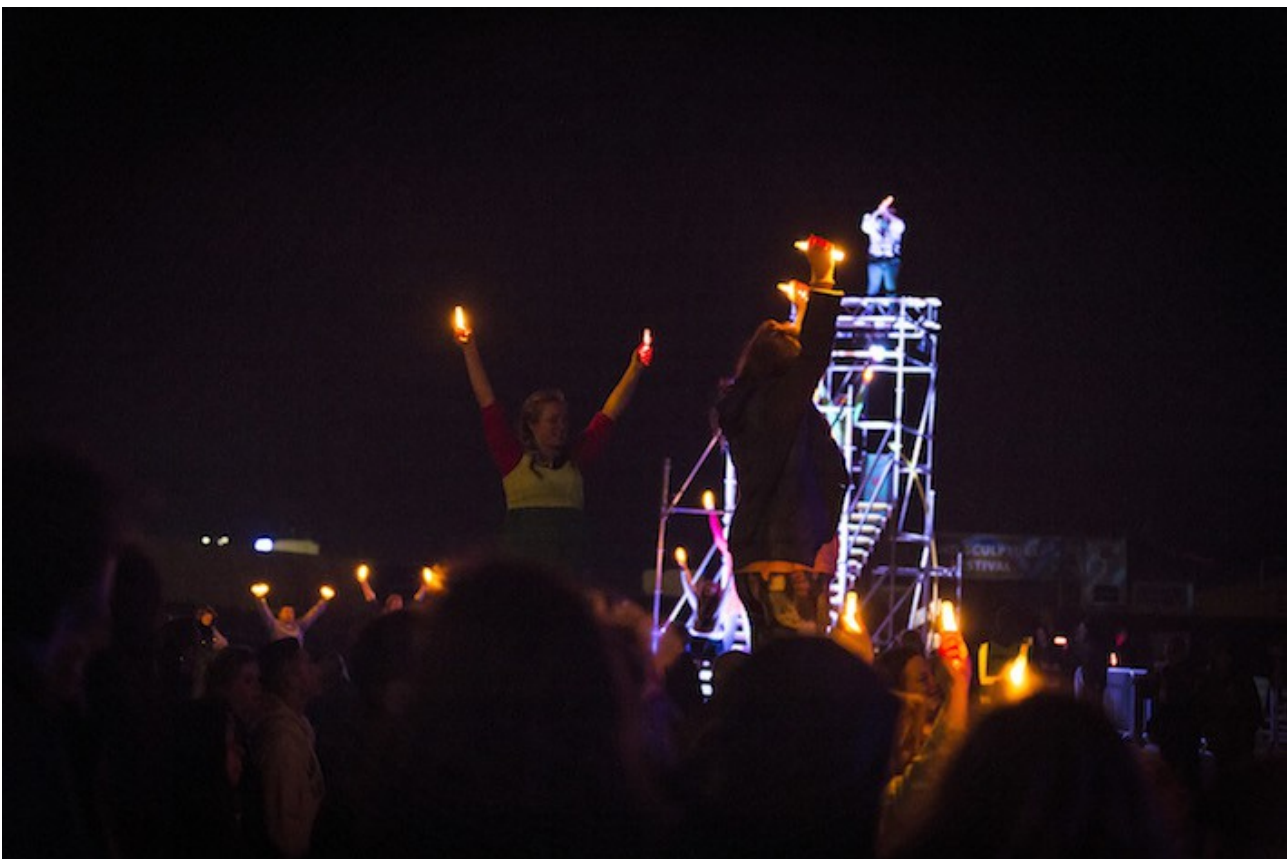
The final moments of *One Million* feature mass unison – a choreographic choice which was reserved for the end (and which we'd used successfully previously in *All That Is Solid*), illustrative of a new and freshly-augured commitment to collectivity. As Anthony's narration concludes, the 95

performers break out into a unified 8-bar choreography. Mainly using the upper limbs (performed by many standing on the top of ladders) the choreography is augmented by the glowsticks which accentuate the pathways of the hands and carefully-rehearsed timing.[69]

As the choreography repeats for the third time, the music converts to a building middle-eight, and a chain reaction of pyrotechnic flares operated by our lead cast lights up the exterior of the circle. As the circle completes itself, this seems to trigger an overhead pyrotechnic display. A new collectivity is ignited; spirits are uplifted. Faces turn to the sky, voices are raised in celebration. Young people dance amongst the crowd.

One Million is about staging the group, and how social systems respond to political and structural systems. The deliberate movement patterning that is plotted through the performance makes an explicit political point about the problems of individualism promoted by an aggressive neoliberal capitalism, and the potentials of collective action to redress this. It sees our protagonists begin as a motley, carefree, connected and playful but disorganised collective. In the process of trying to negotiate a faulty system, they become focused on individual goals of self-realisation, which sees them channelling their energy into competition. This competition is framed as ruthless and destructive, not constructive. After much explicit physical striving, hopes are dashed. The resultant failure and rejection sees bodies become listless, disconnected, and frightening in their distorted facelessness. But the incipient anger evolves, via a state of abandoned hedonism, into urgent, collective action which we (as the audience) experience actually reshaping the landscape around us. Our social interdependence is reinforced and we are arranged in a circle, facing one another. The show's powerful closing images are delivered through mass unison and a co-ordinated chain

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[69] The actual choreography of this 8 bars, is, like that at the end of *All That Is Solid*, devised collectively by the performers through a technique which sees individual performers create small choreographic units in response to themes or images in the show, which are then pieced together and refined as a sequence by the whole group.

reaction – a spark passed from one to the other to complete the circle and light up the sky.

The thesis contained within *One Million*, expressed physically, spatially and kinaesthetically is: Young people, working together (physically) and (we read) powered by their frustration with the system, can catalyse fundamental reorganisation which in turn can affect large-scale change.

Anthony: All is not lost; look around you.

Everything we need is here.

Arrive; a mighty stand expressed in numbers.

So go ahead, and take back

what has always been yours.

Re-plotting the show: what altering some variables can show us about how certain elements function

How do our audience choose to align themselves in relation to the thematic problem of the UK's

youth unemployment? Do they see themselves as part of the group who are powering the show, or part of the underlying structural issue? Are they implicated in the problem or outside of it? And how do the proxemic relationships that we designed in the production aid the formation of these relationships?

The necessary physical reblocking of the show when it was restaged at Brighton Festival in 2014 provides some key insights into how altering some basic physical variables subtly but substantially changes the way that the audience physically interrelates with the work and the themes, shedding light on the questions posed above.

The Brighton Festival site was markedly different from the flat parade ground in Woolwich for which the show was designed; utilising a car park on the sea front, the site had a flat, wide asphalt expanse running parallel with the beach, but also a grassy slope rising from the carpark strip to the main road above, creating a kind of amphitheatre effect. Accordingly, we had to replot some of the action, including building a series of four steel deck platforms on the grassy bank for the characters to use in the early and final sequence of the show. It became much more difficult to achieve the 'arena' formation that we had created in the show's final moments in Woolwich, where the set elements and cast rapidly create a giant circle around the audience, facing inwards with the audience at the centre.

