University of Roehampton London

DOCTORAL THESIS

Experiencing emotional import in twenty-first century Euro-American contemporary theatre dance

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Award date:
2019

Awarding institution:
University of Roehampton

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Experiencing Emotional Import in Twenty-first Century Euro-American Contemporary Theatre Dance

By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of PhD

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2019

Abstract

This thesis explores the spectator's experience of emotions in Euro-American contemporary theatre dance. It proceeds through a dialogue between philosophical views of the spectator's experience and a particular focus on the analysis of videos of performance. The study explores the experience of emotions in works of contemporary theatre dance as neither raw—i.e. not intellectual—nor completely ineffable. The view adopted integrates the bodily experience and the intellectual processing of information to create a complex approach of embodied cognition.

The project develops a conceptual framework through the theoretical notions of emotion, experience, embodied cognition, enactive perception, and emergence, and presents methods to analyse movement qualities, spatial-rhythm, and sound-movement relationships, considering these as perceptual properties of the work. These two aspects of the methodology are put together through a discussion which relates mainly to my own experience as spectator, but also to the experience of other informed spectators through reviews of each work. Two examples within the case studies are well-known works: Russell Maliphant's *Afterlight (Part One* (2009)) and Crystal Pite's *Dark Matters* (2009); the third example is from one of my own works—*Petrichor* (2016). The variety of examples helps me to reflect upon my spectatorial and choreographic experiences. The choreographers' experience, then, is conceptualised as that of first audience members, guiding them to adjust and modulate variables during the creative process.

The thesis proposes that the experience of emotion in Euro-American contemporary theatre dance is an embodied enactive perceptual process which focuses on the features of the work, but which integrates aspects of both the background of the spectator and the context of the work and the performance. This perspective allows for a comprehensive understanding of the experience of emotion in both spectator and choreographer, creating a bridge between the theoretical and movement analysis approaches and between theoretical research and dance practice.

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Acknowledgements

My work towards the completion of this thesis has been made better by the presence of a lot of people in my life. First, I would like to thank my colleagues at the School of Performing Arts of the University of Malta, and especially the Dance Department. I am especially grateful to Professor Vicki Ann Cremona, Professor Frank Camilleri, Dr Mario Frendo, and Dr Stefan Aquilina for their support, advice, and for some very stimulating conversations, and to Dr Deborah Williams for her undying encouragement in the last few months leading towards completion. UM and SPA also funded my research in many occasions, contributing to my scholarly development. I want to thank also Dr Anusha Kedhar and Dr Christina Kostoula, for their often dissenting, and much needed, views. You both continue to be the ideal of lecturer and person to which I aspire.

Roehampton University, even at a distance, has been a great supportive environment and I would like to thank the big dance family there for always helping and making people feel welcome. I am immensely grateful to Dr Simon Ellis, who was instrumental in the development of the foundations of this project as my first co-supervisor, and whose challenging questions still haunt me today—in the best of ways. And to Professor Stephanie Jordan, who also supported me greatly, whose work is the basis of this project's understanding of relationship between music and choreography, and whom I had the pleasure of working with in a research project which was, through her presence, very illuminating.

Thank you also to Russell Maliphant, Crystal Pite, Daniel Proietto, Jermaine Spivey, and Océane Sasizza, for simply being amazingly inspiring. And especially to Russell and Daniel for their feedback, conversations, and approachability. To anyone who has ever danced my work, and to my students: you give meaning to this project.

I consider myself extremely privileged to have had Dr Anna Pakes and Dr Tamara Tomic-Vajagic as my supervisory team. They were rigorous, encouraging, challenging, supportive, but, above all, they were and continue to be inspiring. I am immensely grateful and I continue to strive to one day achieve their level of scholarly work.

To my friends, near and far, but especially to those near who supported me, (put up with me!), believed in me, generally made my life better, and who are genuinely kind and special. Especially Margherita, Florinda, Niels, Keith, Emma, thank you!! I could not be more grateful for our beautiful artistic collaborations and friendship. And especially, Flo, for your insightful feedback. I look forward to developing these all more in our upcoming works!

A huge thank you goes to my family. My incredible mum and the beautiful people I have as siblings, in-laws, and nieces and nephew. Special mention to Emma for opinions, crazy questions, PhD memes, and sharing insane research moments—it's your turn now Nana!

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to my husband, Edi, whose support did not fail even for a second throughout this long process, and whose love and intellectual prompts are between the lines of every single page that follows.

In loving memory of my aunt, who was a most beautiful human being.

Introduction

The starting point of this research is my experience of viewing certain works of dance. These works are brought together by the reaction that they produced in me, that is, an effect akin to an emotional reaction. These emotional effects were of various types: positive, negative, very physical, or understood as more 'intellectual'. In most cases the affective reaction was quite undefined—meaning the work did not make me feel sad, or happy, or angry, it just made me feel. Nonetheless, it can also happen that a work is understood as expressive of a clear emotion, such as when Martha Graham's *Lamentation* (1930) is understood as an expression of grief (Savrami, 2013).[1] While watching Russell Maliphant's *Afterlight (Part One)*, my heartbeat accelerated especially towards the end of the work. At the same time, I was perceiving certain details—mainly the smooth but powerful movement of the dancer and the harmony between the work's elements of light, music, and movement. I was also contemplating the person/character in front of me, and in a sense what his story was—I was not completely aware of the work's relation to any particular narrative aspect when I first watched it. All this, I must admit, was not a fully conscious processing, more of a general awareness. This reflection on my own multi-layered experience problematises the conceptualisation of emotion in dance, understanding it as complex. Emotion, or more specifically emotional import as I argue below (section 1.2), is understood here

[1] An abstracted grief, but still intentional on the side of the choreographer. *Lamentation*'s grief is the expression of the woman (Savrami, 2013): a non-personal, generalised idea of woman.

as emergent from the properties of the work: arising from a combination of perceptual properties, which in turn arise from the work's physical properties.

This emotional experience of certain works of dance is both the motivation for the project as a whole, and that which guides my choice of works. The project intends to explore this experience, trying to explain how and why it occurs. This motivation to understand the experience is joined by my aim, as a choreographer, to discover what it is that gives these works their emotional power. My experience as a choreographer, then, is also key to the project's investigation, no less because it directly affects my spectatorial experience. Through this reflection on my experience I am able to explore the underlying structures of the emotional experience of dance. The hope, and the potential, is to start a dialogue which will disentangle the experience of emotional import in Euro-American contemporary theatre dance. My main research question, then, is what makes dance works emotionally powerful? More specifically, I investigate what in the work might produce the spectator's experience of emotion in contemporary theatre dance, and how this might be linked back to the choreographer's creative process.

Through a philosophical understanding of extant discussions of emotion and the arts, I propose that the spectator's experience of emotion in contemporary dance is an embodied cognitive and enacted perceptual process which focuses on the features of the work but which integrates aspects of both the background of the spectator and the context of the work and the performance. This understanding also allows me to build a link—a parallel—between the experience of spectator and choreographer. Indeed, the agency of the choreographer or of the dancer is not abandoned by focusing on the work. In the studio, and later in the theatre, choreographer, dancers, and collaborators experiment with features of the work until it "works". Mihaly

Csikszenmihalyi talks about this process within his theory of flow, explaining that 'optimal experience'

> is what a painter feels when the colors on the canvas begin to set up a magnetic tension with each other, and a new *thing*, a living form, takes shape in front of the astonished creator (2008/1990: 3).

In the case of the choreographer, I argue, emotional import emerges also at this point: the moment when the combination of factors seems to produce an emotional effect, perhaps appropriately described as an affect.[2] For the audience this process of emergence can be repeated when watching. Csikszentmihalyi refers to a similar idea when he speaks about the reaction to a work of art as an 'epiphany of order' which 'gives you in one glance that great sense of a scheme, not necessarily rational, but that things come together' (2008/1990: 107). Also here my work as choreographer informs my position as viewer in this project, becoming a bridge between choreographer and audience, potentially giving the philosophical discussion of emotion in dance a new perspective, as well as offering some particular insight to the practice of choreography—from within, but informed by theoretical debate.

An element which makes my spectatorial experience of *Afterlight (Part One)* emotional seems to be the fluidity of the performer's movement, Daniel Proietto in this case. If so, what can produce an equally powerful emotional experience in such a different work as Crystal Pite's? The choice of different works relates to an aim to problematise the spectator's experience of emotion: different works produce different

[2] Affect is commonly used as an umbrella term to refer to anything to do with emotion, as in affective realm, but it is also the subject of affect theory, very current in scholarly work in the humanities and social sciences (Leys, 2011). The second understanding, or perhaps, still, understandings of affect have been developed by a series of scholars 'drawing on writings by Lucretius, Baruch Spinoza, Henri Bergson, William James, Alfred North Whitehead, and other dissenting philosophers of nature, especially two recent figures, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari' (Leys, 2011: 441). My use here is in line with the first option, as generally related to emotion.

experiences underpinned by different features and structures. This already focuses the research project to hypothesise that it is not possible to simply generalise about what makes the experience of dance emotional. I maintain that it is not possible to prescribe a particular emotional effect on the basis of specific features or combinations of features. The concept of emergence—the appearance of a whole which is more than the sum of its parts, first coined by George Henry Lewes (O'Connor, 2015)—and the conceptual framework in general, also work towards understanding the experience in a way in which prescription is not possible. The project, then, focuses on dissecting my own spectatorial experience of these three works in relation to emotion, without assuming its unmediated generalisability, but in hope that the detailed exploration of these cases affords the potential to inform other cases or debates. In order to facilitate this, and adding to the study of my own experience, the project explores other informed spectators' experiences through the study of reviews of the works. In terms of choreographic process, the research mostly focuses on my own experience of creating *Petrichor* but also refers to available comments by Maliphant and Pite regarding their own reflections on process.

Establishing the research process

Not every choreographer works with a self-expressive aim. Indeed, the idea of dance as self-expressive is often both contested and abandoned. This occurs from the non-emotional aims of postmodern dance—such as Judson Dance Theatre and especially Yvonne Rainer—to the more intellectualised explorations of conceptual choreographers—arguably, those dance makers whose focus is more on the ideas behind the choreography than on the movement and its organisation, such as Jérôme Bel. It seems, however, that the idea that dance is self-expressive still pervades some areas of practice, with artists and critics alike often resorting to the idea of dance as a

vehicle for expressing oneself. I expand on this idea in my discussion below (section 1.1.1). My argument in this project is that even emotionally expressive dance does not need to be self-expression in a reductive manner, that is, necessarily referring to a symptomatic expression of the feelings of dancer or choreographer. Moreover, that the concept of emotional import is more suitable in the effort to develop a proper understanding of the experience of emotion in contemporary dance works. This allows me to explore the experience of emotion without the need to reduce the emotional or expressive dimension of dance to symptomatic self-expression. The project also develops the idea of the ineffability of the emotional import of dance, and tries both to understand this common assumption, and to propose possible articulations of the emotional experience of dance.

In order to propose these alternative understandings, I analyse my experience of emotion according to that which I can see in performances of the selected works. Firstly I identify the properties to be analysed—movement qualities, spatial-rhythm, and sound-movement relationships—as important in my own spectatorial experience of the works, but also in my choreographic process of the case study of my own work. In addition to their significance for my spectatorial as well as artistic process, these properties were chosen also because they were mentioned by both reviewers and choreographers. Moreover, I analysed the selected works or extracts in full, although I only refer to a few emotionally salient examples in this text. Finally, the project outlines a series of premises in terms of emotion as emergent from the experience of perceptual properties of the work. These are briefly outlined below, but will be explained in more detail in the next sections.

(a) My interest is in the emotional import of dance works as emergent from the properties of the works themselves; dance is not understood necessarily as reducible to symptomatic self-expression, either of the choreographer or of the

dancer, or merely an empty vehicle for the personal emotions of the spectator. Other commonly assumed characteristics of dance, such as it being "raw" emotion or being difficult to articulate, are also reviewed and challenged. I expand on this discussion in section 1.1 below.

(b) The project focuses on the formal properties of the work, and not directly on its symbolism, imagery, narrative, or themes on which the work comments. However, these are discussed as perceptual properties of the work in themselves, for example in the case of symbolic gestures. Nonetheless, I also argue that the emotional effect of the work does not depend solely on the spectator grasping the ideas conveyed by symbols or imagery, but that these are integrated in the full signifying field of the work, comprising its perceptual properties.

(c) The emotional effects of the works I choose to explore do not relate clearly to a particular emotion, and hence these effects may be difficult to articulate. This idea of the ineffability of the emotional effect of dance works is not understood as the only possible way of perceiving dance works, but it is the most intriguing in terms of their emotional power. It also seems to be quite pervasive in the understanding of the spectator's experience of dance. The idea of emotional import—as distinct from, but related to, both emotion and mood, as I argue in section 1.2—is proposed also in line with this: a work is perceived experientially as emotional, but it is not described as expressive of one particular emotion or mood. In fact, I argue that both emotion and mood are concepts which do not conform to the characteristics of the emotional experience of a work of dance.

(d) Since works of dance can only be accessed through concrete manifestations—embodied in performance—I accept that many interpretations within this

> discussion will depend on viewing a particular performance, which is only one possible instantiation of the abstract object that is understood as the choreographic work. There are other elements that could be explored through comparison between different performances, such as the role of the specific dancer: it is possible that with a different cast certain properties would be more or less evident. For this project, however, I focus on the works' features which emerge as important in my experience and that of the studied reviewers, and assume that a work is re-cast with these main properties in mind. That is, the choreographer or re-stager would search for a dancer capable of performing them similarly, so the main properties would generally be maintained. The project then focuses on the particular features of a performance, more specifically movement qualities, use of space and light, and music, to discuss how my spectatorial experience of emotional import might emerge from them. The decision to analyse particular performances of the three principal case studies responds to two main practical reasons: (a) they are available on video, for multiple viewings and analysis; and (b) they are videos of performances by the original cast and which have been sanctioned by the choreographers. This last aspect is important to the project, as I build a perspective which understands the choreographer's role as key to the spectator's experience of emotional import. The choreographer's role is understood as creator as well as first audience of the work, but still distinct from the implication of unmediated symptomatic self-expression.

The project develops a dance analysis method to explore my experience of emotion in these works. This partially—as the method is not only formed of this kind of analysis—situates the project within current studies which annotate video recordings of dance to highlight the structures that compose them. *Synchronous Objects* is perhaps

the clearest example of this kind of work, a project exploring choreographic structures instigated by William Forsythe's work and questioning of process (Motion Bank/The Forsythe Company, 2013). *Synchronous Objects* was in fact a pilot project which then developed into Motion Bank, a four-year project researching choreographic practice which develops online digital scores (Motion Bank, 2019).[3] In *Synchronous Objects* video annotations are used to 'visualize the relations discovered through the team's analysis', and aim 'to "unlock" the structures of the work, to help users recognize the systems of organization and disambiguate the dance' (Blades, 2015: 27). This serves both as a way to reach a broader audience, and to help choreographers look back on their work and 'discover' more things 'explicitly rationalising what was once intuitive' (Jordan and Pakes, 2018: 28). Other choreographers have since either joined the Motion Bank project (such as Jonathan Burrows or Deborah Hay (Motion Bank/The Forsythe Company, 2013)), or developed projects which reflect on their choreographic process (such as Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker with Bojana Cvejić (Cvejić, 2017)). My project responds equally to this double interest in reaching broader audiences and helping choreographers look back on their work, and, in that sense, could potentially benefit other choreographers and audiences.

There are, however, some fundamental differences between my work and this line of projects. The main differences rest in the fact that these are usually done by teams of researchers, analysts, choreographers, and theorists, and often with highly complex technological tools—crucially specialised software. These projects also focus mainly on the visual aspects of the work. To my knowledge none of these projects focus on choreomusicological structural relationships—although Jonathan Burrows and Matteo Fargion's collaborations as analysed in Motion Bank would have an

[3] Motion Bank continued to develop the line of work followed in *Synchronous Objects*, and a third version of their associated software, PieceMaker, is currently being developed (Motion Bank, 2019).

element of music-dance collaboration (Motion Bank/The Forsythe Company, 2013). Clear focus on movement qualities, or, more importantly for my project, on emotion, is not evident in the documentation of these projects either. Nonetheless, dance scholar Hetty Blades argues that video annotations within these projects have the potential to 're-present the resonance of movement through space and generate affective relations with the viewer' (Blades, 2015: 31), and that this possibility might be facilitated by 'conceptualizing affect as a relational experience' (Blades, 2015: 32). This would resonate with the aims and methods of this thesis too, as I use annotations as indexical forms that help me to articulate my emotional viewing/choreographic experience, as well as facilitate the subsequent analytical process. Finally, these projects generally focus on the work of one choreographer in each individual project, and do not offer comparison across works of different artists.

This thesis focuses on the selected composite properties and their interactions, and in this research process I fulfil the positions of spectator, choreographer, and analyst, while comparing experiences of emotion in works of three different choreographers. Although this multi-faceted, but individual, position could be seen as potentially limiting—and I attempt to reflect on this whenever it seems necessary—it can also provide a unique view, and a way to link the experiences of choreographer and spectator through the analyst and theorist lens. My reference to reviews and to available information on the processes of Maliphant and Pite also responds to this aim to maintain a self-reflexive stance.

Case studies

The case studies will be three affective solo dances by three different choreographers. These offer a range of works—or fragments of works—while at the same time being comparable, as they are all instances of Euro-American contemporary theatre dance.

The project looks at solos, either self-standing works as in the case of *Afterlight (Part One)*, or sections of a longer piece as in *Dark Matters* and *Petrichor*. The first reason for this choice was to be coherent with the case that prompted the research itself, that is, *Afterlight (Part One)*. However, the need to narrow the possible variables and maintain achievable analysis aims was also part of the rationale behind this choice: there is more clarity in the analysis when interactions between dancers are not a factor, and using solos also eliminates other possible emotional aspects such as story and relationship metaphors. Solos offer great potential for powerful responses from the spectator across times and styles, from Graham's *Lamentation* as explained above, to Bel's *Veronique Doisneau* (2004). Dance scholar Tamara Tomic-Vajagic argues that

> solos, although often very brief fragments of the work, are by their nature prominent and possibly more memorable for the spectator, than is the case with the larger, group sections. Even subtle shifts in the interpretation of the solo thus might re-position the whole work for the viewer (Tomic-Vajagic, 2012: 296).

The first two cases will be Russell Maliphant's *Afterlight (Part One)* (2009), and a solo from Crystal Pite's *Dark Matters* (2009), situating the discussion in early twenty-first century Euro-American contemporary theatre dance. The thesis centres on choreographers who fall between the two extremes of expression: they do not work anti-expressively, and they do not work with an overtly self-expressive aim. And yet their work still has a profoundly emotional effect on me as a viewer, alongside at least some other audience members, as found from the analysis of dance critics' reviews. Indeed further to my own experience all three works have been perceived as emotional by the reviewers, even particularly commented on in terms of their emotional impact (Cowan-Turner, 2017; Citron, 2012), as is discussed in their respective chapters. I am interested in probing how and to what extent this effect is generated by features of the works themselves. Moreover, there is limited scholarly work on the practitioners,

whose work is analysed in this project.[4] By focusing on particular characteristics of their choreographies, and discussing them within a philosophical framework, this research project will contribute to a better understanding of their work.

Maliphant's *Afterlight (Part One)* (2009) is explored principally in terms of the interaction between movement, light, and music, which seem crucial to the work's emotional effect, and on which Maliphant works often and from the beginning of the creative process. The example of Pite's choreography explored here—a solo from *Dark Matters* (2009)—is part of a full work which is more clearly invested in narrative content, with use of text as soundscape, as well as interaction of various elements, as in the Maliphant case. This solo is performed to spoken text which affects the perception of the movement. Hence, I will also explore the effect of this particular aspect on the overall emotional import of the work.

The choreographers I study in this project are ballet trained, working in contemporary dance style, and regularly work in Europe, which suggests they share with me a reasonably similar background and perspective. I am a dancer and choreographer, European born and trained, I have lived and worked in three different countries within Europe. I am also trained in both ballet and contemporary dance, but currently dance and do my choreographic work within contemporary dance. This similar positionality then allows me to compare and analyse the three works from a perspective related to that of the other choreographers. I conclude with a case study which analyses a solo from my own work *Petrichor* (2016), in an attempt to return to my practice as a choreographer. This is important because it allows a glimpse into a process which I know to be not symptomatically self-expressive, as it is my own. I also mainly work in this in-between of expressiveness in my own choreography, so

[4] On Pite: Dickinson, 2019; McJannet, 2019; and my own forthcoming Piquero, 2019. On Maliphant: Pakes, 2001; and Stewart, 2016; although his work is also mentioned in other scholarly work in terms of his collaboration with Michael Hulls.

my positionality is close to the choreographers of the other case studies, and my own work can be analysed to probe these ideas. But also this final case provides a first-hand choreographic experience, which, as I am acting as the main spectator throughout this project, eventually also offers a link back to the spectator's experience. Finally, it also helps situate the conclusions of this project in a way that might help other choreographers' practice, as well as my own.

Applying the same methodology to my own work as to the other case studies implies (1) that there is a framework which has been tested and might control the difficulties of analysing my own work, and (2) that this framework is further tested by its application to practice-led research. *Petrichor* is a work I created in 2016 for the apprentices of ŻfinMalta Dance Ensemble, the national dance company of Malta. To maintain consistency within the thesis, in Chapter 5 I analyse a solo within the work.

Each case within this research project becomes a small study of my experience of emotion as spectator of dance works. Watching—at least certain kinds of—dance can be an emotional experience, and as a choreographer I feel the need to question how or why this might be the case. Although the thematic has been previously approached from a philosophical point of view, and dance analysis has been used very effectively to understand structures of dance works, including relating them to emotions, little attention has been paid to in-depth dialogues between these two perspectives. The result of this gap in the understanding of emotion in dance is that most discussions either do not thematise emotion particularly, or refer to emotion as represented in dance: they consider emotional meaning—understood as linguistic or propositional, but also including more contextual information, hence broader than emotional import—and not emotion as experienced. As discussed, there is reference to affective qualities in Blades's review of annotation and notation practices in dance projects, but in this case she refers mostly to how these annotations can 'invite the

spectator into an imagined version of the performer's experience' (Blades, 2015: 32).[5] This project joins the strengths of these two approaches of philosophy and dance analysis to explore my spectatorial experience of certain works of dance, and compare it with that of reviewers. The study considers the perception of these works, dissects their properties, and discusses them and their interactions in relation to emotion, experience, and their philosophical conceptualisations. The final proposal is a way to connect the audience and the choreographer's experiences through a complex understanding of emotion in dance, based on embodied cognition and enactive perception.

Content organisation

Chapter 1 sets out the philosophical framework of the project, starting with a review of ideas on emotion in dance through expression, ineffability, and expressiveness. Terms within the affective realm are then studied, both to understand the concepts of emotion and mood and to eventually posit emotional import as a more adequate term. Moreover, conceptualisations of experience and embodied cognition are pursued to construct the understanding of experience from which the project develops, having previously referred to other possible conceptualisations such as disinterest or kinesthetic empathy. The theoretical review ultimately enables me to problematise my experience and to propose the project's conceptual framework through which the methodology of analysis progresses. Chapter 2, then, explains this methodology of analysis, with a focused survey of the movement and dance analysis models in use in the case studies. This includes: Laban's *Choreutics*, in particular his concepts of

[5] Many of her reflections and of the scholars she cites, however, resonate through my project. I refer below to ideas on how the work's perceptual properties are not limited to its physical properties and how emotion needs to be understood as relational in the experience of dance, both of which Blades refers to in her article (2015: 32).

kinesphere and spatial-rhythm (2011/1966), and *Eukinetics*, in particular *effort/shape* theory (2011/1950); the work of dance scholar Stephanie Jordan on structural relationships from her choreomusicological framework (2000 and 2015); the speech analysis—in terms of intensity and pitch—carried out in the *Dark Matters* and *Petrichor* case studies; and my particular conceptualisation of spatial-rhythm and a framework for its analysis, drawing also on ideas from theories of visual arts, mainly psychologist of perception Rudolf Arnheim's ideas on perception (1974/1954, 1982, 1986). This chapter also explains the importance of comparing my and reviewers' experiences, and discusses the problems, but also the benefits, of analysing performances mostly through videos. Together, Chapters 1 and 2 allow me to explore and conceptualise my experience of these works, as well as illustrate it in order to share it with other spectators and/or readers.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 present the case studies of *Afterlight (Part One)*, *Dark Matters*, and *Petrichor* and their respective analyses. They introduce the work, my experience, and the properties that are relevant for the analysis of the dances, to then present salient examples of particular moments and the emotional experience that seems to emerge for me at those points, also in comparison with the reviewers' experiences. The discussion of the insights from the analysis of the experiences of all three case studies follows in Chapter 6. Poignancy is given as an example of a seemingly pervasive emotional import in contemporary theatre dance in Europe, as a further point in common between the case studies, as a clear illustration of the link between the perceptual properties and emotional effect, and also to summarise the proposed understanding of the experience of emotion in dance. Emotion is posited as emergent from the perceptual properties of the work throughout this discussion, and this is further demonstrated through examples from the case studies. This chapter proposes an understanding of the spectator's experience of emotion in these examples

of contemporary theatre dance through embodied cognition and enactive perception. This same conceptualisation is then used to propose a link to the choreographer's experience, which is further developed through reflection on the creative processes. The discussion returns to the dancer's contribution during the creative process and performance, considering this as key, although not a main focus of this particular project. Reflection is also offered in relation to the process and method of analysis itself.

The conclusion discusses the study and its potential significance for choreographers, dancers, and theoreticians, as well as the possible implications for spectators. The limitations of the project, as well as further routes for research in the area are also signalled. Ultimately, the thesis proposes a framework for the understanding of the spectator's experience of emotion in a particular context of Euro-American contemporary theatre dance, through an in-depth dialogue between philosophical perspectives and analysis of spectatorial and choreographic experiences in reference to the work's perceptual properties. The posited view is that the experience of emotion in contemporary dance is an embodied cognitive and perceptual process which focuses on the features of the work but which integrates aspects of both the background of the spectator and the context of the work and the performance.

Chapter 1. Conceptual Framework

Theatre dance is a particular case in the study of the spectator's experience of art. This is the reason why some general aesthetic theories, although referring to emotion, do not seem to apply straightforwardly to dance. The first of these particularities is that a dance is not a static object, but rather develops in space and time: as philosopher Michel Bernard says, dance possesses a 'dynamic of indefinite metamorphosis' (Bernard, 2001/1991: 5). Dance is also instantiated by human beings/bodies. In this sense, as a performing art, it is similar to theatre or music. The juxtaposition of music or sound to the dance is indeed another of the particularities of this form of art: the dance is not experienced by the spectator through one sense only—although I will argue for a possible accentuated weight of the visual below. It could be said that dance is inherently multidisciplinary, as it typically includes music or sound within its performance.

The kind of dance I explore, that is, Euro-American contemporary theatre dance, has a strong aesthetic aim: in other words, it is preoccupied, at least in part, with its formal properties. The spectators are also enculturated to process the works by attending to the dance's formal qualities, so it is plausible that these properties are important part of the experience. Contemporary theatre dance, hence, in its uniqueness of experience, demands that spectators deal with several facets: that they process aspects of visual arrangement, time and space, sound, and the movement of the human body. Bernard explains the complexity of the perception of choreographic work through a multi-layered system of temporality which includes the duration of the performance, the subjective lived time, the personal organisation of visual and hearing

stimuli, the rhythmical organisation of the performance, and the referential aspect (Bernard, 2001/1991: 7-8). His view reflects how the spectator's experience is formed by properties of the work—such as duration and rhythmical organisation—but always as accessed by the spectator's perception—lived time, personal organisation of stimuli, or referential aspects. I propose a similar multi-layered understanding of experience in my framework. This multifaceted understanding implies that both views that emphasise intellectual engagement in dance spectatorship (such as those defending aesthetic experience as distance), and views that emphasise bodily response (such as kinesthetic empathy), are not of interest separately for my particular project. There is need to find a position that develops a more subtle and complex notion of this kind of experience. This understanding implies both perception and cognition not being just bodily or just thoughtful, and including both the work itself and the particular spectator. Indeed it implies a non-dualist relational approach to both perception and cognition.

To frame both the overall discussion and the analysis that the project realises, I review ideas on self-expression, ineffability, and the "rawness" of emotion as potential understandings of dance, settling for expressiveness as a better conceptualisation. I then explore characterisations of widely used affective terms within analytic philosophy and apply them to the experience of dance, proposing emotional import as the framework for my discussion and analysis. Following this, the chapter reviews understandings of experience to select embodied cognition and enactive perception as framework, while recognising the social construction of perception through theories of theatre visuality. To conclude, the conceptual framework builds a notion of emotional import by explaining both what are considered as perceptual properties, and the concept of emergence as applied to the experience of emotion in dance.

1.1 Understandings of emotion in dance

In order to discuss emotion in the experience of dance, there is need to first explore what emotion itself might mean in the experience of theatre dance, and what kinds of understandings have been developed in relation to the affective work of a dance. In this section three such possibilities are reviewed, due to their direct link with emotion and their weight in debates of emotion and art.

1.1.1 The 'widely popular doctrine'

In the late twentieth century, Roger Copeland and Marshall Cohen spoke of the 'widely popular doctrine' (1983: 30) within dance. In their historical discourse, this 'doctrine' is that which identifies dance with self-expression of the dancer or choreographer. Even today, in my experience as a dancer, choreographer, and teacher in Southern Europe, it is fairly rare for me to hear a full conversation between dance practitioners without the terms 'expressing' and/or 'emotion' being mentioned explicitly, or being implicit part of their discourse. Critics also often use either those terms or derivatives (including Crisp, 2009; Watts, 2009; Smith, 2010; or Batson, 2011), and almost always use terms reflecting emotional aspects of the performance such as 'yearning' (Citron, 2012), or 'serenity and the poignant contentment of solitude' (Brown, 2009). Although it is not within the scope of this project to construct a full review of how important emotions and expression are perceived as being in contemporary dance practice, this section briefly surveys the field and explores some historical and some more recent examples. This situates the origins of the research question, since the project adopts the view that whatever it is that makes dances expressive, it is not necessarily reducible to unmediated, symptomatic self-expression, and that there is need to look at the dance itself in order to understand its emotional work. In relation to this, one of the aims of the project is to bridge a perceived gap

between the practical and theoretical understandings of contemporary dance in relation to the experience of emotion. This is achieved by the project's main objective, that is, to analyse the relation between this emotional experience and that which is actually recognisable in the work, that is, its perceptual properties.

In dance, the link between perceived emotion and the artist's self-expression seemed to be widely accepted at one point. Firmly against this idea, philosopher Susanne Langer observed that '[o]nly in the literature of the dance, the claim to direct self-expression is very nearly unanimous' and lamented that this spreads across '[n]ot only the sentimental Isadora, but such eminent theorists as Merle Armitage and Rudolf von Laban, and scholars like Curt Sachs, besides countless dancers' (Langer, 1953: 176-177). One of the most notable periods when dance is openly considered to be self-expression is at the birth of modern dance: for example, Ruth St Denis stated that she 'see[s] the Dance being used as a means of communication between body and soul—to express what is too deep, too fine for words' (Brown, Woodford and Mindlin, 1998: 21). Dance writer Deborah Jowitt highlights both Graham's statement: '"Out of emotion comes form" (in Armitage 1978: 97)', and Doris Humphrey's manner of speaking about 'moving from the inside out' (Jowitt, 1994: 171). Further to this, the idea of self-expression finds strong historical theoretical support in expression theory, especially in the work of Leo Tolstoy (1995/1897), Robin G. Collingwood (1963/1938), and Benedetto Croce (1908).

Writing at the time of the birth of modern dance, Tolstoy proposed that art is a process of infection, by which the artist, who is feeling or recalling a particular emotion, intends to, and succeeds at, making the audience feel the same particular emotion (Tolstoy, 1995/1897). In Tolstoy's theory there is an intention to communicate, and hence a link between the artist and the audience. Tolstoy focuses on the artists and implies that they need to be feeling or recollecting the emotion for the artwork to be

expressive. He believed that the artists intentionally select features of the work to generate in the audience the specific emotion that they are feeling (Tolstoy, 1995/1897). However, 'the theory places too little importance on the work of art as an object' (Lyas, 1997: 62) as the emphasis is mainly on the artist's emotion and how this affects the audience through infection, in which case anything that can transmit 'states of mind from one person to another … will serve' (Lyas, 1997: 62), and the specific character of the artwork is insignificant.

The accounts proposed by Croce and Collingwood, different to Tolstoy's, are both based on the idea of the artists clarifying their emotions through the process of creating the work. There is a vague feeling that the artist cannot define, and this starts the creative process. Throughout creation, that feeling/emotion becomes clear (Collingwood, 1963/1938), so for Collingwood '[a]rt is the imaginative activity of shaping material until it expresses emotion, which consists in the artist bringing a feeling into consciousness as a definite emotion' (Gracyk, 2012: 29). Collingwood and Croce suggested that the work of art may exist only in the artist's mind, and that the physical embodiment of the work as such is not important (Collingwood, 1963/1938; Lyas, 1997). What happens then is that it is the job of the audience to reconstruct the work of art as it was in the artist's head, from an imaginary reading of what they actually perceive in the physical object (Collingwood, 1963/1938). Because they conceive artworks as existing in the artist's mind, Croce and Collingwood ignore the specificity of the medium and neglect the differences between the different arts (Sheppard, 2009; Wollheim, 1970).

Ideas about dance as self-expression seem to pervade the understanding of dance amongst practitioners, more specifically dancers, even today. Dancers such as Royal Ballet principal dancer Laura Morera speak about 'heartfelt emotion' (Willis, 2016). Others directly explain dance as self-expression: Lucía Lacarra, principal of

Bayerisches Staatsballett, states that she loves the emotional side of dance, 'being able to express your feelings' (Jacoby, 2011). Paloma McGregor, dancer with Urban Bush Women, states that '[o]n [her] best days, dancing—pushing [her]self to [her] physical and emotional limits—lets [her] express [her] deepest truths' (McGregor, 2011). Broadway performer Samantha Sturm writes an article about 'dance' as the 'best way' to 'express' herself (Sturm, 2017). Although the importance of expression and the emotional dimension of dance seems obvious at least to some professional ballet and Western contemporary dance practitioners, the terms in which it is understood vary and the meaning ascribed to them is not always clear. Self-expression, however, is present also in discussions of dance in popular culture. The idea that dance is a medium which may allow dancers to express themselves is frequently heard in examples from commercial cinema (including *Center Stage*, 2000 and *Step Up*, 2006), or from reality TV shows (such as FOX's *So You Think You Can Dance*, 2005-present).[6] The idea of self-expression seems to be sufficient in popular understanding to explain the emotional work of dance.

There are, however, also counter-positions. And a brief review of historical materials indicates that this type of symptomatic self-expression was not always considered as essential to dance as the sources in the previous paragraphs might indicate. Accounts of dance as expression can be found as early as the eighteenth century. These accounts, however, do not speak about the unmediated expression of the choreographer or the dancer's emotions, but of the expressive power of the dance. This is clear with the illustrious example of Jean George Noverre, who claimed that expression is the soul of the ballet (Noverre, 2004/1760). In 1913 Jacques Rivière

[6] Such as *Center Stage*'s famous "Whatever you feel, just dance it" (2006) or blogger Sarah Blackwood explaining that '[f]or [the dancers], art is expression, selfhood is the content, and they are there to express themselves all over that damn stage. *So You Think You Can Dance* could perhaps be renamed *So You Think You Have Feelings*' (Blackwood, 2012).

wrote about Vaslav Nijinsky, questioning ‘what could be more moving than this physical image of the passions of the soul’ (Rivière, 1983: 121). Selma Jeanne Cohen reviews ideas of dance as imitation from Michel Fokine, through Rudolf von Laban, and on to modern dance, and there is no evident reference to the personal emotions of the choreographer or dancer (Cohen, 1983). However, as Langer states, ‘the belief in the genuinely self-expressive nature of dance gestures is ... widely, if not universally held’ (1953: 179). She states the importance of separating the self-expressive—or symptomatic—from the ‘logically expressive’—or ‘symbolic of a concept that may or may not refer to actual conditions’ (Langer, 1953: 179). Langer argues that dance is ‘*actual movement,* but *virtual self-expression*’ (her italics) explaining how dance cannot be both spontaneous, springing from passion, and a ‘consummate artistic work’ (1953: 178). Garry L. Hagberg explains that

> [a] physical gesture in dance or a drumbeat in music is not self-expressive for Langer, but logically expressive; not performed for excitation, but for denotation, not—in short—a sign, but a symbol. A dance gesture or a drumbeat can carry meaning on its back, and this meaning she identifies as the idea of a feeling (Hagberg, 1995: 10-11).

So Langer recognises dance as not reducible to symptomatic self-expression. But, further to that, Langer’s understanding of dance/art as symbol also allows her to retain a sense of its expressive power. That said, she still asserts that ‘[n]o art suffers more misunderstanding, sentimental judgement, and mystical interpretation than the art of dancing’ (Langer, 1953: 169).

Adopting a more extreme position, André Levinson states, in his 1925 essay ‘The spirit of the classic dance’, that dance ‘is pure form and it is wrong to think of the dancer's steps as gestures imitating character or expressing emotion’ (Levinson, 1983: 5). And continuing this kind of thinking, a number of twentieth-century practitioners and scholars have disagreed with the idea of dance as reducible to

unmediated self-expression: Merce Cunningham, George Balanchine, or Yvonne Rainer, for example (Jowitt, 1994).

To problematise the conceptualisation of emotion in dance, my first step is to argue that expression is not a matter of personal feelings: dance expressiveness is not centrally a function of the artist's personal feelings. This is not to say that dance cannot be self-expression, but to assume that it *must* be is a claim that is unsubstantiated in the discourse presented thus far. In light of that, the project aims to propose a possible alternative understanding of emotion in relation to how and why it is experienced by the spectator of contemporary dance works, and to do so based on dance analysis as well as a philosophical inquiry.

1.1.2 Raw emotion and ineffability

Occasionally, instead of self-expression, other colloquial terms are heard in dancers', choreographers', or spectators' accounts of their experiences of dance. For instance, dance as "raw" or "raw emotion", although a vague and unclear adjective in this context, is quite prevalent in conversations and seems clear to its users. English National Ballet director and acclaimed ballerina Tamara Rojo describes dance as 'raw emotion' (Winship, 2013). This project proposes that dance is not 'raw emotion', indeed, that there is nothing 'raw'—as opposed to cognitive, or 'intellectual' as Rojo explains it—about emotions themselves. In fact, that there is a number of theories of the social, cultural, and psychological construction of emotion.[7] My project approaches dance experience from the point of view of embodied cognition, that is, it does not accept a dissociation between the bodily and the cognitive. In this sense, it

[7] Such as Robert L. Leahy's *The Social Construction of Emotion* (2015), or Sara Ahmed's *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004).

also understands that emotion in dance implies a different type of knowledge and experience from that which is necessarily linguistic or propositional. This is also a way to relate to the idea that dance, as stated by St. Denis, is a way 'to express what is … too fine for words' (Brown, Woodford and Mindlin, 1998: 21). Hence the understanding of dance is such as to be difficult to translate into verbal language, as the experience is understood as ineffable, embodied: dance expresses something that cannot be expressed in language. In the words of education philosopher John Dewey: 'each art speaks an idiom that conveys what cannot be said in another language' (Dewey, 2005/1934: 110). The key to untangle these issues of articulation—this ineffability—lies not in the language itself, but in the experience of the artwork and how this experience is expressed in language.

Hagberg, in his reviews of Langer's ideas on art, explains that she understands art as 'pick[ing] up where language leaves off' (Hagberg, 1995: 9). Art, Langer continues, functions as a non-discursive symbol, and it cannot be language

> [b]ecause its elements are not words—independent associative symbols with a reference fixed by convention' and because 'it lacks one of the basic characteristics of language—fixed association, and therewith a single, unequivocal reference (1953: 31).

Hagberg further explains that this non-discursive, presentational symbol, according to Langer, is 'a symbol of an episode of emotional experience in virtue of a logical-formal parallel' (1995: 14). For example, in Langer's words: 'Music is a tonal analogue of emotive life' (1953: 27). Moreover, these symbols are not 'amenable to analysis or reduction' (Hagberg, 1995: 15), which again differentiates them from language. For Langer this makes art 'the language of the unsayable' (Hagberg, 1995: 17). Hagberg argues, however, that at one point in Langer's writings this ineffability seems to apply to both the expressive content of works of art, and to the explanation of 'the *theory* designed to show how those works possess meaning' (1995: 21). This is of course

problematic not only for its philosophical implications, but because it limits the possibilities of developing understandings of art that can be applied in practice. Hagberg concludes that '[t]he paradoxical tension we discovered earlier, that art is the language of the unsayable, cannot be resolved' (1995: 29).

This study interrogates the argument presented in Hagberg's conclusion by setting out to study the experience itself, understanding it not as a language, or as translatable into language, but proposing that its workings and underlying structures can indeed be articulated in words. This position does not eliminate the claim of ineffability, however, but situates it closer to what John Spackman considers 'descriptive ineffability', that is, that 'at least some expressive qualities cannot be captured by any nondemonstrative descriptive expressions' (2012: 303). This is also demonstrated in the reviews studied. For example, when Sarah Crompton refers to the solo's light making Proietto seem like 'something half remembered and half forgotten' (2010) in her review of *AfterLight (Part One)*, she is not exactly describing the work's expressiveness, but she's clearly demonstrating its ineffability while giving a general sense of emotion. Spackman continues that '[t]he formal qualities of any artwork represent an endless source of possible connections to the realm of emotion' (2012: 308), but that 'a description of the formal qualities of the work will remain too general to specify the emotion it expresses' (2012: 311). He defends this view through arguing that art often presents spectators with novel emotions, hence its ineffability (2012: 312).

Philosopher of art criticism Arnold Isenberg further explains that 'if we set it up as a condition of communicability that our language should *afford* the experience which it purports to describe, we shall of course reach the conclusion that art is incommunicable' (1949: 340). The description of an experience, then, is distinct from the experience itself, it affords a different involvement. So although the emotional

experience of dance cannot be afforded merely through its description—it is, in this sense, ineffable—its workings can nonetheless be explained through words. It is not my wish to deny the ineffability of the spectatorial experience of dance, nor to describe the particular emotions these works present. Indeed, I believe the difficulty of making the emotions expressed by a work concrete is obvious through my writing, which also corresponds to the use of the term 'emotional import' instead of emotion or mood. Emotional import responds to this general sense of ineffability. The aim of the project, however, remains to understand better my spectatorial experience of emotion in these examples of contemporary theatre dance, by exploring the perceptual properties of the works and the emergence of emotional import through them.

1.1.3 Expressiveness

I return now to the idea that the spectators' emotional experience of dance is merely a question of them being affected or infected by the personal emotions the artist is expressing through the work (1.1.1). However, contrary to this idea, I argue in favour of expressiveness, that is, supporting the importance of the work itself and its properties towards its perceived emotion. As explained above, there seems to exist a pervasive opinion in certain contexts of dance practice that identifies performances or choreographic processes with unmediated self-expression. According to these ideas, any emotion arising from a work of art is the result of the expression of personal feelings of the author—in the case of dance, this could be both the choreographer and the dancer. Contrary to this, it is difficult to imagine that all emotions present in a work must come from the artist's inner life, and it is very hard to defend the idea that artists always *must* be expressing their own emotions when creating an artwork (Gracyk, 2012). These theories have also been criticised because it does not seem to be true that the audience necessarily feels the same emotion that the artist felt or recalled during

creation. To equate the emotions embodied in a work of dance with emotional symptoms of the choreographer or dancer seems both limiting and unjust to their artistic capabilities. Also, it does not seem to account for the spectator's experience of emotion in dance. Indeed, the idea of symptomatic self-expression as key to choreographic and spectating processes does not resonate with my own experience.

Dance seems to have an added complication here, because its matter is the human body. Philosophers argue that the body possesses a 'natural expressiveness' (Margolis, 1981) or and 'intrinsic expressiveness' (Geenens, 2013). Joseph Margolis explains that the body is naturally expressive and so 'dancers are obliged to be concerned with the expressivity of their movements' (Margolis, 1981: 421). He develops this idea by explaining that this 'expressiveness' is the 'intersection of biologically and culturally contingent processes' (1981: 422), that is, it is combined with 'the natural and culturally groomed expressiveness of the body' (1981: 422). As sociologist Helen Thomas argues:

> the ways in which we look at dance are not quite as neutral or as individual as we might think but are inscribed in a chain of cultural codes and practices in and through which our bodies, our subjectivities, are situated and implicated (1996: 73).

Her ideas encompass the argument of relational perceptual properties, and even the idea that perception is both enactive and modulated by our social experience, both of which I build in the next sections of this chapter (1.3 and 1.4).

There are several arguments against the idea of natural expressiveness. The first of these, as philosopher of art Julia Beauquel explains, relates to the fact that situating dance at the same level as normal expressive communication limits the appreciation of dance, 'failing to account for the cognitive dimension of aesthetic experience' (2013: 168). Moreover, 'a philosophical interest in dance as art must take into account the technical and stylistic aspects of the medium' (Beauquel, 2013: 169).

Mary Sirridge and Adina Armelagos actually engage polemically with Margolis in relation to this particular argument, finding expressiveness a vague term, and instead proposing a multi-layered notion of style as more precise (1977). This 'style' is the alternative to Margolis's 'expressiveness', as Sirridge and Armelagos believe that 'expressiveness' might mean one or all of their characterisations of style. They speak about (a) a 'general style' of the work which would include movement vocabulary, staging, and aesthetic choices; (b) the style of the choreographer, which could include other works; and (c) the 'personal style' that would have to do with the training background, dancing ability, and the overall performing style of the particular dancer; with all these notions of style being interrelated (Sirridge and Armelagos, 1977: 19). When used in this project, the term is used with an awareness that the reason for this expressiveness might be one or more of the three aspects mentioned by Sirridge and Armelagos. However, the project also considers that this argument for expressiveness as style has to acknowledge the importance of meaning and of the general—albeit socially mediated—expressiveness of the human body (Beauquel, 2013: 169).

Beauquel explains that 'the technique and style' and 'the expressiveness and meaning' should not be considered two separate things. The first might be a way to do the second' (Beauquel, 2013: 171), which aligns with the ideas behind this project. Beauquel explains that

> the concept of expressiveness enables us to describe dance from an external perspective, without having to deal with the problem of the emotions and intentions, either real or hypothetical, of the dancer or choreographer. … (Beauquel, 2013: 168).

Philosopher Alan Tormey also proposed this idea that a work can have expressive properties without being an expression (1971: 121). He made a distinction between an "expression of φ" and a "φ expression" (Tormey, 1971: 107): 'we cannot infer from the melancholy character of the music to any melancholy in the artist. The music is a

"melancholy expression", not an "expression of melancholy"' (Robinson, 2004: 180). Hence, Derek Matravers argues, 'expressive appearances do not necessarily have mental states for their causes' (Matravers, 2013/2000: 405), as we can perceive something inanimate or without evidence of being self-expression to be expressive of an emotion—such as a melancholy landscape, or the "sad" face of a St. Bernard dog.

Following Tormey's line of thought, Matravers states that 'any account should respect that expression is experienced as being a quality of the work itself' and that 'such qualities can be analyzed independently of the state of mind of their creator... Expressive qualities ... are perceived as part of the form of works of art' (Matravers, 2013/2000: 407). In philosopher John Hospers's words,

> [i]t is no longer necessary to say that the work of art is expressive of feeling qualities; it is only necessary to say that it has them—that it is sad or embodies sadness as a property (Hospers, 1997: 174).

This does not imply that a work can never be self-expression. Indeed choreographers can express personal emotions or ideas through their work. However, in this case it would be important to recognise that the expressive qualities most relevant to the audience's immediate experience are those embodied in the work itself. Generally, specific biographical information of the choreographer would not be immediately available to the spectator. Leaving behind the assumption that the authors had some particular personal feeling that they needed to express, it is possible to assume that they wanted to express something. And also that, whether or not there is an expressive aim, the choreographer still modulates the properties of the work as will be perceived by the audience.

The issue of intention is contentious within philosophical theories of expression in art. Broadly speaking, two opposing views are proposed: intentionalists suggest that the author's intention is relevant and important to the understanding of the

work; anti-intentionalists, meanwhile, defend the idea that the author's intention to express something, if there was one, should not necessarily affect the understanding or evaluation of the work. Obviously the intention of the choreographer affects the way the spectators see things in a very basic sense: the choreographer selects elements and arranges them in a particular way when creating the work. Choreographers have the power to give information in a particular order and format, which undoubtedly affects the spectator's view. Philosopher Robert Stecker explains it this way: 'although people have intentions, and things don't, people's intentions transmit properties to the things those people do and make that are ontologically dependent on those intentions' (Stecker, 2006: 271). Indeed, 'we might think of intention as embodied in the activities of the individuals concerned' (Jordan and Pakes, 2018: 36). In my discussion in Chapter 6, I refer to the intentions of the choreographers through their (our) own descriptions of process. I do so in precisely this way: insofar as they have shaped the perceptual properties of the work. Through these processes, arguably, the works embodied a certain sense of emotion which is not symptomatic but still responds to the choreographer's agency. Perhaps a new concept of self-expression.

1.2 Emotional import

Although it may be difficult to articulate the emotional dimension of the spectator's experience of a work of dance, it is possible to describe correlations between particular emotional effects and the formal properties of the work as perceived by the spectator, that is, and its perceptual properties. This project focuses on the spectator's experience—mine in this case—hence referring to the spectator's emotions, or rather, the spectator's perception of emotion. This distinction is key in that it is not necessary that spectators *feel* something in particular—that they emote—but rather that they

perceive the emotional import of the work.[8] In this sense, there is need to clarify what characterises the affective side of the experience of dance.

1.2.1 Understanding emotion through analytic philosophy

In the context of analytic philosophy, emotion can be understood as a compendium of elements, as described in its definition by philosopher of art Noël Carroll. Carroll gives a comprehensive characterisation of emotion in terms of the cognitive, conative, somatic, and behavioural elements that appear also in other theories. He claims that in emotion:

(a) a somatic state—or feeling state: 'a bodily change and/or a phenomenological experience' (Carroll, 2001: 221)—is caused by

(b) a cognitive state—'a belief or a thought about some person, place, or thing, real or imagined' (Carroll, 2001: 221). The cognitive state needs to be accompanied by

(c) a conative element—this is the affective valence: what makes an emotion different from a judgement is that we actually care about it (Carroll, 2001). And this conative element will be what ultimately prompts us to act, which will be

(d) the behavioural element, so as to affect the relationship between the subject and the world (Carroll, 2001).

As an example, my experience of fear for a friend who has been in an accident is likely to manifest in my heart accelerating and a feeling of anxiety, perhaps accompanied by

[8] This could potentially also establish a difference between 'an experience of emotion' and 'an emotional experience', however I do not establish this difference at this point, to optimise clarity. I discuss this in more depth in Chapter 6, in relation to the analysis.

an upset stomach (a). This somatic state is accompanied by thoughts about the possibilities of my friend being badly hurt (b). Because I care about my friend (c), the desire arises (also c) both to find out more about what happened and to help if possible (d). This understanding, however, does not align as seamlessly to the experience of a dance work, as I discuss below.

There are some theories that centre on emotions as feelings and others which centre on emotions as cognition, but independently of their respective focus, many models currently propose that emotions be understood as processes. These models indicate some kind of feedback system between the somatic and the cognitive elements, where the cognitive element includes also an evaluative judgement, and a behavioural aspect—or action tendency—is related to both. Philosophers and psychologists such as Jenefer Robinson (2004, 2005), Antonio Damasio[9] (1994/2006, 1999/2000) or Nico Frijda (1986) all propose models where emotion is understood as a process involving the aforementioned elements. It is then possible, from the work of these scholars, including Carroll, to characterise an emotion as a complex process that includes:

1. a cognitive element: a thought or belief about an object, generally implying a change,
2. which we evaluate as important to us—evaluative element,
3. which also coexists with some bodily changes—feeling element,
4. and that prompts us to act or to get ready for action—behavioural or motivational element.

[9] Though it is important to mention that Damasio actually understands emotions as the bodily aspect, and feeling as the cognitive one, in contrast to Carroll's characterisation (Damasio, 1999/2000).

Element number 3 is understood here as feeling. I have chosen to state its relationship to the cognitive element as one of coexistence only, as there is no agreement amongst the mentioned scholars as to whether the cognitive aspect causes the bodily response or vice versa[10]. My understanding, as will be elaborated below, is that it is actually most important to consider separation between the cognitive and the bodily—at the phenomenological level—as not useful for dance, and to develop the framework within ideas of embodied cognition. These elements are then phenomenologically inseparable, even though they may be analysed as discrete.

1.2.2 Emotion in dance spectatorship

It is now possible to question whether this characterisation can be applied to the emotion involved in the spectator's engagement with a dance work, or indeed to the spectator's engagement with artworks in general. As an example, I will refer to my experience of watching Maliphant's *Afterlight (Part One)*. As I briefly outlined in the introduction, my heartbeat accelerated especially towards the end of the work: this would correspond with element number 3. I was also perceiving the beauty and strength of the dancer's movement and how the work's elements worked harmoniously together. I was also contemplating the person or character and possible story developing, although I was not aware of any particular narrative or story-line. All this, as related above, was not a fully conscious process but a general awareness. That said, it can still be understood as a sense of awe, and in this sense an example of element number 1. Here is where the conceptualisation of emotion becomes more complex for dance: elements 2 and 4 are not so clear in the spectator's experience of emotions in

[10] Further to their distinction in note 9 above, Carroll understands the bodily feeling as caused by the cognitive state (2001), whereas Damasio's "somatic marker hypothesis" (1994/2006) is closer to the James-Lange theory, whereby we are sad because we cry, and not the other way round (de Sousa, 2013).

the performing arts. That is, I am not so invested emotionally with the work that I evaluate the despair that the piece represents as important towards my own life, nor am I feeling the need to act upon these feelings/evaluations. There is a temporal disconnection with my own needs, a disinterest (Shelley, 2017). This disinterest could explain both the frequent rhetoric of the enjoyment of the performing arts as a form of escape from daily preoccupations, and how satisfied spectators seem to be to engage with works of art which are sad, melancholy, or full of despair.

