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**Theatre, an empty space:
a thought performance after Gilles Deleuze**

John-David Charles Dewsbury

***“A Dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with
the requirements of the degree of PhD in the Faculty of Social Sciences”***
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Abstract

This thesis is about an encounter with performance – be that theatre, dance or live art – and with what happens when you attempt to put into words the visceral, heightened and irretrievable experience that is witnessed in such a space. Moving against the conventional ways social science almost inevitably starts to unpack this experience through always-already made frameworks and interpretations, the thesis begins instead in the abstract realm of ‘empty space’. This is to argue, following Gilles Deleuze, that first and foremost ‘something in the world forces us to think’. The thesis therefore proposes a syntactical grammar of thought, one that operates connections not hierarchies, works upon consistent not systematic modes of thought, and experiments rather than confirms. In the specific encounter with performance art, three registers or realms are advocated for the achievement of a certain kind of knowing; these are corporeality, immateriality and temporality. Working through these the thesis investigates how an encounter registered at the pared down level of ‘empty space’ might inspire other ways of looking at the world which inevitably question the ways in which we know what we think we know. Therefore, in producing a negotiation with what might be an unverifiable real – the affect of our visceral bodies, the immateriality of being in love, and the haunting force of the past upon the tension of our present moment – the thesis argues for the validation of non-representational scriptings of the social. To achieve this the thesis folds, without prejudice, theory and practice by charting an apprenticeship through the work of Gilles Deleuze alongside empirical encounters with some of the processes leading up to the creation of performance (that of the somatic training of Body-Mind Centring, the art of devising theatre, and the space of rehearsals).

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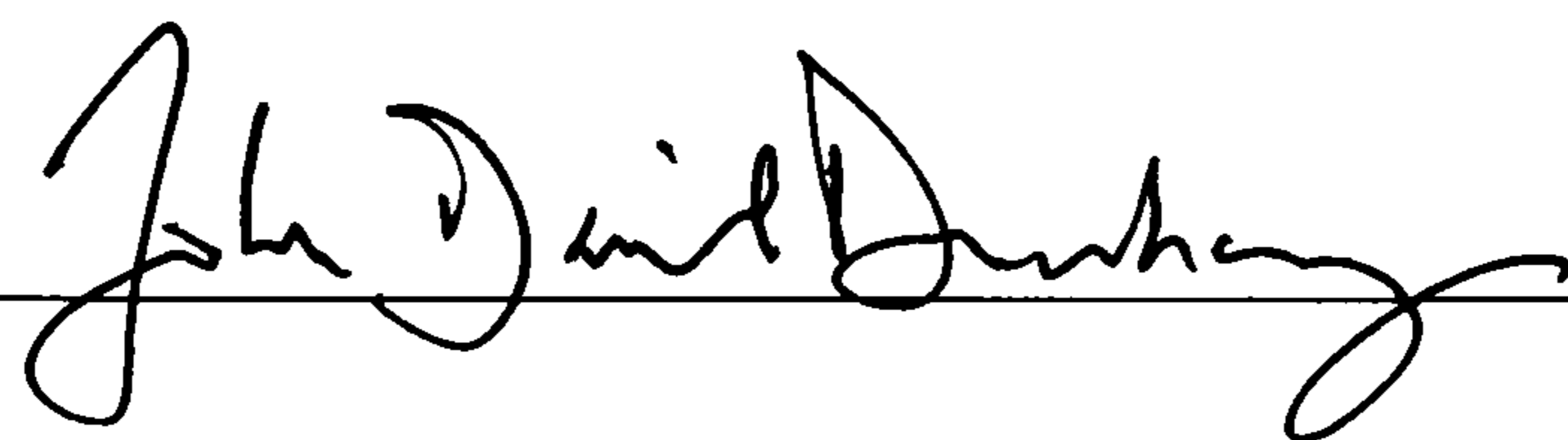
Author's declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original except where indicated by special references in the text and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other degree.

Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University of Bristol.

The dissertation has not been presented to any other University for examination either in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Signed:



Date:

28/1/00

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CHAPTER ONE

'Empty space'

We would do better to ask what is a subjective or implicit presupposition: it has the form of 'Everybody knows ...' Everybody knows, in a pre-philosophical and pre-conceptual manner ... everybody knows what it means to think and to be ... *Everybody knows, nobody can deny*, is the form of representation and the discourse of the representative ... But here and there isolated and passionate cries are raised. How could they not be isolated when they deny what 'everybody knows ...'? And passionate, since they deny that which, it is said, nobody can deny? **(Deleuze, 1994: 129-30)**

Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*. What is encountered ... may be grasped in a range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering. In whichever tone, its primary characteristic is that it can only be sensed. In this sense it is opposed to recognition. **(Deleuze, 1994: 139)**

1.1 Introduction

In *The Empty Space*, the theatre director Peter Brook details what it is we mean when, as a society, we refer to the art of theatre. Moving against historically and geographically specific definitions, which are often charged with the prejudices of society at the time¹, he opens by presenting what he sees as the basic mechanics, the bare essentials, which form an act of theatre. It is rather simple:

I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man (sic) walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged. (Brook, 1968: 11)

The thesis that follows is about an encounter with this space of performance art – be that theatre, devised performance or dance. I am not interested here in theories of theatre, or its history, but in the experience of the theatre and the encounters that it brings: what happens when you attempt to put into words the visceral, heightened and irretrievable experience of any live art performance. Therefore, all of the conceptual and empirical directions that the thesis takes come back to these questions: How are we affected when we experience an act of theatre, either as a spectator or an actor, and how do we come to make sense of this? Why are people moved when they witness the ending of *King Lear*? Why, and how, and what, do we feel when we hear Lear’s words as he crouches, as an old man, over the dead body of his daughter Cordelia: “This feather stirs; she lives! if it be so/It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows/That I have ever felt” (Shakespeare, *King Lear*. Act V, scene III: 264-66)? Again, what is the language that speaks to us when we look upon, or act within, the movement of two bodies dancing? What is ‘going on’, and what does ‘going on’ mean, when we are caught up in the intensity of the rhythm between the bodies, the fluctuating speed and slowness of gesture as a hand caresses and then rejects the touch of the skin of the other body? In performance we can have stunningly visceral and affecting (sensate as well as artistic) directions of bodies; hauntingly evocative designs of sets and props interfering with the clarity

¹ It is clear that Brook is speaking about a Western conception of theatre (although not exclusively so), and that this specificity necessarily shapes most of our accounts of theatre and performing arts where “acting style and the theories that explain and justify it are right and natural for the historical period in which they are developed and during which they are accepted” (Roach, 1985: 12).

of the material sense of place; and powerfully effective use of the tension of the present tense that is the space-time of the performance itself. In each of these registers – corporeal, immaterial, and temporal – a performance can be evaluated, and in each of these registers the performative provides a currency for use in the social scientist's endeavour to unravel aspects of everyday life.

This thesis is about being drawn to the actual 'empty space' of such performance because of the way it mobilizes different levels of phenomena: sensations, architecture, movement, words, theories and fiction. In this way, performance brings us into contact with the immediate effects and mediations of the physicality of our being in the world, the architecture (built and signified) that situates and channels a path through the world, and the power of the 'present moment', both in the ongoing sense of being on the move and in 'knowing' how to go on. Taking up the spirit of Peter Brook's abstract definition, the thesis takes the art of theatre as something that forces us to think and to think differently. In this way, it is an argument for the worth of bringing performance to the practice of doing social science, and in particular human geography. As a theoretical motif for the thesis, and as an instance of the actual ground upon which performances are played out, I present the title and the term of *empty space*.

In this introductory chapter, I want to draw out the manner in which this thesis unfolds. This serves a crucial point because the manner of the thesis, its style of presentation that is at once experimental and programmatic, precise and unrefined, in itself attempts to make an important argument: that we, in academia, need to free up the terms of reference through which we construct the interpretations, explications and descriptions of the social – not least because such referencing affects the way in which we select the areas of investigation. As I will explain, this is a performative style of research which is about "what happens when the stuttering no longer affects pre-existing words, but, rather, itself ushers in the words it affects" (Boundas and Olkowski, 1994: 23). On the one hand, this performative strategy reveals the theoretical and empirical problems involved in the type of research that is capable of working out of an encounter with performance art. In particular, this resonates with the concerns in social science coming together in the work of non-representational theory (Thrift, 1996, 1998, 2000a), performativity (Butler, 1997; Rose 1997a, 1997b), and non-epistemic ontology (Holzman & Newman, 1997; and certain strands of Hetherington & Law's recent work 1998,

2000). On the other hand, this explains the idiosyncratic nature of the thesis in its attempt to show how these concerns produce an alternative sensibility in our stance towards what counts as knowledge. Such idiosyncrasy begins with the three audiences for whom this thesis is intended: the social sciences in general, the field of performance studies, and the followers of the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze. Playing to the mix of these audiences produces a hybridized style of presentation, the characteristics of which I will detail in sections 1.3.1-1.3.4. However, I begin by illustrating the purpose behind thinking through ‘empty space’ both in the way in which my arguments will deal with the concrete space of performance and in the way in which the performance itself leads us to a certain kind of conceptual space. I cannot stress how important this issue of the conceptual space is: a space for thinking that is not paradigmatic but *syntagmatic*, not hierarchical but *linking*, and not systematic but *consistent* (see Deleuze & Guattari, 1994: 91). Next I outline, and make an argument for, the particular qualities of performance that make such ‘empty spaces’ a potentially vibrant resource for social scientific research. I do this through three research examples² taken from the three empirical pieces of research carried out for this thesis:

- An investigation into the role of corporeality in performance through the participation in the somatic training art of Body-Mind Centering [BMC], used both by movement artists (from dancers to actors) and healthcare practitioners (chiropractors to developmental therapists).
- An insight into the immaterial realm of performance through the observation of the processes involved in the production of a piece of devised theatre as it moves from being a work in progress towards a premiere performance. [*Guest House* devised and performed by *Uninvited Guests*; premiere: Arnolfini, Bristol, 22nd October 1999.]
- An exploration of the significance of time within the achievement of performance art carried out through the intensive observation of, and involvement in, the rehearsals leading up to a professional theatre production. [*All My Sons*, performed at the Bristol Old Vic, 3rd February – 7th March, 1998.]

In the next section I will set out why, in the pursuit of many of the aims of bringing performance and social science together, I am following the work of Gilles

² These are examples that are neither particular nor universal; the example here “is a singular object that presents itself as such, that *shows* its singularity ...expropriated of all identity, so as to appropriate belonging itself”

Deleuze and what has been cited as a philosophy of difference (see Ansell-Pearson, 1997a, 1997b; and in geography, Doel, 1999). Finally, I will map out the design of the chapters in relation to the particular elements of performance and to the Deleuzian concepts that open and experiment with thought capable of making sense of such performative qualities. To sum up, daring to edge towards saying that which is impossible, I hope that a mere trace of “that which does not allow itself to be clarified without disappearing” can be achieved (Martin, 2000: 62). Or at least I hope to show some of the theoretical avenues through which such sayings might be accomplished and made to make sense. That is to say that whilst there is a tendency to argue that many things are unsayable, a lot of the time efforts to intimate such things stop before they have even started – not least because of the trenchant nature of the categories by which we feel we can justify and articulate the interventions we do make. In this way this thesis moves against such caution: whilst it doesn’t offer any concrete answers it does suggest theoretical and empirical spaces where we can start looking.

1.2 Empty space

The abstraction of empty space – practically, as the clearing of the stage for theatrical production, and conceptually, as in the encounter of thought – does not work against the material and the concrete. Rather it is an attempt to work off the images of thought that effectively stop potential avenues of thinking. In particular, and as a starting point to this thesis, the aim of this kind of abstraction is focused upon removing the following obstacles that I see as the unnecessary confines of social science, obstacles that can be understood as the conceptual props that seemingly support a lack of thinking. The first of these is the rational discourse that straitjackets the appreciation of the body as no more than an object for knowledge. In this way, the realm of emotions, feelings and specifically embodied stances to the world (gender and sexuality) are thrown out of the courts of reason as a dangerous irritation (venturesome, uncertain and chancy) making the body excessive not only in itself but in relation to our predominant understandings of it. The second is the humanist and subject-orientated stance, including that of phenomenology, that frames understanding through the language of intent and agency, and ignores all the ways in which nonhuman organics, materiality and situations shape and are as

(Agamben, 1993: 10.1).

much a part of the world as we are. Instead, we need to work towards understanding the degree to which the encounters that these ‘others’ give rise to become us, making us who we are. Finally, there is the representational system that works an economy of always-already defined interpretations. For example, in the case of social constructivism, it works towards that ghost in the machine, the real. This system organizes scholarship by privileging those who sign up to a singular essentialism from which everything emanates, denigrating the potential of those research practices that experiment with the basis for what it is we think we can understand. It is not that these images of thought get things wrong, and nor is it the case that the alternative this thesis hopes to offer is a better way of doing things. Rather it is to work at producing other modes of thinking that might elicit additional ways of understanding. And perhaps more importantly it begins to work on the need for a different vocabulary for communicating and co-authoring new maps for the new problems such thinking opens up.

The thesis then is about meeting the force of the performance experience through an openness to think, within a necessity to think, and with a passion to think. It is the encounter itself that gives rise to thought not vice versa. It is the embodiment of being there that starts us thinking, necessarily needing to think about knowing how to go on – with the meaning, the narrative unfolding, and the appreciation of the corporeal (and thus our) skills on show. Such thinking is practice itself; it is a mutual founding. As I will set out shortly, this thesis moves against a theory and practice, and an empirical and transcendental, divide. It is also a passion, a shot in the dark that is a move away from representation towards a performative apprehension. These are apprehensions that are about beginning from vagueness, about not ruling out intuition, and about being tentative in the handling of things because that which is grasped can only be sensed. Apprehensions sketch out with a sense of risk and experimentation that which seems to be slipping from view, and as such have an academic currency in the way they are more attentive to the contingent nature and significance of things in the making. The point is to attempt to start in the ‘empty space’, at a place degree zero, at a place before the representational systems of always-already constituted blocks of meaning that frame the limits of what is sayable. As Bonitzer has put it when speaking of the empty space operating in the work of the filmmaker Michelangelo Antonioni, “empty space is not a void: full of mists, of fleeting faces, of evanescent presences or of random movements, this space

represents that final point of being finally freed from the negativity of intentions, of passions, of human existence” (1989: 218).

The lights might go down, sounds might be played, odours might infuse the auditorium – perhaps not the bare essentials of this act of theatre, but all potential forces, like the body of the man, that channel and bring about the events which are unfolding. Expectations are high in the belief that you are about to witness a heightened instance of the everyday. The man in Peter Brook’s description appears. Where is he coming from? Why is he here? Where is he going? Who is he? Does it matter? Imagine that these questions do not matter, and that foremost you are caught up in the general line of the performance: a man is walking across this empty space. You see the performance as an act of spacing and not as something that is about a particular place or a specific character. This level of description might at first glance appear to be entirely abstract, whereas it comes directly out of the material practices that most concern our daily lives. For instance, take the act of walking: an action that takes us forward and brings us into potential encounters with other people and other things. This is not an escape from the materiality of the world, for, through building knowledge out of such actions, the argument is made for thinking knowledge creation as part of our bodily process, which in turn speaks of the variation of our embodiment within the lived world itself. Instead of orientating arguments from the presupposition of self-autonomous, intentional agents of subjectivity, one focuses on the “common human practices and skills into which we are socialized and that in turn produce people, selves, and worlds” (Dreyfus et al, 1997: 16). It makes explicit acknowledgement of the ways in which we know “how to negotiate our way through a world that is not fixed and pre-given but that is continually shaped by the types of actions in which we engage” (Rosch et al, 1991: 144). Such a description of theatre speaks directly of the syntactical grammar of action, the syntax of which is the moment-by-moment assemblage of the worlds, encounters and events that make up our lives. I am drawn to this syntactical grammar – that which parallels the connective operation of prepositions in linguistic grammar – because of its simplicity and exactness. A good example of the way that this is more evocative is given in Deleuze’s reflection upon babies: “With a young child, one already has an organic, personal relationship, but not with a baby, which concentrates in its smallness the same energy that shatters paving stones” (1998: 133). The description of empty space thus signals the intent of this

thesis to pare things down to an ahistorical operational clarity, serving notice of the belief that there is far less distance between the description and the object of description than is commonly held. By which I mean that the ways in which we mobilize the material, the affective, the sensed and the nonhuman, is less a point of referential disclosure and more the way we constitute their place in the world by the experiential actions we make – actions that are brought about through encountering these ‘others’.

The lights go down. The visual field loses its clarity in the darkness, and yet there is a knowing that something was visible. There is a creaking of wood. Sounds echo as a pattering traces out an invisible movement; thinking is infected and inspired by this other sensation. The curtain lifts. The unseen information of odour pulls attention into the dark, empty space: an encounter here and now. Two bodies and another encounter there, now touching. Feeling that, having the capacity to be affected too, the duration of the encounter binds forces in. Just as the colours of liquids mix when brought together, and when waves of light disperse in contact with other spaces, and as molecules refashion themselves in contact with others, the present make-up of the world is continuously shaped and reaffirmed. The two bodies in the empty space continue moving and touching, unfolding the tension of contact, the force of affecting and being affected. This is all done to, and contained within, the time of the performance. It is about thinking in terms of the present moment. For example, think/feel the sensual becoming of the following performance event of touch as an active aiming at nothing above its own abundance:

A finger turns in light circles across your toes and the pads of your feet. Is this irritating? ticklish? erotic? relaxing? According to difference, the delineation does not usher from an exterior source, like the masseur telling you to relax or a social norm insisting that when your wife does this it is sexual and when your doctor does this it is not. Instead, let the physical action define the borders and meaning What the event is and what it feels like arise on the scene. (Brusseau, 1998: 10)

However, it is impossible to stay still in the immediacy of the ‘empty space’, for even in the space of a few seconds of a performance, such as these two bodies, a territory for interpretation begins to be etched out. Whilst the *tabula rasa* of the ‘empty space’ is an impossible place the purpose is to diagram the journey rather

than its actual departure and arrival points – to see where the journey takes you, to experiment. This is to take a stance that is open to thinking of the advent of difference-in-itself that any action manifestly ushers in; and one that is equally open to the improvized use of empirical and theoretical investigation where both unravel simultaneously, unravelling experientially just as they are woven together referentially in the act of writing them up. This is about investigating how these experiences inspire a mode of thinking that makes a “product of a negotiation with an unverifiable real” where the work of theory in this place is a “description and transcription of what one cannot see or prove with visible evidence” (Phelan, 1993: 1/32).

1.3 Performance

First, I want to make a distinction between the space of performance and the place of the concept of performativity that has in recent years come to take hold: for example, see in performance studies itself the work of Eve Sedgwick (Parker & Sedgwick, 1995); in the social sciences in general Judith Butler’s recent work (Butler, 1997) and the special issue of the journal *Theory, Culture & Society* (1999); and within geography the empirical work of Gillian Rose (1997a; 1997c), the theoretical work of Nigel Thrift (1997, 1998, 2000a) and the special issue of the journal *Society & Space* (2000). Performativity is a slippery term indubitably linked to the idea of a performance, but, regardless of the multiple instances by which a performance might come to be defined (see Schechner, 1994), the performative slips across, beyond and through such actual renditions. In this sense, whilst constituting a discrete act – the performance – the performative is not itself a concept signifying such an act. The performative is the gap, the rupture, the spacing that unfolds the next moment allowing change to happen. Alongside this easy conflation of performativity with performance, there is the additional concern that the boundary between performance and everyday life is increasingly becoming obscured such that everything becomes a performance. Currently within social sciences there is a prevalent assertion that a performance comes about through there being an audience (Abercrombie & Longhurst, 1998). Thus, in everyday circumstances people become performers because they *underline* their behaviour through the apprehension that they are being scrutinized by others (including, in narcissistic terms, themselves). It is the closeness of the word ‘perform’ (to make,

or do something) to the word 'act' (to dissimulate, feign action) that causes this discursive doubling-up (Schechner, 1985 & 1994). The distinction that I want to make is that narcissistic performance chimes with the latter, whereas it is the former general performance, practice let us say, that is constituted by the performative. A key concern remains: Is the concept of performativity one for all occasions? Yes, in that the performative has a univocal sense: it is the cusp of an emergent structure. And no: whilst univocally speaking of the incessant alterity within the spaces of our encounters, the potential the performative etches out for refusal, fracture and torsion is set within *specific* sites. In this it is necessarily aberrant and parasitic upon conventional, citational, and socially stratified context (whether that be upon the theatrical structures and rules of a specific performance art or sited event, or whether upon Goffmanesque performances set to everyday life (see in particular, Goffman, 1956). As Perloff notes, our structures of meaning have to be repeated to work, and as this always entails a shift in context as well as in use, everything becomes open to chance (1996). Hence, whilst the performative, as a theoretical tool or concept, can be used in any given circumstance, its usefulness and what it uncovers and creates is fundamentally specific to the context in which it is sited.

The above considered, the space of performance lends itself explicitly to the realm between theory and practice produced in the performative encounter itself, for four reasons. First, performance opens up to view this 'as if' space, a space that gives time for potential enactments to take place in a way that is much more tangible than in imagination and thought. It does this by putting on show the in-between and the in-the-making performative actualization. Second, this space is a personal space in that it binds you in through an immediate sense of belonging to a shared condition. So whilst it does not construct a space for general theory, it exhibits the micro-political investments produced in the personal spaces of our own bodies in relation to the everyday actions we all have the potential (whilst perhaps not the capacity) to make. It is in this sense that performance heightens the everyday instances of our corporeality by staging the ways we affect and are affected by encounters. Third, there is a link here between performance and the phantasmagoria – theatre has long played upon the conviction by its practitioners that it can make manifest what cannot be seen: “from the ghost of Hamlet’s father to the ghost in the machine of contemporary theatre’s special effects, Western

theatre has had a sustained conversation with the incorporeal” (Phelan, 1997: 2). This means that the performance space plays explicitly to a general research problematic: that the object of one’s mediation or interest itself disappears. As Phelan puts it, linking together the previous and the next point, “the enactment of invocation and disappearance undertaken by performance and theatre is precisely the drama of corporeality itself” (1997: 4; see also Auslander, 1997). Fourth, and finally, performance and theatre is an art with ‘real’ bodies in the sense that it is a live art: “Art is never an end in itself. It is only an instrument for tracing lines of lives” Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 187). Above all, taking all these reasons, it is a question of belief; and it is a question of giving space for the experimentation of that belief. It is not so much a question of whether it can be proven that this is right or wrong, but more about the development of capacities and skills that enable alternative means for the extraction of sense.

In relation to the space of performance within the social sciences the thesis is about taking up Peggy Phelan’s question: “If the diversity of human culture continually showed a persistent theatricality, could performance be a universal expression of human signification, akin to language?” (1998: 3). The openness in utilizing this alternative theatre for academic endeavour is an openness that means to “escape the conventions of methodological allegiance to a particular field’s system of knowledge. In the eyes of its adherents, performance studies was able to combine new work in critical theory, literary studies, folklore, anthropology, postcolonial theory, theatre studies, dance theory, and feminist and queer studies while forging a new intercultural epistemology” (Phelan, 1998: 4). Whilst I agree with this in the terrain of academia, and its many disciplinary and sub-disciplinary boundaries, I think that in speaking only of epistemology it misses one of the most significant tricks of performance studies. This is that it offers a window into thinking an alternative ontology – that it reveals the space of other possible worlds. The thesis therefore takes Phelan’s sentiments on board and looks to the work of Gilles Deleuze to move towards a sense of folding ontologies through which we might make aspects of life, representational or non-representational, apparent and therefore useful. In the next section, many of these particular qualities of the performance space are both refracted through and creative of the problems that Deleuze’s thought delivers us to.

1.4 An apprenticeship after Gilles Deleuze

Do not count upon thought to ensure the relative necessity of what it thinks. Rather, count upon the contingency of an encounter with that which forces thought or a passion to think. (Deleuze, 1994: 139)

In this section I want to set out why the work of Gilles Deleuze offers a perfect apprenticeship to the task of making sense of the encounter with performance, and why in particular it enables this encounter to be taken forward into academia in general. I want to offer four reasons for this because the thesis is as much an examination of Deleuze's thought in practice, as it is about the encounter with performance art.

1.4.1 *Performative research: foldings and weavings*

First and foremost, it is the style of thinking that Deleuze delivers us to. When he asks 'What is philosophy?' in his final collaboration with Félix Guattari, Deleuze answers that it is the art of formulating, fabricating and inventing concepts. Whilst this is pitched in relation to philosophy it explains a practice that can equally operate for theoretical work in other fields, including that of performance and that of the social science that thinks spatially (space featuring in one of its guises as a concept itself). This can be seen in Deleuze's own mixing of his philosophy when he addresses the art of the cinema:

It is a practice of concepts, and it must be judged in the light of other practices with which it interferes. A theory of cinema is not 'about' cinema, but about the concepts that cinema gives rise to and which are themselves related to other concepts corresponding to other practices ... It is at the level of interference of many practices that things happen, beings, images, concepts, all the kinds of events. (Deleuze, 1989: 280)

In this way the theoretical enterprise at work through the empirical encounter is about intervening with the conditions that make possible the production of new modes of existence. I see this as a folding and a weaving because the concept "posits itself and its object at the same time that it is created" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994: 22), which is to say at the moment of the encounter. In this way, the fold also presents

the simultaneity of thought. There are two moments of a dice throw: the weave of the dice that is thrown (experiential) and the dice that falls back (referential). These are the “two hours of a single world”, a simultaneous enactment of the ongoing constitution of the world, the hour of chance and the hour of necessity respectively; the chance of the encounter which forces us to think and the necessity of being able to go on in relation to that which it delivers us to (see Deleuze, 1983: 25-26). Instead of causality-finality we have chance-necessity: “not a probability distributed over several throws but all chance at once” (ibid: 27).

1.4.2 Performative research: folding the experiential and the referential

Second, in achieving this, and in the achievement, it enters into variable relations with other domains. It is not the position of this thesis to present any theoretical or empirical analysis as an answer in itself, rather it is to show a way of thinking through a problem. I am not trying to prove a theory, nor am I, through empiricism, attempting to present a moment of how the world really is. Rather, starting at an interface with the world that produces a certain problematic, that of the experiential encounter with theatre, the question is more about asking how we – in all of our disciplinary guises because we are first and foremost humans experiencing the world – might come to make sense of the encounters that perform the world. As Smith points out “it is no easier to read an image, painting or novel than it is to comprehend a concept” (1998: xii). So it is not enough to show what I am trying to work through via different means – for example, a video of a performance, or a piece of text, or a particular painting – as if they could encompass in their different style of presentation that which is apparently non-representational in writing. The point is what style we take up and use within the sphere of academic interpretation. Those other styles that interfere with ours (if we have such a bounded style) force us to think and in so doing conceive of alternative concepts that offer up another way of understanding the world; not just any understanding, but understandings that can be seen to do something precisely because these mixings of domains take place in the particular context that brings them about. Consequently, the stance of a Deleuzian understands that the academic practice cannot be taken independently of other practices – the artistic, the scientific or the theological. This does not mean that it has to account for all the others, an impossible and unhelpful task (in my view, the academic veracity of what I want to set forth is derived from the ability to distil

potential avenues that are necessarily partial). Rather, it is to be open to the full richness of the concrete through the bringing together of any potential combination of the elements in the specific contrapuntal relationships – the stance of the scientist moving alongside that of the artist producing a conceptual space in between which neither the one nor the other could capture.

This contrapuntal relationship is experimentation in contact with the ‘real’ (as in the empirical richness of the concrete), that which operates a particular fold, that of the experiential and the referential. Experientially: this is what brings us into thinking. It is one way of understanding the nature of your attention as you engage with a theatrical performance. And yet something more takes place. Referentially: the performance takes hold of you. The sensed action of the encounter is filtered in order to make it do something *for* you, rather than it being something that just does something *to* you. This is a fold because neither the ‘*for* you’ or the ‘*to* you’ is superior. Together they make up the algebra of being able to ‘go on’, to live through, to cope, to act. The man moves across the stage (experientially) in a way that reminds you (referentially) either of someone else, or of a personality trait (ie he covers ever so slightly when he does it). The movement of the man begins to etch out a meaningful territory – his walk becomes a pacing up and down and you relate to this in a particular way. The performance seemingly references experiences that you have lived through before. The referential is not a representational system, it is the moment where we trace out a territory for going on.

1.4.3 Performative research: folding theory and practice, the conceptual and the empirical

This leads me on to my third reason, that of the conceptual architecture given to us through Deleuze’s notion of the plane of immanence: “the image thought gives itself of what it means to think, to make use of thought, to find one’s bearings in thought” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994: 37). This concept of the plane of immanence is often misread, and, because it seems to be able to encompass everything, it is likewise misunderstood as some form of transcendental plane. This is not the point of its creation (see Goodchild, 1996: 46-47). Rather, through this concept, Deleuze argues that when we are at work in dealing with the world in any of our guises – as artist, academic, scientist, or even lover – we are working with “concrete ‘multiplicities’” where a whole host of processes are bringing the present moment

about. This renounces the notion of emanation or projection in favour of connection in that it does not follow the realm of signification premised on an Absolute origin but looks to what connections, encounters and interferences actually do. It is not that origins are removed altogether; it is just that they have durations that make them less grand and non-totalizing. Take this example of a man walking across a stage: the man is a biological force, 'multiply' the number of forces that might be at play here and you see that in this way the man is made up of certain types of molecules, specifically those that make up the enzymes and stimulating fluids that have come about within in him due to him having just drunk a glass of wine; or take the stage he walks across, the wood it is made out of, the craftsman who built it, the tree from which the wood came, the fact that it has a history (that it was on this stage that Henry Irving played Hamlet), and so on. These are all concrete, empirical instances bringing about certain processes of connection in the very performance of this action. We could take any one of these lines of connection – the history of the stage, or the biological forces mobilized by the man in the way he effects his performance – knowing that it is just one multiplicity out of the full field of multiplicities that come to constitute this plane of immanence. All these multiplicities are immanent to one another because they come about through contact with the same world. This moves against transcendentalism for it is not suggesting that this immanence has existed once and for always. Rather it is that this idea of immanence captures the fact that the concepts that we have created to get a grip on the world are immanent to a host of other such compositions of concepts in that they are coming out of the same encounter (eg this act of a man walking across the stage). A plane of immanence is that autonomous realm, the image that thought gives itself, in which we hold the particular concepts we are creating or working with together (see Deleuze & Guattari, 1994: 7). It might seem transcendently vast in comparison to our immediate appreciation of the concrete moment but that is because there are so many lines of flight and concepts that we could have taken and created in coming to grips with this moment of the world's unravelling. In this way, the plane of immanence is constructed by the concepts we create and put to use. Equally, as the creation of concepts is derived from being immanent to the world – 'something in the world forces us to think' – the plane cannot be transcendental in the manner of being once and for always because it is changing along with the world. Thus:

Creating concepts is constructing some area in the plane, adding a new area to existing ones, exploring a new area, filling in what's missing. Concepts are composites, amalgams of lines, curves. If new concepts have to be brought in all the time, it's just because the plane of immanence has to be constructed area by area, constructed locally. (Deleuze, 1995: 147)

The way the thesis is structured reflects this, and it does so in two keys, one major and one minor. The major key turns around the way in which the empirical research for this thesis functions; a fact that also effects the way it is presented. As mentioned, the three periods of research were all intensive immersions into particular fields of the live arts, the purpose being to encounter that aspect of the live art performance and give it time to force me to think. Each research period should be seen only as a particular take on the whole aspect of the performing arts. Each piece of the research mobilizes different concepts in the aim of achieving certain connections and apprehensions that enable us to make sense of what is literally and metaphorically 'going on'. The time of being in contact with the empirical field is distilled to the emergence of a coherent formation of these connections. This means that the direct empirical instances presented in the thesis are often a small fraction of the overall immersion time involved, but that equally it should be understood that in this way the empirical and the theoretical are not set apart. In place of such division, different intensities of both theory and empiricism weave in and out throughout the thesis. The point is theory is practice and practice is theory – whilst theory, the creation or use of certain concepts, enables the apprehension of certain aspects of the concrete world, practice is the contact with the concrete world that fuels the theoretical process: 'something in the world forces us to think'. This leads me to the minor key: that whilst it is often common practice to exhibit the empirical elements in compartmentalized sections (or even chapters) this thesis presents both the intensities of theory and practice in a style that further blurs the boundaries between the two. Thus many of the chapters feature the particular theoretical problems encountered in the empirical realm (those moments when we are forced to think) as an exemplification of the process of creating concepts. And vice versa, in the fold of theory and practice, concepts are shown to shed light on particular aspects of the empirical, serving to show Deleuze's work in action.

1.4.4 Performative research: folding the general and the particular

Fourth, I am personally taken with a particular preoccupation of Deleuze's, one that blasts through those confines of social science, that of his appreciation for a non-organic conception of life; or as he puts it, of "*a* Life ..." (1997). Whilst this only presents its face explicitly in his latter work (1988b, 1993, 1997; & 1998) it underwrites the formulation of many of the diversions in his seminal early works (1990a; 1994). Why am I taken with it? "*A* Life ..." opens a window to the ontological ethics of Deleuze's work too frequently overlooked by those – understandably – distracted by the terminology and the playful, often obscure, nature of his writing. This window is beautifully caught in his account of a scene from Dickens' *Our Mutual Friend* where those witnessing the event of a dying man, whom few have any concern for, see in his dying the "spark of life" (1997: 4)³. This spark represents for Deleuze a univocal quality, a quality that acts as a bond between us through the way it effects a "deep interest" – "probably because it is life, and they [we] are living and must die" (ibid).

Between his life and death there is a moment that is no longer anything but a life playing with death. The life of an individual has given way to an impersonal and yet singular life that disengages a pure event freed from accidents of the inner and outer life, that is from the subjectivity and objectivity of what happens. *A homo tantum* with whom everyone sympathizes and who attains a kind of beautitude. (ibid)

The point is that 'Life' "is an impersonal and nonorganic power that goes beyond any lived experience" (Smith, 1998: xiv). In this way, it is the theoretical surface upon which it is possible to comment upon the general, whilst never denying that such generality is folded out of the actual, and particular, lived experience in which it comes to be evoked. For example, these are evocations like the instance in Dickens' above or that moment of performance where two bodies touch. The very moment of these evocations is the ontological space of this final fold, a fold that is equally an empirical and epistemological space. There are many perspectives to choose from not only in terms of the place from which we can be a

witness, but also from the way in which, this time around, we seek assistance⁴ in making sense of what it is we are witness to⁵. The performative moment of understanding and recognition will work in this thesis by the way it acknowledges a sense of the general because we can register that the spirit of certain moments, that of a Life, will happen again. The fact that it won't happen again exactly means that this cannot be an authority or an ownership of the potential repetition; the particular, the specific context, is equally important. Folds are in this sense everywhere, without the fold being universal. It's a 'differentiator', a 'differential' (Deleuze, 1995: 156-57). In this thesis, in its guise as an apprenticeship after Gilles Deleuze, I present these folds as problems which work through the philosophical manoeuvres achieved in Deleuze's work. By putting these problems to use in both the theoretical space of the encounter with performance, and hence through each of the three registers of corporeality, immateriality and temporality, I present Deleuze's philosophy of difference as that which can make a difference.

1.5 How the thesis unfolds

Each of the chapters is distinguished firstly through the investigation it makes of one of the three registers of sense upon which the encounter with performance can come to make sense – the register of corporeality (Chapters Two and Three), immateriality (Chapters Four and Five) and time (Chapter Six); and secondly, through the particular aspect of Deleuze's philosophy each puts to work in creating an alternative methodology (conceptual as well as empirical) for research into and through such registers. Therefore in Chapter Two I begin by addressing the problem signification

³ Interestingly this links to the (last/latter) thoughts of many of the key continental philosophers (see Lyotard, "Anima Minima", 1997: 235-249; Foucault, "Life: Experience and Science", 1998b: 465-478) and to work playing on the similar, earlier thoughts of Aristotle (see Agamben, 1998; and on this bare life, Thrift, 2000b).

⁴ "In a vacuum their work would be meaningless. Here we find a clue. It leads us naturally to the idea of an audience; we see that without an audience there is no goal, no sense ... I watch a play: *j'assiste à une pièce*. To assist – the word is simple: it is the key" (Brook, 1968: 155-56).

⁵ For example, take the spectatorship of an act of performance, that of a dance: "An authority on dance, whom we may refer to as an informed viewer, upon seeing a dancer perform two similar moves, may conclude, 'The dancer repeated the step'. One who is ignorant of dance and claims no ownership of its language, whom we may refer to as an ecstatic viewer, at this same moment might say, 'The dancer performed two similar movements – the first in one place in the room, the second a little later in a different place in the room'. The differences observed by the second viewer might seem so insignificant to the first viewer that he chose to ignore them altogether, concentrating instead on the larger patterns which conform to the language of dance which he feels he owns" (Goulish, 2000: 33-34).

has in the face of the corporeal realm. Beginning with Derrida's famous aphorism, 'Il n'y pas de hors texte', I will show that whilst there is a necessary incompleteness in knowing experientially through the body, and in communicating such knowing referentially through the always-already interpreted frame of language, a certain performative kind of knowing can be achieved. The first Deleuzian problem is then one that shows the importance of the diagrammatic transformations that cut across the way our different signifying regimen figure the body. A workable answer is presented in the second Deleuzian problematic, that of asking 'What a body can do?' In Chapter Three I take this question on board and exemplify a possible empirical investigation into the production of a way of knowing through the body: the fact that through our viscerality, the body is both the engine and the recording surface for many of our encounters, scripting their meaning through the affect, rhythm and movement it delivers us to. Through research into the practice of BMC I argue that an alternative cartography can be made out of mapping the spaces caught in-between affecting and being affected. This is an open system of signification, but a signification nonetheless, which, through mobilizing anatomical, folk and experiential knowledge, makes, as I will show through the empirical work, sense for those who practice it. In opposition to essentialism, I term this an ethological mapping and unite it with Félix Guattari's notion of transversal pathways; respectively these present the third and fourth problematics.

Chapter Four takes the materiality of the body into the realm of immateriality. Through the work of Walter Benjamin in particular, I will demonstrate that, despite the essentially non-representational nature of immateriality, the immaterial plays a hugely significant, if personal, part in the performance of the social. By theming the chapter through the personal condition of falling in love, the fifth and sixth Deleuzian problematics set out the potential of working a symptomology of signs: a theoretically clinical art that scripts, through encounters with the material world, intimations of that which cannot be grasped. Continuing to argue the case for an apprehension of immateriality, the fifth chapter starts by moving out of this personal terrain into the space of events, again stressing the artifice of our representational systems through its inability to bear witness to that which does not appear. This spectral presence is the power of the event itself, and in this chapter I want to argue for a style of thought and practice that is worthy of it. In terms of thought, I present a lengthy illustration of Deleuze's art of creating concepts as

seventh problematic; and in terms of practice, I turn back to the particular qualities of performance art, and make the case for, and an interpretation of, that which is put on show in the process of devising theatre: the making room for things to happen. The chapter concludes by offering interpretations (problems eight and nine) of Deleuze's concept of univocity as a theoretical operator capable of linking the particular instances of the incorporeality of events put on show in the space of performance with a sense of the general line of non-organic life drawn across us all.

Chapter Six turns our attention to time, for if one thing is irrefutable about the specific qualities of performance art it is the way it directly involves and is created through the tension of the present tense and the spacing of time itself. In this capacity, performance, whilst a heightened experience, plays to the particular ways in which time modifies and situates the signification of all of our endeavours: through its passing, where the present moves in both directions towards the past and the future, and through the way the past coexists with the present. I locate a potential sighting of these operations of time through the research conducted into the rehearsal process, and through this location I present two final problematics raised in the work of Deleuze, that of the unravelling of subjectivity within the tension of the present moment and that of Bergson's notion of the 'pure' past.

In conclusion, Chapter Seven asks how we get off this particular stage of empty space. In answering, I attempt to take forward the purpose of this thesis: to extract through the three registers of corporeality, immateriality, and temporality potential openings made possible through both the theoretical citings made in response to the encounter with these registers and the empirical practicality sited here through the space of performance art. This is to conclude that there is something that can only be 'said' in the unsayable; that in the conduct of doing social science we forget that we are operating on a process of loss; as Phelan notes, "learning to see is training careful blindness. To apprehend and recognize the visible is to eliminate as well as absorb visual data" (1993: 13).

CHAPTER TWO

Tracings of flesh striated: arche-écriture, signifiante & viscerality

Here I am in the presence of images, in the vaguest sense of the word, images perceived when my senses are opened to them, unperceived when they are closed. All these images act and react upon one another in all their elementary parts ... Yet there is *one* of them which is distinct from all the others, in that I do not know it only from without perception, but from within my affections: it is my body. I examine the conditions in which these affections are produced: I find that they always interpose themselves between the excitations that I receive from without and the movements which I am about to execute, as though they had some undefined influence on the final issue. **(Bergson, 1990: 1-2)**

2.1 Introduction: the 'body' itself is not a discrete object for investigation

The body is and is not ourselves. The body does everything and it does nothing. Neither ends nor means, always involved in matters which go beyond it, always jealous of its autonomy, the body is powerful enough to oppose itself to any merely deliberate end yet has none to propose to us if we finally turn toward and consult it. (Merleau-Ponty, 1973: 112)

In the empty space it can be argued that we first register what is happening through the body: the primary characteristic of the encounter is that it can only be sensed. Conceptually, whilst this is the operational point of its abstraction, empty space is an impossible space to be: I sense that I can't have the empty space until I am there already. This emptiness is immediately filled by a body – my body, your body, anybody. Situated, as a body, sensing through fleshy materiality one creates space, the surrounding space of being. The substance that is our materiality gives us our sense of place and the space of the empty stage; it speaks before any question of our embodiment within the social. Whilst we sense through the body we fold this up immediately in the way we make sense of that which the body is delivering us to. In this way we need to ask how we make this move from sensing to making sense? We need to ask what conceptualisation of the body do we allow to take place on the stage.

In the last four or five years the sub-discipline of cultural geography has seen a proliferation of literature on the body (Duncan, 1996; Matless, 1995; Pile, 1996; Nast & Pile, 1998). In contributing to this I want to make a distinction concerning two different ways of thinking the body. On the one hand, the body is figured as the object of knowledge. This apparently affirms the body as a viable object of analysis, and provides much insightful work focused upon the array of practices and discourses that enframe, and are enframed by, this *knowable object* of the body. On the other hand, the body is approached as the *subject* of knowledge. It is the body's sensate qualities of touch, smell, taste, sight and sound that enfold our being-in-the-world out of the encounters with others (organic or non-organic, individually or in milieu), etching out our orientations and understandings. Delving further in this direction one becomes aware of the affective mixing within the

particular anatomical compartments of the body, the interchangeable channelling of energy flows and chemical fluids that comprise our unique sensational qualities that give colour to our experientiality with different feelings, emotions and moods. Through affect this elusory body literally composes the spaces through which we move (Radley, 1995).

This distinction is symptomatic of a universal mechanics working at the heart of all knowledge production. In her essay *Bodies and Knowledge: Feminism and the crisis of reason*, Elizabeth Grosz diagnoses this as the crisis of reason exhibited in “the mismatch, conflict, or displacement between ‘objectivity’ and ‘subjectivity’” (1995: 26). For Grosz, this crisis is discernible in the academic practice of self-validation and methodological self-justification; an issue that will be debated in a later chapter. For the moment, I want to extract two issues from Grosz’s argument, both of which outline the risk of configuring the body outside the normal codes of signification, a shift that heralds a vital change to the ways we understand and carry out knowledge production. Firstly, by no longer gagging the body within the codes of signification, constructing it as a knowable object, one implicitly embraces the realisation that there is no single, neutral conceptual tool kit or methodology for the production of knowledge. As Grosz puts it, one is now able to raise the question “How does this language, method, technique constitute its object?” (Grosz, 1995: 27). Secondly, the criteria for evaluating the salience of knowledge is ungrounded by the accompanying denial of the belief that an “object of investigation exists independently of the knowledge of it” (ibid: 28). This offers a new space for considering the intelligibility of our corporeal urges that have hitherto been discredited as subjective and irrational, and consequently thrown out of the courts of reason. These opening points together implicate a principle theoretical cornerstone to the thesis: that above and beyond there being any easy conceptual divide separating object and subject, one senses that both are folded performatively out of the same moment and substance.

A second frame of points arises out from this ‘apparent-paradoxical’ folding. Firstly, whilst the body is not a discrete object the space between bodies (organic and non-organic) offers itself as an adequate decoy for such aspiration. The question behind the advent of this interstitial space is one which asks how might we know this other body, and in *knowing* discover our own body? Let me example this: suppose we encounter another body through the touch of sight where we sense this

body's appearance, movement, gesture and form. The first two qualities of appearance and movement seem in effect to be immediately apparent – something is there before us and we get some sense of space via this presence. Whereas the quality of the latter two differs in that they impose upon us the creation, via the sense of our own body-grammar, of the sentences that this other body, the body, necessarily leaves incomplete (Gil, 1998: 108). The point is we can't know the body, it doesn't know itself – as Merleau-Ponty (1973) says the body has no answers to propose to us. Yet, what we might do in a given encounter is frame this other body; see it, name it, empathise and anticipate its expression. The crucial point I want to suggest is that this anticipation is mediated by the given palettes of signifying regimen, and it is this factor that enables us to communicate *through* the body an indication of its existence¹. The body is then culturally staged and dramatized through particular conventions, such that bodily practices are moulded by the prevailing scenery and contingencies for possible action. Thus, whilst the body is a performance staged within the enclosure of cultural co-ordinates, this does not exhaust the body's meaning.

Finally, therefore, it is important to note the ways in which the body is subject to slander; the inscriptive fact that the body is symbolized, typified, connotated, prefigured, and named. The body represented is not authored by the body; it is highly mediated by the protocols of signifying systems; it is as if we are seeking release from the world by transforming flesh and ourselves into text (Dillon, 1988: 100). Beneath the word, subtending it, the body is something of a crucible of energy mutations. These energies are in themselves unknowable, but, in spite of this, I want to suggest that adequate semiologies can be sought so that a certain kind of knowing might be achieved.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section argues through the consequences that follow from the fact that our knowledge creation privileges the mental over the corporeal. This is about exposing the gap the unknowability of the body creates in the seemingly complete representational system through which we make it apparent outside of itself (eg in text, painting, etc). The next section addresses the importance of our understandings of the body as codified within

¹ I hope to have suggested the sense of folding by using the prepositional use of 'through', thus linking communication relative to the body that *affects* it whilst acknowledging that it is communication that *affects* the body into apparent being.

different semiotic regimes: that of signifying semiotics, the counter-signifying strategies through which the body disappears in strategies that de-corporealize, and at a non-discursive, pre-signifying level that frames the body contextually (historically and culturally) through the tangible consequences of its actions. In the third section, through an initial focus on the last work of Merleau-Ponty, we attempt to think again this pre-discursive realm, that which is prior to referential contemplation and before “the imposition of metaexperiential organization and its codification by reason” (Grosz, 1994a: 96). In this way I attempt to site the empty space beyond representation, as a space of post-signification, in preparation for the next chapter, an apprehension of an alternative vocabulary for thinking our materiality in itself.

SECTION ONE

2.2 Arche-écriture

I use the words you taught me. If they don't mean anything any more, teach me others. Or let me be silent (Beckett, *Endgame*, 1986: 113).

I am writing on the body; I am writing the body – it is a sign, a label, a name, the letters b o d y. This act of writing is not simply evocative of its moment, it possesses a double articulation, that second articulation of an expected readership and the requirement that there is something to communicate and that that something is communicable. In other words, the act of writing possesses us with a split reality – on one level it speaks the immediate corporeal moment, on another level one is caught up in a grander scheme where one is placed within a signifying regime. I am not writing with the belief that this writing is an end in itself – I write the word ‘body’ with the trust that it signifies something, and yet with the knowledge that it almost doesn't matter what it means. It is a disquieting practice as this writing seems to possess another. To write is not to produce a written text but is also in itself a performative utterance – I feel as if I am assembling a world, constituting and being constituted by this act of writing.

2.2.1 The 'body' and two aphorisms

In one way or another, the practice of social science announces the nature/culture binary through its inevitable assumptions concerning the concept of language: that the written word and its phonetic alphabet (with its implication of the primacy of speech) indelibly speaks the 'truth'. After all the very constitution of academic practice is expressed in the spaces created via language:

Even before one speaks of visible or overriding structures (primary and secondary education, the university, authority, legitimacy), there is the very experience of discourse and language: the interest of philosophy already finds itself involved there in institutions. Everywhere and always, institutions ... attempt to dictate our rhetoric, the procedures of demonstration, our manners of speaking, writing and addressing the other (Derrida, 1995: 327).

Whatever critique I wish to present here begins with its necessary immersion in the very system against which it will be set. The words spreading out upon this blank page contain the binary rift inscribing the nature/culture divide: that moment when you consider a word of language as being that which possesses meaning, where there is the assumption that there is some *thing* present at hand that the word signifies. For example, when writing the word 'body', is language (here) the expression of determinate sense or meaning? Is it immediately apparent what it is that I wish to signify to you by the presence of this word (this sign of a sign)? The openings engendered in these questions offer specific conceptual sites from which to support the rest of the chapter, so I want now to consider the implications of these type of questions by addressing two aphorisms, both of which make well-known statements concerning the nature of writing. The first sets out many of the main arguments caught within a structuralist account of writing (where writing is related to speech possessing prosperity in the production of written texts). The second moves to set out the agenda of this thesis by arguing with Derrida for a 'writing in the general sense' (*archi-écriture*), for understanding writing as affectively performative (on this see Norris, 1987). However, to advance discussion I want to turn to the work of Judith Butler, in particular her book *Bodies That Matter*, and a recent interpretation by Vicky Kirby on the ideas contained there. As a direct gesture towards orientating her readers, Butler writes that "to know the significance

of something is to know how and why it matters, where ‘to matter’ means at once ‘to materialize’ and ‘to mean’” (1993: 32). In effect Butler is making us aware that the object of her analysis is not the body as matter (or substance, as Kirby emphasises) but rather the processes by which the body comes to be valued. A crucial implication of this focus is that Butler’s work operates through the assumption that “there can be no access to a pure materiality outside or before signification and, by extension, no access to a pure materiality of bodily life is separate from language” (Kirby, 1998: 103).

