



Title: Hitchcock, Tati and Leone: style, narrative and directorial approaches in mainstream cinema and their relationship to contemporary screen-dance practice.

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**Hitchcock, Tati and Leone: style, narrative and directorial
approaches in mainstream cinema and their relationship to
contemporary screen-dance practice.**

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A thesis submitted to the University of Bedfordshire,
in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MA
by Research

University of Bedfordshire

June 2018

Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

Hitchcock, Tati and Leone: style, narrative and directorial approaches in mainstream cinema and their relationship to contemporary screen-dance practice.

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Abstract

This research recommends the style, narrative and directorial approaches of Alfred Hitchcock, Jaques Tati and Sergio Leone as a relevant point of reference for current screen-dance practice. Their specific cinematic authored models were tested in order to determine whether the framework could provide a flexible enough methodology for the making and producing of effective screen-dance, and in the hopes of providing new pathways for the researcher's screen-dance practice.

The cinematic authors selected for scrutiny were Alfred Hitchcock, Jaques Tati, and Sergio Leone. The criterion for this selection was determined by the directors' stylistic and narrative preferences, and democratic approaches to sound and image making. Five screen-dances were produced for this research between 2004 and 2011 and a further two in 2014 and 2016: *Vanishing point* (Tiso, 2004), *Tippi: Crying Fowl* (Tiso, 2007) and *Nil desperandum* (Tiso, 2012) were based on the Hitchcock oeuvre, *Souvenir* (Tiso, 2005) was based on the Tati opus and *Crimes* (Tiso, 2005) on Sergio Leone's legacy. *Flow* (Tiso, 2014) and *The big sofa* (Tiso, 2016) were developed out of the findings of a completed directorial, stylistic, narrative listing.

This thesis is largely a piece of self-enquiry. The researcher has been methodical in how she has approached her own work, so that the work is presented as a heuristic analysis interwoven woven into body of the practical components.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deep gratitude to my advisor, mentor and friend, the late and much missed Dr. Giannandrea Poesio for his tireless, unstinting support of my MA study and research. He will be remembered for his academic brilliance, boundless enthusiasm for life and immense generosity not only to me, but to all his students and friends down the years. The world is indeed a much less exciting place without his presence in it.

I would like to thank my first supervisor Dr. Tamara Ashley for all her encouragement, constructive criticism and enlightening comments. She has been inspirational, and has guided me through a problematic time with thoughtfulness and great clarity. Gratitude also goes to my second supervisor Dr Louise Douse who very kindly accepted to become my second supervisor at very short notice and in difficult circumstances.

Contents

Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Introduction	1
Chapter One: Methodology	13
1.1. Introduction	14
1.2. Research methodology	14
1.3. Other methodological approaches	18
Chapter Two: Authored film	24
2.1. Introduction	25
2.2. Authored film in context	25
2.3. Alfred Hitchcock in authored context	28
2.4. Sergio Leone in authored context	31
2.5. Jaques Tati in authored context	33
2.6. Film sound in authored context	35
Chapter Three: Screen-dance	38
3.1. Introduction	39
3.2. Screen-dance history	40
3.3. Screen-dance definitions	41
3.4. Screen-dance genres and sub genres	42
3.5. Screen-dance literature and film theory	47

3.6 Screen-dance sound design and music: some examples	51
Chapter Four: Research screen-dances	54
4.1. Introduction	55
4.2. Hitchcock	61
4.3. <i>Vanishing point</i> (Tiso, 2004)	64
4.4. <i>Tippi: crying fowl</i> (Tiso, 2007)	67
4.5. <i>Nil desperandum</i> (Tiso, 2012)	76
4.6. Sergio Leone	77
4.7. <i>Crimes</i> (Tiso, 2005)	81
4.8. Jaques Tati	86
4.9. <i>Souvenir</i> (Tiso, 2005)	86
Chapter Five: Directorial, stylistic, narrative listing	95
5.1. Introduction	96
5.2. Directorial, stylistic, narrative listing	97
Chapter Six: Narrative, spectacle and the close-up	108
6.1. Introduction	101
6.2. <i>Flow</i> (Tiso, 2014)	110
6.3. <i>The big sofa</i> (Tiso, 2016)	121
Conclusion	127
Bibliography	137

Introduction

Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to propose new analytical perspectives and insights into the current, multiple notions of screen-dance practice in the U.K. The proposed research methodology assesses the usefulness of Alfred Hitchcock's, Jaques Tati's and Sergio Leone's corpora, as a producing modality for screen-dance makers. The researcher applied and tested the cinematic languages of Hitchcock, Tati and Leone through her own practice, as a piece of self-enquiry in order to produce to the experimental findings.

The introduction questions the existing narrative and notions of screen-dance and acknowledges that thus far, the working practices of cinematic authors have not been viewed fully, as applications that could lend themselves to creating new perspectives for the many and varied forms of screen-dance in the U.K., for the benefit of international readers. The research generates a clearer understanding of the potential of Hitchcock's, Tati's and Leone's cinematic languages for screen-dance production, by engaging with the narrative devices and stylistics of the directors' mainstream cinema. A directorial, stylistic, and narrative listing based on the film works of the three directors will be articulated in chapter five, that may be of assistance to the production of screen-dance.

The directorial, stylistic, and narrative listing generated a number of significant questions and issues that were necessary to address, as each one proposed an invigorating contribution to the many pre-existing forms of screen-dance in circulation. The research is structured in line with the

questions and issues raised, and falls into a six chapter structure. The original number of practical research screen-dance projects increased from a predicted number of three authorial inflected works at the onset of the research, to a final total of seven. Thus, the addition of the extra chapters seemed not only appropriate, but necessary.

Chapter one sets out the research methodology and other philosophical modalities that were given consideration as alternatives or adjuncts to the authored narrative model. A discussion surrounding the validity of the theory of authorship as a rigorous mode of critical enquiry is given full rein in chapter one.

Chapter two historicises and contextualises directorial, stylistic and narrative film practice, the authorial legacies of the three directors chosen for scrutiny, and the notion of the significance of sound design and music composition in cinematic practice.

Chapter three reviews the screen-dance idiom in terms of its recent histories, definitions, genres and sub genres, and outlines the screen-dance literature and film theory drawn upon in the research.

Chapter four examines the research screen-dances. The first five films produced are paradigmatic of the observations and issues raised in the research. *Vanishing point* (Tiso, 2004), *Tippi: crying fowl* (Tiso, 2007), and *Nil desperandum* (Tiso, 2012) are all based on the Hitchcock model. *Souvenir* (Tiso, 2005) is based on the Tati model and *Crimes* (Tiso, 2005), on the Leone model. The practical research utilised the works of the three directors to promote an autonomous approach to sound and image making. The objective of this strategy was to challenge image prioritization

commonly associated with film production. Avoiding simple pastiche, the three directors' methods of sound scoring and movement direction were applied to the research screen-dances for the purposes of providing the context for the possible development of a modified author inflected screen-dance.

Chapter five outlines the observations and issues provoked by the findings contained in the directorial, stylistic, narrative listing. The listing exists to some extent as a summary of observations, and offers suggestions for those makers considering pursuing the director based model as a guide for their own practice.

Chapter six describes the method by which the directorial, stylistic, narrative listing findings were tested on an additional work produced for the Research & Development phases of the researcher's screen-dance cycle *Flow* (Tiso, 2014) and *The big sofa* (Tiso, 2016). *The big sofa* was an extrapolation of the unforeseen positive outcomes, identified and acknowledged, once the directorial, stylistic, narrative findings had been completed.

In the conclusion, the discussion will close with calls for additional research to be made in to other underexplored aspects of cinematic narrative practices, that might yield rich modalities for screen-dance practitioners to access.

The research posed the further question as to whether the authored directorial, stylistic, narrative model might provide a methodology for the making and producing of screen-dance capable of reaching broader audiences. Hitchcock, Tati and Leone do not fall naturally in to the more

esoteric screen-dance pioneer category occupied by artists such as Maya Deren (1917-1961) and Amy Greenfield, both whom have been the subject of numerous scholarly books and articles. Conversley, the three directors all exhibited aesthetic yet commercial ambitions, that have situated them within middlebrow categories of entertainment. The three directors heralded a personality centric authorial practice now associated with celebrated film directors of the calibre of Terrence Malick, David Lynch and Pedro Almodovar. The decision to select Hitchcock, Tati, and Leone was based on their films' continuing popularity rather than a personality cultism, and their expertise in storytelling and sound and image production. The research did not intend to promote outmoded, stereotypical traits that Hitchcock, Tati and Leone exhibit undeniably, but was prompted by the directors' unique film stylistics and narrative concerns, despite their status as dead, white, western men.

Over the past decade screen-dance culture in Britain has displayed a tendency to align itself with experimental artists' film, rather than popular big budget forms of mainstream cinema, due to some extent to economic constraints. Artist and dance scholar Douglas Rosenberg attests to this,

The prevailing boundaries in mainstream film have, for the most part, kept dance artists from participating in film making on a grand scale (with some exceptions, usually requiring collaboration and considerable funding), but these boundaries have also created a rich history of so-called underground or experimental filmmaking. (Rosenberg, 2012, p.79)

The screen-dance idiom is often at odds with the types of accessible subject matters broadcast on television and appeals to some extent, to more specialist audiences. The arts are considered a niche pursuit within television. Contemporary dance is a minority within that

niche, and thus the form tends to receive scant television coverage. In its eagerness to appear as non-derivative of conventional cinema, some screen-dance makers have eschewed mainstream cinema led practice, hence distancing perhaps a logically receptive audience. One such example of this type of work is the short screen-dance, *Memorabilia*, (Tiso, 2004) which is an early work by the researcher. The work was commissioned as part of The Arts Council of England's Capture 2 series, premiered at Monaco dance forum and was later screened at The Place theatre in 2004. A review of *Memorabilia*, based loosely on the childhood memories of featured solo dance artist Lauren Potter and narrated by Francesca Lindberg, then, twelve years old, alludes to *Memorabilia's* perceived lack of storytelling.

The voice track is child-like and haunting but we are left wondering who this person is and what she is talking about. In film a lot of things can be left to the viewer's imagination but you have to give a little in the narrative so we (the viewer) can make sense of the on-screen goings on (...) Numerous martial arts films and mainstream cinematic releases show just how stunning human movement can look when committed to film. The creators of the Capture series have gone into "art" overload and completely forgotten that other people who care nothing for their concept will have to watch these and attempt to interpret them. (Kinsella, 2004)

At the time of the creation of *Memorabilia*, the researcher was interested primarily in experimental dance imaging mediated through photography, video and data imagery and web animation. Importance was placed on exploring the materiality of the media in *Memorabilia*, rather than conventional story telling.

For the most part, contemporary screen-dance does not underestimate the intelligence of its audiences, nonetheless the application of familiar modes of television and cinematic convention might

prompt a more positive response to televised screen-dances. The BBC 4 initiative *Dance film academy* (2005) adopted the 'academy' jargon to promote screen-dance practice in the recognisable format of reality television. Writer Georgia Harper describes the program as,

(...) a significant opportunity for dance filmmakers to prove to audiences and the media that dance film is accessible, exciting and programmable on television. More importantly, it's an opportunity for these artists to get their work shown to a far wider audience than is ever usually possible. (Harper, 2005, p.10)

There has been a plethora of popular dance competitions made for television such as *Dancing on Wheels* for BBC 3, *Move like Michael Jackson* for BBC3, *Got to Dance* for Sky 1, *America's best dance crew* for MTV TV and *So you think you can dance*, screened on BBC 1.

Contemporary choreographers such as Henri Oguike, Rafael Bonachela, and Mark Baldwin have all made contributions to *So you think you can dance*, resulting in Baldwin, artistic director of Rambert Dance Company having to defend his decision to appear on the show. Baldwin attests, 'There were reservations (...) It has been said to me, 'What about your reputation?' (...) Even the chief executive of the company said to me, 'What are you doing that for?' (Baldwin in Groscop, 2010, p. 22).

According to hip-hop choreographer Sisco Gomez who was a judge on the program, the dance world is '(...) snobbish (...) about, *So you think you can dance*. 'Oh yes, people are bitchy - that happens in our industry (...) Hip-hop is all about keeping it underground. Commercial is taboo; being on TV is not cool'. (Gomez in Groscop, 2010, p. 22). Writer Viv Groscop, reflects also on this issue, 'Many people still believe choreography should be appreciated by a select few though, rather than by people like me,

sitting at home eating pizza. There is a feeling, too, that 'celebrity choreographers risk cheapening themselves' (Groscop, 2010, p. 23).

Despite the potential for much wider appeal that exists in other related dance film practices such as the musical, the development of screen-dance within mainstream culture has been limited. Yet dance has proved that it can work effectively on primetime television where the knowledge of dance history and theory has been of little importance to its success. This sort of scheduling has created a formidable following for competitive, accessible dance forms. By encouraging television audiences to express their opinions on the dancers and choreographers, the programmes have generated a newfound interest in social dance forms. Examining the appeal of this recent widely appreciated cultural phenomena could be beneficial to the screen-dance variant, which to date, has not succeeded in proliferating in its televisual form.

The Kantian criteria for the judging of the seriousness of a work of art has dominated western thinking since the eighteenth century. Kant's *Critique of Judgment* (1790) invoked the principal of 'supersensible substrate of nature' as a means of measuring the aesthetic worth of an art object. On this point, polemicist John Carey states,

Since beauty, as interpreted by Kant, turns out to be so closely related to whatever mysterious principals underlie the universe, it is not surprising that in his view its creators must be very special indeed. He calls them 'geniuses', the special property of genius being that it allows access to the supersensible region. (Carey, 2006, p.11)

Carey declares the Western arts as having a history of excluding certain types of people and experiences from the '(...) spiritual benefits (...) of the

arts (Carey, 2006, p. xii). The writer admonishes '(...) quite what sort of spiritual influence art should impart when operating correctly on the correct sort of person remains, however, largely unexamined' (Carey, 2006, p. xii). The value status of a screen or televisual work should not be estimated simply because of high volumes of the general public showing an interest in it. Some of the finest drama series made for television such as *The Sopranos* (1999-2007) created by David Chase, and *The Wire* (2002-2008) by David Simon, have wide ranging appeal because of, not despite their intelligent content.

Cultural commentator Herbert Gans argues that there are '(...) three taste cultures (...) subdivided into, (...) high culture, upper-and lower-middle cultures, and two kinds of low culture' (Gans, 1999, p. 7). It is difficult to position screen-dance within this cultural spectrum, as contemporary dance is a peripheral practice and is in a constant state of flux, yet the form is often cited as high culture or certainly upper middle culture. The research sought to be as non-judgmental as possible regarding the terminology in circulation with the aim of creating a directorial, stylistic, narrative template listing for the production of cine-literate screen-dances that appeal to amateurs of the 'two kinds of low culture' and the cultural elite of the 'high culture' and the 'upper-and lower-middle cultures' (Gans, 1999, p.7). The practical research screen-dances aimed to explore the point at which these boundaries intersect.

Gans' much broader cultural critique is best described as a '(...) class conflict: an attack by the cultured against the uncultured, the educated against the uneducated, the experts against the laity, and the

more affluent against the less affluent' (Gans, 1999, p.4). Contemporary screen-dance mediated through a sharper sense of mainstream cinematic language might encourage greater accessibility. The research therefore takes advantage of the wide ranging curiosity that continues to surround Hitchcock, Tati and Leone's upper and lower middle culture oeuvres, represented in films such as *Rear Window*, (Hitchcock 1955), *Once upon a time in America* (Leone, 1984) and *Mr. Hulot's Holiday* (Tati, 1953).

Deemed irrelevant, the theory of authorship has been subsumed by more recently expounded theories, that place less emphasis on the notion of process and other important principles for producing, set forth by prominent author film directors. Despite its extreme efficiency and richness as a model for working practice, the notion of the author has of late been rendered a historical footnote and a lost methodology. However, in many ways the authored narrative model proved itself to be an invaluable and perceptive tool to enhance greater knowledge and understanding of the researcher's screen-dance practice.

Prompted by the discovery that all three directors became self-producing during their careers, the authorial discourse has resonance with the emergence of modern day neo-authorial polymath director/producers. These practitioners are defined by recent technological advances in film that enable them to control works from choreographic conception to filmic realisation. The various layers of interpolation that make up a screen-dance work, movement, shooting, sound score, design and editing can now be ceded to one person, due to the range and affordability of digital technology. This revolution has been responsible for the development of a

group of personal filmmakers who have at their disposal broadcast quality digital camera equipment, image editing, music and sound effects programmes available on personal computers, bringing authored practice full circle. The technologies allow a level of finish to be achieved on relatively low budgets, something that would have been inconceivable during the careers of Hitchcock, Tati, Leone.

Video artist, and independent film polymath John Smith, who has collaborated with film maker and choreographer Miranda Pennell, is one such example of a highly personal film maker. Smith's short video installation, *Steve hates fish* (2015) uses footage filmed directly from the screen of a mobile device. Smith is credited as, director, producer, editor, director of photography and sound. In the absence of restrictions imposed by outside producers, artists and directors such as Matt Hulse have also been able to express themselves individually and independently on film. *Hotel central* (Hulse, 2000) features a Hulot type figure but inhabits a more dream like world than the original character. The hallucinatory quality of Hulse's film sets it apart from *Mr. Hulot's holiday* (1953), so that *Hotel central* exists as a work of art in its own right.

Larger crews also make screen-dance works, however the network of skilled technicians required will always need a creative personality in control. Choreographer and filmmaker Ian Spink's Hitchcock legacy piece, *Further and further into night* (1984) is one such work. The screen-dance is constructed out of action quotations from Hitchcock's thriller *Notorious* (1946) extended into longer dance sequences, which refer directly to the gesture aesthetic of *Notorious*. Spink's choreographic rewriting of

Notorious illuminated new creative dance pathways, setting the work apart from the Hitchcock source. Spink's work is an excellent example of screen-dance's capability of combining both accessible aspects mainstream cinema and contemporary dance.

In summary, the principal purpose of the research question was to absorb the directorial, stylistic and narrative impulses of Hitchcock, Tati and Leone in to the researchers' own screen-dance practice, with a view to augmenting the experience of others interested in engaging in similar working practices. Other important issues explored notions of screen-dance accessibility and the importance of sound in mainstream authored cinema as a viable model for screen-dance scoring. The authored narrative model proved itself to be a valuable and insightful tool for the enhancement of a greater knowledge and understanding of the researcher's own screen-dance practice. The main principles and tenets of authored practice worked extremely well for the invention of the research screen-dance works. The researcher thus maintains that it is beneficial for others to interrogate the rules of authorial narrative cinematic engagement for the development of their own practice.

Chapter One

Methodology

1. Methodology

1.1 Introduction

Chapter one describes the research methodology and other methodological approaches, that were considered as appropriate to the topic area. This was not a straight forward undertaking as with further investigation, it became clear that the terminology surrounding the authored impulse namely the theory of authorship, was somewhat ambiguous in tone and interpretation. For the researcher, the application of singular author terminology became ever more abstruse in terms of her own practice, as it became apparent that to meet with the growing ambition of each consecutive research screen-dance work, the productions gathered ever larger groups of indispensable collaborators and contributors.

1.2 Research methodology

Cinematic authored practice is problematic in terms of an all embracing theoretical model, simply because of the wide spectrum of artists and technicians involved in the processes of film production. Writer Xan Brooks has difficulty in accepting the concept of auteur or individual credit,

I blame the auteur theory, which elevated the director to a God-like status and allowed him (and it usually is a him) to hog all the credit. Hitchcock was an auteur, we are assured, and so was Orson Welles. And yet, in later years, the titles designer Saul Bass insisted that it was he and not Hitchcock who had engineered the shower scene in Psycho (surely the most Hitchcockian scene of them all), while US critic Pauline Kael made a case for the writer (Herman Mankiewicz) and the cinematographer (Greg Towland) as the real driving forces behind Citizen Kane. (Brooks, 2010, p. 20)

Brooks also questions the legitimacy of directorial authorship in the wake of the releases of feature films by first time directors, including fashion creative Tom Ford's *A single man* (2009) and visual artist Sam Taylor Wood's *Nowhere boy* (2009).

Copious amounts have been written prior to such admonishments that undermined the concept of authorial practice in favour of the text and the reader. Such practices were censured for having no '(...) spectator or ideology (...)' (Hayward, 2000, p. 23), yet emphasis on reader response theory and the deflection of the single author overlooked notions of process and other essential principles for producing, set forth by authors.

In his essay *The Death of the Author* (1968) French semiologist Roland Barthes denounced the role of the author as sole interpreter of a text,

We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture. (Barthes in Grant, 2008, p. 99)

The research does not wish to contest the notion of the text as 'multi-dimensional space' and agrees that authors are part of much wider socio-economic, cultural and political structures. There is however still some space for creative authorial voices to function within those contexts.

The recent work of filmmaker Katrina McPherson and long term, collaborator and editor Simon Fildes offers an interesting case in point. McPherson and Fildes explore working collaboratively with their performers, who are credited often alongside the filmmaker and editor as key partners. This is evident in *There is a place* (2015) made in

collaboration with dance performer Sang Jijia on location in Scotland. The work is credited as '*A video dance by Katrina McPherson, Simon Fildes and Sang Jijia*'. Their democratic approach to authorship is perhaps in part borne out of the team's exploration of dance improvisation as provider of screen-dance choreographic content. McPherson's and Fildes's screen-dances are shot frequently on a dramatic wide, and feature interwoven close-up shots of the performer. The wide shots take in the full sweep and the beauty of the landscape and locations in which the works tend to be set. Screen-dances such as *Coire Ruadh* (2015) and *The times it takes* (2015) both explore the landscape and location not only in terms of style and visual impact, but also in the narrative the landscape itself has to offer. Seemingly no overt attempt has been made in either screen-dance at imposing a scripted or formal plot line on the performers or the spaces and locations occupied. The concept of the landscape offering up a supplementary narrative imprint can also be detected alongside that of the creator's strong, core idea. Although the notion of landscape enhances narrative significance in the director's work, this should not undermine the value of concept, which underpins McPherson's authorial intention.