Similarly, a question arises as to how it is possible that we engage emotionally with art, particularly given that what we are seeing typically is not "true" in the sense that it is fiction. Carroll develops his ideas on the "paradox of fiction", questioning 'whether and how it is possible for us to respond with genuine emotion to that which we must know is not the case' (1990: 59). In this context, Carroll makes two statements that are relevant to my discussion. The first statement argues that we can have thought processes that do not imply belief—meaning that I can contemplate a possibility without believing it to be true (Carroll, 1990). Or in my case, that I can perceive the emotional content of a work without being emotional myself. The second argues that features of the fictional works relate to our culture and world in a way that makes them relevant to us (Carroll, 1990). Philosopher Jerrold Levinson makes a similar point when he states that works of art activate 'pre-existing emotional valences towards general features of the world' (Levinson, 1990: 79). The content of contemporary dance is not necessarily fiction narrowly understood, in the sense of being narrative- or character-based. Even so, the issue at stake here is that its relation to 'general valences' towards the world remains very arguable. Indeed, theatre is not real life, and in that sense any event in the theatre is detached from the outside world in some sense: although it might refer to the real world and to the existential concerns of human beings, the content of dance works often is removed from the world. Although this

kind of content or concerns about the real world might indeed be present in a particular work, it is also not necessarily so in other works. Following these arguments, the term emotion seems to be problematic as a characterisation of the affective experience of dance.

In dance spectatorship, widely used terms include also ‘mood’. This term can offer some insights into how works produce an effect in an informed spectator of a dance work. Mood defines a range of possibilities, it is all-encompassing in a corporeal way, as it pervades experience and perception (Carroll, 2003: 528). And it is both cognitive and bodily, which seem to be the strongest elements (1 and 3) in my characterisation of emotion within the experience of dance. In the experience of a dance work, the emotion—despair or melancholy in the case of *Afterlight (Part One)*, for example—is not directed at a particular object: I am not despairing at my own life, not even at the life of the dancer/persona. It seems to be more a reflection on what is happening on stage than a personal emotive state. Carroll defines mood as an affective state ‘when the emotion is not directed at any particular object’ (2003: 523). He also states, however, that mood is linked to cognition, but starts from the self and affects everything around it: moods modulate cognition. By contrast, emotions are directed from the world to the self because they respond to events in the world (Carroll, 2003: 529).

Robinson, studying emotions in art, articulates a similar view: ‘moods are more global and diffuse than emotions; they are of longer duration and lower intensity’ (Robinson, 2005: 393). Philosopher Matthew Ratcliffe further states that

> a mood is a background sense of belonging to a meaningful world, a condition of possibility for having intentional states. … Mood constitutes a phenomenological background in the context of which intentionally directed experience is possible (Ratcliffe, 2010: 357).

Robinson agrees with the second aspect of Ratcliffe's understanding, stating that '[a] mood is usually defined in part as a bodily state in which one is more apt or ready to get into an emotional state' (Robinson, 2005: 85). For the purpose of this research, I have chosen to understand the term mood in a similar way to these scholars, agreeing that moods somehow mark a range of possibilities within which the emotional experience of the subject is facilitated (Goldie, 2010), 'a predisposition to be in certain emotional states' (Robinson, 2005: 96). This more diffuse and pervasive characterisation of mood seems to fit better the discussion of the effect of contemporary dance works in a spectator. However, moods are understood as directed from the self to the world—that is from the spectator to the work and not vice versa—which is problematic for understanding the relationality in the experience of emotion in dance. Also, moods are considered a 'predisposition' for emotional states but not a state in themselves, which does not account for the emotional experience in the moment of watching. These two points make it more difficult to understand the effect of works of contemporary dance in the experience of the spectator as a mood.

Moods, however, can still be part of the experience—and from the point of view of the spectator, they are likely to be: the spectator's current mood, whether or not caused by the performance itself, will have an effect, to some extent, on what is watched. Within film studies, scholar Carl Plantinga in fact states that what he calls art moods—'the affective character or tone of the film as opposed to human moods' (2012: 461)—are key to the experience of film, together with emotions and reflex responses. He adds that cognition also works together with these affective aspects in the overall experience. He refers to the overall experience, then, as an art mood potentially eliciting human moods (Plantinga, 2012). His idea of the complex experience formed by these four aspects—moods, emotions, reflex responses, and cognition—seems to be close to what I am positing in this project by using the term

emotional import. However, his separation of the “human” from the “art” seems to me to open an unnecessary gap—albeit only linguistic—from our experience of art to our experience in general. With regards to my discussion, the concept of mood in itself does not seem adequate to explain the spectator’s experience of works of contemporary dance. Given this fact, I consider it more useful to refer to emotional import—instead of Plantinga’s ‘art mood’—and experience of emotional import—the equivalent of the corresponding ‘human mood’.

1.2.3 Emotional import

Through these ideas, it becomes clear that to understand the spectator’s experience of emotion in dance performances it is necessary to consider factors that are not present in general characterisations of emotion or mood. In this thesis, I use the term “emotional import” to characterise what the work of dance conveys, understanding it as the different impressions of emotion which can be experienced through it. These cannot be identified with one particular emotion or mood. The spectator’s experience of emotional import is an aspect of the phenomenal experience of dance works, grounded in bodily and cognitive responses, and it emerges from the properties of the work of dance as perceived by the spectator.

The term emotional import then serves the purpose of referring to what a dance work conveys emotionally, and as it is understood as relational, it can be accessed through the effect which a work of dance has on a spectator. This effect, I argue, is not necessarily the same as a fully-fledged emotion, in that it does not have a conative or a behavioural element of the same strength, nor does it have an object towards which it is directed. This idea of emotional import is perhaps closer to the theoretical understanding of mood, but it seems to be more specific than ‘a range of possibilities’, and it cannot be argued to come only from the self into the world, as it emerges in

interaction with what is being witnessed on stage. In this sense, emotional import is both cognitive and bodily, and it is affected both by what is happening on stage and by the individual spectator. Moreover, the emotional import of the work is not necessarily correlated to the personal expression of the artist, in this case choreographer or dancer, and it is not fully dependent on the spectators themselves as individuals. The idea of expressiveness, as opposed to expression, is useful here, since this term refers to the properties of the work itself, and not to a possible agent of expression.

However, it is also important to emphasise that emotional import is relational. This particular emphasis on the relationality of the experience of emotion in dance, related also to the understanding of perception as enactive, leads me to choose the term "emotional import" *vis-à-vis* the term "expressiveness". Expressiveness focuses more on the work itself, whereas emotional import emphasises relationality. These terms are then complementary, rather than equal or opposed. The emotion perceived by spectators is not merely theirs—they are already complex subjects with a particular background—nor is it just in the work of dance itself, it is the interaction between these two elements. Moreover, the work is created by other subjects, dancer/s, choreographer/s, composer/s, designer/s, and surrounded by a particular professional and social network which delimits both how the work is created and how it is to be seen. All these factors—agents, context, spectator's background, the work's features—affect the spectator's experience of emotional import in a work of dance and render this experience a complex one. It is to the complexity of this particular experience that I now turn.

In addition to "emotional import", throughout my analysis I occasionally use other terms—"emotional impact", "expressive power", or simply "emotion"—to acknowledge this particular conceptualisation of the experience of emotion in dance.

The terms within this range share elements from a general notion of emotion, but also from the understanding of mood as a more diffuse and general atmosphere. I also refer to the experience of the spectator including particular emotional effects and the overarching emotional import of a work, as spectators can speak at both levels when talking about their experience. Poignancy seems to be a pervasive emotional import in this particular context of theatre dance. For this reason it is used to exemplify and summarise my arguments in my discussion. But, adding to this, poignancy seems to be exemplary of the way I understand emotional import per se, as it is related both to mood and to emotion on different occasions, but defined as 'the quality of evoking a keen sense of sadness or regret, pathos' (Oxford English Dictionary, 2018). This definition seemingly encompasses the sense of ineffability of the emotional experience, while retaining the evocation which defines emotional import as relational.

1.3 Experience of emotion in dance

I have described emotional import as relational, emerging necessarily in the interaction between the viewer and the dance work, which has been created in a particular context by all its creative agents. Beauquel explains that:

> [t]he fact that observers help build the movement justifies the adoption of an externalist approach to expressive properties: these properties are extrinsic to the dancer; they are relational. In other words, they characterize the dance works but depend on the viewer's responses (Beauquel, 2013: 171).

Beauquel's position, which links the role of the choreographers—'the observers [who] help build the movement'—to that of the audience or viewers, aligns with my experience. In this section I revisit different ideas in relation to the experience of emotion in dance.

1.3.1 Spectator's experience

The experience of the spectator has been both conceptualised and scientifically studied on many occasions and via many frameworks. Those most relevant to this project, since they refer specifically to emotion, are the idea of disinterest in aesthetic experience, and current studies on kinesthetic empathy.

1.3.1.1 Aesthetic experience and disinterest

Aesthetic experience, and in particular the experience of a work of art, has been understood as one of distance, where the spectator needs not to be personally invested emotionally in order to engage with the work. Aristotle or Thomas Aquinas's *contemplation*; Arthur Schopenhauer's *will-lessness*; Inmanuel Kant's *disinterestedness*; or Edward Bullough's *psychical distance* are examples of this understanding of the experience of art (Collinson, 2002/1992). They all posit a need for stillness, or stasis, and the desire not to intrude in the action/drama, while recognising the work as 'an entity peculiarly apt for profoundly attentive contemplation…' (Collinson, 2002/1992: 119-120). There is an aspect of these theories which resonates strongly with my proposed understanding of emotional import in dance: the way in which the personal is temporarily suspended. I have argued in the previous section that it was difficult to refer to conative or behavioural elements in the understanding of emotion within the particular experience of dance spectatorship. There is no necessary desire to act or action itself as a direct consequence of the emotional import of a work of dance, as Kant argued in relation to judgements of beauty in art: there is no action as a consequence of these judgements, the experience is contemplative, one of disinterest (Shelley, 2017). This is not to say that the background of spectators is not important towards their experience of the work. Rather, that this background—knowledge, mood, relationship to the work—is

operating at a level which is not completely conscious. In this way, spectators can temporarily suspend their positionality and "personhood"—or personal interests and values—and experience the work of dance in this manner. This aspect of theories of disinterestedness and contemplation seems to apply, at least partially, to the experience of the dance spectator, even if the theories do not cover all the aspects of its complexity. Emotion, as seen above, has a bodily component, as does dance. Although these theories do not necessarily deny the bodily aspect of experience, most of them do not put emphasis on it either—with the exception perhaps of Bullough's theory, which describes experiences of distance in a way that implies bodily reactions (Bullough, 1912). While some thinkers propose the value of this suspended gap between the spectator and the work, there are others who emphasise the kind of affective transfer which is often termed kinesthetic empathy.

1.3.1.2 Kinesthetic empathy

Kinesthetic empathy is understood here as a response whereby spectators feel the movement physically in something like the way a dancer does, but without moving themselves. A body of scientific research into "mirror neurons" supports this idea. The concept, although much refined now, is not new: Martin already stated in 1946 that '[m]ovement, then, in and of itself is a medium for the transference of an aesthetic and emotional concept from the consciousness of one individual to that of another', calling this 'metakinesis' (Copeland and Cohen, 1983: 23). Martin also explained that dance audiences 'actively partake in the same kinesthetic experience as the dancers they are watching onstage' (Foster, 2011: 7). However, dance scholar Susan Leigh Foster argues, 'Martin believed in an autonomous inner self that, impressed upon by its witnessing of the dance, responded with its unique interpretation of the dance's

expression' (2011: 2). This is not the case in those dance scholars who engage with neuroscientific ideas about mirror neurons:

> The dancer's performance draws upon and engages with prevailing senses of the body and of subjectivity in a given historical moment. Likewise, the viewer's rapport is shaped by common and prevailing senses of the body and of subjectivity in a given social moment as well as by the unique circumstances of watching a particular dance (Foster, 2011: 2).

The common 'senses of the body and of subjectivity' and the social and historical situatedness of experience make this understanding a more complex one than that proposed by Martin.

On its own, kinesthesia—in the sense of proprioception—was subject to study long before the way mirror neurons work was investigated and their responsibility for empathetic responses to other people's movements proposed (McConachie, 2008). The mirror neuron system is understood as indicating that

> [d]oing an action and watching someone else do the same action [brings] a similar neurological response. As Vittorio Gallese has written, the mind/brain has "an action observation/execution matching system" (McConachie, 2008: 70).

There are various possible applications of these ideas to dance spectatorship: for example, Bruce McConachie dedicates a chapter of his book to explaining how 'cognitive imitation is a crucial part of spectating' (2008: 72). According to Carroll and William P. Seeley, '[t]he idea that choreographic movements communicate to audiences by *kinetic transfer* is a commonplace among choreographers, dancers, and dance educators' (2013: 177). In this context, empathy has been related to aesthetic experience, with kinesthetic sensation considered an intrinsic part of both empathy and aesthetic experiences (Reynolds and Reason, 2012: 19). Although research on kinesthetic empathy is very active at the moment, it is also a highly controversial area of study (Reynolds and Reason, 2012: 21). This is also demonstrated by the range of

philosophical perspectives on the significance of neuroscience for dance aesthetics (Carroll & Seeley, 2013; Montero, 2013; McFee, 2013), of which a full discussion is outside the scope of my research.

Some interesting possibilities arise from this research, however. Kinesthetic empathy seems to be somehow democratic: most people would have the system available for this kind of response, whether they are knowledgeable in dance, a practitioner, or a layperson—although studies find differences in the levels of activation depending on the person's knowledge and level or practice of dance (Reynolds and Reason, 2012). In terms of possible responses to performance and the emotional import of dance works, an explanation in terms of kinesthetic empathy alone, however, seems reductive. It simplifies the possibilities of response by the spectator, and it is at risk of relegating perceptual experience of dance to the unconscious and the non-cognitive, as illustrated by this passage by Reynolds and Reason, again quoting Martin:

> Controversially, [Martin] also proposed that inner mimicry [or 'kinesthetic sympathy'] of a dancer's movement allowed spectators direct access to dancers' feelings: 'It is the dancer's whole function to lead us into imitating his actions with our faculty for inner mimicry in order that we may experience his feelings' (Martin 1939: 53) (2012: 19).

Although scholarly work on dance spectatorship seems very interested in it (Pashman, 2017), theories of kinesthetic empathy can reduce the experience of the spectator to a mirroring of the dancer's experience. Any emotional reaction, then, would be limited to what the dancer is feeling, which does not seem to resonate with experiences of dance and which reverts the argument to a different kind of unmediated self-expression: that is, the dancer's personal feelings as responsible for the audience's emotional experience. This perspective also neglects that which exists in the work, apart from the performing style of the dancer, and ignores the choreographic

dimension, which are essentially my interests in this project. That said, I have no wish to deny that kinesthetic empathy might indeed be a part of the spectator's experience of emotional import in contemporary dance. In fact, kinesthetic empathy in its more general assumption, that is, that our bodily experience affects our cognitive experience, relates to this project's proposal and to the theories of embodied cognition, which I now proceed to discuss. In relation to kinesthetic empathy, however, my position is closer to Carroll and Seeley's ideas

> that this sensorimotor capacity is a contributing factor in our perceptual engagement with dance works, one of a range of tools ready to hand to choreographers and dancers for conveying information critical to the content of their works (2013: 177).

In that sense, I do make use of ideas of kinesthetic empathy when they seem to apply to my experience of the studied works of dance. Judging from the results of the case studies in this project, I consider this aspect of experience one more element—and not a separate or particularly key one—within our cognition and perception. Through the understanding of cognition and perception as embodied and enactive, however, the body is still fully implied in these processes, which I now explore.

1.3.1.3 Embodied cognition | enactive perception

The spectator's experience of contemporary dance is necessarily understood as perceptual, as it has to do with the viewers grasping the dance work through their senses. However, perception, in the context of this experience, needs to be understood in a way that accounts for the multiple facets the experience encompasses, as explained above. Two current discussions are of relevance and support here: that related to enactive perception, and that related to embodied cognition. These theories allow me to understand the spectator's experience of perceiving a dance work as active rather than passively receptive. Philosophers Alva Noë and J. Kevin O' Reagan (2001)

suggest that perception is something we do: an active endeavour, ‘a way of thinking about the world’ (Noë, 2006/2004: 189). The enactive approach proposes that ‘[p]erception might be a mode of encountering how things are by encountering how they appear’ and this ‘is itself an encounter with the world. For how things appear is a matter of how things are in the world’ (Noë, 2006/2004: 85). The objects “out there” are necessarily apprehended through experience. This also implies that the study of the spectator’s experience of dance necessarily refers to a particular action of a particular subject. That is, it is important to recognise that any view is perspectival, as it depends on the particular spectator’s enacted perception.

Ideas about enactive perception correlate also with conceptualisations of cognition as embodied. This allows for a multi-layered understanding of consciousness and gives the possibility to unify the bodily and the intellectual in the way the experience of the spectator of contemporary dance is understood. According to Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch, ‘cognition is not the representation of a pregiven world by a pregiven mind but is rather the enactment of a world and a mind’ (2016/1991: 9). They propose ‘an embodied (mindful), open-ended reflection. By *embodied*, [they] mean reflection in which body and mind have been brought together’ (Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 2016/1991: 27). Inspired by descriptions of colour experience and perception by Varela et al. (2016/1991: 157-172), it is possible to propose something similar for the spectator’s experience of emotion in contemporary dance. They suggest that colour is not only appearance, that is, the physical aspects of wavelength and saturation. Nor is it only an attribute of things, including their context and emergence until the retinal image is formed. They propose, rather, that colour perception should be understood as an experience which includes both of these processes, that is, an experience of embodied cognition (Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 2016/1991: 157-172).

Outside dance and theatre, and in the context of aesthetic perception of abstract art, neuroscientist Eric R. Kandel discusses how

> the image in our retina is first deconstructed into electrical signals that describe lines and contours, creating a boundary around a face or an object. As these signals move through the brain, they are recorded and, based on Gestalt rules of organization and on prior experience, they are reconstructed and elaborated into the image we perceive (2016: 20).

In this sense, I propose, we experience emotional import through the perceptual properties of the performance, which are emergent from, but not reducible to, the work's physical properties. This experience is not only bodily but also cognitive, 'provid[ing] a paradigm of a cognitive domain that is neither pre-given nor represented but rather experiential and enacted' (2016/1991: 171). In fact, emotional import would be experiential '[c]ontrary to the objectivist view'; and, 'contrary to the subjectivist view, ... belong[s] to our shared biological and cultural world' (Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 2016/1991: 172). The objects are "out there" but there is no "reality" independent of our perception (Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 2016/1991: 172). Similarly, the dance work, and its properties, exist out there, but we can only relate to them through our particular perception and experience.

This does not mean, however, that these experiences are entirely subjective and that no agreement is possible. Indeed philosophers of art argue against this idea: Graham McFee, for example, explains that '[a]rtistic properties of artworks are genuine features or properties of those works, even if they require an audience for their recognition (or existence)' (2003: 128). Similarly, philosopher Ivy G. Campbell-Fisher states that works are not 'subjective emotionally', that is, that although works of dance are necessarily perceived through the experience of the spectator, this does not render the emotion subjective (Campbell-Fisher, 1951: 10). Nor is it 'a personal idiosyncrasy', as although experiences will vary amongst spectators, 'the commonness

of experience is greater than is usually supposed' (Campbell-Fisher, 1950: 247). The physical organisation of the work ensures a certain consensus, provided that 'the appreciator has the same psychological equipment as the creator' (Campbell-Fisher, 1950: 247). Monroe Beardsley, an important figure in philosophical aesthetics, defended this idea asserting that 'the object controls the experience' (Beardsley, 1981/1958: 527). This reverts to the idea of the agency of the choreographer in creating the perceptual properties of the work, as discussed above.

At the same time, our perception is modulated through learning, as Gallese explains, 'modulated by our own personal history, by the quality of our attachment relations and by our sociocultural background' (Reynolds and Reason, 2012: 20).

> In a nutshell, the enactive approach consists of two points: (1) perception consists in perceptually guided action and (2) cognitive structures emerge from the recurrent sensorimotor patterns that enable action to be perceptually guided (Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 2016/1991: 172).

From this point of view, cognition is both guide to and emergent from perception, and perception is both guided by cognition and, through its recurrent patterns, responsible for the shaping of cognitive structures. The two processes are indissoluble. In this respect, in section 6.8 and after my full analysis, I will propose that enactive perception and embodied cognition situate this discussion in a groundless territory as they dissolve the dichotomy object/subject. This can be applied also to the experience of art, in that the work's properties are not simply "out there", nor do they depend solely on intersubjectivity. The perception of a dance work is enacted in our embodiment, through patterns emerging from our bodily experiences, in a form of embodied realism (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 93). These emerging patterns are also at least partially shared and cultural—hence explaining the relative commonality of experience. Moreover, artworks are perceived not as a sum of parts, but as something that emerges

from a combination of features but that is more than the sum of its parts. The experience is more than merely the perception of the work's physical properties, precisely because perception is active and embodied. This argument guides us to the idea of emergence as key to the dance spectator's experience, which I discuss in section 1.4.

1.3.2 Linking to the choreographer's experience

Having described the spectator's experience as one of enactive perception and embodied cognition, it is possible to refer to the choreographer's experience in a similar way. This is not only proposed as a general understanding of cognitive processing and perception, but also as a conceptualisation of the choreographer's experience as that of the first audience member (Langer, 1953, and Carroll, 1999). Perhaps one of the most important changes in my choreographic awareness throughout this project was the realisation that the choreographer and the audience's experiences have significant commonalities. That is, as a choreographer, I can use my own experience to mould the work until it produces the effect I am searching for, and this personal experience can give me an idea of what the audience's experience will be—at least for an audience member of a similar background to mine. As Carroll states,

> [a]rtistry requires that the artist play the role of audience member in order to proceed – in order to revise and correct her work. She is her own first critic and, to be self-critical, the artist needs to take up the position of a spectator. Thus, … the artist herself is also essentially a member of the audience… (1999: 69).

Both the possibilities given by the choreographic methodology, and the trust placed on their own experience as guidance, allow choreographers to give time to the process until the moment comes in which "things work".

Since 'every artist is [their] first own audience', '[t]he role of the artist and that of the audience are intimately linked' (Carroll, 1999: 69). The choreographer's own experience serves as an indication of what the audience's experience will be. But, in a similar manner, the spectator is going through an experience that is similar to that of the choreographer in the studio. Collingwood already argued this when he said that the process of clarification for the artist is then replicated by the audience. Replication, however, does not seem to apply fully in this case: the experiences of the spectator and the choreographer are linked, but not identical. Some other aspects of his theories are problematic for my argument: he identified self-expression as key to art, argued that the same emotion should be 'clarified' by both artist and spectator, and did not place importance in the artwork as embodied object (Collingwood, 1968 [1938]).

There is an obvious way in which the choreographer, through the—abstract—object itself, guides the experience (Beardsley, 1958/1981: 527). The choreographer in fact selects, in collaboration with the other artists in the room, mainly the dancers, how the work appears to the spectator. Through their own experience, choreographers have a certain control over the emotional import of the work. This does not imply that the choreographer knows exactly how to produce a particular emotional import, that all audience members will be experiencing the same emotion, or that there is a correct emotional import: that of the choreographer. The experience of emotional import is nuanced through individual perception, by the personal history, culture, or even momentary mood of the spectator. It does not even imply that everyone will indeed find the moment emotionally impactful, although a certain consensus seems to exist in this sense. It does mean, however, that choreographers can guide the process through their own experience, which should give them an idea of what an informed spectator of a similar background might be experiencing when watching their work.

1.3.2.1 Problematising my position

One particularity arises throughout the thesis: my in-between positions as (1) spectator-analyst with choreographer background in the first two case studies, and (2) choreographer-spectator-analyst for the last work. Overall, these are positions which allow me a very particular viewpoint of the works. In the case of my own practice, although other choreographers have developed practice-as-research projects, it is not often that these follow a dance analysis method from the choreographer-as-spectator view. In the other two cases, I offer a position of a very particular type of informed spectator, which is arguably not very common either. Moreover, I theoretically discuss this experience, grounding this discussion in dance analysis. Of course, my position may also raise questions about the analysis itself, as it is inherently infused with this hybridity. This is the reason why the analysis aims to illustrate and explain the workings of my particular experience, and not to strive towards an impersonal general view, which is philosophically incongruent with my proposed understanding of experience. Through enactive perception, as well as through many other understandings, the view is always necessarily perspectival.

1.3.3 Social construction of perception; theatre and visuality

Before moving on to the emergence of emotion from perceptual properties, it is necessary to acknowledge certain aspects of the social modulation of perception which are especially relevant to my discussion. I do this in this section by considering visuality in the theatre experience. The project analyses live experiences, video, and still images to discuss my spectatorial experience of emotion in contemporary dance. Although my experience across the three works is the focus of analysis, other spectators' experiences—through their written reviews—are called upon to investigate correlations between perception of emotion and the features of the works being

analysed. In this sense there is an element of live experience, but there is also a repeated viewing of the recordings consulted. I discuss the use of video and still image further in the next chapter (Section 2.1.2). However, both through those and in the live experience, an important—if not the most significant—part of the analysis relates to the sense of sight. My attempt is to restore the understanding of dance spectatorship to a more multisensorial—experiential—understanding. In this regard, it is necessary to recognise the social modulation of the theatre experience in general, of the perception of emotion in dance, and of the sense of sight.

The issue of visuality—the extent to which vision is socially constructed—immediately arises when considering dance spectatorship. Dance, especially in its Western iterations, undoubtedly relies heavily on vision and, although there are other aspects of spectator experience, the visual seems one of the senses carrying more weight. In fact, it has been argued that most Westerners rely more heavily on the visual aspect of perception (occularcentrism) than on any other sense within everyday life (Rose, 2007: 2). What we see, as well as how we see it, are at least to some extent culturally constructed (Rose, 2007: 2). How a dance work is seen involves the spectator's particular—and socially constructed—ways of seeing. In fact, the theatre seems to be

> the object par excellence for an analysis of visuality as a phenomenon that takes place within the relationship between the one seeing and what is seen and against the backdrop of culturally and historically specific visual practices (Bleeker, 2008: 2).

Maaike Bleeker's account of visuality in the theatre context encourages me to explore how the social construction, background of the individual, and context of the work affect the experience of seeing. Moreover, it is not just vision that is socially constructed, but perception in a more general sense and as a process. Bleeker argues that 'the one seeing is always necessarily a body' and the need is then to 'conceive of

"just looking" as a necessarily impure and always synaesthetic event that takes place in a body as the locus of intertwining of various perceptual systems' (2008: 7). It is a holistic experience, product of our active and complex perception. This is similar to what I propose as a framework to understand the spectator's experience of dance. In this particular kind of analysis the background of the viewer also needs to be considered, in that viewers from different backgrounds—or from different backgrounds than the choreographers—might have very different experiences.

This great specificity of individual experiences is the principal reason why I use my own experience, and do not aim to generalise across different spectatorial viewpoints. Nevertheless, to check and verify my own experience, I introduce accounts by other spectators with similar socio-cultural backgrounds (mostly white, middle-class, European or American critics and writers) and with a similar level of artistic and aesthetic experience in the theatre. This, in turn, is the reason why the project does not directly discuss the background of the spectators but considers it integrated within the experience. I understand that the background of the spectators is present not only in their knowledge and engagement with dance, the work, the choreographer, and the context of creation and performance, but also in the experience itself and way of accessing the theatre. The level at which elements of this array of information are present, however, is not necessarily high in the attention and consciousness of the spectator during the experience of dance. It is integrated in the perceptive process, conceptualised as enactive, as explained above.

Finally, in theories of visuality importance is given to what an image can do, and not just what it looks like (Rose, 2007). Although various theories, for instance those from the field of semiotic visuality, are analysing components that constitute visual readings of performance—such as Roland Barthes's connotative, denotational, and linguistic aspects of visual signs—in this study I am focusing on the work itself

'not to claim that it merely reflects meanings made elsewhere' (Rose, 2007: 17). I look at the work itself, that is, at the video and the still frames as well as the live performance, to grasp my experience of its emotional import and to acknowledge that what the work itself can do is extremely significant, if not crucial. The model of analysis followed in this project, which I develop in Chapter 2, responds to this need. The emotional import of a dance work then includes both meanings 'made elsewhere'—associated with previous experiences and knowledge of the spectator—and those emergent from the performance itself. All of these meanings are integrated in the complex, multifaceted experience of the spectator.

1.4 Emergence from perceptual properties

The main argument of this project is that the emotional import of a work emerges from the properties of the work as they are perceived by the spectator. Naturally, there remains to clarify the properties that are justifiably relevant to emotional import in contemporary dance. And, as the project argues that it is in the interactions between properties that emotion emerges, it becomes imperative to discuss also the relationships between properties. In the following chapter (Chapter 2), I build the model of analysis and reflect in-depth on the properties which are relevant for my discussion. Ahead of that, I here characterise both these properties and the idea of emergence in order to set the framework for my methodology.

1.4.1 Perceptual properties

Enactive perception, as discussed above, understands that the perceiver is an active agent, not one who merely receives and swallows undigested information. This conceptualisation of perception allows me also to mark the difference between what is

physical and what is perceptual, what is considered to be "out there" and its appearance as it comes through our senses (Levinson, 1990: 141). This appearance—this perception—is greatly mediated by background and context, but it is also heavily dependent on our biological systems, our senses. In relation to this, I make use of the work of art theorist and perceptual psychologist Rudolf Arnheim (1974/1954, 1982, 1986), especially for the analysis of space (section 2.2.2). His work is crucial in that it explores the psychology of perception and, more relevant to this project, the perception of works of art. His understanding of perception of art is anchored in the idea of *gestalt*:

> A field whose forces are organized in a self-contained, balanced whole. In a gestalt, components interact to such an extent that changes in the whole influence the nature of the parts, and vice versa (Arnheim, 1982: 216).

Through Arnheim and the psychological tradition of *Gestalt*, it is possible for me to propose that spectators of a work of dance do not perceive the elements of a performance as individual aspects of what is available to their vision, but that their perceptual system creates wholes, *gestalten*, which constitute their perceptual experience. These 'wholes' are not merely the physical properties 'out there', but are affected by perceptual forces, i.e. by the spectator's enactive perception. There is a sense in which these forces could be considered illusions of perception. However, Arnheim argues that the name given to these perceptual forces is of little consequence, 'so long as we acknowledge them as genuine components of everything seen' (1974/1954: 17). They are indeed part of the properties of the work of dance as the spectator experiences it.

An important distinction needs to be drawn here between *gestalt* and emergence. *Gestalt* is a term used for the whole constituted in perception and which arises from perceptual and physical properties, that is, elementary perceptual

conditions. The phenomenon of emergence, meanwhile, might occur also on the basis of non-perceptual properties, such as content, context, or background. In the particular case that concerns this project, there would be cases of each. Composite properties such as those used in the analysis—movement qualities, spatial-rhythm, and movement-sound relationships—would respond better to a description of *gestalten*. Emotional import itself seems to be more adequately understood as emergent from those composite properties as well as other properties which I refer to in the next section—a full description and methodology of analysis for the three composite properties mentioned is the subject of Chapter 2. A key difference between these two cases would be that the composite properties can be predicted and purposely designed through their components, whereas emotional import as emergent can only be encountered through experience.

In relation to perceptual properties, a discussion of aesthetic properties of a work of art seems relevant to certain points of my argument, as these are often characterised as behaving similarly to what I consider as emergent emotional import. Aesthetic properties are considered essentially perceptual, or, at least, 'the set of properties on which any aesthetic property depends must include *some* properties perceivable by the five senses' (Shelley, 2003: 364). Levinson describes an aesthetic property as 'a unitary impression—a look, feel, or appearance—that an object is fitted to afford …' (Levinson, 2001: 68). From this characterisation, it seems that he considers an aesthetic property irreducible to the properties which combined give rise to that emergence: 'which impression, or look, cannot be identified with the set of structural properties underlying it' (1994: 352). He continues to give an account similar to the one I developed in the last few sections with regards to emotional import: that an aesthetic property is relational as it emerges in the interaction between a well-informed spectator and a work—made in a particular context by certain agents. In my

proposal, this interaction is always determined both by the fact that our perception is something we enact and modulated by our background, and by the social ground of our experience in the theatre. Similarly, for Levinson

> any adequate analysis of aesthetic properties will have to reveal them as ultimately *relational* … the terms of the relation, in the general case, may just be these three: a work's low-level perceptual properties; a normally constituted perceiver for the sort of work in question; and a set of historically-determined matrices, categories, or frameworks of perception that are ideally internalized by such a perceiver (1994: 352).

Following these arguments, it is possible to consider the understanding of aesthetic properties as presented here as a framework for the understanding of emotional import. However, whether or not emotional import is itself an aesthetic property is yet to be discussed.

The seminal work of philosopher Frank Sibley (1923-1996) becomes crucial here. Sibley links aesthetic properties to emotion quite directly when describing aesthetic perception, stating that 'people … *feel* the power of a novel, its mood' (Italics in the original) (Sibley, 2001: 34). Sibley never really defines aesthetic properties, but identifies some examples, like delicacy and gracefulness. His starting point is the language that is used when talking about artworks (Brady, 2001: 3), similar to my references to reviewers' writings in this project. The issue at hand is that 'in using aesthetic terms we learn from samples and examples, not rules, and we have to apply them, likewise, without guidance by rules or readily applicable procedures, to new and unique instances' (Sibley, 1959: 431). What Sibley does say about aesthetic properties is that they are emergent from non-aesthetic properties: 'the features which make something delicate or graceful … are combined in a peculiar and unique way; that the aesthetic quality depends upon exactly this individual or unique combination … so that even a slight change might make all the difference.' (Sibley, 1959: 434-435). It is

important to say that, although an aesthetic property is emergent from a combination of non-aesthetic properties—such as colour, texture, length, arguably sensory properties—the presence of a non-aesthetic property is not enough to infer an aesthetic property. Non-aesthetic properties do not entail aesthetic properties. This is what Sibley was arguing in 'Aesthetic Concepts':

> But aesthetic concepts are not condition-governed…. There are no sufficient conditions, no non-aesthetic features such that the presence of some set or number of them will beyond question justify or warrant the application of an aesthetic term (Sibley, 1959: 426).

No combination of non-aesthetic properties would be sufficient to guarantee emergence of an aesthetic property.

Following these descriptions, it would seem that many similarities exist between aesthetic properties and my conceptualisation of emotional import: unitary feel, emergence from formal/non-aesthetic properties, unattainability of prescription or entailment. Poet and philosopher Samuel Taylor Coleridge argues that

> [a]s our language… contains no other *useable* adjective, to express coincidence of form, feeling, and intellect, that something, which, confirming the inner and the outward sense, becomes a new sense in itself … there is reason to hope, that the term *aesthetics*, will be brought into common use (Coleridge, 1821: 254; cited in Shelley, 2017).

This quote seems to allow for the consideration of emotional import as an aesthetic property. Within this line of thought, there seems to be no need to refer to properties as other than perceptual, that is, sensuous but relational. Indeed the relationality of the properties seems to be one of the key arguments to choose perceptual over aesthetic properties. Although Levinson considers aesthetic properties relational, he does so in the case of a 'normally constituted perceiver for the sort of work in question' (1994: 352), arguably what I have described here as a well-informed spectator. If aesthetic properties arise for an informed spectator, the issue then is what exactly appears to an

untrained spectator and, philosopher David Davies argues, what skills and knowledge are necessary for this spectator (Davies, 2004: 29).[11] Although I here refer to a particular set of informed spectators, the use of perceptual properties does not exclude particular levels of expertise in the spectator, and understands this background and knowledge as integrated in the experience through embodied cognition and enactive perception.

1.4.2 Emergence

> [A]lso in dance there is an immanent interrelatedness of bodily movements with their semblance. Tension in the muscles expresses tension in the soul (Katan, 2016: 12).

Although this quote by dance scholar Einav Katan seems intuitive enough to achieve general agreement, my argument is that the relationship between the bodily movement and its meaning is significantly more complex than that. Indeed, ballet movements often imply muscle tension even when expressive of the most gentle emotions. Similarly, there is certain isometric tone needed to execute a suspension in contemporary dance, but the meaning of this movement is not often associated with a 'tension in the soul'. Indeed, having understood that emotional import is not a simple or physical property of the work, but that it arises in the spectator's experience through a combination of properties, it becomes necessary to clarify the concept of emergence that is in use here. This concept, I propose, is an effective explanation of the relationship between emotion and dance in the spectator's experience. As a

[11] Davies establishes a difference between aesthetic properties as sensuous properties, and artistic properties as those that bear on the appreciation of a dance work (2004: 26). I do not make that distinction in this occasion, as I will progress my argument by referring to properties as perceptual, which through embodied enactive perception could be argued to encompass both artistic and aesthetic properties in Davies's sense. That argument, however, is not directly relevant to my argument in this project. Notably, Blades argues that this conflation of artistic and aesthetic properties is in fact facilitated in processes of narration and annotation (Blades, 2018).

philosophical term, emergence refers to a complex process of coming into existence, a full discussion of which is outside the scope of this project. It is understood here that 'emergent entities (properties or substances) "arise" out of more fundamental entities and yet are "novel" or "irreducible" with respect to them' (O'Connor, 2015).

In terms of a dance work's emotional import, it seems clear that from the perceptual properties of the work something else emerges. Something else is apprehended in the spectator's experience and this something cannot be understood as other, simpler, properties of a work of dance. As emergent, emotional import cannot be identified with one single factor, that is, a work is not expressive of sadness—sadness is not its emotional import—just because the dynamic progression of the movement material is slow, for example. A combination of properties makes the emergence of emotion possible. Further to this, an emergent property is more than the sum of its parts, which also supports the idea that emotional import cannot be "prescribed" through a particular combination of factors: slow movement, soft cold light, and delicate music do not invariably produce sadness in a work of dance.

This goes against theories which might pursue a "glossary" of emotions and choreographic tools. And also those scholars, such as Rudolf von Laban, who attempted to identify combinations of movement which produced a particular emotion/mood. Laban spent much time researching the connection between expression and movement, more particularly effort. He posited that details of movement reveal features of our inner life (Laban and Ullman, 2011/1950: 19), and that by naming and describing movement we might be able to 'get the feel of the moods expressed' (Laban and Ullman, 2011/1950: 87). More problematic, however, is Laban's argument that, although 'hazardous', it is possible to generalise in that 'the content of definite series of action-moods is characteristic of definite emotions' (Laban and Ullman, 2011/1966: 60). He also proposed that movement does not have a conventional meaning, and that

works of art are not made by using 'movement with fixed meaning' but with 'the unusual combination of movement' (Laban and Ullman, 2011/1950: 88). Nonetheless, he still posited types of motion-factors and their combinations, and proposed that these might give guidance 'in creating poetic expression of various moods in dance' (Laban and Ullman, 2011/1950: 115). Due to its analytical eloquence, I adopt parts of Laban's system for my case studies. Even so, I wish to separate my argument from these particular ideas about generalisation in the relationship between emotional import and specific movement and factor combinations.

By recognising that emotional import emerges in the interaction between the spectator and the various properties of a performance—not only movement—the project assumes that it is not possible to predict accurately a particular emotional import: it can only be experienced while watching the work. It can be argued that it is possible to negatively prescribe the effect, that is, to anticipate that a given combination could not produce one particular effect. Although this seems more plausible, the functioning of this process would still be rooted in the choreographer's own experience, whether in the particular moment of creation or from past knowledge. This recognition is fundamental to the nature of the project, as one of its contributions consists in identifying relevant properties from which emotion can potentially emerge in the experience of the spectator. And, in relation to the practice, to argue that choreographers have the capacity to identify and work towards emotional import in their work by experiencing it themselves as the first audience member (Langer, 1953, and Carroll, 1999).

1.5 The diverse nature of emotional import. Summary of Chapter 1

I have relayed how perceptual properties are relational, that is, response-dependent on an appropriate perceiver. This is also the reason why the project refers to not just any

audience, but an 'appropriately informed and receptive audience' (Lamarque, 2010: 117), that is, the reviewers and myself. The audience needs to perceive the work situating it 'with respect to its context of origin, including its position in the artist's *oeuvre*, its relation to the surrounding culture, and its connections to pre-existing artistic tradition' (Levinson, 1994: 351). And all these aspects which relate to the work relate also to the spectators' experience of it, since they are internalised in their enacted perception. Informed spectators would have knowledge of the background of the creative agents of the work, as well as the context in which it was developed. Further to this, these spectators would have knowledge of the social context, as well as a situated visuality which would allow them to see the work in its artistic context, style, and genre. This is not to say that a less informed spectator would not be able to experience the work's emotional import, but the commonality of this experience would be reduced with more disparate backgrounds, arguably conditional on how much the work depends on specific dance knowledge. So a less informed spectator might experience *an* emotional import, but this might be further away from the choreographer's intended—experienced—one.

Further still, the particulars of the spectators' individuality would also play a part in their perception of the work, although arguably the weight of this difference is lessened by the other shared aspects as just described. Finally, the content of the piece, in whichever format it might exist—narrative, abstract, any possible in-between of meaning—would also be part of the spectator's experience of the work. But these would be also internalised through the potential reading of content-related information—such as programme notes. It is not my intention to disregard these kinds of meaning or the interpretative possibilities which might arise from them. Indeed, I recognise that emotional import in the understanding developed within this project focuses more narrowly than the full context of the work, which would include more

information. Attention to this wider array of possible information can provide further ideas on the emotional content of a work. I argue, however, that there is need to look at the work of dance, at its perceptual properties, to better understand its experience, without denying the important of further contextual details. In this sense, I refer to any referential or symbolic elements in my analysis when they are themselves immediately perceptual, such as in symbolic gestures or facial expressions. Levinson argues that, considering the aesthetic impression that a work produces in a spectator, 'a viewer might accurately register that impression before registering the structural and lower-order aesthetic underpinnings, perhaps never consciously acknowledging or focusing these at all' (Levinson, 1990: 150). My methodology would partly also test this proposal by Levinson. Deepening the knowledge of these underpinnings, especially in relation to emotional import, is both the aim of this project and a way to further comprehend the spectator's experience, while expanding the possibilities of the choreographer's work, as I will elaborate in Chapter 6.

Through this investigation, I aim to build a view of my own emotional experience of these examples of contemporary theatre dance as an alternative to understandings of dance as unmediated self-expression, raw emotion, or insurmountably ineffable. This is the proposal of this project: that the emotional import perceived in the experience of watching a work of contemporary dance is embodied in the properties of the work, so there is no need to look outside the work to understand it. I propose, then, that the spectator's experience of emotion in dance is best understood as an enactive embodied process, focusing on the features of the work, but which integrates aspects of the background of the spectator and the context of the performance and the work—through this enaction and embodiment. And that, in this sense, it can be linked to the choreographer's experience too.

Chapter 2. Methodology

The focus of this project is to highlight the structures underlining the experience of emotion in three examples of contemporary theatre dance. Hence the aim of the analysis is to explore how the emotion I experience as a spectator of dance works is generated by the perceptual features of those works. The emotional import of the work is considered as emergent and its substructure constituted by, but not reducible to, the perceptual properties of the work. These perceptual properties are, in turn, understood as composite—*gestalt*—properties, as they are the result of combinations of other properties, but can be explained by their parts. In order to situate the reader in a position where the case studies which follow can be understood, this chapter explains the methodology for the study of the perceptual properties of the selected works, and how it is constructed in consonance with the conceptual framework as developed in the previous chapter.

This chapter includes reflections on the benefits and limitations of focusing dance analysis on video and still frames. These afford a fundamentally different experience in comparison with the live performance, but are the best tools for this analysis and topic. The chapter continues by explaining how each of the selected properties is analysed. Movement qualities are conceptualised using *Effort-Shape* theory within Laban's system of analysis (2011/1950), and also scholars working after him, such as Valerie Preston-Dunlop (1998, and Preston-Dunlop and Ana Sanchez-Colberg in 2010). Space analysis is proposed as a method indebted to both Laban and Preston-Dunlop, but also to Arnheim's theories of perception of art (1974/1954). And finally, the analysis of sound and movement relationships is explained through speech

analysis and the analysis of choreomusicological structures as developed by Jordan (2000, 2015).

2.1 From the conceptual framework to the method of analysis

Maxine Sheets-Johnstone—pioneer of the phenomenology of dance—explains that

> …if dance is the phenomenon, the phenomenologist describes the immediate encounter with dance, the lived experience of dance, and proceeds from there to describe the analyzable structures, such as temporality and spatiality, inherent in the total experience (Sheets-Johnstone, 2015/1967: 9).

It is in this sense that the analysis of case studies becomes vital for the project, as it allows me to see which properties and structures might shape the emotional experience of the viewer, and to explain my experience of the emotional import of contemporary dance. To some extent, as explained above, this work responds to the idea of annotation, that Blades describes as 'provid[ing] a hidden tool, or … laid over the top of recordings, drawing the viewer's attention to certain features' (2015: 26). Annotation, Blades continues, 'maintains and re-frames the expressive and affective experience of dance movement' (2015: 27), indicating it as an appropriate visualisation tool for my analysis.

The analysis then focuses on these complex properties—movement qualities, spatial-rhythm, and sound-movement relationships—and their interactions. These are properties which (a) I found significant in my viewing experience, and/or (b) are highlighted in other spectators' responses. In more detail:

- movement qualities—aspects relating to the movement of the dancer are mentioned in all reviews of *Afterlight (Part One)*, and in those of *Dark Matters*, that have been studied;

- music—also referred to in most reviews of *Afterlight (Part One)* as accompanying the atmosphere of the work, in this case in 27 out of 33 reviews. Music is also mentioned in most reviews of *Dark Matters*. The text used in the particular solo that I analyse is not mentioned as much, probably due to the fact that the solo is only a small section of the whole performance, and the text is only used in this and two other moments of the full performance; and
- spatial-rhythm together with use of light—the way the light is used and the way it creates space is repeatedly acknowledged in reviews of *Afterlight (Part One)*, 31 out of 33. This might also be due to Maliphant's well known collaboration with lighting designer Michael Hulls, but whichever the reason, there is an overwhelming number of mentions of this feature in the reviews of Maliphant's work. In reviews of Pite's work, mentions of the light are also frequent.

These are then considered three key features common to all the works. They are features that I perceived as significant to my own experience of emotion and that are mentioned by many of the reviewers. I now move on to explain the particular format in which the analysis of the case studies was developed.

2.1.1 Reviews and my experience

To understand the spectator's experience of emotion in the particular case studies, I refer mainly to my own experience, but also to that of other informed spectators, in this case reviewers who published particular responses to these works. As I reflect on my experience of watching the dances for the analysis, this necessarily means that the analysis is from my particular viewpoint and socio-cultural positionality. 'The experience of this performance, as of any object with material existence, is inevitably

perspectival' (Pakes, 2011: 34), therefore the analysis cannot exhaust the experience. This is not only because the analysis cannot grasp the work's development in time and space, but also because it is inevitably from one perspective only (Hass, 2008: 47). My particular position then shapes my response to these works, as well as my approach to the research as a whole, and my detailed analysis of experience through multiple viewings—live and on video. This personal experience is then contrasted with that of the reviewers, but still remains the main focus.[12]

The studied reviews for each of the first two case studies, and their corresponding years/performers and site of publication, are acknowledged in the respective appendices. *Petrichor*, as I will explain in Chapter 5, is a particular case also in terms of the reviews explored. Occasionally, I also refer to comments on social media—mainly Facebook, and only for the case study of *Petrichor*—as they give me access to other spectatorial experiences. This comparison allows me to look, from the experience of watching a particular dance performance, into the structures that underwrite this experience, to explore if others experience the works in a more or less similar manner, and whether that experience is similarly structured. Throughout the analysis, depictions by the reviewers are used to illustrate particular moments of emotional import in relation to the analysis of my experience, indicating a certain commonality of experience in spectators from similar backgrounds. In this sense, it is understood that what is highlighted by the reviewers has a greater impact on the audience's perception and potentially has an effect in terms of experience of emotional

[12] Although this reduces the scope of the project in order to achieve clarity of conclusions, the model of analysis and conceptual understanding might be extrapolated to other contexts and forms of dance. Applying the analysis to genres and styles other than contemporary dance would ensure this particular project contributes to knowledge in the form of a framework of analysis, and not only with the style-focused findings, as I discuss in Chapter 6.

import. The reviews can also help identify further features of the work which might be contributing towards the emotional import of the work.

2.1.2 Video and still frame analysis

My initial methodology was to see the works live as many times as possible, to explore mainly my experience, and then also that of other spectators through reviews. The first case study, Maliphant's *AfterLight (Part One)*, is developed through that methodology. However, and given that I was interested in seeing a range of works, repeatedly watching live performances was not possible. This was the point when the idea to watch and analyse works on video first arose, also as an opportunity to test whether the same experience of emotion might be achieved through video. Assessing my own choreography live was difficult, too, as I was distracted by various elements that I needed to attend to as choreographer—sometimes I was managing the desks for lights or sound myself, other times simply I needed to be thinking of notes to give to the dancers. The video recording allowed me a distance from *Petrichor* that I could not achieve live. Moreover, I experienced *Dark Matters* on video only and I still had a very emotional experience when watching Jermaine Spivey's solo. This also matched other spectator's experiences, judging by the reviews. By engaging with Pite's work through video recording alone, and still discovering a similar experience of emotional import, it became even more interesting to analyse all three works on video.

Evidently some issues are raised by the change from a live experience to watching a video. Performance scholar Matthew Reason relates how the experience of watching a recording might in fact 'convey little of the impact of the live event, little of the dynamism of the performance, the emotion, or the charged nature of the audience experience' (Reason, 2006: 90). McFee indeed explains that, in general,

watching a recording is not experiencing the art work, as one 'cannot be experiencing some of the work's crucial artistic features/properties. Here there are elements of the work's meaning that are logically beyond comprehension on that basis' (2003: 134). I acknowledge the differences between these two experiences, for example in the change of context around the spectator in each case: it is important to point out the lack of three-dimensional immersion which exists in watching a performance on video, versus that of the theatre.

The analysis of my experience of watching these case studies is done, together with the live experiences of *Afterlight (Part One)* and *Petrichor*, through systematic and careful observation of videos. Live experiences modulate my video analysis as memories of particular impressions can re-emerge, and also a general sense of the first viewing experience remains. That said, the main focus of the analysis is on the videos. The recordings in these cases are of live performances in the videos of which at least two cameras are used. This indicates editing, which renders the experience of watching again somehow different, and the recording is then not a straight case of documentation. Drawing upon Douglas Rosenberg's discussion, Reason suggests that 'the video camera can have a coercive affect [sic] on what it films as it 'shapes a situation it intended to simply reveal or fix' (Reason, 2006: 82). Following this Reason/Rosenberg line of argumentation, the experience of the video is different from the live experience: it is 'hybrid', 'somewhere between the video medium, the live performance medium and the activity of watching …' (Reason, 2006: 91).[13] Moreover, and contrary to McFee, Blades explains that

[13] It is possible to suggest that the video editors then become a form of choreographer in their own turn, modulating what the spectator sees in the video. Although potentially a very interesting debate, this is outside the focus of this particular project. I assume, then, that although they have this power, the editors have not radically altered the choreographer's style or choices through the editing of the video. Indeed, arguably their aim is to create for the spectator a sense of the experience as it is live: they 'focus on replicating and

> it is not the case that a filmed recording of a performance is a completely different thing to the live performance. We still consider these films to be the work, in some sense. Due to the fact that essential components of the work are presented… (Blades, 2011: 45).

The choreographic use of space—and more specifically what I will denote as spatial-rhythm below (after Laban and also following Arnheim's ideas)—is perhaps the property which varies most with the change to video, due to the different angles, close-ups, and the change of position of the spectator. The method proposed for the analysis of spatial-rhythm consists of converting the work's video recording into frames, or still images. Similarly to Reason's point in his discussion about photography, any analysis in this format needs to be 'accompanied by a continual awareness of the transformative effects of the camera, not least in how the still image inevitably reproduces dance without motion' (Reason, 2011: 278).

However, this kind of analysis is doing something different to the experience of watching the performance live: it is trying to reveal how my own experience of watching is constructed and organised. The video allows me to view repeatedly and slow down the action if necessary, whereas the still frames allow me to see the action second by second and study it in depth. This enables me to probe the role of spatial-rhythm in my emotional experience when watching a performance. It is also a pragmatic tool to help me show the other spectators and readers what I saw. The visual representation of the interaction of elements—via the colourful lines that I use to highlight the elements of spatial-rhythm—also helps me to observe interaction of properties, the effect of which I can then analyse further conceptually. In performance, the action passes too fast to closely observe, dissect, and study it. Although the comparison between the experience of live performance and video recordings in itself would be an interesting area of debate, the aim of my video analysis is not to reproduce

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reproducing the experience of live performance' (Blades, 2011: 43). I am not entering here in the broader debate of video recordings also being 'live' in a particular way (Blades, 2011).

the emotional experience itself, but rather to see how my experience of emotion is constructed when viewing these works. The project then covers a range of work a) seen live, then seen and analysed on video; b) seen only via video recording, analysed as such—in a way also 'live'; and c) which I made, seen live, and then analysed as captured on videos.

Furthermore, in light of the live and video experiences and analysis conducted for this project, I argue that the key perceptual properties of the performance can still be perceived on the video: 'essential components are presented' (Blades, 2011: 45), as explained above. Reason suggests that '*something* of the performance is available to us, particularly through careful study, through the (absolutely) hard work of watching' (Reason, 2006: 90). So the video experience still allows its spectator to perceive some key properties of the performance, albeit in a different context. Some elements might in fact be more obvious on the video. An example of this would be certain effects of the light that cannot be perceived so clearly in the live performance but that appear evident on video, which facilitates their analysis. Their effect is nonetheless still part—although perhaps not a fully conscious part—of the overall perceptual experience of the live performance. As Levinson points out in the case of fiction, the spectator of art might perceive the work, the 'impression', but 'perhaps never consciously acknowledging or focusing on [the structural and lower-order aesthetic underpinning]' (Levinson, 1990: 150). In relation to my analysis, indeed, the video experience allows me to perceive movement qualities, spatial-rhythm and sound-movement relationships. My emotional experience of *Dark Matters* on video also indicates that watching video recordings does not preclude an emotional engagement.[14]

[14] And also, seeing the increase on live cinema and screenings of works of dance from major opera houses, scholarly attention to the experience of dance on video could be deemed timely.