2.2.2 The arbitrary nature of the sign: (essentialism)

In many ways “the arbitrary nature of the sign” is an anti-essentialist argument appearing to imply that there is nothing outside the sign to invest it with meaning; in other words that there is no transcendental signified. At work here is the founding principle of knowledge production: the belief that experience and the world is present to me, and that it is possible to ‘voice’ such experience in an exact fashion via speech and writing. The poststructural turn arrived with this ambiguity within Saussure’s work, writing across the map of knowledge with its critique of authorship and the humanist subject at the heart of authenticity and self-presence. Thus, Barthes declared in his essay *The Death of the Author* that “Linguistically, the author is never more than the instance writing, just as *I* is nothing other than the instance saying *I*: language knows a ‘subject’, not a ‘person’” (1988: 145). Outside of the immediate moment one has no self-awareness, and one is not the central agency writing the world that unfolds out of that moment². So, when we attempt to account for the experience of the body, rather than this sign of the ‘body’ having an essential signified, it speaks of an incommensurable gap between what is signified/perceived and the signified’s referent. In this way the sign possesses an arbitrary characteristic in that it may virtually refer to anything. So whilst the sign – ‘body’ – is not significant because of its relation to the thing it designates, in a practical sense it gains weight through what is contained in its use, namely “the formal relation of sign to sign insofar as it defines a so-called signifying chain” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 112). The sign, in other words, performs and creates a

² This is a pivotal question of subjectivity: “The lyric ‘I’ emerges as a positional relation. Its subjectivity is made possible by a linguistic and ultimately social structure in which ‘I’ speaks (Davidson, 1986: 41; quoted in Perloff, 1998: 406).

signified, which does not have a direct relationship with an essential 'real'. Glendinning has termed this "foundational assumption of classical humanism" as the concept of "ideal conceptual exactness" involving a "dogmatic or non-logical exclusion of possibilities of the phenomenon of language, an exclusion practised in the hope of 'isolating' a supposedly *essential* (and thus indefinitely repeatable-as-the-same) identity or content" (1998: 77/79).

To accept the performative potential of language is to understand that the signification of semiology lies in it bringing forth "a place that allows things to happen" whilst being aware that this practice in itself "does not give what it says; it lacks being" (Certeau, 1997: 30). It thus seems that signification can only work in the absence of a transcendental signified. The baton of meaning has to be passed down the signifying chain by interpretation, by interpreters like us. In an argument that might seem to advance the body's signification within academia, one can here stress that it is through our bodies that the signifying coherence of society is maintained. The body is however understood as nothing but a tool of its theoretical representation. To illustrate, language effectively passes through the body using the body as its medium for expression, such that language is understood to operate itself as a vehicle for pre-formed ideas. In such arguments neither the body nor language are seen as a pre-condition of thought. The predominant assumption at work here – that an utterance of a writing should present an immediately apparent meaning, which, more crucially, should be definite and exact – is not one among many of the prejudices framing knowledge creation but "*the philosophical prejudice, the philosophical injustice*" (Glendinning, 1998: 78). To reiterate, the happening of things is in the passing of the baton and not the baton itself. Thus one can argue, like Deleuze and Guattari, that an interpreter's existence is a bereft one, doomed only to encounter a world already interpreted, seizing upon the mere joy of maintaining these always already crafted forms (that don't of course exist). As an aside, whose echo will return later, one can understand the insidious nature of this interpreter's existence within academia, for one can justifiably argue that:

there is no longer even any need to interpret, ... because the best interpretation, the weightiest and most radical one, is an eminently significant silence. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 114)

The silence over the body as a *subject* of knowledge is particularly apt. Moving on, whilst the sign has no necessary relation to anything outside it, that is not to say that there is no outside the sign. The sign seemingly exists as something separate from the extra-linguistic reality of matter (and I am able to write that). But, as Kirby brilliantly illustrates, the issue is not so much one of the matter of difference (the incessant deferral of the origin of the sign's meaning) but more the difference of matter, for if there is no transcendental signified, then the stable ground outside signification is matter itself. Underwriting this last point there is a suggestion that the 'sensible plenitude of substance' (Kirby, 1998) is in some way already present to itself – it does not require linguistics and a regime of signification to become apparent. Crucially, the anti-essentialist potential of the sign is brought out of the acceptance of the existence of an essence, of a sense of substance. Therefore, if we take a second glance at the nature of the arbitrariness of the sign we can argue that it actually comes out of the doubt we have concerning the veracity of the reference, and the generative fact that this doubt is both conceded and refused in the very act of referencing. I can never wholly say, write, signify anything, but that is what drives me, and allows me, to write in the first place. Nothing is apparent.

So when trying to call the thing we call the body forth as an object of intended capture we find ourselves impoverished in our speech and writing. Yet the language we use cultivates in its practice the very lapses and interstitial misapprehensions that designate its function. Thus the impurity of signification and the violence of language are the very qualities that place us somewhere and allow things to happen; as Derrida has argued "writing is unthinkable without repression" (1976: 226). It is the repression in the act of writing, the necessary exclusions, which finds difference inhabiting the identity it judges (Kirby, 1998: 55; see also Glendinning, 1998: 79). And this "radical difference between referent and signified is the site where the materiality of language and that of the world which it seeks to signify are perpetually negotiated" (Butler, 1993: 69). Thus, as a conclusion and bridge to the next aphorism "I do not believe totality can be contained in language; my problem is what remains outside, the unwritten, the unwritable" (Calvino, 1982: 143).

We feel as if we had to penetrate phenomena: our investigation, however, is directed not towards phenomena, but as one might say, towards the *possibilities* of phenomena. We remind ourselves, that is to say, of the *kind of statement* that we make about

phenomena ... Our investigation is therefore a grammatical one
(Wittgenstein, 1953: §90).

2.2.3 'Il n'y pas de hors texte'³ (There is nothing outside-the-text)

This second aphorism serves to disinvest the binary opposition of meaning. Derrida does not here write semiologically – a belief in a system of meaning where words are the symptom of some real referent – rather he deliberately uses the root word *gramme* (to write) over that of *seme* (to mean). As Kirby argues, the sign of Derrida's 'grammatology' is informed by a context that is more than linguistic, with the implication that the world is not a part of a linguistic whole but rather that both 'world' and linguistics are mutually implicated. Therefore, the sign and the system of signification are not discrete entities, because they are familiar within the context of substance. Derrida is not saying that there is nothing outside the text, rather he is suggesting that there is no 'outside-the-text' because there is a general *arche-écriture* encompassing everything. This links back to the previous section that has suggested that it is the difference of matter that matters, whereby signification is grounded and woven out of this unbounded plane of substance. Substance is not this brute unmediated quality figured as some kind of absolute exteriority. This point is amplified in the inference that if there is no outside-the-text then there can be no inside either. This 'writing in the general sense' presents the principal theoretical foundation endorsed within this chapter: there is no inside disassociated textual logic writing the world, nor is there an interior subject adjudicating its creation.

Writing emanates from the simultaneous fold of substance and thought such that any mode of *arche-écriture*, language for instance, "bursts the boundaries of its constitutional articulation, engendering a reality whose inscriptive production implicates the ideological with/in the physical" (Kirby, 1998: 52). Two points can be arrested out of this. Firstly, the conditional possibility of language's functionality rests in its structural ambiguity, in there being a grammatical sense of play at its operational heart (transparency is more a hindrance than a necessity). Secondly, it should be recognised that the grapheme is not just the clothing of the idea or thought, it is its incarnation (Grosz, 1995). This is a rarely visited site, one not mentioned in the academic registry of recommended places; even when it is

³ Derrida, 1976: 158.

considered, it is usually derided for ignoring the pressing 'real' day-to-day struggles implicated within actual instances of social, political and economic concern.

I regard this as an inefficient understanding of what is at stake because there is a misconception that the textuality in evidence here is merely one way in which it is possible to apprehend a formal understanding of text, albeit very pervasive and reactive response. This belief, that, in effect, Derrida is suggesting that there is nothing outside the text ignores Derrida's accent upon the dissolution of the 'real' versus the 'text'. This dissolution is conceived via the conception that the world is produced in the trace, or difference, constituting all forms of writing (*arche-écriture*). This is to say that the immersive gesture of folding, or the happening of the immediate moment, implicates simultaneously object and subject, writing and substance, and the signifying polar opposites that seemingly frame theoretical argument. Whilst there is a dissolution of the 'real'/'unreal' equation, it can be said that there are different modes of writing; and that these differ because they have unique capacities and qualities in performance (aside from the fact that everything next is different to what has gone before). So we can ask, What if:

the book should be the written counterpart of the unwritten world; its subject should be what does not exist and cannot exist except when written, but whose absence is obscurely felt by that which exists, in its own incompleteness? (Calvino, 1982: 136)

Derrida's use of the term of *supplementarity* assists further orientation on this point. When talking about the supplement within the act of writing you can suggest one of two things. Firstly, you can think of Husserl's struggle to *show* a pure self-present origin in the face of the extraneous language by which it seems possible to achieve such a presentation. The supplement, in this case seen as language, is hence an unwanted addition incidental to the pure self-present world out there. Because of this inside/outside split, typical of the phenomenological project, self-present origins are infinitely deferred, an ironic state of affairs when considered alongside this belief in an ideal real world. The "phenomenological enterprise is doomed to failure for there can be no return to the *things themselves*, because 'the thing itself is always concealed'" (Howells, 1999: 24). The *thing itself* is concealed by the additional supplement.

Secondly, in a reversal typical to Derrida's logic, the supplement becomes essential to the very thing it is deemed to contaminate. Again this is a demonstration of the fold of writing as it emerges out of the unbounded mix of thought and substance. Akin to *différance*, the supplement is thus a way of referring to an unacknowledged process of substitution. For example, let us consider the notion of the present moment as it is understood in performative terms: the present is so excessive and driven out of an incessant logic of the ongoing that it is necessarily apparent only through substitution; it can only be apprehended through a supplement. Such a practice, in fact any practice (talking, breathing, writing etc), in being immediately a part of the present becomes simultaneously a part of it. Whilst grammatical logic notices that this last sentence in effect says nothing – nothing more than a similar argument that in being the colour red it was simultaneously red – the illogic here lies not in my writing but in the semiology that separates the word from the world, and writing from substance. In not defining this supplement as an extraneous or inferior substitute for the complete self-present real, one announces it as that which shows up the essential insufficiencies of whatever it is supposed to complete⁴. In Derrida's words "there is never a painting of the thing itself ... because there is no thing itself The original possibility of the image is the supplement" (1976: 412). It is supplementarity itself which is originary: origins are occasions, the being caught in the midst, and how in practice one finds oneself caught up in this way. This interstitial point is "the promise or profile of the singularity of the *trace* that is not yet language or speech or presence nor absence, beyond binary, oppositional, or dialectical logic" (Derrida, 1995: 79). In this way the *tracing* of the point is the performative.

Modes of *arche-écriture* offer a different angle upon which one can apprehend the 'same'; yet it is this same that is conditioned by impossibility, the impossibility that nothing can be the same again. Sliding across one can read the 'same' as self-apparent presence, the loss of which has always already begun. The desire to make our materiality, our body, self-apparently present is ironically cut through by the impossibility to desire that with which one coincides (Johnson, 1987: xi). Merleau-Ponty alluded to this when arguing that the body is a presence that does not entail a

⁴ The moral question once more arises: if the real world is not immediately self-present but via the supplement, then one can easily read this supplement as imagination. This works through our respect for someone else, for we can only have this respect if there is a certain paradoxical *non*-identification (Derrida, 1976: 270).

possible absence insofar as it can never be ‘completely constituted’ as it is that which sees and touches (1962: 92). This has its parallels in the conceptual possibility of *arche-écriture*:

Without the possibility of *différance*, the desire of presence as such would not find its breathing-space. That means by the same token that this desire carries in itself the destiny of its nonsatisfaction, *différance* produces what it forbids, making possible the very thing that it makes impossible. (Derrida, 1981: 143)

Whether you are immersed in speaking, writing, dancing, tasting, breathing, feeling, viewing, composing, painting, shooting, singing, screaming etc, out of the single fold these modes of *arche-écriture* express and herald one of the qualities that make up the moment. Such expression never encapsulates the totality of the moment, and yet it articulates more than the moment itself, tracing a *differential* of space/time which presents “an inseparability between representation and substance that rewrites causality” (Kirby, 1998: 61).

In summary, these two aphoristic accounts uncover the assumptions that split phenomena by way of inhering to a philosophical ideology of ideal exactness and a methodology of re-presentation. Without such assumptions one acquires an alternative habit of thinking that thinks “at once both the rule and the event, concept and singularity” (Derrida, 1976: 119)⁵. This line of argument sets up a threshold of incommensurability generated and threatened by a conceptualisation of the body as a delimitable entity.

That was a way of putting it – not very satisfactory;
... Leaving one still with the intolerable wrestle
With words and meanings. (Eliot, 1963: 198)

⁵ In a similar vein, the task here is to tease out new words that might possess the different qualities of the body; after all the existing language rarely means anything – as T.S. Eliot said “last year’s words belong to last year’s language/And next year’s words await another voice” (1963: 218). Academia is guilty of being silent over the visceral, fleshy, organic, fluid, channelling, sensitive, feeling, excitable matter that is the ‘body’, so, in many ways, instead of Eliot’s “last year’s language” one could read ‘contemporary criticism’ (as provoked by any serious questioning of our corporeality and the ways we understand it). Crucially, we will be forever awaiting that other voice.

In the next section I will attempt to examine the abstract social and cultural trains of thought that circulate around and figure the body forth. I will do this by examining four signifying strategies. The first continues within the signifying regime and looks at the way we assume the body's presence through speculation (in the sense of both literally sighting the body and in the terms of conjecture). The second briefly examines contemporary strategies by which the body is counter-signified relative to these speculative, self-present assumptions, writing the body as an indifferent individual, as mere number within the societal machine. The third strategy will (as a foundation for the fourth strategy) examine the primitive semiotic that heralds the body as an originary source. Finally, a post-signifying regime is advanced that offers the space to open up awareness of alternative performative non-representational ways of configuring the body, a tactic that explicitly works out of a conception of the world as written out of the *arche-écriture* that folds thought and substance.

SECTION TWO

2.3 Signifying machine – Speculating (on) bodies

The spectacular body is both the symbol and the instance.

(Brooks, 1993: 5)

On the Renaissance stage boy actors played women (see Stallybrass, 1991). The body is here rendered, or gendered, visible through prosthetics (costume or otherwise). But what is actually sighted here? The audience must *speculate* upon these bodies, and immediately it is apparent that there is unsettling play at work – one has to be concerned with the ‘part’ that the boy actor has which is not in his part! The play here is between this site of indeterminacy (the body itself) and the sexual difference (sexuality itself) that produces our inconsistent fixation. Such anatomical considerations have been addressed within geography. Gillian Rose has transposed such speculation and placed it at the very heart of knowledge production by citing Irigaray's notion of the male imaginary as having a “certain topography, of one-ness, verticality, solidity” all of which is “bound into male genital ‘morphology’” (1993: 66). Thus, Rose argues, this concept of morphology demonstrates the symbolic importance of anatomy as it inscribes the body into a specific cultural coding, namely that of a masculinist discourse. Yet such

pronouncements covers over the indeterminacy that gives rise to such speculation. In other words, there is a play of meaning manifest here which operates a spacing between that allows for movement and articulation (see Derrida, 1981). In a similar vein, on the Restoration stage women played boys who were revealed to be women. For example, in a bed scene⁶, Mirtilla, in love with cross-dressed Olivia (cross-dressed as a man), leads Olivia to her bed. Enter the Prince, who, in love with Mirtilla, is enraged and grabs Olivia, upon which “*The Prince holding Olivia by the bosom of her coat, her breast appears to Mirtilla*”:

Mirtilla: Ha? What do I see?

Two Female rising breasts

By heav'n a Woman.

(Stallybrass, 1992: 64)

As Stallybrass says “*what* is seen is most vexed, being the point of intersection between spectatorship, the specular, and the speculative” (ibid). There is an inherent danger within any emphasis on the way that the body comes to signify something that sees to the neutering of our sexed corporeality. Pivoting too far in this direction however maintains the binarized categories of either male/female or essentialist/constructionist. And yet the breast is an important body space symbolising a whole host of topics: maternity, reproduction, abortion, etc. There is a need to balance biological and anatomical accounts of the body with their vital socio-cultural configurations and transformations. As Grosz has argued, “the body is the unspecified raw material of social inscription that produces subjects as *subjects of a particular kind*” (Grosz, 1995: 32). This question of a *particular kind* arises out of a problematization of the assumptions that write the body as neutral raw matter ignoring the fact that the body is consistently caught within citation which itself is not neutral and only announces itself within specific citation-situating activities. As, for example, the social cultural backcloth composing the codes of, for instance and for our purposes here, the Renaissance and Restoration stage.

⁶ The object of the bed in theatre is a focal point of scenes of sleep, of sex, and of death. But also there is a focus so obvious that it resists interpretation as we question what the scene is about: the bed draws attention to undressing or being undressed, a process where gender is made visible and is thus crucially staged. The bed therefore unsettles the easy spectatorship of the body, a deliberate stagecraft presenting the crucible of representation.

Are we the points that organize the manifold into a field that we understand? And what are the positions of men and women in relation to the production of knowledge? Within the fold of this question the strategy of the screen becomes apparent. The screen, otherwise known as the corporeal schema or body image, is the mediating term that enables us to unite a consciousness that is not spatially located to external objects that are located in space. This is not merely psychological, for it suggests that “the body ‘knows’ what its muscular and skeletal actions and posture are in any movement or action, quite independent of any knowledge of physiology or how the body functions” (Grosz, 1994a: 91). But the question of ‘How we become aware of our body as distinguished from others, and in other words, locate our experiences?’ remains.

To recognise his (*a child*) image in a mirror is for him to learn that *there can be a viewpoint taken on him* ... By means of the image ... he becomes capable of being a spectator of himself. Through the acquisition of the specular image, the child notices that he is *visible*, for himself and for others (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 136).

Significantly, Grosz argues, Merleau-Ponty sites perception in the no-man’s-land between mind and body, empiricism and idealism, pure physiology and pure psychology, noting that it precedes and exceeds either binary opposite. Thus, once again there is a sense of imbrication for in being uncontainable in either sphere (pure physiology or pure psychology etc) mutual implication is given to both terms. Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology is consciousness incarnated such that the mind is embodied and based on corporeal and sensory relations, and the subject is a ‘being-to-the-world’ that is neither pure exteriority nor pure interiority (1962: 3). The body is not therefore merely the work of a pure, knowing subject⁷. Yet there is the implicit supposition of a separate bodily sphere and a conceptual one. The phenomenon of the phantom limb is a prime illustration as it demonstrates that the body is an active entity that gives form and sense to its own component parts and to its relations to the world. In Merleau-Ponty’s own rather Heideggerian terms, the body “applies itself to space like a hand to an instrument” (1962: 5; see in relation to Heidegger, Dreyfus, 1991). Space here is not a flat, neutral Euclidean realm,

⁷ Movement is “not limited to submitting passively to space and time, it actively assumes them” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 102).

because the body's application to the world is half of its realization (the other half being the world itself, the material objects). The point (subject) organising the manifold (a topological space/surface that is related in some way to Euclidean space) into the field. We manifold something so as to see it again, so to have multiple forms, multiple folds of the same: flat, neutral space. The mathematics of possibility may allow space to have many functions, but these are co-ordinated around the same origin, us.

2.4 Counter-signifying semiotic – strategic transformations

The glance up from the screen has replaced the inquisitive look of the past. The screen reveals one's past, one's data, a page from one's life, not the human face. On the screen is your information, your credit history (surpassing your judicial history in importance), without which you don't quite exist as a trustworthy citizen (Silva, 1997: 90).

The body in late capitalism is constantly territorialized by the abstract flow of numbers, money and the market. Is this a citizenry we desire – the desires of the economic, global majority foisted upon us all? The body here, for it is the body on which such numbers are pinned, is represented by, or indeed reduced to, a sign that marks a mobile and plural distribution that conquers and integrates the body forming a mixed, distributed semiotic (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 118). This semiotic prohibits any embrace towards the doubt and ambiguity of the body – not many of us possess certainty but we are warranted by society to pretend that we do. Reduced to a sign like a number, the body is figured within this 'normality' of certainty that is supported and promoted because it works within the construct of capitalism. What role models are we allowed to have? And what does the body become because of this? In other words, the body is prized as an extension of work for production. For example, many commentators have described the gymnasium as society's newest place of worship. These new Meccas exemplify the social mentality of our more 'civilised' dwelling spaces, which, in the planned exhibition of cleanliness and order, police and exercise our corporeal state and many corporeal acts. Body spaces are to be pristine, both in the political as well as in the aesthetic sense. So, in appealing to our commodified sense of self, images of the body (via

magazines, billboards, TV and film) show the corporeal state physically honed for efficiency and preened for apparent purity and success.

In this sanitised state the individual as a body is reduced to membership in a mass; in terms that Adorno uses, one re-emerges through a technological reconfiguration in a process of subjection that strives towards “the indifference of each individual life that is the direction of history” (1973: 362)⁸. Weber has remarked that “the more perfectly the bureaucracy is ‘dehumanized’, the more completely it succeeds in eliminating from official business love, hatred, and all purely personal, irrational, and emotional elements which escape calculation” (1948: 216). Keith Tester unites these opinions under the umbrella of Benjamin’s sense of the loss of aura exhibited in the technological approach of the C20th, the apogee point being the First World War (1998). The central tenet of Tester’s argument is that the problem of the body has “emerged out of the wreckage of the aura of the individual” (1998: 17). Beginning with Benjamin’s commentary upon the technology of photography, the images rendered of the body are transformed alongside the transformation of the technology that captures them. In this way the individual, specifically centred on its body, is configured within the social and cultural processes of the time. In particular, the progress of photographic technology after 1880, strips the body of its aura – that which is about the unique and the durable and “the differences between things and the clothing of that difference in an almost magical quality” (Tester, 1998: 19). The advent of this technological change characterises the individual’s relationship with his or her body through the sense of the sameness of things at the expense of the singular and unique (see Benjamin, 1992: 214). From Benjamin’s analysis of the photograph of Kafka, Tester sums up this state of affairs:

Kafka was forced, thanks to stage props, genre conventions and the requirements of the technology to look exactly like every other boy who has his photograph taken at this time. (1998: 20)

One can read in for photography the late c20th technologies of surveillance – CCTV, individual credit data information, National Insurance number identification, loyalty cards, etc And indeed the sartorial remit policing bodily

⁸ The technologies of mechanization increasingly seem to predetermine the representative character of our bodies compounding their status as indifferent individuals.

expression in the workplace. The body is transformed into a sign that operates within the cogs of the cultural and social mechanisms attuned to economic globalisation. There is a danger here of eliding the material practices that underwrite the surface appearance of people at work. So, whilst the destruction of aura – which I have suggested is exhibited in the counter-signifying reduction of the body to a sign – expresses the transformation of tradition *and* the patterns of living, one can witness intimations of new freedoms “announced in the distorted, comical and even terrifying patterns of modern experience” (Caygill, 1998: 32). In summation, the transformation of experience is always in train, and the counter-signifying processes at work on the body are a forceful exhibition of the direction in which we are heading. Crucially, however, this *counter*-signifying semiotic is not the body.

2.5 Primitive, pre-signifying semiotic

So given am I to thinking with my blood⁹

I have that within which passes show¹⁰

How is it that our bodies cause us embarrassment? Why is it that there are lines drawn that separate our visceral, humoral, sensate, fluid experience from the spaces we inhabit? Does society operate only because discursive structures, for want of a better description, cordon off much of the living, messy, aqueous matter that exhibits our body? For example, this permeates academia, where writers like Mary Douglas (1984) write an ethnographic distinction heralding a social and a physical body. We are embarrassed then because specific historical and social forms frame the place of, and places for, the material fluidity and visceral physicality of the body. This is a Cartesian writing, one that seeks the reduction of the physical from the social, one that turns the physical, messy body into a primitive semiotic that civilized society aims to control. It is the Cartesian split, the emergence of modernity¹¹, that distinguishes the body as primitive; thus one can see the

⁹ Beckett (*Texts for Nothing*, 1995: 128).

¹⁰ *Hamlet* Act I, Scene ii, 85; “*Hamlet* is full of some stuff that the writer could not drag to light, contemplate, or manipulate into art” (T.S. Eliot, 1975: 48). The fluid, visceral affections and sensations of our material bodies, that which cannot be dragged into light or manipulated into art, is so because it is art already, because through it the fold removes such division.

¹¹ Foucault: *The Order of Things* (1973) (‘Man and his Doubles’) and *History of Sexuality* (1984) (eg the hysteria of women equated with the humoral body and the need to master it).

anatomical theatres of the c16th splitting the fold of thought and substance by clinically opening up the humoral physiology of our corporeal innards into a visible, 'knowable' spectacle. Felt speculation is gone and the ambiguous humoral emotions are found out; a trend that reaches its apogean manifestation in the psychological discourse of shame publicised by Freud. The body is now primitive and the social civilized. This primitive body is overcoded, the substance of its expression, multiple and polyvocal, facing off the territorialities of the State apparatus.

However far a man may go in self-knowledge, nothing however can be more incomplete than his image of the totality of drives which constitute his being. He can scarcely name even the cruder ones: their number and strength, their ebb and flood, their play and counterplay among one another, and above all the laws of their nutrient remain wholly unknown to him. (Nietzsche, 1982: §119)

However, as Douglas herself suggested "there is no reason to assume a primacy for the individual's attitude to his own bodily and emotional experience" (1984: 121). Yet in performative terms the place accorded to the fluid, primary body allows a certain set of hermeneutic observations and scenes. Thus, in *The Winter's Tale* (Shakespeare, 1999), Autrolycus ambiguously performing a status below and above Perdita's adopted family of shepherds, excuses himself from their company by pretending urinary need:

I will but look upon the hedge and follow you. (ibid)

As Paster comments (from which this example has been taken) "the phrase works as a perlocutionary demonstration of rank, enacting more verbal refinement from Autrolycus and arguably more of a desire for bodily privacy than would have been expected in an itinerant peddler – or ... from a fellow rustic" (1993: 27).

In vernacular sixteenth and early seventeenth-century speech and writing, the whole interior of the body – heart, liver, womb, bowels, kidneys, gall, blood, lymph – quite often involves itself in the production of the mental interior, of the individual's private experience (Maus, 1995: 195).

The body is “at once the subject and the object of pleasure¹², the uncontrollable agent of pain and the revolt against reason – and the vehicle of mortality” (Brooks, 1993: 1). The body revolts against reason, against a singular conception of what it entails. Nevertheless, the body functions as an attractive nodal point on which to start and hang discussion concerning the theorization of performance, as art or in social terms¹³. And this points to two problems. First, in bringing with it a whole host of questions that unsettles determinate argument, the body destabilizes neat conclusions and appropriate language are continually undermined. Determined statements are only so because there are attempts at coagulating the potentially volatile and unstable differences that flow and quiver throughout and beyond what feels like our embodiment – again it is an exhibition of that apprehensive hope of capturing cleanly the body, or any matter, within language. Second, we experience the body as being inalienably our own, and what goes on in and through our body is something that to us ‘goes without saying’. This is then manifested in our daily, habitual and involuntary routines, all which goes to persuade us that the body “falls beneath the threshold of significance into the domain of the merely natural” (Paster, 1993: 5; see also Paster, 1997 and Hillman and Mazzio, 1997). The idea of this primitive state is not a temporal or psychological harking back to some essential, pure amniotic origin but rather a statement that acknowledges the unfounded urge for truth that is representation; that there is something to know, that there is a *natural* truth to be discovered.

Whilst this primitive conception of the body is the being open to “the coils of the intestines, the quick current of the blood stream, and the involved tremors of the fibers” (Nietzsche, 1954: 44), all of which are denied by the proud remove of the signifying stratifications of discourse, the interaction between bodily self-experience and its discursive realization “takes place in and through culture or its more politically conceptualized cognate, ideology” (Paster, 1993: 4). This leaves us with the pressing question of ‘when does the discursive framework influence our awareness of bodily experience?’ You can imagine a spectrum stretching from the immediate encounter like a contact improvisation of two bodies reading off each

¹² This points up the interesting performative importance of the body as a spectacle that has to be spectated equally by a body - a fold.

¹³ “The actor’s body constitutes his instrument, his medium, his chief means of creative expression – that is a commonplace on which performers and spectators alike have readily agreed” (Roach, 1985: 11).

other through movement and sensory connection, to a level where the body is *made* by the “transsubstantiation achieved by the hidden persuasion of an implicit pedagogy, capable of instilling a whole cosmology, an ethic, a metaphysic, a political philosophy through injunctions as insignificant as ‘stand up straight’ or ‘don’t hold your knife in your left hand’” (Bourdieu, 1977: 94). Instead of looking for the acculturated, referential aspect of our materiality, one might propose a refigured ontology that speaks of the flows, surfaces, intensities, colours and rhythms of the body at the moment it comes about and unfolds. This is to suggest that what is inside is neither more or less revealing than what lies at the surface. This is to accept that whilst the capacities and conduits of our internal body is anatomically measurable the capacity of our body to love, to pity, to take in the other is incalculable and vital. As Scarry writes the “interior of the body carries the force of confirmation” (1985: 215): instinct, feeling, mood, tendency, aura, rhythm, vitality all communicate our lives to ourselves. This body-grammar of our viscosity is the communication of our senses, through it the body takes place (in both senses) and we become able to affect and be affected. In the immediate moment, in terms of the place of the body in an event, this quality heralds signification; it is not because of signification. Thus the final section looks at post-signifying regimes.

2.6 Post-signifying regimes: “we must consider very diverse domains simultaneously”; or the sign of Jonah

One sense and another in a common flesh. (Grosz, 1994a: 95)

Between *The Phenomenology of Perception* (1962) and *The Visible and the Invisible* (1968) Merleau-Ponty is noted for a shift in focus away from the corporeal schema towards the more earthy concept of the flesh – “thinkable by itself”, without name in philosophy, something existing as an “exemplar sensible” (1964). In this, Merleau-Ponty presents “the condition of both seeing and being seen, of touching and being touched, and of their intermingling and possible integration, a commonness in which both subject and object participate, a single thing folded back on itself” (Grosz, 1994a: 95). I want to examine the implications of this fold, linking the fold of subject and object with the notion of being able to see something because it is culturally framed, folded along with the experiential materiality of seeing and thus being present to be seen. The drive of this fold

courses through every moment (my writing, your reading), and this energy etches out the diagrammatic transformation, that in confluence, presents to us society and society to us. The weft of this fold speaks of the first problem of Deleuze's philosophy that I want to signpost in the way it leads us into a certain conceptual method for doing research and thinking academically.

Problem 1: The abstract machine and diagrammatic transformations

So, on one side we have the machinic assemblage, flow and intensity of bodies (physical systems), and on the other, the formalization of expression (semiotic systems) – in other words, a content and a form, the sensing and the making sense, the experiential and the referential. The contents are not the signifieds dependent on the signifier; they are not the objects of the subject that enunciates. These two sides exist in reciprocal presupposition – the seen and the seeing. The conceptual architecture of this reciprocal assemblage is caught in the concept of what Deleuze and Guattari have termed the abstract machine. In effect, the abstract machine draws a single plane of consistency between planes of expression and planes of content. It is not physical any more than it is semiotic, it is diagrammatic, and “it operates by matter, not by substance; by function, not by form ... functions are not yet ‘semiotically’ formed, and matters are not yet ‘physically’ formed” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 141). In other words, a function has only traits of contents and expression between which it establishes a connection – the connection is all and it is what happens that matters¹⁴. The diagram is therefore:

no longer an auditory or visual archive but a map, a cartography that is coextensive with the whole social field. It is an **abstract machine**. It is defined by its informal functions and matter and in terms of form makes no distinction between content and expression, a discursive formation and a non-discursive

¹⁴ A matter-content having only degrees of intensity, resistance, conductivity, heating, stretching, speed, or tardiness; and a function-expression having only ‘tensors’, as in a system of mathematical, or musical, writing. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 141)

formation. It is a machine that is almost blind and mute, even though it makes others see and speak. (Deleuze, 1986: 34)

To give an example, think of a potential diagram of the transformations occurring within primitive societies: there would be a network of alliances (forces – gifts and counter-gifts) defining a practice, proceeding or strategy that come together to form a system that would clearly be in perpetual disequilibrium.

2.6.1 Antinomies surrounding bodies

Yet in the act of writing this out in a meaningful way, we are still trying to square the circle. Our apprehensions of the quixotic, unstable tracings of the material body are always shadowed by antinomies. If the material fluidity of the body is folded through our socio-cultural discourse and practices, from whence comes the affect of the immediate moment? Either power lies in signs and their relations, or it lies in force such that signs can never on their own create power, create affect. If the former were not so power as force could not be controlled, orientated, or determined as this would imply subordination to a sign system. Power would operate at a whim to circumstance. If power lies in signs alone there would have to be some capacity in the sign capable of quashing force – yet surely only a force can oppose another one. Force is not a gross fact, raw energy without direction; neither does a sign have the capacity to signify by itself. Rather than suggest a synthesis here one path is to argue that “there are forces that make the sign mean something for someone” (Gil, 1998: 9) – force can only exercise its ‘force’ if it is translated as it does so. This translation need not be through the semiotic sign system, rather it might be someone tacitly following the lead of another, or, of someone picking up the rhythm and flow of movements in a dance, etc. There are apparatuses and assemblages that encode forces in particular ways; in a sense these too are operators within the particular moment. Thus, “while energy is related to the pure positivity of a flux, force implies fault lines produced in this flux and in particular points at which energy is coded by some agent” (Gil, 1998: 10). The body is the perfect recording surface for these fault lines: half causing them and half feeling their cause. Making something of this syntactical position of the body as that piece of grammar

which makes connections leads us into the question and the method of asking ‘What can a body do?’ This is the second Deleuzian problematic I want to turn to.

Problem 2: What a body can do

I have already mentioned the fact that we do not have a cultural-theoretical language attuned to the affections and sensations of the fleshy body, with this in mind I want to turn to the potential of the language presented by Deleuze and Guattari in their comprehension of the body¹⁵. A starting point in unpacking the esoteric pronouncements presented by these two thinkers is this Spinoza influenced quote:

We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body, either to destroy that body or to be destroyed by it, either to exchange actions and passions with it or to join with it in composing a more powerful body. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 257)

Buchanan has rightly argued that this way of understanding the body attempts to think an ethology (action and affect) rather than aetiology (cause and effect) (1997a: 74). This ethological accounting configures the body as *a posteriori* affect of an encounter that it has the capacity to carry out. The body here is not presumed to be a knowable object but is understood as a part of a subjectivity that emerges out of the practice within an event. A result of such thinking is to be built off the premise set out by Deleuze in the following words from his revised second book on Spinoza:

We speak of consciousness and its decrees, of the will and its effects, of the thousand ways of moving the body, of dominating the body and passions – but *we do not even know what a body can do*. (1988: 18-19)

¹⁵ One of the most controversial conceptions they present is that of the ‘body-without-organs’ (BwO). I do not wish to debate the significance of this concept in this thesis, for, as Buchanan has shown, the BwO “cannot be the basis of Deleuze and Guattari’s understanding of the body, because it is in fact a consequence of it” (1997a: 73).

The body in this light is the new model for philosophy, the new centre for understanding human geography, and this philosophy needs a new language and a new method for understanding the practical awareness that it instils. I don't want it to be misunderstood that the new here is a better way of writing the body, the assumption there being that I know what previous conceptions and written accounts of the body have been trying to say, and that the alternatives that are to be proposed complete the task. So, in effect I want to distance the following discussion from teleological assumptions concerning knowledge production, the suggestion that any new claim places us further along the path towards an unproblematised notion of truth. Not just by dint of writing this within academic discourse these claims are necessarily limited because they are necessarily implicated in and written out of the language constructing previous conversation concerning the body.

2.7 Conclusions: What meaning in her breast?

In the last book published during his lifetime, Italo Calvino created the character of Mr Palomar (named after a famous European observatory, or a pun on *palo* (stake) and *mar* (sea) to indicate a solid stake contacting a fluid, ample, infinite continuity). In several, highly ordered meditations, Mr Palomar presents a man “whose thinking seeks order, meaning, purity, and control in a universe that is random, contingent, complex, and – in the repeated word of the book – *labile*” (Carter, 1992: 139). In the *arche-écriture* of one such meditation:

Mr Palomar is walking along a lonely beach. He encounters few bathers. One young woman is lying on the sand taking the sun, her bosom bared. Palomar, discreet by nature, looks away at the horizon of the sea. He knows that in such circumstances, at the approach of a strange man, women often cover themselves hastily, and this does not seem right to him: because it is a nuisance for the woman peacefully sun-bathing, and because the passing man feels he is an intruder, and because the taboo against nudity is implicitly confirmed ... but ... in acting like this, I display a refusal to see; or, in other words, I am finally

reinforcing the convention that declares illicit any sight of the breast (Calvino, 1985: 9).

Mr Palomar walks back passed the female bather, this time trying not to consciously *not* look at her breasts. Ironically, this conscious denial of the breasts presupposes an undue concern with them, thus, in this second encounter he optically perviates the entire scene, including the woman, with “neutral objectivity”. This done, he further contemplates what has just gone before and becomes aggrieved at the thought that this last encounter has reduced this female to the level of things, to a mere pair of breasts. Thus he endeavours to pass the bather once more, this time offering a noticeable and appreciative glance at the bosoms, according them their due, relative special value. The intention behind this latest, most perfected (male) performance of an encounter with a female bather’s bare bosoms, is to relieve the breasts from the semi-darkness of centuries of “sexiomaniac puritanism” and to instead enact, in an open-minded manner, a display of gratitude for the “cosmos that rotates around those haloed cusps” (ibid). However:

The moment he approaches again, she suddenly springs up, covers herself with an impatient huff, and goes off, shrugging in irritation, as if she were avoiding the tiresome insistence of a satyr. (Calvino, 1985: 10)

There is a duration to this process of signification: the bare bosom is not always rendered in a specific essential manner, it possess simultaneously a latent virtuality of all possible presentations. But at a given moment, due to a certain assemblage of players one semiotic regime holds relative dominance. This is the point I have wanted to make.

Several points coexist in a given individual or group, which are always engaged in several distinct and not always compatible linear proceedings. The various forms of education or ‘normalization’ imposed upon an individual consist in making him or change points of subjectification, always moving toward a higher, nobler one in closer conformity with the supposed ideal. Then from the point of subjectification issues a subject of enunciation, as a function of a mental reality

determined by that point. Then from the subject of enunciation issues a subject of the statement, in other words, a subject bound to statements in conformity with a dominant reality (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 129).

Can the breast be posited as prior to the social constructions placed on it – pre-judicially male constructions; or, is identity determined by the biological sexing of the body rendered (optically) explicit by the presence of breasts? Taking the latter point of essential sex identity the breast renders the body as the single category ‘female’, thus trumping all other forms of identification. There is in this story of Mr. Palomar’s beach walk, a layering of signification and figurative representation. In order to reach a certain state of awareness the world is rendered through a flow of interpretation, which at the same time is altered according to a set of circumstances alien to its flow (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 139). So, whilst the “body appears to have an essential truth which will overcome all disguise” (Stallybrass, 1992: 82), the signification of the sign of the breast is usurped by the meaning accorded to it by socially constructed discourse. In all of this there is a danger of hoping to locate the ‘truth’ in our bodies: a failing that blinds us to fact that the moment of embodiment is a moment of limitation where we encounter the interpretations always-already applied to our bodies through the dangerous significations of prejudice and desire.

Perhaps, what is required is a humble sense of pragmatics: a belief that there is no “invariant immune from transformation” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 139). None of these semiotics or regimes suggested can be identical to the condition of their possibility. You don’t represent the body, the body can not be represented: rather you might try to shore up, for a moment, the circulation and flow of energy, sorrow or rage, that has been experienced, in to order to intimate a field of sensibility that is a part of our being fleshy, sensual, liquid matter. As a post-signifying regime this opposes a semiotic of signifiante and enacts instead the process of subjectification (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 119) and that of a diagrammatic transformation. You cannot identify one regime of signs, that of an imperial signification, for “there is such a mixture within the same period or same people that we can say no more than that a given people, language, or period assures the relative dominance of a certain regime” (ibid, 119). New lines of flight are now given a positive sign, no longer to be chased by a negative blockage of

'scape-goatism'. Thus, at a given moment a people (an event) effects a certain assemblage that assures the relative dominance of a certain regime. Tomorrow it will probably be different; if I did the painting again it won't possess the same hue, the relative dominance of pigmentation and sensation is different; or what if Mr Palomar's second stroll passed the naked bather is different from the first?

There is no longer a centre of signifiante connected to expanding circles or an expanding spiral, but a point of subjectification constituting the point of departure of the line. There is no longer a signifier-signified relation, but a subject of enunciation issuing from the point of subjectification and a subject of the statement in a determinable relation to the first subject. There is no longer a sign-to-sign circularity, but a linear proceeding into which the sign is swept via subjects (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 127).

CHAPTER THREE

Choreography of affect and movement – the territories of Body-Mind Centring

This music rings out, thunders, vibrates without speaking, makes noises or declaims without us being able to make out what it is that it is seeming to want to say: is it passion, ecstasy, pain, thunder...? Light, mobile, fluctuating, it dances the entire range of the possible. Using notes that never have a fixed meaning, the music expresses universals that come before words with meaning. (Serres, 1995a)

How are the different members of the body to be agitated?
(Garrick, 1744); quoted in (Roach, 1985: 10)

3.1 Introduction: spacing through movement

By journeying both deep inside to our own experience and out through our own perceptions to the world we live in, we can begin to see who we may truly be, beyond conditioned self-images and habitual patterns of thinking, moving, and living.

(Hartley, 1995: xix)

We need to work on new ways of apprehending the bodily experience that is our everyday life, and to do this with a sense that this reveals the body, emphasizing that this forcefully shapes the knowledges that we create and live by. I want to distinguish this apprehension of bodily experience from accounts made by academics who use the term embodiment. This means aiming at apprehending that which is beneath signification, that which subtends the word and that which performatively strikes across and comes before meaning (the referential making sense of that which you have just done). Whereas, embodiment is about the fact that when we encounter another body through our body we always-already see it, name it, and anticipate its expressions¹:

The body's articulation to the world is only possible under two conditions: it has to be oriented, if we understand the world divided up into categories, domains, spaces; and it must allow for the circulation of the body's energy into the world via specific apparatuses, which owe their own existence to different social spaces: this applies to the bow, to the spinning wheel, and to shamanistic procedures for communicating with the animal world. (Gil, 1998: 152)

In this I am primarily concerned with a way of looking beyond embodiment towards an appreciation of the subjective experience of the body's movement, rhythm and energy. I want to move our thoughts of space towards a sensibility that attends to the 'kinesthetic, aural, somatic and spatial sensations' (Albright, 1997) of

¹ For example: "The body is always-already engaged in a specific social situation by means of techniques or rule governed practices which are historically and geographically contingent. In addition, ... the body's relations with itself and with other bodies are always mediated by such practices" (Crossley, 1996: 45).

the immediate, lived experience or eventhood we are witnessing, walking, speaking, living etc.

Explicitly, this chapter is about mobilizing research carried out on the somatic practice of Body-Mind Centering (BMC), suggesting that its practice offers practitioners a new language, vocabulary or cartography with which to understand their bodied lives. In relation to the performing arts it offers a conveyance through movement of the most intangible emotional experience expressed in physical energy and rhythm as an unconscious *communitas*. And, as a somatic health practice it also works towards a therapeutic awareness of the emotional scars and blockages that are held within the bodies experiential tracings (from a cranial sacral understanding to the simple, but powerful injunction, ‘don’t touch me there’). This alternative cartography of expression (ultimately understanding) facilitates a more precise awareness of our immediate, fluid and excessive somatic sensibilities enabling us to approach all our experiences with our physical as well as our visual, aesthetic, and intellectual faculties.

The body in this light is the new model for philosophy, the new centre for understanding human geography, and this philosophy needs a new language and a new method for understanding the practical awareness that it instils. There is a whole history of practices that present themselves for such experiential interpretation towards a new methodology, and what’s more, all such practices are written out of the numerous spaces where people come together to immerse in such pastimes as yoga², dancing, shiatsu, naturopathy, acupuncture and BMC etc. These practices build off a growing emphasis pertaining to notions of ‘self-care’ and the need to focus upon the whole person – body, mind, emotions, physicality and their environment. As such they become easily dubbed as one of the many activities making up New Age cultures, holistic and somatic healthcare, including that of Chinese medicine. Firstly, I want to focus upon the art of BMC.

“The most elementary processes within the living cell” are also a
“writing” and one whose “system” is never closed. (Kirby, 1998:
61; paraphrasing Derrida, 1984: 9)

² Where people occupy themselves in *Asana* (a series of exercises focusing upon physical posture) and *Pranayama* (exercises stabilizing the rhythm of breathing).

Deleuze makes an initial track into his understanding of the body via Spinoza's thesis of *parallelism* which rejects immediately the body-mind split of the Cartesian subject. This significant moment within Spinoza's writing denies the dominance of either mind or body over the other, advocating instead that "an action in the mind is necessarily an action in the body" (Deleuze, 1988a: 18). In relation to the historical concerns of Descartes' mind-body subjecthood and Spinoza's philosophical conversation with him in *Ethics*, the principle of Morality founded upon the endeavour of controlling the body's passions by the mind's consciousness collapses. Increasingly, many writers place their discussions away from the problematic Cartesian subject but fail in their fashionable fervour to extend the implications of doing so into the impact that this might have on everyday instances of action. Sublimated within many discourses by which we operate day to day is the structural glue premised upon this moral mind-body split. Instead of this prevalent mind-body dualism there does seem to be an argumentative divide between notions of what a body can do, morality implicated, and the workings of the body's different fluid and energy flows as they are differentially channelled throughout the distinct anatomical compartments and linkages. This latter corporeal realm speaks of the affective agency that is within the body, and is indeed the body itself; and this space and its relation to our understandings of the mind, is that which is at the heart of BMC.

BMC is a form of dance activity that explores the interrelationship of mind and body in movement as it embraces the interplay between thought, feeling, sensation and emotion. As a recognizable practice it has its origins in the person of Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen. In the years between 1962 and 1972 she worked out from her profession as a dance teacher and occupational therapist in a quest to understand further, or through a different perspective, the haptic practices that facilitated the recoveries of her patients (see Cohen, 1993). This found her immersed in investigations of neurodevelopment therapy, neuromuscular reduction, the Japanese art of *Katsugen Undo*, Laban Movement analysis techniques, Bartenieff Fundamentals and dance therapy practices; whilst at the same time she engaged in yoga, meditation, vocal work, martial arts and craniosacral therapy (see Hartley, 1995). One of her pupils, Linda Hartley, makes particular notice of the general demeanour of Cohen, especially with regards to her sensitivity and "unusual ability to perceive in depth the total pattern of a person's movement and postural

expression as well as the flow or obstructedness (sic) of the mind which the pattern reflects” (Hartley, 1995: xxv).

For the purpose of explicating into the space of academic discourse my experience of practising BMC, two framing points need to be made. First, the ability to engage effectively with the processes involved depended on being able to stay present in the ‘not-knowing’ of the beginner’s mind. You had to be open minded and courageous enough to trust the environment, and the new feelings that you become aware of within your own body. Second, as Hartley notes in her book *Wisdom of the Body Moving*, the principles and methods formulated by Cohen were developed as a language through which one could communicate and teach the somatic experiences uncovered. As such the techniques that are practised guide rather than instruct, and are attuned to the potentially unique expression of the individual body.

What we experience and observe is a particular quality of awareness, feeling, perception and attention when we embody a movement pattern or body system; this is the ‘mind’ of that pattern or system, and is an expression of the integrated body-mind. (Hartley, 1995: xxvi)

One of the first dilemmas to face me was the incongruity between my desire to investigate the active subjecthood of the body in opposition to the predominant mind-body split of the Cartesian subject. In the equation of the body-mind experience that is at the centre of BMC it is noticeable that it is the body that is announced first. This comes out of the fact that BMC speaks of the ‘mind’ as a body system. For trained practitioners it is an awareness synthesized out of the processes of the intellect, imagination, feeling, intuition, sensation and emotion, all of which mix to affect our body-mind experience. Under this notion of the body-mind our sense of whole being is understood as a set of complex interactions mutually intertwined.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first is about situating this type of research in relation to an alternative methodological stance, one that is neither proscriptive nor descriptive but is instead ethological. This ethological methodology, to reiterate the introduction, is not about instancing empirically the way things are in terms of seeking validation for theory, nor is this about the raw

instance of empiricism ‘effecting’ an anything-goes contingent theoretical stance. Rather it is about understanding a way in which both empiricism and theory can be explicitly realized in the very enactment of the practice the research is encountering. In this light, the second section is about taking up my research experience into the practice of BMC and translating it into a potential cartography through which to intimate the spatiality of the body-in-itself. (The research involved three intensive weekend training courses into one of the systems of the body distinguished by BMC, that of the organs [the others being the skeletal, the muscular, the endocrine, the nervous and the fluid systems], and one weekend session detailing the foundational vocabulary for all work involving BMC, that which BMC practitioners call the three planes of movement. In total this involved sixty-four contact hours.)