The notion of landscape as narrator also extends to *Stand In* (Edmunds, 2009), a screen-dance work by screen-dance artist Becky Edmunds, which displays to some degree, stylistic affiliation with artist's experimental film. As the title suggests the performer Scott Smith 'stands in' for movement and meaning. He remains a fixed presence in the foreground of the film plane, as he looks out onto an ever changing,

hypermediated, landscape. For the researcher, the breadth and savage beauty of the animated landscape also provides dramatic significance.

Screen-dance director David Hinton has developed another strong, yet ambivalent relationship to the notion of authorship and storytelling in a number of his works, made in collaboration with leading choreographers such as Rosemary Lee and Siobhan Davies. One example is Hinton's artist's film *Snow* (2003) in which the director recycles vintage black and white found footage of snow scenes, depicting skaters, and people attempting to keep warm. The movement language is found in the nuance of gesture, rather than in formal choreographed content or overt directorial inscription. Filmmaker, and artist, Claudia Kappenberg, who also writes about the problematic status of traditional forms of authorship, comments, 'In a work such as *Snow*, the author/maker/choreographer does not claim a traditional form of ownership of the material and is more a disinterested kind of author figure'. (Kappenberg, 2010)

The aftermath of the death of the author controversy stimulated a reaction against the perceived over theorisation of signifying systems. Cinematic authorship, once regarded as a defunct approach has subsequently undergone a revival in interest. In *Authorship and film* (Gerstner and Staiger, 2003) the co-editors draw attention to a fresh '(...) resurgence in the analysis of authorship' (Gerstner and Staiger, 2003, p. xi). *Hitchcock's Motifs* (Walker, 2005) is another key publication committed to a latter day, classic authorial manifesto. The demand for refreshed authorial commentary implies that there is still much to be learned from the intellectual pursuit of author directors as producers of significant art.

The research does not propose that polymath screen-dance artists should coalesce with Barthes's notion of the Auteur-God, nevertheless technical advances have made it possible for a singular practitioner's imprint to remain present throughout the process of making a film. This comparatively newly acquired skillset has led to an increase in screen-dance productions. A revival in appreciation of classic cinematic authored texts might present manifold, positive implications for screen-dance authorship, given the developments in digital technologies that encourage artists to self-produce complete authored works.

1.3 Other methodological approaches

Having selected an director based position to endorse accessibility in screen-dance at the onset of the research, concern was raised that cinematic authored practice might not display the precise theoretical awareness required as a lone philosophical model for the research. The mixing of the spatial and temporal arts into one medium, namely screen-dance seemed at this early point in the research to require more complex methodological models of reflection and conceivably another discipline positioned as an intermediary between authorship theory, as a mode of production and a method of writing. The researcher thus posited that an intertextual discourse might add theoretical gravitas to the methodology, which appeared lacking in modern Continental philosophy. To varying degrees, the practical research projects had all absorbed and transformed the extant Hitchcock, Tati and Leone texts into dance permutations. There was however some uncertainty about the whole sale suitability of intertextuality in the context of the authored schema, due to its close

association with Ferdinand de Saussure's post-structuralist writings and the polysemic nature of the sign. There was concern that the addition of an intertextual thread to the methodology might not coalesce sufficiently with the established classic authored route, since the two approaches appeared contradictory ideologies. The researcher conjectured that it might be overly hubristic to try to apply the author/ intertextual agglomeration to the making of the research screen-dances. The text centred corpora of Bakhtin for example is an important off shoot of intertextuality, but its concern with literature renders it a less dynamic disciplinary tool for the purposes of this research.

In his short essay *Casablanca: cult movies and intertextual collage*, in *Faith in fakes: travels in hyperreality* (1998) writer Umberto Eco identified intertextuality as a means for the evaluation of cult films. Since Hitchcock, Tati and Leone have achieved cult status as directors and as all of the practical research projects were translations from the authored film medium to the screen-dance medium, further consideration was given as to whether authored and intertextual theoretical frameworks might be amalgamated and modified to serve the research problem, by orienting the writing towards areas where the two intellectual systems might share reciprocal features. The combination of the two models was thus reconsidered to determine if such a framework could provide a flexible enough methodology for producing effective screen-dance, capable of reaching broader audiences.

The term 'intertextuality', was invented by Julia Kristeva, a pupil of Claude Levi-Strauss in *Word, Dialogue and Novel*, an essay written in

1966. Intertextuality has since been linked to some of the concepts of the late 1960's French approaches to semiotics. Ironically, the initial thought to integrate intertextual concepts into the arguments set forth was prompted by Barthes's *The Death of the author* (1968). Barthes' antagonism towards the notion of the author seemed contra to what the authorial related research question was aiming to achieve. However, the connective principles that underpin the notion of the text and its relationship to other texts might well have proved expedient to the research schema.

Other important aspects of intertextuality, flagged by Mary Orr in *Intertextuality; debates and contexts* [2003], namely; influence, imitation, illusion, and quotation, represented four principles that were responsible for determining authorship as a suitable research methodology for this thesis, since aspects of the directorial, stylistic, narrative listing, discussed in chapter five, are implied in all four. Although the intertextual model made it possible to evaluate the directors' cinematic provenances, another fundamental question remained as to how to integrate and interpret the three directors' sources into recognisable, yet reinvented screen-dances. Of the several issues teased out from the broader concepts associated with intertextuality, that intertextuality engages with the concepts of cultural recycling and parody were of most interest to the research.

Constructing a relationship between authorship and intertextuality remained problematic, due to the fact that the fundamental elements of the two theories were contradictory, hence an authorship/text oxymoron might destabilise the arguments. Time was spent researching potential compatibilities between the two rival impulses in an effort to incorporate

authorship as a screen-dance producing modality and intertextuality as a mode of theoretical enquiry. However, the attempt to broker an agreement between authorship and intertextuality did not provide adequate, appropriate answers to research question posed.

Intertextuality did however offer a way of understanding how the researcher applied the authorial credentials to her own work, as opposed to employing them as a method of defining and refining the directorial, stylistic, narrative listing. This thesis is predominantly practice as research in the form of a piece of self-enquiry and was ordered as practice first, followed by the theorisation of the research screen-dances projects. Writer Robin Nelson alludes to the challenges faced by practice led projects that destabilize the primary position of theory over to practice,

(...) the project of bodily dissemination of knowledge from one community to another - for example the passing on of a movement vocabulary in the workshop from one dance or physical theatre community to another - challenges the dominance, if not virtual exclusivity, of writing (or other codified symbolic language) which has long since established itself as the appropriate means of storage and distribution of knowledge. (Nelson, 2011, p.1)

Ultimately, reference to the directorial narrative devices and stylistics of the three directors proved to be of more value to the practical creation of the research screen-dances and ensuing experimental findings. The methodological framework yielded less in the way of latitude with which to explore authored thematic preoccupation or the materiality of the film making process, to the degree that was necessary to support the principles of the practice based components of the research. After some time and much consideration, the researcher thus decided to abandon her attempts to apply an intertextual methodology to the thesis.

The proposed dual author/text system differed radically from other conventional theoretical practices frequently linked to Hitchcock, Tati and Leone studies, such as structural, semiotic and psychoanalytic criticism. There exists for instance, exhaustive feminist theoretical analysis of the Hitchcock oeuvre spearheaded by Laura Mulvey's classic, *Visual pleasure and narrative cinema* (1975). This essay explored gender issues and denounced Hitchcock's objectification of his actresses. Tania Modleski's *The women who knew too much: Hitchcock and feminist theory* (2005), continues the feminist Hitchcockian reading, by focusing on female forms of cinematic spectatorship in the director's work. The arguments postulated by the two writers suggested possible methods of dealing with the concept of the male gaze in the practice based components. For example, in the opening gestural scenes of screen-dance *Tippi: crying fowl* (Tiso, 2007) created for the research, ballet dancer Jenny Tattersall (as Tippi Hedren, as Melanie Daniels) was instructed to look straight into the camera lens at the audience. This action was in a direct challenge to Hitchcock's validation of the male gaze.

General psychoanalytic readings also respond well to the Hitchcock, Tati and Leone corpora, most obviously in *Spellbound* (Hitchcock, 1945). The film functions principally as an arrogation of Freudian theory filtered through artist Salvador Dali's surrealist set designs. Sociologist Slavoj Zizek also offers convincing psychoanalytic interpretations of mass culture, with special reference to Hitchcock and the gaze in *Looking awry: an introduction to Jaques Lacan through popular culture* (1992)., Zizek proposes a number of new tactics for the

psychoanalytic decoding of Hitchcock's cinema,

(...) first an articulation of the dialectic of deception at work in Hitchcock's films, a dialectic in which those who really err are the non-duped; *then* a conception of the famous Hitchcockian tracking shot as a formal procedure whose aim is to produce a "blot", at a point from which the image itself looks at the spectator, the point of the "gaze of the Other"; and, finally, a proposal that would enable us to grasp the succession of the main stages in Hitchcock's development, from the Oedipal journey of the 1930s to the "pathological narcissism", dominated by a superego, of the 1960s. (Zizek, 1992, p. ix)

The notion of 'the famous Hitchcockian tracking shot' (Zizek, 1992, p. ix) inspired the creation of *Vanishing Point* (Tiso, 2004). The work was composed of a series of protracted continuous camera movements. The performers were requested to remain emotionally unengaged and to avoid interacting with the camera lens, so as to ensure that their style of delivery matched the neutrality of Janet Leigh's (1927-2004) performance (as Marion Crane) in *Psycho* (Hitchcock, 1960).

In summing up, as the thesis developed, the anxiety surrounding the nature of the philosophical focus was tempered by other unforeseen constructive inferences. These were associated with the power of the close-up shot, and the narrative concerns of authorial cinematic practice. The directorial, stylistic, and narrative listing, which appears in chapter five recognised the intensely authorial voices of Hitchcock, Tati and Leone and the application of the resource to the researcher's own work, which parodies to some degree the directors' directorial, stylistic and narrative languages.

Chapter Two

Authored film

2. Authored film

2.1. Introduction

In order to understand the reasoning underpinning the adaptation of classic authored strategy to the requirements of screen-dance, it is expedient to describe the origins of author theory and the contributions of Hitchcock, Tati, and Leone within that context. Chapter two historicises and contextualises authored film and sound and music composition in filmmaking. The chapter also examines the working practices and classic author theory embedded into key works by Hitchcock, Tati and Leone.

The nineteenth century European Romantic sensibility epitomised by the German poet and Romantic thinker Friedrich von Schiller, author of the *Ode to joy* (1803), is not included in the research. The researcher felt that this particular stratum of the authored equation resides outside the scope of this MA thesis.

2.2. Authored film in context

Classic authorship criticism as a singular methodological principle was assigned initially to the research for two reasons. First, the classic authored strand expedites an understanding of the particular types of films created by the three directors. The films cited are all drawn from the realistic narrative tradition of cinema and share characteristics of virtuoso sound track and movement direction. The films are not overtly political, nor do they subvert conventional cinema practice. Tati's *Mr. Hulot's Holiday* (1953) and *Mon Oncle* (1958) examine the lives of the French Bourgeoisie and the society in which the Hulot character, played by the director, finds

himself at odds with the status quo. Both films are restrained in their socio-political pretension.

Second, conventional authored practice provides an appropriate means of expounding precisely the sight and sound aesthetics of the three directors, as Hitchcock, Tati and Leone's filmic styles are so immediately identifiable. That said, though easy to classify as style, cinematic authorship remains difficult to evaluate as a theory and has been subject to many transformations and phases.

Film authorship was articulated initially in Germany during the early 1900's as Autorenfilm by scriptwriters who claimed total ownership of the films they wrote, despite the central presence of a director (Hayward, 2005, p. 20). The core debate then shifted to France, there, concentrating on the notion of the director as the individual auteur, whether or not he had been instrumental in the creation of the film script. In 1948 the French art critic Alexander Astruc posited the notion of the director at the axis of the text in his essay *The birth of a new avant-garde: camera stylo in L'Écran Française*, from March of that year. By 1954 film critic and French new wave director François Truffaut had repositioned the single vision theory, this time in Andre Bazin's film journal, Cahiers du Cinéma, as the concept of '(...) la politique des auteurs (...)') (Buscombe in Caughie, 2001, p. 22). The new development was expressed as an anti-authoritarian reaction against outmoded scriptwriting practice in France and the subsequent championing of the '(...) director-based approach (...)') (Holmes and Ingram, 1998, p. vii). Truffaut's seminal article, *Une certaine tendance du cinéma Français* (1954) in issue number thirty-one of the film journal

Cahiers du Cinéma, criticised the French proclivity for filmic literary adaptation as '(...) not truly cinematic (...)' (Buscombe in Caughie, 2001, p. 23). Films were henceforward categorised by artistic merit and critical worth, based on continuity of style and presence of recurring thematic, rather than literary aspiration (Holmes and Ingram, 1998, p. vii). Yet confusingly, despite his single vision pronouncements, Truffaut's working methods were often highly collaborative. He used the same actors and members of production team for many of his films. Those involved in production often performed cameo roles, such as the British film editor Thom Noble, who appeared in some of the group scenes in *Fahrenheit 451* (Truffaut, 1966). Truffaut's working relationships were in many ways similar to present day independent dance companies whose members often share tasks and pool artistic assets to create a screen-dance work.

American film theorist Andrew Sarris proposed the next contentious, director based variant. Positioned now as a cultural impasse between European cinema and the commercial productions of Hollywood, Sarris' authorship theory impulse and subsequent arguments functioned as a '(...) way of ranking directors in a hierarchy of worth (...)', rather than as a philosophical focus for intellectual debate. For Sarris, the theory of authorship functioned as a system to alert cinephiles to the types of films he considered suitable for serious analysis (Andrew, 1976, p. 5).

This research proposed at its inception, a refinement of the classic Truffautian strand to establish whether it was possible for French auteur tradition to activate meaningful, accessible narratives within the screen-dance context. By deferring to the traditional premise of classic, French,

auteurist policy, the notion of neo-auteurist, multitasking, self-producing screen-dance makers was posited as a means of improving the reception of screen-dance.

2.3. Alfred Hitchcock in authored context

The Hitchcockian devices deployed in the research screen-dances *Vanishing point* [Tiso, 2004] and *Nil desperandum* [Tiso, 2012] referenced the director's sense of visual style, rather than narrative or dialogue construction. This can be observed in *Nil desperandum*, where spoken interactions between the actors were almost negligible.

Hitchcock's signature, overstated acting style which Tattersall absorbed in to her performance, proved more fruitful in terms of an examination of Hitchcock's narrative concerns that are embedded in his psychological thriller *The birds* (Hitchcock, 1963). The section in *Tippi: crying fowl* [Tiso, 2007] where Tattersall repeats movement appropriated from the avian attack on the phone booth in *The birds*, is evidence of this approach. A number of stylistic devices and thematic concerns detected by writer Michael Walker and referenced in *Tippi: crying fowl*, are described in detail on pp. 69-75. Other salient themes, such as Hitchcock's interest in suspense narratives, extended action chases, international espionage plotting, the often featured trope of the wrongly accused man and McGuffin devices, are not referenced in this research.

Hitchcock lived and worked in Germany when F.W Murnau (1888-1931), Fritz Lang (1890-1976) and Ernst Lubitsch (1897-1947) were crafting definitive German expressionist films such as *Metropolis* (Lang, 1926), (Strauss, 2004, p. 7). Whilst there, Hitchcock collaborated with

German technicians on his directorial debut, *The Pleasure Garden* (1927) which featured strong references to Langian German expressionist stylistics, most noticeably in the distorted sets and angular lighting states.

Hitchcock's authored thematic was influenced in equal measure by Eisenstein's Soviet montage practice. But as Hitchcock scholar Robin Wood points out, Sergei Eisenstein's '(...) spatial/temporal disorientation (...) ' techniques were adopted by Hitchcock to confound and deceive his audiences, as opposed to promulgating Marxist theory (Wood, 1977, p. 15). Hitchcock was drawn specifically to Eisenstein's core concept of film, conveyed as a series of elements or attractions, a concept described by film theorist J. Dudley Andrew thus, '(...) each element functions like a circus attraction, different to the other attractions at the fair but on equal footing and capable of giving the spectator a precise psychological impression' (Andrew, 1976, p.47).

Hitchcock's later career took him to Hollywood where he drew on the prevalent naturalistic style. Nevertheless, Eisenstein's Soviet editing technique was still patently manifest in his later films. In *The birds* (Hitchcock, 1963), the 'master of suspense' manipulated his audience's responses right up to the moment when petrol is ignited by a match, and explodes, during the massed avian attack on the Bodega Bay Garage. Tippi Hedren's (as Melanie Daniels) horrified response is conveyed as a series of fixed moments, all inspired by Eisensteinian montage cutting procedure.

There has been considerable interest in the Hitchcock authored model as an expressive strategy and analytical tool for film directors,

cinematographers and choreographers, many of whom have engaged in Hitchcockian homage. Gus Van Sant's *Psycho* (1998) takes the notion of the film remake to its ultimate conclusion in his meticulous reworking of Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960). Video artist Douglas Gordon also takes the idea of exacting reference to the extreme in *24-hour Psycho* (1996), a decelerated, twenty four hour looped version of the original film. *Flight plan* (2005), directed by Robert Schwentke updates Hitchcock's *The lady vanishes* (1938), whilst Truffaut's transposition, *The bride wore black* (1967) explores the Hitchcockian trope of a man who suffers the consequences of being wrongly accused of a crime. Chris Marker's experimental films *La jetée* (1962) and *Sans soleil* (1983), both share common elements with Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958) (Orr, 2005, p. 2), whereas Nicole Garcia's pastiche *Place Vendôme* (1998), reinvents story lines and recycles composer Bernard Herrmann's music from the original 1958 *Vertigo* score (Orr, 2005, p. 5).

Hitchcock's model has also been reconceptualised and transformed into other types of art practice. His work was drawn upon as a source base for the Hitchcock U.K. centenary exhibition, *Notorious: Alfred Hitchcock and contemporary art*, at MOMA in Oxford (1999). The work was later relocated to the Pompidou centre in Paris in 2000 (Orr, 2005, p. 2). MOMA contributors included American photographer Cindy Sherman and Canadian filmmaker and opera director Atom Egoyan. Another important Hitchcock media event was *Hitch*, presented at The Glasgow print studio in 2003 where twelve artists' responses to the Hitchcock oeuvre were exhibited (Orr, 2005, p.1).

The use of the Hitchcock style palette as an inspiration for contemporary dance is not without precedent. Spink's, *Further and further into night* (1984) refers in detail the Hitchcock model and recycles precise action from *Notorious* (Hitchcock, 1946) into new dance structures. The re-application of familiar Hitchcockian conventions, plot lines and stylistic devices in Spink's work, propels *Further and further into night* into accessible areas of the screen-dance idiom. This work which, '(...) literally "quotes" movement sequences' (...) 'from *Notorious* has a clear connection to the research (Dodds, 2001, p. 2).

2.4. Sergio Leone in authored context

A selection of recurring Leonesque themes observed by writer Robert C. Cumbow (described on pp.83-85) were conscripted in the the making of *Crimes Tiso* (2005). Other conspicuous directorial and stylistic tendencies Leone exhibits, such as a baroque use of violent confrontation, long passages of emotionally overwrought scoring, a fascination with the iconography of Roman Catholicism and the exploitation of the extreme facial close-up, were also grafted onto *Crimes*. After the directorial, stylistic, narrative listing had been created, the Leonesque facial close-up technique was developed by the researcher in her subsequent screen-dance experiments.

Sergio Leone made fifty eight films as an assistant before becoming a director in his own right (Frayling, 2000, p. 77). During this period, he acquired the skills required to shoot action sequences for the popular 'peplum' genre films, featuring stories about ancient Rome and classical antiquity (Frayling, 2000, p. 85).

Leone notes, '(...) the greatest screen writer of western films was Homer, because Achilles, Ajax, Hector and others are archetypes of Western characters' (Leone in Frayling, 1998, p. 94). The action orientated narratives of early films such as *The Colossus of Rhodes* (1961) and Leone's later spaghetti western cycle have much to offer contemporary screen-dance practitioners in terms of style and content, as dance, another mode of language, is connoted principally through action.

Of the disparate strands that gave rise to Leone's specific Western variant, the silent cinema had the utmost impact on the formation of his aesthetic. Leone cites silent film star Charles Chaplin as a '(...) key influence (...) ' on his directorial methods (Frayling, 2000, p. 18). His personal background was also firmly rooted in the silent cinema. Leone's mother was a silent film actress and his father a director. Under the pseudonym 'Roberto Roberti' (Cumbo, 1987, p. viii) Roberti fell out of favour with Mussolini's Fascist Institute of Enlightenment in Rome, and was prevented from making films after 1941 (Frayling, 2000, p. 65). Despite his appearance in a minor role in the iconic Italian neo realist film *Bicycle thieves* (De Sica, 1948), Leone's style remained rooted in the silent cinema, as opposed to the Italian prevailing socio-political directing style of Vittorio De Sica and Roberto Rossellini (Frayling, 2000, p. 49).