However, we weren't able in Brighton to completely overcome the problems of the sloped site, and this had a marked effect on the relationship with the audience, many of whom watched the first night's show seated on the grass, rather than standing. Nathan and I, watching the first night's show, felt like there was something amiss; that the atmosphere we were aiming for wasn't achieved - and we went to bed deflated that our gargantuan efforts to get the show realised hadn't landed as we'd wished. An interesting insight into this audience relationship with the work was revealed in an in-depth discussion with outdoor programmer Gemma Thomas, an experienced outdoor arts producer who runs Appetite Festival in Stoke and who came to see the show, having previously watched the video version. In Gemma's opinion in the following morning's meeting, this physical distance from the action (experienced by the large portion of the audience who had chosen to sit on the grass) which hadn't existed in Woolwich also created an emotional distancing effect. She expressed the sentiment that it had made her and her colleagues feel like they were watching something 'over there', from the outside, and weren't implicated in the problem and didn't feel involved. Viewed in a kind of panoramic wide-shot by a seated (and therefore physically inactive) audience, the show became spectacle without the emotional investment we had planned, and lost significant impact.

Gemma's feedback spurred us into action, and we spent the day working with the full team to

replot some of the key physical relationships in the show. We re-blocked our narrator/poet, Anthony, situating him more frequently on the steel deck platforms and thus close to the audience on the grass. We reblocked some of the young volunteer cast to augment this effect. And, importantly, at her suggestion, we let our authoritative stage manager Helen Fagelman (a women with 20 years' experience making large-scale outdoor work with No Fit State) make an announcement over the PA as the show was about to begin that the show was better experienced from the road, and to please refrain from sitting on the grass.

The difference this made to the second show was profound. Our audience willingly got up and moved to a place where we could, as planned, surround them with close-up action and make them physically move out of the way of the large structures which would plough through the main audience area. Despite the high wind levels requiring us to cut, at the last moment, 70% of the pyrotechnic spectacle that closed the show (a feel-good 'banker' in outdoor programming), it closed on an electric high. Spatial relationships, we had discovered, crucially affected the emotional impact of the performance. The audience's willingness to move seemed, in our direct experience, to correlate with their *being* moved. We do not, this second performs seemed to confirm, need fireworks – that outdoor arts finale pre-requisite - to feel awe and elation as a crowd. The same effects are possible through the careful and deliberate structuring of people's relationships to one another – the crowd and the celebration of being-in-a-group itself becomes the spectacle. Difficult to achieve, difficult to capture, difficult to evidence and difficult to analyse, is this at the heart of the radical potential of large-scale outdoor work?

The impact of *One Million*

Parviainen argues convincingly that 'social systems operate through the body' (ibid p 213). Can our audience configurations be said to be, in some senses, social systems? By changing these configurations, are we physically *and* symbolically reconfiguring a social system?

Through this chapter I have attempted to investigate what the potential of this reengineering of the spectator/performance relationship is. The Arts Council invest heavily in the prospect of such work producing at least 'soft' outcomes: 'social cohesion', 'community engagement', 'increased participation in social and creative life'. But if we move on from the realm of the politically-neutral language that the Arts Council tends to use, can we attribute more radical potentials to this type of performance?

Performance work like Tangled Feet's, which is generated from a focus on the body and on how bodies relate to each other and to the environments they inhabit (rather than, or as well as, a focus on text and language) often has at its genesis point the intention to examine and plot the audience's physical relationship with the material being created. This rearrangement of the

audience's relationship to the work can include a rejection or interrogation of assumed or traditional material, architectural and financial structures that typically surround performance. It also has the potential to construct a reengineered relationship with the audience which acknowledges and privileges the audience's bodies and - explicitly or implicitly - takes account of the audience's situated perspective.

I hope to have demonstrated, the detailed creative thinking that occurs in the plotting of these relationships through the work, and how they – rather than the text – form the backbone of the show's thesis. All of these choices made by artists concerning the audience's proximal relationship to the work have their own profound effects, including on the political relationships between spectators, between spectator and work, spectator and place, spectator and performance. One of the major shortcomings of the critical response to outdoor work is that a critical interrogation of this type of question is often passed over in favour of addressing the content or performance qualities of the work, despite the enormous bearing such issues have on the interaction under consideration. A new critical appraisal of outdoor/physical/devised work needs to acknowledge more fully that these performance practices generate their own seeing and listening cultures, or at least have influence on existing ones, and need to take account of these effects as a part of the work being produced.

Making work of this scale requires its own delicate balancing act. Fulfilling the social agendas attached to the funding (which I addressed in detail in Chapter 2) is a substantial responsibility which accompanies the creative challenges. The task is made more complex by the need to balance the ambition behind the experience we want to deliver for the audience with the aspirations of commissioners and the nervousness - or other corporate or political agendas - of the agents who control our public spaces.[70]

The conventions of outdoor spectacle work (an uplifting ending with pyrotechnic finale being almost a prerequisite of festival bookers) were difficult to reconcile with the intractable, complex social and political problem at the heart of our theme, as this reviewer identified;

> The production was particularly strong in allowing a space to express deep and dramatic feelings about the world of work and industry...I do think those feelings need a place to be unpacked, and *One Million* is definitely that. As a space for exploring depths of emotion about working, the production is relevant not just to the unemployed generation of Britain but to anyone who works or who has tried to do so.

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[70]In this example, this performance space was licensed by Greenwich Council, but more and more frequently, outdoor public spaces are passing into the ownership of private corporations (the whole of Canary Wharf is one such zone) which further forecloses the possibility of radical, dissident spectacle in public space.

> Beautiful and striking as it was, *One Million* wasn't completely satisfying. The performance ends with an exhortation to escape the existential difficulties of climbing the corporate ladder and the hegemony of the international banking system by accepting the "new world order".... Are there fundamental flaws in the current working culture of Britain (and indeed globally?) Yes, yes of course there are. But I'm not convinced Tangled Feet has provided a viable narrative for a solution. (McDonald, Caitlin; *One Million* Review, onestoparts.com http://onestoparts.com/review-one-million-tangled-feet)

Perhaps demonstrating a 'viable narrative solution' for this flawed system and the problems posed to us by neoliberal capitalism might be viewed as a tall order for a 35 minute outdoor show, and indeed, lay outside the scope of our aspirations. But perhaps *One Million* does something else which is equally valid, but which can only be understood if the frame of analysis shifts to include (as I hope to have modelled) a detailed understanding of the embodied strategies which the show employs as socially-engaged practice;

> Inclusion is not a subject social reformers think through well. We tend to focus on exclusion, assuming that if we diminish racial discrimination, class inequality or sexual prejudice, a more cohesive society will inevitably result. But inclusion has its own logic. Inclusion, be in it a small-scale project or in a nation, requires mutual recognition; people must signal that they are aware of each other as legitimately involved together in a common enterprise. (Sennett, Richard: 'How work destroys social inclusion', 1999 p. 25)

Sennett argues strongly for the power of ritual, 'society's strongest cement', as vital for social inclusion (ibid). Along with mutual exchange and accountability, he defines these characteristics as increasingly absent from the modern work sphere. Performance, in particular, large-scale, free performance in a public space, can offer these things. Through engaging with this performance ritual, we take part in a symbolic modelling of how we can collectively reclaim a lost power as a group. In this modelling, our bodies and presence as audience are recognised and acknowledged inside the frame, and we are invited, in our circular formation, to acknowledge and celebrate together our mutual social involvement. In feeling (in all embodied senses of the term) together what it is like to make the elated transformation in the show's final section, are we left with a collective reference point which alters our sense of what is possible?