2.1.3 Information from the creative processes

Further to my own experience, and to the experiences of reviewers, there is one more element that I make reference to: the choreographers' articulations of process in relation to the works studied. Although I only make use of these materials within my discussion chapter (Chapter 6), it is important to note them here. I make use mostly of interviews publicly available for Maliphant and Pite, but in the case of Maliphant I also refer to personal correspondence with himself as well as Daniel Proietto, the dancer on which *Afterlight (Part One)* was created. The rationale behind the use of the materials responds to my proposal in this thesis, which links (1) the experience of the choreographer with that of the spectator, and (2) the work of the choreographer with the appearance of the perceptual properties. With regard to (1), the materials I use help me identify moments in which the choreographers might have referred to their own experience of emotion in the creative process. For (2), their articulations of process allow me to propose possibilities within the embodiment of emotional import in the perceptual properties, and generally to the agency of the choreographer towards the appearance of the work. These aspects are then further discussed in section 6.7.

2.2 The method of analysis

I argue in this thesis that emotional import emerges from perceptual properties. Colour, size, space, light, shape of positions, or costume are examples of these properties. The perceptual properties of a dance work are inherently in flux and are often themselves complex properties. Movement qualities are composed of factors such as use of muscular energy, time, or use of space; spatial-rhythm is constituted by factors such as lines of tension, pull, gaze, or points of attention; and the relationship between sound and movement is complex and multifaceted. I will expand on these

understandings of properties below, but it is important to establish here that the properties I investigate—those mentioned above—are in themselves composite: a combination of factors. They are not emergent, as they are defined by their parts: a movement quality is a particular combination of use of muscular energy, time, and use of space, and the same movement quality is reached if the same combination of muscle tone, time, and use of space is used.

By contrast, spatial-rhythm is a way of systematising the study and shareability of my experience of spatial configurations through still frames. In this sense, it responds better to a conceptualisation of analytical framework, than to that of a composite property. This is due to the fact that spatial-rhythm as it is studied here is not exactly a feature of the choreography in the particular moment being analysed, which would be characterised as a property, but it is a way for me to look into the spatial arrangements of a moment in the performance. For ease of argument, however, I will from now on group all three—movement qualities, spatial-rhythm, and sound-movement relationships—as composite properties. I will now expand on each of the selected composite properties, their relevance to my project, and frameworks to explain them.

2.2.1 Movement Qualities

When perceiving dance the spectator does not perceive only static forms in the body, but also movement dynamics or textures. These translate into a sense of progression, which is reflected in descriptions in the reviews. In fact, movement qualities are repeatedly referred to: 'fluid as silk' (Jennings, 2009); 'swift, supple, delicate, graceful, strong' (Liber, 2010); 'free flowing' (Foyer, 2017), 'undulating but tightly controlled energy' (La Rocco, 2010); 'impelled by forces outside themselves'

(Jennings, 2013). When analysing how the body moves, attention needs to be given to the kind of—muscular—energy given; to the use of kinespheric space—both in terms of the direction of the movement and in the level of outwards reach; and to the bodily rhythm or timing of the movement. To delineate my understanding of movement qualities I make use of *Effort-Shape* theory as part of Laban's system of movement analysis as well as its developments in the work of his disciples, mainly Preston-Dunlop (1998, Preston-Dunlop and Sanchez-Colberg, 2010). Although I have problematised its philosophical underpinning and some of its less well-known drives (in section 1.4), this theory and its subsequent developments provide a robust framework for my analysis.

Laban's methods have been inspiring to many not only within movement analysis and dance research, but also in the work of choreographers including Mary Wigman and Kurt Jooss, and, more recently, in part of William Forsythe's career (Goodridge, 1999; Preston-Dunlop and Sanchez-Colberg, 2010). Laban's relevance to research on dance and expressiveness is also evident when reviewing his work, which refers quite often to the issue of the expressiveness of movement:

> [i]n mime and ballet the dynamics of thought and emotion are expressed in a purely visible form. They are, as it were, written into the air by the movement of the performer's body (Laban and Ullman, 2011/1950: 7).

Laban spent much time researching the connection between expression and movement, more particularly effort, and posited that details of movement reveal features of our inner life (Laban and Ullman, 2011/1950: 19). He located the expressiveness of movement mostly in the rhythmic patterns and what he called *effort combinations* (Laban and Ullman, 2011/1950). Even the concept of *effort* is defined as 'the inner impulses from which movement originates' (Laban and Ullman, 2011/1950: 9). The

relationship between expression of emotion and movement is extensively explored in his model:

> [w]ords expressing feelings, emotions, sentiments or certain mental and spiritual states will but touch the fringe of the inner responses which the shapes and rhythms of bodily actions are capable of evoking. Movement can say more, for all its shortness, than pages of verbal description (Laban and Ullman, 2011/1950: 87).

Interestingly, the idea of comparing dance to language appears again, but in this case it seems to imply a kind of reverse form of ineffability, where dance is actually more meaningful or communicative than verbal language. Laban then goes on to say that by naming and describing movement we might be able to 'get the feel of the moods expressed' (Laban and Ullman, 2011/1950: 87). Laban's model is a complex one not only in its practical aspects but in the ideas supporting it. As discussed above, Laban argues that although 'hazardous', it is possible to generalise in the characterisation of particular emotions through a series of movements or *action-moods* (Laban and Ullman, 2011/1966: 60). This is at the very least debatable. He situates the meaning in the combination of movement, and more importantly in the *action-moods*, which he defines as 'chains of dynamic actions… of a purely expressive nature… containing mental and emotional qualities' (Laban and Ullman, 2011/1966: 55). He posits types and meanings of motion-factors and their combinations and proposes that these might give guidance 'in creating poetic expression of various moods in dance' (Laban and Ullman, 2011/1950: 115). Although this might seem like a qualitative jump, motion factors and their combinations as proposed by Laban serve as 'the basis of his method for study of expressive energy…' (Goodridge, 1999: 134).

It seems quite easy to judge Laban's vision of the expressiveness of dance as somewhat one-dimensional, or at least to make this judgment in relation to the conclusions he draws from his method of analysis. However, his ideas about dynamics

and rhythm, and their importance towards emotional expressiveness in dance, are useful and relevant (Goodridge, 1999).

> The method of movement observation, with its codified vocabulary and notational method which Laban developed, was clearly a marked advance on general unsystematic description and the use of idiosyncratic language (Goodridge, 1999: 129).

This area of Laban's model, also known as *Effort/Shape* and broadly part of his *Eukinetics*, is selected as part of the research model for this project because of its analytical power. Unlike his ideas about expressiveness discussed above, this area of Laban's model is recognised as one of the most complex and adequate systems of analysis for movement dynamics, within the Western traditions of movement (Goodridge, 1999; Chapple and Davis, 1988). When talking about Laban's model, Suzanne Youngerman argues that Laban's *Effort* terminology is clearer than alternative linguistic descriptions (1984: 107), and it also offers more specificity against the vagueness and subjectivity of use of more ordinary language. The relevance and applicability of this method of analysis to my project is then clear, but so is the necessity to abandon the understanding of emotion as characterized by particular movement combinations that Laban seems to propose.

Laban identified four *motion factors*—weight, space, time, and later on flow—and two attitudes within each of them: indulging in or fighting against. *Weight* describes 'power and overcoming gravity' and divides between strong and light (Bradley, 2009: 75). Vera Maletic, who also developed Laban's theories, describes weight as related to intention and the power of sensing (2005: 10), and to 'a display of strength or delicacy in performance' (2005: 11). The effort factor *space* divides between direct, and indirect or flexible. Direct space would be related to movement that is focused and pinpointing (Maletic, 2005: 14); whereas indirect would be movement that accepts the three-dimensionality of space, multi-focused, and flexible

(Maletic, 2005: 14). Direct space 'shows a tendency toward aligning the joints and performing bending and extending actions' (Maletic, 2005: 14), and flexible space 'shows a tendency toward a combination of twisting, bending-extending actions of several parts of the body' (Maletic, 2005: 14). *Time*'s extremes are quick and sustained (Bradley, 2009: 75). *Flow* 'describes the ongoingness of movement' (Bradley, 2009: 75) and its extremes are bound or free. In Maletic's development of Laban's model, she identifies flow with progression and the power of feeling (2005: 10), suggesting the relevance of including this factor in my analysis. From the combination of these four *motion factors* and the two possible attitudes toward them, Laban proposes a series of *states/attitudes* (a combination of two factors), *movement drives* (a combination of three factors), and eight basic *effort actions* (combinations of weight, space, and time in their different extremes) (Laban/Ullman, 1950/2011; Bradley, 2009).

Interestingly, Laban explores movement qualities in what he calls types of *effort* (Davies, 2006: 43), identified with each of the separate attitudes towards space, weight, and time. He considered 'space effort … the quality of movement we use to explore our kinesphere', 'weight … the type of pressure put into an action', and 'time … the pace contained in movement' (Davies, 2006: 43). Scholar Eden Davies further explains that an action will contain either weight or time in its *effort* content, which will in turn determine the character of this action (2006: 44). This particular understanding of the movement qualities of an action, however, is limited when categorising dance movement: a dance movement generally includes a sense of pressure, timing, and exploration of space, all in one action. In reality, it is Laban's *effort actions* (Laban and Ullman, 2011/1950) which are closer to what is intuitively understood as movement qualities, that is, a combinations of factors. In order to characterise a more complete understanding of movement qualities, however, there is

need to include reference to the fourth *motion factor* of flow, further to the *effort actions*. I explain below the system of analysis based on these four factors, as used in the case studies.

It is of relevance to note here that, for Laban, the combination of the three motion factors of flow, weight and time would constitute the *passion drive*. This combination leaves out space, which seems to be the least related to expressiveness according to Laban and disciples (Laban/Ullman, 1950/2011: 115; Maletic, 2005: 46-47). The passion drive would be

> a more emotionally emphasised drive. It includes the eight possible combinations of Weight, Time, and Flow qualities (sensing, intuiting, and feeling) that override the clarity of Spatial placement and shaping (thinking) (Maletic, 2005: 41).

There are several issues with the conceptualisation of this drive. First and foremost that Maletic seems here to separate emotion from thinking, that is, from cognition, a point of view opposed to that which I posit throughout this project. There are no official terms for the eight combinations that form this drive, although Maletic attempts to find some words to identify them: ‘spaceless float’ (‘vague daydreaming’), ‘spaceless flick’ (‘quizzical’), ‘spaceless glide’ (‘cautious hovering’) and ‘spaceless dab’ (‘light irritation’) (Maletic, 2005: 46-47). It is already quite easy to see by these descriptions that it is problematic to associate dynamics directly with emotions. For example, although there are points in the works in which the movements are light, sudden, and bound, corresponding with the ‘spaceless dabbing’, there is no sense of ‘light irritation’ during these movements. Although the links to this project’s topic are clear, the correspondences that Laban and his followers posit between combinations and emotions are very limiting, so there is need to build an alternative understanding, even if greatly indebted to Laban’s original system.

2.2.1.1 Factors for analysis

Weight, time, and space are indeed factors which I explore in my analysis, often referring to particular *efforts*, in Laban's sense. I also integrate discussion of flow in my analysis, the fourth factor which is not directly included in the effort actions, as I find it relevant to the identification of particular movement qualities.

- *Weight or Force/Muscular energy*

The different use of tension and relaxation in the body—or muscle tonicity—is here understood as a key factor in performance, as it creates difference in the appearance of the movement to the spectator. Laban does not speak directly of muscle tone, however he does talk about weight (Laban and Ullman, 2011/1950). In his theories, weight is the 'pressure put in an action', and can have the 'appearance of lightness and delicacy, or it can be an increasing, assertive pressure' (Davies, 2006: 42). Weight describes 'power and overcoming gravity' (Bradley, 2009: 75) and divides between strong and light. A strong weight would be parallel to a high muscle tone, verging towards the maximum use of the muscular capacity of the body, whereas a light weight would correspond to soft movements, without much use of muscular force. In Maletic's words (which do refer to muscle tone in relation to weight), light weight 'is not the same as lighter weight or a weaker, passive attitude, but is adjusting to a lesser pull of gravity' and 'shows a tendency toward lesser muscular tension, engaging the "center of levity," chest, upper body; movements further extended; inhalation; peripheral transitions' (2005: 16). Muscular energy is intuitively related to emotions—being "tense" or "relaxed" is an example of this direct relationship in colloquial language—but muscle tone, or the factor of weight, is also responsible for differences in the effort actions, and hence in the perception of movement qualities in the spectator's experience.

- *Time/bodily rhythm*

Speed and accents, once again important factors of movement qualities, are understood as key to movement as perceived by spectators. Movement is inherently linked with both time and space, in fact, as they are necessary for its existence. It is no surprise, then, that time is an element referred to in most movement and dance analysis models. Davies defines Laban's understanding of time as 'the pace contained in movement, either speeding it up or slowing it down' (Davies, 2006: 43), and he divides it between sudden or sustained (Davies, 2006). The rhythm with which the body moves, then, is another key element of movement qualities. The use of the term "rhythm", however, does not always seem consistent in Laban's use, which might be a result of translation. This bodily rhythm, and the concept of spatial-rhythm discussed below, are not necessarily similar, which is the reason why time and movement qualities are preferred terms here.

- *Kinespheric Space*

This element describes the way the movement uses the space, firstly referring to direction and projection of the movement within the kinesphere, vernacularly known as the "personal" space of the body. Laban defines kinesphere as 'the sphere around the body whose periphery can be reached by easily extended limbs without stepping away from that point which is the point of support when standing on one foot, which we shall call the "stance"' (Laban and Ullman, 2011/1966: 10). Davies also writes about how Laban understands the different ways in which movers can explore their kinesphere, describing them as either flexible, indirect, or as an 'investigative, direct way' (Davies, 2006: 43). At this level, direction relates to these different possible explorations within the kinesphere. In terms of projection, Preston-Dunlop refers to movements in which 'the spectator can follow the energy line beyond the body' (1998:

134). Projection in this project is mainly studied as an element of spatial-rhythm, explained in the next section.

- *Flow*

Flow is understood by Laban as relating to 'movement which is unimpeded and continuous', but also 'its complete opposite: movement which is broken up and jerky with the quality of 'starting and stopping'' (Newlove and Delby, 2004: 127). Its extremes are, respective to these preceding characterisations, "free" and "bound". Furthermore, I add analysis of flow to the effort actions as important mainly because it helps recognise other types of movement, but also because Laban himself considered it key to expressivity:

> [Flow] plays an important part in all movement expression, as through its inward and outward streaming it establishes relationship and communication. It is mainly concerned with the degree of liberation produced in movement …. A description of flow involves its complete negation, which is stop or pause. It involves also the notion of resistance and counter-movement, each of which is different in mood and meaning (Laban and Ullman, 2011/1950: 75).

Most importantly, Laban understood that flow can be successive or simultaneous, that is, that it relates also to the way the body is used (Newlove and Delby, 2004: 127), and it is in this sense that flow is key to perceiving movement qualities: a successive free-flow, which appears several times in the case studies, would correspond to dancers moving through the different joints of their body successively while not stopping the fluidity of movement, almost as if they had relinquished control of the body movement.

2.2.1.2 Observing movement qualities/efforts in the case studies

From this conceptualisation of the system of analysis, I can now build the different *efforts*/qualities and their characterisations. It is important to note that I use the terms

"effort" and "movement quality" interchangeably as referring to the mode of moving, although I am aware that they would differ in the original Laban system. As explained above, these qualities and their characterisations emerge from combinations of weight, space, and time, to which I add flow as a further distinction.

- *Pressing*: this type of effort is a combination of direct space, strong weight/high muscle tone, and sustained time. It is performed with bound flow. Very controlled movement characterises this effort.
- *Flicking*: a combination of indirect/flexible space, light weight/low muscle tone, and sudden time. It is performed with free flow.
- *Wringing*: related to twisting, with a strong sense of counter-tension. Wringing is a combination of indirect space, strong weight, and sustained time, and is often used in bound flow.
- *Dabbing*: a combination of direct space, light weight/low muscle tone, and sudden time. Dabbing can be performed with free flow, in which case it implies a sense of rebound, or with bound flow which stops the motion and, I add, the movement's outward projection.
- *Slashing*: a combination of indirect space, strong weight/high muscle tone, and sudden time. Generally performed on free flow.
- *Gliding*: smooth movement, a combination of direct space, light weight/low muscle tone, and sustained time. This is usually performed in bound flow.
- *Thrusting/punching*: a combination of direct space, strong weight/high muscle tone, and sudden time. I consider the quality thrusting when performed with free flow, as the movement would project further, whereas punching is more accentuated and bound.

- *Floating*: a combination of flexible space, light weight/low muscle tone, and sustained time which creates a sense of weightlessness, and can be performed in free or bound flow. This is especially interesting, and often encountered in the case studies, as successive free-flowing material, where body parts move one after the other in different directions, giving a sensation of lack of control of the dancers towards their own body.

Although I use the original terms for effort actions (Newlove and Delby, 2004), and add the factor of flow, I also recognise that these are in themselves widely disputed. I make use of them in this project for clarity and speed of categorisation, but I also acknowledge their problems through my analysis as necessary.

It is important to consider also that the analysis does not work with single movements but with phrases or sequences, as these are understood as the relevant unit for the analysis of the work (Morris, 2000: 54). Phrases are identified as clusters of several steps, and delineated by patterns of rest, contrast, or repetition (Morris, 2000). In a similar sense, and linking to the next section about analysis of space, Preston-Dunlop refers to the *choreutic unit*, or basic unit of analysis of space, as 'a particular curve or line … that is placed in space and has a size' (Preston-Dunlop, 1998: 133). This curve or *choreutic unit* is made clear to the audience by way of body design, and spatial progression, projection, and tension (Preston-Dunlop, 1998: 133), which once again link directly to the notion of space. I make use of the idea of *choreutic unit*, proposed by Preston-Dunlop but also used in dance scholar Geraldine Morris's work (Morris, 2000), as it enables me to examine phrases by conceiving of them as units, rather than as merely collections of individual movements. *Choreutic unit* is used below to emphasise the importance of looking at a phrase of movement in order to notice the work's progression in space.

Finally, it happens rarely that a full phrase would have only one effort throughout, or that the effort would fit exactly the description as given above. It is much more common to encounter variations throughout a phrase, and cases of perceived qualities sitting in-between the categories of effort as explained. There could be an argument for developing the model of analysis further, but it is also important (1) to understand the model as a tool to classify and deepen our comprehension of the movement perceived, and (2) to consider that, due to its varied nature, contemporary dance cannot be reduced to eight categories or manners of moving. Laban's systems and different concepts—such as states and drives—are sometimes questioned, disputed, and considered too categorical and positivist whilst not seeing that they are context-specific, that is, they might not relate to various dance or choreographic practices. In my study, however, they facilitate the conceptual analysis—as outlined in Chapter 1—and do not serve to develop closed categories. The analysis, then, is a tool for observation, and not a finite categorisation.

2.2.2 Spatial-rhythm

Both as a choreographer and as a spectator, I tend to pay attention to and note the use of light. These case studies were no exception: *Afterlight (Part One)* uses a video projection with makes the light literally move (Chapter 3), and the solo from *Dark Matters* uses very simple but striking lighting, not less because of the visible light fixture and silhouette effects (Chapter 4). Although I also notice it, spatial organisation is not usually one of my first points of attention when watching dance, except when particularly evident, for example the expansion and encaging effect of the dancer in *Afterlight (Part One)* (Chapter 3). As a choreographer it is very intuitively part of the work, however I argue in my discussion that both my understanding and my choreographic use of space have developed due to this project. The use of space and

light is also described in most reviews of the three analysed works: ‘dying light’ (Jennings, 2009); ‘ravishing arena of light’ (Crisp, 2009); ‘transformed into clouds, space, and waves of light’ (Brown, 2010); ‘edges dissolving in a blue haze’ (Johnson, 2010); ‘evocative lighting … creating a theatrical atmosphere’ (Reviewer 7, 2017). Space and light are interrelated elements of high importance in the performance of the studied solos, both in my own experience and as suggested by the reviewers’ remarks. Space is understood both in terms of the global space of the stage, and the close space of the dancer, or kinespheric space. Here, the latter is mostly analysed through movement qualities, however certain aspects of it contribute to the understanding of space in use.

Understandings of space and light are combined in a method designed to explore the spatial-rhythm of the work, hence investigating space and light in depth. The concept of spatial-rhythm itself is not new. In dance, Laban proposed this concept already in the 1950s, defining it as what is ‘created by the related use of directions resulting in spatial forms and shapes' (2011/1950: 121). The spatial-rhythm of the choreography is created by the design of the movement, of the position, and its relation to the rest of the stage. As they are inextricably related, the use of light is analysed also as an element of spatial-rhythm. This particular analysis of space allows me to explore whether a relationship between spatial-rhythm—mainly in conjunction with other properties of the work—and my experience of emotion exists, and what the terms of this relationship might be.

In his understanding of *Choreutics* (Laban and Ullman, 2011/1966), Laban explored transferences of position, path, kinesphere, the three dimensions—length/height, breadth, depth—and mentioned the innumerable possibilities of directions from the body to the space. Laban also spoke of *trace-forms* as the outward appearance of movement in space, defining four fundamental ones: straight, curved,

twisted, rounded (Laban and Ullman, 2011/1966: 83); these, however, seem rather limiting when trying to understand the use of space in dance. Preston-Dunlop's developments of Laban's ideas on *choreutics* (1998, Preston-Dunlop and Sanchez-Colberg, 2010) seem a more appropriate model to follow, mainly because she applied these ideas and principles to performance. Preston-Dunlop and Sanchez-Colberg recognise *spatial forms* as one of the components of movement material (2010). They also propose *virtual spatial forms*, which link to the idea of the appearance as being the important factor in our experience, as opposed to the physical properties.

For the analysis of space I also make use of the writings of Arnheim (1974/1954, 1982, 1986). Although he focuses on psychology of perception and the perception of works of art, when combined with ideas from dance scholars such as Laban or Preston-Dunlop, his work can also be applied fruitfully to dance and movement. Arnheim's study of perception of paintings allows for the proposal that we do not perceive the elements of a performance as individual aspects of what is available to our vision, but that our perceptual system creates wholes, *gestalten*, which constitute our perceptual experience. This again differentiates between appearance and physicality and relates to the conceptual framework proposed in the previous chapter (Chapter 1).

In his explorations of light and space, performance scholar Scott Palmer refers to the 'use of light as an expressive material in defining, shaping and creating stage space' (Palmer, 2013: 77) highlighting also the 'link between light, space and music' (Palmer, 2013: 77). I inform my analysis with the ideas of Palmer (2013) and Yaron Abulafia (2016) to identify elements which are important in the analysis of light in performance. Light creates space on stage, hence its vital role in perceptions of performance. And it does this both by delineating what the spectators see, creating the spaces dancers can come in and out of, and by creating shadows both on stage and on

the dancers. At the same time, light creates atmosphere through its shape and colour, and in its interaction with smoke. In the particular case of *Afterlight (Part One)*, light also creates movement on stage, interacting even more powerfully with the dancer's movement and the music. In his chapter on light and the body, Palmer speaks about the need for a 'more sculptural, creative use of light' (2013: 142), making his ideas very appropriate in reference to the use of light in *Afterlight (Part One)*, for example. Palmer also refers to 'the expressive qualities of light, its power of suggestion and its potential contribution to performance practice' (Palmer, 2013: 77), indicating light's importance for the emotional import of dance works. Based on the work of these authors, I propose that it is important to acknowledge technical aspects of the light and light fixtures, the atmosphere, and any possible symbolism created by the light, as well as the kind of relationship between light and other elements such as music, and of course the body.

2.2.2.1 Spatial forms in the analysis of choreography

I divide the analysis of space into three levels for explanation and analysis, which together constitute the perception of spatial-rhythm. In the proposed system the three levels are not separated, as they form the spatial-rhythm only in interaction—like movement qualities, the idea of spatial-rhythm is in itself multi-faceted and interactive. The first of the levels is constituted by a more elementary notion of spatial form. I use a more physical understanding of space to discuss this first level, in that it is understood as "real" and not virtual, as the next level will be. Elements within this level are location, use of global space, and kinesphere. I now refer to each of these elements in order to explicate the basis of my analysis system.

The first of the elements within this level, location, refers to the dancer's situation in the global space of the stage, both with respect to the stage limits, the set,

props, or lighting, and the other dancers present. The concept of orchestration would be part of this element, that is, the organisation of a group of dancers in space and time. Understanding that looking at an ensemble piece would diversify the variables considerably in my analysis, I focus on works which only have one dancer moving during the analysed dance. Group movement orchestration, then, is not analysed in my discussion. The second element within the first level would be the use of global space during the performance, and refers to direction, and trace-form. Location then refers to a particular moment, whereas use of global space refers to progression through time. Finally, it is important to study the use of kinesphere as it changes throughout the performances studied, sometimes affecting the perceived emotional import.

2.2.2.2 Virtual spatial forms

The second level is constituted by the idea of virtual spatial forms, mainly in the iteration of the idea by Preston-Dunlop and Sánchez-Colberg (2010). In their review of Laban's ideas, these authors recognise four types of virtual spatial forms—virtual because they 'are perceived to be there but are not actually there' (Preston-Dunlop and Sánchez-Colberg, 2010: 86). Firstly, spatial projections—'when energy is thrown into the space through the dynamic of the dancers' performance' (2010: 86)—are important to the spatial-rhythm of the works. Secondly, spatial tensions—'existing across the space between people or objects or limbs' (2010: 87)—also emerge as important in the analysis: tension is a key concept both in terms of space and in relation with bodily tension or muscle tone as explained within movement qualities. Thirdly, spatial body design—'in which the human being's physicality 'disappears' and his spatial geometric form 'emerges' through the dancer's way of performing' (2010: 87)—relates mostly to the idea of spatial-rhythm in the kinespheric space. And fourthly and finally, spatial progression—'when the dancer's motion seems to leave behind a trace

of lines and curving shapes in the space' (2010: 87)—is considered in conjunction with the idea of trace-form as explained above—with trace-form understood as physical, whereas spatial progression would be its virtual counterpart.

2.2.2.3 Emergence and perceptual forces

Finally, the third level would be the one most evident also in the visual arts, and in its characterisation it is most clearly indebted to Arnheim. As explained above, Arnheim talks about emergence and perceptual forces in the perception of pictorial objects, and in this sense this last level would bring together and into itself the previous two—especially in relation to Preston-Dunlop's virtual spatial forms. The separation, however, is necessary for clarity. Elements such as tension and balance—perceptual properties—which in turn are based on factors—physical properties—such as size, colour, direction, weight, shape, movement, diagonals and nodes of attention (Arnheim, 1974/1954), are explored in the analysis. Balance is defined by Arnheim as 'the dynamic state in which the forces constituting a visual configuration compensate for one another. The mutual neutralization of directed tension produces an effect of immobility at the balancing center' (Arnheim, 1982: 215). In the case of dance, although performers most commonly move in asymmetrical positions, a sense of balance is still achieved through the continuous motion and compensation of elements. Perhaps it is most commonly denominated harmony in dance composition, but the idea of a balanced spatial configuration is not unfamiliar to choreographers. It is part of a choreographer's job to consciously work on the compositional harmony, by using elements such as number of dancers or type or speed of movement, whether or not this means symmetry in the space. In fact, Arnheim proposes the idea that '[b]alance does not require symmetry' (Arnheim, 1974/1954: 21). Interestingly for dance, and something that is encountered in the analysis of case studies, '[f]actors such as size,

colour or direction contribute to visual balance in ways not necessarily paralleled physically' (1974/1954: 20).

Factors that contribute notably to balance are weight and direction. Each of these is in its turn affected by other factors. Weight is defined as 'the strength of the gravitational force pulling objects downwards', although in the arts the tension can be in many directions (1974/1954: 23). Weight is influenced by location, spatial-depth, size, colour, intrinsic interest (subject matter, formal complexity, intricacy, peculiarity), isolation/empty space, or shape (1974/1954: 23-25). Direction is understood by Arnheim—within the context of the still elements of pictorial objects—as one of the properties of perceptual forces (1974/1954: 26), with the shape of objects and attraction by their neighbouring elements influencing direction (1974/1954: 26). In the case of actual movement, this indicates the direction in itself (1974/1954: 28). But further to this, and as I will explore in my examples within the case studies, sometimes the actual direction of the movement is compensated by other directional forces, such as other dancers in the space, light or set creating a sense of pull in different directions. This is especially evident in the analysis of the still frames.

Diagonals are another element to be found relevant in the composition of dance, and Arnheim explores diagonals in-depth in his work on perception of pictorial objects. He states that diagonals break away from the vertical/horizontal framework, but at the same time they give a stability of their own; they create shapes and spaces, but at the same time they create separation (1982: 106-112). It seems that diagonals are understood in his work as elements of inherent tension, which will also be seen as relevant in my analysis. Finally, and relating to points of attention in the spatial-rhythm analysis proposed below, Arnheim considers the points or centres of pictorial objects where directed forces interrelate as "nodes" in the viewer's perception, i.e. 'constellations of vectors which create centers of visual weight' (1982: 155). These

"nodes" are created by crossings of forces, convergences towards a common centre, or contractions. One example of these—still within visual arts—is 'the bending of joints in the human body' (1982: 155-158), which provides a strong link for the application of these ideas in the analysis of dance. All these points, as it will be seen, are of great importance when analysing the spatial-rhythm of the work of dance through still frames, as they allow me to indicate possible perceptual occurrences which affect my experience as spectator during the performance.

2.2.2.4 The focal point

There is one further element to consider beyond the three levels of spatial-rhythm discussed, and which is not usually included in models for movement analysis. This element is the dancer's gaze. Foster considers the possibilities of the dancer's gaze within her framing devices, indicating that the dancer can 'direct the viewer's attention in diverse ways' such as making personal contact, guiding them to focus in on the action and space of the performance, or, through 'inward gaze … encourag[ing] viewers to apprehend the kinesthetic sensations of the act of moving' (1986: 63-64). Arnheim mentions briefly the importance of the focal point of the actor, and indicates that 'spatial directions created by the actor's glance are known on the stage as "visual lines"' (1974/1954: 28). And Morris speaks about spatial projection and comments on how the gaze can support the sense of projection in the movement, as it helps the spectator perceive it (2000: 134). I understand this as the direction towards which the dancer's eyes are looking, or, from the point of view of the spectator, the intuitive understanding of where the dancer's eyes are looking according to the position of the head. Both the lines created by the dancer's gaze and the sense in which the lines of the gaze support projection are discussed in the analysis. This element seems to have a strong effect on spatial-rhythm and be key to the overall perception of the studied

works of dance. At the same time, it seems not to be the result of previously mentioned elements, hence my separate emphasis on it.

2.2.2.5 Analysis of video based on spatial-rhythm method

For my analysis, I exported the video material into still frames. As explained, this was done in order to facilitate understanding my own experience of space, relate it to my experience of emotional import, as well as in order to share it with the readers. The same frame rate as the official video recording which is used for the analysis is chosen for the conversion. Converting to stills at this frame rate allows me to have a still for every second of the video. These stills are then viewed individually to identify four elements, which allow me to illustrate aspects arising as giving emergence to emotional import during my viewing experience, and that of other spectators. The elements are the following, drawn into each frame in the identified colours:

- Lines of tension (main and secondary) refer to the use of direction and the dancer's position. In this sense, they also refer to Preston-Dunlop's ideas on spatial tension (2010). [Blue lines]. These relate to ideas of kinesphere, shape, and diagonals, as previously explained. Occasionally, these lines also give rise to spatial projection.
- Direction of pull refers also to tension, but mainly it is related to the sense of outward projection in the still image, when a sense of push towards a particular direction is clear. [Red arrows]. This in turn relates to direction, position, relation to other elements present in the space, as well as the trace-form.
- Areas of attention, which are where my eye is directed within a still frame, and which are directly related to factors such as light, colour, size, or shape. [Green circles/ellipsis]

- And finally, the focal point, i.e. the direction of the dancer's gaze, which, I argue, is important to our perception also of space. [White lines].

An example of the result of analysing one frame can be seen below, in image 91e.

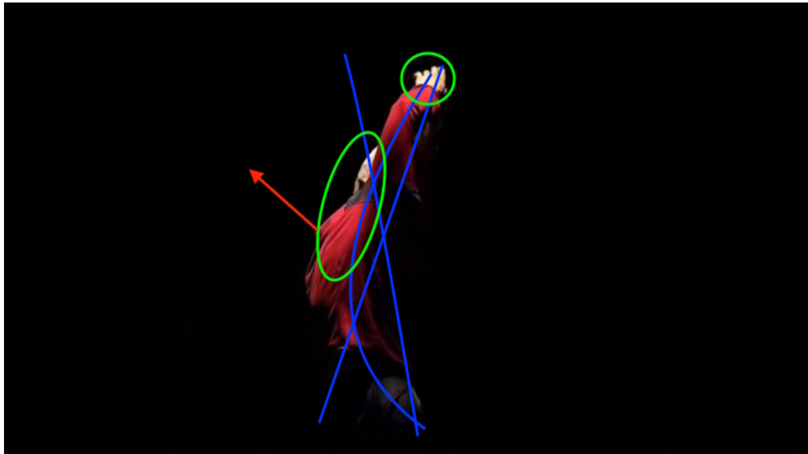

Figure 1 Image 91e. An example of the sense of diagonal and spiral through the body design. A strong sense of pull can also be observed

Through these still frames and the lines and circles drawn on them I am able to dissect the work into more detail in terms of its use of space. Both video analysis and the live experience do not allow this kind of observation of detail in the spatial-rhythm. The use of still frames is also necessary in order to draw the lines and circles, as video analysis, even though it allows for stopping and rewinding, does not allow drawing[15]. This detailed representation of spatial-rhythm in the still frames allows me to demonstrate, understand, and share my experience of it more clearly. To do this, I first analysed all still frames from the case study under scrutiny, then selected those with characteristics which stood out, and finally identified these within the scenes selected for discussion. In this way, the analysis both helped me understand my experience,

[15] Although I am not fully familiar with the technology, projects which use specifically developed software to annotate video also use lines through the moving image. They seem to do this animating it after the analysis. For the analysis itself, it is still necessary to stop the video.

informed the general discussion within the project, and exemplified my spectatorial view within the particularly highlighted scenes.

2.2.3 Sound-movement relationships

It seems to be widely accepted that the sound and/or music which forms part of a dance performance is key to our experience of it: '[t]he audience is acoustically encircled or surrounded by the performance' (Brown, 2010: 138-139). Peter Sellars is also quoted in Ross Brown's reader on sound as stating that 'sound is where we locate ourselves, not physically, but mentally and spiritually. Sound exists inside our heads. It is our greatest experience of intimacy, it transports us, it invades us' (Brown, 2010: 46-47). Music and/or sound is key to my experience of these works, which is why I consider it a relevant property to my analysis. Further to this, sound is referred to often in the studied reviews, and is linked very directly to emotional understandings of the performance: 'soft insistently doodling piano' (Brown, 2010); 'haunting piano score' (Costello, 2010); 'disembodied voice intoning excerpts' (Thomas, 2012). The elements to which I refer for my analysis of the soundscapes in the case studies are elaborated on in the following section.

2.2.3.1 Structural relationships between sound and movement

The study of the interactions between sound and movement is crucial for my research. Reviewers highlight moments of interaction repeatedly, for example with *Petrichor* Reviewer 2 saying that '[i]t seemed almost as though the movement of the dancers were creating the beats, rather than the beats guiding the movement of the dancers' (2017), or dance writer Jann Parry describing *Afterlight (Part One)*'s music as an 'eerily calm accompaniment to [the dancer's] perturbation' (Parry, 2017). It is

important, then, to deal with the possible relationships between movement and music. Although most of the comprehensive studies of these possible relationships (such as Jordan, 2000, or Preston-Dunlop and Sanchez-Colberg, 2010) refer only to music, I will expand here and relate to other possibilities of sound in dance, such as the singing or speaking voice, or soundscapes. Jordan proposes ‘a theory of interdependence and interaction between music and dance’ (2000: 63). This is because whether sound and movement are created together, in integration, or completely independently, the reality for the spectator is that inevitably they are experienced together, as a whole (2000: 65).

Before referring to Jordan’s categories for choreomusicological relations, however, there are some concepts which are relevant to this discussion. Phrasing and rhythm are within these relevant concepts, as they can anchor structural relationships between dance and music. Phrasing is a term that applies both to music and to dance. It relates to the mode of playing or moving in phrases—brief units of movement or notes—and how each of these phrases are modulated. It is ‘the ebb and flow’ or ‘the peaks and valleys’ of a piece of music (Cavalli, 2001: 9) or of a movement sequence. What is more, ‘[p]hrasing is as important to music as it is to speech because it allows the listener to experience the music as bite-sized chunks rather than a continuous stream of notes’ (Powell, 2016: 182-183). In a way, phrasing can be related to breathing (Goodridge, 1999) and to the fact that movement qualities keep changing throughout in a dance (Maletic, 2005). Both movement phrasing—as seen above in the analysis of movement qualities and the use of the phrase as basic unit—and musical phrasing—in its structural relation to movement phrasing—will be explored in my analysis.

In relation to movement, it is important to understand its ‘dynamic structure or quality’ within the ‘context of phrasing’ (Maletic, 2005: 13). Indeed, Jordan locates

the expressiveness of music in ‘dynamics, tempo, and tonal tension’ which, she says, ‘have a psychological impact, stimulating the human nervous system’ (2000: 66). Dynamics is a widely-used term, the definition of which somehow escapes us. In Preston-Dunlop’s book *Dance Words*, dynamics are defined as ‘changes of movement colouring recognised and initiated by choreographers and schools according to their own view of dance’ (1995: 268). Humphrey is quoted defining them as the ‘texture of dance…, in movement it is “smooth and sharp” plus “variations in tempo and tension”’ in 1959 (Preston-Dunlop, 1995: 268). In the context of musical understanding of dynamics, Eric Taylor speaks about softness or loudness, that is, indications of how the passage is supposed to be played (1989: 78). Intensity or loudness refers to the different emphasis that notes can be played with, making them more significant. Composers can show changes in dynamics, with terms such as *crescendo* or *diminuendo* (Taylor, 1989: 79). Musical dynamics also relate to concepts of tempo—the speed of the beats; and pitch—‘the height or depth of sound’ (Taylor, 1989: 7). As can be seen by this very brief characterisation, although in both disciplines the term has to do with energy, understandings of dynamics differ between dance and music. I refer to dynamics in dance as a feature of movement qualities, and within the dynamics in music I will mostly refer to points of particular intensity of sound.

The second concept anchoring structural relationships between sound and movement is rhythm. Musical rhythm here ‘refers to the way in which sounds of varying length and accentuation are grouped into patterns’ (Taylor, 1989: 6). There has to date been little study of rhythm and timing elements in performance, according to Janet Goodridge, who states that

> …the challenge of addressing and clarifying the subject has still not been fully taken up in performance studies. In fact, not since the American dance writer John Martin (1939) observed when commenting on the ‘vexed subject’ of rhythm: ‘Indeed as soon as rhythm is mentioned, we are likely to find ourselves enveloped in as

> dense a fog of mysticism and vagueness as that which beclouds the subject of form itself' (Goodridge, 1999: 15).

Goodridge proposes, talking about performance, that time elements seem to be a strategy to 'unlock the seeming mystery of "what makes it work"' (1999: 13). Moreover, Raymond Bayer suggests that 'understanding of a work of art lies in understanding its rhythmic construction: "We understand a work of art correctly, then, as soon as we perceive it correctly in the rhythm-formal sense, and as soon as we feel its true emotional content through this formal perception" (1961, p.29)' (Goodridge, 1999: 95). In this sense, the idea of rhythm is present throughout my analysis, although the term itself seems too wide-ranging to be of particular analytical use[16].

Within her proposal concerning structural categories for relating music and dance (2000: 73), Jordan speaks about parallelism as the result of the choreographer's use of the 'technique of creating concurrence … between music and dance' (2000: 74). She problematises this, however, 'operating within a mechanism of interdependence rather than maintaining the hard binary of parallelism versus counterpoint' (2015: 93). Counterpoint, Jordan discusses, can be executed in conflicting rhythms or syncopation within music, or with rhythmic conflict between music and dance (Jordan, 2000: 92). Jordan makes use of ideas of parallelism and counterpoint in the rhythmical structure of the music and the dance, 'matching or crossing rhythms' (2015: 110). However, she does this still considering the 'distinctive manner in which music and dance operate' when talking about 'rhythmic parallelism or music visualisation' (2015: 110). Even within parallelism, she argues, the synchronisation is not absolute, even when phrases start and end at the same time in music and dance. Although taking into account her

[16] Different conceptual understandings of rhythm can be used for multi-dimensional analysis, from bodily, musical, and spatial-rhythm, to personal or shared rhythm, even to proposals such as Henri Lefevbre's Rhythmanalysis (2013/1992). For this project, however, they seem too broad. I have chosen to utilise spatial-rhythm for its usefulness as a framework for analysis of space.

problematisation of the binary parallelism-counterpoint and later change to an understanding of interdependence, Jordan's characterisations of choreomusicological relations are useful tools for my analysis. The relationships between sound and movement are more easily illustrated through these categories although, similarly to the case of movement qualities, the aim is not to develop categorisation but to look in depth at the details of the work in my own experience.

Another type of relationship between music and dance would be the case of dance anticipating or reflecting the music. Although this is not a case of parallelism, the effect is similar, with music accentuating elements of the dance (Jordan, 2000). Syncopation—another musical category that choreographers can relate to—basically implies accenting a weak beat instead of a strong one—which are instead rests—avoiding a regular sense of rhythm (Cavalli, 2001: 5). There are also pieces of music, or phrases, which are meant to be played without very evident accentuation, and this might be linked with modes of playing, for example those joining the notes—*legato*—and those which are meant to be played with clear differentiation between notes—*staccato*. Although musical terms, these can also be applied to the way the dancers move by being informed by the music, which Jordan does (Jordan, 2010). For clarity, and because this project does not focus directly on the dancer's particular performance, I retain Laban's efforts as a way to refer to movement qualities.

Accentuation is also taken into account in the analysis as it emphasises—or is emphasised by—movement. Syncopation is key both to the music itself and to its relationship to movement. And *legato* and *staccato* are used in the soundscapes of all three case studies, with *legato* more prominent in *Afterlight (Part One)* and *Petrichor*, and *staccato* present in different occasions in the way the poem is voiced in *Dark Matters*. Finally, Jordan acknowledges that '[c]horeographers can, of course, devise

material that rides freely across the musical pulse' (2000: 93). All these concepts and ideas inform my analysis of music/sound and their relationship to movement.

2.2.3.2 Forms of analysis

For the analysis, although it is not presented in full detail here, I first turned to the music or sound in itself, exploring the scores of Erik Satiè's *Gnossiennes* 1-4 (1890-1891) in the first case study, and analysing sound in the subsequent two cases. The three case studies have very different soundscapes, from music, to voice, to a combination of a song *a cappella* and percussion. An open-source software for speech analysis, Praat (GNU GPL license), was used for the analysis of sound in the second and third cases, returning data regarding the voice or sound in the solos of *Dark Matters* and *Petrichor*. Below is an example of the images that the software produces:

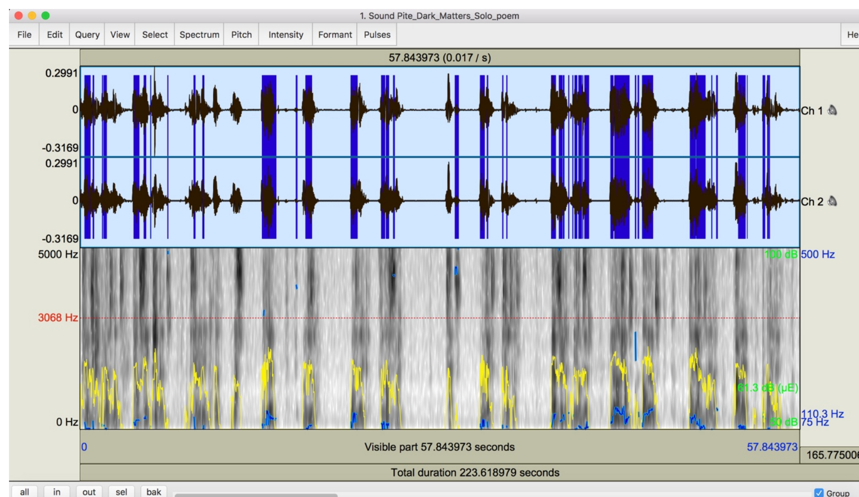

Figure 2 Praat speech analysis example, results from first section of Dark Matters solo

Such images provide information on the general progression of the shape of the voice, given by its intensity and pitch. This also enables both the poem and the *a cappella* song to be treated in a similar way to music in this study, that is, pitch and intensity are analysed and made evident as they would be in a musical score. This elucidates their relationship to movement, understanding rhythm (as structure), intensity, and

pitch, as the most important features of this relationship. These define my perception of sound, and apply to all sound, voice, and music, which in turn affects emotional import.

2.2.4 Selection of examples for discussion in the thesis

The process of analysis then comprises a full analysis of the selected works—*Afterlight (Part One)*—or extracts—*Dark Matters* and *Petrichor*:

(a) through Laban's efforts,

(b) an analysis of the still frames, one per second, following the spatial-rhythm analysis as explained above, and

(c) a choreomusicological study of sound-movement relationships following Jordan's ideas through the study of the musical scores in *Afterlight (Part One)* or the structural analysis as well as the pitch/intensity analysis through Praat in *Dark Matters* and *Petrichor*.

(d) Following this, I study the choreographies through these three elements synchronously, observing the interactions between them and the emotional effect they have in me.

Finally, in order to share my experience I select particular scenes that have a strong emotional impact for me, and also for reviewers judging by their comments. These scenes are also selected as they exemplify specific emotional effects in relation to the works' perceptual properties. The selection is made to illustrate the insights obtained from the analysis, since a full description of the analysis would be too extensive.

2.3 Summary of Chapter 2

Chapter 2, following the conceptual framework in Chapter 1, built a dance analysis framework that would observe core individual elements common to all three works, namely movement qualities, spatial-rhythm, sound-movement relationships, and also their interactions. Each of these properties is understood as a composite, or *gestalt*, property: a combination of different elements. Movement qualities are understood as a combination of muscular energy, time, use of space, and flow, based on Effort-Shape theory—through the work of Laban and Preston-Dunlop. Spatial-rhythm is constructed from physical and virtual form—that which emerges through perceptual forces—and is constructed from the ideas of Laban and Arnheim, as well as Preston-Dunlop's development of Laban's theories. The focal point of the dancer is also studied as part of a work's spatial-rhythm. Sound and movement are considered, with possible structural relationships discussed through Jordan's framework.

Throughout the last two chapters I have located the main aim of the project through its conceptual and analytical basis, that is, its methodological framework. This methodological framework enables me to explore how emotional import emerges from the perceptual properties of the works. In order to do this, the framework considers my own experience in detail, and also the experience of other informed spectators through discussion of reviews of the works in question. Through these explorations of experiences I select the elements to focus on for the analysis. I also take into account issues of visuality in the theatre, and mainly the problematic of documentation and experience of a work of dance through video and still image. By identifying a form of analysis that can relate both to the importance of the work itself, and to the intuitive difference between physical properties and perception of emotional import, I seek to explain my spectatorial experience of emotion in these works of contemporary theatre dance by analysing its constituent elements. This will then allow me to relate the

experience of the spectator to understandings of embodied cognition and enactive perception, and through these, to refer back to the choreographer's experience. It is these case studies to which the next three chapters are dedicated.

Chapter 3. Case Study 1: Russell Maliphant's *Afterlight (Part One)* (2009)

What seems like a single source of light comes up on stage, dimly lighting a dancer. He is wearing a beanie hat and a red sweatshirt. He is facing the back of the stage. Soft, melancholy piano music accompanies the scene. The dancer starts turning slowly till he faces the front, his face obscured by shadows. He continues turning and with a soft movement of the shoulder starts lifting the left arm over his head, while he keeps revolving around. Shortly after, the dancer and the lights "lock" and turn together in a continuous and slow movement, which feels unsettling and at the same time calming. All this time the music has been creating an atmosphere of mystery and melancholy.

What precedes is a description of the opening scene of *Afterlight (Part One)* (2009). My experience of watching *Afterlight (Part One)* (live in 2009, 2010, and 2017) was one of hypnotising power and moving beauty, as can be perceived in the description above. I found the work to be a silent cry, full of longing. When I saw the work live in one performance of its premiere run, it left me speechless for some time, overwhelmed by the need to stay still and process what I had seen and felt. Although I knew what to expect, the effect was equally emotional in subsequent viewings, even in my experiences of watching the work on video. My analysis of the properties of the work, as explained in the previous chapters, aims to identify the features of the work which contribute to its expressive effect, that is, to my emotional experience. Watching *Afterlight (Part One)* for the first time left me with a general sense of melancholy.

Each time I watch the work again, even on video and after many views needed for the analysis, I still get the sense of melancholy, a general sadness, some sensation of painful beauty. The analysis here develops the scenes which emerged as most significant for my experience of the work, together with moments that reviewers also referred to. I identify the particular emotional impression and its corresponding underlying structures in section 3.2. Before that, I give a brief introduction to the work.

3.1 Introduction to *Afterlight (Part One)*

Maliphant was born in Canada in 1961 and trained at The Royal Ballet School in London. He danced with Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet. He later abandoned ballet to perform with DV8, Michael Clark, Rosemary Butcher, and Laurie Booth. Studies of anatomy, physiology and biomechanics, as well as his training in the Rolf Method of Structural Integration, inform his choreographic work, which is also influenced by other practices such as ballet, contact improvisation, yoga, capoeira, and tai chi. He has had his own company, Russell Maliphant Company, since 1996, but also creates work for and with other artists and companies such as Sylvie Guillem, Robert Lepage, Isaac Julian, BalletBoyz, and Lyon Opera Ballet (Russell Maliphant Company, 2016).

He describes his own choreographic style as still including classical elements such as line, *épaulement*, and head positions, with influences from Body-Mind Centering in the use of breath, Rolfing in the use of fascia, floorwork, and contact (English National Ballet, 2015). Dance writer Sanjoy Roy describes Maliphant's style also as 'quite an amalgam', but insists how 'it never feels forced; you can't see the seams' (Roy, 2009). Roy continues that

> [c]horeographically, Maliphant is an abstractionist. He works with the physics of action and interaction – tugs and leans, falls and arcs – and you can often sense the chemistry of character and feeling just beneath the carefully crafted surface. Compositionally, he'll often use buildups

> or accumulations: small, simple motifs that are repeated and developed into larger, more complex patterns (Roy, 2009).

The close relationship—or more accurately interdependence—of movement with light and/or music in his work is also often pointed out, for example by Roy again: 'even his solos often feel like duets, in which one of the partners is light, space or sound' (2009). Maliphant has developed a long-standing and renowned collaboration with lighting designer Michael Hulls.

Afterlight (Part One) is a work choreographed by Maliphant in 2009 on Argentinian dancer Daniel Proietto, as part of the *In The Spirit of Diaghilev* programme that was presented from the 15th to the 17th of October at Sadler's Wells Theatre, in London. The work was commissioned by Sadler's Wells' Artistic Director Alistair Spalding for a special gala performance commemorating the centenary of the Ballet Russes. Spalding commissioned four of Sadler's Wells associate artists for the programme, and works by Wayne McGregor, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, and Javier de Frutos were presented alongside Maliphant's *Afterlight (Part One)*. This solo has since been presented at *Made at Sadler's Wells* in 2013, performed by Thomasin Gülgeç; by Daniel Proietto again in February-March 2017 as part of *MaliphantWorks*, a full evening of works by Maliphant's own company at The Print Room, London; and again by Proietto in November 2017 as part of *Men in Motion*, a one-off gala celebrating male dancers, organised by dancer and impresario Ivan Putrov at The Coliseum, also in London. The work was also part of a similarly titled longer work premiered at Sadler's Wells in 2010, that then toured, with the main role being performed by either Proietto or Gülgeç on different occasions.

Maliphant uses Erik Satie's *Gnossiennes* 1 to 4 (1890-1891) as the soundtrack for this work, and these four pieces of music also divide it into four sections, which Maliphant called *Turning*, *Trails*, *Opening Out*, and *Pouring In* (Stewart, 2016: 54).

In section 1, to *Gnossiennes* number 1, Proietto starts turning and arching his back slowly, in a small pool of dim light. Section 2, to the music of *Gnossiennes* number 2, starts with Proietto opening his chest to the ceiling while spiralling down towards the audience. At the same time, the music starts and the light projection opens to extend to cover a bigger area of the stage. Proietto also expands his movement to travel more in this bigger space, rolling, rotating, and spiralling, moving mostly at low level, close to the floor. At the end of *Gnossiennes* number 2, Proietto takes off his sweatshirt, which he throws off-stage just after the beginning of the next piece of music, *Gnossiennes* number 4, while he starts turning on the spot repeatedly with a faster dynamic. This turning motion then develops into sequences composed of rolls on the floor, combined with spiralling sequences at standing level. The piece develops in this third section to include faster movements, but still within the motif of spirals and turns. The projected light-video also seems to move more in this part of the work, occupying the whole stage as a large cloud-like presence. In the final section, with *Gnossiennes* number 3, Proietto dances almost only centre stage, in a series of revolving sequences that develop a seemingly opposing motion going towards the centre of the stage and outwards, aided by the inward—towards the centre—motion of the light-video. The movement is again faster. The light-video projection shrinks throughout this section until Proietto is again turning in a very limited dim pool of light, coming back to the first image of the work. In the final scene of the piece the light fades out on Proietto, who is reaching upwards by stretching one arm above his head, while still turning.

Dance scholar Nigel Stewart states that *Afterlight (Part One)* ‘depicts Vaslav Nijinsky—Diaghilev’s lover and Ballet Russes’ greatest dancer—as he descended into mental illness at the end of his glittering stage career’ (2016: 54). Hulls, however, maintains that the work is ‘inspired by Nijinsky and the Ballets Russes’, but it is not *about* them (Brown, 2014). This lack of narrative agreement is perhaps best indicated

by the fact that most reviews considered here describe *Afterlight (Part One)* occasionally using some kind of

- representational reference—'briefly taste[d] freedom' (Philpott, 2017), 'lost … searching' (Crompton, 2010);
- symbolic reference—'sketch come to life' (Mead, 2009), 'trap[ped] between worlds' (Brown, 2009);
- reference to Nijinsky's most famous roles (Liber, 2009); or
- narrative with reference to Nijinsky's 'descent into schizophrenia' (Jennings, 2009).