Leone's oeuvre has been referenced frequently in films such as: *My name is nobody* (1973) directed by one of Leone's protégés, Tonino Valerii (Frayling, 2000, p. 248), Shane Meadows's *Once upon a Time in the Midlands* (2002) which relocates the spaghetti motif to Nottingham and *The good, the bad, the weird* (2009) by South Korean director Kim Jee-

woon, which resets the precursor action to 1940's Manchuria. Hitherto, Leone had based his *Dollars trilogy: A fistful of dollars* (1964), *For a few dollars more* (1965) and *The good, the bad and the ugly* (1966) on stories and characters garnered from Japanese samurai films, thus creating a formidable web of cinematic connections.

Leone's authored aesthetic has significant implications for prospective screen-dance makers, in terms of his penchant for overt movement metaphor as an a priori means of communication, his use of the wide screen format to capture in extreme close-up, exaggerated facial expression, the complexity of the spatial relationships between his locations and characters, and his understanding of musical scoring and sound design in filmmaking.

Leonesque spaghetti western tropes, taken out context and repositioned within the screen-dance idiom might open up new areas for screen-dance performance to occupy. For example, the inclusion of a gun in several choreographed scenes in the Leone inflected research screen-dance *Crimes* (Tiso, 2005) subverts expectation of what types of properties or subject matters are suitable for screen-dance, an art form not routinely associated with violent gun slinging content.

2.5. Jaques Tati in authored context

One of the salient hallmarks of Tati's directorial style is his preoccupation with the theme of progress, and the contrast between the binary oppositions of French modernity and French tradition. This thematic finds expression in the settings for *Mon Oncle* (Tati, 1958). The film examines Tati's perceived tension between mechanised modes of living, associated

with suburban modern accommodation and liberated lifestyles of traditional French vernacular dwellings. Tati's observation of everyday natural behaviour is another key directorial element. However, neither of these two approaches were examined in great depth in the Tati inflected research screen-dance *Souvenir* (Tiso, 2005). The researcher chose to concentrate on applying Tati's use of the visual gag to the crafting of the dance structures and ensuing story lines. *Souvenir* was concerned with capturing the stylistics of the era and the manufacturing of a narrative that had particular resonance with some of the major movement episodes in Tati's *Mr. Hulot's Holiday* (1953). This is witnessed in the beach scene featuring a group of fitness enthusiasts who are performing various exercise routines near to the hotel where Mr. Hulot is staying.

Jaques Tati source texts have been put to use by various filmmakers and have demonstrated their suitability as an important points of reference for screen-dance practitioners and other art practitioners. Animation director Sylvain Chomet's extension of the Tati template into the feature length cartoon *Belleville rendez-vous* (2003) demonstrates the effectiveness of the Tati oeuvre in straddling diverse screen categories. Tati's postman, who delivers the local mail by bicycle in *Jour de fête* (1949) and Hulot, conceived later on in Tati's career, resonate with the animated characters in *Belleville rendez-vous*, in a similar use of humour and movement as opposed to dialogue as a method of conferring meaning and mood. Sylvain Chomet went on to create *The illusionist* (2010) another animated Tatiesque homage based on an unproduced script written by Tati in 1956. *Mr. Hulot's holiday* (Tati, 1953) has also been

referenced in Hulse's *Hotel central* (2000), but in this instance the movement palettes move in to realms that exist beyond the Tati modality.

The title of the Tati inflected research screen-dance *Souvenir*, (Tiso, 2005) was inspired by the director's anti consumerist exhortation in Penelope Gilliatt's English language book about the director, *Jaques Tati* (1976), 'Now a new car: maybe the old one has more memories. *Souvenirs*' (Tati in Gilliat, 1976, p. 34). *Souvenir*, which refers exclusively to *Mr. Hulot's holiday* is offset by complex movement sequences that rely on comic timing and the use of idiosyncratic Tatiesque sound effects.

Tati's movement direction, his relationship to sound design and image as opposed to dialogue as a means of communication, and systematic use of the long shot, permitting events to occur in real time and space, are all of great value in terms of screen-dance application.

2.6. Film Sound in authored context

In an interview given in 1933, Hitchcock stated, 'Music as an artistic asset of the film, is sadly neglected' (Brown, 2005, p. 21). The director acknowledges here what is recognised by past scholarship as a lack of appreciation for one of cinema's most powerful elements.

The study of musical composition for film remains on the periphery of academia. Film scores, '(...) also known as underscores, background music, incidental music (...)' are undervalued in film production (Donnelly, 2006, p.1). The combination of high art pretensions of the classical music canons, set against the low art status of film music has done little to enhance its reputation. Despite film scores created by classical composers such as of Serge Prokofiev and Ralph Vaughan Williams, film music has

been regarded frequently as a tool to assist with continuity editing. The click track mechanism devised in the 1930's, which was responsible for synchronising precisely sound to image, rendered film sound and music subservient to the moving image track, and ensured that composers had reduced control over their scores. Spotting music to the final cut of film images gave rise to the disparaging expression, '(...) Mickey Mousing the music (...)' (Brown, 2005, p. 22). Although there are numerous scholarly texts that concern themselves with film, most of the academic discourse generated has focused on the creation and consumption of film images. Film director, writer and composer, Philip Brophy confirms this tendency, describing film sound as being '(...) submerged by the weight of the literary and visual discourse' (ed. Brophy, 1999, p. v).

For many of its earliest commentators the expectation of a film as visual experience was undermined by the inclusion of sound. In his book, *Film Art* (1957) German Gestalt psychologist Rudolph Arnheim (1904 - 2007) set forth a historical precedent for the vilification of sound and film dialogue. In Arnheim's opinion, the absence of dialogue, sound, colour, and three dimensionality purified film. Consequently he equated the loss of filmic art status to the coming of the talking pictures. In writer J. Dudley Andrew's *The Major Film Theories* (1976) the author devotes a chapter to the essays of Arnheim, noting that any sound in film to Arnheim was like a 'cancer' which, '(...) enshrined one of its parts (dialogue) at the expense not only of the other de-emphasised parts, but at the expense of the organic whole' (Dudley Andrew, 1976, p. 35). Initial negative responses to film sound were affected by the sub-standard nature of the early sound

technology. The *duelling cavalier* comedic scenes from the Hollywood musical *Singin' in the rain* (Donen and Kelly, 1952), corroborated many of the problems that beleaguered the early sound stages.

Situating authorial practice as an indication of filmic style and music production modality has been an effective strategy for the research. Yet despite the intertextual reading considered for endorsement of the research in the early stages of the thesis, the practical and to a lesser extent written submission allude strongly to the concept of author and authorial relationship to sound scoring. It was considered unwise to underestimate the importance of sound and musical elements, as they represent an essential factor in the shaping of effective, meaningful screen-dance works.

Chapter Three

Screen-dance

3. Screen-dance

3.1. Introduction

Screen-dance exists as a number of interconnected dialogues, namely film, dance, music and sound design. Within these practices many cultural and theoretical frameworks operate. Composer, film maker and critic Michel Chion refers to his concept of 'added value' as a method with which to explore the interconnectivity and reciprocity of the sound and image in film making,

By added value I mean the expressive and informative value with which a sound enriches a given message so as to create the definite impression, in the immediate or remembered expression one has of it, that this information or expression 'naturally' comes from what is seen, and is already contained in the image itself. Added value is what gives the (eminently incorrect) impression that sound is unnecessary, that sound merely duplicates meaning which in reality it brings about, either all on its own or by discrepancies between it and the image. (Chion, 1994, p.5)

It can however be problematic forming reciprocal approaches towards the study of the subject, since theoretical exploration combining music, sound design, and choreography with an in depth knowledge of film studies is limited. This comparatively young genre has as yet, neither failed to inspire large quantities of scholarship, nor has any single mode of enquiry has been strongly recommended as a means to examine the topic area.

There follows a summary of some of the fundamental issues that impact the manner in which the hybrid form screen-dance is manifest: screen-dance history, screen-dance definition and screen-dance genres and sub genres. With reference to the aforementioned issues, an attempt

has been made to resolve the fundamental question, 'what is a dance film?' This was supported in the early stages of the research by examples of critically acclaimed screen-dances that were accessed mainly through the now defunct specialist screen-dance collection at The Place Videoworks. This extensive collection has since undergone relocation to The Laban Centre in Greenwich, London.

3.2. Screen-dance history

The art of screen-dance appears to be lagging behind dance made specifically for the theatrical milieu in terms of artistic development. Independent dance film history has produced a number of multi skilled performers, such as directors and performers, Charles Chaplin and Buster Keaton, both of whom were producing movement oriented works during the silent era. Latter day, high profile dance practitioner filmmakers also include: Dutch dancer Hans Van Manon and ballet company director Birgit Culberg, both whom were ballet dancers and choreographers before they experimented with screen-dance, U.K. choreographer and film maker Sally Potter, who has carved out a successful film career, and French director/ choreographer Philippe Decouflé, who has established his own unique form of visually spectacular screen-dance. The dance practitioner and filmmaker Yvonne Rainer, is also worthy of mention here. A series of influential short movement oriented films celebrating Rainer's early career were screened at the Getty Research Institute, Getty Centre, Los Angeles in October of 2014. These included, *Rhode Island Red* (1968) which takes as its subject matter a chicken coop in continual motion, and *Trio Film* (1968) which is performed naked by Judson dancers Steve Paxton and

Becky Arnold, and features a large, white, inflatable ball. Rainer's pursuit of cross disciplinary dance/art practice remains a relevant force today, and has had considerable impact on the reception of screen-dance, and where it is received. As an example, Katrina McPherson's, *Rainer* inspired corpora has found its natural home as part of arts, rather than televised programming. McPherson states,

I remain as inspired and excited by video dance as an artistic medium. What is unexpected is that, of the twenty or so video dance works that I have directed in the intervening decade and a half - and although I have directed many hours of broadcast documentary arts programmes - only one of the video dance works I have made has been commissioned by and seen on television. I am in no way disheartened by this outcome, for what has also happened over the past 15 years is that video dance has come into its own as an art form and there are now many opportunities beyond television for this kind of work to be funded and seen. The money to make the majority of my video dance has come from both public and private commissions and the resulting works have been screened all over the world - at festivals and in cinemas, theatres and galleries. (McPherson, 2004)

Independent dance on film in the UK has been defined by experiments such as the Channel 4 series *Dancelines* (1987). The initiative comprised a multi-disciplinary project that brought together choreographers, designers and directors to explore the diverse processes that go into making a screen-dance. However, the discourse created by this experiment and others, such as Channel 4's *Tights camera action* series (1993-94) failed to enthuse wider audiences.

3.3. Screen-dance definitions

'Screen-dance' has been selected as suitable terminology for the research instead of the dense 'dance for the camera', or the misleading 'dance film', as it takes into account the immense volume of screen applications available from the smart phone, domestic computer and

television, to wide screen cinema formats. As much of current screen-dance is short format and shot on high resolution, broadcast quality, digital video equipment, 'dance film' as umbrella terminology is deemed inaccurate. There is also a marked difference in the materiality and aesthetic of each of the two mediums. Video has little depth of field and flattens the image, thus exaggerating foreground perspectives, whilst film enhances the entire film plane so that imagery remains in deep focus. Digital cameras such as the Arri Alexa are now reducing the gap in quality between digital and analogue formats. In the past, economic forces have dictated that screen-dance remains shot chiefly on digital video formats. There are exceptions. Director Adam Robert's *Hands* (1995), featuring choreographer Jonathan Burrows was shot on 35 mm film stock by Roberts, and lit by feature filmmaker Jack Hazan.

3.4. Screen-dance genres and sub-genres

Screen-dance embodies a diversified range of genres that are individually distinguishable yet equally disposed to cross pollination. The contemplation of a single model or concise definition for 'screen-dance genre' is contentious as the form embraces so many disparate categories and sub categories and has been constructed out of profuse dance and non-dance systems.

The following sketch devotes itself to the identification of prominent generic imprinting within screen-dance and identifies the diversity of some pre-existing genre groups that the researcher had identified and categorised prior to her MA studies.

Screen-dance works can be predicated on diverse models such as, theatrical, hypermediated, documentary, and cinematic. *Symphony in C* (MacGibbon, 1997) is an example of the theatrical genre variation. Ex Royal Ballet dancer Ross MacGibbon's recording, facilitated by multi camera work, remains as faithful as is possible to the dance composition of Russian choreographer George Balanchine (1904-1983). *La Medea* [2017], a theatrical work by director/ choreographer Yara Traveiso was performed, filmed, and edited in real time in front of a live studio audience in Brooklyn in January 2017. The work was streamed instantaneously to audiences around the world. Their virtual interaction with the theatrical experience was in close proximity to the work as experienced by the live audience in Brooklyn. At the other end of the aesthetic spectrum, freestyle club jazz dancer Robert Hylton's and commercials director, Oliver Ashton's *Jaffa Man* (2003) tackles dance mediated through pop video genres.

Some screen-dance makers have responded to the arrival of the technological digital revolution with a genre variation best described as hypermediated screen-dance. This variant comprises an abundance of post-production interventions. A considerable number of works mining this particular vein were screened in the Dance film international programme, part of the *dancefilmday* in London in December, 2005. The immediacy of this style engages audiences on a sensory level, but at times, at the expense of the context of the spatial/temporal body represented. *b-alles* (Giotti, 2005) for instance, manipulates footage from a 1980's Greek commercial for a racquet game to humorous effect, but diminishes the

importance of dance technique. Another more current example of the technical, hypermediated variant is *Wide Open* [2016] by music video /commercials directors Dom & Nic, in collaboration with musicians, The Chemical Brothers. The work was awarded a prize at IMZ Dance Screen for technical innovation in 2016.

Writer Harmony Bench has identified and classified another distinctive mediated genre, she describes as '(...) social dance-media (...), an experimental composite of dance-media and social media purveyed to audiences via the internet. Bench subdivides social dance-media into three discrete elements namely '(...) crowdsource, flash and viral choreographies (...).' (Bench, 2010).

Bench affirms,

(...) works of social dance-media present themselves as evidence that dance should be shared, copied, embodied, manipulated and recirculated rather than preserved for the professional and elite dancer. (Bench, 2010).

Bench cites Fildes's and McPherson's *Move-me* (2006-2008) as an example of a crowdsource choreography. The project travelled throughout the U.K., Australia and New Zealand between 2006 and 2008, in a booth like construction that recorded '(...) performances of everyday individuals out shopping or waiting in foyers' (Bench, 2010). Flash choreographies, according to Bench are composed of and performed by, 'Flash mobs', which are '(...) large gatherings of individuals at a specific time and place in response to a call sent out via email or text (...)' (Bench 2010). For Bench, viral choreographies present '(...) common ground of cultural reference points for internet audiences, and (...) circulate contagiously', as the description suggests. Remakes of Judson Laipply's 'Evolution of

dance', the '(...) most viewed dance video on YouTube(online)' are examples of the social dance-media genre sub-set (Bench, 2010).

Hinton's dynamic cutting style imposed on archival footage of exotic birds in his screen-dance *Birds* from 2000, also expands on the notion of what screen-dance can be, and permits the viewer to experience the footage with a choreographic eye. Hinton's and Davies's, *All this can happen* (2012), composed from predominantly black and white archival film, is a mediated work that questions perceptions in screen-dance practice. *All this can happen* moves adroitly between multiple environments, subject matters, split screens and freeze frame imagery that are not directly related to screen-dance in orthodox interpretation. Composer, sound designer and writer Jürgen Simpson attests to the work's, '(...) complex hypermediated visual structures (...) built around the work's predominant thematic, the action of walking' (Simpson, 2016, p. 21).

For other practitioners, screen-dance has meant the implementation of movement mediated through film genre and cinematic language. Set against Parisian backdrops, the feature film length *Le Delfi* (Blanca Li, 2002) incorporates hip-hop genres with contemporary dance. *Street Dance* (Giwa and Pasquini, 2010) featuring actress Charlotte Rampling and popular television programme *Britain's got talent* winners George Sampson and hip-hop dance group Diversity, works on a similar level as *Northern Soul* (2014) directed by Elaine Constantine, which is an exploration of the 1970's British social dance movement.

Route-dancing to New Orleans (2005) by director Alex Reuben aligns itself with standard road movie and travelogue conventions, whilst directors Joe Campbell and Oscar Oldershaw's *Sulphur Spring* (2016) follows another much shorter journey through a frozen Icelandic landscape. *Sulphur Spring* contains no discernable dance movement, and appears to have absorbed the stylistic traits shared by experimental artist's film.

Pennell's *Fisticuffs* (2004) draws on the classic western bar brawl, reinvented as a series of orchestrated fights, located within an inner city pub. It is this category of cine literate works that forge firm links with the themes and issues raised by the research.

Realist interpretations and so called 'Docu-Dances' that focus on dancers' lives, work processes and performance as well as the filming of reconstructions of dance works originally created for the stage are not included in this account (Rubidge in Jordan and Allen, 1993, p. 213). Examples of this type of genre include, *Anatomy of a male ballet dancer* (2017), directed by David Barda and James Pellerito, which is a celebration the life of Brazilian Ballet dancer Marcelo Gomes, and the tribute work, *In the steps of Trisha Brown*, (2016), directed by Marie H el ene Rebois.

The Hollywood musical is another viable form of screen-dance but as it such a vast subject, with its own specific history, the form will also not be referenced here. The decision was taken not to include this particular genre, despite the musical's existing strong television presence, as the topic area moves well beyond the range of this piece of writing. Dance led

animations, such as choreographer and filmmaker Wilkie Branson's *Little Dreams* [2016] also will not be included in this study, nor interactive mixed media screen-dance works such as Antony Hamilton and Byron Perry's *Untitled* (2015), where editing procedures and decisions are determined by the viewer.

3.5. Screen-dance literature and film theory

There follows is a brief summary of the screen-dance literature and film theory sources which were drawn upon, that may be of interest to other screen-dance practitioners with similar interests.

Stephanie Jordan's *Parallel Lines: media representations of dance* (1993), concerned with the theme of media depictions of dance made for broadcast television, and Sherrill Dodd's extensive account, chronicling of the diversity of the screen-dance form, *Dance on screen: genres and media from Hollywood to experimental art* (2001) provided useful, wide ranging resources.

Writers such as Erin Brannigan have also contributed much to the opening up of the screen-dance debate. In *Dance film: choreography and the moving image* (2011) Brannigan cites the many types of screen-dances that inform the screen-dance vernacular, which make up the subject matter of her book,

New, intimate dances located on corporeal surfaces and specific bodily sites have become the subject of films shot primarily in close-up. The gestural language of dramatic screen performance has been informed by, and informs, choreographic practice to produce moments of gestural dance. Various forms of editing such as jump cuts and matches-on-action have enabled new forms of dance as choreographic continuity is spread across bodies and locations, or non-figural dance is produced from inanimate objects. Challenging dances that elude perception of

performance are presented to the camera to be both revealed and manipulated through the use of experimental film techniques. Show dancing has been 'restaged' on city streets in film musicals that choreograph the shift from everyday activities to corporeal extremes. (Brannigan, 2011 p. 3)

Dancefilm: choreography and the moving image (Brannigan, 2011) also examines the association between full cinematic and choreographic practise, and how choreography and cinematic processes combine to create the hybrid media, dancefilm. Her discussion of film theory includes specific reference to the use of the cinematic close-up in screen-dance practice, to produce 'micro-choreographies' (Brannigan, 2011, p. 39). Micro-choreographies make use of the close-up and extreme close-up shot to capture new expressive ways of presenting the body in motion.

The Oxford handbook of screendance studies (2016) edited by theorist and writer Douglas Rosenberg, compiles an exhaustive overview of the topic area. The book is divided into three categories, histories, theories and practices, and has the advantage of being one of the most complete and current collections of essays devoted to the subject. Jürgen Simpson's essay, *Sound perception as a choreographic object: a perceptual approach to the integration of sound in screendance* (2016) in the theories section of *The Oxford handbook of screendance studies*, revisits Chion's work on audio-visual synchronicity and the ability of sound to support or interfere with the narrative drive in film. In the practises section, Priscilla Guy's *Where is the choreography? Who is the choreographer? alternate approaches to choreography through editing* (2016), reconsiders Brannigan's theoretical proposal of micro-choreographies.

In terms of film theory, the study drew mainly on three threads: theories of authorship in filmmaking, cinematic music and sound theory, and the plethora of film theory surrounding the work of Hitchcock, Tati and Leone.

Auteurs and authorship: a film reader (2008) addresses the history and aesthetics of cinematic authorship in a series of essays edited by Barry Keith Grant. The book explores the working processes of a number of mainstream directors, and was of particular use to the research, as it highlighted the working practises of more established cinematic directors. After the preliminary investigations had taken place, the researcher considered a methodological reinterpretation of the topic area. The original modality favoured, based on authorial theory, appeared to suffer from a dearth of philosophical exactitude when exposed to serious enquiry. Intertextuality as a speculative theoretical alternative was then pursued, but relinquished eventually, in favour of the former cinematic authorship modality. However, the concept of parodying the stylistics and narrative traces of Hitchcock, Tati and Leone's mainstream cinema was to a certain extent amplified and reoriented into the extant authorship discourse. Writer, Linda Hutcheon's *A theory of parody* (Hutcheon, 2000) was of particular use in this instance. Her assertion of the need of signals from a given text to act as guides to interpretation, raised issues in the research screen-dance experiments. These issues focused on how visible such signals might or might not appear. (Hutcheon, xvii, 2000)

Chion's *Audio-vision: sound on screen* (1994) proved most useful with regard to the examination of film music composition and sound

theory, with special reference to his aforementioned concept of 'added value' (Chion, 1994, p.5). Chion's theory was extrapolated in the research screen-dance *Souvenir*, (Tiso, 2005). The paradoxical information in certain scenes, heard in the sound track and observed in the image track synthesised, thus appearing to form a new dimension of meaning. Conversely, in other more naturalistic sequences in *Souvenir*, the sonic elements and visual imagery were experienced as closely associated phenomena.