Bradley Hemmings (Greenwich + Docklands International Festival's Artistic Director, and co-Artistic Director of 2012's Paralympic Opening Ceremony) was more generous about the ambition of *One Million*'s attempt to tackle such a theme, and show's resultant contribution to the UK's body of outdoor work;

With *One Million*, Tangled Feet have done something "game changing" for outdoor theatre in Britain. You've proved that large-scale work can be intelligent, emotional, dramaturgically thrilling but, of course, above everything, purposeful. What you've created means that it's much harder for everyone to default to mainland Europe for large scale work in future.[71]

Conclusion:

In this chapter, I have provided a detailed analysis of some of the performance practice I have created with Tangled Feet. As Hemmings' endorsement (above) demonstrates, *One Million* can be argued to be a work of significance in a section of the UK arts landscape which is currently under-documented. My hope is that this creative interrogation, by offering detailed insight into the artistic strategies and intentions behind the work, complements and reinforces that impact.

I have developed arguments over the preceding three chapters about the limitations of text-centric frame of analysis and a culture that has trouble finding adequate systems of value for the liveness, improvisation and liminality of this type of performance practice, and which lacks sufficiently-developed analytical frames for the nuances of its social engagement. In my reading, these blind spots lamentably tie into problems of exclusion and exclusivity in the arts in the UK. At the same time, I have signalled through the thesis where evidence has developed about what the potentials of this kind of performance might be, if we refocus our analysis onto the ways that bodies interact with each other in cultural practice and social relationships. In this chapter, I have endeavoured to tie these threads together in a discussion centring on and dissecting my own practice.

I looked closely at how we might employ a developed understanding of Lakoff and Johnson's theories of embodied metaphor, both theoretically and creatively, to foster a greater understanding of how the linguistic unconscious might be brought into operation in physical performance. I have attempted to show how by foregrounding how these metaphors operate, through performance, we can bring into focus and re-interrogate aspects of our cultural attitudes and structures which rest on deeply ingrained but questionable premises. Capitalism's adoption of an evolutionary 'truth' to justify its own aggressive logic starts to deflate if we reappraise 'survival of the fittest' to mean 'survival of the best nurtured' rather than of 'the most ruthless'.

Drawing on the work undertaken in the previous chapter, I also sought to demonstrate a conscious, deliberate and incisive artistic employment of kinaesthetic effect. Having explored in Chapter 3 how our bodies might be responding kinaesthetically to a body-at-risk, in this chapter I aimed to show how I have attempted to deploy that affectivity in performance for specific narrative and political impact.

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[71]   Content of feedback email from Bradley Hemmings to the company, July 2013.

In my exploration of *One Million*, I have also shown how the implications of perceiving, understanding and thus employing and altering kinaesthetic relationships in specific spaces can be woven into a performance's consideration. Building on Parvieinen's insights, I demonstrated how choreographing bodies (the crowds' as well as the performers') in public spaces can be tactical, not just symbolic or representative. This, I have aimed to show, is crucial to the intended impact of *One Million*, which in its political thesis, asserts our social interdependence as a fundamental part of its critique of a meritocratic neoliberalism. This interdependence is not just demonstrated symbolically and narratively but modelled experientially. When the carefully-plotted proxemic relationships in the piece are compromised, as they were in Brighton, the work loses its impact on the spectator.

Despite the challenges of the funding landscape and the resultant pressures brought to bear on outdoor arts which I have mapped out in Chapter 2, Tangled Feet have aimed to create work which juggles the twin responsibilities of social engagement with political critique; which aspires to be both complex and accessible, intelligent and engaging. While a formal and detailed objective appraisal of audiences' reactions to our work has been outside the scope of my research, the shows I have placed under consideration have achieved relative success in the outdoor arts landscape in terms of investment from funders, programmers and bookers. These performances have gleaned very little critical attention, but they have also been endowed with an investment of time from audiences who have stopped, stayed and watched, and who, in turn, I have been able to stand amongst and learn from. It is, ultimately, the embodied reactions elicited in these moments, so difficult to render in writing, which have kept me committed to an ideologically-driven creative practice despite its many challenges.

Thesis conclusions

This thesis was in part motivated by a frustration at the lack of critical recognition received by elements of my own practice (and the broader culture of practice I am engaged in), and the ways in which this practice was hampered by a text-centric system. Through this investigation, I hope to have made a strong case that the physical practice and the performing body ought, for several interconnected reasons, to be placed more centrally to performance exploration in the UK.

It is vital for UK performance that we have a theatre culture which is broadly resonant and accessible, where world-class innovation to the form can flourish and isn't hampered by reverence to the past or by outdated industrial systems; which has the capacity not only to be incisively commenting on the daunting problems faced by human society, but to be contributor to political and social transformation. These are all things which I have found to be on some level constrained or threatened by our current dominant practices which frequently sideline or dismiss the potential of the body.

By shifting our focus to look at works which do place the kinaesthetic relationship more centrally, and by bringing conscious attention to the startlingly distinct affects that these works can have, I aimed to strengthen a developing case that changes are necessary in the frameworks and strategies that we use to make theatre in the UK. This can only happen if and when kinaesthetic affectivity has an acknowledged value in our theatre culture, despite the current difficulties with capturing its existence or its results empirically.

In Chapter 1, I endeavoured to lay some brief groundwork which illustrated how theatre culture, through the 20th and into the 21st century, has been influenced by the application of theories and strategies developed in literature, but which are less useful to a body-centred form. Paying disproportionate attention to the textual aspects of our rich diversity of theatrical practice risks producing, in Harvie's analysis, 'a cliché of British theatre as cerebral and only verbally expressive' (Harvie 2005 p. 113). These literary tendencies, whilst certainly not being deployed universally, have resulted in the focussing of considerable attention on certain types of practice to the neglect of others.

I outlined and explored two broad problems with this 'literariness': Firstly, that on interrogation, it rests on premises which are undermined by recent developments in embodied cognition, and secondly, that the disembodied, authoritative critical voice which is often employed in this critical practice serves to shore up power with already-powerful agents, often excluding female and body-centred practice from the analysis. Mihalova's work argues strongly how this voice often equates

text with 'objective' knowledge, and performance with supposition. These unhelpful binaries correlate with others that I expose throughout the thesis.

The notions which I found iterated in literature theory that tally with the flawed premise that 'all thought proceeds necessarily and by virtue of language' (Burke 2007 p. 14) are fundamentally challenged by recent developments in the study of embodied cognition, including Lakoff and Johnson's proposal that the embodied reality precedes the idioms of language. This underpins a solid argument for the value of evolving alternatives to text-centric theatre critical practices, which could take better account of creative processes with *begin* with the moving body, and which build their meanings and theses through embodied effects. This process has some fundamental differences with the practice, common to most script-based theatre, of attempting to construct in the rehearsal room a resonant physical reality from the idioms contained in language on the page. This mode of theatre-making and theatre-critiquing reduces the opportunity to capitalise on the possibilities that a kinaesthetic-informed approach affords us.

