Towards an 'Embodied Poetics':
An Exploration of Devising Processes Based on the
Work of Jacques Lecoq and Gaston Bachelard

Submitted by Ellie Nixon, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Performance Practice (Drama), September 2015.

This thesis is available for Library use on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Signature:

Abstract

Taking as its focus the 'actor-creator's' process in devising practices, this study explores the notion of the 'poetic body' developed by French theatre pedagogue Jacques Lecoq (1921 - 1999) and the writings of French philosopher Gaston Bachelard (1884 - 1962) on the 'poetics of imagination.' The overarching aim is to originate a new 'embodied poetics' whereby the sensate, feeling body actively explores correspondences with the 'material elements' of earth, air, fire and water. These are experienced as 'poeticising substances' – catalysts and conductors for an embodied imagination. More specifically, this thesis asks the following question:

What new understandings can a relational encounter between Lecoq's pedagogy and Bachelard's 'poetic imagining' reveal about the 'poetic body' and how might these new understandings originate a devising process?

I combine three solo practical projects with accompanying written analysis, to first interrogate the working methods I have inherited as a practitioner and teacher since my time as a student at the Lecoq School, from 1987 to 1989. This is followed by an embodied exploration of Bachelard's 'poetic imagining' process through my own practice. In the final project, I develop an 'embodied poetics' for devising, based on the 'actor-creator's' active participation with the world and a recognition that the poeticising 'I' is intimately entwined with the material elemental substances that comprise it. In considering the material elements as originating substances for an imagining body, their dialectic qualities offer infinite possibilities for a permanent renewal, expansion and transformation of practice.

This study also proposes a new reading of Lecoq's notion of the 'poetic body' from an embodied perspective. Equally, in applying Bachelard's 'poetic imagining' to the devising process, I seek to revivify and reposition his philosophical standpoint from a contemporary perspective within the field of interdisciplinary practices.

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures

List of Accompanying Material

DVD-ROM (1)

SECTION 1: Chapter Two - Practical Project 1
'Towards an Embodied Understanding of Jacques Lecoq's 'Poetic Body'
Presentation in Full

Extract 1: Neutral Mask: A Territory of Truth

Extract 2: Neutral Mask: Calibrating Inner Feeling and Outer Expression

Extract 3: The Mimetic Faculty

Extract 4: Voice Recording of Macchu Picchu by Pablo Neruda in Spanish / English

Extract 5: Transposition - The Process of Abstraction

SECTION 2: Chapter Four - Practical Project 2
An Embodied Exploration of Gaston Bachelard's 'Poetics of Reverie'
Presentation in Full

Extract 1: Exploring Embodied Reverie

Extract 2: Convergence of the Real and the Unreal

Extract 3: Dancing with the Disappeared

SECTION 3: Chapter Five - Practical Project 3
Trying to Reach the Sea: Towards a New Poetics for Devising through an exploration of Jacques Lecoq and Gaston Bachelard in Dialogue
Presentation in Full

Extract 1 - Improvising with Feldenkrais

Extract 2 - Exploring Poetic Intentionality

Extract 3 - The Filtering Process

Introduction

La brume
laisse à l'imagination
le soin de terminer
l'image.

Mist
leaves the completion
of the image
to the imagination.

(Lecoq 1998, my translation)

This study examines the notion of the 'poetic body' held by the French theatre pedagogue Jacques Lecoq (1921 - 1999) and the writings of the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard (1884 - 1962) on 'poetic imagination,' with a specific focus on the 'actor-creator's' process in devised theatre practice. Through the development of a practical inquiry composed of three solo projects and accompanying written analysis, the study also draws on my experience as a student with Lecoq from 1987 to 1989 in order to move towards a deeper, more expansive understanding of the 'poetic body.' Secondly, and of equal significance to this inquiry, is an embodied exploration of Bachelard's affirmation that the external world, individual consciousness and the body's senses are by nature interwoven and that the material elements of earth, air, fire and water are the essential forces that mobilise the imagination. The study culminates in bringing Lecoq and Bachelard together in an interdisciplinary relational encounter through my own practice. The overarching aim is to originate a new poetics whereby the actor-creator's embodied engagement with

the material elements of earth, air, fire and water, acts as the catalyst for originating devised performance.

The quote by Lecoq at the start of this introduction points to the heart of the study, in its allusion to the ephemeral yet dynamic relationship between the external world and the imagining process. In choosing the natural phenomenon of 'mist,' Lecoq acknowledges the intangibility, indeterminacy and porosity of such a relationship, whilst also pointing towards the fundamental basis of his pedagogy: a dialogue between 'what we can observe around us, and the imagination of the theatre' (Lecoq 2006: 112). The imaginative potential of the relationship between the body and the external world proposed by Lecoq, in which 'one side of our skin is used to connect with the exterior world and the other side to connect with our own interior world' (*ibid*. 112), offers compelling possibilities for an attentive analysis of Bachelard's reflections on the poeticising qualities of the material elements of earth, air, fire, water, applied to the devising process. Moreover, in proposing a new embodied exploration of Bachelard's theory of creative consciousness, I seek to revivify and reposition Bachelard's philosophical standpoint from a contemporary perspective within the field of interdisciplinary practices.

Underpinning this inquiry, the primary research question is as follows:

What new understandings can a relational encounter between Lecoq's pedagogy and Bachelard's 'poetic imagining' reveal about the' poetic body,' and how might these new understandings originate a devising process?

Poiesis: Initial Definitions

The term 'poetic' is an elusive one with a good deal of ambiguity attached to it. In attempting to move towards a deeper understanding of Lecoq's 'poetic body,' it is important to first establish his view that the 'poetic,' 'is there precisely to show there are things we cannot define. Things which only poetry can define, that is what is between words, what's invisible' (Lecoq interviewed in Roy and Carasso DVD, 1999). Indeed, the 'poetic' and its relationship to the body is identified as central to Lecoq's pedagogy by Giovanni Fusetti, when he writes, 'The actor performer is an artist and first of all a poet. His language is the body' (Fusetti & Willson 2002). In order to clarify Lecoq's position, it is useful to point out that his understanding of the body parallels Maurice Merleau Ponty's view of the body as a 'whole structure of existence' (Steeves 2004: 2), and his assertion that at the heart of embodiment lies our 'imaginative ability to modify the natural skills of the body into free and creative modes of existence' (*ibid*. 2). From this perspective, the 'poetic body' for Lecoq can best be described as a body that actively imagines, or in other words, an 'imagining body.'

Throughout the study my use and application of the term 'poetic imagination' is based on Bachelard's definition, in which he considers the imagination as an activity located in the mind. Through an exploration of his own personal responses to carefully selected extracts of poetry, literature and art, Bachelard asserts a creative process based on the perpetual intertwining of subject and object, in which the poem, work of art or literature engenders a dynamic of awakening of the receiver through intentional consciousness or '*reverie*'. He uses the terms 'imagining consciousness,' 'poetic imagining' and 'poetic consciousness' interchangeably, to refer to the active process of generating

new images. It is important to add here, as Richard Kearney observes, that Bachelard's 'poetic imagining' is based on the premise that 'we are not determined by anything, but re-create ourselves in reponse to archetypal correspondences between consciousness and matter' (Kearney 1998: 107). 'Poetic imagining' for Bachelard then, not only refers to the written word and neither is it prescriptive in its approach. Rather, it is, a state of becoming and renewal.

Building on these initial observations, it is pertinent to offer an indication of how I develop the term 'embodied poetics'. Taking as its focus, an 'embodied' devising process in which the body is understood as 'the main driver to both create and perform the work' (Loukes 2013: 195), I adopt Derek Whitehead's model of *poiesis* in the making of an artwork as synonymous with something very much 'in process' or 'brought into being' (Whitehead 2: 2003). Correspondingly, this study explores the interstice, whereby the body actively mediates between inner and outer worlds, negotiating the known and unknown, the material and the immaterial, the sensation and the realisation, the said and the unsaid, the visible and the invisible, the impression and the expression, the real and the imaginary. Thus the 'embodied poetics' I attempt to un-pack through the course of this study, is centred on the projective and inventive interplay between my sensate body and the material elements. Correspondingly, I argue that this process offers a unique possibility for illuminating the way in which I as the actor-creator shift from following in the footsteps of a discipline or tradition of making, to opening myself up to the transformation of my practice, in essence to developing my own 'poetic body.'

Outline of Thesis

In order to frame the progression of the study it is useful to briefly outline the structure of the thesis and to indicate the interconnections between the written and practical elements. Chapters One and Two of the thesis establish the foundations of the inquiry. Drawing on the key principles and characteristics of Jacques Lecoq's pedagogical approach and my own experience as one of his students, I address his notion of the 'poetic body' and scrutinise the methods and processes by which he accesses this faculty in his students, from an embodied perspective. Chapters Three and Four of the thesis shift focus in order to interrogate Gaston Bachelard's phenomenology of the imagination and trace the journey from his early work on the philosophy of science towards his formulation of the imagination as the essential driving force in the reality of human experience.

The practical element interrogates how his thinking and unique vocabulary concerning the 'poetic imagining' of the mind might be embodied. The final chapter of the study analyses the third practical project, which serves as a platform for exploring the discoveries and challenges of applying the reciprocity between Bachelard and Lecoq through my own practice to propose a new devising process.

In keeping with the chronological structure of the study, the practical projects are designed to increase incrementally in depth and complexity, whereas the accompanying written element reflects on and interrogates the practice from a more analytical stance. As such, the dynamic relationship between the analytical and experiential and the ways in which they inform each other are key

to the methodological framing. These interactional opportunities are addressed

in the literature review section on Practice and Research and Methodology

section of this introduction. In Figure 1, I have set out the progression of the

study in visual form.

Fig. 1. Progression of the Study

- **LECOQ**
- **Chapter One:** The key principles, characteristics and points of access for the 'actor-creator'.
- **Chapter Two:** Towards an embodied understanding of Lecoq's 'Poetic Body'.

P P 1: Lecoq - The 'Poetic Body'

P P 2: Bachelard - 'Poetic Imagining'

- **BACHELARD**
- **Chapter Three:** Gaston Bachelard's 'Poetic Imagination'.
- **Chapter Four:** An embodied Exploration of Bachelard's poetics

P P 3: 'Trying to Reach the Sea'

- **TOWARDS A NEW EMBODIED POETICS FOR DEVISING**
- **Chapter 5:** Bachelard & Lecoq in dialogue through my own practice.
- **Conclusion**

Rationale

My personal motives for undertaking this study into the nature and possibilities of the 'poetic body' have emerged from my experience of being a student with Lecoq, whose teachings have profoundly influenced my professional and personal development both as a practitioner and teacher. Interestingly, during my two years at the Jacques Lecoq International Theatre School (1987 to 1989), I have no recollection of Lecoq referring directly to or even mentioning the notion of the 'poetic body.' My first year at the school coincided with the publication of his very first book, *Le Théâtre du Geste - Mimes et Acteurs* (1987) in which there is no in-depth analysis of the term. Instead, we, his students, experienced the qualities and facets of the 'poetic body' implicitly through a process of discovery and, moreover, without the hindsight of his subsequent book published just two years before his death, *Le Corps Poétique, un enseignement de la creation théâtrale (*1997), in which he shares his personal philosophy and refers for the first time to the notion of the 'poetic body' as crucial to his pedagogical approach.

When *Le Corps Poétique* was first published I had been working professionally for eleven years as artistic director of the La Mancha Theatre Company, established in 1989 and as co-founder and teacher of the La Mancha International School of Image and Gesture in Santiago founded in 1995. Subsequently, over the years, I acquired three versions of the book, one in French: *Le Corps Poétique, un enseignement de la creation théâtrale* (1997), another in Spanish: *El Cuerpo Poético. Una pedagogía de la creación teatral* (2003) and a third English version: *The Moving Body (Le Corps poétique), Teaching creative theatre* (2000). Curiously, in this last version the words

'poetic body' had been replaced with 'the moving body.' I did not question this anomaly for several years until I began work on a devised theatre piece titled *'Arquitectura del Aire' (Aerial Architecture)* in Chile, 2006. [1] Centred on the work of the French artist Yves Klein (1928 - 1962), the nature of this production compelled me to interrogate the notion of the poetic through my practice.

Yves Klein's fascination with the elemental forces of nature and the creative process, were accompanied by the abstract ideas of the immaterial, the infinite, the absolute and the void. His invention of a patented unique tone of blue, constituting almost two hundred blue monochrome paintings, suggests an attempt to free the viewer from the confines of the object and instead, open up to the power of experience. How could I transmit this world theatrically? How could I make a piece of theatre about someone who wanted to paint space and not the objects that filled it? There are several observations I would like to make about this performance that led me to consider the 'poetic body' as far more elusive and profound than a body simply moving in space. [2]

Firstly, in the development of the performance, the natural elements of earth, air, fire and water, became rich sources of inspiration and were approached instinctively through the bodies of the actors. Klein's fascination with the element of air imbued the developing work with sensations of weightlessness, of the transformative and the mutable. During the rehearsal process I sensed

---

[1] 'Arquitectura del Aire' was performed in Santiago, Chile (2006) in *El Teatro Mori*, by La Mancha Theatre Company, co-devised with the actors and directed by Ellie Nixon.
[2] I believe that Klein attended Bachelard's lectures at the Sorbonne. His mother (the artist Marie Raymond) gave Klein the book, *Air and Dreams* by Gaston Bachelard. In Klein's 1959 lecture at the Sorbonne, he acknowledges his debt to Bachelard: 'The world is on the far side of an unsilvered mirror, there is an imaginary beyond, a beyond pure and insubstantial, and that is the dwelling place of Bachelard's beautiful phrase: 'First there is nothing, next there is depth of nothingness, then a profundity of blue' (Bachelard 2002: 16).

the actors increasingly shift from weighted and grounded beings to vaporous and mercurial presences. Klein also made 'fire paintings,' holding paper up to flames, which was an aspect also explored and incorporated into the production. However, while the actors underwent Lecoq's process of initially 'identifying' physically with the element of fire, the work seemed to shift to another plain, one that extended beyond a mere reconstruction of Klein's work, but that somehow launched his ideas into an independent autonomous space, from the derivative towards the projective; a devised project that now sustained a life of its own. I understood then that the work operated on another level and for the first time, this project made me highly sensitive to the significance of Lecoq's term 'poetic.' His ambition was for his students to 'invent their own theatre, or to interpret written texts, if they so desire, but in new ways' (Lecoq 2000:18). I had reached this point, but was unaware of how I had arrived.

As a consequence of researching the life, works and influences on Klein's work, I discovered the writings of the French philosopher, Gaston Bachelard (1884 - 1962). The more I read Bachelard's writings on the phenomenology of the imagination, the more I sensed strong synergies and resonances with Lecoq's teaching approach. It is not yet known whether Bachelard knew of Lecoq's work, yet Lecoq acknowledges Bachelard as an influence on the development of his pedagogical approach, citing Bachelard's writings as a source for further research in his book *Le Corps Poétique* (Lecoq 2000: 44) and includes an extract from Bachelard's, *L'air et les songes*, (*Air and Dreams, ibid*: 43). An assumed commonality therefore exists, yet I felt the need to interrogate the deeper connections between the two. Was there an opportunity to push this interaction in order to reach a deeper understanding of the 'poetic body'?

The process of researching, developing and constructing *'Arquitectura del Aire'* *(Aerial Architecture)*, provoked unforeseen synergies and interconnections between the artist Yves Klein, the philosopher Gaston Bachelard and, obliquely through my own practice, Jacques Lecoq. Coincidentally, this also marked my first independent project under the auspices of La Mancha Theatre Company. Whereas I had always worked in collaboration with my long-term colleague, the Chilean director, Rodrigo Malbrán, this solo opportunity was to provoke and originate a compelling shift in my personal artistic direction as an 'actor-creator.' Was this shift a result of working alone, or was it provoked and encouraged by an embodied encounter with the natural elements of Klein's work?

In accordance with the above, my desire to work towards identifying and moving towards pinning down the notion of the 'poetic body' is rooted in the nature of my practice, in the form of what Professor Baz Kershaw describes as a 'hunch': 'Puzzles and riddles can be 'solved' by analysis, but equally - they can require intuition, insight and maybe even instinct to determine their potential as creative springboards for performance research' (Kershaw 2009: 113). Thus, a 'hunch' for Kershaw, becomes 'a dynamic addition to the practice-as-research lexicon of starting-point terms, because 'hunches' - or, 'intui-tions' can issue in new aesthetic forms' (*ibid*. 113). Additionally, I have taught an adapted version of Lecoq's entire two-year process fourteen times consecutively at the La Mancha School.[3] I believe that this set of experiences over a number of years, places me in a unique position to approach this research through my practice.

---

[3] See my forthcoming chapter: 'La Mancha Theatre Company and School – Chile: An Enactive Paradigm' in forthcoming publication of *The Routledge Companion to Jacques Lecoq,* edited by Mark Evans and Rick Kemp.

At the time of writing this study, a resurgence of recent and forthcoming academic and practical interest in Lecoq's work is most certainly bringing new insights into his approach and the legacy of the school.[4] These publications will hopefully go some way to redress the attitudes and misconceptions that have shaped and clouded the dominant British view of Lecoq's contribution to contemporary theatre, in order to place him more resolutely as a central figure in the Western canon of theatre pedagogy and theatre-making. My intention in this study is to contribute to a re-evaluation of his work in an aspect which has proven considerably resistant to academic scrutiny, that of the 'poetic body.' As I mention earlier in the introduction this may be in part due to its necessarily elusive nature, yet as I propose over the course of this study, it is precisely this intangible and provocative quality that crucially distinguishes Lecoq's pedagogical approach. With this in mind, far from offering a definitive explanation of the 'poetic body,' which would clearly stifle its projective and expansive possibilities, my intention is that in rendering explicit a personal description of the 'poeticising process' through my own body, I may exemplify Lecoq's overriding desire for his students to discover their own making process. As such, this study aims to capture how Lecoq's notion of the 'poetic body' places the actor-creator in a permanent state of discovery leading to a perpetual renewal and transformation of practice.

Similarly, in declaring my interest in Bachelard, I attempt to re-examine his writings from an embodied perspective, as a means of refiguring their significance and contribution to contemporary notions of the relationship between the body and the imagination. If the 1960s witnessed the huge

---

[4] Of particular significance is the forthcoming publication mentioned above.

popularity of Bachelard's phenomenology of the imagination, by the mid 1970s

his presence had notably receded. His fluctuating popularity and

marginalisation to the peripheries of literary criticism, philosophy and scientific

study, is arguably attributable to an increasing interest in structuralism and, as

Colette Gaudin suggests, he became '*depassé*'' (Gaudin 2005: xi), or out of

step with contemporary critical theories. This is a view corroborated by Susan

Kozel, who acknowledges phenomenology's waning influence as a contributing

factor:

> From the 1980s to the 1990s it became unfashionable to study
> phenomenology, almost politically suspect in the area of textual
> deconstruction and psychoanalysis, the time of the fragmentation of
> the body, identity, and the subject.
>
> (Kozel 2007: 4)

I contend that contemporary academic interest in the associated areas of

embodiment and cognitive science, addressed further on in the literature review

of this introduction, offers a timely opportunity for a reconsideration of both

Bachelard and Lecoq's work in light of these new understandings. Indeed, since

Bachelard's death in 1962, the rupture of the Cartesian mind/body divide offers a

compelling set of conditions for re-examining and re-positioning his

phenomenology of the imagination from an embodied perspective. Thus, in the

perceived limitations of Bachelard's approach lie its strengths. Criticised for being

obtuse and unclear, Bachelard's writings fail to make distinctions or neatly

categorise. It is futile, Gaudin stresses, to make reductive comparisons, when the

true unity in Bachelard's entire body of work, lies in John Hyppolite's definition of

his work as 'a project of total opening [*ouverture intégrale*]' (Hyppolite cited in

Gaudin 2005: xvi).

The rich complexities of Bachelard's reveries have been challenged for their evident lack of precision, yet the unique value of Bachelard's work within the context of this study lies in his rejection of fixity:

> The voyage into distant worlds of the imaginary truly conducts a dynamic psyche only if it takes the shape of a voyage into the land of the infinite […]. The very law of poetic expression is to go beyond thought.
>
> (Bachelard cited in Gaudin 2005: 23)

The importance of reconsidering the complexities and seemingly unstable concepts of Bachelard's approach and the provocations and interrogations that this provokes, allows me to interrogate the 'poetic body' from an alternative methodological perspective, which I expand upon in the methodological section of this introduction. I support Gaudin's assertion, made over twenty years ago, that it is time to re-read Bachelard with the benefit of distance and the renewed critical pluralism of our times.

Furthermore, devising practices generate a compelling opportunity for theatre to exist in a condition of perpetual flux and therefore invite continued scrutiny. Both Lecoq and Bachelard's ideas on the imagination and how we make meaning in the process of performance-making are particularly relevant to contemporary practitioners and 'actor-creators' working in the field of devised performance and, more specifically, to Lecoq graduates who have gone on to develop their own unique modes of making. In recent years, a host of national and international theatre companies who devise their own work have generated academic and artistic interest, not only in contemporary theatre practice, but also in theatre education. More broadly, I would argue that an investigation of my unique experience from an embodied perspective, acknowledges the

breadth of the interdisciplinary field that drama is increasingly attempting to negotiate. Correspondingly, while this thesis seeks to have a tangible bearing on the related disciplines of dance, movement, live art and movement awareness practices, where issues surrounding the performing body and imagination have been subjected to academic inquiry, it is also relevant to the wider fields of cognitive science, phenomenology, neuroscience and ecological debate.

Research Questions

The primary research question outlined earlier consists of several components, which can be further broken down and explored in incremental depth and complexity through the relationship between the practical and written elements of the thesis. What follows are the more specific questions, which the study aims to address:

What is the poetic body in Lecoq's work and what are the methods and processes by which Jacques Lecoq's work accesses the poetic dimensions of the actor/creator's body? (Addressed in Chapters One and Two)

How does Gaston Bachelard's work on the philosophy of the imagination inform a deeper understanding of the 'Poetic Body' from 'impression' to 'expression'? (Addressed in Chapters Three and Four)

What new understandings can a relational encounter between Lecoq's pedagogy and Bachelard's 'poetic imagining' reveal about the' poetic body' and

how might these understandings originate an approach to devising? (Addressed primarily in Chapter Five)

Literature Review

The bibliographical research of this thesis comprised both primary and secondary sources in English, French and Spanish. The intention of the literature review is to examine the historical and current literature related to the area of investigation, 'the poetic body;' partly to clarify the terms used in this thesis and partly to pinpoint existing gaps that open up possibilities for placing Lecoq and Bachelard in dialogue through the practical element of the thesis. The varying language sources reflect the international context of the study and additionally, my personal experience of having developed my teaching and practice in all three languages. The main categories of bibliographical research comprise published works by and about Jacques Lecoq; published works by and on Gaston Bachelard and a further category on the 'actor-creator.' This is followed by an inquiry into the relationship between embodiment and performance. The literature review finalises with a consideration of publications that consider artistic practice as a form of academic research. Figure 2, represents the alignment of these areas of inquiry in the following diagram:

Fig. 2. Diagram of the Literature Review
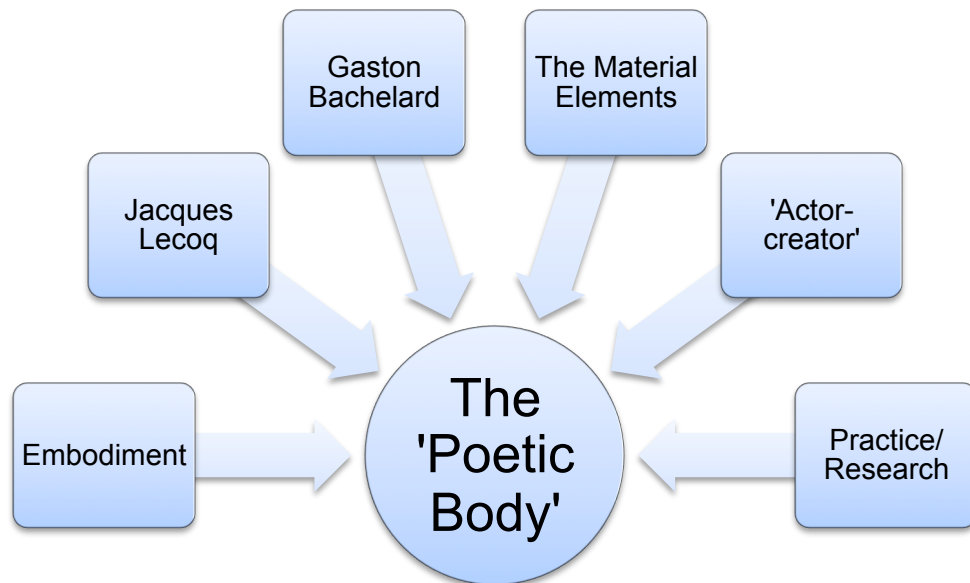
Complementary material in philosophy and anthropology relating to the topic also contribute to the study. In addition to literary resources, I include Lecoq's film, *Les Deux Voyages de Jacques Lecoq* (1999) as well as a recorded and transcribed personal interview with Mme Fay Lecoq (Appendix 1) all of which offer a deeper insight into his pedagogy.

Jacques Lecoq and The 'Poetic Body'

In the first category, the key supporting text of this inquiry is Jacques Lecoq's own exposition of the essential principles of his teachings developed over more than forty years: *Le Corps Poétique, un enseignement de la creation théâtrale* (1997), in which Lecoq discusses his understanding of the 'poetic body' within the context of his pedagogical approach. Lecoq offers no single definition of the term, but refers more commonly to a 'universal poetic sense,' which he locates in an abstract dimension, 'made up of spaces, lights, colours, materials, sounds,

which can be found in all of us' (Lecoq 2000: 46). It is universal because our experiences with the external world through the senses have been absorbed into the body and 'constitute our common heritage' (*ibid.* 46). Ultimately, Lecoq's teaching method seeks to develop the students' own creativity, but in such a way as 'not to limit itself to life as it is, or as it seems' (*ibid.* 46). Thus, there is an implication here that the connection between the body and the world is the catalyst for the creative process.

Lecoq returns to this theme when discussing the analysis of the dynamics of nature. He connects the four essential elements of earth, air, fire and water and the ways in which they can be experienced through the body. In summing up the first year of his School, he refers to the 'poetic depths of words, colours, sounds' (*ibid.* 97). Echoes of this aspect of his teaching appear in his explanation of *The Laboratory for the Study of Movement* (2007), a distinct yet related course at the School that explores more specifically the relationship between body and space: 'it teaches how to construct the invisible, how to give body and movement to things which seem to have none' (*ibid*. 157). Lecoq's writings reveal the ways in which he sought to access the poetic through the body. Similarly, he describes the way in which his teaching of the four elements is applied to the creation of character, but does not, as far as I am aware, extend this aspect in any depth to the application of the four elements as part of a devising process.

Pertinent to this study, is Lecoq's explanation of the *mimodynamic* process, a term borrowed by Lecoq from the French anthropologist Marcel Jousse (1886 - 1961), to suggest that the relationship between the internal experience and the outside world is not fixed, but rather exists in a state of perpetual flux. This moving back and forth between the real and the imaginary is at the heart of this

inquiry and arguably, encompasses Lecoq's entire pedagogical philosophy.

Ten years earlier, Lecoq published *Le théâtre du geste (*1987*)* in collaboration with other authors, practitioners and thinkers. This publication focuses on the history of gestural theatre from ancient history to the present day. A series of chapters by and interviews with Lecoq are interspersed with photographic documentation, combined with interviews and perspectives from other sources. While this publication does not consider the notion of *poiesis* in depth, Lecoq acquaints the reader with his fundamental stance on the difference between mimicry and mime, establishing the notion of mime as a dynamic exchange between the real and the imaginary, which underpins his teaching approach and connects directly to the focus of this study.

Lecoq and the Lineage of Copeau

The locus of Lecoq's teaching approach can be traced back to French theatre director, actor, writer and teacher Jacques Copeau (1879 - 1949). While other significant figures have shaped his work such as, Charles Dullin (1885 - 1949); Anton Artaud (1896 - 1948); Louis Jouvet (1887 - 1951); Jean-Louis Barrault (1910 - 1994) and Jean Dasté (1904 - 94), Copeau is the principle historical figure aligning Lecoq's pedagogical approach to French theatre traditions concerned with the central role of the actor and the actor's body as the catalyst for a revitalisation of and renewal of theatre.

In his book *Relational Aesthetics* (2002), French art critic Nicholas Bourriaud delineates the beginning of the twentieth century as 'the arena for a struggle between two visions of the world: a modest, rationalist conception, hailing from the eighteenth century, and a philosophy of spontaneity and liberation through

the irrational (Dada, Surrealism, the Situationists)' (Bourriaud 2002: 12). At the

time of Lecoq's birth in 1921, this rift was exemplified in art by the German

Expressionists and Italian Futurists who fractured and blurred the boundaries

between the fictive and the real. In theatre, playwrights, notably Alfred Jarry,

Pirandello, Apollinaire and Vladimir Mayakovsy, explored the intangible world of

dreams, the immaterial and the absurd, clashing violently with the naturalists'

commitment to truth and tangible materiality. In his book *Theatre of Movement*

and Gesture, Lecoq describes this moment as:

> [A] time to rethink the concept of theatre, time to sweep away
> the disorder, greed and extreme self-centredness that had
> settled. It was time to rebuild a theatre that would use poetry
> to elevate an audience above the surrounding mediocrity.

(Lecoq 2006: 38)

Accounts of theatrical innovation and radical repositioning of theatre at this time

are well documented. For instance, David Graver in *The Aesthetics of*

Disturbance describes how Brecht and Artaud developed the principles of

'performative montage' (the Brechtian *Lehrstück*) and 'experiential collage'

(Artaud)', (Graver cited in Shepherd & Wallis 2004: 161). The mode of

expression was the manifesto and Artaud in *The Theatre and its Double*,

argued fervently for a new theoretical perspective. Derrida believes that for

Artaud, there is 'a rupture between things and the ideas and signs that are their

representation' (Derrida cited in Fortier 1997: 42). These developments would

expose the crisis surrounding dramatic form and the process of making theatre.

Artaud called for a new space for experimentation, a performance space that

could offer immediacy between performer, stage and spectator, 'not to define

thoughts but to cause thinking' (*ibid.* 7). As practitioners increasingly looked beyond the text a decisive shift in the nature of and thinking about theatre occurred.

In England, actor, theatre director, designer, producer, and theorist Edward Gordon Craig (1872 - 1966) called for a re-examination of the actor's place in theatre practice and a re-consideration of the performance space itself. In Russia, theatre director, actor and producer, Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874 -1940) was developing his system of biomechanics and experimenting with the inter-relationship between the spectators, dramaturgy, staging and the actor's performance. Similarly, the Swiss architect and theorist Adolph Appia (1862 - 1928) was proposing design theories around how light, space and the human body could be synchronised to create a unified *mise en scène*. European theatre could now include cultural, political and philosophical practices, and bring about a poetic transformation on the stage. Consequently, the foundations were laid for the actor to become an independent creative force.

In France, director and teacher, Jacques Copeau (1875 - 1949) called for a renewal of theatre. Lecoq was conversant with his approach and shared many of Copeau's concerns surrounding theatre training and theatre practice through his involvement with Jean Dasté's company in Grenoble. Indeed, a meeting between Lecoq and Copeau took place in Grenoble, as confirmed by Lecoq himself in Guy Freixe's publication, *Les Utopies du Masque* (2010).

Apart from his own writings, Copeau's life and works are explored in a number of publications (Rudlin, 1986; Kurtz, 1999; Evans, 2006). While it was never

Lecoq's intention to transmit or indeed confine his pedagogical approach to the scope of Copeau's vision, it is important to acknowledge that the French lineage refined by Copeau, is central to Lecoq's positioning in contemporary French theatre. It is therefore worthwhile to briefly reflect upon Copeau's vision for a rejuvenated theatre.

According to Paul Allain and Jen Harvie in their anthology *The Routledge Companion to Theatre & Performance* (2005), Copeau's theories 'became the bedrock for later innovations in mime, physical theatre and body-based performance' (Allain and Harvie 2005: 51). In his publication *Jacques Copeau* (2006), Mark Evans chronicles Copeau's ambition to escape from the degenerative practices of *cabotinage*, a French term coined by Copeau to describe the lowest level of the art of acting, a degrading form of parody, translated into English as the 'ham-acting' of a second-rate actor. In response to the *cabotinage* of nineteenth century French naturalism, Copeau called for 'a re-examination of the central triumvirate of the poet-playwright, the creative actor and the director' (Evans 2006: 43). Evans suggests that Copeau's vision was a humanist one, based on his conviction in the power of the theatre, "to unite people of every rank, every class" to renew man in the theatre, through an act of 'communion' created by a return to what he understood as the essence of drama' (*ibid*. 48). In 1913, together with a group of artists and writers, Copeau founded the *Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier*. Relatedly, Evans points to the mutual and lifelong admiration between Copeau and the Swiss composer, musician and musical pedagogue, Émile Jaques-Dalcroze (1865 - 1950), who advocated Eurythmics, a new form of training based on spontaneity of the body and experiencing music through movement. Both recognised in each other, 'a

fascination with the interaction of rhythm and movement in the work of the actor and the performer' (*ibid.* 18). These mutual concerns are reflected in the development of Lecoq's own pedagogical approach.

In their publication, *Making a Performance - Devising Histories and Contemporary Practices* (2007)*,* Emma Govan, Helen Nicholson and Kate Normington consider Grotowski, Brecht and Artaud as the key innovators of a new approach to European theatre. Although Copeau is acknowledged in passing, it is to exemplify his particular focus on the actor's body and the link he explored between spontaneity of play and childlike creativity. Copeau's crucial contribution to the development of the actor as creator is not explored to the same extent. Copeau's approach pre-dates Stanislavsky's Method of Physical Action, but as Evans argues, both practitioners shared a commitment to 'engaging the actor in the part through action and improvisation rather than through discussion' (*ibid*. 55).

Whereas, Stanislavsky was fuelled by the new interest in the mind developing at the beginning of the twentieth century, Copeau was building the ideological and pedagogical foundations for devising practices in France. His plans to rejuvenate the theatre were based on the assumption that theatre is a collective and collaborative activity, a view corroborated by John Wright, who describes Copeau's investigations into acting as 'working for a devised theatre and towards new theatre forms' (Write cited in Chamberlain and Yarrow 2002: 74). These ambitions clearly pre-empt Lecoq's own aspirations.

Copeau was firmly committed to the text. It was for him, the starting point, from which all creativity stemmed and the director was the vehicle for facilitating a true representation of the author's vision. Nevertheless, he argued that naturalism was stifling the necessity for theatre to find its own means of expression and called for theatre to view the world through its own lens, its own unique language. More specifically, Rudlin reveals a direct lineal connection between Copeau and Lecoq. Copeau wanted his students to become 'astute observers of nature and of animals, performing exercises based on the birth of spring, the growth of plants, wind in the trees, the sunrise' (Rudlin cited In Leabheart 1989: 27).

Having situated Lecoq's approach to theatre-making within the historical lineage of French Theatre and wider European influences, the following section briefly discusses publications tracing the key stages in Lecoq's professional life that have contributed to shaping his unique pedagogical method.

Foundations of a pedagogical approach: The Early Years

As a young man, Lecoq's interest lay in physical education. His experience as an athlete and a swimmer led to a profound interest in how the body moves and performs efficiently. In his article 'The Influence of Sports on Jacques Lecoq's Actor Training' (2012), Mark Evans documents in detail this period in Lecoq's life. Of particular note are the resonances identified in Lecoq's pedagogical emphasis on 'physical preparation, the building of technical understanding and expertise, the embodied understanding of underlying principles' and what Evans describes as 'a journey echoed in many programmes of sports trainings.' (Evans 2012: 170). It was during the war years that Lecoq first encountered the

theatre, when he met Jean-Marie Conty (1904 - 1999) who co-founded

L'Éducation par le Jeu Dramatique (*Education through Dramatic Performance*),

a school that looked to approach theatre through the body with, among others,

Jean Louis Barrault (1910 - 1994) and Copeau's daughter, Marie Hélène Dasté

(1902 - 1994). In this environment Lecoq met teachers and practitioners with

direct connections to Copeau's legacy. The director Charles Dullin (1885 -

1949) had been a member of Copeau's first company and went on to establish

his own studio for theatre research in the 1930s. Lecoq also collaborated with a

number of Dullin's pupils whilst training at The *Association Travail et Culture*

(TEC) and then in 1944 he co-founded *Les Compagnons de la Saint-Jean,*

performing large-scale events, reminiscent of the popular theatre that was later

to shape and inform his teaching. It is through the indirect connection with Dullin

that the link between Lecoq and other key practitioners of the time can be

made.

In addition to Lecoq's own writings, I draw on key British texts written about his

work. These are not numerous and curiously, at the time of writing this study,

the most recent analysis in the UK of his teaching approach dates back to

2003.[5] One of the earliest British publications to include several sections on the

significance of Lecoq's work is Anthony Frost and Ralph Yarrow's *'Improvisation*

in Drama' (1990). First published the year after I graduated from the Lecoq

School, it charts a history and theory of improvisation as well as current

improvisational practices and training. Of particular note for this study, is the

authors' recognition of Lecoq's interest in 'the body's potential for engendering,

registering and remembering experience at subtle and profound levels' (Frost &

---

[5] At time of writing, *The Routledge Companion to Jacques Lecoq* is being developed and edited for publication by Mark Evans and Rick Kemp.

Yarrow 2015: 70). Furthermore, in highlighting Lecoq's assertion that, '*l'homme pense avec tout son corps'* (Lecoq cited in Frost & Yarrow 2015: 69), they reinforce the compelling parallel with Merleau Ponty, introduced earlier.

The 2001 book, *Jacques Lecoq and the British Theatre* (2001) edited by Franc Chamberlain and Ralph Yarrow is a collection of essays and articles by British actors, directors and teachers at the time, many of which had attended the Lecoq School.[6] The written contributions pre-date Lecoq's death, yet this publication marks an important milestone because it is the first published attempt at an academic consideration of the impact of Lecoq's teachings on British theatre and as such, its academic scrutiny of his teaching provoked new connections and understandings at the time.

Published just two years later, Simon Murray's comprehensive guide and analysis of Lecoq's teaching methodology titled, *Jacques Lecoq* (2003) offers a complimentary insight into the historical, contextual and pedagogical aspects of Lecoq's work, yet does not address in depth the 'poetic' aspect of his teachings. Murray locates Lecoq within a historical theatrical framework and lineage concluding that Copeau, Grotowski and Lecoq are united by the belief that 'it is the actor's body that is both starting and finishing point of all live performance' (Murray 2003: 5). In support of this argument, Murray cites David Bradbury, who says of Lecoq, 'He was really interested in the body and how it moved, and that was the centre of everything' (*ibid*. 33). Whilst these are legitimate assertions, this publication does not linger on Lecoq's understanding of the poetic, which I argue is the essential distinguishing feature of his teaching. Murray does make

---

[6] Interestingly, the Lecoq graduates interviewed in this publication were in the year above me at the Lecoq School.

mention of Lecoq's, 'willing recourse to the poetic, the philosophical and the mystery of things' (*ibid.* 43) and acknowledges the tensions between the practical and poetic dimensions of Lecoq's teaching:

> This juxtaposition between the indefinable and transcendent qualities of an invisible poetry lying in the gaps 'between words,' and apparently immutable 'universal laws,' suggests at least a playful tension between two very different ways of understanding or explaining the world.
>
> (Murray 2003: 156)

Equally, in relation to the poetic, Murray quotes Lecoq from the video *Les Deux Voyage de Jacques Lecoq* (1999), 'the word poetic is there precisely to show there are things we cannot define. Things which only poetry can define, that is what is between words, what's invisible' (*ibid*. 156). However, while these brief insights do not examine in detail Lecoq's understanding of the 'poetic' and its central role in his pedagogy, Murray's publication does offer an iilluminating snapshot of Lecoq's legacy based on extensive interviews with the two prominent theatre companies at that time to come out of the Lecoq School: *Complicité* (then called *Théâtre de Complicité*) and the Swiss theatre company, *Mummenschanz.* The publication concludes with selected examples of practical exercises conceived and constructed with Thomas Prattki, a teacher at the Lecoq School at the time of publication.

A further text of note is David Bradby and María Delgado's 2002 publication *The Paris Jigsaw: Internationalism and the City's Stages*, in which an entire section is dedicated to Lecoq and his School. Bradby's insights and understandings of Lecoq's work are unique. While he was never a student at the Lecoq School, he was deeply committed to understanding and

disseminating Lecoq's philosophical and pedagogical approach. Indeed he was responsible for the English translation of Lecoq's works. Arguably, in this publication, Bradby presents the most penetrating definition of Lecoq's poetic world, which I quote in full, as it forms the basis of this thesis:

> He believed that the ability to respond creatively, or poetically, depended on the laying down, as it were, of a series of sediments through our experience of the universally shared experiences of being born, nurtured, developing movement and speech, and discovering a world of movement, objects, sounds, colours and other human beings outside ourselves. For an actor to enter into the necessary state of creative openness, he had to be able to relate afresh to these basic discoveries.
>
> (Bradby in Bradby and Delgado 2002: 86)

Bradby's final comment about relating afresh to these discoveries opened up the possibility in Practical Project 1, for me to re-experience and thus re-envisage my learning with Lecoq. Furthermore, he contests the reductive assumption that Lecoq's training 'is one that opposes 'physical theatre' to 'textual theatre,' stating forthrightly that this is 'entirely false' (Bradby 2002: 91). In addition, this book presents the first analysis I have identified that points more concisely towards an interest in the poetic perspective of Lecoq's work by Giovanni Fusetti and Suzy Willson: *The Pedagogy of the Poetic.* This chapter asserts that central to Lecoq's pedagogy are the notions of 'theatre as a poetic medium' and 'of the body as a poetic body' (Fusetti and Willson 2002: 93). Fusetti's explanation that Lecoq's pedagogy is 'conceived as a journey' whereby the body 'represents life and transforms it into poetry, which is based on synthesis and transposition' (*ibid.* 93) summarises the first exploratory stages of Practical Project 1. Both authors were also students of the School, yet

while they make astute observations there are some opinions that I would argue confuse and contradict Lecoq's philosophical standpoint regarding the body. Fusetti's view that Lecoq's pedagogy *trains* the body to become 'a poetic *instrument'* (Fusetti 2002: 1; emphasis added) obscures Lecoq's argument that the body is not a tool to be controlled or treated as a machine (2006). This divergence of understanding is addressed more fully in the course of the study.[7]

When questioned in a personal interview for this study, as to why the title of Lecoq's publication was changed to the 'Moving Body' in its English translation, Mme Fay Lecoq attributed this to Simon McBurney, who was concerned, as she explained, that 'it wouldn't be understood and that the English would prefer the word 'movement' (Appendix 1). In attempting to understand McBurney's advice, it is pertinent to consider why so little academic inquiry has been made about Lecoq's notion of the 'poetic body' and to trace the attitudes and misconceptions that have shaped and clouded the dominant British view of Lecoq's pedagogy, particularly at the time of his book's publication in the UK. The association of Lecoq with the niche technique of mime may go some way to explaining the limited awareness and understanding of his emphasis on the 'poetic body,' both nationally and internationally. For instance, in *The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Performance* (2006), brief mention is made of his having had an influence on 'many artists specializing in comic and physically exaggerated styles of performance' (Allain and Harvie 2006: 50). In her book *Through the Body* (2001), Dympha Callery regards Lecoq's approach as central to the development of physical theatre, where the visual dimensions and the performer's body are primary distinctions. Similarly, Deirdre Heddon and Jane

---

[7] Furthermore, Fusetti considers the discussion of Lecoq's work within an academic context as dangerous, which opens up the unhelpful debate about Lecoq's ambiguous relationship with those that write about his work and those that live it.

Milling in their publication *Devising Performance: A Critical History* (2006), characterise Lecoq's training as the inspiration behind many of the physical theatre companies in the UK. Why is Lecoq associated so narrowly with the world of physical theatre? Part of the answer may lie in Lecoq's own emphasis when presenting and writing about his work.

As I have commented in this introduction, during his lifetime Lecoq occasionally presented a performance-lecture about his work entitled *Tout Bouge, 'Everything Moves,'* articulating the fundamental aspects of his thinking and teaching in the public arena. When I saw this performance in 1988 at the Royal Albert Hall in London, Lecoq explored the body as a 'revealer' of cultural identities and the way in which it is enmeshed with the diverse theatre styles taught at his school. I recall several audience members at the time, criticising the lecture/demonstration for being reductive and overly simplistic. However, it is important to acknowledge that at the time, Lecoq's work preceded the surge of more recent academic inquiries into the collapsing of the Cartesian mind/body dualism and further studies into embodied consciousness and theatre.

Whilst it is generally agreed that the performer's body is at the heart of Lecoq's actor training, deep confusions surround the nature and focus of this aspect of his work, not least because his use of the term 'mime' to characterise his work, is often misunderstood and dismissed in the UK. In order to move towards a deeper understanding of his notion of the 'poetic body,' it is useful to address what he means by 'mime' and how this defines his pedagogy. In an obituary published in *The Guardian* at the time of Lecoq's death, Martin Esslin describes

Lecoq as 'one of the greatest *mime* artists and perhaps more importantly one of the finest teachers of acting in our time' (1999). He goes on to describe Lecoq's School in Paris as 'the nursery of several generations of brilliant *mime artists* and actors' (*ibid*; emphasis added). Esslin's distinction between mime artist and actor is revealing in that it exposes the awkwardness with which the British in particular regard the term. Similarly, in Kenneth Little's Study of the Clown, Lecoq is grouped with 'such mimes as Marcel Marceau, Jean-Louis Barrault, Etienne Decroux…' (Little in Schechter 2003: 141). Recognising the loaded meanings attributed to this term, Murray and Keefe reveal the reticence with which 'mime' is regarded in the UK, stating that:

> Despite the 'proliferation of body-based theatre forms over the last three decades…there are few practitioners and companies within the landscape of physical theatres who would proudly proclaim either to be mimes, or to be representing a practice with that particular description.
>
> (Murray and Keefe 2007: 19)

The confusion surrounding Lecoq's association with mime can be traced partly to the early title of his School. When I attended in 1987 - 1989, the School's prospectus (1987) defined the core characteristics of its teaching, below its logo, as *Mime, Movement Théatre*. Of these three words, 'mime' is the trickiest to reconcile and in the current prospectus this term has been omitted, preferring now to be defined more broadly as an *International Theatre School*. Somehow, particularly in the UK, the connection with Lecoq and mime (pantomime) prevails, even amongst the undergraduates I teach. However, as early as 1989, Thomas Leabhart in *Modern and Post-Modern Mime* acknowledges this contradiction: 'Lecoq has been one of the great teachers in late-twentieth-century mime, yet he is not a mime, has never studied mime, and does not like

mime' (Leabhart 1989: 90). As indicated earlier in the literature review, it was only towards the end of his life that Lecoq published his own writings, which have contributed to opening up the conversation about the depth and breadth of his work and legacy. Again, however, his focus on the body in his work arguably reinforces the exclusive association between Lecoq and physical theatre in the UK.

Murray and Keefe discuss the relationship between the emergence of physical theatre practices and the devising process as 'productive and symbiotic' (Murray and Keefe 2007: 18). Astutely, they locate physical theatre practices within 'the devising paradigm and its politics of process' (*ibid*. 18). Their acknowledgment that the physical is only one aspect of devising practices is useful in that it goes some way to explaining the misconception that Lecoq is synonymous with physical theatre. However, when looking at various publications dedicated to the devising process, no mention is made of Lecoq in *Devising Theatre a practical theoretical handbook* (2009) and as recently as 2010 in *Devising in Process*, Alex Mermikides and Jackie Smart dismiss him as being popularised in the 1980s 'by a generation of companies who had spent their year in Paris 'doing Lecoq' (Mermikides and Smart 2010: 11). More sympathetically, Philip Zarilli points out Lecoq's influence in contemporary approaches to acting that emphasise 'a *gestalt* approach where the paradigm of the actor-as-interpreter of a theatrical text is replaced with the paradigm of the actor-as-creator' (Zarilli 2002: 15). Likewise, in his forward to the English translation of Lecoq's *Theatre of Movement and Gesture* (2006), David Bradby offers a credible explanation in the wider context of the 1980s as the key moment in European theatre when the focus returned to the creativity of the

actor, with the emergence of companies such as, '*La Compagnie Jérôme Deschamps-Macha Makeieff; Theatre de Complicité; Moving Picture Mime Show'* (Bradby in Lecoq 2006: xii). Leading French theorists including Bernard Dort and Denis Bablet set up a new journal in 1970 entitled *Travail Théâtral* or 'Theatre Work,' emphasising the need to balance an understanding of creative method with the evaluation of outcome. As Bradby points out:

> They began to redefine the notion of a 'text' in the theatre, showing that the old binary opposition between the writer's text and actor's performance was untenable, and that the performer also generated a 'text,' which, properly understood, was extraordinarily rich, combining words, action movement, gesture, dance, music, etc.
>
> (Bradby in Lecoq 2006: xiii)

For the first time, according to Bradby 'theatre scholars and critics were able to consider the originality of Lecoq's approach to a theatre of movement and gesture' (*ibid*. xiii). In conclusion, I argue that while Lecoq is widely associated with the category of physical theatre, his contribution lies more profoundly, as Zarilli claims, with the shift from the actor as *interpreter* to the actor as *creator*. It is important to point out that Lecoq does not view these positions as oppositional. Rather, in his own words, 'Interpretation is the extension of an act of creation' (Lecoq 2000: 18). Primarily, the students at his School acquire an understanding of acting whilst developing their own imaginations, which, as Lecoq asserts, allows them to 'invent their own theatre or to interpret written texts, if they so desire, but in new ways' (*ibid*. 18).

Gaston Bachelard: The dynamic work of the imagination

The second category of this literature review, also featured in Spanish, French and English, is concerned with Gaston Bachelard both as author and as subject for other publications. Bachelard's own writings are extensive. He wrote twenty-three books between 1929 and 1962, yet only relatively recently have several of his own books been translated into English. In his writings, he makes no claims to objectivity, using his own personal sensations and memories in response to works of literature, poetry and art, to form the basis of his arguments, for which he has been accused of solipsism (J.S. Hans 1977). One of the major challenges of reading Bachelard's work is his refusal to fix terms conceptually, making his writing at times mystifying and obtuse. Notions discussed in Chapters Three and Four, such as 'image', 'metaphor', 'reverie', 'resonance' and 'reverberation' are hard to pin down. In selecting key texts for this study, I drew on Susan Kozel's observation when she characterises the 'poetic' in her own research, as being based 'on concepts that are fluid conditions of experience' (Kozel 2007: 180). Accordingly, instead of seeking empirical evidence, Bachelard's writings require receptive reading, a giving over by the reader to his world, as a rich source for deepening, layering and expanding instances of experience. Consequently, this study acknowledges the mobility of his philosophical stance and focuses in particular on the publications that pave the way to an embodied encounter with his philosophy on 'poetic imagination.'

Bachelard's first book related to this study, *The Psychoanalysis of Fire* (First published in 1938*), charts his shift from scientific to aesthetic concerns. In exploring examples of literary images engendered by the imagination of fire, he

introduces for the first time, a connection between the principles of the four material elements and their orientations in the poetic expression of '*reverie.*' These initial assertions form the basis of his philosophy and are explored in depth in Chapters Three and Four of this study. In his second book on the material imagination, *Water and Dreams*, (First published 1942), Bachelard examines images related to the diverse qualities of water. This publication in particular, was a key text for Practical Project 3, in which I explore the generative possibilities of this material element. In developing further his ideas on '*reverie*' as opposed to dreaming, Bachelard appropriates the concept of the 'archetype', also applied in Practical Project 3. Whereas the Swiss psychiatrist Jung (1875 - 1961) considers archetypes to be rooted in our ancestral memories and therefore having determining qualities, Bachelard prefers to examine the archetype in its 'functional signification,' endowing it with the potential to project 'towards an end which is not yet attained' (Bachelard cited in Kearney 1998: 105). This idea of the archetype as both generative and universal is significant to the development of my 'embodied poetics', in that it anticipates a devising process in which archetypes or material elements considered as starting points, are infinitely abundant in their creative potential.