There is too much variation between them: the general thematic points towards Nijinsky's life, also indicated by the title of the full programme, but the narrative of the work is not straightforward. Nonetheless, narrative, symbolic, and representational aspects of performance still might affect the emotional impact the work has on the viewer. Gestures, facial expression, or symbolic movements that relate to the narrative aspects of the work, however, can be perceived in the properties of the work—that is, without the need to refer to anything external to it. As they seem to affect my experience, I discuss these aspects when they are foregrounded in my experience. When I first watched *Afterlight (Part One)* I was not completely aware of its connection to Nijinsky's life, although the title of the evening did indicate a general link to the Ballet Russes. This did not compromise my emotional engagement. As Luke Jennings observes, when watching *Afterlight (Part One)* 'you don't have to know the story of Nijinsky's descent into schizophrenia to be profoundly moved' (Jennings, 2009), but these profoundly moving aspects are embodied in the work itself.

The analysis below studies the composite properties of movement qualities, spatial-rhythm[17], and movement-sound relationships, considering them as *gestalt*, as explained in the methodology (Chapter 2). These properties are chosen for in-depth analysis as they emerge through my experiences of the work as relevant to my emotional engagement, and they are also mentioned by other spectators—the reviewers. The analysis of these properties proceeds through careful observation of a video that documents Proietto's performance during the premiere run of the work (15th to 17th October 2009), which is also the official video recording released on DVD (Maliphant et al., 2009)[18]. Observations made during the analysis, together with the comments of reviewers, are then explored to probe how the emotional import of the work derives—at least in part—from these perceptual features, in an understanding of perception as enacted and integrating background and context into the spectator's experience.

3.1.1 Informed audience perspective

As explained in the methodology chapter (Chapter 2), I juxtapose my perception and emotional experience of the work with experiences of other informed spectators, in this case professional reviewers. It was interesting to discover that other spectators had similar responses to the work as I did. The reviews examined as part of the case study, their corresponding years/performers, and their site of publication are collated in the table in Appendix I. I have consulted a total of thirty-three reviews published in twenty-one different newspapers, magazines or online, the majority reviewing

[17] The full set of edited still frames is available in the supplementary materials USB/DVD within the *Afterlight (Part One)* and Edited Stills folders (see Supplementary Materials/Afterlight (Part One)/Edited Stills).
[18] The full video is available in the supplementary materials USB/DVD within the *Afterlight (Part One)* and Full Video folders (see Supplementary Materials/Afterlight (Part One)/Full Video).

performances by Proietto, although six focus on Gülgeç's performance. Further to my own experience, this work is usually described in emotional terms, for example: 'piercing in [Proeitto's] evocation of loss' (Jennings, 2009), or 'obsessive' (Parry, 2017), with 'Erik Satie's pellucid *Gnossiennes* provid[ing] an eerily calm accompaniment to his perturbation' (Parry, 2017). Or perhaps more explicitly:

> *Afterlight (Part One)* is perhaps one of the most emotional dance performance ever to be seen. Accompanied by Erik Satie's powerful and sensual *Gnossiennes 1-4*, Daniel Proietto does not just move to the music, he is fueled by it and synchronises his body to the rhythm and the emotion. He is like an ice skater, and Jan Urbanowski's projected animation resembles ice breaking beneath the feet during Gnossienne 4. It is utterly beautiful (Cowan-Turner, 2017).

These observations correlate with most of the other reviewers' comments, and with many audience members with whom I spoke informally. There are exceptions, however, both amongst reviewers—with Neil Norman saying that 'sleep was very much in [his] mind' (2009)—and audience— with an acquaintance of mine saying to me at the end of the performance that she was bored to tears, while I was still recovering from my own, very different, experience. Although agreement is generally quite extensive, then, it is not possible to find one position which would coincide with the experience of every member of the audience. The attention, background, and context of the particular spectator do have an impact on their experience of the dance work.

Ideas about emotions elucidated by the experience of the performance run through most reviewers' writings in three types of descriptions. The first type refers to the poignancy of the work ('profoundly mov[ing]' (Jennings, 2009), 'lyrical sadness' (Philpott, 2017), 'reaches deep into the soul' (Liber, 2013), 'gesture of perpetual yearning' (Guerreiro, 2017)); the second, to the idea of loneliness, ('poignant contentment of solitude' (Brown, 2009), 'utterly lonely' (Brown, 2010), 'lonely eyes'

(Costello, 2010)); and the third type refers to the effect of the performance as 'transfixing' (Crompton, 2010), 'mesmerisingly beautiful' (Jennings, 2009), 'breathtakingly good' (Watts, 2009), or 'spellbinding' (Talijancic, 2014). Interestingly, most of these descriptive themes occur in reviews across the different performances of the work (2009, 2010, 2017 performed by Proietto, and the 2013, and 2014 performances by Thomasin Gülgeç), with the idea of "loneliness" being the one that is not so clearly invoked in descriptions of Gülgeç's performance, of which there are far fewer reviews[19]. I also maintained personal correspondence with Maliphant and Proietto, which I used to nuance my discussion in the analysis. For example, Proietto has the impression that reviewers who see the piece without the context of Nijinsky's life have a less emotional reaction, which indicates that narrative aspects are key for him (Proietto in personal communication, 26 November, 2017).[20] I saw the work live in its first run in 2009, in the premiere of the full-length version in 2010, and most recently in its 2017 re-stagings, and my analysis draws on all three live viewings, during which I experienced similar feelings.

3.1.2 Perceptual properties

As explained in the methodology of the analysis, drawing upon my multiple viewing experiences and cross-referencing with key terms from the reviews, I have selected the following properties to analyse in terms of their impact on my spectatorial experience:

- movement qualities—aspects relating to the movement of the dancer are mentioned in all reviews studied: 'fluid as silk' (Jennings, 2009); 'swift, supple, delicate, graceful, strong' (Liber, 2010); 'free flowing' (Foyer, 2017);

[19] In this particular project I do not compare the work of different dancers, but I will reflect on their obvious contribution in section 6.2.1.
[20] All information and quotations have been approved for their use in this project.

- music—also referred to in most reviews as accompanying the atmosphere of the work, in this case in 27 out of 33 reviews, and very directly linked to emotional understandings of the performance: 'haunting piano score' (Costello, 2010); 'eerily calm accompaniment to his perturbation' (Parry, 2017);
- spatial-rhythm together with use of light—the way the light is used and the way it creates space is repeatedly acknowledged in reviews, 31 out of 33, perhaps due to Maliphant's well known collaboration with Hulls. Some examples are: 'dying light' (Jennings, 2009); 'ravishing arena of light' (Crisp, 2009); 'transformed into clouds, space, and waves of light' (Brown, 2010).

The project analyses a particular performance by a particular performer to probe the emotional import of the work. It is interesting to note, however, that judging by the reviewers' coinciding opinions, the conclusions extracted from this particular analysis could be successfully extrapolated to other performances of the same work. This suggests that the emotional import is centrally a feature of the work and not of any particular performance of it. Taking these issues into account, I look at the choreography, which would maintain across different performances most of the characteristics relevant to this analysis and discussion. Movement qualities are perhaps the properties which vary more between performers, however, as seen in the study of the reviews for *Afterlight (Part One)*, the emotional import survives these slight variations of qualities across performances from Proietto or Gülgeç. Further to this, Proietto indicated to me that the relationship between music and movement varied from the performances in 2009 to those in 2010 and 2017, once again indicating that emotional import can still emerge when there are slight variations of the relevant properties (Proietto in personal communication, 26th November, 2017). The agency of

the choreographer is the key here, as it is the choreographer's experience that modulates the emotional import in the creative process.

Although for the purpose of analysis each perceptual property is studied separately, it becomes important to explore their interactions. Instances in which a second property affects the way something is perceived are explored, for example, with the accents in the music inducing possible perception of accents in the dance, or with the light affecting how the movement or position is perceived by creating shadows on the body or in the costume. Therefore, further to the analysis of particular properties, I here develop the study of scenes in which moments of interaction in the work particularly call out for attention in terms of emotional engagement.

3.1.2.1 Light

The light design used for *Afterlight (Part One)* is singularly striking and hence requires separate attention for a moment. Maliphant and his long-term collaborator lighting designer Hulls worked together from very early on in the process (Maliphant et al., 2009). The lighting takes the form of a video animation created by Jan Urbanowski, projected as an overhead spotlight from the centre of the stage on to the floor. Together, Hulls and Urbanowski create a source of white, dim, animated light, a swirling video projection that expands and moves, partially illuminating the body of the dancer—dressed in a red top and grey trousers, also wearing a white beanie hat—while he almost continuously spins and spirals his body. Throughout the piece, the light projection changes size, shape, and brightness, moving and circling around the dancer at points, also creating spiralling forms. This is a general description of a visual motif, but also coincides, in its spiral imagery, with the fact that *Afterlight (Part One)* was 'inspired by photographs of Vaslav Nijinsky and his geometric drawings' (Russell Maliphant Company, 2016). The drawings to which Maliphant referred for inspiration

are found in the diaries of Nijinsky, which are full of geometric designs. 'With obsessive consistency, they are composed of circles and arcs' and only loosely resemble any realistic figures (Acocella, 1999). Maliphant refers to the drawings as 'very fine sculptural positions' (Maliphant et al., 2009), which he also used to guide tasks to create Proietto's movement. I will expand on this in section 6.7, when referring to the choreographer's process.

3.2 Analysis of properties and interactions

This section analyses scenes that emerged as especially relevant for my emotional experience, and which are particularly illustrative of this experience's underlying structures. Before that, it is important to note something that occurs in the moments between the four sections of *Afterlight (Part One)*. In between scenes, Proietto seems to "disconnect" from his dancing persona and become more pedestrian, he drops theatricality and becomes more "human". This seemingly non-performative mode of movement is not easy to describe in terms of the movement qualities articulated in my methodology, and poses some interesting challenges both for the model of analysis and for the understanding of the experience of emotional import in contemporary dance: the perception of the dancer's humanity, and not only the extraordinary ways in which he moves, affects my emotional experience of the work.

3.2.1 02.10 | A sense of melancholy

Proietto suspends his stop at the end of a flowing turn and reaches his arms up, facing his own hands. A contradictory sense of projection upwards and contained energy in the hands arises from this position. With the continuing accompaniment of the music, he opens the right side of his body, slightly arching his back so that it is possible for

me to see his face. At this point the melody of the next phrase of the music starts, making the moment even more poignant. He continues to drop his body towards the right side, allowing his face to go more into the light, then into darkness, and adopting a twisted position overall. In ten seconds, he goes from hopefully reaching up to turning his back on this hope, falling into a sense of despair. His left arm, however, is still reaching back and up and in the light, holding on (see Supplementary Materials/Afterlight (Part One)/Scene 3.2.1).

This description of the scene identifies several elements that are relevant to my emotional experience of the performance. In *Afterlight (Part One)* most of the movement is performed with a direct, sustained, and light effort, in bound and simultaneous flow: what I will be calling gliding movement quality, following Laban (Laban and Ullman, 2011/1950). Reviewers repeatedly comment on this continuous and soft quality of *Afterlight (Part One)* (Costello, 2010; Jennings, 2009). This movement quality common within the case study is performed at a slow pace at the beginning of the piece, in section one, and it alternates with a pressing quality. Pressing quality is also direct and sustained, but includes high muscle tone, or strong weight, giving it a sense of resistance, as if the dancer is moving in a dense environment. The movement is also performed in a bound and simultaneous flow. Muscle tone, or sense of weight, would seem to be a key aspect of how the movement is perceived and, in this case, it is important in that it is key to distinguishing between gliding and pressing efforts, which are key qualities within *Afterlight (Part One)*. In this particular case, the contrast between these two qualities of movement allows for a sense of breathing in the movement: while pressing has a sense of breathless tension, gliding has a sense of lightness that releases tension, a relaxed melancholy.

Changes between qualities, for example at the end of particular movement phrases, add to my engagement with the work. In a sense, they produce a dance version of *rubato*, “stealing” moments from the particular phrasing. *Rubato* seems very powerful for dance, both when performed in the music, and when used in choreography. Jordan defines rubato in dance as ‘the slowing, decaying and then catching up with the beat’ (2015: 111). This appears in *Afterlight (Part One*) in the form of these suspensions at the end of a movement sequence, as it occurs, here and throughout the solo, when the turns are finished in a pressing effort, with bound flow. *Rubato* captures my attention, adding a sense of tension, of mystery, in a way a similar effect to that of the pressing effort, but with an added surprise and suspension, as it comes unexpectedly. It is as if a breath was momentarily taken away from the dancer and from the spectator as well. The movement throughout this scene is performed with a pressing effort, although it is not a very slow version of this quality. The scene develops a quality that seems to fall between gliding and pressing as it cannot be observed as a pure example of either. This “in between” quality has a higher muscle tone than the light weight of gliding, and as it is quite fast in pace it cannot be considered pressing either. Perhaps this indicates, at least in the context of this project, that analysis models cannot account for every nuance of performance, but are tools to better understand a work. In this case, this feeling of being in-between two qualities allows me to posit a fluid identity in the emotional import of the work which translates into a sense of hesitation, of doubt. The change between the sense of hope and that of despair is also facilitated by this hesitation, and hence by this in-between quality.

A sense of spatial projection, and, in fact, a change of spatial projection, is also perceived in this particular scene. The sense of projection seems to be aided by the coincidence of the main line of tension and direction in the body and the focal point of the eyes. Through this scene, the simple movement draws the projection from that just

described to its opposite, where the direction of the focal point and that of the main line of tension pull in different directions. Incidentally, my analysis of spatial-rhythm leads to the understanding of projection as dependent on the relationship between the focal point of the dancer and the main lines of spatial tension perceived—and this is obvious in all three case studies, as will be seen below. Morris also indicates that the dancer's gaze can help the spectator perceive projection (2000: 134). The most obvious conclusion is that the sense of projection in fact arises when the dancer's focal point and the main line of tension perceived in the body of the dancer coincide. This can be observed in the following sequence of stills, from this particular scene, where the most evident projection occurs in A-RM-128e and A-RM-130e, when the look and the lines of tension are closer:

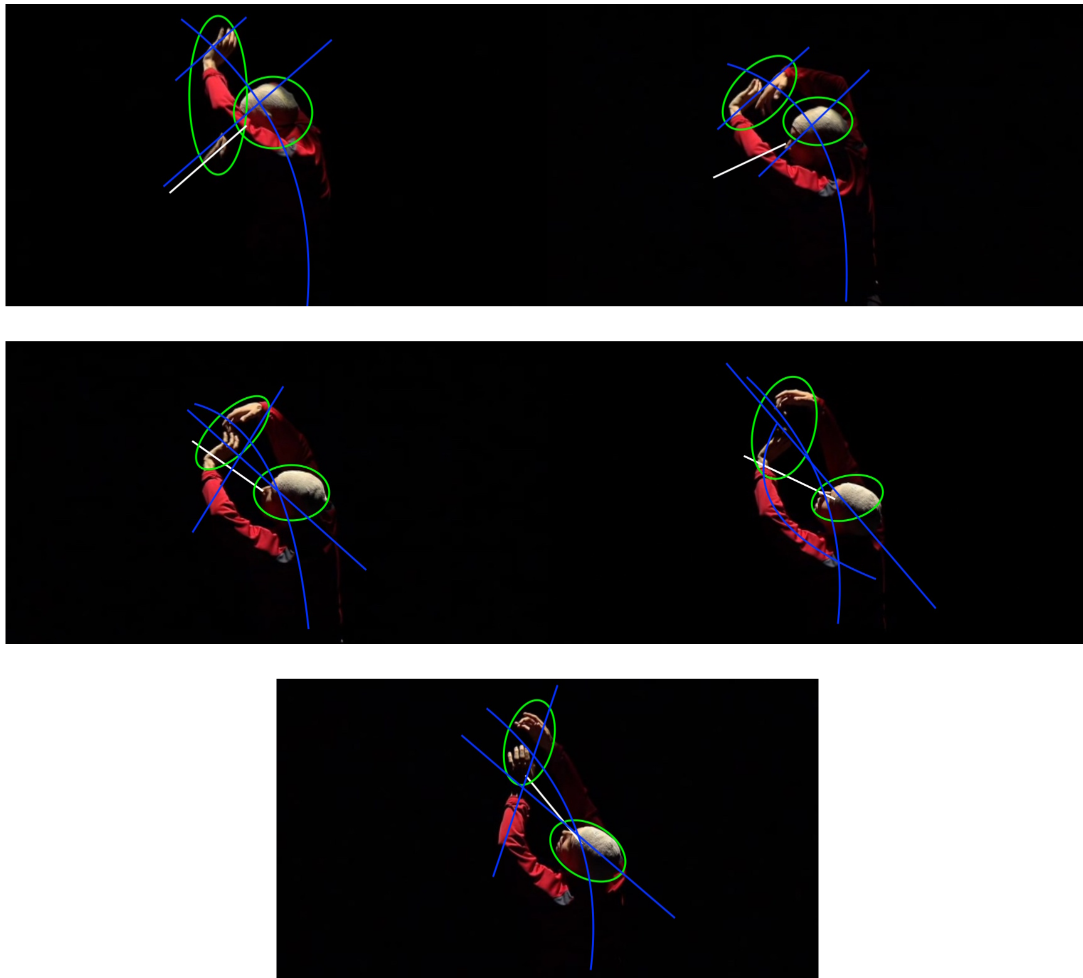

Figure 3 Images A-RM-126e to A-RM-130e. From top to bottom, left to right

More interesting is perhaps the fact that projection can also be achieved by the look going in the opposite direction to the main line of tension—on those occasions when this line has a clear sense of direction towards one side. This can be observed in image A-RM-140 below. The emotional impact of these two examples of projection, however, seems different: when the directions coincide I perceive an impression of intentionality that deems the sense of projection more active; whereas when the projection is produced by opposing directions the perception tends to a sense of pull backwards, which seems more passive than intentional. The contrast between these two forms of projection coincides with the perception of the dancer as both 'delicate' and 'strong' (Liber, 2010), both 'searching' and 'lost' (Crompton, 2010), both 'majestic' and 'fragile' (Wood, 2014). Interestingly, an intention—or lack thereof—is here perceived in a movement without any reference to what the dancer himself actually intends. It is in this sense that the idea of emergence from perceptual properties is interesting in terms of emotional import, without necessary reference to any self-expressive aim external to the movement itself. Beauquel explains that '[t]he analysis of choreographic expression should describe different kinds of movements involved in dancing and acknowledge their decisive role as well as the fact that they are not all as intentional or active as we think they are' (Beauquel, 2013: 166). However, in this case a sense of intention/action emerges from the movement itself, without need to refer to any actual intention or action from the dancer, which supports both the idea of emergence and Beauquel's proposal.

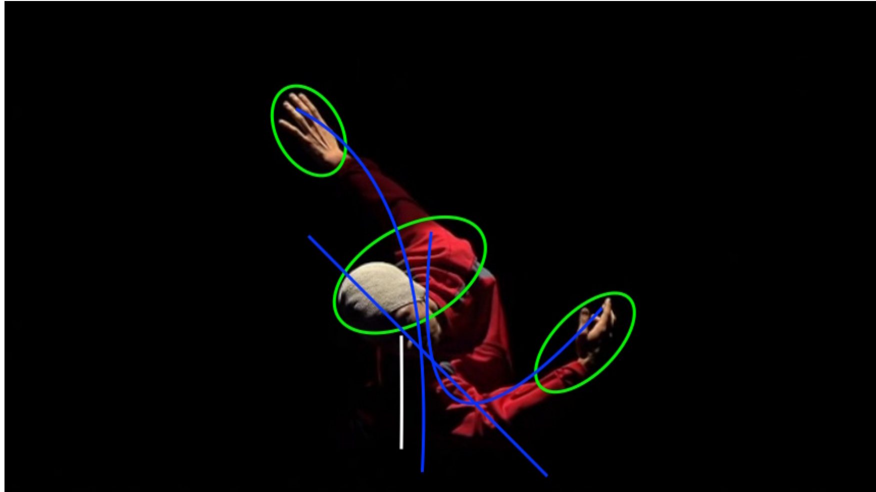

Figure 4 Image A-RM-140

The position of the dancer's hands also produces an impression of contained energy. Empty or negative space is another key element in *Afterlight (Part One)*. In these frames there is empty—or negative—space between the hands in A-RM-126e to A-RM-130e (figure 3), or between hand and torso in image A-RM-140 (figure 4). This not only directs my attention as spectator but also gives a sense of containment, an energy captured between the hands. Arnheim talks about the importance of the volume of empty space to the sense of balance in the visual arts (1974/1954: 24), but also discusses how this is used in performing arts to highlight certain moments or characters in space, referring to stars on stage and how a space is left around them at important points of the performance. Arnheim calls this 'isolation for emphasis' (1974/1954: 25). The fact that the dancer is going from a straight upright position, to a twisted one facing down, from relative symmetry to several lines of tension and movement, also produces an intense effect. The opposition within the body—both spatially and movement-wise—creates a sense of underlying tension in the work.

Throughout *Afterlight (Part One)* it is clear that the phrasing of music and movement run parallel to each other, although the movement is still quite simple at this beginning point of the choreography. The movement does not seem to match the music exactly—each movement does not correspond to each note in the melody or

harmony—but there is a consonance between the two in the overall phrasing, in what Jordan calls ‘a blurred synchronisation’ (2000: 78). Sometimes the movement seems to follow the melody in its sense of phrasing, but it is more in parallel with the harmonic accompaniment in its overall structure and more particularly with its movement-to-movement organisation. This is quite evident in the scene being analysed here. In this specific moment of the performance, the dancer opens the right side of his body in a constant movement which is paralleled in the constant feeling of the harmonic accompaniment. Further to this, it is in the way the melody, which is not constant, gives the movement a rhythm, like a beat, that the merging of the forms becomes most interesting. This is something that would not be perceived in the movement alone, but is given by its interaction with the music. Jordan explains that ‘[m]usic also has the capacity to infect … our seeing … so that we perceive dance accentuations to musical accentuations, even when they are hardly, if at all, built into the dynamics of the movement’ (2000: 76). This is perhaps another way of yielding to the music (Liber, 2009), and can be considered an example of *visual capture*—the effect by which what spectators hears affects what they see (Jordan, 2015: 115).

The face goes from being in full light, because of the dancer facing up, to disappearing into the shadows when he lowers his head down. As previously discussed, in *Afterlight (Part One)* the light is key, the cause of this being perhaps the continuous fluctuation of this element. This is also more generally a feature of Maliphant’s choreographic style. In *Afterlight (Part One)* there is only one light source which is in fact a projector just above the centre of the stage, on top of where the dancer starts and finishes the piece. In bigger venues, such as Sadler’s Wells, some side lighting is used too (Stewart, 2016: 56). This lighting arrangement allows the shadow effects to be created. The shadows created by the projection in the dancer's body affect the kinespheric spatial-rhythm: they allow me to have a sense of three-

dimensionality, and to appreciate details of the hands and face. At the same time the audience is never able to see Proietto's full body, with the work

> refus[ing] the spectator a totalising vision of Proietto's body, not only by fragmenting it kaleidoscopically into patterns of light and shade but also by forever changing those patterns by virtue of the fact that Proietto catches the light differently as he continuously morphs from one shape to another whilst all the time turning in place (Stewart, 2016: 60).

The contrast between light and darkness seems to be an important tool when it comes to creating space on stage. *Afterlight (Part One)*'s lighting designer Hulls explains this saying that it is 'about the quality of the darkness, which is almost—almost—as important as the quality of the light because they are opposite sides of the *same* coin' (in Moran, 2017: 130).

The details of light and shadow referred to in this section might not be fully apprehended in a live performance. However, judging by other examples of the use of light, they affect my perception of the piece even if they are not individually perceived consciously. That is, they are apprehended as part of the overall perception of the piece. Dance critics note this: Libby Costello does speak of how 'the fine details of Proietto's body are illuminated' (2010), and Sarah Crompton writes that 'the flickering illumination mak[es] him look like a memory or a ghost' (2010). The most obvious connection between the use of light and shadows and emotional import is that the dancer cannot be seen in full by the spectator at any point, as he is always covered by a mix of lit and shadowed areas. Apart from the halo of mysteriousness that this might add to the performance, it blurs the perception of the dancer's body and with it his presence, perhaps even his humanity—hence the 'ghost' or 'memory' effect that Crompton talks about (2010). In this particular scene, the varying degrees of light on the hands and face of the dancer also provoke changes in my perception of emotion,

allowing a contrast that strengthens the sense of hope at the beginning, and of surrender towards the end of the scene.

All these features of the moment interact to create an emotional effect, and although the effect is not the most intense of this particular work, it is still enough to call my attention to it. There is contrast, changes, and "in-betweens" in the movement qualities; a sense of parallel phrasing, moments in which the music gives the movement a rhythm, and examples of *rubato*; spatial projection both when the lines of tension are in the same direction to the focal point of the dancer, and when they are opposite to it, contained energy in the empty spaces of the body, tension produced by opposition, and also shadows that create space and avoid Proietto's body being shown in full. It is a relatively simple sequence, but through the analysis it is possible to see that a lot of information is available to the spectator. Through all these properties and interactions the scene produces an effect of hope that evolves into a calm surrender.

3.2.2 Beginning of section 2 | A gasp

After a very brief moment where Proietto's body is facing the back of the stage but he twists his upper body to look at the audience in a slight suspension, he suddenly opens to the opposite side and arches to lower himself to the floor. At the same time, the music—Gnossienne *2—starts, and the light video projection expands to cover a bigger area of the stage. A mixture of power, struggle, despair and vulnerability seems to pervade this moment of release* (see Supplementary Materials/Afterlight (Part One)/Scene 3.2.2).

One of the first possibilities in terms of interactions between properties is that these run in parallel and produce similar effects upon the audience, strengthening the

resulting effect. An obvious example, and hence perhaps less impressive although still effective, is the beginning of the second section of *Afterlight (Part One)*. This moment is marked by the dancer performing a back bend to lower himself to the floor, with the music starting and the light expanding dramatically at the same time. The movement is sudden, with the effect of the big arch backwards enhanced by the way the arms open, emphasising both the sense of projection and the powerful diagonal line of tension. Proietto performs certain movements such as this one, thrusting, occasionally through the solo. These movements give the impression of a fall, his body dropping suddenly. This type of effort consists of direct movements, performed with high muscle tone or strong weight, and in a sudden manner. The moment is also emphasised by the slight suspension to the opposite direction that he performs immediately before throwing himself to the floor.

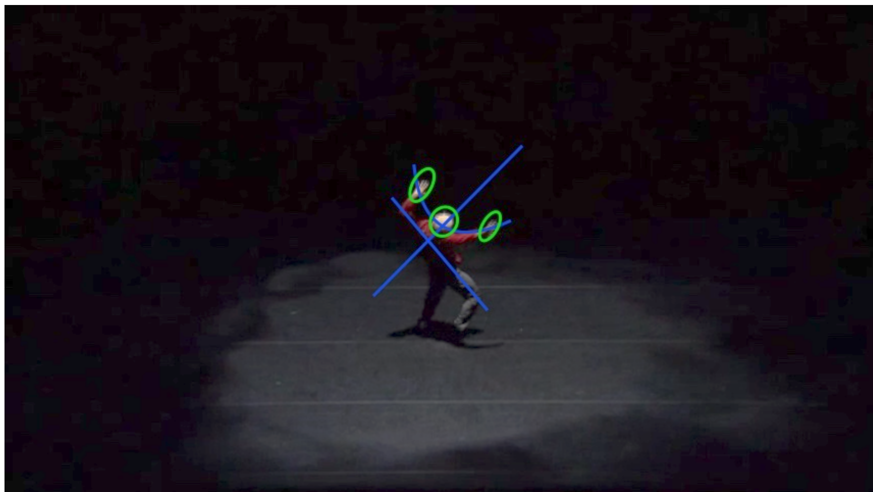

Figure 5 Image A-RM-277e.
Note: this frame has been slightly modified in brightness here to facilitate viewing, the original is darker

In this moment, the main aspect of the spatial-rhythm that becomes evident is that the lines perceived on the frame do not coincide with the anatomical lines of support of weight that I know are necessary to perform the posture of the dancer. This can be observed in the previous capture: figure 5. Although two of the lines of tension coincide with the anatomical lines—left elbow to right knee, and the one produced by

the semi-circle hand-head-hand—the main line of tension, which is the one that produces projection, does not coincide with any anatomical line.

Unlike other examples, the emotional effect of this moment seems to lessen with repeated viewing, perhaps because the mechanisms by which it seems to work are less sophisticated and also less "mysterious", perhaps because of the repeated viewing on video necessary for the analysis. In this scene there are clear examples of parallel behaviour in all properties, a thrusting movement, and lines of tension which do not coincide with anatomical lines. Despite this, it can still be linked with effects that the reviewers mention, such as Brown commenting that 'he arcs backwards and up into emptiness' (Brown, 2010). Indeed, the first viewings of this moment provoke a gasp, a sense of surprise, expansion, release. The emotional import is close to that of awe, but it is also a strange emotional power that I cannot seem to place in either despondency or elation. Indeed, a clear example of an embodied, ineffable, experience of emotion.

3.2.3 07:56 to 07:58 | A silent cry of surrender

Proietto performs a fast turn and steps to open his right arm slowly, arching his back while his left arm slides down the front of his torso. Taking impulse from this position, he turns with his upper body down, then stops the turn and continues the upper body in a fast wave and ripple to come up to upright with the arms open to the side, almost as if he is pleading. This moment coincides with a higher note in the musical melody, making it a particularly poignant moment. A second ripple is then articulated through the body, a show of weakness, suffering, and surrender following the more feisty protest of the first movement (see Supplementary Materials/Afterlight (Part One)/Scene 3.2.3).

The poignancy of this moment is very strong for me. Indeed, this is one of the scenes that I find most intensely emotional in *Afterlight (Part One)*. The head is slightly delayed in the first movement, while the arms impulse the circle and open at the end into a soft second position in a pressing effort. The acceleration, or thrust, of the movement of the body bending around gives a sense of urgency, that is then resolved with the moment—performed in a pressing type of effort—when the dancer is upright again. The same upright undulation is repeated two seconds later (7:58), yet, apparently because of the lack of acceleration, this second repetition does not produce the same effect. The contrast between elements plays a vital part here: from gliding, to thrusting, to pressing, the dancer builds up an energy that dissolves, a change from fighting to despairing that accentuates the poignancy of the moment.

This pattern of qualities—gliding, pressing, thrusting—is repeated throughout the solo, and is also recognised in the descriptions of the piece by reviewers who say, for example, that the dancer is ‘ethereal yet grounded’ (Liber, 2010). In terms of individual qualities, gliding effort is often described in reviews as ‘fluid’—‘fluid as silk’ (Jennings, 2009)—or similarly implied—‘free flowing’ (Foyer, 2017). Pressing effort could be linked with emotional descriptors such as ‘entrancing’ (Liber, 2010), or perhaps even ‘obsessive’ (Crisp, 2009) due to the tension they exude. The “small falls” associated with the moments of thrust can arguably serve both to add more dramatic effect, and to accentuate the other qualities by way of contrasting and breaking the pattern, creating new rhythms. I also associate this combination of qualities with the feeling that the piece is a silent, melancholy cry, with these words corresponding respectively to the qualities of pressing, gliding, and thrusting. Perhaps this same combination invites reviewers to speak of the work as dreamy or romantic (Liber, 2009), or indeed melancholy (Sweeney, 2017). Although the sense of gliding or floating on its own might be enough to give a ‘dreamy’ feeling to the choreography,

the reviewers' choice of 'melancholy' as a descriptor implies another quality, in this case closer to a pressing effort: dynamically, a gliding or floating quality is faster, whereas a sense of melancholy is given more through a slow, tense, way of moving, i.e. a pressing quality. This combination, together with moments of thrusting or punching efforts, give the 'Romantic' feeling to the work, implying a sense of struggle inherent to the common understanding of the Romantic spirit.

It is then possible to observe that the movement quality changes throughout the work, and that it does so often. Although not impossible, it would seem difficult to maintain the same movement quality throughout a whole work, both for the performer and for the audience watching. In fact, I argue that the quick changes between qualities facilitate the engagement of the audience, through continuous surprise. At points during this particular section of the work, the quick changes between gliding and pressing efforts happen more often, faster, sometimes as fast as a change per second. The build-up of the material replicates in the overall structure of the work, which starts small, slow, soft, to develop to faster and bigger sequences, to finally close and slow down again for the ending.

Another difference between the two repetitions of the movement in this moment is that on the second occasion the body is more articulated through the upper torso, whereas in the first one the upper body arrives "as a whole", accentuating more the full movement. This replicates the aforementioned build-up through which the material becomes more elaborate as the work develops in time. In fact, a free successive kind of flow, evident in movement performed with a floating effort, starts to appear. The emotional effect is very intense for me in such moments in which this particular quality—successive-free-flow floating—is used. It is a quality that explores and splits the body into its many joints, at the same time breaking the continuity and maintaining a stream of movement. Through these explorations of the details of the

body, and the dancer's concentration on continuous changes of direction in his joints, a sense of interiority somehow emerges, a revelation of inner life: the dancer shares with the spectator an intense and elaborate journey through his anatomy, 'with an inner spiritual life that we can only surmise' (Liber, 2010). The effect of the second movement then, is different, but equally relevant: the scene moves from a sense of urgency through the thrusting of the first movement, to one of interiority and vulnerability through the successive flow of the second.

In terms of the relationship between movement and music, there is again a consonance in the overall phrasing, 'a blurred synchronisation' (Jordan, 2000: 78). This is also emphasised by the fact that the arrival of the body in an upright position happens at the end of the second phrase of the melody of *Gnossienne* number 4, with the last two notes. The note that coincides with the first arrival of the body in a thrusting effort is also higher than most of the other notes, highlighting this moment even more. This ending phrase is paired also with the slight delay of the head and the arms in a dance *rubato*. The delay of the head and arms also allows for interaction with the light, emphasising the moment the dancer's bare body areas come into full illumination. The impact of the light and colour on the spatial-rhythm and the overall perception of the piece appears significant. This is seen, for example, in how the brightness of the head and hands, and the colour of the top—first red, at this point off-white—affect the perception of spatial-rhythm, or in the way the face cannot be fully perceived at several points through the performance.

This scene is an example of a very powerful, albeit brief, moment, in which a blurred synchronisation between music and movement—marked by particular notes and accents—together with an instance of *rubato*, a pattern of movement qualities, and a particular way to use the body—articulating the movement through the joints,

produces effects of urgency, struggle, despair, melancholy, giving the scene a general poignancy.

3.2.4 08:50 | A look of longing

Starting with a slight drop of the upper body, which then repeats after two steps, Proietto performs a series of turns changing direction. The second of these turns finishes in a suspension with the arms up, and the dancer looking out, which gives me a strong sensation of longing. After some more steps, crossing a lot of space, Proietto crosses his body with one arm and then the other, reaching across to each side, to finally move the upper body in a circle around and arching. At the end of the sequence he reaches his right arm up, at the same time as the melodic phrase of the music ends. A final, almost unnoticeable, ripple adds further sense of suffering to this moment of vulnerability (see Supplementary Materials/Afterlight (Part One)/Scene 3.2.4).

This moment starts at around 8:50 on the video, with the seventh musical phrase of *Gnossienne* 4. The relationship with the music in this movement sequence is clear, but not one of obvious structural parallelism. The dancer performs "drops" in thrusting effort, and turns, coinciding with the notes of the melody. He finishes one turn on the first note of the second bar of the melody, accentuating the stop and then elongating the movement by leaving his head behind slightly, emphasising the look. This is one of the key expressive moments of the sequence: the impulse of the turn coming together with the dancer's sustained look and the melody of the music, in another example of *rubato*. The moment seems to offer a more contrasting relationship between movement and music, varying from free phrasing to structural parallelism. A distinctive relationship between movement and music emerges in this section: a cross-

phrasing and overlapping, with the strong beats of the music and accents of the movement not coinciding—almost like a syncopation. Here, the last movement of the phrase coincides with the last note of the melody, but the next phrase of movement starts with the continuing harmonic accompaniment that begins the next musical phrase. A new movement phrase then starts with the new melody, but this cross-phrasing of movement with phrases of music has already occurred. Somehow this also builds up the relationship between movement and music, and keeps me, as spectator, surprised by this relationship. Just after the final reach within this sequence, there is also a sense of relationship across movement and music in which the end of the movement phrase is used to prepare for the next movement in order to catch the beginning of the next musical phrase on time—for example the end of this phrase is a *plié* in order to shunt at the beginning of the new musical phrase. This provides continuity, but it also gives a sense of acceleration of rhythm just before the end of the dance phrase, which is contrary to the usual performance of musical phrases, that tend to slow down towards the end of each phrase (Powell, 2016: 183). In the words of a reviewer, the movement seems to be 'yielding to Satie's Gnossiennes' (Liber, 2009). The choice of the word 'yielding' here is also significant, as if, even in the relationship to the music, there was a sense of despair in the dancer.

A different kind of spatial projection can also be appreciated here. Image A-RM-533e below is an example of this kind of projection, which is achieved by a series of convergent lines of direction, not by one major line of bodily tension. The spatial projection effect seems to be less in this case of projection.

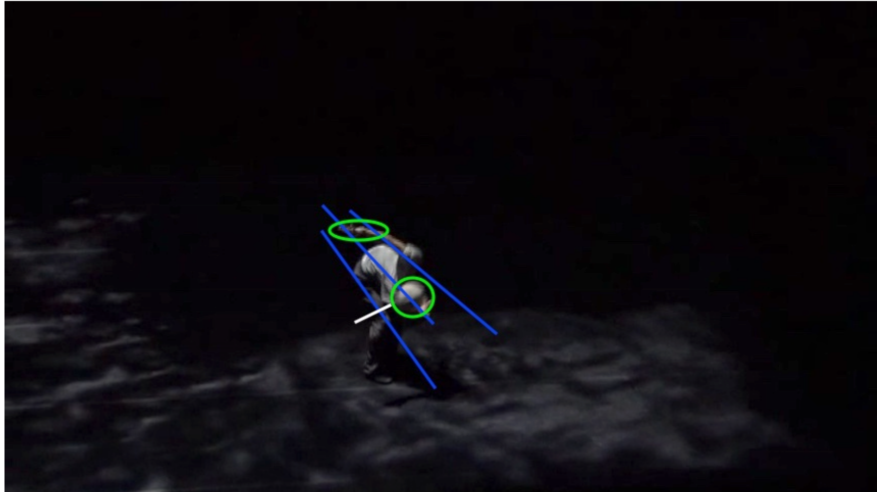

Figure 6 Image A-RM-533e
Note: this frame has been slightly modified in brightness here to facilitate viewing, the original is darker

The final moments of the sequence are equally powerful: the dancer reaches his right hand across to the left, with a strong projection outwards produced by the look again, then repeating the action towards stage right. He circles the body, leading with the movement of the head, until he recovers to stand upright, when he swipes the left arm around over the right, which is reaching up. This final position, of the right arm and head reaching up, seems to be linked in my experience with a more symbolic gesture—reaching up as a gesture of suffering or longing within the Western/European imaginary. Moreover, all the way through the sequence the light projection moves and alters the shadows on the body of the dancer. The sense of reaching, pulling, perhaps searching, is clearly achieved throughout this sequence, emphasised by the interaction between properties as outlined—*rubato*, cross-phrasing of music and movement sequences, convergent lines creating spatial projection, shadows, and the final symbolic gesture. Through these properties, this sequence has a feeling of tentative searching, with the dancer looking lost, probing the space around him to finally emerge longing, reaching for something else.

3.2.5 10:00 | A feeling of lightness

A series of jumps and turns to a soft moment of the melody are accentuated by some particular notes. The speed and lightness of the moment together with the music, and the fluidity of the whole effect, are closed with a roll to the floor and a suspended ripple that gives it a sense of breath. This sequence feels both meditative, light, and extremely sad (see Supplementary Materials/Afterlight (Part One)/Scene 3.2.5).

This sequence consists of a series of movements alternating qualities of thrusting and gliding, with certain moments where the quality verges towards pressing, a common pattern through the solo, as explained above. The light projection is stable here, allowing a clearer perception of the movement of the dancer, whilst still providing areas of shadow and light that the dancer moves across. The relationship with the music is at its most elaborate form of parallelism: the dancer prepares in between two notes of the melody to jump and land on note 2, he marks four notes with different body parts across the phrase, perhaps most notably with the right leg whipping sideways on note 10. Indeed, at this point of the performance certain movement-music relationships have developed into a motif: the dancer "throwing" an arm or leg outwards on a particular musical accent, sometimes marked by the harmonic accompaniment. A body part marks the music in isolation. Perhaps this is also a way to accentuate the relationship movement-music, exhibiting more clearly the delicacy of the music (Mackrell, 2010), and the poignancy of the performance. Even the *chassés en tournant* seem to be supported by the impulse of the music, dancer and music together providing a feeling of lightness that pervades the whole sequence. During the sequence in this scene, Proietto's knee lands on the floor exactly on the first note of the second bar, and he stops in a crouching position to sustain the final undulating movement of arm and body until the end of the harmonic accompaniment of this

musical phrase. The uplifting emotional power of this sequence relates quite clearly to the relationship of movement and music. Reminiscent of the 'ethereal yet grounded' description of the performance that Liber (2010) gives, the key moments within this sequence seem to be the jumps and the dancer's descent to the floor, highlighting the importance of contrast for the emotional experience of the work.

The movement material in these later sections is not necessarily dissimilar from that of the previous ones, however it is developed to a faster speed. Also, the video projection seems to move more, occupying the whole stage as a large cloud-like presence. It is perhaps here that the importance of movement qualities is more obvious. With the development of speed, the qualities of the movement material change, giving a sense of wringing effort—similar to pressing but using the body in opposing directions—and also some instances of slashing effort because of the long projection of the arms. There are more movements punching, many fewer in pressing effort, and successive-free-flowing floating seems to keep appearing in this section. The material does not appear new, but the speed, both of the movement itself and of the changes between qualities, increases. The alternating qualities seem to lose the clear demarcation present in previous sections, and there is more evidence of different efforts in different body parts. The change in the emotional import throughout the work is not necessarily given by the movement material, which is similar through the different sections, but through the development of the quality with which the material is performed. The development in speed is brought up in the reviewers' descriptions—'accelerating into Dervish spins' (Mackrell, 2009)—an association that already implies a perception of spirituality in the work. Through being consonant, or equivalent, the properties in this scene are almost redundant in their effect: the pattern of qualities in parallel to the phrasing of the music, the moments in which a body part marks a musical note in isolation, the contrasts between light and shadow and between

jumps and rolls to the floor, and also the general faster speed of this section compared to previous material. Through these properties and interactions, the sequence develops a particular emotional tone, in this case a sense of hopeful strength, a sense of lightness, and an uplifting atmosphere.

3.2.6 Final Scene | An impending loss

During a series of very fast turns Proietto lifts his arms up, he brings them down and across, then lifts the left elbow and arm to lower them again while slowing down the turning. The light closes in on him, only lighting his upper body. Finally, he lifts his right arm up, as if his hand was trying to reach for something, looking up. The light and the music fade out, leaving me with a final image of Proietto reaching up and slowing down, which is equal parts beautiful and heart breaking. The sense of finality, of loss, is manifest (see Supplementary Materials/Afterlight (Part One)/Scene 3.2.6).

The final scene of the solo is perhaps key to the understanding that the relationship between elements, and not the elements in isolation, is important for emotional import: the dancer is turning, his body moves fluidly, gliding, but his arms are moving in a more dabbing effort. Before this final moment Proietto returns to dance mostly in the spot centre stage, in a series of revolving sequences that develop seemingly opposing motions going towards the centre of the stage and outwards, aided by the movement—towards the centre—of the light-video projection. The elaboration of the movement material continues to develop till the light closes in on the dancer. At this point, in the last few seconds of the choreography, his arms adopt a pressing quality, while the body keeps a fluid turning motion. In *Afterlight (Part One)* there is a particular use of the body in dissociation of its parts. Across the solo, there is also a surge in this kind of

separate use of efforts simultaneously in distinct body parts. This final scene is an example of many instances in which the arms are pressing or dabbing but the body continues moving in a gliding quality.

With these movement qualities—gliding, pressing—the movement rhythm is continuous and the spatial-rhythm is stable, round, sculptural. In the last image, however, the dancer lifts his gaze and his arm upwards and the spatial-rhythm changes. The pull upwards is used more obviously, accentuated through being presented in isolation, as shown in these two captures:

Figure 7 Images A-RM-852 and A-RM-853.
Note: These frames have been slightly modified in brightness here to facilitate viewing, the originals are darker

Our attention, then, is directed up. A sense of uplifting finalisation comes together through the workings of the movement, the impending end of the music and the fade out of the light. The strength of this moment is not lost on the reviewers, who comment on the 'arms stretched outwards and upwards in a gesture of perpetual yearning' (Guerreiro, 2017), or qualify the performance as 'piercing in its evocation of loss' (Jennings, 2009).

3.3 Chapter Insights

Afterlight (Part One) is a meditative work, harmonic and seamless, with a sense of continuity and softness in the movement, a melancholy accompaniment from the music, and an otherworldly impression created by the moving light-video projection.

The overarching emotional import I perceive in this work is that of melancholy, with touches of vulnerability, sadness, poignancy. Brown speaks about the 'light, serenity and the poignant contentment of solitude' (2009). As I have argued through this chapter, this overarching emotional import is emergent from the perceptual features. Those features found to be relevant through the analysis are: use of pressing, gliding, and punching/thrusting efforts, together with a floating effort in successive flow; the opening and closing positions, changing and opposing directions, sense of projection and pull, and the use of balance and tension in the spatial-rhythm; and the parallelism, blurred synchronisation, consonant phrasing, or syncopation between movement and music. From these features it is possible to gather emotional impressions, such as the change from hope to a nuanced despair which emerges through a combination of (1) a slow pressing quality—mixed with a gliding effort; (2) the change in projection from lines of tension coinciding with gaze, which gives an impression of power, to these lines opposing the direction of gaze, which gives an impression of surrender; (3) the use of light and colour producing a sense of softness or enervation; and (4) the atmospheric, melancholy, music. All this forms the impressions of the first analysed scene (3.2.1).

It is, however, in the interactions between different properties that the emotional import seems to be more clearly recognisable. In a particular scene (3.2.2), a sudden opening of the light-space, together with the beginning of the music, emphasises the sense of release of an arch that lowers the dancer to the floor. This combination of property behaviours gives the moment a sense of struggle and vulnerability, mixed with power. An impression of transcendence and very strong poignancy is given in a sequence through the combination of thrusting movements and quick changes of qualities, together with a clear parallelism to the music and open positions which project outwards (3.2.3). The next repetition of the same sequence

achieves more of a sense of vulnerability and introspection through a change to a floating quality with successive flow, indicating how changing one property can change the whole effect of a moment. The next scenes which were analysed, two different sequences (3.2.4 and 3.2.5), convey a sense of suffering and vulnerability, and a sense of lightness and melancholy through a combination of qualities, with a stronger sense of projection in the first sequence and faster changes in the second. These scenes also present cross-phrasing and syncopation mixed with moments of parallelism between movement and music, and the particular effect of light and shadow given by the movement and the patterns of the light-video projection.

Finally, the last seconds of the piece gather the strength of the whole dynamic structure (3.2.6). The piece moves from simple movements and contained spacing to large, more elaborate sequences, using the whole space, to then retreat once again to the simplicity and limitation of space. This sense of progression affects perceptions of the piece, and, arguably, it is designed to give more effect to the key moments. The small, contained start allows for an intriguing beginning, that emphasises the change and the sense of freedom when the dancer starts moving and taking the whole of the stage. Returning to this same limited space gives a sense of confinement, gathers the energy into the dancer, and builds up the emotional charge with which the piece ends. The sense of closure and loss is given by the impression of finality present both in music and in light, together with the longing present in the dancer’s reaching and looking up. Again, the importance of the interactions is clear when a change in one property produces a change in the emotional impression of the full scene, in this case through the pull upwards. This was indicated also above with the progression of the use of space through the work.

It is important, finally, to state that my experience of emotion in *Afterlight (Part One)* is also constituted by the perception of gestural movements which carry

conventional meanings or associations, at least to me as a Western audience member. Examples of these are the gestures reaching up, signifying longing. These reaching gestures are emphasised by spatial projection and the particular illumination of the dancer's body, as well as by their interaction with the music (3.2.4). Further to this, I understand them as perceptual similarly to any of the other composite properties, and indeed, inseparable from them. Facial expressions also are supported by the physicality of the rest of the body. Interestingly, facial expression was something I barely perceived in *Afterlight (Part One)* until I watched Proietto's live performance at The Print Room, London, in March 2017. In this performance the closeness of the stage allowed me to perceive the details of the face. The fact that I could perceive facial expressions during this performance, however, did not seem to alter my experience of the work radically. It perhaps only compensated for other differences in the perceptual properties—for example the smaller space and resulting limited movement range—to create a similar emotional impact as in my other experiences of the work. Nonetheless, it is important to note that, in the same way in which we attend to hands and face because they are our most commonly used areas for communication, certain facial expressions appear to have a more conventional, communicative meaning in my experience. As argued, this communicative function is both supported by the spatial factors and integrated within the perceptual experience of the spectator. The same occurs with moments in which the dancer seems to make eye contact with the audience.

The analysis of this case study allows me to illustrate how my spectatorial experience of emotional import in this performance of *Afterlight (Part One)* emerges as a function of its perceptual properties. This occurs both in my own experience and in the descriptions of a series of expert audience members, namely the reviewers. Through this study, it becomes evident that this impact cannot be reduced to

Maliphant's own emotions, to Proietto's, or to the story of Nijinsky's life being portrayed through the choreography. As Jennings observes, Proietto 'seems to be chasing these fragmentary memories through the dying light', and this is evocative enough without the need to fully understand that the work is based on Nijinsky's story (2009). The key to this kind of understanding of emotion in dance is precisely in the experience, given that at least a part of my experience—as well as that of the reviewers—seems to emerge from the perception of the features of the work, as explored through the analysis. All this is always suggested considering that in the spectator's enacted perception there are forces at play which indicate that the perceptual features of the work are not reducible to their physical properties. In this case the perceptual properties studied are movement qualities, spatial-rhythm, and music-movement relationships. The concepts of enactive perception and embodied cognition also allow me to posit that the background, context, and content for both the spectator and the work are integrated in the experience as interiorised in the spectator's enacted perception. I conclude that it is primarily the interactions between the properties highlighted that generate the work's sense of melancholy, vulnerability, poignancy, and the 'contentment of solitude' (Brown, 2009).

Chapter 4. Case Study 2: Crystal Pite's *Dark Matters* (2009)

A hooded figure, dressed in black, sends a wave of energy towards a lone male dancer, with a quick arm movement targeting the space where he is standing. He suddenly explodes into movement, seemingly exploring every joint in his body, as if uncertain of how or where to move. After a short while, a disembodied voice is heard, reciting words which spread their weight on the atmosphere. Appearing to be struggling with something that cannot be seen, but can be felt, the dancer continues to move around the space, alternating between softness, surrendering to the floor, and explosions of power. Sometimes impossibly lifted or suspended as if he were hanging from the ceiling, sometimes moving as if unable to hold himself up. He is like a puppet whose strings were not so clearly functional, forcing him to contemplate his own existence.

This solo is particularly interesting as it produced a similarly strong reaction in me as *Afterlight (Part One)*, albeit that in this case I watched it on video. My experience of this solo within Crystal Pite's *Dark Matters* (2009) was extremely powerful. I felt the command of the dancer, but also his struggle, his sense of defeat, and his fight. The idea of opposing feelings seems to be the most applicable to my experience as spectator in this particular case. Watching it was an emotional experience which included a despairing existential questioning, vulnerability, doubt, and an atmosphere of lost battles. Together with the equally emotionally-charged reviews of the work, this drove me to choose it as a case study for this project, and to argue that the solo's mixed emotional import is emergent from the perceptual features of the work. It is important to note, however, that this solo is part of a longer work, and that some of the

imagery and thematic of the earlier sections of the work do affect my perception, as evidenced by the puppet and existential questioning which emerge in my description of experience above.

4.1 Introduction to the work

Pite is a Canadian choreographer who regularly works both in Europe and elsewhere around the globe. She started her career as a dancer in Ballet British Columbia—where she also took her first steps as a choreographer—and then under the mentorship of William Forsythe in Ballett Frankfurt. She has created work for companies such as Nederlands Dans Theater—of which she is also Associate Choreographer—Cullberg Ballet, Ballett Frankfurt, the National Ballet of Canada, Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal, Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet, Ballet British Columbia, or Louise Lecavalier/Fou Glorieux. Most recently she has been sought after by major ballet companies and has choreographed for Scottish Ballet, UK's Royal Ballet, and Paris Opera Ballet. In 2002 she formed her own company, Kidd Pivot, with which she has created five evening-length shows (Kidd Pivot, 2017).[21]

Pite's work has been described in emotional terms on numerous occasions, with her company's website citing the UK newspaper The Guardian: 'Pite structures her work with a thrilling intelligence and choreographs with a detail that makes you *feel passion* and *unease under your own skin*' (Kidd Pivot, 2017). Their company description states how

> [i]ntegrating movement, original music, text, and rich visual design, Kidd Pivot's performance work is *assembled with recklessness and rigour*, balancing sharp exactitude with irreverence and risk. The

[21] She is also Associate Dance Artist in Canada's National Arts Centre and Associate Artist at Sadler's Wells, and the recipient of important dance awards, most recently the 2015 Laurence Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dance (Kidd Pivot, 2017).

> company's distinct choreographic language – a breadth of movement fusing classical elements and the complexity and freedom of structured improvisation – is marked by a strong theatrical sensibility and a *keen sense of wit and invention* (Kidd Pivot, 2017).

My emphasis in these quotations indicates a relation to emotion in the way her work is described: thrilling, passion, unease. But in a way the recklessness, rigour, wit, and invention with which her work is constructed, according to these quotations, also refer to the possibilities of exciting experiences afforded to the spectators. I will refer more in depth to this in section 6.7, when talking about the choreographer's process as affecting the work and its embodied emotional import, but words such as 'recklesness' indicate that Pite's process has the potential to translate emotionally to the spectator's experience through the way the work is organised, that is, through its perceptual properties. Her use of all the elements of performance, that is, her work on the perceptual properties, is also highlighted by reviewers: 'The musical score, the lighting, the set—all brilliantly dovetail with the action on stage' (Upchurch, 2011); 'Pite's work integrates original music, text, rich visual design' (Jocelyn, 2012). In addition to my strong experience of the work, the amount of properties mentioned by other reviewers casts this solo as a piece comparable to my other case studies. The case provides complexity and integration of elements—both technical and story-related, recorded experiences of emotional import, and my own emotional experience of watching the piece.