Shifting my focus onto dance - another performance discipline which Tangled Feet's work straddles - I examine some of the associated problems of 'literariness' encountered by dance scholarship, This included attempts to stretch literary terms to analyse dance, further highlighting their potential inappropriateness in relation to physical practice. In the process, I foregrounded some more useful textual strategies for approaching this type of performance. These include an ethnographic emphasis which includes the spectator's/critic's body in the frame of analysis – a tactic I go on to employ in my own performance readings.

Focussing more closely on those who are left out of arts culture in the UK, in Chapter 2 I brought into discussion changing policies in arts funding, which have been informed by very robust evidence and have sought to address continuing pervasive inequalities in arts engagement. Using my situated position as a practitioner whose work has been fundamentally underpinned by the Arts Council England, I placed Tangled Feet's work into a larger debate about arts policy, offering an analysis of how outdoor arts has been strategically developed by our national funder because of its perceived ability to 'engage new audiences'. Statistically, the outdoor arts are drawing a broader, more diverse and representative audience than other forms – but we risk not fully appreciating the reasons for this success story if we fail to develop the analytical tools for examining how outdoor performances move and involve audiences. This resultant value system, constructed around the perceived social benefits of accessibility and public engagement, needs to be matched by more rigorous, nuanced analyses of the nature of this engagement.

I have attempted to stay alert to the problems of practically and theoretically evidencing what I see the impact of shared/collaborative/devised/improvisatory elements of my practice to be in terms of

rearranging relationship between artists and spectators and bringing attention to the contingency of the live moment. Relating this back to Arts Council funding policy, which encourages artists to seek solutions to the disengagement which leaves many feeling that theatre and performance is 'not for people like me' I defend an ideological proposal that such work has the potential to hand meaning-making back to an audience.

Joining David George and Peggy Phelan in calling for a greater appreciation of ambiguity, temporality, liminality and disappearance - nebulous but potentially generative qualities - I have simultaneously explored the risks attached to a creative practice which places them centrally. I highlight systematic prejudices which demonstrably oppose these qualities, with close reference to specific funding systems and policies influenced by a capitalist agenda which demands evidence of return on investment, and to a broader Western epistemological tradition which seeks the safety of binary closure. Offering up an alternative model, which (drawing on Foster) has the contingent potentials of improvisation brought into the frame, I championed the restorative power of uncertainty. There is, in this reading, a politically generative potential of the 'indeterminate, relative universe in which the actual is only ever one possible manifestation of multiple potentials' that, according to George (1989, p. 78) performance models.

An investment in the radical potential of the live performance moment places me (and Tangled Feet) in opposition to Auslander, who argues that the no ontological quality of liveness can be securely evidenced. My brief foray into neuroscientific research around embodied cognition leads me to believe that this is an area which might prove fruitful evidence that helps to expand our understanding of 'liveness', and to define that performative quality more accurately. As music, photography, film and journalism rapidly fall prey to the results of digital dissemination which drastically reduces the potential income from these professional areas, there is reason to believe that live performance – because of its irreplicable qualities - might concurrently become elevated in value. It therefore might serve us well, as theatre makers, to invest energy and resources championing theatre's ontological liveness in the face of the massive changes to the cultural landscape brought about by this digital revolution.

In Chapter 3, attempting to bring closer attention to the means of engaging with an audience which my practice engenders, I bring my focus on to kinaesthetic relationships, which (as I and other artists and theorists are demonstrating) play a fundamental part in human thinking and communication. Kinaesthetic experience is just one facet amongst the many others, all worthy of consideration, that make up a performative experience. Currently, theoretical work around kinaesthesia is only a very minor part of performance criticism, albeit one which seems to be picking up pace as advances in cognitive science and neuro-imaging (particularly with regards to embodied cognition and mirror neurons) start to restructure the way we conceive of cognition.

Our layer of kinaesthetic interaction is tied inextricably with our other perceptive senses and with our cognitive processes. The specific qualities of our human form (for example, that our head is above our torso, or that we are usually symmetrical beings with binaural hearing) shape our kinaesthetic profile. If Lakoff and Johnson's proposals are sound, the near-universal constants of our human form also underpin a fundamental linguistic unconscious that we use to make sense of our world and our place in it.

Though a close analysis of my own and others' creative practice, I have investigated the ways in which employment of the body's instability or fragility in performance functions, and how it can serve the exploration of a larger thematic agenda, which I have tied into a broader set of proposals about how our kinaesthetic empathy operates. This has also enabled me to consciously develop my abilities in employing, discerning and writing about kinaesthetic affectivity in performance, a distinct skill-set which I contest is under-appreciated in our theatre culture (despite being more frequently approached in dance practice and scholarship). The practical instincts or principles I have investigated include the operation of physical metaphor, and how an understanding of the ways that our bodies structure some of the fundamental metaphysical concepts about the world enables these to be deployed with more conscious and incisive use.

My attempt to come to a closer understanding of kinaesthetic affectivity in performance is motivated by the conviction that by *not* paying attention to it, we lose huge amounts of potential for influence. This influence can be shown to be concurrently physical, emotional, moral and political, and as such there is clearly a need to include kinaesthetic affectivity inside the framework of performance analysis with more regularity. It should become a larger part of consideration and criticism, particularly if 'public engagement' continues to be used ever more perniciously as a crude measure of the 'value' of the arts.

If we can culturally re-conceptualise cognition as not something that is occurring 'inside the head of the individual but instead (is) distributed across the individual and the situation as they interact' (Wilson p. 630), it gives us a new framework to consider how crowds function in response to a performance work – particularly when the crowd and their embodied reactions are placed *inside* the scenographic frame. In Chapter 3 I developed the proposal that we tap into group awareness and distribute our attention to receive and respond to information from crowds, often without being aware that we are doing so. My experience, which I hope to have modelled in my practice research, is that performers, and performance-makers, can develop a particularly acute awareness of this distributed attention and its potentials. This can be deployed both creatively and politically, as demonstrated in Parvieinen's interrogation into the strategies of a selection of 'resistant choreographies' used by protestors in public places. (Parvieinen, 2010). These

choreographies, she argues, make very conscious and intelligent use of the existing patterns of kinaesthetic interaction which already exist in public places between people, agents and objects, deploying strategies to disrupt, enhance or otherwise alter these relationships with powerful performative and political effect.

I conducted a thorough performance analysis of a quite widely-renowned physical work (Shechter's *Political Mother)* demonstrating a mode of critical writing which foregrounds the kinaesthetic strategies in the work and their contribution to the complex political thesis contained therein. In the fourth Chapter, I then attempted to conduct the same analysis to two of my own performance works, also augmenting these accounts with contextual information which contributes to a more thorough understanding of the motivations behind this practice. It also addresses in detail the industrial challenges and tensions this practice has had to negotiate, including the agendas of funders, commissioners and councils, the pressures to deliver a set of social outcomes, and the expectations and usual conventions of the form.

Working from the premise that the physical transactions which occur as part of the performance are indivisible from the political and economic structures that the performances are part of, feed into and may indeed affect, I have attempted to draw in and synthesis all these elements throughout the thesis, bringing them all together in the practice analysis in my final chapter. I aimed, with my analysis of *One Million*, to add weight to Ramsey Burt's argument (that performances can create 'new potentials for social and political relations that are underpinned by an openness towards affective experience' (Burt; 2009 p. 206)). I hope to have to demonstrated, through this practice and practice analysis, that through a conscious re-authoring of how performer and spectator bodies relate to each other in space, the potential occurs for physical performances to catalyse significant social and political shifts.