In his third book on the elements, *Air and Dreams,* (First published 1943*)*, Bachelard focuses more specifically on the psychology of literary imagination through the element of air. His belief that poetic imagination is not fixed shifts the emphasis of his investigations from an initial concern with how reality is known, to a fascination with the imagination's capacity to move. Indeed, he describes this work as an essay on the imagination of motion, in which he discovers that the unstable and intangible qualities of air serve to provoke the

poetic imagination of the mind. This key text paved the way for an embodied interrogation of his writings.

Although his field of study is generally considered to be the imagination of language, in his most prominent publication *The Poetics of Space*, (First published 1958), Bachelard concentrates on space in all its variants: the 'oneiric house,' drawers, trunks, nests and seashells. These seemingly disparate manifestations of the image combine together to induce a sense of refuge and intimacy, leading to an examination of the dialectical spatial relationships between the large and the small, inside and outside, open and closed. Here, Bachelard expresses more profoundly the dynamic relationship between subject and object and clarifies the way in which his own acts of '*reverie*' are at once personal and universal. In *The Right to Dream*, (First published 1960) Bachelard extends his poetic analysis to diverse areas of artistic practice through the works of Chagall, Monet, Corti and Segal. Significantly, for the purposes of this study, his assertion that poetic drawing also provokes images, offers more expansive and embodied applications of his ideas. Of particular relevance is his observation on engraving: 'It is not the eye alone that follows the lines of the picture, for added to the visual image is a manual image, and it is this manual image that truly wakens the active element in us. Every hand is an awareness of action' (Bachelard 1971: 57).

Finally, *The Flame of a Candle,* (First published 1961)*,* Bachelard's last book to be published during his lifetime, returns to the various manifestations of the element of fire through his own internal and solitary contemplations to confirm

that fire is the psyche of the imagination. This publication in particular served as a rich source of inspiration and focus for Practical Project 2.

At the time of writing this study, the principle texts about Bachelard predate the year 2001. The main body of academic study initiated during the 1970's was subsequently re-kindled during the mid to late 1990s, arguably reflecting his fluctuating popularity. Moreover, Bachelard's contribution has been superseded by the writings of Foucault and Merleau- Ponty, who both draw on Bachelard's epistemology. Academic analysis of Bachelard centres on two main aspects of his philosophy, firstly, his early work concerning the philosophy of science (Smith, 1992; McAllester, 1984) and secondly, on his increasing fascination with the formulation of the imagination (Kaplan, 1972; Chimisso, 2001; Gaudin, 2005).

Other related publications (Lechte, 1994; Kearney, 1998) discuss Bachelard's contribution to the evolution of the phenomenology of poetic imagining. His influence is noted on Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser and linked to Pierre Bourdieu, a former student of Bachelard's. Lechte in particular, highlights Bachelard's anti-Cartesian stance and his understanding of the imagination not as a mere reflection of exterior images, but rather an activity subject to individual will. James Steeve's 2004 publication, *Imagining Bodies,* confirms the view that Bachelard's writings on material imagination, discussed through the four primordial images of earth, air, fire and water are what make his approach distinctive. Like Kearney, Steeves links Bachelard's emphasis on the four elements back to Heidegger, who as Steeves writes, was himself preceded by pre-Socratic philosophers. Interestingly he groups Merleau-Ponty, Sartre and

Bachelard together in their call for 'a psychoanalysis of nature' and their

engagement with a phenomenology of elemental experience:

> [A]n analysis of the way that qualities appear to us at the root of
> experience, when scientific assumptions are put aside and the
> qualities are allowed to show themselves in their original affective
> meanings for consciousness.

<div align="right">(Steeves 2004: 126)</div>

More recently and in the same field, David MaCauley's *Elemental Philosophy:*

Earth, Air, Fire and Water as Environmental Ideas (2010), references

Bachelard's philosophy of the elements. In linking Bachelard's thinking to

environmental aspects, both publications prepare the ground for connecting the

outcomes of this thesis beyond the theatre studio and towards issues

surrounding sustainability and the environment.

Lecoq and Bachelard

Bachelard's writings articulate a conceptual framework that has been well

documented within the contexts of Fine Art and Architecture, particularly in

relation to his book *La poétique de l'espace*, *The Poetics of Space* (1958).

However, it is the contention of this thesis that Lecoq has developed and

extended Bachelard's thinking to performance, offering richer possibilities for

considering imagination and how it functions through the body. In my search for

available literature reviews that might suggest such a connection, the doctoral

theses, *La Escuela Jacques Lecoq: Una Pedagogía para la Creación*

Dramática (The Jacques Lecoq School: A pedgagy for Dramatic Creation) by

Carmina Salvatierra Capdavila (2006) and *Spaces of Play: A Phenomenology*

of Stage Presence (2010) by Jonathon Tilghman Sherman, provided insights and relevant points of convergence with the themes of this thesis. Like myself, both authors were students at the Lecoq School. Salvatierra's Spanish study offers an in-depth analysis of Lecoq's pedagogical approach and its contribution to the renewal of the body in theatre and to theatre itself, whereas Tilghman Sherman is exclusively concerned with proposing a methodology for describing the phenomenon of stage presence, by drawing on his theatre training with Lecoq and on the philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Both authors make reference to connections between Bachelard and Lecoq in their analyses.

Firstly, Salvatierra draws attention to important connections between Bachelard's writings and Lecoq's pedagogy, writing that Bachelard's *'filosofía de la imaginación material basada en los cuatro elementos impregna la poética de Lecoq,'* philosophy of material imagination based on the four elements, permeates Lecoq's poetics (Salvatierra 2006: 32; my translation). Her analysis of Bachelard is intended to underpin Lecoq's rejection of reflecting reality as it is presented in theatre. Crucially, for the purposes of this thesis, Salvatierra quotes from a personal interview with Lecoq, where he asserts: *'Prefiero una imaginación de lo real,'* I prefer an imagination of the real (*ibid*. 230; my translation). Furthermore, Salvatierra explores the journey involved between the real and the imaginary, linking the notions of play and imagination. The imaginary, she argues, from Lecoq's perspective is provoked by a recognition of the real through the body, in which the body discovers the possibilities of transformation, *'de la materia en los cambios de sólido a liquid, las calidades de' aire, los matices de los colores, la dinámica de las palabras, los empujes y fuerzas de la música o el comportamiento de los animals…'* of the material

between liquid and solid, the qualities of air, the nuances of colour, the dynamics of words, the push and pull of music (*ibid.* 237; my translation). Finally, Salvatierra suggests that one of the key manifestations of Bachelard's influence on Lecoq's pedagogy is that of *'la permanente relación, contacto y profundización con la material como un fuente que impulse la imaginación,'* the permanent relation, contact and investigation with matter as a source that impulses the imagination (*ibid*: 292; my translation). Salvatierra's brief assertion underpins the focus of this thesis.

Similarly, Tilghman Sherman's exploration of a phenomenological link between Lecoq and Merleau-Ponty converges with some of the themes set out in this thesis, notably when he highlights the importance of their equal emphasis on encouraging openness and an acceptance that the unknown pervades the known. Of particular relevance to this study is Tilghman Sherman's assertion that phenomenology is 'a kind of orientation in movement' (Tilghman Sherman 2010: 28). Although he does not extend his analysis to Bachelard in detail, Tilghman Sherman's brief consideration of Bachelard's ideas on space in relation to Lecoq, sourced from *The Poetics of Space*, offers a compelling link between the two.

While both doctoral theses have informed this inquiry, their focus differs from my own in fundamental ways. Salvatierra is concerned with the historical and contextual development of Lecoq's pedagogical approach and her inclusion of Bachelard proposes an alignment within this context. Likewise, Tilghman Sherman's comparison is between Lecoq and Merleau Ponty around the theme of stage presence. Both consider Bachelard through the exploration of one

publication, *The Poetics of Space* (1958). The subject of this thesis differs in that it places in dialogue Jacques Lecoq's approach to the 'poetic body' and Gaston Bachelard's philosophical writings on the 'poetic image,' as a means of exploring the dynamic interrelationship between reality and the imagination through the body. Rather than looking at the pedagogical significance, this thesis focuses more specifically on exploring through practice how an embodied engagement with the natural elements, might be applied directly to the devising process from the perspective of the 'actor-creator.'

In addition to the scholarly investigations described above, the article by Christophe Merlant: *L'Ecole Lecoq: des Mouvements de la Vie à la création vivante*, *The Lecoq School: From Movements of Life to Living Creation* (1998), given to me by Faye Lecoq, offers what she considered to be a comprehensive analysis of the Lecoq School within the field of what Merlant defines as a *pluridisciplinaire* (multidisciplinary) training of interpreters and creators of live performance. Based on a series of conversations with Lecoq and his collaborators, Merlant describes Lecoq's curriculum as a journey that is not fixed and whose aim is dramatic creation above actor training, concluding that the school is an experience to live through rather than understand. Furthermore, Merlant identifies Bachelard's direct influence on Lecoq's identification with the elements, *rêveries élémentaires* or 'elemental reveries.'[8]

A significant study contributing to the development of this thesis is Susan Kozel's re-working of phenomenology and its application to performance-making in her book, *Closer: Performance, Technologies, Phenomenology*

---

[8] Mentioned earlier, this article was significant to Faye Lecoq, who believed it depicted most clearly the aims of the Lecoq School – informal conversation when she handed me a photocopy (15/06/2011).

(2007). Kozel's approach to the construction of meaning based on the interaction between the dancer's body and digital technologies, served as an insightful analysis and study of the relationship between making and experiencing, bodies and technology, phenomenology and research, as well as practice and reflection. While her approach is underpinned by the writings of Merleau Ponty, references to Bachelard are interwoven into this publication, offering the most comprehensive study I have read to date connecting Bachelard's writings to contemporary academic thinking on practice and research in the imagination and the body. Like Tilghman Sherman and Salvatierra, Kozel cites extracts uniquely from Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* (1969), which is only one aspect of Bachelard's writings considered in this thesis. However, apart from Kozel's material, I have not found any published or unpublished works that connect Bachelard's writings so directly to performance. Kozel's third chapter in *Closer*, 'Responsive Architectures: An Embodied Poetics' is the original source of the term 'Embodied Poetics' (Kozel 2007: 191), appropriated in the development of this thesis. Whilst not unique to Kozel, her use of the phrase refers to the construction of a 'phenomenological poetics' in an installation event rather than a performance. This led me to consider the ways in which the term might encompass the central focus of this thesis, in its exploration of the dynamic relationship between the body and the elements in the process of performance making.

The references to Bachelard in the above examples, serve to clarify the aim of this thesis, which specifically sought to explore a potential alignment between Bachelard's philosophy of the imagining mind and Lecoq's pedagogy of the 'poetic body.' Apart from the aforementioned bibliographic material, I have not

found another volume to date that is concerned exclusively with the 'poetic body' and its connection to theatre-making from the particular perspectives of Lecoq and Bachelard.

Actor-Creator: An Emancipatory Model

Pivotal to this inquiry is the notion of 'actor-creator,' a term that requires unpacking and clarifying, not least because are not all actors necessarily creative when they interpret a character or a text? Indeed, in his publication on Stanislavski's Method of Physical Action, *Different Every Night* (2007), Mike Alfreds calls for the actor's creativity to be 'continuously at play for the entire life of the performance' and he goes on to say: 'There's no limits to the discoveries that imaginative and open actors can make' (Alfreds 2007: 25). However, it is not the intention of this inquiry to problematise the notion of creativity. The literature on this subject is extensive, following many divergent paths and across a vast array of disciplines. For the purposes of this study, 'actor-creator' refers specifically to the actor who authors and performs self-generated material, and can be used interchangeably with 'actor-devisor'[9], 'theatre maker' or, as Lecoq mentions in reference to the solo performer, 'the mime is an actor-author' (Lecoq 2006: 67). Building on the authorial aspect of the 'actor-creator,' I draw upon Dorinda Hulton's definition of the 'creative actor' who, in her words, engages in 'ways of thinking that are either generative or selective or both' (Hulton cited in McCullough 1998: 16). In highlighting this two-fold approach, Hulton's definition is suggestive of the empowering potential of a model whereby the actor's choice of the material is the catalyst for devising, rather than the actor's improvisations as the means 'by which the director and writer

---

[9] A term used by Rebecca Loukes to describe her own practice (2013: xvi).

develop their own ideas' (*ibid*. 35). Hulton's model affirms the 'creative actor' as 'play-maker,' but significantly still places the responsibility of conveying meaning to the audience through the director. However, her caveat that the roles of director and 'creative actor' are fluid is useful to this inquiry, in which I take on both roles. More recently, I have come across the expression 'Authorial Acting' (*Authorial Acting Programme* at DAMU, Prague). For the purposes of this study, 'actor-creator' is favoured to align the inquiry with Lecoq's pedagogical aim of awakening this dual capacity in his students in the making process. The term draws attention to what Robert Gordon articulates as Lecoq's resistance to rigid distinctions: 'Acting was performance, and performance incorporated a full range of skills of improvisation, devising, writing, and scenography' (Gordon 2006: 214).

Zarilli's crucial distinction between the 'actor-as-interpreter' and the 'actor-as-creator' mentioned earlier, is also helpful in clarifying the terms. The former draws on a theatrical text, whereas the latter implies 'a point of departure for creating performance […] with the actor's imagination, improvisation, and kinaesthetic/spatial awareness' (Zarilli 2002: 14). This is not to say that Lecoq rejects in his pedagogical approach the 'actor-as-interpreter,' but rather considers interpretation as 'the extension of an act of creation' (Zarilli 2000: 18). It is in the chapter 'the explosion of mime,' by Jean Perret and Jacques Lecoq in *Theatre of Movement and Gesture* (2006) that the term 'actor-creator' appears.

The French theatre director Arianne Mnouchkine, who studied at the Lecoq School, strongly argues the case for the actor's authorial position:

> I do not see why one only has the right to be called an author if one has a pen. An improvising actor is an author, an author in the broadest sense of the term. So we have authors. But the problem is that we are very much novices in this practice.

> (Arianne Mnouchkine cited in Miller 2007: 28)

Despite her forthright position, Mnouchkine's identifies here the significant complexities of developing mature, layered and compelling theatre from an actor's perspective. These challenges are addressed in more depth in Chapter Four in which I discuss Practical Project 2.

Devising: The Production of New Work

From a contextual and historical perspective, the 'actor-creator' sits within the extensive field of devised theatre, a collective term used in the UK to define an explosion of alternative theatre practices actively disengaging with the literary theatre tradition, which until the 1950s had dominated theatre. Interestingly, the word 'devised' when associated with theatre is a distinctly Anglo-centric term extending to other English speaking countries. Translations into French and Spanish, where devising practices are ingrained in their theatrical traditions, are elusive and vague involving words such as 'invention,' 'creation' and 'imagination.' Devising is explored in a number of publications interrogating the critical theory of devising and making theatre (Govan, Nicholson & Normington, 2006; Radosavljevic, 2013; Britton, 2013; Trencsényi, 2015); the observation and recording of comparative approaches to devising used by successful theatre companies (Williams, 1998; Milling & Heddon, 2005; Harvie & Lavender, 2010; Graham & Hoggett, 2014) and the devising process (Oddey, 1994;

Callery, 2001; Kerrigan, 2001; Barker & Bicat, 2002; Mermikides & Smart, 2010; Orti, 2011). Additionally, in their survey of contemporary devising, Govan, Nicholson & Normington consider the political motivations, aesthetic concerns and artistic backgrounds of different practitioners and devising companies (Govan, Nicholson & Normington 2007: 12).

Since the 1950s, process-led practice has lead to a constant repositioning of devising practices. The intensely personal and individually structured working practices explored by each practitioner are diverse in nature, constantly evolving and unique to each project. The huge varieties of complex working configurations and group structures have drawn from diverse traditions and experiences, thus making a systematic taxonomy difficult. Govan, Nicholson & Normington's definition of devising in the plural as 'processes of experimentation and sets of creative strategies - rather than a single methodology' (*ibid.* 7), encompasses this diversity and also provides a productive framework within which to position this thesis.

The notion of the actor as author is not recent. In *Tricks of the Trade* (1991) Dario Fo traces the role of actor as author back to the traditions of *Commedia dell'Arte*. The actor in *Commedia* is central to the performance narrative 'The entire theatrical structure rests on their shoulders, the actor-performer is author, producer, storyteller, director' (Fo 1991: 13). A *Commedia* actor had to know the character inside out. The proposed scenario for each performance could change according to troupe, location and audience. Once chosen, the actors could create freely around the theme, weaving skilfully and spontaneously in and out of the agreed situations, responding imaginatively to proposals from

other actors. More recently, Chamberlain proposes to conflate terms: 'perhaps the word 'create' or 'creativity' here should be re-written as 'devise' or 'devising' (Chamberlain in Murray and Keefe 2007: 152).

Importantly, for the purposes of this thesis, the link between devising and the body is widely acknowledged. Callery sees an overlap in that 'by and large, most physical-based theatre is devised by companies whose core members train and play together' (Callery 2001: 163). Similarly, this interrelationship is echoed by Murray and Keefe in *Physical Theatres: A Critical Introduction* (2007), in which they consider physical theatre practices to be firmly located within the devising paradigm and sharing process-led models: 'The histories of physical theatres and devising are certainly not identical with each other, but there is a productive and symbiotic relationship between them which is impossible to ignore' (Murray and Keefe 2007:18). While the connections are evident, the conflation of physical theatre and devising has also proved problematic in that arguably, this has led to the misconception that devised theatre rejects text. In Chapter Five of the thesis, this aspect is interrogated and challenged through Practical Project 3.

Central to the selected publications on devising is the idea that collaborative practice is integral to the development of devising processes. Indeed, companies working within devising parameters often described themselves as 'collectives' or 'ensembles.' Thus, creative choices are shaped by a particular group of people working together around the issues they choose to address. In her publication, *Devising Theatre: A Practical Theoretical Handbook* (1994), one of the first major UK studies on the subject, Alison Oddey takes up this point,

arguing that the fluctuating repositioning of devising practices originates from: 'a concern with the collective creation of art (not the single vision of the playwright), and it is here that the emphasis has shifted from the writer to the creative artist' (Oddey 1994: 4). This view is reinforced by Diedre Heddon and Jane Milling in *Devising Performance - A Critical History* (2006), in which they include, amongst multiple definitions of the term: 'a social expression of non-hierarchical possibilities; a model of cooperative and non-hierarchical collaboration; an ensemble; a collective' (Heddon and Milling 2006: 5). The emphasis appears to centre on establishing a flattened hierarchy of power, where the performance has been co-authored using a multitude of creative strategies to get there. But what happens if an actor chooses to devise alone?

Solo Devising

As discussed above, devising is generally considered to be a collaborative process or group activity. A variance on this view is presented by Govan, Nicholson and Normington in *Making a Performance: devising histories and contemporary practices*: 'Devising is widely regarded as a process of generating a performative or theatrical event, but not always in collaboration with others' (Govan, Nicholson and Normington 2007: 4). While the authors contest the dominant view, their publication does not interrogate this alternative. In her 1994 publication, *Devising Theatre: A Practical and Theoretical handbook*, Oddey also contests this assumption: 'Must devised theatre always be considered as a group activity?' (Oddey 1994: 3) However, she does not expand on or interrogate this question further. As part of the methodological approach of this study, each of the three practical projects was conducted from a solo perspective. The intention was not to address Oddey's question, but to

develop an individual mode of inquiry, which I discuss in more detail in the upcoming overview of research methods in this introduction.

Solo work across the artistic spectrum is not new. Cabaret, comedy, dance, conceptual art, live art and performance art, all have a strong tradition in this aspect of performance. Performance artists such as Stuart Brisley, Bas Jan Ader, Yoko Ono, Rebecca Horne and more recently Julia Bardsley, have specialised in this area. [10] While solo performance may involve other collaborators - designers, writers and directors - this study focuses on self-generated, singularly authored, solo work. The motivation for this approach, as noted above, is not an attempt to limit the scope of the study to solo work, or indeed to narcissistically immerse myself in my own autobiography. Instead, 'solo devising' acts as a method by which I attempt to get to the heart of the 'poetic body' from an internal perspective, to uncover the experience, sensations, challenges and responsibility of solo devising and whereby, as I move towards applying my findings to an outcome, I encounter the colliding and interactive positions between actor, creator, designer, dramaturg and director. I am not, however, entirely alone in this process. My supervisor acted as an invaluable outside eye at key points and I received invaluable technical support in the three Performance Projects. However, in attempting to move closer to a deeper understanding of the relationship between myself as 'actor-creator' and the 'poetic body,' the ambition is for the findings to be opened up for discussion and debate with the wider community of 'actor-creators'. The methods by which

---

[10] Julia Bardsley is a British theatre/performance artist who studied with me at Middlesex University. For further information, see 'The Skin of the Theatre: An Interview with Julia Bardsley, by Dominic Johnson. *Contemporary Theatre Review*, Volume 20, Issue 3, 2010 and Manfull, H. (1999) Taking Stage: Women Directors on Directing, London: Methuen Drama.

I attempt this are addressed in the upcoming methodology section of this introduction.

The Paradigm of Embodiment and The Situated Body

In my attempt to navigate how the 'poetic body' is experienced, this section of the literature review is concerned with how the body or 'bodily being,' concisely defined by Rolf Elberfeld as 'the zero point, from whence both 'fundamental sources' of knowledge - sensuality and understanding - unfold' (Elberfeld cited in Zarilli, Daboo and Loukes 2013: 27), can itself become a mode of inquiry. In this aspect, the subject of this thesis bears similarities with a number of publications that seek to explore the body in the arts. Over the last thirty years, publications scrutinising the body in philosophical terms as well as 'it's role in perception, psychopathology and social relations' (Steeves 2004: 3), have significantly increased. Consequently, the notion of embodiment has moved increasingly from the margins of academic research to a far more prominent position (Sheets-Johnstone, 1999 and 2009; Callery, 2001; Tufnell and Crickmay 2004; Noë, 2007; Counsell and Mock, 2009; McConachie and Hart, 2010; Broadhurst and Machon, 2011; McCutcheon and Sellers-Young, 2013; Roche, 2015; Spatz, 2015). Other publications in the same field look more deeply into the relationship between action, thought and perception and at the links between neuroscience, embodiment and performance (Kozel, 2008; McCutcheon and Sellers-Young, 2013; Zarilli, Daboo and Loukes 2013; Kemp, 2014). [11]

---

[11] For an insightful discussion on the acting process and cognitive science, see Loukes, Chapter 5 (a), pp. 194-223 and Chapter 6 (b), pp. 224-255 in Zarilli, Daboo and Loukes (2014) *Acting: Psychophysical Phenomenon and Process*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Significant to this study are the writings of the Chilean neuroscientist and philosopher Francisco Varela (1946 - 2001) who argues from his conviction that knowledge is about 'situatedness,' in that it is 'concrete, embodied, incorporated, lived' (Varela 1999: 7). As Loukes succinctly notes, the situated body is 'actively engaged with its environment as it perceives, feels, and relates to others' (Loukes in Zarilli, Daboo and Loukes 2013: 236). Similarly, Kozel's understanding of a 'phenomenological poetics' explored in *Closer* (2006), links directly to the notion of embodiment in both performance and research, defined by Peter Lichtenfels as 'the practice of the body doing and developing an understanding of that doing' (Lichtenfels cited in Riley & Hunter 2009: 131).

Given the views above, the intention of this thesis is to understand the experience of doing, so that in confronting my habitual working methods, I can break out of familiar patterns and thus expand my modes of theatre-making. Building on this standpoint, the practical sessions of this study are rooted in the work of Israeli physicist Moshe Feldenkrais (1904 - 1984), whose approach to thinking in movement acts the pivotal means of 'access' in each of the practical projects of this thesis.[12] The method developed by Feldenkrais is based on the contention of 'unity of mind and body' as 'an object reality' (Feldenkrais cited in Evans 2015: 79).[13] Our experience of movement is, for Feldenkrais, richer than feeling or thought, yet we become easily trapped in self-limiting patterns that reduce us to feeling that there is only one way of doing. As David Zemach-Bersin puts it, we have trouble linking the connections between habitual posture, neuromuscular organization, and psychological habit patterns: 'We assume that we are simply the 'way we are' (Zemach-Bersin 2012: 18). Thus,

---

[12] For an in-depth exposition of his own work, see: Feldenkrais, M: *Awareness Through Movement* (1972) and *The Potent Self* (1985).

movement phrases form the basis for awareness and aim to renew our sense of having choices and alternatives. In applying the Feldenkrais Method to choreographic practices, Dr Thomas Kampe concisely summarises its potential to 'empower the participant to question habitual behaviour and interaction with the world.' (Kampe 2013) Expanding this notion further, Varela, Thompson and Rosch indicate that when reflection is approached in this way:

> It can cut the chain of habitual thought patterns and preconceptions such that it can be an open-ended reflection in one's current representations of the life space. We call this form of reflection mindful, *open-ended reflection*.

Given the points above, a range of possibilities begins to emerge whereby the body is situated as a locus for breaking out of the habitual non-aware habits of devising, while at the same time connecting the practice to embodied reflection. Within this context, the study draws on my experience of attending workshops with the German born movement teacher Monika Pagneux in Barcelona (2006 and 2007). Pagneux who had been a student at the Lecoq School, went on to teach there for fifteen years until 1980, when she set up her own school in with French theatre pedagogue, Philippe Gaulier (Murray & Keefe, 2007; Evans, 2009; Murray in Hodge, 2010). Even though she is not a Feldenkrais practitioner herself, over the years Pagneux has developed her own unique pedagogy, drawing on particularly on her experience of working directly with him and equally importantly her dancer Mary Wigman to articulate and optimise a fluid relationship between the actor's inner world and outer expression.

In my brief time with Pagneux, I discovered the compelling ways in which she extends and expands Feldenkrais exercises to facilitate and encourage an

approach to devising based on an unfolding process, combining acute awareness with playful discovery. This process is documented in a recent publication and accompanying film documentary, *Inside Outside: Theatre/Movement/Being* (2012). When discussing his own experience of working with Pagneux, Murray captures a suggested connection to this study, in that her teaching also nurtures and produces a particular quality of attention in students to their own bodies, '(but never in a narcissistic or self-referential manner), to their consequent interactions with other bodies, or their encounters with the material world' (Murray in Hodges 2010: 226). Both the playful disposition Pagneux inspires in her students and the Feldenkrais exercises, were key drivers for accessing the heart of experience in the practical projects of this study.

Identifying a Research Paradigm

In order to determine a methodological approach appropriate to the demands of this study, the final category of the literature review draws upon diverse publications on the processes, structures and examples of the use of artistic practice as a mode of academic inquiry. Recent publications that highlight current debates around the nature and role of practice in research offer varying interpretations of the connection between practice and research, its nature and significance, both for the practitioner/researcher and for the researcher/practitioner in performance practices. Increasingly, creative practice has become more widely recognised as a valuable focus of academic inquiry. New theories, approaches and processes are being generated through a critical exploration of experience and creativity, placing the practitioner at the heart of research. In his publication *Blood, Sweat and Theory* (2010), John Freeman

concentrates these artistic processes for research methodologies into two key definitions:

- Practice-based: when the practical performance, in its most inclusive sense, forms the core of the contribution to knowledge
- Practice-led: When the research undertaken is likely to lead primarily to new and/or advanced understandings about practice

<div align="right">(Freeman 2010: 6)</div>

I would argue that this thesis moves between the two modes, but consistently locates the research activity within a critical and contextual framework. Barret & Bolt, in their book *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Inquiry* (2010) use the term 'practice-led research' to describe research initiated in practice where questions, problems and challenges are identified by the needs of the practice and or practitioners. Terminologies are increasingly being used more flexibly as the practitioner/researcher recognizes the way in which creative practice and theory feed into each other in a bi-directional way. For Freeman, it is 'this fusing of the creative and the cognitive that is at the heart of practice-based research developments' (Freeman 2010: xiii).

As the current literature on the subject highlights, the relationship between theory and practice is dynamic and reciprocal in the sense that practice-led research can discover new processes for, and insights into, creative work and research, as academic research can lead to new insights into creative practice. The intention of this thesis is for the triangulation of practice, process and its documentation to lead to further research insights, which can then be theorised

and re-applied to that practice, in the way that reflects Smith & Dean's concern for these processes to be 'interwoven in an iterative cyclic web' (Smith and Dean 2009: 2).

When practice is combined with academic research, a dynamic space is generated for critical reflection and dialogue. In positioning myself in the role of practitioner as researcher, conscious connections can be discovered between the subjective embodied experience and the cognitive: 'between 'knowing about' and 'knowing how' (Freeman 2010: xiii). This is a view echoed by Graeme Sullivan who observes that 'artists themselves have the capacity to explore and explain complex theoretical issues that can have significance across broad areas of knowledge' but he adds that in most cases, ' this process is clarified in retrospect as issues and ideas are revealed through the process of reflexive and reflective inquiry' (Sullivan in Smith and Dean 2009: 42).

Contemporary theatre practitioners explore and create work often within changeable contexts and conditions. Each project sets in motion an evolving process of ideas, creation, collaboration and tensions, all of which have the potential to trigger the next piece of work. Moreover, theatre practice is by its very nature, experiential and ephemeral. It deals with the complexities of feeling, the intuitive and high degrees of uncertainty. Ideas are transmitted through the body and are manifested in the work. In this sense, the literature review on embodiment mentioned earlier and research through performance practice, interact with each other. However, embodied knowledge, unique to each practitioner, is not easy to pin down or define. It can be, as John Freeman suggests, *ineffable* in the sense that it 'describ[es] feelings, concepts or

elements of existence that are too great to be adequately described in words and which can only be known internally by individuals' (Freeman 2010: 2). The embodied perspective does however, involve 'seeing something from somewhere,' and as Barrett observes:

> It links experience, practice and theory to produce situated knowledge, knowledge that operates *in relation* to established knowledge and thus has the capacity to extend or alter what is known.
>
> (Barrett 2007:145; emphasis in original)

As a methodology, practice is central to this study and is addressed more specifically in the methodology section below.

To conclude the literature review, the above account of available publications are not intended to be exhaustive but serve to highlight the specific interactive components of the practical inquiry and relevant theoretical material that constitute the study in composition and intention. Moreover, the literature review delineates the terminology of the study designed to address the notion of the 'poetic body.'

Methodology

This next section of the introduction sets out the qualitative research methods designed for the study and then addresses the practical element of this inquiry, in order to consider the elements that underpinned the planning, undertaking, evaluation and analysis of the projects, before moving on to the key characteristics, influences and considerations surrounding the research methodology. As introduced in the literature review, this study is anchored in the

processes of making new work and as such, performance practice using my own practice as a starting point for research, forms the basis for my methodological approach. In attempting to scrutinise more closely my process of experiencing 'the poetic body' and then applying the findings to the demands of a final product, three practical projects fulfil the central role of the research and provide the primary data. Accordingly, I take on what Smith and Dean define as, 'the dual roles of the researcher and the researched in 'a reflexive process' (Smith and Dean 2010: 28).

Working Alone: The Researcher Researched

The practical projects did not involve collaboration with fellow actors or a director. Instead I worked entirely from a first person perspective. However, as pointed out in the literature review, the thesis did not aim to identify the difference between the processes of working alone or collaboratively, neither were the intended outcomes aimed uniquely at the solo performer. Working alone was a valuable method for identifying and interrogating the interrelationships between the body, imagination and devising, which involved exploring my existing knowledge acquired through training and practice to generate an active experimental space within which to consider the way in which the key connections between Lecoq's active approach to theatre creation and Bachelard's apparently more contemplative scrutiny of the literary image, inform my practice. As such, working unaccompanied evolved into an analytical framework for evaluating the emerging shifts and discoveries. Steven Berkoff's interest in solo performance expressed recently, highlights the significance of this approach:

> I thought I want to act like a pianist, a pianist can go on with an orchestra, they can go on by themselves, but it's not quite so common with actors but I think there is a very unique communication you have with a one man show; also you can delve into things, you can express yourself, you can really explore areas you never even thought of exploring before because you have no other actors to deal with, to communicate with, so it gives you even greater scope.

> (Berkoff cited in Bruno & Dixon 2015: 5)

From my individual perspective, the aim of the study is for the resulting findings to be shared and interrogated within a wider context. Furthermore, as the literature review has established, the interplay between the different fields involved in this study have created opportunities for mapping a range of intersections between multiple discourses, which provided both content and context for the practical projects.

During the course of the study, I became increasingly aware of the resonances between my evolving methodology and Bachelard's call for a methodology of scientific inquiry in which, as he writes, 'experimentation must give way to argument and argument must have recourse to experimentation' (Bachelard in Lechte 2001: 3). This alignment is addressed in more depth in Chapter Five and in the Conclusion. However, it is important to note at this point that Bachelard is not against 'method' itself. He uses the word 'method' in its double meaning, as Colette Gaudin points out: 'It suggests the rigor of a system and the indeterminacy carried by its Greek root *hodos* ('way'); it mixes personal discovery and conceptual construction' (Gaudin 2005: xxI). This use of the term, also adopted in Chapter Two to define Lecoq's teaching approach, is essential to the emerging methodology of the study. Relatedly, Haseman and Mafe (2009) see practice-led research as unruly and ambiguous because it is deeply

emergent in nature. From this perspective, it is important to assemble a rigorous research methodology and appropriate set of procedures that simultaneously integrate the diverse components of a first person inquiry, whilst generating appropriate methods for interrogating process.

In alignment with the above, the key stages in the research method structured for this study are as follows:

1. The 'performative research' model and analytical perspectives of the study were established as appropriate for an embodied interrogation into the notion of 'the poetic body' and its application to the devising process for the actor-creator. [14]

2. The creative pathways from initial idea to interpretation were mapped through three performance projects, providing 'live situations' for developing and evaluating practice. Each practical project involved cycles of pre-project preparation planned to increase in scale and depth as findings refined the continuing research process.

3. The material generated in the studio, from exploration to realisation, was documented through a combination of still images and unedited digital camera filming. I also recorded interviews on a digital voice recorder.

4. Studio practice involved reflection *in* practice, through daily note-taking, the making of detailed descriptions, reviewing film footage, making drawings and this data was retrieved in personal notebooks.

---

[14] A research paradigm conceptualised by Brad Hasemen, where 'practice is the principal research activity' (Haseman in Smith and Dean 2010: 6)

5. During the duration of the studio practice, I reflected *on* practice after each session, recording evolving observations and drawings in personal notebooks.

6. Each Practical Project was followed by post-project reflection, analysis and theorisation in written form as a means of re-calibrating the aims and methods for the subsequent Practical Projects.

7. Photographic documentation was selected for the thesis and relevant edited filmed extracts are included in the form of a DVD, providing examples and evidence of material for the written interrogation and critical analysis of the study.

8. The resulting written critical analysis was designed to compliment rather than undermine or replace the practice.

An Overview of the Practical Research:
A space within which to consider the nature of making

As outlined above, the research methodology initiated in and developed through practice, establishes a distinctive set of lenses through which to address the primary research question, by articulating a relational encounter between Lecoq's pedagogy and Bachelard's 'poetic imagining,' and considers how these new insights might originate devised performance. In grounding the study in practice, as Hannula, Suoranta and Vadén state, 'experience looks at experience and thereby produces new experience' (Hannula, Suoranta and Vadén 2005: 44). Each project adhered to a similar structure over an eight-week period, with written and recorded media documentation focused on the studio sessions. The process involved an embodied 'inquiry cycle' of

improvising and revising my work in a succession of studio based sessions. [15]

Consequently, rather than designing a set of methods with clearly defined outcomes, this study called for iterative cycles of practice and reflection on that practice, as well as continuous reflection on the methods employed, to accommodate any necessary re-calibrations as the study developed.

Moreover, the practical nature of this inquiry offered me the opportunity to control the conditions in which the research evolved and to focus on contexts within which the work was developing. As such, each practical project acknowledged the importance of communicating my findings through a creative product and served a specific function within the research process. Towards the end of the projects, findings were drawn together and structured into a devised performance and the presentation of a critical overview of each project. Accordingly, the structure and outcomes of each project reflected the increasing complexity of the evolving research. Practical Project 1 culminated in a lecture/demonstration. Practical Project 2 concluded with a sharing of work-in-progress, whereas Practical Project 3 finalised with the presentation of a final product, completed and performed within a specific time scale.

Below, I set out a brief synopsis of each Practical Project:

Practical Project 1: 'Towards an Embodied Understanding of Jacques Lecoq's 'Poetic Body'

The aim of this project was to re-construct a particular phase of my learning process at the Jacques Lecoq School, from the perspective of my accumulated

---

[15] Based on John Dewey's (1933) philosophical assertion that education is based on a spiral mode of inquiry, starting with the curiosity of the questioning learner, who then investigates solutions. In gathering information and discussing the experiences and discoveries involved, new knowledge is generated, which is then reflected upon and the spiral continues.

layers of experience. Practical Project 1 was designed as a highly directed three-stage journey from the *neutral* to the *individual*, as I selectively and strategically traversed Lecoq's carefully structured process to determine the methods and processes by which his pedagogy accesses these poetic qualities through the actor's body. Consequently, the intention was to consciously scrutinise and reflect upon my own implicit, embodied knowledge.

Practical Project 2: An Embodied Encounter with Gaston Bachelard's 'Poetics of Imagination'

This second project oscillates between a process-driven and goal oriented exploration of Bachelard's writings as he responds to poetry, literature and art. For Bachelard, the fundamental link between the dreamer and the world is language and Practical Project 2 led me to consider what the body might take from Bachelard, as a means of accessing the body's poetic possibilities. My aim was to devise a performance that would articulate the fundamental embodied dynamic character of Bachelard's unique assertion that matter acts as the catalyst and conductor of the imagining consciousness.

Practical Project 3: *Trying to Reach the Sea* - Towards an Embodied Poetics for Devising Through an Exploration of Jacques Lecoq and Gaston Bachelard in Dialogue

This third and final project of the study provided a platform for bringing together Lecoq's approach to the 'poetic body' and Bachelard's philosophical writings on the 'poetic imagination,' as a means of exploring the dynamic interrelationship between reality and the imagination through the body. Rather than looking at the pedagogical significance of this dialogue, I focused on exploring how an

embodied engagement with the natural elements, might be applied directly to the devising process from the perspective of the 'actor-creator.' The intention was to scrutinise more closely my process of experiencing space/connections/journeys between identification with an element through the body and how this is transformed and shaped into a performance.

In synthesis, the iterative nature of the practical components of this study moved the inquiry increasingly towards an interrogation of how the dynamic triangulation of body, natural element and lived experience might contribute to a deeper understanding of what constitutes the 'poetic body,' and how a poetic response through the body might illuminate the process of engaging with, developing and constructing a performance from the perspective of the 'actor-creator.' The project-specific questions are listed below:

Practical Project 1

- What are the fundamental characteristics of Jacques Lecoq's 'poetic body' from an embodied perspective?
- What are the methods and processes by which Lecoq accesses the poetic dimensions of the actor's body?
- What new understandings can be drawn about how the body is implicated in this process?

Practical Project 2

- How might Bachelard's poetic imagining of the elements be embodied?
- What can this particular form of embodied *'poetic imagining' reveal about the' poetic body'* for the actor-creator*?*

- How can this be applied to the devising process?

Practical Project 3

- What can an alignment between Bachelard's 'poetic imagining' and Lecoq's pedagogy of the 'poetic body' bring to the actor-creator process?

- What are the discoveries and challenges of applying the reciprocity between my body and the elements to the devising process?

- How might an encounter between Lecoq and Bachelard's elemental imagining offer a method (*hodos)* for revealing a personal authorial signature in the devising process?

Accompanying DVD: Capturing Key Discoveries

The DVD accompanying this study serves to highlight key insights arising from the practical enquiry and is included in the appendices. It is my intention for the reader to view the DVD alongside Chapters Two, Four and Five of the study, which specifically address the three practical projects. Attention will be drawn to the sections under discussion throughout the relevant chapters. The DVD is structured so that each practical project is available to view in full, followed by selected extracts from studio sessions, grouped sequentially by project and corresponding chapter.

The studio sessions associated with each practical project generated an abundance of visual and audiovisual material, which served as a valuable reflective resource due to the solo nature of my inquiry. In compiling the DVD and additional photographic evidence that accompanies the written element, I have been highly selective in order to capture the key discoveries and emerging

themes relating to the project specific questions. The DVD is structured into three sections. Section 1 refers to the first Practical Project. Selected extracts highlight my embodied exploration of Jacques Lecoq's 'Poetic Body.' Section 2 highlights the emerging insights developed in my embodied interrogation of Bachelard's 'poetic imagining' through Practical Project 2. Finally, Section 3 charts the key findings of Practical Project 3 in which I develop the final presentation of 'Trying to Reach the Sea.'

Apart from serving as a point of reference for the evolving discussion, the dynamic interaction between the written element and audio visual documentation is intended to assist in generating for the reader a deeper understanding of the unfolding findings of the study. Furthermore, in selecting extracts of my embodied exploration of the material, I highlight the incremental depth and evolving progression of the devising process originated through the course of this inquiry. In figure 3, on the following pages, I set out a chronological diagram of the three practical projects.

Fig. 3. Practical Projects: 1, 2 and 3

Practical Projects	Structure	Data Retrieval	Duration	Aims	Methods
Project 1 Key Principles, characteristics and points of access for the 'actor-creator'.	**Studio based** Experimental: three stages. Stage 1: The Neutral Mask: A State of Discovery Stage 2: The Mimetic Faculty Stage 3: Transposition – The Process of Abstraction **Outcome**: Lecture / Demonstration Solo Performance of a section of Pablo Neruda's poem: Macchu Picchu	Video and photographic documentation, workbooks, observational notes, written evaluation of findings	8 weeks	Interrogating Lecoq's notion of the *poetic body* Re-examining a specific phase of my learning at the Lecoq School.	• Describing qualities of the poetic body • Looking at notions of mime, imitation, identification and transposition • Developing an analytical framework for evaluating the implications of my training on my practice. • Referring to wider notions of mimesis through anthropology • Contextual research and reading
Project 2 An embodied exploration of Gaston Bachelard's	**Studio based.** Experimental: three stages. Stage 1: Active Meditation and Reverie Stage 2: Resonance: The Lived	Video and photographic documentation, workbooks, observational notes	8 weeks	Interrogating Bachelard's poetics of imagining from an	• Phenomenological descriptions • Looking at notions of • Applying Bachelard's understanding of

Reverie'.	**Outcome**: Solo Performance and accompanying presentation of the process and findings.				
Project 3 *Trying to Reach the Sea: Towards a new poetics for Devising*	**Studio based.** Experimental: three stages. Stage 1: Finding ways in - resonance Stage 2: Generating material in the studio – the oneiric process Stage 3: In search of a form **Outcome:** Performance Solo Performance	Video and photographic documentation, workbooks, observational notes, written evaluation of findings	8 weeks	Bringing together Lecoq and Bachelard to originate my owin embodied poetics as a means of devising	• Phenomenological descriptions • Studio Explorations • Field Trip • Filtering Process • Rehearsals • Contextual research and reading

A Paradigm of Embodiment: **Key components, approaches and influences**

The focus of the interdisciplinary methodology designed for the study was

modified across the duration of the three Practical Projects, from an initial

scrutiny of internal experiential and conceptual insights emerging from the

practical component of Project 1, towards an increasing focus on the practice

itself as an external expression of research in Project 3. Project 2 serves as the

interstice between these two lines of inquiry. As Freeman asserts, the 'very act

of discovery leads the discovering researcher to new points of knowledge and

new directions to take' (Freeman 2010: 178). This gradual shift in attention

altered the means of investigation slightly for each project, but the overall key

methodological influences on the design were grounded in performance

practice.

The issues, tensions and limitations of the practitioner-research model are

palpable. At the outset, I acknowledge my experience as unique and intensely

personal and as such, open to being considered biased and subjective. John

Matthews rightly points out the dangers of producing 'generalized and

subjective accounts shaped by the perspective of the participant, posing as

apparently objective, observational knowledge' (Matthews 2014: 29).

Nevertheless, if I am to move towards capturing an embodied understanding

and analysis of the 'poetic body,' I consider an external observational position

as incompatible for the purposes of this inquiry. Rather than the objective body

of naturalism, the 'poetic body' is an 'experienced' body. Xavier Escribano

establishes the key distinction between these two perspectives:

> While the objective body occupies a position in space, together with
> other objects, with a spatiality which is geometrically determinable,

> the living and lived body inhabits space and maintains a vital
> relationship with it.
>
> <div align="right">(Escribano 2013: 38)</div>

Escribano's distinction is pertinent because it points to the central premise of the study: a meaningful encounter between the subject and the world.

Whilst acknowledging then, the limitations and tensions of my immersive position, this thesis is not intended to present a purely autobiographical account, but rather acknowledges the significance of my own experience of making, bringing together the related strands of my Lecoq training, Bachelard's writings and embodied practices through direct and unmediated experience from an informed perspective. Importantly, it is not my intention to assert that my personal narrative is representative or universal. Rather, I suggest that some of my experiences and findings are relational and can contribute to collective knowledge on devising practices.

Phenomenology: Experience In Action

In selecting my own practice as an explicit and intentional method for generating and collecting data, theories of phenomenological experience are pertinent to the study's attempt to unpack how the elements of performance from an internal system, provide a unique form of experience. Furthermore, by acknowledging the 'actor-creator's' body as the permeable interface between the internal and external worlds, a phenomenological discourse facilitates the attempt to explore the lived experience between, as Mark Fortier writes, 'individual consciousness and reality' (Fortier 2002: 41). Consequently, the Practical Projects generate detailed experiential data into what it feels like to

work in this way, echoing David George's contention that 'experience is an experiment' (George 1996: 23). In Project 1 for example, where the focus was on discovering the body as a poetic site through my own body, I note that phenomenological perspectives led me to the richness of experiencing moments of emergence and to a re-evaluation of my processes and the language I use to describe these. These aspects were carried forward into the subsequent practical projects and analysis.

Phenomenological Bracketing

Expanding the scope of phenomenology in Practical Projects 1 and 2, I draw upon the method of phenomenological bracketing. As the researcher, I bring with me a particular set of experiences and pre-conceptions, based on my time at the Lecoq School. In Practical Project 1, in which I revisit my learning with Lecoq, I attempt to set aside and suspend prior knowledge in my endeavour to bracket my expectations or bias in favour of attending to the immediate onset of perception. Similarly, in Practical Project 2, which focuses entirely on Bachelard's work from Bachelard's perspective, I adopt his assertion that 'knowing must therefore be accompanied by an equal capacity to forget knowing. Non-knowing is not a form of ignorance but a difficult transcendence of knowledge' (Bachelard 1969: xxix). Here, Bachelard refers to the creative process, but the same principle is applicable to this study, and can be summarised as a 'way of seeing' (Pollio, Henley andThompson 1997: 48). The bracketing tool is intended as a phenomenological attempt to maximise Bachelard's influence on research outcomes in Project 2 and to minimise my own.

Whilst I acknowledge the impossibility of achieving total bracketing, particularly as my self-generated practice is the focus of the research inquiry, I note Fiona Hallett's observation that the bracketing process does not imply that 'prior theory determines what interpretation will be reached,' rather it is 'a means to suspend our personal understandings of a subject matter in order to understand somebody else's perspective' (Hallett in Juisman and Tight 2014: 212). So, aware of my prior knowledge, I seek to use this method as a means of maintaining an open mind. Just as Lecoq reflects on the impossibility of neutrality: 'Of course there is no such thing as absolute and universal neutrality, it is merely at temptation' (Lecoq 2000: 20), I acknowledge that in moving towards an embodied understanding of Lecoq and Bachelard, they are never completely separated from myself (Bowden 2005).

Through the combination of practical inquiry and theoretical discourse. I am feeling my way through different possibilities and this level of uncertainty generates a space for reflection, a space for identifying critical contexts that frame my practice. The repercussions of this method led to a narrative perspective, which became a crucial strategy for capturing an unpredictable and some times obscure process: a way of looking at the complexities of articulating my individual experience in the performance-making process.

In attempting to capture and document interweaving experiences and thoughts, the repercussions of working alone highlight the crucial importance of the notebook as a means of dialogue with myself. As I advanced through the projects, I discovered ways in which the written methods defined by Jonathon Pitches as formative writing, documentary writing and reflective writing, inform

the study. [16] Each practical project involved formative writing to prepare and establish the nature of the inquiry. The documentary writing during the project recorded the emerging data, (reflecting 'in' practice), whereas the reflective writing led me to select data and discover new strategies evolving from interaction between practice and documentation (reflecting 'on practice). Consequentially, the written element of this study foments both reflection and the dissemination of findings. It serves to tease out ideas, to make sense and articulate findings, and to understand the lived experience. Conversely, Dieter Lesage argues, 'that the artwork itself […] is sufficient in order to evaluate its originality and relevance' (Lesage cited in Nelson 2013: 145). If the writing serves only as an explanatory text or recording tool, I would agree, but as outlined above, the writing for this study is a crucial and integral component of the methodology. Throughout the study, practice and writing in its various forms transmit to each other. Expanding this notion further, theoretical reflection need not be mindless and disembodied, opening up the possibility for this thesis to consider embodied reflection as a mode of inquiry. ,

A Mixed Mode Model for Research

Drawing together the interdisciplinary approaches outlined in this section, the study's diverse methodological strategies can be formalised into the 'mixed-mode' research model proposed by Robin Nelson. Defined by Nelson as a 'dynamic model for process' (Nelson 2009: 127), the overarching aim is to produce a new kind of information about the 'poetic body' that prioritises a connection to the wider community over introspection. Nelson's 'mixed mode'

---

[16] For Pitches, written reflection for can be broken down into *formative* writing (to help understand the work), *documentary* writing (to record the work), *reflective* writing (to allow space for personal evaluation) and *critical* writing (to draw on ideas from a wider context (Pitches in Kershaw and Nicholson 2011: 142).

research model places the outcome at the centre of a triangle. Located at the top is the 'know-how,' my embodied knowledge, enculturated by my training at the Lecoq School and my experience as actress, director, artistic director and teacher, immersed in a tradition which places the body at the heart of my practice. Nelson adds 'critical reflection' as a means of reflecting on established practice to bring out 'tacit knowledge' and then finally, 'the conceptual framework' contributes the theoretical aspects to this study. Figure 4, below, is my version of Nelson's model set out in a circular form, to represent the ways in which all three aspects interact and build on each other in an evolving spiral.