There exists an exhaustive supply of theoretical comment surrounding the work of Alfred Hitchcock. Françoise Truffaut's *Hitchcock/Truffaut* (1966) provided an effective overview of the the Hitchcock oeuvre. The book consists a series of taped conversations between the two directors, in which important facets of Hitchcock's work are explored, including his use of narrative device. Hitchcock's credentials as a consummate cinematic author are also established, with references to the director's meticulous attention to the entire process of filmmaking. The book is valuable in terms of its examination of the core concerns of the research question, whilst providing a template for all filmmakers interested in producing engaging narrative cinema, made for the mainstream, or otherwise. Walker's *Hitchcock's motifs* (2006) examines recurring themes and forms of cross referencing across the Hitchcock oeuvre. This book was of relevance to the research as it signposted various Hitchcock leitmotif. The themes identified were then integrated in to the choreography of the research screen-dance *Tippi: Crying fowl* (2007).

Chion's contribution to the scholarship of Jaques Tati is also of note. *The Films of Jaques Tati* (Chion, 1997) was informative in respect of Tati's use of sound score and musical composition, notions of which were absorbed in to the sonic landscape of *Souvenir* (Tiso, 2005). Penelope Gilliat's *Jacques Tati*, (1976) provides a brief, and less stimulating resource, whilst David Bellos's biographical account *Jacques Tati. His life and art* (1999) enhanced the researcher's understanding of how the director approached his film making process.

Cumbow's authorial critique, *Once upon a time: the films of Sergio Leone* (1987) devotes a section to a cluster of spaghetti western themes. The researcher drew upon a number of these motifs to form her own parodic interpretation of Italian western genre convention, *Crimes* (Tiso, 2005). Christopher Frayling has contributed several volumes to the field of Leone scholarship, with his accounts, *Sergio Leone: once upon a time in Italy* (2005), *Sergio Leone: something to do with death*, (2000), and *Spaghetti Westerns - cowboys and Europeans - from Karl May to Sergio Leone* (1998). Frayling's mapping of Leone's creation of the spaghetti western paradigm were of significance, however the bulk of *Sergio Leone: something to do with death*, for example, was mainly biographical in content and of limited interest to the research.

3.6. Screen-dance sound design and music: some examples

Current screen-dance sound design and music composition approaches are as many and as varied as the hybrid form itself. Pennell's *Tatoo* (2001) for instance, features music for military band, composed by Graeme Miller. The music was produced within the diegetic space, and plays out in

unison with the marching movement of the military band featured, so that the conformity of the image is supported by the structures in the musical composition. Conversely, Chu-Li Shewring's sound design for Hinton's and Davies's *All this can happen* (2011) moves away from the concept of sonic and visual correspondence. Emphasis is placed instead on the foregrounding of aural deterioration, for the purposes of accentuating the ephemerality of the film medium. Shewring's approach is detected by Jürgen Simpson,

In short: the sound design becomes a foregrounded feature akin to that of music and language, and in so doing, it highlights the conditions of media decay and media failure as one of the film's primary thematic concerns. (Simpson, 2016).

Hulse concentrates his efforts on exploring the important relationship of sound to projected image in his work, particularly in his film collaboration with composer Max Richter for the album *The Blue Notebooks* (2004). Founded in 2003, and still on going, Hulse is also responsible for the curation of the touring *The audible picture show*, comprised of audio works for cinema, created by diverse film, radio and visual artists and composers.

Choreographer/director Lea Anderson, whose oeuvre frequently alludes to cinematic sources, has worked in close collaboration with composer Steve Blake since 1987. Their film *The bends* (1994) for example, finds its direct referent in the Marx Brother's feature film *Monkey business* from 1931. *Perfect Moment* (1992) choreographed on Anderson's all female performance group The Cholmondeleys, and their male counterparts, The Featherstonehaughs is another early example of

Anderson's and Blake's intensely collective efforts. Writer Ramsay Burt explains,

Anderson says that her starting point for the men's company was the observation that all the women she knew were dancers while all the men she knew were in bands. She decided, in her own words to get a load of these band men and to take their mannerisms, along with the sorts of expectations which audiences have for a performance by a music group (these being different from those for a dance performance) and try to play with these. (Burt, 1995 p.168).

This co-opting of male behaviours, contiguous with music event anticipation into Anderson's choreographic palette, impacts her highly idiosyncratic style.

Chapter Four

Research screen-dances

4. Research screen-dances

4.1. Introduction

Chapter four describes and defines the authorial themes, motifs and tropes contained within the practical research screen-dances, which prompted the eventual findings of the directorial, stylistic, narrative listing. The research body of work examines positively the aesthetic disparities and similarities of the screen-dances produced to the original authored texts. Authored works conceived by Hitchcock, Tati and Leone, that are founded on the bedrock film genres of the suspense thriller, silent comedy and spaghetti western, harbour their own codes and instantly recognisable features. The ability of broader audiences to recognise these genres conventions renders the three directors particularly appropriate as resources for screen-dance making. The analysis of the research screen-dances embraces the appropriating and mirroring of such cinematic devices.

There follows a short critique of types of simulacra investigated. The practical components of the thesis celebrate the borrowing of authorial stylistics and narratives, with reference for the most part to the phenomena of parody, thus forging links between authorised intention and authorised convention. Alluding to theories of parody, Hutcheon writes,

(...) we need signals from the text to guide our interpretation, and the degree of visibility of these signals determines their potential for assisting us. (Hutcheon, 2000, p. xvi)

The researcher interrogated the notion of parodic reworking of the authored themes within some of the screen-dances and assessed the

scope of intention in terms of how derivative such 'signals' (Hutcheon, 2000 p. xvi) might appear, reconceptualised as narrative, thematic, visual and sonic elements within the research screen-dance collection.

Hitchcock and parody in the screen-dances, *Vanishing point* (Tiso, 2004), *Nil desperadum* (Tiso, 2012), *Tippi: crying fowl* (Tiso, 2007) and *The big sofa* (Tiso, 2016)

Hitchcock's use of the continuous take in *Rope* (Hitchcock, 1948) was reassigned in research screen-dance *Vanishing point* as a useful structural device rather than as a playful, ironic commentary on the historic Hitchcockian text. The continuous shot strategy was undertaken as a means of granting the dancers adequate time to develop immediate, visceral performances, the type of which that can be compromised, if subjected to repetitive filming. However, the dancers were instructed to parody Leigh's (as Marion Crane) detached performance in *Psycho* (Hitchcock, 1960) in an attempt to offset composer Dan Coppock's emotionally over wrought Herrmannesque/Hammer horror inspired *Vanishing point* parodic sound score. The complex negotiation between the location architecture, poet John Dryden's (1631–1700) fragmented dialogue episodes read by actor Caroline Catz and the Hammer horror blended Hitchcock/Herrmann sound score, meant that the Hitchcockian parody signalling remained relatively concealed.

Nil desperadum parodies the notion of the Hitchcock blonde, however the narrative intention of the research screen-dance differs greatly from Hitchcock's classic thriller genres, which frequently feature blonde actresses, such as Kim Novack and Eva Marie Saint.

Nil desperandum (Tiso, 2012) is a short drama memoir. The work revolves around the conflict within a family and the characters' lack of emotional development and connection. The cinematography runs at a stately pace, and unfolds as a collection of the memories of the lead characters.

Tippi: crying fowl (Tiso, 2007) annexes the movement of Tippi Hedren (as Melanie Daniels) in *The birds* (Hitchcock, 1963), signalling a clearer intention in parodic choices. The movement material is lifted directly from sequences from the Hitchcock text, much in the same way as Spink's Hitchcockian *Notorious* parody, (Hitchcock, 1946) *Further and further into night* (1984). One explicit example of this type of signalling in *Tippi: crying fowl* is evident in the choreographic sequence in which Tattersall (as Melanie Daniels) converses on the telephone with a pencil in her hand. The costuming and movement direction parody in some detail, the same scene appropriated from *The birds*.

Some of the research screen-dance works transposed the authored references from the present into a specific bygone era. *The big sofa* (Tiso, 2016) is set in the present day. The opening sequences of the screen-dance are characterised by natural colour and lighting effects. The work is then propelled into an otherworldly cinematic past, replete with noirish stylistic parody, appropriated from director Billy Wilder's *Double indemnity* (1944), and Hitchcock's *Notorious* (1946).

Tati and parody in the screen-dance *Souvenir* (Tiso, 2005)

Souvenir parodies overtly the Tati precursor material derived from *Mr. Hulot's holiday* (Tati, 1953). However, the work superimposes a new narrative on to the text, fashioned out of the original source material. By

contrast, Hulse's *Hotel central* (2000) displays a more tenuous link with the Tati source. Hulse's work is imagined as a bizarre dream sequence that falls short of parodying *Mr. Hulot's holiday* (Tati, 1953), save the characterisation of the performer. This performance is based on the Mr. Hulot persona, especially in his choice of attire. The familiar Hulot panama hat for instance, takes on a life of its own in *Hotel central*, as it appears to fly around the film frame. Like Hulse, the researcher also reimagined the Hulot character as the lead performer in *Souvenir* (Tiso, 2005), attired in a linen suit and panama hat. The aim here was to signal and assist the viewer in the identification of the Tatiesque character.

Leone and parody in the screen-dance *Crimes* (Tiso, 2005).

There are immediate Leonesque contextual references exhibited in the spaghetti western inflected *Crimes*. The work parodies precisely, and signals the stylistics of Leone and music and sound preoccupations of Leone's musical director, composer Ennio Morricone. Pennell's *Fisticuffs* (2004) comments specifically on the western genre, and bar room brawl in broader contexts. The work also has a strong affinity with the conventions of the action movie. The action in this instance is removed from the Wild West and is relocated to the quintessential British institution of a public house. *Fisticuffs*, which was shot in real time and space, however, informed the researcher's research screen-dance in its bold deployment of action placed in the foreground, middle ground and background. *Crimes* also took advantage of three planes to add richness to the on screen action. The effect in this instance was achieved through the layering of images in postproduction to create a semblance of the three filmic planes.

All of the research screen-dances quoted an authorial precursor text to varying degrees. The researcher advocated and utilised a broad array of referents, that ranged from unambiguous parody, such as displayed in *Souvenir* (Tiso, 2005) and *Crimes* (Tiso, 2005) to more ambiguous referencing in works such as *Vanishing point* (Tiso, 2004) and *Nil desperandum* (Tiso, 2012).

Some of the passages in the following pages contain detailed descriptions of the authorial inflected research screen-dances. This seemed an appropriate tactic, as the various practice based projects, which contribute a major part of this MA by research submission, needed detailed practical explanations of their linear histories, as well as descriptions of how they were constructed.

It is judicious here to clarify the decision to create the practical works before the written analysis. In order to cultivate the directorial, stylistic, narrative listing, it was necessary to expedite the practical research through the development of a personal screen-dance practice. This took the form of a series of tangible screen-dances that could be assessed and evaluated using authorship as methodological focus. The screen-dances produced for the research, hence became the process and the tools by which the directorial, stylistic, narrative listing conclusions were put across in chapter five. The reflective form of the analysis focused on the time that elapsed between the production of the screen-dances and the scrutiny of them. This space had to be sufficient enough to enable the researcher to remove herself from the works created, so as to critique them more freely and effectively. The five author inspired screen-dances

were fully enmeshed in to the assessment, the results of which were found expedient to the formulation of the directorial, stylistic, narrative listing.

Some issues under consideration were: to what extent should the authorial source texts be represented, how best to fine tune the differences and similarities between the original material and the screen-dance adaptations, how best to distinguish between what to use and what to discard from the cinematic sources, and how to shift from mainstream cinema genres to the contemporary dance medium. For example, the Tati screen-dance transfer *Souvenir* (Tiso, 2005) remained within the domain of homage due to the decision to adopt period costuming, musical scoring and fixed camera operations rooted in the Tati precursor *Mr. Hulot's Holiday* (1953). Conversely, *Vanishing point* (Tiso, 2004) based on a very loose interpretation of the structure of *Rope* (Hitchcock, 1948) concealed its proximity to its Hitchcockian roots. By contrast, a conscious decision was made to ensure that the style and context of *Tippi: crying fowl* (Tiso, 2007) remained faithful to the themes contained in Hitchcock's *The birds* (1963). The 20th century Hitchcock source material shared many parallels with the 21st century competing story represented in *Tippi: crying fowl* (Tiso, 2007). The new work however, marked a substantive shift in temporal and spatial relationships away from the Hitchcock source. *Tippi: crying fowl* embraced fully the Hitchcock text yet remained integrated into the rival contemporary flu pandemic specter discourse. The utilisation of the Hitchcock cinematic canon provided universally known background reference material, which assisted and augmented narrative recognition in *Tippi: crying fowl*. The work's source material was clearly identifiable, yet

given new life within the contemporary screen-dance context.

It was perplexing to establish what might conceivably be accepted as appropriate criteria for a screen-dance success, in terms of concept and audience engagement as, after a substantial period of time for reflection, the self-evaluative part of this research still remained challenging, despite persistent efforts at heuristic rigour.

4. 2. Hitchcock

There follows a description of the directorial, stylistic, and narrative thematic contained within the Hitchcock inspired practical research, and how the director's relationship to image and sound in film impacted the creation of the screen-dances, *Vanishing point* (2004), *Tippi: crying fowl* (Tiso, 2007) and *Nil desperandum* (2012).

Hitchcock's early directing experiences were inspired by Einsteinian Soviet film and German expressionist silent film, particularly in their tendency to deploy gesture and facial expression as an adjunct to meaning. Sequences of movement designed by Hitchcock for Hedren in *The birds* (Hitchcock, 1963) were transposed into the dance images in *Tippi: crying fowl*. The process of reconstitution connected the research to Hitchcock's Soviet/expressionist aesthetic of exaggerated gesticulation, reinterpreted in the screen-dance vernacular. The phone box scene from *The birds*, in which Hedren endures a vicious avian attack is opened up in *Tippi: crying fowl*, and the source material is remodeled into a piece of linear choreography. Questions were thus raised as to what extent the original source material might be referenced.

Tattersall's performance was predicated on Hedren's exaggerated

facial expressivity and modelling walk. The dancer's explicit experimentation with the Hitchcockian gesture system in the opening telephone film sequences of *Tippi: crying fowl* (Tiso, 2007) was contrasted with a hand washing sequence described later in detail, derived from an Internet source. Both sequences were executed with exacting Hitchcockian precision.

During the garage forecourt scene in *The birds* (Hitchcock, 1963), Hedren responds to an impending petrol explosion by striking up a series of powerful German expressionist inspired poses, edited in the style of Einsteinian Soviet montage. This scene was reinterpreted meticulously in *Tippi: crying fowl*, as facial expression and gesture, and repeated numerous times to make clear the choreographic intentions.

Hitchcock's musical collaborator, composer Bernard Herrmann is quoted as declaring that the director '(...) only finishes a picture 60%. I have to finish it for him (...)' (Herrmann in Brown, 1994, p.148). It is therefore appropriate to consider Hitchcock and Herrmann as co-authors of their body of work since Herrmann's music was so deeply rooted into Hitchcock's plot lines, that his sound scores sometimes subsumed the image track. This is evident in *Psycho* (Hitchcock, 1960) when Leigh (as Marion Crane) is forced to turn her car off the road into Bates Motel. During this sequence Leigh's detached performance is offset by Herrmann's insistent musical composition, which is responsible for the building of tension. Similar types of performative and musical juxtapositions were tested in *Vanishing point* (Tiso, 2004) to establish whether Herrmannesque/insistent, Hitchcockian/neutral approaches could

be used to encourage a reaction to the new screen-dance images and sounds presented. Henceforward the researcher set about appropriating explicitly aural elements from *The birds* (Hitchcock, 1963) experimental score, and dropping them in to the acoustic landscape of *Tippi: crying fowl* (Tiso, 2007) for the purposes of heightening atmospherics and forming firm links with the Hitchcock text. At the time of its release, *The birds* synthesised score was considered highly innovative and unlike the prevalent, classic Hollywood three track system which combined '(...) dialogue, sound effects, and music (...)' (Weiss and Belton, 1985, p. 299). Hermann played an '(...) advisory role (...)', whilst German composer Remmi Gassmann created the atonal score on an 'Studio Trautonium' electronic keyboard (Smith, 2002, p. 253). Much like Gassmann's composition, the *Tippi: crying fowl* sound scape contained no orchestration and very little music, save some prerecorded piano, banjo and harmonica, played live on stage by Scott Smith (as Mitch Brenner, played by actor Rod Taylor in *The birds*).

A Gassmann inspired avian cacophony introduced the audience to the Lilian Baylis theatre space at Sadler's Wells, where *Tippi: crying fowl* was premiered. Birdcalls were conceived and produced digitally through a computer and then manipulated during postproduction. The cawing of wild birds lasted almost five minutes, and built to a deafening crescendo before the performers took to the stage. The *Risselty Rosselty* folk song source music sung by the school children from the Bodega Bay school in *The birds* was recycled in a duet performed actor Kate Gartside (as Annie Hayworth) with Smith accompanying her on the banjo.

In the final analysis, the closer the *Tippi: crying fowl* (Tiso, 2007), Hitchcock parody signalled its filmic antecedent in visual style and musical content, the more accessible and comprehensible it appeared to become. In terms of substance this was expressed most noticeably in the screen-dance installation that pre-empted and supported the action on stage.

4.3. *Vanishing point* (Tiso, 2004)

Research screen-dance predicated on the Hitchcock oeuvre.

Prior to the rehearsal process the researcher interviewed members of the cast of *Vanishing point*, drawn from the EDge ensemble, the post-graduate dance company based at The Place London contemporary dance school. The interviews did not attempt to test a particular hypothesis or to collect factual data for analysis, but focused on getting to know the dancers before rehearsals began.

A vocal questionnaire approach was taken. The dancers' responses were then documented onto digital video. The objective was to discover and evaluate the dancers' relationships to the process of making dance for the camera, instead of the stage. For some, the concept of the spoken word proved too intimidating, since they were used to articulating predominantly through their bodies. Consequently, dialogue interventions were removed from the proposed *Vanishing point* mise-en-scène. The interviews were moderately open ended, and there was an agreed confidentiality.

The concept of a sustained tracking shot underpinned the conception of *Vanishing point* in the manner of its precursor, the black and white suspense thriller *Rope* (Hitchcock, 1948). The notion of being

watched, a salient thematic in *Rope* was recycled and reinforced by the Hitchcockian shared point of view camera work of the *Vanishing point* (Tiso, 2004) cinematographer, Ole Birkeland. The images devised, disclosed gradually the performers' physical and temporal relationship to the interior and exterior of Petersham House in Richmond. In the opening sequences, Birkeland started running with the camera at the precise moment the first dancer was glimpsed to the right hand side of the film frame, taking flight across a formal line of trees. The dancer's dramatic entrance, transferred directly the experience of running and being pursued. In order to achieve the shared point of view perspective, Birkeland's camera was mounted onto a basic yet efficient piece of film equipment known colloquially as a 'pogo stick'. This allowed the cinematographer to follow the action at close quarters.

Although the deployment of the pogo stick hoodwinked the audience into thinking that *Vanishing point* was shot in a single film take in reality this was impossible to achieve, as there were not enough lights on set to illuminate performance pathways, so that the equipment had to be repositioned at various intervals. There is one obvious iris cut during the sequence in the ballroom at Petersham House, in which the camera alighted onto a duet performed on the stage in front a Damian Hurst butterfly painting. Another less obvious suture occurred as two performers exited the house during the coda of *Vanishing point*, presaging the transformation from black and white to saturated colour. The dancer chosen to exit the house had jet black hair. The extreme close-up shot of the back of her head was then cut together with another close-up of her

hair as she ran out of the door into the formal gardens beyond. In both internal and external spaces, her hair colour simply read as black, so the illusion of a continuous shot persisted. This device was derivative of Hitchcock's camera operations deployed in *Rope* (1948) however, in the original text, the camera was focused on the backs of Hitchcock's actors, creating dark areas for shots to move in and out of at the beginning and end of the reels of film.

The concept of the single take appears to be a simple enough mechanism in theory. In practice, extensive fore planning was required to avoid aural and visual disjunctions occurring. The major advantage of the continuous tracking shot was that from the first entrance to the final exit, the dancers were able to perform the work for the most part, in real time.

Observations made by Chion in his book, *The voice in cinema*. (1999) fed into the creation of music and sound score for *Vanishing point* (Tiso, 2004). Chion describes the phenomenon of an elusive unseen voice over as '(...) a kind of talking and acting shadow (...) categorizing it as, (...) complete acousmetre (...) or (...) bodiless voice (...)' (1999, p. 21). To test the Chion theory and codification, an acousmetre modulated voice over, delivered by Catz was created to define the tense atmosphere in *Vanishing point*. Catz's non-visualised, disconcerting recitation tracked the external and internal action across the gardens, rooms and corridors of the Petersham House location. Her words were constructed out of fragments of poetry written by Dryden during the same epoch that Petersham House was built. The dancers' emotionally neutral, visual manifestations formed a counterpoint to Catz's eerie auditory presence in the sound track.