This chapter paid close technical attention to the ways in which Tangled Feet employ physical metaphor in performance work, providing evidence of how these conceptual metaphors, which are predicated on commonly-shared formative experiences, are creatively utilised to investigate broader moral, emotional and political concepts. In my analysis of *One Million*, I explain how these physical metaphors are deployed to represent and investigate a neoliberal capitalist system which, in the performance's thesis, wastes the energy and potential of young people. Examining the ways that we include the audience inside the scenographic frame, I show how, by carefully designing proxemic relationships between people, objects and the space, we utilise their presence to contribute to an overall exploration of social interdependence. Their participation in this performative 'ritual' is fundamentally embodied; they are 'moved' (in all senses of the word) in order to reach an understanding of a complex political problem in a way foregrounds our collective involvement.

Signalling some of the areas which are subject to ongoing research, Dee Reynolds and Matthew Reason ask in the conclusion to *Kinaesthetic Empathy in Creative and Cultural Practices* (2012)

> whether kinaesthetic empathy is something that those who perform/watch a lot of movement...become progressively more adept at?... Might kinaesthetic empathy training involve a kind of 'brain training' and if so, what would be its moral, social and intercultural implications? (ibid. p. 318)

An attendant question would be whether, through creating performances which draw strongly on embodied cognitive and associated kinaesthetic empathetic functions of its audience, we encourage audiences to exercise those muscles. If so, is this something which, in the Arts Council's parlance, 'contributes to social cohesion'? Empirical proofs are some way off, but professionally and ideologically, my work is committed to the potential that this might be the radical promise of such performance practice.

Many areas of investigation still remain open. If empathy, morality and emotion are embodied operations, as I have begun to explore and as others have offered evidence to suggest, does physical theatre have a particular and unique capacity for communicating? Does devised, physical theatre, where an actor is making use predominantly of their own situated experiences, activate and deploy fundamentally different cognitive processes than theatre in which an actor constructs a performance from a script? If so, what is the effect on a spectator and on how they experience 'liveness'? These are all questions which it has exceeded the parameters of this investigation to investigate in detail, but which are part of an ongoing and important scheme of developing research by others.

The issues I have explored feed into wider debates about cultural politics and the shifting arts landscape in the UK, in which the future of theatre buildings is undergoing significant reimagining;

> The notion of constructing something for culture that has walls and doors and requires people to cross a threshold, is deeply unfashionable. Big capital projects, once a mainstay of British cultural development and the backbone of the national arts infrastructure, are no longer seen as the core element they once were...where there is a live interaction between audience and artist, where there is participatory involvement and where work is striving to be as accessible as possible, there is more ambiguity about the value, appeal or even necessity of a dedicated building. (McKechnie, 'Walls, Doors and Thresholds' Arts Professional Magazine, 3/3/16)

Although I have evidenced a changing funding landscape which sees non-textual, physical and previously margin practices valued by the Arts Council because of their perceived ability to 'engage new audiences', I have argued that this has not been matched by substantial and mainstream critical analysis which recognises sophistry of these forms or developments in them. This thesis aims to contribute to a body of work which is addressing this imbalance. From a situated perspective, there are still significant impediment to the potentially fruitful integration and cross-fertilisation of forms, particularly of indoor and outdoor performance which still seem to function in two almost entirely separate industrial spheres, with outdoor theatre left firmly out in the cold when it comes to critical attention. Despite recognition of the potential of the outdoor arts in the eyes of our national funding body, and the considerable amount of economic uplift to the sector, it is still gaining only limited attention and recognition. Danny Boyle's 2012 Olympic Ceremony, played out on a world stage, invigorated the outdoor arts sector by radically challenged ideas about what large-scale outdoor spectacle was capable of delivering. But in the same year, what was arguably the country's most prominent arena for outdoor performance - the National Theatre's Watch This Space Festival - was lost as The Shed was erected on the festival's site. That the festival's twenty-five year history of diverse and daring programming, and its very significant and diverse annual audience was deemed of lesser priority to the National Theatre's organisational identity than the construction another indoor theatre space for scripted work was barely acknowledged by the cultural press, but keenly felt by the outdoor sector.

The architecture of theatre history until now has, I have argued, been text-centric, but digital culture is rapidly reshaping critical culture and the archiving of performance. We are at a juncture where new critical practice could emerge, with the development of new theoretical models and standpoints. Are traditional modes of criticism flexible enough to adapt? Susan Foster's conceptualisation of a improvisatory approach to writing history (Foster 2003), where the doing and simultaneous reflecting on that doing are more closely integrated, offers an intriguing theoretical perspective on how this might be achieved, while dance criticism and scholarship, I propose, also offer us more developed writing strategies in which take account of the experiential nature of physical performance. This transition has the potential to dissolve or rearrange ingrained hierarchies between artists, critics and audiences, helping to bring about a meaningful 'engagement' of audiences which enables their political participation in the work.

My aim has been to draw a strong case for the potential of the physical performing body to be considered central to our performative explorations, and that there is much to be gained from an analysis of the intersection between political and economic forces with which we communally struggle and our own embodied realities. We are in need of – and perhaps have in our reach - radical paradigm shifts. If our aim is for theatre to continue to be purposeful - to be 'critical and dissident', to have the capacity to evolve practice which sites

itself on the keenest edge of the knife in terms of its ability to be incisive - we would be deeply unwise to continue ignoring or sidelining the body.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: A brief history of Tangled Feet

Here I aim to provide a brief contextualisation and brief description of the way the working ethos has evolved and the work that has been made. Alongside this, because in my view it has been absolutely integral to the direction the work has taken, I have provided a summary account of the financial and funding conditions the company was operating under.

The ensemble express their 'core beliefs' thus:

- We believe that art has the power to transform lives
- We believe art succeeds most effectively when people are put before profit.
- We believe art must be available and accessible to all
- We believe that collaborative creativity can achieve things that a single artist working alone cannot.
- We believe in shared decision making, in equal creative stake, in fair and equal pay.
- We believe in young people's potential to change the world and their right to be seen as a significant part of that world
- We believe that sharing stories and narratives in public spaces builds our empathetic connection with each other and brings us closer together.
- We want to entertain, to challenge and to delight; to create lasting memories and to inspire other artistic journeys.

    (www.tangledfeet.com/about/our-vision, updated November 2015)

On a personal note – but one which is crucial to an understanding of the ensemble - the way that Tangled Feet works together, and any shared value structure that underpins it, is founded on the back of strong friendships. It has developed through years of evolving working methodologies together, through loosely-structured discussions at monthly MGM meetings, but also in late-night arguments, in drunken post-performance escapades at festivals, in the stress-points of frantic get-ins and the boredom of long car journeys. It has been augured in the dances at weddings, the funerals of parents and the passing around of babies. Shared experiences of walking miles in a snowy blizzard at dawn to get to an airport on an early foreign tour have gained folkloric, almost mythical status. It would be a huge omission to ignore not only the very close friendships but also the sense of family that exists in the ensemble. In the absence of regular funding (or indeed, in the early days, any funding) it has often been this sense of familial responsibility and commitment to a common cause which has enabled things to get done.