THE KNOW-HOW
Experience acquired at the Lecoq School and through professional practice

From the Poetic Body to a New Embodied Poetics

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
Gaston Bachelard, phenomenology, embodiment

CRITICAL REFLECTION
Practical Projects 1, 2 & 3: through 'action research' and written component
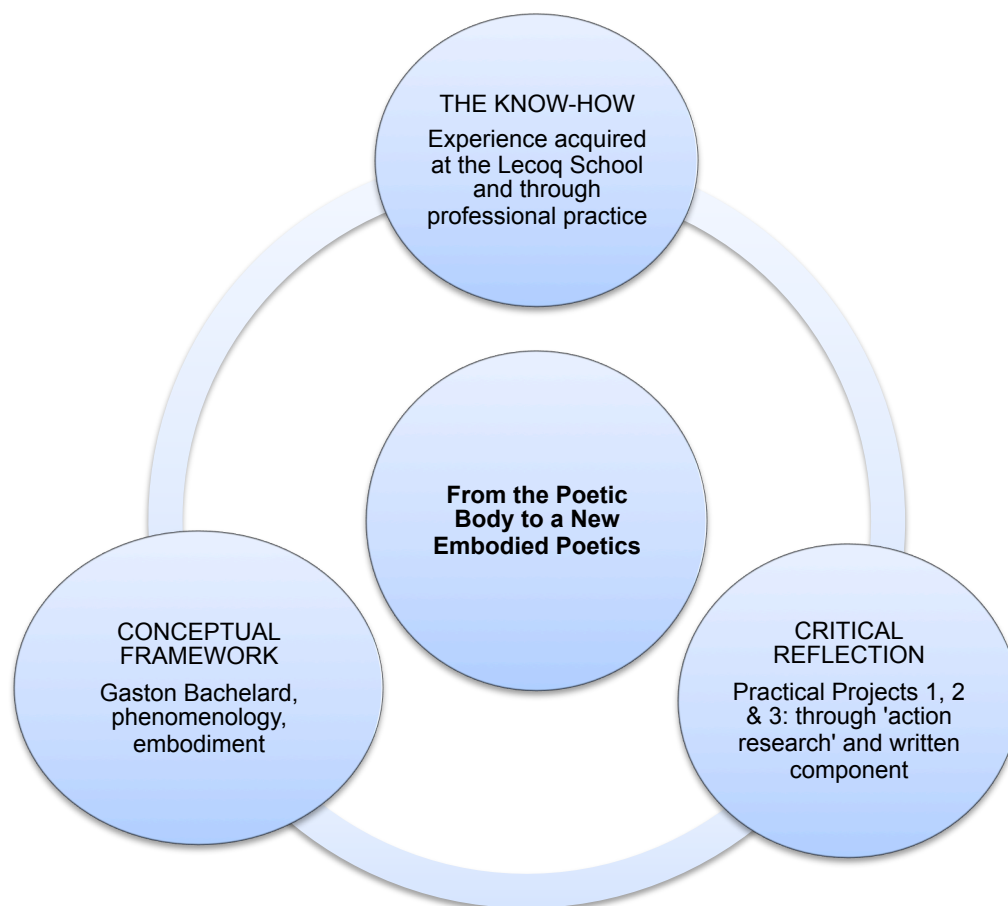
Fig. 4. Adaptation of Robin Nelson's Mixed Mode Research Model (2009)

The interweaving and synchronisation between this specific set of components and the interdisciplinary frames of reference are articulated in the thesis structure. Intentionally chronological in design, the study reflects the generative nature of the experiential insights and maps how the complexities and challenges of each stage inform the next, in incremental depth and complexity. The thesis documents and analyses my own unfolding experience as I journey through the process of creation and performance to make new sense of my practice. Whilst reflecting on and interrogating the evolving practice from a more analytical stance, I progressively refine and consolidate my findings, which when completed, constitute the actualisation of new knowledge.

The unique attributes of this study can be summarised in the following way:

1) The emphasis in Chapters One and Two on apprehending and elucidating an understanding the characteristics of Lecoq's 'poetic body' from an embodied perspective.

2) The focus in Chapters Three and Four on Bachelard's writings on poetic imagination and how they can be brought to bear on human experience. This is arrived at by an embodied application of Bachelard's unique vocabulary on the making process. Consequently, a new vocabulary develops through which to expand an understanding of the making process.

3) The application in Chapter Five of a devising process, whereby the mobility and flexibility of an 'intersubjective' exchange between the natural elements and the 'poetic body' is in itself a process by which

work can be originated and by extension, through which actor-creator's work is transformed and transformative.

4) The practical aspect of the project involved exploring, capturing and revealing potential correspondences between Bachelard's concerns with the creative consciousness of the mind and what I propose as an 'embodied poetics' or a 'poetics of embodiment,' which I argue contributes to the original aspect of this research journey.

The aspects listed above have the capacity to inform and expand upon future practice and discourse in this area in relation to the 'actor-creator' process, thus confirming its unique position. As noted in the literature review, as far as I am aware, no in-depth study has been undertaken to problematise the notion of the 'poetic body' from the perspective of the 'actor-creator,' or indeed has considered Bachelard's thinking and writing in relation to Lecoq's philosophy of teaching from an embodied perspective, or vice versa. It is my contention that exploring these connections through my own practice contributes to the original aspects of this inquiry.

Summary of the Introduction.

This introduction is set out in specific sections that seek to articulate the following:

- The primary research question the study aims to address, its various key components, which are further broken down into more specific questions.
- The rationale for the study within the field of devising and its motivation grounded in my own practice.

- A literature review examining the historical and current literature centred on the 'the poetic body' and related categories pertinent to the study. Additionally, this section details terminology and identifies existing gaps that create possibilities for placing Lecoq and Bachelard in dialogue through the practical element of the thesis.

- The chosen methodology for the study, followed by *the key* approaches and influences guiding its structure and development. Within this section I point to the ways in which the study contributes new knowledge and offers a unique contribution to the field of devised performance.

Chapter One: Jacques Lecoq and the 'Poetic Body': The key principles, characteristics and points of access for the 'actor-creator'

Introduction

In order to provide an essential foundation and contextual framework for the practical element of the study, this chapter interrogates Jacques Lecoq's notion of the 'poetic body' from a pedagogical perspective. I begin with a brief overview of the two-year diploma offered at The Jacques Lecoq International Theatre School (*École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq*) in Paris, to identify the key principles that guide his teaching approach and situate the conditions within which he awakens the students' capacity to create. In my endeavour to move towards an understanding of the characteristics of his 'poetic body,' the chapter next considers the most suitable term to position Lecoq's unique pedagogy of the 'poetic' within the spectrum of teaching approaches. Finally, I draw out key terms and concepts to establish a framework for the following chapter, which analyses an embodied scrutiny of the methods, conditions and processes by which Lecoq's student 'actor-creators' access the 'poetic' dimensions.

In line with the above, Chapter One seeks to address the following components of the primary research questions:

What is the 'poetic body' in Lecoq's work and what are the methods and processes by which Jacques Lecoq's work accesses the poetic dimensions of the actor/creator's body?

The Lecoq School: A School for 'Dramatic Creation'

Jacques Lecoq's main body of work was developed within the context of *The Jacques Lecoq International Theatre School*, Paris, established in 1956, where he taught until his death in 1999. The overarching aim of the school is 'to produce a young theatre of new work, generating performance languages which emphasise the physical playing of the actor' (Lecoq 2000: 18). Whilst the school has fomented actors, companies, directors, teachers, comedians, clowns and circus artists, dramaturgs and writers, engaged in both contemporary dramatic creation and extant texts, his approach has also generated compelling connections to the broader disciplines of dance, architecture and fine art.

As the latest information on the *École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq* website states, actors enrol from as many as thirty different countries generating a meeting of cultures, which brings 'its own resonance to the teaching, extending the quest for a shared poetic wealth' (Lecoq School n.d.) The awkard translation from French to English on the website is somewhat bewildering and does little to throw light on the principles of the School. For instance, in its English version, the first year programme is presented as, 'based on the dynamics of movement, involving the body as the primary element of recognition of the living being, through the re-enactment of everything which moves, whether in life or on stage' (*ibid*.18). The complexities and limitations of translation are evident here, but also arguably, reflect Lecoq's profound resistance to setting out the curriculum before it is experienced. As noted in the literature review, since the widespread publication of Lecoq's own writings, the necessary state of 'unknowing' is no longer as feasible as it was when I was a student at the school in the late 1980s. This state of 'unknowing' will be

explored in more depth in the following chapter, as I attempt to revisit aspects of my own educational experience of the Lecoq school.

The Two-year Diploma offered by the School is divided into two parallel and intersecting routes, one being the study of 'improvisation and its rules' and the other being the study of 'movement technique and its analysis' (Lecoq 2000: 14). As mentioned above, the aim is for the student to experience this process as a sentient journey consisting in incremental stages: a voyage of discovery, moving horizontally across a landscape of dramatic styles, which Lecoq calls *territoires* (territories). This voyage is transversed by a vertical axis, where the upward direction consists in 'scaling the heights of different acting levels' and the downward direction excavates into the 'depths of poetry' (*ibid*.15). Of particular interest to this inquiry is the relationship between the downward 'poetic' direction and how this is played out through the 'actor-creator's' body in the process of generating new work.

Alongside the two-year diploma, the School offers a course titled, the Laboratory of Movement Study (*LEM*). In its presentation of LEM, the website more overtly expresses a reluctance to render explicit its content: 'The LEM journey is a practical experience that cannot be replaced by written explanations', reinforcing once again Lecoq's resistance to anticipating or pre-empting the learning experience. As a student, I did not participate in LEM, but its relevance to this study is compelling. On this point, Murray indicates that just before his death, Lecoq was in the process of writing a book on what 'some have argued, lay at the heart of his whole project, the Laboratory for the Study of Movement' (Murray in Hodge 2010: 215). Discussing LEM with fellow

students at the time and in a more recent informal interview I sustained with Pascale Lecoq, current director of the Lecoq School and leader of the LEM course, it is evident that the principles of LEM are aligned with the more 'poetic' aspects of Lecoq's pedagogy. In the same interview sustained with Pascale Lecoq, she confirmed that towards the end of his life, this is where his main interests lied (2011). Returning to the Two-Year Diploma, the first and second year of the Lecoq School have distinct emphases. This study focuses in particular on the first year in which the foundations of Lecoq's pedgagogy are established and in which I believe, the conditions for the students to access the 'poetic body' are most central. In order to clarify how I arrive at this decision, it is important to briefly outline the distinctive foci of both years.

The First Year: 'The World and its Movements' (Lecoq 2000: 25).

Beginning from silence in an empty space, the student explores real situations of everyday life to address psychological play. The student is thus alerted to the importance of observation, of not assuming or of skimming over the surface, but to really explore the power and significance of silence, space and the body, before setting out to discover the word. No extant texts are used to guide the work. Rather, contexts or 'themes' are given within which to improvise. Even at this early stage, Lecoq establishes the fundamental link between observation and improvisation. On completion of this phase, the student enters the world of the 'neutral mask, 'combining calm and curiosity' (Lecoq 2000: 14), before next embarking on what Lecoq defines as 'the real educational journey' involving an exploration of the dynamics of nature: 'Natural elements, materials, animals, colours, lights, sounds and words are discovered through the miming body' (*ibid.* 14).

The remainder of the first year is concerned with mask work, approaches to poetry, painting and music, accompanied by an ongoing analysis of movement and the development of 'play' through improvisation. In keeping with his emphasis on the natural world, Lecoq compares the role of his teaching staff to that of a gardener, whereby on completing the first year, 'we shall have planted the roots, enriched the soil, turned over the earth' (*ibid.* 97). Lecoq summarises the first year as a completion of three journeys. Firstly, 'observation and the rediscovery of life,' through the neutral mask, secondly, 'raising the level of play' through expressive masks and finally and exploration of the 'poetic depths of words, colours and music' (*ibid. 97*). These components come together to embed a collective understanding of the world that we are immersed in, leading to the conclusion that for Lecoq, to understand the world, we must embody it. In summary, the first year proposes that through the process of mimesis and embodying the world, a new and shared vocabulary emerges with which to deliberate and generate new work. These factors are developed further in the following section and addressed explicitly in the following chapter concerning Practical Project 1.

The Second Year: 'Roads to Creativity' (Lecoq 2000: 95)

While this study focuses on a particular phase of the first year, it is useful to point towards the second year process, as elements of this year will become increasingly relevant as I move in the study from a reconstructive process in Practical Project 1 towards 'a profound experience of play' in Practical Project 2, and finally the articulation of a personal process of 'dramatic creation' in the final Practical Project. In Lecoq's words, the second year of the Two-Year Diploma is not a 'logical continuation of the first, but a qualitative leap towards

another dimension' (*ibid.* 97). The process begins with an exploration of gestural languages to introduce a shared physical vocabulary, aiming to prepare the students for a different purpose, that of 'dramatic creation' (*ibid.* 97). So, from developing a collective understanding of the movements and dynamics of the world that surrounds us, the second year involves applying this embodied approach to a variety of making processes and theatrical styles. Extending the metaphor of the natural world, Lecoq defines this stage, as a '*geodramatic* journey,' an exploration and discovery of the infinite expanse of what he defines as 'dramatic territories' (*ibid*. 97). David Bradby sees this term as designating the major dramatic genres and in line with this translation, Melodrama, Commedia dell'arte, *Bouffons*, Tragedy and Clowns are for Lecoq, historically the five principle genres of theatre from which others forms have evolved. Traversing these territories through the second year, the students explore the 'grand emotions,' 'human comedy,' 'from grotesque to mystery,' 'chorus and hero' and finally, the 'burlesque and absurd' (*ibid.*15). Interestingly, from exploring all that unites the students in the first year, the concluding style of the two-year diploma is clown, which looks at the opposite end of the spectrum: that which makes each of us individual and unique.

Autocours: A Devising Process

To conclude my overview of the Two-Year Diploma offered at the Jacques Lecoq School, I highlight the fundamental importance of the student-led component, which for the purposes of this inquiry, serves to draw attention to the way in which I build my own learning at the school into the methodology of the study. Integral to the entire curriculum of the School is the principle of *autocours,* translated literally into English as 'self lessons' (translation my own)

and defined by Murray as 'one of the defining characteristics of the school' (Murray 2003: 61), consisting of daily sessions involving groups of students preparing their own work in response to the themes being explored in the tutor-led sessions. '*Autocours*' is described by Simon McBurney as 'a devising model: a heuristic pedagogy of the imagination in contexts where collaborative work takes place' (McBurney, cited in Mitter and Shevtsova 2005: 249). As a student, *autocours* introduced me to the challenges of collective making. Generating performances with students from different nations, some of whom spoke neither French nor English, was both an intensely rich and frustrating experience. However, of equal importance was the learning experience of sharing our ideas. The resulting work, whatever state it was in or stage it was at, was presented to the entire year and teaching staff on a weekly basis. Independently we were putting into practice all that we were learning, whilst consistently confronting the rigors and pedagogical significance of critical feedback.

Franc Chamberlain and Ralph Yarrow draw attention to the way in which *autocours* serves as a space for students 'to express their voices as *auteurs*, and it is here that Lecoq's rejection of the 'actor as instrument' is most manifest' (Chamberlain and Yarrow 2002: 30). The emphasis on constantly making work without input from the teacher introduces a research model of inquiry through practice, which guides the methodological components of this study, as detailed in the introduction.

Teaching the Poetic Body: Training, System, Technique or Method?

With a brief overview of the Lecoq School complete, I now turn to a consideration of an applicable term to position Lecoq's unique pedagogy of the 'poetic' within the spectrum of teaching approaches. Varying definitions have been used interchangeably over the years, which in my view have obscured the significance of the 'poetic' in his teaching. Importantly, any term needs to acknowledge the dualistic nature of Lecoq's teaching as he simultaneously encourages a 'scientific curiosity' (Lecoq 2000: 23) fused with a poetic dimension, where certainty holds on to elements of instability and doubt. Simon Murray points out that like the renowned theatre pedagogues, Monika Pagneux and Philippe Gaulier, Lecoq resists describing his teaching practice as a 'method,' adding that all three, 'most certainly would be dismayed to have their work yoked together in a common 'system' or 'technique' (Murray in Hodge 2010: 216). With this, Murray identifies the overlapping facets of their work and recognises their divergent orientations, emphases and foci. However, if it is neither a 'system,' a 'technique,' nor a 'method,' then neither can it be considered 'actor training,' the limitations of which are succinctly put by Ben Spatz (2015) when he highlights the emphasis in training on 'the transmission of knowledge over its creation, discovery or production' (Spatz 2015: 117).

Following this line of argument, the word 'training' does not allow for, or acknowledge, the central premise of Lecoq's teaching, which is the creative development of the student. Likewise, Pagneux's suspicion of 'training' actors, highlighted by Annabel Arden, long-term colleague of Pagneux, lies in its association to an obedience to a specific set of skills: 'She says she *forms*

them rather than *deforming* them and stresses that there is no 'body of an actor' which you can acquire by training' (Murray in Hodges 2010: 227)

In an informal interview I sustained with Susana Lastreto, teacher at the Lecoq School, she characterises the first year as, *'una estructura - sólida - infalible'* - 'a solid and infallible structure' (2011, my translation). Here, she highlights the uncompromising order of the first year curriculum, which over the years has been carefully sequenced to build up incremental layers of experience. In this sense, the first year curriculum might best described as a 'system': from the Latin *systema:* an arrangement, system and Greek *systema:* organised whole, a whole compounded of parts, suggesting a series of components organised in a form or order (Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology 1969).

Moreover, as mentioned earlier, Lecoq places significant emphasis on movement technique, particularly in the first year, which is comprised of 'physical and vocal preparation; then dramatic acrobatics; finally, movement analysis' (Lecoq 2000: 66). As such, 'technique' can also be considered a key component of the first year 'system.' 'Technique,' from the Greek *teknikos*, pertaining to art, skill, craft in work, points to developing personal and practical knowledge and, as Evans indicates when discussing the Lecoq School, to a 'meticulous approach to the analysis of movement' (Evans 2009: 60). In this aspect, Lecoq draws directly from the physical education model developed by the French physical educator and theorist Georges Hébert. Nevertheless, as Evans affirms, Lecoq acknowledges the dangers of 'falling into pure technique or virtuosity for its own sake' (*ibid*. 79), stressing that a sound knowledge of

anatomy, everyday physical action, economy of movement and observation, act as reference points for the purposes of dramatic creation in the second year.

The tensions and ambiguities inherent in 'technique' are developed in Spatz's thorough and insightful inquiry. He points to the long-held antipathy in twentieth-century literary criticism between the technical and the poetic, citing Laura George (2007), who in her analysis, exposes the pervading romantic view upheld by Coleridge that technique is used to mean 'any skill requiring particular steps or knowledge' whereas 'real poetry occurs at the moments when mere technique is transcended' (George cited in Spatz 2015: 28). Spatz suggests an alternative more expansive term: 'embodied technique,' which refers to 'transmissible and repeatable knowledge of relatively reliable possibilities afforded by human embodiment' (*ibid*. 16). This new term offers a more fitting model for defining Lecoq's use of technique, in that it recognises conscious and unconscious repetition through 'a process of iterative discovery' (*ibid*. 16). Lecoq's use of technique is based on students developing knowledge through physical awareness, in order to offer 'greater freedom to the player' (Lecoq 2000: 71). Viewed in this way, his assertions that the body 'must be disciplined in the service of play, constrained in order to attain freedom' (*ibid*. 79), reveal that far from being oppositional, the relationship between technique and the poetic as explored through the body, is dynamic combinative and reciprocal.

To further this idea, in the same interview conducted with Lastreto, she pointed out to me, a crucial distinction between the two years of the School: *'Segundo año debe ser más flexible - más de la creación que de la pedagogía'* - Second

Year has to be more flexible - it's more about creation than pedagogy (my translation). From my own experience, the '*Geodramatic Territories*' of the second year are less fixed in content and structure. As a second year student in the late 80s, the sequence of my second year differed from previous years. Indeed, over time, Lecoq expanded on its content, order and emphasis in direct response to the evolving curiosity and varying interests of the students themselves.[17] As a consequence, the term 'training' in its etymological sense: to instruct and discipline, does not account for the flexibility and indeterminacy of the second year programme.

With this context in mind, the inherent dialectical relationship between technique and the poetic in Lecoq's pedagogical approach might best be described as a 'method' when considered in its two-fold etymological origin, which I refer to in the methodology section of the introduction. As Colette Gaudin (2005) succinctly expresses in a discussion of Bachelard's use of the term, 'It suggests the rigor of a system and the indeterminacy carried by its Greek root *hodos* ('way'); it mixes personal discovery and conceptual construction' (Gaudin 2005: xxi). Similarly, in his penetrating article on the Lecoq School, Christophe Merlant acknowledges the non-fixity of a method, when he defines Lecoq's pedagogy as a method that has always been and remains '*ouverte*' or 'open' (Merlant 2004: 2). In summary, the entire experience of the School, described by Lecoq as a journey, can also be defined as a 'method' in its etymological sense: 'Method' (*meta + hodos*): a traveling, way.

---

[17] See my chapter: La Mancha Theatre Company and School, Chile: An Enactive paradigm in forthcoming publication: Evans, M and Kemp, R. (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Jacques Lecoq,* Routledge.

Building on this double notion of 'method,' at the heart of Lecoq's pedagogy is the propagation of new work or in other words, for students to find their own '*hodos*' or way. As Lecoq states: 'I am nobody. I am a neutral point through which you must pass in order to better articulate your own theatrical voice' (Lecoq cited in Murray 2003: 16). Thus, far from imposing his own particular style of theatre, Lecoq's 'method' combines the rigour and guidance of enduring principles with an incremental focus on the generative power of the student's imagination. Starting from the observation of life, students embark on an embodied journey towards a theatre to be invented and in the words of the Lecoq graduate and teacher John Martin, he charged us, his students, to 'go out and create it' (Martin in Chamberlain and Yarrow 2002: 57). More recently, Jos Houben, member of Complicité and teacher at the Lecoq School, summarises this aspect when talking about his own practice as founding member of Complicité: 'Later people say, 'Oh, that's Lecoq.' We say, 'No that's Complicité, because what Complicité wound up doing, we weren't taught at Lecoq, Lecoq just taught us to make up our own mind and get on with it' (Houben 2011).

Significantly, inherent in the two-fold meaning of 'method' is the suggestion of a journey *towards* something, towards forging my own '*hodos*' or 'way' as exemplified by Husserl's assertion presented by David George, that:

> The continuity of any cultural phenomenon, the praxis of any body of knowledge, involves a string of people not simply learning a set of axioms which someone invented in the past, but also themselves repeating the cognitive breakthrough of its 'inventor' and actually reinventing the institution itself each time.

(David George in keefe and Murray 2007: 27)

It follows then that Lecoq's *method* is projective in nature and this aspect is particularly relevant to this study in my endeavour to address the particular facet of the primary research question, which looks at the development of a personal making approach or style in Chapter Five. Having now established Lecoq's approach as a *method ouverte* or open method, I now turn the focus more specifically to the pivotal characteristics and components of the first year at the Lecoq School, which I believe set in motion the 'poetic body' experience.

Towards the 'poetic': The Fundamental Journey

This last section of Chapter One, introduces some of the more philosophical considerations, which underpin Lecoq's notion of the 'poetic.' The intention at this point is to begin to define the significance of the relationship between the 'poetic' and the body in his terms and to propose the central importance of the first year of the Lecoq School, as the catalyst for tuning the student in to a 'poetic' relationship with the making process. These aspects inform the practical inquiry addressed in the following chapter where I attempt to examine the characteristics and conditions by which Lecoq introduces the 'poetic body' to his students from an embodied perspective.

As noted earlier in this chapter, humans, Lecoq maintains, share a sensibility with an abstract dimension, which he defines as Le *fonds poétique universel* or a 'universal poetic awareness.' Through a process of 'identification' with the natural elements, materials, colour, light, sound, animals and plants, the student is guided to a space where the real encounters a different dimension; a 'poetic space' intended to provoke the actor's desire to create, to give life to his or her own imagination. This fundamental principle, he asserts, brings us into contact

with the essence of life, 'the common heritage, out of which 'will spring dynamic

vigour and the desire to create' (Lecoq 2000: 46). Before moving on to a closer

analysis of what is meant by 'identification' in the following chapter, it is useful

to turn first to Lecoq's fundamental affirmation that before we look at difference,

we need first to experience what is common between us.[18]

A 'universal poetic awareness'

To begin with, the first year involves a brief exploration of the psychological

'replay' of every day situations, in which students are charged with remaining

'faithful to reality and to the student's own psychology' (Lecoq 2000: 29). On

completion of this initial phase, students are introduced to the fundamental

principle of 'universality,' primarily through a process of physical engagement

and sensation. From this moment in the curriculum, the neutral mask

designates the body its pivotal role in the learning process. I will return to an

embodied analysis of the neutral mask in the following chapter, but at this

stage, it is important to note how Lecoq's understanding of 'neutral' is

associated with his ideas on 'universality.' Unlike a character who 'experiences

conflict, has a history, a past, a context, passions,' Lecoq describes the neutral

mask as a 'neutral generic being' (*ibid.* 38), a pedagogical tool for accessing, a

state of calm, without conflict, before expression comes into play. For Lecoq,

the neutral mask tends towards an invisible fulcrum point or point of balance

from which the actor can begin, conforming closely to Roland Barthes' assertion

the neutral state is 'a stepping-stone towards something else, it is not a goal in

itself' (Barthes 2005: 211). Barthes views the neutral as 'stripping away what is

already there, in an attempt to reach the stage 'before contamination' with

---

[18] The significance of finding the 'common denominator' is explained in detail in an interview
with Jacques Lecoq, available in the video: Les Deux Voyages de Jacques Lecoq, (1999) and
(2006).

convention' (*ibid*: 211). Likewise, Lecoq writes that the neutral places the actor 'in a state of discovery, of openness, of freedom to receive' (Lecoq 2000: 38) and as such serves as 'a way of understanding performance, not a way of performing' (Eldredge and Huston in Zarilli 2002: 146).

Terms such as 'neutrality,' 'universal poetic sense,' 'common denominator' and 'common heritage' are used liberally by Lecoq to underscore the significance of what unites the students. At first glance these terms are often misunderstood, particularly when considering the cultural diversity of the school's students and in an era when 'universals' are being challenged and rejected as synonymous with the homogenisation of humanity. Indeed, 'in some quarters,' as Murray points out, these terms make Lecoq 'sound old fashioned and out of kilter with a contemporary spirit that acknowledges only *relative* values' (Murray 2003: 156; emphasis in original). However, further interrogation of these terms may reveal the unfolding process by which Lecoq's pedagogy initiates awareness between the 'poetic' and the body. Lecoq himself acknowledges 'the idea that everyone is alike is both true and totally false' (Lecoq 2000*:* 40), so to exemplify his notion of 'universality' over 'uniformity,' he refers to the act of saying goodbye, in order to encapsulate the dynamic connectedness between the individual and the collective. The singular experience of a 'goodbye' is governed by many contributing factors: the individual person who is leaving, the person left behind, the unique location and more broadly, the social, historical and cultural context within which the act takes place. However, according to Lecoq, this highly individual gesture can be condensed into an essential act, as a means of bringing out the 'common denominator' of what is primarily, a parting: 'A genuine farewell is not just saying goodbye, it is an act of separation' (*ibid*. 40).

This is an act that we can all experience in a multifarious way: a separation between people, a separation of a piece of ice from an ice shelf, a separation of a lid from a jar, a separation of one side of Velcro from another. The possibilities are infinite and through a collective discovery of these 'shared references' (*ibid*. 99) the neutral mask reveals the '*permanence*' of the act itself, or in the words of Houben, 'what is always there' (Houben interviewed in www.culturebot.org 2011). Considered in this way, students experience the *moteur* or 'driving force' of the act of separation. [19] Significantly, this *permanence* is not a static state, but an underlying dynamic, an energy or force understood primarily through bodily experience and then later applied to the dramatic dimension.

Arguably, Lecoq's emphasis on collective experience has certain correspondences with Eric Fromm's definition of humanism, as a system of thought and feelings centred upon human beings and upon the belief that every man and woman *embodies* within him/herself all of humanity (Marx's Concept of Man, 1961). Fromm's reference to embodiment here offers compelling parallels to Merleau-Ponty, for whom 'man (*woman*) is in the world and only in the world does he (*she*) know himself (*herself*)' (MP, 2002: xii; emphasis added). Merleau-Ponty asserts an experiential world of connectedness with others and things, an intersubjective world *from* which individuation can evolve, but *in* which the notion of relatedness is permanent. Importantly, for the purposes of this inquiry, Merleau-Ponty finds the capacity for this spectrum in the unique structure of the human body, in the way that it experiences itself from the inside by 'being touched from the outside, by opening onto that which includes it, that with which it blends and of which it will always be a part'

---

[19] In his glossary at the end of Lecoq's book *The Moving Body*, Bradby translates *moteur* as, motors (of play), 'sometimes translated as 'driving force' […] used to indicate the dynamic pinciples underlying dramatic representation' (Bradby 2000: 166).

(Merleau-Ponty cited in Low 2013: 283). Moreover, for Merleau-Ponty, an evolving interconnection between the shared world and the body develops a reflective self-awareness whereby individual experience is understood as an expression or example of the shared, universal experience. In line with this argument, Lecoq's proposed 'universal' is no longer synonymous with 'sameness,' nor is it aligned to a reductive vision of humanity.

If both Fromm and Merleau-Ponty affirm that a connectedness with the outside world and communication with others is grounded in the human body, then the body, understood as the single most relevant, persistent, and unrelenting reality of our lives, becomes the unifying factor, the ultimate model of 'universality.' Viewed from this perspective, Lecoq's 'universal' takes on a synthesising dynamic, whereby human movement is the 'permanent guide in this journey from life to theatre' (Lecoq 2000: 15). In applying the understanding of the 'poetic' presented in the introduction of this study, as a 'productive process,' a 'bringing into being' and 'active making,' a distinction begins to emerge between a body that simply moves through space and a 'poetic body.' While one is characterised by its functionality, the latter engages actively and dynamically with the natural world in an imaginative 'universal,' one that exists at the threshold of theatrical tradition and creative practice.

The Foundations of the Poetic: *Le 'Jeu'* (play), '*Disponibilité*' (openness), *Complicité* (a state of involvement)

In my endeavour to identify the conditions for accessing the 'poetic body,' it is important to consider Lecoq's central emphasis on the notion of play. Murray asserts that for Lecoq, 'play is the *driver* of creativity' (Murray in Hodge 2010:

223; emphasis in original). Similarly, Bradby stresses the extent to which Lecoq 'exploits to the full the overlap of meanings contained in the words 'play' and 'player,' between child's play and drama, games and performances' (Bradby in Lecoq 2000: 167). If Lecoq's aim is to provoke in his students the capacity to generate their own work, then 'play' or improvisation becomes a central means of accessing, exploring and developing the 'poetic.' Consequently, if Lecoq's 'poetic' involves engaging with the indeterminate, then an aptitude for play is integral to understanding the 'poetic body.' Rather than an activity, Murray describes play more accurately in this context as an 'embodied and emotional disposition' (Murray in Hodge 2010: 223), 'a spirit of invention, generosity and openness which Lecoq also calls *disponibilité*' (*ibid*. 224). As John Wright, points out, play is 'a dynamic principle opening up possibilities for action which can both liberate the actor from the 'literalness' of the text and enrich it with additional (physical and visual) meaning' (Wright 2006: 34). Thus, play is not a disposition limited to the physical, but can also be applied to text. Following this argument, theatrical play for both the actor interpreter and the actor-creator is necessarily inventive as it exploits and expands upon the possibilities of a moment in performance.

In order to unpack this notion further in relation to the 'poetic body,' it is valuable to examine the connection between art and play as developed by the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900 - 2002). In his book *The Relevance of the Beautiful and other Essays* (1986), Gadamer offers a deeper understanding of 'play' as, firstly, a transformative experience and secondly as a communicative act. 'Play,' from the perspective of the player, he asserts, is not an object or an activity to be subjectively determined. Neither is it a frivolous

pastime or indeed in opposition to the serious. Instead, 'play' for Gadamer is in essence a mobile, active phenomenon precisely because in the act of playing a game the player is absorbed by the game's movement. Of equal importance to the game is the conscious participation of the spectator:

> The playing of the play is what speaks to the spectator, through its representation, and this in such a way that the spectator, despite the distance between it and himself, still belongs to it.

<div align="right">(Gadamer cited in Torevell 2007: 172)</div>

Viewed from this perspective, Gadamer proposes that an appreciation of a work of art also involves a 'being-in-play' with the work. The spectator immersed in the experience of art, absorbed by the elements 'at play' in the work, experiences a shift of consciousness from mere observation to active participation. Furthermore, Gadamer suggests that in surrendering to the elements 'at play' within the work itself, the spectator ultimately contributes to reinforcing or even completing the work.

Like the game, a work of art is a form of self-movement, which invites the spectator to interact with the work and in the 'playing' of that work, something new and autonomous comes into being. Together, the spectator and the artist play a crucial role in developing the ideas that are activated by the art and here Gadamer asserts the primacy of play over individual consciousness. In the act of playing, Gadamer believes that the spectator is not the subject of the action, but is instead being played by the game and subsequently is transformed by what the act of spectatorship brings into being. This argument is similarly reflected in the work of the French Anthropologist Marcel Jousse, whom as I

mentioned in the literature review, profoundly influenced Lecoq's approach. I expand on this influence in the following chapter. Gadamer's understanding of the medial nature of play between the player and the spectator is analogous with Lecoq's position in which he shifts the emphasis away from the psychology of the actor, towards a more organic engagement with external provocations.

Play requires a specific state of being, defined by Lecoq as *disponibilité*, an outward looking sensitivity of paying close attention, not on oneself, but rather on the situation being played or experienced, thus it is the situation that drives the action. This is an important variant as it points to an activity in which the relationship between the body and the external world is paramount. Instead of imposing an idea on someone or something, play is an involved activity, an embodied engagement with surroundings, a sensing of the flows and forces of the external world in a sympathetic way, in order to receive and act upon the unpredictable events at play. *Disponibilité* is introduced through the neutral mask, which invites students to experience the material world in 'a state of receptiveness to everything around us, with no inner conflict' (Lecoq 2000: 36). Progressively, the movement of play is given purpose and drive by an additional layer: 'when, aware of the theatrical dimension, the actor can shape and improvisation for spectators, using rhythm, tempo, space, form' (*ibid*. 29). This layer of play is explored in incremental depth through the practical element of this study in Chapters Two, Four and Five.

The final requisite for accessing Lecoq's poetic body is *complicité*. Often translated as *collaboration*, Murray prefers Michael Ratcliffe's more subversive translation: 'a form of *collusion* between celebrants' (Ratcliffe cited in Murray

2003: 71; emphasis added), for its suggestion of a 'spirit of shared, gleeful pleasure,' where 'boundaries are tested and extended' (*ibid.* 71). While Murray associates *complicité* with the quality of ensemble and the relationship between performer and audience, I suggest that this spirit of *collusion* is further extended to the relationship between the body and the material world. This is an argument I develop incrementally in the practical element of this inquiry.

The triumvirate of conditions outlined above are the foundational interweaving qualities intended to awaken in the student a shift from a body that merely moves through space to a 'poetic body.' For the purposes of this study, I define the activity of play or improvisation as *embodied making*, an ongoing activity of working things out as the play advances. Tim Ingold uses the term 'wayfaring' to describe a similar process, in which practitioners, 'are wanderers, wayfarers, whose skill lies in their ability to find the grain of the world's becoming and to follow its course while bending it to their evolving purpose' (Ingold 2011: 211). This unfolding process is made generative through a *complicité* between my inner world and the world that surrounds me. In my *disponibilité* or availability and openness to an embodied dialogue with what surrounds me I become sensitised to 'otherness' and possibility. I become immersed in the productive process of bringing something new into the world. I enter into the realm of the 'poetic.'

The Poetic Body: *Mime de Forme* and *Mime de Fond*

Having identified the essential qualities of Lecoq's poetic body, I introduce briefly, a further element for consideration in anticipation of the following chapter. In his writings, Lecoq delineates two distinct levels of play. Firstly,

mime de forme - 'traditional, virtuosic, communication through gesture without words' (Murray in Chamberlain and Yarrow 2002: 24), pertains to the modern mime technique developed by Etienne Decroux and crystallised by Marcel Marceau. Richmond Shepard defines this approach as demonstrative, 'you become engrossed in the skill of physical movement, the perfection of each gesture' (Shepherd 1972: 13). Conversely, *mime du fond* - 'fundamental or essential mime' lies at the heart of the student experience at Lecoq's school and is designated by Murray as 'the bed-rock upon which their skills and qualities as performers must be constructed' (Murray in Chamberlain and Yarrow 2002: 24). Far from being prescriptive, *mime du fond* relates to the notion of the poetic, as suggested by Bradby in his distinction between Mimicry and Jousse's term, *mimism*: 'Mimicry is a representation of form, *mimism* is the search for an internal dynamics of meaning' (Bradby in Lecoq 2000: 22).

Returning to Lecoq's teaching axis, introduced earlier in this chapter, *mime du fond* is associated directly with the downward vertical axis: 'It's about searching deep down and finding the deposit that is the result of things that we have observed' (Lecoq 2006: 112). These depths can be found in our affinity with the rhythms, spaces and forces through an embodied understanding of the laws of movement starting with the body in action: *'équilibre, déséquilibre, opposition, alternance, compensation, action, réaction'* (balance, imbalance, opposition, alternation, compensation, action, reaction) (Merlant 2004:12; my translation). These, for Lecoq, are immutable laws, or as mentioned earlier '*permances*,' which not only move us but are also universally shared and recognised. Consequently, in moving *with* the world, we are moved beyond mimicry to being touched and affected *by* the world. While Lecoq rejects the display aspect of

mime du forme, the replay of reality involved in this form of play is as essential as '*mime de fond*' and reflective of the dynamic between technique and play, as well as articulating a relation between reality and abstraction.

Chapter One: Summary

In this chapter, I set out the pedagogical journey offered by the Jacques Lecoq School in order to establish the foundations of Lecoq's 'poetic body.' Secondly, I have proposed 'method' in its double sense as the most appropriate term for encapsulating the two-fold dynamic of his teaching approach, which acknowledges the rigour and guidance of the laying down of enduring principles and the generative power of the student's imagination. Finally, I have drawn out key terms and concepts that I believe move closer to an understanding of the essential conditions for accessing the 'poetic body' and which are concisely articulated by Lecoq himself in the following affirmation:

> To recreate an action, an object with illusion (action mime) allows the imagination to invent what does not really exist, to change its dimensions, its weight, to overturn gravity and to play with the infinite possibilities that allow the actor-mime to take flight towards other worlds, wherever the imagination might lead them.
> (Lecoq 2006: 73)

A discussion of the terms, conditions and processes associated with Lecoq's 'poetic body' prepare the way for an alternative exploration of the 'poetic body' in the following chapter. In this next stage I intend, as Wittgenstein argues, to now draw attention to 'observations which no one has doubted, but which have escaped remark only because they are always before our eyes' (Wittgenstein cited in Bayer and Shotter 1998: 45). John Shotter observes that rather than seeing our discipline through its gaze, Wittgenstein wants us to attend to 'how

we actually do' […] '*in practice* - something that usually escapes our notice'
(*ibid*. 45; emphasis in original). Drawing on this proposition, an exploration of
the poetic body in the following chapter is intended to expand further on the
'poetic body' from a phenomenological, embodied and experiential perspective.
At this point, I list below, the key terms identified in this chapter, to be
interrogated through Practical Project 1:

Towards a 'Poetic Body'

- Observation and rediscovery of the external world

- A universal poetic awareness

- An understanding of being In the world

- The neutral mask: Unknowing & discovery

- Play/improvisation

- Relationship between inner and outer worlds

- Mime: *Mime de Forme* and *Mime de Fond*

Chapter Two: Practical Project 1 – 'Towards an Embodied Understanding of Jacques Lecoq's 'Poetic Body'

'In rediscovering you transform. You set off; you learn'

(Ariane Mnouchkine cited in Lecoq 2006: 133)

The first practical project of this study was designed to re-visit a particular phase of my learning at the Lecoq School. This chapter considers the process and findings of the project. Rather than examining the curriculum in its entirety, the aim of the project was to reconsider specific key stages that contribute to unpacking the lived experience or 'embodied phenomenology' (Escribano in De Preester 2013: 44) of Lecoq's approach to the 'poetic body.' Furthermore, in detailing this trajectory through practice I created live situations for interrogating research methods in order to construct a coherent framework within which to develop appropriate approaches and tools for deepening and documenting emerging understandings of practice in the subsequent practical projects (Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt 2007).

As mentioned in the introduction of this study, this chapter is intended to be viewed in conjunction with the accompanying **DVD**. **SECTION 1** - titled **Chapter Two, Practical Project 1**: **'Towards an Embodied Understanding of Lecoq's 'Poetic Body' -** is structured so that Practical Project 1 is available to view in full, followed by selected extracts from studio sessions, grouped sequentially. Attention will be drawn to the extracts under discussion throughout the chapter.

The embodied knowledge I experienced as a student from 1987 to 1989 at the Lecoq School in Paris continues to profoundly inform and shape my personal creative journey as an actress, director and teacher of movement and acting. I have been enacting what Philip Zarrilli defines as a 'theory of acting, a set of assumptions about the conventions and style that guide the structure of my actions and their shape in performance' (Zarilli 2002: 3). The combination of the practical element and written analysis in this study, offered me the opportunity to reconstruct a particular phase of my learning process from the perspective of my accumulated layers of experience, in order to consciously scrutinise and reflect upon my own implicit embodied knowledge, whilst moving towards a deeper understanding of Lecoq's 'poetic body.'

The selected sequence of learning explored in this project revolved around 'how beings and objects move, and how they find reflection in us' (Lecoq 2000:19). 'People,' Lecoq maintained, 'discover themselves in their relation to their grasp of the external world, and if the student has special qualities these will show up in the reflection' (*ibid*.19). These words exemplify a turning point in my own learning as a student at the Lecoq School. My curiosity extended beyond the possibilities of developing my skills as an actor interpreter, towards an increasing desire to make my own work. With this in mind, I analyse an eight-week period of learning in the first year, consisting of three key stages adhering to a method of progressive accumulation, beginning with the neutral mask, followed by *identification* with the four elements: earth, air, fire and water, matter, light, colours, paintings, music and animals and concluding in the *transposition* stage. Through this process, students experience an opening up of the body to the world and once grounded in this reality, progressively move

towards an imaginary dimension of artistic creation. If 'poiesis,' as delineated in the introduction, signifies 'a productive process,' then the outlined pedagogical sequence chosen for Practical Project 1 offers opportunities for exploring this transformational shift from the real to the poetic as it unfolds through the body.

Between June 2011 and April 2012 Practical Project 1 aimed to:

- Identify the fundamental characteristics of Jacques Lecoq's 'poetic body' from an embodied perspective
- Determine the methods and processes by which Lecoq accesses the poetic dimensions of the actor's body
- Uncover new understandings about how the body is implicated in this process.

Based on Lecoq's original diagram of his curriculum below, I highlight in red, the selected phase of learning explored in this Project (Figure 5).

THE EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY OF THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF MIME AND GESTURE

1st YEAR

2nd YEAR

SECOND YEAR

Focus of Practical Project 1

NEUTRAL

MASK

Elements   Materials

POETRY

PAINTING

ANIMALS

MASKS
Larval

PASSIONS

MUSIC   Stylistic

Stylistic

CHARACTERS

Constraints

OBJECTS

INVESTI-
GATIONS

SITUATIONS

Psychological
play without
words
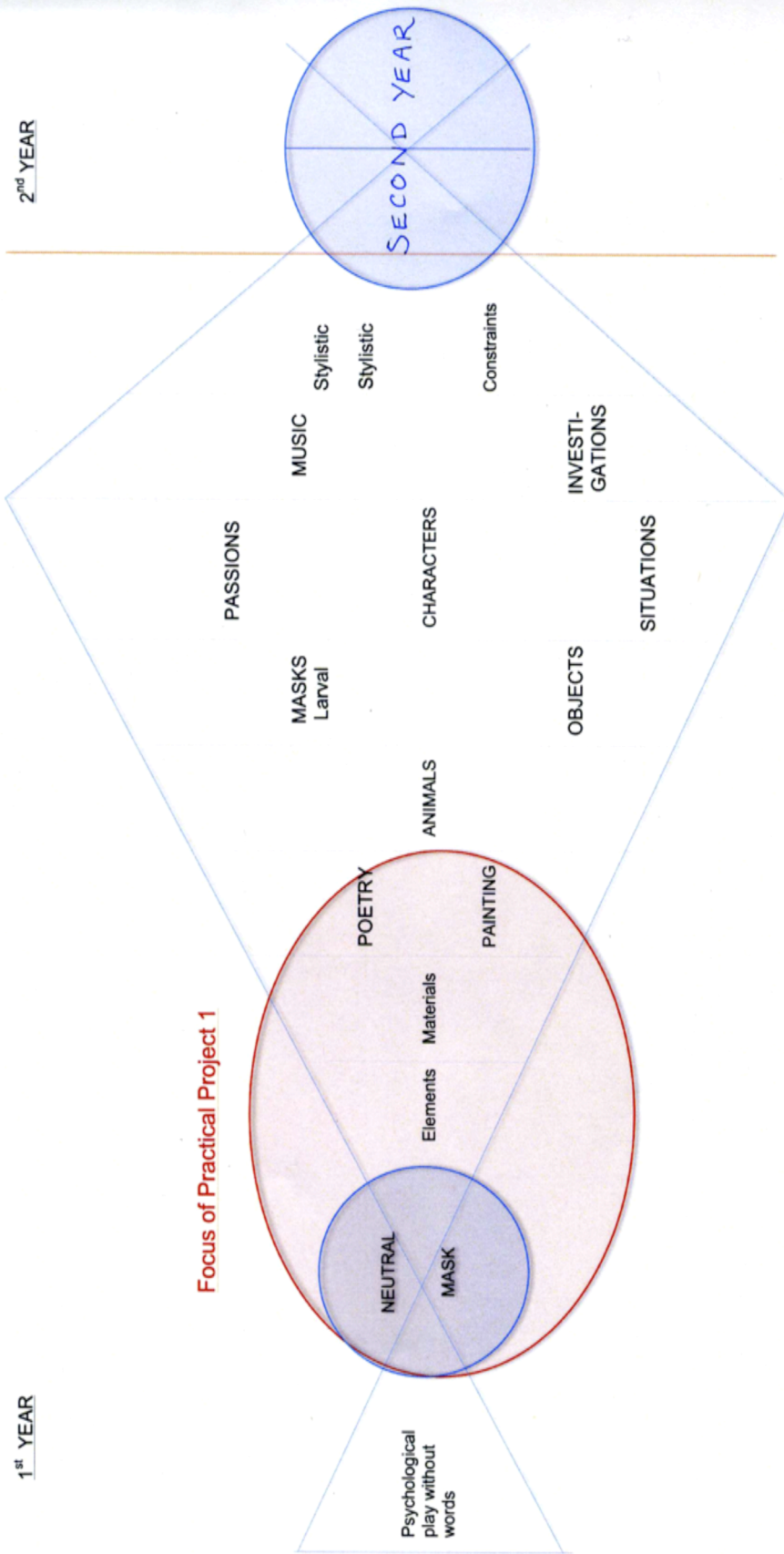
ELLIE NIXON PhD Performance Practice

Fig. 5. Focus of Practical Project 1

Practical Project 1: Design

Using the inquiry cycle set out in the methodology section of the introduction, I selectively and strategically traversed Lecoq's carefully structured learning process to understand how the body becomes a 'poetic' site. The initial stages of the project comprised a succession of studio-based sessions involving improvising, revising and refining my findings, exemplifying Peter Lichtenfels' process of 'the practice of the body doing and developing an understanding of that doing' (Lichtenfels in Riley and Hunter 2009: 131). The project culminated in a demonstration of the findings and their implications on the early stages of the devising process in the form of a short performance, as set out in the following chronological overview.

CHRONOLOGICAL OVERVIEW OF PROJECT 1

PROJECT STRUCTURE   Experimental: three stages

ENVIRONMENT   Studio based

TIMESCALE   One performance: University of Exeter

PERFORMER   Myself

RESEARCH DATES   Stage 1: June – July 2011

                            Stage 2: January – February 2012

REHEARSAL DATES   Stage 3: February and March 2012

PERFORMANCE DATE   3 April 2012

DATA RETRIEVAL METHODS: Video and photographic documentation, workbooks, observational notes, written evaluation of the findings.

The first stage of the project occurred between June and July 2011 and focused on the neutral mask to re-examine Lecoq's premise that 'starting from an

114

accepted reference point, which is neutral, the students discover their own point of view' (Lecoq 2000: 20). The second stage took place between January and February 2012, in which I retraced practical exercises designed by Lecoq in order to capture the experience of the various facets of 'identification' with the 'real' through embodying the four elements of nature: earth, air, fire and water and an analysis of the 'dynamics of scale.' This stage also involved embodying matter, such as materials with or without echo, materials that effervesce or melt, corrode, tear, expand and contract. Rather than including and detailing the entire identification stage of animals, light, music and paintings, I highlight two examples of how the body engages with this stage as I believe that while the points of focus may vary, the process itself remains comparable. In March 2012, the final stage involved a more intensive rehearsal process as I applied the accumulated embodied principles and practices to the devising process in the form of a short performance. For this purpose I selected an extract from *The Heights of Macchu Picchu*, the epic poem by the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, which I will expand upon towards the end of this chapter. I first consider the nature and significance of the preparatory exercises for the studio sessions, followed by an analysis of the findings discovered at each stage of Project 1. I conclude this chapter with further questions generated by this project, which provoke the following practical projects of this study.

Preparation: 'Waking the body' [20]

In my endeavour to identify the facets that constitute Lecoq's 'poetic body,' my initial focus at the start of each session was to mark a separation between the everyday and workshop environment through physical sequences comprised of

---

[20] I adopt this phrase used by Monika Pagneux in preference to 'warming up the body,' which she argues, is always warm. (workshops I attended in 2004 and 2007, Barcelona).

a number of exercises taken from Lecoq's movement analysis classes set out in the previous chapter. Additionally, I incorporated exercises derived from the Feldenkrais Awareness Through Movement method, discussed in the introduction of this study. As the project progressed and in the subsequent practical projects, the preparatory stages of the practical sessions extended and evolved into an unexpected yet overarching methodological framework for the entire study, which I address in more depth through the analysis of the practical projects. Equally, I identify the evolving preparatory exercises as increasingly central to accessing the processes by which the 'poetic body' is introduced and experienced by the 'actor-creator.'

Actor training offers many variants on preparing the body for activity. For example, The National Theatre offers an online version of the 'warm up' designed for actors preparing auditions, rehearsals or performances, intended to 'work your body in different ways, getting your heart rate up, stretching, and connecting the breath' (www.national theatre.org.uk, n.d.). This widely held view of the function of the 'warm up' conforms to the etymological definition of 'preparation' as a 'making ready,' but the *how* and *what for,* are not always considered with sufficient scrutiny. For the purposes of this inquiry, an alternative approach was required. The notion of 'working' the body as set out above implies effort and the imposition of an established procedure, whereas for Monika Pagneux, her preferred term, 'waking the body' refers to developing a state of curiosity through play and corporeal awareness as paramount from the start of her sessions.[21] Pagneux's more improvisatory approach contrasts with the movement analysis I experienced at the Lecoq School. In my

---

[21] When I attended two of Pagneux's *stages* (2006, 2007), anyone seen stretching, forcing or engaging in formal physical exercises through the use of an established method was stopped immediately.

endeavour to define the characteristics of Lecoq's 'poetic body in Practical Project 1, I felt increasingly compelled to draw on Pagneux's approach. The basis for her work is the Feldenkrais method. It is useful at this point to consider the parallels and contradictions between my experience of Lecoq's movement analysis and a deeper consideration of the implications of the Feldenkrais method on the focus of this inquiry.

In the previous chapter, I highlighted Lecoq's pedagogy as a dynamic blend of analysis and discovery, of constraint and freedom, of rigor and play. Lecoq stresses that movement analysis is not intended to impose either a physical model or established dramatic forms, but instead engenders the 'fullest realisation of accurate movement' (Lecoq 2000: 67). With this in mind, I began each session with a selection of Lecoq's 'Twenty Movements' to determine how his analysis of movement might contribute to developing an embodied understanding of the 'poetic body.' [22] I chose movements that would place my body in a state of readiness and that were determined by the specific nature of each session. For instance, in preparation for working with the neutral mask in stage 1, I was aware of Lecoq's observation that the neutral mask 'opens up the actor to the space around him' (*ibid.* 38). I therefore focused on movements that would invite me to engage with the external space and to experience

---

[22] The Twenty Movements are derived by Lecoq from his experience in sport and from Georges Hébert's 'natural method,' which as Lecoq writes, 'analyses movement under eleven categories: *pulling, pushing, climbing, walking, running, jumping, lifting, carrying, attacking, defending, swimming'* (Lecoq 2000: 71). At the end of the first year of the School, each student devises an individual choreography based on the 'Twenty Movements.' The instructions demand that the choreography be contained within strict parameters: starting and ending in the same spot, each of the 'Twenty Movements' is required to be included with no extraneous movements added. The initial frustration of not being able to invent new movements or step out of these constraints evolves into the crucial discovery that within the apparent constraint of the exercise another kind of freedom exists: freedom to explore and determine rhythm, qualities of movement, transitions between movements, use of space and intensity. This element of 'play' exemplifies the dynamics of freedom within constraint referred to earlier in the study.

sensations of opening and closing, advancing and retreating. The use of breath determines the length and rhythm of the movement, making an immediate connection between the inner body and its outer expression. Later on in the second *identification* stage of the project, the *Twenty Movements* became a vital resource for preparation in quite another way. The emphasis here was on selecting preparatory movements based on the four basic bodily movements: expansion, contraction, rotation and undulation as well as coordination, balance, bodily tension, spatial levels and directions. Importantly, each element or material that I would be embodying at the *identification* stage would involve all of these dimensions.