Coppock's emotionally gratuitous score referred to Herrmannesque stylistics combined with musical cliché, often associated with the Hammer horror genre. Coppock's ascending and descending scale string instrumentation referenced Herrmann's *Vertigo* (Hitchcock, 1958) falling sequences. These were based on Herrmann's own reading of Wagnerian leitmotif in *Tristan und Isolde* (Wagner, 1865) (Auiler, 1999, p. 141). There was no specific allusion to fear of falling in *Vanishing point*. Coppock parodied instead, Herrmannesque glissandos to enhance atmospherics, achieved by exploiting the contrapuntal effect between sounds and images. The EDdge ensemble, meanwhile were requested to remain emotionally disengaged, despite the heightened drama of the music.

4.4. *Tippi: crying fowl* (Tiso, 2007)

Second research screen-dance predicated on the Hitchcock oeuvre.

The combined theatre work and installation piece *Tippi: crying fowl*, merged recorded medium and music and dance with live theatre. Having an experienced actor Kate Gartside on the set, invigorated its creation. Gartside's presence encouraged dramaturgical concerns in performance intention, character motivation and scripting.

The *Tippi: crying fowl* parody appropriated and transformed imagery and themes contained in *The birds* (Hitchcock, 1963). The source functioned as an allegory for the state of modern existence at the beginning of the 21st century, in the wake of the collective fear of biological terrorism, plague and global warming. The screen-dance narrative was extended by layering the bird flu pandemic sub plot on top of the extant Hitchcock text. The pitting of the current flu pandemic thematic

against the plot of *The birds* (Hitchcock, 1963) focused attention on the psychology of fear, engendered by media coverage of the spread of a bird flu virus.

The *Tippi: crying fowl* (Tiso, 2007) plot took the date of 2010 as its point of departure. The avian flu pandemic had destroyed the world economy and all but two of its inhabitants, lawyer, Mitch Brenner, (played by actor Rod Taylor (1930-2015) in *The birds* and by Smith in *Tippi: crying fowl*) and schoolteacher, Annie Hayworth, (played by actress Suzanne Pleshette (1937-2008) in *The birds* and by Gartside in *Tippi: crying fowl*). Tippi, based on socialite Melanie Daniels, the central character in *The birds*, was presumed dead but continued to haunt Annie as a powerful screen presence. Mitch and Annie fled the bird flu virus and somehow survived, although Annie began to contract symptoms of the illness in the final section of the work.

A DVD of the combined theatre and screen installation work, performed at The Lilian Baylis theatre at Sadler's Wells in November 2007 is presented as part of the research. The movement material featured in the installation was built on a cluster of themes selected from some forty others identified in Michael Walker's authorial manifesto *Hitchcock's Motifs* (2005). Using the Walker analysis, the movement material developed a series of Walker inspired choreographic vignettes featuring Tattersall, a dance performer who bears a striking resemblance to Tippi Hedren.

Hitchcock's syntax of gesture and movement was fundamental to the creation of the choreography in *Tippi: crying fowl* (Hedren's utilisation of gesture and melodramatic facial expressivity was studied frame by

frame in various key sequences in *The birds* (Hitchcock, 1963). The sequences selected presented Hedren in various psychological states, ranging from an unwavering confidence to extreme emotional distress. The choreographic palette of *Tippi: crying fowl* (Tiso, 2007) replicated the information gleaned from the Hitchcock source in rigorous detail.

The following discussion focuses on movement derived from the Walker resource. The movement material alludes exclusively to Hitchcock's aesthetic of gesture and thematic preoccupations in *The birds*. The authored themes suggested by Walker most pertinent to the making of the material for *Tippi: crying fowl* were: 'Exhibitionism/Voyeurism/The Look' (Walker, 2005, p.164), 'Confined spaces' (Walker, 2005, p.111), 'The Corpse' (Walker, 2005, p.123), 'Food and Meals' (Walker, 2005, p.197), and 'Hands' (Walker, 2005, p. 220).

'Exhibitionism/ Voyeurism/ The Look':

Mulvey's critique, *Visual pleasure and narrative cinema* (1975) concerns itself with the notion of the gaze in terms of a feminist subtext. In the *Tippi: crying fowl* the look is associated with a generalised notion of control, filtered through the types of camera compositions, audience identification techniques and editing procedures employed by Hitchcock. Hitchcock's voyeuristic camera movement, which follows the line up Hedren's legs and body, from the point of view of the man who accompanies her in the elevator up to Brenner's apartment in *The birds* is translated in *Tippi: crying fowl* as pure movement material. Tattersall's determined, elegant walk through broken egg shells, followed by a tracking dolly shot, suggests that she is in control of how the imagery should be consumed. This

amounts to an inversion of the male gaze and a refusal to submit to objectification. The implication here is that Tattersall is reasserting her power by taking back control of the gaze. This action casts her as a protagonist, rather an object of desire. The notion of the reassertion of the male gaze is by no means new phenomena. The thematic has been explored widely in the visual and performing arts. For example, the video work *Olympia* (2003) by George Chakravarthi, recasts the artist as the reclining Olympia from the Manet painting of the same title, painted in 1863.

The boat sequences that presage the first avian attack in *The birds* (Hitchcock, 1963) are a typical example of Hitchcockian build-up of tension through voyeuristically driven point of view shots. The spirited nature of the exchanges that ensue between Hedren and Taylor, mask an undercurrent of menace as the first gulls begin to gather nearby. In *Tippi: crying fowl* (Tiso, 2007) Tattersall's direct look into the camera recreates the same moments as the original source, but omits the presence of a malign gull. The audience identifies with Tattersall's alarm in another point of view shot, in which she studies her bloodied glove. This shot sets up the narrative significance of the birds as a destructive, yet invisible force in *Tippi: crying fowl*, marshalling the rest of the action.

Five very distinct cuts, from medium to close-up, featuring Hedren's facial reactions, were appropriated in *Tippi: crying fowl* from the set piece in *The birds* in which Hedren, framed by a window, views the death of a man who accidentally ignites himself in a pool of leaking petrol. The Einsteinian Soviet editing style which Hitchcock employs in this sequence,

disrupts the naturalistic flow of the mise-en-scène. The scene inspired the creation of a key sequence of movement material in the *Tippi: crying fowl* (Tiso, 2007). Here, Tattersall combined Hedren's five medium to close-up shots into a continuous flow of movement. These were then repeated at varying speeds.

During the shooting of the work, a stuffed carrion crow was deployed as a strong compositional element in several of the scenes. The crow functioned as a voyeuristic presence rather than an active physical threat, unlike the superimpositions of squawking birds created by Hitchcock's technical team for *The birds* (Hitchcock, 1963).

'Confined Spaces':

The avian assault on Hedren in an enclosed phone booth in *The birds* accentuates Hitchcockian themes of entrapment and confinement. The choreography in *Tippi: crying fowl* remakes the phone booth attack and traces similar gestural patterns as the source material. The choreography was opened up and set against a wall in the film location in *Tippi: crying fowl* to make clearer Hitchcock's movement patterns, configured within the phone booth. The climatic attack from *The birds* in the Brenner home attic room, featuring Hedren with a torch was also revisited and treated in a similar opened up manner in *Tippi: crying fowl*. The dance images became increasingly more claustrophobic, when several kilos of white feathers descended onto Tattersall and the floor in the film location. The sense of confinement was further expressed by the use of overhead shots that appear to bear down on Tattersall as she flayed her arms and legs around in the falling feathers. The addition of a blindfold tied around

Tattersall's eyes, during the repetitions her movement material sequence added to the sense of restriction and confusion, as she was unable to fix her visual coordinates. The blindfold trope referred to the scene in the *The birds* (Hitchcock, 1963) in which the Bodega Bay school children are attacked by wild birds as they played blind man's bluff at Mitch Brenner's younger sister's birthday party.

'The Corpse':

In *The birds* the first corpse encountered by the viewer and film characters, Rod Taylor (as Mitch Brenner), and Jessica Tandy (1909-1994) (as Mrs Lydia Brenner, Mitch's mother) is a minor character named Dan Fawcett. He wears striped pajamas and is slumped in his bedroom at the Fawcett farm. His his eyes have been gouged out. In the *Tippi: crying fowl* choreography, Tippi's dead body is treated less dramatically and is simply pulled across the floor out of the frame on several occasions. The researcher sought here to avoid the objectification implied in some of Hitchcock's handling of the violent deaths of his female characters.

'Food and Meals':

Another character from *The birds*, played by Ethel Griffies (1878–1975) (as ornithologist Mrs Bundy) is interrupted by the waitress at the local restaurant, calling out an order of southern fried chicken during the ornithologist's verbal justifications for the existence of the bird species. Although the choreography does not cite this ironic exchange, the fried chicken food motif seemed a theme worth pursuing as movement material, as an adjunct to the competing bird flu pandemic narrative. The concept of mental breakdown was expressed by Tattersall as she opened up her

handbag and calmly extracted a piece of deep fried chicken from within. Her elegant façade evaporated when she started then to stuff the food clumsily into her mouth. This unsettling imagery linked her behaviour to the fear of anarchy that had been predicted in the press, in the aftermath of a possible avian flu pandemic.

‘Hands’:

Hand gesture, a signature motif in *The birds* (Hitchcock, 1963) was put to significant use in *Tippi: crying fowl* (Tiso, 2007). Movement material was suggested by the study of hands in *The birds*, combined with a simple hand washing routine, instructions for which were gathered from a bird flu information web site.

Walker divides his section on the theme of hands in *Hitchcock’s Motifs* (Walker, 2005, p. 221), into five different groupings: ‘Male hands/female hands’ (Walker, 2005, p. 229), ‘Held wrists’ (Walker, 2005, p. 224), ‘Damaged hands’ (Walker, 2005 p. 229), ‘Holding hands’ (Walker, 2005, p. 230), and ‘Hands and the police’ (Walker, 2005, p. 236). Aspects of these categories were refocused in the context of the *Tippi: crying fowl* movement material, reducing the Walker groupings down to two main areas of investigation, ‘Male/female hands’, interpreted in the choreography as female flirtatious hands, and ‘Damaged hands’ interpreted as melodramatic hands and arms. Both categories function very differently in the realisation of the hand theme in the *Tippi: crying fowl* choreography.

‘Male/female hands’:

Hitchcock perceives ‘female hands’ as flirtatious, elegant, sophisticated

and controlled, whilst 'damaged hands' and arms are melodramatic, vulnerable, defensive and threatened. This gesture system can be seen as an extension of the characteristics and mental states displayed by Hedren in *The birds* (Hitchcock, 1963). At the beginning of the film, Hedren appears confident and controlled. In the final scene where she is led away from the Brenner house, she is clearly emotionally disturbed.

The scene in which Hedren meets Taylor in the pet shop in San Francisco is referred to directly in the movement material of *Tippi: crying fowl* (Tiso, 2007). Hedren uses the pencil that she is holding to draw attention to her neck and mouth. A similar dynamic was projected onto the movement during a telephone conversation between Hedren and Taylor, made from the schoolmistress's cottage in a later scene. Tattersall retraced Hedren's elegant hand gestures in *Tippi: crying fowl*, however, the gestures were realised as a series of accelerated movement repetitions.

'Damaged hands':

The damaged hands motif provided the strongest choreographic link between *The birds* and the *Tippi: crying fowl* bird related scenario. Hedren's cultivated behaviours and hand gestures, as cited by Walker were merged with the practical *6 Step Clean Hands Guide* instructions (citroxx, 2007). Seated modestly on the edge of a chair, Tattersall evolves the practical demonstration of the *6 Step Clean Hands Guide* into a detailed choreographic hand jive incorporating birdlike elements. The exquisite manner in which Tattersall moves her hands becomes the focus of her performance. There follows a description of the citroxx six step

clean hands guide to washing your hands:

1. Palm to palm.
2. Right palm over back and left palm over back of right hand.
3. Palm to palm with bent spread fingers.
4. Outer parts of fingers on the opposite palm, with fingers bent.
5. Circular rubbing of the left thumb in closed right hand and vice versa.
6. Circular rubbing backwards and forwards with closed right hand, fingertips in left palm, and vice versa.

The hand washing hand jive was performed to the rhythms of the *Risselty Rossetty* tune sung by the children in the Bodega Bay school house, before they are attacked by a flock of carrion crows in *The birds* (Hitchcock, 1963). Some audience members at the Lilian Baylis were unacquainted with the contemporary dance idiom, but were nonetheless able to identify sections drawn directly from *The birds* in the *Tippi: crying fowl* (Tiso, 2007) presentation. The screening of Hitchcock's *The birds* in the foyer of the Lilian Baylis theatre cafe on the night of the performance offered further clarification. Photographic stills shot during preproduction were displayed in the Lilian Baylis theatre cafe before the event. It was hoped that the photographic installation would encourage potential audience members to engage with Hitchcockian quotations evident in the images and then perhaps attend the performance.

The researcher was fully conscious of the direct recycling of some of *The birds* visual content and music scoring in *Tippi: crying fowl*, nevertheless the superimposition of the pandemic story onto the existing narrative promoted a fair degree of artistic validity. When real life cases of

avian flu began to emerge soon after the live event had taken place, the complex nature of the interconnected relationships in *Tippi: crying fowl* (Tiso, 2007) entered another bizarre realm.

4.5. *Nil desperandum* (Tiso, 2012)

Third research screen-dance predicated on the Hitchcock oeuvre.

In terms of the research, *Nil desperandum* encompassed a rethinking of how dance on film might be interpreted as a short drama memoir /skewed morality tale. Here the researcher hypothesised, as to whether the Hitchcock template might offer movement direction possibilities and camera work solutions for movement that is filmed, that place less emphasis on explicit choreographic content.

Nil desperandum uses camera movement as a means of expression and experiments with camera work as a mode of enhancing natural movement, as opposed to employing standard filming techniques associated with shooting crafted choreographic material. The method evolved in *Nil desperandum* shifted the emphasis from dance on film, to movement as process, thus marking a departure from the other screen-dances produced for the research.

Nil desperandum deals with the negotiation of space and moving bodies within the frame, and endorses action as a mode of communication in place of dialogue. This recalls themes and tropes present in Hitchcock's early silent cinema works made at Michael Balcon's (1896-1977) Gainsborough film studio in Hoxton, London. The two lead characters in *Nil desperandum* remain mainly mute, and utter only one line of identical dialogue at different times during the work.

Audiences have become familiar with the concept of the Hitchcock blonde. Cultural awareness of the phenomenon escalated after Terry Johnson's West End play, *Hitchcock blonde* (2003) received considerable critical acclamation. In 2012 *Vertigo* (Hitchcock, 1958), featuring the performance of Swedish blonde actress, Anita Eckberg, (1931-2015) (as Madeleine Ellsler) was voted top position in the film journal *Sight & Sound's*, greatest film poll. The British film institute's retrospective, *The genius of Alfred Hitchcock* in the same year, added to the volume of audiences capable of appreciating and recognising the strands of the Hitchcock legacy. The female protagonist daughter/mother figure in *Nil desperandum* represents a combination of classic Hitchcock blonde characteristics, hence opening up audience identification of another major Hitchcock thematic in the screen-dance.

4.6. Sergio Leone

There follows an overview of authorial leitmotif in the practical research, and a description of Morricone's sound/image stylistics and their influence on the creation of the screen-dance *Crimes* (Tiso, 2005).

Leone's directorial methods were applied to the research to provide the context for the development of an alternative screen-dance vocabulary based on an analysis of the thematic concerns, sound score and action direction from *Once upon a time in the west* (Leone, 1968) and *The good, the bad and the ugly* (Leone, 1966). The following recollection of assistant to the director, Tonio Valeri, is fundamental to the understanding of Leone's directorial style, 'Sergio had a very limited English vocabulary when he was directing, (...) He'd learned the phrase, "Watch me!" And he

mimed the actions the actors had to do' (Valeri in Frayling, 2000, p.15). The lack of verbal communication on Leone's sets meant that action, rather than dialogue, became the primary mode of filmic representation.

Leone's human movement sequences were influenced by his awareness of the Pupi Siciliani, five foot puppets from the south of Italy, which were suspended on metal rods. Their '(...) complex language of puppet gesticulation (...) ' alerted Leone to the possibility of pure gesture as a mode of telling stories (Frayling, 2000, p. 9). Leone observes, 'The puppeteers take on a legend or fable, and mix it with local reality (...) as a film-maker, my job was to make a fable for adults, a fairy-tale for grown-ups, and in relation to the cinema I felt like a puppeteer with his puppets' (Leone in Frayling, 2000, p.10).

Morricone lends expression to Leone's relationship with dialogue and emphasis on pure gesture in the opening sequences of *Once upon a time in the west* (Leone, 1968). A small group of characters await the arrival on a train of actor Charles Bronson (1921-2003) (as Harmonica). Their inactivity is articulated through extreme camera close-ups and Morricone's aural atmospherics, constructed out of everyday sound effects, not via ensemble dialogue. Morricone developed Leone's story line using Wagnerian leitmotif to signify Bronson's presence.

Wagnerian leitmotif has been applied to classical ballet to connote place and character, but has not been so readily put to use in either contemporary dance or screen-dance production. Bronson plays his harmonica as a means of communicating intention, whilst remaining essentially mute. Leone's lead actors often display the tendencies of what

Chion describes as '(...) the Mute Character' (1999, p. 95). Chion distinguishes between the notion of muteness, '(...) a physical condition (...)' and, '(...) mutism, a refusal to speak for (...) psychological reasons (...)' (Chion, 1999, p. 96). At the beginning of *Once upon a time in the west* the Bronson character exemplifies Chion's psychological definition of 'mutism'. 'The mute is considered a guardian of a secret, and we are accustomed to him serving in this way. So the presence of a mute character clues us in to the fact that there is a secret' (Chion, 1999, p. 96). This encounter with Chion codification was of great value to this research as dance performance is often considered a mute form of expression. The researcher absorbed Chion's concept in the practical project *Crimes* (Tiso, 2005) to the extent that Leone's typically minimal dialogue tendency was reduced to an unalloyed muteness in *Crimes*.

Writer and filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Theorem* (1968) also experiments with notions of mutism. In some sections of *Theorem* where the story telling lacks formal verbal cueing, movement within the frame takes over as means of driving the narrative. Leone utilizes a similar strategy in the dialogue free opening sequences of *Once upon a time in the West* (Leone, 1968). As movement based works are often wordless, films such as *Theorem* (Pasolini, 1968) also function as valuable guides for screen-dance practitioners. The *Theorem* example might assist those who wish to explore the notion of how to support complex narratives that deal with extreme situations, without resorting to dialogue as a means of conveying atmosphere and plotting. *Theorem* shares some other major thematic concerns expressed in Leone's work, most notably the idea of

the visitor, drifter or enigmatic stranger, as portrayed by Clint East in Leone's Dollars Trilogy, *A fistful of dollars* (1964), *For a few dollars more* (1965) and *The good, the bad and the ugly* (1966). Terence Stamp, in the role of the visitor in *Theorem*, echoes the Leone trope of the stranger who enters into an existing story line, has a substantial effect on the subsequent action and then mysteriously disappears. The role of the Catholic church is likewise scrutinised in both Pasolini's and Leone's works, however, Pasolini challenges directly the role of the church in society, whereas Leone is more concerned with the iconography of the Catholic Church, most notably in his explorations of the concept of the triptych, *The good, the bad and the ugly* being a case in point. Both directors have also collaborated with Morricone. In *Theorem*, Morricone's compositions support various sections of the psychological drama. Leone too makes use of Morricone's scoring to support manifestations of character inner turmoil. In *Crimes* (Tiso, 2005) an attempt was made to convey heightened emotion not only through the power of gesture, but also by propelling the emotionally charged musical composition into the foreground of the sonic field.

In his crafting of the Leone's spaghetti western variant, Morricone discarded the classic symphonic sound of Hollywood film composers, for example Erich Korngold and Max Steiner, in favour of sound scoring featuring unconventional instruments, such as the jaw harp, combined with the human voice and everyday sounds effects. Choreographer Merce Cunningham's avant-garde composer, John Cage's assertion that all sounds were valid in music composition, also influenced Morricone, who

attended a seminar in 1958 led by the composer, where Cage expounded his ideas.

4.7. Crimes (Tiso, 2005)

Research screen-dance predicated on the Leone oeuvre.

Crimes capitalised on foreknown knowledge of the Leone opus, and adapted it to fit spaghetti western formulaic storytelling. The Leone source material *Once upon a time in the west* (Leone, 1968) was declared vigorously in *Crimes*. For example, the female performer, dancer Catherine Bennett, exhibited similar strong, combative character traits to those of Jill McBain (played by Claudia Cardinale) in *Once upon a time in the west*. However, superficial comparisons were avoided by shifting dependence on the Leone model to the contemporary dance context. Leone's preoccupation with the relationship of his actors to their environment was reinterpreted in *Crimes*. As dance is concerned primarily with movement through time and space, Leone's attention to spatial concerns were of profound significance to the creation of the research screen-dance. Sierra locations favoured by Leone were recreated on the set of *Crimes* by using of low key lighting levels to achieve the sensation of the human body lost in an expanse of space, so that at times the two performers, Catherine Bennett and Scott Smith, appeared to inhabit a seemingly endless landscape. A sense of intimacy/distance between the dancers was realised by overlaying layers of film to approximate Leonesque extreme close-ups within the wide screen context. Thus, both performers appeared as multiple versions of themselves in the manufactured filmic space in *Crimes* (Tiso, 2005) .

Leone's concern with death imagery was revisited in *Crimes* in the opening floor level shots of a packet of cigarettes, a gin bottle and a handgun. The props operated as stark referents for the suggestion of a latter day, rake's progress inflected narrative. The cigarette trope is highly visible in Leone's films, however, in *Crimes* the cigarette imagery was deployed as a story referent, as opposed to enhancing character dimension.