Tangled Feet define themselves as a 'physical theatre ensemble', built on a 'shared rehearsal and

performance history.'[72] The company originally formed on leaving Middlesex University in 2003, with ten original ensemble members, with roles roughly delineated as one director, seven performers and two production/set/lighting/technicians/stage managers.[73] In the early years, Tangled Feet created four studio-scale shows (*Catching Dust, Lost Property, Emily's Kitchen* and *game?)*, each of which completed a run at the Edinburgh Festival and some national and international touring. The core of the company remained the same during this period until 2006 when I joined the company as Assistant Director on *game?*.

In the intervening years the company has developed in three significant ways. Firstly, Tangled Feet have largely abandoned the model of indoor studio/fringe touring, increasingly making work in outdoor/non-theatre spaces and at festivals. Secondly, the company have made the transition from largely working unpaid in the early years, to paying at or above industry rates for almost all work. Thirdly, while still retaining the core collaborators, Tangled Feet has morphed and expanded to the point where the 2013 outdoor season of work, *Tangled Feet Take To The Streets*, had an artistic team of over 50 people. All of the original founding members are still involved in the company in some capacity or other.

While there is no specific policy about who is involved in each project, there is an ethos of trying to make sure everyone in the ensemble is involved to the degree that they would like to be – a continuous and ongoing balancing act that means taking into account each individual's personal circumstances. The informality of the agreements about the changing nature of the company (which is essentially thrashed out between a group of friends month by month) perhaps reveals something about the economic value of the 'product' the company produces – legally, there has never been a need for anyone to protect the value of their assets.

Even as Tangled Feet has evolved, some very basic ideological concerns have been retained, and these form the bedrock of the company, affecting its political direction, economic situation, artistic policy and the ways and means the ensemble engages with its audience. The company was founded with a flat, democratic, co-led structure, on the agreement that the ten creatives would work together for a year without payment, and then reassess the situation. From the outset, there has never been a distinction between the performers, directors and technicians in terms of stake in the company, either creative or financial.

An early culture of shoe-string touring has left its mark on the enduring ethos of the ensemble. Tangled Feet have an 'all hands on deck' mentality. This means that the performers have always (and still do) help rig lights, build sets, put up scaffolding, pack vans, source some of their own

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[72]   Www.tangledfeet.com
[73]   Original ensemble members were Nathan Curry, Alex Ramsden, Leon Smith, Sara Templeman, Mario Christofides, Jonathan Ellicot, Alyson Jones (nee Cale) Emily Eversden (nee Horn), Luke Gledsdale, Tom White.

costumes, publicise and often help document the work. Perhaps more unusually, it also means that the technicians will contribute creatively on material in rehearsal, join in warm-ups and games, and have a strong presence in the development of artistic ideas.

Through the early years, intermittent project funding was augmented with much unpaid work. When payment was available, historically, all members of the ensemble were paid equally regardless of role. Echoing the structure of a worker's co-operative, ideologically, the founding members of Tangled Feet have a 'stake' in the company in return for the work – both paid and unpaid – they have put into building it.

As a not-for-profit company, Tangled Feet's capital exists in its creative products. Though no legal or even formal agreement exists (it would be all but impossible to implement one) all members of Tangled Feet are assumed, in the ethos of the company, to have and to retain shared rights over the materials they create. Accordingly, when it is necessary to credit work (in programmes or other promotional material) all work is credited as 'devised by Tangled Feet', with the individual production roles then outlined as accurately as possible (given that production roles are often somewhat amorphous).

Various associate artists (who have worked with the ensemble over several projects) are invited to and receive minutes from the MGMs. They, and other recurrent collaborators, are invited to contribute their thoughts and ideas through the company's regular Creative Continuity sessions and in structured formats. The nature of these associate artists' relationship to the company and the reciprocal responsibilities and benefits that they have is an ongoing point of discussion. As we move into the second decade of the ensemble's existence, it becomes ever more complex to define who is 'part' of Tangled Feet.

The rather organic way that the company runs itself is inevitably being put under pressure as the ensemble becomes more successful. As the company attempts to move towards regular funding rather than being a project-to-project concern, the company is negotiating the shift in dynamics as job roles are required to be more clearly defined and the company has to adapt itself to adhering to five-year business and artistic plans. As turnover increases and funding agreements become more complex there is a necessity to present as a viable business with stable financial management, diverse income streams and well-defined job roles at the administrative centre. With the company moving into its second decade, the shared ambition is that despite the requirements to conform increasingly to commercial models, above all the ensemble will retain the values – and the friendships – that underpin its existence.

Financial Story:

In a legal sense, Tangled Feet is a company limited by guarantee, and in 2011 also became a Charity with governance handed over to four trustees (one of whom, Emily Eversden, is also one of the founding members of the ensemble).

During the early years of Tangled Feet's existence (touring work at the Edinburgh Festival and small-scale studios), aside from a £16,000 grant from ACE/East to Edinburgh for *Emily's Kitchen*, the company received no grant funding. Productions were created on a profit-share basis, which evolved out of an original agreement that all ten would commit to work together for a year without payment and see where they got to. In reality, during this period (2003-2007) box-office takings (even during sell-out Edinburgh runs) were never enough to cover artists' wages in anything more than nominal amounts, on top of the substantial costs of fringe space hires, touring accommodation and travel. The pieces were mainly developed during evenings and weekends, with all ensemble members juggling other paid work both in and out of the theatre industry. In a retrospective appraisal, making work during this period was only possible because the ensemble had committed to a working relationship with each other, subsidised the productions with significant unpaid time, and were able to keep costs to a minimum by sharing all work and resources. In reality, this meant doing what many other young companies have done: ten people sharing a three-bedroom flat in Edinburgh for a month, getting up early to staple photocopied reviews to flyers over breakfast bought from a kitty, and a rigorously enforced but democratic system for sharing one shower.

Around 2008 a gradual shift in the company's direction can be retrospectively defined. Disenchanted with both the financial model of the fringe and festival circuits and general homogeneity of these audiences, the company made the decision (described in Chapter 2 in more detail) to begin making work in non-theatre spaces. Since then Tangled Feet has developed and toured a roster of shows of varying scales for outdoor spaces. These include *Home* (2009), *The Measurement Shop* (2010), *I Confess* (2010), *All That Is Solid* (2011), *The Hide* (2011), *RantBox* (2011), *Inflation* (2012), *One Million* (2013) and *Push* (2013). The company has also made several site-responsive indoor works including *Crowd* (2009), *Showtime* (2009) and *Shepherd Tone* (2011).

The launch of the Arts Council's *New Landscapes* strategy (discussed in detail in Chapter 2) corresponded neatly with Tangled Feet's first show for non-theatre spaces *(Home).* While the company continue to make a number of short and initially unfunded/unpaid works in response to opportunities, the move into outdoor territory has opened up to the company a stream of public subsidy revenue: the ACE grant of £46,000 to make *Home* in 2009 was followed in 2010 by a project grant of £52,950 to develop the skill-sets and techniques which would become

Measurement Shop, Remote Control and *All That Is Solid.* Further grants of £22,000 (to mount *All That Is Solid)* and £10,000 (for organisational development) were leveraged in 2011.