The work analysed in this chapter is one of the evening-length shows that Pite has created for her company, a work entitled *Dark Matters*. It premiered on 24th April, 2009, at the National Arts Centre, Ottawa, Canada—in co-production with Dance Victoria and Montreal's L'Agora de la Danse (Dickinson, 2010). The work is performed to music composed by Owen Belton, lighting design by Robert Sondergaard, set design by Jay Gower Taylor, and costume design by Linda Chow.

Seven performers form the cast: Eric Beauchesne, Peter Chu, Sandra Marín Garcia, Yannick Matthon, Jiří Pokorný, Cindy Salgado, and Jermaine Maurice Spivey (Kidd Pivot, 2017). Spivey is the protagonist of the solo that will be subject of study in this chapter. I analyse a video of their performance at On The Boards theatre in Seattle, WA, available online on their website (On The Boards, 2011).[22]

The work is composed of two acts, and lasts 120 minutes with an intermission. The first act is more theatrical, with the action centring around puppetry techniques and physical theatre. This act informs the spectator's viewing of the second one, the latter being 'pure dance' (Kidd Pivot, 2017), as already seen in my own description which starts this chapter. The work is based on the scientific, albeit mysterious, concept of dark matter, 'the mysterious force that… makes up 96% of our universe' (Smith, 2010a), and responds to a 'curiosity and fascination with the unseen forces at work on mind and body' (Kidd Pivot, 2017). This curiosity, however, is also fuelled by Pite's own creative process, in which she admits to feeling continuously in a 'state of not-knowing, dealing with the unknown' (Jones, 2010). As Janet Smith states '[t]he fable can be read as a Frankenstein story about playing god, but it's also about being an artist: that what you create can destroy you' (2010b).

This work has been described as 'a riveting thought provoking' one (Lancaster, 2010), and it shows Pite's ability to 'make her abstract ideas vivid and real' (Smith, 2010a). In the first act, a character 'build[s] a small wooden marionette, which promptly comes to life' (Gauthier, 2010). Finally, the creation turns on its creator and kills him, then dying itself too, while the black-clad figures 'that were manipulating the puppet break out into a ninja fight, destroying the set in the process' (Gauthier, 2010). The second act, then 'is pure dance, playing off the lessons from the first half,

[22] The full video of the solo is available in the supplementary materials USB/DVD within the *Dark Matters* and Full Video folders (see Supplementary Materials/Dark Matters/Full Video).

drawing on the broken-down movement of marionettes' (Smith, 2010a). It 'explore[s] the themes of the first section through complex choreography' (Smith, 2010b). It is in these sense that these details of the story are still significant for my experience of the solo studied here. Pite herself explains that themes dealt with in the first half—creation, destruction, obsession, power, manipulation—should inform the way that the second act is viewed, and that these themes are indeed transformed into the movement of this second act (Jones, 2010).

There are two ways, apart from the movement inspiration, in which the first and second act connect: one is the text used, a poem by Voltaire; the second one is a lone black-clad figure that seems to stay behind after all the destruction,

> rushing about the stage, moving lights, doing things behind scrims, popping up in unexpected places … And finally inserting herself within the other dancers' bodily chains to provide them with an added force, or a change of direction … in their deliberately uncertain movements (Dickinson, 2010).

I expand on both of these elements in the section on perceptual properties below. The solo I analyse sits towards the end of the 'pure dance' second act, just before the final—'achingly tender' (Gauthier, 2010)—duet, and is danced by 'the feline Jermaine Spivey', who is notable in his 'precise, electric dancing' and embodiment of the 'inventive, aggressive choreography' of the piece (Gauthier, 2010). Interestingly, although a minimal detail, he wears trousers of the same colour as the puppet is offered by his maker in the first act. These red trousers are then refused by the puppet and seem to be the beginning of his rebellious adventure. It is possible to read symbolism in this moment, as well as in certain movement qualities of the solo: Spivey is the puppet—as are all the dancers at one point or another. The solo is part of 'Pite's devastating ending' and is interpreted as 'a poignant solo that suggests a lost soul alone in the universe' (Citron, 2012). The conveying of meaning in this solo is similar to

Afterlight (Part One) in its variety and faint, non-determining character, as I comment on below, although the theatricality of the first act seems to induce a higher level of commonality in the interpretations.

The black-clad figure moves her hands as if sending a burst of energy in the direction of Spivey, who starts moving with a sudden arching of his back. This mobilises a reaction through the body, which contorts as if he is unhinged in all joints. Slowly, the figure in black stands up straight and starts walking upstage, towards stage right in the audience view. In this same spot, a single source of light fades in, in a warm straw colour. Soon the figure in black is established in what will be her position till the end of the solo: facing diagonally towards downstage left (audience left), in the same direction as the light, of which she stands diagonally in front, giving it her back. The dancer continues to move, although the quality, as will be seen in the analysis that follows, seems to be more controlled than at the beginning. The style of movement varies from more codified steps—such as a turn in *attitude derrière*—to freer, less codified movement. Soon the voice-over starts, reciting the poem by Voltaire. Towards the end of this early part of the solo, the dancer starts covering more space. Most of this section is performed at standing level, with the dancer only lowering himself to the floor once. The piece then develops into movement covering most of the space, starting with a short, smaller, gestural sequence where the dancer is standing and moving only his hands and upper body. Although still using mostly standing level, there is more use of floor in this part of the solo. The style of the movement material, however, does not differentiate this section from the first part of the piece, only just giving the appearance of being bigger and sharper. Finally, with the last word of the poem—“dissolve”, the dancer melts down to a second position, turned in, hands on the sides of his head. Becoming more pedestrian in his movement, he stands upright,

lowers his hands caressing his face and chest, and leaves the stage walking slowly, in a calm tension.

4.1.1 Informed Audience Perspective

For this case study, I studied sixteen reviews in fifteen newspapers, magazines and blogs, between 2009 and 2012. The reviews of *Dark Matters* that I have consulted and their corresponding years/performers and site of publication are collated in the table in Appendix II. It is important to note, however, that in this case most of the comments in the reviews refer to the work, or to the second act in general. Only few reviewers refer to the solo in particular, but they are the exception rather than the rule, as the solo is only a small part of the work, unlike in the previous case study. However, the emotional impact of most of the act is equally produced by the solo—especially in terms of its poignancy; and the properties that are highlighted through the reviews of the full work still apply to the solo, making the analysis relevant. Moreover, my own experience serves as a more specific account of the perception of the particular solo, together with that of the reviewers who do mention it.

It is also relevant to note that there is more agreement with regards to the narrative meaning in this case study than in the previous one. This is likely due to the very theatrical nature of the first act of the work. Nevertheless, there are various interpretations of the emotional meaning of the work, the ideas about emotion running in several themes through the reviews. The first one refers to the circle of creation/destruction, and the sense of violence and unseen forces at play, with the dancers moved by external forces like the first act marionette (Batson, 2011; Citron, 2012; Dickinson, 2010). The second theme refers to the human condition, to uncertainty, impermanence, and it is supported by the use of Voltaire's poem (Batson, 2011; Johnson, 2010). Finally, ideas about despair, poignancy, devastation, yearning,

or 'haunting images' (Potter, 2010) are also often encountered. This variation in themes allows me to use this case study as another example of emotional import—that is, of a sense of emotion/mood which does not have a clear, particular emotion, or a clear narrative meaning. At the same time, the consonance in certain themes allows for a degree of commonality in the experiences of the work. I now refer to the properties on which I focus my analysis.

4.1.2 Perceptual properties

As with the previous case study, use of sound, spatial-rhythm, movement qualities, and interactions between these properties are analysed. In relation to the spatial-rhythm of the work, it is important to mention the figure in black that moves at the beginning of the solo and then stays in place until the very end. Although there is almost no movement performed by this dancer, her presence—later in the work it is revealed that this figure in black is in fact a female dancer—directs our eye towards that area of the stage and draws an implied diagonal line between the main dancer and the figure in black in the spatial-rhythm of the image. Even when the dancer is at the centre of the stage, the camera shows him off centre to make sure the black figure is within shot. Of course, this confirms both the importance of this figure in the dramaturgy of the work and the weight of the particular editing of the video for the experience of watching. The relevance of this figure to my perception of the solo is explored also in the analysis below.[23]

[23] The full set of edited still frames is available in the supplementary materials USB/DVD within the *Dark Matters* and Edited Stills folders (see Supplementary Materials/Dark Matters/ Edited Stills).

4.1.2.1 Sound/text

As part of the analysis of Pite's solo from *Dark Matters*, it is important to attend to the use of voice, since that, and not music, is the soundscape of the work. Praat was used for this purpose, returning data regarding the voice that accompanies the movement, as explained in the methodology (Section 2.2.3.2).[24] The analysis was used as support to discuss aspects that come to the fore when perceiving the voice and movement together. To study this solo, I divided it in three sections of approximate equal length. Interestingly, there is a general progression both in pitch and in intensity: pitch lowers from section 1 to section 2, to significantly increase in section 3; similarly, intensity lowers from section 1 to section 2, and increases in section 3—but in this case only slightly. Sections 1 and 3 are quite similar in intensity, although 3 is significantly higher in pitch. Section 2 is lower both in pitch and in intensity, allowing me to hypothesise a slight "lull" of the voice in the middle section of the score, giving extra strength to the beginning and end of the solo. Interestingly, the middle section is where the dancer uses the space more. The progress in intensity was also used to identify moments of accentuation in the voice—intensities over 68 dB were highlighted—which will be discussed when relevant in each of the sections below. It is important to note, however, that this element did not appear particularly impactful in terms of the emotional import through the analysis, I discuss this further in section 6.4.2.

In relation to the sound, and as related above, the solo is performed to parts of the translation of *Poème sur le Désastre de Lisbonne*, written by Voltaire in 1756, performed 'with oracular emphasis' and as an 'amplified male voice, (Vancouver actor

[24] The Speech Analysis results are available in the supplementary materials USB/DVD within the *Afterlight (Part One)* and Speech Analysis folders (see Supplementary Materials/ DarkMatters/Speech Analysis).

and director Christopher Gaze), rich and sonorous' (Dickinson, 2019: 249). The text is a reaction to the earthquake that shattered Lisbon in the year in which it was written, and a manifesto against Optimism, the reigning philosophical school at the time, which affirms that 'all that is and happens is for the best' (Besterman, 1976/1969: 365). The poem shares 'Voltaire's rage' (Richter and Ricardo, 1980: 59), and his 'insistence on the moral bankruptcy' of Optimism, which 'comforts no one and changes nothing for the best' (Stewart, 2009: 126). Voltaire confronts evil and suffering in his writing, and admits that in this case the 'great suffering' was 'essentially meaningless', as any possible meaning of the event is beyond human understanding (Richter and Ricardo, 1980: 60): as the poem states in the soundscape of the solo 'The book of fate is closed to us'. Although the poem initially ended with the idea of hope for the future— '*Un jour tout sera bien, voilà notre espérance*'[25]—Voltaire eventually added a question mark after the phrase, losing his conviction of this hope (Besterman, 1976/1969: 373). Neither version of this final verse is used in the solo, leaving the existential questioning as part of the piece, but without the hope or even the hopeful doubt. I transcribe the version of the poem used below, as Pite does not use the whole poem, and alters some content by deleting verses and adding much repetition.

> This frail construction of quick nerves and bones | Cannot sustain the shock of elements; | This temporary blend of blood and dust | Was put together only to dissolve;
>
> What is the verdict of the vastest mind? | Silence: the book of fate is closed to us. | Man is a stranger to his own research; | He knows not whence he comes, nor whither goes. | Tormented atoms in a bed of mud, | Devoured by death, a mockery of fate. | But thinking atoms, whose far-seeing eyes, | Guided by thought, have measured the faint stars, | Our being mingles with the infinite; | Ourselves we never see, or come to know. | This world, this theatre of pride and wrong, …

25 'One day everything will be well, here is our hope', my own translation.

> This frail construction of quick nerves and bones | Cannot sustain the shock of elements; | This temporary blend of blood and dust | Was put together only to dissolve;
>
> What is the verdict of the vastest mind? | Silence: the book of fate is closed to us. | Man is a stranger to his own research; | He knows not whence he comes, nor whither goes. | Tormented atoms in a bed of mud, | Devoured by death, a mockery of fate. | But thinking atoms, whose far-seeing eyes, | Guided by thought, have measured the faint stars, | Our being mingles with the infinite; | Ourselves we never see, or come to know. | This world, this theatre of pride and wrong, …
>
> This frail construction of quick nerves and bones | Cannot sustain the shock of elements; | This temporary blend of blood and dust | Was put together only to dissolve (Voltaire, 1912/1755).

The poem is the most direct relationship between Act 1 and Act 2 (Lancaster, 2010). The way it is recited, however, is slightly different in each of the two acts: while in the first act, and the beginning of the second, it is mixed in with a lot of other sounds, 'it is repeated with crystal clarity' in the second act for the solo (Batson, 2011). Indeed, the poem appears at the very beginning of the first act, with more reverberation and echo, together with some music, making the voice more mysterious, and also more present and aggressive. The way the poem is read in this first case, slower and with an almost sarcastic tone, is quite different from the more straightforward, almost friendly, reading which occurs during the solo. Some reviewers argue that it is indeed the only aspect of the works that 'move[s] its intellectual content forward' (Potter, 2010). Potter states that *Dark Matters* lacks 'choreographic exposition' and that she misses movement that is more than just movement, even if it is 'beautiful and engaging', that is, she misses the meaning (Potter, 2010). Indeed, the relationship between the words and the movement seems not to be directly representational except for some occasional words (like "silence", or "dissolve"). Yet the words are powerful and their meaning is difficult to ignore, something that I also refer to in the analysis below.

The use of the text as sound score, more evidently than thematic accompaniment, is also obvious in this solo, with the 'disembodied voice intoning

excerpts' (Thomas, 2012) serving as soundscape. English and contemporary art scholar Peter Dickinson explains that the spectator responds both 'at the level of linguistic sign' and 'to [the word's] alliterative sonorousness, their balanced syllabic meter, but also accommodating their material substance, their directional weight…' (Dickinson, 2019: 246). Overall, however, it seems that the meaning of the poem and the significance of *Dark Matters* as a whole, do have strong similarities. Indeed, although this direct connection between linguistic meaning and movement only occurs occasionally, the presence of the poem in all its significance is relevant to our perception of the solo: the voice is a particular voice, the content has been edited to support a particular message, the presence of the character of the black-clad figure is perhaps indeed death (Lancaster, 2010), a personification of human suffering as described in the poem.

In a similar way to the music of the previous case study, ideas on structural relationships between voice and movement are explored in the analysis, positing instances of rhythmical parallelism or counterpoint of different forms, as well as a sense of a shared rhythm—perhaps similar to Jordan's blurred synchronisation (Jordan, 2000). Lastly, at around minute 2:30 in the solo, a soundscape, barely perceivable and mostly constant, is introduced. Although it does add to a certain perception of build-up and anticipation—especially when it is slightly accentuated at minute 3:30 after which it fades out; it does not seem to be of key relevance towards my experience of emotional import in the solo. In fact, I did not consciously notice it in my first viewing.

4.1.2.2 Light

The light does not change throughout the solo, with the exception of the very beginning, where the light fixture upstage fades in. Just before it does, the light is cold,

blue-ish, a 'naked stage bathed in hazy blue light' (Gauthier, 2010). It is formed of a diagonal space that is lit by a general wash (from the top), together with a brighter and more intense diagonal light, quite clearly marked on the floor. The fade-in of the spotlight is 'the dusty beam of a standing lamp' (Johnson, 2010), while the rest of the stage is lit by a general wash, 'its edges dissolving in a blue haze' (Johnson, 2010). It seems that the middle to back area of the stage is more brightly lit than the front or the very back of it, and it is likely that this implies the use of more focused lights such as the diagonal we saw clearly at the beginning, in addition to the general wash. Once that light is full and the figure in black has assumed her position, no more changes are seen in the light until the final fade out and cross-change to the light for the next scene. It is also important to notice that light does not change throughout the solo, apart from the beginning where the light behind the black figure is established. Light is considered here as an element of spatial-rhythm, as it helps create space, shadows, lines of tension, projection. In this case, as the light does not vary, its relevance is related to the dancer's movement across the stage space, providing imagery that affects the spatial-rhythm throughout. The light is emphasised in the reviews, with Johnson qualifying it as 'Sondergaard's brilliant lighting' (2010), or La Rocco stating that 'Sondergaard's lighting design … uses darkness as much as light to frame, contextualize and sometimes undercut the action' (2010). Once again, the interplay of light and shadow seems important for our perception of emotional impact in dance works, presenting 'eerily mobile shadows and spotlights with minds of their own' (Upchurch, 2011).

4.2 Analysis of properties and interactions

I now analyse a series of scenes that emerge as significant in my emotional experience of the solo, and include features that are highlighted also by reviewers. It is also important to note that the key to the emotional import of a work as experienced by the

spectator—as proposed here—relies in the interaction between properties, and not in each of them separately. In this sense, I study particular emotional impressions through each of the qualities, but it is through the interactions between elements that I discuss emotional import.

4.2.1 00:01 | The solo's opening scene

The soundscape here is highly atmospheric and quite loud, formed by a drone-like melody and a low oscillating minimal background sound. It stops at the same time as the figure dressed in black directs a sharp movement of her arm to Spivey. The burst of energy sent through this movement is clear, Spivey immediately starts moving quickly as if the energy is going through every part of his body (see Supplementary Materials/Dark Matters/Scene 4.2.1).

The strong energy of this beginning is heightened because the music that was quite loud just before that point, stops exactly at the same time. The use of the stage space—the diagonal which links the two dancers—also adds to the full effect of this moment. This first moment also highlights the importance of the presence of the figure in black during Spivey's solo. Not only does she start the solo by sending this burst of energy, but her position throughout affects the spatial-rhythm of the work, implying diagonal lines and facilitating impressions of projection and pull. The final still frame that was analysed—before the change of lights clearly indicates the end of the solo—is a good measure of the spatial force of the figure in black and the light behind her (figure 8). Once Spivey has left, all the attention is directed to this composition, and it becomes possible to observe the strength of the diagonal lines of tension and the force of the point of attention of the figure and the light.

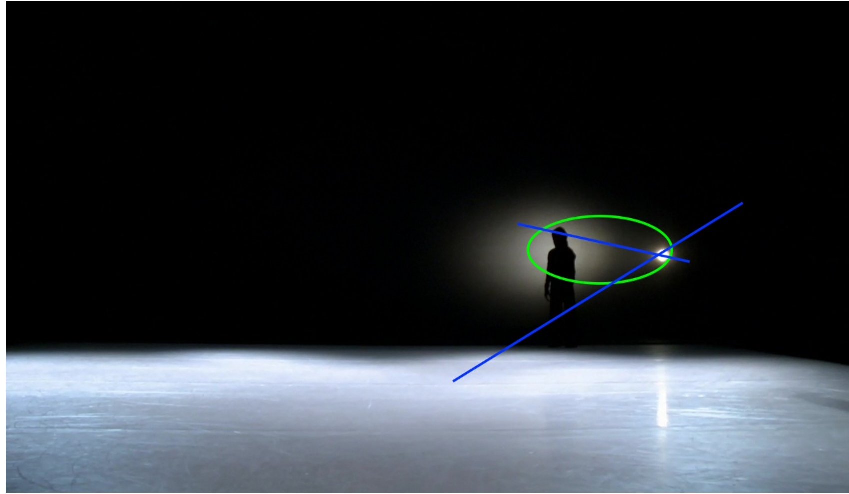

Figure 8 Image DM-CP-259e

In several reviews this character is identified with Death (for example in Lancaster, 2010). Whether or not it is known who or what she is, her presence is in itself powerful as a sense of premonition, danger, menace, with my spectatorial eye drifting often towards her position.

After the first thrusting movement by the figure in black, it is possible to see the main movement qualities that will be visible through the solo. Many movements are performed with successive floating, gliding, and pressing efforts. It is not difficult to see the similarities between these qualities, which give a sense of coherence to the solo. The reviewers speak about the dancers' 'smooth flow' (Johnson, 2010), 'weightless fluidity' but 'incredible control' (Lancaster, 2010). They mention how they 'flow like water' (Scott, 2012), or describe 'beautifully fluid bodies' (Potter, 2010). It seems the fluidity—gliding effort—is more striking to an audience member than the moments of pressing effort, and it is very likely that the successive floating effort would still be defined as "fluid" in general vocabulary, as both qualities share some aesthetic characteristics although created from different elements: continuity seems to be a feature of both, but whereas it is actually happening in gliding, it is

created in this example of floating by divided fast movements which continuously change direction, that is, by successive free flow.

Already from this beginning I get the impression that the dancer is both moving of his own volition and being moved by outside forces. In this particular moment, it seems, he gives the impression that does not completely control where or how his body is moved. There is an unsettling feeling give to the sequence by the burst of energy sent by the figure in black and the pattern of movement qualities including successive floating, gliding, and pressing.

4.2.2 01:07 | Power

The dancer extends his arms backwards and then steps back to suspend on one leg, with one arm and leg up and open, facing the audience in a slightly aggressive position. He breathes in audibly at this point, in a silence between phrases. The movement feels like a fleeting moment of arrogance, challenge, or power, which swiftly dissolves into a calm content (see Supplementary Materials/Dark Matters/Scene 4.2.2).

At 01:07 in the video the dancer is upright, with one leg off the floor and the arms open outwards. He is facing the audience very clearly, his expression is slightly aggressive, not relaxed. He gets into that position through a sharp closing movement, that coincides with a silence between sentences in the poem. The dancer's face goes in and out of the light as this is happening, swinging from light to shadow then back to light with the movement.

Also in this solo, similarly to *Afterlight (Part One)*, movements are performed in thrusting or punching efforts at points. For example, when landing from a jump with

a particularly heavy accent, marking the final position of movement phrases which have been performed in a gliding effort throughout, or with single body parts making a thrusting or punching movement. Reviewers speak of 'buckling, rippling phrases' or 'fluid, explosive style phrases' (La Rocco, 2010); or they point out how 'the cast moves with astonishing ease, the smooth flow of a dancer's movement abruptly freezing in a wary pose, or with his energy briefly channelled into a peripheral gesture' (Johnson, 2010). In this scene, and many times, the hands make these kinds of movement. Empty space is important to this example, as can be seen both by the space created by the position of the hands, and by how the leg supports this energised space—specifically with the turning in, and "sickling" of the right foot—in the image in figure 9.

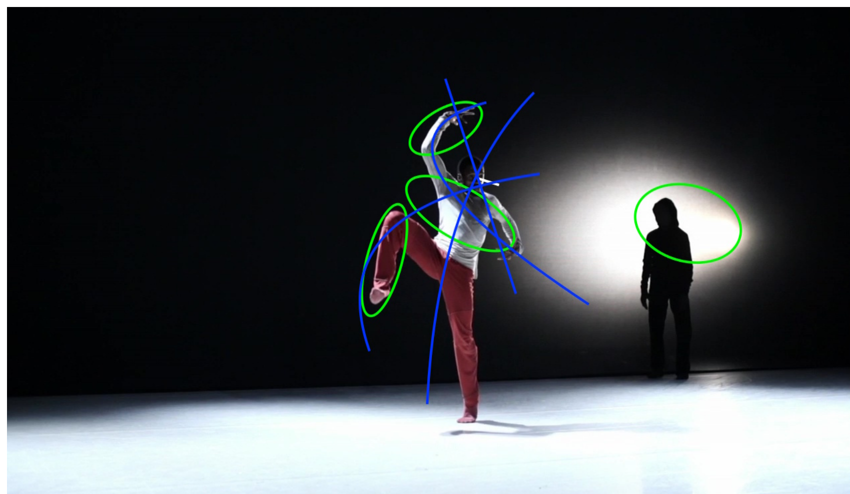

Figure 9 Image DM-CP-068e

What makes this still frame particularly interesting, however, is that this internal space of energy is contrasted with the fact that the position is actually large and open. The overall image given is actually one of volume and reaching out in the space. It is an interesting contrast that reflects the contradictory feelings that the solo presents throughout. The tension between internal space and volume in the position intensifies the energy of the dancer by concentrating it in space. The sense of power reaches out, exudes from the body, but does not disperse out on stage.

One of the most interesting perceptions within this solo is a mixed quality, verging towards dabbing effort, which does not produce the seemingly corresponding sense of outward spatial projection of this movement quality. Perhaps there is room here to argue a different sense of projection within the spatial-rhythm, in which there is no need for the outward sense of spatial continuity usually associated with projection, or the contained energy of the empty space: the position of the body does not create an energy that is held within constraints of the body, but one that surrounds and releases from the body. This different sense of projection can be associated with the impression of power. There seems to be a difference in my emotional experience of cases of projection and of power. Spatial projection, through its outward reaching and linear visuals, tends to give a lighter, uplifting sensation, evoking a sense of excitement, and positive feelings. Power, more concentrated in space, and hence giving more impression of intensity, is more animalistic, visceral, grounded. The stops, the thrusting and punching efforts, together with this kind of dabbing quality, are also highlighted by reviewers and they seem to be particularly relevant to the spectator's experience in terms of emotional import. As an example, Catherine Thomas describes how the dancers 'slash and freeze in pristine angles, contort, tangle, and ricochet' (2012), which for her seems to give the work a sense of a world undergoing destruction.

Also emerging from the analysis of spatial-rhythm in *Dark Matters* is which features of the work demanded my attention particularly. I have called these points of attention, also linking them with the idea of nodes of attention in Arnheim[26] (2.2.2.3). Different things became points of attention in this solo: faces, areas that are very visible because of lighting, areas of skin that are uncovered, silhouetted figures, or

[26] Arnheim talks about points in which directed forces interrelate and calls them nodes, specifying that they 'create centers of visual weight' (Arnheim, 1982: 155).

actual lighting fixtures. In Figure 9, above, examples of nodes of attention due to light clothing and the silhouetted black figure can be seen. In Figure 10, below, the face becomes a clear point of attention. As can be quickly extracted from these examples, light plays a crucial role in guiding my attention towards particular points, which is why interesting lighting is an invaluable tool for choreographers.

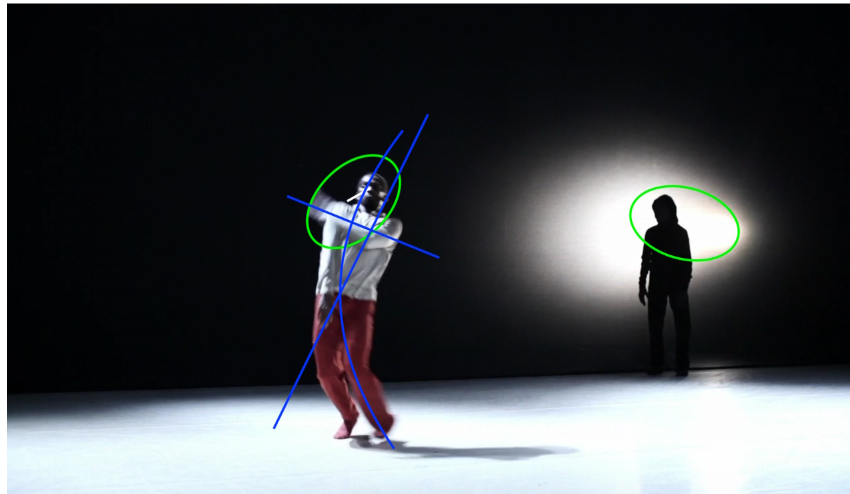

Figure 10 Image DM-CP-069e

Finally, through the analysis of this moment certain features of the sound are highlighted, the first of which is the timing of the movements performed in silence and the voice reciting the poem. There are several examples of moments in which a particular movement happens and the voice starts immediately after—from 0:50 to 0:52, Spivey pushes off the floor, lands, then the voice re-starts. In this case the start of the movement phrase seems to follow the voice immediately: the dancer moves his arm backwards on hearing the voice, which means his movement starts only slightly later than the voice. Finally, as per the description, the inhale by the dancer happens in between two phrases of the voice, giving the moment a stronger sense of accent.

In this scene, divided in two examples, there emerges a clear pattern of movement qualities (alternating gliding, pressing, thrusting, and successive floating), a sense of empty space, a differentiation between spatial projection and irradiating

power, and a relationship between timing of movement and words, similarly to a music-movement blurred synchronisation (Jordan, 2015). Also, it becomes obvious in this scene that certain elements repeatedly call my attention, such as areas of bare skin, faces, silhouetted figures, or lighting fixtures. All these elements, together with the relationship between properties changing continuously, contribute to my perception of intense power of this moment, of struggle, frustration, and restlessness.

4.2.3 01:33 | Reaching to infinity

After a series of fast movements of the arms, the dancer turns with one leg stretched out behind him. The soft turn finishes with the dancer switching the body to face his leg in front, reaching this leg forward while the back and one arm reach back in a suspended elongation. The head is tucked in to the chest, resisting the moment of release, cutting short this instant of longing (see Supplementary Materials/ Dark Matters/Scene 4.2.3).

The long, pressing, turn that finishes in a *fouetté* and elongation of both leg and arm—with an arched back—is another moment where properties come together and then break apart and an emotional effect emerges from this evolving interaction. The turn and *fouetté* are gliding but quite slow, almost pressing. The elongation is pressing, with very bound flow, producing the feeling that the dancer is suspended in that position. This bound flow with higher muscle tone implies an intensification of tension in the movement, it is almost as if the dancer could not move at all. This moment contradicts the most organic way to perform the particular movement: the turn and *fouetté*. “Organic” here refers to moments in which qualities seem to be used because of the needs of the particular sequence, or efforts that seem more appropriate to the

sequence in particular cases. Examples of these more appropriate efforts in relation to particular movements are the use of dabbing or thrusting efforts to reach a position, or pressing to finish a sequence. The use of a punching effort in a fall is also a case of this.

Equally, some steps seem to be more successfully performed with a particular quality. Examples of these are high jumps, which seem to need thrust, or turns, which seem to need gliding. This also adds power to these particular movements when they are performed in a more unexpected quality, as is the case with this turn performed in pressing effort when turns are most commonly performed in gliding effort because of their nature, making this one of the most impressive moments of this section of the solo both technically and emotionally. In this solo it is also possible to perceive mixes of qualities due to changes of muscle tone, such as the one between pressing and gliding qualities. When the muscle tone is softer, the quality appears as gliding, whereas a stronger muscle tone, a resistance in weight, will render it pressing. As previously discussed, the use of muscle tone is a key factor both in the differentiation between qualities and, judging by the analyses in this research project, an important variable in the spectator's experience of emotional import too.

In this instance, a change from parallelism to contrast in the functioning of the movement qualities and spatial-rhythm (gliding and pressing efforts with long projected lines to thrusting movement closing the spatial-rhythm) produces a feeling of suspension cut short. A sense of longing rapidly let go. The words spoken by the voice intersperse the movement and spatial parallelism with their own rhythm, first maintaining a sense of parallelism too, to then break away before the other properties from the atmosphere of longing. An overall sense of contrast is achieved in this sense, changes from content to explosive, volatile atmosphere, are perceived in the scene.

4.2.4 01:41-01:54 | Control and vulnerability

Spivey jumps and moves back to the centre of the stage. He turns, seemingly floating, then spots his head quickly before suspending a fall to the floor. He slides, sharply moving his arm back, to finally come up and stop suddenly mid-step. At the end of this strong sequence, where he looks powerful and in control, he walks slowly bringing his fingers up his body, in a delicate gesture, to finally hold his face between his fingers, in a vulnerability contrasting the preceding sequence (see Supplementary Materials/ Dark Matters/Scene 4.2.4).

This sequence from 01:41 to 01:54 exemplifies the experience of emotion as emergent from relationships between properties. Although the general movement quality of the sequence is gliding, there are exceptions in certain movements such as the lowering to the floor performed in a pressing effort, the punch with the elbow, the sharp impulse to come off the floor with a half turn, and the final gestural hand movements which are closer to a very bound pressing quality. The words coincide with the first jump, then with the turn, then "thought" coincides with the punch of the elbow, the dancer comes up and then stops with "have measured". To "the faint stars" three movements are performed, one just before the voice starts—so that the end of the gesture coincides with the beginning of the voice—one with the marked "t" sound at the end of the word "faint", one to the word "stars". Interestingly, faster movements seem to occur in the silences: the turning jump, the acceleration at the end of the attitude turn, and the impulse to come up. The final gesture of the hands also falls after the sentence has finished.

This use of movement, silence, and words creates a shared rhythm between movement qualities and sound. This is perhaps one of the key observations of the analysis of sound and movement together in this case study: they not only share a pulse

throughout, even when they seem to oppose each other, they actually create a shared rhythm between them. It is not only the way the movement is “matched” to the words, but also the sense of rhythm that continues in the moments of silence, that create this sense of shared rhythm between both properties, constituting the rhythm of the work. This idea emerges also in from the application of Jordan’s concept of blurred synchronisation between music and movement (Jordan, 2000). I believe this shared rhythm to be a key to my experience of emotion in the performance. After all, rhythm has already been linked to expressiveness both in Laban—with weight rhythms linked directly to moods (Laban and Ullman, 2011/1950: 122-123)—and in other examples such as the ideas of Goodridge and Bayer discussed in section 2.2.3.1.

Dissociation of body parts is very present in this solo, with instances of body parts performing movements in pressing, gliding, or punching efforts, while the rest of the body performs in a different quality. This is very common in the case of head and arms performing movements in a punching effort, and a very important aspect of my experience of emotion in the performance—likely to do with a more pedestrian, gestural meaning that these movements and efforts relate to. An example of this is the punching arm movement, as described above. The combination of qualities present in this solo is perhaps best described by critic Claudia La Rocco when she states that ‘movement impulses might begin at any point in the body, sending tides of undulating but tightly controlled energy through the dancers’ honed muscular forms’ (2010).

In terms of the stage space, the dancer descends downstage in a strong diagonal, to then revert back half way in the same direction, and finally face the audience for the walk and gestures, moving downstage. A sense of hesitation and struggle seems to be transmitted by the work here—again the ‘deliberately uncertain movements’ (Dickinson, 2010). Another even more literal sense of contradiction is perceived in the spatial-rhythm of the frame below, figure 11, which is used here to

illustrate this particular point, although it does not belong to this scene. Although it is clear that the dancer is descending towards the floor, the pull perceived is in upward direction, which can be related to the physical pull that the dancer needs to perform at this point to be able to lower himself slowly on one shin without hurting himself. The fact that the head repeatedly moves in a direction different from the line of movement—which is also observed in the spatial-rhythm analysis—also gives a sense of physical struggle that adds to the emotional charge of the work.

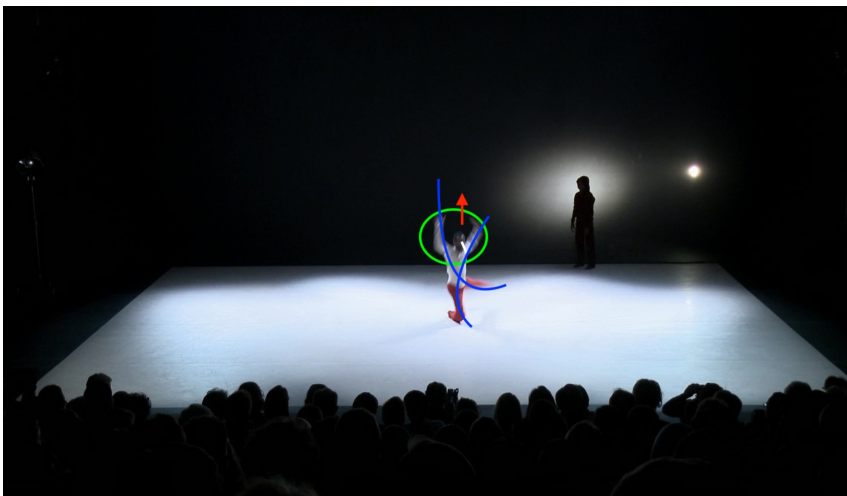

Figure 11 Image DM-CP-217e

In this moment of the solo the pull changes immediately after the moment of elongation, from forward in the direction of the leg, to backwards in the direction of the arm and back. This change emphasises the sense of elongation of the body of the dancer, pulled in several directions. The length of the bodily position just before adds to the impression of infinity, as does the silence in which this moment falls: in between sentences of the poem, suspending time. Projection, changes of direction, and change of pull are likely to be the reason the work is perceived as transmitting a sense of instability: '[t]hough the choreography is finely wrought, it also looks as if it might fly apart at any moment, unravelling the … equilibrium' (La Rocco, 2010). Contrary to this, lines of tension and other elements of space can create very stable, almost

geometric rhythms, producing harmony and balance (as explained in the methodology, section 2.2.2.3), such as in figure 12 below.

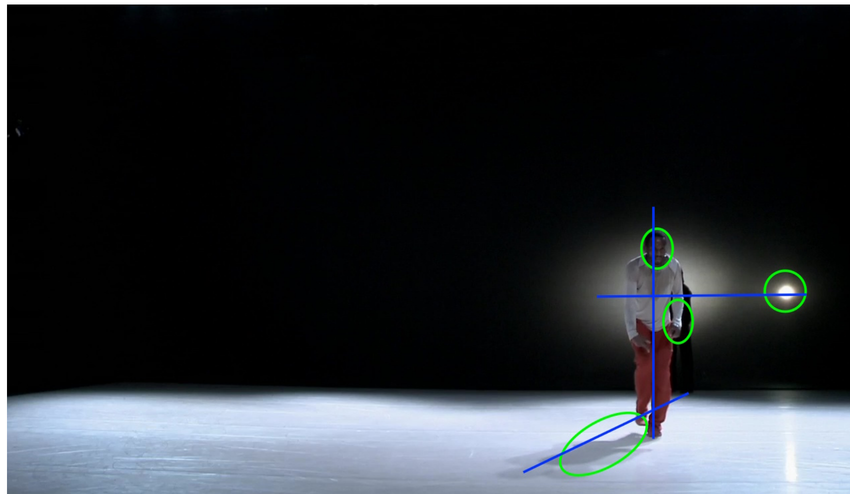

Figure 12 Image DM-CP-112e

Balance, and indeed harmony, can be found in more dynamic spatial-rhythms, when opposing forces neutralise one another. This corresponds to Arnheim's definition of balance in composition (Arnheim, 1974 [1954]: 21).

Finally, there are some aspects of the movement in this section that, although not directly related to qualities, seem to contribute to the emotional import of the work in my experience. One of these is the moment when Spivey "walks" his fingers rapidly up through his torso on to his face. This is a delicate movement that seems to be full of emotional content, once again perhaps due to associations with every day, gestural movements, which hold meaning for a Western audience: an indication of caresses, tickling, or simply delicate sensibility.

This scene moves from an emotional import of control and power, to that of vulnerability. It does this through a shared rhythm created between the movement qualities (gliding interspersed with thrusting movements, bodily dissociation), and the words (including different structural relationships of movement and voice or silence). In the spatial-rhythm a sense of contrast between balance and instability is perceived

through the hesitant use of the full space, and the opposition between what is physical (the dancer going down to the floor) and what is perceptual (the pull up perceived through that moment. The contrast balance/instability relates very directly to that between control or power and vulnerability in this case.

4.2.5 02:01- 02:14 | Ripple through the body

An impulse moves through Spivey's body like a fast ripple, opening his arms and chest to the back. He lowers his body to then explode into a big jump and continue with a slide into the light in a crouching position. His whole body opens suddenly to then close with resistance and shunt around, changing direction to face the audience, moving his head sideways with his arms. From that moment, an impulse takes him around. He channels this impulse by leading with movement of the upper body, then rolling on the floor to close everything into a crouching position again. Finally, his whole body opens, facing up and suspending, to suddenly close. This last movement seemingly being an attempt to compose himself and show his strength after a sequence where his feelings of helplessness were manifest (see Supplementary Materials/ Dark Matters/Scene 4.2.5).

This moment is another example of the contrast between moments of struggle and moments of obvious power. The way the space is used covering a long diagonal, the punching effort of the movements, and the dancer facing the audience contribute to this feeling of power. This is contrasted by the moments where he lowers to the floor, or by the final opening gesture. The addition of thrusting and punching to the more easeful gliding corresponds to the interpretation that the piece is 'a study of the human condition and of the violence in nature—especially of our own nature' (Johnson,

2010). Voice, like music, can also create perception of accents in movements that do not actually have any accents in their performance. In this instance, the dancer goes into a back and then forward bend in which four accents are seemingly perceived, to coincide with the syllables in “we never see”. When observed without the voice, however, it is possible to see that there is no accent in the movement itself, it is only perceived with the presence of the sound.

Another moment that is worth mentioning is the reach up followed by a sharp stop in upright position that happens at 02:11. In terms of movement qualities there is a punching effort to get to the position, a pressing moment in the suspension, and then a second punching effort—very sharp—to recover to upright standing. The spatial-rhythm is marked both by the fact that the dancer is centre stage and facing the audience, and by the open arms and right leg. The fact that the head and chest are leaning back open towards the ceiling also affects our view of the moment. Regarding the voice, the impulse up happens through “this theatre of pride and wrong”, the suspension occurs in the silence immediately after, with the outbreath of the dancer accentuating the sharp descent. In the image below, figure 13, it is possible to observe how this very impactful moment in the choreography retains its power even in the still frame. The opening of the hands and upward reaching of the chest is a position of impact in itself, and one that can be argued to be loaded with conventional meaning—imploring, reaching up to the heavens, desperation. The lines of tension created by the gaze and the vertical line of the body create a sense of pull upwards, compensated by the diagonal line that is created by the opening of the right leg to the side, and by the slight curvature downwards of the arms. All these factors together give the impression of power and movement that is evident in this particular frame. As reviewer Robert Johnson describes, ‘[t]hese nameless characters seem desperate for comfort, as if seeking refuge from the shades of doubt that pursue them’ (2010). Air seems to be the

key to this picture: I feel like the dancer needs to be drawing a very deep breath at this point, filling his lungs while he looks like he is in the air without gravity. I too feel like I need a deep breath as I watch this moment. This is one of the few moments in this research project in which kinesthetic empathy seems able to explain clearly my particular experience. In this sense, it aligns with my proposal, following Carroll and Seeley (2013), that kinesthetic empathy might be part of the spectator's experience of dance works, without it being able to explain this experience's complexity in full. As explained in section 1.3.1.2, I do not discard the work of kinesthetic empathy in my perception of works of contemporary theatre dance, however in these particular works it does not emerge as a key process. I argue that the body is still implicated, however, through emphasising the integration of body and mind within embodied cognition and enactive perception.

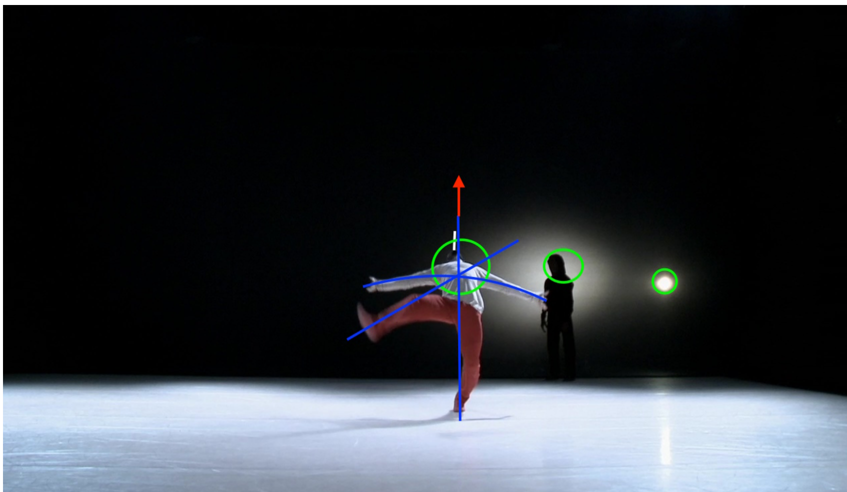

Figure 13 Image DM-CP-132e

In a way, as Johnson describes '[t]his dance tiptoes along the edge of hysteria, describing our clammy response to the unknown' (2010). Johnson's interpretation is loaded with the meaning of the work's first act and general theme—dark matter, the not-knowing of the creative process. In my experience too, the solo embodies these ideas through moments such as this, in which the dancer is in a precarious physical position. The particular pattern of movement qualities, in combination with the voice

(giving the movements further accent too), the impactful position, and the dancer's situation facing the audience contribute to the opposing feelings of power and delicacy, the variation within responses to the unknown. The contradiction between my need for breath—imaginatively shared with the dancer—and his airborne suspension, provides further thematic tension.

4.2.6 Words and meaning

The dancer's movement, attacking and desperate, imbues the work with a sense of strength. The dancer's final melting to "dust" reminds me of our ephemerality (see Supplementary Materials/Dark Matters/Scene 4.2.6).

At 02:22, to "this temporary blend of blood and dust", a sequence of movement happens which is full of contrasts. First, the dancer performs two thrusting movements, opening and closing the upper body with an angular position of the arms. Then he shifts to face the back, maintaining the same position. Then, to the word "dust", he lowers himself to the floor in a fall in a pressing effort with a very bound flow. There is not only contrast in the movement qualities, the angular position of the arms is contrasted with a curved torso, which is also accentuated when the dancer turns his back to the audience. The curved form is also maintained while the dancer lowers himself to the floor, although it is a less static position, that adapts to facilitate the fall. The relationship to the voice is much more direct than it has been elsewhere: the dancer is generally still, and he only moves significantly with the voice, when in the first silence there is a slight movement of the fingers in the right hand. He also relates much more clearly to the sound of the word "dust", sustaining the movement as the "s" sound is elongated in the word, and then even longer. The word "dust" is significant here,

while the dancer melts to the floor, powerless, almost as if turning to dust himself. This relationship between the meaning of the word and the movement and spatial-rhythm potentiates symbolic interpretations and can possibly facilitate some comments by the reviewers, who suggest, for example, that the work ‘ponder[s] the essence of humankind’s existence’ or talks about the ‘black hole of fate’ (Citron, 2012), or refers to ‘unknowability and impermanence, and the dance we as humans do to negotiate between the two’ (Batson, 2011).

Another moment that calls my attention emotionally is the push to the back leg, with the dancer leaning forward, exactly when the voice says “but”—at 03:14. He is in a precarious position, lowered towards the floor, and the doubtful expression of both his position and the word “but” produce a weakening effect. Another example occurs just after “this world”, at 03:41, when the dancer moves backwards and opens his arms at his side, bent at the elbows. He sustains this position slightly before moving to the next sequence. It is this moment of slight pose after the words “this world” that give it a sense of contemplation, together with the position of the dancer and the pressing quality. Furthermore, at 04:00, just after the voice enunciates “put together”, the dancer initiates a movement from the knees that starts in a punching effort, then turns to gliding, then finishes in another punch with a very loud breath. The knees move inwards and outwards, then inwards again sending a ripple through the body that brings it up to upright. The arms open suddenly, broken at the wrists, with the palms facing up. The voice starts again at this point, but the dancer holds the position in “only to…” before starting the “dissolve”. The facial expression of the dancer is important here, he looks surprised, in a negative way, almost as if he were in pain or somehow suffering.

Something else that became evident through the analysis of the *Dark Matters* solo was that the way the movement relates rhythmically to words varies throughout.

As an illustration of the possibilities, in some instances the movement and the word start and finish at the same time, giving a very similar sense of accent, for example "mind" at 1:08. There can also be moments when several movements are fitted within a word, matching the syllabic division: at 1:21, hands go to the knees to "a", then two movements are done to "stranger", pushing the legs back and pulling the right knee forward just at the end of the word. Finally, to the word "mockery", at 1:38, a kind of counter-step jump takes place, matching each of the two accents of the jump to each of the last two syllables of the word. These are only some examples of the possible variations, however, which are too many to enumerate. Once again, this correlated behaviour between sound and movement contributes to the shared rhythm which defines the work's energetic structure.

It is important to note that most of the time the movements do not follow the meaning of the words in any obvious way, i.e. they do not gesture the words. There are, however, three exceptions to this rule, together with the feeling reported above with "dust". Although the relationship between the meaning of the words and the movement is perhaps clearer, more representational, it still varies amongst the different times these words are used.

- "shock of elements" – 0:49, 2:19, 3:51

The relationship in this case is mostly to the word "shock", and this word is correlated in its first utterance with a sharp, outwards movement, in this case a composition of the leg touching the floor—making a landing noise—and the arms exploding out and upwards. In the second repetition the movement is also sharp and outward, however: it is a simple shaken movement of arms and legs, maintaining the same general shape in the position. It is like a position suspended in the air. This suspension, and the fact

that the whole body shoots outwards, add to the sense of "shock" in this section, building up from the previous one. Finally, in its third iteration, the sensation is much softer. The movement preceding the word "shock" is performed in a pressing effort, and the movements—the right arm going down in front of the body, then back up—although fast, are not as sharp as in previous utterances. The arching of the back and movement of the head back still give an impression of opening, however.

- "only to dissolve" – 1:01, 2:31, 4:02

In the first repetition of this phrase, the dancer performs a series of three movements that give the impression of dissolving—because they get lower to the ground but also because of the quality used, alternating punching and pressing efforts. Figure 14 below studies the spatial-rhythm of this moment.

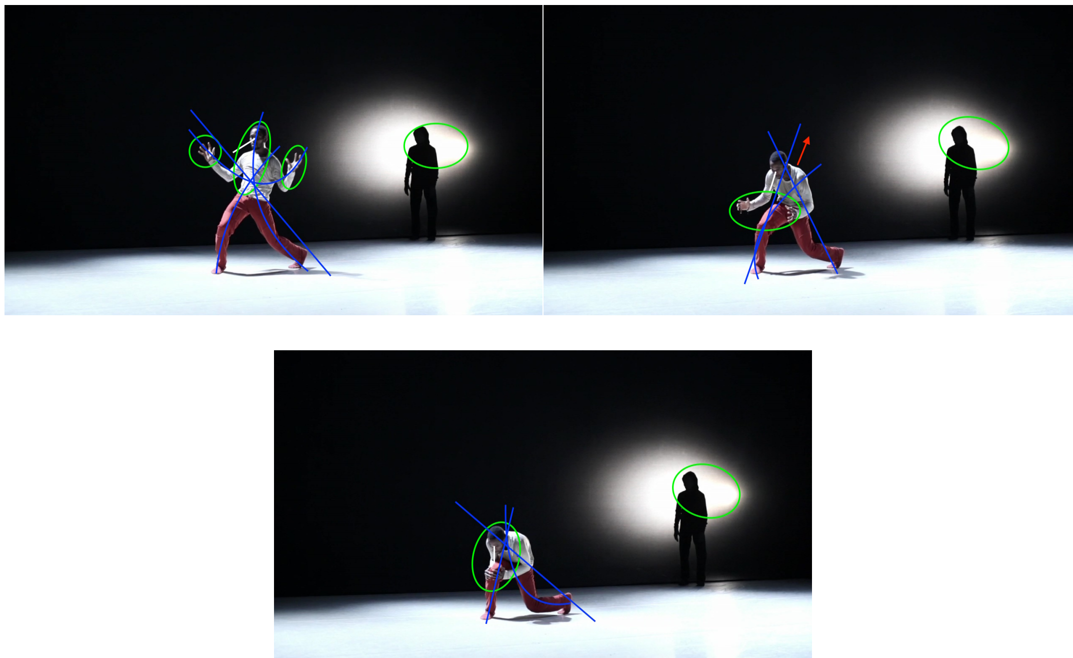

Figure 14 Sequence of images DM-CP-062e-064e

The dancer "dissolves" into this position, and there is a small stop at the end. The progressive simplification of the spatial-rhythm of the dancer's position runs parallel

to the feeling of slowing down, melting, “dissolving”, given both by the movement and the words. In the second repetition, the dancer falls to the floor. Effectively, he dissolves, letting go of the position completely to lie down supporting himself on his elbows to keep his head propped up. Once again, the dancer comes close to the floor, however on this occasion the relationship of action to meaning is much more literal. The third utterance consists of three consecutive repetitions of the same movement, which reduce the volume of the dancer’s position each time, coming closer to the floor. The correlation to the word is not straightforward, though, with the first repetition starting at the beginning of the word “dissolve”, the second one at the end of the word, and the final one in the silence. The position is very expressive for me, especially in what relates to the hands holding the sides of the head, and the facial expression of the dancer. I perceive in this sequence a sense of despair combined with an impression of resistance given by the moments of sustained movement—in pressing effort. The final position gives way to ideas of a paralysing fear or dread. The quality of the moment also gives the intention of melting down, and in that final gesture recovery does not seem likely.

- “silence” – 1:12, 2:51

The first time this word is uttered, the gesture is clear—an open hand towards the back of the head; and the sharp finishing of the movement, the stop, gives an impression of relationship with the meaning of the word. Something—someone?—is silenced. The second repetition relates more to this second meaning: it is not directly representational of silence itself, but of silencing someone. The dancer closes his fist suddenly, like catching something, the image of catching an insect, for example. The gesture is performed sharply again, like a slash, and it is also followed by silence as in the first section.

Through this analysis of correlation between words, meaning, and movement, some questions about the integration of emotional import and narrative arise, similarly to the first case study. Although the second act of *Dark Matters* does not have a clear sense of narrative, our perception of it is informed by the first act, which does have a clear story-line. Pite herself expects this to happen (Jones, 2010). Here, I argue, lies the key to Pite's work, in this solo as well as in her style in general: her sense of narrative is intensely physicalised, making it impossible to separate it from the other properties of the work. This is not so evident in her more theatrical approaches such as in the first act of *Dark Matters*, but it is clear in the solo analysed here. The poem is also part of this integration. Indeed, as Dickinson argues

> when considered as but one element within the total sensory environment of the performance rather than as that which exists externally and a priori to make sense of this environment, then text starts to take on added texture; it begins to matter not just indexically or symbolically, but also acoustically, visually, somatically (2019: 244).

This same argument can easily be applied to the potentially contentious issue of the dancer's facial expression and gestural movement as the carriers of narrative. Although the facial expression and gestures, which seem to underline the sense of meaning, may affect our view of the work, it is not plausible to suggest that they alone do the expressive work. Facial expressions and gestures are relevant in that they are also perceptual features of the work. Catherine Thomas talks about the last duet as a 'shape-shifting marvel of mime and dance' (2012). This description could easily apply to the solo: it is both things at work, inseparable as they are, which gives the emotional impact to Pite's choreography. Reviewers talk about themes 'beautifully embodied in this potent and affecting [show]' (Jocelyn, 2012). Jocelyn also describes it as a '[h]aunting portrait of the unknown presented through breath-taking movement' (Jocelyn, 2012). Jennings is clearer even in this line of argument: 'you don't have to get the references to read Pite's work. Her intentions are conveyed, with strange, fierce intensity, through the wordless language of the body' (2013). The language metaphor

discussed in Chapter 1 reappears, here seemingly as a way to articulate the idea of communication. Her work's emotional power, then, lies in the perceptual properties of the work, as I analyse and explore throughout this chapter, and it integrates facial expression and gestures, as well as meaning conveyed through the poem and other information, through the particular understanding of perception as enacted. Further aspects of meaning could perhaps emerge in a broader study of context, as discussed in Chapter 1.