Despite my initial conviction that the 'Twenty Movements' would open up the body to a diverse range of movement possibilities, it is worth noting that these movements resonated substantially in the creative choices I made for the final performance of '*Macchu Picchu.*' Reflecting on this, I suggest that in my effort to recover an accurate and efficient rendition of the movements, I found myself 'falling into pure technique, or virtuosity for its own sake' (*ibid.* 79). In trying to 'get the movement right' I was missing out vital layers of exploration through play, defined by Lecoq as *traitements*, 'treatments,' which he characterised as 'a set of variations whose purpose it is to explore different adaptations of the movement' (*ibid.* 74). This essential process of 'tasting' the action' (Evans 2009: 63) invokes the transitional shift from technical accomplishment to dramatic exploration. As Evans highlights:

> The efficiency of the body is thus repositioned from the purely functional performance of actions with the minimum expenditure of energy, to include the production of a dramatic interior space within which the actions and movements generate meaning.

> (Evans 2009: 63)

In preparing my body from a purely technical perspective I was re-experiencing all the movement possibilities outlined above, yet, failed to consider the significance of the perpetual dynamic interaction between the technical and the playful. Whilst this finding is not new, I became increasingly aware of the need to prepare the body in a way that would allow for a sensitive balance between the rigors of technique and the freedom of play. As a student at the Lecoq School I moved blithely back and forth along this continuum without consciously perceiving its shifts and nuances. For Lecoq, too much freedom, 'where everything is possible' leads to 'the invention of a world with laws other than those of reality' (Lecoq 2006: 72) or abstraction for abstraction's sake. Therefore, I would argue that 'the twenty movements' anticipate, the significance of the constraints of the 'reality' of this world, which will eventually trigger creative work.

Project 1 involved working alone without the constancy of an outside eye from a teacher, director or co-collaborator, I would need to find a way in which I could observe myself in action. According to Callery, 'we normally distinguish two states of existence: waking and sleeping. Feldenkrais defines a third state: awareness' (Callery 2001: 37). Correspondingly, as I mention above, I drew on the source of Pagneux's approach: *Awareness through Movement* exercises developed by Feldenkrais. When Pagneux taught at the Lecoq School, she introduced the work of Feldenkrais to the curriculum. As a student several years after Pagneux's departure from the School, Feldenkrais work was almost non-existent and I was certainly not conscious at the time of its relationship to the 'poetic body.' While I can find no mention of Feldenkrais in his own writings,

Lecoq addresses the significance of awareness in his pedagogy through his analysis of movement classes:

> If we try to mime all the actions that we do every morning from waking up to having breakfast, the innumerable little gestures that we do automatically without thinking about it, we realise that we did not know what we were doing and everything gains importance as it is recreated.
>
> (Lecoq 2006: 73)

Feldenkrais preparation undertaken in Practical Project 1 was based on four specific 'lessons' designed to improve functionality, awareness and imagined action. The first focuses on understanding breath through movement involving seesaw movements of the diaphragm and progressing to the back. The second focuses on the pelvis as a means of identifying superfluous and unconscious efforts that interfere with an alignment of the spine. The third lesson introduces the effect of imagined movements in order to 'distinguish between the projected image of an action and its actual execution' (Feldenkrais 1977: 123). The fourth and final lesson increases awareness of parts of my body 'of which we are not conscious, with the help of those of which we are conscious' (*ibid*.155). I experienced varying sensations of feeling taller, flatter, lighter or breathing more fluidly. These slight shifts in awareness, invited me to focus right in on my internal self, aligning with Callery's observation that 'You become a spectator of your own body - from the inside' (Callery 2001: 39), which as Feldenkrais points out, alters continually. Additionally, I note that these exercises did not impose a movement style on my body. Instead, I was being invited to sense and explore the shades and layers of my own movement qualities, to become curious about new breathing patterns, speed, intensity and rhythm. Feldenkrais work became a central method for accessing possibilities

of change, without limiting myself to the unhelpful opposition of correct and incorrect movement and prompting me to make new and subtle choices through exploration rather than force.

In relation to the focus of moving closer to an embodied understanding of the 'poetic body,' my use of the Feldekrais exercises is based on his premise that an increase in awareness frees up our energies for creative work.[23] Relatedly, Feldenkrais proposes a 'whole self' that is environmentally and socially embedded as a 'functional unity between body, mind, and environment' (Feldenkrais cited in Kampe, 2015: 200). Kampe's recent analysis points towards the way in which, for the purposes of this study, the Feldenkrais method became increasingly central as a means of accessing the appropriate state of awareness for the project: 'The perceiving organism is not merely registering but exploring and asking questions of its environment, … seeking out the answers in the sensory stimuli that surround it' (*ibid.* 200). This ethos reflects Pagneux's emphasis on 'waking up' the body and while I did not apply her particular approach directly, its unique focus on the interaction between the rigors of the Feldenkrais work and the notion of play, improvisation and dramatic creation influenced the developing projects. [24]

Stage 1: **The Neutral Mask: A State of Discovery**

Having presented the preliminary means of preparing the body for each stage, I will now set out the content of Practical Project 1, stage by stage to include an analysis of findings with references for viewing the accompanying **DVD**:

---

[23] For further insights, see the special edition of *Theatre, Dance and Performance Journal* dedicated to Feldenkrais (2015).

SECTION 1, **Chapter Two - Practical Project 1**: **'Towards an Embodied Understanding of Lecoq's 'Poetic Body.'**

 The first stage of Practical Project 1 examines the role of the Neutral mask in Lecoq's pedagogical approach and its significance to the 'poetic body.' This stage consisted of exercises, or as Lecoq prefers: 'themes' that form the basis of the neutral mask work at the Lecoq School, undertaken individually over a period of four days and documented on digital camera. The exercises were selected specifically to experience anew the key incremental learning points of the neutral mask process. In this analysis I also include observations on the neutral mask work I experienced as a participant at the *Footsbarn Three Week Summer School* in France (July, 2011), with François Lecoq (Jacques Lecoq's son) as teacher. I believe this additional experience informs the preliminary stage of Practical Project 1.

As noted in the previous chapter, Lecoq's use of terms such as 'universal' and 'neutral' are highly contested. For instance, Janet Adshead-Landsdale defines neutral as a quality in analysis 'which is never present; the method is not neutral; the observer is not neutral; both are the result of personal and cultural histories' (Adshead-Landsdale cited in Preston-Dunlop 1998: 583). Similarly, Lecoq acknowledges the impossibility of the neutral. However, as established in the previous chapter, the aim of neutral mask work is not to obliterate difference, but serves primarily as a means of exploring pre-performance or the 'pre-objective, pre-conceptual or pre-thematic stage' (Escribano in De Preester 2013: 49). At the School the quest for neutrality consists of approximately four weeks exclusively dedicated to neutral mask work. As a student in 1987, no introduction, explanation, or module handbook prepared me for this immersive

process, reflecting Lecoq's desire for the pedagogical process to be a voyage of surprises and discovery. Whilst I cannot ignore my previous experience of the neutral mask, I incorporated the bracketing method outlined in the methodological section of the introduction. In my embodied investigation of Lecoq's 'poetic body,' the intention was to revivify the experience with the additional component of reflective analysis. I now discuss three key neutral mask 'themes': 'The Turn,' 'Throwing the Stone' and 'The Fundamental Journey,' which I believe form the connection between the neutral mask and the characteristics of Lecoq's 'poetic body.'

Neutral Mask - A Territory of Truth

The first theme, 'The Turn' examines the moment when the neutral mask reveals itself to the world, a deceptively simple action involving turning the body to face the performance space. However, any extraneous effort, tension, direction, angle, or shifting of weight reveals and amplifies the non-neutral or individuality of the wearer. Decroux says, 'Masks make things worse [...] It's like lighting. We see everything you do clearly. And the moment you wear a mask, especially [a neutral] mask, we see the quality of what you're doing' (Decroux cited in Leabhart 1975: 56). (Please view **DVD: SECTION 1 – Extract 1 – Neutral Mask: A Territory of Truth**). In this clip taken from early workshop sessions, we observe different versions of how I negotiate 'the turn.' These exemplify the ways in which the neutral mask reveals a number of details about my inner world at the start of the project. My initial movements are tentative and rigid. Why do I tend to turn in the same direction and from the same spot in the room? Rather than allowing myself to actively enter the space - to experience; to explore the unknown and the possible - there is a palpable

quality of uncertainty and hesitation in the way I negotiate the space. In maintaining an inflexible approach to the 'turn,' I am unconsciously reassuring myself with the security of certainty. Additionally, my wide stance reveals a lack of connection between the upper and lower body. I appear to challenge the space rather than be open to it. Reviewing the filming was helpful in acknowledging the ways in which my initial unease is manifested externally. I was entering what the American teacher Dody Disanto refers to as 'a territory of truth' (Disanto 2013).

Calibrating Inner Feeling and Outer Expression

The second 'theme' I wish to consider is the following: *The neutral mask arrives at the beach and looks out to sea, picks up a stone and throws it into the sea*. In my role as teacher, I have watched many students from different cultures experience this 'theme.' I observe each student's body in order to look for clarity, precision and accuracy. I also note if significance is given to each movement with a fully inhabited body. However, despite my years of experience, when I approached this theme in Project 1, I found myself confronted with a disparity between thought and action. (Please view **DVD: SECTION 1 – Extract 2 – Neutral Mask: Calibrating Inner Feeling and Outer Expression**). On reviewing the digital recordings, I noted that the external manifestation of the theme being explored was far less forceful than my internal experience of it. For instance, in this clip, my movements appear tentative and small in the way in which I enter the space and walk in sand. I barely suggest the action of looking out to sea. This is compounded by the lack of variation in my bodily rhythm, lack of specificity, and the way in which only half my body commits to the action of throwing the stone.

Expanding on Decroux's quote mentioned earlier, Lecoq asserts that, 'with the mask, you have no past, no race – except what the mask portrays…it forces you to act with your body, to think with your body – and the body doesn't lie' (Lecoq cited in Leabhart 1989: 97). Returning to the extract, it was helpful to experience anew this process, particularly in the incremental process of calibrating the disparity between inner feeling and outer expression.

Furthermore, as my entire body became implicated in the action I sensed my body's three-dimensional presence in space, perceiving a marked difference in bodily sensation if I advanced or retreated. This is evidenced at the end of this extract after the imaginary stone has left my hand. In retreating backwards, however small the movement, I am withdrawing; recoiling from the surrounding space. In negating the world, the neutral mask loses impetus and a sense of driving forward through time and space. As the extract suggests, it appears I am awaiting approval. Indeed, I was approaching the theme as if fulfilling a task, which can be defined as 'a piece of work imposed, exacted, or undertaken as a duty or the like' (OED online). Interestingly, Lecoq's pedagogical vocabulary does not include the term 'task' in French and neither is there a corresponding term in Spanish. I realised that if I continued to work in this way I would be merely undergoing a process of correction, forcing my body through a disciplining process. Instead, the emphasis needed to be upon engaging the body in a playful combination of rhythms, efforts and directions that are capable of tirelessly perpetuating the freshness of a new experience, encouraging me simply 'to be.' It is interesting to note that this was not resolved in Project 1, but these observations helped me to pinpoint those moments of anxiety and doubt,

which restrain and inhibit the freedom of exploration over the course of the study.

At the Footsbarn Summer School (July, 2011), with François Lecoq as teacher, I had the opportunity to observe thirty-eight versions of 'throwing the stone.' Each throw varied in tension, direction, amplitude and projection, based on anatomical differences, gender, age and culture. While the individuality of each throw confirms Adshead-Landsdale's assertion that we are the result of both our personal and cultural differences, in all cases when participants were wearing the mask for the first time, the qualitative movement dimensions were remarkably similar. Each throw was nearly always executed with a low bodily tension, in a forward direction with limited amplitude and minimum projection of the stone into the space. Furthermore, motion tended to be concentrated on one body part: the arm that throws rather than the body that throws it. I argue here, that while the similarities of the throw represent Lecoq's notion of getting back to the essential universal qualities of the throw, they also expose a universal disparity between perceived action and its external manifestation.

In consequence, I stopped trying to 'do it right,' exploring instead the infinite varieties of 'throwing the stone' and varying the gesture's rhythm, tension and direction. I was prompting myself to become curious, to improvise. In other words, I began to 'taste' or 'play' with the theme and my body became increasingly implicated in the action. This emphasis on play disrupted my habitual patterns and provoked instead a receptive response in a way similar to the sensations described by Andrew Dawson when working with the Feldenkrais method:

> By making new and unusual movement in new and unfamiliar positions, the nervous system must generate alternative solutions, which combine familiar movements with unusual sensations. Awareness of what the body is doing is enhanced and the individual begins to choose how he or she moves.
>
> (Andrew Dawson n.d.)

Increasingly, through a process of discovery and exploration I perceived from within myself the tuning faculty of the neutral mask as it calibrates thought and action. Through encouraging the simplicity of action, the mask work unblocks or reawakens corporeal circuits, which Salvatierra describes as a memory of the body, which needs to be recovered (2006). The emerging curiosity I sensed in my relationship to the gesture of throwing the stone was accompanied by a crucial shift away from an emphasis on analysing my own unique way of throwing, towards a focus on the essential quality of the action itself. This adjustment exemplifies Barthes' explanation of the neutral as 'every inflection that, dodging or baffling the paradigmatic, oppositional structure of meaning, aims at the suspension of the conflictual basis of discourse.' (Barthes 2005: 211). For example, in everyday life we might have an emotional or physical response to the act of being by the sea. We might find it frightening, calming or even exhilarating. Indeed, we might in real life never choose to throw something into the water and, undeniably, the gesture of throwing a stone is provoked by an emotional or psychological impulse. Additionally, these sensations are also conditioned by temporal factors: memories of the past, anticipation of the future. However, the neutral mask in this theme compelled me to find the essence of the act of throwing the stone, before the layering of personal opinion and temporal conditions, thus freeing me to experience the purity of action in the moment.

The Fundamental Journey: Engaging with the World

The experience of first throwing an imaginary object and literally oneself into the space prepared me for the next stage, a journey through nature:

> *At daybreak you emerge from the sea; in the distance you can see a forest and you set out towards it. You cross a sandy beach and then you enter the forest. You move through the trees and vegetation which grow ever more densely as you search for a way out. Suddenly, without warning, you come out of the forest and find yourself facing a mountain. You 'absorb' the image of the mountain, then you begin to climb, from the first gentle slopes to the rocks and vertical cliff face which tests your climbing skills. Once you reach the summit, a vast panorama opens up: a river runs through a valley and then there is a plain and finally, in the distance, a desert. You come down the mountain, cross the stream, walk through the plain, then into the desert, and finally the sun sets.*
>
> (Lecoq 2000: 42)

The journey of this theme is an imagined space filled with potential obstacles and evidenced through the dynamic interaction between the real space of the studio and my body's manifestation of the imagined space of the theme. As with the previous theme this improvisation exposes individual differences in motion and imagination. While the stages of the journey are the same for everyone, my experience of it is unique. I walked through the undergrowth, climbed over fallen logs, jumped over streams and pushed vines and branches out of my path. I allowed myself to run, to leap, and to crawl under and over things. I imagined the mountain and began to climb vertically in the studio space, shifting my weight and incorporating different levels of effort. My breath became laboured as I pushed with my legs and pulled with my hands and arms. At the top of my imagined mountain, I felt my feet firmly rooted into the earth and experienced the sensation of being at the summit. My breath was irregular and shallow as if my body had really experienced the journey. I react in a sensory way, as Zarilli

128

writes: 'because when the mind stops defining experience, the senses still function' (Zarilli 2005: 142). Despite not finding a state of calm I was developing a feeling body. In using the neutral mask to engage with the external world I experienced the purity of action and re-discovered a connection to space, opening up to possibilities, to exploring the new and expanding experience.

Viewed from this perspective, Lecoq's notion of neutral does not necessarily contradict with the intensity of experience, suggesting a correspondence once again with Barthes' notion of the neutral as structural, 'by which I mean that, for me, the Neutral doesn't refer to 'impressions' of grayness, of 'neutrality', of indifference. The Neutral - my Neutral - can refer to intense, strong, unprecedented states' (Barthes 2005: 211). Correspondingly, as the following images (Figure 6.) suggest, my movements became more assertive, expansive and I explored different levels in the space.

Fig. 6. The Neutral Mask: Strong Unprecedented States

At this stage, the neutral mask continued to calibrate my actions and intentions. Moreover, it put me in touch with the fundamental laws of motion through an experiential encounter with nature. The body becomes sensitised and connected to the external world beyond a physical state, but more fundamentally, in the words of Evans, 'we can best consider the 'neutral' body, not as a material reality, but as a way of understanding the body's relationship to the world' (Evans 2009: 98). In this way the neutral mask work had served as an anchoring device, a reference point from which to begin, yet I also experienced the mask-work as liberating. My body began to reconnect to its receptive and expressive potential through a profound and dynamic engagement with the real and the imaginary.

Copeau, whose link to Lecoq is established in the literature review, conceived of the neutral mask as a means of breaking with the confines of the habitual, to free the actor from cultural, physical and social conditioning, in order to return to a starting point, a fully inhabited, embodied state:

> To start from silence and calm. That is the very first point. An actor must know how to be silent, to listen, to answer, to remain motionless, to start a gesture, follow through with it, come back to motionlessness and silence, with all the shadings and half-tones that these actions imply.
>
> (Copeau cited in Eldridge 1996: 42)

Meyerhold also attempted to rid the body of extraneous and habitual actions or what Gennady Bogdanov calls 'physical trivia,' […] 'gestures for the sake of gestures' (Pitches 2006: 67), where *stoika* represents a 'position of readiness, [in which the actor's] physical apparatus is always switched on' (Bogdanov cited in Pitches *ibid*. 67) as he searched for clarity, precision and a permanent state

of attention from his actors. In drawing parallels between Meyerhold, Copeau and Lecoq, Pitches draws attention to neutrality, not as a state of stasis or death, but rather 'the performative equivalent of the Stakhanovite worker at rest: he may not be moving but he is always anticipating the next call to action' (*ibid*. 67).

In the neutral mask stage of this project, my body was re-sensitised to the space around me, shifting my perspective away from the mask as a corrective tool towards an intensification of the relationship between my internal body and the external world. Thomas Leabhart points out an important factor of this experience: 'Your own person ceases in that instant and you are what happens' (Leabhart 1989: 97). Importantly, to counteract the common misunderstanding associated with this view, Evans maintains that 'This form of body-based training is 'not 'anti-thought', but constructs thought as something produced by and through the body' (Evans 2009: 90). Returning to Fusetti's definition of Lecoq's 'poetic body' outlined in the introduction, his idea of Lecoq's body as an 'instrument' is made redundant by the neutral mask. In beginning with the lived world of perceptual phenomena, our bodies are not objects to us. Quite the contrary, they are an integral part of the perceiving subject.

Stage 2: **The Mimetic Faculty - Identification With the Elements and Matter**
If the neutral mask introduces the student to the spatial dimensions of being immersed in an imagined natural world, the following stage of 'identification' builds on this to capture the nuanced experience and perception of natural phenomena through the body. Between January and February 2012, I interrogated my responses to embodying natural phenomena through a process

of physical experimentation in order to move closer to an embodied understanding of the 'poetic body.' The aim is twofold. Firstly, the body's field of gestural reference is expanded through an embodied synergy with the observed. In an informal interview with Pascale Lecoq, the current director of the Lecoq School, she confirms that this process encourages the student to 'feel in the body, the world that surrounds us' (2011). Secondly, as Lecoq writes, 'feeding off all of these experiences' offers a physical stimulus from which to create' (Lecoq 2000: 48). Thus, for the body to enter into Lecoq's poetic dimension, it must first be grounded in external phenomena, in the empirically observable, echoing both Evans cited above and Merleau Ponty's insistence on the importance of 'relearning to look at the world' (Merleau Ponty cited in Escribano in De Preester 2013: 43). Furthermore, Escribano points to the similarities between Lecoq and Merleau Ponty in their mutual premise that to understand the world, necessarily involves 'an internal identification in the form of a corporeal recreation of that movement' (*ibid*: 43).

It is Lecoq's particular extension of our mimetic faculty or involvement with the world in a theatrical context that is of concern here and how our capacity to 'other' contributes to deepening our understanding of the 'poetic body.' The relationship between art and imitation has long been a primary concern in examining the creative process, from Aristotle's *Poesis*, the 'natural' human inclination to imitate is acknowledged and it is through this 'identification' stage the mimetic faculty of the body is developed and refined. The anthropologist Michael Taussig defines mimesis, as 'the nature that culture uses to create second nature, the faculty to copy, imitate, make models, explore difference, yield into and become Other' (Taussig 1993: 19). Of particular note here, is the

way in which mimesis is understood as an adaptive behaviour, before language, whereby humans make themselves similar to their surrounding environments through play and assimilation. In the words of Walter Benjamin, 'observation is based on self-immersion' (Benjamin cited in Jennings and Eiland 1999: 720) and 'play is to a great extent its School' (*ibid*. 694).

In his quest for engaging with the world, Lecoq uses the concepts of *mimodrama*, *mimism* and *mimemes* following the writings of the French anthropologist, Marcel Jousse, whom, as mentioned previously, Lecoq acknowledges as profoundly influencing this aspect of the pedagogical journey. Based on the premise that the act of miming is the first expression or language of the '*anthropos*' or human being, Jousse argues that we are essentially an indivisible 'complexus of *gestes*' (Jousse 1997: 14). Gestes, he defines as 'All the movements executed by the human composite' (*ibid*. 56) and through self-awareness these *gestes* are developed and refined. Significantly then, Jousse's understanding of the mimetic faculty is synonymous with self-discovery and as such, the most penetrating means available to analyse ourselves is by the study of our own performance of our own *gestes*. 'This,' he asserts, 'is surely the tool to dismantle all other tools' (*ibid*. 14). For Jousse, our natural inclination to mime replays everything in us and through us in such a way that our own bodies become 'laboratories of awareness,' *(ibid*.15). In re-examining my learning with Lecoq, perceived from within my own body, through my own *gestes,* I was adopting Jousse's 'laboratory of the self' (*ibid*. 15).

My intention at this stage was for my lived experience to form the empirical basis for a phenomenologically informed description the shift from 'observation' to 'identification' through an exploration of the four fundamental elements of

earth, air, fire and water. For instance, the element of air is evidenced by the objects it carries, such as paper or leaves. In exploring mimetically how air lifts these objects through my body, I sensed myself moving along a path of least resistance in an indirect upwards motion, discovering moments of suspension, lightness and responsiveness, where just before settling in stillness, my body would set off again carried off by the impulsive nature of air in different directions. In phenomenological terms, it was important to find a language to articulate how this process appeared in my bodily experience. Using the 'objective kinetic language' proposed by Maxine Sheets-Johnston in *The Primacy of Movement*, (Sheets-Johnstone 1999: 486) I documented these characteristics. I exemplify this process with the element of air in the following table, (Figure 7):

Qualitative Structures	Element: Air
Effort and Shape of Movement	Expansive, rounded and angular, dabbing, gliding, flicking
Complex details about kinetic aliveness	Turning, spirals, expansion, lifting, settling
The qualitative nature of self-movement	suddenness, slowness, heaviness, laxness, forcefulness, etc.

Fig. 7. The Qualitative Structures of the Element: Air, based on Sheets-Johnstone's *objective kinetic language* (1999*).

Having documented the unique characteristics of each element in the same way, I followed a similar process with their diverse manifestations. For instance, the flame of a match and a sparkler belong to the element of fire, but these are further differentiated by a unique set of structural movement qualities, which then extended into an exploration of a broader field of reference: matter. Through the body, I tested the structural qualities of materials that wobble: jelly,

silicone; materials that effervesce, fizzy drinks, sweets that fizz in the mouth, vitamin tablets; materials that stretch, materials that bounce, corrosive materials, dough, paper, the movement of tin foil and cling film. (Please view **DVD: SECTION 1 – Extract 3 – The Mimetic Faculty**). For instance, in this extract we first observe two examples selected from a large variety of plastic bags I worked with as they attempt to return to their original form after being scrunched up. This is followed by a clip of my body engaging in a mimetic experience of this journey. In adapting my body to the movements of the material object I inhabit new rhythms and unfamiliar structural qualities, which are arranged in the following table, (Figure 8):

Qualitative Structures	Matter: Plastic Bag
Effort and Shape of Movement	Bound, resistance, angular
Complex details about kinetic aliveness	Echo, vibration, from contraction to expansion, tension, multiple directions, changes of state, beginnings and endings,
The qualitative nature of self-movement	Sudden shifts in rhythm, suspension, trying to return to an original shape, yielding, changes of scale, response to having been compressed, sensations of opening and release.

Fig. 8. The Qualitative Structures of Matter: Plastic Bag, based on Sheets-Johnstone's *objective kinetic language* (1999).

Correspondingly, this 'identification process' encouraged me to experience the infinite varieties of the basic efforts of push and pull, beginnings and endings, as well as textures, the malleable and the immovable. In using this approach, I was articulating what Sheets-Johnstone defines as a language of kinetic experience, a way of sensing the relationship between the body and the external world whilst avoiding the filter of my subjective opinion. The structural variations between elements and materials were apparent. As Sheets-

Johnstone asserts: 'A medium is constrained by its very nature' (Sheets-Johnstone 1999: 116-17). However, I emphasise that this process was not about identifying prescriptive qualities, but a means of articulating the sensations. For instance, when Escribano describes Lecoq's 'identification' with the natural world as a 'body formula' (Escribano in De Preester 2013: 42) he alludes to a kind of taxonomy of qualities. Yet fails to acknowledge the corresponding emergence at this stage of a language of experience, which articulates at the same time, the body's kinetic aliveness.[25]

Next, I 'tasted' the nuances of each element through Lecoq's 'dynamics of scale' from calm to tempestuous. For example, when embodying a calm sea, I experienced a heightened sense of stillness on the surface of my body, yet the imagined currents of the sea kept the inner body active, as the shoreline suggests the inner life of the sea. Within this dynamic calm, the external reveals the internal. Traveling up the scale to tempestuous, I mimetically engaged with the power and force of the interacting elements of air and water.

In accommodating my body, rhythm, breath and use of space to the element or material I experienced Taussig's '*othering*' and as I kinetically experience the reality of the elements and of matter, I release the corresponding energy in the form of gestures. When discussing Lecoq's pedagogy, Christophe Merlant (1998) explains that in everyday life we are accustomed to relating to the external world as the subject observing the object. If we invert this dynamic, as in the *identification* process, so that we accept to be what we see, we lose our status of having a view of the world and are fundamentally put into play. The external world that I experience and perceive impregnates itself upon me and as Marcel Jousse contends, I apprehend the reality that reverberates in me. I

---

[25] This 'language of analogy' (Lecoq 2000: 87) becomes the vocabulary that informs creative work. It draws on the precision of observation, the richness of the world around us and as Lecoq writes. 'goes beyond any psychological approach' (*ibid*. 87).

am fashioned, sculpted by things, which play themselves out in and through me. Returning to the DVD extract of embodying a plastic bag (**DVD: SECTION 1 – Extract 3 – The Mimetic Faculty**), in reaching out to the plastic bag through my mimetic faculty, I consciously let the plastic bag in. As Jousse affirms:

> The knower *becomes* in a way the object known in the form of this visible expression. […] He *becomes* - transitorily - the being known and mimed; he then becomes the action that flows from this being; he finally incarnates the being on which this action is exercised.

> (Jousse1997: 71; emphasis in original)

Hence, the expanding plastic bag I observe expands in me. I give *my* plastic bag to the plastic bag. This exchange between my body and the external world, exemplifies Taussig's two-layered notion of mimesis, involving taking hold of something by means of its likeness and crucially, 'a palpable, sensuous, connection between the very body of the perceiver and the perceived' (Taussig 1993: 21). Thus the dynamic world that I am exploring is inseparable from the dynamic world I am creating.

Through the body's mimetic faculty the distinction between the self and other becomes more porous and it is this capacity of the body to 'become other' that reveals Lecoq's internal dynamics of meaning, where meaning is embedded in experience. It is important to clarify here that Lecoq is not asking for an imitation of the real, but as Merlant states above, rather a 'playing at' and this distinction creates a space for the individuality of each student to emerge. On this point, Mark Johnson indicates that, 'human meaning concerns the character and significance of a person's interactions with their environments' (Johnson 2007:

10). He argues that even at a non-conscious level, the body inhabits and interacts meaningfully with its environment. Thus, it is my endeavour to embody the structural qualities of the dynamic world that provokes the vital differences that will define my individuality. This aspect of Practical Project 1 is interrogated further in the subsequent practical projects of this study.

Progressively, the student's accumulated experience of embodying the four elements and various forms of matter are drawn into the 'dramatic dimensions' (Lecoq 2000: 83). In shifting from the realms of observation towards identification, an impression is made. The student's newfound corporeal vocabulary can now be drawn upon for expressive purposes and this is the focus of Stage 3, the concluding stage of this project.

Stage 3: **Transposition – The Process of Abstraction**

The final stage of Practical Project 1 took place over a period of six weeks from mid February to the end of March 2012 and culminated in a lecture/demonstration performed on 3rd April 2012. The one-hour lecture/demonstration included video examples of each incremental stage from the workshop sessions to rehearsal and involved live performance. As such, the nature of the practical sessions necessarily shifted from a workshop environment to a rehearsal process. The aim of this final stage was to apply the accumulated embodied principles and practices explored earlier to the devising process. Lecoq's understanding of the 'dramatic dimension' referred to earlier, branches off in two principle directions. The first involves the '*transference*' method, where this new corporeal vocabulary becomes an imaginative source for expressing the qualities of a character 'to achieve a better playing of human

nature.' The second direction leads the student to the realms of theatrical transposition 'beyond realistic performance' (*ibid. 45*). For the purposes of exploring Lecoq's *transposition* process and its connection to the 'poetic body,' it was in this direction that the concluding stage of Practical Project 1 was directed.

My approach was framed according to Lecoq's 'theme' of 'moving' a poem.[26] I selected an extract from *The Heights of Macchu Picchu* by the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, in part because of my personal and professional connection to South America. It was in Chile that I developed my practice and teaching and, moreover, in Spanish. Additionally, the experience of introducing Lecoq's European model to a Latin American context generated significant transatlantic resonances that continue to influence my practice. Until now, I had explored the mimetic correspondences with the elements and materials. Importantly, Neruda's poem was to become the provocation. In considering Neruda's poem as a structure in motion from which to devise a bodily response rather than a representational illustration; I was locating the focus of the *transpositional* on Lecoq's notion of 'fundamental mime' (*mime de fond*) rather than 'formal mime' (*mime de forme*); mimesis rather than mimicry. The choice to work alone generated an opportunity to focus exclusively on the essential exchange between my own body and the stimulus. In effect, by experimenting at this stage with expressing through my movement what Lecoq describes as a 'dynamic emotion,' I was confronting the initial transition from the neutral to the individual. It is important to stress here that I was being guided by Lecoq's

---

[26] Based on an exercise at the Lecoq School, in which each student selects a poem in its original language, to explore and capture its mimodynamic potential: its essential qualities in movement.

definition of emotion, rooted in its etymological French meaning: a 'setting in motion' (Lecoq 2000).

Discovered in 1911, Macchu Picchu is an Inca stronghold in the Peruvian Andes. Neruda first visited the site in the early 1940s and this experience led to *Las Alturas de Macchu Picchu*, a complex poem divided into twelve sections. Wary of the temptation to make a figurative rendition of the English version, I opted to develop my response entirely based on one section of Neruda's original Spanish version. (Please view **DVD: SECTION 1 – Extract 4 – Voice Recording of Macchu Picchu by Pablo Neruda in English/Spanish).** After reading the poem aloud in Spanish, I found myself drawing with a pen on and around the text. Lines, curves, dots, shapes and spirals began to appear, suggested by the words, phrases and dynamic flow of rhythm. I believe that this improvisational or playful course of action facilitated a pathway from the page to the body as the drawings revealed my subjective response to the rhythms of the poem in a way that echoed Jousse's rhythmic schema:

> The rhythm of intensity, the rhythm of duration, the rhythm of timbre, the rhythm of pitch, the alliteration of consonants, the assonance of vowels, the exact number of fully pronounced syllables, the average tempo of delivery, etc, etc.
>
> (Marcel Jousse 1997: 24)

My hand initiated the mimetic experience of the poem's performative dimensions. To bring the movement into the entire body, it was necessary to escape the page and attempt to respond physically to my recorded reading. (Please view **DVD: SECTION 1 – Extract 5 – Transposition – The Process of Abstraction).** This extract shows my embodied exploration towards the end of

the process. In it, I am listening and responding to my rendition in Spanish

through headphones. It is particularly interesting to observe my embodied

process of transposing Neruda's poem without the accompanying words as I

move the entire section of the poem through the different lenses of the four

elements. I observed that the poem is not fixed within one unique elemental

lens, but resonates with all four to varying degrees. In order to examine more

closely this assertion, the extract captures my exploration of the two dominant

elements I connected to in Neruda's poem: air and earth. In the opening phrase

'Del aire al aire' ('From air to air') for instance, my body explores the expansive

qualities of air, in the same way that a gust of wind might expand over water.

The words themselves refer to air, but I connected primarily to the specific

qualities of suspension inherent in the words and images rather than an

illustration of air. Further on in the poem, an increasing density emerged in the

qualities of my movements. For example, in the phrase, '*Días de fulgor vivo en

la intemperie de los cuerpos*' ('I live days of brilliance amongst the exposed

elements of bodies'), my movements became increasingly tense, linear and

rigid as they responded to the pressure of the explosive consonants, so much

so that I began to embody the metal-like qualities of iron: maximum tension,

dense, strongly resisting yet eventually succumbing to external pressure, with a

slight echo as body parts reached fixed points. Neruda mentions steel in the

following phrase, which may have influenced my physical response, yet

embodying the qualities of metal, I perceived Neruda's 'exposed elements of

bodies' as being expressed through the metallic qualities of my singular body.

During this phrase my body resisted the increasing forces of 'push' and 'pull'

until it released suddenly in *'noches desdichadas hasta la última harina'* ('nights

afflicted until the last dust of flour'), whereupon the metallic qualities of my body transformed into the effervescent qualities of bubbles surfacing in a drink.

In experiencing the more extreme forces of push and pull, I sensed more clearly the moments when my body was, to borrow Jousse's terms, 'acting upon' and 'acted on.' For instance, when I embodied the movement of the corkscrew I sensed my body initiating and driving the direction and quality of the movement, yet when embodying iron I sensed my body forcefully resisting and gradually surrendering to the external force of being crushed. Notably, the American choreographer Bill Forsythe, describes dance as a conversation with gravity (2011) and in 'setting in motion' Neruda's poem, I experienced, as this extract shows, a similar dynamic as my body responded in a permanent dynamic of weight, and weightlessness, of push and pull, of acceptance and resistance. Fundamentally, these emerging qualities were not based on a literary analysis of '*Las Alturas de Macchu Picchu*,' but instead, involved the dynamic play between the elements of air and earth that I had sensed were inherent in the poem.

Devising is an imaginative and exploratory practice; a speculative adventure into the unknown. Certain parameters and structures help to clarify and guide this process, but it is important to make a space for experimentation. During the early stages of rehearsals I identified moments when my body responded instantaneously and freely to the elements and materials suggested by the poem. However, in other instances my body remained lifeless and unresponsive. This occurred particularly when I tried to impose an idea on my body before allowing myself to experience. The sensation felt similar to driving

with the handbrake on. As with the neutral mask stage, rather than considering the performance as a 'task' to be completed, the process needs to be viewed as an opportunity for curiosity, openness and play. Salvatierra points out Lecoq's insistence on this, when he tells her: *'Il faut déconner'* (Salvatierra *2006: 325*). This phrase encompasses the need to expose oneself to looking foolish, to engage in a spirit of play and risk. Consequently, on revising the recordings, I identified several habitual choreographic choices that revealed the moments of hastened decisions, which provide the certainty and security of completion. In this work, it is no use trying to be correct, scholarly or timid. In attempting to do something too well, I fulfil how I believe it should be done and lose the opportunity for doing it for myself. On sensing these moments of resistance I interrupted the rehearsal to return to the Feldenkrais lessons. In this way, the pressure of producing a concrete result was superseded by the more constructive state of receptiveness and responsiveness.

Additionally, the conflicting sensations I experienced between opening up to the poem and imposing my ideas on the text, may also have mirrored my shifting roles in the devising process as being both maker and performer of my work. For Sheets-Johnstone, the choreographer undergoes a process of thinking *in* movement, which is experienced as 'thought about action' and 'thought in action' (1999). In the initial stages of the devising process, I experienced this duality as oppositional, involving sporadic instances of stops and starts, yet the duality of the actor/creator need not consist of separate processes interfering with each other. Instead, these can involve a fluid dynamic between the two. A key factor in developing this understanding was a heightened focus on my use of breath. By exploring its ebb and flow in each movement choice, I was

connecting my internal responses to the external interaction of my body with the poem. Breath became the vehicle through which I engaged in a conversation or exchange with the poem's internal dynamic and external manifestation.

Towards the end of the project I found myself no longer attempting to illustrate the elements and materials through my body. Lecoq's *identification* process had become a point of departure, from which to make my own meaning. Refining the development of my devised piece over the course of the rehearsals, involved gradually paring away extraneous *gestes* until I arrived at what Lecoq describes as le 'essentiel,' (the essential), an adjective he transforms into a verb, *essentialisar or to 'essentialise.'* The etymological definition of essence is 'quality, being' from the Latin esse 'to be.' In his glossary on Lecoq terms, Bradby offers the following translation: '*essentialisar*, to reduce any movement or action to its essential components, usually understood in an abstract or poetic sense' (Lecoq 2000: 165). I had initially assumed that this process of reduction was in fact the editing process, yet in condensing a response of this kind to its essential components led to new *gestes*. Using a tree as an example, Lecoq explains this process in detail and I quote him in full as it is the clearest way to describe my experience:

> In bypassing the concepts and personal responses that we have to a tree, we can find a physical sensation that allows us to experience the dynamic life of the tree. It is this sensation that should act as a reference point in making the tree come alive. It's as though one side of our skin is used to connect with the exterior world and the other side to connect with our own interior world. These two sides must cooperate for us to make a distinction between impression and expression, between inspiration and expiration, inhaling and exhaling.
>
> (Lecoq 2000: 112)

For instance, returning to the extract being discussed, at one point I roll over on the floor. This gesture is not rooted in an illustration of Neruda's meaning, but fulfils a two-fold response. Firstly, it echoes the point at which I experience the poem's maximum pressure and secondly, it evidences a transition of the body from being acted *upon* to acting *on*. The body uses the roll as the impetus for leaving the floor to reassert itself in the space. Importantly, the new *geste* of the roll is not invented without a context, but condenses an entire body dynamic originating from a corporeal relationship with the poem and my sensation of it. Once again I quote Lecoq in full, when he discusses the 'actor-mime' and the process of 'identifying' with the sea as the following assertion encapsulates the journey I experienced in the extract:

> I discover that those rhythms emotionally belong to me; sensations, sentiments, and ideas appear. I play it again on a second level, and express the forces in it by giving my movements more precise shape: I choose and transpose my physical impressions. I create another sea – the sea played with this 'extra' that belongs to me and which defines my style.
>
> (Lecoq 2006: 69)

The poem is not the 'real' world. It is Neruda's world, yet my interaction with it through identifying with what I experienced as its inherent material elements and matter, reflects Marcel Jousse's process of '*intussuscepting* curiosity.' It is a taking possession of the outside world or, in this case, Neruda's poem, through my body which, when played out, prompts new *gestes* or *mimemes* in the form of extremely complex interactions, which can be expressed once again as: 'An Acting One - acting on - an Acted upon' (Jousse, 1999). Accordingly, in the act of *transposing,* my impressions become expressions in the etymological sense of 'a departure from.' Following this line, my body plays out through *gestes* and

rhythm what Marcel Jousse describes as the abstraction process. 'Expression,' he says, 'implies a process of abstraction, something is drawn from reality, abstracted from reality,' as opposed to 'algebraic abstraction,' which he argues, 'cuts loose from reality' (Sienaert 1990: 98). This resulting expression of abstraction resonates with the French poet and critic Stéphane Mallarmé's claim as he began work on Hérodiade, that he was initiating a 'new poetics' whose function was 'to paint, not the thing itself, but the effect it produces' *(*Mallarmé cited in Saunders, Corinne & Macnaughton 2009: *242*). In the final *transposition* stage of the project*,* my individual subjective body brought my newly developed sensitivity to Neruda's poem and consequently accessed my own imaginative or poetic faculties. The function of the body in this *mimodynamic* process, I would argue, is not to imitate the real, but to bring the clarity of the real to the imaginary.

Summary

In keeping with the wider aims of the study, Practical Project 1 provides a foundational exploration of the characteristics of the 'poetic body' from an embodied perspective. Drawing on the key terms identified in the previous chapter, this project aimed to articulate and discuss the experience and processes by which Lecoq accesses the student's poetic faculty through the body and the initial implications of its application to the devising process. Analysis has centred on identifying five key sequential yet interrelated processes:

Observation - Identification - Impression - Transposition - Expression.

In this chapter I have documented the experience of the neutral mask as it placed me progressively in a state of discovery and curiosity towards the external world. Then, through a mimetic encounter with material elements and matter, I explored how my body was imbued with sensations and stimuli, enriching its gestural vocabulary with precise and nuanced gestures appropriated from the real world. In order to clarify this in terms of phenomenological experience, I applied Sheets-Johnstone's theory of the qualitative structures of self-movement to an embodied exploration of the elements. This application, I argue, clarifies the source of Lecoq's unique vocabulary of universal experience, which later extends to the devising process. For example, when developing characters I might discuss them in terms of their 'elasticity,' 'echo' or 'fiery' qualities. Similarly, when devising I might refer to a moment that is too 'sticky' or particularly 'oily.' This 'language of experience' is extended to the devising process in the subsequent practical projects. Finally, in the *transposition* stage the key principles acquired in the previous stages were applied to the creative process, in which the body makes its own meaning. The inclusion of Feldenkrais exercises at the start of each practical session assisted in highlighting this aspect and served as a valuable method for capturing the sensate as an unfolding process.

Through Chapters One and Two of this study, I have developed a conceptual and embodied analysis of how Lecoq's carefully structured pedagogical process to encourages the body to become a 'poetic' site. Moreover, I have argued that what renders the body poetic for Lecoq is its capacity to be both transformed and transformative. Below, I set out a table of the findings as experienced through Project 1 (Figure 9):

Fig. 9. Findings: Project 1

CHARACTERISTICS	EMBODIED FUNCTIONS
Preparation Lecoq's Analysis of Movement	• Observation through the body • Understanding the universal laws of movement
Preparation Feldenkrais Method: I am an evolving being.	• Developing an embodied mode of inquiry • The body continually changes • Becoming a spectator of the body from the inside. • Accessing sensations of change through curiosity rather than force
Neutral Mask: A State of Discovery	• A means of exploring pre-performance, 'pre-objective, pre-conceptual or pre-thematic stage' • Calibrating thought and action • A state of readiness • You are what happens • Experiencing the body's relationship to the world • Reconnecting to the receptive and expressive potential of the body
Identification with the Elements and Materials: Engaging with the External World	• A setting in motion • Discovering the body's mimetic faculty through play • Expanding field of gestural reference • The capacity to 'other' • A laboratory of the self • Developing a language of experience • Jousse's '*intussuscepting* curiosity'
Transposition: from impression to expression Application of the elements and materials work to the poem Macchu Picchu by Pablo Neruda.	• Introducing the dramatic dimension • From receptiveness to responsiveness • Discovering new *gestes*. • 'Acting on' and 'acted upon' • A process of abstraction drawing on reality.

Poiesis: '*from* life' to '*new* life'

Having explored Lecoq's '*fonds poétique commun'* a 'universal poetic sense'

(Bradby in Lecoq 2006: xiii), the following two chapters address more

specifically the latter part of the journey towards creativity in which the unique

embodied poetics of each actor-creator evolves. In order to situate the

particular aspect of the 'poetic' I intend to interrogate, it is timely to include the

views on the 'poetic' expressed by German born actress and teacher Uta

Hagen (1919 – 2004), when she refers to Tolstoy's definition of the difference

between life and art as: ''something is added to nature which wasn't there

before.' That 'something,' she argues, 'is the artist's point of view and his power

of selection, which comes *from* life and makes *new* life' (2008: 78; emphasis in

original). Hagen's use of the term 'making' draws directly on the etymological

meaning of 'poetic,' from the Greek adjective POIETIKOS, related to the noun

poietes 'maker' or 'poet' (Macy 2001: 300). Furthermore, her stress on a shift

'*from* life' to '*new* life,' suggests the active or 'in process' aspect of making

(Whitehead 2003), in which the involvement of the artist or maker is central.

Here, Hagen establishes two crucial aspects of the 'poetic' that are developed

in the next section of the thesis: Firstly, the interconnectedness between the

maker's being and what is being made and secondly, the dynamic transaction

between the real and the imaginary. This feature of the 'poetic' and the way in

which the body acts as interstice or intermediary in this exchange between the

real and the imaginary, are interrogated throughout the analytical and practical

elements of the following chapters.

Chapter Three: Gaston Bachelard's Poetic Imagination

Introduction

The practical exploration conducted so far in this study has interrogated

Jacques Lecoq's notion of 'the poetic body,' drawing entirely upon the particular

set of cultural and artistic codes that inform and shape my practice. Adhering to

Whitehead's understanding of *poiesis* introduced in the introduction, in which

the making of an artwork is synonymous with something very much 'in process'

or 'brought into being,' in Chapters Three and Four, I turn my attention to an

exploration of 'poetic imagination' as presented by the French philosopher

Gaston Bachelard (1884-1962), who, as noted in the literature review of this

study, is referred to by Lecoq in his own writings. Before considering any

connections between the two the purpose at this stage is to examine and

situate Bachelard's philosophy of the imagination. Chapter Three seeks to

respond to the following facet of the primary research question:

How does Gaston Bachelard's work on the philosophy of the imagination inform

a deeper understanding of the 'Poetic Body' from 'impression' to 'expression'?

In order to address this question, I will first discuss Bachelard from a historical

perspective, tracing Bachelard's journey from his early work on the philosophy

of science and its connection to the elaboration of his theories on imagination.

Secondly, I will analyse Bachelard's exploration of the philosophy of the

imagination, or as Richard Kearney puts it, the 'phenomenology of poetic

imagining' (Kearney 1998: 96). Particular emphasis will be placed on

Bachelard's notion of the *poetic image and* where he locates the poetic act of

creation, followed by a discussion of the processes through which he asserts

that poetic imagination reveals new possibilities of being. I will also analyse

Bachelard's argument that the external world, the individual consciousness and

the body's senses are by nature interwoven and that matter, in particular, the

four material elements of earth, air, fire and water, are the vital driving forces

that drives the imagination. Bachelard's thinking precedes Foucault, Althusser,

Lecourt and Derrida yet his contribution to current philosophical discourse is

often neglected. A new embodied exploration of Bachelard's theory of creative

consciousness, offers an opportunity for a revivification or repositioning of

Bachelard's philosophical standpoint from a contemporary perspective. As

such, I will attempt to reinsert Bachelard into the current debates on the

imagination by considering his reception and influence. Finally, I will establish

the framework for Practical Project 2, which aims to apply Bachelard's poetics

of the imagination, discussed in this chapter, to the 'poetic body' in the devising

process.

Over his lifetime, Bachelard completed approximately ninety publications

contributing to the fields of science and the imagination. Not only are his

writings discussed in the literature review - a significant source of reference and

inspiration for fine art, literature, architecture, poetics and philosophy - but also

overlap into the fields of linguistics and psychology. Indeed, Jacques Derrida

celebrates Bachelard's contribution to what he calls 'cracking the surface of

philosophy' because, as Gaudin writes, he examines 'the dispersion of meaning

through metaphors' (Derrida cited in Gaudin 2005: x).

Bachelard was born on 27 June 1884 in Bar-sur-Aube, in the rural region of Champagne in France. He attended school there and then progressed to working in the local postal service. By the time war broke out in 1914 he had already received his 'licence' in mathematics and was studying to become an engineer. His learning was interrupted for four years while he served in military service, for which he was awarded Le Croix de Guerre. On his return home, Bachelard taught physics and chemistry at the local secondary school until 1930. In the interim he was drawn to the study of philosophy, in particular the problems raised by the nature of scientific knowledge in the field of physics.

At the age of thirty-five Bachelard became a college professor of natural sciences and it was at this relatively late stage in his career that he began to further his own studies, finally completing his doctorate in 1927. Newly qualified, Bachelard was offered a post at the University of Dijon, where he taught for ten years. This led to his appointment as chair of Philosophy of Science at the Sorbonne. In 1951, he was elected to the *Académie des Sciences morales et politiques* and ten years later, Bachelard was one of only three philosophers ever to receive the Grand Prix National des Lettres, just one year before his death on 16 October, 1962.

In order to situate Bachelard's unique approach within the context of this study, I draw attention to the way in which a profound and personal connection to the natural world pervades his work. This aspect becomes increasingly pertinent to my inquiry in Practical Projects 2 and 3, as I apply Bachelard's 'poetic imagining' and his writings on the material elements to the devising process. He often expresses his ideas through his own experiences of growing up in the

Champagne region. One of his students, Etienne Gilson, highlights this connection, noting 'the striking originality of a man so deeply rooted in the soil of everyday life, and in such intimate relation with the concrete realities of nature' (Gilson in Bachelard 1994. xiv). According to Gilson, these lifelong connections to rural France led to an inherent resistance to being shaped or formed by the classical approaches imposed by the traditional French universities at the time: 'We all loved him, admired him and envied him a little, because we felt he was a free mind, unfettered by any conventions' (*ibid*. xiv).

Method: an Active, Experimental and Open-ended Approach

In order to approach Bachelard's work on the poetic imagination, it is relevant to first consider Bachelard's preceding studies in the field of modern science, which contribute significantly to the development of his poetic vision. In his most celebrated book *'Formation of the Scientific Mind'* (1938), Bachelard writes that historically, irrational obstacles have continually challenged the sciences in such a way that for science to progress, a recalibration of all previous understandings has been necessary: 'Specifying, rectifying, diversifying: these are dynamic ways of thinking that escape from certainty and unity, and for which homogeneous systems present obstacles rather than imparting momentum' (Bachelard 2002: 27). He traces this idea of 'modern science' back to 1905 with the advent of Albert Einstein's theory of relativity to demonstrate how science has shaken and subverted traditional inflexible epistemologies and to argue that Einstein's theory was not determined by or developed from Newton's theories, but instead broke with the past to create a completely new and autonomous source of knowledge. This complete break he describes as '*rupture épistemologique'* or 'epistemological rupture.' Thus, for science to

advance, a break between the past and the present is crucial for provoking a necessary discontinuity, which then actively undermines common-sense experience and pre-conceived assertions. These instances, far from being disruptive threats to the objectivity of contemporary science are for Bachelard, the inevitable consequence of a rational advancement of scientific knowledge. In rejecting both an additive or reductive standpoint, he argues for a new epistemology of scientific inquiry that welcomes the insights of an evolving science. This idea was later to influence Foucault, Althusser and Derrida.