The company applied to be part of the National Portfolio of regularly-funded organisations in 2011 and again in 2014, but were unsuccessful on both occasions (the second time, in 2014, the investment amount that Tangled Feet asked for was too large for it to be brought into the London portfolio without disinvesting in another major organisation). Nevertheless, the company have continued to be funded by ACE at a similar level of investment since then. In 2012 ACE supported Tangled Feet with £46,500 to underpin the 2012 outdoor season *Tangled Feet Take To The Streets,* and in 2013 a similar season, including the creation of large-scale work *One Million* was supported with £100,000. *One Million* was remounted at Brighton Festival (and re-supported with a £15,000 GftA) in 2014. Also in 2014, ACE funded the company £69,000 for a collection of projects, including developing regional relationships, creating *Burntwater* in Spalding, redevelopment of its website and creating a new work for the Fun Palace weekend. A further £15,000 grant in 2014 enabled the company to review its brand and marketing strategies.

Wishing to re-establish a profile in indoor venues, the company developed a season of work inside buildings in 2015, all of which examined the value of care in our society. ACE supported headline production, *Care,* a co-production with Watford Palace Theatre, with £49,000 (the application was initially rejected, then granted on second application.) Also in 2015, the company was supported with £15,000 to remount *Need A Little Help*, which it initially created in January 2015 in co-production with Half Moon Theatre. The third production in the 'Care' season, *Kicking and Screaming*, which was initially developed and toured with a commission from REACH (a Strategic Touring Initiative in North East England) was further supported in 2016 with £44,600 for a national tour. The company have also received £49,000 to create outdoor installation/performance *Emergency* in 2016, which will premiere at Brighton Festival.

The ensemble became a Charity in 2011 with the aim of opening up a new stream of revenue from trusts and foundations. 2012 saw the first core funding grant from a Charitable Trust, the Foyle Foundation, for £9,500, and a two-year core funding relationship established with the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation. Shrewdly conscious of the increasing requirement (from public funders) to present a 'mixed economy' of different strands of income, the company has also developed some commercial relationships which have lead to projects and helped to support the company's running costs. The company now aims to pay a small team of core staff (still working as freelancers) a set number of days a month to maintain the organisational effort and develop relationships, funding applications and strategic initiatives. Tangled Feet's turnover totalled £314,000 in 2014/2015. There is the intention to reapply for National Portfolio Organisation status again in 2016.

Appendix 2: List of works

The works that I have co-directed with Nathan Curry are highlighted in **bold**.

Those that I have directed alone are **bold and underlined.**

Those that are neither bold nor underlined were directed by Nathan alone

Catching Dust (2003): Edinburgh Festival and regional touring

Lost Property (2004): Edinburgh Festival, regional touring

Emily's Kitchen (2005): Edinburgh Festival

game? (2006-7): Edinburgh Festival, regional touring, Southwark Playhouse

Home (2008-9): Outdoor festivals, UK and France.

<u>Undercover</u> (2009): RESOLUTION festival (The Place), Latitude Festival, Shunt Lounge

<u>Crowd</u> (2009): Southwark Playhouse (Nabokov Present Tense)

I-Confess (2010): Edinburgh Festival, Latitude Festival, various indoor and outdoor venues

Showtime (2010): Village Underground (Nabokov Arts Club)

<u>Remote Control</u> (2011): RESOLUTION Festival (The Place)

Wishful (2011): Collaboration with Emergency Exit Arts, Paradise Garden Festival finale

Measurement Shop (2011): Elephant and Castle shopping centre

Shepherd Tone (2012): BAC (Nabokov Arts Club)

All That Is Solid Melts Into Air (2011-2012): Various outdoor festivals

<u>RantBox</u> (2011-2012): Various outdoor festivals

The Hide (2011-2012): Various outdoor festivals

<u>Inflation</u> (2012): Various outdoor festivals

One Million (2013): Greenwich + Docklands International Festival

<u>Push</u> (2013): Various outdoor festivals

The Crossing (2014): Imagine Watford Festival

Burntwater (2014): Site-specific outdoor piece, Spalding, Lincolnshire

The Ping Pong Table of Truth (2014): Croydon Fun Palace

Need A Little Help (2015/16): Half Moon theatre, national tour.

__Kicking and Screaming__ (2015/16): Tour of small-midscale venues in the North-east, national tour

__Care__ (2015): Watford Palace Theatre

Collective Endeavour (2015): Millennium Square, Leeds

Appendix 3: Participation in One Million

Most of Tangled Feet's work has an intrinsic participative element. Embarking on creating a show about mass unemployment in the 18-25 age bracket, it was obvious to us that, ideologically as well as creatively, it was vital that we found a way to include young people in the making of the show. Our participative and creative processes were designed to ensure that, as far as possible, they (specifically, 16-26 year-old Londoners with experience of struggling for employment) were authentically represented in the work, physically, creatively and emotionally. We developed a multi-strand integrated participation strategy which had the aim of bringing young people's input into the devising process as well as creating meaningful training and career development opportunities.[74]

Internships: Aware that internships in the arts are frequently only accessible to young people who are fortunate enough to be able to rely on parental support, we tried to find a way to enable interns from more diverse social backgrounds to enhance our team. We worked with social enterprise A New Direction to recruit ten young people currently in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance, and developed structured and tailored internships for them in the production team which they were able to undertake whilst still retaining their benefits. The placements were in all departments: costume, directing, participation, production and stage management, aerial, sound design, and each intern had a dedicated line manager who tried to ensure that their experience enabled them to learn new skills.

Volunteer performers: We built relationships with a host of organisations across East London who were already working with young people in performance contexts. These ranged from small local stage schools to established drama schools (East 15) as well as more specialised and therapeutic services like --- which is a theatre company for care leavers. We offered free physical theatre workshops (tailored to each setting), an opportunity to feed into the devising process of the show and to perform as part of the large chorus. In total we worked with 127 young people in 2013, 87 of whom performed in the show. The workshops ran in parallel with the main devising process, and the practitioners delivering the workshops (cast members in the show and our Participation Manager, Alex Ramsden) videoed sections of performance that they created, which was shared in the main rehearsal room and which influenced the development of sections of the show. In the final week of rehearsals, the young people visited the main rehearsal room for a session learning the end choreography and their routes through the show. They were also called during our very tightly

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[74]A detailed account of the participation process, including a fuller investigation of the methodological considerations and ethical questions concerning involving non-professionals in professional work would be a worthy exercise, but isn't possible here. Instead I have aimed to provide a summary which gives the reader enough context to understand the involvement of the young people in our creative process.

planned outdoor technical and dress rehearsals on site, enabling us to fully prepare them and train them to use the set and equipment safely and confidently.

Writers

Alongside the practical workshops, we ran a series of free spoken-word workshops in Woolwich, led by our narrator and writer, Anthony Anaxagorou. Using our theme as a starting point, a host of new material was generated by the young people who attended, some of which was uploaded to Tangled Streets to complement the evolving digital 'scrapbook' of the process. The young poets also performed some work to a specially invited audience (including local mayor and politicians) at the GDIF reception before the first performance. This creative contact influenced Anthony's writing.

Young professional performers:

In a bid to expand our ensemble with a young cohort, we committed to casting 4 of the 10 main cast with new performers at the beginning of their careers.