In conclusion, a third section makes an argument for validating the alternative concerns of this ethological methodology in terms of the fact that people are practising BMC and using it to make sense of their lives. Placing such an argument within academia is to operate the syntactical space, or spacing process, as a transposable resource – a way of looking – that can begin to invest in an alternative logic for understanding the way in which the world, and our encounters with it, are literally ‘going on’ through our bodies before signification.

SECTION ONE

3.2 Thought spoken out of substance: ‘What can a body do?’

Kinetic proposition tells us that a body is defined by relations of motion and rest, of slowness and speed between particles. That is, it is not defined by a form or by functions The important thing is to understand life, each living individuality, not as a form, or a development of form, but as a complex relation between differential velocities, between deceleration and acceleration of particles. A composition of speeds and slowness on a plane of immanence. In the same way, a musical form will depend on a complex relation between speeds and slowness of sound particles. It is not just a matter of music but of how to live: it is by speed and slowness that one slips in among things, that one connects with something else. One never commences;

one never has a *tabula rasa*; one slips in, enters in the middle; one takes up or lays down rhythms. (Deleuze, 1989: 123)

One never commences, one takes up or lays down rhythms: this is the subject of this chapter. Moving aside from the issue that the subject disappears as one understands that the agent of commencement is not within you, what can social scientists say about the connections and interferences by which we encounter and meet what we are about to become? This vexed question haunts our discourse; we are caught in the middling that is a becoming. So how might it be possible to intimate, and write with feeling, those forces that make us speak only of the rhythmic gerund of the verb – middling, talking, writing, dancing, moving, jumping etc. This becoming-space is an intensive place that figures the body in its connections; in its taking up and laying down of rhythms. In confronting this in thought I want to plug into two planes. The first is by far the primary focus of the chapter, and that is the plane that is the body itself – blood, organic cell, substance, fluids, flesh, organ structure, smell etc. This presents the research that I have done on the somatic and performative art of BMC, and this is laid out in detail and in advance of the latter culmination of the thesis in preparation of an ability to be attentive to all our performances in terms of the affective economy that writes them (Melrose, 1993). The other plane of thought takes up the question posed at the end of the last chapter – ‘What does a body do?’ – and uses it as the starting point for a new ethological methodology. This is the terrain of Deleuze-Spinoza (see Buchanan 1997a, 1997b; Doel 1999), an ethologically mapping of traces where action and affect takes precedence over an aetiology of cause and effect – where we speak of an effect and a zone of affect (see Taussig, 1992). Through this ethological stance I want to argue for the acceptance of the insights that the affective intensities uncovered in the work of BMC.

Problem 3: Ethological mappings

A couple of contextual observations should be made when utilizing Deleuze’s specific reading of Spinoza, one in regard to its place in Deleuze’s own philosophical oeuvre, the other to the qualities that this encounter, Deleuze-Spinoza, brings to thought in general, to thought as thought. Deleuze’s two published works on Spinoza, *Expressionism in Philosophy* (1990b) and

Spinoza: A Practical Philosophy (1988a), do not present formalized wholes, but rather unravel in the style of “a series of interpretative strategies in the process of development” (Hardt, 1993: 56). This style is crucial as such serially ongoing and interpretative thought is the pathway necessary for an awareness of the intensities that perform our sense of being a body that is always on the move. So, first, in relation to Deleuze’s philosophical world, Deleuze-Spinoza creates a flight into politics, a flight whose trajectory is biased by the previous encounters with Bergson’s ontological positivity and Nietzsche’s ethical affirmation. Now, with Spinoza, a new singularity of thought presents itself, and furthermore it achieves this thought by and through being immersed within a field of practice. This immersion is likewise important, for working on the body as an affective field is not to turn one’s back on a politics and an ethics. The affective language that emerges out of working through the body is one that writes an ethically mindful ontology of practice.

Ontology inheres in ethics, which in turn inheres in politics. Spinoza’s politics is an ontological politics in that, through a rich analysis of power and a conceptual elaboration of practice, the principles that animate being are the very same principles that animate an ethics and a practical constitution of political organisation. (Hardt, 1993: 57)

To emphasize, and to shift focus away from the latter sphere of a practical constitution of political organization “the principles that animate being are the very same principles that animate an ethics” – Spinoza’s universe begins from the bare indeterminate form of predication, attribution or determination itself (Joughin, 1990). For example, stop here and now and think what is happening: are you sitting down, what does that feel like, how come you can be sitting down right now, what are you doing, what other things bring you to this practical moment in time, etc? Through this evolution of Deleuze’s thought, through its drive and application, there emerges a space of thinking that unravels out of a contemplation of initial situations (as described by the loose questions above). Such unravelling

envelopes experience as it diverges from its immediate relations with other qualities or forces, breaking, as Joughin deftly puts it, “out of that ‘space’ of relations and provoking a reflection in which we consider reorientations or reinscriptions of this and other terms within a ‘virtual’ matrix of possible unfoldings of these terms and their relations in time” (1990: 9). This line of thought is very much leading us towards Deleuze’s work on the philosophy of Leibniz as presented in *The Fold* (1993). The direction of this thought consequently searches out wider concerns folding back upon our understanding of being the/a ‘subject’, folding our being as “the locus of orientation of space of present appearances within the virtual matrix of all unfolding in time” towards its “own practical activity of interpretation, evaluation or orientation of the terms of experience within the universal matrix it has itself unfolded” (Joughin, 1990: 9).

From such foundations the chapter orientates the presentation of the study of BMC by asking the question: ‘What is it to understand?’, ‘What do we mean when we say that we understand something or comprehend what is happening?’ The philosophical tone of Deleuze-Spinoza widens the horizon of a possible answer by levelling the relationship between the commonly held notions of explication, emanation and expression³. Consequently, the practice of BMC offers a legitimate

³ As my intention is about opening up spaces for future theoretical and empirical investigation I do not want to dwell on this aspect of Spinoza’s work. This is not to say that it holds huge importance especially upon the ways in which social science can utilize this parallelism to instance the ethical importance of what, to many, seem to be highly removed and esoteric contributions to the politics of the social. On this see Moira Gatens excellent book *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power, & Corporeality* (1996b) – especially Chapters Seven and Eight. For now this quote from Deleuze illustrates the potential in investigating this area further: “The practical significance of parallelism is manifested in the reversal of the domination of the traditional principle on which morality is founded as an enterprize of the domination of the passions by consciousness. It was said that when the body acted, the mind was acted upon, and the mind did not act without the body being acted upon in turn (the rule of the inverse relation cf. Descartes, *The Passion of the Soul*, articles 1 and 2). According to the *Ethics*, on the contrary, what is an action in the mind is necessarily an action in the body as well, and what is a passion in the body is necessarily a passion in the mind. There is no primacy of one series over another [...]. There are no fewer things in the mind that exceed our consciousness than there are things in the body that exceed our knowledge. So it is by one and the same movement that we shall manage, if possible, to capture the power of the body beyond the given conditions of our knowledge and to capture the powers of the mind beyond the given conditions of our consciousness” (Deleuze, 1988a: 18).

way into an understanding of our physiology and the affects this understanding has on our knowledge (where knowledge works as something that depends on being in a world that is inseparable from our bodies). Key issues are announced in this methodological move that sites the affective economy immediate to our embodiment as counter to more typical knowledge notions, those of realism and idealism. Firstly, speaking of affect in opposition to effect is to appreciate that the interpretations by which we make our moves onwards are moments of *enactment*: the “bringing forth of meaning from a background of understanding” (Rosch, et al, 1991: 149). And that secondly, affect is foremost because this bringing forth is only so in that it results from our “ongoing interpretation that emerges from our capacities of understanding” (ibid; see also Rabinow, 1997). Yet thirdly, continuing the fold of significance and substance from the previous chapter, the experiential of affect folds out after its duration as *embodied action*, which is to say that the fold is understood as a double movement, as follows:

First, that cognition depends upon the kinds of experience that comes from having a body with various sensorimotor capacities, and second, that these individual sensorimotor capacities are themselves embedded in a more encompassing biological, psychological and cultural context. (Rosch, et al, 1991: 149)

In this regard, the chapter is concerned with promoting the exploration of these capacities as understood within the structure, fluids and viscosity of our being. This is about understanding that our embodiment is crucial to the world in which we live, in how we live it and in the way that our viscosity and comportment discerns the knowledge production through which we come to know that we are in a world (see Lingis, 1994a and 1994b). The kinaesthetic beat at the heart of this embodied being-in-the-world is, as a technique for understanding what is geography, *spacing*. In terms of Deleuze and Guattari we are speaking here of the notions of *becoming* and *movement*. Edward Casey, in his bold book *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*, instructs our thought not to overlook, as he believes Deleuze and Guattari to have done, “the placial potential of *settled dwelling* – of ... ‘built places’” (1998: 309). I don’t quite agree or disagree with him. The aspect of Spinoza in Deleuze might explain: the *encounter* is all with Deleuze-Spinoza, so whilst it is not merely a question of pure becoming or movement, one should likewise caution against overemphasizing the certainty, fixity

and ‘importance-through-permanence’ of *settled dwelling* spaces. Deleuze notions to an understanding through eventhood, that it happens in the *settling*, in the body’s spacing and movement – rest and motion – as it encounters and seeks out continuity – ‘the-being-able-to-go-on’ – with whatever relations are etching out its present moment. It is important to emphasize the vital quality of our body in all of this; therefore we firstly ask ‘What is it that drives us to settle, to have feelings, affections and intensities that nurture us and hold things still?’ There is a lived architecture before there is a built one and it is this architecture that is the focus of BMC.

SECTION TWO

3.3 The visceral art of Body-Mind Centring: a new expressive language of the planes of movement

Underlying the forms of our expression is the process of how our movement develops as an infant. Development occurs in successive stages and any interruption to complete a particular stage can lead to alignment or movement weaknesses, problems in sequencing, in perception and in creativity. Those different movement stages are composed of reflexes and basic movement patterns and they are the building blocks of our movement vocabulary. (Hossenlopp, 1999)

The *prima facie* of BMC is the basic unit of organic life, that of the living cell. From the moment of its conception the cell contains *in potentia* the whole development of its more differentiated form, and in the unfolding process that pursues its development there follows a pattern “that can be observed in the evolution of all animate life” (Hartley, 1995: 24). This is expressed not only in terms of movement but also in synchrony with a “development of consciousness”, with a “cellular awareness”⁴, such that with “each subsequent stage of physical development” there

⁴ The notion of ‘cellular awareness’ chimes in character not in biological terms but more in kinship with Deleuze’s notion of ‘a life’ (1997). This likewise seems to emerge out of his encounter with Nietzsche, a moment intimated in Heidegger’s own understanding of Nietzsche’s thinking:

Nietzsche’s thinks the ‘biological’, the essence of what is alive, in the direction of commanding and poetizing, of the perspectival and horizontal: in the direction of freedom. ...So little is Nietzsche’s thinking in danger of biologism that on the contrary he rather tends to interpret what is biological in the true and strict tense – the plant and

is a manifestation and expression of “an increasingly higher degree of perception, awareness, and consciousness” (ibid). It is easy to conceive this quality if you think of our own growth from embryo to newly-born child through to adolescence.

Firstly, I want to outline a possible sensibility – that of thinking through planes of movement – through which to intimate this non-verbal aspect of our expressive identities. The suggestion is that these planes of movement have inherent affective qualities that sketch out our corporeality with specific correlation to energy qualities, our use of movement and space, and our general relational demeanour and mood.

Latitude and longitude are the two elements of a cartography
.... *Latitude is made up of intensive parts falling under a capacity, and
longitude of extensive parts falling under a relation.* (Deleuze &
Guattari, 1988: 261/256-57)

3.3.1 Latitude: the horizontal plane of affect

The sum total of the intensive affects it is capable of at a given power or degree of potential (latitude). (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 260)

The important point is to ask whether something, some quality or affect, exists as knowledge beyond any particular performance or encounter? If so, where is it

the animal – *non-biologically*, that is, *humanly*, pre-eminently in terms of the determinations of perspective, horizon, commanding, and poetizing. (as quoted in Ansell-Pearson, 1997c: 114)

Ansell-Pearson has provided excellent commentary to these historically uneasy passages of Nietzsche and Heidegger, signalling the anthropomorphism not as a criticism of Nietzsche but as a particular quality of his writings that here significantly reflect modernity as “fundamentally metaphysical, resting on a voluntarism, subjectivism, and anthropomorphism” (1997c: 115). In this, and in Heidegger’s reading in particular, the philosophy of life presented here dislocates itself from the “kind of ‘machinic’ conception of evolution that is necessary to free the logic of life from anthropocentric naivety and blindness”, something which Deleuze’s thinking realigns us to (ibid). However, Heidegger’s critique of Darwin’s theory of evolutionary adaptation - the serious underestimation of the relational encounter between animal and world created in Darwin’s conception of an animal as something that is ‘present-at-hand’ adapting to a world also ‘present-at-hand’ - emphasizes “that the ‘environment’ is an intrinsic feature of the becoming of the ‘movement’ of the organism (see Ansell-Pearson, 1997c: 117).

located – in the body? in expression? in the syntactical architecture of the event, materially or immaterially (felt)? Is the point of registration one of constraint (natural) and convention (cultural)? Do we have to accept the notion of shared cultural resources, a set of qualities that are instantiated in performance? Affect is not to be confused with emotion. Affect will often, in its intensity, be a floodgate to an emotional experience, but it is not, in its intensity, something that can be owned and recognized as such (Massumi, 1996: 221). When one speaks of emotion, as many practitioners of BMC do after working through a particular quality of the body, you are qualifying the intensity by working it through a semantic and semiotic framework, allying it to “narrativizable action-reaction circuits”, and giving it a function and a meaning (ibid).

I want to reflect this latitude as the *horizontal plane* prevalent within the practice of BMC. It speaks primarily of the mobile sensibility that we experience and affect in relation to our earliest years – immersed in our mother’s womb, lying flat on our back before we develop the capacity to crawl. As a sensation it has a very full, drowsy quality often expressed through the image of wading into a sea to be submerged within its deep expanses. It has strong associations with our earliest rotational navel pattern of movement, and in terms of bodily comportment, it is appropriately described in the action of nursing, cuddling, resting deep within oneself etc. As such it is on this plane that evocations of our experience of trust and support are achieved, and in relation to an understanding of more general movement, it is from this plane that “we are able to give and receive weight, and relate positively to gravity ... (thus, this) is the plane of attention and the ground for the other two planes to develop” (Hossenlopp, 1999).

Let me example this through what is known as the *naval radiation* pattern. If you observe an infant in the first few months of their lives you will notice a radial and horizontal pattern to their movement: “as it snuggles in, throws back its head, or thrusts out with an arm or leg, these actions appear to originate not locally, in the muscles of the limbs, but from the navel center of the infant’s body” (Hartley, 1995: 29). Movement radiates outwards through the individual body parts, differentiating the qualities of affect (to a greater degree as the infant grows up), and inwards as the body is integrated via the awareness garnered from whatever venture the body’s movement has created. The body is continually in relation to a multitude of stimuli – touch, gravity, sound (sudden or soothing) – and crucially

responds to the stimuli by moving toward or drawing away from the perceived source. These two simple responses clarify a whole host of emotional reactions and acknowledgements that define us throughout the many encounters that make up our lives. In relation to the basic demands of life as exhibited in the unit of the organic cell, the desire, that is the ‘immanence of a life’ common to all (see Deleuze 1997), to be nurtured and survive (and ultimately therefore reproduce), is expressed in this movement towards something for support and the potential for bonding, and the movement away in the act of defending one’s personal survival. This tendency develops as a result of the omnipotent ‘at-one-ness’ experienced *in utero* where our early sensory experience is about being immersed in a self-sustaining universe; thus “it is in the womb that our potential to form loving and trustful relationships has its roots” (Hartley, 1995: 39). The complexity of relationships in later life (and I speak here of relationships in terms of affects and forces as opposed to those describing the personal nature of our social narratives) implicate these simple but foundational movements in more chaotic and muddled forms⁵. However, at the heart of all movement this tendency of attraction and repulsion orchestrates every spacing that we make. This orchestration is prevalent within the structure and presentation of space as theatrical art. Here space does not merely function in order to perform a setting or a socially specific locale for the expression of a story (see Garner, 1994) – as I hope to make clear I am not writing here of functionality – but rather space is a performative exhibition of bodies encountering. In this way drama is an art of space, in it space emerges out of the live performance as an act of spacing. There is an uneasy mix here between the representational qualities as pronounced in theatre as an art form and the underlying emphasis of my argument for an embodied and felt performativity to ongoing action. The argument is for the development of an attentive empathy for the attraction and repulsion of bodies as they encounter. So, as Lotman outlines:

Behind the presentation of things and objects that form the environment in which the figures of the text perform there is a

⁵ It is in this way that the practice of BMC becomes a potential site of therapy: “In going back to re-experience the movements, sensations, and ‘mind’ of the early Navel Radiation pattern – to the extent that we as adults can do this – we have a chance to complete a stage that was incomplete before, or reintegrate where connections have been disturbed subsequently. Experiences of positive support, relationship, integration, and pleasure can be encouraged and strengthened” (Hartley, 1995: 39).

system of spatial relations, namely the structure of topos. This structure is the principle governing the way the figures are organised and distributed within the artistic continuum. (1972: 330; quoted in Pfister, 1988: 257)

Furthermore, this topos records and develops the affective intensities of our experiences, allowing our body to hold within it traces of previous experiential encounters – a tracing of intensity which, whilst asocial, is not pre-social. As Massumi puts it, this intensity “*includes* social elements, but mixes them with elements belonging to other levels” (1996: 223). Intensity is *incipient*, and this incipience exhibits *tendencies*.

Although the realm of intensity that Deleuze’s philosophy strives to conceptualize is transcendental in the sense that it is not directly accessible to experience, it is not transcendent, it is not exactly outside experience either. It is immanent to it – always in it but not of it. (Massumi, 1996: 226)

In this abstraction a potential is unleashed, to develop an appreciation with the capacity to apprehend alternative meaningful spaces; it is not about subtraction, an uninformed, unempirical, irrelevant wordiness. Thus, Massumi strongly points out that “the implied ethics of the project is value attached – without function, with desire only – to the multiplication of powers of existence, to ever-divergent regimes of action and expression” (1996: 227).

The aim is to see that the experience of the body as it is achieved in BMC is the tension that plays out the contention of Judith Butler’s that whilst the subject is *performed* in submission within reiterable acts it cannot be reduced to it. The body is the excess, it is our unique experience, our unique desire (and there is a collective, empathetic space that does not assemble through meaning and signification but through intimate bodily acts). This is not to deride the huge significance of the fact that there are representational artefacts, discursive objects and material practices that are, to a greater or lesser extent, involved in producing effects of power and new types of subjectivity. A whole genealogy can be traced charting the emergence of the practice of BMC. But whilst the practice, the institution, has an historical edge, there are spaces where people do explore the body in these ways, but also, to reassert the transhistorical philosophical point, there are spacings that are the body

through which subjecthood is achieved and spacings that are the very dynamism of experience: movement, speed, rhythm and affect. Not something essential but something that is very durable, durable yet little explored hence the sense that it has so many unchartered qualities. To continue in breaking this down, it is not that these qualities have not been experienced many times before, many aeons ago, but that they have not been chartered consistently. This comes back again to the question as to what counts as knowledge and that is historically situated and geographically placed in those ‘empty spaces’ where these affects can be explored.

But a question or vital problematic still remains: Where is affect situated? The force of sensation is often that which defines the notion of affect, sensation being the affect of an event eternal to the body itself, and hence to the subject. The notion of the stable subject is made untenable for things outside its control (too easily) sway it. The classical model of understanding premised upon the visual breaks down and mastery achieved through one sense, that of the gaze, competes with the subjective appeal of the other senses in a modality of subjectivity influenced by the materiality of the world itself (including the way our vision ‘touches’ things). Affect then doesn’t distil these senses, rather it speaks of the unique and polyphonic event of a combination of them all. And in its allegiance to sensation, its place is neither internal nor external, but is in the in-betweenness that is the world. Affect is a part of us, and it is apart from us, drawing us into ever-new connections that keep our subjectivity on the move: unlocalizable then, but not intangible nor unintelligible. It is this movement that performs the longitude of this cartography, a movement that is spurred into being through the vertical plane of relationality, the plane of intensity.

3.3.2 Longitude: the vertical plane of relationality

The sum total of the material elements belonging to it under given relations of movement, rest, speed and slowness (longitude). (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 260)

In BMC the *vertical plane* stems from the spinal reaching out movement where as infants we begin to discern and to desire the action of taking things in, to, in more expansive and social terms, focus our attention on other bodies and our immediate environment. BMC practitioners have termed this as the plane of intention, where

“in movement the vertical plane supports our ability to perceive and express ourselves in the outer environment and to other people” (Hossenslopp, 1999). This intention is less about thought, less derived from the mind of the subject, than it is about the body-mind interface of desire or appetite. Appetite or desire is not an internal, innate quality but an emergent onto-genetic expression of the realm of relations, connections, associations and couplings. Thus:

We neither strive for, nor will, neither want, nor desire anything because we judge it to be good; on the contrary, we judge something to be good because we strive for it, will it, want it, and desire it. (Spinoza, 1996, *Ethics*, III, 9)

Or:

Now, the appetite is nothing else but the effort by which each thing strives to persevere in its being, each body in extension, each mind or each idea in thought. But because this effort prompts us to act differently according to the objects encountered, we should say that it is, at every moment, determined by the affections that come from the objects. (Deleuze, 1988: 21)

This appetite, or prompting to act differently through forms of relationality, is about the intensity of attraction or repulsion. Nowhere more obviously are the tendencies of attraction or repulsion seen than in the act of eating. This act signals the more general quality of ‘plugging-in’, the plugging-in to flows of sustenance (energy and substance), affection and information, and an illustration of the desire to do so. In the space of BMC one can appreciate this action as an early developmental movement pattern, that of *mouthing*. It is in this pattern of our development that we as infants are conjectured to begin to initiate our own movement in a purposeful way. We begin to move our body with intent through space, developing our capacity to change within our immediate environment and in response to our own actions (this resonates with the recent work of Alphonso Lingis, with his argument for imperatives [1998] and dangerous emotions [2000]).

Significantly, the mouth and the sensory organs in the head are amongst the first to develop *in utero*, a fact reflected in the way many embryos show signs of sucking

their thumbs. This is in fact preparation for the vital few hours after birth, and henceforth, where the mouth, and body, searches for food now that the navel connection is severed – in other words sustenance has to be sought and we change from ‘being’ to ‘doing’. This movement of the mouth connects with our immediate potential to develop overall body movement as well as the ability to vocalize our needs. Hartley describes this life-enhancing process in detail, and this clarity is worth quoting in full:

Motivated by the need to find food to survive, the mouth will reach towards the source, drawing the head with it. Movement initiated at the mouth in this way will reverberate down the spine. The action is initiated in the jaw; while the chin or lower jaw is partially resting against the mother’s breast for support, the upper jaw is primarily responsible for the action of reaching for and grasping the nipple. In this way the head rocks forward and back with the rhythm of sucking; as the mouth opens, the movement of the skull levers into the first vertebra and then sequentially down the spine to its tail ... this action underlies the first Push pattern from the head, down through the spine. As the mouth closes and the skull circles up and forwards again, the whole spine is released and lengthens in response. (1995: 47-48)

This pattern exhibits an active searching that acts as a foundation for the subsequent behaviour that likewise reaches out for that which fulfils needs – attraction coloured with necessity and/or desire.

This longitudinal realm choreographed through intensity explicitly starts with the body, in the body; or as the body emerging. Gil offers this emerging body as an “energy, as a kind of floating signifier that manifests life in its unpredicatability, diversity and spontaneity” (1998: 154). But he too asks, in order for there to be a body, that there be some metamorphosis of energy, that there must be some following of regular rhythms. He offers the idea that we have modes of correct behaviour and the observation that there seem to be ‘implicit spaces’ where creativity and individual expression are developed. I want to consider this notion of correct behaviour. First, what if we extend it and argue that it infers notions such as appropriate response, or channelled negotiation of an encounter that allows a

successful continuation or conclusion? This makes apparent that we ought to be clear whether this need for some metamorphosis of energy is because of an injunction or an imperative. It is a mixture of both for between these two a space opens up that allows for the development of ‘singularities, the space of the life of the body’ (Gil, 1998: 153). Thus:

The singularity of the ‘individual’ is not that of an ‘I’ or a distinct body – with its organs, skin, affect, and thought separate from the rest of the community – but that of a body in communication with the whole of nature and culture, and all the more singular to the extent that it allows itself to be traversed by the greatest number of natural and social forces. (Gil, 1998: 158)

3.3.3 A synthesis of these two planes: the sagittal plane

So, finally, these singularities are paced out on the *sagittal plane*, a plane of movement that emerges out of the body moving: spacing out the terrain that unfolds through and with it. This spacing is the act that is moved by our desires. It is the plane of our affections, our affecting others (whereas on the vertical plane we are open to taking in the intensities of other bodies and are affected by them). In this way this is the realm of our dynamism: the movement through which we have the ability to push, pull, lift and jump. This dynamism is the desire to push against someone or something to feel their/its affect more fully; it is the desire to take someone with you, to hold something close, to push someone away *through choice* rather than through need or attraction/repulsion. In this choice through semantic appraisal it is the metamorphosis of the energy of the body into tangible expression. This reflects our *spinal growth pattern*, that which is in effect initiated at and during the moment of birth. Again turning to Hartley, this process is described in the following way: “as the head of the birthing child pushes into and through the birth canal and the tail of the spine and the feet respond by pushing against the contracting walls of the womb, the push of the head transforms into a reaching through to the new world” (1995: 53). This pattern is intrinsic to all our future perceptual activity in that the extension of the spine, our vertical axis, occurs through the proprioceptive stimuli of our senses; although at this early, infantile stage of our development space is only actively experienced on the horizontal plane. This movement of push and pull integrates all

three of the illustrated movement patterns and represents the basis for all further body movements which, feeding out of the characteristics outlined above, effectively operate on three planes – the *horizontal*, the *vertical* and the *sagittal*. In co-ordination with each other these three planes present the three-dimensional expression of ourselves through movement: “the more fully we integrate these three planes, the more rich and rewarding our movement in all the dances of life will be” (Hossenslopp, 1999). Thus:

You are longitude and latitude, a set of speeds and slownesses
between unformed particles, a set of nonsubjectified affects.
You have the individuality of a day, a season, a year, *a life*
(regardless of its duration) – a climate, a wind, a fog, a swarm, a
pack (regardless of its regularity). Or at least you can have it, you
can reach it. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 262)

3.3.4 Practising BMC: pathways to affect

The habits we acquire from experiences of being-in-the-world channel our corporeality in set ways and this, I want to argue, deadens the potential of affect that we possess at the interface that is our capacity as a body. When we experience the heightened intensity of bodies through art – theatre, music, painting, dance – there is an empathetic yearning for connections that we too possess within; a possible world denied even as we make our next step forward. Unfulfilled potential is never completely lost, it is merely not yet experienced, or it has been experienced and then forgotten. In a sense, as adults, we have forgotten how to play. Thus:

It is possible for us even as adults to remember these potentials
for movement experience, thus clarifying and strengthening the
foundations upon which our present movement, perceptual,
psychological, intellectual and spiritual experiences are based
We find that this re-education of underlying developmental
patterns not only gives more inner strength, clarity, and
aliveness to our movement and perceptual responses, but it also
frees more of our energy for creative thought and activity.
(Hartley, 1995: 91)

BMC is about working at the deep level of the body where emotional feelings, memories and associations surface reawakenings of past experiences that have been stored within the tissues and fluids. Responses in this vein can be gentle and subtle. Also colouring the affections that we experience are less comfortable bodily sensations, such as pain, nausea, or deep tiredness. In heightening your own awareness of these sensations through practising BMC you learn to appreciate that the body has an *experiential anatomy* as well as a physiological one. Charting and exploring this anatomical map of affect is the focus of the remainder of the chapter.

3.4 Experiential anatomy

The groundwork of BMC is based on our *experiential anatomy*, an awareness about our own body that combines an understanding of our various tissues and structural components – such as bones, muscles, organs, fluids, and our nervous and endocrine systems – alongside our personal experience of their individual cellular affections. The bodywork that goes to make up the BMC practice develops within an individual his or her own differentiated awareness of embodiment. Catherine Hossenlopp describes this life process in these terms:

Each tissue crystallizes a specific energy from which arises a particular quality of movement and a specific mind state. BMC teaches you ways to contact directly those different tissues and to initiate movement from each of them. In doing so, we learn to get in touch with specific aspects of ourselves and learn to express them to others. (1999)

Practising BMC is an individual process through which practitioners actively engage with their own body in a process that facilitates a change in their awareness of themselves and their environment. Using this way of knowing and being, practitioners promote change by embracing the energy within and between bodies, focusing energy attention and creating movement in specific tissues of the body. In contacting through hands, in a hands on manner, two people can meet in their energy allowing each other to become aware of the individual's energy flow (harmonious or congested) in order to facilitate the ability to conduct attention to the different areas of the body's affective economy. My experience of the pattern of our everyday lives understands that these practices are often cautiously approached;

my own understanding of ‘common-sense habit’ meets any encounter such as this with scepticism. Perhaps a major cause of such apprehension lies in the fact that we don’t have a language to discourse about the feelings of our affective body. Or more pointedly, we are not accustomed to using language to communicate these affections because intuitively our bodies are read out of the connections made within our affective economy; to reiterate from earlier, interpretation is enacted out in practice. In a way which exemplifies this, Golden comments that she got a sense of the practice when she understood what Bainbridge Cohen had called ‘the art of embodying tissue’:

First we focus attention on and initiate movement from each fluid in turn, then we combine them. ‘Now become more rarefied, change density: synovial with CSF. Now keep the lightness but allow some lymph to come in so you’re no longer nonspecific’. Each time she gives a new direction, the quality of the movement – and of the energy in the room – changes. (1993: 86)

In a similar manner, the BMC practitioner leading the workshops I attended, Catherine Hossenlopp, would embody in her bodily expressions (rhythm, gesture, motion) the quality of movement pertaining to ‘being in’, for example, the horizontal plane (in the contents/organs) or the lungs. By aligning this kinaesthetic expression with your own awareness of ‘being in’ the horizontal plane, or lungs, you begin to develop and expand the body’s awareness and perceptual field. The rhythm and sensuality, the feeling of the space you are taking up and creating, focuses your being-present through the particular quality of a specific body component or plane.

Once we sense that we have initiated movement in an organ, it is important to let go of the careful intending and sensing process. The energy of the organs needs to be released into full and spontaneous movement and the mind must also be able to move. At this point we simply move and feel the movement. Through their physiological functions (respiration, digestion, etc), flow of energy, rhythm, movement, and actual physical connections to one another, the organs form systems within a system. Through contemplating their structure, function, and movement we can gain some idea of the emotional attitudes that

individual organs reflect and support. Each organ embodies a polarity such as acceptance or rejection, love and fear or hatred, courage and timidity, joy and anger, sadness and sympathy. When we bring our awareness to a particular organ we may experience such feelings; we may also be able to perceive the relationship and attitude we have toward those feelings and the organ itself. (Hartley, 1995: 196)

The task now is to open up a space of comprehension within the medium of writing, and I think it is best to do this by delving straight in. In presenting the BMC research into the organ system, I begin by mapping out the experience itself as that which was experienced by me [*italics*], folding this with a programmatic description of the methods involved [Roman], and illustrating the ‘results’ – the experience-in-itself – through the instruction of a trained BMC practitioner, Catherine Hossenlopp, [**bold**] and the vocal reactions of my fellow students [“Roman”].

Contact

On the first day of the three-weekend BMC course I attended on the Organ System Catherine led us in an exercise to enhance our present awareness of our skin. The method began with a gentle way of stimulating this awareness by the simple act of touching the areas of skin on our hands and face; thus in effect we began to focus our attention on this realm of our being. To further this process we exposed more areas of our skin to the air, rolling up our sleeves and making contact with our hands and slowly allowing the rhythm of this stroking contact to dictate our general body movement – as we were standing we started to make sweeping gestures with the air, swooping and caressing its surface/our surface. Catherine invoked us to sense our environment through the sensation and energy focus we were now experiencing via our skin. The quality of the room felt light and spacious and as I moved around I felt I had a greater awareness of the whole room available to me. Through this movement it felt as if we were becoming very open to the surroundings and as Catherine vocally gestured to us to bring the movement down and on to the ground, where we started to roll upon the floor feeling the different surfaces (including each other – hair, skin, clothing), we allowed our bodies to move freely with the sensations that contact evoked. Moving around in this way seemed to extend, whilst not necessarily to the same degree, the open and light quality to all surface parts of the body. As we brought this movement to a close and regrouped, I certainly felt a refreshing sense

of clarity in my awareness of the space about me and the whole group seemed calmer and somehow more there.

The physical boundary of our body is linked to our skin. To many, an appreciation of contact with another person is held in the act of touching – in the physical sense of the word ‘felt’ one feels the differentiation of one’s own body from that of others. As infants our early experiences of touch are often the first intimations of selfhood. Even as adults, therapy can be achieved through the stimulation of touch contact by way of defining what is self and what is other. Yet the skin is not a mere boundary, its membrane like quality acts like a ‘Mobius Strip’ folding the inside and the outside (here one might think of the membrane of our digestive tract that flows from the lips of the mouth down into the body in the form of our oesophagus and then out through the intestines into the rectum). Hartley describes this quality in the following terms:

It is an elastic and highly sensitive organ that links our inner world to the outside world and enables us to perceive and learn about both simultaneously. The environment touches our skin, and its qualities are transformed into messages that we interpret as heat, cold, pleasure, pain, comfort, pressure, etc. (1995: 133)

In this way the boundary associated with the skin is no longer termed in a restrictive way but rather comes to be seen as a medium through which the potential to exchange is boundless.

The organs

Our first sensations and experience of life can be understood as primarily organic – our involvement in the world emerges out of the sensations of feeding and digesting, breathing and moving. Our sense of being there is stimulated by the perceptions of pleasure, pain or comfort that these processes entail.

They can evoke or reflect the pleasurable powerful state of fullness of being, the frustration of being unable to let go, the pain and fear of being empty or abandoned, the joy of being alive, and so on. The organs evoke and express the sense of

differentiated being in its myriad of feeling qualities. (Hartley, 1995: 184)

Method I – familiarization of anatomical placement and physiology

At this point through the study of anatomical diagrams you accustomize yourself with the location of the organ, visualising and feeling its presence via mentally placing it within your own body. Then you enhance the intensity of your sensing of its presence through touch and by way of breathing from the organ – mentally you focus your breathing and thought on the place of the organ. This breathing technique can then be instrumentally furthered by allowing your breathing to translate the sensations of the organ into hissing and into sound. Then with a partner you both focus on the organ as above, and once you both have a sense of having awareness of the organ’s sensations, however vague, one of you places both their hands on to the area of the body around the location of the organ – above the organ, or with one hand on the front with the other on the back of the body. As contact is made in this way the recipient continues to breathe, hiss and sound through the organ. The benefit of practising BMC in this manner lies in the way “a partner’s presence helps to keep the attention focused and will further concentrate the energy where directed” (Hartley, 1995: 205).

Method II – holding

This can only be effectively carried out with a partner. The supporting partner makes contact with their hands as above, and then focuses their attention upon feeling the ‘weight’ of the organ so that in effect they hold the recipient’s organ in the midst of its surrounding body tissue as if it were a balloon filled with water in their hands. In this manner the next method of facilitating movement from this organ awareness can be guided and amplified.

Method III – Initiation of movement

As you lie on the floor, now reasonably attentive to the awareness of the organ’s sensations, you start to allow your body to move with the rhythms that seem to emanate from the energy you have found in the organ. As illustrated above, the movement that emerges here extends into three distinct planes, the vertical, the horizontal and the sagittal. Allow yourself to let go and be moved by the subtle

initiations that now seem to slowly flood through your body ever more vibrantly; thus your whole body (or just your arms, your torso, etc) might start to rotate, roll, reach upwards, or curl up in stillness slowly rocking to an almost imperceptible beat etc. As you start to move via the sensation of the organ, its intensity, weight and rhythm, you can “work with changing levels in relation to the floor, through lying, sitting, squatting, hands and knees, standing. Explore the dynamics of gravity and levity, support, and mobility acting on the organs as the organs initiate and support these changes” (Hartley, 1995: 205-06).

Method IV – Dance and improvized movement (contact or solo)

Here you extend the expression of the organ to its fullest potential, actualizing this quality of yourself and experiencing the energy that resonates from that place. In this way you enhance your body memory and understanding of what it is your body is capable of. This movement expresses the full energy and power of the organs moving you through space to and from the floor with speed or deft touch, allowing you to freely jump, roll, run, balance and so on. As Hartley herself noted, and I myself experienced in my own body and through being with others, you “follow the organs’ own momentum, rhythm, direction, and quality of movement, and let yourself be surprised” (1995: 207)⁶.

Introduction by way of introducing the digestive tract

In accordance with the Spinal pattern of movement, that of push and reaching out to take in or grab something, you can sense the impulse of the movement travelling through the digestive tract from our frontal mouthing posture through to the abdominal and pelvic organs. When breathing in and focusing attention on this pathway through your body (perhaps tracing with your fingers the course a piece a food takes, identifying the space of the stomach, the valves from the stomach to the small intestine and from the small to the large intestine, tracing the bulk of the colon as it moves up your body

⁶ Another method that is having a growing impact (**Method V – *Expression in drawing and colour***) can be carried out as a temporary conclusion and reflection of your experience. This is the practice of drawing directly after or whilst still focused within the awareness of an organ, the energy you feel and have experienced in the dance. The style of such expression is naturally one of abstraction – the abstraction of a particular quality of colour, mood, energy, feeling, even a personal image or landscape. This grounds the experience and functions in a therapeutic fashion. However, this is not something that my research had the opportunity or time to take in and investigate.

on the right side crossing behind the liver as it moves from your front to your back beneath the diaphragm, emerging on the left side before it angles down into your rectum) you can sense the feeling of the digestive tract and observe the many different qualities of movement contained there. The digestive tract is an open organ system that is continuous with the outside, reflecting our intimate relationship with the external world. This quality exhibits the digestive tract's concordance with all levels of our need for nourishment – physical, mental, spiritual and emotional.

How we accept or reject, digest, assimilate, integrate, choose (what is to be retained and what eliminated), and let go in terms of food, are attitudes of the digestive process. Whether we enjoy our food, attack it, play with it, dislike it, or give it very little attention, may all be signs of our underlying attitude towards nourishment and nurturing and ultimately the meaning and value of life itself. (Hartley, 1995: 198)

One can think here of how an actor preparing to play Falstaff might, for an early intimation of his character, concentrate on his corpulent posture and its kindred appreciation of gastronomic excess and belief in the warming qualities of a good 'sherris-sack', in the hope of rousing gestures that might accompany such an attitude.

Liver

The liver is considered by the art of Chinese medicine to be the 'General' of the body, being responsible for a lot of our decision making processes by facilitating the overall balance of our internal constitution. The liver, physiologically, synthesizes, stores and distributes the body's economy of nutrients, filtering the many unwanted waste products out of the body's system. These nutrients are then processed to the rest of the body as when needed, hence its 'General' status.

In our opening focus session on the liver, Catherine explained that the quality and energy of the liver, as it expresses itself in the work of BMC, is one that speaks of independence and freedom. In this the affects that resonate from an access to its 'energy presence' is one of clarity – it helps you as a being to have clear boundaries. Catherine described this as “energy that is into the self ... an energy quality that is not heavy but more of weight, of confidence, authority”. She evoked a sharper appreciation of this particular affection by

talking about it as “the spirit of support, it is not something that pulls you down ... it is about getting things done whereby action is freer and you see them through”. As such, in terms of our relationship with the world about us it speaks of planning and taking responsibility.

Gall bladder

Whilst it is extremely difficult to physically locate the gall bladder by way of touch, my experience of focusing my attention on this organ illustrated the ability to feel an organ’s location through the organ’s unique cellular breath. This sensation is effectively the resonance coming off from the organ as the cells ‘breathe’ fully into their own space in your anatomy. This effect can be clarified if you imagine a deflated balloon being filled with air. Physiologically the gall bladder secretes a host of enzymes particular to the digestive process. This biological action mirrors the gall bladder’s relation to our ability to maintain a steady balance of overall well-being. Being located in the solar plexus, this characteristic is reflected in the way, when focusing cellular awareness in this organ, you can discern feelings of anger, frustration or despair in response to our ability to cope with the ever-changing array of everyday responsibilities. Within the map of the solar plexus the gall bladder is, as Catherine put it, “the moment of choosing”; ‘to have gall’ is to have the nerve to do something. Closely linked to the gall bladder is the **pancreas**, which likewise stimulates the overall maintenance of our bodily health by issuing enzymes into the digestive process, specifically those that break down fat. However, unlike the gall bladder it is more a soft tissue, and hence an expansive, organ existing anatomically as a flat, wide yet thin and long organ, all of which is reflected in the quality of cellular awareness that we receive from it. Catherine introduced the pancreas to us as that part of the solar plexus that is intimately bound up with the process of “taking care of yourself”.

Kidney

As Catherine put it, the kidneys are about “generosity”.

The kidneys are the anchors into our potential, our strength. They announce the fact that you are there, that you are, that you are you. They are about being honest, and honest with yourself, being congruent with yourself. They are about respecting your limitations and taking your strengths with you. Also there is

sometimes a very strong feeling of frustration attached, that you can't quite get out On top of the kidneys rests the adrenals, the drive to get out – motivation, drive, addiction, but without the kidneys there's no support ... you can easily go into overdrive, become run down, empty (yeh? You know 'pouf! (she lets her whole upper body and head sag) ha ha!). There is this drive and the fear of stopping because you know you are empty and you fear the collapse.

Lungs

In relation to Chinese medicine the lungs are seen as the channels into the body of *prana* or *ch'i*, that is a major part of our vital energy. In this way these organs operate as a linkage between our inner and outer environment. The motion of breathing also pertains to our ability to think and meditate; thus breathing is often held as a natural pathway between a conscious and an unconscious state. On the plane of emotions the lungs express sadness and grief, the silver lining to such evocation is a sympathy for others as well as a belief in some new hope. These attached notions are derived from the general states of inspiration and exhalation: when we exhale we let go, we experience a loss in releasing life to death until we inspire again and renew ourselves with the oxygen required to sustain life. The exhalation also serves as a way of connecting ourselves to nature, we give back molecules, carbon dioxide, in a chain of viroid life bonding us to the plant kingdom – hence the sentiment of sympathy. In summary: each breath represents the cycle of life; each inspiration is a pause, a “space in which potential is manifest” (Hartley, 1995: 202).

At the beginning of the middle weekend, some two months on from our last meeting and after reacquainting ourselves with each other in movement [dance and contact improvization] we came together in the centre of the room and share a quiet moment of reflection and of 'being-where-we-are-now' – reflecting upon our lives in the past two months, how we felt that morning coming from our different tempos of life and how we had felt in meeting each other just then:

Catherine: Is there anything we'd like to share? (Pause)

“It's nice to find some lightness”

“I feel a bit foggy from all the driving [She had driven down from the north of Manchester that morning to be in Bristol, a good four hours driving time before we started at 10: 30]; but I am beginning to feel quite quiet inside, and contained”

Catherine: How did you feel meeting people in movement?

“I found it quite hard ... the transition into opening out. I feel as if the work with the organs has stayed with me, but ... it felt that I needed to be in that heart protector”

Catherine: [Paraphrasing the main intent of Catherine’s following words which are in effect answering the feelings just expressed and linking them more generally into the overall experience of BMC by way of direct relationship to this and the last weekend’s work]. **Right, having done some work on the organs, that quality of being in a specific organ remains with us, however faint. In relation to the organ we are working with today, that of the lungs, there is a relationship that links back to the quality of the kidneys [which we experienced last time]. The energy of the lungs translates into feelings via the kidneys.**

“I have been thinking about the expansion into the organs, it gives me greater clarity, but when I interact with someone else, part of me wants to withdraw ... to be more authentic to how I am”

“I find it just about possible to work with two intensities, say like being in the heart and in the kidney”

Catherine: The strength of oneself, of authenticity to oneself is stronger than this weekend, and it is important to know that strength, to know ‘Ah, that’s me’ – the body supports you, and supports you in being open to relationships. So we are going to experience our lungs!

[Now basic anatomical details are clarified: the left lung is smaller than the right, having only two lobes compared to the right’s three. This we experienced by handling and examining the lungs of a pig. Herein we felt that the organ was non-

contracting (ie not muscular), that its physical quality was ‘sponge-like’ and soft, and yet with a strong, slimy membrane by which it was possible to discern the lobe compartments. In the body we are told that the lungs are protected by fluid, the pleuras, and that we can feel the lungs directly – place your two main index fingers above your shoulder bone on your front torso and breathe in deeply – thus demonstrating that the lungs extend from your diaphragm right up to shoulders. We were also informed that it is the diaphragm that controls most of our breathing (around 60%) and is thus responsible for initiating the movement of the lungs].

Catherine: Their job is to take in information from the air – taking in new sensations from the outside ... and to have the courage to take this in ... we often have the choice to take in information.

Thus the group paired off and worked through the methods outlined above. Once the partner receiving the contact had focused their energy in the lungs and had found sufficient impetus there to move them into dance, the roles were reversed. For a while all of us were moving in the space of the room to the energy levels and directions that we found within us. This movement opened up spaces and led to encounters between us that met primarily in terms of rhythm. This dynamic was enhanced as Catherine added music to the scene – in this case “Guantanamera” as performed by Pete Seeger. The dance and quality of the movement was generally light yet with an undercurrent of potential, a vertiginous force. A couple of the group moved very slowly. They kept very much within their own body space even though they moved slowly about the dimensions of the room. One of the group had nested themselves alongside one of the side walls and was clearly overcome by some private emotional feelings. I had begun to feel as if I was open to all around me, moving initially in what felt like free and tensionless gestures, dancing in sweeping moves, using my arms to arch my body around – swirl-like I suppose – and very much on the balls of my feet. However, this openness, when explored, began to feel overpowering, and the grace I felt moving through the balance of being on the balls of my feet seemed to lose its continuity and the movement began to feel increasingly agitated within. [This sensation was later experienced on my final weekend course, which worked specifically through the three planes of movement. This time it occurred when in the midst of allowing the focus of my movement to exist solely on the vertical plane. During this experience I once again had a heightened awareness of all that was around – it felt like I was being bombarded by all the potential sensations that my body could lay me open to. I was presented with an image of a vibrant kaleidoscope of fizzy colours. As I moved via the energy of this

sensational force, the objects and the structural details of the room were seemingly announcing themselves to me in the weight of their 'bound-up' energy. The overpowering feeling was much stronger this time, and as the movement became much more vigorous I felt that I had to make the conscious decision to stop – there was a strong fear that I was going to be overwhelmed, and that the nausea that was sweeping through me was going to cause me to blackout]. During the dance initiated via the lungs, my partner, being a Shiatsu practitioner, picked up on my agitation as we vocalized what we were feeling. Thus they attempted to anchor my disorientation by holding/ touching the contact points of the elbows and joints of the thumb that are linked to the lungs in the anatomical map of Chinese medicine. Steering the vigour and flow of the energy I was feeling, out and through these points and with my partner, it felt as if calmness returned and more importantly a sense of control. This was facilitated further by Catherine asking us to add a little of the digestive tract to the movement so as to experience the effect that that had on our movement. When combining both, the movement began to feel somehow more purposeful. It was slower, or at least it felt it, therefore if the movement was still at the same speed, it felt fuller and with more presence. Having brought the dance to a close we gathered once again in the middle of the room.

“It felt wonderful, twinkling, as if I could go higher and higher – where’s the ground, ha ha!”

“The quality of the body felt like I imagine being a parachute would, and yet also with the digestive tract it felt akin to a hot air balloon, where the lungs are the canopy and there is this need for some grounding in the form of the basket”

C: Yes, I like that. You do need the anchor of the digestive tract, your basket. It enables you to say ‘fine I’m safe, I can say no’

“I had a sense of completion when we were in both ... it made me feel quite tall ... aware of the spine ... there to support me, a lengthening ... as if my structure was softer and yet very supportive, so it felt as if I could empty my lungs without the collapse, I could deflate them that much”

“Yes, its sounds like the buoyancy”

“I felt the support, the sense of interchange, an aliveness in the membrane, in the alveoli, a certain kind of tone ... and also having the support with my liver, from the diaphragm”

C: There is an expansion, a breathing from your back, there is the support of the kidney and it is as if you are massaging your kidneys

“I also felt, in the midst of my twinkling (*laughs*) that the lungs gave me the space ... to feel my tiredness ... I needed the earth so much, down in the ground, yet also knowing the vastness of space, the potential to swim with the air”

“I was sensing my own need to protect and be quiet – after all that I’ve recently done; a lot of it has been in public, my work”

C: I’m sure everyone will have a different sensation due to a different relation with the digestive system at the moment, and a different relation with the lungs at the moment ... both are to do with interchange, with heaven – knowledge – and earth – nurturing.

* * *

Heart

On the last Sunday of our three-weekend course, Catherine began the workshop in the usual manner and we sat together in a circle in the middle of the room sharing the silence, our thoughts and each other’s presence.