Coppock appropriated Morricone's readings of Wagnerian leitmotif, Foley track and sound score design for the music track. Coppock's leitmotif interpretations introduced the two performers and presaged the choreographic interludes that ensued. The harmonica functioned as leitmotif for the male character, whilst guitar music and whistling represented the female character. Like *Once upon a time in the west* (Leone, 1968), the *Crimes* score was prepared before rehearsal and shooting, and was played on set to build appropriate atmospheres.

Recognisable imagery from the spaghetti western paradigm, integral to Leone's style were adopted from a catalogue of motifs collected by Robert C. Cumbow in, *Once upon a time: the films of Sergio Leone* (1987). The trinity thematic that dominates the Leone oeuvre, was made manifest in *The good, the bad and the ugly* (Leone, 1966). Cumbow's psychoanalytic reading of the notion of troika oriented scenarios related to Sigmund Freud's explorations into consciousness, namely the id, ego, and superego. These perceptions were espoused in *Crimes*, first to hone performer psychology, although the triad principal was well hidden, and second, as task material for the two dancers to access. The psychopathic

trope was re-examined in the formation of the female character. An image of her two selves in *Crimes* (Tiso, 2005) was presented inside a split screen, so that her character appeared to be broken into halves. Her image was then superimposed into the frame three times, set against a black void.

There follows a description of Cumbow's authored reading of Leoneque themes, which were absorbed into the dance structures of *Crimes*.

'Anonymity' (Cumbow, 1987, p.165):

The two performers remained mute in *Crimes*. Their individual backstories were unexplained in order to test whether the spaghetti western genre template was capable of making sense out of the bloodbath coda in *Crimes*. An overly prescriptive reading of the performers' relationship to each other was avoided, so viewers might access their personal knowledge of the spaghetti western genre to imagine possible narratives and form potential explanations for the violent outcomes of the screen-dance.

'Faces' (Cumbow, 1987, p.175):

In *Crimes* the extreme facial close-up was a strong, recurring compositional element. The intercut to eyes shot, is another Leone motif explored in *Crimes* in a number of scenes. Intercuts of the male performers' eyes and facial twitches became more intense as the screen-dance interludes unfolded.

'Musical Instruments' (Cumbow, 1987, p.180):

In *Crimes* (Tiso, 2005) the harmonica was emblematic of the imminent confrontation between the two performers, followed by the bloody coda as the violence escalated. A series of textual interventions, combined with of the sound of the harmonica announced the start of each choreographic section. The textual interventions revealed by degrees the screen-dance's format as a six minutes opening title and credits sequence.

'Partnerships' (Cumbow, 1987, p.182):

The notion of partnership in *Crimes* was fraught with danger from the onset of the film action. The two performers might have represented ex partners. They appeared to offer each other protection at first, only to betray one another in the coda. The performers' menacing behaviours did not to have clear motivation within the mise-en-scène, however there was a sense and that both partners were expendable. So too the viewer, when the male performer turned the gun towards camera lens, and thus directly at the viewer, at the end of the work.

'Shoot outs' (Cumbow, 1987, p.188):

Standard western cliché over recent decades has dictated that plot lines and filmic action frequently culminate in a shoot-out scene. *Crimes* reconceptualises and reverses this convention in the opening scene.

Conceived as choreographic two-way confrontation, the female figure placed in the extreme foreground, moved her hand down her side as if to pull an imaginary gun. The notion of gunplay as a skill was not examined in per se. The researcher was more interested in testing the impact the presence of 'loaded' weapon might have within the context of screen-dance, and if Leone's violent authorial themes, reinterpreted through

dance might be tolerated within the screen-dance idiom. *Crimes* (Tiso, 2005), does not include the sound of gunshot, nor is the audience aware of the moment that injuries are inflicted on either of the two performers. The graphic image of the female dancer clutching an abdominal wound in the coda is visualised as a macabre piece of movement material.

The scene shares similar genre characteristics with American director, Fred Zinnemann's (1907-1997) classic Western *High noon* (1952), the apogee of the Western shoot-out. The diametric oppositional placement of the two performers in *Crimes* satirises the slow, deliberate, face off confrontations derived from both Zinnemann's film and the Leone spaghetti western canon

Leone's Southern European repertoires, idiosyncratic movement and sound grammar were filtered and refigured into a British commentary on the spaghetti western genre. This was due in part to some fundamental differences between Northern and Southern European cultural sensibilities. The Leone template proved viable as a legitimate source for the researcher of *Crimes* to access, and might be of interest to other screen-dance practitioners.

4.8. Jaques Tati

There follows an account of Jaques Tati's visual imagery, sound effects, storytelling, and how the director's grammar of film impacted the image making, sound scape, and narrative concerns of the Tati parody research screen-dance. The account analyses Tati's singular vision stylistics and

argues that the director's intricate staging of movement and sight gags which are embodied in his physical comedy, offers up many opportunities for screen-dance makers.

4.9. Souvenir (Tiso, 2005)

Research screen-dance predicated on the Tati oeuvre.

Tati's insistence on the use of the general shot and long shot meant his audiences could scan the entire screen surface to accrue visual information. The shots in *Souvenir* were crafted mostly as general long shots, although the image surface was less crowded with information, due to the budgetary circumstances of the *Souvenir* shoot.

Tati's use of the long take and non-selective front facing camera position methods were adopted in *Souvenir*, first, to enhance the parodic nature of filmic style which enables the viewer to process the scene and entire dance composition within the *mise-en-scène*, and second, to maintain dancer performance energy, since interruptions associated with shooting from different angles, close-ups and cutaways can be disruptive.

Though non-dance oriented, *Mr. Hulot's holiday* (Tati, 1953) was built on well thought out movement vocabularies and an inventive use of props. In response, *Souvenir* merged social and gestural modes of dance with the handling of props, such as a giant beach umbrella, newspaper and sand castles with the intention of driving the narrative towards Tati parody.

A salient thematic preoccupation in *Mr. Hulot's holiday* and companion piece *Mon Oncle* (Tati, 1958) was the negative effects of technological progress on Hulot and his environment. Hulot's comedic gesture found expression in the many situations he encountered as a

result of the vagaries of progress, most notably the car related incidents in *Mr. Hulot's holiday* (Tati, 1953). *Souvenir* (Tiso, 2005) does not dwell on these issues, but concentrates more on Tatiesque sound design principles.

Tati's films were routinely denuded of naturalistic dialogue and used sound to enhance meaning and atmospherics. As dance is considered generally as a non-verbal medium, the implications for the screen-dance form are substantial. As Tati observes, 'The comedy of observation is supported by stereophonic sound which adds to 'le gag visuel' 'le gag sonore' (Tati in Gilliat, 1976, p. 69). Tati created an acute awareness of stereotypic Gallic idiosyncrasy in *Mr. Hulot's holiday* through the use of sound effects and music. Dialogue was realised as post-synchronised mumblings. Such approaches were responsible for generating mood rather than story and differed markedly from industry standards of the time, or what Chion terms as '(...) vococentrism, (...) the technical and aesthetic norms of the classic cinema (...) implicitly calculated to privilege the voice and the intelligibility of dialogue' (Chion, 1999, p.6).

The absence of sound and visual cohesion and use of dubbing, typified Tati's acoustic quality and film stylistics. The commonly accepted connection that exists between sound and space was hence subverted in *Souvenir*, so that the sonic palettes bore scant resemblance to that of the actual location sound sources. Tati's habit of foregrounding noise, originating from the sonic background was honoured, suggesting scenarios that were not present in the *Souvenir* images. *Souvenir* favoured a non-vococentric approach achieved through dubbing

techniques and sound effects. The dancers chattered their way through their movement material, describing what they are doing and adding their own vocal sound effects. None of the dialogue or action attempted to create a specific dimension of meaning, with the exception of climatic moments for example, when the young couple, played by Tattersall and Solon Ulbrich, reach the end of their tango influenced section.

The viewer hears the voices of children at play on the beach in *Mr. Hulot's Holiday* (Tati, 1953) where none are visible, save images of three sand castles and a spade. The same effect was put to use in *Souvenir* (Tiso, 2005) during the scene in which the middle aged couple Mr and Mrs Grey, played by Scott Smith and actor Saskia Reeves, attack each other with fly swats. In other instances, the opposite of sound/image mismatching occurs, for example when the music in *Souvenir* interacts graphically with the external action in the visual field. One example of the close proximity between sound and image is demonstrated in scene at the beginning of *Souvenir*. The scene features a minor character who is digging a hole in the sand on the beach. A Foley track of incidental sounds created for the digging sound effect supported the musical rhythms of the sound score. Some of the sound was incorrect contextually, or exaggerated for comic effect, or was treated as a musical structure with a time signature, such as the digging sounds, and breath emanations that occurred later in the work.

There was little attempt at precision lip synch in *Souvenir* (Tiso, 2005) due to the lack of quality sound equipment available on the shoot.

The closest the production came to a dialogue sound and image fusion was when Tattersall slaps the face Ulbrich, her tango partner.

The musical scoring in *Souvenir* identifies and accentuates the historical period in which the work was set. This was achieved by drawing on an assortment of styles and musical clichés such as, steam driven calliope music from carousels, and tango and silent movie piano accompaniments. The musical themes also featured voice, cornet, accordion, cello, celestia and musical wine glass harps. The music, sound and image were initially tied closely by a beat imposed on the score in the introduction, in which Mrs Grey strides purposefully onto the beach, followed by her despondent husband.

American film director Billy Wilder (1906-2002) appropriated the character Stephen Lynn, Dr Alec Harvey's friend in English director David Lean's (1908-1991) and Noel Coward's (1899-1973), *Brief encounter* (1945), as a point of departure for the character C.C. Baxter in *The Apartment* (Wilder, 1967). In a similar parodic manoeuvre, a middle aged couple that spends the duration of *Mr. Hulot's holiday* (Tati, 1953) walking in the environs of the beach hotel became the character reconstitutions, Mr and Mrs Grey in *Souvenir*.

The narrative incidents in *Souvenir* are introduced by a descending picture postcard graphic motif. Each postcard represents a filmic non-sequitur, and displays textual information as inter titles. The picture postcard imagery is interposed with images of Mr Grey in his deckchair on the beach. He is reflecting on his life.

In the opening frames of *Souvenir*, (Tiso, 2005) Mr and Mrs Grey are seen taking an afternoon walk on a beach dressed in stone colours, set against dull, monochromatic backdrops comprised of extraordinary stone and rock formations. Mrs Grey sets up a marching rhythm that informs the music and sound design for opening scenes of *Souvenir*, which ceases only when Mrs Grey exhales onto her glasses. Both the beginning and ending of *Souvenir* are characterised by drab colour. The colour grading selection performed as a metaphor for the couple's beleaguered marriage. This effect was also enhanced by the use of filters on the shoot day. The nature of the Greys' marriage is expressed further by the physical gap that divided them, much like the placement in the film plane of the characters from the original Tati text.

Mrs Grey is shot as a 'reveal' starting with a middle close-up of her shoes, which extends up her calf to the hem a tailored grey skirt and then moves up her body to focus on her firmly buttoned up jacket. The camera alights on to a rolled up vintage copy of the Daily Telegraph pressed firmly under her arm. For the duration of *Souvenir*, the newspaper prop functions as a symbol of oppression, being used latterly as a weapon to swat flies. The reveal shot is used to disclose substantial amounts of information about Mrs Grey's character without her uttering a word. A counter point camera movement is employed in the next shot of Mr Grey, as he undoes his suit jacket in an attempt to 'loosen up'.

Mrs Grey mean spiritedly stamps on some sand castles, presumably built by small children. In the next frames, Mr Grey stoops down to repair the damage, whilst in the middle distance, a figure,

obscured at first by Mr Grey is glimpsed holding a spade. He is digging a hole in the sand in time with Mrs Grey's marching rhythm, which was set up in the earlier sequences. This grave digging, funereal image is also indicative of the couples' redundant relationship.

The film's monochromatic backdrop jolts into vivid colour, on the arrival of a small group of youthful fitness fanatics dressed in brightly coloured beachwear. Polarising filters were used on the day of the shoot in order to intensify this dramatic colour transition. The three fitness enthusiasts' entrance is representative of the colour and energy they bring to the visual field, in contrast to the dreary nature of the Greys' opening sequences. Their vintage costuming is flamboyant and costume jewellery and makeup, vivid. Their individual looks contrast with the sensibly booted and suited Mrs Grey. Mr Grey's encounter with the fitness enthusiasts encourages him to reconsider his role as an idle hen pecked husband and offers him a transitory mode of escape.

Souvenir (Tiso, 2005) is constructed out of some of the basic grammar of '(...) cinema sight gags (...)' employed by Tati in *Mr. Hulot's holiday* (1953) (Bellos, 1999, p.173). 'Reduced to its simplest structure, *Les Vacances de M. Hulot* consists of a number of gags of the form: X (or somebody) takes Y (or something) for Z (something else)' (Bellos, 1999, p. 173). The *Souvenir* parody proceeds as a number of such simple sight gags. For instance, Mr Grey mistakenly makes contact with the fitness enthusiasts by misconstruing a gesture in their exercise routine as a friendly wave to him. This type of incorrect interpretation of body language and a lack of a coherent interaction between characters are familiar

Tatieseque tropes. As David Bellos points out, in Tati's world, '(...) characters do not interact, but pass each other at a distance' (Bellos, 1999, p.173). The concept of the Tati cinema sight gag is parodied in the section in which the hapless Mr Grey joins the fitness enthusiasts, despite their refusal to acknowledge his presence. Unimpeded by the lack of formal recognition, Mr Grey follows their choreographed movement by closely observing their steps. Mr Grey's pedestrian approximations of the more complex moves in the routine become more refined, until the unlikely figure is absorbed totally into the choreographic *mise-en-scène*. The exercise repetitions become increasingly punishing and the high pitch whistling in the sound track, insistent, as the fitness enthusiast in the red shorts and wide brimmed hat, played by Tattersall, counts down the exercise repetitions out loud.

The shrillness of the whistle in the sound track appears to wake every dog within a five mile radius of the beach. The barking motif is then absorbed back into the rhythms of the fitness routines. The tempo of the whistleblowing is reiterated in their heavy out of breath exhalations, as the group drop to the floor exhausted. Mrs Grey exhales vigorously onto her glasses. Thus she brings the marching rhythm section to an abrupt ending.

Mr and Mrs Grey set against each other with fly swats. They duck and dive and avoid coming to blows. Converseley, the young couple, (Tattersall and Ulbrich) perform a duet along the shoreline. Prompted by the ominous sound effects of thunder in the distance, Mr Grey holds a large colourful umbrella over the couple. Again, Mr Grey's presence

remains unacknowledged and the young couple continue to perform their tango-inspired dance sequence.

The following scene exploits the humorous potential of video's shallow depth of field and parodies Tati's sense of comic timing. The choreographic structures merged Tati'sque dumb show comedy with contemporary, social and gestural movement styles. Tattersall and Ulbrich move in and out of the immediate foreground. They are locked in a series of choreographed romantic embraces which used the iconography of cinema lobby cards as their point of reference. The scene concludes when the female fitness enthusiast (played by Alice Sara) who had been wearing a light blue dress is revealed, now stripped down to a yellow swimming costume and petticoat. Mr Grey is captivated. Their ensuing duet is a symbolic enactment of his fantasy life and is offset by the real life relationship that exists between his wife and himself.

Towards the end of the encounter, Mr Grey realises that he is unable to match the energy of his young dance partner, who seems unaware of his predicament. In response, he runs from the shore and wades into the sea. As if recognising that he is physically and metaphorically out of his depth, Mr Grey turns towards the shoreline and wades fully clothed into the sea. The colour desaturation from the early scenes resume.

The *Souvenir* (Tiso, 2005) narrative sought to create internal, meditative, fragmentary moments, counterbalanced by the real life external action. The contemplative sections were illustrative of Mr Grey's mental processes, whereas the other characters involved in the external

action functioned as real presences. Their existence within the mise-en-scène formed narrative pathways that merged with Mr Grey's imaginings. This represented a departure from the narrative concerns of the original Tati source material, and thus fell short of declaring a unilateral commitment to it. However, *Souvenir* forged firm parodic links with the sonic and visual effects employed in *Mr. Hulot's holiday* (1953), and with the structure of the sight and sound gags used to enhance the comic effects.

The multi-faceted nature of the authorial source materials of Hitchcock, Tati and Leone, required the researcher to tease out the most appropriate strands to intergrade into the practical research screenings. Some of the authored strands proved more fruitful than others. In general, the experiments with the Hitchcock oeuvre proved the most effective, and came the closest, in terms of corresponding with the initial research expectation.

Chapter Five

Directorial, stylistic, narrative listing

5. Directorial, stylistic, narrative listing

5.1. Introduction

Chapter five sets out to interrogate interpretations of the directorial, stylistic, narrative listing within the context of contemporary screen-dance, based on observations and issues prompted by the findings of the listing. The objective was to create a clearer understanding of the potential of the Hitchcock's, Tati's and Leone's cinematic languages for screen-dance, by constructing the listing for the purposes of encouraging and evaluating contemporary screen-dance today. The appropriation of authored cinematic vernacular for the creation of more accessible screen-dance works, suitable for broader audiences, augmented the production of the listing.

The directorial, stylistic, narrative listing took on a different formula from that which had at first been envisioned. The initial thought process had been to combine information from the differing aesthetic palettes of the three directors, to help craft an authorial aesthetic equation. This goal was not entirely achievable as there was no guarantee that what represented an author driven aesthetic success to the researcher, would necessarily provoke the same reaction in other screen-dance artists. Possible listing preferences were just as likely to differ from one dance practitioner to another, engaged in similar working modes.

A subtler approach was called for, but to date, the researcher has not been able to produce a fully comprehensive authored directorial, stylistic, narrative listing, suitable for screen-dance application. The lack of

a defined didactic answer to the research question was perhaps to be expected given that the premise was subjective. Consequently, the initial thought processes were modified, so that the listing was mediated as a number of observations that might be of use to screen-dance artists with an interest in adding such a rubric to their creative screen-dance practice. However, the observations indicated that the screen-dance idiom might well be suited to appropriating and recycling of the authorial languages of mainstream cinema.

There follows an inventory of some of the positive observations made, and difficulties encountered during the attempt to formulate the directorial, stylistic, narrative listing. The inventory may be of benefit to screen-dance practitioners and other film artists interested in directorial, stylistic, narrative led cinema and the representation of movement on screen.

5.2. Directorial, stylistic, narrative listing

Finding one:

The use of the close-up revealed itself to be the most effective author inflected device, in terms of screen-dance production.

Dance film specialist Erin Brannigan observes, 'As a type of cinematic shot, the close-up has traditionally had a strong connection with narrative story-telling and the construction of the star personae (...)' (Brannigan, 2011, p. 39). However, Brannigan's discourse concerns itself, with the aforementioned concept of '(...) micro-choreographies (...)', or the close-up as deployed in screen-dance, that moves beyond the confines of the star system (Brannigan, 2011, p. 39). Her interest lies in the types of

close-ups that draw attention to the dramatic, visual impact associated with micro performance, be it an extreme close-up of the surface of a performer's skin or the micro movements of a facial muscle.

McPherson and Fildes have also explored in detail the potential of the close-up in their substantial body of screen-dance works. McPherson writes,

Through the use of close-ups and different angles, the camera can take the viewer to places they could not usually reach. The lens can enter the dancer's kinesphere – the personal space that moves with them as they dance – framing the detail of the movement and allowing an intimacy that would be unattainable in a live performance context. In my experience, it is often the movement of the body parts outside the frame that creates interesting and active viewing. The framing I chose often focuses on a detail of movement, frustrating the audiences view of the 'whole', whilst at the same time creating dynamic and tension within the shot and forcing the viewers' imagination to come into play. (McPherson, 2003)

A similar aesthetic, in terms of an overt sense of experiential, kinesthetic, quality can also be detected in the work of Becky Edmunds. In *Skate*, (Edmunds, 2009) the viewer is made intensely aware of the sensations of ice skating in the close-ups seen exclusively from the point of view of the skater in action. The physical feat of skating is punctuated by periods of stasis and calm silences that burst forth suddenly into rushes of energetic new action. The imagery is supported by the sound design, which serves to heighten the awareness of blade slashing through ice.

Edmunds has also collaborated with filmmaker Lucy Cash, who together lead the Straybird collective. Both artists have a background in dance, live art practice and moving image. They have co-directed screen-dances, and co-curated projects featuring dance movement as it relates to other art forms in conjunction with artists such as Claudia Kappenberg.

Sergio Leone is far more concerned with exploiting the potential of the close-up in his distinctive use of the extreme close-up shot, as purveyor of star commodity, conveyor of dramatic symbolism and descriptor of character motivation. This was achieved in part through the recording of his actors performing small movements such as chewing, blinking, and nervously gulping, to more obvious fearful, or entirely neutral facial movements. For example, in *The good, the bad and the ugly* (Leone, 1966), the length and extremity of Leone's facial close-up shots emphasised both the taciturn quality revealed in the micro movements of Clint Eastwood's features, as well as the actor's matinee idol looks. For Leone, exaggerated facial expressivity contained in the close-up was fundamental to his film stylistics and storytelling and became an influential idea that was absorbed in to this research.