Based on the above, Bachelard prefers a 'philosophical theory that sees science as essentially incomplete' (*ibid.* 56), proposing a fundamental overturning of the predominantly held views of the relationship between subject and object, reason and reality and the rational subject. His questioning of the philosophical significance of how science 'comes to know phenomena,' challenges the assumption 'that objectivity results from studying objects' (Smith 1982: 70). Moreover, to be scientific is to privilege neither rationalism nor realism, but to recognise the dynamic relationship between the two: 'Experimentation must give way to argument,' he maintains, 'and argument must have recourse to experimentation' (Bachelard in Lechte 2001: 3).

Bachelard introduces the idea that scientific inquiry involves the interaction of both the experiential and theoretical domains. Rather than forcing science to fit a philosophical model, he proposes an active, experimental and open-ended approach that can create opportunities for a fundamental re-formulation of reality. The development of scientific knowledge then, is not linear or incremental in nature. Gaudin notes that true progress is best expressed for

Bachelard in a mutative pattern (2005). Viewed from this perspective, thought is valued by Bachelard, not for its capacity to immediately explain, but rather for its *liveness*, its 'shifting character.' Importantly, this standpoint foreshadows his later work on the philosophy of poetry when he argues for the need to break with the cultural past in order to be receptive to the appearance of an image 'in the very ecstasy' of its newness' (Bachelard 1994: 1). In painting too, Bachelard asserts that significant discoveries occur independently of skill. In this way, a pure beginning is possible and the creation of a work can then become 'an exercise in freedom' (*ibid*. xxxii - xxxiii). This assertion forms the foundation of Bachelard's phenomenological approach to the imagination. In prioritising a state of flux over finality, Bachelard lays down the foundations for a perpetual play around ideas. On this point, Mary McAllester suggests that Bachelard's argument turns on its head the idea of the rational subject as being the 'unchanging centre of all knowledge and experience' (McAllester 1984: 170). Instead, his rational subject is 'transcended, upheld, created and recreated by something other than itself, by the '*non-moi,*' by the discursive, dialectical, dynamic interrelationship between reason and reality (*ibid*.170). She goes on to say that:

> While still maintaining the notion of the *cogito,* Bachelard rejects its permanence, replacing, *'je pense donc je suis,'* (I think therefore I am) with *'je pense la difference, donc je deviens different, et etant different, je pense d'autres differences,'* (I think difference, thus I become different, I think of other differences).

(McAllester 1984: 170)

As noted in the methodology section of the introduction, these central ideas already being developed in Bachelard's thinking on science are pivotal to the methodology developed over the course of this study and will be considered in

more depth in the following chapter in which I explore Bachelard's philosophy of the imagination through practical inquiry.

Learning: A Projective Voyage of Discovery

Bachelard's rejection of a finite approach to learning extends to his view on teaching, a recurrent theme in his epistemological writings. 'Method,' he argues, evidences 'the inertia of thought that has just found satisfaction in the verbal agreement of definitions' (Bachelard 2002: 66). However, he is not against 'method' itself. Bachelard uses the word 'method' in its double meaning, as I have previousely noted: 'It suggests the rigor of a system and the indeterminacy carried by its Greek root *hodos* ('way'); it mixes personal discovery and conceptual construction' (Gaudin 2005: xxi). This understanding of the term method, alluded to in Chapter One on Lecoq's teaching approach, is essential to the emerging methodology of this study and I return to it in the conclusion. Following this argument, it would appear that it is the inflexibility and inequality of the relationship between teacher and student that Bachelard rejects. McAllester goes so far as to say that Bachelard dislikes teachers, yet I would argue that his objections lie not with the teaching profession itself, but rather with the destructive practice of imparting 'ephemeral, haphazard knowledge' (Bachelard 2002: 242). Such teachers, according to Bachelard, do 'not guide pupils towards knowledge of the object,' but instead they 'judge rather than teach' (*ibid*: 209). In his view, the teacher, together with the student, should undertake a voyage of mutual discovery, an egalitarian and lifelong engagement with learning. This view culminates in his fundamental principle of the Pedgagogy of the Objective Attitude, that 'whoever is taught must teach' (*ibid*. 242). Bachelard's call for a projective rather than a prescriptive approach

to learning is also significant to the methodological approach developed in this inquiry, because in placing emphasis on non-hierarchical learning, formal lessons are replaced by discoveries, allowing for new methods to emerge.

Poetry and Science: The Mobility of Concepts

Significantly, Bachelard consistently connects the domains of science and imagination in his writings whilst acknowledging fundamental methodological differences between the endeavours of both. There is, as Smith identifies, a 'subtle 'cross-fertilization' from the philosophy of one domain to that of the other' (Smith 1982: 135). For instance, in *The Formation of the Scientific Mind* (1938), Bachelard constantly refers to authors, poets and playwrights, including Moliere, H.G. Wells, Voltaire, Balzac, Baudelaire, Kipling, Strindberg and Zola, to demonstrate his points. According to Smith, Bachelard's fundamental distinctions between science and imagination, reason and reverie lie in his call to approach these domains in different ways: 'The difference is that the determining factor for science is HOW we know, while for poetry it is WHO we are' (*ibid*. 97).

From examining methods of scientific knowledge, Bachelard is increasingly drawn to the forces that create it, to the workings of human imagination. John Gilson suggests that it was in the realm of poetry that he chose to observe these forces at play (1994). In a series of studies written on the imagination, and discussed in the introduction of this study, Bachelard examines disparate literary images of prose and poetry by diverse authors, from the perspective of the reader. Significantly, in relation to this study, he intentionally places himself at the centre of what happens when he reads, gradually arriving at the

conclusion that instead of inhibiting scientific thought, imagination is an essential driving force in the reality of the human being. Caroline Picart identifies a pivotal point at which she claims Bachelard 'crosses over' from science to aesthetics, when in chapter six of *The psychoanalysis of Fire* (1938), Bachelard discusses the 'Hoffman complex.' As he reminisces on watching his parents prepare a burnt-brandy or *brulot*, he discovers in his own reminiscences of fire 'a common insight echoed by Hoffman: a close association of subject and object' (Picart 1997: 62). For Picart, this moment reveals Bachelard's transition from the psychoanalysis of objective knowledge to a realisation that 'alcohol is a creator of language' (*ibid*. 62). It is at this instant that Bachelard discovers a sense of the material base of the imagination. Progressively, Bachelard sees imagination in permanent interaction, both in opposition and in synthesis. However, while imagination alone is not sufficient to lead to knowledge, Bachelard considers it to be crucial in making knowledge possible. In order to move beyond a conceptual certainty it is the mind's ability for unbridled imagination to reach beyond assumed scientific theories towards new possibilities:

> By the swiftness of its actions, the imagination separates us from the past as well as from reality; it faces the future […] If we cannot imagine, we cannot foresee … the function of the real and the function of the irreal must be made to co-operate.

> (Bachelard 1994: xxxiv)

A sort of dynamic complementarity emerges in which, as Kearney writes, 'Imagination and reality make and remake each other' (Kearney 1998: 97). Thus, in his epistemology of science, Bachelard argues for the 'essential

mobility of concepts.' On these grounds it can be claimed that Bachelard is already considering thought in terms of its mobility.

Poetic Imagination: Image, Concept, Perception and Metaphor

Before moving on to examine Bachelard's notion of the poetic, it is valuable to consider in more detail his understanding of the 'image.' Firstly, Bachelard distinguishes between the *concept* and the *image*, arguing that there is no possible synthesis or even an affinity between the two: 'The image cannot give matter to the concept; the concept, by giving stability to the image, would stifle its existence' (Bachelard cited in Gaudin 2005: 6). His somewhat archaic alignment of the *concept* to the masculine and the *image* to the feminine genders further compounds this separation. Secondly, the notion of the 'image' according to Bachelard, has become increasingly associated with the observable, with a visual representation of reality, or a translation of the external world into concepts. As a result, the vital connection between imagination and image loses its way.

On first reading, it appears that the relationship between the imagination and perception is not clearly distinguished by Bachelard. In *L'Air et les Songes*, *(Air and Dreams, 1943)* he initially describes the imagination as a force that transforms or 'deforms' the image of perception, yet as Margaret Higonnet (1981) points out, later on in the same publication, Bachelard places a contrasting emphasis on the creative novelty of the literary image appearing to argue instead that imagination precedes perception. Higonnet attributes this apparent contradiction to Bachelard's tendency of sliding 'from an objective to a subjective definition of reality' (Higonnet 1981: 24). She suggests that as an

idealist, Bachelard tends to subordinate external to internal reality in a way that playfully undermines the value of reality, particularly when he attributes to the imagination a quality of the unreal or *irreal* (*ibid.* 24). By the end of the book, Bachelard affirms his view that, the 'created' or 'poetic' image' is more fundamental than image-perception.

Furthermore, when interrogating Henri Bergson's description of the imagination as 'poeticised memory' (Bergson 1994: viii), Bachelard firmly opposes Bergson's emphasis on the reflective, claiming that the comparisons of images to memories inhibit the force of 'productive imagination' (*ibid.* viii). Indeed, Bachelard goes further when he argues that what is imagined determines what is perceived, acknowledging the imagination as a life force. In relation to the question of how Bachelard's work on the philosophy of the imagination contributes to a deeper understanding of the 'poetic body' at this point, it is important to emphasise here that for Bachelard, imagination is clearly distinct from perception and memory. Rather than reproducing reality, imagination is a generative faculty concerned with '*opening out'* (Bachelard cited in Gaudin: 37).

Relatedly, Bachelard makes an important distinction between the metaphor and the image: 'The prescientific mind conceives concretely of images that we take as simple metaphors. It really thinks the earth drinks water…' (Bachelard 1983: 68). Picart describes this understanding of the metaphor as *imitative*, whereas for Bachelard the *image* 'precedes concepts; it is not exhausted by rational knowledge' (*ibid*: 168). Bachelard is then arguing for new instances of thought provoked by the external world: 'By the swiftness of its actions, the imagination separates us from the past as well as from reality; it faces the future' (Bachelard

1994: xxxiv). Without the world, there is no consciousness, no human being, nor human becoming and according to Picart, this consciousness of difference is what separates Bachelard from Bergson. Beyond mere translation, Bachelard's imagination involves a conscious creative act capable of transcending reality.

From the above, Bachelard affirms more prominently the physical agency of the workings of the imagination. As Kearney points out: 'The image is to be understood as a *genesis* not an *effect'* (Kearney 1998: 99)*.* This shift away from reflection to activity is intended to recuperate the image as a feeling, an experience, or a sensation. On this basis, I take Bachelard's use of the term 'Poetics' to refer to an *act* of creation. Crucially, viewed from Bachelard's perspective, this capacity is not rooted in the unconscious, but emerges instead from a semi-conscious state through an act of will. The intentionality of this activity will be explored in more detail through Practical Projects 2 and 3.

The Image and the Imaginary

In an attempt to separate the imagination from the visual reading of an image, Bachelard maintains that the fundamental vocabulary corresponding to imagination is not *image*, but *imaginary,* and furthermore, that the value or power of an image is measured by the extent of its *imaginary* radiance. Bachelard affirms here that the imagination is not 'the faculty of forming images of reality, 'it is rather the faculty of forming images which go beyond reality, which sing reality' (Bachelard 1999: 16). Importantly, the imaginary does not reject reality, but rather, as Kearney states, 'only the ossified and habitualized crust of reality. It does not annihilate the real world; it mobilizes its potencies of

transformation' (Kearney 1999: 101). Building on this understanding of the imaginary, Salvatierra views Bachelard's subtle distinction between the *image* and *imaginary* as in a way, reclaiming the dynamic nature of the imagination; its permanent mobility between the real and the imagined. The imaginary then is rather *'el trayecto que realiza, su movilidad y no la descripción de la imagen,'* the journey it makes, its mobility rather than a description of the fixed image (2006: 294; my translation). This is a helpful distinction which clarifies further Bachelard's understanding of images as lived, experienced and reimagined in an act of consciousness, which restores at once their timelessness and newness (Gaudin 2007).

Compelling comparisons have been made between Bachelard's work on the poetic imagination and the poetics and poetry of 18th century English and German Romanticism. Indeed, in his exploration of the English Romantic writers Shelley and Blake, or the German Romantics Richter and Novalis, it could be argued that Bachelard's theories are a mere extension of the Romantic vision of creative imagination. When he asserts that 'true poetry is a function of awakening' (Bachelard cited in Gaudin 2005: 16), resonances with the English poet, philosopher and literary critic, Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772 - 1834) appear. For Coleridge, '*willing suspension of disbelief*' or 'poetic faith' on the part of the reader is characterised by 'awakening the mind's attention from the laziness of habit and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us.' It holds the power to undermine 'the film of familiarity' (Chapter XIV, Biografia Literaria 1817). Both for Coleridge and for Bachelard then, it is through the poem that the reader sees life anew by means of focused attention.

In this regard, Higonnet contends that while Bachelard's thought is closer to Romantic ideals than to later aesthetic systems, Bachelard is not intellectually dependent upon their arguments. Instead, he turns to Romantic precedents for isolated ideas: symbolism and imagery in poetry as means of expression, particularly the way in which Romantic poetry 'transfigures and translates nature' (Paul de Man cited in Higonnet 1981: 22). The most characteristically romantic aspect of Bachelard's poetics is the essential ontological function of imagination, which he locates 'at the center of being as that which defines man' (*ibid*. 22). For Higonnet, it is this fundamental aspect of the imagination as first principle, as a life force that links Bachelard's work on the imagination to the Romantic tradition. Accordingly, the suggested dynamic quality of Bachelard's imagination is once again affirmed here and this central premise is drawn on for the subsequent practical projects of this study.

Poetic Imagination and The Revelation of Being

It is important to acknowledge that several of the ideas central to Bachelard's work on creative imagination were also explored by Sigmund Freud (1856 - 1939), as well as Martin Heidegger (1889 - 1976). In an attempt to clarify Bachelard's position, it is valuable to briefly consider both these perspectives. Freud's psychoanalytic approach to poetic imagination proposes that creativity arises from the unconscious, whereas Heidegger sees creativity as gathering meaning through time. According to Sunnie Kidd (2006), both Freud and Heidegger coincide in their view of the poetic as not mere fancy but rather the process of bringing something new into light. However, for Heidegger, she notes, it is the revelation of Being, whereas for Freud 'the work of art comes through the poet as an expression of turning away from reality' (Kidd 2006: 7).

Freud maintains that the driving force behind our fantasies is a deep internal dissatisfaction and because we are ashamed of our fantasies, we attempt to suppress them. Conversely, for Heidegger, poetic imagination is 'dynamic and expands consciousness by revealing something new' (*ibid*. 4) As such, this view chimes with Bachelard's vision of the imagination as a productive capacity.

In *The Psychoanalysis of Fire* (1938), Bachelard's first book on the imagination, he initially adopts Freud's approach by focusing on the image-maker and considering the image process as intrinsically an unconscious one. Increasingly, however, he shifts away from the psychoanalytic approach, dismissing it as reductive: 'Classical psychoanalysis' he states, 'neglects the intermediary study of blood and water, between the unnameable and the named' (Bachelard cited in Gaudin 2005: 58). In this sense, Bachelard's preference for locating the image at the origin of consciousness rather than the unconscious, is closer to the position held by Heidegger. To summarise Heidegger's argument, the created work is not something added or incidental to an artist's being. It is integral to it and as such adheres to the principle encapsulated by Christopher McCullough that human beings are 'constantly self-changing through their actions' (McCullough 1998: 5).

Following this argument, the work of the imagination for Bachelard, as mentioned earlier, is an activity subject to will. As such, it demands a particular state of semi-consciousness, one at odds with the passive practice of dreaming. Bachelard emphatically privileges the term '*reverie*' over Freud's use of the term 'dream.' Etymologically, *reverie* can be traced back to the 14th century - *reuery:* wild conduct, frolic; from the old French *reverie, resverie* 'revelry, raving,

delirium' (The Oxford Dictionary of Etymology 1969). Over time, in both French

and English, reverie has become synonymous with 'day dreaming.' The Oxford

English Dictionary definition: 'A state of being pleasantly lost in one's thoughts:

a daydream,' confirms this view. However, for Bachelard, in dreaming we are

'capable of beautiful visions,' but these are not truly experienced. Following this

view, dreams are nothing more than a solitary and unconscious form of

escapism beyond our will, whether they occur at night or during the day.

Furthermore, in the realm of dreams, our consciousness is dissipated as we

lose contact with ourselves and with reality. In contrast, Bachelard's *reverie*

involves a constant play of consciousness, a quality of inventiveness that

operates through a process of discovery. In his words Bachelard locates the act

of image making in the state of reverie:

> Reverie is entirely different from the dream by the very fact that it is
> always more or less centred upon one object. The dream proceeds
> on its own way in a linear fashion, forgetting its original path as it
> hastens along. The reverie works in a star pattern. It returns to its
> center to shoot out new beams.

<div align="right">(Bachelard 1987: 14)</div>

In this manner, consciousness participates actively in the process of reverie and

'reverie' endows imagination with its dynamic mobile character which is then

transformed and through which poetical imagination reveals new possibilities of

being. This conscious act is explored initially in Practical Project 2, in which I

explore reverie from an embodied perspective and is further developed in the

final practical project.

Progressively, Bachelard stresses the need for a shift away from the personality of the poet towards the exchange between the poet's work and the reader: 'The poet does not confer the past of his image upon me, and yet his image immediately takes root in me' (Bachelard 1994: xvii). In receiving a writer's image, Bachelard asserts that the reader is invited to continue this image through the process of engaging the reader's imagination. The act of communicating is an essential component of Bachelard's understanding of reverie as it 'derives pleasure not only from itself, but also prepares poetic pleasure for other souls' (*ibid*: xxii). Here he shifts the location of the poetic act of creation on the response of the recipient (Kearney 1999) and this aspect of Bachelard's work is introduced more specifically in the final practical project in Chapter Five, in which I devise a theatrical performance for an audience.

Bachelard's understanding of the image reveals that in the act of transforming reality the image is not for him a product of the imagination, but rather the imagination and the image are interdependent. We do not produce an image because we imagine. Instead, we imagine because of the image. Hence, Bachelard opts to access the imagination on its own terms using a phenomenological approach which he considers to be the most appropriate method to answer the following question:

> How can the image, at times very unusual appear to be a concentration of the whole psyche? How - with no preparation - can this singular, short-lived event constituted by the appearance of an unusual poetic image, react on other minds and in other hearts, despite all the barriers of common sense, all the disciplined schools of thought, content in their immobility?

> (Bachelard 1994: xix)

In his shift away from a psychoanalytical perspective towards a phenomenological approach, Bachelard attempts to account for how the reader's consciousness is changed by that process. In 'bracketing' the initial rationalising response Bachelard aims to apprehend the image in its emerging totality. This phenomenological position proposes a dynamic activity: 'I am conscious of something other than myself, and this 'other' changes me' (Bachelard 1981: 35). In the next section I will discuss how, for Bachelard, images are created and revealed in a 'constant re-creation of reality' (Minkowski cited in Kearney 1998: 101), and furthermore how that reality is transformed into human terms.

Subject Object Interpenetration

As his quote above suggests, Bachelard views reverie as a meeting point, where the dualistic relationship between subject and object is, 'iridescent, shimmering, unceasingly active in its inversions' (Bachelard 1969: xv). Through reverie the subject and object in Bachelard's analysis, are intrinsically bound together in the production of meaning. This emphasis on the dynamic interpenetration between subject and the object parallels the view held by Jousse discussed in Chapters One and Two of this study. A contemporary of Bachelard, Jousse asserts that the external world we experience and perceive impregnates itself upon us. Firstly, we apprehend the reality that reverberates in us. We are fashioned, sculpted by things, which play themselves out in and through us. Likewise, Bachelard's poetics, explore the trans-subjectivity of the image or more precisely, in his terms, its quality of 'intersubjectivity':

> Thanks to a fruit the whole being of the dreamer becomes round.
> Thanks to a flower, the whole being of the dreamer relaxes [...] this

> flower born in poetic reverie, then, is the very being of the dreamer,
> his flowering being.

<div align="right">(Bachelard 1960: 154)</div>

In his consideration of the poetic act, Bachelard extends the duality of subject and object. The value or power of the poetic image, he maintains, lies primarily in its capacity to impact upon the imagination of those who experience it and furthermore, the extent to which it is then reimagined. Bachelard proposes that in concentrating on an image that mediates between the subject and the world, the world opens up anew with each poetic image in a kind of expanding spiral of image and renewal: 'Each contemplated object, each evocative name we murmur is the point of departure of a dream and of a line a creative linguistic movement' (Bachelard cited in Gaudin 2005: 23). Hence, it can be argued that play and the imaginary are permanently present in the act of creation. This aspect of Bachelard's poetic imagining is explored more deeply in the final practical project, which brings Lecoq and Bachelard together through my own practice.

The Process of Poetic Imagining

According to Bachelard, the newness and movement of an image give it an entity and dynamism of its own and suggests that the force of its being is possible to apprehend in the effect it produces, in its *reverberation* rather than what causes it. He acknowledges that his thoughts on 'reverberation' draw directly on the definition offered by the French psychiatrist and phenomenologist Eugène Minkowski (1885 - 1972):

> It is not a material object which fills another by espousing the form
> that the other imposes. No, it is the dynamism of the sonorous life

itself which by engulfing and appropriating everything it finds in its path, fills the slice of space, or better, the slice of the world that it assigns itself by its movement, making it reverberate, breathing its own life.

(Minkowski cited in Gaudin 2005: 72)

Moreover, Minkowski claims that the essence of life is not 'a feeling of being, of existence,' but that it is rather 'a feeling of participation in a flowing onward, necessarily expressed in terms of time, and secondarily expressed in terms of space' (*ibid*. 71). This definition provides Bachelard with the means to explain the journey made by a poetic image. First there is *resonance*, the capacity of the literary image to 'take root' in the reader, to draw out subjective responses. This in turn provokes *reverberations*. The initial poetic image is received and then infused by the receiver's reveries, which then generates *repercussions* in the way that the receiver experiences and senses the world. Subjective life is thus expanded as the poet's image reverberates through the reader. In resonating with that experience in a multitude of permutations, the reader is thus prompted to create anew: 'True poetry' Bachelard asserts, 'is a function of awakening' (Bachelard cited in Gaudin 2005: 16). This view of 'poetic imagining' can be summarised then, as a process of:

Reverie - resonance - reverberation - repercussion

The relevance of these terms will be also form an integral component of the concluding chapter of this study. Kozel sums up Bachelard's poetic image as 'an ontological freeze-frame within the current of experience' (Kozel 2007: 26). While she captures the fundamental moment-to-moment quality of Bachelard's vision Kozel is in danger of implying a certain linearity in the process, somewhat inconsistent with the more flexible and mobile nature of Bachelard's approach

and Tim Ingold's more recent analysis of the essence of making (2013). An embodied exploration of the processes and terminology outlined above is the focus of the following chapter and further applied more explicitly to the devising process in the final chapter.

Matter: 'The Unconsciousness of Form' (Bachelard 1983: 57)

Having considered Bachelard's principles of 'reverie,' 'resonance,' and 'reverberation,' I now consider how Bachelard classifies the imagination. As mentioned earlier, the true poetic image for Bachelard offers a rich understanding of the world and our being. It does not originate, however, in the inner instinctual world. Instead it emerges from the 'intermediate zone' between the unconscious and rational consciousness, at the interstice of rational thought, where the real and unreal are inextricably linked. This assertion lends itself to Bachelard's view that the imaginary acts within the realms of possibilities, rather than in a static and deterministic dimension. To expand on this further, Bachelard defines two axes of imagination, which he names the *formal* and the *material*. The formal axis is powered by the new and the unforeseen whereas the material axis is founded in the primitive and the permanent. Despite the correspondences between the two, he draws attention to the 'formal' imagination's tendency to conceptualise, whereas 'material imagination' prioritises the immediate experience:

> Beyond the images of form, so often evoked by psychologists of the imagination, there are… images of matter, *direct* images of *matter*. Sight names them, but the hand knows them. A dynamic joy handles them, kneads them, lightens them. These images of matter are dreamed in their substance, intimately, by setting aside forms, perishable forms, vain images, the development of surfaces.

> (Bachelard cited in Smith 1985: 84-85)

With regard to 'material' imagination, Bachelard considers matter as the driving force that imbues an image with poetic potency. The perceived object loses its power to the primacy of a deeper substance, an elemental substance that corresponds dynamically to the symbols of inner human life. This aspect of the imagination argument will be explored initially in Project 2 and then developed further in Project 3. As such, it is worth briefly expanding on Bachelard's viewpoint in preparation for this aspect of the study. Throughout our existence the human being is immersed in matter. Matter can be defined as 'anything that occupies space, possesses mass, offers resistance and can be felt by one or more of the senses' (Verma 2010: 19). In our innate human drive to comprehend and experience the matter that surrounds us, Bachelard sees it as shaping our being and therefore driving our imagination:

> Matter is our energetic mirror; it is a mirror which focuses our powers in illuminating them with imaginative joys … In other words, in the realm of the imagination the dualism of subject and object is presented at its truest equilibrium.
>
> (Bachelard cited in Kaplan 1972: 13)

In essence, for Bachelard, matter precedes form. That said, when he applies the qualities inherent in natural phenomena to the act of imagining, Bachelard proposes a means for transforming the possibilities of imagination into a form. Returning to his assertion that for reverie to progress to a written work, it follows then that the essential pathway for Bachelard is analogous to reverie finding its matter: 'A material element must give the reverie its own substance, its own law, its specific poetics (Bachelard cited in Gaudin 2005: 35). Based on this premise, the following section introduces the specific drivers of Practical Projects 2 and 3, which are interrogated at length in Chapters Four and Five.

The Material Elements as Poeticising Substances

As noted earlier, Bachelard responds to images rather than ideas. These are

material and dynamic images, which are neither perceptual nor rational, but

rather grouped, framed, guided and dynamised by four primordial substances

that drive material imagination: earth, air, fire and water. For Bachelard, these

substances guide our openness to the world around us (Steeves 2004).

Furthermore, Bachelard asserts that each imagining person resonates more

profoundly with one material element in particular and this element feeds the

psyche in a unique way, acting as a 'good conductor' of life's energy:

> Their action upon the imagination may seem remote and it may seem
> metaphorical. And yet as soon as we find a work of art's proper
> appurtenance to an elemental cosmic force, we have the feeling of
> having discovered a *ground of unity* that strengthens the unity of even
> the best composed works.
>
> (Bachelard 1971: 33)

Bachelard puts forward *'A system of poetic faithfulness'* (Bachelard cited in

Gaudin 2005: 36; emphasis in original). However, it is important to stress here,

that he is not intent on forming a rigid taxonomy or prescriptive formula, but as

Jacques Gagey reminds us, the four elements are to be considered as

'inductors of the poetic logos and reverie, not as a function of their objective

determination, but as images' (Gagey cited in Smith 1982: 78). In this respect,

'material imagination' is not about a systematic rooting of the imagination in a

particular substance, but acts instead as a kind of 'revealer' through which we

can discover ourselves. This particular aspect of Bachelard's philosophy is an

aspect that I address in Practical Project 3.

The elements then are, for Bachelard, principles of artistic creation. However,

his concern lies less in the associated subjective meanings, but more

fundamentally in the elemental laws of nature. This assertion and his

contemplations on the qualities, motion and directions of the four elements in space, are deeply rooted in the 'four classical elements' of pre-Socratic philosophy. Importantly for this study, Aristotle developed a model of the cosmos based on this theory in which he attributed specific motional qualities to the five elements of earth, air, fire, water and ether, reinforcing matter's connection to process or change. Air and fire move upwards in a straight line, whereas earth and water descend. Ether's movement however, is circular. In conclusion, the world, far from being inert in Aristotle's universe, was imbued with movement. In connection to Bachelard's philosophical stance, the Greek philosopher Empedocles is attributed with developing the cosmogenic theory of the four elements as constituting all existing matter. He not only described them as physical manifestations or material substances, but also as spiritual essences. Bachelard echoes this perspective when he specifies that each element of earth, air, fire and water, possesses its own unique energy and vibration.

Given the ancient understanding of the elements and their significance in constructing a vision of the world, it is useful to consider their evolution. E.M.W. Tilliard (1943) writes that for the medieval mind 'the elements were thought of through their effects' (Tilliard 1943: 68). Like the ancient Greeks, the Elizabethans envisaged the elements in movement in 'a constant flux of transmutation, one into the other' (*ibid*. 70) in their aspiration to a perfect state of mutual balance. Tilliard explores the many references to the elements in Elizabethan literature, asserting that their imaginative function is 'to link the doings of men with the business of the cosmos, to show events not merely happening but happening in conjunction with so much else' (*ibid*. 70). Drawing

on this rich body of history, Bachelard's writings are based on the premise that Classical cosmology and alchemy, continue to profoundly pervade our thinking and as such, hold a certain poetic truth that reveals our archetypal affinity with the elemental substances. According to Smith, it is Bachelard's association of his 'material' and 'dynamic' imagination with the four elements of antiquity that makes him unique (1984).

Continuing this argument, through a conscious engagement with the elements, a reciprocal energy is generated, defined by Bachelard as a poetic correspondence between the self and matter. In asserting its mobility, its dynamic nature, Bachelard stresses the imagination's creative and productive possibilities. Importantly, each individual element for Bachelard is necessarily imagined in a moving state, in all its varying forms and all its permutations of transformation, whether moving autonomously or being acted upon. In this sense, his exploration is concerned with the poetic *possibilities* of each element rather than *fixed associations*. As such, each poetic mind will discover diverse and unique possibilities within the same material element. Here, Bachelard hones in on the subjective structure of material images. This facet of Bachelard's thinking is explored directly in Practical Project 3.

Towards Practical Project 2: From the Mobility of Mind to Embodied Mobility

To sum up Bachelard's position and its connection to the progression of this study, the poetic image is not to be considered as an imitation of present reality, but rather as a transient new and original instant, shaped by spontaneity; a temporal object that creates its own rhythm, 'a meaning in the nascent stage'

(Bachelard cited in Gaudin 2005: 26). It is at this point that Bachelard diverges from the existential position on imagination held by Jean Paul Sartre. As Kearney points out, Sartre viewed the image as a 'surpassing of the real towards nothingness,' whereas Bachelard, echoing Heidegger's stance, views it as a 'surpassing of the real towards a renewed reality' (Kearney 1998: 102). In Bachelard's words, poetic images are '*des miniatures de l'élan vital*' (Bachelard 1981: 26), expanding the world with each image in a constant spiral of image and renewal. Once again, he confirms the generative force of the poetic image. Accordingly, for Bachelard, 'Consciousness is itself an act, the human act. It is a lively, full act' (Bachelard 1960: 5). Continuing with the etymological analogy, 'action' has its root in the Latin verb ago, agree, egi, actum - 'to act upon physically; to move, manipulate. Also: to perform as a physical action, to act *out*' (The Oxford Dictionary of Etymology). The terms of Bachelard's poetics then, are experiential rather than formal in nature. Based on this assertion, it can be argued that the *poetic* for Bachelard is essentially kinetic in nature, and on this premise, I propose in my second practical project to apply Bachelard's philosophy of the imagination to the body.

Summary

In this chapter I have positioned Gaston Bachelard's 'poetic imagining' as a potential process for the actor-creator to extend and deepen an understanding of the 'poetic body' for the purposes of devising. An initial examination of Bachelard's journey from the epistemology of science to the ontology of the imagination reveals his shifting stance from the rational to an increasingly subjective approach. From an emphasis on how reality is known and a desire to improve the mind, I have discussed Bachelard's progressive concern with how

human imagination transforms material reality into a specific human reality. As he explores the four elements and their relationship to the human psyche through the emergence of the image, Bachelard's initial psychoanalytic approach is modified to a phenomenology and hermeneutic of images. Consequently, he increasingly sensitises the reader to the activity of the image. It is important to point out here, Bachelard's firm commitment to the interaction of the real and the unreal, an assertion rooted in the flexibility and openness of the mind to all possibilities. Viewed from this perspective, the poetic image for Bachelard becomes the subject of the verb 'to imagine.' Furthermore, the imagination is not for Bachelard 'a faculty which fabricates images of reality; it is a power which forms images which surpass reality in order to change reality. It is the power of sur-humanity' (Bachelard cited in Kearney 1998: 101). Through the activity of 'reverie,' the subjective state for Bachelard, precedes a perception of reality, yet the images, far from being symptoms of a deep subconscious dissatisfaction are rather the creative projection of conscious subjective being.

The creative potential of *reverie*, as 'a perpetual play of consciousness that alternately teases out, wrestles with, and recedes from the emergence of an image' (Picart 1997: 59), drives the practical element of the following chapter. In Chapter Four, I discuss Practical Project 2, which seeks to explore how Bachelard's 'elemental imagining' of the mind might be applied to the body in the devising process. Importantly, in this chapter I have introduced the terminology proposed by Bachelard that will inform and articulate the development of Practical Project 2. These are listed below. The relevance of

these terms will be also form an integral component of the concluding chapter
of this study.

Mapping Bachelard's Trajectory of 'Poetic Imagining'

- Material Elements: poeticising substances

- Material Imagination: matter as the driving force that imbues an image
  with poetic potency

- Reverie: a constant play of consciousness, a quality of inventiveness that
  operates through a process of discovery

- Resonance: the image takes root in the receiver

- Reverberation: the image is received and then infused by the receiver's
  reveries

- Repercussions: the receiver creates anew

Chapter Four: Practical Project 2
An Embodied Exploration of Gaston Bachelard's 'Poetics of Imagination'

'To define is to kill. To suggest is to create'

(Mallarmé cited in Unwin 2010: 180)

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to develop and expand on the understanding of the 'poetic body' through an analysis of Practical Project 2, in which I turn my attention entirely to an exploration of Gaston Bachelard's notion of the poetics of the imagination from an embodied perspective. I draw upon his notion of the four material elemental substances of earth, air, fire and water as impulses for the imagination to interrogate how Bachelard's mobility of the mind has the potential to be experienced equally as forcefully through the body. This is not to suggest that the body is central to his work, but rather to interrogate what the body can take from it as a means of accessing the actor-creator's poetic possibilities in the devising process.

This chapter is intended to be viewed in conjunction with the accompanying **DVD**, **SECTION 2**, **– An Embodied Exploration of Gaston Bachelard's 'Poetics of Reverie'**. Practical Project 2 is available to view in full, followed by selected extracts from studio sessions, grouped sequentially. I would like to point out at this stage that the resulting performance was performed in candlelight which, while optimising the lived experience of the inquiry, was not captured in the same detail in the recording of the performance. For this reason this chapter incorporates visual documentation and extracts from the rehearsals to articulate the lived experience. The first part of the DVD involves the

performance and is then followed by a presentation that discusses the findings of the project. Attention will be drawn to the extracts under discussion throughout the chapter.

Practical Project 2 took place between December 2012 and March 2013, culminating in a solo performance in order to address the following facet of the primary research question:

How does Gaston Bachelard's work on the philosophy of the imagination inform a deeper understanding of the 'Poetic Body' from 'impression' to 'expression'?

Listed below are project-specific questions:

- How might Bachelard's poetic imagining of the mind be embodied?
- What can this particular form of embodied *'poetic imagining' reveal about the' poetic body'* for the actor-creator?
- How can this be applied to the devising process?

Following the procedure of the previous project, the devising process for Project 2 took place across three stages, beginning with an experimental inquiry cycle, leading to a more concrete devising process, followed by the rehearsal stage and, finally, a performance at the University of Exeter on Tuesday, 26th March, 2013. Although these stages were intended to be chronological and incremental in nature, in practice they were less rigid and at times tended to interweave as connections and discoveries emerged.

CHRONOLOGICAL OVERVIEW OF PROJECT 2

PROJECT STRUCTURE   Experimental: three stages

ENVIRONMENT   Studio based

TIMESCALE One performance: University of Exeter

PERFORMER   Myself

RESEARCH DATES   Stage 1: December 2012 - January 2013

                                         Stage 2: January - February 2013

REHEARSAL DATES   Stage 3: February and March 2013

PERFORMANCE DATE   Tuesday, 26th March, 2013

DATA RETRIEVAL METHODS: Video and photographic documentation,

workbooks, observational notes, written evaluation of the findings.

Practical Project 2: The Parameters

In the previous chapter I established the key characteristics of Bachelard's

philosophy of imagination: 'reverie,' 'resonance,' 'reverberation' and

'repercussion,' defining it as an open and projective creative process.

Importantly, for the purposes of this study, Bachelard's terminology is rooted in

a vocabulary of movement: 'No one can imagine a sphere without making it

turn, an arrow without letting it fly' (Bachelard 1992: 48). Indeed, Bachelard's

entire thesis is invested with motion or a will to motion, which led me to the

focus of Practical Project 2. In an attempt to address Bachelard's work from his

perspective I drew upon the method of phenomenological bracketing discussed

earlier the Methodology section of this study. I endeavoured to bracket my

expectations or bias in favour of attending to the immediate onset of perception.

In the words of Bachelard: 'Knowing must therefore be accompanied by an

equal capacity to forget knowing. Non-knowing is not a form of ignorance but a

difficult transcendence of knowledge' (Bachelard 1969: xxix). This view can also be defined as a 'way of seeing' (Pollio, Henley and Thompson 1997: 48).

As stressed in the methodological section of the introduction, I acknowledge that in moving towards an embodied understanding of Bachelard's position, I am intrinsically implicated in this process. The bracketing method however, serves as a phenomenological attempt to maximise Bachelard's influence on research outcomes and to minimise my own. In consequence, his methods of inquiry progressively informed my evolving 'embodied poetics'.

For this practical project, I drew largely upon Bachelard's first and last works in the field of the poetic imagination published during his lifetime. These publications frame the initiation, development and consolidation of his philosophy of the imagination. Firstly, *The Psychoanalysis of Fire* (1938) charts Bachelard's shift from scientific to aesthetic concerns and establishes the principles of the four material elements as principles of artistic creation. Secondly, *The Flame of a Candle* (1961), the last book to be published during his lifetime, examines his own internal and solitary contemplations of the flame of a candle and concludes his journey into 'poetic imagining'.

Divided into three stages, the first consisted of an exploratory inquiry cycle of improvising and revising my work in a succession of workshops. In relation to my own practice, I sensed that the more delicate and contemplative world of the candle flame would challenge my habitual movement choices, which incline towards bolder, sharper and more expansive qualities. The second stage of the project explored the interaction between the real and the imaginary, and in the final stage of the project the findings were structured into a performance.

Stage 1: **Active Meditation and Reverie - The Flame Takes Root in Me**

In attempting to respond to the first question of Project 2: *How might Bachelard's poetic imagining of the mind be embodied?* I initially inhibited any mimetic engagement with the candle flame as a way of engaging entirely with Bachelard's 'poetic consciousness,' defined earlier as the active process of generating images with the mind. This involved attempting to additionally bracket my learning with Jacques Lecoq, which often provokes an immediate spontaneous response with the entire body. In giving time to the more contemplative activity of observing the flame, of being with the flame, I experienced the unique details of its structural characteristics as developed in Practical Project 1.

For instance, I identified how variations of the flame's shape and colour were dependent on the components and shape of the candle itself, as well as the quality and length of the wick. I observed its varying rhythms; its liquid quality, and how the surrounding air has both the ability to animate the flame and the power to extinguish it. It was at once flexible and playful, easily moved and ceaselessly striving to return to the vertical. Nonetheless, as the image below indicates (Figure 10), my body was always engaged at some level with this activity. It would twitch, move towards and retreat from the flame, while at times my hands would grip the table. Indeed, my body was actively absorbed in the observation process.

Fig. 10. Active Meditation and Meditative Action

Beyond merely watching, I was enacting Bachelard's call for a very special kind

of selective attention introduced in the previous chapter: 'active meditation or

meditated action,' much like what neuroscientist Francis Crick (1984) describes

as a 'searchlight of attention,' a metaphor for the integration of multiple sensory

inputs into a single conscious experience. In her chapter, *Embodying Deep*

Practice: A Pedagogical Approach to Actor Training (2013), Bonnie Eckard

relates this focused attention directly to neuroplasticity, the ability of the brain to

change its function in response to environment, behaviour, thinking, injury and

emotions. In my own case with the candle, this level of attention was neither

experienced as forceful nor intense, but rather as a gentle form of engagement,

described by Bachelard as 'quiet receptivity.' Similarly, Ekhart's 'soft focus' for the actor, 'takes the pressure off the eyes as the dominant source of information, and allows the whole body to listen' (Ekhart 2013: 49).

In prioritising this more responsive and sensitive activity, I entered into an experiential appreciation of imagination and mobility on Bachelard's terms, which curiously, I had not been able to grasp through a reading of his work. In the process of 'actively meditating/meditatively acting,' the flame became a sail, or took on animalistic qualities. The bending wick was a hunched body in liquid snow; a solitary figure in miniature. At the time I believed I was making images *from* the flame, but Bachelard turns this view of imagination on its head. Rather than the faculty for *forming* images of reality, he contends that imagination *deforms* what we perceive to free us from the immediate image in order to go beyond reality 'to sing reality' (Bachelard 1999: 16). For Bachelard, without this shift is an integral component of the imaginative act: 'If the image that is *present* does not make us think of one that is *absent*, if an image does not determine an abundance - an explosion - of unusual images, then there is no imagination' (Bachelard 1988: 1; emphasis in original). Through the lived experience of being with the candle, I had entered into Bachelard's particular state of 'reverie,' defined in the previous chapter as a constant play of consciousness; a quality of inventiveness and play that operates through a process of discovery.

The material element understood as a 'poeticising substance' led me to a fresh appreciation of the relationship between the world and my body. Motivated by this discovery, my heightened awareness extended beyond the studio. For instance, when attending a carol service (2012) at my local church, the

hundreds of candles placed throughout were not just means of illumination. The flames took on anthropomorphic qualities as they greeted the congregation with the same animated anticipation of those present - flickering, leaping, advancing, retreating. The flames silently whispered their excitement, echoing Bachelard's assertion that the candle becomes a new being, expressing, in this case, the congregation by making them what it expresses.

Returning to the studio, I became increasingly aware of the dialectics of light and dark as I worked with the candle flame. The shadows produced by the flame's source moved around me; moving dark. Similarly, Bachelard's dialectics of large and small became increasingly evident through the shadows projected on the walls. For Bachelard, 'Large issues from small, not through the logical law of a dialectics of contraries, but thanks to liberation from all obligations of dimensions, a liberation that is a specials characteristic of the activity of the imagination' (Bachelard 1994: 154-5). Time given to this form of contemplation led to an in-depth consideration of detail and the subtleties of the flame that most likely would be lost in precipitating a fully active mimetic approach.

While Bachelard's philosophy is located historically in a time when the study of perception was envisaged as a kind of introspection or a preparation for action, the 'active meditation/meditative action' I experienced at this stage reflects the more contemporary philosophical understanding of perception, as a way of accessing the world or establishing a relationship with the world. The American professor of philosophy Alva Noë, contends that 'seeing is access: a bodily skill: an understanding that by moving my eyes or my body, I can bring this environment nearer' (Noë 2008). This view is not dissimilar to Bachelard's

notion of imagining, in which he connects to the world of the soul: 'It is not a question of observing but of experiencing, being in its immediacy' (Bachelard 1994: 234). For Noë, the act of perceiving is not detached from the coupling between the capacity to move and the capacity to see. Indeed he views perception as this coupling. Similarly, Bruce McConachie asserts the importance of integrating 'mind-full bodies with body-full minds' (McConachie 2013: 31), and equally, Mark Johnson argues that 'meaning reaches deep down into our corporeal encounter with our environment' (Johnson 2007: 25). In congruence with these views, I sensed a deeper curiosity; a desire to touch the flame, to test it and to explore its physical qualities. I challenged and provoked the flame: touching, blowing, raising, lowering, shaking, and moving it through space. This physical curiosity, I would argue, was an embodied manifestation of Bachelard's freedom of the mind and echoes the Belgian artist, Georges Vantongerloo's assertion that 'things must be approached through sensitivity rather than understanding....' (Vantongerloo cited by Ian Hamilton Finlay in Aeschen and Huk 1996: 137).

In order to trace the reception of the 'poetic image' in the subjective consciousness, Bachelard asserts the need for openness and a focus on the present experience. The habitual image, he argues, obstructs imaginative powers: 'Habit is the exact antithesis of the creative imagination' (Bachelard 2002: 11). Applied to the devising process, habitual working patterns ingrained through prior training, can induce automatic rather than fresh responses reflecting the British social anthropologist, Paul Connerton's opinion of personal habits as, 'sedimented into bodily conformation' (Connerton 1989: 95). In order to fracture my own habitual movement vocabulary and as a means of opening

up to new ways of working, I spent thirty minutes at the start of each session on

the Feldenkrais preparation initiated in the previous practical project. This time I

introduced exercises I had first experienced with Pagneux in Barcelona: freeing

the upper back, waking the spine, twisting and lengthening, pelvis and neck. I

would suggest that this form of engagement opened up my body to change in

such a way that the body is, as Pagneux asserts, no longer 'an obstacle for the

imagination' (Pagneux 2007).[27] In allowing these exercises to develop and

evolve, I recalled how the playful exploration of new pathways for movement

and heightened attention I had experienced with Pagneux, appeared to flow

effortlessly into improvisation, inspiring infinite possibilities where anything can

seemingly develop from nothing.

The Feldenkrais exercises and Pagneux's playful approach to exploration

became increasingly central to the practical projects of the study. The

significance of this groundwork can be encapsulated in the way Feldenkrais

defines three ways of moving. Firstly, there is the compulsive way, secondly the

making of mechanical choices and finally, a third way, the creative and

spontaneous: 'Just when you think you have refined an action, idea or way, a

new way can appear.'[28] Approaching the flame through this preparatory work

provoked an acute awareness of being imbued with new internal and external

movement sensations, bringing a new softness and lightness to my body and a

more sensitive level of receptivity. This level of awareness can also be

expressed as *Sanmai*, which the Japanese actor Yoshi Oida describes as 'the

awareness of each moment and the focus on the simple activity of that moment'

(Oida 2007: 74). True unconsciousness, he argues, 'is not just about making

---

[27] Mentioned by Pagneux in a workshop I attended in Barcelona (2007).
[28] Quoted by Garet Newell, educational director of the Feldenkrais International Centre Ltd, in an ATM session I attended in 2006.

the mind empty […] You are not caught by the conception of 'emptiness'. You simply react to the world around you' (*ibid.* 80).

As well as gently unsettling my habitual patterns of making and experiencing, the intention with this form of preparation was, in Zarilli's words, 'not to space out, zone out, or attempt to relax,' but instead to 'enter a state of concentratedness in the moment, which is not energy-less, but energy-full or energised' (Zarilli cited in Pitches & Popat 2011: 43). Zarilli's analysis not only reflects the state of awareness I experienced, but also goes some way to elucidating the principles of Bachelard's 'active meditiation/meditative action'. It is important to remember here, the significant difference for Bachelard between dreaming and 'reverie.' Whereas the dream proceeds in a linear direction, forgetting its original path, 'reverie,' far from being a passive and dissipating activity, generally centres on one object and works in a star pattern, returning to its centre to shoot out new beams (Bachelard 1964). Beyond watching and observing, this activity demands a very special kind of attention. As he afirms, it is 'a discipline acquired through long hours of reading and writing, and through a constant practice of '*surveillance de soi*. Images reveal nothing to the lazy dreamer' (Bachelard in Gaudin 2005: xxix). Engaged in this attentive and lively focus with the flame, I sensed increasingly that the subject (myself) and the object (the flame) were, to borrow as Bachelard does, the Husserlian term 'co-constituted,' apprehended in their relationship together rather than in their otherness.

Embodied Reverie

From the initial stage of active contemplation, I improvised more freely around the material element of the candle flame. At the heart of this process is the notion of play as an activity or space within which thought and experience interweave, and the mind and body interact. (Please view **DVD: SECTION 2 – Extract 1 – Exploring Embodied Reverie**). This extract demonstrates the infusion of instances when I embody the flame with instances of exploration, of sensing where this takes me in the process of working things out. Returning to Sheets-Johnstone's description of the choreographic process highlighted in the previous practical project, this extract exemplifies my thinking *in* movement, which, as mentioned earlier, is experienced as 'thought about action' and 'thought in action' (Sheets-Johnstone's 1999). In this instance, I am still tackling the inner and outer relationship between my body and space experienced in the previous project, but here the experience is more integrated and porous. In the words of Elizabeth Ellsworth (2005), I became 'a learning self in motion.'

As established above, 'reverie' whilst free and unpredictable in nature, is not considered by Bachelard to involve random or arbitrary thought, but rather like improvising around a theme in a theatrical context, demands an active conscious state. Nonetheless, the act of subjecting images to reverie for Bachelard needs to be a free and open activity in order to propel the image to transcend reality. In *The Poetics of Space* (1992) Bachelard introduces the notion of 'inhabited geometry' made up of materiality, valorisation and playfulness. *Materiality* is comprised of weight, motion and substance and *Valorisation* relates to the image in terms of vibrations, rhythms of intimacy, warmth and attractiveness. Returning to the DVD extract being discussed, there

is no extraneous force or effort involved in this example, but rather an embodied engagement with all the dimensions of Bachelard's 'inhabited geometry'. A sort of poetic play emerges here, through which I negotiate imminent meanings. The level of engagement I experienced chimes with Kozel's assertion that 'ideas do not come after the experience, they do not come before, they permeate it like tendrils, like the web of connective tissue' (Kozel 2007: 29).

Documenting the Emergence of the Poetic

In considering the flame's materiality and my mimetic experience of it, a range of new perspectives and sensations began to emerge. I continually recorded my subjective responses and findings in the form of drawings, notes, diagrams and photographs. Documenting the process in this way served as an essential strategy for capturing an uncertain and some times obscure process, and as a means of looking at the complexities of articulating my individual experience in the performance-making process. When Kozel identifies the process of making as 'inward: somatic, and outward: choreography' (2011), the writing came to forge an integral link between inner experience and outer expression. Figure 11, below, provides examples of the indexical documentation of my embodied responses to the reciprocal exchange between the material element of the candle flame and myself.