Follow up and ongoing career support:

As with all Tangled Feet projects, we endeavoured to repay the young people's investment in our work by providing follow-up career support to those who requested it, and progression into fully-paid work with us where possible. This resulted in us professionally employing several of the interns again in fully-paid roles in 2014. When we remade the show in 2014, we invited performer James Weal, who had been a student at East 15 the previous year when he performed in our volunteer chorus, to join the main cast.

Bibliography

Note

There are some texts which have significantly progressed my thinking and practice in relation to this thesis, particularly in regards to the practical element, but which are not, for reasons of brevity, cited in this written thesis. For this reason I have also included an additional list of (written and performance) works consulted.

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As The World Tipped. Created by Wired Aerial Theatre, Written and Directed by Nigel Jamieson. Perf Hannah DeCancho, Sebastien Gonzalez, Robert Guy, Ryan Harston, Daniela B Larsen, Benjamin Stephens. May 2011. Performance.

Blasted. By Sarah Kane. Directed by Sean Holmes. Perf Aidan Kelly, Danny Webb and Lydia Wilson. Lyric Hammersmith, London. 7 November 2011.

Cascade. Motionhouse Dance. Choreographed by Kevin Finnan and company. Perf: Giorgio De Carolis, Laura Peña Nuñez, Wayne Parsons, Alasdair Stewart. Various performances, England 2011/12. Performance.

Event Horizon. Antony Gormley. Cast iron. Various exterior locations, London. 17 May – 19 August 2007. Sculpture.

Every Good Boy Deserves Favour. By Tom Stoppard. Directed by Felix Barrett and Tom Morris. Perf Bronagh Gallagher, Bryony Hannah, Toby Jones, Joseph Millson, Dan Stevens, Alan Williams and ensemble. National Theatre, London. 25 February 2009. Performance.

Eye and I. Professor Helen Storey. Wooden installed structure with live performers. Thomas Tallis School, London. June 2006. Performance installation.

game? Devised by Tangled Feet. Directed by Nathan Curry, Kat Joyce. Perf Mario Christofides, Alyson Jones, Leon Smith, Sara Templeman. Gilded Balloon, Edinburgh and various venues, England, 2007/08.

Home. Devised by Tangled Feet. Directed by Nathan Curry, Kat Joyce. Perf Mario Christofides, Tunji Falana, Susan Momoko Hingley, John Hinton, Vala Omarsdottir, Sara Templeman and Fiona Watson, additional developmental performances by Cristina Catalina, Abi Hood, Emily Horn, Sebastien Lawson, Alex Ramsden, Leon Smith. Various performances, England 2009/10.

Inflation. Devised by Tangled Feet. Directed by Kat Joyce, Al Orange, Nathan Curry. Perf Cristina Catalina, John Hinton, Mike Humpreys, Sara Templeman. Various performances, England 2012.

Measurement Shop. Devised by Tangled Feet. Directed by Nathan Curry, Kat Joyce. Perf Susan Hingley, John Hinton, Leon Smith, Sara Templeman, Fiona Watson. Elephant and Castle Shopping Centre, London, July 2010.

One Million. Devised by Tangled Feet. Directed by Nathan Curry and Kat Joyce. Musical score by Guy Connelly and Nick Gill. Poetry by Antony Anaxagorou. Perf. Anthony Anaxagorou, Jessica Andrade, Simon Carroll-Jones, Cristina Catalina, Mario Christofides, Gemma Creasey, Tunji Falana, Mike Humphreys, Ericson Mitchell, Connor Neall, Leon Smith, Che Albrighton (drums), Guy Connelly (voice/guitar/samplers), Nick Gill (guitar), Lucy (??) Rhiannon ?? (??), Neil ?? (>>). Greenwich + Docklands Festival 2013. Performance.

Paperweight. Devised by Top of The World (now Frequency D'Ici). Directed by Jamie Wood. Performed by Tom Frankland and Sebastien Lawson. Camden People's Theatre, London. 24 October 2008. Performance.

Political Mother. Choreography and musical score by Hofesh Shechter. Perf Maëva Berthelot, Winifred Burnet-Smith, Chien-Ming Chang, Sam Coren, Frédéric Despierre, Laura de Vos, Karima el Amrani, Christopher Evans, James Finnemore, Bruno Karim Guillore, Philip Hulford, Jason Jacobs, Yeji Kim, Erion Kruja, Sita Ostheimer, Hofesh Shechter, Hannah Shepherd, Louisa Aldridge (Viola), Christopher Allan (Cello), Rebekah Allan (Viola), Laura Anstee (Cello), Joseph Ashwin (Guitar), Chopper (Drums), Jub Davis (Double Bass), Yaron Engler (Drums, Bendir), Dominic Goundar (Drums), Alison Gillies (Cello), Joel Harries (Guitar), Tim Harries (Bass Guitar), Edward Hoare (Drums), Norman Jankowski (Drums, Pandeiro), James Keane (Drums), Moshik Kop (Drums), Vincenzo Lamagna (Guitar), Bethan

Lewis (Viola), Andrew Maddick (Guitar, Viola), Richard Phillips (Cello), Desmond Neysmith (Cello), Jordi Riera (Drums), Natasha Zielazinski (Cello). Sadler's Wells, London. 13 and 15 July 2011. Performance.

Push: Devised by Tangled Feet. Directed by Kat Joyce and John Hinton. Perf Hannah Gittos, Emily Horn, Jenny Jackson, Alexis Terry, Fiona Watson. Various performances, England 2013.

Simulated Laparotomy. Developed by Roger Kneebone and team at Imperial College, London. Cheltenham Science Fair, Cheltenham. 11 June 2010. Performed simulation.

The Author. By Tim Crouch. Directed by Karl James, a smith. Perf Tim Crouch, Adrian Howells, Vic Llewellyn, Esther Smith. Royal Court Theatre, London. 26 September 2009.

The Land of Yes and the Land of No. Choreographed by Rafael Bonachela in collaboration with dancers. Perf Amy Hollingsworth, Fiona Jopp, Cameron McMillan, Lisa Welham, Renaud Wiser and Paul Zivkovich. Queen Elizabeth Hall, London. 25 September 2009. Performance.

Three Kingdoms. By Simon Stephens. Directed by Sebastian Nübling. Designed by Ene-Liis Semper.\ Dramaturgy by Julia Lochte and Eero Epner. Perf Rasmus Kaljujärv, Risto Kübar, Lasse Myhr, Mirtel Pohla, Jaak Prints, Gert Raudsep, Ferdy Roberts, Steven Scharf, Rupert Simonian, Çigdem Teke, Nicolas Tennant, Tambet Tuisk, Sergo Vares. Lyric Hammersmith, London. 5 May 2012.

To Be Straight With You. By DV8. Directed and choreographed by Lloyd Newson. Perf Ankur Bahl, Ermira Goro, Femi Oyewole, Hannes Langolf, Ira Mandela Siobhan, Lee Davern, Rafael Pardillo, Sera Adetoun Akinbiyi. Oxford Playhouse, Oxford. 30 April 2009. Performance

Trilogy. By Nic Green, devised with company. Perf Laura Bradshaw, Louise Brodie, Nic Green, Murray Wason and Jodie Wilkinson. BAC, London. 14 Jan 2010. Performance.