The type of close-ups that encourage the viewer to empathise in terms of a kinesthetic response with the dancer on screen have been explored in detail in the work of McPherson, and Edmunds and Cash. The close-ups examined specifically in the research work *Crimes* (Tiso, 2005), respond more directly to the strategy advocated by Leone, and expands on current screen-dance methodologies in the manner in which the close-up shots support the idea of character motivation, narrative intention and the building of a specific atmospheres that under pin the screen-dance plot lines. This was expressed most directly in the research screen-dance *Crimes*. Scott Smith was asked to look into the camera with the type of psychotic menace typical of some of the more intimidating characters in the Leone rollcall of villainy. This action moved beyond the forming of an

experiential connection with the viewer, into the realms of making clear a specific dramatic intention.

Finding two:

Engaging with gender issues and violent tropes associated with film studies in terms of authorial invested screen-dance practice was useful, but made less of an imprint on the Leone inflected research screen-dance, *Crimes* (Tiso, 2005) than might have been anticipated. This may be due in part to more recent debates surrounding gender theory that have obsoleted the type of tropes on display.

In *Once upon time in the west* (1968) Leone replaced the typical Leonesque male hero figure embodied in the on screen persona of Eastwood with a strong female protagonist, Cardinale. The repositioning of the female role as protagonist was tested in the screen-dance *Crimes*. In hindsight, the partial nudity, hints at violent and sexual conflict contained within the mis-en-scène did not sit particularly well in *Crimes*, nor did the attempt at empowering the female role satisfy entirely. Taking contemporary dance out of its context by utilising Leonesque tropes such as guns and blood, seldom depicted in screen-dance, was a perhaps a debatable strategy.

Finding three:

Continuity editing and the use of a single take can enhance screen-dance performance quality.

In a recorded interview, conducted by the researcher with performer, curator and producer Emma Gladstone in 2000, Gladstone talked at length

about the compromises that are made inevitably by dance performers.

Gladstone articulates,

There are so many cumbersome technical requirements, so you can't possibly dance with as much focus as you do on stage, and it makes you realise how much power you have in the theatre, when you dance the life into someone else's work, it's a huge responsibility. On film your responsibility isn't only to the work, but also to the camera. You are obliged to keep your head thinking very precisely about where you are in space, and where you need to be. It's very draining and it is a lesson in not being precious about the choices that you make (...). Group work that moves through space is much harder for the camera to record, and as the camera does not pick up the quality of the movement. I think it is hard for the dancers to really give their best. You are really a cog in a larger process, and you're used to being something else. It's a strange realisation, but you have to adjust your standards.

Dance exists in the spatial and temporal dimensions, so adherence to continuity shooting suggested itself as a promising stratagem for the recording of skilful dance performance. Four of the five practical research screen-dances prioritised skilled choreographic content over pedestrian non-dance styles. Thus, hypermediated editing techniques that obsoleted the need for virtuoso performance were rejected in favour of less invasive editing processes. The goals here were to encourage dancer commitment to their choreographic material and to render the experience of being on a film set as positive as possible for the performers, by reducing the inevitable interruptions that occur during the film making process.

The mise-en-scène preference for the long shot and long take over editing was a prerequisite of the Tati oeuvre. However, the impulse for employing a sustained tracking shot for filming continuous dance was suggested initially by viewings of Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948). It was

calculated that the realism implied by the long take might encourage the choreographed interactions between the performers to develop naturally. *Souvenir* (Tiso, 2005) also preserved the natural flow of images and the quality and visual style of the period it pertained to, but was less rigorous in its adherence to the non-constructed Tati model. The *Souvenir* editing style thus featured some cuts to close-up and middle shots to add variety to the shot palette.

The study of continuous, long tracking shots in Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948) combined with an analysis of virtuoso uninterrupted long takes created by other prominent directors are also recommended to novice filmmakers interested in the screen-dance form. For example, Orson Welles's *Touch of evil* (1958) makes use of a protracted crane shot in the opening sequences of the film. The shot tracks the concealment and journey of a car bomb that is set to explode in real time, in the town of Los Robles on the Mexican border. Martin Scorsese's *Goodfellas* (1990) describes in detail the route made by actors Ray Liotta (as real life mobster Henry Hill) and Lorraine Bracco (as Hill's future wife, Karen) through the back entrance, into the labyrinth of corridors and kitchens of the Copacabana, a New York underworld nightclub. One of the longest tracking shots in cinematic history is the short feature length film *Russian arc* (2002), directed by Russian filmmaker Alexander Sokurov. The camera movement is a single, ninety six minutes shot. The film was recorded on a Steadicam by the cinematographer Tilman Büttner over one day at the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg. Another tracking shot that warrants special attention is featured in the socialist propaganda

film, *I am Cuba* (1964), by the Soviet director Mikhail Kalatozov (1903-1973). A funeral procession was shot by a camera mounted on to cables by cinematographer Sasha Calzatti. This uninterrupted, overhead, gravity defying camera movement, captures the large crowd of mourners below.

Finding four:

The use of a plurality of authored themes in conjunction with other film genres and sub genres in new screen-dance works, though enriching, can result in generic confusion.

Vanishing point (Tiso, 2004) was a synthesis of film noir, German expressionism, Hammer horror inspired sound scoring and Hitchcockian continuous take strategy. When the Dryden sound track utterances were added during post production, the assortment of concepts became indistinct in relation to the authored subject and theme of *Vanishing point*. As a consequence of this experience, the use of multiple cultural and cinematic referents were not retested in the subsequent screen-dances.

Finding five:

Authored screen-dance is capable of transforming the traditions of authorial cinema without losing a sense of itself.

The three directors' genre films are susceptible to both broad based audience appeal as well as high art critical approbation. Hitchcock's suspense dramas, Tati's comedies and Leone's spaghetti westerns all push the intellectual boundaries of their particular genres. The research thus supported the case for the making of mainstream directorial, stylistic, narrative inflected screen-dances, that were both entertaining and challenging.

The high versus low differential in current screen-dance practice is driven to some extent by economic considerations and the individual tastes of various contemporary dance 'gate keepers', including programmers, directors and funders. Mainstream film inheritance thus remains relatively under explored. One significant exception is the BalletBoyz, Michael Nunn's and William Trevitt's feature length film version of their 2015, WW2 drama stage production *Young Men*. The work was commissioned by the BBC and shot on location in Northern France. It however remains to be seen as to what extent the commissioning of *Young Men* has had on current screen-dance awareness, or if indeed the work has contributed to a significant shift in screen-dance related funding policy at the BBC.

The researcher therefore considered how reference to mainstream cinematic authorship might disrupt the notion that entertainment value debases art practice by placing the types of subjects and film genres believed suitable for screen-dance into a wider cultural context. For example, sensationalist tropes connected with filmic realism, sometimes rejected as suitable screen-dance material were experimented with in *Crimes* (Tiso, 2005).

Populist stratagems extend beyond the historic Hitchcock, Tati and Leone mainstream contexts, to works by modern single vision directors such as Michel Gondry. In Gondry's *Be kind rewind* (2008), the lead characters find themselves remaking the video collection of a struggling video store after its entire contents are destroyed. The characters respond to the disaster by reconstructing the high, middle and low art VHS

collections, using sets and props made out of cardboard, cotton wool and paste. Lowbrow entertainment films such as *Ghostbusters* (Reitman, 1984) and *Rush hour 2* (Ratner, 2001) to the more highbrow cinematic cult classics such as *The umbrellas of Cherbourg* (Demy, 1964) and *2001: A space odyssey* (1968, Kubrick) were all remade with the same meticulousness, as if the high, middle, and low art film classifications were of little significance.

Finding six:

The three directors were motivated by action as much as dialogue in their filmmaking process, yet their methods of directing action differed significantly from one another, thus offering a wealth of creative possibilities for emerging and erstwhile screen-dance practitioners to exploit.

As a bi-product of the study of the relationship between the research screen-dances and the directorial, stylistic, narrative inflected referents, it became apparent that Hitchcock, Tati, and Leone process action very differently from one another. Leone's depictions of action and his symbolically loaded spatial relationships refer to the well-known ritualistic characteristics of the spaghetti western genre, he all but created himself. Action sequences are punctuated by moments of stasis and reinforced by extended periods of silence or musical scoring. Tati and Hitchcock constructed their scenes more realistically, Hitchcock using hands specifically to convey information and atmosphere, whereas Tati deployed the whole body to comic effect.

These principles were absorbed into the research screen-dances to establish a wide ranging palette of action options for directing the performers.

Finding seven:

Focusing on the importance of music and sound design in film, screen-dance and film practice, challenges previous assumptions concerning the commonly held view of the inferior positioning of sound in mainstream cinema.

There exists a lingering attitude, that film is principally visual media, despite the expressive possibilities music and sound affords in terms of the narrative and psychological dimension. Brophy attests to this disparity,

We say we say we 'watch' movies, but the 'cinesonic' experience is far more than a mere optical event. (...) but thanks to years of optical and literal orientation, you articulate filmic experience through words which use visual metaphors. (Brophy, 2004, p. 2)

Many valuable lessons can be learned from the '(...) cinesonic (...)'

study of authorial filmmaking based on exemplar works that combine an experiential style of editing and movement direction with a heightened sense of sound aesthetic (Brophy, 2004, p. 2). This research attempted further to redress the balance by utilising a number of interrelated perspectives set forth by prominent 'cinesonic' thinkers such as Chion.

In summary, in many instances, the directorial, stylistic, narrative listing proved itself to be a valuable and insightful device for the enhancement of a greater knowledge and understanding of the researcher's own screen-dance practice. The main principles and tenets of

authored practice worked well for the invention of the research screen-dance works, thus the researcher would maintain that it is advantageous for others to interrogate the rules of the directorial, stylistic, narrative inflected model in their own practice. However, it should be acknowledged that there is a plurality of other screen-dance practises and platforms in the current practice, that subvert or break with screen-dance perceptions explored in this research, such as the high art and low art qualification, the remake, or the reinterpretation of authorial voices. Screen-dance artist and writer Anna Heighway speaks of a broader, more radical screen-dance model,

(...) the filmmaker need not frame the pirouette, but could explore more natural, non-theatrical forms of human motion such as running, falling, or the throwing of a punch. This new lineage facilitated an even more liberated screendance paradigm in which the “dance” in screendance need not be “dance” movement, nor human motion, but anything kinetically driven, full stop. (Heighway, 2017).

This approach opens up the dialogue by advancing a wider ranging definition of screen-dance that reaches beyond the discussion surrounding the directorial, stylistic, narrative inflected model, or more general cinematic provenances, or screen-dance’s relationship to human movement and dance choreography.

Chapter Six

Narrative, spectacle and the close-up

6. Narrative, spectacle and the close-up

6.1 Introduction

As an unexpected by-product suggested by the authored stratagem, the researcher has developed an interest in extending her experience of choreographing and making screen-dance, by creating a sense of narrative and cinematic spectacle around her own screen-dance practice. The researcher recognises that screen-dance practitioners and artist filmmakers have been drawn over the decades, to various forms of narrative and spectacle. Artist Isaac Julien's spectacular movement oriented examination of the life of the poet Langston Hughes, *Looking for Langston* (1989) is an example of this approach. *Curing Albrecht* (2016), which was filmed in the spectacular location of Victoria Baths in Manchester, is another more recent work by choreographers/ directors Jessica Wright and Morgann Runacre-Temple. The screen-dance was made in collaboration with the English national ballet and featured a large cast of dancers drawn from across the Greater Manchester area.

The following observations are based on the researcher's experiences, after having created the directorial, stylistic, narrative listing. Finding one identified the scale and power of the cinematic close-up in the researcher's screen-dance as one of the most valuable listing conclusions. The production of an experimental screen-dance cycle, where further engagement with finding one, and notions of spectacle and storytelling,

were retested on the the researcher's R&D phase of the screen-dance project *Flow* (Tiso, 2014).

6.2 Flow (Tiso, 2014)

There follows an account of the six R&D *Flow* screen-dances. Mainstream authorial practice is examined in terms of its relationship to the deployment of the cinematic close-up in screen-dance and the impact of spectacle and cinematic narrative on the screen-dance form.

Flow merged together facial expressivity, whispered and spoken dialogue, dynamic camera movement, sound design, music composition and choreography. The work was built extensively on the cinematic close-up as a method of crafting a more effective personal screen-dance practice. The intention was to take the viewer on a visual and aural journey using shots that amplified the proximity of the dancers to the viewer. The large projection surface in The Vaults, located underneath Waterloo Station where the work was premiered, was an ideal space for the viewer to experience the encounters with each member of the *Flow* ensemble, as they were projected at a spectacular scale. Little of this visual expansiveness could have been be possible within the confines of an upper circle seat in a theatre, or on a miniature mobile phone screen.

The concept underpinning *Flow* was constructed on the idea of a choreographic translation of 'chinese whispers'. Chinese whispers is a popular and timeless party game, and is played across the globe by people of all generations. A sentence is whispered from one person to another along a long line. The words and subsequent mishearings are

passed on, so that the sentence that emerges at the end of the line can be quite different from the one uttered at the beginning. Made on a cast of seventeen dancers ranging from the ages of twenty-one to eighty, *Flow*, (Tiso, 2014) applied this idea to choreographed movement material. When movement was passed from one dancer to another, both choreographic repetition and transformation took place. The viewer was central to the game, observing when and where the choreographic duplication and redefinition occurred.

The *Flow* cast, made up of trained performers at the beginning of their careers and those who have enjoyed long and varied working lives, met for the first time during the R&D rehearsals. The mature members of the group performed the same material as the younger dancers, thus the *Flow* concept stimulated a sense of shared ownership of the process and the material amongst the group. The dancers were motivated to explore the potential of their physiognomy as a mode of communication, as well as emoting their whole bodies in an attempt to enhance the emotional authenticity of the work. These types of elements can read particularly well when projected at a large scale.

The six *Flow* films represented the merging together of the two movement polarities, namely un-coded everyday gesture and dialogue and rigorous dance technique. The *Flow* choreographic framework for making the work was broken down into the following steps:

1. All the performers created a solo teasing out key elements from sound designer Tim Barker's sound score.

2. One of these solos was selected, observed and then embodied by the whole group.
3. Using the movement information that they had just observed, the performers created empathetic responses to the solo.
4. Solos based on the responses to the original solo were arrived at and set. These solos were then scripted in detail and the scripts were passed around the group and taught. The dance scripts produced a collective movement thematic without replication, since each performer deciphered the script directives in relation to their own understanding and observations. Thus 'core' material comprising alteration, and open interpretation were interposed in each of the six *Flow* pilot screen-dances.
5. The scripted choreographic 'chinese whisper' phrases were then reworked and re-embodied.
6. The performers divided in to four groups of four, and made an approximately fifteen second quartet, evolving and developing material that enhanced choreographic transformation and gave the dancers time to modify and own the material.

A variety of language descriptors were used in the *Flow* scripts. Further observations regarding timing and dynamic were emphasised by the use of vocal range and onomatopoeia. Special emphasis was placed on the practical relationship of space to the performer, where exactly the movement initiated in the body and how the movement connected from one moment to another. Creative imagery was used to source movement material and some technical vocabulary was also utilised where necessary. This methodology produced common movement themes that

emerged without replicating the original scripts. Each dancer interpreted the script instructions in relation to their own experience and perception. As a result, there was evident, core material containing many alterations, interpretations and translations, interspersed in the six *Flow* films.

Sergio Leone often rehearsed his actors using Morricone's pre-recorded film music to illicit strong emotional responses from his casts. In advance of the *Flow* workshops and in honour of this practice, Tim Barker was asked to create a rehearsal sound score that referred to a sense of visceral communality, and what it is like to have breath and a beating heart in the body. Barker's sound score contained key aural elements, whispering, heartbeats and a meditative hum that the dancers accessed in terms of mood and as a point of departure for the movement material.

Barker collected additional ambient sounds of the performers' clapping and stamping. They were then requested to devise and memorise a short mantra based on their own personal histories. Barker recorded the whispered mantras, heartbeats, ambient room sounds and spoken memory fragments. The language that was heard in the *Flow* sound track was multi-national and reduced often to unintelligible murmurings in the manner of the dialogue interferences in Tati's *Mr. Hulot's Holiday* (1953). Composer Jude Greenway's score was constructed out of a musical leitmotif modelled on the urgent rhythmical patterns, typical of the Bernard Herrmann oeuvre, that built to an emotive, sonic coda.

The *Flow* films were for the main part structured as a series of extended takes inspired by Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948). The work featured

Filippo Maria Bianchi's and Greenaway's mobile cinematography. Their camera hovered and floated along the undulating line of *Flow* performers. The camera work permitted visual access to facial expression and smaller movements in the extremities, not commonly observed by theatre audience members. From time to time the camera hesitated and appeared to backtrack on itself, as if trying to make up its mind what to focus on next. In this way the cinematography drew attention to significant close-up moments that the group had choreographed within the movement sequence. Fleeting connections were made with each performer, which when projected at a spectacular scale, took on increased emotional significance.

To generate the choreographic material, the performers followed instructions described in the steps on page pp 111-112. The task instructions had been devised by the researcher and the co-choreographer Lauren Potter in advance of the rehearsal period. The guidelines were formulated from analysis of the sound track prepared for the *Flow* R&D rehearsal period by Barker. The researcher instructed the performers to incorporate elements into their movement improvisations which had been selected from the language of film imagery. For example, terminologies such as, slow motion, cut, fade to black, the horizontal pan the film close-up, and the vertical pan were accessed as task material.

The prevalence of the head shots as prime sites of interaction in *Flow* (Tiso, 2014) has far reaching implications for the future of the next stage of the work. The researcher will therefore continue to pursue the recording of facial expression as a top priority for the full development of

the *Flow* (Tiso, 2014) project. For instance, shooting an extreme close-up of a transitory smile to support the film narrative, if or where appropriate, might be explored. Attention to the close facial expression in the fully realised production of the *Flow* films might stimulate a deeper understanding of performer intention and motivation, and intensify audience reaction to spectacle in the new work proposed.

Descriptions of the six pilot *Flow* screen-dances and a short summary of the films in terms of spectacle, the close-up, the tracking shot, narrative, and the importance of film sound are described below.

Flow 1:

Flow 1 foregrounded the emotional context of the work through exploitation of the cinematic close-up. The opening frames focus predominantly on the heads, shoulders, arms and hands of the dancers. A gesture performed by the dancers, communicating the impression of a heartbeat, expressed also in the sound track, was featured prominently in *Flow 1*. The visceral notion of what it is to have a pumping heart and blood flowing through one's veins was a key thematic of the *Flow* experimental cycle. The sound-scape examines the relationship between the non-diegetic, prerecorded score, constructed out of verbal fragments and the realistic diegetic sounds, which were generated by performers in the rehearsal space.

Flow 2:

Flow 2 consisted of one spectacular tracking camera movement. The camera floated along the line of performers so that the audience might register a glimpse of each of them as individuals. The slow, detailed

tracking shot comprised of close-ups and extreme close-ups, assisted in the construction of a micro narrative, in which the dancers connected with one another verbally and the audience, whilst gazing intently in to the camera. The dancers acknowledged the camera lens as it passed them. The camera later came to rest on the ceiling of the rehearsal space. The line of dancers reorganized themselves in to a tight grouping as the camera continued to cut a swathe through them, again registering their facial responses in close proximity.

The *Flow 2* lighting state was realistic, and the use of life-like, colour reinforced the naturalistic approach. As the camera work was concerned exclusively with close-up and middle close-up shots, it became somewhat challenging to locate the dancers' relationship to the space they were performing in.

Flow 3:

A series of shots were deployed in *Flow 3* that moved in and out of the line of performers. The emphasis in this experiment was placed on the notion of the power of the spoken word and facial expression as sources of narrative content and meaning. The whisperings and words uttered between the performers were embedded into the *mise-en-scène*, much in the same manner as *Flow 1*.

Flow 4:

The movement material in *Flow 4* was performed by the four dance quartets, facing each other. Overhead tracking crane shots swept above and across the corridor formation of dancers. Close-up shots were interspersed with medium shots. The movement material was placed

securely in the middle ground of the film plane, so that the dancers' relationship to the performance space was detectible.

Flow 5:

Flow 5 features an active play between the realistic ambient noise of the performers in the room and the sound track. Some of the movement material was loose and natural, whereas other gestures contained explicit quotations from individual dancers' movement palettes, such as the 'I am watching you' motif, generated by mature dancer Nicholas Minns.

Flow 6:

The *Flow 6* experiment was filmed as a wide shot and by a fixed camera. The sixth and final *Flow* film imitated faithfully the viewing experience of a dance work performed in a performance space. Music composition dominated the work. There were no close-ups or supplementary sound design components. The dancer quartets performed their movement material in canon formation, peeled off to the end of the line and then repeated the movement in a series of loops. The viewer experienced the movement transitions, as the performers at the end of the line in each quartet moved down the line to join a different quartet. There was little sense of a beginning, middle or end in the experiment, save the empty space created in the coda. *Flow 6* generated the clearest interpretation of the choreographic 'chinese whisper'. The sense of a visual narrative was less pronounced, due to the deep placement and fixed operations of the camera. There was however, a clear indication of the dancers' relationships to the space and floor in this experiment.

Listed below are several additional observations gathered from the

six *Flow* film experiments. These observations stimulated further consideration of the directorial, stylistic, narrative listing as an important instrument for screen-dance practice.

The close-up in *Flow*:

The 6 pilot *Flow* films conceived of a cinematic interpretation of screen-dance which was distinct from live performance. The power of the close-up shot was exploited by melding together facial expressivity, spoken dialogue and micro movements of the performers' heads and shoulders. There exists little substantial equivalents in dance performed in a theatre, due to the customary space separating the proscenium arch from the audience. The facial close-up, as key style declaration in *Flow*, strove to forge an intimate experience between the viewer and performers. The shot sought to intensify the emotional content of the micro narratives generated by the individual participants and larger *Flow* groupings.