Fig. 11. Documenting The Poetic
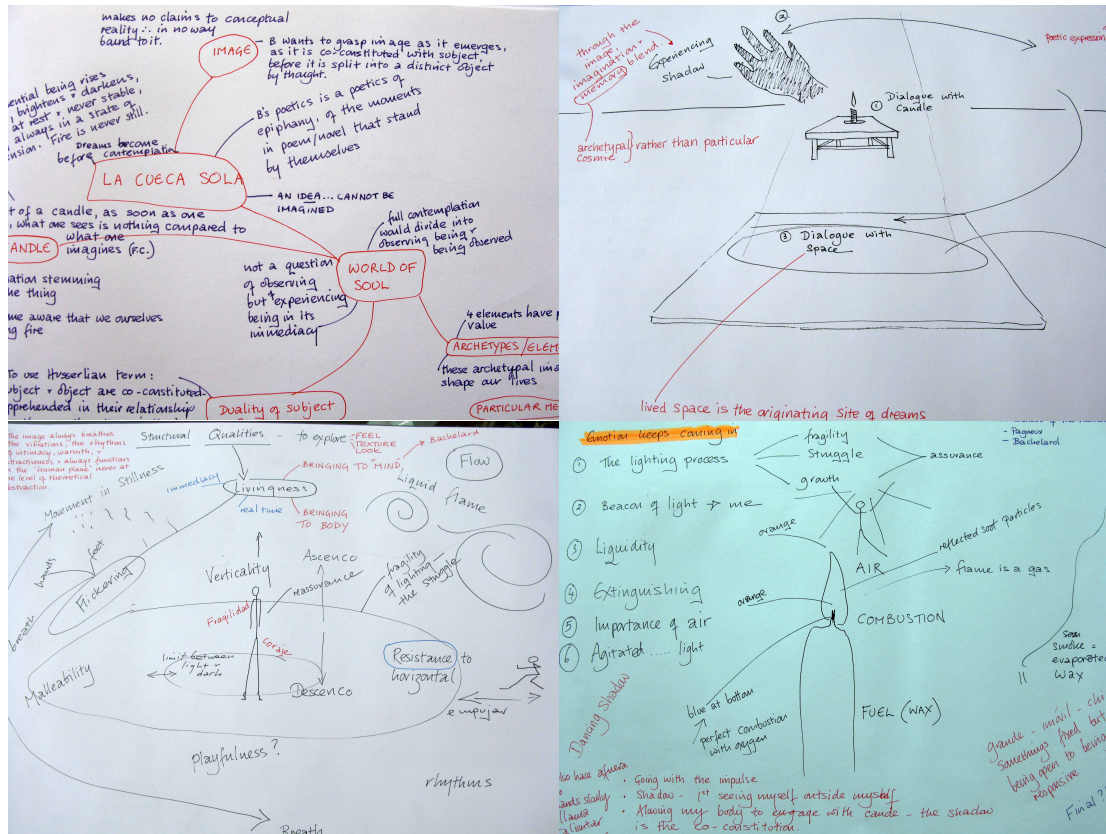
In his article, *Another kind of writing: reflective practice and creative journals in the performing arts* (2007), Evans explores the ways in which creative writing can inform the development of reflective practice, suggesting its valuable role as a means of deepening understanding, because the whole person is engaged: 'body, emotion and intellect, creativity and objectivity, observation and response' (Evans 2007: 71). Likewise, at this stage of Practical Project 2, the writing actively participated in the experience. The words appeared to function, 'as a part of a process of coming into knowledge' (*ibid*. 71). Later on, the evolving documentation was refined into two groupings, which I set out in the following table (Figure 12). Firstly, I selected descriptions of the flame's movements in terms of space, weight and time (its materiality) and secondly, I recorded the more subjective descriptions of how my body experienced the exploratory stage. These distinctions were not differentiated at the time of

working, but rather intertwined to generate a narrative, which progressively

became the source of the material developed later in the dramaturgical stage of

the project.

Fig. 12. Towards 'Embodied Reverie'

TOWARDS EMBODIED REVERIE **My body and the candle flame**		
Material: motion/weight/substance	**Sensory:** What it feels like	**Reverie:** Play
- Spatial: expansive, contracting - Flow - Speed - Rhythm - Heat - Texture - Energy/vibration - Weight continuum - Liquid	- Softening, rhythm, floating, suspension, - Balance/imbalance - Energy/vibration - When the movement is difficult or blocked - The body as permeable - Showing and being - Variations in breath - Sense of solitude - Moments of resistance and flow - Slowing down	- Exploring opposites - Miniature - Rhythm - Shadows - Environmental factors: effect of daylight/no light on candle flame - Memories: 'personal' and 'cosmic' - Blindfolding - Playfulness - Releasing the dynamics of the flame through the breath

The table above points to what Bachelard describes as the *onset of the image*:

'The study of the phenomenon of the image when it emerges into

consciousness' (Bachelard 1994: 14). Furthermore, it elucidates the

interweaving layers of experience arising from an embodied engagement with

the material element, much like Merleau-Ponty's affirmation: 'the things pass

into us as well as we into the things' (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 123). 'Material images' for Bachelard, refer to the spaces we are and the spaces we live, which in turn, steer us to what he calls 'ontological ways', to a fresh appreciation for and an understanding of, our worlds and our bodies. Increasingly, Bachelard's written account of his own experience of the candle flame had ceased to guide my choices and I was now fully immersed in my own experience. Moreover, through approaching my embodied affinity with the flame in this way, I was indeed being moved by it, in a manner that was playful rather than constrained. The new sensations emerging from playfully exploring Bachelard's understanding of 'materiality' and 'reverie,' inspired by the heightened corporeal awareness accessed through the Feldenkrais and Pagneux preparative exercises, led to instances of 'embodied reverie,' a new term, which I develop further over the course of this thesis.

The Significance of the indeterminate

If I was to devise a performance based on experiencing the imagination on Bachelard's terms, inevitably, I would have to leave the security of a clear and pre-determined idea and instead, adhere to his assertion that 'It is better to live in a state of impermanence than in one of finality' (Bachelard 1994: 61). Consequently, as an 'actor-creator' working towards the necessary production of new work within a limited timeframe, Bachelard's resistance to the determinate produced an underlying anxiety in my own process. While uncertainty and doubt are integral components of the devising process, the fear of the indeterminate can block progress and result in hurried choices. Frequently, if the idea does not come quickly, then the stimulus is rejected. Writing on the experimental theatre ensemble, *Elevator Repair Service*, Sara

Jane Bailes affirms that a certain amount of uncertainty is a necessary condition 'for a genuinely open process, and each starts by confronting the process of invention itself' (Bailes in Harvie & Lavender, 2010: 89). Similarly, Alison Oddey highlights the devising experience as 'often contradictory, unclear, and confusing' (Oddey 1994: 167), whereas John Wright describes his company as 'an amoeba, never really in control if devising' (*ibid*. 66).

In order to cope with this uncertainty, Oddey proposes the need for a clear structure, as does Tim Etchells (*ibid*. 66), although financial and time restraints often appear to be what drive this need for making sometimes hasty decisions. The constant pressures of producing a product to a deadline can lead to precipitously latching onto an idea, which then acts as an anchor or safety net constraining opportunities for new ideas and processes. This was a valuable moment of realisation in Practical Project 2, as it anticipated the significant tensions between Bachelard's resistance to fixity and the need come to a resolution. Furthermore, this dilemma reflects the wider and enduring tensions between artistry and efficacy and the way in which this impacts on and influences the devising process.

Stage 2: **Resonance: The Lived Experience of The Shadow**

In Bachelard's poetics the real and the unreal converge. The real resonates within us, while the unreal - the possibilities of the future, the unknown - reverberate at the surface of our being and expand its limits. In my case, through the mutability and liveness of the candle's shadow, a new possibility emerged. Projected on the wall behind me, my own shadow became a source of exploration. The interaction between my body and the candle flame through

the vehicle of the shadow was a unique possibility to expand on Bachelard's notion of 'reverie.' I proceeded to work on a series of shadow improvisations, which were intentionally not determined or conditioned by a task or an aim. (Please view **DVD: SECTION 2 – Extract 2 – Convergence of the Real and the Unreal**). In this extract, I am working in a lighted studio, so that the camera can capture my exploration. Initially, this work was undertaken in silence, but the selected DVD extracts highlight a slightly later stage of the project when the music, *First Light* by Brian Eno and Harold Budd (1980), was incorporated to reinforce the delicate and transient nature of both my gradual transformation and the discovery process. Once again, I consciously experienced minute moments of realisation; a fusion between mind and body; a kind of corporeal thinking. Increasingly, I was drawn to the pervading presence of my own shadow. Rather than attending to an internal *psychological* significance, my engagement was more keenly focused on the shadow's potential to change form, intensity and location in the play between my body and the candle flame. In shifting my attention away from the light source to the wall behind me, I was freeing myself from the constraints of the flame. Figure 13, depicts the beginnings of this exploration.

Fig.13. The Emergence of a Body Other Than Myself

The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'shadow' as 'a dark area or shape

produced by a body coming between rays of light and a surface.' In the realms

of analytical psychology however, they house the mysterious and the unknown.

Shadows can be experienced as calming and intimate forms, places of refuge

and shade. Indeed, children discover the imaginative qualities of shadows

through play, and Jung also identifies the shadow's more positive,

transformational qualities: 'To confront a person with his shadow is to show him

his own light' (Jung cited in Becker 2001: 157). In effect, the shadow became

an engine or generator for the devising process. It served to activate and free

my thoughts and reveries, pointing to towards 'an end which is not yet attained'

(*ibid*. 104). Increasingly, the relationship between the shadow and my being

took precedence over the candle flame, leading to what can possibly be

described as a transformation, arguably exemplifying a Bachelardian

'archetypal symbol;' an axis, 'around which a host of images may conspire to

evoke typical human experiences' (Kearney 1998: 104). The shadow no longer

existed uniquely as a mere reflection of my body. Instead, this living, moving

'other' was a manifestation or extension of my inner, poetic or creating self.

Through the reality of the shadow, I would argue that I had discovered a way of

accessing the embodied reality of my imagination.

Matter for Bachelard sparks inner images, which in turn imbue matter with

memory and values. The candle flame is naturally solitary, alone, and this

resonated through my body. Bachelard's contention is that our interaction with

the world provokes or triggers the imagination. In my case, the candle flame

had invited me to engage with its unique qualities and my shadow in the form of

a solitary vigil. In the words of Bachelard: 'The flame is a world for the solitary

man' (Bachelard 1988: 3). Interestingly, Anton Vydra argues that absolute

solitude is impossible: 'An authentic solitude is a form of relation' (Vydra 2012:

200). The evolving experience was not with myself but with the external world,

which, in turn, provoked memories.

Memory and the Poetic Image: Personal and Cosmic

Bachelard draws attention to the intimate relationship between '*reverie*' and

memory, distinguishing two categories of memory in the process of 'poetic

imagining.' Firstly, personal memories tend to relate to a particular location or event experienced by the individual. In my own case, in its ephemeral nature the candle flame embodied the temporary presence of the absent. Nevertheless, this subjective memory for Bachelard, is not sufficient to provoke a 'poetic image.' In its capacity to serve as a universe, a matrix for memory, the candle flame also has the ability to provoke memories that transcend the personal. These, he defines as 'transubjective' or 'cosmic' memories, in which, 'such a dreamer is a world dreamer. He opens himself up to the world and the world opens itself up to him' (Bachelard, 1992: 20). In his analysis of 'the mourning walk,' Carl Lavery compares Bachelard's 'world dreamer' to 'a modern-day Orpheus, a subject who enters the daydream of reverie in order to allow the ghosts of the [human] world and the [inhuman] cosmos to speak' (Lavery in Heddon, Lavery & Smith 2009:50). In essence, whereas 'cosmic memory' is blended with imagination, Bachelard considers personal memories as a consequence. They do not form a part of his trans-subjective complex. Furthermore, he contends that if the memory is too particular the unity of the archetype is destroyed. This is an aspect of his 'poetic imagining' process that I experienced in stage 3, below.

Stage 3: Reverberations and Repercussions

(Please view **DVD: SECTION 2 – Extract 3 – Dancing with the Disappeared).**
This extract of a rehearsal in which, once again I am working in a lighted studio for better viewing, captures the moment when I believe I experienced Bachelard's cosmic or 'transubjective memory', a turning point which was to determine the course of Practical Project 3. The DVD extract then goes on to demonstrate how this 'resonance' was finally expressed in a 'repercussion' as

part of the final performance. During an explorative session, in a moment of 'embodied reverie' centred on the candle flame's movements and my projected shadow, I arguably experienced what Bachelard calls a 'metaphysical moment,' sometimes described as a 'poetic instant,' introduced in the previous chapter. He defines this as a sudden burst of consciousness calling for an acute act of attention, or an act of will. Kearney describes it as a simultaneous moment of creation and discovery, synthesising an immobilising of the present, with experiencing in that moment.

In my case, I experienced this as a moment of 'heightened perceptual awareness' (Zarilli 2009: 57), or as the Japanese philosopher Yuasa Yasuo puts it, as 'knowledge gained *through the body'* and 'not knowledge of the body' (*ibid*. 58). Quite unexpectedly, the solitary flame had led me on a personal journey from the initial experience of its structural qualities towards a 'cosmic' or 'universal' image of solitude and absence. Bachelard compares this moment to *'le point vélique:'* [29]

> When the pressure of wind on sail is met with a countervailing resistance from the waves against the vessel itself. In this moment of opposing forces - sail versus sea - we witness a singular equipoise of intensities, a fertile commingling of immobility and movement, a still point that generates dynamic propulsion. And this double pressure on canvas sail and sea-born hull actually produces a humming sound. The boat literally *sings*.
>
> (Bachelard cited in Kearney 2008: 39)

A vivid memory reverberated throughout my body of witnessing in 1990 the inauguration of the first democratically elected president of Chile, after eighteen years of dictatorship. I was in Chile at the time when a national celebration was

---

[29] In dinghy sailing, this would be described in English as 'planing'. I have experienced this humming sound myself in dinghy racing.

taking place at the Sports Stadium in Santiago, involving all the political leaders of Central and Latin America. Once a place of torture, the National Stadium was now a focal point for celebration; a celebration of a new democracy. Watched by over 70,000 spectators and by millions more on the television, a solitary woman entered the arena to dance the *Cueca*, the national dance of Chile. Originally a flirtatious dance between a man and a woman based on the movements between a cockerel and a hen, it was now performed as a solo dance to protest against Pinochet's military regime. These women were dancing with their absent brothers, fathers, husbands who had been arrested, abducted, tortured and eliminated without trace. As exemplified in Figure 14, they were dancing with the 'disappeared.'

Fig. 14. *La Cueca Sola (Navarro, 1978)*

The 'resonance' of experiencing the solitary flame had provoked a 'reverberation' in me. This was not my personal memory. I had not experienced the dancer's individual loss, but the 'poetic image' of the memory connected me instantly to the solitary dancer. I experienced this moment in rehearsal just as

Bachelard describes: 'It excites and proves, it invites and consoles, it is both astonishing and familiar' (Bachelard 1971: 196), in which 'time no longer flows. It gushes' (Kearney 1998: 198). I argue that in that instant, what united me with the dancer is Bachelard's 'cosmic memory' of absence, or what I term as *a poetics of absence*. In this sense, 'Reverberation' for Bachelard, consists of an awakening of poetic creation, 'a becoming of expression, a becoming of our being, expression creates being' (Bachelard 1994: xxiii).

Kozel, encapsulates the origin of the 'poetic image' as a 'fleeting moment shaped by the flow of time, memories, and corporeal insertion into being' (Kozel 2007: 26). When I experienced this convergence of energies, or what Kearney calls 'the poetic junction of opposites,' I sensed it as a bodily realisation generated by the candle flame and its shadow rather than an isolated concept. I would argue that this was further intensified and enhanced by the lightness of play and by approaching the work through curiosity and pleasure, very much in the spirit of Pagneux, who, as John Wright points out, looks 'for vulnerability and pleasure at the moment of risk and the lightness and simplicity of movement that is fully integrated' (Wright 1994: 11). Importantly, as the DVD extract in the lighted studio exemplifies, this was only made possible by leaving the physical reality of the flame in order to aspire towards new realities. Furthermore, I would argue that I was moving beyond bodily k*nowledge* accessed through the body, towards *imagination* gained through the body; an 'embodied poetic' moment emerging from a very specific convergent point of energies. Returning to the second part of the DVD extract in discussion, I include the way in which I chose to transform the embodied 'cosmic memory' of the solo dancer into of the final moment of performance. Moreover, this fusion

of rehearsal and performance in the DVD extract, serves to highlight as I discuss below, the challenges I faced in attempting to draw this 'poetic instant' together into a form for the final presentation.

In search of a Form

In addressing the final project specific question of how to apply this approach to the devising process, the final stage of Practical Project 2 involved exploring ways to optimise the 'reverberations' I had experienced, so that they in turn might have 'repercussions' in the spectator. In the spirit of Bachelard, what moved me needed to transcend, to reach out to the spectator with its own potential 'resonances.' Despite the temptation to remain in a zone of playful exploration, I needed to make the leap from 'a becoming' to a performance outcome, yet I experienced significant difficulty in arriving at what the sociologist Robert Witkin, calls *the resolution*. In his model of the creative process (1976), Witkin argues that sensate experience requires structuring or ordering into an expressive form, through 'successive approximations in which finer and still finer medium control is instituted' which lead towards further realisation of 'feeling impulse' (Witkin 1976: 185). The challenges I faced at this juncture alerted me once again to the inescapable tension in Bachelard's poetics, between the process of imagining and the bringing of its meaning to fruition in a way that can be repeated and shared with others. Arguably, this struggle resides in Bachelard's abiding resistance to form: 'When it has been reduced to a form, an image is a poetic concept; it forms superficial links with other images, as one concept is linked to another' (Bachelard 2002: 11).

As Kearney points out, Bachelard's poetics is a poetics of epiphany; of the instances in a novel or poem that stand by themselves (1998). For instance, when writing on the material element of fire, he contends that images stand alone in their vastness, whereas 'a storyline is but the string on which pearls are strung' (Bachelard 1990: 116). The complexities of constructing a compositional frame from the exploratory stages in rehearsals result in many highly imaginative and fruitful devising processes being abandoned. In order to navigate this seemingly irreconcilable aspect of Bachelard's work, I was drawn to potential resonances with the French philosopher, Jacques Rancière's principle of an 'emancipation of the spectator,' which resides in a dramaturgy that associates and dissociates and where each individual spectator can then 'make his poem with the poem that is performed in front of him' (Rancière 2009: 277). Subsequently, I resolved to share with the 'spectator' the evolving way in which, through playful curiosity, I had come to know the flame, or in other words, my relation to the flame. This was followed by the interweaving of the relationship between the candle and myself, leading to the final 'poetic image' or inhabited transformation of the contemplated flame evoked by the 'poetic imagining' process. As a consequence, through a series of 'successive approximations' in the rehearsal process, the narrative structure came to reflect the research journey itself.

Towards a 'Poetics of Absence'

To begin with, I introduced the more sensitive approach developed in Project 2, in which through the discovery of the candle flame, my body tuned in to its more delicate qualities. Correspondingly, in the performance my physical engagement was more subtle, soft and sensitive, thus shifting the emphasis

away from *showing* the audience towards *sharing* the experience, in a way reminiscent of Yoshi Oida's following analogy: 'I put the audience into the bus, and drive them to another time and space. The aim is to bring them to this time and space, not to show them what I can do' (Oida 2007: 87).

From the visual, I moved to the tactile; touching the flame, feeling where its heat was most intense and little by little, through delicate play, progressed to the light that the flame emits, exploring variations of its intensity on the walls of the performance space. The aim was to share my own experience of curiosity and discovery, which led me to a playful exploration of my projected shadow on the back wall, reflecting once again, my experience of the inquiry stage of the project. Gradually, my shadow transformed into the shadow of the solo dancer.

The Chilean *Cueca* dance involves a white handkerchief waved flirtatiously at the partner. In attempting to find a connection between the shadow and myself, I devised a way in which the shadow appeared to reach out and touch my hand; a physical realisation that we had been separate, but that we were now connecting as partners. When the shadow removed its hand from mine, I was holding a folded white handkerchief. Rather than a preconceived idea, this moment emerged once again through the interplay between the shadow and my moving body in the rehearsal stage. The increasing expansion of movement possibilities the handkerchief engendered, allowed me to move more freely and to escape from the reality of the candle flame. With a flick of the handkerchief, the flame was extinguished and I was free to explore its imaginary and projective qualities through my body.

In the final section of the performance, I selected a series of photographic images projected on the back wall, beginning with a back lit shadow photograph of a Chilean prisoner of war in a position of submission facing a soldier with a gun (Figure 15):

Fig. 15. Estadio Nacional 1973 (Latin 21).

This in turn led me to source images and original footage of the bombing of 'La Moneda,' the presidential palace (Noticiero 24 Horas 1973). In the dark, the original voice recording of the military order to bomb the Presidential Palace emerged and with the back projection, I mimetically took on the same physical position as the shadowed submissive posture of the prisoner in an attempt to develop a link between the shadow and the ghosts of the missing. Tens of thousands of people were detained, tortured, killed or disappeared during the dictatorship. In an attempt to keep the memory alive, families distributed images of the 'disappeared.' I included a selection of these in the subsequent projected sequence gradually increasing in number as I danced in front of them, until the

final slide revealed a multitude of unclaimed lives (Figure. 16) covering my dancing body and the entire back wall.
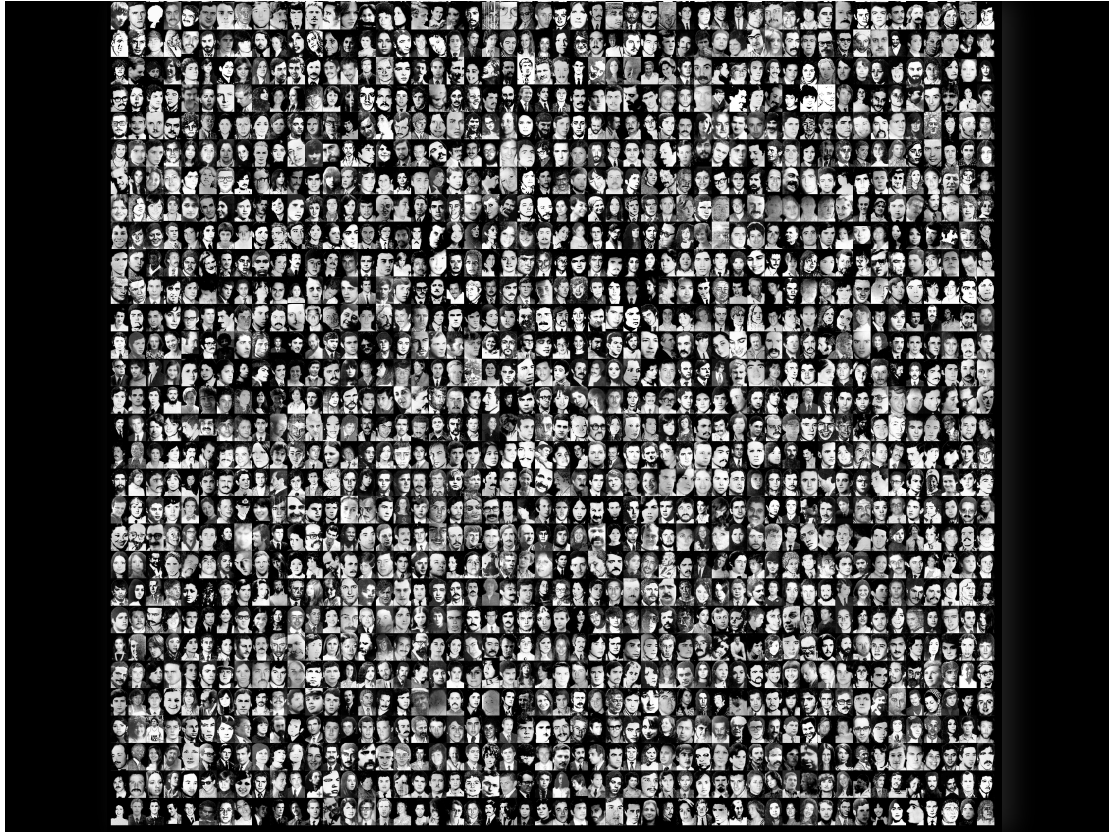
Fig. 16. The Chilean Disappeared (La Red 21, 2012)

Kearney observes that the word 'invention' in the spirit of Bachelard, takes on 'all the rich double sense of its etymological origin as both creation and discovery (invenio-invenire). It is both active and passive, dynamic and receptive' (Kearney 2008: 41). On the morning of the performance, I worked through the compositional sequence with the projections in the final rehearsal and experienced once again, what I would describe in Bachelard's terms as a final 'poetic instant.' Whilst searching for ways in which the dance with the handkerchief could trigger the end, it was in this attentive state of 'concentrated will' that my moving body responded to 'the incoming instant' (Bachelard in

Kearney, 2008: 41). In one moment of improvisation, my hands slowly raised the handkerchief until it covered my face and is captured at the end of **the extract** (**DVD: SECTION 2 – Extract 3 – Dancing with the Disappeared).** With one gesture, I was gently absorbed into the infinite faces of the disappeared. Consequently, in this final 'poetic instant' experienced just moments before the presentation, the 'poeticising substance' of the candle flame led me unexpectedly, to extinguishing myself. The 'poetics of absence' was complete. Below, I include a summary of the key structural choices of the final performance in the form of a diagram (Figure 17):

Fig. 17. Presentation of Practical Project 2 - The Poetics of Absence

ACTION	CUE
Light candle downstage.	
Text: *'To know fire is an act of disobedience.* *Single flame, I am alone.* *The flame is precarious and courageous,* *destroyed by a breath, relit by a spark. Easy birth.* *Easy death.'*	
Explore the candle's properties.	
Text: *'That which illuminates also sees.'*	
Walk slowly upstage illuminating table. Place candle on the table. Blow gently on the candle, revealing flickering shadow on back wall.	
Text: *'The flame is a world for the solitary dreamer.'*	
Place hand above flame to hide shadow	CUE 1: Music First Light.
Explore shadow on the wall until the shadow disappears:	
Text: *Shadows do not hide reality or secrets. They are willing to reveal.* Blow out the candle Projections of the bombing of the Chilean Presidency, 1973. Images from the coup followed by images of 'disappeared.' I gently dance 'La Cueca.' Final image: A wall of faces. I conceal my face with the handkerchief used for dancing the Cueca.	CUE 2: Music Ellie PhD CUE 3: Projection 2 seconds after music begins

* All texts by Bachelard

Towards a Multifaceted Dramaturgy

Although my chosen resolution evolved directly from my experience of

interacting, playing and resonating with the flame (the real world), the journey to

finding its expression was less successful. The tenuous yet vital link between

the playful exploratory shadow work, the gravitas of the 'dance of the disappeared' and the 1973 Chilean Military Coup, remained under-developed and unresolved. This was an important discovery. 'Objectively,' Bachelard writes, 'the glory in a poetic image lies in its ephemerality' (Bachelard 1990: 20). Even though my 'poetic image' of the dancer opened up to the structure I had adopted, it resisted the constraints this imposed. In attempting to reach a 'resolution' or form, I was in danger of leaving the expansive heights of the 'poetic image' for the fixity of the metaphor.

For Bachelard, metaphors and images are in opposition and cannot be synthesised. Metaphors, he argues, are merely displaced thoughts; intellectualised images that are neither direct nor immediate. They are distanced by the consequences of an attempt to express something more clearly or indeed differently. Because they are formed from thought, they are static. Images, however, are imagination's earliest form of life. Images take from the real world and leave it for an imagined one. Far from being static, they are *variational* and dynamic and as such should be understood as a genesis, not an effect.

So, in this context, the material element had imbued my body with new experiences, leading to unfamiliar movement qualities of sensitivity, delicacy, softness, subtlety and lightness, but what if these specific qualities, unique to this material element extended to the dramaturgical process itself? Returning to Bachelard's use of 'method' in its double meaning, the guiding fidelity of the material element might represent the rigor of a system, whereas the indeterminacy carried by its Greek root *hodos* ('way')' (Gaudin 2005: xxI), might

reside in a more open dramaturgy. If, for Bachelard, 'a stable and completely realised image *clips the wings* of the imagination' (Bachelard 2002: 2), then a dramaturgy, in which meaning is not necessarily fully formed, but rather, intentionally nascent and tentative, might best reconcile and acknowledge this double meaning. Moreover, the projective force of the imagination is for Bachelard, 'an invitation to journey' (*ibid*. 3), affirming a potential compatibility with a more open, unfolding 'multifaceted dramaturgy' defined by Eckersall, Monaghan and Beddie as, 'a confluence of literary, spatial, kinaesthetic and technical practices, worked and woven in the matrix of aesthetic and ideological forces' (Eckersall, Monaghan and Beddie in Trencsényi and Cochrane 2014: 19). The way in which this aspect was explored and integrated into the final practical project, is discussed Chapter Five of this study.

Summary

Practical Project 2 created opportunities for engaging with Bachelard's 'poetic imagination' from a practical perspective. Returning to the project specific question concerning how Bachelard's poetic imagining of the mind might be embodied, through experiencing his call for 'active mediation/meditative action' with the candle flame, I encountered his state of 'reverie,' defined in the previous chapter as a constant play of consciousness, a quality of inventiveness and play that operates through a process of discovery. Significantly, this was not concerned with imposing or forcing an idea on to the substance, material or object in question, but rather about placing oneself in a specific state for his 'reverie' of consciousness to emerge. This process was enriched and made more vivid by the incorporation of preparatory Feldenkrais exercises and Monika Pagneux's approach to establishing the conditions

whereby, as Murray suggests, 'bodies can attend better and more sharply, not only to themselves, but also to the perpetual stimuli of the human and material world around them' (Murray in Hodges, 2010: 227). Additionally, at this stage, I discovered that the quality of perception involved is not passive, but enactive, as Noë concisely puts it: 'Perception is not something that happens to us, or in us. It is something we do' (Noë 2006: 1). I experienced this state as involving the body at the deepest and subtlest levels of engagement, and through this practical exploration, I put forward a new term to describe this enactive engagement with Bachelard's 'poetic imagination': 'Embodied reverie.'

In stage 2 of this practical project, I explored more specifically what an embodied engagement with Bachelard's *poetic body'* might reveal for the *'actor-creator'* in the devising process. In response to this inquiry, I discovered the candle flame as *a poeticising substance*; a means of accessing that deeper level of reverie where feelings, observations, thoughts and sensations are moving around in a fluid way. From here, given space, time and focused attention, something surprising and unexpected can be generated. My body became imbued with the material and dynamic qualities of the candle flame, which led to a particular play of consciousness combining memory, sensation, feeling and a quality of inventiveness that I believe can operate dynamically through the body as a method of inquiry in the early stages of the devising process. It is important to note that rather than being structured rigidly into the schedule, the second stage emerged from the first, leading to a bridging of the experience/imagination divide, or in Bachelard's terms, the shift from 'resonance' to 'reverberation.'

Towards Practical Project 3

Jen Harvie defines devising as:

> A method of performance development that starts from an *idea* or *concept* rather than a play text; is from the start significantly open-minded about what its end-product will be; and uses improvisation […] as a key part of its process.

<div align="right">(Harvie in Harvie and Lavender 2010: 2; emphasis added)</div>

I would argue that the findings in this second project offer an additional layer to this definition - arguably underexplored as yet - whereby the performance text evolved from an interactive experience between a natural element and the human body. This will be the central focus of Practical Project 3. Returning to the primary research question of this study - in which I attempt to move towards developing a devising process, through an exploration of Jacques Lecoq's 'poetic body' and Bachelard's 'poetic imagining -' I wish now to explore the possibilities of an unfolding devising approach that moves from 'resonance' and 'reverberation' experienced in the body, towards finding a 'resolution' or some kind of form. The material element of fire in its most gentle manifestation of a candle flame was in the case of Practical Project 2, the starting point. I propose now to explore the interweaving experience of my body and the alternative material element of 'water', to interrogate the ways in which an alternative spring board for making impacts on the devising process.

Finally, Writing on Merleau-Ponty, Steeves points to his view of the material elements of earth, air, fire and water as prepatterning our experience. 'All of the elements provide general laws by means of which they can serve as a level or

medium for the appearing of being' (Steeves 2004: 128). Likewise, when Bachelard writes, 'The Voyage Throws Light on the Voyager' (Bachelard 1988:116), he opens up the possibility for a devising process based on his philosophical writings, to be an expression of the artist's style of embodiment. This is one aspect I propose to interrogate in the final practical project and will involve re-integrating the Lecoq work explored in the previous project, in order to further articulate my 'embodied poetics' as a devising process from material element to full-length performance.

Chapter Five: Practical Project 3

Trying to Reach the Sea: Towards a New Poetics for Devising through an Exploration of Jacques Lecoq and Gaston Bachelard in Dialogue

Introduction

Building on the developing analysis from the previous two practical projects this fifth chapter presents Practical Project 3. This practical project aimed to bring together Jacques Lecoq's approach to the 'poetic body' and Gaston Bachelard's philosophical writings on the 'poetic image' through my own practice. In appropriating Lecoq's terms 'identification' and 'transposition,' explored in Practical Project 1, and Bachelard's notions of 'reverie,' 'resonance,' 'reverberation' and 'repercussion,' addressed in Chapters Three and Four of this study, I seek to consolidate a more exacting and expansive understanding of the 'poetic body' and its projective possibilities for the actor-creator in the devising process.

As with the previous chapters discussing the practical projects, this chapter is intended to be read in conjunction with the accompanying DVD.

SECTION 3 – Trying to Reach the Sea: Towards a New Poetics for Devising through an Exploration of Jacques Lecoq and Gaston Bachelard in Dialogue is structured so that Practical Project 3 is available to view in full, followed by selected extracts from studio sessions, grouped sequentially. Attention will be drawn to the extracts under discussion throughout the chapter.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the concluding presentation of Practical Project 2 reflected the journey of my inquiry process with the material element of the candle flame, but did not evolve into a full-length performance. Drawing upon Witkin's 'Model of Reciprocity' in 'The Intelligence of Feeling' (1974), I developed a structured sequence of 'successive approximations,' yet did not reach, in his terms, a 'resolution.' As noted in the analysis, this reflected in part Bachelard's resistance to the fixity of ideas. In Practical Project 3 I seek to fulfil Witkin's notion of 'the resolution,' whereby feeling achieves externalisation in the form of a stand-alone performance. In his book *'Water and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Matter'* (1999), Bachelard claims that 'matter is the unconsciousness of form' (Bachelard 1999: 57) and that 'it is matter that governs form' (*ibid*. 119). In this sense, Practical Project 3 aimed to explore more specifically the creative progression from matter to form in the making of a performance. In Bachelard's terms, how do I transform my experience of reality into poetry? In Lecoq's terms, how could I reinsert this work into a 'dramatic dimension'? (Lecoq 2000: 45).

The final practical project took place between February and June 2014, culminating in a solo devised performance entitled *Trying to Reach the Sea.* The project involved an exploration of the dynamic triangulation of my body, material element and lived experience, in what might be described as a phenomenology of elemental experience, to tease out the progression of Lecoq's process of 'impression' to 'expression,' and, in consequence, propose a method or *hodos* as defined earlier in the study, for generating new work. Chapter Five addresses the final facet of the primary research question:

What new understandings can a relational encounter between Lecoq's pedagogy and Bachelard's 'poetic imagining' reveal about the' poetic body' and how might these new understandings originate a devising process?

Listed below are the project-specific questions:

- What can an alignment between Bachelard's 'poetic imagining' and Lecoq's pedagogy of the 'poetic body' bring to the actor-creator process?

- What are the discoveries and challenges of applying the reciprocity between my body and the elements to the devising process?

- How might an encounter between Lecoq and Bachelard's elemental imagining offer a method (*hodos)* for revealing a personal authorial signature in the devising process?

As discussed in Chapters One and Two of this study, Lecoq's pedagogy privileges the imaginative and poetic dimensions of the body, inviting his students to reconnect to 'a universal poetic sense.' As mentioned earlier, Bradby describes this as 'the actor delving down beneath the idea, beneath the word, to find the physical impulse which, he [Lecoq] believed, could be shown to underlie all thinking, all emotion, all expression' (Bradby in Lecoq 2006: xiii). In chapters Three and Four I discussed Bachelard's classification of 'poetic temperaments' as 'the four categories of souls in whose dreams, fire, water, air or earth predominate, show themselves to be markedly different' (Bachelard 1987: 89). While Bachelard's influence is palpable in Lecoq's approach through the 'elements work' in year 1 of his school, it is centred upon enriching the expressive qualities of a character. In Project 3, I proposed that an embodied

dialogue between Lecoq and Bachelard might lead to originating an application of the 'elements' as a devising process in itself.

Adhering to the structure developed in the previous practical projects, this final project divides into three stages designed to feed into and inform each other. Between February and April 2014, the first stage involved conducting fieldwork to interrogate how, through the lens of a material element, the body generates possible performance material. The second stage of the project took place between April and June 2014 and consisted in studio-based activity exploring the relationship between the real and the imaginary, or what Lecoq defines as the journey from 'impression' to 'expression.' This stage generated further material, which subsequently guided the focus of the final performance. In the last stage the evolving material underwent a process of development, selection and shaping, put more concisely by Zarilli as 'the actor's score' (Zarilli 2013: 15), or as Turner & Berhrndt call it, the 'dramaturgy of the performance' (Turner & Behrndt, 2008). The final performance was presented at the University of Exeter in June 2014.

As with the previous practical projects, I set out below a Chronological overview of Project 3.

CHRONOLOGICAL OVERVIEW OF PROJECT 3

STRUCTURE	Experimental: three stages
ENVIRONMENT	Studio based
TIMESCALE	One performance: University of Exeter
PERFORMER	Myself
RESEARCH DATES	February 2014 - April 2014

REHEARSAL DATES	May 2014 - June 2014
PERFORMANCE DATE	Tuesday, 24th June, 2014
DATA RETRIEVAL METHODS	Video and photographic documentation, workbooks - observational notes, written evaluation of the findings.

The thread running through each of the practical projects explores the way in which the body engages with, or the corporeal process of identifying with, the world to develop a devising process for the actor-creator. If, as Oddey asserts, Devised theatre 'can start from anything' (Oddey 1994: 1), I proposed to explore the ways in which a material element sets in motion and shapes a devising process from its initial development stage to performance. Bachelard maintains that a material element provides its own substance, its own specific rules and poetics (Bachelard, 1999). In order to test this viewpoint in Project 3, the element of water offered an opportunity to explore an alternative 'system of poetic fidelity' or 'fundamental oneiric temperament' (Bachelard 1999: 5).

Moreover, in selecting water over other elements, I draw upon Bachelard's affirmation of water as a combinative element, through which the other elements emerge:

> It assimilates so many substances, draws so many essences to itself! It receives contrary matters, sugar and salt, with equal facility. It becomes permeated with all colours, all tastes and all odors.

> (Bachelard 1999: 93)

I include the quote in full to highlight the significant mediating possibilities between my body and the element of water in the making process. Given the

points above, Project 3 involved a deeper interrogation of how my making

process is explicitly informed by this negotiation in my endeavour to move

towards a deeper understanding of the 'poetic body.' Firstly, is this mediating

dynamic between my body and the material element an interaction, a

collaboration, a combination, a rapport for Lecoq, a dialogue in Feldenkrais

terms, or, as Ingold (2013) suggests, a 'correspondence'? Secondly, Kearney

asserts that Bachelard's poetic imagination 'reveals new possibilities of being'

(Kearney 1998: 110). In foregrounding my unique and personal lived

experience of a specific stretch of water, how might this contribute to a deeper

understanding of the 'poetic body' for the actor-creator in the devising process?

<u>Stage 1:</u> From the Moving Body to the Lived Body

In order to tease out the transition from the moving body to the poetic body, it is

important to return to some key distinctions made by Bachelard regarding the

process of poetic imagining as the reader. Movement, for Bachelard, examined

as a study of mechanics 'does not prepare the integration of the will to move

and the experience of motion' because it is simply 'the transportation of an

unchanging object through space' (Bachelard 2002: 225). Similarly, visual

images serve only as a 'partially conceptualized illustration' (*ibid*. 262).

Consequently, neither of these instances can be considered to set in motion a

poetic opportunity, as essentially they are limited to description. In *The Poetics

of Space,* Bachelard's central premise is that the self is discovered through an

investigation of the places it inhabits. Jeff Malpas highlights Bachelard's

concerns for 'the love of place - 'topophilia' - and of the investigation of places -

'topoanalyisis' - as essential notions in any phenomenological/psychoanalytic

study of memory, self and mind' (Malpas 2007: 5). Likewise, as Steeves writes,

'for Merleau Ponty, 'human thought and experience is essentially founded in the corporeal and the concrete, and is therefore intimately connected with the environing world in its particularity and immediacy' (Steeves 2004: 8). In line with these assertions I selected a stretch of The River Exe in the East Devon town of Topsham as my field of investigation. From the age of six, I have known the river in all its forms and manifestations: at low and high tide; it's eddies, its patterns; its benign presence and imminent danger. I have spent years rowing, sailing and windsurfing upon it; swimming in it, fishing and crabbing; finding the unexpected in it: roman coins, china fragments, dead animals, wood and even the drowned. Furthermore, the river involves the necessary combinative possibilities mentioned above: the relationship between the air and the water and between the riverbed (earth) and water.

As noted in Chapter Four, within Bachelard's analysis of material imagination and its catalysts, he points to the womb, shell, labyrinth, snake, forest and house as archetypal symbols beyond the material elements, 'around which a host of images may conspire to evoke typical human experiences' (Bachelard cited in Kearney 2006:104). More importantly, symbolism for Bachelard 'constitutes an archetypal conjoining of self-contents with other-than-self contents (*ibid*.105), yet far from 'determining' us 'like ancestral memories (Jung) or personal histories of libidinal desire (Freud),' Bachelard's symbols are concerned with origins in a different way: 'In the sense of making us originators of our own future and allowing us to intuit matter teleologically as a task to be discovered rather than a thing to be negated' (*ibid.* 105). Given this discourse, I sensed that in choosing water as my poeticising substance or a centre of poetic space and placing this within the context of the River Exe, I had potentially

found an 'archetypal symbol.' As with the candle flame and the shadow in the previous project, the material element of water in Practical Project 3 serves as the poeticising substance and the river as agent for the imagining body. The poeticising attributes of the element of water are made unique by its manifestation in a specific location. The River Exe in Topsham, Devon, is characterised by its strong tides where the river meets the sea. It is an estuary, a transitional interstice between river and the maritime environment; a dynamic eco system where the fresh water of the river mixes with the salt water of the sea. Undoubtedly, the singularity of the location would impact on the work and my involvement in the work as actor-creator. This is an aspect that I develop further on in this chapter.

Between February and March, 2014, my initial impulse was to engage in the more conventional research approaches associated with theatre-making: exploring texts, poetry, images of the river, conducting interviews and recordings of local histories. I visited the museum, watched videos that had been made about the area, looked at historical photographs of how this particular section of the river had evolved geologically, historically and socialogically. I looked at scientific analyses of water to examine the notion of water as 'the agent of geological, environmental and global change.' (Ball 1999: 23). I investigated the mythological properties of rivers, their association with the Greek underworld; rivers in the Celtic religion; the rivers of the Iliad; of Dante's Inferno, as well as their anthropomorphic and etiological qualities. On a mythological level, Philip Ball asserts that water 'offer[s] human-kind a journey into death' (*ibid*. 22). However, influenced by Bachelard's dialectic possibilities, I proposed a performance whereby water offers a journey into life. I looked at the

geographical, social and anthropological significance of rivers. I noted proverbs associated with rivers; considered rivers as boundaries, borders, bringers and takers of life; rivers as mirrors, as the subconscious; symbols of passing time; the symbolism of crossing rivers, of leaving a familiar place behind in order to enter into and experience an entirely new one. This process gave rise to both the universal - understood in Lecoq's terms developed in Chapter 2, as a means of bringing out the shared references - and the particular: information pertaining uniquely to the River Exe. The interconnection between the personal and the universal as an aspect of this inquiry into the 'poetic body' will be further developed as the chapter progresses.

As a means of situating and articulating my own practice in stage 1, I looked at other solo artists who have also worked with the relationship between water and the body. Two in particular served as key reference points for Practical Project 3. The Dutch conceptual and performance artist Bas Jan Ader (1942-1975) and the German performance artist Rebecca Horn (1944), examine the relationship between the body and the environment. Ader's work is intensely personal. His own body, face or shadow, figure prominently as both subject and object, yet he intentionally avoids the narrative. Instead, he explores themes of gravity, departure and failure. In many works he jumps or falls, testing the way in which his physical presence alters his surroundings. Jan Verwoert (2006) says of Ader:

> By putting himself in the position as test person, Ader makes an existential investment in the work. He invests both his desires and doubts into the process, and ultimately puts his life at stake in the attempt…
>
> (Verwoert 2006: 7)

In 1975, Ader embarked on the ultimate performance of what was to form a section of a multipart work called *In Search of the Miraculous,* a daring attempt to cross the Atlantic Ocean in a small sailing boat. Six months after his departure, his boat was found half-submerged off the coast of Ireland. Bas Jan Ader had disappeared and his body was never found.

Rebecca Horn's body sculptures involve performances using objects attached to her body to negotiate the delicate balance between body and space. Over time, her focus has leaned more towards the construction of kinetic sculptures that take on a life of their own. Defining her own work, Horn writes: 'The transformation of the experience: that is pure art' (Horn n.d). The projected texts that move around the space in 'Light Imprisoned in the Body of a Whale' (2002) inform my final performance as well as her kinetic sculpture 'The Snake's Ghost' (2002), which exposes the rippling effect of the minute contact made by the point of a metal, finger-like object making contact with the water's surface.

Reinserting Lecoq into the Project

Having worked uniquely with Bachelard in the previous project, I now reinsert Lecoq back into the study more pointedly to scrutinise his assertion that 'people discover themselves in relation to their grasp of an external world, and if the student has special qualities, these will show up in the reflection' (Lecoq 2000: 17). Correspondingly, in my attempt to move towards a deeper understanding of the 'poetic body,' Practical Project 3 aimed to illuminate the way in which I as the actor-creator shift from following in the footsteps of a discipline, or tradition of making, to opening myself up to the new and finding my own style, or my own 'poetic body.' I use the term 'style' in its more expansive sense, defined by

Lecoq as 'the spirit of play,' or 'the imaginary play of the actor' (Salvatierra, 2006). Relatedly, Yarrow points to a crucial dynamic in Lecoq's making process which underpinned this project:

> In order to create a theatre which does not exist it is necessary to enter into the possibility of a different symbolic form (Schiller calls the ability to do this *Formtrieb*, the impulse to form; he says it rests upon and is expressed through *Spieltrieb*, the impulse to play).

> (Yarrow 2002: 112)

If, as I suspect, the body responds to the guiding qualities of the element, then it was crucial to spend time with the river itself. The significance of real experience is foregrounded by Lecoq: 'Every student has to go and cook an egg, for real, before performing, so that they can see that the yolk falls first, dragging the lighter white behind it' (Lecoq, 2000: 89-90). This is not to suggest an exact reconstruction of life as it is, but, as mentioned earlier, to 'feed off all these experiences' (*ibid*. 48) in order to create something new. Consequently, I formulated eight studio sessions, each of three hours duration, in anticipation of a field trip between 12th and 21st April, 2014. The preliminary studio preparation attempted to gain a sense of the imagined relationship between my body and the River Exe before my visit to it. After the field trip, the studio work served to process shifts or nuances that might be captured through the addition of the lived experience of being in the location with the element of water.

Building on the previous practical projects, I began each of these studio sessions with a Feldenkrais Awareness Through Movement session. I sourced

recordings available on OPENATM.ORG. [30] In selecting these online recordings I sought to reconnect to the way in which my body pays attention. Guidance through the lessons by diverse teachers allowed me to free myself of habitual movement and open up to the unexplored and unexpected. On a deeper level, I aspired to locate a space for preparing the body to engage with Bachelard's notion of reverie and Lecoq's 'identification' process, which both demand full participation in experience. As with the previous practical projects, I believe that targeting the Feldenkrais lessons in stage 1 of Practical Project 3 manifestly enhanced this level of engagement.

Feldenkrais as an improvisational method

Increasingly, the Feldenkrais lessons evolved into impromptu improvisations serving as a springboard into imagining through the body. Sharon Starika's 2003, ATMs Runners Workshops were significant in this finding (Openatm.org n.d.). (Please view **DVD: SECTION 3 – Extract 1 – Improvising with Feldenkrais).** This extract captures the shifts I make from listening to a Starika recording, to beginning to make my own choices. For instance, the lessons: 'Spiralling legs up from the stomach' and 'Elbows touching Knees' introduced an appreciation of the delicate and subtle forces of the four types of breathing, so fundamental to Lecoq's work: inhale, inhale hold, exhale and exhale hold. I became acutely conscious of how I hold the breath in moments of tension or stress. In releasing the breath, I noted the back felt longer than the front of my body, or that the back of my neck felt extremely long. Starika's lessons emphasise the importance of giving the same time and focus to inhaling as to

---

[30] The goal of the Open ATM Project is to offer an online resource of recorded lessons intended to guide students through a sequence of gentle movements with a different emphasis or focus depending on individual needs or interest. Many of the lessons are interpretations of Feldenkrais' work by qualified teachers. http://openatm.org/recordings.html (Accessed: 05/05/2014).

exhaling. Exploring the equal relevance of the outward and inward breaths in a horizontal position I made associations with the tide. The river floods and ebbs with the same. In feeling the expansion and contraction of the body as the lungs filled and vacated the air, my bodily awareness shifted away from the internal body to an imaginary River Exe.

Building on this example, I added rhythmic transference of the weight in a standing position, focusing upon the advance and retreat of the body through exhale and inhale. Led by the breath, I explored changing location using the advancing and retreating process. Little by little, a new fluidity was perceptible through the body. I felt capable of ebbing and flooding in different directions, levels and intensities. The Feldenkrais exercises had guided me to a more playful and lighter body. I was embodying my imaginary water and allowing my imaginary water to embody me. The water came through me and as a result there was a freedom to be fluid, transitional, flexible, without design or external intention. Through the Feldenkrais improvisations I increasingly tuned in to being guided by experience rather than an idea, which relates to Sheets-Johnstone's (1999) notion of kinaesthetic consciousness as 'fundamentally a consciousness of an unfolding kinetic dynamic' (Sheets-Johnstone 1999: 123). I would argue that this process is conducive to a corporeal engagement with Bachelard's notion of 'awakened oneirism' or 'reverie.' Without being there with the river, I was shifting from an internal 'reverie' of the mind towards exploring 'reverie' as a mode of being in the body. This is a key finding, which I will develop further during this chapter and the conclusion.

Field Trip to River Exe: Active Contemplation

As with Lecoq's example of the egg mentioned earlier, Sheets-Johnstone

observes that to begin, involves attending to the things themselves:

> [M]eticulously examining what is there, going back again and again
> in order that we may describe and verify for ourselves what is
> actually present in our experience and thereby discover and validate
> aspects of our sense-making that lie sedimented within us.

(Sheets-Johnstone 1999: 140-41)

This was indeed the purpose of the field trip. Accordingly, I looked for ways to

explore the river from the shoreline at different tidal stages and at different

times of the day, filming the surface of the water, reflections on the water,

underwater; sensing the way the wind interacted with the surface of the water

and the reeds; the different sounds of water and its surroundings. Below,

(Figures 18 and 19) are two examples of the diverse stimuli.

Fig. 18. Cloud Reflected on Water

Fig. 19. Rope in the Depths

For Bachelard 'this hold that water has on matter cannot be fully understood if one is satisfied with visual observation. Tactile observation must be added to it' (Bachelard 2002: 107). I walked in the muddy river bed at low tide, explored the reed beds, went sailing, rowing and windsurfing, documenting each instant: Figures 20 and 21 are just two examples of this documentation.

Fig. 20. Mud Walking

Fig. 21. Rowing in the Reeds

Picking up a thread developed in Chapter Four, contemplation for Bachelard

involves: 'active meditation, meditated action' of the mind. I argue that all of

these activities with the river exemplify an embodied engagement with

Bachelard's 'active contemplation,' a sensorial way of perceiving or making

sense of the world. While my engagement with the river on the field trip

repeated possibly everything I had ever experienced with the river throughout

my life, there was a crucial variation in this instance, a certain level of intentional

will. Indeed, for Bachelard 'an act of concentrated will' (Bachelard cited in

Kearney, 2008: 41) is the crucial distinguishing feature that distinguishes

'reverie' from dreaming. It is worth remembering at this point Bachelard's

understanding of reverie as the mind at play. Yet, I argue that this same

process was already occurring discretely through an embodied reverie in the

following example. While engaged with the field trip I found objects in the water

and at low tide in the mud: plastic and glass bottles, chain, bolts, driftwood and

broken china. When Lecoq argues 'neither belief nor identification is enough -

one must be able genuinely to play' (Lecoq 2000: 19), a rapport exists with

Bachelard's understandings of images as 'free expressions - created not from pressure but from play, not from necessity but from inventiveness' (Kearney 1998: 99). Immediately, the combination of Bachelard's 'active contemplation' and Lecoq's 'impulse to play' manifested conjointly in an urge to explore the fragments of China, captured below (Figure 22).