Catherine: If I can ask the right question I have done half the job, if not more than that, for the power of the body does not lie in answers. By now we have all experienced the body as different layers – emotional, physical, spiritual and mental, all of which are ongoing. It’s like a loop, if I touch the physical it can touch all the others; it might be the others that move. If you can think of them all it helps it to be total. So in a way we are talking about being in the different systems. If I touch one, all give you weight. If I touch you or see you, meet you I can ask your emotional and mental level; so you

be there with your feelings in the act of giving weight [this refers to one person having contact with the other in a similar way to that achieved in Method II, and in the way you meet someone in movement through their comportment and stance towards you] **and I'm looking for the whole person to be connected not just one part. In the harmony of the many different systems of the body, the organs and the fluid system speak of the emotional body, the nervous system speaks of the mental body, the muscular system presents the physical body and finally the spiritual body is in the endocrine system. So when you open up the pathway of movement** [through the expression of the digestive system, etc] **you can manifest your emotional or spiritual self within that.**

“I've found the sense of anatomical clarity really helps, to have this anatomical clarity and feel it ... it gives a sense of presence – a here and now (*she points to her torso, pushing her hand into her stomach a couple of times as a gesture to indicate this feeling*) – it opens up a distinct space for the emotions ... which otherwise seemed to be confused, not knowing where they are or are coming from”

“It's never once and for all – ‘Oh I've got that now, I'll stick that in my pocket’. Its very changeable.” [This participant had had several previous experiences of working with BMC and had combined the insights with his own work as a ‘Contact Improvization’ instructor]

“This rich textual of planes – a celebration of diversity in the many ways in which we can access them, all the different levels”

Catherine: To meet other people's energies is very important – that can change me – it's almost as if you've made a third thing – a meeting place. It can remind you of what you've got in your pockets!

“I feel as if I've been knowing a bit more about myself. The intensity – that it's huge basically. I've felt enriched by that, in quite a humble way; but then who's an expert?!”

Catherine: Yes, as a dancer I was interested in integrating the mental with the emotional and physical. It is difficult to really embody and feel the experience for dance. Through the work of BMC I realized what was inside me and what was out there, and how to integrate this with my work, that I need not have very strong boundaries. My dancing and movement had more colour. It was more vivid. I was starting to ask could I do that, get that sense of colour, it is quite controlled, you could feel by it – so these different qualities of self: ‘Oh, now I need to be more ... now I need the ...’. There is a whole repertoire of colours and the organs help us to get in there.

“There are so many places in the body where that is located, that colour or quality. It is as if you can turn the tap on! There is this spiritual aspect, something almost within the organ, the divine architect, the creator, the structure – as if there is an exquisite hand behind it”

“It’s like a miracle; it’s all inside; the structure – I am amazed at what is happening”

Catherine: Yes, so this has been about the development of perception of the organs, of the body.

“And we experience it from the intensity of probing the organs – is it?” (*Many in the group nod, murmur agreement*)

Catherine: Yes. And also you then realize that where your intensity is is where you are. It is the presence of mind, but this isn’t Shaman like for the presence is in the body. Sometimes the mind gets in the way. There are doubts, dislocated from experience, like a sentry guard, this figure from the past telling you that what you are feeling isn’t true; it comes back in when you are not looking.

“What do you mean when you speak of the mind?”

Catherine: I call the mind ‘liveness’, where you feel authentic to experience; where you are at. It is that connection between you and the present moment.

Of course it means different things for different people. There is a way it can function as a ‘ghost’ saying ‘Just don’t be silly’ – taking you away from the present; yet I can feel it. At that moment my mind goes out of my body, thus part of my vital energy is then out there.

SECTION THREE

3.5 Legitimizing the vitality of this research

Let me legitimate the academic currency in utilizing the art of this somatic body practice through situating it within the apparatuses of subjectivation (so as not to get caught in the extreme of either biological determinism – that the body in sensing is all – or social constructivism – that the apparatuses by which we make sense are foremost). These apparatuses produce paths, the criss-crossing of which becomes the basis for modes and processes of subjectivation. Guattari identifies three distinct types. First, one of *power*: the circumscription of human groupings from the outside, “either through direct coercion of, and panoptic grip on, bodies, or through imaginary capture of minds” (1995: 19). So, here I want to suggest that working with the body explicitly within the academic task of producing knowledge, makes for a disruption of the embedded processes of subjectivation. For example, think of the codification of the visual sense as the dominant sense of perception:

Why is ability, as in the conception of an able-bodied capacity to a person, necessarily always premised on a visible categorization? We need to focus research on increasing our awareness of a continuum of abilities rather than on an either/or situation around the capacity of one of our senses (Albright, 1997: 35).

Second, paths of *knowledge* are articulated pragmatically. This is to present a deterritorialized and reterritorialized mode of understanding, one that emphasizes the ways we make sense of the immediate world around us. In particular association with the practice of BMC this is a sense making that is about being in tune with the feelings and energies of the body resonating not only from within but from the proximate relationships to things, spaces and other bodies. This is about knowing what to do in the present moment, sometimes something that is quite

literally about going with the flow of the events surrounding you – going with the feel of the proximate spacings of rhythm, movement, intensity and rest.

Finally, Guattari identifies paths that are of *self-reference*: the development of “processual subjectivity that defines its own co-ordinates and is self-consistent ... but can nevertheless establish transversal relations to mental and social stratifications” (1995: 19). The notion of transversality is significant in the work of Félix Guattari. It is derivative of a psychotherapeutic concept for the ‘group’ describing the way a individual affirms himself/herself through the language and expression pertaining to a particular group thereby constituting a ‘subjective’ unity for the group in terms of the social (see Stivale, 1998: 19-20). Crucially, transversality opposes hierarchical groupings that sanctify and enable one person to speak on behalf of everyone else. So, Deleuze asks (as we do through this third pathway):

What does it mean to speak for oneself rather than for others?

It’s not of course a matter of everyone finding their moment of truth in memoirs or psychoanalysis; it’s not just a matter of speaking in the first person. But of identifying the impersonal and mental forces you confront and fight as soon as you try to do something, not knowing what you’re trying to do until you begin to fight. Being itself is in this sense political. (1995: 88)

So let me conjecture: the practising of BMC is not about discovering an absolute moment of truth – captivating some essential, natural, brute, biological fact from within your body. Rather it is about speaking for yourself through this vocabulary shared in the group practice of BMC, or indeed, in the vocabulary of the body performing (therapeutically or on stage). It is a personal attempt to work and identify with those impersonal forces that arise in the moment through being a visceral, fleshy and feeling body. It is an identification that is simultaneously transversally associated with the wider organization of society. In the next section I want to illustrate how this can be argued. I will do this by making active these three pathways in talking about BMC, not only as a worthwhile practice in its empirical and practical existence, but also in the way it moves our understanding of the body towards a more general and open mode of representation. This is about unpacking and making instrumental the terms that I have borrowed from Guattari and his

work with Deleuze. This then announces the next problematic encounter with Deleuzian thought.

Problem 4: Transversal pathways

The four crucial terms for my argument not only strike against our geographical imagination as either familiar metaphors or as idiosyncratically obtuse, but will also construct the ladder that enables the theory I want to describe here; the four rungs are: *paths*, *apparatuses*, *subjectivation*, and *territorialization*.

In speaking of paths, and pathways, we are firstly aiming at pushing through the implications of the terms of becoming. Guattari frequently threads his thoughts through the belief that “there is no Being already installed throughout temporality” (1992: 30). He propels the alternative dynamic topography of becoming in the notion of *pathic expression*. The point is to destabilize the notion of space and time existing as separate empty containers: the partnership of time and space is not imposed, and nor does it impose a grid or definition of the world as something already framed. Rather, thinking of paths, one appreciates the spacing of the world. Let’s think about this in terms of residing within a potential to lose a sense of ourselves. Thus we need to follow a path to a ‘coming into existence’. The path isn’t there yet, it has to be made: thus the subject and the pathway become through enunciation onto-genetically.

Secondly, this onto-genetic element spins a net much like a spider’s web, weaving a more durable consistency to the world, producing a netting that loosely frames our actions and channels the actions themselves. Consequently, we as social scientists can apprehend and work with the notion that there are *apparatuses* that strongly influence the production of the social and the sense therein of individual subjectivity. These apparatuses are a complex of activities that offer multiple exchanges between the nexus of individual-group-machine. They in many ways define the conditions of production in relation to meaning and subjectivity. It is vital that our understanding of these

apparatuses moves beyond just equating them with juridical laws, organizational contexts, familial habits and so forth. We need to include in our definitions here many of the following: “human inter-subjective instances manifested by language; ... institutional interactions of different natures; machinic apparatuses (for example, those involving computer technology); incorporeal Universes of reference such as those relative to music and the plastic arts” (Guattari, 1992: 9). However, here I want to focus primarily upon the final apparatus of incorporeal universes of reference.

Thirdly, we must be clear about the term *subjectivation*. The distinction it heralds from the notion of subjectivity is that it requires us to think through the co-management of the production of subjectivity. Subjectivation is the virtual plane of potential subjective positions, wherein the actuality of such positioning is dependent upon the apparatuses in which we find ourselves, and the criss-crossing, polyphonic combination of such influences that produces specific pathways for subjectivity. Subjectivity is then an emphasis upon the founding instance of intentionality (Guattari, 1992: 22); in other words, an emphasis upon that instance when we understand how, and what it takes, to be able to ‘go on’. It should also be clear that intentionality does not therefore reside in a pre-given subject(ivity) but is something that is enacted and brought forth in the actual performing of the task. For example:

A child in the dark, gripped with fear, comforts himself by singing under his breath. He walks and halts to his song. Lost, he takes shelter, or orientates himself with his little song as best he can. The song is like a rough sketch of a calming stabilizing, calm and stable, center in the heart of chaos. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 311)

The subject is not then an “ultimate essence of individuation, as a pure, empty, prereflexive apprehension of the world, a nucleus of sensibility, of expressivity” (ibid). Rather it is a performative mapping of a territory, and one that I want to emphasize is conceived out of our viscerality (on this see Grosz, 1994b).

Finally, it is helpful to recoup these disparate and unfamiliar concepts by appreciating the notion of *territorialization*. Following Deleuze & Guattari, the factor of transformation is defined through its two-fold biological distinction, with the notion of territoriality being a transformation of isolation or separation rather than the other definition, that of a process of mutation (1988: 548n21). A deterritorialization – a geographical metaphor – and yet within it a warmth of intimacy, of suspense, of *subjectivity* that you grab to stay warm, to feel good, to feel sheltered (see Guattari, 1997). The bodies performing the dance, the movement, or the rhythm, are equivalent to a moment-by-moment seriality that presents a sense of subjecthood.

Through these pathways the performing bodies – our bodies, the body of the performer walking across the empty space, and the bodies of the BMC practitioners – produce the enunciation of subjecthood as correlative to the emergence of a logic of non-discursive intensities and the incorporation of vectors of partial subjectivity. This is the logic of an alternative cartography, a cartography that charts the planes of movement through an understanding constructed out of the vocabulary of BMC. In witnessing a performance registered at the level of empty space, this opens up a space – the intimate space between bodies and the spacing through bodies – within which to apprehend the sense that makes us understand what is ‘going on’. This is about witnessing our bodies through our viscerality and understanding empathetically the cartography of affect that a particular move makes.

3.6 Conclusion: geographies of affects and relations

This is a space of choreography; the spacing and choreographic presentation of immediate context. It is a landscaping of moves and relations that “can withstand the impact of ‘text’ ... and not be reduced to an illustrative frame” (Pardo, 1998: 20); that is not reduced to landscape. Rhythm, movements, feelings, affects, emotions, entering into conjunctions, conquering *their own plane*, and becoming “autonomous from dramatic action, impulses, and situations, and independent of characters and landscapes” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 319). An independence of character which offers the potential for you to be there outside the cultural

ascription of your body, thus no longer as disabled, as weak, as muscular, as tall, as white, as male, as handsome, as always-already defined. It is about making an apprehension of that outside. It is about being aware, of listening to the alternative non-discursive logic of making sense through your body. Close your eyes and feel the air, the environment, the other bodies, on your skin. Let knowledge breathe, feel and desire openly.

What writer has not dreamt of freeing himself from meaning in order to compose music? What is the point in writing if one hears nothing? (Serres, 1995a: 126)

The desire is to suggest a new way of becoming, one that is driven through with the blood of the body, made tangible by the excitations of touch, apprehended in the dynamic balance of movement and made actual in the affection of interrelational intimacy. We can now shift the boundaries of the apprehensions we are making in the witnessing of the performance held within the stage of the empty space and move beyond the initial register of the body into the realm of immateriality, that which the body delivers us to.

CHAPTER FOUR

The materiality and immateriality of objects, or craftsmen and apprentices

Before the Law stands a doorkeeper. To this doorkeeper there comes a man from the country and prays for admittance to the Law. But the doorkeeper says that he cannot grant admittance at the moment. The man thinks it over and then asks if he will be allowed in later. "It is possible", says the doorkeeper, "but not at the moment." [...] The doorkeeper gives him a stool and lets him sit down at one side of the door. There he sits for days and years [...] The man, who has furnished himself with many things for his journey, sacrifices all he has, however valuable, to bribe the doorkeeper. The doorkeeper accepts everything, but always with the remark: "I am only taking it to keep you from thinking you have omitted anything" [...]

Now he [the man] has not very long to live. [...] The doorkeeper has to bend low towards him, for the difference in height between them has altered much to the man's disadvantage: "What do you want to know now?" asks the doorkeeper; "you are insatiable." "Everyone strives to reach the law", says the man, "so how does it happen that for all these many years no one but myself has ever begged for admittance?" The doorkeeper recognizes that the man has reached his end. [...] "No one else could ever be admitted here, since this gate was made only for you. I am now going to shut it." (Kafka, 1996: 3-4)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to chart reconfigurations of the object through a theoretical space left in the wake of the dissolution of the subject/object divide. An attempt is made to write the object at degree zero as it exists in the syntactical space of performance, and to show how, within the space of their own scene, both the material object and the object of affection perform an opening into an immaterial realm. The aim is to present an enunciation that suspends the habitual ways in which we encounter time and space in order to sketch out, initially through the notion of falling in love, some potential openings apprehended and made apparent within the affective economies carried forward from the last chapter. Through the work of Walter Benjamin and Gilles Deleuze in particular I want to show that this speculative endeavour is not new, just (and this is a very unfortunate just) little appreciated within the confines of academia. I conclude by placing these thoughts back in the empty space of performance by illustrating how a particular theatrical performance, and therefore the latent potential of performance art in general, has the power to put us in direct contact with that which cannot be grasped, the immaterial.

4.2 The object in general: Italy 1924 – an erotic event: dissolving the categorical distinctions which separate body, city and text¹

We live today in the age of partial objects, bricks that have been shattered to bits, and leftovers. We no longer believe in the myth of the existence of fragments that, like the pieces of an antique statue, are merely waiting for the last one to be turned up, so that they may all be glued back together to create a unity that is precisely the same as the original unity. We no longer believe in a primordial totality that once existed, or in a final totality that awaits us at some future date. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1984: 42)

By way of introducing the chapter we begin in Italy with Walter Benjamin, not just any Walter Benjamin, but Walter Benjamin in love: “This street is named Asja Lacis Street” (1997: 45). As Missac comments, Benjamin’s pursuit of Asja Lacis, “who had become his muse while living with another man, leaves one astounded by the

¹ Burgin, (1998: 56).

behaviour of this bashful and obliging suitor” (1995: 5). Here is a man whose thoughts were becoming entrenched in the cultural-theoretical currency of material fragments and whose body was falling in love, becoming captivated in the immaterial. An early textual piece by Benjamin offers illustration of the erotic event that foregrounds, what commentators like Caygill (1998) have termed, Benjamin’s speculative methodology: “eros, love, tends toward none other than the joint death of the lovers” (quoted in Missac, 1995: 5); death the ultimate expression of love’s immateriality. The issue here is the relationship of (or between) materiality and immateriality – a sense of an immaterial Always and Ever-after held within a material, grounded Now. The ground of the Naples essay, an early experiment in Benjamin’s methodology (see Buck-Morss, 1989; Caygill, 1998), and walked through with Asja Lacis, is indicative of an early directive Benjamin had hoped to achieve in his critical writings. In preparatory notes for his *Arcades Project*, Benjamin writes: “What the child (and weakly remembering, the man) finds in the old folds of the mother’s skirt that he held on to – that’s what these pages should contain” (quoted in Hansen, 1987: 185). You cannot describe what the material of the mother’s skirt evokes, this evocation is immaterial and heartfelt. As I hope to work through in this chapter, our impressions of an object have two sides: “Half sheathed in the object, extended in ourselves by another half which we alone can recognize” (Proust; quoted in Deleuze, 1972: 26). What is clear is that the equation of an object and subject is inadequate if we are to emulate the directive Benjamin had hoped to achieve. In his remembrance for Benjamin’s work, Missac portrays this affection for the immaterial in these terms:

The things Benjamin says about the relationship between eros and sexuality in several short texts represents merely a new aspect of the dialectic of the near and the far that played such an important role for him in so many respects. This dialectic explains his interest in Baudelaire’s poem ‘A une passante’ ... which he discussed in one of his last texts: there is always something inaccessible about the woman one wants to love.
(Missac, 1995: 5)

This “always something inaccessible” quality will theoretically link the chapter to Deleuze’s work on Proust’s ‘apprenticeship to signs’; or, on a different level, the

contents of the chapter are united in their pursuit of the status of the object and subject reconsidered in the light of the state of being in love.

Benjamin's writings at this time are on Naples, and, like the majority of the accounts he makes about his particular experiences of urban centres, the city and the experience itself are expressed through the experience of other cities (not least his home city of Berlin). The otherness of such experiences is not registered solely in terms of either spatiality (other places) or temporality (other times) but on other actualities (other virtual space-times): writing the experience of the city is a "negotiation not exhausted by actual past experiences of the city, but also of those experiences which did not ever happen" (Caygill, 1998: 119)². This otherness echoes that "always something inaccessible", a quality that demands an alternative analytical framework than the all too easily assumed dialectical logic of subject and object. The theoretical nuances begun by Benjamin in *Naples* presents the first reconfiguration of this stale analytic that I want to present in this chapter. The critique of Benjamin's work is twofold, firstly the object will be presented as a *dialectical image*; these:

images are not subjective impressions, but objective expressions. The phenomena – buildings, human gestures, spatial arrangements – are 'read' as a language in which a historically transient truth (and the truth of historical transiency) is expressed concretely, and the city's social formation becomes legible within perceived experience. (Buck-Morss, 1989: 27)

Secondly, the object is composed out of the folds of "perceived experience" where, rather than looking for a phenomenological or physiological description of perception, the focus is upon the cultural-historically specific grounding of perception through concrete encounters. The argument here is that Benjamin's writings on these images, especially in this precursive work of *Naples* (in Naples, in 1924), are taken directly from the experience of walking through concrete, material spaces. The image is apprehended directly from the pulsational encounter of the everyday, and in attempting to inscribe this moment in posterity (as theoretical

² [An actuality that is so close to happening, so close in fact – in material concrete experience – that, in metaphorical terms, you could see it happening. That it did not makes it hover in sadness, perhaps regret: 'so sad, I lost my memory'.]

critique) the desire captures, however transiently, an aspect of the immaterial quality of the moment. Thus, we:

sentiently experience a window, a cloud, a tree not in our brains but, rather, in the place where we see it, then we are, in looking at our beloved, too, outside ourselves. But in a torment of tension and ravishment. [...] And no passer-by would guess that it is just here, in what is defective and censurable, that the fleeting darts of adoration nestle. (Benjamin, quoted in Taussig, 1993: 38)

4.3 Walter Benjamin: the viscosity of historical-cultural material

Walter Benjamin's touch upon the object is invested within a wider concern for the past. The intimations that lace his many fragments of writing unravel out of ruminations on loss – on a sense of loss that is felt through change and within memory, a loss felt in the present in preparation for going on in hope. Specifically one senses in Benjamin's descriptions or stories around objects the perception of loss as it emerges in (modernity's) '*Chokerlebnis*': the disorientating indifference exhibited in the technological channellings of experience. As will be presented throughout this chapter, subjectivity is finely woven into these configurations of the object and one recognizes a melancholic subjectification in, as Lash puts it, "the midst of jolting experiences of rapid succession of objects in the wasteland of technological culture" (1999: 313). But my interest is not with the status of the subject as it is caught in a maelstrom of socio-cultural change, an argument that is somewhat hyperbolic in any case, but with the processes of subjectification that, through materiality (people and things), speak of the immaterial. Etched into the encounter with the object is an intimation for the subject, an intimation of Benjamin's spiritual essence and of Deleuze's concept of univocity. This intimation is a space between and beyond the subject and the object, the here and the now. It speaks of hope.

In the case of Benjamin, then: in his famous *Arcades Project* the dream world of the c19th is presented (by itself) as "a mortified world of things, a world of reifications that are cut off from their origins" (Frisby, 1985: 210). The ripping out of things from their normal connections – *Absetzen* – is "a process of unravelling and then recasting in fragments" (Lash, 1999: 325). The fragment is not an

objective quality, it is poetically spun out of an intimation of time, death and memory. These immaterial vectors are the processes that objectify the fragment producing the object not as self-evident thing with an essential quality, but as a moment of affective force. The immaterial aspect of the material thing is the focus here, that is not to say that if this is disregarded you cannot conceive the material object as something whose duration makes it appear to last for all time. However, consider this: is not the immaterial aspect of the material in evidence in qualification of the disused/unused/misplaced/recast commodity; and is not this immaterial agency being evoked in the presence of the object itself³? The space of Benjamin's theoretical argument, this dependence on an immaterial aspect to the object, precariously alludes to an ideal totality for, in Benjamin's own appraisal, the task of *Passagen-Work* was to forage for "the crystal of the total event in the analysis of small, particular moments" (Benjamin; quoted in Buck-Morss, 1989: 74). However, it is not Benjamin's intention to ascribe to a teleological topography of the world, rather, in consistently looking to the forgotten and the rejected Benjamin's narration exhibits signs of a messianic topography:

The elements of the ultimate condition do not manifest themselves as formless progressive tendencies, but are deeply rooted in every present in the form of the most endangered, excoriated, and ridiculed ideas and products of the creative mind. (Benjamin, 1999: 37)

By turning to the cast-off objects of the 'History of Progress' Benjamin effects their redemption, correcting the loss violently acted out upon them by the dominant constructions of experience. The allusion to an ideal totality, or to a sense of the absolute, arises in the theoretical foundation justifying this attention to the ruins of time – what do such objects have to show us? Caygill sites this tension in Benjamin's early textual fragments:

Benjamin's difficulty at this early stage consists in discovering a method by which it would be possible to present the immanent

³ "A relationship to objects which does not emphasize their functional, utilitarian values – that is, their usefulness – but studies and loves them as the scene, the stage of their fate In this circumscribed area, then, it may be surmised how the great physiognomists - and collectors are the physiognomists of the world of objects" (Benjamin, 1992: 62).

absolute without translating it into an ideal totality in the manner of Hegelian speculative philosophy. (1998: 9)

Benjamin's attention to the discarded is worked through by adhering to the belief in, what Caygill has called, a notion of speculative experience. Such experience requires that the transcendental subject is dissolved into the temporal landscape of its objects. So whilst this inevitably draw us towards an expression of an immanent totality of spatio-temporal experience, it also speaks of an experiential complexity that exceeds any opposition of subjective and objective temporality. From this, Caygill notes that the expression of an immanent totality figures in Benjamin's arguments in two distinct ways. The first understands the concept of an immanent totality as something manifest in the proliferating and complex patterns of actual experience (spatio-temporal experience). Whilst the second demonstrates an implicit belief in the complexity of time and space as something that exhibits a dissolution towards a state of totality, towards an ultimate redemptive immanence such that "all the conditions of possible experience [is dissolved] into emanations of the absolute" (see Caygill, 1998: 6). Caygill goes on to argue that, on the whole, Benjamin resists the latter figuration⁴, arguing instead for an immanent totality as speculative thought. The art of the speculative is the willingness to make out what has been excluded because of particular conditions of legibility or a specific set of conditions delineating possible experience. In this vein, an "immanent totality is manifest as a contour, a rhythm or a warp in experience from which it is possible to begin a reading, rather than a moment of spirit which would mark its seal and completion" (Caygill, 1998: 7).

When we encounter an object, do we enact a moment of irreducible observation? Is there a law of objects that exists outside of the thing that confronts us? Is a thing partly objective in that it is in some of its ways of being-there independent of the string of chance actualizations that give it its material realization: is there a general movement of apprehension? Or, is a thing also partly subjective; does it possess apprehension by way of thought – a speaking beyond the register of the sensual encounter as something particular? Illustrating the tendency of Benjamin to side-step the absolute notion of an immanent

⁴ Except, significantly in the notions of voice in *On Language as Such and on the Language of Man*; the notion of *divine violence* in *Critique of Violence*; and the notion of *pure language* referred to in *On the Mimetic Faculty* (see Benjamin, 1997 and 1999).

totality he turns to the concept of an *irr-phenomenon* which removes this part objective, part subjective equation by arguing “a timeless law within a temporal observation”. This argues that the general reveals itself in a particular form: “the point of emanation is actually appropriated by the object” (Simmel; quoted in Buck-Morss, 1989: 72).

The highest thing would be to grasp that everything factual is already theory. The blue of the sky reveals to us the fundamental law of chromatics. One would never search for anything behind the phenomena; they themselves are the theory.
(Goethe; quoted in Buck-Morss, 1989: 72)

The material, whether that be the molecules making up the sky or the contours of an actual object, speaks of the immaterial. In staging this fundamentalist and biological concept of Goethe in the realm of history, Benjamin’s materialist emphasis flanks an all out advocacy of an essentialist and transcendental metaphysics. Yet, his presentations of historical images or descriptive monographs still proffers a theory that shines through without interpretation. Buck-Morss suggests an attractive analogy for this problematic and paradoxical theoretical situation within Benjamin’s conception, that of the crossing of switches:

The method relies on juxtaposing binary pairs of linguistic signs from the language code (here history/nature), and, in the process of applying these signs to material referents, crossing the switches. The critical power of this manoeuvre depends on both the code, wherein meaning arises from binaries of signifier/signifieds independent of the referents, and the referents, the materially existing objects, which do not submit to language signs meekly, but have the semantic strength to set the signs into question. (1989: 60)

This strength for setting the signs into motion is the significant aspect within this conception of the object for the priority it gives to the object itself. Lash terms the effect this conceptualization has on our theoretical thought as ‘object-ism’: a focusing of our intellectual and felt capacities upon the “speech acts of the material objects themselves” (1999: 325). But what are the theoretical foundations Benjamin uses to configure this ‘object-ism’? I want to examine this further for this is not the commonly held understanding of the theoretical equation that is a ‘speech act’ (this

analogy muddies the waters but I want to show that ultimately it is a useful one). It is possible here to turn to *The Task of the Translator* to witness an important extension of Benjamin's basic line of thought:

The concept of life is given its due only if everything that has a history of its own, and is not merely the setting for history, is credited with life. In the final analysis, the range of life must be determined by history rather than by nature, least of all by such tenuous factors as sensation and soul. The philosopher's task consists in comprehending all of natural life through the more encompassing life of history. (1992: 72)

Firstly, this hints at Benjamin's conception of historical materialism, the "basic principle" of which, it is important to emphasize, quoting Benjamin from an early diary entry, "is not progress, but actualization" (see Buck-Morss, 1989: 79). History for Benjamin is not predicated on a social Darwinism – the historical charting of the speech act of the object itself is not considered in terms of its ability to channel, or perfect, social functioning. Crucial to an understanding of Benjamin's take on history, and the way he ascribes thoughts to modernity (and how social theorists might utilize his work to comment on such a term) are the implications in these following words: "humans as a species reached the end of their development tens of thousands of years ago; but humanity as a species is just at its beginning" (Benjamin, quoted in Buck-Morss, 1989: 64). Benjamin's interest in history is humanity's imperfect, chaotic assembling of experience into everyday worlds; here humanity as a species speaks of technologies of experience. Take Benjamin's "definition of 'modernity' as the new in the context of what has always been there" (Benjamin; quoted in Frisby, 1985: 207), in a 'having-never-been-modern' world, this is experience through objects: for example, mechanical reproduction, rhythmic channelling of energy through experiments with electronic sound, the channelling of new spaces through virtual image-scapes, or the many organic compartments we undertake (often within the guise of ritual). My point here is to argue that 'object-ism' is a theoretical focus on a non-linear trajectory of humanity⁵, or in other words, an interest in the obscure technologies (understood in its broadest sense) through which experience of the world is constituted and understood with no necessary outcome perceived. (Such thoughts should chime with the presentation of BMC made

⁵ Beside the point and non-teleological.

in the previous chapter.) This broader currency of humanity, of the cultural-historical, is encapsulated within the material itself; a belief in this is exemplified in Benjamin's most central concept, that of the dialectical image.

4.3.1 The Dialectical Image

The concept of the *dialectical image* “refers to the use of archaic images to identify what is historically new about the ‘nature’ of commodities” (Buck-Morss, 1989: 67). Under this conception a dialectical image does not exist as such, it is only so by way of some critical practice – “the *use* of archaic images”.

An uncomprehended symbolism enslaves us without ceremony
– sometimes, on awakening, we recall a dream. In this way rare
shafts of insight illuminate the ruins of our energies that time
has passed by. (Benjamin, 1999: 6)

The work of Benjamin's later, more famous *Arcades Project*, embodies the same theoretical stance as this extract typical of his earlier essays, but differs in many of its modes of expression. One such difference is in Benjamin's use of image; a shift in use that effects a “small (repugnant) machinery that allows the coincidental, the *discontinuous*, and *materiality* to be incorporated into the very roots of thought” (Foucault, 1981: 61). This shift in use is the practice that produces the dialectical image. What we need to ask is what does this dialectical image speak of in socio-theoretical terms? Firstly, it presents the counterevidence to the idea of a progressive course of history. The image is itself a material re-view of the wreckage of the material destruction acted out in the past. It is, in its affect, a face turned towards the past where, metaphorically, it represents the ‘Angel of History’: “where a chain of events appears to *us*, *he* sees one single catastrophe which relentlessly piles wreckage upon wreckage, and hurls them before his feet” (Benjamin, 1992: 249). The image is analysed as that which has actually taken place and acts in opposition to the mythology of futurist emancipation that writes history as progressive, unreal perfection. Secondly,

What differentiates images from the ‘essences’ of
phenomenology is their historic index. (Heidegger seeks in vain
to rescue history for phenomenology abstractly, through
historicity). These images must be thoroughly marked off from

humanistic categories, such as so-called habitus, style, etc. For the historic index of images doesn't simply say that they belong to a specific time, it says above all that they enter into legibility (*Lesbarkeit*) at a specific time. And indeed this entering into legibility constitutes a specific critical point of the movement inside them. Every present is determined by those images that are synchronic with it: every Now is the Now of a specific recognizability It isn't that the past casts its light on what is present or that what is present casts its light on what is past; rather an image is that in which the Then (*das Gewesene*) and the Now (*der Jetzt*) come together into a constellation like a flash of lightning. In other words, an image is dialectics at standstill ... The image that is read, that is, the image at the Now of recognizability, bears to the highest degree the stamp of that critical, dangerous impetus that lies at the source of all reading. (Benjamin; quoted in Fynsk, 1992: 116)

From this lengthy quote I want to remark upon two distinctive attributes assigned to the notion of the dialectical image. First is the concept of legibility, a concept of relation: the coming together of the Then and Now as a constellation, as a dialectical image. Significantly Benjamin designs this conception as something constituted by a "specific critical point of the movement" inside the dialectical image itself; in other words legibility is independent of any mediation to an intending consciousness. It is possible to see in this independence, despite an assertion away from the 'essences' of phenomenology, a contemplation of the notion of essence. As Lash (1999) observes, Benjamin demonstrated this concern in some of his earlier essays, particularly those on language – for example, *On Language as Such and on the Language of Man*. It is evident that Benjamin is ascribing to an ontological assumption that humans, events and things have a spiritual essence. In opposition to semiotics, Benjamin argues that the essence is communicated *in* language, by which he means in language itself and not merely through language conceived in solely instrumentalist terms. Therefore, for Benjamin the sign in language does not merely refer to a meaning but carries the meaning within it. So, to borrow Lash's words, we apprehend "that this essence as mediator lies in what is left over after language plays its instrumental function" (1999: 321). In pursuing the

direction of Benjamin's thought and influences here, Lash goes on to note the cabbalistic dimension to Benjamin's concept of this spiritual side of language. Through allusions to the cabbala Benjamin portrays the communication of essence in language as the moment when man names a thing. Thus:

The previously hidden essence of a thing, ie the deeply mediated essence of a thing, becomes immediate in the cabbalistic, the magical dimension of language. (Lash, 1999: 322)

Such thoughts are also employed in Benjamin's essay *The Task of the Translator*:

It is plausible that no translation, however good it may be, can have any significance as regards the original. Yet, by virtue of its translatability the original is closely connected with the translation; in fact, this connection is all the closer since it is no longer of importance to the original. *We may call this connection a natural one, or, more specifically, a vital connection.* (1992: 72; my emphasis)

The original, here of course a written text but by extension a work of art, an object, has continued life by way of its translatability. This quality of translatability is the original's vital connection such that "even in narrowly prejudiced thought there was an inkling that life was not limited to organic corporeality" (Benjamin, 1992: 72): there is something more than the material now. So, the concept of legibility – 'true translation' – "does not cover the original; doesn't put the original under the light, but lets pure language, strengthened through its own medium, only more fully reflect onto the original" (Benjamin, 1992: 79).

Second, I want to unpack the concept of relation that underwrites Benjamin's notion of historic index of images: to recall: "the historic index of the images doesn't simply say that they belong to a specific time, it says that above all that they only enter into legibility at a specific time" (Benjamin, 1992: 80). The possibility of relation (that between a translation and its original for instance) is a moment of createdness (*Relationsbegriff*), it defines "the structure of the *opening* of relation" (Fynsk, 1992: 118). Furthermore:

The very notion of a *Relationsbegriff* is clearly proposed in order to differentiate the communication that occurs in the essence of language (where language communicates *itself* and not the some signified content) from any act of signification or

communication effected by an intending consciousness or depending in any way on such a consciousness⁶. (ibid)

The concept of relation is the immediate expression of the thing itself; this is the object's speech act. The particularity of this object formed speech act is perhaps best illustrated in a fragment from Benjamin's earliest commentary. Shortly after completing *The Origins of the German Mourning Play* Benjamin started to write about the space between the divergent manners of two German Romantic novelists, Adalbert Stifter and Gottfried Keller. What interests me here is the revelation of the object in this space between their two styles of writing, it is this space that the object (speech) acts. Benjamin notes how Stifter's writing creates "only on the visual plane" (Benjamin, 1999: 112; see Caygill, 1998: 65); this is then seen to contrast with Keller's writing style which depicts a sense of revelation as something "that must be heard" beyond that which is seen. In Keller's configurations such a revelation is consequently not something fully understood. Benjamin talks of this revelation as the "sensual pleasure of description ... because in it the object gives back the gaze of the viewer, and in every good description the pleasure involves the two gazes which seek and meet each other" (Benjamin, 1927; quoted in Caygill, 1998: 65). Out of this Benjamin conceives of the notion of a community of recognition – the space of the gazes between object and viewer, a space emerging out of a field of recognition – which stands in opposition to the auratic, given that the *auratic* speaks of a space before recognition. And it is this community of recognition that gives to Benjamin one of the vital characteristics delineating the concept of the *epic*, that it describes the intertwining of the limited individual with what is far reaching. This configuration of the object through literary exposition is then transposed as a conceptual tool for an exposition of modernity through the analysis of the cultures of early and high capitalism:

The immanent critique of literary modernism required an analysis of the experience of modernity, just as the latter provided the condition of possibility for the immanent critique (Caygill, 1998: 63).

⁶ Fynsk goes on to clarify this: "A name does not designate a thing external to it (it does so only after it has fallen into the structure of signification, which for Benjamin is the fall itself)" (ibid.). Included as link to the thought from outside, to the limits of thought as conceived in relation to the Fall.

Significantly, it is the concept of a *modern epic* that gives to Benjamin's analysis of modern experience the notion of montage that so defines Benjamin's writings on experience as situated and orientated through the period of c19th to early c20th. In effect this concept configures a way of understanding, and thus conceiving, modern experience. For example:

Marseilles – the yellow-studded maw of a seal with salt water running out between the teeth. When this gullet opens to catch the black and brown proletarian bodies thrown to it by the ship's companies according to their timetables, it exhales a stink of oil, urine, and printer's ink. This comes from the tartar baking hard on the massive jaws: newspaper kiosks, lavatories, and oyster stalls. The harbour people are a bacillus culture, the porters and whores the products of decomposition with a resemblance to human beings. (Benjamin, 1997: 209)

However, Benjamin intimates something more lived than recognition, usurping the community of recognition with Proust's 'convoluted time' of memory (1992: 200). Here Proust is initially cast recounting a life lived through an individual's remembrance of the experience of a life. Yet the *experience* of this, and its configuration through the practice of writing (Proust's idiosyncratic tempo and detail), is not spun out of a condition of remembering but rather out of the actual experience of having forgotten:

When we awake each morning, we hold in our hands, usually weakly and loosely, but a few fringes of the tapestry of lived life, as loomed for us by forgetting. (Benjamin 1992: 198)

As Caygill observes the "infinite is present in this experience" of remembering: "For an experienced event is finite – at any rate, confined to one sphere of experience; a remembered event is infinite, because it is only a key to everything that happened before and after" (Benjamin, 1992: 198). Let me put this differently: the convolution of the time of experience is in the fold of the material and the immaterial, there is something more than the bare now.

4.3.2 The absolute, the mystic, the invisible, the immaterial as univocity; or, “No one else could ever be admitted here, since the gate was made only for you. I am now going to shut it”⁷

What should be there is missing. Quietly, almost painlessly, this discovery takes effect. It afflicts us in a region we cannot identify, as if we had been stricken by the separation long before realizing it. (de Certeau, 1993: 1)

In *The Mystic Fable*, de Certeau’s theoretical encounter with the Christian mysticism of the c16th and c17th, creates, and/or uncovers, a poetical annunciation of perpetual departure within language itself: “What should be there is missing”. The space of this “region we cannot identify” is the figure of desire. It is an expression of the want to be fulfilled, the expression of holding, but for an almost, and an intangible, fleeting moment, the constellation of a Now and Then. Whilst there is a sense of a lack of a One that cannot be found, I do not wish to emphasize this aspect, for in many ways it is less relevant than two other components of this poetical annunciation of perpetual departure. First, in the qualities of mourning, bereavement and melancholia that haunts the mystic discourse, there is a sentiment of nostalgia, but one which does not wish to reflect a celebrated past, an Eden, which you want to return to; nor does it find its topography within the recesses of our memory, of an individual’s memory. Rather, de Certeau understands that these mystic authors bring to the world “statues erected to mark the boundaries of an ‘elsewhere’ that is not remote” (1993: 2). We do not lack this ‘elsewhere’ but we can have no clear expression or representation of its existence; we are immersed in it already. In an allusion of himself as the “man from the country” in Kafka’s *Before the Law*, de Certeau finds himself “near the door” guarded by the doorkeeper who presents the situation of it being possible to enter, “but not at the moment”. Is this a messianic hope that one day soon, some 20 years later perhaps, he will be able to go through the door. Or is it eschatological, the desire to go through the door comes from “elsewhere”, but not in a remote way because it has already happened:

It is a testamentary: a kiss of death. It appears only at the moment when the door closes before the dying man, that is to

⁷ Kafka, 1996: 4: *Before the Law*

say, at the moment when the demand is extinguished, not of itself, but from the lack of vital forces to sustain it. (de Certeau, 1993: 3)

It has happened already because it arises out of the moment of your birth when your name is written down. However, we need to take a step to one side of this argument for it is not my intention, nor was it de Certeau's, to engage in issues of theodicy. The death of the man 'before the Law' speaks of materiality, but the death itself harnesses the forces of immateriality, the line that is Outside of thought⁸.

Just as in Chapter Two, where thought and substance are intertwined such that the gerund of all verbs speaks of an *arche-écriture*; just as theory and practice are evoked in the moment of the performance in Chapter Three where in practising the somatic art of BMC meaning arises by being playful in a childlike ability to be 'open-minded', so here materiality and immateriality are mutually bound. The immateriality is apprehended in that state of it 'being possible to enter but not at the moment' – it is our materiality that allows us to know/sense/apprehend the immaterial, but we never actually hold it, not yet at least. This connection can be discerned in Benjamin's latter, diluted sense of a spiritual absolute pertaining in the material fragment whereupon his conceptualization of the "magic of language was no longer confined to the lofty heights of romanticism and symbolism, but came to inhabit the lowest, basest levels of the material world" (Lash, 1999: 324). So too we have the thematic consistency of the chapter: Eros, the kiss of death, the joint death of the two lovers. The testamentary quality of this moment of death is in evidence in Deleuze's latter work. In 'a Life ...' Deleuze writes of the witness of the dying of a living thing:

No one has related what *a* life is better than Dickens, by taking account of the indefinite article understood as the index of the transcendental. A good-for-nothing, universally scorned rogue is brought in dying, only for those caring for him to show a sort of

⁸ "The thing is, Bichat put forward what's probably the first general modern conceptualization of death, presenting it as violent, plural, and conextensive with life. Instead of taking it, like classical thinkers, as a point, he takes it as a line that we're constantly confronting, and cross in either direction only at the point where it ends. That's what it means to confront the line Outside". (Deleuze, 1995: 111)

ardent devotion and respect, an affection for the slightest sign of life in the dying man. Everyone is anxious to save him that in the depths of his coma even the wretch himself feels something benign passing into him. But as he comes back to life his carers grow cold and all his coarseness and malevolence return.

Between his life and death there is a moment which is now only that of *a* life playing with death. The life of an individual has given way to a life that is impersonal but singular nevertheless, and which releases a pure event freed from the accidents of inner and outer life, freed, in other words, from the subjectivity and objectivity of what happens: *Homo tantum* with which everyone sympathizes and which attains a sort of beatitude.

(Deleuze, 1997: 4)

“Taking account of the indefinite article understood as the index of the transcendental” – is this not the kiss of death, the revelation that appropriates all but that which is your particular gate? That “something benign” that passes into the wretch is common to all, it is *a* life, and it needs no subjectivity nor objectivity to discern what happens. This quality of *a* life that evokes affection from all is the immaterial mist that is immanent in everything; it is Deleuze’s concept of univocity, it is, for example, the condition of falling in love, it is the falling in love itself:

“Imagine a piece of music that expresses love. It is not love for a particular person The quality of love will depend upon its essence and not upon its object.” Although personal, it is not individual; transcendent, it is like the God in us. “When music cries, it is humanity, it is the whole of nature that cries with it. Truly speaking, it does not introduce these feelings in us; it introduces us rather into them, like the passers-by that might be nudged into a dance.” (Deleuze, 1988c: 110)

Why does the performance of a piece of theatre, a piece of live performance, a moment of choreographed dance evoke an empathetic and affectual economy? It is, I argue now, because these are arts that intimate those ‘of-itself’ qualities in life. The danger is that this is romantic and idealistic, in that it speaks of there being an essential, universal and even transcendent, metaphysicality in the world. In turning

to Deleuze in more detail, again starting with the object and the state of being in love, I intend to show that this is not so.

4.4 Gilles Deleuze: the sensation of attachment

4.4.1 Lines of apprenticeship

The analysis of the object is carried out in the style of an apprentice. The task is to encounter the object not in relation to the past (its past, our past, the past) but to the future journey that is our apprenticeship. Deleuze instructs us in his own absorption into the ‘Search’ that is Proust’s *A la Recherche du temps perdu: Proust and Signs* (1972):

The Search is given a rhythm not simply by the contributions or sediments of memory, but by a series of discontinuous disappointments, and also by the means employed to overcome them within each series. (Deleuze, 1972: 26)

There is no linear progression to our apprenticeship; it is a journey of setbacks, regressions and disappointments. It is a journey where nothing is certain at the start; there is no Logos to this world, no departure points inherently validated in their capacity to imitate, already, the goal (Deleuze, 1972: 97). The chapter turns to Deleuze to assist in learning a capacity to misapprehend the dialectical concept that seemingly pervades use of Benjamin’s dialectical image. The ‘Search’ is this line of apprenticeship, and the first rule is: beware the law already known before its application, before actualization, “this is the dialectical trick by which we discover only what we have already given ourselves by which we derive from things only what we have already put there” (Deleuze, 1972: 94). Like the man before the Law, don’t forget for one moment that you are always aiming to go through the door, but also don’t not realize that this might never actually be possible. An adequate starting point to this apprenticeship is “to be sensitive to signs”, “to attribute to the object the signs it bears” (Deleuze, 1972: 26).

Problem 5: The symptomology of signs

We have an habitual tendency to turn to the object in order to seek a decipherment of the signs it emits – our passion, our intelligence, our perception and our self-worth, actively encourages this way of slipping into an encounter (ibid).

Deleuze calls this inclination *objectivism*. The impression between ‘subject’ and ‘object’, the betweenness of an encounter, is “half sheathed in the object, extended in ourself by another half which we alone can recognize” (Proust; quoted in Deleuze, 1972: 26). This is *a* sign, it half designates an object, the other half signifies something different; one half is the material actual, a sensational designation, the other is that something beyond the Now, the immaterial. The former is the objective side, “the side of pleasure, of immediate delight and of practice” (Deleuze, 1972: 26). This objective half of the sign speaks of recognition, through it we recognize things but do not know them. The performative space of this part of the encounter is the site of pleasure, the site of immediate delight – immediate in the sense of seeing the object, of recognizing the object, of identifying who/what is designated (a lover, a friend, an apple, a revolver). The object is not touched, smelled, tasted; it is not known. This side is the “splendor of the sign” to which our expressions of the object can be nothing more than our homage to it.

Initially in our apprenticeship we concentrate on this half, “missing the finest encounters ... the imperatives that emanate from them” (Deleuze, 1972: 26). This sight is the sighting of a first love:

I told myself that this was indeed the woman whom the name Duchesse de Guermantes *designated* for everyone; the inconceivable life this name *signified* was actually contained by this body. (Proust; quoted in Deleuze, 1972: 27)

The objective side sees this love as unique and in this uniqueness it is cast as mysterious. The sign the loved one emits belongs to that person and only they truly understand and possess it. The apprentice must move from seeing this mysterious world as something to discover: disappointment in the quest to uncover its mysteries teaches us that the world *is* mysterious and no amount of homage to the object will “restore to the beloved what one believes belongs to it” (Deleuze, 1972: 27). Thus the “hero of the Search” does not know at the start of his apprenticeship:

“that the truth has no need to be spoken in order to be manifest, and that it can be attained perhaps more certainly without waiting for words and without even taking them into account, in a thousand external signs, even in certain invisible phenomena, analogous in the world of characters to what atmospheric changes are in the world of physical nature”.

(Proust) (quoting from Deleuze, 1972: 28)

But the young lover must not despair in the tasks of the apprenticeship, for love itself is hinting at the other side: “the sign is an encounter rather than an act of recognition, and it can only be felt or sensed: signs act directly on the nervous system” (Marks, 1998: 38). The state of disappointment draws the apprentice, through experience, into the art of signifying something different; drawing them to a fleeting appreciation of the anti-Logos of the world:

The following experience will be familiar: if one is in love, or just intensely preoccupied with another, his portrait will appear in almost every book. Moreover, he appears as protagonist and antagonist And from this it follows that the faculty of imagination is the gift of interpolating into the infinitely small, of inventing, for every intensity, an extensiveness to contain its new, compressed fullness. (Benjamin, 1997: 75)

This is the irrational hue of the lover’s world; a portrait that exemplifies the anti-Logos. And yet, in the infinitely small one is drawn out into the larger world, hoping to take from this moment of intensity some meaning. In other words, the lover is attempting to find recourse in the extensive exterior of the world, to find empathy in his or her predicament. According to Deleuze, these intense moments are sensuous signs that set up the potential of failure, they actualize our disappointment by inviting us to seek meaning in the object that bears them. However, the compressed fullness is there in the moment, not before nor ever-after: *It is possible but not at the moment. No one else could ever be admitted here.* The disappointment is the abandonment of interpretation. (Deleuze, 1972: 31).

Disappointment is a fundamental moment of the search or of apprenticeship: in each realm of signs, we are disappointed

when the object does not give us the secret we were expecting.

(Deleuze, 1972: 33)

And thus with all objects the subject intervenes: “*for the disappointment of the object, he attempts to find a subjective compensation*” (ibid). The sign is more profound than the object emitting it, but it is still grounded in the object. And in similar tension, the sign’s meaning is more profound than the subject interpreting it, but it is half incarnated in a series of subjective associations. But what is there except the object and the subject?

Problem 6: The essence of the phrase of the sign

In Proust’s *A la Recherche du temps perdu*, the hero goes to the theatre to hear Berma’s talent in her performance of Phedre, but what he experiences is neither Berma (her talent in isolation) nor the character Phedre. “Phedre is a *role*, and Berma unites herself with this role; not in the sense in which the role would still be an object or something subjective; on the contrary, it is a world, a spiritual milieu populated by essences” (Deleuze, 1972: 36). Deleuze proposes the essence as the alternative to the object and subject. It is, however, “only on the level of art that the essences are revealed” (1972: 37).