Narrative interpretation in *Flow*:

Whilst the subject matters of the *Flow* experiments embody screen-dance authorship and musical and choreographic concerns, the *Flow* experiments also cast forth another question; in creating screen-dance, was the significance of interpretation being stressed and if so, should this apply to all screen-dance or solely to narrative driven dance film? It can be argued that the omnipresent close-up in the *Flow* films drew away from pure narrative, yet in the researcher's view, the use of the close-up was as effective in terms of storytelling as orthodox narrative stratagem. This was due to the shot's ability to release multiple micro narratives and thus open up audience interpretations. The researcher believes that this is the case

in her assessment of the *Flow* pilot films. The narrative construction in *Flow* lacked the broad sweep of storytelling declared in dance made for theatrical environments that allude strongly to mainstream cinema, such as Matthew Bourne's *Adventures in Motion Pictures*, *Edward Scissorhands* (Bourne, 2005). *Flow* creates a series of micro narratives that are determined by what the viewer construes to be happening within the film frame at any given moment. Such observations encourage the individual viewer to get involved and participate in the formation of a narrative, rather than digest a retelling of a fairy tale for example.

Editing and lighting in *Flow*:

In terms of editing procedure, the researcher's first impulse was to permit the floating camera close-ups to run uninterrupted in *Flow*. Hypermediated editing styles were eschewed so that the choreographic 'chinese whisper' unfolded as effortlessly as possible. Nevertheless, the persistent close-up strategy in some of the *Flow* film experiments meant that the shape of the 'chinese whisper' inspired choreographic material, was at times lost in the film space. By cutting to a mid or wide shot intermittently, the dance performance might become more comprehensible within the frame.

The *Flow* films employed varying lighting effects in order to generate appropriate film atmospherics. Each film was adjusted to suit the differing screening experiments. For example, the dancers in some of the experiments were given more definition in the colour-grading by saturating the palettes to the maximum. On reflection, the techniques adopted on the *Flow* R&D set might have included lower lighting states, to help clarify the choreographic content and to create more projectable, stable imagery.

Sound score in *Flow*:

The score in *Flow* (Tiso, 2014) was neither intended as background nor incidental to the visual imagery. The aim was to challenge these customary inequalities, so that the sound and pictures were represented equally. This tactic referenced the close collaborations between Hitchcock and Herrmann, and Leone and Morricone.

Greenaway modelled his musical composition for the six *Flow* films on Herrmannesque sound scoring, though Greenaway did not attempt to pastiche directly Herrmann's celebrated scores. Nonetheless, there are traces of Herrmannesque mannerism in the insistent sound style of the *Flow* cycle. Unlike Herrmann, Greenaway's music did not attempt to cue action, set mood or inform the audience as to how they should be responding to the work emotionally. Greenaway did however allude to Herrmann's use of leitmotif in the introduction of the character of the *Flow* cycle itself. The *Flow* musical theme was repeated in different variations in terms of melody and tempo, and ran through the entire *Flow* cycle, except for *Flow 4* where sound effects were put to use exclusively.

Barker's original sound concept informed the *Flow* micro narrative from the onset of the rehearsal period. The sound design attempted to connect emotionally the viewer with the performers. Anthropologically produced sounds, such as heartbeats and whispering were used to reinforce the perception of shared humanity, that permeated the *Flow* cycle.

6.3. *The big sofa* (Tiso, 2016)

The nature of the spectacular close-up and the stylistics of film noir and Hitchcock parody have also influenced the creation of the researcher's screen-dance project *The big sofa*. The work was impacted directly by finding one of the directorial, stylistic, narrative listing (which read, 'The use of the close-up revealed itself to be the most effective author inflected device, in terms of screen-dance production').

The big sofa is a three minutes short film, which was co-commissioned in 2016 by Big dance shorts and Channel 4's Random acts strand. *The big sofa* narrative features an extended family unit of nine, which spans the decades: a grandmother, grandfather, mother, aunt, two young adults, a teenager, and a young child. Another child appears later on in the narrative. In the opening sequences of the work, the group are piled together on a large sofa in front of a television, late one night after a family celebration. The opening scenes in their living room are bathed in the warm, realistic glow of lamplight. The family doze fitfully, whilst watching a film noir. A flickering light source emanates from the television screen, but only the sound track of the noir movie is heard by the viewer. The noir images themselves are never glimpsed. The family is woken abruptly by an ear splitting clap of thunder in the sound track. At once, the lighting state changes and the stark shadows of noir stylistics shroud the living room. The family find themselves being moved literally by the disturbing images and sounds they are experiencing on their television screen. So too the viewer, who also experiences the transformation of naturalistically lit *The big sofa* set, into an otherworldly, black and white

universe, shot at noirish oblique angles. These and other noir tropes on display were inspired by Hitchcock's early work in German silent film.

Further along the time line of *The big sofa* (Tiso, 2016) the Aunt enters into the frame with her teenage son. She is carrying a glass of milk with an eerie glow radiating from it. The inclusion of this prop references a scene in Hitchcock's spy noir *Notorious* (1946) featuring Cary Grant, (1904-1986) (as T. R. Devlin) in which the actor takes a glass of milk (lit from the inside by Hitchcock's props department) up a staircase to Ingrid Berman (1915 -1982) (as Alicia Huberman) who has been poisoned, and is languishing upstairs in bed.

The big sofa family shifts positions and fidgets until they become comfortable again. The sofa bound group responds directly to the film noir music, sound and images they are experiencing on the television as they happen in real time. Gradually the family's reaction to the sound scape and visual imagery on the television screen progress into a succession of composed dance and gesture sequences.

As stated, the sound track acts only as a means of deciphering what is happening on the television screen for the screen-dance viewer. The objective was to encourage the viewer to engage and empathise with the family's disconcerted response to the film noir climax, so that they too experience a similar reaction to the ensuing shoot out coda, without actually observing the climactic moment on the television screen. *The big sofa* cast thus reads the film noir context through the noir imagery, sound track and dialogue originating from the television screen. The viewer in turn rereads the text filtered through the neo noirish treatment of the

screen-dance music, sounds and images they are receiving in the film frame. The exchange revealed an interesting intertextual association between the viewer and the viewer, viewed. The family's choreographed movement builds in physicality, right up the searing climax of the film noir on their television set. The ending is accompanied by gun shots, screams, squealing car wheels and the high pitch wail of police sirens. The family fall back on the sofa exhausted. The soft, realistic lighting returns to the set.

The camera movement in *The big sofa* (Tiso, 2016) begins with an establishing low angle shot on the family on the sofa. The use of a focus puller and a zoom lens allowed *The big sofa* cinematographer Bianchi to move from the extreme close-up to a wide shot in one movement. The camera movement also defined the dimensions of the space. The set was lit with soft ambient, practical lighting for the opening, realistic colour sequences. This was in stark contrast to the deep contrast lighting state that was deployed in the latter noir sections. The lighting was set up to suggest a hypothetical streetlight source, emanating from the window and the presence of a Venetian blind, which is one of the more familiar noir clichés.

Sound and music were treated in equal measure, in keeping with the original requirements of the research. Tim Barker used a vintage sound library to select recordings to create the neo noir sound scape for *The big sofa*. The sounds chosen were permeated with the timbre and quality evocative of the film noir era. Attention was given to replicating the minor acoustic distortions intrinsic to the vintage recordings. This gave the

new sound scape an instantly identifiable, noir like ambiance. Archetypal noir sound clichés, such as the screech of tires, the wail of sirens, sounds of gunfire, screams, running footsteps and rotating ceiling fans were all employed to full effect.

The voice over narration, interspersed with hard boiled, wise cracking phraseology, was delivered by American actor Reed Birney. Dialogue elements, selected from the film noir classic *Double Indemnity*, (1944) directed by Billy Wilder (1906-2002) and co-written with novelist Raymond Chandler (1888-1959) were studied and then rewritten in parody script form by the researcher. The resulting music composition, sound montage and parody scripting represented a distillation of noir essence for *The big sofa* family to engage with, and react to, during the screen-dance.

The edited soundtrack was played in the performance space during rehearsals and the filming of *The big sofa* (Tiso, 2016) for the dancers to respond to. This referred to the aforementioned rehearsal processes of Leone and Morricone. An updated noir score was composed and recorded specially for *The big sofa* by musician, composer and filmmaker James Braddell, a.k.a. Funki Porcini. Porcini created heightened drama and tension in the soundtrack by employing electronic music technology to recreate a fully orchestrated score. Porcini drew influence from the *Double Indemnity* score by Hungarian, Hollywood composer Miklos Rozsa (1907-1995). Rozsa was also responsible for the music composition in Hitchcock's philological, mystery noir *Spellbound* (1945). Porcini's music played a primary role in the creation of atmospherics, movement mapping and as a mechanism for enhancing the editing sutures. The cuts became

increasingly numerous as the musical structures gathered momentum.

The Big dance shorts commission was part of the bi annual Big dance festival. The initiative was conceived in 2006 and led by the Mayor of London, in partnership with People dancing and Big dance hubs. Big dance has since become one of the world's largest most inclusive dance festivals. The festival mission was particularly appropriate to this research in terms and its social reach and aspiration towards epic scale. The Big dance pledge has taken place in Trafalgar square since the festival's inception. The final spectacular version choreographed by Akram Khan, in collaboration with a team of dance leaders and hundreds of participants, ranging from the ages of fourteen to eighty six took place in 2016. A further forty two thousand dancers from forty four countries performed Khan's choreography simultaneously with the Trafalgar Square group.

Part of the Big dance mission statement was to develop dance events of scale in extraordinary locations, to inspire and enthuse new, wider audiences, and to involve and mobilise large, diverse, communities to come together and experience dance practice in all its many guises. *The big sofa* (Tiso, 2016) was conceived with this type spirit in mind, though the work is significantly more limited in its ambition towards the epic. *The big sofa* performance group were of all ages and abilities and came from different backgrounds. The casting strategy was aimed at appealing to a broad range of viewers who might empathise with the *The big sofa* ensemble mix, so much so that they perhaps might also develop a curiosity to see more screen-dances or even become involved in the creation of a screen-dance work at a later date themselves.

The authored stratagem has proved an expedient theoretical point of departure for the full critique, and the directorial, stylistic, narrative findings have galvanized particularly the experience of generating the researcher's current practice concerns in a number of beneficial ways. The findings pertaining to the creative processes underpinning *Flow* (Tiso, 2014) and *The big sofa* (Tiso, 2016), namely the preoccupation with scale and the close-up shot, reinforced by the stylistic and narrative concerns of Hitchcock, Tati and Leone, have had positive effects on both screen-dance works. The researcher thus hopes to continue this line of enquiry in her next up and coming screen-dance project.

Conclusion

Conclusion

The aims of this investigation were to establish a framework for the reassessment of allegedly retrograde cinematic authorship, to promote a greater understanding of movement direction and cine sound in screen-dance, and to broaden its appeal. The researcher thus proposed an authorial inflected directorial, stylistic, narrative inspired listing, based on modes of reading and producing screen-dance, invested with genre qualities, contiguous with the films of Hitchcock, Tati, and Leone.

The authorial modality was nonetheless a contentious choice for a current piece of research, as the model has been supplanted by new philosophical theories that have diminished interest in the topic area. At the moment in the history of philosophy when theoretical interpretations of semiotics and signifying systems took hold, the notion of meaning as primarily generated by a single author became outdated. These once powerful, modern philosophical forces became detrimental to the actual making of authored works to comment on. The anti-agency debate has since moved on, and due to the continuing interest in the author, the decision was taken to retain the authored directorial, stylistic, narrative stimulus as a strategic policy for producing the research, despite former theoretical hostility.

The recognition of cross referencing in the screen-dances created for the research required an understanding of how the Hitchcock, Tati, and Leone precursor texts moved across contemporary screen-dance. After a significant time lapse, the researcher set about resolving the problem of

cross referencing and critiquing her own author inspired screen-dances. The self-critique was a complicated undertaking as the works produced were bound by so many meanings that the researcher had difficulty in deciphering the intertexts she had constructed.

Souvenir (Tiso, 2005) for example, recycled characters from the Tati film *Mr. Hulot's holiday* (1953) but extended the Tati plot lines into new narrative avenues. Image and text conjoined in *Souvenir*, to reference the era of the British seaside holiday. The textual interventions were laid out at the bottom of the film frame, so that each choreographic interlude was given an inter title within the picture frame. This feature is shared with the seaside picture postcard format. Information was styled as a combination of slogans and hand written messages linked to former codes of social interaction, and more precisely to the speech inflections of British comedy actress Joyce Grenfell (1910-1979). *Souvenir* cleaved to the Tati model in its delivery of a loose narrative and types of physical comedy typical of the Hulot cycle.

Crimes (Tiso, 2005) to some extent existed as Leoneque parody. The work's indebtedness to the cinematic quotations and stylistic idiosyncrasies of the Leone canon was openly discernable. The screen-dance's depiction of physical violence, a common feature of the spaghetti western form, but rarely portrayed in contemporary screen-dance, supported the perception of the genre translation.

Conversely, the relationship in *Vanishing point* (Tiso, 2004) to its originator was almost imperceptible, since no explicit Hitchcock text was cited. The suture-less structure of *Rope* (Hitchcock, 1948) was adopted as

a mechanism for the purpose of finding a continuous rhythm for the dance performance in *Vanishing point* (Tiso, 2004), rather than as an attempt at a Hitchcock parody. The researcher was more concerned in this instance with opening up viewer interpretations of the *Vanishing point* story line, by moving outside the directorial, stylistic, narrative inspiration to which it referred. In this, *Vanishing point* endeavoured to engage with the spectator and their ability to interrogate their own impressions of the work, by offering many other disparate sites of information.

Tippi: crying fowl (Tiso, 2007) suggested similar author inflected characteristics contained in *Vanishing point*, *Crimes* (Tiso, 2005) and *Souvenir* (Tiso, 2005), but focused in more detail on the Hitchcockian narrative model. The work referred almost exclusively to *The birds* (Hitchcock, 1963) plot line, and appropriated some sequences from the film. The reaction to the parody work was amplified as a real life flu pandemic threatened to break out in the U.K. in 2007. Due to this extraordinary coincidence, *Tippi: crying fowl* acquired another layer of complex associations. The resulting amalgam combined threads from Hitchcock's past invention with the present day threatening crisis. The strategy of borrowing and parodying Hitchcock, Tati, and Leone cinematic texts, situated outside the realm of the dance idiom, provided a significant platform for the creation of new recognisable screen-dance derivatives.

Hitchcock's, Tati's, and Leone's innovations in movement direction and sound situate them between avant-garde and mainstream entertainment cinema. Although their personal styles were sometimes at odds with the commercial studios, they remained engaged by their

employers because of their marketable entertainment qualities. An important part of this investigation was to test if screen-dance could inhabit a similar environment by using a refinement of the stylistics and narrative concerns of the three directors, with a view to crafting thoughtful, yet entertaining new works. The directors' accumulations of middlebrow art, highbrow art and populist genres impacted the creation of research screen-dance stories, that were, recognisable to non-specialist audiences. There have been other initiatives which have undertaken to familiarise wider audiences with the screen-dance idiom. *Dance film academy* led by programme artistic director of Thierry de Mey, adopted the nomenclature 'Academy', for the purposes of associating the programme with mass television culture. Unfortunately however, the show failed to be recommissioned.

The research also encouraged a renewal of interest in Laura Mulvey's essay *Pleasure and Narrative cinema* (1973). The emphasis shifted away from erotic spectacle of the male gaze and other psychoanalytic feminist readings of film spectacle, towards the impact of the close-up and visual spectacle on screen-dance practice. The *Flow* ensemble was, to some extent, the object of the gaze, despite the dancers' respective ages and genders. The sixteen performers were however treated with the same respect by the camera. Neutral forms of spectatorship were encouraged to connect the dancers with one another, and the viewer to them. As the camera drifted across the ensemble it did not linger unnecessarily on the bodies confronted, but emphasised the complex relationships between the group members. The non-voyeuristic

shooting technique challenged the notion of the male gaze, as no one performer of either sex was singled out in any of the *Flow* micro dramas.

The researcher would therefore argue that *Flow* (Tiso, 2014) does not have to rely on avant-gardist strategy to assuage anxiety generated by the negativity of the male gaze, since the *Flow* films did not seek to prioritise any one person or any one particular story. The *Flow* camera permitted the viewer to choose which narrative thread they wished to follow as the various stories unfurled on the screen in front of them. Another possible reason for speculating that the close-up might deflect the notion of gaze in *Flow* was that the performers were observed rarely in their entirety, except for the final film in the *Flow* cycle. The performers were instructed to gaze straight back in to the camera from time to time, thus disrupting the Mulvian concept of the gaze still further. The researcher would agree that mainstream cinema continues to assert the male gaze but it can be argued the *Flow* films adherence to high production values, technically assured camera work and editing procedure engages screen-dance with what works well in mainstream cinema in terms of visual spectacle.

The word spectacle in art practice has been associated with other screen-dance practitioners such as, Decouflé, and de Mey (in collaboration with Belgium dance maker Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker). Such examples are distinct from the understanding of spectacle as interpreted as a form of distraction or display, exemplified by the language of blockbuster movie marketing. The American, deep voiced preview narrations for 'coming attractions' movie trailers are examples of the type

of marketing activity that attempts to attract as many audience members as possible to high budget productions, by signaling the promise of action and romance sequences. This research embraced the word spectacle in terms of a collective artistic celebration that brings together communities or smaller groups in a shared artistic experience, and inspires and attracts new audiences that may have had no prior engagement with contemporary screen-dance.

The scale of any future production will be crucial to the development of the *Flow* concept. The researcher is hoping to shoot an epic scale, full production version of *Flow* (Tiso, 2014), perhaps in a vast decommissioned building or spectacular outdoor space, that suggests additional layers of narrative content. The new *Flow* film might then be screened at unusual outdoor venues such as, inside tunnels, across bridges, at arts festivals or by rivers and coastal areas. The images might also be projected on to water screen walls, or dry ice walls, or multiple pipe and drape extra wide screens, or double sided, walk through, strip screens, or any other viable, remarkable surface. It is the researcher's intention to make a film that is suitable for these types of spectacular methods of screening so that the 'chinese whisper' choreographic phrases might appear to 'flow' from building to bridge, from plaza to rooftop, or water screen to dry ice screen. The optimal objective, coming to the end of this MA, is articulated as a desire to inspire new screen-dance viewers to enjoy works that speak to wider audiences of all ages and ethnicities, that are governed neither by notions of mass appeal, nor the vagaries of fashion.

Another strong conclusion drawn from this research, was that the directorial, stylistic, narrative impulse might be considered as 'one possible' tactic, rather than 'the only' approach, worthy for the consideration and the presentation of more proficient screen-dance works. The research became less dogmatic in its authorial aspiration, as although received knowledge of cinematic practice is a useful tool to help navigate the sometimes perilous waters of screen-dance, other subsequent discoveries exposed the unassailable reality that an absolute interdependency on an authorship methodology, though inspiring, was not essential to the extension of effective screen-dance in the U.K. There exists a host of other screen cultures, which can be brought to bear equally productively on to the screen-dance idiom. The directorial, stylistic, narrative impetus should rightly be considered as one of the several theoretical interdependencies that work particularly well alongside the screen-dance vernacular. Despite this, the authored inscription has been somewhat overlooked in the history of British screen-dance. A demand for fresh, complete analysis of the form, filtered through authorial narrative cinema, capable of summoning wider audience appreciation of screen-dance vernacular still exists. The call for what could be described as work with broad appeal should however not imply that popular author led screen-dance be judged as aesthetically or intellectually deficient.

The screen-dances produced for this research aligned themselves to televisual and narrative cinema. Diverse choreographic languages, that sanctioned strong dance technique, were also endorsed, as was the use of highly trained performers. By televisual, the researcher does not refer to

work that is unduly influenced by the bottom line, or has been produced for a mass market in an attempt to second-guess broad based tastes or entertainment value preferences. The type of works referred to here have respect for viewers' intelligence and abilities to connect to a work of art on their own terms. Encouraging viewers to experiment with interpreting or making sense out of a screen-dance work should not likewise be considered as demeaning. Screen-dances that access iconic cinematic moments from Hitchcock's thrillers, Tati's comedies and Leone's spaghetti westerns might contribute to a fuller appreciation of narrative inflected works, without necessarily postulating absolute interpretations.

Dance performance is now frequently recorded and uploaded on to the internet. By contrast, live dance remains out of the reach of many people, interested in experiencing the performing arts. The highly successful National theatre LIVE cinema evenings at local cinemas attest to the way in which cinema can release a work of art from exclusive to affordable venues. Screen-dances can thrive as part of this mediated liberation, if promoted as discreet works of art, and freed from costly touring venues. Screen-dances have become proficient at circumnavigating mobile phone, laptop and computer screens, gallery spaces, film festivals, outdoor spaces, and commercial television. Moreover, once shot and post-produced, screen-dances remain wholly intact, apart from occasional screening aberrations.

The study of cinematic authorship as a guiding principal has been abundantly rewarding in many respects, not least in that it had encouraged the researcher to think in terms of how to devise camera movement and

choreography that is more cinematically driven in style, content and storytelling. More importantly, this thesis has thrown up a wealth of artistic possibilities that might feed in to the researcher's new ways of working and hopefully other practitioners, built on the strategy of referring to the directorial, stylistic, and narrative tendencies of Alfred Hitchcock, Jaques Tati and Sergio Leone.

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