Fig. 22. Active Meditation with China Fragments

Through a playful reverie or improvisation, a circular shape resembling a plate emerged which would later become part of the final performance. Writing about Lecoq's emphasis on the impulse to play, Yarrow observes that only through an 'essentially deconstructive attitude towards the familiar can the as-yet-unknown

be entered' (Yarrow 2002: 112), and the plate exemplifies this. Its emergence evolved through approaching the fragments without a preconceived intention or idea. On reflection, this example also mirrors my endeavour throughout the process as I pieced together disparate findings for the performance.

Stage 2: From the 'Lived Body' to the 'Poetic Body': An Imagination of the Real

Back in the studio with all the collected material - a mixture of found objects and documented sensations and instances; images, recordings and interviews - I had reached the same critical moment articulated in Practical Project 2. As with the candle flame, I needed to build on the lived experience of being with the river, but now in my own space away from the river itself in a space where I can consider by what means I make the transition from a 'lived body' to a 'poetic' one. In order to address this transition I returned to an activity undertaken in Project 1 involving an analysis of all the structural qualities of the material element of water as defined by Sheets-Johnstone (1999). In this variation, I set out the relationship between the structural qualities of the material element of water and my documented findings of being with the river as an initial framework for capturing the transition, which I set out in the table below (Figure. 23).

Fig. 23. Towards Embodied Reverie

Reverie between my body and the River Exe	
Materiality **(**motion/weight/substance)	**Qualia** (What it feels like)
A reed in water	Fragile resistance
Eddies at low tide	Constant force moving in specific directions, Restless movement, Powerful force, Spirals, Constant movement.
Reflections on water	Playfulness, lightness, touching a surface, mirroring, stillness, wind on water.
Tides: Ebbing, Flooding, High and Low	Gravitational pull, Process of constant flux, Emptiness and fullness, Underneath/above.
Finding objects in the mud	Sticky, Opaque, Hidden/revealed, Past/present, Perceiving the sensorial, Effort.
Rowing	Efforts of pull and push, Effort and release, Advancing, Rhythm, The external effects of earth, air and water on an action.
Filming the water above and below	Discovering a fish, Silting, Reeds, Light/dark, Wind on surface of water, Beneath and above, Hidden and visible.
Recorded Interviews	Documenting the experience of others, A sense of the past in the present.

The table above served as a starting point for the mimetic process. Drawing upon an improvisation from Tufnell and Crickmay's 'Calling back the body… calling back the world' (Tufnell and Crickmay 2004: 50 - 51), and a similar Lecoq exercise where the movement of the body is analysed 'in relation to the sea' (Lecoq, 2000: 87), I spent a session imagining myself as the river: What speed do I flow at? What is the journey? How deep was I? Could I see the riverbed? What does it feel like? I began by facing the empty space and sensing my imaginary river, then breathing its movements. I explored different ways of expressing the light upon it; the wind touching its surface, gusts, ripples, space and colour. Through a mimetic involvement with the material element of water in the studio sessions, I was reaching out to the substance of water - for Bachelard the key material element at the heart of experience: 'It continues to rock the dreamer while he is resting on the river bank' (Bachelard 1999: 130). Nevertheless, I was not fully aware of the extent to which I was being permeated by the element. Taussig identifies the absorbing power of mimesis as a moment of knowing, involving 'a yielding and mirroring of the knower in the unknown, of thought in its object' (Taussig 1993: 45), Importantly, he warns of the potential hazard of this 'yielding' as highlighted by Adorno and Hegel, whereby it is possible to lose oneself in the environment to such an extent that 'instead of playing an active role in it; the tendency to let oneself go and sink back into nature' takes over. 'Freud called it the death instinct, Caillois *le mimétisme*' ' (*ibid.* 45).

In my efforts to embody the river, I was in danger of disappearing into the element itself. Moreover, according to Taussig, Adorno and Horkeimer present the yielding aspect of mimesis as a passive, even frightening process: 'The self

losing itself, sinking, decomposing into the surrounding world, a yielding that is, be it noted, despite apparent passivity, an act both of imitation and of contact' (*ibid*. 45). As with the candle flame in Practical Project 2, I initially experienced this absorption as reassuring, convinced that I was advancing in my devising process. Nevertheless, this 'active contemplation' or 'impulse to play' can be dangerously 'arresting' in the etymological sense of 'stopping' progression. Tufnell and Crickmay observe that 'everything we are drawn to, that we feel for and choose spontaneously (as if it had chosen us), comes to our attention because it somehow resonates within us' (Tufnell and Crickmay 2004: 74). Yet, in directing my attention entirely on the substance of water, I was negating personal memories and feelings that were evidently surfacing. Like the river, my own creative process was in danger of drifting and meandering.

To explain this further, I return Marcel Jousse's understanding of the mimetic faculty discussed in Chapter Two, in which our natural inclination to mime replays everything in us and through us in such a way that our own bodies become 'laboratories of awareness,' a view later developed by Lecoq to exemplify the three modes of physical action which animate us:

> I push or I pull
> I push or pull myself
> I am pushed or I am pulled.
>
> (Lecoq: 2010: 4-5)

The revelation that in embodying the river I was in Jousse's (1925) terms being '*acted upon,*' and in Lecoq's terms being *'pushed and pulled,'* rather than allowing myself to '*act on*' or '*I push or pull, I push or pull myself,'* was experienced directly and profoundly at this stage. Correspondingly, on sharing

the early developments of Practical Project 3, my supervisor noted that despite

my physical presence in the work, there was an absence of my personal self, or

rather my own connection to the work. How could Jousse's model of self-

discovery come to fruition unless I brought myself more overtly to the process?

In my experience of the Lecoq method, I had always given 'priority to the

external world over inner experience' (Lecoq 2000: 17). However, as

acknowledged in Practical Project 1, this assertion refers to the first layer of

engagement whereby I experience the world. In defining the next step, the

relationship between observation and the 'imagination of the theatre,' Lecoq

emphasises an open dialogue between the two:

> It's as though one side of our skin is used to connect with the exterior
> world and the other side to connect with our own interior world. These
> two sides must cooperate for us to make a distinction between
> impression and expression, between inspiration and expiration.
>
> (Lecoq 2010: 112)

In the words of the American ecologist and philosopher David Abram, this might

be described as engaging in perceptual reciprocity (1997), a term borrowed from

the French Anthropologist Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's to characterise a perceived

relation between diverse phenomena involving the 'experience of an active

interplay, or coupling between the perceived body and that which it perceives'

(Abram 1997: 57). Likewise, Csordas, defines embodiment as 'an existential

condition in which the body is the subjective source or intersubjective ground of

experience. (Csordas cited in Reeve 2011: 26). In light of these assertions, the

next step was to bring myself more overtly into the process.

Embedding Myself into the Process

The collected data and documentation, which I had considered as an impersonal account of the environment, the material element and the stories of others, became in effect, a testament to my own personal participation with the river. Rebecca Rupp asserts that 'water, still or moving, pulls mysteriously on the mind, moving us to contemplate, plumb our inner depths, examine our lives, dream…In water we see ourselves not through a glass, darkly, but clearly and face to face' (Rupp 2005: 130). In reconsidering the materiality of the water in correspondence with my personal mimetic experience of it, new perspectives and sensations began to emerge involving an interweaving of the lived experience of the field trip, memory and qualia/sensation.

It is useful at this juncture to revisit the way in which Bachelard's 'reverie,' 'reverberation' and 'repercussion' applied to the experience of reading is implicated in my endeavour to explore the way in which these terms expand on the notion of the 'poetic body' for the actor-creator. For Bachelard the doublet of 'resonance' and 'reverberation' in a poem produce a correspondence with the poet, as though the poet's being penetrates our own and we are possessed by the poem. Resonance then, is the dynamic condition that reveals the world's imaginary possibilities. Resonances are dispersed on the different planes of our life in the world in a scattering formation, while repercussions give greater depth to our own existence. In their coupling we are possessed by the poem, to the extent that we absorb it and it awakens new depths in us. In this intense state, the rhythm of the world and the rhythm of consciousness calibrate to transform our own personal rhythm. We make the poem ours by sharing in its creation and our own creation and it becomes a new being in our language, expressing us by

making us what it expresses. For Bachelard, in the 'resonance' we hear the poem and in the reverberation we make it our own. Prompted by this realisation and basing my focus on the river Exe, I then made the crucial step of allowing this doublet to shift the focus from Lecoq's 'impression' as purely objective to 'impression' involving the self. Below, I have modified the previous table (Figure. 24) to exemplify this shift and the resulting resonances and reverberations would eventually be evolve into the final performance.

Fig. 24. Resonances/Reverberations: From Impression to Expression

RESONANCES / REVERBERATIONS: From Impression to Expression		
Instance	**Sensation**	**Reverberation: A becoming of Expression.**
A reed in water	Fragile resistance	Struggle, the will to resist, the strength of a lightness of touch: fragile force.
Eddies at low tide	Constant force moving in specific directions, Restless movement, Powerful force, Spirals, Constant movement.	Memories of objects being caught in the eddies; finding floating objects that had drifted down the river: a dead sheep that was caught in the movement of the eddies for days.
Reflections on water	Playfulness, lightness, touching a surface, mirroring, stillness, wind on water.	The changing seasons I experienced as a child as evidenced by the river: September mists, the ephemerality of the weather.
Tides: Ebbing, Flooding, High and Low	Gravitational pull, Process of constant flux, Emptiness and fullness, Underneath, above.	The way in which the water reflects change, flux in the lives of others and my own. The constancy of the tides and memories of the river flooding.
Finding objects in the mud	Discovering a fish, Silting, Reeds,	Memories of collecting china with my brother. What were the

	Light/dark, Wind on surface of water, Beneath and above, Hidden and visible.	fragments when they were whole? Who did they belong to? Who do I remember from the river as a result?
Rowing	Efforts of pull and push, Effort and release, Advancing, Rhythm, The external effects of earth, air and water on an action.	A journey from the safety of the river to the unknown of the open sea. Memories of engaging with the elements of wind and water: sailing, rowing, windsurfing, canoeing, playing on the river and competing on the river.
Filming the water above and below	Discovering a fish, Silting, Reeds, Light/dark, Wind on surface of water, Beneath and above, Hidden and visible.	Secrets revealed, the trapped body of the dead man, salmon fishing through the years, fear of falling in.
Recorded Interviews	Documenting the experience of others, A sense of the past in the present.	Shared memories of being on the river; the wrecks, the fishing, the changes over the years on the river's form and use, personal memories of others sparking new ones in me.

I argue that the table above exemplifies Bachelard's notion of resonance and reverberation: 'The image's awakening of sentimental, surface exuberance, which in turn stirs archetypal echoes' (Bachelard 1992: 120), and contributes to a more expansive understanding of Lecoq's term 'impression': 'searching deep down and finding the deposit that is the result of things we have observed' (Lecoq 2006: 156).

Imagination as a 'Productive Faculty'

At this stage, I directed my attention to expanding and improvising around the found materials, with each improvisation in the studio lasting between one and three hours. (Please view **DVD: SECTION 3 – Extract 2 – Exploring Poetic Intentionality**). In this extract, working examples are selected to introduce Bachelard's term: 'the imaginal' (1994), an active process of the mind. I will now explain how the 'imaginal' process, or what I consider to be called 'embodied reverie' in the context of this study, was used to develop the devising process. In this extract I explore the image of a floating bottle and also return to the plastic shopping bag (explored in Practical Project I) in an attempt to see if an object with its own specific movement qualities can, like my body take on the element of water. Improvising with the bottle and the bag for an extended period of time without a finite goal, echoes Bachelard's description of material imagination as 'this amazing need for penetration which, going beyond the attractions of the imagination of forms, thinks matter, dreams in it, lives in it, or, in other words, materializes the imaginary' (Bachelard in Gaudin, 2005: xlvi). The clip also highlights a later rehearsal in which I am exploring how to begin the piece. I am mimetically engaging with the rowing action, which I know well, and exploring the development of a text which contextualises the River Exe and simultaneously connects to its symbolic possibilities as developed by Dante.

Continuing with the fragments of china mentioned in stage 1, I proceeded to explore them again as exemplified in this extract with different results. Placing them on the floor of the studio in different sequences and formats, along with applying different qualities to the physical gesture of laying them out, I discovered that the more I decelerated the activity, the more I allowed the

opportunity for reverie to materialise. As an additional means of bringing myself

into the improvisation, I selected a range of contemporary songs, choral and

instrumental compositions to underpin the exploration. Consequently, I sensed

all the individuals that were connected to each fragment and gradually, in an

attempt to reconstruct the whole from the broken pieces, I found myself

reconfiguring the plate as in stage 1 but with a new 'repercussion.' Through the

application of lengthy improvisations exploring the fragments, my body entered

the state of Bachelard's 'awakened oneirism,' which in this specific case led to

a melancholic sensation. My 'softened' body responded with a profound sense

of sadness and tears poured down my face. In opening myself to the activity I

had connected to the significance of each discarded fragment for each original

owner. In the action of reconstructing the plate I was attempting to gather

together a lost community.

In her discussion on 'embodied practices' Loukes points to the synergies

between expression and emotion in Mary Wigman's work: 'Wigman described

expression as 'the breakthrough of unconscious spiritual (seelisch) processes to

a state of corporeal consciousness'' ' (Wigman cited in Loukes 2013: 208).

Similarly, my melancholy had evolved in a similar way, preceding concrete

thought. I argue that this example reveals a compelling correspondence

between Bachelard's 'awakened oneirism' and Lecoq's '*mimage*.' In both cases,

the imagination is not passive, but reflects a dynamic process, whereby, in

Bachelard's words, 'reality is transformed, by which the psyche frees itself from

reality' (Bachelard cited in Smith 1982: 96). Equally, Lecoq writes: 'Whatever the

actor's gesture, it is inscribed in the relationship between the actor and the

surrounding space, and gives rise to an inner, emotive state' (Lecoq 2000: 70).

In his pedagogy, Lecoq differentiates three types of bodily action: The Language of Situation, The Language of Action and The Language of Suggestion (Tilghman Sherman, 2010). '*Mimage*' refers to the latter. David Bradby describes Lecoq's invention of the word '*Mimage*' as a neologism collapsing into a single term 'mime' and 'image' (Bradby in Lecoq 2000: 177 – 8). While these can be manifested as essential gestures expressing the inner state of a character, the term also suggests a rapport between reality and abstraction, which in Lecoq's LEM (*Laboratoire d'Étude du Mouvement*) is manifested through sculptural structures, but which in my case were appearing through my rapport with the fragmented china. Through this interplay, little by little I was drawing myself into the equation. Despite not being an autobiographical piece, it was important to somehow connect the world of the river to my own. Thus, the hypothesis I support is synthesised in Mark Johnson's affirmation that: 'Imagination is tied to our bodily processes and can also be creative and transformative of experience' (Johnson 2008: 13).

The Plastic Bag: Interpenetration of Subject and Object

I will now explain how the 'imaginal' process, or what I consider to be called 'embodied reverie' in the context of this study, was used to develop the devising process in another way. (Please view **DVD: SECTION 3 – Extract 2 – Exploring Poetic Intentionality**). In this extract I return to the plastic shopping bag (previously explored in Practical Project I) in an attempt to see if an object with its own specific movement qualities can, like my body, take on the element of water. Improvising with the bag for an extended period of time without a finite goal appeared to echo Bachelard's description of material imagination as 'this amazing need for penetration which, going beyond the attractions of the

imagination of forms, thinks matter, dreams in it, lives in it, or, in other words, materializes the imaginary' (Bachelard in Gaudin, 2005: xlvi). Whereas I had initially only engaged my body in exploring the water's movements, increasingly, the reciprocal interaction between my body and the plastic bag allowed the bag itself to become imbued with the rhythm, colour and space of the river. The ensuing dialogue between my body and the object became the vehicle for playing with the dynamics of the river in the final performance.

This experience marked an important turning point in the way I understood the potential of the body in the making process. Previously, I had considered the body as the sole generator of meaning, yet the interactive process or what Bachelard calls the 'interpenetration of subject and object, artist and image' (Bachelard cited in Macauley 2010: 188), provoked a dynamic making space whereby my experience with the object was being continually modified and transformed. The sensation of working in this way was not of a 'back and forth' or a horizontal interpenetration, rather I would describe this process as a kind of expanding vertical spiral involving levels of play, experience, reflection and confirmation.

The American educational theorist David Kolb (1983) defines experiential learning as a cycle whereby knowledge is generated through the transformation of experience. The interaction between my body and the object (plastic bag) generated in Kolb's terms: active experimentations (doing), concrete experiences (feeling), reflective observation (watching) and abstract conceptualisation (thinking). Kolb suggests that if learning has occurred, then this process can be viewed as a spiral of development. His was not a new

theory. Years earlier, the American philosopher John Dewey (1934) had identified the learning cycle as a spiral 'filling each episode of experience with the potential for movement, from blind impulse to a life of choice and purpose' (Dewey cited in Kolb, 1983: 132). Kearney refers to this spiralling process when comparing Sartre and Bachelard's phenomenologies of imagination. While both Sartre and Bachelard understand the image as an act of intentional consciousness, Kearney posits that their interpretations differ radically: 'Sartre sees it as a circle of self-involvement; Bachelard as the spiral of man's dialogue with the world' (Kearney 1998: 98).

In my case, I propose that this spiral constituted a process of imagination-in-action, activated by the dynamic interstice between my body and the object. As I mentioned earlier, I would also argue that Lecoq's 'mimodynamic' process, a 'setting in motion' of the sensations aroused by elements, colours, words, music (Lecoq, 2000), is reminiscent of this. The 'spiral' proposes a transformative process linking receptivity to creativity, from the real to the imaginary. This aspect reveals a clear concordance between Lecoq and Bachelard, in that through engaging with the outside world, the self is discovered. Likewise, returning to Witkin's *Intelligence of Feeling*, (1974), his method of successive approximations is expressed as a spiralling inwards 'from the outer ranges of relatively crude approximation through progressively more refined approximations until the 'resolution form' is reached at the centre' (Witkin 1974: 185-186).

Stage 2 of Project 3 involved sensing the pre-creative aspects of *mimage* or *Reverberation*. Ultimately, the element invited me to move under the auspices

of something that is other than myself and, in Lecoq's words, 'In order to develop the poetic sense, whether artist, writer or actor, one must feed off all of these experiences' (Lecoq 2000: 48). My poetic body shifted from a 'lived body' to an 'imagining body,' as exemplified in the examples above, whereby it creates rather than reproduces. Returning to a finding from PP2, whereas the metaphor is imitative, the image is creative.

<u>Stage 3:</u> Finding a Form - *Trying to Reach the Sea*

'Poetry is soul inaugurating a form'

(Pierre-Jean Jouve in Bachelard, 1958/1969: xviii)

Bachelard describes the imagination as a creative act, an active consciousness seeking form. Accordingly, in this final stage of Practical Project 3, I attempted to arrange the accumulated material: an eclectic blend of texts, poetry, objects, audio recordings and visual, into a composition or structure: 'Moving from an inarticulate felt sense into formed image; with its own logic, own beginning, middle and end' (Macauley 2010: 189). This aspect of the devising process is addressed directly throughout the second year of the Lecoq School, where the aim is not just 'to see and to recognise reality, but to imagine it, to give it body and form' (Lecoq 2000: 104-105). It is important here, however, to briefly consider the notion of form and to distinguish between the subtleties of the 'formulated' and 'forming.' Macauley considers Bachelard's understanding of 'the formulated' as constituting 'the boundaries of a logical space in which we infer answers from premises' (Rorty, cited in Macauley 2010: 63), whereas 'Forming' is concerned with 'our act of incarnating unfolding meanings […] Forming happens in the mode of the imagination, criss-crossing the boundaries

of logical spaces' (*ibid*. 63). My experience of the dramaturgical process in this project falls clearly into the 'forming process.' I was driven overwhelmingly by the inclination to generate an atmosphere, a world, an environment to be shared with the audience; to somehow involve them in my experience of the river and to invite them to a space in which they could bring their own experience to bear, but apart from that, I had no chronological prescribed narrative to guide my forming process.

In my professional practice, I generally map out an initial structure beforehand, which is consequently modified, rejected or confirmed during the collaborative devising process. In Project 3, I had aimed instead to undergo a reversed process whereby the reciprocal relationship between my body and the element was intended to eventually find its own structure or form. This structure would not be arbitrary, but would necessarily be guided by the chosen element. However, through stages 1 and 2 of Practical Project 3 I discovered that the embodiment of an element brings with it part of the person embodying it. Thus, the components of the final performance necessarily involved the dynamics of water, the location and, essentially, the full participation of myself in various aspects: experience, memory and reverberations.

The mysterious event of a dead body being found, tangled in the reeds in the river near my home, combined with my father discovering the boat sculpture trapped in the same place the very next day, set up a starting point that linked with my experience of the river as a journey from source to sea with the conflict of not being able to arrive there. I recollected that my Mother said at the time: 'If that had been me, I would have liked to have reached the sea.' This memory by

association served as the starting point for the dramaturgical process and clarified it's a kind of loose route and destination: reaching the sea. Dramaturgy is widely considered to be an arrangement or organisation of materials (Heddon and Milling, 2006). However, Allan Kaprow refutes this premise. Often credited as the originator of the 'Happening,' Kaprow proposed that the unique properties of the generated material would guide the form of the 'Happening,' rather than the form being imposed as an external structuring device: 'Let the form emerge from what the materials can do' (*ibid*. 64). While my final performance was not a 'Happening' in the strict sense of the word, the emerging collage of material reverberated with Kaprow's declaration. Below, I outline the process of selecting and ordering which I describe as a filtering process.

The Poetics of the Found

Going through the discovered objects and relics found in and around the river, I contemplated how the 'found object' or *Objet Trouvé*, could feed into this particular devising process. The Tate defines 'The Found Object' as a natural or man-made object (or fragment of an object) found (or sometimes bought) by an artist and kept because of some intrinsic interest the artist sees in it' (Tate Gallery n.d.). I saw the added value of collaborating with the artist Graham Rich, whose work is positioned from the perspective that 'the found is more powerful that the made' (Rich, cited in Gale & Ingleby, 1999: 13). [31] Rich gave me permission to incorporate the sculpture into the performance, to adapt it to my requirements and to include my own found objects. A compelling shift unfolded as the inanimate boat sculpture evolved over time into a performative space.

---

[31] The boat sculpture, also titled 'Trying to Reach the Sea,' was found in the River Exe. It has been exhibited in The Cairn Gallery, Nailsworth, the Victoria Gallery Bath, the Usher Gallery, Lincoln, the Glynn Vivian Gallery Swansea and The Fine Art Society New Bond Street, London.

The boat, which was already visually highly potent, came to serve as the central space for the action. I explored my body inside it, outside it and together Rich and I added a mast, boom, sail, rudder and other elements I would need for my journey (Figures. 25 and 26).

Fig. 25. The Boat Sculpture

Fig. 26. Exploring the Boat Sculpture as a Performative Space

The Filtering Process: May - June 2014.

(Please view **DVD: SECTION 3 – Extract 3 – The Filtering Process**). This stage involved making choices, pushing and expanding on underdeveloped moments while rejecting others, which resulted in an intertwining play between discoveries and intentions. I identified the moments where I tried to fix too early moments where I blocked possibilities, or felt the need to remain within my habitual choices. However, if I attempted to progress continuously in open and non-deterministic manner, I would not be able to identify an emerging form that would result in a product. For instance, a moment I had developed around the activities of marine training in the Topsham mud, which at first felt integral to the piece, gradually appeared to detach itself from the emerging structure. Eventually, I had to let go of this moment for the work to progress and for the overall piece to find its own internal organic rhythm and logic. Similarly, in

looking for ways to interact with the films I had made on the field trip, I projected

them on the wall on a huge scale, but felt separate to them. I knew they could

participate in some way, but I was forcing their incorporation. This was resolved

by the addition of a sail to the boat sculpture which acted as a more intimate

screen on which to project the films and images, and the back wall became a

larger space on which to juxtapose text and film. At the same time, I began to

write short texts and include the initial documentation in my research of the

river. The following images document some of the processes I explored in the

filtering process (Figures, 27 – 30).

Fig. 27. Exploring Text

**Fig. 28. Exploring the Boat's Objects in the Studio**

Fig. 29. Embodied Reverie in the Studio - 1

Fig. 30. Embodied Reverie in the Studio - 2

The process of filtering involves developing an innate confidence or belief in

one's own judgement in conjunction with an acute awareness of how this might

be measured against accepted standards. I found this aspect particularly

challenging. As I mention earlier, my habitual devising process is collaborative,

and collective reassurance is an important aspect of this mode of making.

Conversely, collective doubt can have the opposite effect and undermine

potential pathways. In challenging myself to work alone, I was placing myself in

a position to confront these opportunities, dilemmas and fears. Thus, my

decision to share the work in progress uniquely with my supervisor was a

conscious one. However, this created another set of challenges, which I discuss

in the evaluation of the performance.

Towards a Dramatic Structure

I suggest at this point that the filtering process outlined above, not only contributes to determining the dramatic structure of the devised piece, but also brings to light, the identity, personal stamp or style of the actor-creator. Of course, like a signature, this evolves over time and it bears noting that choices are clearly influenced by the researcher's cultural, social, historical and educational background. As Abram asserts,

> The human body with its various predilections is, to be sure, our *own* inheritance, our own rootedness in an evolutionary history and a particular ancestry. Yet it is also our insertion in a world that exceeds our grasp in every direction, our means of contact with things and lives that are still unfolding, open and indeterminate around us.

> (Abram 1997: 50)

As mentioned in Chapter One, there is a pervasive assumption that Lecoq's pedagogy dictates a particular style of performance, yet Lecoq insisted that graduates discover their own style. In his book *'Embodied Acting: What Neuroscience tells us about Performance'* (2012), Richard Kemp contends that while Lecoq's influence is palpable across a range of companies or actors their styles are profoundly diverse. According to Kemp, what unites Lecoq's graduates is that 'no matter what style of performance an actor is engaged in, a certain proportion of meaning is communicated through the body' (Kemp 2012: 90). Significantly, Kemp draws attention to Lecoq's focus on fundamental cognitive and expressive activities as the foundations for preparing the actor for a variety of styles. I would like to draw attention here to Kemp's mixed use of the term, which also reflects Lecoq's double use of the term in his writings. Firstly, for Lecoq, 'style' refers to the 'dramatic territories' (Lecoq 2000:12) of melodrama, commedia dell'arte, bouffons, tragedy and clown. In English, we

might designate these as theatre genres, but for Lecoq, they are specifically 'theatres whose forms are still open to change and renewal' (*ibid*.105) or 'roads to creativity.' Secondly, Lecoq, defines the individual style if the actor-creator as 'the spirit of play' and 'the imaginary play of the actor,' where play is understood as 'the imagination of the actor' (Lecoq cited in Salvatierra: 2006)

In English, the term 'style' is used to define 'a particular procedure by which something is done; a manner or way' (OED), but I would argue that Bourriaud's definition of style as the movement of a work, its trajectory, (Bourriaud 1998), is closer to Lecoq's overarching use of the term. In this manner, the use of the term 'style' in Practical Project 3, designates a way of seeing or experiencing the world with its own parameters and guidelines. Through this practical project, the evolving preferences, transitions and layering of images and texts, were directly informed by my corporeal dialogue with the element of water. Rather than pre-determining the nature of devising process, I believe that the involvement of the element, contributed to activating and articulating rather than inhibiting my preferences. Thus, the interaction between my imagining body and the element serves as an intermediary space or stepping stone towards determining my own dramatic structure.

The correspondences between corporeal imagining and the element are not universal. For Bachelard, different poetic minds will see different things in the same material element or archetypal motif and, likewise, the same diversity of reverberation also exists (Kearney 1998). Thus what sets out as a premise for universality reveals or provokes difference. Importantly, as Kearney concludes, 'the pleasure common to all our poetic experiences of these element is that of

discovering ourselves in what is other than ourselves - or what Robert Frost called 'the pleasure of ulteriority' (*ibid.*104). In this manner, I would argue that in Practical Project 3, the archetypal symbol of the river came through me, not a generic being, and as such activated, evolved and revealed my style of theatre-making. This was further intensified by the significance of working alone.

Analysis of the Performance – Challenges and Discoveries

What started out as embodied inquiry into the element of water increasingly merged with my own story. The interlacing of the 'impressions' the river made on me, guided by the inherent qualities of the material element of water, reflected my experience and involvement with it. The result was not strictly autobiographical, but my involvement came to be inherently personal. If I was asked *what* the piece was about, I would suggest several intersecting motifs: the River Exe, trying to reach the sea and a journey. If I were asked *who* it was about, there were numerous protagonists: the river, the boat, the drowned man, the recorded voice and obliquely, the inhabitants of Topsham Town. Essentially, the resulting performance felt like a conglomeration of overlapping material, exemplified in the words of Mike Pearson and Mike Shanks as 'constituting a kind of stratigraphy of layers: of text, physical action, music and/or soundtrack, scenography and/or architecture (and their subordinate moments)' (Pearson and Shanks 2001: 24). Building on this notion of geological layering, I would describe the logic of the final performance as one of polyvalence, where all the constituent unfolding material was interwoven into a whole, with converging and diverging resonances and centres of focus from moment to moment. In this manner, as Pearson and Shanks point out, 'such layers may have different

relative thicknesses or dramatic significance' (*ibid.* 24). Returning to Witkin's 'Model of Reciprocity, the river was the overarching 'holding form,' or container. This level of plurality, I would argue, was encouraged by the incorporation of synaesthesia, defined by Abram as the 'overlapping and blending of the senses' (Abram 1997: 60). While he acknowledges the senses as distinct, Abram considers them to be 'divergent modalities of a single and unitary living body, that they are complementary powers evolved in complex interdependence with one another' (*ibid.* 61). Thus, my engagement with the river was not uniquely visual, but also muscular as I sensed its dynamic movements, which were also interwoven with the auditory senses being provoked by the sounds it made and the sounds that surround it. As such, the convergence of sensory systems had a profound influence on the dramaturgical process.

In this sense, there was no clear linear narrative to the piece. Writing on the element of fire, Bachelard rejects the notion of the storyline as merely 'a string on which the pearls are strung, hardly worth a second thought once one has been transfixed by the richly jewelled marvels of fire' (Bachelard 1990: 116). The obvious tension that this generated in the structuring stage of Practical Project 3 was alleviated by considering the loose narrative and the eclectic poetic images as two parallel temporal orders: one which corresponded to the narrative thread or horizontal time, and another which corresponded to a series of intersecting poetic instances, both of which were loosely connected by the dialogue developed in the previous stages between my body and the element of water.

Technical Challenges

The polyvalent nature of the performance was far more technically demanding than I had envisaged, and involved interweaving the moving images projected onto the boat sail, as well as a separate sequence of films on the back wall. The intention was to create a collage of visual moments that could at times accompany or juxtapose the performance. Making these short films was not so difficult, but their application in the performance space and the precision required to locate the image purely on the sail was highly complex. Furthermore, the accompanying recorded voice and detailed sound track needed to be cued with precision and sufficient rehearsal. From an initially simple structure, the final version was surprisingly complex.

The challenges of solo devising, which I touched upon earlier, also impacted on the 'resolution' stage. I was reminded of the challenges of Practical Project I, where I was faced with the dilemma of being inside and outside. In this project, I felt more st ease in this role, but an objective or independent outside eye, particularly in the dramatic structuring stage, might have assisted in encouraging greater depth in the layering process and a more resolute ending. In this sense, the feedback from my supervisor at different stages of the devising process, inviting me to consider potential routes, options or developments, was key to finding the threads of the dramatic structure. Furthermore, I was obliged to do everything myself in the performance space. Although the limitations of solo work potentially inhibited the possibilities I might have had with more performers, this apparent constraint invited me to search for alternative solutions.

For instance, just on a practical level, each object needed to be arranged in such a way that I could produce it and conceal it without needing anyone else to do this for me, or indeed, detain the flow of the performance. I spent a lot of time working out the practicalities of this apparent constraint, yet in confronting these apparent difficulties I came to sense a deeper physical connection to and awareness of the space and the overall rhythm of the piece. At the time, I was reminded of a first year exercise at the Lecoq School, which reveals the power of the constraint. On a small stage of one metre by two metres, up to nine actors or more are obliged to remain in the space and devise a performance which might occur in different locations. For instance, a scene in an eighth storey of a building, followed by a scene in a park, or a crowd scene followed by an intimate scene involving two characters. The seemingly impossible constraints that the limited space imposes, force the actors to find alternative solutions and to resolve the limitations in an imaginative way that they may not have done if the constraints had not been there.

Returning to the constraint of being alone in the space in Practical Project 3, I wish to refer to a specific example of the constraint as a driving force rather than a limitation. In one moment I needed to introduce the device of the projected film on the sail. The film comprised the reflection on water of the sun emerging from behind a cloud over ninety seconds. In spending time exploring this moment, I sensed the need to accompany this delicate moment with the gentle sound of the river and sought to reduce my presence to a minimum. However, I could not leave the boat. How would I make the transition to the next moment? How could I find a way to follow the projection? Gradually, I placed my hand in the imaginary river surrounding the sailing boat, gently playing with

the water that was correspondingly being projected in reality on the screen and heard on the soundtrack. This contemplative action led to the following text: 'When I place my hand in the water, I touch the last of what has gone before, and the first of what is yet to come'. One member of the audience was struck by this moment, saying that the blending of the film, my physical action, the sound and the text came together to 'create a perfect definition of the here and now' (audience member).

Working in this way requires an enormous amount of time to play, improvise, to be with, to process and to suspend the urge to anticipate a conclusion. Whilst I would argue that I used this time effectively during the process, the final performance was still in a process of evolution during the technical rehearsals, mainly because it relied so heavily on the technical aspects to get a sense of the whole.

Where Was the Body in this?

Most importantly, during the technical rehearsals and the final performance, I confirmed the discovery I had made in Stage 2 of Practical Project 3. Until then, I had considered the body and its own movements as being central to a performance that explores the themes of my research. Surprisingly, as the piece evolved, I was drawn more towards the stillness of the body, its subtle engagement in the process and the value of the spoken word. Whereas, initially I was arguing that the body is central to meaning, I discovered the value of the body and its interpenetration with the element as the essential mode of devising. Through the guidance of the element and the ensuing dialogue with that element, the physical body becomes an imagining body, a means of

making. In conclusion, through its capacity to imagine, the body becomes the mediator between inner and outer worlds, negotiating between the unknown and known, between the sensation and the realisation. Thus beginning with the body, doesn't mean ending up with it, but as I have explored in this project, I believe that both Lecoq and Bachelard ask us to feel first. From feeling comes form.

The mysterious event of a dead body being found, tangled in the reeds in the river near my home, combined with my father discovering the boat sculpture trapped in the same place the very next day, set up a starting point that linked with my experience of the river as a journey from source to sea with the conflict of not being able to arrive there. As noted earlier, I recalled my Mother said at the time: 'If that had been me, I would have liked to have reached the sea.' This memory by association served as the starting point for the dramaturgical process and clarified it's a kind of loose route and destination: reaching the sea.

Summary

The third and final practical project generated a dynamic space for engaging with themes and questions that have emerged from the research I have conducted so far. This involved generating an active dialogue between Jacques Lecoq's approach to theatre-making and Gaston Bachelard's writings on 'elemental philosophy,' as a means of interrogating more deeply the notion of the 'poetic body.' I considered the discoveries and challenges of applying the reciprocity between my body and the elements to the process of devising a performance from an initial encounter with an element, collecting data, selecting data, generating material, building a dramatic structure, devising a script and

performing the final product. Moreover, this project also led me to examine ways in which the application of such a dialogue, might offer keys for unlocking, or identifying a personal authorial style in the devising process from the perspective of Lecoq's actor-creator.

The process involved an exploration of the converging and diverging relationships between Lecoq's notions of 'identification' (broadening the field of reference for the actor), 'transposition' (an intermediary stage between reality and going beyond reality) and 'Mimage,' (a physical abstraction of reality), with Bachelard's notions of 'reverie,' 'reverberation' and 'resonance.' In Project 3, The River Exe acted as a guiding focus for embodying internal experience, memory and the sensate. I would like to propose that by inhabiting the river poetically it becomes a projective imaginary space in which to devise and that therefore, this form of identification with the external world can become a basis for devising when it is conceived as a mode of experience through the body which then 'feed off these experiences' (Lecoq 2000: 48). For Bachelard, 'to perceive and to imagine are as antithetic as presence and absence' (Bachelard 1992: 10). Thus, imagination is not merely understood as a reflection on the observable, rather it is a creative force. Indeed, I would conclude that it is not the capacity of the body to be mimetic that renders the body poetic, but the way in which the reverberations play out through the body. Thus, this I would define this mode of devising, as a 'transformative process' in which actors can create themselves. Consideration of these points will be addressed in the conclusion to follow.

CONCLUSION: A Recalibration of The 'Poetic Body' - Originating an Approach to Devising

This final section draws together the threads of the practical projects, accompanying DVD and thesis to present an overview, summary and analysis of the outcomes of this inquiry, in which I explored Jacques Lecoq's 'poetic body' and Gaston Bachelard's 'poetic imagining' through my own practice as 'actor-creator.' I then point to possible future avenues of investigation and experimentation with the intention of connecting my findings to the wider nexus of developments in the field of performance practice and pedagogy.

The scope of the study is three-fold. Firstly, the study contributes to the existing literature and research on Lecoq, by offering a new reading of his notion of the 'poetic body' from an embodied perspective. Secondly, in proposing an embodied scrutiny of Bachelard's 'poetic imagination,' the notion of the 'poetic body' is enhanced and expanded. Within this facet the study also brings Bachelard's writings into contemporary focus, repositioning and recalibrating his philosophy through its application to the devising process. Finally, this inquiry has furthered existing research in the field of performance practice by originating a devising process in which the projective and inventive interplay between the sensate body and the material elements of earth, air, fire or water serve as conductors and catalysts for generating new work. Significantly, in adopting a multidisciplinary methodology, the practical inquiry and written thesis offer a unique possibility for illuminating ways in which 'actor/creators,' can shift from following in the footsteps of a discipline or tradition of making, to opening up to the transformation of practice - in essence, to developing their own 'embodied poetics.'

Overview of the Study

With the 'actor creator's' process as the focus of this inquiry, the study began by revisiting the working methods I have inherited and developed since my time as a student at the Lecoq School. Accordingly, the thesis examined the key characteristics and principles that guide Lecoq's pedagogical approach and, more specifically, established the conceptual framework for an embodied scrutiny of the methods, conditions and processes by which Lecoq's students access the 'poetic body.' Rather than being one step removed, or fulfilling the role of observer of this phenomenon, the decision to use my experience as the basis for this study placed me firmly at its centre.

Building on the above, the second chapter discussed Practical Project 1, in which a particular phase of my learning at the Lecoq School was selected to experience anew the fundamental characteristics of Lecoq's 'poetic body' from an embodied perspective. In opting to adopt Marcel Jousse's understanding of the body as 'a laboratory of the self,' I, 'the experimenter became simultaneously the experimented' (Jousse 1997: 15). In this manner, I interrogated what it feels like to experience his pedagogical approach. The articulation of a phenomenologically informed description of the shift in my body from impression (*identification*) to expression (*transposition*), offered new and sensate insights into how the body engages with the 'poetic' from an internal perspective.

In the next phase, the entire focus of the study was directed towards a contextualisation and analysis of Gaston Bachelard's poetics of the imagination, seeking a new reading of the 'poetic body' from a philosophical perspective.

Using primary and secondary sources, I established that for Bachelard, thought is valued for its 'liveness' and its shifting character. In prioritising a state of flux over finality, I asserted his premise that the creation of work is an exercise in freedom and that the function of poetry is one of awakening. These affirmations emerged from an interrogation of the terminology Bachelard uses to elucidate this unfolding process: 'reverie', 'resonance', 'repercussion' and 'reverberation', paving the way for an embodied scrutiny of his imagining process.

The second practical project discussed in Chapter Three, interrogated Bachelard's poetic imagining consciousness from my embodied perspective as 'actor-creator.' A consideration of Bachelard's 'material imagination' as a deeper substance corresponding dynamically with the symbols of human life, led to an exploration of the four material elemental substances of earth, air, fire and water as conductors or catalysts for the imagination and as principles of artistic creation. In my analysis I defined 'reverie' as a constant play of consciousness, a quality of inventiveness that operates through a process of discovery: a meeting point of the dualistic relationship between subject and object. Then there is 'resonance,' the capacity of the literary image to 'take root' in the reader, to draw out subjective responses which simultaneously provoke 'reverberations.' Rather than reproducing reality, for Bachelard imagination is the faculty that transcends and creates a new reality. In this sense, we do not possess imaginations. Instead, the second practical project confirms his view that we *are* imagining beings.

Drawing on the findings generated by an embodied exploration of Lecoq's 'poetic body' and Bachelard's 'poetic imagining', I located the final practical

project of this study exclusively within my own practice. The project was driven by the initial 'hunch' (Kershaw, 2009) motivating this inquiry, that the four material elements can extend beyond a means of approaching the specifics of character, towards a new 'embodied poetics' for the 'actor-creator;' a devising process in itself. Taking the material element of water as the 'poeticising substance' for this project, I developed and documented an evolving, unfolding process of experimentation, an 'embodied poetics' which was then articulated and shaped through an open dramaturgy, which I argue, offers a new trajectory or method (*hodos*), for generating work.

Outcomes of the Thesis

The significance of this study in the field of devising practices has been the articulation of a new approach to making for 'actor-creators' who want to interrogate their own professional practice, or indeed relate it to their particular learning experience. Importantly, this thesis does not propose a definitive approach, but rather proposes a devising process grounded in an existing pedagogy and it's potential for expansion.

In terms of Lecoq, the embodied scrutiny of a phase of his pedagogy in this study offers unique insights into what it feels like to experience his approach and is intended to contribute to existing primary and secondary resources in this area. Importantly, I establish the notion of 'neutral' as a state or disposition of discovery, openness and call to action - all pre-conditions for accessing the body's poetic possibilities. I also propose Lecoq's 'universal awareness' as a unifying dynamic, affirming the significance in this process of a connectedness and communication with the world and others. Correspondingly, Lecoq's

'identification' process, defined as an enactive mimetic rapport with the world and its movements, leads to a discovery of the external world. Through the activity of play, considered as a communicative spirit of invention, I highlight its essential role in optimising the shift from the universal or collective, to the individual and, in particular, its capacity to engender personal exploration of the 'impressions' made on the individual body by the outside world. Crucially, I question the positioning of Lecoq's pedagogical process as 'training,' offering the alternative term of 'method' understood in its double meaning: combining the rigour of a system and the indeterminacy carried by its Greek root *hodos* ("traveling way").

The practical element of this inquiry allowed me to re-experience first hand, the defining the characteristics of Lecoq's 'poetic body' as encompassing all the kinaesthetic processes of absorbing the real through an embodied encounter with elements and materials that then act upon the imaginary. Selecting Pablo Neruda's poem 'Macchu Picchu' as my frame of reference, I explored the application of Lecoq's *mimodynamic* process, providing fresh embodied insights into the journey of abstraction, which, I argue, brings the clarity of the real to the imaginary. Furthermore, for the body to sensitise itself to this method, I contend that it cannot be subjugated to the role of an instrument merely expressing the preconceived ideas of the mind, but, as Csordas asserts: 'When the body is recognized for what it is in experiential terms, not as an object but as a subject, the mind-body distinction becomes much more uncertain' (Csordas cited in Blaikie 2005: 109).

With Bachelard, the immediate aim was to seek to revitalise his conceptual argument as an embodied one within a devising framework. Through a process of mimetic play and an interrogation of how my body consciously engaged in his process of 'active contemplation,' I propose a new term: 'embodied reverie.' In reaching out to the world through the impulse to play, a flow of sensory experiences, feelings and associations resonate in me, *transforming* my experience and equally, I am *transformed* by my experience through 'reverberation.' In consequence, this study expands on Lecoq's notion of the 'poetic body' to include the material elements as 'poeticising substances' from which the 'actor-creator' can initiate an embodied poetic creative process. Resultantly, I demonstrate a compelling affinity between Bachelard's 'poetic imagining' and the theatre-making process, whereby the body is the principle means of generating performance material. I also argue that the mobility and flexibility of what Bachelard considers to be an 'intersubjective' exchange between the real and the imaginary resonates with and informs the 'open dialogue' that Lecoq calls for between the world around us and the imagination of theatre.

In order to articulate this 'open dialogue' I draw on the position put forward by social anthropologist Tim Ingold, who writes that 'to correspond with the world, in short, is not to describe it, or to represent it, but *to answer to it*' (Ingold 2013: 108; emphasis in original). Through a mediating process, defined by Ingold as 'transduction,' he describes the essence of making as a blending of 'the movements of one's own sentient awareness with the flows and currents of animate life' in the form of a double thread which twine around one another 'until they become indistinguishable' (*ibid*. 108). His preference for the term

'correspondence' over 'interaction' in this process, lies in the 'implication of the prefix *inter* 'in interaction,' in which the *interacting* parties can only be connected through some kind of bridging operation.

> Any such operation is inherently detemporalising, cutting across the paths of movement and becoming rather than joining along with them. In correspondence, by contrast, points are set in motion to describe lines that wrap around each other like melodies in counterpoint.
>
> (*ibid.*108)

Ingold's analysis is relevant to this study's emphasis on developing a devising process concerned more with 'forming' than with the 'formed.' For instance, if I consider my imagination and the elemental substance as two distinct entities in which my body acts as a bridge, I maintain a sense of lineal separation. In Ingold's words, I 'interact' with the world. If, on the other hand, my participation entails a mimetic giving over, as with the candle flame or the river, I conjoin with the forces, flows, rhythms and qualities of the material element or archetypal symbol. A kind of of embodied porosity ensues, allowing my feelings to 'flow in and out in a 'correspondence' (*ibid*.108), a term also used by Bachelard (1999). Similarly, I contend that in shaping my experience in this way, I experience Varela's notion of 'empathy' (1999), a term he uses to describe sensorimotor and affective processes that constitute an embodied, intersubjective space, from which the 'self' and 'other' co-emerge. In imagining myself as other, the poetics I propose is experienced as an intertwining of sensorimotor, affective, imaginative and intersubjective embodiment.

Embodied Poetics: Articulating a New Trajectory of Devising

The 'embodied poetics' developed in this study, involves a consciously active participation with the world by the 'actor-creator,' and a recognition that the poeticising 'I' is intimately entwined with the material elemental substances that comprise it. Importantly, in this process, the material elements of earth, air, fire and water are not considered as things or objects, but rather as originating substances for the imagining body and, by extension, they provoke and mobilise a devising approach. This is the power of the elements. As I argued in the final project, substances precede form and, in their dialectic possibilities the material elements offer infinite possibilities for a permanent renewal, expansion and transformation of individual practice.

Over the course of the practical components of this study, a key strategy for reaching the necessary state of awareness and sensibility necessary for accessing my 'embodied poetics,' was the Feldenkrais work. Equally, in terms of moving from exploration to performance, It is important to add here the increasing significance of Pagneux's, unique approach to the study, in which simplicity, economy and 'lifeful' play are activated through the Feldenkrais work and then integrated organically into the devising process itself. If, as Feldenkrais suggests 'the aim of education should be to help the individual achieve the state of an evolving being' (Feldenkrais 1985: 11) and if, as noted earlier, *poiesis* in the making of an artwork is synonymous with something very much 'in process' or 'brought into being,' then these or similar approaches are at the very heart of the 'embodied poetics' I am proposing.

It bears noting that in my 'embodied poetics,' the four material elements are not alone in their generative powers, thus I do not limit its scope by naming my approach 'elemental poetics.' As this study has shown, other archetypal motifs can engender similar feelings of 'ulteriority' (Robert Frost cited in Kearney 1999). For instance, in Practical Project 3, the river can be described in Bachelard's terms as an 'archetypal axis' around which, like elemental substances, universal and individual feelings are simultaneously evoked. When he asserts that, archetypal symbols are not limited to a singular signification or cause because of their dialectic possibilities, I would then define them as paradigms for images.

Over the course of this study, a new term evolved: 'poetic intentionality,' which rather imposing a formed idea or will, instead, generates, through focused sensorial attention, an active space for discovery. Engaging in this process, the 'actor-creator' opens up to the creative potential of unfolding new experiences. Through 'poetic intentionality' individual will permeates matter, leading, for instance, to the emergence of the Chilean dancing woman in Practical Project 2, or, as in Practical Project 3, the dead man found in the reeds of the River Exe. In the final practical project, what began as embodied inquiry into the material element of water led to the archetypal symbol of the river, which in turn provoked a series of interlacing 'impressions' ('resonances' and 'reverberations'). These were experienced and mapped as a synthesis of feeling, memory, sensation and emotion. Importantly, these 'impressions' were not strictly autobiographical but led to my involvement becoming inherently personal. To expand on this further, my experience was less concerned with revelations of past personal memories or self-involvement 'in its limiting

isolationist sense' (Kearney 1999: 102), but instead was aligned more explicitly with my self-identity opening up to the world force in the moment of 'correspondence'. It is important to acknowledge here, 'the plurality of existence' expressed as a dialogue '*between* intentional subjects' (*ibid*. 100). Thus, for the communicating purposes of a theatrical performance, this study has shown that in their capacity to be 'trans-subjective,' the four material elements and 'archetypal symbols' possess qualities that are potentially common to others.

In the devising process I propose, the infinite poeticising possibilities of the material elements serve as originators of meaning for the 'actor-creator' rather than pre-determined or prescriptive formulas to be adhered to. This is a view corroborated by François Roy in an email sent to Mme Lecoq on hearing about the focus of my study (Appendix 2). Roy, a graduate from the Lecoq School, and president of *Le Forge des Mythes* in France, also collaborated with Lecoq on several projects, including the video *Les Deux Voyages de Jacques Lecoq* (1999). In the email he acknowledges the deep connection between Lecoq and Bachelard, but in particular, I draw attention to the following extract:

> *Non ce qui est vraiment merveilleux dans les elements c'est leurs variations à l'infini. Et qu'une fois de plus elles inspirent sans induction. On ne dit pas à l'étudiant comment vivre sa légèreté, on lui donne la liberté de découvrir son propre rapport à` l'élément air. Ainsi on stimule sa créativité au lieu de la brider. C'est plus respectueux.*
>
> What is really marvellous about the elements is their infinite variation and that again and again they have the ability to inspire without being prescriptive. Rather than being told how to be light, the student is given the freedom to discover their own affinity with the element of air. Thus, their creativity is stimulated instead of constrained. This is more respectful.
>
> François Roy (2011, translation my own).

Viewed from this standpoint, the 'embodied poetics' articulated in this study is predicated on the understanding that each 'actor-creator' or, indeed, individual involved in other artistic practices, possesses a unique and tacit poetic disposition, capable of discovering completely different 'resonances,' 'reverberations' and 'repercussions' in corresponding with the same material element or archetypal symbol. As such, I would argue that this approach to devising sensitises 'actor-creators' to discoveries and new choices about the making process, invoking a mode of relating to the world that can take them out of the habitual self and which can offer their practice a new identity.

Varela sees our individual being as emerging from an embodied and intersubjective space of action, perception, emotion and imagination. Similarly, as Steeves points out, Merleau Ponty defines 'the structure of transfer and reversibility between sensing and being sensed, between consciousness and the world' (Steeves 2004: 139) as the 'flesh.' At this point of convergence, the body becomes central: 'The world is not what I think but what I live through' (Merleau-Ponty 2002: xviii). [32] Correspondingly, Varela's notion of 'autopoiesis' as self-transformation encapsulates Bachelard's assertion that as an imagining being I am in a constant process of self-renewal and flux - 'a being to be imagined' (Bachelard in Kearney, 1999: 109). Following this view, if that which renders the body 'poetic' resides in its capacity to be both *transformed* and *transformative,* then by extension, is our practice not *transformed* in the process? [33]

---

[32] It is interesting to note that as early as 1817, when discussing the nature of poetry, Coleridge sees writing poetry as a trans-subjective process: 'What is poetry? is so nearly the same question with, what is a poet? that the answer to the one is involved in the solution of the other' (Coleridge 1965: 173).
[33] Thomas Kampe links Varela's 'autopoiesis' to the Feldenkrais method in that it, 'proposes a relational and ecological being where self is understood as-in-process' (Kampe 2015: 9).