4.2.7 Final moments

The final scene of the solo (see Supplementary Materials/Dark Matters/Scene 4.2.7) is also of interest in that the dancer breaks into a more pedestrian movement, but this time he does seem to perform in a gliding effort—unlike the clear break from performing in between sections in *Afterlight (Part One)*. The walks when Spivey leaves the stage, however, are an interesting mix of perceived qualities and emotions: he walks seemingly calmly, but there is tension in his body; upright, but I perceive a sense of desperation in his expression. It is not an easy moment to interpret, in that it is conveyed in an in-between of performed effort and pedestrian movement. There is a sense of content, resistance, and even dignity which makes this a very emotional moment for me after having perceived struggle and suffering as spectator of this solo.

I have discussed how the spatial-rhythm slows down at points in which there is need for it to have a softening or weakening effect, such as in the moments where the voice utters "only to dissolve". At the end of the solo, the final frames indicate again this simplification of spatial-rhythm, and this guides the audience to a sense of ending through the simplification of movement, positions, and the finality of the voice. This simplification also has a calming effect in the audience, although in this particular case one is not clear whether this is a positive kind of calm, or a despairing surrender. The idea of simplicity in the ending of the solo appears mainly in the final gestures

and walking, going from a moment where everything concentrates with two simple lines of tension and one point of attention—figure 15, top left image; briefly opening into two points of attention and adding the determination of the dancer through the clear focal point—figure 15, top right image; to finally one point of attention and a single line of tension for the dancer to walk off—figure 15, bottom image.

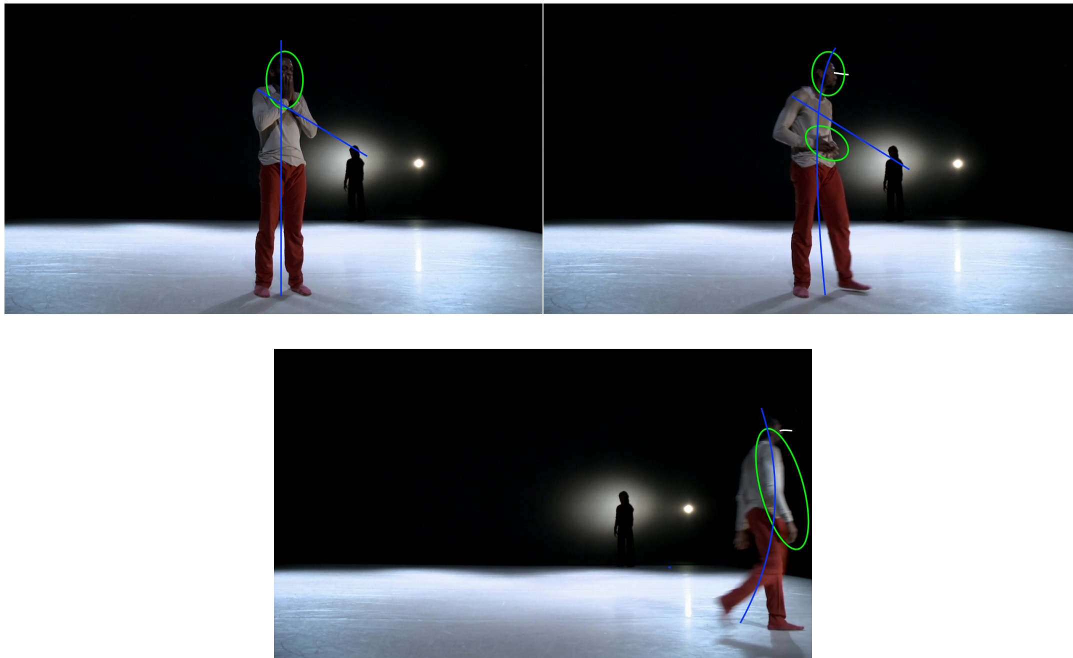

Figure 15 Images DM-CP-253e, DM-CP-256e, and DM-CP-258e

This final image of determination and doubt is a fitting closure for an 'extraordinary meditation on the nature of life and creation' (Lancaster, 2010), on 'what is real and who controls who' (Batson, 2011), leaving me also with many open questions.

4.3 Chapter insights

This section of *Dark Matters* is an intricate, 4-minute long solo which uses all the space on stage, with long sequences which alternate expansive and very small and detailed movement. The body is used in a particular manner, integrating movements which are almost gestural with more ballet-derived vocabulary. These movements are performed in different efforts and they apparently explore all the joints of the dancer's

body. Performed to a disembodied voice, which recites Voltaire's poem, the solo gives an impression of existential questioning, vulnerability, doubt, but also of power, the dancers moving 'like electricity on a wire' (Batson, 2011). Feelings are mixed in my experience of this solo of *Dark Matters*. As I have argued through the chapter, this varied emotional import is emergent in my experience from the perceptual features of the work. Those features found relevant during the analysis are the movement efforts of gliding, pressing, thrusting, punching, dabbing, and floating, as well as the mix between these qualities; the elaborate spatial-rhythms, sense of tension, opposition, projection, and pull; and the relationship between the sound of the voice and the movement, especially with regards to rhythm.

These features are found to correlate with emotional impressions, such as the position and illumination of the figure in black, together with her impulse to Spivey at the start of the solo, giving a sense of control and unease throughout (scene 4.2.1). In Spivey's use of qualities there is an impression of difference perceived by critics who describe the 'sense of weightless fluidity' yet also observe 'a taut stretched line and incredible control' (Lancaster, 2010) (also clear in scene 4.2.1, but seen throughout). These differences are marked by distinct uses of the body, which in this solo seem to change at great speed in what dance writer Marcia Siegel terms an 'endless, boneless struggle' (2011). Combinations of similar qualities can be observed, such as the fine line—marked by muscle tone—between floating, gliding, and pressing efforts. But combinations can also be observed between seemingly more opposing qualities, such as dabbing and gliding, dabbing and floating, or indeed floating and gliding, which are distinct not only on muscle tone but also time and space. These combinations and changes between more opposing qualities emphasise the sense of tension even further.

Furthermore, through tension, far-reaching positions, or contained energy, the positions and movements of the dancer transmit an impression of power (4.2.2). It is

important to clarify here that, although the impression of power is clear, it does not seem to be an assertive kind of power, something intentionally aggressive. My impression is more of a kind of power resulting from resilience, from the struggle, the need to fight. It aligns with the complex and often contradictory emotional signalling that seems to be occurring through the solo: power and vulnerability, resistance and despondence, struggle and despair. These are opposing forces which do not necessarily achieve a balance, but that are evident in the contrasts between volume of movement, and sense of empty space within positions; the movement qualities with sense of power but no outward projection; or the evident points of attention which come to the fore. Interestingly, the sense of power seems to also imply the idea of projection, but it is not produced by outward-looking lines, positions, or gaze. Projection of this kind is achieved even in positions or movements that would not be projecting in that more linear sense. There is an escape of energy from his body centre outwardly through his kinesphere, as if achieved by concentrating the sheer force of the dancer and the properties used—spatial-rhythm, and movement qualities mainly, but also in combination with the voice. These forces produce a mixed sense of emotional import in me as a viewer and, seemingly, also in the reviewers, who speak about 'porous identities' (Siegel, 2011) or a 'mesmerizingly beautiful' (Scott, 2012) show which is nonetheless 'self-shattering' (Dickinson, 2010).

The different properties studied have equivalent structures at points during the solo, for example with a moment of silence, simple spatial-rhythm, and pressing quality; but most often have contrasting behaviours, such as the rhythm of a movement counterpointing the rhythm of the voice, a complex spatial-rhythm in a still pose, or a simplifying spatial-rhythm in a moment of high tension in the body. Changes between these forms of harmony and contrast between properties, together with a combination of a sense of pull in the spatial-rhythm and a varying use of direction in the movement

qualities seem to further the sense of instability present in the solo. These factors give a non-organic performance quality to the work, again as if the body was pulled in two opposite directions. There is clear dissociation of body parts, coherent with the puppet thematic. Hesitation and struggle also seem to be transmitted by the work through the 'deliberately uncertain movements' (Dickinson, 2010), associations with every day gestural movements which hold meaning for a Western audience, or with the movement of the head, which does not seem to follow the same line of movement as the rest of the body—giving the sense of opposing forces, and an impression of confusion and conflict. The occasional appearance of qualities that imply that the body moves in a less global way, in asymmetry—such as flicking, dabbing, or successive flow—also indicates this use of the body in a disjointed manner. In fact, Siegel talks about the 'disjointed puppet moves' (2011). Also supporting this effect are those moments in which body parts combine different qualities, mostly happening with pressing, gliding, and punching of the arms and head. These factors, very clear in scenes 4.2.3 and 4.2.4, are exemplary of the experience of emotion as emergent from relationships between properties, with a shared rhythm appearing through these interactions between sound, movement qualities, and spatial-rhythm.

The continuous changes of qualities, uses of the rhythm of the words, or spatial-rhythm that are observed in the movement in the space, as well as within the qualities themselves: floating in successive flow or flicking are defined by changes in direction, for example. Siegel again speaks of the dancers 'streaking, slithering, falling, slashing, propelling themselves nearly out of control and then reversing direction to stagger backwards' (2011), which is a very eloquent description both of the changes in qualities and the different directions and oppositions present in the use of space within the work. In 4.2.5 there is a clear sense of the use of gestures and the

power of their—Western—conventional meaning, through combined lines of tension and open positions, with clear implications of imploration, desperation, but also power.

Gestures are not the only factors which affect meaning in the solo, however. Words, although generally more obviously correlated to movement in terms of their rhythm, have occasional representation in the qualities and significance of the particular sequences. “Dust”, with a melting quality to the floor, or “silence” with a sudden gesture, are examples of these. These occasional symbolic gestures or almost representational movements add to the fragmentary narrative of the work, which is clear in the first part of the piece, but more abstracted in its second half, as explained above. Arguably, this more direct sense of meaning is still emergent from the features of the work and still related to the particular characteristics of the properties—gliding effort in “dust”, dabbing quality in “shock”. Dickinson speaks of ‘fleshly nouns like “nerves and bones”’ or ‘the organic matter of “blood and dust”’ (2019: 250) as examples of the interaction between the movement and the disembodied voice, with this combination cuing the spectator cognitively and affectively (Dickinson, 2019: 249). Dickinson continues, in line with my argument in favour of an integrated spectatorial experience in this thesis, that ‘the uttering of words like “nerves” and “bones” and “blood” and “dust” alongside their physical manifestation transforms information into sensation’ (Dickinson, 2019: 255).

The movement relates in different ways to the sound of the words of the poem, changing the rhythm of the movement itself, affecting how movement and words are perceived together, and creating a shared rhythm. It was also observed that accents in the movement can be perceived due to the accents in the voice, in a clear phenomenon of *capture* (Jordan, 2015: 105). Most remarkable perhaps in terms of the relationship between movement and voice was that the pulse is maintained through the movement even in the moments of silence between the spoken sentences. All these ideas relate to

the contradiction and change that are inherent in the choreographic choices that compose the work. The shared rhythm of all the properties is that which achieves the emotional import of the piece in my experience. Having studied the relationships between movement, spatial-rhythm, and voice, a shared rhythm emerges from their interaction that is what makes the piece "work up" the spectator emotionally, 'overwhelming the heart and mind' (Citron, 2012).

Spivey's solo in *Dark Matters* does not seem to have a structure as obvious as the previous case study did, in which sections are evident even on a first viewing. Still, through the analysis it becomes apparent that the solo seems to decelerate overall. In terms of movement it starts at high speed, with a combination of gliding, pressing, and thrusting efforts. Although there are fluctuations throughout, the final image that the solo leaves is one of paused movement and simple, slow walking. The space covered seems to enlarge in the middle section of the solo, with the movement being more limited in range both at the beginning and towards the end. At the very end, the use of space reduces, simplifying both the movement and spatial-rhythm. The voice, however, is constant in tone and speed throughout. Although not extremely emphasised, a sense of deceleration still is perceivable through the characteristics of the analysed properties.

Poignancy appears as a big theme in my experienced emotional import in this work, due to this constant sense of tension and contradiction. This is delivered in the form of a combination of the movement efforts, the spatial-rhythms, and the use of the voice, but mainly of the tension both within each of them and between them, which creates the shared rhythm between the properties. Reviewers repeatedly use poignancy to refer to the emotional import of the work, either directly (Citron, 2012; Johnson, 2010) or through equivalent emotional terms or combinations of them such as

melancholy (Citron, 2012), self-shattering (Dickinson, 2010), or ‘loneliness’, ‘obsession’, ‘tight’, and ‘enthralling’ (Jennings, 2013).

Chapter 5. Case Study 3: *Petrichor* (2016)

While the other dancers fall to the floor, a female dancer moves as if propelled by forces inside of her, but not completely under her control. A female voice coexists with her movement, both creating it and responding to it. The dancer alternates fast, fighting qualities with moments of painful delicacy and vulnerability. While watching this solo images of suffering, struggle and despair emerge for me, but also of someone fighting back, of the strength of someone who does not surrender. It is as if through the movement of her body her doubts are clear, but also her own potential for answers.

The last study of the project is an analysis of my work *Petrichor* (2016), which allows me to investigate the double experience of spectator-choreographer. This case also relates back to the origin of the research question, which emerged from my own practice. The analysis also adds new factors to the discussion, being a solo by a female dancer, and a choreography created purposely applying different uses of the body (or qualities), which is danced to a female voice singing *a cappella*, in the last section joined by percussion orchestra.

Although I am the choreographer of the work, when I saw the first run of the full piece in rehearsal the extent of its emotional power in my own experience surprised me. To this date, even though evidently I know the work very well and from an insider position, I still use my emotional reaction as indication of a good rehearsal: that is how I know that the piece is working. When watching a performance, I can perceive my

heart rate elevating, and although this could be easily associated with the nervousness of presenting my work in public, the fact that it happens every time in particular moments of the piece suggests that it is the work and its features, and not the general context of performance, which produces this effect. The sense of fight, revolution, and some kind of visceral power is also present for me when I watch this work.

The analysis of my own work implies a further complication: the impossibility to separate the insider view of the choreographer from the outsider view of the spectator/analyst. This is far from a problem as I see it and propose it here. In fact it becomes an advantage when it allows me to correlate the experience of the choreographer and that of the spectator, arguing that the experience of the spectator is a reflection, to some extent, of the process that the choreographer follows in the studio. More specifically, choreographers follow tasks, create specific material, and orchestrate the choreography in relation to space and sound until there is a moment in which things "work", which is to say that they perceive a powerful effect in the work. This is not to say that the effect is necessarily of a particular emotion, as explained in the conceptual framework (Chapter 1), but there is an emotional impact of some sort. It is not possible to differentiate whether this moment of emotional effect—or affect—happens first, which leads to the choreographer's feeling of things "working", or if, in a reverse direction, things "work" at a point, hence producing the affect. This distinction, however, is hardly relevant in my particular embodied understanding of experience, as the emotional reaction and the reflexive nature of the perception of things "working" are inseparable at the phenomenal level in an embodied cognitive and enactive perceptual experience[27]. It is important to recognise also that this does not mean in any way that choreographers finalise the work at this point, but that the direction becomes clearer for them—and likely for the dancers too through their

[27] As I discussed in relation to cognitive and bodily elements of emotion in section 1.2.1.

guidance—once this moment of emotional impact has occurred. In my own experience of creating *Petrichor*, the moment of the creative process when the final music—and especially the song—came in was the moment of emotional impact for me: the work made sense at that point. As stated above, this allows me to explore both my experience of the work as spectator/choreographer and those of the other spectators, to correlate them and the emotional import of the piece to the features of the work, and to illustrate the importance of interactions between properties—since it was at the point when movement qualities, spatial-rhythm, and music came together that the work made sense for me.

The case study employs the same methods utilised in the previous studies, analysing movement qualities, spatial-rhythm, and sound and movement relationships. The selected short solo and its faster repetition are fluid and complex, presenting the dancer's body as disjointed but strong. The movement is significantly linked to the voice and the percussive music in the spectator's experience, although through a fluctuating relationship. The space is important to the emotional import too, both in terms of the light and of the position of the other dancers. Through these perceptual properties and their interactions, feelings of vulnerability, despair, and struggle emerge, making the solo unsettling.

Similarly to the previous case studies, I focus on both my memories of live experience and a video of the *premiere* of the work, in 2016, although inevitably my experience of rehearsals and of other stagings of the work affect my view. The audience's reaction is invariably similar, with an audience member writing that she was 'deeply moved by [the] piece. Raw emotion and energy' (Ruth Borg, Facebook Comment, 2017), or another stating that it 'keeps you clutching the seat throughout' (Rochelle Gatt, Facebook Comment, 2017). Once again, there appears the idea of raw emotion in relation to a dance piece.

5.1 Introduction to *Petrichor*

Petrichor is a work of contemporary theatre dance, although my work is heavily influenced by ballet—and by more balletically-oriented schools of contemporary dance—not so much based on my personal experience as a dancer, such as is the case of Maliphant or Pite, but on my taste and experience as a student and spectator. Fluidity, musicality, and group orchestration are some of the elements that are usually identified in my work and which can be linked to my training as dancer and as dance spectator.

The work under scrutiny here is a 17-minute piece to a varied soundscape of poems and music, and consists of a series of solos and group sections. The group sections lead the work's line of energy, and the solos thread through it, with the dancers coming in and out of the group. There are five group sections: the beginning which we call the "clap" sequence and cannon, to the first music; the gesture section at medium speed; the floor section; the gesture section in slow motion; and the gesture section at high speed. There is also a group section which is a series of lifts of one of the soloist, which was a duet in the 2016 version but was modified into a group for the 2017 version[28]. I will focus the analysis on a female solo: what was called in rehearsals the articulation solo. This solo falls between the floor section and the slow motion gestures section in its first repetition; and at the end of the whole work in the second. The solo was originally created on the dancer Océane Sasizza, and then reprised by Florinda Camilleri, Jure Gostinčar, Emma Louise Walker, and Zoe Camilleri. Although I have rehearsal videos of each of them, I only have performance videos of the female dancers, and I will focus on Sasizza's performance of the solo for my analysis, since

[28] Full videos of both versions are available in the supplementary materials USB/DVD within the *Petrichor* and Full Work in 2016 and Full Work in 2017 folders. (see Supplementary Materials/Petrichor/Full Work 2016 or Supplementary Materials/Petrichor/ Full Work 2017).The quality is lower on the DVD version due to size.

it is the original one[29]. This solo is performed twice during the work. The first time it is performed to the beginning of the song *Gallo Rojo, Gallo Negro*, where there is only a female voice *a cappella*, occasionally joined by sparse sounds, and a wind-like sound at the end. The second part is performed at the end—both of the song and of the work—and the voice is here accompanied by percussion. I expand on the significance and details of this song in section 5.1.2.1 below.

I created this piece when I was given the opportunity to work with the five 2016 apprentices of the national dance company of Malta, ŻfinMalta Dance Ensemble, by its then director Mavin Khoo.[30] I created it based on some movement material that I had produced during a previous choreographic research project.[31] This material was then adapted and reworked with the individual dancers, so that it now only loosely resembles the original material. The process was similarly replicated when I reworked the piece for the main cast of ŻfinMalta, in 2017, although the room for individual exploration of material was slightly reduced as the choreography was ready. The piece was then presented in a double bill called *Tnejn(2)*, premiered in May 2017 in the Għargħur Theatre, Malta, alongside Iván Pérez's *Exhausting Space* (2015). I reworked the piece for nine dancers in this case, in order to include also the 2017 apprentices of the company in the performance. This time the work was presented five times, whereas the first run had only had one performance as part of an emerging companies' festival in Malta, at the Malta Drama Theatre, 26th February 2016.

I also presented the work with a new cast of five dancers in the gala of Estancias Coreográficas, in Spain, August 2017. In this case, however, I was part of the cast

[29] The full video of the solo is available in the supplementary materials USB/DVD within the *Petrichor* and Video of Solo folders (see Supplementary Materials/Petrichor/Video Of Solo).
[30] He has since left this position and Paolo Mangiola is now director.
[31] Estancias Coreográficas (www.estanciascoreograficas.com), project which I co-directed 2015-2018.

myself, so was not able to experience the work from the outside[32]. Finally, ŻfinMalta restaged the work, with a mostly new cast, for a performance in the Dance Studies Association conference in Malta on the 5th of July 2018. Although I analyse only the video of the first staging, the experiences of the others inevitably inform my viewing.

The dancers only knew the thematic content in general terms—and so did I, in reality—and we worked together in form and dynamics mainly. I had, as stated above, some material from a previous project, which I gave to the dancers to work with, adapt, and personalise in a collaborative process. The creation of this work was an interesting progression for me since I started the process with only a vague idea of what it was going to be. It had a general thematic, mostly set by the poems I was using as inspiration—poems by Uruguayan poet Mario Benedetti. These poems dealt with differences between groups of people—Benedetti calls them “grietas”: cracks or rifts—and how they can be saved or made deeper by choices and behaviour. Other poems had to do with reasons to fight for the future and for the homeland; with the search for truth through the recognition of defeat, and how that honesty can lead to victory; and with the defence of joy against the obligation of being joyful, again through truth.[33] My interest in these poems relates to their pervasive feeling of social or civic unrest, and to the sense of resistance and resilience that transpires from my reading of them. The title was chosen in a similar fashion: although evocative of the general thematic—*petrichor* means ‘the smell produced when rain falls on dry ground,

[32] Being inside the work gave me yet a different perspective, which could be of potential use for a future discussion of how the properties understood as perceptual in the experience of the spectator or choreographer are lived by the dancer. I do not have the space to discuss this here, however.

[33] Respectively with the related themes, “Grietas” in *Quemar las Naves* (1968-1969), “Por qué Cantamos” in *Cotidianas, Retratos y Canciones* (1978- 1979), “Otra noción de Patria” in *La casa y el Ladrillo* (1976-1977), and “Defensa de la Alegría” in *Cotidianas, Botella al mar* (1978-1979), all in Benedetti, 2004.

usually experienced as being pleasant' (Cambridge Dictionary, 2017)—it does not clearly direct the narrative in a particular way.

Some reviewers seem to see the piece as stating a very clear idea: 'The idea of revolution read clearly in the piece, with choice of costume, including red and black, as well as choice of music and movement' (Reviewer 2, 2017).[34] However, the writers also signal that there was no linear narrative they read in the piece:

> gestural movements, in combination with the evocative lighting and the Spanish music were creating a not very obvious but yet theatrical atmosphere. Only the choice of costumes was abstracting a bit of the piece's strength, as they were not adding a lot in the creation of any atmosphere or representation (Reviewer 7, 2017).

The lighting that Reviewer 7 refers to is that for the 2017 performance, which differs from the one in the analysed video. The former was designed by Moritz Zavan Stoeckle while the latter I designed myself. Other reviewers talk about a 'sense of unity and protest… achieved through the use of soundscape' and with 'movement provid[ing] context' (Reviewer 3, 2017). Once again, although a general theme is set, there are no clear narrative aspects to which the emotional response can be related. There are, however, some indications in the form of symbolic references—hands in fists, falls, gestural arm movements—which provide a more meaningful relationship between the movement and the idea of revolution. The songs—*Panderos* and *Gallo Rojo, Gallo Negro*, both by the Iberian percussion orchestra Coetus, still fit this general theme of social revolution and unrest in different forms.

With regard to the music, it is interesting to note that I did not work with it from the beginning, in fact, the music came quite late into the process, when the movement was already created. I had known the main song for a long time—*Gallo*

[34] As will be explained more in depth below, these reviews are unpublished and were produced as part of a programme of study, so I have preserved the anonymity of their authors by not attributing to named individuals.

Rojo, Gallo Negro—and also the work of the band, Coetus, and thought it might be interesting to try the combination. When we rehearsed with the music for the first time, the changes of the music fitted the sections in the work perfectly: the structures of music and choreography seemed to "magically" run in parallel. From then on, I encouraged the dancers to play with the musicality of their particular solos, and I set only certain cues to the music, mostly in the group sections. As a choreographer, I do not work with counts, and tend to only give sporadic cues on the music, with the idea of not making either form strongly dependent on the other[35].

It is relevant to note also that, although I resisted it, I eventually decided to respond to the dancers' repeated requests and gave them some indication of thematic, narrative imagery to help them with the performance of particular qualities and energies. The resistance came from my own interest in arriving at the emotional import with no narrative indication, that is, from the observable features of the work[36]. This was contrasted with the dancers' insistence on asking what it all meant, or what it was about. The solution to this issue came in the form of a collaborative process of definition of specific moments. This included discussion of formal qualities, for example explaining what the effort was in a particular solo or what the body position could be. References to theme were also part of this process, evoking sensations of feeling different, or encaged, and also drawing on political issues which they felt close to them or unfair situations which they knew about. In the particular solo I analyse, for example, this translated into the idea of being moved from the inside by uncontrollable

[35] Incidentally, this changed in my latest work, *Eigenlicht* (2018), and I believe this might have to do with the development of my research.

[36] I am aware that this need for narrative and dramaturgy is both a very human characteristic and a very common way to work in dance, however I believe that the reverse process of allowing things to emerge from the work is equally valid and perhaps more interesting—if only because less common. I often feel, however, that dancers need something to grasp to be able to allow themselves the energy needed to perform. This interesting area of questioning could be a future development of my research focusing on the dancer's experience.

forces, from a visceral sensation of something not being right, and at the same time thrusting out these feelings in order to fight for some kind of change. This was always discussed after the dancers knew the full choreography and were already advanced in the rehearsal process, not to interfere with the observable features too early through the dramatic interpretation of some idea.

5.1.1 Informed audience perspective

In the preceding case studies, I explored how professional reviews compared and contrasted with my own view of the works, relating the emotional descriptors to the formal qualities perceived in the analysis. In this case and as discussed above, since I am both choreographer and spectator, my view is different. However, I still use reviews in order to specify elements that the viewers notice collectively. The reviews for this case study are: one review of the 2016 premiere published in the newspaper *The Times of Malta* (Cachia, 2016), and eight written by students of the Dance Criticism study-unit of the Dance Studies department at the University of Malta. I coordinate and teach this study-unit and always ask the students to review the work of the national dance company. Being aware of the issues raised by the fact that I was asking my students to review my work, they were free to review only the first work, by Iván Pérez. All the students chose to review both pieces. Given this particular circumstance, I take the comments as potentially biased when using the reviews for my analysis, as I imagine my position as their lecturer influencing the students' writing. For the purpose of this study, however, the reviews serve to have examples of other audience experiences and the emotional import the work has in those experiences, and so I look at their writing for specific language relating elements that refer to the work's potential emotional import. Among those, seven reviewers saw the work live in May 2017, and one used a video of the 2016 performance.

5.1.2 Perceptual Properties

My research highlights the elements of movement qualities, use of music, and spatial-rhythm[37], as well as their interactions, as crucial to the emotional import of these works, so my discussion centres on them. All of these aspects of the work emerge as important in my own experience and are mentioned also in the reviews. In this particular case, where my view as spectator and my view as choreographer are inevitably entangled, it is important to acknowledge that these properties are also important to me throughout both the original choreographic process and the subsequent restaging processes.

5.1.2.1 Music

The song that is used in the solo is potentially a highly differentiating factor between Spanish and non-Spanish audiences. The original *Gallo Rojo, Gallo Negro* song was written by the singer-songwriter Chicho Sánchez Ferlosio (SGAE, 2017). The political relevance of the song is two-fold: first, it was written to express opposition to Franco's dictatorship, with its author being censored; and second, this censorship helped spread the rumour of the song as originating from the Spanish Civil War, giving it more power and mystery (SGAE, 2017). The song's political significance, then, does not escape any Spanish person over a certain age threshold—a group to which I belong. The song has a particular significance for me as a Spanish person. The lyrics of the song are translated below, to indicate how Spanish-speaking people, although ignorant of the political context, might also be affected emotionally by the words themselves. I consider it important to highlight this here, as I am trying to illustrate my experience.

[37] The full set of edited still frames is available in the supplementary materials USB/DVD within the *Petrichor* and Edited Stills folders (see Supplementary Materials/Petrichor/ Edited Stills).

However, the reviews used are all from non-Spanish speaking writers, which avoids this issue. This is an instance where the relevance of the spectator's contextual background to the perceptual properties of the work is clearly seen. I refer to this and explain it openly wherever I feel that it shapes my interpretation.

> Cuando canta el gallo negro es que ya se acaba el día, si cantara el gallo rojo, otro gallo cantaría.
>
> **Ay, si es que yo miento, que el cantar que yo cante, lo borre el viento. Ay, qué desencanto si me borrara el viento lo que yo canto**
>
> Se encontraron en la arena los dos gallos frente a frente. El gallo negro era grande pero el rojo era valiente. Se miraron a la cara y atacó el negro primero. El gallo rojo es valiente pero el negro es traicionero. Gallo negro, gallo negro, gallo negro, te lo advierto: no se rinde el gallo rojo más que cuando está ya muerto.
>
> Translation:
> When the black rooster sings it means the day is ending, if the red rooster sang, it would be a different thing[38].
>
> **Ay, if I am lying, may the song that I sing be erased by the wind. Ay, what a disillusion, if the wind were to erase the song I sing.**
>
> They met in the sand, the two roosters face to face. The black rooster is big but the red one is brave. They looked into each other's face and the black was the first one to attack. The red rooster is brave, but the black is treacherous. Black rooster, black rooster, black rooster I am warning you: the red rooster only surrenders when it is already dead.[39]

The same kind of analysis of pitch and intensity that was done for the previous case study was also completed in this case[40]. It is interesting to note, however, that although both pitch and intensity vary significantly throughout the solo, there is no evident pattern of changes. In that sense, the analysis is only used when relevant to moments

[38] "Otro gallo cantaría", literally "another rooster would sing", is a Spanish saying that translates as "it would be another story" or "another matter". An English equivalent would be "a new day would dawn", which is interesting taking into account the preceding sentence.
[39] My own translation. The excerpt in bold font is the chorus, which is repeated several times during the song.
[40] The results from the sound analysis are available in the supplementary materials USB/DVD within the *Petrichor* and Sound Analysis folders (see Supplementary Materials/Petrichor/Sound Analysis).

of particular significance, and as appropriate to their characteristics. The final repetition of the solo is performed to a combination of voice and percussion at the end of the same song, giving it an extra sense of urgency and power. This also contributes to the emphasis of the characteristic interactions found in the previous repetition of the solo. It is important to note, through the musical analysis, that the overall intensity of this section goes up significantly compared to the average of the previous repetition.

5.2 Analysis of properties and interactions

There are several issues to take into account in the analysis of this case study. First, being the choreographer, my view of the piece will be different from most audience members, but also significantly different to anyone non-Spanish, due to the meaning of the song—and its particular significance to me, as I chose it—and to the language used in it. Second, the reviews are mostly non-professional, and their impartiality and their experienced use of vocabulary might be questioned due to the circumstances of their writing, however they also provide context to compare the first premise in that they are written by non-Spanish speakers. Finally, reviews mention only the work in its totality, and do not refer specifically to the solo that is the object of the study. It can be argued, however, that some of the properties that the reviewers highlight, and the effects that they feel on their basis, are also evident in this particular solo.

The stage space is quite small in the performance of *Petrichor* being analysed, not only because the stage itself was small, but because there are dancers spread around on the floor while the solo is being danced.

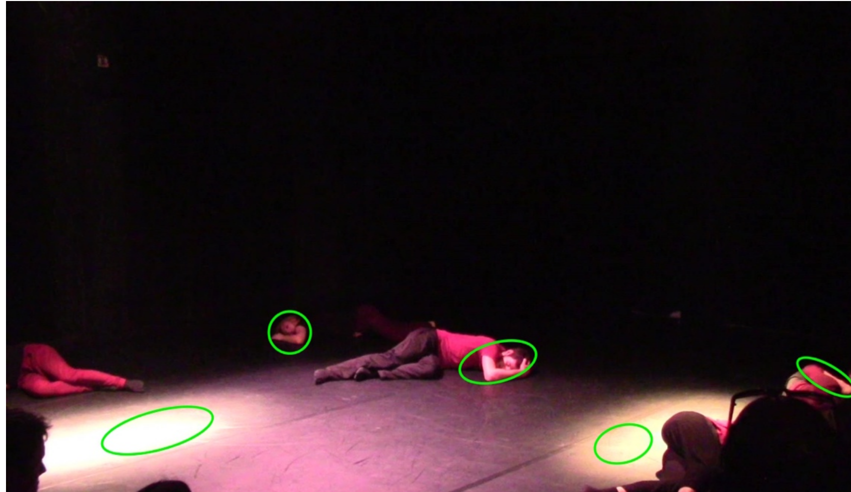

Figure 16 Image P-LP-037

This human "set" can be observed very clearly in the still frame above, image P-LP-037. The dancer is then restricted in her use of space, and that translates into using mostly the centre and the space to the audience's right in this first section. As the positions of the rest of the dancers change for the final solo the space that the dancer can use also changes. As can be seen in the image below, figure 17, most of the dancers are in the right upstage corner, with one of them falling slightly into the centre, and another one to the front. The space used by the dancer covers mostly a central area, often moving in diagonals, but always within this limited space. She does transport the movement upstage and downstage, but does not move sideways in a wide range.

Figure 17 Image P-LP-116

I now analyse those moments of choreography which stand out for their emotional impact in my experience, and the interaction between properties that seems to be underlying this impact.

5.2.1 00:24 - 00:44 Struggle and melancholy

To a soft moment of the voice, the dancer ripples through her body, throwing herself to the floor and rolling into a suspended movement of the leg. After this, she lifts herself on to her knees, rolling her head around, with her hair hitting the more intense area of the light, before she goes down to the floor again, fast, to suspend once more into a foetal position. There is a short moment of silence. A sense of despair is clear through this sequence, and vulnerability is evident in the finishing position. Soon after, Sasizza suspends a position coming up off the floor, with the arms and one leg up. She looks almost like a mantis, an aggressive animal concentrating her strong gaze on her prey. She then softly lowers her leg and then moves it in a rond de jambe *around, lowering her body, moving into a suspended* renversé*, floating for a second before quickly sliding out on to the floor. She is delicate, but strong and clearly in control. I feel the beauty of this moment as performed by Sasizza as almost painful* (see Supplementary Materials/Petrichor/Scene 5.2.1).

At 00:30 of the video there is an example of interaction between properties of light, voice, and movement quality. There is a strong impulse in the movement, performed to a softer moment of the voice, which moves the dancer into the light. The effect of the hair swinging around the dancer's head in a fast arch is also important in this moment, together with the shape that the dancer's movement is making: coming up rolling her head around, to come back down to the floor. It is a very simple but

effective moment for me, which translates into a sense of vulnerability at this particular point in the performance. Figure 18 illustrates how the way the work is lit and the blurred head area provoke an emphasised point of attention in my view, and elongate the main diagonal of tension, which eventually facilitates my perception of pull in the image. The blurring indicates the speed of the movement, which probably will translate into a halo effect in live performance, that is, the movement would not be seen clearly at that point.

Figure 18 Image P-LP-033

Changes in pull can be observed throughout the work, although they are especially significant in the final section. An example of change of pull can be noticed in the sequence of still frames below, in figure 19. In images P-LP-030 and P-LP-031 the pull is quite similar: it follows the same direction and it is produced by the coincidence of the middle line between the lines of tension, and the direction of the focal point of the dancer. In image P-LP-032, however, although the change in position is not radical, the pull is suddenly moved towards the other upward diagonal, in opposition to both the line in between the lines of tension, and the direction of the dancer's gaze. This change of pull responds to the geometrical balance in the image as the leg position, being lower, stabilises the scene. This is an indication of how minute changes can affect the spatial-rhythm of a performance quite radically, and also of how

it is likely that part of our engagement with dance has to do with these sudden changes in the sense of direction and pull. These might not be perceived fully consciously, but are nonetheless present in the performance.

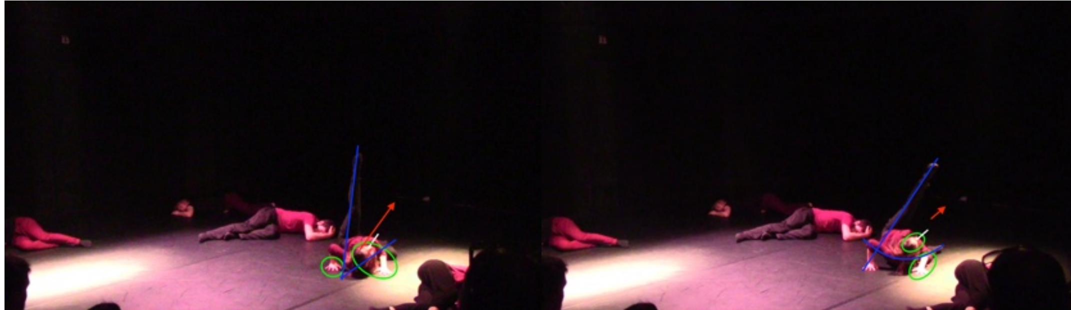

Figure 19 Images P-LP-030 to P-LP-032

I argue that this sense of pull while the body progresses through a movement augments the perceived elaboration of the material, perhaps helping this sense of anticipation that the audience talks about—for example with Reviewer 5 (2017) saying that the piece 'kept [her] at the edge of [her] seat'.

The dancer rolls to the floor after the big impulse and a head movement, and sustains the end of the movement to coincide with the voice finishing a word. The sentence continues though, creating a sense of tension that is perhaps more perceptible to me as a Spanish speaker—although the upwards intonation at the end of the word could be obvious also to non-Spanish speakers. The dancer then lets the voice start again before she continues, in a dance *rubato* that then resolves the tension with a powerful accentuation of the movement. This moment exemplifies one of the defining features of the solo: frequent changes between the three qualities of floating, gliding,

and pressing, interspersed with movements performed in a thrusting effort. Thrusting movement indeed accents the material of the solo throughout. The contrast produced by this opposition of qualities creates a particular rhythm in the movement, maintaining a sense of surprise by breaking out of patterns of qualities. This aligns with the description of the piece by its reviewers as 'full of dynamic qualities' (Reviewer 7, 2017). They also mention how 'contrasting movement' (Reviewer 3, 2017), or the 'contrast between strength and release' (Reviewer 5, 2017) are used throughout. In this case study, it is possible also to observe repetition of certain efforts at the end of the movement phrases. These qualities that often seem to finalise movements are mainly pressing and punching efforts.

Another important emotional moment is the sequence between 00:39 and 00:44. The dancer suspends her movement when she is coming up in the silence, staying at the edge of the light so that her arms and face are slightly illuminated. She then kicks her leg forward and shortly after lowers her upper body entering more into the light, to then start the *renversé*-like movement, suspending at the top position and keeping her head and arms in the light. Immediately after the suspension and when she is starting to come down she is in full illumination, especially in her face, arms, and moving hair, which produces a beautiful intensity of light. Just after this moment she "escapes", accelerating her slide down and out of both the light and of the suspended position. A moment of tension is achieved in the suspension, which is then abruptly broken by the slide out. There is no violence in it, it is a soft, melancholy kind of struggle. The suspension leaves me breathless as perceiver and the spell is only broken by the sliding out of the dancer. This is one of the most important moments of the solo for me, and one that I invariably search for as a choreographer when re-staging the piece.

In figures 20 and 21 below, a moment is captured in which the sense of power is evident. The dancer's gaze coinciding with the only straight line of tension; the position of the arms moving slightly upwards; the clear points of attention facilitated by the light, especially in the knee; even the position of the dancer's shadow on the floor—all these factors contribute to a position that is both delicate and strong. A sense of power that is given by the fact that it transmits a sense of anticipation towards what is coming after, 'waiting to see what is going to happen next' (Reviewer 5, 2017).

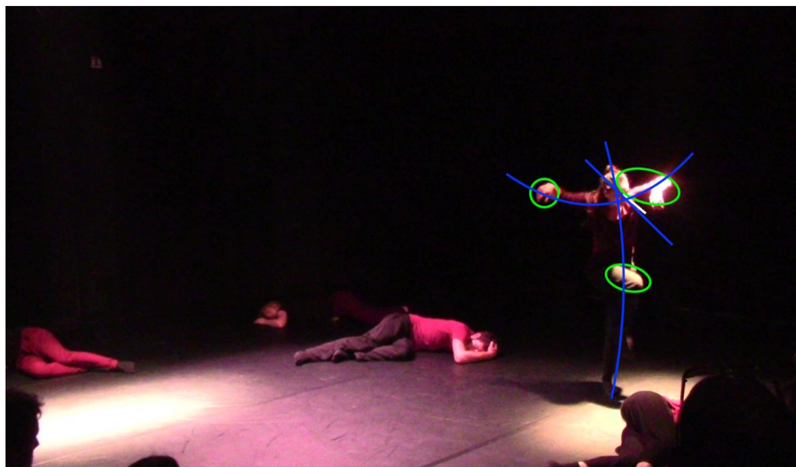

Figure 20 Image P-LP-042

This moment of the solo presents a newly encountered opposition, within the piece, between the sense of pull and projection within one still frame. Such opposition can be appreciated in the image below, where the sense of projection follows the coinciding direction of the lines of tension towards the upwards diagonal to the right, whereas the pull follows exactly the opposite direction. This gives the sensation of the dancer fighting against her own destiny, pulling up while she is being pulled down.

Figure 21 Image P-LP-044

These effects of struggle and delicacy are constituted in my experience of this moment through the interactions between the blurred areas of attention, the effect of the hair, the particular areas of more intense light and how the dancer traverses through them, the dancer's gaze, and the sense of pull in the spatial-rhythm; as well as the relationship between the moments of soft voice and silence, and the alternating movement qualities.

5.2.2 00:44 – 0:55 | Floating, voice, and poignancy

Coming up from a crouching position, the dancer suspends the position of open arms and one leg to the side. A ripple goes through her limbs, apparently first motivated by the voice, but accelerating in the silence. She looks, and breathes, as if some external force, or something that she cannot control, is moving her (see Supplementary Materials/Petrichor/Scene 5.2.2).

Although I directed this solo towards the movement quality of free-flow successive floating, it is interesting to note that this effort is not so present in the qualities as I perceive them in the analysis. There are three instances in this first section when this

quality of successive floating is clear, but the dominant efforts are in fact gliding and pressing, interspersed with thrusting/punching movements. This combination, of gliding, pressing, and thrusting/punching, seems to be again the most present in the solo, as in the preceding cases. It might be possible to propose that this feeling of successive floating is in fact given by the continuous interruptions of flow that movements in thrusting/punching effort produce in the fluidity of the gliding moments, these two being the qualities used most often. Punching/thrusting, after all, does change direction and breaks the flow in the use of the body, which links to the successive flow in floating. Moreover, this type of floating at high speed might easily verge on fluidity, moving towards gliding effort, especially considering the way the body is trained in European contemporary dance, where the focus on continuity and fluidity is obvious in all the movement techniques within the category of release technique.

Most probably, however, although the gliding-punching combination is not enough to create successive-flow floating in itself, the effect on me as audience of these two possibilities is similar: the body is divided, directions are constantly changing, and a sense of urgency and instability is produced. The fact that the quality that inspired the solo was successive-flow floating, and that this was translated into a combination of qualities including also gliding, pressing, and punching/thrusting movements, might be argued to cause highly complex spatial-rhythms in this solo. These are understood as arising from these movement qualities and the positions in which the body appears together with the way the work is lit, due to which I can perceive an elevated number of points of attention and lines of tension as emerging in the still frames. Examples of these complex rhythms can be observed in the still frames below, in figure 22, where P-LP-039 belongs to the previous scene and P-LP-050 to

the current one—also giving an indication of the progression of complexity across the work.

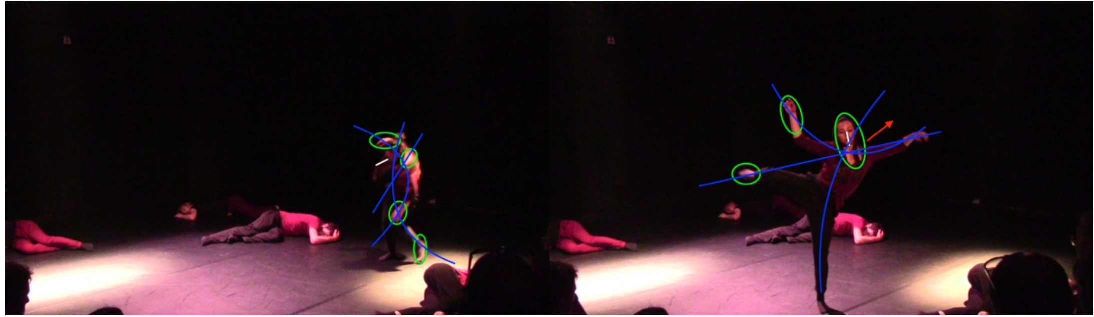

Figure 22 Images P-LP-039 and P-LP-050

The number of lines of tension is given by the fact that the body is used in a very dissociated manner, often holding several directions at once within each movement. Sense of pull, points of attention, and the direction of the dancer's gaze, are often also factors that disperse the sense of direction, creating different and complex rhythms throughout the solo, as can be seen throughout this analysis. This does not imply that the solo is continuously moving within complex rhythms, nor that the simpler rhythms cannot be equally powerful. These complex rhythms, however, create a feeling of excitement, almost anxiety—that clutching-the-seat feeling referred to above.

In *Petrichor*, it is possible to observe a different kind of relationship to the voice than in *Dark Matters*, and this is evidently something that cannot be observed in *Afterlight (Part One)*[41]. The clearest relationship is between the effort of successive-flow floating, when it is present, and the elongation of the voice. The dancer seems to move in successive flow, articulating the body, in moments when the singer is sustaining the note—particularly at the end of words or when she sings the "ay ay ay ay" repetitions. Often there is a sense of acceleration in the articulation of the movement which contrasts the sustained feeling of the note. There is also sometimes

[41] Although parallels between the voice and the melody of the music can be drawn, this is outside the scope of this project.

a relationship between the movement of the dancer and the intonation of the singer, often a correspondence between changes of accents in the movement and changes of pitch in the voice.

Finally, and perhaps more relevant to this project's question, there are some instances in which the movement seems to match the texture of the voice—almost its feeling. These moments are such that a soft, delicate voice is matched by slow, soft movement, the two complementing each other and producing a particular feeling of vulnerability. At 00:45 the dancer articulates through the body in the elongation of the "o" sound, however, when the second, and higher pitch, elongated "o" sound arrives, she sustains the movement and comes out with the right leg and both arms to her sides in this pressing quality. Although the relationship changes, it is clear that there is a strong link to the voice, and perhaps it is the change of pitch in this moment that elucidates a change from the successive floating effort to the gliding one. Interestingly, it is possible to see in the musical analysis that although the pitch becomes higher at this point, the intensity lowers, so perhaps the pressing quality responds more to the intensity of the voice. This movement is performed to an especially soft moment of the singing and it is later accelerated, both of which moments produce a special sense of poignancy in this sequence.

5.2.3 01:04-01:10 | Reaching towards the light | Actively taken by energy

A slow sustained turn, looking at her own hands, takes the dancer to centre stage in the middle of a phrase in the song. In the ensuing silence Sasizza reaches her arms up into the light, also looking up, sustaining the position and elongating up, to then suddenly drop her head and arms with a deep outbreath. This moment feels like a moment of pleading before giving up on any help and moving on alone. The voice and the body seem to go together, it is not clear who is leading. The dancer's body is

divided in many parts, each of them moving in different directions. She does not seem completely powerless, though, more like letting herself be taken by energy, but actively so (see Supplementary Materials/Petrichor/Scene 5.2.3).

The image in figure 23 below, indicates how the sense of pull develops in this sequence to achieve its maximum in the last image of the sequence: the lines of tension simplify in that last image, whereas the points of attention diversify, strengthening the sense of direction.

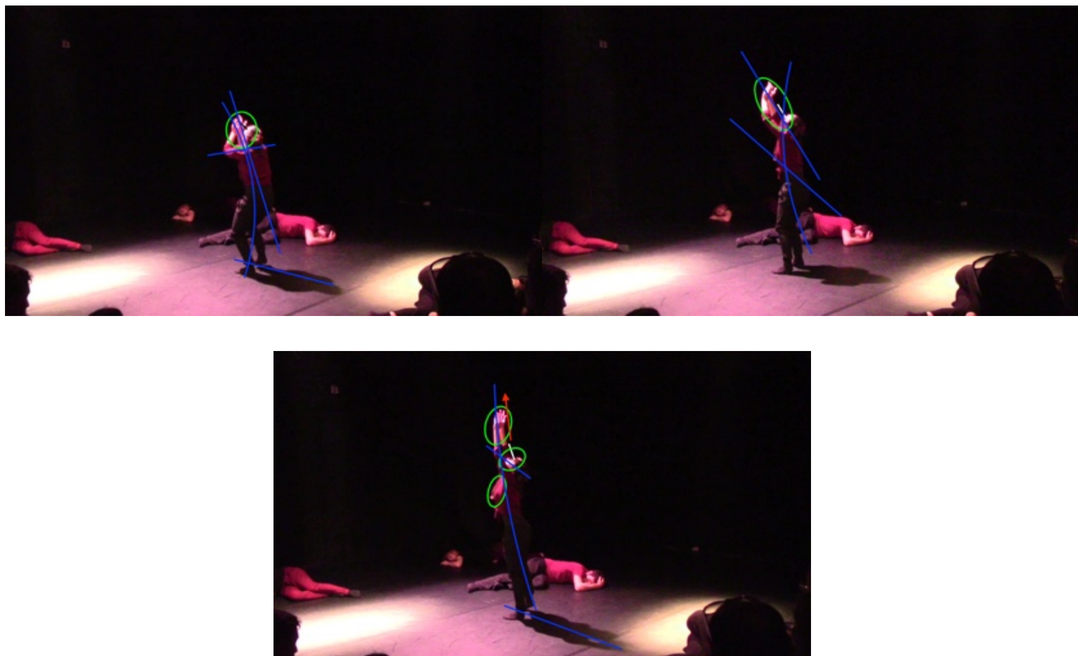

Figure 23 Images P-LP-065 to P-LP-067

The position of the shadow, and the dancer's body and shadow in conjunction, also intensify the directional pull. Finally, the relationship between the hands and the gaze stretches out throughout, from being very close together, to the gaze being on the cupped palm of the hands, to eventually having arms and gaze following the same direction. The sense of reach, of pleading, is evident through the spatial-rhythm. This pressing movement, in silence, and into the light, produces in me a sense of breathlessness, a tension that is resolved when the dancer comes out of the position.

Shortly after, the dancer performs a movement of head and arm in a punching effort which is also paired with an accent in the voice. At this point both the hand and the face pass through the spotlight that sits just above the dancer, giving the audience a slight flash of skin, only for a very short period of time. This effect, however, emphasises the speed of the movement, the sense of accent, and the power of the moment. It is also a clear moment of structural relationship between movement and music. The leg goes up to the intonation of the word "yo" and down to the second intonation—or elongation—of the "o" sound. Then the dancer goes down towards the back of the stage to the accentuated first syllable of "cante" and recovers in the second syllable. The coincidence of structures of voice and movement give more sense of intentional action to the movement of the dancer.

It is also interesting to note, and obvious in this example, that more of the movement qualities observed in this solo do not seem to be fully fledged forms of the formulaic efforts. I feel the need to qualifiers such as "soft pressing", "soft thrusting", "slow gliding", in my descriptions, which seem to indicate that the mixing between efforts is common, and that movement qualities cannot be separated clearly in analysis of live performance. Through the solo, it is also possible to observe that the movement qualities morph into each other with ease. Examples of gliding turning into thrusting (01:10), or thrusting back into gliding (01:17), or gliding into pressing quality (01:19), happen very often. As seen in the timing of these examples, the changes are very fast and very common in the solo, with these three changes occurring only in a sequence of 10 seconds. Whereas the sense of mixing between qualities might offer a coherence to the whole solo, a sense of continuity, these frequent fast changes maintain a variety of material and dynamics that keeps the spectator engaged, with one reviewer indicating that '[t]he energy of the audience was in unison with the dancers' (Reviewer 6, 2017).

During this scene the developing sense of pull and the pressing movement in silence develop a sense of longing and breathlessness. Other features of the moment, and in general of the solo, such as the dancer's passing through more brightly lit areas, the changes and mixing between movement qualities, and the coincidences of structures of movement and voice, also facilitate the emotional import of this moment: the pleading, the angst, the powerlessness, the defeat.

5.2.4 01:13 – 01:22 | Delicacy and surrender, ephemerality and power

*After a very sharp movement of the upper body to a back bend, accompanied also by a sharp outbreath, Sasizza performs small bounces of the upper body with the soft voice and into the light. This is a moment of delicacy and surrender that feels almost soothing. Sasizza suspends a coming in to a foetal position, while the voice repeats "*ay ay ay*" and softens. She then slides across the floor and into the light. Her vulnerability in the closed position is followed by a feeling of power tainted by ephemerality* (see Supplementary Materials/Petrichor/Scene 5.2.4).

The relationship of the rebounds to the music is clear to the viewer: each of the arch and rebound movements happens to the syllables of the words, and so does the preparation and turn immediately after. At the same time, each rebound brings the dancer's areas of bare skin, mainly the face, in and out of light. The subtlety of the movement, especially of the changes in position in hands and head, is made evident by this going in and out of light. The intensity of the light and its clarity—contrasted by the softness of the movement and the voice—has a beautiful soothing effect.

The analysis of complex rhythms seems to indicate how the spatial-rhythm and its many complex and changing instantiations affect the perception of the work,

generating a sense of instability, an unsettling sensation. The next still frame exemplifies contradictory perceptions in the spatial-rhythm of the *Petrichor* solo. The position of the dancer in figure 24, below, indicates two different directions in the projection, coinciding with the diagonal lines of tension.