Again, we should be cautious with this advocacy of essence. Firstly, Deleuze is not proposing some essential, transcendental quality that will have existed and always will exist. In direct continuation to the previous quote, Deleuze writes, “But *once* they are manifested in the work of art, they react upon all other realms; we learn that they were already incarnated” (ibid.). The incarnation has to happen, it has to be actualized *once*; in other words it takes place in the material concrete world. Secondly, we are asked to consider why it is that the essence exists only in art? Why are the signs of art different? Deleuze suggests that it is their immateriality that gives them their superiority. This argument leads up to what is one of the central theoretical pronouncements of *Proust and Signs*, all of which is contained in this following phrase from *A la Recherche du temps perdu*.

As if the performers not so much played the little phrase as executed the rites necessary for it to appear. (quoted in Deleuze, 1972: 39)

The ‘little phrase’ is that of a piece of music (Vinteuil’s). As Deleuze points out it can be “decomposed materially: five notes very close together, two of which recur”; likewise the notes, themselves material, are “merely the ‘sonorous appearance’ of an entirely spiritual entity” (1972: 39). But the ‘it’ that appears is immaterial. It is immaterial because you cannot uncover the sign’s meaning in something else – the something else always pertains to matter, and as such the meaning conceived is refractory to this sense of spirit, of immateriality. The signs of art provide the unity of the immaterial sign and its spiritual meaning; this is Deleuze’s interpretation of Proust’s ‘essence’.

This definition makes it clear that he is not talking of a universal claim for essences, there is no such thing as an essence for all things. As Marks observes, Deleuze “compares Proust’s essences to Leibniz’s monads”, the shared assertion of different viewpoints expressing difference in such a way as to undermine “the privileged value normally associated with conversation, communication and friendship” (1998: 20). The monad, or the essence, “has neither doors nor windows: the viewpoint being the difference itself, viewpoints toward a world supposedly the same are as different as the most remote worlds” (Deleuze, 1972: 42). There is no link – you are unique, this is unique, that is its essence. There is no such thing as intersubjectivity because there can be no communication. There is only the ‘in-between-space’ where there is no you or me, or subject and object, but only the encounter, the situation. Take into consideration friendship: friendship is not thrown aside, rather it is reconfigured in relation to the emission of signs. As Marks writes, “we all know that we ‘click’ with some individuals and not with others”, we are charmed through our sensitivity to the signs of friendship functioning “at a level of perception which occurs prior to signification” (1998: 38).

⁹ In other words, “What is an essence, as revealed in the work of art? It is a difference, the absolute and ultimate Difference. Difference is what constitutes being, what makes us conceive being”. (Deleuze, 1972: 41)

Prior to signification because there is no shared map of meaning with which to communicate, it just happens and it feels right, it is a happy or a sad encounter.

It is easy to comply with a gross misconception of this argument, and this error works on two accounts. One understands the Leibnizian world of monads as a relativistic world. This is a world of absolute non-communication, one that is chartered by individuals of irreconcilable difference. Deleuze's argument does begin with the notion of an individual subject expressing an absolutely different world, a world which "so expressed does not exist outside the subject expressing it" (1972: 42). But, Deleuze continues, "what we call the external world *is only the disappointing projection, the standardizing limit of all these worlds expressed*" (ibid; my emphasis). In extrapolation towards the concept of the essence, the essence:

does not exist outside the subject expressing it, but it is expressed as the essence not of the subject but of Being or of the region of Being which is revealed to the subject. (Deleuze, 1972: 43)

The subject does not come before the essence but the concept of essence is implicated in the subject. The subject does not therefore constitute the world for it is the essence that constitutes the individual by a process of individualization, by a process of subjectivity actualized in the essence's implication with the subject. In this way the individual matters – the theatrical space is Chekov's *The Cherry Orchard*: the cherry trees are chopped down, how do you deal with that loss? How do you deal with loss? The world is never the same again. Individuals matter.

At first the piano alone complained, like a bird abandoned in its countryside; the violin heard, replied from a neighbouring tree. It was like the beginning of the world, as if there had been, as yet, only the two of them on Earth, or rather in this world closed to all the rest, constructed by the logic of a creator in such a way that only the two of them would ever exist: this sonata. (Proust; quoted in Deleuze, 1972: 44)

Only the two of them would ever exist, eros: the death of two lovers, the material and the immaterial.

4.5 Conclusions: The dialectical moment/image/object – Arcadia

As a conclusion, I want to pull all the threads of the chapter together through a theatrical example that serves to illustrate how, in the location of performance, a space emerges within which it is possible to site the presence of the immaterial. This arises out of the ability of performance to put in the same space characters that do not share the same timeframe. So in the extract that follows, from Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia*, note that Valentine, Hannah and Gus do not interact with Septimus and Thomasina because they do share the same time in history:

(The drawing room, Sidley Park)

SEPTIMUS: This is not science. This is story-telling.

THOMASINA: Is it a waltz now?

SEPTIMUS: No.

[...]

THOMASINA: Yes, we must hurry if we are going to dance.

VALENTINE: And everything is mixing in the same way, all the time, irreversibly

SEPTIMUS: Oh, we have time, I think

VALENTINE: ...till there is no time left. That's what time means.

SEPTIMUS: When we have found all the meanings and lost all the mysteries, we will be alone, on an empty shore.

THOMASINA: Then we will dance. Is this the waltz?

SEPTIMUS: It will serve.

(HANNAH goes to sit at the table, playing truant from the party. She pours herself more wine. The table contains the geometrical solids, the computer, decanter, glasses, tea mug, Hannah's research books, Septimus's books, the two portfolios, Thomasina's candlestick, the oil lamp, the dahlia, the Sunday papers ... GUS appears in the doorway. It takes a moment to realize that he is not Lord Augustus; perhaps not until HANNAH sees him.)

SEPTIMUS: Take your essay, I have given it an alpha in blind faith. Be careful with the flame.

THOMASINA: I will wait for you to come.

SEPTIMUS: I cannot.

THOMASINA: You may.

SEPTIMUS: I may not.

THOMASINA: You must.

SEPTIMUS: I will not.

(She puts the candlestick and the essay on the table.)

THOMASINA: Then I will not go. Once more, for my birthday.

(SEPTIMUS and THOMASINA start to waltz together.)

GUS comes forward, startling HANNAH.)

HANNAH: Oh! – you made me jump.

(GUS looks resplendent. He is carrying an old and somewhat tattered stiff-backed folio fastened with a tape tied in a bow. He comes to HANNAH and thrusts this present at her.)

Oh ...

(She lays the folio down on the table and starts to open it. It consists of only two boards hinged, containing Thomasina's drawing.)

'Septimus with Platus'. *(To GUS)* I was looking for that. Thank you.

(GUS nods several times. Then, rather awkwardly, he bows to her. A Regency bow, an invitation to dance.)

Oh, dear, I don't really ...

(After a moment's hesitation, she gets up and they hold each other, keeping a decorous distance between them, and start to dance, rather awkwardly.)

SEPTIMUS and THOMASINA continue to dance, fluently, to the piano.)

END

We are in the midst of a theatrical illustration of Stoppard's characteristic style of 'double vision' where the action of the play is filtered through two different framing devices: two different perspectives, or different levels of thought, are presented in one moment. There can be many different perspectives (this is an example of Deleuze's Leibnizian world) but, even in theatre's aesthetic and structural polyvocality, this complexity requires skilful handling when dealing with just two: the temporal division where Septimus and Thomasina are in 1809, whereas Valentine, Hannah, and Gus are in the present. Hannah, an historian, is one of several academics who have descended on Sidley Park in the hope of finding archival evidence to support a current historical thesis. Specifically, she is looking for proof of the 'Sidley Hermit' as he is to be the "peg for the nervous breakdown of the Romantic Imagination. I'm doing landscape and literature 1750 to 1834" (Hannah in *Arcadia*, Stoppard, 1993). There is evidence that the 'Sidley Hermit' existed – fragments of material, letters, shooting records, estate bookkeepings – but nothing definite. Immateriality takes its place, not only in the present of the historian's task, but in the situation of the past for at around the same time as the hermit Sidley Park was damaged in a fire which is about to be caused, in the time of the theatre performance, by Thomasina, the candle and the dance.

The object Gus brings to Hannah is a drawing by Thomasina of Septimus, it is theatrically a presentation of her state of falling in love (with Septimus). She draws Septimus with his tortoise 'Plato', the same tortoise Hannah finds in the historical fragments alluding to the existence of the hermit. It is clear then to the audience that the hermit is Septimus, an existence brought on in his distress after Thomasina's tragic death in the fire that is about to happen/or has happened. This drawing is, in these terms, a dialectical image of that 'always something inaccessible' quality that is the immaterial, both in its creation through the state of falling in love and through its historic importance in the present. A material object possessing two

immaterial resonances. This revelation, not actual for the character's but virtual and apparent to us the audience, is like being nudged into a dance - a movement that connects both the Then and the Now, a movement beyond the here and now of materiality.

In this scene, and in the scene of the chapter, the space of performance evokes three openings into the immaterial. The first opening is the achievement of the dissolution of the object/subject and material/immaterial divide, a blurring of the boundaries of orientation such that the body, the material and the force of utterance fold into a moment of immateriality. This has been portrayed throughout the chapter in the example of falling in love where it can be argued (Ideally) that both space and time are folded such that Here and Now feels like an Always and Everafter: the poignancy of Septimus's dance with the soon fated Thomasina - 'we will have time to dance/until there is no time left'. Only having established a topography for this almost vertiginous state of immateriality can an encounter with performance move back from the immaterial to the material towards an appreciation of the scene of the object itself. This movement is that of the second opening: a speculative apprehension of the material world no less grounded than the fact that the material world is incorporated into the very roots of thought. Materiality is necessarily shown to be folded with the practice of thinking. This is the performance of thought as it encounters the object - in other words, it is the act of the dialectical image, the image that Thomasina's drawing gives Hannah; a dance to the music of time. This is both the gap within which sensing switches to sense making (this doesn't just occur on one plane of thought it happens simultaneously). Performances are therefore full of profane illuminations, the point is they need to be folded into our academic stories - 'This is not science'. Finally, there is an opening onto a sense of opening itself; the opening that is the power of the sign. This is a symptomology that is clinical in the way it indicates that which is not apparent; the fact that what is there is missing - the characters on the stage of *Arcadia* who cannot interact; a mystic fable; an elsewhere that acts directly on the senses but cannot be recognised for correspondence. This is disappointing: we will only ever have a partial apprehension of the immaterial, that is its nature.

All of us carry invisible dreams around us; The dance
begins. Our hands slide off one another; our glances meet,
laden, emptying themselves out and smiling from the ultimate

heaven. Our bodies make careful contact; we do not arouse each other from our dreams We have bound everything in gay colours, masks, alternately withholding and promising naked flesh. In everything there is something monstrous that we have to keep quiet about. But we hurl ourselves into the rhythms of the violins When was time ever overcome? Who knows who we will meet at this hour. Otherwise (were there an “otherwise”) we would be just here, but already complete The music transports our thoughts; our eyes reflect our friends around us, how they all move, surrounded by the flowing night. We are truly in a house without windows, a ballroom without world. Flights of stairs lead up and down, marble. Here time is captured. It sometimes resists, moves its weary breath in us, and makes us restless We know that all the merciless realities that have been expelled still flutter round this house. The poets with their bitter smiles, the saints and the policemen, and the waiting cars. From time to time, music penetrates to the outside world and submerges them. (Benjamin, 1999: 16-17)

Following this music to the outside world, the next chapter sets the scene to make the argument that, despite the disappointment, academics need to become better witnesses of the immateriality of the world.

CHAPTER FIVE

Events: witnessing the inhuman

The bright fields look dazed.
Their expression is changed.
They have been somewhere awful
And come back without him.

The trustful cattle, with frost on their backs,
Waiting for hay, waiting for warmth,
Stand in a new emptiness.

(Ted Hughes, *The Day He Died*, 1995: 190)

“**Event(s)**, 64, 65, 132, 171, 176; and accident, 53-54; communication of, 174, 185, 214; **communicating the univocity of being to language**, 248; compatibility of, 177-78; conjunction of, 183; **death as**, 156; difference from things and states of affairs in Carroll, 9-11; **distributed in two series constituting metaphysical surface**, 241; double structure of, 151-52; effects in, 5, 210; castration of, 351n3; Epicurean notion of, 344n4; eternal truth of, 161; **as the expressed of proposition**, 184, 186; and experience, 170-71; Freudian theory of, 226; heterogeneous series of, 70; ideational/incorporeal, 8; **infinitely divisible**, 8, 113, 114; lack of present in, 63-64; and language, 3, 181-185; logic of, 111; and metaphysical surface, 221-22; modality of, 33-34; movement and, 276-77; nature of, 94,95; Oedipus and, 212; phantasm, 213-214; **in proposition**, 12, 34; problematic as mode of, 54, 56; realization of, 87, 104; relation of, 33, 171; representations of 245; **sense as**, 22, 107, 167, 176, 180, 211; series of, 37, 38, 148-153, 226; signifier as, 37-38; **singularities as**, 53, 56; singularity of, 152-53; in Stoic ethics, 143, 144, 146; surface-, 167; symbolic relation with state of affairs, 240; **and thought**, 220-21; **unique**, 178; *see also* **Actualization of event**; Communication of event; **Pure event.**”

(Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 1990a: 376-77; my emphasis)

5.1 Introduction: The wooden horse of representation

There's a profound link between signs, events, life, and vitalism: the power of non-organic life that can be found in a line that's drawn, a line of writing, a line of music. It's organisms that die, not life. Any work of art points a way through life, finds a way through the cracks. (Deleuze, 1995: 143)

The performance in the empty space is an art that points a way through the cracks of our organic organization of life, a way through the organization – representational (systems of signification and validation), social (Capitalization) and biological (survival)¹ – that keeps that 'always something inaccessible' away from view. This is the limit of representation but not representation's limit; the latter is the space where representation leads us into an encounter with that which is always inevitably somewhat inaccessible. It is the space where we apprehend that inaccessible quality but for a fleeting moment and through a personal register, which means that after the experience we find it difficult to testify and be its witness – the organization of representation lets us down. And yet there is the hope that in such felt capture we are not alone, that it can be made to make sense for other people, that there is a line of non-organic life that can be drawn. If representation at its present limits misses the reality that we seek to capture through it, maybe art, and performance in particular, "stands as both the medium of this failure and the agency for the hope of its restitution. In the moments of representational crash performance opens meaning and sends the spectator elsewhere" (Heathfield, 2000: 21). This said, I have been struck by how this human geography, that which looks to the condition of what I think can be appropriately described as the 'living through of life', escapes due emphasis. The efforts made² to map the emotions, passions, responses, perturbations and forbearance that come with the encounters and events that life brings are

¹ I don't want to be misunderstood here: by each of these I mean the way their importance overrides at a social level the personal level. For example, instances of this personal level include: the inability to put into words a personal felt reality (representation); the need for personal space and time away from the orchestration of Capitalism and the 'rat' race mentality (social); and finally the needs of the individual to feel a sense of belonging aside from the obvious hand to mouth requirements (biological). Of course this is a caricature because performatively we utilize the social level to invent such spaces for personal investment – Capitalism quickly colonizes this though!

² See for example, Tuan 1977, and in particular Chapter 10, Seamon, 1979, and Buttimer and Seamon, 1980.

underacted and underprized. You only need to think of what has been achieved in the arts – the lilt of music, the brilliance of paint and form, the lyrics of novels, or the light fantastic of dance – to appreciate that there is a world of feeling to be extracted. This is not to say that practising geography should be a cathartic experience; more that these seemingly ephemeral, intimate moments should be given the right place in the geographer's consideration. There is an urgency here: Cassandra like – thin in number but powerful in voice – Nigel Thrift urges geography to stop looking at things in the usual way and to focus instead on giving the right place to description (1998). And he provides a legend for this alternative mapping:

The difficulty – I might say – is not that of finding a solution but rather of recognising as the solution something that looks as if it were only a preliminary to it ... This is connected, I believe, with wrongly expecting an explanation, where as the solution of the difficulty is description, if we give it the right place in our considerations. (Wittgenstein, quoted from Thrift, 1998: 221)

In many ways, and in several places, this thesis is all about responding to this call. The stance of this chapter is the argument that the geographer's art should have the *range* of description to encompass the 'dazed look' of the fields, and that 'new emptiness' of the world experienced and expressed by Ted Hughes and so many others. This task is begun by moving aside from our 'habits of thinking' (Deleuze, 1994). One of the reasons that geographers have avoided the field of the human condition, as described above, comes with the accepted practice of rendering the individual as a knowing subject of rational occurrences and rational choices of which emotions can take no part. Additionally, the assumptions contained within this practice are accompanied and performed by a host of methodological technologies: for example, focus groups, interviews, questionnaires and, potentially more deviant, the ethnography of participant observation. These technologies are ill-equipped, or misused in the name of convention (a hidden agenda that ratifies what an empirical study can be), to deal with the world of individual emotions. Thus the task of researching human feelings, the immaterial registers discussed in the previous chapter, are deemed too subjective and hence unverifiable and unscientific. But I want to argue that there is an alternative space upon which to focus and lay out the importance of these immaterial feelings, and

that is the space of the event. So the task of thinking otherwise can be presented with more definition: to become better witnesses, better ‘describers’, of the spaces events bring into relief – spaces such as that ‘new emptiness’ which the poet suggested hangs ‘affectively’ over life. But I have to make a further claim: that as well as description we need experimentation and this brings us back to geography as an art or as a discipline that can offer so much to the question of the human condition by way of the arts. Experimentation is needed in part because we do not yet have the experience, as a discipline, of the skills capable of accomplishing the finer details of description that are more attuned to these event spacings, and partly because such description in itself requires the courage of experimentation. It is a question of style rather than of competence:

In each case style is needed – the writer’s syntax, the musician’s modes and rhythms, the painter’s lines and colours – to raise lived perceptions to the percept and lived affections to the affect. (Deleuze, 1994: 170)

It is a question of looking at things in an unusual way: to look instead at the spaces between individuals; to seek responses beyond the lived perceptions or affections; and to make our perspectives vibrate in order to rend the percept from perceptions and the affect from affections (see Deleuze & Guattari, 1994: 176). So, this chapter charts the move from an interview that asks about the lived perceptions of the knowing subject in a specific place – ‘What do you feel about your body when you sit down for a meal?’ – to a method that aims *in media res* and towards a documentation of the percepts that shape the events spacing the particularities of a place – ‘Can you tell me about a room and something that happened there?’

Affects and percepts are thus the generic and immanent elements constitutive of a life ‘life’ is constructed on an *immanent plane of consistency* that knows only relations between affects and percepts, and whose composition, through the creation of blocks of sensations, takes place in the indefinite and virtual time of the pure event (Aeon). (Smith, 1998: xxxv)

The aim is to turn to the notion of the event to show that the difference between geography as a social science or as an art collapses when the validation of what counts as knowledge is rethought. In particular, I have my sights on the representational understandings that have predominated geographical imaginations – those views that restrict knowledge by attaching its validation to either an essentialism that ignores the post-structural developments in c20th philosophical thought, or to an empiricism that does not question its own foundations. In the rest of the chapter I begin by working out of these two attachments in order to reveal a space in which to think anew alternative geographical imaginations worthy of witnessing the event. Subsequently, in the space cleared by this opening discussion, the chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section I seek to show how the concept of the event has haunted many of the c20th continental philosophers, and how, for our purpose now, this haunting involvement reveals an ethical argument and injunction for the inclusion of ways of witnessing the ‘inhuman’ into our research practices. Next I situate the space of another piece of research shaping the directions of this thesis and the particular concerns of the thoughts delivered to us by an encounter with the event itself. This research took the shape of observing the processes involved in the creation of a space of performance. This is the art of devised theatre (see Oddey, 1998; Etchells, 1999, 2000; and Ghoulish, 2000). This involved four days observation work of a two-week residential workshop by a newly formed live art performance group *Uninvited Guests* – Paul Clarke, director; Jessica Hoffman & Ben Slater, actors; Thomas Keller, computer programmer; Liam Fahey & Jessica Marlowe, sound. The residential was a part of the process of devising a live art digital performance entitled *Guest House*: “a tour of an ‘impossible building’ composed of rooms gathered from elsewhere; a fragile place where stories are continually told, traced and rubbed out” (Paul Clarke, 1999). Their own research for, and subsequently content of, the piece comes from recorded interviews conducted with members of the public where they simply started by saying: ‘I’m going to ask you to describe a room and something that happened there’. I present the observation through the fold of my empirical, first person notes and the interventions of theory that make sense of the capture of these observations, observations that are ostensibly about witnessing the inhuman, non-organic line of life. In this light, the final section pursues the concept of the event to bring consistency to the experimentation on show, an endeavour that attempts

to reveal how working with Deleuze's philosophy produces a conceptual space for evaluation.

5.1.1 The problem of the transcendent set-up; an essentialism

Thanks to an arrangement which is like the symbol of all perception, each one feels himself to be the centre of the theatre. (Proust, quoted in Bennington, 1988: 12)

One of the main consequences of this predominance of representational understanding is that there is a totalization of thought in the very artifice through which we present that which we are attempting to understand. In his earlier work Jean-Francois Lyotard used the term of a theatrical set-up or *dispositif* to act as a motif for much of his critique of this representational system of Western philosophy. The theatrical metaphor portrays his view that the representational system operated like the theatrical machinery that lies hidden from the spectator off-stage:

For the sign is, as Pierce said, something which replaces something else for someone. Hide-show: theatricality. (Lyotard, *Des Dispositifs Pulsionnels*, 1979: 95; quoted in Bennington, 1988: 14)

That someone includes us – the social scientists, the researchers and the writers. In some way we are all false witnesses to what is there³. So, even though the philosophical drive moves against the apparently sterile set-up of totalising representations, the presentation of ideas is trapped within the structure it is trying to critique. In my opinion, this sterility is only apparent. Significantly this appearance is valid from both sides: from the side of representational theory because of the belief in the representational structure as being able to give an account of everything; and from the side of non-representational theory because of the danger of getting carried away with an absolute critique of representations. The

³ For example, Lyotard uses the example of the historian who “is supposed to undo all the machinery and machination, and restore what was excluded, having knocked down the walls of the theatre. And yet it is obvious that the historian is himself no more than another director” (Lyotard, *Des Dispositifs Pulsionnels*, 1979: 180; quoted in Bennington, 1988: 10).

apparent sterility comes from this last point, that in getting carried away with critique you fail to appreciate that the building blocks of representation are not sterile in themselves; it is only when they are used as part of a system. In other words, not all theatre is 'realist'; and hence the research of this chapter into the performance art of devised theatre. The representational system, its structure and regulation of meaning, is not complete – it needs constant maintenance, loyalty and faith by those who practice it. In this regard, its power is in its pragmatic functions: easy communication of ideas (that restrict their potential extension), and sustainable, defensible and consensual agreement on understanding (a certain kind of understanding, and hence a certain type of knowledge). The non-representational argument comes into its own when it sets out to suggest that we, as academic thinkers and researchers, are lazy if we don't revisit the performative space of representation in a manner that is more attuned to its fragile constitution. For me the project of non-representational theory is to excavate the empty space between the lines of representational meaning. The representational system is not wrong. Rather, it is the belief that it offers complete understanding – and that *only it* offers any sensible understanding at all – that is critically flawed.

As there are evident gaps in the representation of our understandings, there are also many uncharted, or perhaps forgotten, cartographies for orientating our appreciation of the world in which we find ourselves (links can be made here to the cartography of BMC made in Chapter Three). Modestly, we should not forget that the task of the researcher, the academic, and the philosopher is one that only arrives at a partial apprehension of the 'eventhood' of the world. Assessing this task therefore lies less in the 'truth' that comes with a belief in absolute knowledge, and more in the spirit in which we focus upon the gaps of knowledge hidden behind representation's claim to have covered all possible eruditions. As Deleuze puts it, *there is*:

A theatre of multiplicities opposed in every respect to the theatre of representation, which leaves intact neither the identity of the thing represented, nor the author, nor spectator, nor character, nor representation which, through the vicissitudes of the play, can become the object of production of knowledge or final recognition. Instead, a theatre of problems and always open questions which draws spectator, setting and characters into the

real movement of an apprenticeship of the entire unconscious,
the final elements of which remain the problems themselves.
(1994: 192)

In other words, this is about the researcher's task to invent concepts that have the potential for making coherent grasps of the world's theatre of multiplicities and that have the power to deal with these open questions. (As I mentioned in the introduction, this task is something that I think is overlooked in human geography). As researchers the task is not to be found wanting in relation to the open questions that this unconscious movement of the world asks of us. Rather it is about attempting to be worthy "of what happens to us" (Deleuze, 1990a: 149) – a clear indication in Deleuze's work of not separating theory from practice.

In turning to the potentialities of the invented conceptual sphere of the event, this chapter therefore asks the question, 'How do we figure this task in relation to the use of performance research as an academic space of investigation?' It is important to keep in mind that whilst we are seeking to investigate those empty spaces of meaning that exist as gaps in the representational system, we will still not reach a point of absolute knowledge: there is no Origin to go back to, and there will always be more than we can tell. However, in place of this Origin I want to argue that there is some other space for thought in which things cohere: that space of univocity evoked in the last chapter. Univocity hangs over this spacing of the event as if the event were like a mist, like the silence of nature, those sounds of the 'unworded world' and the unsaid⁴. Following Michel Serres' lyrical wording of sound, we are dealing with three levels of thought: in Chapter Three I noted the level that emerges as the non-linguistic voice of the body; whilst in Chapter Four I intimated the immaterial, un-signifiable and silent vibrations of the world; whilst, entertained in Chapter Two, there is this 'garbage noise' of that always-already signification common to the human collective (the mob) (Serres, 1995b: 91-92). The argument of this chapter is that this third level, that of the theatre of representation and its crowd of signification, dulls our sense to what I am will end up showing is the 'pure Event'. As Assad writes, paraphrasing Serres "the tourist collective surrounds itself with its all-invasive language, as if the latter were a safe

⁴ These thoughts echo those of Michel Serres (see Assad, 1999: 77).

ship keeping the unknown and illogical world at bay behind its protective hull” (1999: 77). The task of inventing concepts is in this case clear: to become better witnesses of the event.

5.1.2 The problem of empiricism

In the earlier chapters I have covered the ground of the body, or substance, or flesh and viscerality, and the way it produces, just as the convex produces the concave, the concept of the sensible, the concept of affection, and the concept of intensity (of movement). Taken alone, and in conjunction with signification, this seemingly presents a way of thinking a human geography based on the principle that the intelligible comes from the sensible, that “everything in the understanding comes from the senses” (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987: 54). This principle is often understood as empiricism. We know how to read and understand this philosophy. We know that *in principle* we can comprehend that it makes sense, that it is an acceptable and workable starting point. The question remains then, ‘How to act upon this principle in principle?’ In other words, *in theory it makes sense, but in practice what does it mean to do research in this way?* Investigating this philosophically, the belief that the intelligible comes from the sensible is no more than an abstract first principle from which one poses all future investigations. For example, ‘Where and how does the sensible come into existence?’ – ‘From Being?’ or ‘From an intentional embodied Ego?’ or ‘From the brute reality of the forces (of perception – light, sound, etc) that are the Sensible?’ At what point and how does sensing become a moment of having made sense? This is not however the point of empiricism for Deleuze, for:

It is not the question ‘Does the intelligible come from the sensible?’ but a quite different question, that of relations.

Relations are external to their terms. (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987: 55)

Deleuze illustrates this variation with the example that ‘Peter is smaller than Paul’ arguing that this relation of size (‘smallness’) is not predicated on the innate essence of either Peter or Paul but is rather in the middle and exists as such. In arguing for relations that are external to their terms, Deleuze is arguing against a totalizing image of the world where understandings of relations or individuals are all based upon a first abstract principle that transcends the actuality of life – for example, that the intelligible ‘comes’ from the sensible (see Deleuze, 1991). Recast

in Deleuze's empiricism the emphasis is not that the intelligible, or indeed the sensible, comes first, but that it is the 'comes' as such that matters: it is the spacing of connection, the place between sensing and making sense, that is important. If relations are internal to their terms (where terms can be understood as the sensed that is encountered), two problems arise: firstly, the relation will inhere in the term, for example Paul or Peter, and can not therefore be distinguished from the term. Secondly, if there is to be a change in relation then there will have to be a change in the term. This set-up neutralizes difference:

In that the relation must always remain identified with, and therefore reducible to, its term(s); any alteration on the part of one is met with an equal alteration on the part of the other, such that a thing's essences and its properties maintain the equilibrium of a constant identity or generalized equilibrium.

(Hayden, 1995: 286)

Thus, to take Deleuze's empiricism forward into human geography we need to focus on relations by thinking space in-between things. We need to look more purposefully at the conditions, transformations, and distributions of relations *actualized* within the social world⁵. To understand what is at stake, consider the 'corporeal geography of consumption' suggested by Gill Valentine. She argues that bodily practices are 'inflected by wider sociospatial *relations*' (1999: 329; my emphasis). The argument that she makes begins from the principle that the body is a tactile space that is "always sensing and actively engaging with itself (the inside) and the world (the outside)" (1999: 331). The equilibrium is already set, and thus Valentine is able to argue (to already interpret) that "our understandings of our bodies and attempts to manage them are therefore predicated not only on visual information – what we look like – but also on sensual information about how we feel inside, about the relationship between the inside and the outside – about our spatiality" (ibid). She then goes on to outline a conventional set of qualitative techniques through which to practice an empiricism that validates the tenets of

⁵ For an example of these actualizations think of the way an encounter is negotiated through action (the gestural movement of rejection as detailed in Chapter Three, or in the way a dog might turn its nose away at your hand if you don't let it smell it first); or through the way we categorize things and enable them to be traced through time translating what it is they actually do, and therefore are, in the time of their occurrence.

such a spatiality. From this she uses the empirical ‘findings’ to construct conclusions (I quote here to set out the tangent at which the research of this chapter will cut across these conventional traditions of doing geography):

An individual may experience multifaceted, overlapping, and fluid understandings of how they should be producing and regulating the space of their body ... For example, Jackie, a lone parent living with her son and working as a child minder, wants to produce her body in a disciplined – what she considers men will perceive to be sexually attractive – way, yet at the same time her body is also inflected by the stress of her domestic life, her son’s preference for ‘junk’ foods, and the pleasures and comforts she takes from eating when she is at home alone.

(Valentine, 1999: 348-49)

The question is ‘What if she had instead practised the empiricism of Deleuze, the geography of relations not the geography of reason (see Deleuze & Parnet, 1987: 56; Hayden, 1995: 284)? The first response is that the emphasis would be clinical in approach in that it is about writing a world partly as an “attempt to make life something more than personal, to free life from what imprisons it” (Deleuze, 1995: 143). Second, what if the empirical evidence had been interpreted from the point of view of external relations? Deleuze’s argues that, “it is not enough to create a logic of relations, to recognize the rights of the judgement of relation as an autonomous sphere, distinct from judgements of existence and attribution” (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987: 56-7). So whilst we can agree with Valentine’s argument of multifaceted experience, we need to question the ground upon which the relationship between the body of Jackie and the bodies of the ‘Man’, whom Jackie apparently believes to have an innate evaluation of her body, is founded. As it stands the interpretation is justified through an autonomous sphere separate from actual experience because no investigation is made here of the attributions (attribute = sexually attractive body) as they are played out. This is not to say that Valentine’s research is wrong, nor that Jackie’s personal narrative and appreciation of her situation should be ignored, but that there are equally valid ways of looking at the same problem; or, more significantly, of creating the problem in the first place. The question is ‘How do we witness the playing out of attributions, the

actualization of life as it happens in all its complexity?’ This is not a task that can be fully accomplished; it is more an alternative research ethos that touches upon the small intricacies of life. In the philosophy of Deleuze we find a set of instructions:

Substitute the AND for IS: A *and* B. The AND is not even a specific relation or conjunction, it is that which subtends all relations, the path of all relations, which makes relations shoot outside their terms and outside the set of their terms, and outside everything which could be determined as Being, One, or Whole ... Thinking *with* AND, instead of thinking IS, instead of thinking *for* IS: empiricism has never had another secret. Try it, it is a quite extraordinary thought, and yet it is life. (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987: 57; my underline)

Crucially then, thinking in this alternative fashion between things in themselves disrupts the justification for conventional qualitative techniques. This in-betweenness, the place of interrogation in this chapter, is the space of the event; or rather I want to argue that this in-betweenness can be apprehended if we think in terms of events rather than foremost in terms of individual people. It is also, as I hope to show, the reason that Deleuze writes, “I have always felt that I am an empiricist, that is, a pluralist” (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987: vii).

SECTION ONE

5.2 Beyond limits of thought

It happens by means of answers and questions. It is not argued.
(Lyotard, 1997: 117)

In his essay *The General Line* Jean-François Lyotard, quoting from the Nina Berberova’s novel *The Revolt*, writes that everyone has their own ‘no-man’s-land’, a domain that is theirs and theirs alone, a domain that consists of living in “intervals unchecked” (1997: 115). Three aspects of this ‘no-man’s-land’ resonate here. First, humanity is only human if people are allowed to have this ‘no-man’s-land’ (ibid 116). Second, this ‘no-man’s-land’ is not a secret despite its “secret existence” because it is not a question of you not saying what you know about it as “you don’t know what should be said” (ibid). Third:

These moments “are crucial to demarcating any sort of ‘general line’”. The ‘general line’ is not the line of life in general, of life “such as it is”. The second existence is nonetheless sweet in relation to “the life everyone sees”. It suspends it a little, it dwells within it from time to time and sweeps it away, but without one knowing anything about it. The second existence does not really wrong the first; it opens little parentheses within it. (Lyotard, 1997: 117-118; quoting Berberova’s novel)

We don’t know what should be said about these “little parentheses”, but it is to the task of illuminating and being able to witness them that we now turn. It is in fact the reason why thinking through the event is so important, and why eventhood features prominently in the concerns of several philosophers of the c20th. In particular these concerns are naturally drawn towards and refracted through the event of Auschwitz, not least because the attempt to make sense here through recourse to a transcendental realm beyond representation finds our reasoning “‘always already’ defeated by Auschwitz because no pre-existing Idea is adequate to it and any Idea we may cobble together afterwards is going to reek of this original (suppressed) failure” (Buchanan, 2000: 75). Noting the adjudication of juridical law by this representational philosophy, Giorgio Agamben writes of the space left in the wake of Auschwitz that the “law not presume to exhaust the question” (1999: 7). Now, I do not want to be misunderstood when I follow some of the lines through this work. In no way do I want to equate the significance of Auschwitz with events in general, nor am I suggesting any importance in my thesis in citing Auschwitz⁶. Rather it is that I cite the work on Auschwitz in the way it illustrates the philosophical mechanics involved in the concept of the event. In other words, I am concerned here in investigating the remnants of experience and the way they produce a space of testimony for eventhood. And that this is a space that openly questions our ability to make sense of the event and a space that requires us to invent concepts adequate to this enunciation of experience that is beyond the law (of reason).

⁶ Although this might serve to illustrate the potential political and ethical importance involved in thinking through events in themselves.

Whoever assumes the charge of bearing witness in their name knows that he or she must bear witness in the name of the impossibility of bearing witness. But this alters the value of testimony in a definitive way; it makes it necessary to look for meaning in an unexpected area. (Agamben, 1999: 34)

There can be no witness of the event itself; it is impossible to represent. It exists in representation as a wrong exists in the economy of justice. For example, in these terms of justice:

This is what a wrong would be: a damaged accompanied by the loss of means to prove the damage Either you are a victim of a wrong, or you are not. If you are not, you are deceived (or lying) in testifying that you are. If you are, since you can bear witness to a wrong, it is not a wrong [because in bearing witness you are in the process of righting that wrong and achieving justice], or you are deceived (or lying) in testifying that you are a victim of a wrong (Lyotard, 1988: 5).

This does not mean that there is no event. Just because you cannot prove that something happened, or that something is happening, does not mean that it didn't happen, or that it isn't happening. This is the expression of the 'double bind'. As Agamben notes, the impossibility of bearing witness to the event has a double sense in "that it is impossible to bear witness to it from the inside – since no one can bear witness from the inside of death – and from the outside – since the 'outsider' is by definition excluded from the event" (1999: 35). Agamben proceeds to argue that the double sense of witnessing produces a "threshold of indistinction between inside and outside" (1999: 36) that can be evident in the testimony that the witnessing calls into being. Thus:

What makes the power of testimony ... is not the words but the equivocal, puzzling relation between words and voice, the interaction, that is, between words, voice, rhythm, melody, images, writing, and silence. Each testimony speaks to us beyond its words, beyond its melody, like the unique performance of a singing. (Felman and Laub, 1992: 277-78; quoted in Agamben, 1999: 36)

The space of art takes the place of the logical impossibility of expressing through representational systems of meaning the experience of the witness who bears the impossibility of bearing witness. If you consider the body of the witness, and the state of affairs that it is witnessing, then you can make the distinction that, in relation to the timing of the event, bodies and states of affairs exist only in the present. It follows then that it is impossible to provide testimony of the 'present' of the experience. However, there are relations between bodies and states of affairs that exist as effects – much as I mentioned earlier that there are affects, zones of affect, that exist between lived affections. These effects then “are not bodies, but, properly speaking, ‘incorporeal’ entities”; that “are not things or facts, but events” (Deleuze, 1990a: 4-5). Being beyond the present these effects exist as lacunae to the actuality of that present:

This is why what is borne to witness cannot already be language or writing. It can only be something to which no one has borne witness. And this is the sound that arises from the lacuna, the non-language that one speaks when one is alone, the non-language to which language answers... The language of testimony is a language that no longer signifies and that, in not signifying, advances into what is without language, to the point of taking on a different insignificance. (Agamben, 1999: 38-39)

This 'different insignificance' leans towards an alternative logic of sense that requires novel ethical consideration. Questions at the heart of Deleuze's philosophy, the development of concepts exhibited in *Difference & Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*, have a particular value in working upon the ethics needed here.

Between these event-effects and language, or even the possibility of language, there is an essential relation. It is the characteristic of events to be expressed or expressible, uttered or utterable, in propositions which are at least possible. There are many relations inside a proposition. Which is the best suited to surface effects or events? (Deleuze, 1990a: 12)

The answer that Deleuze gives to this question is this alternative 'logic of sense', and he means this literally: the answer is sense, that “mysterious fourth dimension of the proposition” (Buchanan, 2000: 77). Propositions exist alongside the material

world of things, including the human body as it is caught in the present. A proposition is an inquiry as a happening, as a problem, and as a subject of thought. In thinking towards an appreciation of the logic of sense, Deleuze presents the concept of the proposition through four dimensions. Other than sense, the three dimensions are denotation (or indication), manifestation, and signification: denotation is the relation of the proposition to an external state of affairs (the selection of particular images “*which ought to represent the state of affairs*”); manifestation concerns the relation between the proposition and the person who speaks it (“it is the domain of the *personal*”); signification “is a question of the relation of the word to *universal* or *general* concepts, and of syntactic connections to the implication of the concept” (Deleuze, 1990a: 13-14). Sense is thus in many ways what is left unsaid by the other three dimensions, given that the unsaid does not yet make sense. In Deleuze’s terms, sense is the “*expressed of the proposition ...an incorporeal, complex, and irreducible entity, at the surface of things, a pure event which inheres or subsists in the proposition*” (Deleuze, 1990a: 19)⁷. Again sense does not exist as such because we have no means to express it directly. If Agamben has asked us to “look for meaning in an unexpected area” (1999: 34), much as Deleuze urges us to be worthy of the event, I think that we need to pay attention to the space of the event and to the logic of sense that subsists within it. We therefore need to create concepts that extract sense worthy of the event. Seen in this way, the soliciting of the event – its surface effects and its pre-personal non-language – is a question of ethics.

But how might we begin to do this? What we have achieved so far is the realization of the problem that representation brings: an awareness that accepts that some aspects of the world are misrepresented, underrepresented and even inherently non-representational. The problem of representation is thus invented – a formulation of Bergson’s philosophy that is underrated: “The truth is that in philosophy and even elsewhere it is a question of *finding* the problem and consequently of *positing* it, even more than of solving it ... The stating and the

⁷ The question is as follows: is there something, *aliquid*, which merges neither with the proposition or with the terms of the proposition, nor with the object or with the state of affairs which the proposition denotes, neither with the ‘lived’, or representation or the mental activity of the person who expresses herself in the proposition, nor with the concepts or even signified essences?” (Deleuze, 1990a: 19)

solving of the problem are here very close to being equivalent” (1946: 58-59). Such a stance is very close in style to the demand for description to be given the right place in our geographical stance towards understanding the world. Thus in following Bergson’s ‘Method’ and the tenet of Wittgenstein’s thinking we have already begun to extract sense worthy of the event by inventing this problem of representation and by refining the statement of the problem through the descriptions we make possible. In other words, if representation fails to capture aspects of the world, and if it neglects the non-representational aspects, we need to situate the understanding that representation brings alongside the understandings that it denies. In this way we can recognize one of the reasons why Deleuze finds Leibniz’s theory, that each individual is a monad that expresses the world, so instructive: in a given moment of representation, or signification, or performative action, in the unfolding duration of the life of an individual entity, the world is actualized (see Massumi, 1997).

In each world, the individual monads express all the singularities of the world – an infinity – as though in a murmur or a swoon; but each monad envelops or expresses ‘clearly’ a certain number of singularities only, that is, *those in the vicinity of which it is constituted and which link up with its own body*. (Deleuze, 1990a: 111)

It is from this that I can make the central point of the chapter, that:

A world can be viewed from two perspectives: that of the individual which actualizes and incarnates in its body singularities which ‘evolve’ through forms of folding (envelopment, development, etc), and that of the singularities which continue to persist and subsist over and above their particular incarnations and actualizations within an individuated body and self. (Ansell-Pearson, 1999: 87)

In what follows, I want to fold three lines of thinking that underpin this chapter to make both a theoretical and empirical space for the enactment of such inhuman witnessing. The first line presents the space of performance art and the field of performance studies as a worthwhile research intervention into the concrete richness of the actualized world; an intervention that sites the immaterial richness

of meaning in the concrete. The second charts the implications of the call to bear witness to non-representational aspects of the actualized world as suggested in the Deleuzian ethics of transcendental empiricism and counter-actualization. And the third, illustrates the relation of both these lines of thought through the presentation of the research into the practice of performance art. In true fashion to folding, these lines develop contrapunctually so that whilst they are each individually needed to hold together the argument of the chapter they function independently by making separate equally salient points. The weave begins with the third line: witnessing the making of performance art.

SECTION TWO

5.3 The art of Performance Art: Uninvited Guests – ‘Guest House’

Wednesday 27th January 1999

1. An event it itself could be a time of day, a place, a draft,

It is ten thirty in the morning and I am beating my body attempting to bring forward my destination as I make my way along the cobbled riverside walkway within an ‘urgency’ not to be late for the rehearsal. The warehouse building, broadly projecting itself at the end of the wharf, is finally tangible and as I push through the glass doors/I am caught slipping through the glass into the modernist foyer. I am a body becoming the guest, perhaps a consumer, but definitely a spectator and a witness. I am a male body that has just walked into the Arnolfini gallery.

Whitewashed walls, silver trimmings, industrial doors, red carpet and slate floor. Through the glass doors becoming distracted by the early morning hubbub of the arts centre – a couple browsing in the bookstore, an attendant sitting with a chunky red book manning the latest art exhibition (a thought cuts across this attention, that book reminds me of those old hymn books we had at church); then there is the clattering of glasses from the café filled with the cadence of at least three voices in a mixing that is chopping and changing, pulling and distilling attention.

2. The fissure of irrational intervals – subjectivity is unhinged in the unfolding of these singularities.

I’m also distracted because I’m at the point where I have got to gain access without unduly disturbing the process at work. I am not here this time to buy a book, see a film, have my imagination transposed in the spectacle of a performance; I am here to witness an event, to witness the making of an event. A couple of bodies man the desk that

backs into the cashier point of the bookstore (a book here could be a box containing fragments of performances: pieces of paper with printed text; a tape recording; a polythene bag containing follicle exfoliations – well they are tagged as such). I deliberately (speech) act my moment of subjectification revealing information about the work in progress that is being loosely assembled in the Arnolfini's performance space. This time I am an invited witness: thus acceptance.

Walking into a theatre means walking into a different sort of space ... Within the theatre comes a second limit or division, separating the stage from the audience, marking off the place observed and the place from which it is observed ... A third essential limit separates the stage from the wings or the backstage, this space is invisible to the spectator and is the place of everything that might be called the theatrical machinery" (Bennington, 1988: 10-11).

*No longer that any body that walked through the glass doors, I am instructed to go to two large white doors, doors that I have passed through on many occasions, over several years. This is the Rubicon to those experiences that have scarred my body with the 'experientially visceral' traces that reverberate and seemingly house my possession of many live art performances. The space beyond is not an empty space for me: I have been here before. And yet, whilst it is of course a space for time regained and experiences foretold, there is more to it than that. **3. Flows, sequences, chains, series, processes, connections, and distributions: the continual vectors of singularities.** I stand before this entrance, much like a modern variant of those twinned doors whose central parting greets you as you arrive at many of our church buildings, and enter.*

5.3.1 Event arts and the art event

Performance isn't a game but a symbolic machine ... using the most ordinary, everyday resources for the most unheard-of purposes. (Jorge Glusberg; quoted in Kent, 1998)

Live performance is an event art in its immediate capture of attention framed within a specific co-ordination of time and space. Performances of this kind play explicitly upon rendering visible the particular physical, emotional and culturally warped experiences that make up that sense of 'living through life'. In performance terms this visibility takes place in the qualities that make performance of all kinds the most immediately expressive art form (see Albright, 1997). These qualities include movement (the physical presence of rhythm and affect), the mise-en-scene (the architectural spacing of things), textual inscription (of voice, stutterings or silence), and the energy of sound (vibrant, repetitive or nauseating). Through all of these qualities performance art can be seen as a model for another representational

economy, one in which sense is unleashed from overly deterministic moorings. Meaning is given more freedom to move in conjunction with the action of the performance, thus undermining the assurance of the reproduction of that which we do not fully understand (the Other) with that with which we think we do (the Same). In this I believe performance art offers a space in which to think the non-representational; you could even argue that it is the laboratory for non-representational prototypes – the art of *unheard-of* purposes. In particular, it plays off at a tangent many of the more innovative developments within the social sciences and the humanities – for example ANT (Latour, 1988, 1993; Murdoch, 1997; Bingham, 1996), cognitive psychophysiology (Rosch et al, 1991; Varela, 1996, 1999), and embodied accounts of the social (Radley, 1995, 1996) – by directing attention towards the undetermined location that is the immateriality of the world.