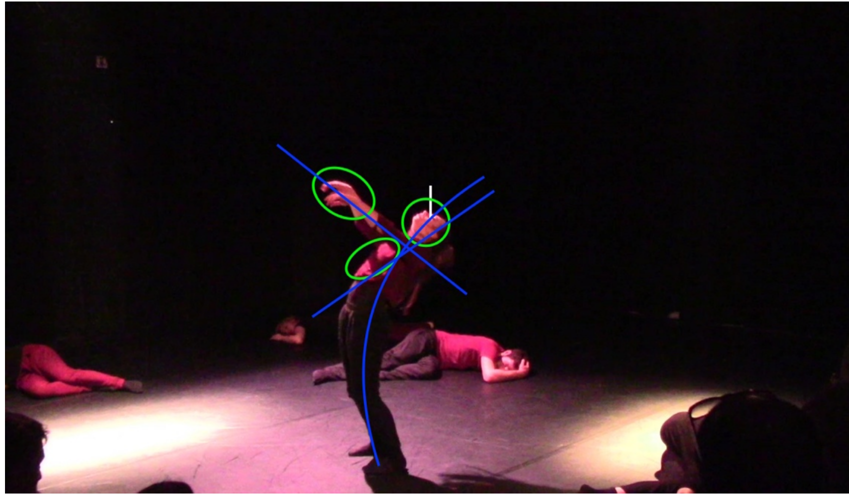

Figure 24 Image P-LP-075e

Although the direction of the gaze is clear, and it rests in the middle line between these lines of tension, it does not seem to promote spatial projection in its direction as usual, it is not powerful enough to produce this projection effect. Perhaps this is also due to the stability provided by the situation and weight of the points of attention—the one in the dancer's chest particularly seems to add a heaviness that stops the sense of projection. The struggle between the sense of motion and that of stability is very evident in this image. It is also unsettling, as if the dancer is trapped between forces.

In addition, the first arch of the back coincides with the word "lo", the rebound to the first syllable of the next word "bo-" and a softer rebound to the second syllable "-rre". There is a final accent that happens in the word "el" when the dancer is pulling up, and which is emphasised by the fact that these last two syllables are pronounced as joined, almost continuous. With the word "viento" Sasizza lowers her body to

crouching to take impulse and then turn, again using a pressing effort in the silence. The voice softens this sense of instability which contributes to an eerie overall effect.

At 01:18, the dancer turns reaching up and then goes down to the floor sliding on her side to finally close herself slowly into a foetal position. This happens to the voice singing “ay ay ay ay”: the turn to the first interjection, the slide and roll to the other three, and the closing in performed in a pressing effort beginning with the last but continuing through the silence, until she “kicks” her leg out with the moment when the voice begins to sing again. The gathering happens in a pressing effort and in the silence, and there is a moment of defeat, of overwhelming vulnerability for me: it builds up tension through the quality, the silence, and the dancer’s closed—helpless, sheltered—position. She then explodes out of this position when the voice restarts with a charged impulse.

As in previous case studies, simplification of spatial-rhythm also plays an important part in my perception of emotional import in this moment of the solo. Figure 25 below exemplifies a simplification of rhythm that in this case coincides with the change from gliding to pressing effort: from 4 to 2 points of attention, with the lines of tension becoming smaller and closer, and with the direction of gaze disappearing in the last image because of the dancer facing down. This simplification of rhythm and slowness of the quality gather and calm the energy of the performance. This calmer energy of the solos is also noticed by the reviewers: ‘solos are performed in a calm nature highlighting individual movement’ (Reviewer 3, 2017). Although, as demonstrated through the analysis, the energy changes significantly through the solo, not staying in a ‘calm nature’ throughout.

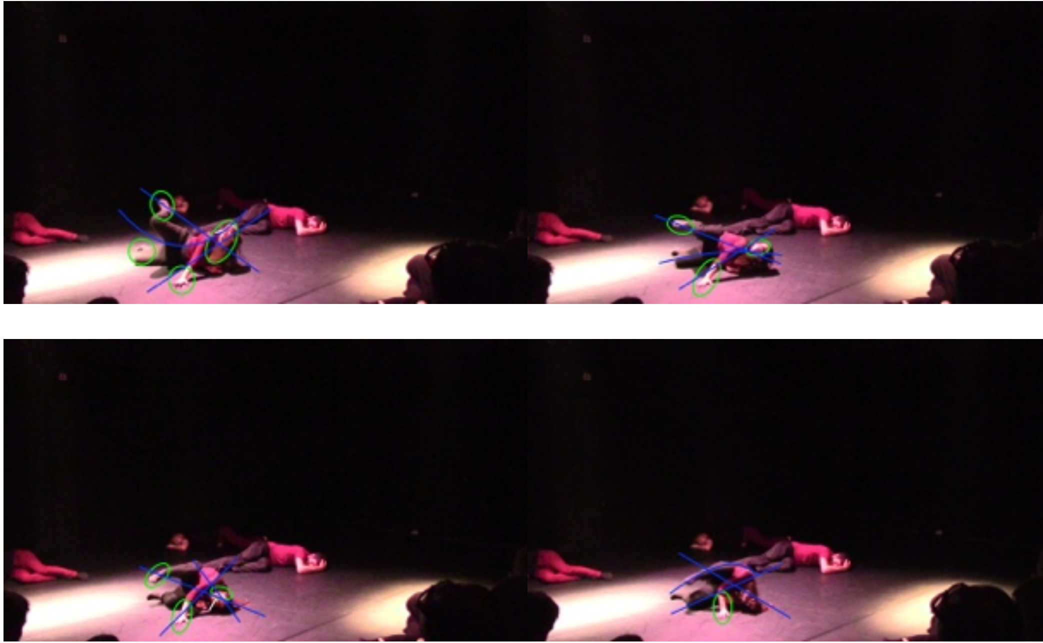

Figure 25 Images P-LP-082e to P-LP-085e. Top left to bottom right

In this scene, then, the relationship between voice and movement, together with the light, the spatial-rhythm which combines motion and stability, the gathering in of the dancer in silence and in a pressing effort, and the simplification of spatial-rhythm at this point produce a sense of unsettling atmosphere, a feeling of defeat, and despondency which breaks out when the dance pushes herself out of the closed position and into the slide.

5.2.5 01:53 | Second solo repetition - Breaking free

The solo repeats at the end of the piece, and starts with Sasizza suddenly coming out of the group. This happens immediately after a strong accent of the music and to a change of light. Everything is very sudden. The feelings are those of breaking free from somewhere, and of the power of the individual person (see Supplementary Materials/Petrichor/Scene 5.2.5).

The second repetition of the solo begins strongly when the dancer uses the moment when the other dancers lower to the floor to come out of the group and into the space. This big translocation coincides with a sudden change of lighting, both in colour and in light fixture—from white back lights to a combination of lavender top wash and warm spotlights. It also follows a very powerful accent of the music, marked by the percussion elements, and then restarting with voice and percussion together. There is a reinforcement of change and impulse in all the properties at this point of the choreography that makes it an intense and remarkable moment for me, and this is one of the moments that needs to be grasped very clearly by the dancers for the piece to have the effect I am looking for. In a way, like in the example discussed in section 4.2.2, of *Afterlight (Part One)*, this scene has a very predictable effect on me, but is still very thrilling. A sense of breaking out, freedom, and resistance is also transmitted through the changes in all the properties at this point.

5.2.6 01:57 and 02:14 A brief elevation | Big arch of the back

Turning into the light. Throughout these moments there is a very soft but fast use of body and the dancer seems to have fleeting moments of elevation, brief uplifting moments. The sudden stop in a big back bend has a feeling of surprise, of finality, emphasised by the music. The dancer then softly, but violently at the same time, lowers herself to the floor, almost like allowing herself to give up but only for a split second. She recovers with the soft voice and seems to explore her own body, her own strength, before raising speed in anticipation to the build-up of the music. She knows in what she is doing now, she appears wiser, content with her own fight (see Supplementary Materials/Petrichor/Scene 5.2.6).

At 01:57 Sasizza starts a fluid turn which for me is a significant moment of the choreography both because of its beautiful poignancy and because it is fleeting. The moment is very fast and includes an instant in which the light intensifies as it hits the dancer's face looking up, as well as a fan-like movement of the hair because of the quick whipping of the head. Interestingly, once again the hair seems to be an important part of the spatial-rhythm of the work, and of its effect on my experience. The hair seems to amplify particular moments of thrusting/punching movement especially. There are several other brief moments of going in and out of the light, accentuating once again the areas of bare skin and also at times the movement of the hair. The effect of the passing moments of illumination is quite intense from my perspective as spectator, almost as if different parts of the body and the movement are highlighted at each point, accentuating the division of the body characteristic of successive flow in this floating effort. This "passing illumination" effect offers a different sense of dynamism and makes the movement more interesting, also giving it an emphatic sense of ephemerality, of transience.

In the figure below a complex rhythm can be observed, with the clear direction of gaze, a line of tension created by the shadow, and the pull produced by all the elements in conjunction. This complexity has quite an exciting effect on me as viewer, with so many forces acting at once rendering the image very active.

Figure 26 Image P-LP-122e

It is in this final section when the successive-flow floating effort seems to come through clearly. Perhaps the acceleration of the movement material helps the dancer develop the bodily quality, perhaps there was more emphasis in its importance at this point—I do remember making a very clear point of the importance of this quality in the rehearsals of this "repetition" of the solo. Perhaps the speed allows me—in my position as spectator—to have a clearer sense of articulation, the movement then feels more disjointed, more multi-directional. Through all these possibilities, the perception is that this section of the solo is very loaded with successive-flow floating and punching efforts, and has very little sense of gliding—especially in comparison with the previous section—and almost no pressing effort. In fact, the mixing of qualities that was so evident and permeated the previous section exists in a different form in this one: fast successive floating and thrusting seem often to mix, and interplay between them appears very frequently. After the big movement towards an arched back, gliding and pressing effort seem to behave in a similar manner in the softer part. They interplay and mix, as will be seen below.

This section of the piece is quite homogeneous, both regarding movement material, and regarding speed and qualities. In this sense, faster versions of gliding and successive-flow floating are seen in this section of the solo: the emotional impact of

this newly-found speed is obvious, as there is an acceleration, a sense of build-up, an anxiety almost, up until the arched back. Some particular body parts—such as the punching effort with the elbows at several times during this section—or movements—such as the fast gliding turn in 01:57—accentuate this feeling of acceleration. A question arises here in terms of my position. I know what is coming, so the acceleration carries a sense of anticipation due to this knowledge—and a certain sense of anxiety, wondering whether the dancer will manage to get the accent right. It is not possible for me to know whether the acceleration occurs in the experience of spectators who do not know this, although it seems plausible due to the build-up of the music and the movement. Nonetheless, if there is no sense of anticipation the effect of surprise will be greater with the sudden stop in the back arch. This arguably compensates for the lack of anticipation, making the moment still strongly emotional, albeit in another manner. It is interesting to note, however, that anticipation is brought up often in the reviews of *Petrichor*.

The big arch at 2:14 is a very sudden break of continuity, which is an intense emotional moment for me as choreographer/audience, with a clear sense of surprise. Three elements—light, pull, and shadow—seem to interact clearly. The light intensifies as the dancer lowers her back and head, as it hits her more directly, also illuminating more bare skin surface in the face and neck. The shadow becomes smaller as the dancer lowers her body, concentrating more power in a smaller area and helping redirect the pull downwards. The interaction between these elements of light, pull, and shadow is key to this moment, concentrating and heightening the emotional import of the sequence, producing a haunting effect.

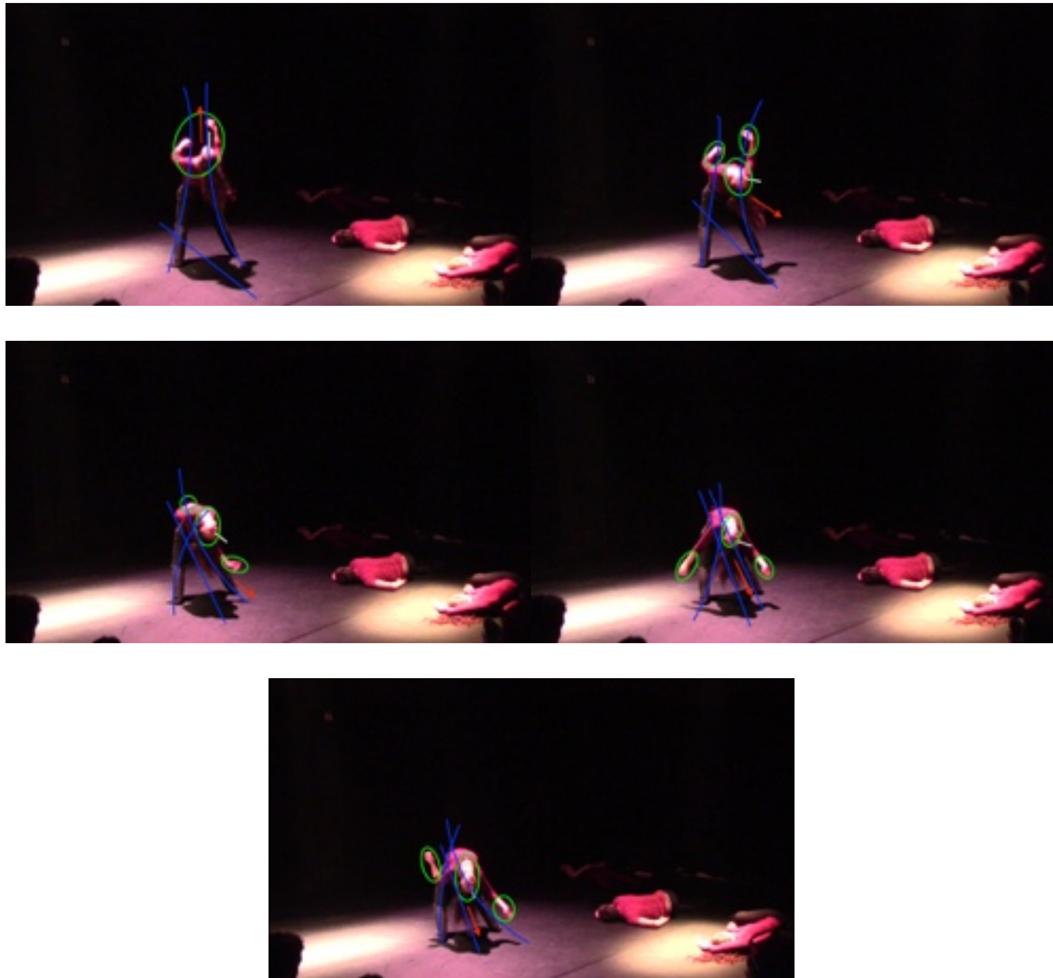

Figure 27 Image P-LP-136e to P-LP-140e. Top to bottom, left to right.

The movement quality varies between pressing and gliding, with a soft rebound and slight accents in the “falling” limbs. The combination of all these factors in a few seconds creates a devastating moment, also aided by the fact that it contrasts the very fast material that was seen immediately before. There is a sense of respite, a moment of rest and breathing for me as audience, that is at the same time made very poignant by the position of vulnerability of the dancer: literally falling to the floor. The dancer seems to let her body “break down” piece by piece, until she reaches the floor. Similarly to previous case studies, the body here is used in dissociation, with a body part moving in a separate quality from the rest of the body. Through the solo, this happens with the head—which moves separately in thrusting and pressing; or the arms—which move separately in a punching effort.

Also just before the back bend, there is an example of how sometimes the complex rhythms seem to produce effects that give the illusion of being physically contrary to what is happening in the moment. As an example, in the still frame in figure 28 below, the number of lines of tension and their direction seem to indicate a projection diagonally upwards towards the right. The dancer is slightly elevated from the floor, almost weightless.

Figure 28 Image P-LP-135e

The pull is, contrary to these ideas, downwards—perhaps encouraged by the dancer's gaze—and it affects the image giving it a strong sense of weight. This heaviness influences my perception of this image significantly, giving it an emotional weight that is important for this moment: just before the big arched back that resolves to a sense of climax in this section of the solo. After this moment, the last part of the solo is heavily marked by continuous changes of pull, as can be observed in the sequence below, made of images that follow each other quite closely—although they are non-consecutive.

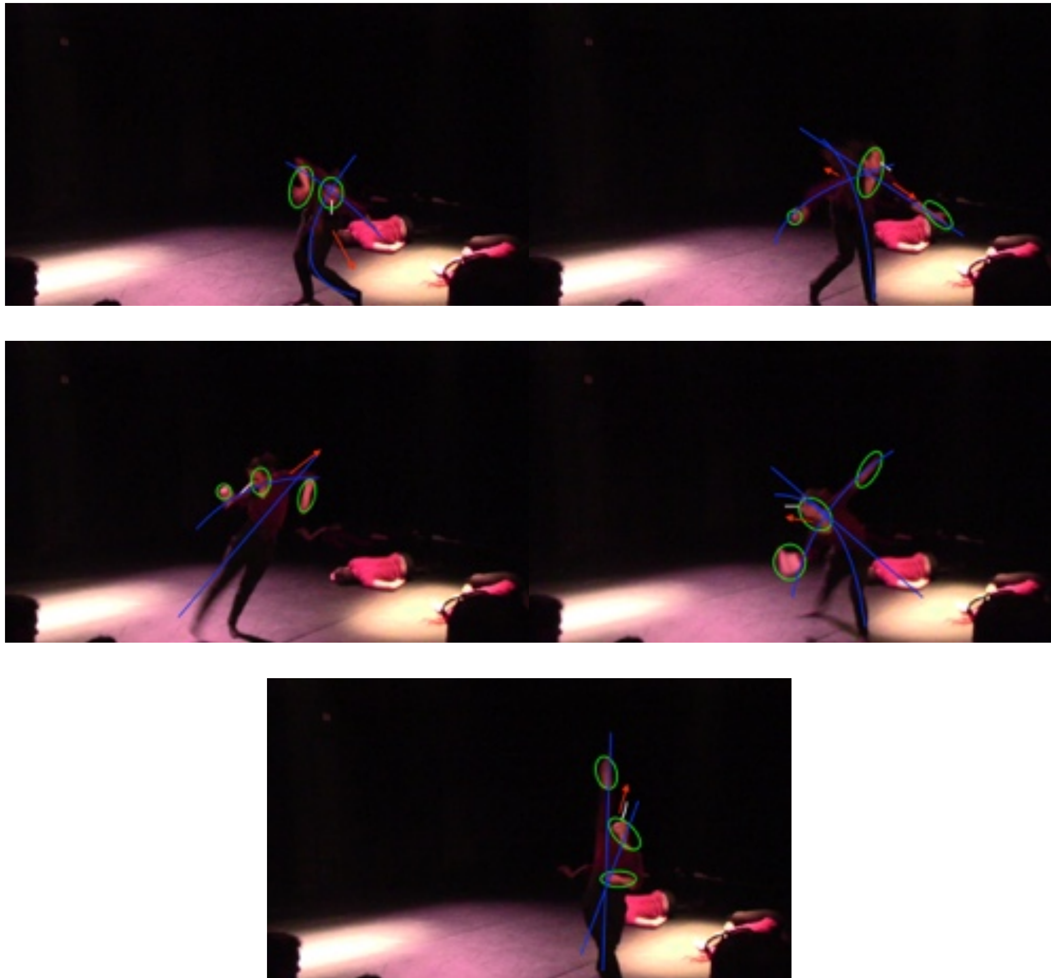

Figure 29 Images P-LP-155e, P-LP-157e, P-LP-158e, P-LP-159e, P-LP-161e, P-LP-164e. Top to bottom, left to right

The five images are evidence of five different directions of pull, occurring in a short span of time. Continuous changes of pull contribute to the unsettling feeling of the performance, to the illusion of the dancer being pulled in different directions by various forces, and they also keep me engaged through a constantly changing movement structure.

5.2.7 Final moment

The dancer punches up in the air at the same time as the percussion re-starts, in a clear moment of defiance. She turns and is then moved back and lifted by the other dancers. Once up, her face and one free arm are illuminated, soft-looking. In the final beat of the music, her head and arm relax and fall, while the light goes off suddenly.

There is a mix of power and weakness in the scene that does not resolve, and leaves me active and attentive (see Supplementary Materials/Petrichor/Scene 5.2.7).

The final scene of the piece is marked by the dancer reaching up a fist, then switching to the other, to then turn and lean forward before being lifted into the air. This arm movement is strongly emphasised by the drums restarting at the same time, and the more powerful moment of the voice. The force of all these elements together is evident at this point. Continuous changes of pull also contribute to the feeling of power that is achieved in the final moments of the solo, as evidenced by the image below of the arm reaching up.

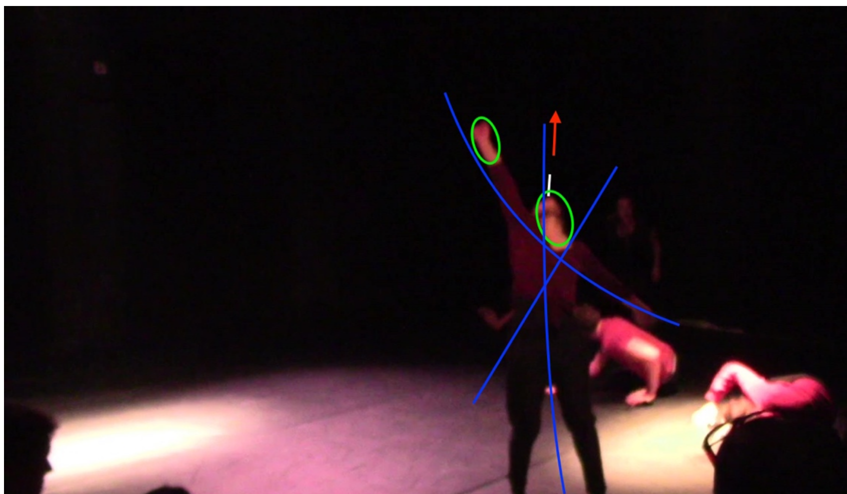

Figure 30 Image P-LP-164e

The accents in the arm and leg in these last moments also produce a sense of anticipation, as they accelerate the build-up and indicate that something more is about to happen. Further to this, the in-breath of the singer at this point contributes to the feeling of anticipation.

The lift, although not strictly part of the solo, is the culmination of both solo sections and, in its second repetition, the end of the work in its totality. The lift itself happens before the end of the music, with the dancer still reaching forward when she

is up in the arms of the other performers. She then liberates the energy, dropping her head and right arm with the final beat of the music, and at the same time as the lights go off. The energy is up and the audience is engaged and suddenly let go, which would explain some of the reviews saying that their energy was up ‘to the ceiling’ (Reviewer 6, 2017) and they wanted to see more. Regarding this final lift, reviewers also call it ‘abrupt’ and understood it as the climax of the acceleration of the piece (Reviewer 7, 2017); or identify it with representation of ‘freedom that you could associate with being freed from the shackles of society’ (Reviewer 3, 2017), once again reclaiming the social resonance of the work.

5.3 Chapter insights

This short solo and its faster repetition are flowing elaborate sequences which seem to present the dancer’s body as disjointed but powerful. The relationship with the voice is significant, as is the spacing used both in terms of the light and of the position of the other dancers. The continuous and rapid changes between qualities, as well as the mixing and in-between states of some qualities contribute to a sense of constant transformation and rupture of expectations that seems to maintain the engagement of the audience. The same is true of the use of space, especially kinespheric space in terms of the spatial-rhythm of the dancer’s positions. These effects are due, as I argued through this chapter, to its perceptual features. Those features which were highlighted as creating the emotional import of the work are the use of gliding, pressing, and thrusting efforts; the lighting and its intensity mainly in relation to the bare areas of the dancer’s body; the shadows present in the spatial-rhythm; the use of the body as disjointed; the movement of the dancer’s hair; the sense of counter-tension in the kinespheric space; and the changing relationship between the voice in the song—and then the percussive sound—and the movement.

Feelings of delicacy, despondency, resistance, melancholy pervade the solo, giving it the power to unsettle its audience. The full piece is identified throughout the reviews with feelings of revolution, protest, support in each other, 'being involved in a fight' (Reviewer 6, 2017). In fact, a reviewer goes further to say that 'the whole choreography could be summarized with a direct concept and quote; "unity is strength"' (Reviewer 6, 2017). Some of these overall emotions can also be linked with the solo. Through the use of changes, the disjointed use of the body, and the musicality, the solo presents also an image of struggle, of revolt. Images of protest, individuality, strength can be perceived, although the dancer breaks out of the group—or perhaps because of it, and because of the manner in which it is done—but the sense of group support and community is also present.

A sense of poignancy is achieved in the first few moments of the solo through the fast changes of movement qualities, the direction of the gaze of the dancer, the use of lines of tension, the particular relationship between the movement and the light, and the relationship also to the voice in the song. Instability and urgency are conveyed in these first moments of the solo (5.2.1 and 5.2.2). As previously discussed, the search for successive-flow floating and the combination of gliding/pressing and thrusting efforts in the performance of movement produces very complex spatial-rhythms. This also contributes to my engagement as spectator. One of my worries as a choreographer was that these complex rhythms could potentially also be overwhelming for the audience, but it does not seem to be the case at this point, judging by the reviewers' responses, such as Reviewer 8's 'exhilarating and excitingly powerful' (2017) characterisation of the work. In relation to this, I guided this particular solo towards the effort of successive flow in a floating effort—and rehearsed the dancer accordingly, however I do not perceive this quality so clearly in the analysis. It is possible that somewhere in the creative process the aim changed, although not fully

consciously as I continued to instruct Sasizza towards this quality. The second possibility, and I think a more likely one, is that a combination of qualities achieves the same effect as successive-flow floating in this particular example. Continuous alternating of gliding and punching efforts would be the combination that achieves the sense of division in the body and multidirectional movement that is defining of this successive-flow floating (for example as seen in 5.2.2). This is interesting also because it indicates the usefulness of my three-fold relationship with the work, where I searched for something as choreographer, I found the effect as first audience, but I could only understand what happened in my position as analyst.

Further to this, counter-tension is very present in the use of the body but also has a very particular nature in this case study. Although through the study of the still frames it is obvious that counter-tensions are present, as the lines of tension and positions of the body indicate this, the impression of counter-tension in watching the video is not so strong. The aim towards successive-flow floating—and final combination of gliding/pressing efforts with thrusting and punching—implies that the body is forced into positions full of opposing forces. However, the gliding effort and speed of the movement allows for perception of a much more organic sense of movement. Possibly, although there is counter-tension, it is much more understated than in other cases because it is embedded in the nature of the qualities, and combination of qualities, present. Its effects on the viewer, then, are also lessened, giving more a sense of delicacy and vulnerability than of struggle. Remarkably, from the beginning of the solo part of the effect of certain faster movements is attributable to the movement of the dancer's hair, within the spatial-rhythm but also as potentiating the movement qualities. Turns, fast slides across the space, or jumps, imply that Sasizza's long hair "flies" behind or around her, sometimes obscuring her face, sometimes framing it. This effect contributes to the perception and elongation of

movement, and that this is something that was not encountered in the previous case studies. This effect of hair is one more indication that it is not possible to separate movement qualities and spatial-rhythm in experience, as it is an element which seems to affect both perceptual properties in my experience.

The idea of vulnerability, especially, is highlighted in moments of interaction with the light, when the dancer passes or moves an area of bare skin through an intense spotlight (such as in 5.2.3). This aligns with the proposal that the light indeed creates space and spatial-rhythm, and that it affects my experience of the work in great measure even when it is stable or simple in its design. The light is indeed very important in this solo, although it is not because of changes in the design, but because of the dancer moving through the different spotlights. The intensity of the light when the dancer passes through or moves a part of her body through, contrasts with the softness of the movements themselves and the delicate voice. This combination of elements has a soothing effect on me as spectator, providing also those moments of calm referred to by the reviewers (Reviewer 7, 2017). In this scene, 5.2.3, it is also possible to observe that the relationship between the voice and the movement often affects my perception of intentionality in the dancer, with coinciding accents or softness giving more agency to the dancer, while contrasting structures of voice and movement seem to give the dancer's actions more of a passive quality.

Perhaps a more relevant observation is that the spatial analysis of the work reveals several contradictions. In the analysis of some still frames, points of attention act as movement deterrent points, in that they counteract the projection possibilities of the lines of tension or the dancer's focal point. Other frames are found to have clear sensations of movement even in the stillness of the captures. Some frames have double effects of stability and pull. All these examples (discussed in 5.2.4) seem to be

responding again to a theme of opposing forces and tension between power and vulnerability.

Very obvious in the change from the group into the second repetition of the solo is the strengthening effect that all the properties have when working in the same direction. In this moment (described in 5.2.5), the dancer breaks away from the group covering a big area of the stage, the lights change quite drastically, both fixture and colour, and the music has a strong beat followed by a silence. The feeling of the dancer breaking free, although not necessarily in a positive way, is evident for me and strengthened by these sudden coinciding changes in all the properties. Another important observation in this second repetition of the solo is the power that the shadow has with respect to the spatial-rhythm of the work. Although the lighting is quite simple in this particular performance, the position of the dancer with respect to the light affects the shadow on the floor, and this in turn affects the overall spatial-rhythm. In some cases, this translates into concentrating the space around the dancer, highlighting the space around her. In other occasions the shadow expands from the dancer and away into the space, facilitating effects of projection or even pull. The idea of vulnerability, especially, is highlighted in moments of interaction with the light, when the dancer passes or moves an area of bare skin—or her hair flickers—through an intense spotlight (as discussed in 5.2.6). The sensation of power was explored in relationship to the shadows projected by the dancer on the floor, also in moments when entering the light. The contrast of light and shadow is again relevant, and interestingly corresponds with the vulnerability/power contrast.

One important change in the last section is that the acceleration seems to make successive floating more present, even when the movement material is the same as, or very similar to, the previous section (5.2.6). This section is more clearly based on articulated movement and this element, together with the speed and the music, imply

a stronger build-up in my perception of the emotional tone of the piece. This might also be aided by the observed continuous changes in the direction of the pulls within the spatial-rhythm. Also in this final section, the voice is joined by percussive music. Although this was present throughout the rest of the piece, it was not there in the first part of the solo. The relationship between the music and the movement becomes then double: movement and music as well as movement and voice. Reviewers notice this and relate how the power of the music leads the piece but does not overpower the dancer (Reviewer 1, 2017). It is clear both that the music and the movement are intrinsically related and interact throughout the work, and that a strong part of the power of the piece resides in this interaction. Reviewers speak about how '[i]t seemed almost as though the movement of the dancers were [sic] creating the beats, rather than the beats guiding the movement of the dancers' (Reviewer 2, 2017). I also discussed one of the final moments of the piece, in which after the acceleration and anticipation provoked by the contrast between the dancer's crescendo in her successive-flow floating and the softness of the voice, the arm up coincides with the drums restarting (5.2.7). This is a particularly powerful moment that perhaps exemplifies that sense in which the movement and the music are so intricately related in the spectator's perception that they seem to "create" each other.

In terms of its structure, the solo seems to maintain quite a stable sense of dynamic progression of the choreography during the first repetition, only slightly fluctuating throughout. This fluctuation can also be identified as moments of vulnerability/weakness or power/fight in my experience as spectator. The second repetition, however, is quite clearly an acceleration that then suddenly stops—in the back bend—to rebuild speed slowly and finish on an *accelerando*. In this second repetition the emotion is more acute, from a disjointed fight to a complete surrender,

slowly building towards the end which is not clearly defined due to the energy going up (Reviewer 6, 2017) but with the dancer surrendering in the lift.

Although the individual composite properties—movement qualities, spatial-rhythm, and sound-movement relationships—appear to create some intermediate impressions which contribute to the overall emotional import of the work, the impact of the solo as encountered both in my own experience and by informed spectators is most clearly dependent on the interaction between properties in all three case studies. The effect of a divided body moving through the joints, combined with the multiple senses of direction, creates complex spatial-rhythms that are observable in the still-frames. There appears a sense of opposition between pull and projection, where they do not necessarily follow the same directions. The body seems to be pulled by many forces at the same time, both in the use of qualities and in the resulting spatial-rhythm. In conjunction, these uses of the body and spatial-rhythms have a potentially unsettling effect for the observer: there is very little respite for the dancer, who seems to be pulled continuously in different directions, and whose body is moving as if by a force not completely under her control—this is something that the dancer herself reported feeling in the moments of most successful performance. Through these series of contrasts and constant changes, I argue, the audience stays engaged and excited about the work. It is interesting to note Reviewer 6's comment, then, that she felt like she was 'being attacked and at the same time [she] wanted to attack' (2017).

Finally, this case seems to propose an interesting problem in terms of the discussion of narrative and representation in relation to emotional import, conceived as not fully dependent on these. Reviewers seem to agree on the general theme of social revolution, and also associate this with some of the perceptual properties of the work. It is important to note, however, that they had already been given information that can support this representational view in the programme notes. There is no clear

sense of a linear story though, and the images that do emerge—attacking, being attacked, revolution, freedom, protest, unity—leave a sense of general theme but no specific story. The imagery, however, is loaded with representational content: the fist-forming arm movements, the lift at the end of the solo, even the colour of the costumes seem to me easily associated with some sort of social unrest. Reviewer 7, however, argued that the costume choice in fact abstracts from the atmosphere of the piece (2017), and although it is difficult to fathom exactly what the writer meant, it is likely to signify the costumes as taking away clear reference to a particular period or event.

These are only some of the insights, but they exemplify the work that this project does through showing in detail what is happening at the level of perceptual properties and how this relates to the spectator's experience of emotional import. Reviewer 4 seems to agree in her description of the work's progression:

> As the piece goes on the dynamics strengthen, the themes are magnified and the command and dominancy of the group resonates through the walls. With the groups passion, acceleration and resilience I was left wanting to see so much more once the 15 minutes had ended (2017).

Finally, this particular analysis has allowed me to discuss a dual experience as spectator who is also choreographer of the work. These distinct experiences were useful to understand my own creative process and its results—for example in relation to the successive-flow floating effect achieved through a combination of qualities (p. 199). But more importantly, this case study allowed me to compare these experiences and link them, as I found them to be more similar than perhaps expected. I expand on these ideas in section 6.7.

Chapter 6. Experiencing Emotional Import

This thesis investigated my spectatorial experience of emotion in three works of twenty-first century Euro-American contemporary theatre dance. Through both the philosophical enquiry and the insights based upon the analysis of three case studies, the project traced correlations between this emotional experience and perceptual properties of the work. This relationship is further underpinned by understandings of enactive perception, which recognise the spectator's activity and agency in perception—as opposed to a passive receiving of information—and hence allow the individuality and the background of each spectator to be part of the perceptual process, integrating them into the experience. Further to this, an embodied understanding of cognition allows me to posit an experience that is neither solely bodily, nor purely intellectual. This understanding is much more fitting for the experience of emotional import in dance, and for the understanding of dance in general, allowing a break from a Cartesian dualism of experience. This perceptual process ultimately results in a set of emotional effects that I denote as the experience of 'emotional import'. The approach I followed was to explore the emotional effects I perceive in three examples of contemporary theatre dance, as spectator but from the point of view of a choreographer/dancer. This was also set in comparison to a series of informed spectators: reviewers. I then analysed the perceptual properties in which these effects are grounded, or, at least, with which they correlate. I propose that the emotional import of these works emerges from the particular impressions perceived by the

spectators, which in turn emerge from their correlating perpetual properties—composite properties or interactions between them.

Through these analyses, and the study of the reviews, I identified movement qualities, spatial-rhythm, and sound-movement relationships as relevant to my spectatorial experience of emotion in relation to the works considered. More specifically, I refer to the interactions between—the combinations of—these properties as the key to my experienced emotional import of these contemporary dance works. Although I did not engage with the effect of particular performances, shaped through the dancer's personal styles, I acknowledged its undoubted effect throughout, and discuss it further in section 6.4 below. This chapter discusses the insights emerging from the analysis of the case studies in relation to the major themes explored by the project. These include the understanding of emotional import, the conceptualisation of the spectator's experience through notions of enactive perception and embodied cognition, the choreographer's experience and agency, and the dancer's contribution. The chapter also discusses uses and further developments of the analysis methods as well as the particular viewpoint that this project adopted. In order to introduce these themes, I briefly refer to the experiences of the three case studies, and to poignancy as a summarising example of a pervasive emotional import.

6.1 Experiencing and analysing the three works

Through this thesis I analysed my different experiences of three works of Euro-American contemporary theatre dance. My contact with Maliphant's *AfterLight (Part One)* took the form of several live experiences as well as many instances of watching the official video-release. Through these experiences, as explained in Chapter 3, I found myself getting a general feeling of melancholy, as well as more particular moments of perceiving vulnerability, fragility, resistance, poignancy, nostalgia,

struggle. Of course each viewing would be slightly different depending on its context, and the intensity of the first viewing was not exactly matched ever again. However, these emotions are common to all my viewing experiences—even on video and after the many repeated viewings necessary for study. The analysis in Chapter 3 indicated correlations between these emotional imports as I experienced them—and sometimes also as experienced by the reviewers—and the perceptual properties of the work. Those features found to be correlating were: in terms of movement qualities, the use of pressing, gliding, and punching/thrusting efforts, together with a floating effort in successive flow; the opening and closing positions, changing and opposing directions, sense of projection and pull, and the use of balance and tension in the spatial-rhythm; and the parallelism, blurred synchronisation, consonant phrasing, or syncopation between movement and music.

My experience of emotion in *Afterlight (Part One)* was also constituted by the perception of gestural movements which carry conventional meanings or associations, such as gestures reaching up, signifying longing. Facial expressions also had communicative meaning in my experience. As argued, these gestures and facial expressions are also perceptual, hence considered within the perceptual properties. From these individual features: movement qualities, spatial-rhythm, sound-movement relationships, symbolic gestures, and facial expressions it is possible to gather emotional impressions, but the emotional import of the work emerges from the interactions between these properties to create the melancholy, vulnerability, poignancy, and the ‘contentment of solitude’ (Brown, 2009) that are experienced.

When I experienced Pite’s *Dark Matters*, my second case study, through a video recording of one performance in contrast with the previous example, my experience was still one of strong emotional charge. Poignancy was the main emotional import of the solo I chose to focus on for my analysis, but it was tinted with

perception of vulnerability, of power, of struggle, of despair, of existential doubt. These emotions were often equally brought up in the reviews I studied. In Chapter 4, I illustrated through my analysis how this emotional import correlates with the perceptual properties of the work, and how it is possible to relate my experience of emotion to these properties and their interactions. Those features found relevant during the analysis were: the qualities of gliding, pressing, thrusting, punching, dabbing, and floating in the movement, as well as the mix between these efforts; the complex spatial-rhythms, produced through tension, opposition, projection, and pull; and the relationship between the rhythm of the voice and the movement. A sense of shared rhythm was found to develop through the solo, in which the different properties, as studied, do not often align with each other in energy, but instead create the sense of struggle and poignancy through their oppositions. An interplay between impressions of power and vulnerability appeared, linking to the thematic of contrast, tension, and opposition, from the changes between—and sometimes the concurrence of—images of stability and instability.

The work which was studied in the final chapter, *Petrichor*, reflected on a different type of experience, in that I was in this case not only audience or analyst but also choreographer of the work. My position in this case study, then, is that of an insider: but I still experience and analyse the work as a viewer, even though I am its choreographer. This offers me a new perspective and challenges my framework for this study, as my position is markedly different from an outsider spectator, but still spectatorial, as will be discussed below. When watching *Petrichor* I perceive delicacy, despair, struggle, melancholy, fragility, but, overall, I feel a strong sense of poignancy. My analysis in Chapter 5 illustrated my experience of emotional import again through its correlation to the work's perceptual properties. Features which were highlighted as giving rise to my perceived emotional import of the work were: the use of gliding,

pressing, and thrusting efforts; the lighting, mainly in relation to the dancer's skin; the shadows present in the spatial-rhythm; the disjointed body movements; and the overall sense of contradiction and counter-tension present through—and between—the different properties.

6.2 Poignancy as a summarising example

As seen in these brief descriptions of each case study, poignancy appears to be a pervasive emotional import in my experiences of the three works, even within the differences in nuance existing between them. I do not seem to be alone on this:

> There's a new spirit abroad in choreography. It offers us beauty and exhilaration, but with the old aesthetics stripped away. It looks for truth, no matter how unconsoling, and its subject is the transfixing poignancy of the human condition. ... And nowhere are these themes more subtly and beautifully explored than in the dance works of Crystal Pite… (Jennings, 2013).

The 'new spirit' that Jennings talks about, the 'unconsoling truth', seems to surface also as my general emotional import of all three case studies. The elements analysed in this project can account for the emergence of poignancy in my experience in the following ways:

a) The overall energetic structure of the works through the shared rhythm of their perceptual properties: *AfterLight*'s acceleration/expansion and final caging of the dancer; *Dark Matters*'s overall deceleration, spiked with moments of struggle and power; *Petrichor*'s slow acceleration and stop, then more pronounced acceleration and final stop;

b) The contrasting properties which create tension, as well as the patterns of changes within properties; and the conflict between power and vulnerability;

c) The coherence and balance, on occasion, which create a feeling of calm and melancholy; and

d) The occasional facial expression, expressive gesture, or symbolic element which contribute to the overall atmosphere of meaning of the works.

I have found that all these elements create my experience of emotional import, that can be characterised as poignancy overall, but also includes other emotional tones throughout the case studies: in *Afterlight (Part One)* melancholy, dreaminess, sadness, loneliness; in *Dark Matters* suffering, power, vulnerability, struggle; in *Petrichor* melancholy, delicacy, despair, resistance. This particular emotional import can also be used to exemplify the insights emerging through the analysis. With regard to point a, it is evident that structure and rhythm differ in the three case studies. In this sense, it is possible to explain that they produce the same overall emotional import through an understanding of emotional import as emergent from—and not entailed by—combinations of perceptual properties. That is, different combinations can produce the same effect, but, equally, minute variations in properties can easily change emotional impressions. Point b of these elements contributing to poignancy can be understood as an example of properties embodied in the work which emerge as emotional impressions: contrast in the properties derives in tension in the perceived emotional import. In turn, this aligns with the conceptualisation of the experience of emotional import as embodied cognition: the sensorimotor structures giving rise to the embodied concept.

Point c responds to a similar explanation, but in this case relates even more directly to virtuality in perception, with balance emerging from asymmetrical physical properties. The enacted embodied understanding of the experience of emotional import in the works would account for the integrated processing of the information that I refer to in point d. Furthermore, poignancy responds

paradigmatically to the characterisation of emotional import I have proposed in Chapter 1. Emotional import is perceptual, that is, the result of the spectator's experience of dance; it cannot be aligned completely with either emotion or mood—as cannot, seemingly, poignancy—and it includes the spectator's background and the work's context. I understand emotional import defined in this way to be a fruitful and coherent conceptualisation of my experience of emotion in these works of contemporary theatre dance, the elements of which conceptualisation I now proceed to discuss.

6.3 Perception of emotional import

Through my conceptualisation of emotion in Chapter 1, I argued that general understandings of emotion or of mood were not appropriate for the spectator's experience of emotion as encountered in works of contemporary theatre dance. Reasons for this related to the lack of behavioural, conative, and evaluative elements of the emotion—including a sense of disinterest from the spectator; and also a lack of object towards which the emotion is directed. In the case of mood, the direction from the self to the world, or its understanding as a predisposition for an emotional state (1.1.2) also complicated its application to dance experience. Moreover, I discussed the complexity of the relationship between emotions and art, mainly in terms of the paradox of fiction—the difficulty of understanding the reaction to a work of art as a genuine emotion. I talked also about the importance of understanding emotional import as relational: through the spectators' perception, but including in these elements of their personal background, the work, and the agents and context of the work. I now explore this conceptualisation through the results of the analysis, in order to support this particular vision of emotional import in the experience of the spectator.

The behavioural and conative elements of emotion, based on Carroll's definition as explored in section 1.2.1, are perhaps the most easily dismissed in relation to the spectator's experience of emotion in the three works of contemporary theatre dance used as case studies. When watching either of the three case studies and experiencing the sense of struggle I do not feel the sudden urge to help the dancer/character overcome their difficulties—and seemingly neither do the reviewers. Across all three dance works I did not even perceive a clear character or a clear difficulty in this sense, as I will argue below in relation to the object of emotion. I might feel a renewed revolutionary impulse or existential mission, however this is *a posteriori* and in association with my experience—or as a reflexion on it—rather than directly part of it. When I watch *Afterlight (Part One)*, I do not feel lonely in my own life, same as I do not personally feel the suffering in Spivey's movement in *Dark Matters*—or what I could imagine to be Spivey's own suffering—as to do with a particular situation in my life. In *Petrichor*, I do not feel revolutionary or vulnerable because of events going on in my own life. This is not to say that I would never associate elements of my own life with those perceived in a work of dance, rather that the emotional impact I experience as a result of watching a work of dance does not have to be directly related with an evaluation of my personal situation.

The conative and behavioural elements in this kind of experience of emotion, then, seem to be associative and delayed. Associative because they are not produced by the immediate emotional import as experienced, but by the relationship that I understand exists between the emotional impact as experienced and some particular situation or aspect of the—or my—world outside the theatre. Perhaps a spectator watching *Petrichor*, feels the revolutionary, empowering emotional impact, and associates it with a personal or social issue, giving then this particular meaning to the performance *a posteriori*—my particular experience of *Petrichor* is of course different

to that of a general spectator here. It is in this sense in which I refer to the conative and behavioural elements as delayed: they seem to appear after the experience itself, even after the performance, once it is associated with something external to it, but not directly a result of the work of dance. This could also be associated with the idea of disinterest as explored in section 1.3.1.1, where there is an affective suspended gap between the spectator and the work.

Of course it is important to keep in mind that (1) these associative/delayed elements do not necessarily happen for every spectator or in every performance; and that (2) these divisions within the experience—between the experience of watching and the delayed associative processes—are more analytic than phenomenological, i.e. they are not experienced as separate, but can be divided here for their study. Further to this, there might be an aspect of empathy or sympathy towards what is happening on stage, but this is neither necessary, nor part of my experience of emotional impact: it is not my perception of emotion in itself, but my reaction to what is perceived, similarly to the delayed associative elements that I spoke of above. As I have argued in Chapter 1, this also relates to the understanding of aesthetic experience as one of disinterest, meaning that my personal needs and interests are temporarily suspended in the experience of art. That is, although they might be associated with it, I do not consciously bring my personal issues into the experience of watching the work: my personal needs do not seem to be part of the experience, but are only later associated with it.

As I pointed out above, my perception of suffering in *Dark Matters*, of delicacy or despair in *Petrichor*, or of sadness in *Afterlight (Part One)* do not have a clear object. I am not sad because of something that happened to me, not even because of something that happened to Proietto or to Maliphant. In this particular case it is possible to argue that I feel for Nijinsky, however, as I discussed, I was not fully aware

of the relationship between the solo and Nijinsky's history in my first viewing and I still experienced a type of sadness. And even being aware of the possible narrative, I have demonstrated through the analysis of the case studies that there are aspects beyond this which affect the emotional import I experienced, that is, that the fact that the piece is based on Nijinsky's life is not enough to explain my impressions of emotion, i.e. my experience of emotional import. My sadness, then, is an aimless sadness, more an outcome of a pervading atmosphere of the work than an object-directed emotion. It is in some ways closer to a mood, but when these works of contemporary theatre dance carry emotional import, it is not (or not merely) creating mood. As discussed in section 1.2.1, scholars understand mood as pervading perception, that is, directed from the self to the world, however the direction from self to world cannot explain on its own my experience of emotion in these works.

Even so, I do argue that the experience of emotion is relational—hence that something indeed follows that direction: from the spectator to the work. That is, although the characterisation of mood arguably could make it more appropriate to explain my experience of a work of dance—for example, in the case of the pervading poignancy that Jennings talks about (2013), as discussed in section 6.2—the particular emotional impact of a work, as illustrated by my experience, does not seem only to predispose me towards an emotional state. This does not preclude that some works might, in fact, put the spectator in a particular mood, or change someone's mood from how they enter the performance to the moment the work ends. However this seems to be more a consequence of their emotional import, rather than constitute their only emotional work. As explained, *Petrichor* tends to have an exciting, empowering effect on the audience, however its emotional import does not consist solely in excitement or empowerment. And whereas I had a general melancholy after watching *Afterlight (Part One)*, there was much more than that to my experience.

It is here that I reiterate the complexity of the relationship between emotion and art—particularly dance in this case—and the need to reflect on this to suggest a useful way of understanding it. As proposed in the conceptual framework (section 1.2), and supported by the analysis of case studies, emotional import as experienced by the spectator—emotion as perceived by the spectator in a dance work—does not respond fully to characterisations of emotion or of mood, having very particular characteristics of its own. After the analysis carried out, a question in this sense continues to be whether or not what the spectator experiences in response to a work of art can be considered a 'genuine emotion' (Carroll, 1990: 59). Carroll refers to thought processes to solve this issue—through which the spectator is able to hypothesise a proposition rather than fully believe it to be true. And Levinson refers to 'pre-existing emotional valences towards general features of the world' (Levinson, 1990: 79), on which the work supports itself to allow the spectator to get an emotional experience. Both of these aspects, however, do not account directly for the correlation between perceptual properties and my experience of emotion found through this project, as they imply make-believe or emotional valences which do not refer necessarily to the full perceptual experience of the spectator, that is, they focus mainly on the cognitive side of the experience.

Carroll, in fact, speaks about emotions in art as a matter of cognitive recognition, by which the audience detects the emotion in the artwork without being affected by it (Carroll, 1999: 85). On this argument, emotion in art is a matter of recognising expressive appearances (Gracyk, 2012), or 'to hear music as sad is not to hear music and feel sad, it is to hear sadness in the music' (Matravers, 2013/2000: 411). Although situated in the work, and hence argued as closer to my argument, there is more than recognition in the experiences I have analysed through my case studies. According to cognitive recognition, in my experience of *Afterlight (Part One)* I would

identify melancholy in the appearance of the work, but I would not myself feel melancholy. This does not exactly correlate with my actual experience, however: I did feel some form of melancholy, if not one relating to my own life. Here, again, the proposed term of emotional import might be of use. Emotional import does not correlate, as explained, with a fully-fledged emotion or a mood—although this might still be part of the experience of dance; nor does it mean there is only recognition of emotion in the appearance of the work. Through enactive perception and embodied cognition, emotional import presupposes both a bodily involvement—which goes further than recognition, as in my elevated heart rate for example—and a cognitive aspect. And it understands these as inseparable aspects of the experience. The separation between recognising emotional import and experiencing emotional import is in itself conceptual: there is no differentiation in the experience itself between these two aspects of it. There would be a difference, however, between experiencing/recognising emotional import, and being able to articulate it.

The spectator, then, does not necessarily emote, but does more than recognise emotion. Although a slightly uncertain terrain, this term seems to correlate in its complexity with the experience of emotion in works of contemporary dance. I will relate this uncertainty below with the idea of *groundlessness*. In order to fully explain this understanding, I now refer to the analysis' insights as they focus on the properties of the work.

6.4 Focusing on the properties: expressiveness and expression

Through the conceptual framework (Chapter 1) I identified several proposals that defended the concept of expressiveness to understand the emotional work of dance, as opposed to it being necessarily the artist's unmediated and symptomatic personal expression. The idea of expressiveness allows for the study to focus on the work and

its properties, without having to refer to materials external to the performance necessarily. This project, then, explored the work's properties in order to identify those seemingly relevant to my experience of emotional import in the selected three works of contemporary theatre dance. Several factors influenced the decision to look at the work and at these three particular properties. First, my own experience of the works served to identify movement qualities, use of space and light, and sound/music-movement relationships as relevant to my experience of emotion in the case studies. Secondly, these same properties—or closely related aspects—were often mentioned by the reviewers and associated with emotional effects. Finally, both my own experience as choreographer of the last case, and comments by Maliphant and by Pite seem often to focus on these properties. I will discuss at the end of this section, however, that this in no way implies that they are the only possible properties to study in relation to emotion in dance, or that they completely encompass the properties of the works.

Expressiveness, then, focuses on the properties of the work, and although emotional import offers a relational perspective of the emotional work of a dance piece, the question of objectivity and subjectivity still arises here: if the emotion arises through the properties of the work, it is possible to argue that this project takes an objectivist, or realist, stance towards emotion in dance, and towards perception of dance more generally. Although I explain enactive perception and embodied cognition through the analysis of case studies in the next two sections, some points are worth noting here as they are the basis for my positioning with respect to the object/subject polarity—that is, that the focus cannot be solely on the work as object, nor can it be on the spectator's subjective experience. Understanding perception of emotional import in works of dance as enactive, and cognition as embodied, rejects the dichotomy object/subject. That is, I do not understand the work of dance as an object

"out there", independent from the perceiver, nor do I see the only alternative to this as a shared intersubjectivity (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 93). Indeed, linguist George Lakoff and philosopher Mark Johnson state that both of these options are insufficient explanations to our functioning in the world, proposing instead *embodied realism* as a solution (1999: 93). Embodied realism suggests that 'we are coupled to the world through our embodied interactions' and that '[o]ur directly embodied concepts … can reliably fit those embodied interactions and the understandings of the world that arises from them' (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 93). Understanding the experience of emotional import as a process of enactive perception and embodied cognition, then, allows me to move beyond the object/subject distinction, and also to explain emotional import as emergent from the properties of the work—same as the embodied concepts and understandings arise from interactions with the world.

The concept of emergence was also reviewed in the conceptual framework and responds to the basic premise that 'a network gives rise to new properties' (Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 2016/1991: 88) which are distinct from the properties from which they emerge. According to cognitive scientists, 'emergent properties are fundamental for the operation of the brain itself' (Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 2016/1991: 93), and in this project the concept of emergence appeared as key to understanding emotional import in relation to the features of the work. In this sense, I made a distinction between *gestalt* and emergence, considering each of the studied properties—movement qualities, spatial-rhythm, and sound-movement relationships—as gestalt, whereas emotional import is considered emergent from those features.

More specifically, movement qualities and sound-movement relationships are considered gestalt as they can be predicted from their components, whereas I identified spatial-rhythm as a framework to analyse, illustrate, and share my experience of use

of space in the works. This difference notwithstanding, the elements which compose the selected properties are the following:

- movement qualities: use of weight, space, time, and flow;
- spatial-rhythm: points of attention, lines of tension, sense of pull, and direction of the dancer's gaze;
- sound-movement relations: characteristics of the music or sound in itself, as well as structural relations between the movement and the music.

From the interactions of these properties the emotional import of a work emerges in my experience as spectator. And through the analysis of my experience of the case studies I was able to extract a series of insights on the process of emergence of emotional import which I explore in the following sections. The focus on the properties of the work has two further implications that I review here before moving on to explaining my spectatorial experience of emotional import through the insights of the analysis: the dancer's contribution, and the uses and implications of dance analysis.

6.4.1 The dancer's contribution

I explained in my methodology that I would only be looking at one particular performance of each of the case studies. In this sense, I considered the dancer's performance as the instantiation of the perceptual properties, and paused the philosophical distinction between performance and work in order to progress my analysis. Having been through the analysis of all three works, however, it seems timely to bring back the role of the dancers and their importance to the emotional import. Indeed, one of the possible developments of this study would be to comparatively analyse performances of the same work by various dancers, in order to observe the differences. Analysing the perceptual properties as was done through this project but

looking at different dancers would test the methodology's potential to engage with philosophical questions about the spectator's experience of emotion in contemporary theatre dance, but also about more general questions of ontology of dance, in several ways.

Firstly, looking at different dancers would engage with the question of which, or even whether, these three properties remain relevant to emotional import across dancers. I hypothesise most of them would—the choreographer's work having important weight on this—but it would be interesting to see whether that is the case in other performances by different dancers. Moreover, even if the properties themselves remain crucial, it is unlikely that the effects would be produced by the exact same modulations and combinations of properties. Indeed perhaps the emotional import would itself be too different between performers, although then the question would arise of whether these two performances are of the same work or not—that would depend on how essential the emotional side of the work is to its identity. For example, it seems evident that a lot of the power of *Afterlight (Part One)* rests on Proietto's capacity to move in a particular quality, and Maliphant's ability to potentiate this in his choreography. Maliphant recognised himself that performances by dancers other than Proietto felt radically different—although he did not qualify this with a value or an emotional judgement (Maliphant in personal communication, 13th March 2017). The importance of Spivey or Sasizza in the other two case studies seems equally evident.

This idea that the dancer's approach is key to emotional import—although it seems intuitive enough—could also be grounded through my analysis in the observation that even minute changes can have an effect on the impressions the spectator perceives. This would mean that the performances of two dancers, which can easily be full of minute, or not so minute, differences, could potentially produce very

different impressions in the spectator. The next question would be, of course, whether or not different individual impressions can still give rise to the same overall emotional import. This seems to be at least potentially true through my investigation in this project, as three different works with three sets of individual impressions still are pervaded with a sense of poignancy—although differently nuanced for each.[42]

My own experience of *Petrichor* might provide a further example here. When re-staging the work with ŻfinMalta, Florinda Camilleri reprised the role of the articulation solo. Camilleri and Sasizza are two very different dancers, hence although we worked on the same kind of movement quality their explorations led to different results. The overall emotional import of the work did not change in my experience. It was easy to see, however, that certain moments were significantly different. The suspension I analysed in scene 5.2.1, for example, was performed by Camilleri as less of a suspension and more of a whipped turn into a highly attacked slide—a clear thrusting effort. The effect might then be different: in this case for me it was more an impression of suffering and despair than of melancholy, which was the case in Sasizza's version. As a choreographer, it was not problematic to accept these variations and explorations, as the overall emotional work of the solo was still what I was looking for. I would say that both solo versions were equally engaging and emotionally strong, and they both conveyed what I was looking for as a choreographer, through different means. Moreover, the dancer's contribution is crucial also in giving the choreographer other options and solutions, adding to the creativity of the work. It would be interesting, however, to engage with these questions further as spectator/analyst.

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[42] It could be argued that this is potentially due to my own propensity towards poignancy—if such a thing is possible—but reviewers both in *Afterlight (Part One)* and in *Dark Matters* characterise the works as poignant. In *Petrichor* reviewers do not use this word specifically, but that might be due to lack of particular vocabulary, not being professional reviewers.

Although outside the scope of this particular investigation, the dancer's contribution to choreography has had notable scholarly attention in the work of Morris (2000), Tomic-Vajagic (2012), McFee (most recently in 2018), or Sarah Whatley (2002). These scholars all first recognise the key aspect of the dancer's contribution: there is no dance without performers (McFee, 2018: 123), but then continue to specify both the bodily and the artistic capabilities of dancers and their agency in dance works (Tomic-Vajagic, 2012). Tomic-Vajagic also occasionally refers to the expressive aspects of the dancer's performance, for instance the impact on the spectator's understanding of the musical score—which Jordan also acknowledges in her studies (2002). Although Tomic-Vajagic's focus, similarly to Morris and Whatley, seems to be more on style and interpretation. Further study of the dancer's contribution towards the spectator's perception of emotional import, then, could be of scholarly interest.

6.4.2 Dance analysis

This thesis hypothesised that perceptual properties might be the key to emotional import in the spectator's experience of dance, and proposed an analysis as a way to test this and further explore how this could be the case. The analysis covered three composite properties through my spectatorial experience of three works, and the experience of other informed spectators. These selected properties, as explained, were movement qualities, spatial-rhythm, and sound-movement relationships. Although they give an overall view of what is happening in the scene, these properties do not cover all aspects of dance, hence it could be argued that other elements might have as strong an impact in emotional import as them. Examples of elements which are not covered in my analysis are spatial pathways, narrative/story-line elements external to the perceptual properties, and relationships with the audience or with other dancers present—I referred to this only briefly in *Dark Matters* as the relationship between

Spivey and the figure in black was evident in the particular moment. Differences between moments of pre-set choreography and improvisational elements could also be explored—although arguably this might be evidenced to a certain extent also through the perceptual properties explored in this project. Moreover, some elements are explored only through the composite properties and would benefit from more in-depth, differentiated attention. I propose that muscle tone, or use of kinesphere would likely reveal themselves as more particularly key aspects of emotional import if studied. It also occurred that some elements which were analysed did not appear to be of much consequence to my experience of emotional import, direction—except in relation to projection/pull—and pitch/intensity are examples of these. It might still be the case, nonetheless, that they simply require further study—as I anticipate is the case with pitch/intensity.

Further research could look at testing the analytical possibilities of my methodology by applying it to cases within other styles or even genres of dance, as well as to group works. Most interesting would be to apply the methodology to works which do not foreground the features I identify and focus on. It would be curious to see how this method of analysis applies to works such as those within the non-dance movement. Bel's work, for example, would be a powerful candidate to test the model further. It is difficult to imagine that movement qualities or spatial-rhythm would be equally key to Bel's *Veronique Doisneau* (2004) as they are to *Afterlight (Part One)*—although the measured pace, pauses, and specific positioning of the dancer on stage could indicate that these properties might still be relevant to some extent. Applying the method to dances that pay heightened attention to gestural, meaningful movement—perhaps in forms such as the South-Asian classical form Bharata Natyam—or fundamentally different styles such as the Japanese Butoh, would test other aspects of the method and could hold fascinating results. Of course it is also a

possibility that other genres/styles might prove the methodology inadequate for anything outside the range of works studied here, although I believe there is enough indication for a broader potential of the methodological framework proposed. My argument is, nonetheless, that the more general discussion of experience as enactive and embodied could still be relevant to these other forms of dance.

Extending the methodology to analyse group dances is also something both necessary and potentially of academic interest. One of the main changes expected from this application would obviously be that interactions would occur not only across properties, but across dancers and within each property. For example, each dancer could be moving in a different quality at a particular moment—like a differed dissociation across multiple dancers. Dancers can also use different accents or counts in the music/sound—such as in a sequence in canon. The analysis would be much more complex, evidently, and perhaps most especially in the case of spatial-rhythm, in which many more relationships would emerge between elements. In fact, it is perhaps questionable whether it would be manageable, or if a simpler version of the analysis of still frames would emerge out of necessity, focusing on the most salient aspects of the spectator's experience of space. The most important addition in the case of a group piece, arguably, is likely to be related to meaning, symbolism, and in general relationships between dancers. Seeing the weight that the presence of the figure in black had in the solo from *Dark Matters*, it is not difficult to imagine that this would be much accentuated in the case of several dancers moving.

Having proposed and conceptualised the complexity of the experience of emotional import in contemporary dance as I have, it is imperative to reiterate that no number of properties could effectively and completely analyse the experience. Indeed that it is part of the very idea of experience to be beyond this kind of analytical encasement. The analysis, however, does not aim to do this, and serves a two-fold

purpose here: (1) it allows me to test whether—and illustrate how—these perceptual properties might indeed be partially responsible for contemporary theatre dance's emotional import, but more importantly (2) the analysis informs, grounds, and supports a discussion and an overall questioning of the workings of the experience itself. The analysis affords the suggestion that emotion/mood might not be the best terms for the affective work that contemporary theatre dance does, as certain elements within these concepts cannot be supported through the analysis. This methodology also allows me to characterise the experience as a process of enactive perception and embodied cognition, as through the analysis of the experience emerges a necessary integration of different levels of information.

Although this study has demonstrated a series of correlations between my emotional impressions and combinations of perceptual properties, it is not possible to prove that there is causation from these specific perceptual properties to the emotional import I experienced as spectator. For example, I have argued that a particular scene in *Afterlight (Part One)* produces in me an impression of suffering and surrender which correlates to (1) a particular pattern of efforts—gliding, pressing, thrusting; together with (2) a sense of successive flow—which also seems to produce a sense of interiority; (3) a blurred synchronisation of the movement and the music; and (4) a particular impact of the light on the bare areas of Proietto's body (Section 3.2.3). Although this is quite a clear correlation, it is not possible to prove that these properties exclusively *cause* the emotional import as I experienced it. The relationship, however, is further confirmed through the other case studies, with some particular combinations of properties consistently appearing to correlate with emotional effects.

Three points are important here: (1) that these—combinations of—properties do not always produce the same effect, that is, that they do not entail a particular emotional import, so it is not possible to predict it; (2) that a change in one property

does generally imply a change in the emotional effect experienced; and (3) that although there are significant commonalities between the three case studies, there are also differences, both in the particularities of the properties which seem significant, and in the emotional import which is experienced from them. An example of point (1) would be the effect that my perception of empty space has in *Afterlight (Part One)* and in *Dark Matters*, that is, respectively one of containment or capture (3.2.1), and one of power (4.2.2). The difference between the emotional import of these two moments would be given by the modulation of other properties, in this case: movement quality, lighting, and music in *Afterlight (Part One)*, and movement qualities and spatial-rhythm in *Dark Matters*. Point (2) can be illustrated through the example of the third scene analysed in *Afterlight (Part One)* (3.2.3), where two repetitions of the same movement produce a completely different effect in me because of the movement quality in which they are performed—a fluid movement with the whole body, versus a floating movement in successive flow. Finally, in reference to point (3), the differences between case studies account for the impossibility of emotional import being entailed by the presence of a particular combination of perceptual properties. These characteristics of the insights underpin my proposal of emergence as an appropriate model for understanding the relationship between emotional import and perceptual properties: they demonstrate that emotional import arises in my experience of simpler perceptual properties, but which is not reducible to them. They also support ideas about the need to understand emotional import as relational, that is, emergent in the interaction between a work—created by several agents—and a spectator.

6.5 Enactive perception

The conceptualisation that underpins my proposal, then, is that perception is enacted. That is, that perception is an action of spectators through which they encounter ‘how

things are in the world' (Noë, 2006/2004: 85)—not that these things are independent of particular embodied interactions, as explained in section 6.4. The first implication raised by this understanding is that spectators are not passive receivers of information to process in their mind, but that they are actively perceiving. As Noë explains, based on Dewey, 'perception is an activity of doing and undergoing, a *transaction* with the world around us', that is, 'it is something we do, not something that happens inside us' (2015: 97) (italics in the original). The spectator does not simply receive the dance but enacts it perceptually and, in the same sense, the emotional import is perceived actively by the spectator, hence it is relational: it depends on this interaction. There are two aspects of enactive perception that are both important to the experience of emotional import and demonstrated in the analysis of case studies as presented in this project: the virtual elements of perception, and the importance of the spectator's background or the emotional import's relationality.

Several examples in the analysis align with the idea that perception does not correspond directly only to the physical properties of the work. To start with, all the insights within spatial-rhythm support this claim that there is something virtual, some kind of perceptual emergence in my experience of these works of dance. This is the reason why it was important to study the elements of spatial-rhythm as proposed, and not just space *per se* in the sense of physical properties. Through the study of points of attention, lines of tension, sense of pull, and direction of the dancer's gaze, I could fruitfully understand, and share, my perception of space in these three cases of contemporary theatre dance. In relation to this, I argued how light is a fundamental aspect of spatial-rhythm because it creates space, allowing me as spectator to see certain things, even accentuating particular effects, whilst it hides others. This was evident in *Afterlight (Part One)*, where the body of Proietto is partially hidden most of the time, but could also be perceived in the other cases, where certain areas are

highlighted while others remain in darkness. Similarly in *Dark Matters*, Spivey's figure is highlighted in the foreground, whilst part of another dancer is highlighted in the background. In a way, light presents the body in parts, blurring the dancers' humanity, separating them from me as audience and adding a sense of cold observation and distance at points.

The space and shadows created by light, as well as the effects of projection and pull, are all examples of the virtual aspects of perception. These examples correlate with the conceptualisation of perception as enacted, as

> The perceptual world is not a world of effects produced in us—in our minds—by the actual world. But the perceptual world is the world *for us*. We can say that the world for us is not the physical world, in that it is not the world of items introduced and catalogued in physical theory. But it is the natural world (and perhaps also the cultural world) (Noë, 2006/2004: 156).

This is also the reason why I called the selected properties perceptual, as differentiated from physical. Preston-Dunlop and Sanchez-Colberg also referred to this in their virtual spatial forms (Preston-Dunlop and Sánchez-Colberg, 2010), as did Arnheim in his notion of perceptual forces (Arnheim, 1974/1954). However it is not only in spatial analysis that this virtuality can be appreciated. In the analysis of sound, other phenomena confirm the idea of the virtual in perception. These are capture, from Jordan's work (2000), and the effect of maintained pulse through the silence. They also reiterate the importance of attending to the complete experience—as they do not exist in one property only and seem powerful devices towards the emotional import I perceive through these works.

Noë states that

> [t]he content of perceptual experience is *virtual*. This point goes beyond the proposal that the visual system utilizes virtual representations; the claim is that experiential content is itself virtual. According to the enactive approach … the unseen environmental

> detail [is] present to perception virtually in the sense that we experience their presence because of our skill-based access to them (Noë, 2006/2004: 67).

So not only there is virtuality in perception as explained through the examples from the analysis, but (1) all the details of perception are not fully conscious, and (2) it is the skilled and active perceiver/spectator who is the key in the experience. Point (1) can indicate the importance of studying the underlying structures of perception as presented through this project. Point (2) leads me to the next aspect of perception, and also to highlight the methodology followed here. This second aspect is the importance of spectators and their background, which again defines emotional import as relational.

The project proceeded through an analysis of my own experience as well as an exploration of other spectators' experiences through reviews. I have explained how reading reviews allowed me to look into the experiences of other informed spectators, whose background also corresponds to mine in that they are mostly white, middle-class, Euro-American spectators. This situates us in a similar position as spectators, as well as in a similar background to that of the creative agents of the works—choreographer and dancers—and the work's context too. I will deal with the relationality of emotional import as also pertaining to the choreographer's work in section 6.7 below.

Blocking these variables of context and background in the manner that I have done through my study—mainly through the use of my own experience and those of similar spectators—allowed me to analyse the experience of emotional import mostly in relation to the perceptual properties. Context was then understood as allowing broader understandings of the experience of emotion in works of contemporary theatre dance, through a wider array of information, whereas emotional import refers more particularly to the experience of emotion as emergent from the work's perceptual properties. To defend this correlation between emotional import and perceptual

properties, I proposed a conceptual framework which focuses on embodied cognition and enactive perception, through which the background of the spectator is anyway integrated in the experience: spectators enact perception according to their own background, their own sensorimotor structures and embodied concepts which are emergent from previous bodily experiences of the world (Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 2016/1991). One more concept is needed to fully develop this understanding of the experience of emotional import in works of contemporary dance: that of embodied cognition.

6.6 Embodied cognition

The notions of enactive perception and embodied cognition are intimately related, in fact, they are phenomenologically and conceptually inseparable—they need each other to make sense. Understanding perception as enactive implies that perception is action but also that 'cognitive structures emerge from the sensorimotor patterns that enable action to be perceptually guided' (Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 2016/1991: 173). The perceiver, then, possesses a 'sensorimotor structure' which is 'the manner in which the perceiver is embodied' (Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 2016/1991: 173). Insights from the analysis of the case studies support this idea that 'reason itself [the cognitive] comes from the details of our embodiment' (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 4).

I will start with an example. Through the analysis of spatial-rhythm I explored a way in which perceptual forces (light, position, weight, direction) can contribute to my experience of emotional import. Continuous changes in pull and projection create contrast between stability and instability, and sometimes both of these sensations appear in the same still frame. The opposing forces in the body also produce a disjointed feeling, which also corresponds with the use of movement qualities. This sense of opposition within the body allows for an inwards projection to emerge in my

perception, which can produce, again, introspection and interiority. All these forces create a physicality that varies between power and vulnerability, or produces contradiction by presenting both at the same time, especially in *Dark Matters* and *Petrichor*. The reason why this particular binary is key to my discussion is that it exemplifies the emergence of emotional import from the perceptual properties of a work. I argued how this conflict between power and vulnerability—which are both perceptual and emotional—is paradigmatic as to how emotional import emerges in the experience of contemporary dance, and how it can be best understood. The key concept for this emergence is indeed embodied cognition, as it allows me to posit not only that there is no need for a Cartesian divide, but that 'reason is not completely conscious' (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 4), which can relate to the fact that spectators are not fully aware of the structures underlying their experience of emotional import. Moreover, reason is then also 'emotionally engaged' (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 4), which establishes further the relationship between cognition, embodiment, and emotion.

As evidenced in the analysis, part of my experience of *Dark Matters* resides in the relationship between the movement and the meaning of the words. This relationship to meaning happens only at isolated moments, both abstracting it and making it more salient. The words that the movement relates to in all their repetitions are "dissolve", "shock", and "silence", although at one point the dancer also seems to significantly go down to the floor slowly to the word "dust". As Dickinson explains,

> [a]s mutually constitutive elements of the textscape of dance-theater, speech and movement become sensorially interpolated and, in fighting for our perceptual attention, mutually interpellating of the spectating subject, each working to influence how we apprehend a given performance work (2019: 244).

In this case, the words themselves seem significant to the general theme of the piece—dissolve, shock, silence, dust—and more specifically to the devastating view of

humanity and its destiny, as it exudes from the work in all its elements. The meaning of the words is supported physically, not through a literal interpretation but through an embodiment (4.2.6). Gestures and facial expressions are also important in my experience of Spivey's solo. These elements are exemplary of an embodied understanding of cognition and experience.

In *Petrichor*, it is possible to observe an array of relationships between movement and voice that illustrate the various forms in which emotion can be embodied in the interactions between properties. At points there is a relationship between the movement of the dancer and the intonation of the singer, often a correspondence of changes of accents in movement with changes of pitch in the voice. Perhaps more relevant to this project's question, there are some instances in which the movement seems to match the texture of the voice—the feeling. These moments are such that a soft, delicate voice is matched by slow, soft movement, the two complementing each other and producing a particular feeling of vulnerability in my perception of the work. Also, the dancer often stops in the middle of a sentence of the song, sustaining the movement just before she stops. It is important to note that I am able to perceive this both because I am a Spanish speaker and because I know the song, however it is possible that the intonation of the singer would indicate these stops even to non-Spanish speakers. The result in my perception is that a tension is produced by the interaction between the sustained quality and the suspense of the unfinished sentence.

As I explained in the analysis, all case studies proposed in this project present examples of meaning-carrying gestural movements. A similar argument can be used to refer to those elements in *Petrichor* which are clearly meaningful in a symbolic manner: the music—not just the song within a Spanish context, but also the nature of the percussion and its implications towards battle; the colours of the costume, red and

black; the gestures themselves—fists up in the air, reaching up fast; even the title. These elements evidently contribute to the emergence of meaning more generally for the audience, and so are noted by the reviewers (Reviewer 2, 2017).

This further sense of interaction is important to highlight here: the interplay between movement qualities, spatial-rhythm, and sound-movement relationships with the expressive or symbolic gestures, or facial expressions. These gestures and expressions are understood intuitively as distinct to the perceptual properties studied, as they are more clearly referential. However, it was seen through the analysis that they are indeed perceptual, and that their position as abstracted by their context actually strengthens their effect. It is important to acknowledge their presence, nonetheless, and to refer once again to the conceptualisation of experience as an embodied enactive perceptual process, which implies that these types of gestures, expressions, and meanings are easily integrated into my perceptual experience as a spectator. This conceptualisation also includes understanding the meaning of the work to be broader and including contextual information, further from that internalised in the spectator's perception or embodied in the work.

Theories of embodied cognition then respond to the need to conceptualise the relationship between the perception of properties of dance and the experience of emotion understood as both bodily and cognitive. I have argued that the experience of emotional import is not purely bodily, nor can it be purely cognitive—understood as only mental (1.2). Following elements (1) and (3) in my initial characterisation of emotion (1.2.1), emotional import has both a cognitive component and a bodily feeling. Separately, it does not seem to be difficult to argue for each of these elements: when I experience *Dark Matters* I cannot deny a relationship to the words, to my background, or to a sense of existential questioning, which are easily related to cognition and cannot be reduced to a bodily experience. The bodily side of the

experience can easily be argued for through the physical implication of our senses in the act of perception, and through a particular sense of consciousness in the experience too. Neither one of these understandings are enough to deal with the complexity of the experience of emotion in dance when applied separately: when I watch *Dark Matters* my experience is informed by my background, the words, the existential side of the experience, and my sensorial experiences. It is therefore necessary to provide a framework to bridge between these elements, in order to conceptualise the experience as a whole. Theories of enactive perception and embodied cognition, as argued, help me provide this bridge. Issues of subjectivity are also confronted here as even though the viewpoint is always particular, embodied cognition 'belongs to our shared biological and cultural world' (Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 2016/1991: 172). This argument again brings societal construction into the discussion, and helps explain the commonality of experiences in watching dance.

When the qualitative jump between the bodily and the cognitive is dismissed through these theories, the relationship between any possible layer of content is also accounted for. Content, meaning, thought, belief, common categories related only to cognition, are now understood as part of embodied cognition, hence not separate from our bodily experience. In this sense, I can now account for my experience of emotion in *Afterlight (Part One)* as a complex enacted perception which integrates aspects of my background, as well as elements of the background of Maliphant and also Proietto's, and of the context of Sadler's Wells and the commission—including the story of Nijinsky to a certain extent. This complex enacted perception is mainly based on the properties of the work, that is, on its perceptual properties—which are in turn dependent on background and context of choreographer, dancer, and work. And hence the perceptual properties—as I have analysed them here—and the experience of emotion are related through enactive perception and embodied cognition. There is one

more aspect that would be of interest for further study and which relates to the idea that cognitive structures emerge from patterns of bodily experience. I have related this idea to the spectator, and will relate it to the choreographer in section 6.7, but studying the dancer's embodied concepts arising from bodily experience in relation to emotion would be a fascinating area for further research.

6.7 The choreographer's experience

I have argued in favour of the idea of expressiveness as opposed to self-expression especially in terms of the position of the choreographer—this implies that the choreographers are not simply expressing personal emotions or displaying symptoms, although aspects of their personal emotions can indeed be embodied in the perceptual properties of the work (movement qualities, spatial-rhythm, and sound-movement relationships). Emotional import, then, added an extra layer of relationality to this idea of expressiveness, linking it to the spectator experience of emotion when perceiving the work of dance. In this regard, I still need to claim back the choreographer's agency in the work, that is, to explain what the role of the choreographer can be in this case. This section aims to relate the research directly to the choreographer's experience, explaining it as linked to the spectator's and also a process of enactive perception and embodied cognition, and to indicate the possible tools that the research can provide to other choreographers, by explaining what it has already provided me.

Arguably, by focusing the analysis—and the experience—of emotional import on the properties of the work, the project momentarily put aside the choreographer's agency and the history of the work, and its process of making. Having taken the position of spectator/analyst and spectator/choreographer/analyst, I can now offer some insight into the experiences of spectator and choreographer and how they are—within their differences—comparable. I explained in my conceptual framework

(section 1.3.2) how it is possible to understand the position of choreographers as the first audience members (Carroll, 1999; Langer, 1953), and how they go through an enacted perceptual process until the moment in which "things work". This is the moment in which choreographers perceive the emotional import they are looking for, which can give them an indication of what the audience—if from a similar background—can perceive. In this sense, referring to the spectator's and choreographer's experiences as similar enactive embodied perceptual processes seems aligned with the analysis carried out in this study.

Of course this brings up the issue of choreographic intention, which, as briefly mentioned in the conceptual framework, is a contentious issue in philosophy of art. Broadly speaking: intentionalists argue that the author's intention is relevant and important to the understanding of the work; anti-intentionalists, meanwhile, defend the idea that author's intention to express something, if there was one, should not necessarily affect the understanding or evaluation of the work (McFee, 1992). This can also be related to aesthetic empiricism—the work stands alone (Davies, 2004: 25)—and contextualism—how works are created has an effect on what they are and subsequently on what they mean (Jordan and Pakes, 2018). My focus on the work follows more the idea that, through their own process, the choreographers modulate elements and observe the emergence of emotional import in their own experience. This does not imply that every member of the audience would find equally powerful the same particular moments that the choreographer identified as emotional. Nor that, if found emotional, these moments would have the same emotional import for the spectator as they did for the choreographer. However, as Stecker claims, 'people's intentions transmit properties to the things those people do and make' (2006: 271), so there is relative embodied choreographic intention in the work itself.

One further argument to make here is that, as Jordan and Pakes argue in the context of projects such as EChO,[43] the choreographic process is often analysed, but attention on the work itself might not be so common: 'the "work" as object maintains a different position within the hierarchy of activities, whilst the working process is reflexively highlighted' (2018: 28). My intention is to reconcile work and creative process by looking into the work but understanding its creation as enactive embodied cognition. Noë, discussing the issue of the creative process, quotes Robert Irwin as saying that

> [t]o be an artist is not a matter of making paintings or objects at all. What we are really dealing with is our state of consciousness and the shape of our perception (2015: 191).

In this sense, it is important to consider information on the first two case studies in relation to the role of the choreographer. Developing a discussion through ideas about Maliphant's and Pite's ways of relating with thematic content and perceptual properties allows me to exemplify ways in which the creative process is indeed embodied in the work's properties. This is done only with regard to the analysis of the case studies presented here—and briefly as it is not my main focus—but could eventually constitute an area of further research and questioning. Some ideas, however, can be raised already, and can contribute to illustrate further relationships between the role of the choreographer and the experience of the spectator beyond my own practice.

[43] As explained by Jordan, EChO is an 'acronym for Enhancing Choreographic Objects', and the project was linked with the creation of a work by Wayne McGregor entitled *Atomos*, and refers to 'work with an autonomous, thinking, choreographic entity, a choreographic (digital) tool, or rather agent, that can be used in the making of choreography' (Jordan, 2013). The project was directed by Scott deLahunta and James Leach.

Maliphant, as discussed, focused his work on the drawings made by Nijinsky in his diaries. Although not necessarily related to his personal story in a straightforward way, these drawing were made at difficult points in Nijinsky's life and might be argued to be pictorial embodiments of his ailments. The sense of spiral is clear in both the movement and the light in *Afterlight (Part One)*, and can be related to the shapes in his drawing at the moment of Nijinsky's 'descent into schizophrenia' (Jennings, 2009). Maliphant focused on this idea mainly through his Rolfing-technique-based work on fascia, setting tasks and exercises for Proietto which worked on the continuity of the body's movement through this sheet of connecting tissue (Maliphant in personal communication, 13th March 2017). This theme, in the case of Maliphant, is quite literally embodied in the work. He also used photography of Nijinsky's poses from his most famous roles, once again physicalising his history. It could be argued that the reason why the spectator does not need to know Nijinsky's story to feel moved by *Afterlight (Part One)* (Jennings, 2009) is because the story is understood perceptually through the dance, as my analysis has tried to illustrate.

His work on emotion is equally subtle. He explains how he sometimes told Proietto that a particular performance or rehearsal seemed overtly emotional. That is, until Proietto did hold back emotionally in one performance and the piece did not work as well as usual. This once again attests to the importance of the dancer's contribution (Maliphant in personal communication, 13th March 2017). Incidentally, Proietto himself believes that emotion on stage is a matter of attention to the details of movement, and not so much of personal emotion (Proietto in personal communication, 26th November 2017). One more anecdote correlates also with the idea that the choreographer functions in a way as a spectator and waits for the moment in which "things work". Maliphant decided to use Satie's *Gnossiennes* almost by chance. While working on the video of the rehearsals of *Afterlight (Part One)* at his home, his wife

Dana played something that was accompanied by *Gnossiennes* and Maliphant realised the combination "just worked" (Maliphant in personal communication, 13th March 2017). This moment of hybrid spectatorial-choreographic experience guided his decision as choreographer.

Pite's case is slightly different in that she is more openly articulate about the relationship between themes and the physicality of her works. She speaks of stillness and balance being peaceful, and a sense of tension in the movement bringing conflict as theme too (CreativeMornings HQ, 2013). In fact, Pite's work, like Maliphant's, is also exemplary of embodiment of narrative and thematic aspects, of those being perceptual in a very direct way. There is tension through the properties and in the thematic. But I can also see the earthquake of Voltaire's poem and the puppet of the first act through the movement qualities. Pite herself recognises the latter image, as explained in Chapter 5. She also recognises that the second act is a danced reflection on the themes of the first act. Pite consciously works on this relationship between the movement and the thematic content, on the emotional power of dance and how it 'touches' people, and she is also often open about it (as in her interview with Crompton (2014)). The choreographers' experiences and modulations of the movement/theme relationships through the creative process can then be argued to be one of the tools they can employ to relate to possible spectatorial experiences.

In this sense, one of the major themes of this project is my position as spectator with choreographic experience in the first two cases, and especially my position as choreographer in the last case study. Although this affected my view and complicated my position in *Petrichor* especially, it also offered me the opportunity to observe from a new perspective: joining the spectator's and choreographer's positions but also allowing me to compare these two different experiences. My own experience as spectator with choreographic experience, or as spectator/choreographer, together

with my position as analyst, give me a particular view. Specifically, analysing my experience of *Petrichor* allowed me to explore a three-fold perspective as choreographer, spectator, and analyst. As an example, this was especially clear in the analysis of the successive-flow floating effort. I searched for this particular effect as choreographer, as it dissociated the body but kept a sense of continuity that provided the contradictory feeling that I was looking for: of strength and fragility, of the dancer being carried by forces outside her control but not losing completely her agency. Although I achieved the effect I was searching in my experience as viewer, I did not find this particular effort— successive-flow floating—when analysing the work. What I found was a combination of efforts and a pattern of changes which still produced in me as spectator the effect I was looking for as choreographer. My analysis of the work allowed me to understand my choice as choreographer, my experience as spectator, and the relationship between the two. This example correlates also with the understanding of the choreographer's position as first audience member, and with the framework of enactive perception and embodied cognition as the explanation of the process by which both choreographer and spectator experience emotional import as emergent from the perceptual properties of the work.

After the full analysis of the three case studies, and having linked the spectator's and choreographer's experiences, I can observe some points on the choreographer's process of selection and modulation of properties and possible tools I gained in this regard. Throughout the process of analysis of the works I identified three composite perceptual properties which are movement qualities, spatial-rhythm, and sound-movement relationships. The choreographer's conscious modulation of movement qualities and sound-movement relationships can be accepted quite intuitively. It might be argued, however, that the characterisation of these properties of the work is not usually executed in much depth. There is often no clear systematic

approach to work with these elements, although most choreographers still would work on material in terms of dynamics or style of movement. The same is true in terms of the relationship to sound, although clear relationship to music perhaps is less common in certain types of contemporary theatre dance currently. As a choreographer myself, however, I always felt that the lack of a systematic, but at the same time manageable tool to think about and play with movement and with sound/music was detrimental to the work in the studio[44]. My research has already given me tools in this sense: understanding which elements contribute to the different efforts/qualities allows more varied use of these elements within my choreographic tools. This was evident in my creative process for *Petrichor*. Moreover, it continues to be true for other creative processes since, as I will discuss shortly. In terms of music, the tools include not only understanding the music/sound better, but the relationship to movement as full of possibilities, and the importance of this relationship towards the perception of a dance work. If nothing else—although there is much more—this analysis and methodology have offered me deeper awareness of the possibilities of play within these properties. It is my hope that it might do the same for other choreographers.

In terms of spatial-rhythm analysis, the change for my creative process has been even more significant: although I was always aware of the importance of space in choreography, it had always been a very abstract kind of awareness. Having to find a method to analyse perception of space both in the full space of the stage and in relation to the dancer's particular position—but perhaps more importantly in the latter—forced me specifically to look at what was happening at every point of the choreography. It is evident that the analysis itself cannot be carried out in the studio

[44] Laban's is a clear, systematic tool, but it requires extensive training usually outside the reach or interest of most choreographers, hence failing to be manageable. That said, the parts of the system used here, and their understanding as tools and not categorisation, are potentially useful for the creative process.

during a choreographic process, but my way of looking at choreography, and my way of solving certain choreographic problems has definitely changed and become more systematic. Ideas not only about the direction of the dancer's gaze, or the sense of projection—perhaps more intuitive—but also about modulating the points of attention or the sense of pull, are now variables that I can play with consciously while working in the studio. Through this project they have become choreographic possibilities.

I can perhaps usefully illustrate this point about the tools I gained through this research by briefly referring to more a recent creative process. For *Eigenlicht*, a ten minutes long work I made for a cast of six dancers in December 2018, I made use of the musical score as structural guidance for the choreography. Although I am aware that this is in no way new—especially from a ballet perspective (as demonstrated by Jordan, 2000, for example) but also beyond—it was new for me. The work of analysing these case studies gave me the tools not only to better understand the possibilities but to consciously go towards or against a particular relationship, often choosing cross-phrasing or contrast over evident parallelism, for example. I also found myself potentiating moments of *rubato* often. In this case, interestingly, it seemed that I first made the choice, then I realised only after what had happened and was able to name it—I was first choreographer, then analyst. Moreover, I asked the dancers to create the material, then layered it with choices of movement qualities and spatial organisation, in this case both individually and in terms of orchestration. In this sense, however, it is very difficult to delineate the tools that developed through this research, and the tools that pre-dated the research—and which perhaps my experience as choreographer in fact brought to the research. This adds to my argument on the complexity of this/these experience/s. Two further points through this creative process align clearly with my research in this project. First of this is that more often each creative process I reject demonstrating or giving material to the dancers in favour of using my

spectatorial view to create and develop movement. Second, and perhaps more interesting, is that in this project I resisted giving the dancers any indication of thematic context or narrative. They only knew the title, which loosely means the dark grey colour our vision captures in the absence of light, but also can be translated as grey light. Close to the performance, however, I decided to ask them what they felt the work was doing in terms of narrative, theme, or emotion, and their answers, although more abstract (non-referential or non-narrative), aligned with my intention. They spoke about escape, resistance, raw delicacy, but also of calm, meditation, and reverence. Contradiction was a big theme. My idea was also quite loosely thematic, but played between hope—even in the absence of light there is no complete darkness—and the very real darkness we encounter in the world right now. The process, somehow, had brought to them the thematic ideas embodied in the work we were developing together—perhaps another indication for the usefulness of future research of embodied emotional concepts emerging in the embodied dancer.

6.8 The experience of emotional import as complex, bodily and thoughtful

> Every work of art (whether dance, song, poetry, film, whatever) challenges you to *see* it, or to *get* it. The work of art (not the artist, not the performer) says, *Bring me into focus, if you can!* Crucially, you usually can't at least not right away (Noë, 2015: 102).

The amount of information, of processing, of work, that is, which is involved in watching a work of dance, the complexity of the experience, might explain this difficulty to 'bring [it] into focus' right away. The spectator's experience of emotional import in dance has been characterised, through my study, as a bodily, thoughtful, ineffable, enactive, cognitive, perceptual process. It is focused on the properties of the work but its workings depend on a series of agents: spectator, choreographer, dancer, and the rest of the creative team. I have attempted to disentangle this complex

experience by looking in detail at its underlying structures, but also by providing a conceptual framework through which to understand it. This, after all, is the job of analytic philosophy. And together with dance analysis this breaking down of the experience into its constituents can illuminate the process of the experience itself.

Evidently, my particular conceptual position has some ontological implications. (a) In its understanding of the properties of the work of dance as dependent on the view of the spectator, as well as the instantiation of the work as dependent on the dancers, the project aligns with notions of the dance work as abstract object, only accessible through its performances. (b) In assuming that I can access the work of dance through a recording of a performance, and equally have an emotional experience through watching the video, I entered, albeit briefly, the debate on the ontological position of video recordings and of dance itself: I accept that accessing the video is a form of accessing the work. In this sense, however, I argued that the videos had the role of tools for analysis, more than that of facilitating an experience. That said, I still had an emotional experience of *Dark Matters* watching only the recording.

And (c), through an understanding of emotional import as relational I briefly faced the discussion of the object/subject issue, but offered a solution to this by embracing embodied realism. By understanding the spectator's experience of emotional import in works of contemporary dance as enactive, embodied cognition the project dismisses the dichotomy between objectivism and subjectivism. This is due to the understanding that the world is not out there for us to grasp, nor do we only achieve a sense of reality through intersubjectivity. The "world" appears for us through a series of embodied interactions, defined by our embodied concepts, background, and positionality. These in turn emerge from past interactions which give rise to our sensorimotor structures—that then make our enacted perception. To some extent, these

structures are also social and shared, hence the commonality of experience amongst people of similar backgrounds.

My experience of watching these works of dance is a process of enactive perception guided by my existing sensorimotor structures. These have been formed emerging from patterns of previous experiences with the world. Not only past experiences of watching dance, but training, choreographic experiences, and more generally life experience. These form my embodied concepts which guide my experience of emotional import in these works, and I can see what patterns form part of my enacted perception and embodied cognition in this respect. I can also observe this partially in the reviewers. Through the study of interactions and the annotation of the video and still frames I can then share my experience with other audience members. This can indicate forms of viewing which may in turn facilitate audience experience.

These frameworks of understanding, however—and here resides the real complexity of the experience—do not allow me to have a sense of clear definition in the explanation of the experience of emotional import. I can illustrate it, demonstrate it, and characterise examples of it, but I cannot pin it down with any form of finality. The experience, the performances, all produce temporary effects, and any specific findings might be only temporary anyway. This does not preclude discussion on the set of relational principles that elucidate how the spectator might experience the work as evocative, whether emotional or otherwise. The ineffability of the experience is clearly reflected in its theoretical side too: I can talk about the experience, but I cannot give the experience through words, I cannot translate it. Equally, I can explain it through enactive perception and embodied cognition but I cannot ground it through these processes. Varela et al. indeed talk about this sense of groundlessness:

> [G]roundlessness is the very condition for the richly textured and interdependent world of human experience… all of our activities

> depend on a background that can never be pinned down with any sense of ultimate solidity and finality … [G]roundlessness is revealed in cognition as "common sense", that is, in knowing how to negotiate our way through a world that is not fixed and pregiven, but that is continually shaped by the types of actions in which we engage (Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 2016/1991: 144).

The job of the analyst—both in dance and philosophy—would then be to identify and illustrate forms of experience, but always accepting the impossibility to ever really finalise the task.

Conclusion: Contribution to knowledge and further areas of research

At the start of this thesis I set out to investigate the spectator's experience of emotion in Euro-American contemporary theatre dance. Whether this experience is dependent on the choreographer's or dancer's personal emotions and necessarily mediated by representational meaning was also questioned. Indirectly, the project also questioned models of dance and movement analysis as tools to understand perceptual properties of dance. Through the analysis of three case studies, a relationship was found between perceptual properties, on one side, and the reviewers' and my own experience on the other. This relationship, however, is not one of entailment where reactions can be predicted or some form of glossary can be produced. My experiences emerged from the perception of properties, but are not reducible to them, in the same way that my perception of properties is not reducible to the physical properties of the performance. Through the discussion of these insights, it was argued that this experience can only be understood from a perspective of embodied cognition, and the related enactive conceptualisation of perception. These two lines of conceptualisation allow me to propose an embodied understanding of the spectator's experience of emotional import in contemporary dance. To conclude, I discuss this study in terms of its limitations, contribution to knowledge, and further areas of research.

At the start of this thesis I stated that its point of departure was my own experience of emotion in works of dance. As the research question was related to the spectator's experience, I used my own experience in order to explore the emotional effects of the works. However, I also studied reviews of the works, as they provided

other examples of experiences which extends the possibilities of generalising to a type of spectator: that is, Europe- or America-based contemporary dance expert spectators. Studying these reviews has allowed me to compare experiences and explore their correlation to perceptual properties. Of course the amount of reviews, hence subjects which can be explored, are limited, and each spectator would have a personal experience, as explained both through the conceptual framework and the insights arising from the project. The context of Euro-American contemporary theatre dance and specifically of these three works constitutes the particular reach of the project. I posit that it would be possible to extrapolate the methodology to other contexts in the future, as argued in Chapter 6. It would be extremely productive to do so in order to test the methodology as well as the conclusions achieved in this project.

The models of analysis were chosen to respond to the understanding of perceptual properties as complex, gestalt properties. In the case of movement qualities and sound-movement relationships, they follow systems proposed by recognised scholars—Laban and Jordan respectively. To illustrate and share my experience of spatial-rhythm, I used a model indebted to Laban’s work as well as Arnheim’s work in psychology of perception, but which was specifically designed for the project and constitutes a possible contribution to methods of dance analysis. The combination of the three models of analysis to explore these properties and their interactions was overall useful for this particular analysis and equally can be extrapolated to other case studies. Both the particular spatial-rhythm analysis model, and the approach to the study of interactions have the potential to be developed and strengthened in future work. This is especially true for the model of analysis for spatial-rhythm in terms of time-frame of work—as to analyse hundreds of still frames is disproportionately time-consuming. A possible development in this area would be to create a software or artificial intelligence capable of recognising the particular lines and areas as proposed

in the model, and the implications of these computer-based possibilities towards philosophical understandings of the spectator's experience of dance are enticing—as demonstrated by existing technology-based projects such as MotionBank (Motion Bank, 2019), for example.

Opposed to the idea of a "raw", "non-intellectual" view of emotions in dance (Rojo in Winship, 2013), this project proposed to make use of embodied cognition and enactive perception as theoretical framework to develop an understanding of the experience of emotion in contemporary theatre dance. Equally, it explored philosophical understandings of emotion, aesthetic experience, and expressiveness. The resulting understanding also supports the emergence of emotional import in the spectator's experience from the combination of perceptual properties—in turn complex properties resulting from physical properties. This understanding integrates contextual and background information. A dialogue was then created between the conceptual framework and the analysis of perceptual properties, through which I can articulate the proposal of the spectator's experience of contemporary dance as an embodied enactive experience, focusing on the observable features of the work but integrating the background of the spectator, as well as the context of the work. This argument is possible only through this dialogue between the philosophical approach and the analysis, which offers a comprehensive view of my own experience while allowing the case studies to illustrate the points being made. Through analysis as well as philosophical discussion, the project makes a claim for the importance of careful consideration of perceptual properties of contemporary theatre dance towards their emotional experience, combining existing knowledge in the field with analysis of practice to suggest a discussion on the spectator's emotional experience—and then also the choreographer's experience. By incorporating both dance analysis and philosophy of art, I propose a discussion that is not possible through either of these

disciplines alone, but only exists in the interaction between the two. I see this interaction between disciplines as key to a better understanding, but also as currently underused in both dance studies and philosophy of art.

Although the project is a fully written one, I believe my position as a practicing choreographer is vital here. My approach is guided by a personal choreographic interest in the issue of the spectator's experience of emotion, which directs the discussion in such a way that differentiates it from philosophical discussions. Dance analysis tends to focus discussions on the work of one particular artist and concentrates on drawing conclusions applicable to their work and not generalisable, whereas philosophy of art has often been accused of not paying enough attention to the particularities of dance as an art form (Langer, 1953; Beauquel, 2010). By situating myself within the development of philosophy of dance I propose to bridge the separation between dance analysis and philosophy of art. My project is then relevant for both philosophers of dance and art, and dance practitioners. Although it is challenging to speak to two such diverse groups, the project creates a common ground from which the benefit of this interdisciplinary feedback can be explored. I expect benefits reaching to both disciplines: Philosophy of art by providing insight on an art form that arguably is less often explored in discussions of expression; and Dance studies by shedding light on aspects of the experience of emotion, a phenomenon that, although part of everyday discourse, has not often been analysed in depth within dance academia.

Adding to this, there is limited scholarly work on the practitioners in this project, Maliphant and Pite. By focusing on particular characteristics of their work and discussing them within a philosophical framework, this research project will contribute to a better understanding of their practice. By analysing the work of different practitioners it is also possible to gather momentum for future wider

discussion, not centred on these particular choreographers but using them as examples from which to extrapolate ideas, and as illustrations for the philosophical debate. In this sense, I understand the chosen choreographers as representative of twenty-first century Euro-American contemporary theatre dance, which would allow certain insights to be extrapolated to other cases, always with further research. Equally, as discussed, to apply it in the future to dance works outside of this Euro-American context would be very interesting and would allow develop answers to further questions. The project, however, needed the narrow focus in order to develop both the method and the discussion in-depth. The insights themselves, then, can only be generalised to other cases of a similar context—and cautiously. However the methodology and overall discussion can be extended in the near future.

The project can inform future research studies, being a bridge between several areas that can be developed in as many directions. First of these is the psychological direction, more specifically neuropsychological, in terms of perception of dance. This area could be developed in order to understand better how emotional import is perceived, but also how the perceptual properties themselves are perceived from the physical properties, in scientific studies with audience subjects and quantifiable measures. This could allow discussion on the correlation versus causality issue of experience of emotional import from the perceptual properties of the work. Further studies can also be realised in relation to embodied cognition and emotion, and equally embodied cognition and dance, this last area being one of elevated interest in the field of dance studies at the moment.

Finally, the use of this kind of analysis and observation can inform the work of choreographers, both those working with narrative to support it from the in-depth understanding of perceptual properties, and those working in a more abstract manner to be more aware of the way in which emotion can also emerge from abstraction. While

I believe that a more in-depth understanding of the spectator's experience of emotion in dance will help choreographers and dancers, it will not give them a glossary to create highly emotional performances. Part of this, as discussed, has to do with the fact that choreographers already know to use their own experience as the first audience members to their work. Continuing this area of application, then, would be a further area of research. The experience and agency of the dancer in the creative process also needs to be developed in this context of emotional import as emergent from perceptual properties. All these further areas would provide a more complete understanding of the experience of emotion in contemporary dance, which would enrich both the work of dancers and choreographers, the field of dance studies, and, eventually through these, the spectator's experience itself, expanding the findings to a potential broader reach.

This project presented a particular view in the experience of emotion in relation to works of dance. Firstly, a view constituted by two ways of breaking the experience into its underlying structures—dance analysis and analytic philosophy. And secondly a multifaceted view in the form of a reflection from the informed spectator's point of view, but also from my experience as choreographer—especially by looking at my own work. Although the proposed conceptualisation is indebted to cognitive science, the project did not apply cognitive science to a dance example but observed and analysed experience allowing the ideas to emerge from dance practice. By engaging with this particular methodology the project encountered epistemological and ontological questions, some of which were faced through the thesis, others which can open future paths for research. In its specific context of emotion in dance, the thesis engaged with the question, already posed by Varela et al. of 'what are the relations of body and mind in actual experience' (2016/1991: 30), but also with Davies's question about 'the relationship between the generative act that brings a work into existence

and the receptive act that is a proper appreciation of that work' (2004: 26). The proposed answer, as discussed, opens up a space of groundlessness, which occasionally feels intensely intimidating, but which is both the place of work for philosophy, and a possible potentiator of artistic creativity. In being groundless, the space for further exploration of the experience of emotion in contemporary theatre dance is full of possibility.

The thesis then offered the proposal that the experience of emotion in Euro-American contemporary theatre dance is an embodied enacted perceptual process. This process focuses on the features of the work, but aspects of both the background of the spectator and the context of the work and the performance are integrated in perception through the conceptualisation proposed for the experience—that is, through enactive perception and embodied cognition. This perspective allows for a comprehensive understanding of the experience of emotion in both spectator and choreographer, creating a bridge between the theoretical and movement analysis approaches and between theoretical research and dance practice. The focus on the features of the work allows for theory to emerge from the analysis of the medium of dance per se, and this potentiates possible repercussions in practice. By looking into the work it is possible to argue for dance itself—its materials, its structures—as a medium of meaningful and emotional communication. Dance does not need to refer to anything outside itself to justify its emotional power. To some extent, this idea links with current discussions on dance as philosophical activity, but in this case dance does not need to be philosophy, it can be its own form of embodied cognition.

Appendix I: *Afterlight (Part One)* reviews

AUTHOR	YEAR	PUBLICATION	DANCER
Anderson, Zoe	2009	*The Independent*	Daniel Proietto
Brown, Ismene	2009	*The Arts Desk*	Daniel Proietto
Crisp, Clement	2009	*Financial Times*	Daniel Proietto
Jennings, Luke	2009	*The Guardian*	Daniel Proietto
Liber, Vera	2009	*Theatre Review*	Daniel Proietto
Mackrell, Judith	2009	*The Guardian*	Daniel Proietto
Mead, David	2009	*Ballet Dance Magazine*	Daniel Proietto
Monahan, Mark	2009	*The Telegraph*	Daniel Proietto
Norman, Neil	2009	*Sunday Express*	Daniel Proietto
Watts, Graham	2009	*LondonDance*	Daniel Proietto
Anderson, Zoe	2010	*The Independent*	Daniel Proietto
Brown, Ismene	2010	*The Arts Desk*	Daniel Proietto
Costello, Libby	2010	*Londonist*	Daniel Proietto
Crompton, Sarah	2010	*The Telegraph*	Daniel Proietto
Liber, Vera	2010	*Theatre Review*	Daniel Proietto
Mackrell, Judith	2010	*The Guardian*	Daniel Proietto
Smith, Lise	2010	*LondonDance*	Daniel Proietto
Taylor, Julie	2010	*Bachtrack*	Daniel Proietto
Cowan-Turner, Georgie	2017	*The Upcoming*	Daniel Proietto
Elderkin, Rachel	2017	*Exeunt Magazine*	Daniel Proietto
Foyer, Maggie	2017	*Seeing Dance*	Daniel Proietto
Guerreiro, Teresa	2017	*Culture Whisper*	Daniel Proietto
Parry, Jann	2017	*DanceTabs*	Daniel Proietto
Philpott, Maryam	2017	*The Reviews Hub*	Daniel Proietto
Sweeney, Stuart	2017	*Critical Dance*	Daniel Proietto
Bayes, Honour	2011	*Exeunt Magazine*	Daniel Proietto
Watts, Graham	2011	*LondonDance*	Daniel Proietto
Tomalin, Jo	2012	*Forallevents.info*	Thomasin Gülgeç
Ulrich, Allan	2012	*SFGate*	Thomasin Gülgeç
Liber, Vera	2013	*Theatre Review*	Thomasin Gülgeç
Levene, Louise	2014	*Financial Times*	Thomasin Gülgeç
Talijancic, Ivan	2014	*Bachtrack*	Thomasin Gülgeç
Wood, Darrell	2014	*NYC Dance Stuff*	Thomasin Gülgeç

Appendix II: *Dark Matters* reviews

AUTHOR	YEAR	PUBLICATION	DANCER
Gauthier, Natasha	2009	*Ottawa Citizen*	Jermaine Maurice Spivey
Dickinson, Peter	2010	*Performance, Place, and Politics. Blog*	Jermaine Maurice Spivey
Johnson, Robert	2010	*New Jersey Online*	Jermaine Maurice Spivey
La Rocco, Claudia	2010	*The New York Times*	Jermaine Maurice Spivey
Lancaster, Lynne	2010	*Dance Informa Magazine*	Jermaine Maurice Spivey
Potter, Michelle	2010	*Michelle Potter. Blog*	Jermaine Maurice Spivey
Smith, Janet-Preview	2010	*The Georgia Straight*	Jermaine Maurice Spivey
Smith, Janet-Review	2010	*The Georgia Straight*	Jermaine Maurice Spivey
Batson, Quinn	2011	*Off Off Off*	Jermaine Maurice Spivey
Upchurch, Michael	2011	*Seattle Times*	Jermaine Maurice Spivey
Siegel, Marcia	2011	*The Portland Phoenix*	Jermaine Maurice Spivey
Citron, Paula	2012	*The Globe and Mail*	Jermaine Maurice Spivey
Jocelyn, Matthew	2012	*Canadian Stage*	Jermaine Maurice Spivey
Leung, Wayne	2012	*Mooney on Theatre*	Jermaine Maurice Spivey
Scott, Aaron	2012	*Portland Monthly*	Jermaine Maurice Spivey
Thomas, Catherine	2012	*The Oregonian, Oregon Live*	Jermaine Maurice Spivey

Appendix III: Contents of the Supplementary Materials DVD/USB (For further reference)

Afterlight (Part One)

Edited stills
Full video
Scene 3.2.1 – Video extract and corresponding still frames
Scene 3.2.2 – Video extract and corresponding still frames
Scene 3.2.3 – Video extract and corresponding still frames
Scene 3.2.4 – Video extract and corresponding still frames
Scene 3.2.5 – Video extract and corresponding still frames
Scene 3.2.6 – Video extract and corresponding still frames

Dark Matters Solo

Edited stills
Full video of solo
Scene 4.2.1 – Video extract and corresponding still frames
Scene 4.2.2 – Video extract and corresponding still frames
Scene 4.2.3 – Video extract and corresponding still frames
Scene 4.2.4 – Video extract and corresponding still frames
Scene 4.2.5 – Video extract and corresponding still frames
Scene 4.2.6 – Video extract and corresponding still frames
Scene 4.2.7 – Video extract and corresponding still frames
Speech analysis

Petrichor Solo

Edited stills
Full work in 2016 (lower resolution in DVD, higher in USB)
Full work in 2017 (lower resolution in DVD, higher in USB)
Video of Solo
Scene 5.2.1 – Video extract and corresponding still frames
Scene 5.2.2 – Video extract and corresponding still frames
Scene 5.2.3 – Video extract and corresponding still frames
Scene 5.2.4 – Video extract and corresponding still frames
Scene 5.2.5 – Video extract and corresponding still frames
Scene 5.2.6 – Video extract and corresponding still frames
Scene 5.2.7 – Video extract and corresponding still frames
Sound analysis

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