As critical theories of cultural reproduction become increasingly dedicated to a consideration of the ‘material conditions’ that influence, if not completely determine, social, racial, sexual, and psychic identities, questions about the immaterial construction of identities – those processes of belief which summon memory, sight, love – fade from the eye/I. (Phelan, 1993: 5)

Taking up this trajectory towards the poetic, spectral and emotional murmur seemingly located between everything, I want to suggest that performance art offers four methodological openings in which to begin to think an alternative geographical practice. First, it is a liminal space, “a space we might call the tension of the present tense” (Phelan, 1999: 224). This is a question of the duration of performance and the fact that it takes place in ‘real’ time. However, the significance here lies in the way this tension asks us to bear witness to an invisibility or inexpressible space; as Bergson puts it, there is here “an incomprehensible reason why phenomena are seen to *succeed* one another instead of being set out all at once” (1960, *Time and Free Will*: 219; quoted in Deleuze, 1988c: 48). In other words, the present has already divided into the past and the future before you have time to grasp it in its own instance and yet performance makes an art out of the fact that you do witness its passing (these aspects are picked up in the next chapter). The importance of bearing witness to this tension of the present tense resonates strongly within Lyotard’s notion of the event as “the face to face with nothingness”

(1991: 17). Thus confronted, performance leads us towards a research sensibility that accepts that “there are many events whose occurrence doesn’t offer any matter to be confronted, many happenings inside of which nothingness remains hidden and imperceptible” (Lyotard, 1991: 18). This first opening is therefore conceived within the task of becoming:

competent in listening to the sound underneath silence or noise,
to become open to ‘It happens that’ rather than to the ‘What
happens’, [which] requires at the very least a high degree of
refinement in the perception of small differences. (ibid)

The distinction between audience as spectator or as witness has increasingly preoccupied the invention of contemporary performance, “since to witness an event is to be present at it in a fundamentally ethical way. To witness is to feel the weight of things and one’s own place in them” (Etchells, 1999: 33). In more concrete terms, and in relation to the actual practice of performance art, it follows that:

As a live structure, perceived in relationship to larger aspects of
culture, the event promised to escape the limitations imposed by
the conventions of the arts as commonly understood, be they
theater, literature, the fine arts, dance, music, architecture, or
whatever. (Foster, 1988: 5)

Second, as its position within the cultural psyche and socio-political developments of the last century testify, it has been seen as an art form of our times⁸ in that it has offered an intense engagement with the fundamentals of social experience – questions of the subject and the world in which the subject is made. In this vein, performance has been aptly described as “a writing of cultural biography in neglected physicality” (Etchells, 1999: 34). Performance achieves this writing by operating “a crucial paradigm of subjectivity as occurring at two places at once: both for the subject itself (the performer or spectacle) and for an external or social agency (the audience)” (Noveck, 1995: 66; see also Schefflin, 1998). This

⁸ For example: “Work which came to be called live or performance art emerged most powerfully in Europe and the United States at moments of artistic or social crisis, when formal aesthetics or social structures were perceived to be inadequate or had actually collapsed” (MacRitchie, 1998: 21; see also Auslander, 1999).

simultaneous siting leads to a continual shift in meaning, a dynamic that etches out a tangible, albeit abstract, presentation of the space between things. In siting this very dynamic as an art it has often been used with the intention of facilitating potential alternative modes of experience, not least in the ways we come to understand experience. Let me clarify this point through an example: take a line of dialogue from a performance. This could as easily be performance without words (eg two bodies touching, a body dancing, a stage being left empty by a departing body) “because speaking in/as performance is rather more a somatic act involving muscular work in the mouth, throat, face, eyes, body tensions, gestuality, than it can be called a linguistic act” (Melrose, 1993: 252). Indeed, in the line of dialogue I want to example, such somatic qualities are vital:

PHÈDRE: I thought his eyes were stone – she found tears in them. (Hughes, *Phèdre*, 1998: 60)

The point is, as a witness to the event of this performance, we become “bound-in” through an empathy that cuts open a new spatialization *between* the particular action of the speaking character and the univocal sense of this emotion of being rejected. In part then, the real power of performance art lies in taking this tension of the present tense and using it as a violent tool to extract from the everyday aspects that have been overlooked. Artists, according to Deleuze in his following of Nietzsche, are clinicians in the way they group the symptoms of civilization through the creation of their works of art as a novel constellation of signs (see Deleuze, 1990a: 237; and Smith, 1998: xvi-xvii). Deleuze therefore sees criticism as the art of declension (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987: 120), which I think we can understand as the variation of the signs, or symptoms, of life according to the case in hand. These cases function in the same fashion as medical cases: the case of Parkinson, or Alzheimer, where the doctor, whose proper name comes to designate the group of symptoms, “has created a new grouping, a new individuation of symptoms, a new haecceity, has broken up regimes which have up to this point been mixed together, has reunited sequences which up to this point were separate” (ibid). The work of art, as a new case or potential grouping of signs, thus also obtains a critical purpose by bringing into view a potential world – an alternative take on what is already there which had hitherto been taken for granted as fixed, or as unseen, and therefore as incurable. In other words:

The use of the event as a 'given' in social and aesthetic communication gave to art a working access to real or functional aspects of culture which it had heretofore only been able to represent. This is not merely the erasing of distinctions between art and life, but the use of the everyday and historical structure of the event, real or imagined, as a vehicle of artistic and/or critical purpose. (Foster, 1988: 5)

Third, performance as an art is a tool for doing research. It is a methodology of evasions in that it escapes from the conventional allegiance to disciplinary fields of conducting and legitimising systems that produce knowledge. In being a witness of a performance the researcher is not merely a spectator, or a passive voyeur, who puts to use tried and tested methodologies and ways of seeing. To be a witness you affect the performance and you are affected by it. The performance affects the researcher's interpretative assumptions bringing us towards an appreciation of the fact that "the present for us is always filled with possibilities, is always processual and unfinished"; it raises us to question "How can we say we are writing what men and women actually experience if we dehumanize them into a past-participled world?" (Denning, 1996: 17). It is for this reason, amongst others no doubt, that:

In the eyes of its adherents, performance studies was able to combine new work in critical theory, literary studies, folklore, anthropology, postcolonial theory, theatre studies, dance theory, and feminist and queer studies while forging a new intercultural epistemology. (Phelan, 1998: 4)

To put it succinctly, performance art can operate within geography as an epistemology that brings into focus the complex traces of the world unmarked by conventional means of representation. This would be an epistemology that proceeds by making an account of the "singular stock of retained images, muscular contractions, feelings", particular to a situation where, as I demonstrated earlier with the example from *Phedre*, the generalization of which comes in the spaces between things; a "work that figures, but does not explain" (Melrose, 1993: 251/253).

Fourthly, performance is an event in itself. In performance it is made explicit that you are not standing back from life, that you cannot be anything other than

completely immersed in it (see Kaye, 2000). Of even more significance however, is the way performance uses the very qualities of life to reach, or present rather than represent, the level of understanding that you seek. To understand performance as an event in itself you need to grasp the fact that, for you (singular and only human), the event is more than just something that happens: it stretches beyond the present moment carrying within it the preconditions for its happening and the potential for future actualities; and it is an entity in its own right. Too often these aspects are overlooked because the event is commonly defined as a watershed in a related series of incidents – you only have to think of the way we work the distinction between everyday events and those that are ‘newsworthy’. To hold to this distinction is to miss the point of my argument. Imagine the conceptual structure of the event in a historical context. Here, events require “a purposeful action or an intentionality (in the acting or in the perceiving of an action) that matters *as a point from which one explains* and that has the capability of identifying what *appear* to be consciously worked out causal chains between reasons and actions” (Foster, 1988: 7). Needless to say, these events are socially constructed because our definitions of what count as historically important frames how we perceive something as an event. I am not looking at the event as something that is prerequisite upon there being a suitable situation for its operation – even in the deliberate framing of performance art. My focus is upon the belief that events just happen. They are about happenings, happenings that have a life of their own. Here, badly conceived questions naturally arise out of social science’s commonly held habits of thinking: ‘But when does an event begin?’ ‘When does some situation have the quality of eventhood?’ Let me illustrate a simple, and an immediate, answer to both these questions: the answer is ‘all the time’. There are two ways to explain this. First, to a degree the event has already begun to happen because consideration is preemptively given to expectation (audience and in general) and to the potential impact of the event. What happens to the account of the action when you consider that many unexpected things take place? The framed sense of eventhood has already denied the essential dynamic of fortuity that creates an event in its spuriously assembling embrace of a whole host of things. So much goes into creating an event, more in fact than we can be naturally aware of. A single viewpoint of an event is woefully inadequate. A single way of conceiving the forces that create events is more deficient still. The second explanation, and this is the philosophical heart of

the chapter, is that events are virtual: they are real but not always evident; they take on many forms, but have a univocal character; and they have an agency that is often ascribed solely to ourselves. Thus, before I return to the Arnolfini I need to explain what it is I am looking for.

SECTION THREE

5.4 Events and the virtual

In order to have an appreciation of an event as something that has a consistency of its own – in other words to make out the event as something that can be intimated as an entity in itself – we need to be aware that we are doing philosophy. If we follow Deleuze, this doing of philosophy is made up of three elements: “*the prehistorical plane it must lay out (immanence), the persona or personae it must invent and bring to life (insistence), and the philosophical concepts it must create (consistency)*” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994: 76-77). So let me attempt this:

Problem 7: Thought worthy of the event

Immanence

The event itself, as a separate entity, is laid out on the prehistorical plane of ‘duration’, where duration is a plane of immanence that has the power to separate itself into different fluxes and/or into single currents according to the nature of attention occurring (see Deleuze, 2000: 50). Duration in this way is not divisible in that it changes in nature in dividing itself. In other words, the event happens and that is it, you can’t subdivide it. This plane of duration is indeed immanent because, in wording that is hugely significant for the doing of Deleuze’s philosophy of difference, Deleuze argues that this differentiation is vital “even if its concept is not itself biological. Life is the process of difference” (2000: 50; my emphasis).

Many philosophers had already said that the whole was neither given nor giveable: they simply concluded from this that the whole was a meaningless notion. Bergson’s conclusion is very different: if the whole is not giveable, it is because it is the Open, and because its nature is to change constantly, or to give rise to something new, in short, to endure. ‘The duration of the universe must therefore be one with the latitude of creation

which can find it in place'. So that each time we find ourselves confronted with a duration, or in a duration, we may conclude that there exists somewhere a whole which is changing, and which is open somewhere. (Deleuze, 1986: 9; quoting Bergson, 1954: 359)

Being differs with itself internally; this is Bergson's concept of *élan vital*, which Michael Hardt instructively describes as linking the "pure essence and the real existence of being" (1993: 14). When Deleuze's philosophy aims at thinking of life it is clearly not just biological life that Deleuze has in view. Furthermore, this philosophy is not anthropomorphic; thus by extrapolation, Deleuzian human geography is not just about the human, nor the organic.

Not all Life is confined to the organic strata: rather, the organism is that which life sets against itself in order to limit itself, and there is a life all the more intense, all the more powerful for being anorganic. There are also nonhuman Becomings of human beings that overspill the anthropomorphic strata in all directions. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 503)

The use of the word vital, and its biological links to the differentiation of the species, is not to be seen as an analogy for use as a philosophical thought; rather it is philosophical thought. This dimension of Deleuze's philosophy is affiliated to his interpretation of the work of Henri Bergson, in particular in the way that it expresses this new vital ontology: an absolutely positive movement of Being. It is because of this that this vitality has implications beyond the biological realm: "No doubt differentiation comes from the resistance life encounters in matter, but it comes first and above all from the internal explosive force that life carries within itself" (Deleuze, 2000: 51). In this sense the vital (*élan vital*), and the event and duration, cannot be figured as a simple determination: "a determination can be accidental, or at least its being can only be attached to a case, end or a chance, it thus implies a subsisting exteriority" (Deleuze, 2000: 50). Thus the process of difference, or life, or the 'internal difference', is indeterminable (Deleuze, 2000: 51).

Insistence

Possibilities of life or modes of existence can be invented only on a plane of immanence that develops the power of conceptual personae. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994: 73)

Having laid out the plane of immanence presented in duration, and having produced an appreciation of the sense of indetermination it is now possible to introduce the persona: the virtual. The virtual is most familiar within Deleuze's work as a consideration of time and I will be turning to this aspect in the next chapter. However, in relation to the event, Deleuze cites it as a kind of repetition: "the repetition of an internal difference which it incorporates in each of its moments, and carries from one distinctive point to another" (Deleuze, 1994: 20). As mentioned above, duration is not divisible in that it changes in nature in dividing itself. The 'what' that changes in nature in duration is the virtual. Or putting it another way, the internal difference of life itself develops in divergent directions and it is through this divergence, or 'disassociations-of-itself', that virtuality comes to realize itself. Following Bergson's thought in reproaching the traditional and antecedent philosophical conceptualizations of Being, Deleuze presents two aspects of being: the virtual and the actual. The unfolding of the virtual in the actual – in other words virtuality realizing itself – is the process of differentiation, or, as Deleuze also refers to it, the process of actualization⁹.

This relationship between the virtual and the actual opposes the machinery of thought produced through the representational belief in the relationship between the possible and the real. Deleuze uses this possible-real habit of representational thinking to make apparent the new directions in thought made viable through the virtual-actual connection by detailing "that the transcendental term of each couple relates positively to the

⁹ In another direction, the virtual is, in the burgeoning number of works on Deleuze, something of a signature concept (much like discourse is in accounts of Foucault's project): note that pages of commentary have been given to the conceptualization of the virtual and the actual: Badiou (2000: 42-52); Buchanan (2000); Hardt (1993: 14-22).

immanent term in the opposite couple” (Hardt, 1993: 17).

Several points then unfold. First, the virtual is to be distinguished from the possible. The possible is not real as it operates as a function of an Ideal such that the real is that which resembles, and not that which is, this ‘possible-Ideal’. In this sense, the possible operates as an abstraction and as a limitation because conceptually it follows that there will always be ‘possibles’ that do not pass into the real. This is not to say that the possible, as a concept, does not have an actual existence; it can be actual in that it can have effects. In opposition to this the virtual, and I quote Deleuze quoting Proust’s formula, is “real without being actual, ideal without being abstract” (1988c: 96).

The virtual is part of the object of thought where “every object is double without it being the case that the two halves resemble one another” (Deleuze, 1994: 204. Therefore the object of thought has both a virtual and an actual side. For Badiou, the object in its entirety is a mere simulacrum. (One of the main disagreements I have with the ‘philosophy-*contra*-Deleuze’ that Badiou presents in *The Clamour of Being*, is that it is he that states that the virtual and actual are combined to both equal a simulacrum of a universal One, not Deleuze). Not being fully actual the object can be played out in an immanent theory of its double; in other words, it is possible to think of a plane of immanence when explicitly thinking through encounters with the concrete, empirical ‘real’. In other words, the encounter actually occurs but only as something achieved (actualized) through a duration (immanent). It is this relationship with duration that intimates the immanent virtuality of all things. The crucial point is that this immanent relation of the object, its transcendental quality if you like, is not located beyond its actuality, rather it is constituted *because of its actuality*. This transcendental quality is, for Deleuze, that which is beyond the human, but this ‘beyond’ does not denote the transcendent because it is still empirical. Deleuze puts this in another way, in terms of the Outside: “something more distant than any external world. But it’s also something closer than any inner world” (1995: 110). This reflects both the clinical power of performance

art mentioned above and the capacity to view the world from two perspectives at once:

It is the peristaltic movements of the outside which serve to destratify fixed and stable identities and produce through doubling processes new possibilities for an intenser and more creative existence. (Ansell-Pearson, 1999: 84)

In many ways Deleuze's philosophical meanderings through Bergson set out the effects of thinking in two planes of thought at once – you have to think in “two dissymmetrical jets, one of which makes all the present pass on, while the other preserves all the past” (Deleuze, 1989: 81) – where the preservation of all the past is the virtual. This is the ‘Open whole’, the transcendental part of transcendental empiricism, and where the present passing on is the realm of the empirical. It is also the ethical-practical motivation, or dream, of Deleuze's philosophy: the encouragement of “the creation of new values and senses in the affirmative constitution of life and human existence” (Hayden, 1998: 6). Thinking in this way is not dialectical because it does not signal a progression of thought towards the realization of a synthesis that is the ‘truth’ or the final solution. Again it is not dialectical in that it is not the mechanism of thought – thesis and antithesis – that makes thought possible. Rather thinking two planes at once is so because you cannot think one plane without the other. This is the ‘mutual image’ of thought that thought gives itself (see Deleuze, 1989: 81).

Virtual being is pure, transcendental being in that it is infinite and simple; actualized being is real being in that it is different, qualified and limited. (Hardt, 1993: 14)

It is here that we can see the importance of the empirical in Deleuze's work and the insistence that it is the empirical, “the concrete richness of the sensible” (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987: 54), that explains the conceptual not the reverse (see Baugh, 1993). The ethical implications here are in the unsettling of the ‘given’, the unsettling of the concepts that representation assumes to be naturally and always *a priori*. This philosophical intervention is the perspective to think differently that Deleuze presents in the

wake of his criticism of representation. It is the new image of thought – or rather it is thought without representational image, the thought from the outside, that Deleuze calls transcendental empiricism. Liberating thought from the representational economy in this way allows the conceptualization of experience to be set free from the reductionism that centres all meaning in the interiority of the self-constituting subject: “The fault of representation lies in not going beyond the form of identity, in relation to both the object seen and the seeing subject” (Deleuze, 1994: 68). Only when you allow thought to go beyond representation is the empirical made a central feature of the theoretical; in moving away from the unnecessary divide of empiricism and theory “the empirical *is* the ‘transcendental’ condition of *both* actual experience and concepts” (Hayden, 1998: 7; my emphasis). So:

At first glance, the sensible can be said to differ from the concept insofar as the concept determines the possibility of repeatable experiences that are identical in respect of their organizational form, whereas the sensible is the actuality of any given experience, and as such is the non-repeatable basis for the difference *between* actualizations. The sensible as the reality of a specific actualization falls outside of the concept: the concept determines the equivalency among actualizations (they are all actualizations of the same concept), the sensible is the ground of their difference. (Baugh, 1993: 15-16)

Let me example this in the abstract (with concrete demonstration being intimated in relation to the research into performance art and the performance of *Guest House*): Take a moment of action – a syntactical instant of a performance – and consider the form any understanding of this moment takes. The moment and the understanding of it are not achieved beforehand. Rather, meaning arrives experientially *a posteriori*. This is in the actuality of the empirical. As well as foregrounding the empirical, Deleuze is at pains to distinguish these experiential and actual understandings from being no more than an utterly indeterminate here and now “identical to nothing” (Baugh, 1993: 17). There is, and there has to be, an abstract or

transcendent realm to this actuality. As Deleuze puts it “the abstract does not explain, but must itself be explained; and the aim is not to rediscover the eternal or the universal, but to find the conditions under which something new is produced (*creativity*)” (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987: vii). These conditions are the concrete richness of the sensible; and they are the states of things, the actuality or singularity, that “are neither unities nor totalities, but *multiplicities*” (ibid). Understanding that it is the abstract, the conceptual, which needs to be explained, is also to appreciate Bergson’s argument against the ‘badly stated problem’. Presume, for example, the abstract notion of order. If we evaluate the empirical using this notion – it is common for researchers to interpret empirical data with such abstractions in mind – we are dealing with a ‘false problem’ by already assuming that order precedes itself, that it precedes “the creative act that constitutes” it (Deleuze, 1988c: 18). This is not a quest to unearth a grounding for all experience in general, but an experimentation for dealing with “experience in all its peculiarities” (ibid: 28). This sentiment is inferred when Deleuze and Foucault argue that “theory does not express, translate, or serve to apply practice: it is practice” (1977: 208). Theory, “is not therefore a totalizing instrument, but one that multiplies potentialities” (Hand, 1988: viii):

The real causes of experience, unlike universal concepts in relation to representations, need not resemble their effect in any way, any more than an organism need resemble its genetic material, even though the causes are ‘virtually’ or implicitly present in their effects. (Baugh, 1993: 22)

We can look at this in relation to performance in two ways. First, by taking this on board with regard to performance itself, in which case “the empirical is the here and now actuality that differentiates between performances and which makes repetition of the same work possible” (Baugh, 1993: 16). For example, take a performance of *Hamlet*: what is performed (the concept “that determines the possibility of repeatable experiences that are identical in respect of their organizational forms” (ibid: 15), in this case the form and content of the text of *Hamlet*) is identical,

but the actual performances differs as they are the empirically actual of the experience and as such are “the non-repeatable basis for the difference *between* actualizations” (ibid). Second, picking up the philosophical implications of the first, you can use the theoretical design of transcendental empiricism to link the performance, in this case an artistic performance such as *Hamlet* or that of *Guest House*, to show how it can work as an arena for social scientific research. In the representational tradition the research endeavour is to unearth and present a generality of the particular; in other words, to investigate an empirical actuality – for example, the memory of an event by a particular group of people – for the purpose of extracting some general conditions that can then be transposed as knowledge worthy of instructing education or government. In effect, a concept is constructed, which is often deemed subconsciously by adherents to the representational system as something essential and innate. Here Deleuze gives the example of the concept of the ‘human’: whilst it becomes something different in, say, Peter and Paul, it still remains fixed to the concept such that evaluation is always made on the basis of resemblance (1994: 10). On the other hand, thought without this image works to present the universality of the singular. Instead of transposing research findings under the legend of resemblance, you align the findings with the notion of repetition. Repetition only makes sense in relation to the singular and hence the unrepeatable. This sounds contradictory, but consider this: if nothing were to change then there would be no sense in repetition as everything would be once and for always. Equally, in this case, repetition of the same seems nonsensical. In actual experience repetition is the spacing of difference and not the return of the same as engendered in the representational economy of resemblance; it is the dynamic of the singular that prevents it from being equivalent to any other. Through this working of repetition and difference it is possible to grasp the principle proposition regarding Deleuze’s notion of transcendental empiricism, namely that “difference must be shown *differing*” (Deleuze, 1994: 56) in a nonconceptual empirical

manner. In this, uniting these last two points, “the work of art leaves the domain of representation in order to become ‘experience’, transcendental empiricism or science of the sensible” in such a way as to reveal “the very being of the sensible: difference, potential difference and difference in intensity as the reason behind qualitative diversity” (ibid: 56-57).

The task is now clearer:

For the reason that representation seeks to mediate difference in the identity of the concept in general, thought becomes limited and cut off from its sensible source. Transcendental empiricism, on the contrary, continually strives to discover ‘a pure concept of difference in itself’ and thereby overturn Platonism and restore the life of difference to Ideas. (Hayden, 1998: 16; quoting Deleuze, 1994: 59)

Consistency

Finally, then, we come to the creation of the philosophical concept. The laying out of the immanence of duration and the invention of the virtual come together in the creation of the concept of the event. The event is strung through the virtual and is therefore composed by the virtual’s “fundamentally open whole as the immensity of the future and the past” (Deleuze, 1986: 46). Let me example this through snapshots of the event's creation. We arrive in the empty space. First, a proposition is made – there is an encounter that forces thought to occur. Thus, using Deleuze’s example, in this empty space there is an encounter with *a tree*. From this a subject of thought emerges and an idea is formed: *the tree greens*. Second, something is affirmed or denied of this subject of thought in that the proposition also contains attributes. The attribute of the proposition is the predicate – “a qualitative predicate like *green*” (Deleuze, 1990a: 21; my emphasis). Thirdly, there is the attribute of the thing, in this case the attribute of the tree: “the attribute

of the thing is the verb: *to green*, for example, or rather the event expressed by this verb” (ibid)¹⁰.

The attribute has an entirely different nature than corporeal qualities. The event has a different nature than the actions and passions of the body. (Deleuze, 1990a: 94)

The line that Deleuze is drawing here places the event on the same side as the attribute. An attribute is not an event in itself because it cannot be abstracted or separated from the corporeal plane of bodies (and things)¹¹ despite being of a different nature than them. Think about the nature of an attribute, for example, ‘the green of the tree’ or ‘the warmth of the fire’, without the particular tree that green doesn’t exist. The event, however, “expresses what is happening” and is therefore not reliant on one particular body (Deleuze, 1990a: 277); it describes the movement of the composition and decomposition of ‘happenings’ actualized through and around bodies. Whilst the event results from the corporeal plane and the mixture of actions and passions of bodies it is not reducible to them. This irreducibility is the force of the incorporeal appreciated as that ‘different nature’ that cuts across those ‘events’ staged and understood as (a combination of) discrete instants. Being on the other side of the line means to look beyond the cause and effect equation of a state of affairs resulting from/along the corporeal plane of bodies and things. The incorporeal is beyond the state of affairs announced in the present moment of the event:

“When time passes and takes the event away, there is always a meanwhile to restore the event” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 158).

A phrase haunts me here – ‘think again’. Something forces me to think again, or rather, to keep on thinking. That is the nature

¹⁰ Further still: “The attribute is not a being and does not qualify a being; it is an extra-being. ‘Green’ designates a quality, a mixture of things, a mixture of tree and air where chlorophyll coexists with all parts of the leaf. ‘To green’, on the contrary, is not a quality in the thing, but an attribute which is said of the thing” (Deleuze, 1990a: 21).

¹¹ In a somewhat clumsy fashion I want to signal here that when Deleuze speaks of the corporeal level and of ‘bodies’ this also leaves space for the material force and architectural channelling of things, objects, winds, smells etc – eg the *tree*.

of problems for Deleuze; the task is not to aim for solutions but to be worthy of thinking. Additionally, 'to think again' is intimation of the eternal return, and of difference and repetition; it is that which indicates the will to (keep on) thinking. Thinking again I am caught by the criticism that the irreducibility of the event to be staged in the corporeal action and state of affairs of bodies is to suggest that the event is somehow transcendent to these bodies. Deleuze signposts a line of flight for thinking beyond this critique by way of the concept of the 'pure event'. The 'pure event' is another phrasing for Deleuze's conception of the event. He doesn't always use it (it mainly appears in *The Logic of Sense*) but when he does it is to both counter the above transcendent criticism of the event and to distinguish his conception of the event from those predicated on the event as solely 'the birthday party', 'the tennis match', 'the battle' etc, that denies the force of the event itself¹². The concept of the 'pure event' works by signalling the relation of the event to the virtual: "while the event may *appear* transcendent to the state of affairs to which it relates, it must be conceived to be an entirely immanent movement" (Ansell-Pearson, 1999: 124).

At this point I can return to the empty space of the Arnolfini.

In what follows I pick up the preparations of *Uninvited Guests* some eight months later. Refracting the mechanics¹³ of my own description of a room and something that happened there, I present the observations that I took then and fold theoretical asides in amongst the notes.

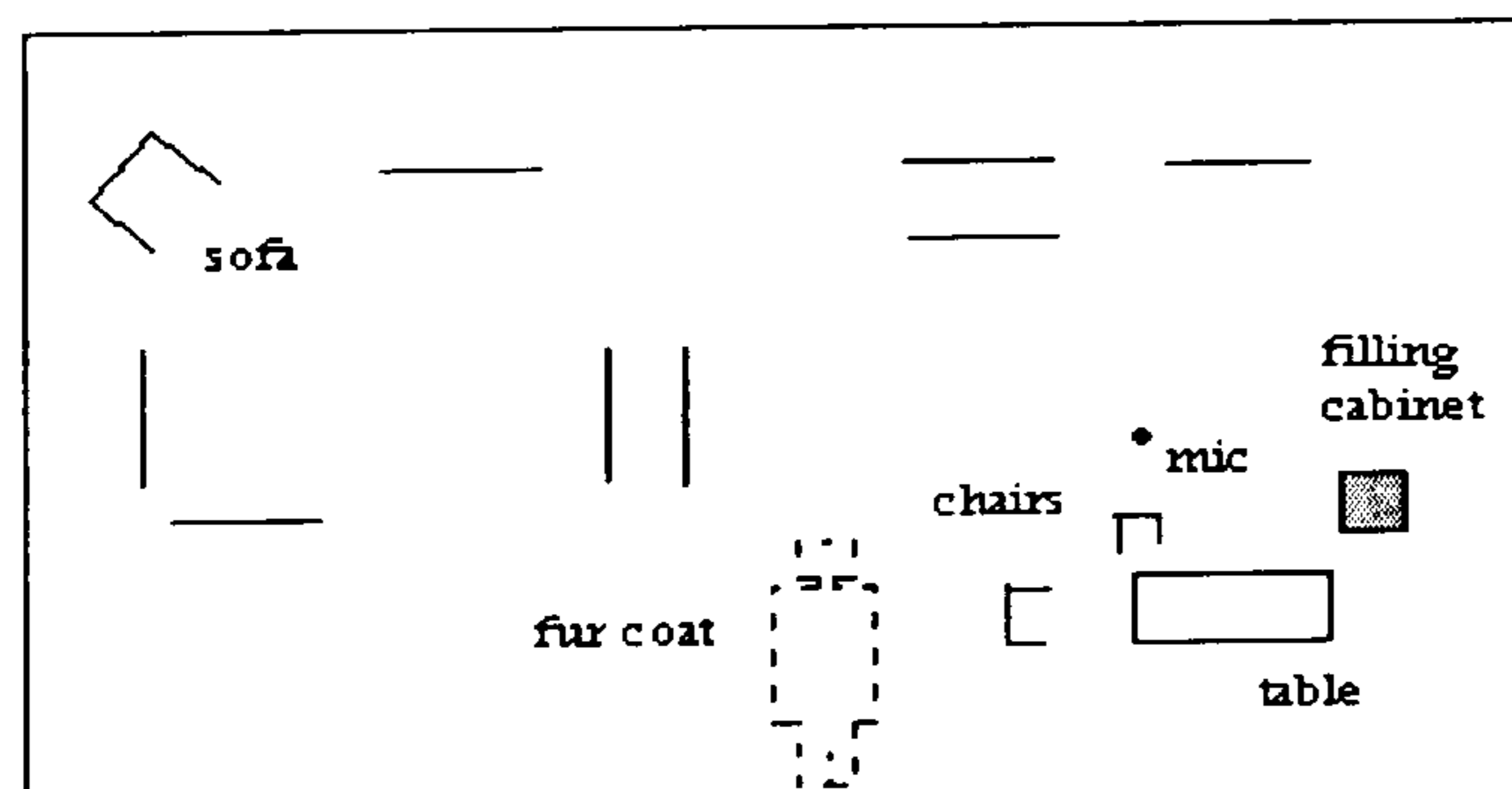
¹² "The battle *hovers over* its own field, being neutral in relation to all of its temporal actualizations, neutral and impassive in relation to the victor and the vanquished, the coward and the brave ... Never present but always yet to come and already passed, the battle is graspable only by the will of anonymity which it itself inspires" (Deleuze, 1990a: 100).

¹³ "1. An event in itself could be a time of day, a place, a draft ..."; "2. The fissure of irrational intervals – subjectivity is unhinged in the unfolding of these singularities"; "3. Flows, sequences, chains, series, processes, connections, and distributions: the continual vectors of singularities".

Wednesday 20th October 1999: a work in progress ...

The art of spacing – how does that work? A pre-occupation of some kind like a narrator that never appears, never speaks and never acts. “Spacing”: I am thinking about the performance that is being devised. How might spacing work? Firstly, I write in my notebook, “in relation to the materiality of sociality” – I am presupposing these terms already; I am pre-occupied by them you might say. Secondly, I continue to write, “in relation to the objects themselves”. And thirdly, another way that spacing works is somehow more than the first two, not a synthesis that accretes power, but the fact that “it takes place” both in terms of time, a duration, and in the actualization of the potential virtuality of all of the proliferating couplings. Touching, hearing, seeing, smelling – the spacings of the body, not so much because the devised performance has live bodies performing, but because the witnessing of the event is registered through the body, my body spectating.

Actual experience is being put on show, so in terms of interpretation consider that when Deleuze talks of pure difference he speaks of the intensity that awakens each faculty of understanding. To put this a different way, difference itself “is that which is sensed and gives rise to sensibility in the encounter. Each faculty is different and apprehends its own exclusive zone of the intensive being of the sensible. The faculties are able to communicate with one another, but they are not governed by the necessity of a common sense because difference always inhabits and fractures sensibility” (Hayden, 1998: 31).



Room – the middle term between place and space. There is a geometric continuum of bodies-in-places that fold, displace and interact with other bodies. The Stoics described this world as “an island embedded in an infinite void”; an island of sense in the ocean of events, of indifference. The dynamic connecting these separate places is the room (Casey, 1998: 87).

So in terms of touch there is no contact yet between the bodies. There is a chair however; it’s positioned on the left near to some bottles. There is another chair behind a table that is fairly proximate to the first chair. The first chair is performing more because its position gives it greater nodal density in the scene, and it is to this chair that I am drawn: touching it I feel its event – canvas, chrome, cold, and foam. The chair makes me ask, as the performers move around awaiting instructions before the scene begins, ‘Does someone have a specific chair, and how does that align them to the others?’

On another plane, in terms of sound, Uninvited Guests are splicing segments of recorded interviews and editing them to produce background noise. But through

For each faculty there is always something that forces it to confront its limit: imperceptible differences, the unimaginable, the immemorial, and the unthinkable (Hayden, 1998: 32).

this editing, this noise and interference, moments of order emerge – “During a pause the sound of a glass being put down on the little table can be heard”. This is an art of apprehension: on show is motion and play; shadows, gasps, and gestures people the empty stage making room for a moment rendered. Is this the moment Uninvited Guests are trying to wrestle out of the noise? It is an apprehension of experience. It is a memory of room. It strikes me, sitting here in the Arnolfini auditorium that memory is a more attentive recording machine for the ‘noise’ of the event. In this space an object punctures the *mise-en-scène*. Further still, the faint representations of the corporeal plane – masking tape traces out a space for the presence of a suitcase, or a fur coat – possess the spectator more violently, leading them towards the ‘ungraspable real’ of the remembrance of a state of affairs that once was. So it is that Deleuze writes: “We ask, for example: What forces sensibility to sense? What is it that can only be sensed, yet is imperceptible at the same time? We must pose this question not only for memory and thought, but also for the imagination” (1994: 143). The sensible multiplicities that are the conditions of actual experience force thought such that it too is open to variation. There are faculties “yet to be discovered, whose existence is not yet suspected” (*ibid*).

2. The fissure of irrational intervals – subjectivity is unhinged in the unfolding of these singularities. The breakdown in dialogue, the repetitions, the shifts in sound and noise, and the irrational intervals in place as you move from one room to the next, all present the energy of space as fissures of creation. This is not a performance of a finished work; it is more a work of performance that gives space to that virtual realm of the event in order for various occupations to emerge. So it’s not a question of verifying places but in showing what space gives place to. Accepting this, the house functions less as an architectural description of the rooms than as an architecture for ‘eventual’ space, the making room for things to happen. This is architecture as “a writing of space, a mode of spacing which makes a place for the event.” (Derrida, 1986: section 3). The spectator finds the room not as something complete and representable, but as somewhere between place and space. Here a room is that which makes room and clears space for things to happen. Philosophically, it acts as the *chora*, the impossible location where void and place merge in space in the room space furnishes (Casey, 1998: 87). In searching for evidence of such furnishings, the performers interrogate the happenings, or the singularities (the interactions of organic and nonorganic bodies as combinations of actions, passions, and

circumstances that have no origin in the consciousness of the knowing subject), in their attempt to trace out these rooms with the remembrances of the marks they left behind: blood, photographs, footprints, fur coats, pieces of jigsaw, etc. The performance is put in place and now awaits its own event.

5.5 Offering up interpretations

For a doctrine in general, there is nothing regrettable in this uncertainty about the outcome of research, this complexity in the study of the particular case of each faculty: on the contrary, transcendental empiricism is the only way to avoid tracing the transcendental from the outlines of the empirical. (Deleuze, 1994: 144)

If thought, and hence understanding, arrives in the actual multiplicity of experience itself, doesn't this mean that essentially meaning emerges in an irrational, quixotic and ad hoc fashion? To put it another way, how can we conceive of difference in itself without falling foul of the charge of atomism? How can we consider the making of difference in terms of the practices and activities of real experience with some form of consistency? And what do the observations of the processes involved in devising, and the affects achieved in, a piece of performance add up to? I want to suggest two routes through these questions – the first is through Deleuze's Spinoza and the composition of singularities; and the second is in Deleuze's folding of the philosophy of Leibniz and the communication of unity.

Problem 8: Univocity part one

Singular being as substance is not 'distinct from' or 'different from' any thing outside itself; if it were, we would not have to conceive it partly through another thing, and thus it would not be substance.

And yet, being is not indifferent. (Hardt, 1993: 62)

The philosophical problem Deleuze finds in Spinoza helps us to define the difference in being (difference in itself) whilst maintaining a being that is absolutely infinite and indivisible. Here we are confronted with the theory of the singularity of being; or the theory of singularities. A singularity is in absolute relation to the internal difference of all things; thus it emerges

out of both the notion of that process of differentiation in all things and the notion of being of all things, which in the philosophical case of Spinoza is the being of substance (see Deleuze, 1990b). In this Deleuze is then able to argue that being is remarkable in that it is both infinite (substance) and definite (internal difference). Or, as Hardt puts it: “The singular is remarkable because it is different in itself” (1993: 63). In terms of doing of social science this calls for a move away from systems of thought, or representational systems, towards a serial composition of thought based on difference in itself, or rather, the ‘singularities of life’. In this you can see the non-representational mode of theory having particular application.

5.5.1 Singularity and individuality

The singularities or events constitutive of *a* life coexist with the accidents of the corresponding life. (Deleuze, 1997: 5)

Let us return to the example of *the tree greens*. The attribute of the tree, ‘to green’, is a “‘singularity-event’ that subsists in the vicinity of which the tree is constituted. Individuals, therefore, are constituted within the vicinity of singularities that they envelop” (Ansell-Pearson, 1999: 132). Therefore I want to argue that encountering the event seriously directs research towards an experimentation that attempts to render visible the singularities that inhere alongside the corresponding life of the individual person. The experimentation occurs because it is no longer a question of interviewing the individual as knowing subject, as that ‘perfect’ witness capable of giving testimony to some part of life’s events, but of becoming a better witness to the event itself. The researcher needs to experiment with ways to enhance, both conceptually and methodologically, their skills of description so as to become more capable of giving consideration to what is neither individual nor personal, but are the emissions of the singularities of events¹⁴. To see how this might work, let me

¹⁴ For reference: “What is neither individual nor personal are, on the contrary, emissions of singularities insofar as they occur on an unconscious surface and possess a mobile, immanent principle of auto-unification through a *nomadic distribution*, radically distinct from fixed and sedentary distributions as conditions of the syntheses of

recount an example of that suspended second existence of the ‘general line’ that regards the space of a ‘pure event’:

She passed the lifeguard, and after she had gone some three or four steps beyond him she turned her head, smiled, and waved to him. At that instant I felt a pang in my heart! That smile and gesture belonged to a twenty-year-old girl! Her arm rose with bewitching ease ... It was the charm of a gesture drowning in the charmlessness of the body ... There is a certain part of all of us that lives outside time. (Kundera, 1991: 3-4)¹⁵

It may seem disingenuous to parade evidence from the art of the novel when my aim is to demonstrate the worth of researching the empty space of performance art but there is a crucial affiliation, namely that of force or that of (the force of) expression. Expression can occur anywhere: “what is expressed has no existence outside of its expressions; each expression is, as it were, the existence of what is expressed” (Deleuze, 1990b: 42). So encountering an expression, in this Spinozian way, can be an encounter with all art forms for they all speak of the univocity of being. As Deleuze and Guattari put it:

There is a specific way in which the novella treats a universal matter. For we are all made of lines. We are not referring to lines of writing. Lines of writing conjugate with other lines, life lines, lines of luck or misfortune, lines productive of the variation of the line of writing itself, lines that are *between the lines* of writing. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 194)

The key here is to realize and accept that our accounts¹⁶ of the event should not be dependent upon, or even interdependent with, a principle of identity; rather there should be attempts to traverse the “empty significance of mobilities,

consciousness. Singularities are the true transcendental events, and Ferlinghetti calls them ‘the fourth person singular’” (Deleuze, 1990a: 17).

¹⁵ See also Virginia Woolf’s *Jacob’s Room*. “Thus if you talk of a beautiful women you mean only something flying fast which for a second uses the eyes, lips or cheeks of Fanny Elmer, for example, to glow through” (quoted in Gibson, 1996: 204).

¹⁶ “They [events] take place only within certain determinate boundaries. They are not discursive. They are represented or recounted. They are thinkable only as having occurred” (Gibson, 1996: 181).

conjunctions of forces, confusions between entities, events as encounters” (Gibson, 1996: 199). Thinking in terms of the event sees the life of the individual cede to the life of impersonal singularities. Or, rather individuality is an operation of individuating processes that comprise the chance amalgamation of forces and things, and is not therefore a function of the unity of an ‘I’, a Subject. Thus descriptions are put into practice to capture the insistence of the smile or gesture that traverses the body; they are not used as a description of the individual itself.

**Wednesday 20th October: two days before the premiere of
Guest House**

The performers are back on the Arnolfini stage. So, slipping in with another perspective we start again: So, can you describe a room for me please? What are they

“In the vicinity of the art work, we are suddenly somewhere else than we usually tend to be.” (Benjamin, 1992)

being asked to describe? This is a repetition of what I’ve seen before: We have, after all, no means of verifying whether these places ever existed. “When we evoke ‘space’, we must immediately indicate what occupies that space and how it does so: the deployment of energy in relation to ‘points’ and within a time frame.” (Lefebvre, 1991: 12). In this respect Guest House reverts this evocation and show space itself as it gives room for certain occupations to take place. The series of actions that comprise the performance in this scene have been loosely scripted, improvised, rehearsed a couple of times and are now vaguely remembered. The scene is a living room. The white slats have been rearranged. The lighting is bright. There is a clarity in the white light that seems to be telling us that nothing must remain hidden, and yet the lighting contains a spectral blue chiaroscuro – an ether, a gap, a phantasmagoria, a place for idle talk. The tone of the dialogue is emotionless. The style they are aiming at is akin to forensic description. They are not performing a dramatic scene as such; rather they are attempting to retell the stories of the rooms themselves.

SCENE THREE
Colin's room

ACTRESS: This is a sitting room in a small house. Nothing really matches. Everything is done out in a very seventies style. (Glances left). The wallpaper is full of purple triangles. (Looks down) and the carpet ... (walks across the stage) there is a yellow, swirly patterned carpet. (Turns right). There is a seventies TV set and an old worn, bed settee with broken springs from years of kids trampolining on it. There is also an armchair, more comfortable than the bed settee (turns around and looks down) and a coffee table with bits of unfinished jigsaws on it. (Looks up). There is a bay window which looks onto the street. And there is a white glass shelving unit with a gas fire inside of it. On either side there are cupboards containing bits of knitting and bits of unfinished jigsaw and above the gas fire are shelves upon which there is a German musical box with a bear on it ... and next to that is a blue glass jar. On the wall is a photograph of the entire family who live in this house, two adults and nine children

[AT THIS POINT THE INTERVIEW WITH
THE PERSON WHOSE ROOM THIS WAS
STARTS TO CUT IN AND OVERLAP]

COLIN: there is also ... the room was used ... the photograph was taken by the neighbour and er ... for a family photograph taken by the next door neighbour ... he came to take a big photograph of the entire family and that was taken in that room, so I can remember the room as well ... again it had eh this wallpaper very seventies triangles ... I think purple or something I mean it was ... pretty awful but um (Laughs) ... um... And I think that picture where it was taken was put on the same wall where it was taken so it was a very arty ... um ... So is there one thing that sticks out ... in the room/in the room ...um apart from the bits of furniture I mean there were certain objects in the room, I mean one was a picture on the wall, which was quite grim actually ... it was a picture by Millet which was a picture of these ... I can't remember what it was called, but it is two people in a (beat) ploughed field and I think they're standing over a grave, the grave of their dead son or something; so I remember that picture on the wall

Do you know who brought it?

*Oh it wasn't a, it's, it was just a kind of a print
No, but do you know who, who, who, whose picture it was,
or is it...*

*I think it ... well I don't know whether it was
my mum's or my dad's ... I, I
Right ...*

*I don't know whether they were given it, or ...
err...*

3. Flows, sequences, chains, series, processes, connections, and distributions: the continual vectors of singularities. The dialogue is cut and spliced – stretched and reduced to fragments, some fragments stutter repetitively. This kind of sound editing bears witness to the sheer volume of information contained in a given moment. The dialogue is thus presented as interference. This is effective nowhere more so than when it is used as an immediate interaction with the actors: here, actor, recorded interview (information) and sound show the slippery task of getting even a tentative grasp on things.

DIRECTOR: Maybe he's lost it ... looking for it. I don't know ... there is something ambiguous about you not wanting to retell it

ACTOR: Therefore I pretend I'm looking for it.

DIRECTOR: You're trying to get to the point.

ACTRESS: I did do a bit of that, but then I gave up on that – have to get my head around it ... exactly, it's like I'm working it out.

DIRECTOR: Your eye shifts from object to object as you try and place them. You are engrossed – it gives you a reason for you to become with the questioning.

ACTRESS: Thus at times it could be fictionalized by me ... I don't know what is coming next ... and yet at the same time I do, it's just that I'm taking my time, pausing [by the objects that are in the room].

DIRECTOR: 'Over here ...' something happened.

Therefore we have the singularity of the event on show: the day the neighbour came to take a photograph of the entire family. A singularity is not an event of individuality – an “empirically actual is not a bare particular, a ‘this’ like any other ‘this’” – in that it has a “determinate content in virtue of its actual genesis” (Baugh, 1993: 24). Here the history of these singularities coming into being comes from the life of that particular family, the room of the family household, the build-up of friendship with the neighbour, the development of photographic technology, the creation of the tradition of photographic portraits etc. All are virtual forces that come to be actualized in this event and all are founded in the empirical world. The individuality emerges through the interviewee’s perspective on this event; it is a function of the actualization process such that the process of individuation occurs in the encounter of the event – “something happens before he construes it as happening to him” (Gibson, 1996: 201)¹⁷. Thus, we find in conclusion that to be witness to the event is to be individuated by it. This is to realize that “there is a mode of individuation very different from that of a person, subject, thing, or substance” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 261). To achieve this realization is to grasp the sense of the event, to extract sense itself where “sense is that which is expressed” (Deleuze, 1990a: 20). In this way sense does not exist outside of its expression and is therefore absolutely empirical and not metaphysical; they inhere rather than exist as such. Consequently:

How could we not feel that our freedom and strength reside, not in the divine universal nor in the human personality, but in these singularities which are more us than we ourselves are, more divine than the gods, as they animate concretely poem and aphorism, permanent revolution and partial action? ... Today’s task is to make ... pre-individual and nonpersonal singularities speak – in short, to produce sense. (Deleuze, 1990a: 72-73)

¹⁷ See also: “It would be a gross mistake to assume that because Lyotard is engaged in questioning unities and totalities, he is necessarily promoting some form of individualism. If it is true that totality is a negatively marked term in his thought, the corresponding positive term is, rather, *singularity*. A singularity is not so much an individual as an *event*” (Bennington, 1988: 9).

Translating this into performance research means that we must accept that a performance is never an interpretation of neither a text nor something that can be sufficiently interpreted. It means that when making of empirical data an extraction of sense rather than a representational discovery of knowledge we look at the pre-individual, incorporeal and immanent spacing between things in an indifference to the individuals that actualize it. This is not a brute atomism, impossible individualism, that adds up to nothing because “a singularity is not so much an individual as an *event*” (Bennington, 1988: 9). Singularities inhere and take place immanent to an event, so in seeking to find a way of presenting this type of observation as an adequate social science, we need to turn now to that second route through this problematic of adding up and making transposable in some way (practically or conceptually) these particular extractions of sense. Thus we look to the Leibnizian folding of the world into a space where a unity of communication becomes possible.

Problem 9: Univocity part two

What constitutes the unity of a work? What makes us ‘communicate’ with a work? What constitutes the unity of a work of art, if there is such a thing? We have given up seeking a unity which would unify the parts, a whole which would totalise the fragments. For it is the character and nature of the parts or fragments to exclude the Logos both as logical unity and as organic totality. But there is, there must be a unity which is the unity *of* this very multiplicity, a whole which is the unity *of* just these fragments: a One and Whole which would not be the principle but, on the contrary, ‘the effect’ of the multiplicity and of its disconnected parts ... A communication which would not be posited in principle, but which would result from the operation of the machines and their detached parts, their noncommunicating fragments. (Deleuze, 1972: 144-145)

What we have here is an expression of life in terms of an immanence of multiplicity which is taken from Leibniz’s notion of monads – individual perspectives on the same world that are also perspectives which, in large part, do not communicate (hence the term monad as the singular unity of the individual). Whilst individual they are however immanent to one another

because it is the same world on which they all have a perspective. In other words, among their solitudes there is “a spontaneous ‘correspondence’”; they “all possess the same stock, enveloping and expressing the same world in the infinite series of their predicates” (ibid: 145). Therefore, in witnessing the space in-between things, the spacings that make up the intensities and movement of bodies, objects and situations as the events of performance art, as the event on show courtesy of performance, we witness the univocal dynamics which give experience (of this world) its unique unity: laughing with laughter itself; falling in love with love itself; crying with crying itself, etc. This is what makes us ‘communicate’ with a work. This is what makes us grasp that ‘ungraspable real’, the virtual but not actual world immanent to us because we are of *a* life ...

5.5.2 The pure event and art of counter-actualization

I would like the happening to be arranged in such a way that I could at least see through the happening to something that wasn't it. (Cage, 1980: 55; quoted in Deleuze and Guattari, 1984: 371)

The Stoic's attitude¹⁸ towards events persists throughout Deleuze's work, because, as he put it, the event was “a philosophical concept, the only one capable of ousting the verb ‘to be’” (1995: 141). This capacity to move thought beyond the question of Being also enables Deleuze to sidestep (irritably¹⁹) the critique that consideration of events can only be an anecdotal contribution to philosophy in that it offers nothing concrete in the way of a logical exposition on life – eg the event is not something substantive. Where there should be concrete, tangible objects the event is an ephemeral mist. Like Deleuze, I want to argue that this intangible, immanent, virtual and impersonal air of the event is too significant to ignore just

¹⁸ The Stoic attitude, to put it briefly, is the nature of a new distinction that contrasts “the ‘thickness of bodies’ with the incorporeal events which operate on the surface of bodies like ‘a mist over the prairie’” (Marks, 1998: 39; quoting Deleuze 1990a: 5).

¹⁹ “We are sometimes hesitant to call Stoic a concrete or poetic way of life, as if the name of a doctrine were too bookish or abstract to designate the most personal relation with a wound” (Deleuze, 1990a: 148).

for the name of rationality²⁰. It is for this reason that Deleuze is at pains to show how the personal and felt, and hence the substantive, is deeply implicated in a philosophy based on discovering the nature of events. So let me demonstrate this philosophy further through one of the most instructive examples Deleuze uses, that of the wound itself:

A wound incarnates or actualizes itself in a state of things and in a lived state; but it is itself a pure virtual on the plane of immanence which draws us into a life. ‘My wound existed before me ...’. Not a transcendence of the wound as a superior actuality, but its immanence as a virtuality always at the heart of a milieu (field or plane). (Deleuze, 1997: 6)

Deleuze frequently referred to this example of the wound taking it from Joe Bousquet’s novel *Les Capitales*: “My wound existed before me, I was born to embody it” (1955: 103). The point he makes here is crucial to an understanding of the logic of the event to which he subscribes. The protagonist – the subject or the ‘I’ of representational signification, and therefore, for Deleuze, by implication maybe you or I – recognizes the value of the wound as a condition of life separate from themselves; the protagonist thereby accepts their part in becoming the quasi-cause of what unfolds, of what is actualized: i.e. the encounter of forces that becomes you and the wound. Deleuze portrays this acceptance as the question of attaining the will that the event creates in us; that there is an exchange (that plays out as a mutual oscillation) of the organic will of our life force for a spiritual will, where the spiritual is that which wills “not exactly what occurs, but something *in* that which occurs, something yet to come which would be consistent with what occurs, in accordance with the laws of an obscure, humorous conformity: the Event” (Deleuze, 1990a: 149)²¹. This is about consistency, and in this it is about ethics. Counter-actualization is the creation of concepts – here the creation of the concept of the event – which comes to function as an expression of the unity of the singularities that inhere in the particular folds of life.

²⁰ “I have, its true, spent a lot of time writing about this notion of the event: you see, I don’t believe in things” (Deleuze, 1995: 160).

²¹ This facet is founded on Deleuze’s reading of Nietzsche’s notion of Eternal Return (Deleuze, 1983).

To become worthy of what happens to us, and thus to will and release the event, to become the offspring of one's own events, and thereby to be reborn, to have one more birth, and to break with one's carnal birth – to become the offspring of one's events and not of one's actions, for the action is itself produced by the offspring of the event. (Deleuze, 1990a: 149-150)

It is never a matter of regretting how things have turned out, but always of finding out how to embrace the past such that it can be said to have conditioned the present in the most positive sense (Buchanan, 2000: 25). This reflects Bergson's method of intuition: that knowledge consists in finding and positing problems, the invention of new points of departure from that which already exists, and the freedom and courage to move away from ready-made solutions. As Hayden puts it: "What is at issue is the recognition that humanity makes its own history and that our freedom is only as great as the problems we set for ourselves" (1998: 39). So in relation to all events, be they Auschwitz, that dazed field, or the remembrance of your own particular room:

The eternal truth of the event is grasped only if the event is also inscribed in the flesh. But each time we must double this painful actualization by a counter-actualization which limits, moves, and transfigures it. We must accompany ourselves – first, in order to survive, but then even when we die. Counter-actualization is nothing, it belongs to a buffoon when it operates alone and pretends to have the value of *what could have happened*. But, to be the mime of *what effectively occurs*, to double the actualization with a counter-actualization, the identification with a distance, like the true actor and dancer, is to give to the truth of the event the only chance of not being confused with its inevitable actualization ... It is, finally, to give us the chance to go farther than we would have believed possible. To the extent that the pure event is each time imprisoned forever in its actualization, counter-actualization liberates it, always for other times (Deleuze, 1990a: 161).

In other words, we can create clinical understandings by giving space to the event itself, by clearing room for its observation in both a practical (actualization) and a conceptual (counter-actualization) sense.

IV Two days later: the premiere of 'Guest House', a work in progress

I am sitting in the Arnolfini auditorium; there are more people on this side, the audience's side, than before – photographers, Arnolfini staff, an amateur filmmaker, friends ... I am here as guinea pig and here to offer commentary on the way the performance has changed and on the performance as a whole now that I am about to see it unfold more or less uninterrupted. However, in what happens next this doesn't happen. There are numerous stoppages, mechanical faults, retakes, performance notes, and last minute improvements – no, that last bit is wrong, better to see them as up-to-the-minute changes. The thing is the performance is a work in progress, and in my opinion works best in its guise as a rehearsal on show. Or rather, that is the spirit with which the audience of the performance of Guest House should let themselves be seduced. Guest House is a performance of the attempt to pull together material, to join the forces of situations and make these fragments conspire towards something informative, instructive and entertaining. I am hooked; I am hooked on the narrative of the performers trying to make a narrative, trying to make sense where ostensibly there is none: just bits of interviews about disparate rooms, objects, events and lives. My attention is the energy the performance asks of me, the energy required to fill in the gaps, to find room for these things, to attempt to keep hold of this room, of these rooms, of these impossible rooms. Audience and performer accompany each other.

Why do we seem so interested in things that are obviously there? Do we see our own rooms, our own events and lives there, there in the objects, the descriptions, the vagueness? As a spectator to Guest House we witness the sitings of, or clearings for, the 'ungraspable real' that is the virtual realm of the event itself. There is no narrative to follow, nothing to salve our growing uncertainty: the event is impersonal, and inhuman. De Certeau has put the place of this performance on the map where he foresees that "stories about places are makeshift things ... composed with the world's debris"; that there is a place where "things extra and other (details and excesses coming from elsewhere) insert themselves in the accepted framework" (1984: 107). Representing what appears on the surface, a direct representation of the lines of the interviewee's text, does not give a worthy testimony to the event. In composing a show of spaces "everywhere punched and torn open by ellipses, drifts, and leaks of meaning" (ibid) the Uninvited Guests bear witness instead to the conditions that make an event possible by exposing and creating those details that come from elsewhere. In his

last abstraction on the event Deleuze proposes a lead to help us capture the event: “Events are produced in a chaos ... but only under the conditions that a sort of screen intervenes.” (Deleuze, 1993: 76). Guest House, as a performance piece, is made out of such interventions, and, as such, the performance is a work in progress, it is always intervening.

5.5 Conclusions: Ungraspable reality

Performance art succeeds when it grabs our attention through the intensity produced in the way it is worked out of the tension of the present tense. The art of performance comes from the way it is built out of the present moment and the ambivalences that this contains. In the empty space and in the practice of witnessing a performance a moment of apprehension is a reach towards that which cannot be said. Words fail to capture the feeling. One of the reasons for this comes from the sense that after the encounter, the moment of apprehension, the ambivalence of all the other things that could have been going on sets in; the feeling that in making sense you have exercised a certain blindness to the full power of the event itself. The representational system fails the witness and there is no easy communication of the apprehension that is now fast disappearing from view. The point is that “the thing seen’ exceeds the understanding of its witness and consequently returns to haunt her” (Heathfield, 2000: 21).

In weaving together the space of thought and the space of empirical encounter, I hope to have intimated the fact that in the face of a performance it is possible to site/sight the ambivalence of the event itself, and the fact that it can’t be proven, in such a way that delivers us to a new experience of the world, an unthought thought and into a realm beyond the present limits of representation. The folds of Deleuze’s work have produced three lines of flight out of this encounter. First, in the encounter with experience as a witness who cannot fully testify, there is a relation between the question and the answer, the demand upon and the response through representation, which cuts across the science of verifying testimony. This relation, achieved in the face of witnessing an event akin to that of being wronged, is the logic of sense: an incorporeal plane upon which to register a way of knowing through a sense of the event itself. We need to work on the plane of this other perspective to things and look beyond the particular account of the individual and the human, towards a possible account of the unsaid, the inhuman; towards the

expressed and not the proposed. Second, we need to work the distinction of these two perspectives into our accounts. One way proposed for this is through the space of virtuality alongside that of actuality. This is about thinking two planes of thought at once, where the virtual plane delivers us to new possibilities of experience and expression for the project of expanding the ways in which can communicate modes of making sense of things. In this light, my own account of *Guest House* operated through the folds of theory – a virtual register through the creation of concepts that capture one particular perspective of the same event (the virtual here being that there is potential for other accounts) – as an attempt to show how such a dual assemblage of the virtual and actual might work. Finally, the fact that the virtual moves our thought towards the notion of univocity, a realm of ‘spontaneous correspondence’: that something makes sense not through an individual’s particular intent and agency, but through the space of the event itself. It is here that the potential of witnessing the inhuman nature of the event presents a potential style of understanding, one that counter-actualizes that which actually happens by looking at the non-organic line of something that occurred in the happening: an alternative, but equally valid, way of making sense; and one that I believe is ever present in the appreciations we make of our encounters with performance.

CHAPTER SIX

Timing, or an encounter with time

There would have been a time for such a word¹ –
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this pretty face from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

(William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Act V, Scene V, 18-28)

¹The hopeless word of 'never to return'.

6.1 Introduction: the quick and the dead

Our knowledge of the material world is based on concepts defined in terms of the broadest generality and the greatest scientific (ie having a content) abstraction ... energy, space, time When we evoke 'space', we must immediately indicate what occupies that space and how it does so: the deployment of energy in relation to 'points' and within a time frame ... Space considered in isolation is an empty abstraction.
(Lefebvre, 1991: 12)

In developing our knowledge of social practice we are investigating the taking place of the world. In aiming at the thought-performance of an 'empty space', this thesis is an attempt to shed light on the syntactical relations operating at the heart of this 'taking-place' achievement. Part of this task is to construct concepts that make us capable of extracting sense at the point of these relations; as outlined earlier, this is the work of the performative understood as the frontier teetering on the edge of whatever next. Taking stock of what has been achieved so far, both in the theoretical 'empty space' and the concrete empty space of performance art, we have looked at the energy of affect in the corporeal realm and to the virtual realm of events. We have intimated that this affect spaces out the encounters that people this world. The force of the event itself gives room for things (material and immaterial) to occur – an occurrence of things (objects) that likewise complicate and fold the channelling of such forces (energy). Therefore, in the argument that Lefebvre uses above, one frequently referred to within the practice of human geography (see Gregory, 1994), we have finally to consider the conceptual realm of time: the tension of the present tense unfolding in the timing of performance itself as the man walks across the empty space.

What is time? Time is foremost an abstract relation and an exceptionally complicated concept that is equally exceptional in the way it modifies all of our endeavours be they scientific, artistic, political or philosophical. Time, conceptually, operates both in absolute terms – as a period, an epoch, as an enduring, as Aion, etc – and in reference to succession – the past, the present and the future, as a now or never, a Chronos. The conceptual justification of the importance of time given by Lefebvre in the quote above is a partial one. It is partial because it only operates for time conceived in terms of Chronos, as that which 'frames' energy. Whereas

spaces and times “are generated by the movements of mobiles, they do not frame these movements” (Latour, 1988: 25) – the recent theoretical intervention of Actor-Network Theory exemplifies the importance of this partiality. Such an argument begins to move us away from Lefebvre’s Chronos: thus on the one hand, the time of Chronos is a container that offers a uniform measure for the taking place of things, and on the other hand, the time of Aion emerges only in the performance, it is constitutive *of* the performative because it is constituted *in* the performative. In other words, the virtual time of time itself (Aion) is tangible only in its moment of actualization because it is the driving force of that actualization. Part of the purpose of this chapter is to show that to understand performance we need to address this notion of virtual as well as actual time, an appreciation illustrated in Elizabeth Grosz’s recent work (2000a; 2000b):

As a whole, time is braided, intertwined, a unity of strands layered over each other; unique, singular, and individual, it nevertheless partakes of a more generic and overarching time, which makes possible relations of earlier and later, and relations locating times and durations relative to each other. Such a durational – that is to say, wholistic *and* fragmentary – concept defies any simple linear model of the arrow of time, in which the time of beings, and processes is elided in favor of a measured movement whose uniform, regular beat generates an objective, measurable, clock time. (2000a: 17-18)

Introducing the concept of duration unites both of these conceptual takes on time, bringing together time as it frames our understandings and as it offers up the singular and the unique in its guise as an incessant force bringing about change. This echoes the link to that “explosive internal force that life carries within itself” (Deleuze, 2000: 51) running throughout the thesis. This link brings to the fore a new take on an old problem: that through this “positive, internal movement, being must become qualified and concrete in its singularity and specificity” (Hardt, 1993: 14). I want to suggest that by utilising Deleuze’s conceptualizations of time by juxtaposing the Stoic configurations of Aion and Chronos, it is possible to think of the same and the different, the concrete singular and the ongoing continua, together. The actuality of Chronos acts as a leverage for apprehending the qualified, necessary and determinate sense of our being, whilst Aion provides a sense of the

vital openness and indeterminacy of experience as it happens. All of which etches out the excess primacy of the “heterogeneous time of difference over the spatialized time of metrication with its quantitative segments and instants” (Boundas, 1996: 92). In this chapter on time, this conceptual contest between Chronos and Aion plays out a problem that reflects the larger argument running through the thesis that rather than impose from a transcendental plane a unity and completeness through homogenization and reduction we extract notions of unity – the univocal, the pure event, the one substance, the virtual – from the actual (the empirical). In particular here I want to uncover two interrelated theoretical and empirical applications that are both attuned to the making sense of these issues of time and their role in the constitution of the social.

The chapter is divided into three sections, which will draw out some of the ways in which the theorizing of time, operates as a further way of looking at and hence interfering with, the grounds upon which we come to understand the social. In the first section I will place the role of time in the context of the discussions held in the previous chapters. I will do this in two ways. First, through the contrast between the notion of a direct and indirect image of time I will show how particular considerations of time relate specifically to the experiential ways in which we encounter time, both *actually* through our corporeality and the plane of affect, and *virtually* through a sense of immateriality and ‘eventhood’. Secondly, an outline of the different characteristics of Chronos and Aion will examine the way we theoretically, and therefore to a certain extent referentially², engage with time. This will enable me to show how these two Stoic concepts, when played alongside one another, suggest a possible way of theorizing the general and the particular. This will lead into the second section, because in the relationship between Chronos and Aion a gap of excess opens up producing a realm of indiscernibility. In this section I will make an account of the final piece of research carried out for this thesis, that of the study of rehearsals for a professional theatre production. I will conclude this section by analysing how the rehearsal process itself, as witnessed, plays upon what is now a burgeoning interest interfacing the social sciences with other disciplines,

² Please note that whilst this distinction between the experiential and the referential might suggest a divide, respectively related, between theory and practice, that is not my intention nor is it my belief (see Chapter One). Rather it is a necessary simplification to enable me to distil a sense of how conceptualisations of time come to play an important role in both the practice of and the understanding of our everyday lives.

that of Benjamin Libet's neuro-scientific discovery of the 'half-second delay'. In particular I argue that this empirical encounter in the process of rehearsals offers social science a way of conceiving an explicitly performative sense of subjectivity. This reveals a potential research strategy held within the space of performance art, showing how non-representational theory can be put to use in the making of alternative ways of understanding. In the third, and final section, I will illustrate how this gap of indiscernibility heralds another conceptual space involving time: that of memory or the 'pure past'. If the 'half-second delay' offers a relatively weak and ephemeral subjectivity, may be it is through memory that we can conceive of a firmer ground; for, even when starting at degree-zero in 'empty space' and with an anti-subject orientated stance, the idea of subjectivity is very difficult to ignore. A final introductory point: the concepts used here to work through the notion of time don't work to show us what time is; rather they are normative in relating understanding of the temporal towards certain uses (see May, 1996), and are therefore potentially useful for transposition elsewhere. This is not about having a better understanding of the world; rather it works to encourage better ways of living in a world conceived in the 'tactical resourcefulness' (Conley, 1993) by which we make aspects of life apparent.

SECTION ONE

6.2 Movement and force: time irretrievable and indeterminate

Think back to the objects presented in the performance of *Guest House* in the previous chapter; think back to the material presence of the object in Chapter Four and the material affect of the body in Chapter Three. Place these thoughts in the 'empty space' and imagine the encounter of two organic bodies and the ever-changing dimensionality that propels encounter after encounter as the scene unfolds and as the two bodies co-exist within the same performative field. A simple act, for example the movement of footstep after footstep, carries the situation forth into the next moment. It is clear, even in this pared-down example, that imbued within any apprehension of the actions that make up our lives there is a sense of time: there is movement, change and difference at work. On the one hand we can relate this to perception, to the fact that we are the body and that the body is the

subject of perception (see Merleau-Ponty, 1962)³. (It is important to note that this is a movement back from the impersonal forces illustrated in the previous two chapters, and that that this reiterates that we can have many perspectives on the world with neither one being superior to the other – the point is to always ask what any one perspective facilitates.) In short, sense of the world is made through the sensory-motor perception of the other body and of this encounter. So, if this were an abstraction of the everyday life of two people in the social world such a perception would be a recognition that this other body is, for example, Francesca, your friend. On the other hand, moving towards the sense of the immaterial again, we abandon the notion of developing our understanding through this material perception alone, and encounter the other body (which could equally be an object or the force of a wind or the architecture of [the] space itself) through a pure image – the pure sight, sound, or force, etc. that it brings to bear. In this case it is that particular body that we encounter, not the additions that over time produce the notion of a general body and thus a capacity for recognition. This is an image that is anterior to signification, it is a ‘pure’ image achieved through any one, or combination, of our senses, be it a “pure optical” or a “pure sonic”⁴ image etc. The distinction between these two perspectives is portrayed as follows by Deleuze:

It would seem first of all that the sensory-motor image is richer, because it is the thing itself, at least the thing as it extends into the movement by which we make use of it. Whilst the pure optical image seems necessarily poorer and more rarefied: as Robbe-Grillet says, it is not the thing, but a ‘description’ which tends to replace the thing, which ‘erases’ the concrete object, which selects only certain features of it, even if this means making way for different descriptions which will pick out different lines or features, which are always provisional, always in question, displaced or replaced. (1989: 44-45)

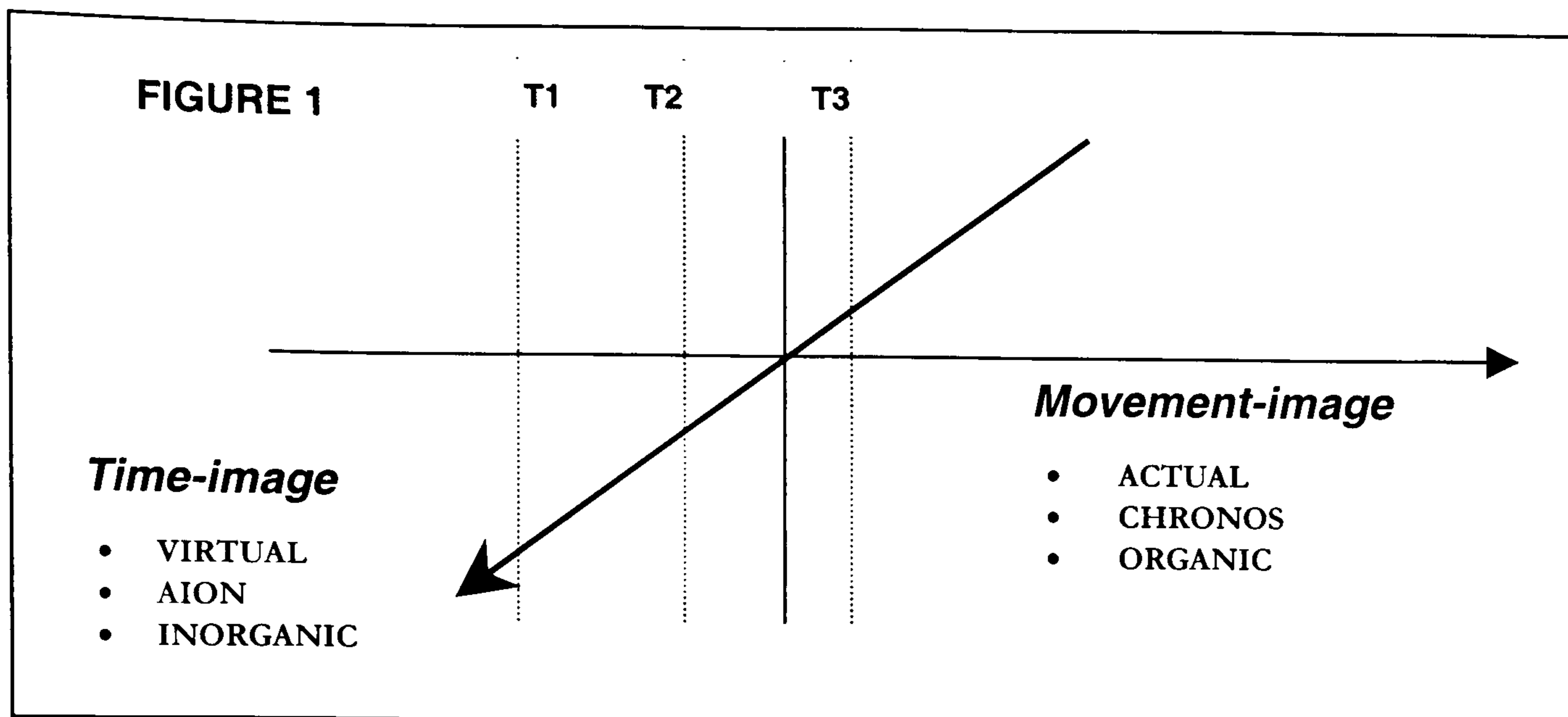
³ I refer to the definition of perception held by the earlier and influential work of Merleau-Ponty where a theory of the body is already a theory of perception: “The thing and the world, are given to me along with the parts of my body, not by any ‘natural geometry’, but in a living connection comparable, or rather identical, with that existing between the parts of my body” (1962: 205).

⁴ These are the names Deleuze gives to such ‘pure forces’ as they are translated in philosophical and concrete terms by the technology of the cinema (see Deleuze, 1986 & 1989).

Needless to say we experience both these perspectives at the same time: the one organic – in other words, the actual body you touch; the other inorganic – it is the sense you make of the encounter, the ‘description’ you give of it, it is the encounter’s virtual register. The former perspective is that of the movement-image (see Deleuze, 1986) and the latter that of the time-image (see Deleuze, 1989). And both perspectives use and take time to happen. In this regard both offer an image of time: the movement-image is an *indirect* representation of time, whilst the time-image is a *direct* image of time. In working with the pure optical image, or the direct image of time, we make pure descriptions that are undone at the same time as they are produced. If we use perception or phenomenology alone and work with the movement-image we effectively retain from the thing, or the other body, only what interests us, or what extends into the reaction of ‘us’ as the character, the subject, only the perspective of our sensing of what happens in the moment. Conversely:

The pure optical image may only be a description, and concern a character who no longer knows how or is no longer able to react to the situation; the restraint of this image, the thinness of what it retains, line or simple point, ‘slight fragment’ without importance’, bring the thing each time to an essential singularity, and describe the inexhaustible, endlessly referring to other descriptions. It is, then, the optical image which is really rich, or ‘typical’. (Deleuze, 1989: 45)

The indirect image of time is ‘typical’ in that it speaks of that which affects us all and is not a description of something particular to us. This quality of opening up a description of the world separate from our individual perspective enriches the time-image because it is not, unlike the movement-image, dependent on the “movements it is able to follow or make, but by the mental connections it is able to enter into. And it becomes questioning, responding, objecting, provoking, theorematizing, hypothesizing, experimenting, in accordance with the open list of logical conjunctions (‘or’, ‘therefore’, ‘if’, ‘because’, ‘actually’, ‘although ...’)” (Deleuze, 1989: 23). The time-image thus cuts across the universal register of time – T1, T2, T3, ...etc. (see **Figure 1**) – and organizes alternative “cartographies of thought, mappings or visualizations of the movements of thought in and as time” (Rodowick, 1997: 84). It is right here in the alternative cartography of the time-image that this chapter sets out to offer the empiricism of rehearsals as a potential



place for exploring the associative glue of these logical conjunctions ('or', 'therefore', 'if', 'because', 'actually', 'although...'). In doing so, the chapter will follow the theoretical diagram of the time-image and its affiliation with the Stoic configurations of Chronos and Aion by weaving individual moments of theory into the actual space of performative happening as explored and utilized in the processes that make up rehearsals. Before picking up the first thread of the theoretical diagram I begin with a fold that looks into and introduces the foundation for my research into the rehearsal process.

Rehearsals

The rehearsal process examines the immanence of the virtual through practice, or rather the theatre of intimate, personal, and 'momentarily relational encounters'

(Shotter, 1995), by bringing to the fore the web of associations that come together to form a particular encounter. Naturally, these seemingly ephemeral conjunctions are concretized, stratified, and through time construct the social arenas in which we play. We don't, however, always have recourse to an already agreed justification for action in the spontaneous and novel circumstances through which our lives cross. Unlike final theatrical performances (the base assumption shaping the use of dramaturgical metaphor within social science) life

may be seen to be more akin to the rehearsal room where the aim is to feel a way onwards, in a practical sense, whereby one is attempting to be attuned to the immediate environment of the situation. Research held within the sphere of the rehearsal process is therefore an exploration into "the co-operative-experiential path to theatre processes

The human achievement – shared by a few primates and aquatic mammals but not elaborated by them – is the ability to make decisions based on the virtual as well as actual alternatives. These virtual alternatives take on a life of their own. Theatre is the art of actualising them and rehearsal is the means of developing their individual shapes and rhythms. By turning possibilities into action, into performances, whole worlds otherwise not lived are born ... Rehearsals and recollections – preplay and afterplay – converge in the theatrical event (Schechner, 1994: 184).

evoking ‘felt-meanings’ and knowledges, through the contextualized work by groups of singular social subjects” (Melrose, 1993: 201).

The research that I offer here comes from entering as an observer into the five-week rehearsal process (from the 6/1/98 to the opening night of the 5/2/98) leading up to the Bristol Old Vic’s production of Arthur Miller’s second play *All My Sons* (1971)⁵. The account made of this research was carried out through the use of extensive note taking and annotation of the actors’ movements as they played through the text and blocked the action for the production. In particular, emphasis was made of the gestures and intensity improvised as the individual scenes were played out, and of the decisions made and justifications given, by the director and the actors, as they negotiated through performances the dramatic text. The main part of this research is achieved through the intense immersion into the rehearsal process comprising, in this case, nearly the entire run of the four-week rehearsal period (see Appendix I). It has not been my intention to show the extent of the notes made in this time. Rather, in the research extracts set out in this chapter, my purpose is to show how within the research process itself in particular, and in the process of rehearsal in general, a space is created in which another sighting of ‘how things go on’ can be achieved. I have then used distilled extractions of my notes to exemplify one method through which we can make this particular space of apprehension both meaningful (theoretically) and practical (in terms of setting out how these apprehensions become apparent in the space between the written dramatic text and the tentative live performance in rehearsal). Other methods are clearly available in this space, not least one which follows the intentions of Laban in annotating a new vocabulary for scripting the seemingly unrepresentable – whilst this potential is latent within the notes I made it is not the intention of this thesis to pursue them.

⁵ Synopsis of Arthur Miller’s *All My Sons* (first performed in 1947): The play deals with the divorce between action and responsibility: that reveals a drama that “by its very movement – by its creation, suspension, and resolution of tension; its inexorable rush towards tragic confrontation – proves that the past is always present and cannot be ignored, forgotten or denied” (Centola, 1997: 50). The dramatic action is centred on Joe Keller, a thriving businessperson, who shifts the blame for producing cracked aeroplane cylinder heads in wartime on to his partner, Steve Deever, and sends 21 pilots to their deaths. Joe’s ultimate defence is that he did everything for his family. But when one son, Chris, invites his dead brother Larry’s ex-girlfriend Ann (Steve Deever’s daughter), to the Keller household with the intention of proposing to her (despite being blocked by his obdurate mother and tainted by familial guilt), the truth of how Larry went missing in action during the war forces Joe Keller’s past into the open.

6.2.1 The play between Chronos and Aion: the gap within which rehearsals take place

What we have here is a unity in which its phrases and aspects are related to each other not as *separable*, existentially identifiable component parts, but only as *sensibly* distinct and distinguishable aspects of the same flowing totality. Each locus is a region of structurizing activity (an agency?), within which a diffuse, dynamic unity is continually, creatively sustained by the (disorderly) exchanges at its boundaries, exchanges between it and the other activities surrounding it ...which depend in their turn upon dynamic exchanges at greater and lesser levels, and so on. (Shotter, 1993: 67)

Here Shotter is referring to time as it is figured in complexity theory within the natural sciences (specifically in relation to the work by Prigogine and Stengers, [1984]). What I want to show by this reference is the way in which our conceptions of time, to whatever degree of intricacy, operate in a very similar way whether they are applied in the sciences or the humanities. The loci here are like many encounters, both an order out of chaos and an account of a dynamic stability occurring in the processes of flow. But how do we apprehend and get a sense of these loci and their place in the unravelling of the (social) world? And more pressingly how do we theorise their occurrence and hence make possible their capture? An answer is made to both these questions through juxtaposing the Stoic notions of Chronos and Aion, which enable a theoretical take on both the same and the different, the singular and the ongoing, together. So in the remaining part of this section I want to show how Chronos and Aion, separately and in mutual relation, can be seen to work in a syntactical way within the general practice of everyday life⁶. I will then take what is brought forth in this examination and place it

⁶ As I have already suggested, performance is an art that speaks explicitly of the tension of the present tense. I want to set out here how a notion of immediacy is almost always mediated and simplified by a reduction that expresses it as nothing more than the succession of instants. In this section I want to lead towards an argument for another potential research strategy within the performing arts: that the process of rehearsals was an enormously rich site for experimentation not only for the purpose of acting but for research too. Thus the spacing achieved to the metrication of Chronos turns attention to the first of the two methodological issues under examination in this chapter.

in context within the process of rehearsals as a way of understanding what is put on show there.

6.2.2 Chronos: corporeal and actual

There is a sense that we do not experience the present as something wholly unique – a fact exposed with mechanistic clarity if you consider the task of the actor when performing a text learned by heart. In everyday terms such clarity is greatly put out of joint. However, we still schedule our lives, making of them representations, measuring our encounters temporally with minute exactitude, becoming impatient with the present “whose duration restricts our access to a future event that we desperately need to make real” (Crocker, 1998: 486). We wish to eliminate time’s interval whilst living so religiously by it. This can be aptly phrased as *proleptic* living; living as if a future event was accomplished already. Irretrievable lives. It happens. Tick-tock. This is the time of Chronos. Three aspects of this conception of time make it possible to conceive a theoretical line capable of linking our habitual communication of time to a sense of a performative unfolding in time itself. Such a line works to break open that space between the actions unravelling in an encounter; it gives pause to thought in a way not noticeable in the way our lives unfold in the everyday but perhaps closely intimated in the process of rehearsals.

The first of these: this happened – ‘she raised her hand’, *tick* – then – ‘he drew back’, *tock*. What is being done and what then has been done is understood and categorized via discrete manifolds. This is a turn-taking that is discontinuous and actual, encasing us in a series of successive, relative presents and providing us with the building blocks for the civilization of time, “an organization that humanises time by giving it form” (Kermode, 1966: 45). Thus think of the clock’s tick-tock as two discrete manifolds, where “tick is a humble genesis, tock a feeble apocalypse” (ibid). In acting parlance such manifolds are akin to Stanislavski’s *units of action*. Chronos thus incorporates; it measures “out the action of bodies and causes” (Deleuze, 1990a: 162) seeing difference as only that which exists between self-identical entities and which consequently only speaks of difference in degree (Deleuze, 1988c). In this case the action, the character’s intent (dramatic texts are obviously scripted, very representational and subject-orientated) and that which it is the actor’s task to display, is played through the subject – the action is not going to change the qualities of the subject enacting it. In other words, we want to see what Hamlet, or Lear, will do when ‘what

happens next' happens. The great actors work to put life into the happening and not into the precise performative description of the character the audience expects of them. In this way, difference in kind comes about when the action enacts the subject. For example, Jonathan Miller describes how a subject is played through an action in the way he directs his actors for *La Boheme*:

Where Rudolfo is making his first tentative flirtation with Mimi
I deal with the microscopic details of embarrassment and
shyness. Instead of having some great theory about love ... I
told my Rudolfo not to look at Mimi, but instead to study his
feet, and in that moment they discovered how to play the whole
scene. (1997)

Second, there is the notion of a vaster present which places these discrete manifolds into a general conception of time: for example from the moment of her rising hand, extending through to the withdrawal of his face only the present exists so that the future and the past are branded *relative modalities* of the one present (see Deleuze, 1990a: 162; and 1988c: 74). (I will deal with this in much more detail shortly (see 6.4.2); suffice to say that for now it sets up a significant contrast with the way in which Aion operates a conception of time in terms of the past and the future). Thirdly, the movement represented by Chronos delineates time as the shift from the possible to the real, and thus involves loss – an irretrievability rendered because other possibilities are now impossible; their time is gone. For example: It happens, it has to happen, time passes and in practice you are judged by what you do. Meanwhile possible futures are being shut down whilst equally new possibilities open up. This is illustrated in the smallest details – consider for example, the main incident haunting Arthur Miller's play *All My Sons*:

KELLER: Every half-hour the Major callin' for cylinder heads,
they were whippin' us with the telephone. The trucks were
hauling them away hot, damn near. I mean just try to see it
human, see it human. All of sudden a batch comes out with a
crack. That happens, that's business ... All right, so – so he's a
little man, your father, always scared of loud voices. What'll the
Major say? – Half a day's production shot ... So he takes out his
tools and he – covers over the cracks. (Act One, page 30)

Every minutia of action clearly holds an unbearable weight of responsibility actualising what is, up until that moment, seemingly virtual. In the split moment, or the performative rupture, of the decision to cover up the cracks lies the commutation between virtuality and actualization. The clarity of the action of setting about repairing the cylinders for shipment signifies the complete change of the situation as it opens up an alternative future to what had gone before – 21 airman are now going to die because of these cracked cylinder heads. Through this Steve Deever, the “little man”, is incorporated into the material reality and the specific netting of signification via a moment of embodied connectivity that is the action of repairing. Putting aside for the moment the fact that there are multiple nettings of signification adequate for the communication of this moment, the movement that potentially makes such an action is hidden behind the representation of time as a succession of instants. This is the paradox of Zeno’s arrow: “movement cannot be reconstituted on the basis of instants any more than being can be constituted on the basis of presents” (Boundas, 1996: 83). Rather than an atomistic conception of experience – an empty linear sequence of nows – time is actually created in experience by the way in which moments are associated (Goodchild, 1996: 17). This virtuality is apprehended in the time of Aion, so, like paradigms but simultaneously, we shift plane and realize that it is happening whatever

6.2.3 Aion: incorporeal and virtual

“There is only one time (monism), although there is an infinity of actual fluxes that necessarily participate in the same virtual whole.” (Deleuze, 1988c: 82)

It’s happening: this is difference as the movement of a virtuality that is actualising itself (Deleuze, 1988c: 93-97). This is the time of Aion. Contrasting Chronos by not judging time purely in relation to the death of its contents as corporeal and actual, Aion conceives time purely in terms of “the explosive internal force that life carries within itself” (Deleuze, 2000: 51). In other words it is that which delivers us to the instant in “an internal multiplicity of succession ... *virtual and continuous*” (Deleuze, 1988c: 38). Relative to Chronos, instead of speaking of the one present Aion conceives “a future and past [that] divide the present at every instant and subdivide it ad infinitum into past and future, in both directions at once” (Deleuze, 1990a:

164). In other words, Aion is conceived of this as monistic, virtual time, whereas the actual fluxes are made apparent through the more precise narrative contouring of Chronos. So, one's implied territory expected in the time of Chronos is disrupted by this continuous flow of Aion. This in part reflects the need for the actor to exhibit spontaneity despite knowing the course of action unfolding. Theoretically, the point is that we cannot be fixed points *in* the world for we become *with* the world (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 169). Thus, this interplay, between Aion and Chronos, allows a communication of a minimal subjectivity whilst never denying the fact that any subjectivity cannot be anything other than a process of becoming (see Smith, 1998: xxxvi). It is not identity that is rejected; rather there is a rejection of identity being subsumed under a transcendental principle (see May, 1994: 46) – actors are always more than the character on the page because they unfold meaning through the performance as it happens in 'real', Aion time. It is in showing this that the significance of performativity as the frontier teetering in between the necessary and the unexpected comes to the fore.

Finally then, and of most significance here, we acknowledge that Aion is virtual in that it cannot be grasped; it is indeterminate in existing as the *pure empty form* of time that traces the frontier between things (Deleuze, 1990a). Something does not exist without the future mode and a past genesis, but these dimensions don't exist with it, they are virtual. So, thinking in terms of Aion is to think time itself, to think of the immanence of another world of incorporeal, or surface (non-individual), effects that are about 'pure operation' not incorporation (Deleuze, 1990a). Immanence to the virtual presents the next happening as that which is in liaison with all that has ever been, whilst equally presenting the fact that the virtual whole changes as it endures such that novelty arises⁷. Without the force of the future upon the present, action is unimaginable. Yet, despite expectations of what is to come this sense of future is likewise unforeseeable. In summary: Aion gives credence to a non-representational way of sensing the world, apprehending in the spacing between two enactments, a virtuality of forking time and of infinitely saturated space (Borges, *The Garden of Forking Paths*, 1964). And it is this gap that allows us finally to intimate a virtual space, a space of indiscernibility, that hovers

⁷ Again this lays further foundations for the problematic of theorizing a notion of the pure past that I bring together in making one of the key theoretical points of this chapter, that of the role of memory and its relation to subjectivity (see 6.4.2).

immanently around all that is done, shadowing everything realized with what might have been (see Deleuze, 1990a: 100). It is not that we should ever fully know these things; rather the point is that firstly *it* happens before we represent the event via the question of ‘*what* happened?’ In this respect, part of the power of the rehearsal space, in terms of research, is in the fact that this equation is reversed. Knowing what is to happen, and playing to that outcome with conviction, is to be open to the numerous ways in which you can account for the particular act you know, as an actor, you are going to perform. In short, the actor’s art in rehearsal is being skilled in an appreciation of the virtual; the actor’s art in performance is being skilled in an appreciation of the potential for alternative means of going on with the scene by way of a sense of indiscernibility – in other words, improvization. In both cases, performance is intimate with virtuality.

6.2.4 The indiscernibility of time: virtuality

Taking my cue once again from Deleuze, unlike possibility, the virtual is always real; being inaccessible but necessary, not proceeding but contemporaneous to the present (see Massumi, 1992: 167-170; also Deleuze, 1988c: 96). This is virtuality as “real potential that is imperceptible in itself” (Goodchild, 1996: 4)⁸. The unity of a moment of actualization – that minimal subjectivity in a doing – is in fact “a contingent operation holding together a potential divergence” such that the virtual opens up uncharted directions (Rajchman, 1997: 18). The performative frontier in rehearsals, the moment-by-moment enactment of the text, proceeds not by elimination (possibilities not realized), nor by limitation (thwarted possibilities) but only by creation (the actualization of potential) (see Deleuze, 1988c: 96). Every move the actor makes, and every move we make in general, is an untimely moment redistributing what has gone before while opening up what may yet come (Deleuze, 1988c: 96; see Hayden, 1995: 295-296).

I want to now fold this theory into the empirical space of the rehearsal process. In this first extract, in the space between the textual scene from *All My Sons* (in the

⁸ A classic example of this imperceptibility: “Take a lump of sugar: It has a spatial configuration. But if we approach it from an angle, all we will ever grasp are differences in degree between that sugar and any other thing. But it also has a duration, a rhythm of duration, a way of being in time that is at least partially revealed in the process of its dissolving, and that shows how this sugar differs in kind not only from other things, but first and foremost from itself” (Deleuze, 1988c, page 31-32).

right-hand column) and the research notes of the rehearsal performance, I want to pin the points above through the eventhood of Frank's appearance. The discrete manifold of incorporation (Chronos) is manifest in the action concerning the ladder, in particular the actor's concern over the timing of the precise action of putting it down. Theatrically, the ladder's presence, as justified by the actor, is symptomatic of the fact that Frank has been driven (Aion) into the encounter without time to pause and hence put the ladder down. The proliferation of questions asked in rehearsal of this seemingly simple act of Frank's arrival, and the need to ask more questions as the scene unfolds, shows how several meanings are viable. This space further illustrates that the moment-by-moment decisions based on these different meanings unravel yet further possibilities above and beyond the fact that at any moment some other factor/force/person might enter the equation.

<p><i>All My Sons</i> Act One page 26-27</p>	<p>6th rehearsal 12/1/98: 10am-1pm SESSION 3 (see appendix I)</p>
<p>Mother: (<i>Going to her</i>) Because certain things have to be, and certain things can never be. Like the sun has to rise, it has to be. That's why there's God. Otherwise anything could happen. But there's God, so certain things can never happen. I would know, Annie – just like I knew the day he (<i>indicates Chris</i>) – went into that terrible battle. Did he write me? Was it in the papers? No, but that morning I couldn't raise my head off the pillow. Ask Joe. Suddenly, I knew. I knew! And he was nearly killed that day. Ann, you <i>know</i> I'm right. (<i>Ann stands there in silence, then turns trembling, going upstage</i>)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ann: No, Kate</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mother: I have to have some tea. (<i>Frank appears carrying a ladder</i>)</p> <p>Frank: Annie (<i>Coming down</i>) How are you, gee whiz!</p> <p>Ann: (<i>taking his hand</i>) Why, Frank, you're losing your hair.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Keller: He's got responsibility.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Frank: Gee whiz!</p>	<p>Director: (<i>to Frank</i>) Is he borrowing the ladder or providing it?</p> <p>Frank: I'm handyman, so I'm just pottering around working on <i>my</i> house, and I've heard voices so I've come from the garage at the front of the house, it's my ladder.</p> <p>D: Yes. (<i>Turns to Annie</i>) He fancies Annie – she's the girl he could never have – she's the intellectual one.</p> <p>Ann: And the signs of ageing, losing his hair put him in his place again.</p> <p>D: (<i>To everyone</i>) What does Frank bring to the scene?</p> <p>Chris: The outside curiosity of</p>

Keller: Without Frank the stars wouldn't know when
to come out.

Frank: (*laughs; to Ann*): You look more womanly.
You've matured. You –

Keller: Take it easy Frank, you're a married man.

Ann: (*as they laugh*) You still haberdashering?

Frank: Why not? Maybe I too can get to be
president. How's your brother? Got his degree, I
hear.

Ann: Oh, George has his own office now!

Frank: Don't say! (*Funerally*) And your dad? Is he –?

Ann: (*Abruptly*) Fine. I'll be in to see Lydia.

Frank: (*sympathetically*) How about it, does Dad
expect a parole soon?

Ann: (*with growing ill-ease*) I really don't know, I –

Frank: (*Staunchly defending her father for her sake*) I mean
because I feel, y'know, that if an intelligent man like
your father is put in prison, there ought to be a law
that says either you execute him, or let him go after a
year.

Chris: (*interrupting*) Want a hand with that ladder, Frank?

Frank: (*taking cue*) That's all right, I'll – (*picks up
ladder*). I'll finish the horoscope tonight, Kate.

(*Embarrassed*). See you later, Ann, you look
wonderful. (*He exits. They look at Ann*).

Ann: (*to Chris, as she sits down on the stool*) Haven't they
stopped talking about Dad?

Steve, the situation –

D: (*To Chris*) After he has
gone, what's your task?

Chris: Smooth over things.

D: Is it more? Clearly from
his letters, their mums are
mentioned, does he
mention the neighbours? [ie
No he never has] Therefore,
try and play it down – what
has been said about it. Both
[Chris and Mother] have a
talent for ignoring things –
they lie when Ann says
exactly what they don't want
to hear when Frank leaves.
[...] Ok lets play it through
again.

Frank: A question about the
position of the ladder – Do I
put it down, or do I hold onto
it, ie I'm here for a chat, half
an hour!!

D: Yes, look like you
preparing to stay! ... it was
fine the way you did it then
[putting the ladder on
speaking 'Why not? Maybe I
too ...']

The crucial point here is that to understand any moment is to grasp its field of latent potential such that whatever significance is given to an event it is dependent both on what *could* have happened and the fact that events take place *in* time. That is to say that it is often a delusive practice trying to predetermine events in advance of their occurrence; after all there is always a surplus constituting 'the choice' that makes those moment-by-moment decisions real. The sheer noise of debate in

rehearsal surrounding the potential ways of acting out even the most ordinary looking line of text is symptomatic of this.

To conclude and sum up the thread of this first section, take the following event (mentioned above – ‘she raised her hand’, ‘he drew back’):

I fancied they both stood still for an instant, and looked, as it were, strangely at one another, *but I may not have seen rightly in the crowd*. It is asserted, *on the contrary*, . . . that Liza, glancing at Nikolai Vsevolodovich, quickly raised her hand to the level of his face, and would certainly have struck him *if he had not drawn back in time* . . . I must admit I saw nothing myself, but all the others declared they had, *though they certainly could not all have seen it* in such a crush (Dostoevsky, *The Possessed*; quoted in Morson, 1994: 122 – my emphasis).

Morson makes clear that we are given here not one but many potential events, such that Dostoevsky’s purpose is “to suggest that reality includes what might have happened” (1994: 123; see also Bernstein, 1994). It is not that there are several perspectives on the same world, rather that each viewpoint opens up another world that is at the same time ‘of this world’. In rehearsal the actors might achieve any number of potential worlds but they will all be of the text *All My Sons*. So, if what makes an action significant is that this happened rather than that, that there is a choice and a potential difference, did Nikolai move, or is Lisa someone who is ultimately unable to inflict such action? The event in itself speaks of all these worlds, of all these potential eventualities by being indifferent “to the individual and the collective . . . because it is actualized in diverse manners at once, and because each participant may grasp it at a different level of actualization within its variable present” (Deleuze, 1990a: 100). Thus, the event in itself is neutral to its actualizations being “always yet to come and already passed” (ibid), being excessive in that it is in itself impenetrable. As noted in the last chapter the concept of singularity comes to the fore in rendering the impersonal and pre-individual transcendence of the event that does not correspond purely with the empirical actuality of individual people, perspectives or things. These singularities exist as a ‘fourth person singular’ distributing potential which admits “neither Self nor I, but which produces them by actualising or realising itself” (Deleuze, 1990a: 103). Therefore it is not a question of the character of Frank or of the actor playing him,

but a question of the singularity that is in the text, that of Frank walking in carrying a ladder. In other words, people, perspectives or things only come about, become actual, through events, through being performed. They “are no longer imprisoned within the fixed individuality of the infinite Being, nor inside the sedentary boundaries of the finite subject” (Deleuze, 1990a: 107). Decisively, this can only be so if one understands the present moment as saturated with a virtual field of what might happen next (the chance combination of a whole plethora of forces). The forces at play here, having no fixed points of reference, are now merely related to other forces, such that singularities are not moments of synthesis, more mathematical points expressing the immediate convergence of several forces. Of course, amongst these forces there are predominant players that, due to their slowness of composition (materially one might think of architectural spaces), or due to their more stratified nature (discourses that are reiterated more than most due to the security that their abundant performance provides), seem to suggest fixity. The encounters that etch out our lives thus come out of convergences that are either connective (if . . . then), conjunctive (and . . . and), or disjunctive (either . . . (or) . . . (see Smith, 1998: xxvi-xxvii). Finally then we are working with a new image of time, that which Deleuze refers to as the crystal image (1989), one that works to the beat of these connective possibilities: that time has to split as it sets itself out. In any moment part of the present is launched towards the future whilst another part preserves all the past. The rehearsal process is about working at the juncture of this split in the indiscernible gap where something has to happen because it is happening whatever. As Bergson himself put it:

Every moment of our life presents the two aspects, it is actual and virtual, perception on the one side and recollection on the other . . . Whoever becomes conscious of the continual duplicating of his present into perception and recollection . . . will compare himself to an actor playing his part automatically, listening to himself and beholding himself playing (1920: 135-8).

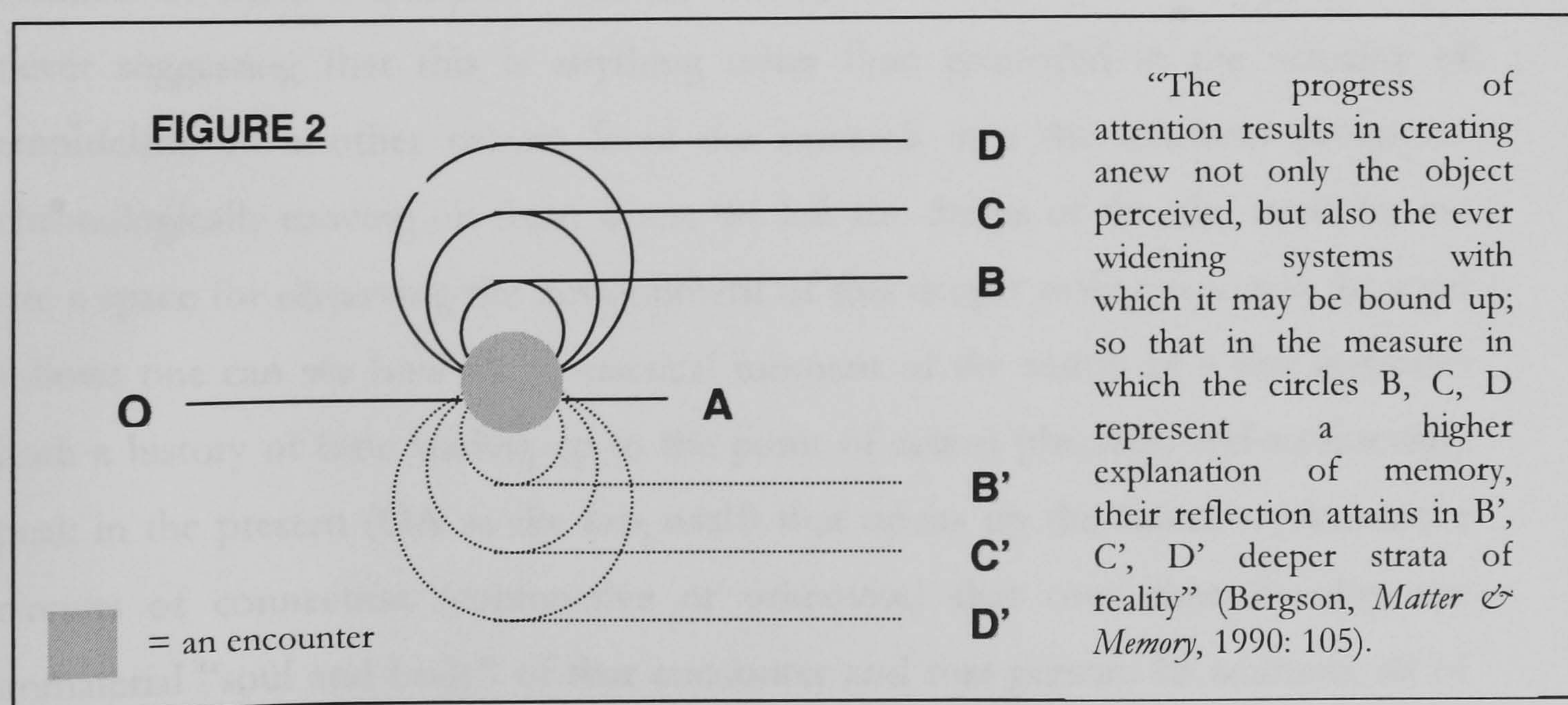
Taking this crystal-image (see Deleuze, 1989: 68-97) of time, that of time splitting, I move into the next section to suggest that we can use this fundamental operation of time to instance an understanding of the process of subjectivity.

SECTION TWO

6.3 An instance of subjectivity

In an encounter with another body you can argue that subjectivity arises in the very instance of the perception of this other body – their appearance, smell, gait, voice, surface – in an act of *reconnaissance* (as in the French *fait de reconnaître*, to be understood by way of recognition). For example, the subjectivity of Frank in the extract above as he meets Annie for the first time in several years: “You look more womanly”. In other words, raw “perception searches out memory as a mirror image that gives it identity and renders it meaningful” (Rodowick, 1997: 92). In the very act of the encounter there is a fold of space and time (a space-time being a folding): “where perception occurs in space, memory occurs in time” (ibid). Using a diagram of Bergson’s from *Matter & Memory* (figure 2), let me present this folding in direct relation to the comments made at the end of the last section.

In the empirical ‘real’ of the time of an actual moment as it happens (represented by the zone **OA**), for example the moment skin touches skin in a kiss, time itself splits simultaneously constituting “the layers of one and the same physical reality [**B’, C’, D’**], and the levels of the same mental reality, memory or spirit [**B, C, D**]” (Deleuze, 1989: 46). The smallest circuit is **OA**, and not **A’A’**⁹, because it refers only to the object that initiates the force that brings about the moment of this encounter. Memory then comes immediately consecutive to this perception as the zone of indiscernibility clears (the shaded circle) and the



⁹ Think here of the perception of an object and the first memory associated with it (if any, as it might be a degree zero encounter, and this too will be of degree – e.g. think of a new born baby and its first touch where

encounter passes through the force of Aion such that 'before you know it' you have become active in ordering the potential avenues opening up around this encounter. This is the movement from experientiality to referentiality, from sensing to making sense. You have achieved, or endured, a way of going on with the ever-changing, potentially chaotic, flow; and all parties to the encounter achieve a sense of dynamic stability. It is helpful to think of these stabilities as durations, and to expand this appreciation by thinking of durations as anything from the evolution of the human being or the development of a mountain range, to the duration of a day, a play, an hour, or the time it took Mr Palomar to walk his walk across the beach (see Chapter Two). The object of the encounter is thus taken in through the immediate description of the pure optical or sonic image that it gives off, and then through the way it links to the higher expanse of memory through previous experience – be that experience which has just been achieved a few seconds earlier. Thus a deeper reality is formed in time and through duration “where there are no longer sensory-motor images with their extensions, but much more complex circular links between pure optical and sonic images on the one hand [B, C, D], and on the other hand images from time and thought, on planes which coexist by right, constituting the soul and body” of that particular encounter [B', C', D'], be that a person, a place, a book, or a song etc. (Deleuze, 1989: 47). The crucial point is to appreciate the importance of the phrase *'over time'* and the way that these conceptions of time legitimate a theoretical space, that deeper reality, for the location of those immaterial elements illustrated in the last two chapters whilst never suggesting that this is anything other than grounded in the actuality of empiricism. In another extract from the research into the rehearsal processes, chronologically moving on from where we left the drama of the play itself, let me site a space for observing the development of this deeper reality in action. In what follows one can see how the syntactical moment of the action of a kiss instances both a history of time leading up to the point of action (the kiss) and an intensity peak in the present (OA as the kiss itself) that opens up the future to alternative circuits of connection (conjunctive or otherwise) that over time develop the immaterial “soul and body” of that encounter and that person. In addition, all of this only makes sense because it is put into relief by that “explosive internal force

there is a 'habitual recollection' derived from genetic evolution; there are already circuits to link this encounter to).

that life carries within itself', time itself, forcing the action and the characters to keep moving on.

All My Sons

Act One page 31-33

Chris: Isn't he a great guy?

Ann: You know? It's lovely here. The air is
sweet.

Chris: (*Hopefully*): You're not sorry you
came?

Ann: Not sorry, no. But I'm not going to
stay.

Chris: Why?

Ann: In the first place, your mother as
much as told me to go.

Chris: Well –

Ann: You saw that – and then you –
you've been kind of –

Chris: What?

Ann: Well ... kind of embarrassed ever
since I got here.

Chris: The trouble is I planned on kind of
sneaking up on you over a period of a
week or so. But they take it for granted
that we're all set.

Ann: I knew they would. Your mother
anyway.

Chris: How did you know?

Ann: From her point of view, why else
would I come?

Chris: Well ... would you want to? (*Ann
still studies him.*) I guess you know this is
why I asked you to come.

Ann: I guess this is why I came.

6th rehearsal 12/1/98: 2pm-6pm

SESSION 3

D: What does she want with Chris?

Ann: A companion, someone there, reliable,
solid.

D: And she's not met that?

Ann: She's got close ... [but here] she gets
that and more, she gets all the good things
I've [Actress referring to herself as the
character] cut off these years.

D: She says 'After all these years' – Do
you think her love for him, I mean he's
the older brother, possibly more like Joe,
her instinct is right – she's got no solid
base in her life [Ann's mother is unwell
and her father, Steve Deever, is in prison
for the crime Joe, Chris's father,
instigated], it's not an age that supports
women until they got married. It hasn't
worked out in New York; she's
hankering back. Later on she says ...

Ann: ... 'I'm not going to leave here alone'

D: (*Turning to Chris*) What is it about
Annie?

Chris: He does know her best, he's not fast
with women, shyness – it is getting to an age
when I should be thinking of my age –
thinking about a family. Larry was the fun
one; Chris has his books, serious like.

D: He hasn't had the time to find
anyone! Not sure there is a sexual

Chris: Ann, I love you. I love you a great deal. (*Finally*) I love you. (*Pause. She waits.*) I have no imagination ... that's all I know to tell you. (*Ann is waiting, ready.*) I'm embarrassing you. I didn't want to tell it to you here. I wanted some place we'd never been; a place where we'd be brand new to each other ... You feel it's wrong here, don't you? This yard, this chair? I want you to be ready for me. I don't want to win you away from anything.

Ann: (*putting her arms around him.*) Oh, Chris, I've been ready a long, long time!

Chris: Then he's gone forever. You're sure.

Ann: I almost got married two years ago.

Chris: Why didn't you?

Ann: You started to write to me – (*Slight pause.*)

Chris: You felt something that far back?

Ann: Every day since!

Chris: Ann, why didn't you let me know?

Ann: I was waiting for you, Chris. Till then you never wrote, and when you did, what did you say? You sure can be ambiguous, you know.

Chris: (*looks towards the house, then at her, trembling*): Give me a kiss, Ann. Give me a – (*They kiss*) God, I kissed you, Annie, I kissed Annie. How long, how long I've been waiting to kiss you!

Ann: I'll never forgive you. Why did you wait all these years? All I've done is sit and wonder if I was crazy for thinking of you.

Chris: Annie, we're going to live now! I'm going to make you so happy. (*He kisses her, but without their bodies touching.*)

attraction, hence that moment is tender, it can be.

Chris: By getting all that stuff out, he can be free to think about her; yet still feels held back – there's only momentary relief.

D: She has to let him make the moves.

Ann: I can do so much

D: Why does he say that line 'He's a great guy isn't he'?

Chris: He's thinking about marriage, about Annie having any doubts

D: Therefore test the water – does

Annie resent him

[Joe, his father]?

(Pause) Also,

allow yourself to

take more time

with the first

interchange, some huge lines there.

Ann: This is the first time with been alone, its oh fuck, this is the moment, ease slips out the window.

[*The actors run through the scene again*]

D: (*speaking to Chris*) 'I'm embarrassing you' – you're going to say no [Ann is going say no to Chris].

You've got to go down the road to 'oh, I've bollocks it'. You need to be sure –

It's like Dad [whether or not he was guilty], you need tangible, formal proof.

Ann: I find putting my arms around him as if I am jumping the gun.

The past, I saw, is a formality, merely a dimmer present, for everything we are is at every moment alive in us. How fantastic a play would be that did not still the mind's simultaneity, did not allow a man to 'forget', and turned him to see present through past and past through present, a form that in itself, quite apart from its content and meaning, would be inescapable as a psychological process and as a collecting point for all that his life in society had poured into him. (This little man walking in the street had all my youth inside him, it seemed) (Miller, *Timebends*, 1987: 131).

Ann: (*a little embarrassed*): Not like that
you're not.

Chris: I kissed you ...

Ann: Like Larry's brother. Do it like you,
Chris. (He breaks away from her abruptly.)

What is it, Chris?

Chris: Let's drive some place ... I want to
be alone with you.

Ann: No ... what is it Chris, your mother?

Chris: No – nothing like that [...] It's all
mixed up with so many other things ...

You remember, overseas, I was in
command of a company?

Ann: Yeah, sure.

Chris: Well, I lost them. [...] They didn't
die; they killed themselves for each other. I
mean that exactly; a little more selfish and
they'd've been here today [...] And then I
came home and it was incredible. I – there
was no meaning in it here; the whole thing
to them was a kind of a – bus accident. I
went to work with Dad, and that rat-race
again. I felt – what you said – ashamed
somehow. Because nobody was changed at
all. It seemed to make suckers out of a lot
of guys. I felt wrong to be alive, to open
the bank-book, to drive the new car, to see
the new refrigerator. I mean you can take
those things out of a war, but when you
drive that car you've got to know that it
came out of the love a man can have for a
man, you've got to be a little better because
of that. Otherwise what you have is really
loot, and there's blood on it. And I didn't
want to take any of it. And I guess that
included you.

D: You've got to help him!

Chris: That proximity [that they just had
when acting this scene out, probably due to
the director's note to be more tender] would
make me more nervous. That would be
great.

D: A lot of guys wouldn't give anything
unless they can be sure.

Ann: 'I'm waiting for you'!! She still is!

12th rehearsal 20/1/98: 2pm-6pm

SESSION 9

D: There's one thing in there between
the first and second kiss. The first is
genuine, it's something you've wanted
for some time, and then there is
something in between. So it's the effect
of the first, something to do with the
fact that you've got the reciprocated love
back – so you see what I'm getting at ...
is that something he's been conscious of
– that loot thing?

Chris: No ... I say, I guess that's something

D: Yes, and it's in the way. The
association kicks in between the kisses.

Chris: But why would it happen now, when
I say 'were going to live now'?

Ann: But I felt it was me giving the kiss, and
the second kiss, I'm waiting for him to give
the full 'passionorama'!

D: I think that's it.

Chris: And in tying it in with the story,
that's what you want?

D: To be honest I think you've done it
better; you've got this moment before.

Chris: Do I need to be tougher than before?

<p>Ann: And you still feel that way?</p> <p>Chris: I want you now, Annie.</p> <p>Ann: Because you mustn't feel that way any more. Because you have a right to whatever you have. Everything, Chris, understand that? To me, too ... [...]</p> <p>Chris: Oh Annie, Annie ... I'm going to make a fortune for you!</p> <p>Keller: (<i>offstage</i>) Hello ... Yes, sure [answering a telephone call from Annie's brother George who has just seen their dad in prison, and is now coming over because he is convinced that Keller is guilty.]</p> <p>Ann: (<i>Laughing softly</i>): What'll I do with a fortune?</p> <p><i>They kiss. Keller enters from the house.</i></p>	<p>D: Deliver them less tentatively ... yes, let's try it.</p> <p>[<i>The actors run through the scene again</i>]</p> <p>D: I think that 'I'm going to make a fortune' ... I think that he can then give the real kiss – in this scene they are discarding the past, so that they can see that they are going to make a pure future together.</p> <p>Chris: Do you think that when they come together it's so believable ... if when I say 'I kissed Annie' ... it leaves her a bit embarrassed.</p> <p>D: Leave that one – it's a 'see thing' [<i>ie trust the theatrical stagecraft</i>]</p> <p>Ann: It felt nice, like come on I've got you now; this is the beginning of my future.</p> <p>Chris: It felt better down there [<i>a reference to the stage blocking meaning down centre stage front</i>].</p>
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What we have in evidence here, at the heart of the rehearsal process, are space-time foldings, proliferating instances of entering into relation with other things (physical entities inert or otherwise, emotional or otherwise, affecting or otherwise) that bring about connections woven out of the sense of time weaving in both its directions – preserving the past and contracting the future. This is to work a philosophy of becoming into our understandings “which does not tolerate the separation or the distinction of before, or after, or past or future. It pertains to the essence of becoming to move and pull in both directions at once” (Deleuze, 1990a: 1). This brings us back to the crystal-image of time, that image of time revealing the fundamental operation of time as it splits into two directions at once. In this light the rehearsal process is about making visible “the ceaselessly fracturing or splitting of non-chronological time” (Rodowick, 1997: 92). Thus in the instance of each kiss there is a preservation of the past at the self-same moment that the kiss itself opens up and affects the future. Take the first kiss – “How long, how long I've been waiting” – a wait held within Chris because of the past where his brother Larry had

been Ann's previous boyfriend – “Then he's gone forever”. Then the second kiss: whilst contracting the future – “we're going to live now!” – it still contains an affection for the past in that Ann detects the reticence of the past still latent in Chris's feelings – “I kissed you” “Like Larry's brother”. And finally, the third kiss opens up to a more carefree future – “I'm going to make a fortune for you!” “What'll I do with a fortune!”

The essential point, in any event, is that the two related terms differ in nature, and yet ‘run after each other’, refer to each other, reflect each other, without it being possible to say which is first, and tend *ultimately* to become confused by slipping into the same point of indiscernibility (Deleuze, 1989: 46).

This point of indiscernibility in which things happen is the place where an instance of subjectivity can be located. It is the “association that kicks in between the kisses”; it is the point of selection, and the point where a decision is made before you are aware of having made it. Whilst almost impossible to sight, except by intimation, this is the point of entering into relation of “the real and the imaginary, the physical and the mental, the objective and the subjective, description and narration, *the actual and the virtual ...*” (Deleuze, 1989: 46). One can say that it is the full force of the present that in its passing on creates a trace of subjectivity in the requirement it makes of the way we handle its passing. We need to open up ways of apprehending this space of the present moment despite Zeno's paradox that keeps it forever from our grasp. Thus to conclude this section, and by way of leading into the next, I want to address the theory by which such apprehensions can come to make sense, and indeed justify the processes at work in the case of rehearsals used for research.

Problem 10: The unravelling of subjectivity

In Bergson's *Matter and Memory* Deleuze finds a conceptualization of subjectivity that cuts across the chaotic variability of our philosophical and scientific attempts to come to terms with this unfathomably complex notion of being a subject. What Bergson presents here are five aspects of subjectivity distilled in their most abstract sense in order that they might, for the purposes of analysis and in a wide range of

scenarios, extract an appropriate understanding of the world.

These aspects are *need-subjectivity*, *brain-subjectivity*, *affection-subjectivity*, *recollection-subjectivity*, and *contraction-subjectivity*.

Within duration (the continuity of things) there is a moment of selection based on a *need* that breaks the continuity and opens up an interest that lets the rest, that which remains outside this interest, pass by. In relation to this interest there is a moment of indetermination, a moment which equals that interval between received and executed movement (perception and action if you like). This plays upon the neuro-scientific notion that the *brain* (that the brain is made up of slowly emerging subconscious processes), by virtue of its network of nerves, divides up the excitation of information (perception) infinitely and incessantly, leaving several possible re-actions. Next, in terms of space and time and therefore immanent and imminently, there is the moment of *affection*: perception does not reflect possible action, nor does the brain bring about the interval without the assurance that certain organic parts are committed to “the immobility of a purely receptive role that surrenders them to pain” (Deleuze, 1988a: 53). This is not to say that we are completely passive, but we cannot help but be affected by the surrounding environment. The interval of these potential reactions, the indeterminacy of the moment, is filled by *recollection*, by memory, by habit, by experience. The moment is actualized. The moment is almost over, its final breath being one of *contraction*: the body being of the ongoing forces that converge in space, and through an instant in time, thus brings about a “contraction of the experienced excitations from which quality is born”, the qualities that over time make you who you are (ibid).

Within any moment, conceived in the manner of the abstract description given above, there is an oscillation between objectivity and subjectivity. Let me explain: the aspect of *need* lies in the realm of the objective in that it is a direct extraction from the world; *Brain* remains on this side offering openings from such objectivity, openings which may or may not remain entirely objective – hence this being the interval of

indetermination; *Affection* is the ‘impurity’ that disturbs this notion of pure objectivity (see Deleuze, *ibid*), and from this point on we move into the realm of subjectivity as it occurs in *recollection* and *contraction*: only you could have occupied those space-times, those experiences with their specific perspectives and *needs*, and only you endured those *affections* that now come to you like so many *recollections contracted* to this moment of existence, of you being you now.

In relation to our common understanding of time and the role it plays in our assumptions of what memory is, one further question remains in the problem of unravelling subjectivity: ‘Where are these recollections or memories that fill the gap of indeterminacy located?’ It is commonly assumed that memories are somehow preserved in the location of the brain as if the brain were a store for such recollections that could be called upon at any time. Following Deleuze’s Bergsonism, I want to move against this assumption. Firstly, if the brain is considered on the side of objectivity, as outlined above, then memories, which are essentially subjective in nature, cannot be located there. In short, I want us to see the brain as just another organ of the body that channels in purely operational terms, and hence objectively, the ‘sensation-information’ that comes from pure perception. The brain in itself does not hold any subjective currency. Secondly, the distinction that Bergson makes between matter and memory comes to the fore. The point that he makes, and that which Deleuze amplifies in creating several philosophical interfaces for this alternative way of thinking about time, memory and subjectivity¹⁰, is that there is a difference in kind between matter and memory that is paralleled respectively in the difference between the present and the past, and pure perception and pure recollection. Again I think this difference can be presented conceptually in terms of the empirically actual, and ontologically factual, folding of space and

¹⁰ *Bergsonism* (1988c), *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* (1986), *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (1989) all of which have spawned ongoing philosophical invention (see for example *Deleuze’s Time-Machine* (Rodowick, 1997); *The Brain is the Screen: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema* (Flaxman, 2000); and indeed the performance art and documentary pieces of *Goat Island*.

time – a folding that makes them simultaneously one and the same thing. Consider this:

In the same way that we do not perceive things in ourselves, but at the place where they are, we only grasp the past at the place where it is in itself, and not in ourselves, in our present.
(Deleuze, 1988c: 56)

In relation to time the common perception of the past is that if it is something it is something that is no longer. In this sense “we have thus confused Being with being-present” (Deleuze, 1988c: 55). In other words, just because something is no longer actually happening, and is therefore no longer present before us in terms of time, doesn’t mean that it doesn’t inhere in the present that we are now ‘in’. The past is in time just as the Eiffel Tower, for example, is in space – whilst neither is present before us they both have the power to affect us in the future (eg you do not doubt that the Eiffel Tower is still standing).

SECTION THREE

6.4 Memory: the ‘pure’ past

The question now then is about how to obtain meaning from the immediacy of this physical point, the encounter, in such a way as to make it something more than a bare particular. Whilst it is clear that the driving force of time itself, Aion, delivers the world, the world is obviously not completely made anew in each moment. As I have intimated in the last section, our lives take place over time, and through this time a ‘deeper reality’ evolves that is particular to our experiences. In the final section then, alongside from the quick of each moment, I want to illustrate that equally there are qualities of recollection and contraction that play as important a part in constituting the social as this Heraclitian flow: there is a sense of duration and orientation through the recollection of the ‘pure’ past, the realm where memory is located. In the light of this rehearsals offer a space and a mode for apprehending in closer detail that which ultimately escapes view: the indiscernible, and the indiscernibility of, the present moment. Crucially, it only achieves this by working explicitly through the full range of our conceptualizations of what time is: time itself, the past, the present and the future. Rehearsals also reveal that it is in this indiscernible gap between the virtual and the actual, at the moment when the

virtual is actualized, when Chronos delineates the actual fluxes that necessarily participate in the virtual whole of Aion, that subjectivity is instanced. Furthermore, showing that it is only through an appreciation of time that subjectivity can come to make sense. Now moving the argument on into the next and final section of this chapter, at one level this play between the virtual and the actual works out of the understanding that the actual refers to the state of things as rendered spatially through perception whilst the virtual fractures this simplicity by introducing the multifaceted subjectivity sought out in time through memory. Thus, referring back to the circular ripples of figure 3, successive moments are preserving the past in the very instance that there is contraction of the future:

How can we say that it is the same object which passes through different circuits, because each time description has obliterated the object, at the same time as the mental image has created a different one? Each circuit obliterates and creates an object. But it is precisely this ‘double movement of creation and erasure’ that successive planes and independent circuits, cancelling each other out, contradicting each other, joining up with each other, forking, will simultaneously constitute the layers of one and the same physical reality, and the levels of one and the same mental reality, memory or spirit”. (Deleuze, 1989: 46)

As I hope to show, this simultaneous other layer of reality is “definitely not produced in the head or in the mind, it is the objective characteristic of certain existing images which are by nature double” (Deleuze, 1989: 69). In pointing out that this layering of the virtual and the actual has nothing to do with the head Deleuze is pulling us away from thinking this relationship through the body, through a biological essentialism; and that it is not in the mind is to dispel recourse to an innate, transcendental (Kantian) faculty. Deleuze’s aim here is to make thinking capable of working through this layering – and the potential indiscernibility brought about in-between the layers in the moment of actualization – not as something confusing, but as something that puts us into direct relation with the way things are. In an echo back to Chapter Four, this indiscernibility “gives us access to that Proustian dimension where people and things occupy a place in time which is incommensurable with the one they have in space” (Deleuze, 1989: 39). Back there I presented this in terms of immateriality – for example, the

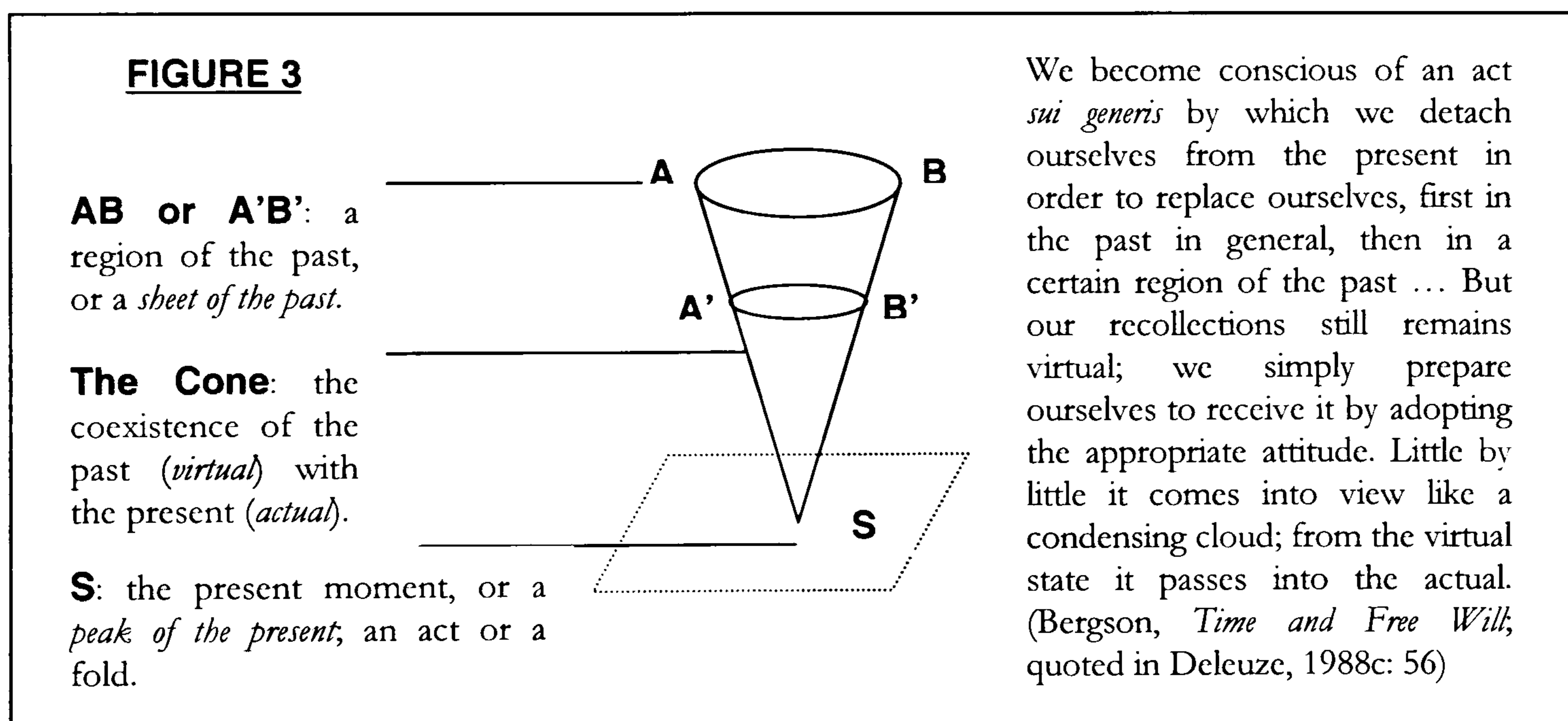
condition of falling in love as something that, whilst personal and subjective, somehow speaks of a shared state of being – whereas this time I want to work out this sense of immateriality in terms of memory. Thus, in the final part of this chapter, I want to set out the theoretical problem of memory and the solution it delivers us to by bringing the threads together in the empirical space of the rehearsal process.

6.4.1 Memory

Problem 11: Bergson's notion of a 'pure' past

One way of understanding the operation of memory, at least in consistency with what has gone before, is to turn once again to Bergson and pick up the previous strands and follow their development through towards the notion of the 'pure' past.

Starting with the notion of the 'present moment' (point S in Figure 3) it should be immediately clear there needs to be a new



present instantaneously following on the back of this 'present moment' in order for this present to pass and for the notion of a moment to make sense. This is one of the paradoxical difficulties of thinking time on the plane of Chronos because clearly "no present would ever pass were it not past 'at the same time' as it is present" (Deleuze, 1994: 81). Think again of Zeno's paradox, the nearer you attempt to delineate the exact moment of the present, the more it seemingly becomes capable of never being graspable. Three points or paradoxes ensue from this way of thinking. The first point: there is a *contemporaneity* of the past, in other words the past is contemporary with the present that it

was (diagrammatically, in figure 4, this is represented by the tip of the cone). Instantly this argument involves something more theoretically dynamic: that if the past is contemporaneous with the present that it was “then *all* the past coexists with the new present in relation to which it is now past” (ibid: 81-82). In this sense the past *is*. It is not something that once existed, that *was* but is no more, rather it is something that insists and is a consistent part of the present that is now. Thus, the second paradox: the *coexistence* of the past with the present (the metaphor of the cone in Figure 4). And finally, if this coexistence is accepted then by implication you sanction the notion that in some way there is this past that pre-exists the present. The past thus “forms a pure, general, *a priori* element of all time” (ibid: 82). This is Bergson’s notion of a ‘pure’ past which conserves itself in itself by being presupposed by the new present which thus comes forth only by contracting the ‘pure’ past of which it is ‘now’ already a part. In some way this ‘pure’ past is a virtual recording surface of all the durations that have ever existed. Each section, or sheet of the past, as presented in Figure 3 as **A’B’** or **AB** operate as more or less expanded or contracted levels of the totality of the past (see Deleuze, 1988c: 59-60). In short you do not doubt that yesterday, or twelve years ago (as difference levels of contraction), the force of your body left a mark somewhere, with someone and was itself affected and marked by the passing of time, altered by an ‘internal force’ that carries life within itself. Thus when speaking of duration it less a question of succession than of coexistence, of memory as virtual coexistence in the present.

Taking this into the space of rehearsals, the dramatic tension and denouement of the play *All My Sons* emerges through the actor’s ability to act the present in direct relation to the volume of the past. The actor, and in particular in the scene below Chris, has to achieve the next moment of the textual action through the very contours of the past that brings this situation to its specificity. For example, in the text from the rehearsals that follows there is a gradual unravelling of the past that works to expand the awareness of a particular level of the past – a particular past

moment and its associations – in the repetitive questioning ‘... you did it?’ It is possible to see these associations develop like a spiral line working up the curved surface of the cone in Figure 3, just like when a memory gradually takes on more completeness as your encounter with such a memory is allowed to endure.

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>All My Sons</i> Act Two – page 66-67</p> <p>Mother: Chris, I’ve never said no to you in my life, now I say no!</p> <p>Chris: You’ll never let him go till I do it.</p> <p>Mother: I’ll never let him go and you’ll never let him go!</p> <p>Chris: I’ve let him go. I’ve let him go a long –</p> <p>Mother: (<i>with no less force, but turning from him</i>) Then let your father go. (<i>Pause. Chris stands transfixed.</i>)</p> <p>Keller: She’s out of her mind.</p> <p>Mother: Altogether! (<i>To Chris, but not facing them</i>) Your brother’s alive, darling, because if he’s dead, your father killed him. Do you understand me now? As long as you live, that boy is alive. God does not let a son be killed by his father. Now you see, don’t you? Now you see. (<i>Beyond control, she hurries up and into the house</i>)</p> <p>Keller: (<i>Chris has not moved. He speaks insinuatingly, questioningly</i>) She’s out of her mind.</p> <p>Chris: (<i>in a broken whisper</i>) Then ... you did it?</p> <p>Keller: (<i>With the beginning of plea in his voice</i>): He never flew a P-40 –</p> <p>Chris: (<i>struck; deadly</i>) But the others.</p> <p>Keller: (<i>insistently</i>) She’s out of her mind. (<i>He takes a step towards Chris, pleadingly.</i>)</p> <p>Chris: (<i>unyielding</i>) Dad ... you did it?</p> <p>Keller: He never flew a P-40, what’s the</p>	<p>16th rehearsal. Monday 26/1/98: 2pm-6pm SESSION 12</p> <p>Director: (<i>To Keller</i>) It needs so much – all the cumulative things – the passion ... some of it has to be converted into anger ... something, a look or a stare, so that by the time you get to ‘what could I do, you were a boy...’ something clicks – that it is too human – he is cornered by his own flesh, it is not father and son; he’s [Keller] fighting for his life, ... (<i>To Chris</i>) was there even, in the back of his mind, that he knew of the risk – it’s then ‘Tell me everything and I will be judge’. Sit on that thought but hold it back. I don’t mean to say that it hasn’t been indicated [before now in the moments in the play rather than in the actors performance] but it is at this point that it is realized. He is extraordinarily coherent in his anger. It is then when he says ‘What must I do?’ That is when it comes in on him.</p> <p>Chris: yeah, but that all comes from the stuff before, that all comes from that ... I know you say that he’s [Keller] a con, but you get clear when you get like that [when you get pent up, angry in the moment] ... the rhythm just goes ...</p> <p>D: Yeah its got rhythm – there is a lot of fury,</p>
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Whenever the hand of the distant past emerges out of its grave, it is always somehow assured as well as amazing, and we tend to resist belief in it, for it seems rather magically to reveal some unreadable hidden order behind the amoral chaos of events as we rationally perceive them. But that emergence, or course, is the point of *All My Sons* – that there are times when things do indeed cohere (Miller, *Timebends*, 1987:135).

matter with you?

Chris: *(still asking, and saying)* Then you did it. To the others.

Both hold their voices down.

Keller: *(afraid of him, his deadly insistence)*

What's the matter with you? What the hell is the matter with you?

Chris: *(quietly, incredibly)* How could you do that? How?

Keller: What's the matter with you?

Chris: Dad ... Dad, you killed twenty-one men!

Keller: What, killed?

Chris: You killed them, you murdered them.

Keller: *(as though throwing his whole nature before Chris)* How could I kill anybody?

Chris: Dad! Dad!

Keller: *(Trying to bush him)* I didn't kill anybody!

Chris: Then explain it to me. What did you do? Explain it to me or I'll tear you to pieces!

Keller: *(horrified at his overwhelming fury)*

Don't, Chris, don't –

Chris: I want to know what you did, now what did you do? You had a hundred and twenty cracked cylinder heads, now what did you do?

Keller: If you're going to hang me then I –

Chris: I'm listening, God Almighty, I'm listening!

passion, but he needs to be in control, that's where when he says 'what do I do' that is for him [ie he's not asking Keller to tell him] and it is because he doesn't know what to do with it [what he now knows about his father] ... its an impotent hit on the back. OK also this control in pursuing his father for the truth

Chris: So what's the difference between that and what I'm doing?

D: This is man to man.

Chris: So, the realization is going on ... then I confirm it ... and then I ask him to explain it ... and then I see the type of man he is ... and that is very upsetting information but also you are seeing your father for what he is ... and I put my ass on the line for George, Ann, ... everyone, and it is overwhelming fury [because the foundation of putting everyone else first has been shattered so the way he has lead his life believing in Dad etc has been destroyed]

D: What I'm seeing at the moment is not what you just described.

Chris: Then what are you seeing?

D: What I see at the moment is gut-wrenching disappointment with his father.

Chris: Absolutely

D: Yes, and you need to give that this is about a man, you're judging him. If I was Keller I'd be thinking you can talk alright but thank fuck you are not hitting me, but I need to see him needing to listen to you ... What you are doing is not wrong ...

Chris: Yeah, I just trying to figure it out

D: As well as the fury it is about seeing your father as a man, as just another man.

Additionally, the actual subjectivity and being of Keller is caught in the present by having been made in the past, by which I mean to suggest that his reality is consistently shaped, or haunted if you like, by the sheets of past (the regions **AB** or **A'B'**) that are his particular previous experience. In the scene above, and indeed in the entire play, it is the sheet of past that is the moment when Keller agreed to ship out those cracked cylinder heads. Now this moment, say the sheet **AB**, coexists and potentially influences all that comes after it, (beneath it in terms of the conic diagram). Hence, this new encounter with his son Chris becomes, in its passing, a new sheet of the past. This new sheet exists closer to the apex of the cone because it is shaped by the coexistence of the past and in its contemporaneity has itself now become a part of the virtual whole of the 'pure' past potentially influencing the future. In other words, you cannot erase what happens, even the most banal or minute action. Thus in each of his responses, Keller is recollecting the past and shaping the contraction of the future (the latter achieved in the way that Chris demands to be told).

6.5 Conclusions

Starting from the recognition that "it is we who are internal to time, not the other way around" (Deleuze, 1989: 82) this chapter has been about bringing to the surface some of the dynamic ways in which time itself operationalizes the unfolding creation of the world. This statement is hardly startling, but as I hope to have shown it holds several complex and compelling implications. To draw these elements together I frame the implications presented in the chapter as three lines, all of which stitch together the possibility of an alternative temporal topography for future research. The first of these traces out the full force of the sense of time as time itself – that Aionic drive delivering us to each moment. In the rehearsal process the actors are able to script their performance through negotiating this virtual force of time itself by replaying the exact contours of the moment of its actualization. Therefore, in performance, as in life in general, this is the essential syntactical space that is the tension of the present tense. Second, a line that cuts across everyday assumptions of time revealing a gap between the happening of things – a half second delay, a catch – that forever keeps the instance of the present moment from our grasp. This is a gap exposed by the paradox (Zeno's) that measures time in discrete manifolds (Chronos) whilst knowing that time is forever

slipping away (Aion). As such this gap is a space, or rather a rupturing and a spacing, in which to intimate the role of the present moment as something full of potential itself. Investigating this gap reveals a virtual texture to our events, encounters and performances; it is a siting of what might have been and what is also happening. Finally, a third line ghosts the other two with the coexistence of the totality of the past, the 'pure' past that stretches the present by recollecting the past and contracting the future at the same time. Different forces, by they of objects, places, or people (characters), have a specific duration that is not about the sum of series of successive moments but about the coexistence of the past within their present unfolding. Proceeding from this, despite the bare particularity of the mechanics of each moment, there is at different times and at different places an association of the past that brings to the present a historical genesis. This, as I hope to have shown, reveals a conceptual place for the making of a sense of weak subjectivity. It is a possible explanation, or location for such revelation, for how it is that we come to feel an immaterial hue to our lives. All three lines trace a spacing in which to cast a new cartography that grapples with the potential of what comes next. Using the example of the rehearsal process as an ideal space for experimentation with these lines, I have sought to reveal a research strategy not for examining the social itself but for working with our understanding of the way in which different elements, some virtual and others actual, bring the social about. Unlike Macbeth, in the quote that opened this chapter, whilst time maybe a grand story affecting us all, an intimate encounter with its operations exposes a space in which, rather than signifying nothing, the tale of life is full of potential signification. This is to say that moving out of the empty space the traces that we take with us are ones which can be registered temporally in the tension of the present, choreographed in relation to the contraction of the future, and haunted by the presence of the past.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Endgame

It seemed, then, that Friday had triumphed at last over the state of affairs he so detested! He had not, of course, deliberately caused the disaster Friday was not a rational being, performing deliberate, considered acts, but rather a force of nature from which actions proceeded, and their consequences resembled him, the way children resemble their mother Unwittingly but inexorably Friday had paved the way for, and finally achieved, a cataclysm that heralded the coming of a new era; as for the nature of this era, clearly it was in Friday's own nature that Robinson must look for it. He was still too much the prisoner of his former self to predict what form it would take ...

And so, having released him from his earthly bonds, Friday would now show him the way to *something else*, substituting for an existence he had found intolerable a new order which Robinson longed to discover. A new Robinson was sloughing off his old skin, fully prepared to accept the decay of his cultivated island and, at the heels of an unthinking guide, enter upon an unknown road. (Tournier, 1997: 179-80)

7.1 Introduction: an unknown road

There are dimensions here, times and places, glacial or torrid zones never moderated, the entire exotic geography which characterises a mode of thought as well as a style of life.

(Deleuze, 1990a: 128)

In its raw elements performance delivers the force of corporeality, immateriality and temporality in such a way as to strip us of our academic habits of thinking. In the face of these forces we have encountered the concept of the empty space that frames this thesis, and like Robinson in Tournier's *Friday*, we find ourselves having to find new ways of looking at the world in our attempt to make sense of this now seemingly uncultivated island. In this light, this thesis has been about experimenting with what I feel to be the three most important pared down elements through which we come to make sense of our encounters with the world. In utilizing the work of Gilles Deleuze as our 'unthinking' guide the aim has been to pave a way for making valid sense of the alternative dimensions arising when you give space to 'being' just in the present moment – a new mode of thought and perhaps a new order for the doing of social science.

Her last words were, 'If you were on a desert island, just remember two words: "Be present", and the rest will follow'

(Brook, 1998: 87).

7.2 Making an exit

Clov: "This is what we call making an exit." (Beckett, *Endgame*: 132)

This is the point where we have to work out how to get off stage, a task made difficult because the performance comes to an abrupt stop, signalling that the encounter is over despite the fact that the world continues on unravelling. Whilst the performance is over the experience continues in the way that it has affected us; we carry it forward into the street traced within us – art has no other object than Life (see Smith, 1998). I want to operate this conclusion in the same way as this 'endgame' by asking what are some of the traces that are taken forth? These traces interfere with the stance we take up in negotiating our next encounter in much the same way that the experience of rehearsal for the actor alters the next performance

she makes. This is an experiential process just as it is a referential one; it is the conceptual as rhizome, as dimensions that are directions on the move (see Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 21). As these are traces that need to be put on the map, not vice versa, I present three ways in which these traces can come to operate usefully within our practice of doing social science; three ways that equally infer a methodological sensibility shaping the use of Deleuze's philosophy.

7.2.1 Immanence

Firstly, the traces operate an 'anti-judicial' stance: why should our sociability need a transcendent power independent from our embodied, natural condition, such that what we do is prejudged by a context outside the event of its happening (Gatens, 1996b: 164-65)? The ethics here speak of our mutual immanence to *a* life (Deleuze, 1997), that there is something that exists between a subject and an object, something incorporeal, something inherent within everything, such that everything is a virtue of the same substance. This links back to the importance of the body-in-itself as substance and the cartography, or choreography of affect, described and experienced in Chapters Two and Three respectively. It also connects the academic stance towards the appreciation of the immaterial register of things and performances, artistic or everyday, as witnessed through the theory and the practice evidenced in Chapter's Four and Five. Through these illustrations, the events that people this immanence can be seen to be the effects of the interactions of bodies (organic or nonorganic) as combinations of action, passion and circumstance that have no "origin in the consciousness of the knowing subject" (Hayden, 1995: 292). The encounter with the performance can be taken forwards by using the spaces and spacings it opens up to construct a new vocabulary for presenting that which cannot presently be said. This creates a grammar connecting us to the immanence of both our gestures and those of animals, to the immanence in the effect of material spaces to our immaterial sense of them, and to a syntactical appreciation that the particular is immanent to a more general nature (love itself). Relative to how we might traditionally think this is anti-foundationalist. Yet to critique a foundation is to affirm another one: a performative foundation, or ontology, that is immanent, material and open (see Hardt, 1993: xv). In announcing a vital, ethical alternative adequate to contemporary social questions, in direct kinship with Deleuze's later works, the traces are clinical as well as critical in that they look to "a

possibility of life, a way of existing” (1995: 100; see also Deleuze, 1998; and Smith, 1998). Certainly, this vitalism is anti-humanist, being the ‘elan vital’ (Deleuze, 1988c) existing in “opposition to the world represented and mediated through the framework of the subject and object” (Marks, 1998: 29-30). It speaks the gerund of the verb, the expressing of “becomings or events that transcend mood and tense” (Deleuze, 1995: 34), such that we now speak of an “empiricism for which difference is the generative force of the actual” (Hayden, 1995: 283).

7.2.2 Practical and pragmatic

One never has a *tabula rasa*; one slips in, enters in the middle;
one takes up or lays down rhythms. (Deleuze, 1988a: 123)

Secondly, the traces are apprehended out of being delivered to the actual where our relations come “into existence by practical rather than essentialist or necessary means” (Hayden, 1995), such that the encounter that forces us to think is very much a part of being in constant interchange with our environment (Gatens, 1996a: 165). This means that rather than seeking interpretation, asking what something means by joining the dots, creating a pattern already orientated through a tracing of a historically substantiated (power-riddled) grid of signification, one experiments, as I have experimented in this thesis, by asking: ‘what can be done here?’, ‘And, what next?’ The conjunction ‘AND’ rules (see Doel, 1996) such that there is always the possibility of divergence and the destruction of identity (Deleuze, 1995: 45; see Smith, 1998: xxiii). Subsequently, the world, and our identities, have to be made; they need constant maintenance or re-enactment (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 6). This plays to the importance of the viscosity of our actions in the moment of their making. There is a danger here of advocating a “primal scene of an originary, unmediated encounter” (Goodchild, 1996: 43) when the point is rather to show a sense of everything existing in a ‘zone of indiscernability’ where we are defined by the limits and borders of the relations we slip into (see Marks, 1998: 34). For this purpose we need to work on the methodology and the language through which we come to map the social field. As I hope to have shown in Chapter Three the field of somatic art already operates a space within which people both practise a language for such mapping and heighten their skills in relation to the pragmatic living of their own lives. In relation to academia it is important to note how such

practices are used by artists (dancers, painters, and actors) for precisely the purpose of scripting an alternative stance that makes the most of the body's seemingly indiscernible nature. Equally, this works on an ethological perspective that speaks of the micropolitics 'in-between' subjects, the spacing cited in that syntactical grammar, such that one is always asking: "How can a being take another being into its world, but while preserving or respecting the other's own relations and world" (Deleuze, 1988a: 126)? This operates conceptually, as in the mixing and creation of concepts that produce a particular area of the plane of immanence, as well as practically, as in the very actions we make as we sense a way through an encounter. Accepting that an ability to affect is reciprocated by a capacity of being affected, part of the answer is performative, it is in getting through each individual moment, it is in knowing how to go on. Finally, in playing to the significance of time itself, of difference rather than identity persisting through time, Chapter Six traced out a temporal register for making sense of our encounter with performance by revealing the pragmatic way in which actions are always, to a greater or lesser extent, an encounter with the 'not-yet-known'. And that whilst risky, and continually testing what it is we think we know, the spacings and duration of our encounters are always shown to hold within them the colour of the past. Folding the empiricism achieved in the observation of rehearsal with theory enabled a way of seeing action both in relation to the practicality of the immediate moment and in its pragmatic relation to the past that still is. This trace is about thinking/acting on real existence as opposed to the possibility of existence being pronounced by *a priori* ideas: it is the 'earthiness' of our daily walks, the encounters for our tears and laughter, and our corporeal needs, that etch out the conceptual, not the reverse (see Baugh, 1993).

7.2.3 Creative

Thirdly, taking these traces up is indicative of the incessant need to think otherwise, to realise that we are always thinking on our feet: physically through our corporeality (Chapter Three), in registering such thinking materially (Chapter Two) and through materiality (Chapter Four) in relation to immaterial concerns (Chapter Five). Setting expectation aside through the concept of empty space, thinking otherwise is "not concerned with determining the essence and intrinsic relation of each thing, but with describing how new relations can be actively created between

things in order to produce change in and between the wholes these relationships form” (Hayden, 1995: 287). All of the chapters have been about this search for new relations through which to apprehend that which we feel takes place and that which evidently occurs in our encounters. This is about juxtaposing the advent of theory and practice in the attempt to create a space in-between where a sense of some kind can be made. Thus, in Chapters Two and Three the space was cleared for a cartography of relations built out of the visceral pathways etched out by the body-in-itself; in Chapter’s Four and Five, immanent relations to immateriality and eventhood were intimated to enable discussion of that which has not, and cannot, be said; and Chapter Six exposed the important relation of timing to all these relations, in particular through the way in which time operates the space of the comprehensions that can be made through such relations. For example, thinking in terms of the past makes sense in the discussions of materiality held in Chapter Four rather than in those of viscosity in Chapter Three (which has more to say through the temporal metrication of Chronos [corporeal and actual] despite operating through the dynamic force of Aion [incorporeal and virtual]). Above all, understanding the encounter with performance through a temporal register is to emphasize the persistence of difference in itself and to accept the inevitability of change and the performative sense of experimentation that greets us every day. In working through the encounter with performance art to capture the way it forces us (me) to think (to have thought), and to work this out of an apprenticeship with the work of Gilles Deleuze is to effect a venturesome coupling and a research strategy that negotiates the new. This is achieved through following both the empirical and theoretical lines of flight that have enabled a way to ‘go on’.

7.3 Writing with a view to an unborn people that doesn’t yet have the language¹

In utilising Deleuze by linking his conceptualisations to the register of the corporeality, immateriality and temporality presented to us in performance, the aim has been to operate a form of detective work in the concrete empirical field, where the drive has been in explicating what we do rather than what we are (see May, 1996; Goodchild, 1997). In this regard this thesis has not been about setting out to

¹ After an expression of Deleuze’s (1995: 143).

prove the validation of a specific research field with the social sciences, nor has it been about achieving a detailed explication of a particular aspect of everyday life. Instead, my focus has been to offer a potential syntactical, rather than genealogical, philosophical analysis that is ambitious in its attempt to use such syntactics – the connective capacities scripted out of the corporeality, immateriality and temporality – to grasp that which is inevitably ungraspable. The point I want to make of this ambition is that it makes due acknowledgement of the need to embark on such an endeavour in and of itself, and that through doing research in this way the thesis has been more of an experimentation in contact with, rather than a specifically detailed attempt at explaining, what it is we might call the ‘real’. This said, the thesis leaves so much unanswered, leaving just the hint of the traces of the possible ways in which we might begin to make sense of the seemingly ‘ungraspable’ realities of the three registers of corporeality, immateriality and temporality. Therefore I end with the challenge that some of the pathways that I have begun to explore here are worth further pursuit, namely:

- How specific contexts affect the operations of these three registers in making sense.
- How, within a more detailed and specific case study, the traces suggested here can be made to achieve practical application.
- How such experimentation reveals a space for the creation and justification of new methodologies for the capture of those worlds whose vistas are presently out of sight.

What one says comes from the depth of one’s own ignorance,
the depths of one’s own underdevelopment. One becomes a set
of liberated singularities, words, names, fingernails, things,
animals, little events. (Deleuze, 1995: 7)

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Appendix

All My Sons rehearsal research schedule

DATE	REHEARSAL	RESEARCH SESSION	COMMENTS
6/1/98 Tuesday	1 st		The opening day when all the cast meet each other for the first time. This consists of mainly improvisation exercises that aim at the cast getting to trust one another and reveal early thoughts about their characters. ¹
7/1/98	2 nd	S1	
8/1/98	3 rd		
9/1/98	4 th	S2	
10/1/98	5 th		
12/1/98 Monday	6 th	S3	I am invited to stay and come to the rehearsals right through the run.
13/1/98	7 th	S4	
14/1/98	8 th	S5	
15/1/98	9 th	S6	
16/1/98	10 th	S7	
19/1/98 Monday	11 th	S8	
20/1/98	12 th	S9	
21/1/98	13 th	S10	
22/1/98	14 th		
23/1/98	15 th	S11	
26/1/98 Monday	16 th	S12	
27/1/98	17 th	S13	
28/1/98	18 th	S14	Director's preview. A complete run through in front of audience members (held in the rehearsal room). The lighting designer attends the run through and makes changes to the scripted choreography already agreed with the director.
29/1/98	19 th	S15	Technical Rehearsal/Set up
30/1/98	Run through	S16	Technical Rehearsal
31/1/98	Run through	S17	Dress Rehearsal
2/2/98 Monday	Run through	S18	Dress Rehearsal
3/2/98	Premiere		Performance

¹ I did not attend not least because during the first day of rehearsals the actors set about building a rapport amongst themselves through the fairly raw, and for some vulnerable, experience of improvisation. The director Andy Hay also wanted to give them the opportunity to say whether or not they minded my presence. It was agreed that I should meet Andy in the theatre on the second day of rehearsals half an hour before they were scheduled to begin, and that I should be aware that for the lead actor playing Joe Keller, John Franklyn Robins (a stalwart of the Royal National Theatre under Tyrone Guthrie and Lawrence Olivier), this would be his first day with the rest of the cast. There were no objectors, more curiosity, and it was agreed that I could attend the rehearsals and make whatever notes I wanted. As a kind of probation for all concerned this was agreed for the first few rehearsals. To begin with I was going to stagger my attendance so that I could collate my notes and give thought to the particular focus I wanted to pursue.