The inter and cross disciplinary dramaturgies that have emerged in the twentieth century have brought to the forefront the performance text, in which 'both the 'open' text and devised work demand that we consider the composition of the performance as a whole' (Turner and Behrndt 2007: 30). As this study has revealed, the proposed dramaturgy for my 'embodied poetics' falls clearly into the 'forming process' rather than the predicated. For instance, in the case of Practical Project 3, I define the resulting performance as polyvalent, an unfolding and multi-layered narrative with converging and diverging resonances and centres of focus from moment to moment. I sensed this journey as a kind of expanding vertical spiral of experiences involving interweaving layers of play, feeling, reflection and confirmation.

In terms of my own practice, this study has revealed new ways of working to me. In the past, the focus of my devised productions both individually and collectively as director of La Mancha, has generally centred on the story of another person, character or community. Previous productions have explored the work and lives of poets and artists, political themes or extant texts. As this study demonstrates however, in 'corresponding' with the material element through an open disposition, or working 'from within the world, not upon it' (Ingold 2011: 347), I experienced a perpetual expansion of possibilities. In *Trying to Reach the Sea*, for example, the final performance became an interweaving of my being with the personality of the river, its inhabitants (both past and present), the dead man and the boat wreck too, in a permanent state of flux and fluidity, echoing the 'poeticising' qualities of water. From this perspective, I would stress that in this approach, the finished piece cannot be the result of a pre-determined design, but preferably exemplifies Ingold's view

that forms or objects 'grow from the mutual involvement of people and materials in an environment' (*ibid.* 347). As this study has demonstrated, this does not in any way imply a haphazard or arbitrary process of finding and selecting material or, indeed a ready-made reality, but instead offers rich possibilities for discovering imminent meanings.

Once again, I reassert my use throughout the study of a 'method' or '*hodos*' understood in its double meaning as the most appropriate trajectory for the dramaturgical process followed in this study. Drawing upon Bachelard's declaration, mentioned earlier in the study that 'experimentation must give way to argument and argument must have recourse to experimentation' (Bachelard in Lechte 2001: 3), the two-fold dynamic adhered to in this study acknowledges the 'particular rules and poetics' of each material element (Bachelard 1999: 3), and the generative power of the 'actor-creator's 'poetic body.' Moreover, the filtering process applied in the final project not only contributed to determining the dramatic structure of the devised piece, but also acknowledged the crucial importance of shaping the work for an audience.

Devising practices generate a compelling opportunity for theatre to exist in a condition of perpetual flux and therefore invite continued scrutiny. Based on the above, I would suggest that the study's focus on Lecoq's pedagogy can be of use to a practitioner who is familiar with Lecoq's pedagogical approach, but I would also suggest that as a creative process, the findings can also be accessed by all inquiring practitioners who are familiar with alternative devising approaches and alternative pedagogical backgrounds, in that they offer a springboard for interrogating individual practice and style. As to whether an

'acto-creator' would require Lecoq's prior-learning in order to understand, experience or extend my 'embodied poetics', I contend that the findings extend beyond the specificity of his pedagogy, in that they connect to and highlight enduring and mutual interests spanning the wide ranging field of alternative devising practices. For instance, the inherent complexities of the indeterminate in any devising process are often overlooked. In addressing the dilemma I faced between Bachelard's more open approach in which he claims: 'It is better to live in a state of impermanence than in one of finality' (Bachelard 1994: 61), and my need to resolve or express this approach through a form, the study acknowledges the significance of this paradox. Pressured by a limited time frame and increasing financial restraints, devising processes seldom involve an extended developmental phase for placing attention on the importance of experience, or for 'a forgetting of expectations' (Kozel 2007: 299). This study has shown, through purposefully carving out a space for 'embodied reverie,' experience is privileged over the idea in the early stages of the devising process, offering productive and potentially fruitful opportunities for the unexpected and the new.

Whilst I acknowledged from the outset that the interrogation of my individual devising process is conditioned by my education, individual experience and embodied knowledge, I would argue that an exploration of these aspects, from a unique frame of reference, serves to highlight the significance for each 'actor-creator' in experiencing and exploring their own poetic affiliations. All too often an emphasis in devising practices on collaborative processes overlooks the development of an individual poetics. In this manner, I propose that while collaboration in the making process is paramount, the possibilities of

scrutinising an individual process can situate the practitioner in an informed and empowered position from which to make work with others.

Moreover, the rigor of interrogating my own making process through the weaving of practice and written analysis exemplifies a methodological approach, in which the main advances in reflective awareness occurred in embodied experience. As such, the study adopts the view that 'reflection is not just *on* experience, but reflection *is* a form of experience itself' (Varela, Thompson and Rosch 1993: 25).

Pedagogical Implications

In terms of educating the performer, this study proposes a devising process in which students and teachers can explore the complexities between the indeterminate and fixity. The 'Elements' work established by Lecoq in his School is now commonly taught in drama schools and universities worldwide (Callery, (2001); Snow, (2012); Ewan and Green (2015). It is often tempting however, to fall into a mechanistic and formulaic approach rather than allowing the possibility of this work to lead to discoveries by the student that extend beyond 'identifying' with the element in a way that fulfils the expectations of the teacher. In this aspect, it is interesting to recall the first practical project in which I contended that the notion of 'task' in this work is unhelpful in seeking to instil in the student an opportunity for curiosity, openness and play.

These issues are particularly pertinent in my experience of working in British Higher Education, in which goal-oriented work becomes the priority in an increasingly risk averse climate. Lecoq's method rejects prescription in favour of

the student's own personal research and investigation. From my own experience as a Lecoq student and then as co-founder of La Mancha School in Chile, deep and life-long learning takes place in an atmosphere of discovery. As teachers running a similar model to the Lecoq School, outside the educational system, we neither offered aims or learning outcomes to our students. Some found this approach frustrating and intimidating, but in my experience, our students at the La Mancha School learned to engage with depth and to connect to their individual creativity in profound ways. The emerging companies, theatre-makers and performers from the La Mancha School each have their own identity and continue to flourish in their diversity.

Having taught devising practices in several cultural contexts - European, Scandinavian, Central American and South American - the quest for an open, fearless and creative actor is a challenge that intrigues educators and students alike. Even in a time when assignments, assessments and results are foremost, it is the creative actor who holds our attention and remains in our thoughts, long after the performance has taken place. Risk-taking is a fundamental part of this process. Confronted by the thought of trying something new or breaking the mould, students can become paralysed with doubt: "What will happen if I make a mistake? Will I make a fool of myself? Will I fail? How can I try if I don't know what I am supposed to do?" These fears reflect the sociologist Frank Furedi's definition of the *precautionary principle*, whereby 'it is best not to take a new risk unless its outcome can be understood in advance' (Furedi 1997: 9). In an environment where students are encouraged not to fear failure, they can make discoveries about their creativity and imagination, which would not be possible in an inflexible environment with fixed learning outcomes.

Here, I am reminded of Bachelard's fundamental principle of the pedagogy of the Objective Attitude, discussed earlier in the study, which argues for a projective rather than prescriptive approach to learning. In this sense, I would contend, alongside Bachelard, that the 'embodied poetics' I propose within a teaching context, advocates the generative and empowering forces of uncertainty and the indeterminate, within a supportive framework that enables students studying a wide range of creative disciplines, to work in a free and stimulating environment; where personal growth is truly valued. I would further argue that the 'embodied poetics' originated in this study alerts students to a mind/body approach to devising, where the need to navigate towards an end product demands working out what is happening while it is happening, and sensitises the 'actor-creator' to the flow of sensory experience from the real to the imaginary.

Embodied Poetics: Areas for Further Development

In addition to the theoretical arguments and practical material generated in this study, a number of possibilities for further inquiry are apparent. For instance, I have limited my exploration to the material elements of fire and water. A fruitful avenue of research would be to explore the material elements of air and earth, as well as alternative 'archetypal symbols' in the devising process and to interrogate their generative possibilities for other 'actor-creators.' An equally valuable extension of this inquiry would be to consider how Bachelard's vocabulary of 'poetic imagining' - 'reverie', 'resonance', 'reverberation' and 'repercussion' - can be developed further as a shared language for making, both in professional practice and within an educational setting.

In limiting the scope of this study to solo devising, future research could investigate how this individualised devising approach might inform a collaborative venture. How might the process be applied to co-devised projects, in which individual making processes and backgrounds need to be accommodated and observed within a collective framework? What other variations or permutations might emerge? Similarly, another expansion of this research would be to explore its reception and impact. In what ways does it provoke a 'poetic imagining' process in the audience?

More broadly, this thesis seeks to have a tangible bearing on the related disciplines of dance, movement, live art, movement awareness and spatial practices, where issues surrounding the performing body and imagination have been subjected to academic inquiry. An equally compelling possibility for extending this research would be to investigate further, its connection to the wider field of cognitive science. For example, the study's emphasis on what I would describe as empathetic mimesis resonates with more recent enquiries into the contested area of 'mirror neuron' research, which looks into the role of mirror neurons in affective experience. Discovered in the 1980s by the Italian neuroscientist Giacomo Rizzolatti and colleagues, mirror neurons are believed to be a particular system of neurons that fire when we observe an action or emotion performed by another. Arguably, the neuron 'mirrors' the experience of the other, as though the observer were indeed acting. Recent studies into the mechanism of mirror neurons and its relevance for the performer have looked, for example, at the relationship between mirror neuron theory and deep actor training (Carlin-Metz, 2013). The role of motor neurons within theatre and consciousness has also been explored in the complex relationship between the

performer and the audience in Verbatim theatre (McCutcheon, 2013). How might this research enhance understandings of the devising process I propose? Relatedly, this study also points to further areas of inquiry concerning Bachelard's writings within neuroscience and contemporary philosophy. I would argue that the embodied reading of Bachelard's work in this study has reignited his relevance in these fields.

Finally, I return to Lecoq's quote introduced at the beginning of this study:

<div align="center">

Mist

leaves the completion

of the image

to the imagination.

</div>

I would argue that this quote encapsulates the fundamental conditions of the 'embodied poetics' I propose. In choosing 'Mist,' comprising the material elements of water and air, Lecoq draws us firstly to the flowing forces of the external world that surrounds us. Secondly, mist, often considered as a shroud concealing the world from view, or as an obstacle to be overcome, serves a different purpose. Using Jousse's notion of 'intussuscepting curiosity,' I take possession of the outside world not by observing the mist or trying to fight it, but instead by being *with* it. Through poetic play, I find myself in a world of which, to borrow Kearney's words 'I am both the creature and the creator' (Kearney 1999: 104). The material element of 'mist' is the conductor between internal experience and the outside world. Entwined with this material substance in a state of permanent flux resonates with Bachelard's belief that 'matter is the unconsciousness of form' (Bachelard 1999: 57), leading to 'discoveries of the self in matter.'

As this study has shown, using the processes of 'embodied reverie' and 'poetic intention,' I answer to the provocation of the world in generating my own 'repercussions,' leading me to create anew. In this projective and productive environment, I move towards the becoming of Lecoq's 'expression.' Thus, the new 'embodied poetics' I have articulated proposes a devising process in which the body, through its capacity to imagine, becomes the mediator between inner and outer worlds; negotiating between the unknown and known, between the sensation and the realisation. Marcel Duchamp describes the artist or creator as 'a mediumistic being who, from the labyrinth beyond time and space, seeks his way out to a clearing' (Duchamp, cited in Seigel 1995: 221). Drawing upon this affirmation, my 'embodied poetics' proposes the following *hodos*, or 'travelling way':

From matter comes feeling and from feeling comes form.

Appendix 1. Interview with Mme Fay Lecoq

Wednesday, 15 June 2011

Lecoq International Theatre School - Paris

Interviewer: Ellie Nixon

Duration: one hour

The interview was conducted in English

TRANSCRIPT

Ellie: Why was M. Lecoq's book 'Le Corps Poétique', translated into English as 'The Moving Body'?

Mme Lecoq: It was Simon McBurney. He advised us not to call it 'The Poetic Body' because he felt it wouldn't sell in England.

Ellie: But surely the word 'poetic' is at the heart of the book.

Mme Lecoq: Of course and we wanted to call it that, but Simon said that it wouldn't be understood and that the English would prefer the word 'movement'.

Ellie: What a shame. I think it's a fundamental idea at the heart of Lecoq's work.

Mme Lecoq: I know, but we followed Simon's advice.

Ellie: I suppose maybe at the time it was first published, it might have

                been more appropriate.

Ellie: How did M. Lecoq develop his pedagogy around nature and the

                elements? Did he develop the work of Copeau here?

Mme Lecoq: Jacques always loved nature. He was a keen sportsman. He

                loved swimming and running in particular and he would run in the

                countryside a lot. I think that this was always in him, before

                theatre, since he was very young.

Ellie: When did this aspect of the 'poetic body' evolve?

Mme Lecoq: From the very beginning, when he was teaching sport at a very

                young age.

Ellie: Did he ever mention Gaston Bachelard?

Mme Lecoq: Oh yes. He had all the books in his library. He has left me with

                over 2,000 books. Jacques read a lot and I know that Bachelard

                was very important to developing his thinking.

Ellie: Did he mention a particular book?

Mme Lecoq: Well he used to give a reading list to students? Do you have one

                still?

Eliie: No, I don't. (The book listed is *The Poetics of Space*)

Mme Lecoq: I will copy one for you. Several of Bachelard's books are included

                on the list. I know that with Jacques' interest in nature, he found a

                deep connection with Bachelard. I have tried to read his work in

                French, as I knew you were coming, but I find it very hard

                understand certain words…invented words. I would like to read his

                books in English to see if that might help.

Ellie: They are translated and I will send you copies.

Mme Lecoq: When I knew you were coming I got in touch with one of Jacque's

                old students François Roy, who remembers Jacques talking about

                Bachelard. He sent me an email, which I have printed for you.

                François studied here many years ago with Jacques and also did

                the teaching year. I remembered that he knew about Bachelard

                and he has very kindly written back. I have cut the email into

                sections to separate the information that is relevant to you from

                the more personal.

(Mme Lecoq hands me a copy of the email)

Ellie: Thank you so much Fay. I have read several books in English on

                Lecoq's approach. There have been two really useful ones. One

                by Simon Murray and another called *Jacques Lecoq and the*

                British Theatre. The introduction by David Bradby to 'Tout Bouge'

is great. I think he has been really key to opening up French

theatre to a British audience.

Mme Lecoq: Yes. Did you hear that he died recently? We were very sad to

hear it and he really understood how to communicate Jacques'

work.

Ellie: Yet there still seems to be a misunderstanding about Lecoq's work

in the UK. He is still associated a lot with mime.

Mme Lecoq: Yes, yes and the English still do not really understand what

Jacques meant by 'Mime'….Have you read anything that connects

Jacques to Bachelard?

Ellie: Yes, the Spanish graduate Carmina S wrote a fantastic PhD about

Lecoq's pedagogical approach…

Mme Lecoq: Have you read it? I haven't read it yet but I know it won a prize.

Ellie: Yes, she was kind enough to send me a copy and when she

heard about my research, sent me an article written by

Christophe….

Mme Lecoq: Merlant, Christophe Merlant. Unfortunately he died too, but I agree

it is a very important article and I will photocopy it for you. In fact I

have another article I can photocopy by Morgan Bourhis and an

interview with Jacques and Christophe Merlant in the very

important theatre journal here, CASSANDRE – *Le théâtre en courants.*

Ellie: That's great. That will be really useful. Carmen refers to Merlant in her chapter about the poetic aspects of Lecoq's pedagogy as I think that it's the only place where the connection is considered. Lecoq mentions Bachelard briefly in Le Corps Poétique, but I think the connection needs further investigation.

Mme Lecoq: Yes. It is very interesting and I know Jacques was very keen at one time, to read all Bachelard's books. I also have an article about Marchel Jousse, which I will see if I can find for you.

Ellie: That would be fantastic. I have just started to read about that connection and I am sure it ties into my own research.

'*Bachelard, oui, je me rappelle que monsieur Lecoq le citait en reference. Il y a 5 ouvrages que sont proches de son travail:*

La psychoanalyse du feu - L'air et les songes – L'eau et les rêves – La terre et les reveries de la volonté – La poétique de l'espace.

Gaston Bachelard a recherché chez divers poètes tout ce qui pouvait parler des dynamiques des éléments. Il a réuni dans chacun de ces ouvrages des phrases, des extraits liés à chacun de ces éléments et il écrit dessus, il fait plus que les commenter, il s'en inspire et en faisant cela il déclenche chez le lecteur un véritable appétit pour les textes organiques. Comme M. lecoq il nous rappelle notre lien à la nature, au movement et il nous redonne notre liberté en nous reconnectant à cette vérité que nous faisons partie, irrémédiablement, de la nature! Nous n'en sommes plus séparés avec l'illusion de pouvoir l'observer. C'est ressourçant. Et depuis maintenant plusiers années que j'enseigne je ne me lasse pas de rédécouvrir année après année les bienfaits rééquilibrants de l'idententificacion aux elements. Cela me permet de découvrir les élèves et de relever parfois des déséquilibres physique o mental graves. Pour éviter le côté

new age je parle aussi d'equilibre (la terre) de fluidité (l'eau) de légèreté (l'air)

ou d'intensité (le feu) soit les 4 qualités du movement Ou alors des 3 états de la

matière: solide, liquide, gazeux avec la température qui fait passer d'un état à

un autre (cela rassure les esprits scientifiques mais c'est beaucoup moins

poétique!) Non ce qui est vraiment merveilleux dans les elements c'est leurs

variations à l'infini. Et qu'une fois de plus elles inspirent sans induction. On ne

dit pas à l'étudiant comment vivre sa légèreté, on lui donne la liberté de

découvrir son propre rapport â` l'élément air. Ainsi on stimule sa créativité au

lieu de la brider. C'est plus respectueux.

Pour ce qui est du travail avec la peinture, cela fait partie du programme de

l'école. S'identifier à un tableau, le "bouger" et par là faire ressortir les

dynamiques. Cela met en évidence les caractéristiques propres à chaque

peintre en dehors de leur biographie, ce qui s'exécute avec le corps, la

respiración, le métabolisme, l'unicité et qui parle au corps de celui qui regarde

sans passer par l'intellect, ce qui nous touché au profound. M. lecoq donnait en

exemple les jaunes de Vangogh qui "bougeaient" comme du violet parce qu'ils

étaient en torsion en bas dans l'espace comme la dynamique du violet. Ce n'est

pas une interprétation intellectuelle mais bien une réalité objective saisie par le

corps mimeur. Les dynamiques des couleurs sont perçus universellement par

chaque corps mimeur.

J'ai eu l'occasion de faire un performance dans un exposition. Je restais

immobile devant un tableau, je m'en imprégnais et ensuite je me laissais guider

par ses dynamiques. J'étais bougé par le tableau. Le travail consiste à être

juste, à restituer fidèlement. Les spectateurs avaient dû trouver cela intéressant car j'avais été applaudi…

Toutes les peintures ne se prêtent pas à cet exercice comme tous les textes ne se prêtent pas à l'analyse de Bachelard. Ils doivent contenir la vie dans ce qu'elle a de plus organique, il faut qu'ils respondent aux lois du Mouvement. C'est une recherche passionante qui demande une grande plasticité, un corps préparé, c'est à dire dont tous les circuits sont activés, prêts à saisir sans interpretation l'essence même du tableau, du texte por la retranscrire!

Il me semble que le sujet d'étude de cette ancienne élève Elie Nixon est très intéressant et aurait plu à M. Lecoq. Je lui souhaite de finaliser son travail.

A bientôt donc, avec mes amities.'

François Roy

President of the Forge des Mythes.

English Translation

'Bachelard, yes, I remember that M. Lecoq used to quote him and refer to his writings. There are 5 books written by Bachelard that are relevant to Lecoq's work:

The Psychoanalysis of Fire – Air and Dreams – Water and Dreams – The Earth and the Reveries of Repose – The Poetics of Space.

Gaston Bachelard explored the work of various poets in terms of the dynamics of the elements. From each of these poems, he selected phrases and extracts and discussed them in terms of the elements. He did more than comment on the work, indeed he was inspired by it and this in turn, prompted in the reader a genuine appetite for organic texts. In a similar way, M.Lecoq reminds us of our connection to nature, to movement and in doing so he restores our freedom and re-connects us to a reality of which we are an irremediable part, that of nature! We are no longer separated from it by the illusion of observation. This is invigorating. And now after several years of teaching, I continue to rediscover, year after year, the restorative benefits of identifying with the elements. This work allows me to make discoveries about the students and to occasionally pinpoint serious physical or mental imbalances they might have. In order to avoid associations with the new age, I also refer to the four qualities of movement using the following terms: balance (earth), fluidity (water), lightness (air) or intensity (fire), or the three states of matter: solid, liquid and gas, where the temperature transforms matter from one state to another (this approach is reassuring to the scientifically minded but is a lot less poetic!). What is really marvellous about the elements is their infinite variation and that again and again

they have the ability to inspire without being prescriptive. Rather than being told how to be light, students are given the freedom to discover their own affinity with the element of air. Thus, their creativity is stimulated instead of restrained. This is a more respectful approach.

As for the work with paintings, this is part of the school's programme. The student identifies with a painting, "moves" it and in doing so, releases its dynamics. This work highlights the unique characteristics of each painter, without alluding to the painter's biography. This is performed through the body, the breath, the metabolism, in a unique way as it speaks to the body of the observer without going through the intellect, a sensation that touches us deeply. M. Lecoq used to give as an example, the yellows in Vangogh's paintings. He said that they "moved" like the colour violet, because they were located in torsion low in the space in a similar way to the dynamics of violet. This is not an intellectual interpretation, but rather an objective reality seized by the miming body. Each miming body perceives the dynamics of colours in a universal way. I had the opportunity once to make a performance in an art exhibition. Remaining still, I allowed a particular painting to permeate my body and then I let myself be guided by its dynamics. I was moved by the painting. The work had to be accurate in order to make a faithful reconstruction. The spectators must have found it interesting because I was applauded…

Not all paintings lend themselves to this exercise, just as not all texts lend themselves to Bachelard's analysis. They must contain within them an organic life, in as much as they have to respond to laws of movement. It's a passionate area of investigation demanding great plasticity, a prepared body, in other

words a body in which all the circuits are active, ready to grab the essential essence of a painting or a text, not to interpret it, but to retranscribe it!

It seems to me that the subject of inquiry being undertaken by the Lecoq graduate Ellie Nixon, is very interesting and would have pleased M. Lecoq. I wish her well in completing her work.'

Best wishes,

François Roy

President of the *Forge des Mythes.*

Bibliography

Abram, D. (1997) *The Spell of the Sensuous*, New York: Vintage Books.

Ader, B. J. [Online] http://www.basjanader.com, (Accessed: 04 August 2014).

Aeschen, J., Huk, R. (1996) *Contemporary British Poetry*: *Essays in Theory and Criticism*, New York: State University of New York Press.

Alfreds, M. (2007) *Different Every Night: Freeing the Actor*, London: Nick Hern Books Limited.

Allain, P., Harvie, J. (2005) *The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Performance*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Allegue, L., Jones, S., Kershaw, B. (eds.) (2009) *Practice-as-Research in Performance and Screen*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Amnesty International. [Online] http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/chile-40-years-pinochet-s-coup-impunity-must-end-2013-09-10 (Accessed: 25 November 2013).

Andrews, R. (2003) *Research Questions*, London: Continuum.

Bachelard, G. (1938) (1964) *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*, Dallas: The Dallas Institute Publications.

Bachelard, G. (1942) (1999 Third Printing) Trans. Edith and Frederick Farrell. *Water and Dreams an Essay on the Imagination of Matter*, Dallas: The Dallas Institute Publications.

Bachelard, G. (1943) (2002) (Second Edition) *Air and Dreams – An Essay On the Imagination of Movement,* Dallas: The Dallas Institute Publications.

Bachelard, G. (1946) (2011) *Earth and the Reveries of Repose: An Essay on Images of Interiority*, Dallas: The Dallas Institute Publications.

Bachelard, G. (1948) (2002) Trans. Kenneth Haltman. *Earth and the Reveries of Will: An Essay on the Imagination of Matter,* Dallas: The Dallas Institute Publications.

Bachelard, G., G. Stilgoe, J. Gilson, E. Jolas, M (eds.) (1958) (1994) *The Poetics of Space,* Boston: Beacon Press.

Bachelard, G. (1971) *The Right to Dream,* New York: Grossman Publishers.

Bachelard, G. (1988) *The Right to Dream*, Dallas: The Dallas Institute Publications.

Bachelard, S. (ed.). Trans. Haltman, K. (1990) *Fragments of a Poetics of Fire*. Dallas: Dallas Institute Publications.

Bachelard, G. Trans. McAllester Jones, M. (2002) *The Formation of the Scientific Mind*, Manchester: Clinamen Press Ltd.

Bachelard, G. (1977) *Psychoanalysis of Fire*, Boston: Beacon Press.

Bachelard, G. (1992) *The Poetics of Reverie: Childhood, Language and the Cosmos*, Boston: Beacon Press.

Bachelard, G. (1988) *The Flame of a Candle*, Dallas: The Dallas Institute Publications.

Bacon, J. (2010) The voice of her body: Somatic practices as a basis for creative research methodology. *Journal of Dance and Somatic Practices* 2:1, pp. 63-74.

Ball, P. (1999) *H20: A Biography of Water,* London: Phoenix.

Barrett, E. (2006) Materializing Pedagogies. *Working Papers in Art and Design* [online] Available from: <http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes_research/papers/wpades/vol4/ebfull.html ISSN 1466-4917> (Accessed: 07 May 2011).

Barrett, E. (2007) *Foucault's 'What is an Author': towards a critical discourse of practice as research*, Australia: Deakin University.

Barret, E., Bolt, B. (2010) *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, London: I B Tauris & Co Ltd.

Barthes, R. (2005) *The Neutral: Lecture Course at the College de France (1977- 1978), European Perspectives: A Series in Social Thought and Cultural Criticism,* New York: Columbia University Press.

Bayer, B., Shotter, J. (eds.) (1998) *Reconstructing the Psychological Subject: Bodies, Practices and Technologies (Inquiries in Social Construction Series),* London, New Delhi: Sage Publications Limited.

Becker, K. (2001) *Unlikely Companions, C.G. Jung on The Spiritual Exercises of Ingantius of Loyol,* Herefordshire: Fowler Wright Books & Surrey: Inigo Enterprises.

Bell, J. (2005) *Doing your Research Project: A guide for first-time researchers in education, health and social science,* 4th Edition, UK: Open University Press.

Blaikie, A. (2005) *The Body: Sociology, nature and the body*, London: Routledge.

Bourriaud, N. (2002) *Relational Aesthetics*. France: Les Presses du reel.

Bowman Piper, W. (Spring, 1987), 'The Invulnerability of Poetic Experience'. Source: *South Central Review*, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 11-23. Published by: The Johns Hopkins University Press on behalf of The South Central Modern LanguageAssociationStable [online] Available at:

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3189599> (Accessed: 16 July 2012).

Bradby, D., Delgado, M. (eds.) (2002) *The Paris Jigsaw – Internationalism and the City's Stages,* UK: Manchester University Press.

Bruno, S., Dixon, L. (2015) *Creating Solo Performance*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Calder, J. (1999) *Obituary: Jacques Lecoq*, The Independent. [online] Available at: www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/obituary (Accessed: 28 May 2011).

Callery, D. (2001) *Through the Body: A Practical Guide to Physical Theatre*, New York: Routledge.

Campbell, A., McNamara, O., Gilroy, P. (2004) *Practitioner Research and Professional Development in Education,* London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

Carr, S. (2014) *British Sociological Association of Mental Health Study Group. Symposium,* 13th June 2014, University of Wolverhampton [online] Available at: <http://www.slideshare.net> (Accessed: 30 March 2015).

Cazeau, C. (2000) *The Continental Aesthetics Reader*, London: Routledge.

Chamberlain, F., Yarrow, R. (eds.) (2002) *Jacques Lecoq and the British Theatre*, London: Routledge.

Chimisso, C. (2001) *Gaston Bachelard – Critic of Science and the Imagination*, London: Routledge.

Coleridge, S. T. *Biographia Literaria, Volume I*. [e-book] Available at: <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10015064?ppg=314> (Accessed: 12 October 2012).

Coleridge, S., T. Watson, G. (ed.) (1965) *Biographia Literaria,* London: J.M. Dent and Sons.

Connerton, P. (1989) *How Societies Remember (Themes in the Social Sciences)*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Counsell, C., Wolf, L. E. (eds.) (2001) *Performance Analysis: an introductory coursebook*, London: Routledge.

Crick, F. (1995) *The Astonishing Hypothesis: The Scientific Search for the Soul*, New York: Touchstone.

Cutting, G. (1987) Gaston Bachelard's philosophy of science, *International Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, Volume 2: 1, pp. 55 – 71 [online] Available at: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/28780545/GuttingBachelard> (Accessed: 25 September 2012).

DAMU (n.d) Authorial Acting MA [online] Available at: <https://www.damu.cz/en/m-a-degree-programs/authorial-acting-1> (Accessed: 14 March 2015).

Dawson, A. (n.d.) *Feldenkrais in Theatre and Acting,* [online] Available at: <http://www.feldenkrais.co.uk/articles/dawson.html> (Accessed: 13 June 2012)

De Preester, H. (ed.) (2013) *Moving Imagination: Explorations of gesture and inner movement*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Eckhart, B. J. (2013) *Embodying Deep Practice: A Pedagogical Approach to Actor Training*. In McCutcheon, J., Sellers-Young, B. (eds.) (2013) *Embodied Consciousness: Performance Technologies,* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

École Jacques Lecoq (2007) *Laboratoire d'Étude du Mouvement* Brochure: 30 ans 1976-2006, Paris.

École Jacques Lecoq (n.d) [online] Available at: <http://www.ecole-jacqueslecoq.com/en/school_en-000001.html> (Accessed 12 February 2009)

Eldridge, S. (1996) *Mask Improvisation for Actor Training and Performance – The Compelling Image*, USA: Northwestern University Press.

Ellsworth, E. (2005) *Places of Learning: Media, Architecture and Pedagogy,* Abingdon: Routledge.

Eliot, T.S. (1991) *Collected Poems, 1909-1962*, first edition, USA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Eno, B., Budd, H. (1980) First Light, [Sound recording] Source: *Ambient 2: The Plateaux of Mirror*. E.G. Records.

Embree, L.E., Nenon Thomas (eds.) (2007) *Phenomenology 2005: Selected Essays from North America Pt. 5.2 (Postscriptum OPO).* Bucharest: Zeta Books.

Escribano, X. (2013) '*The Moving Body: Gestural Recreation of the World in Drama'*, pp. 37-68. In De Preester, H. (ed.) *Moving Imagination: Explorations of gesture and inner movement*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Esslin, M. (1999) *Jacques Lecoq: Mask over matter*. Obituary. The Guardian [online] available at: <www.guardian.co.uk/news/1999/jan/23/guardianobituaries> (Accessed: 28 May 2011)

Evans, M. (2006) *Jacques Copeau: Routledge Performance Practitioners,* Abingdon: Routledge.

Evans, M. (2007) Another kind of writing: reflective practice and creative journals in the performing Arts. *Journal of Writing in Creative Practice* 1: 1, pp. 69–76, doi: 10.1386/jwcp.1.1.69/1.

Evans, M. (2009) *Movement Training for the Modern Actor*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Evans, M. (2012) The Influence of Sports on Jacques Lecoq's Actor Training. *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training*, pp. 163-177.

Evans, M. (ed.) (2015) *The Actor Training Reader*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Feldenkrais, M. (1985) *The Potent Self: A Study of Spontaneity and Compulsion*, California: Frog Limited Books.

Fo, D. (1991) *Tricks of the Trade*, New York: Routledge.

Fortier, M. (1997) *Theory/Theatre: an Introduction*, second edition, London: Routledge.

Forumfoto.org Brazil (2012) ,*Algunos de los desaparecidos en la dictadura Chilena.* [online photograph] available at: <http://www.lr21.com.uy/mundo/1015986-chile-informe-apunta-a-150-posibles-nuevos-casos-de-victimas-de-dictadura> (Accessed: 21 February 2013).

Freeman, J. (2010) *Blood Sweat and Theory: Research Through Practice in Performance,* UK*:* Libri.

Freixe, G. (2010) *Les Utopies du Masque*, Montpellier: Editions L'Entretemps.

Furedi, F. (1997) *Culture of Fear: Risk-Taking and the Morality of Low Expectation*, London and Washington: Cassell.

Fusetti, G., Willson, S. (2002) *The Pedagogy of the Poetic Body* [online] available at: <http://www.giovannifusetti.com/public/file/Poetic.body.pdf.> (Accessed: 16 November 2014).

Gadamer. H. G. (1986) (2009) *The Relevance of the Beautiful and other Essays,* UK: Cambridge University Press.

Gale, M., Ingleby, R. (1999) *Two Painters: Works by Alfred Wallis and James Dixon*, London: The Tate Gallery.

Gates, A. (1969*) A New Look at Movement – A Dancer's View*. Second Edition, USA: Burgess Publishing Company.

Gaudin, C. (ed.) (2005) *Gaston Bachelard, On Poetic Imagination and Reverie*, Connecticut: Spring Publications, Inc.

George, D. (1996) Performance Epistemology. *Performance Research*, Vol. 1, No.1, Spring, pp.16-25. London: Routledge

Ghanim, Honaida. *On the Shadow and its Shadows*. [Online] available at: <http://www.men-in-the-sun.com/EN/honaida-ghanim> (Accessed: 04 November 2013).

Gordon, R. (2006) *The Purpose of Playing: Modern Acting Theories in Perspective*, USA: University of Michigan Press.

Govan, E., Nicholson, H., Normington, K. (2007) *Making a Performance: Devising Histories and Contemporary Practices,* Abingdon: Routledge.

Gray, C., Malins, J. (2004) *Visualizing Research: A guide to the research process in Art & Design,* UK: Ashgate.

Hagan, U., Frankel, H. (2008) *Respect for Acting*, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Hamilton Finlay, I. (1968) Ian Hamilton Finlay, letter to Pierre Garnier, 17 September 1963. In *Hispanic Arts 1* (winter-spring 1968).

Hannula, M., Suoranta, J., Vadén, T. (2005) *Artistic Research – theories, methods and practices*, Sweden: Academy of Fine Arts, Helsinki & University of Gothenburg.

Hans, J.S. (1977) Gaston Bacchelard and the Phenomenology of the Reading Consciousness. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 35* (Spring 1977), pp. 315-327 [online] available at: <http://cat.inist.fr/?aModele=afficheN&cpsidt=12845962> (Accessed: 02 January 2013).

Harvie, J., Lavender, A. (eds.) (2010) *Making Contemporary Theatre: International Rehearsal Processes*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Heddon, D., Milling, J. (2006) *Devising Performance – a critical history,* Hants: Palgrave Macmillan.

Heddon, D., Lavery, C., Smith, P. (2009) *Walking, Writing and Performance, Autobiographical Texts by Deidre Heddon, Carl Lavery and Phil Smith,* Bristol: Intellect Ltd.

Higonnet, M. (1981) 'Bachelard and the Romantic Imagination*',* Source: *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Winter, 1981), pp. 18-37Published by: Duke University Press on behalf of the University of Oregon, Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1770415 (Accessed 16/07/2012).

Hodge, A. (ed.) (2010) *Actor Training*, Second Edition, Abingdon: Routledge.

Horn, R. (n.d.) *Biography* [Online] available at: <http://www.rebecca-horn.de/pages/biography.html> (Accessed: 4 August 2014).

Houben, J. (2012) *Lecoq, Complicité, Beckett & Working with Peter Brook*, Culturebot – Maximum performance, [Online] available at: <http://www.culturebot.org/2012/10/11643/jos-houben-talks-about-lecoq-complicite-beckett-working-with-peter-brook/> (Accessed: 3 May 2015).

Huisman, J., Tight, M. (eds.) (2015) *Theory and Method in Higher Education Research II*, Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Huotari, M. (2013). *Dody Disanto and the Neutral Mask*. [online] Available at: <https://celebrationbarn.wordpress.com/2013/04/01/dody-disanto-on-neutral-mask> (Accessed: 17 May 2015).

Ingold, T. (2011) *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Ingold, T. (2013) *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture,* Abingdon: Routledge.

Jennings, M., Eiland H. (eds.) (1999) *Walter Benjamin. Selected Writings, Volume 2, part 2, 1931 – 1934,* USA: First Harvard University Press.

Johnson, M. (2008) *The Meaning of the Body – Aesthestics of Human Understanding,* USA: The University of Chicago Press.

Jousse, M. Sienaert, E. (ed.) (1997) *The Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm,* Trans. Sienaert, E,. Conolly, J. South Africa: Centre of Oral Studies. University of Natal, Durban.

Jung, C. G. Read, H., Fordham, M., Adler, G. (eds.) (1969) *Volume Nine, Part 1. The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious.* London: Routledge.

Kampe, T. (2013) Moving after Auschwitz: The Feldenkrais Method as a soma-critique. *Academia.edu* [online] available at: <https://www.academia.edu/5849553> (Accessed: 14 May 2015).

Kampe, T. (2015), Eros and inquiry: the Feldenkrais Method® as a complex resource, *Theatre, Dance and Performance Journal*, pp. 200-218, DOI:10.1080/19443927.2015.1027451 [online] available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19443927.2015.1027451> (Accessed: 27 June 2055).

Kaplan, Edward K. (1972) Gaston Bachelard's Philosophy of Imagination: An Introduction. Source: *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Sep., 1972), pp. 1-24, Published by: International Phenomenological Society [online] available at: <http://www.jstor.org> (Accessed: 17 July 2010).

Kearney, R. (1994) *Modern Movements in European Philosophy: Phenomenology, Critical Theory, Structuralis,* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Kearney, R. (1998) *Poetics of Imagining, Modern to Post-modern*, New York: Fordham University Press.

Kearney, R. (2008) Bachelard and the Epiphanic Instant. *Philosophy Today. SPEP Supplement* [online] available at: <https://www2.bc.edu/~kearneyr/pdf_articles/pl86279.pdf> (Accessed: 29/11/2013).

Kemp, R (2012) *Embodied Acting: What Neuroscience tells us about Performance,* Abingdon: Routledge.

Kershaw, B., Nicholson, H. (eds.) (2011) *Research Methods in Theatre and Performance*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd.

Kidd, S. D. (n.d.) *On Poetic Imagination: Sigmund Freud and Martin Heidegger* [online] available at: <ailhttp://www.inbetweenness.com/SunnieContents.htm> (Accessed: 02 October 2012).

Klee, P. (1992) *The Diaries of Paul Klee, 1898-1918*, USA: California Press.

Kolb, D. (1983) *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development,* UK: Financial Times/Prentice Hall.

Kozel, S. (2007) *Closer, Performance, Technologies, Phenomenology*, USA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Kozel, S. (2011) *Across Bodies and Systems*, interview by Marlon Barrios Solano [online] available at: <http://dance-tech.tv/videos/across-bodies-and-systems-interview-with-susan-kozel/> (Accessed: 18 February 2013).

Latin 21.Com (1973) *Estadio Nacional de Chile - 11 September* - 1973 [image online] Available at: <http://www.latin21.com/board3/view.php?table=research_ah&bd_idx=6> (Accessed: 07 March 2013).

Leabhart, T. (1989) *Modern and Post-Modern Mime*, Hants: Macmillan Press Ltd.

Lechte, J. (2001) *Fifty Key Contemporary Thinkers - from structuralism to postmodernity*, London & New York: Routledge.

Lecoq, J. (ed.) (1987) *Le Théâtre du Geste*: *Mimes et Acteurs*, Paris, France: Bordas.

Lecoq, J. (2000) *The Moving Body (Le corps poétique): Teaching Creative Theatre,* London: Methuen.

Lecoq, J. (2002) *The Moving Body (Le corps poétique): Teaching Creative Theatre,* London: Methuen.

Lecoq, J., David Bradbury (ed.) (2006) *Theatre of Movement and Gesture,* Abingdon: Routledge.

Lecoq School. (2007) *Laboratoire d'Étude du Mouvement* Brochure, *30 ans 1976-2006.*

Lecoq, J. [0nline] available at: <http://www.ecole-jacqueslecoq.com> (Accessed: 12 February 2015).

Lefebvre, H. (1991) *The Production of Space*, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Lehmann, H.T., Jürs-Munby, K. (2006) *Postdramatic Theatre*, (New Edition), Abingdon: Routledge.

Loukes, R. (2014) Chapter 5 (a), pp. 194-223 and Chapter 6 (b), pp. 224-255 in Zarilli, Daboo and Loukes *Acting: Psychophysical Phenomenon and Process*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Low, D. (2013) *Merleau-Ponty in Contemporary Context, Philosophy and Poltics in the Twenty-first Century*, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.

MaCauley, D. (2010) *Elemental Philosophy: Earth, Air, Fire and Water as Environmental Ideas*, New York: State University of New York Press, Albany.

Macke, F. J. (2007) 'Body, Liquidity, and Flesh: Bachelard, Merleau-Ponty and the Elements of Interpersonal Communication', *Philosophy Today,* Winter*,* pp: 389-422.

Macy, D. (2001) *Dictionary of Critical Theory*, Penguin Reference.

Malpas, J.E. (2007) *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography,* UK: Cambridge University Press.

Martin, J. (2004) *The Intercultural Performance Handbook*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Masaru, E. (2001) *The Hidden Messages in Water*, New York: Atria Books.

Matthews, J. (2014) *Anatomy of Performance Training*, London, New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama.

McAllester, M. (1984) Bachelard Twenty Years On: An Assessment, *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, No 2/1984.

McCullough, C. (1998) *Theatre Praxis – Teaching Drama Through Practice*, Basingstoke & London: Macmillan Press Limited.

McCutcheon, J.R., Sellers-Young, B. (eds.) (2013) *Embodied Consciousness: Performance Technologies,* New York/Hants: Palgrave Macmillan.

Merleau-Ponty, M., (trans. Smith, C) (2002) *Phenomenology of Perception*, London and New York: Routledge.

Merlant, Christophe (1998) 'L'Ecole Lecoq: des Movements de la Vie a la creación vivante'. *Revue Cassandre*, N° 23 et 24, mai et juille.

Mermikides, A., Smart, J. (eds.) (2010) *Devising in Process*, Hants: Palgrave Macmillan.

Miller, J. (2000) *The Passion of Michel Foucault*, USA: Harvard University Press.

Miller, J. (2007) *Ariane Mnouchikine (Routledge Performance Practitioners),* Abingdon: Routledge.

Mitter, S., Shevtsova, M. (2005) *Fifty Key Theatre Directors*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Morris, C. W. (1993) *Symbolism and Reality: A Study in the Nature of Mind*, USA and The Netherlands: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Murray, S. (2003) *Jacques Lecoq*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Murray, S., Keefe, J. (2007) *Physical Theatres – A Critical Introduction*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Murray, S (2010) *Jacques Lecoq, Monika Pagneux and Philippe Gaulier: Training for Play, Lightness and Disobedience*, Chapter 13 (pp. 215-236) in Hodge, A. (ed.) *Actor Training*, Second Edition, Abingdon: Routledge.

National Theatre: Discover More. [video online] *Movement: An Actor's Warm-up part one*, available at: <http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/video/an-actors-warm-up-part-one> (Accessed: 14 May 2015).

Navarro, L. (1978) [image online]: *La Cueca Sola, International Womens Day.* Available at: <http://www.elquintopoder.cl/cultura/cueca-sola-desde-el-imaginario-social/> (Accessed: 14 February 2013).

Nelson, R. (2013) *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances,* UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Neruda, P. *Las Alturas de Macchu Picchu*, [Online] Available at: <http://www.neruda.uchile.cl/obra/cantogeneral.htm> (Accessed: 7 July 2011).

Noë, A. (2006) *Action in Perception,* USA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Noë, A. (2008) *Dance as a Way of Knowing,* Interview by Marion Barrios Solano [online] available at: <DancetechTV, http://dance-tech.tv/videos/alvanoe/> (Accessed: 21 February 2013).

Noticiero: 24 (1973) *Horas Noticias, Bombardeo a La Moneda, 18 de Septiembre de 1973*, [video online] available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZ3TWIGrihk> (Accessed: 21 February 2013).

Oddey, A. (1994) *Devising Theatre – a practical and theoretical handbook*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Oida, Y., Marshall, L. (2007) *An Actor's Tricks*, London: Methuen Drama.

Onions, C.T. (ed.) (1969) *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Open ATM. Org (n.d.) *Feldenkrais Awareness Through Movement Lessons* [online recordings] available at: <www.openatm.org/recordings.html> (Accessed: 15 May 2014)

Oxford English Dictionary (n.d.) [online] available at: <http://www.oed.com> (Accessed: 14July 2012).

Pagneux, M. (2012) *Inside Outside: theatre/movement/being*, UK: Robert Golden Pictures Ltd.

Pearson, M., Shanks, M. (2001) *Theatre/Archaeology,* Abingdon: Routledge.

Pecknold, A. (1989) *Mime – The Step Beyond Words,* Toronto: NC Press Limited.

Picart, C. (2007) Metaphysics in Gaston Bachelard's 'Reverie. *Human Studies,* Vol. 20, No. 1 (Jan., 1997), pp. 59-73. Published by: Springer [online] available at: <www.jstor.org> (Accessed: 23 September 2012).

Pitches, J. (2006) *Science and the Stanislavsky Tradition of Acting*, London: Routledge.

Pitches, J., Popat, S. (eds.) (2011) *Performance Perspectives – A Critical Introduction,* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pollio, H., Henley, T., Thompson, C. (1997) *The Phenomenology of Everyday Life: Empirical Investigations of Human Experience*, UK, USA, Australia: Cambridge University Press.

Preston-Dunlop, V. (1998) *Dance Words*, Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers.

Rancière, J. (2009) *The Emancipated Spectator*, London / New York: Verso.

Reeve, S. (2011) *Nine Ways of Seeing a Body*, Axminster: Triarchy Press.

Reinelt, J. and Roach, J. (eds.) (2007) *Critical Theory and Performance*, USA: University of Michigan Press.

Riley, S.R. and Hunter, L. (eds.) (2009) *Mapping Landscapes for Performance as Research: Scholarly Acts and Creative Cartographies*, Hants: Palgrave Macmillan.

Roy, J.N. (1999) DVD: *Les Deux Voyages de Jacques Lecoq* (The Two Journeys of Jacques Lecoq), La sept ARTE.

Rupp, R. (2005) *Four Elements: Water, Air, Fire and Earth,* London: Profile Books.

Russell Brown, J, (2001) *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Theatre*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Salvatierra Capdavila, C. (2006) *La Escuela Jacques Lecoq: Una Pedagogía para la Creación Dramática*, unpublished PhD thesis, Universidad de Barcelona, Spain.

Saunders, C., Macnaughton, J. (eds.), (2009) *The Body and the Arts,* Hants: Palgrave Macmillan.

Schechter, J. (2003) *Popular Theatre – A Source Book*, Second Edition, London: Routledge.

Seigel, J. (1995) *The Private Worlds of Marcel Duchamp: Desire, Liberation, and the Self in Modern Culture*, Berkley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.

Sheets-Johnstone, M. (1999) *The Primacy of Movement – Advances in Consciousness Research*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Sheets-Johnstone, M. (2009) *The Corporeal Turn: An Interdisciplinary Reader,* UK, USA: Imprint Academic.

Shepard, R. (1972) *Mime: The Technique of Silence*, London: Vision Press Limited.

Shepherd, S., Wallis M. (2004) *Drama Theatre Performance (The New Critical Idiom)*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Sienaert, E.R. (1990) Marcel Jousse: The Oral Style and the Anthropology of Gesture. *Oral Tradition*, 5/1: pp, 91-106 [online] available at <http://wenku.baidu.com/view/d7f1c9140b4e767f5acfceba.html?re=view> (Accessed: 01 August 2015).

Smith, H., Dean, R. (eds.) (2010) *Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts,* Scotland: Edinburgh University Press.

Smith, R. C. (1982) *Gaston Bachelard*, Boston: Twayne Publishers.

Spatz, B. (2015) *What a Body Can Do: Technique as Knowledge, Practice as Research*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Steeves, J. (2004) *Imagining Bodies: Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy of Imagination*, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.

Stroud, J. *The Future of Beauty: Gaston Bachelard as Guide,* [Online] available at:
<http://www.dallasinstitute.org/listenandview_read_gastonbachelardasguide.htm> (Accessed: 09 November 2013).

Tate.org (n.d.) *Glossary of Art Terms: Found Object* [online] available at:
<http://www.tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/glossary/f/found-object> (Accessed: 06 August 2014).

Taussig, M. (1993) *Mimesis and Alterity – A Particular History of the Senses*, New York, London: Routledge.

Tilghman Sherman, J. (2010) *Spaces of Play: A phenomenology of Stage Presence*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Northwestern, USA.

Tillyard E.M.W. (1943) *The Elizabethan World Picture*, London: Penguin Books.

Torevell, D. (2007) *Liturgy and the Beauty of the Unknown: Another Place,* Hants: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Trencsényi, K., Cochrane, B. (eds.) (2014) *New Dramaturgy: International Perspectives on Theory and Practice*, London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama.

Tufnell, M., Crickmay, C. (2004) *A Widening Field, Journeys in Body and Imagination,* Princeton Book Co Pub.

Turner, C., Beherndt, S. (2008) *Dramaturgy and Performance,* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Unwin, S. (2010) *Twenty Buildings Every Architect Should Understand*, London and New York: Routledge.

Varela, F. J. (1999) *Ethical Know-how, Action, Wisdom and Cognition*, California: Stanford University Press.

Varela, F., Shear, J. (1999) First Person Methodologies: What? Why? How? [online] available at*:* <www.imprint.co.uk/pdf/VFW_introduc.pdf> (Accessed: 05 May 2011).

Varela, F., Thompson, E., Rosch, E. (1993) *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience*, Massachussetts: MIT Press.

Verma, N. K. (2008) *Comprehensive Chemistry XII*, New Delhi: Laxmi Publications Pvt Ltd.

Verwoert, J. (2006) *In Search of the Miraculous,* London: Afterall Books.

Voituriez, A. (2009) *Formation de l'acteur,* production ARTE France-3X+, [online] available at: www.ecole-jacqueslecoq.com (Accessed: 26 May 2011)

Vydra, A. (2012) Solitude as a Philosophical Stance in the Late Bachelard, Affectivity, Agency, and Intersubjectivity. *Institute of Philosophy of Trnava University,* (pp. 187-201) [online] available at: <http://philpapers.org/rec/AJDAAA> (Accessed: 12 July 2013).

Whitehead, D.(2003) Poeisis and Art-Making: A Way of Letting Be. *Contemporary Aesthetics*, Volume 1, 2003, [online] available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.7523862.0001.005> (Accessed: 20 September 2015).

Willson, S., Fusetti, G. (2002) '*Pedagogy of the Poetic Body'*, *The Paris Jigsaw*. In Bradby and Delgado(eds.) pp. 93 -101, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Witkin, R. (1974) *The Intelligence of Feeling*, London: Heinemann Educational Publishers.

Wood, David. (ed.) (1990) "Philosopher's Poets*", Warwick Studies in Philosophy and Literature,* London: Routledge.

Wright, J. (2006) *Why is that so Funny? A Practical Exploration of Physical Comedy*, London: Nick Herne Books.

Wright, J. (1994) Monika Pagneux, some thoughts on her teaching and unique approach. In *Total Theatre*, 6 (1), p.11.

Yarrow, A., Frost, R. (2015) *Improvisation in Drama, Theatre and Performance*. 3rd ed. London: Palgrave.

Zarrilli, P. (ed.) (2002), *Acting (Re)Considered – A theoretical and practical guide,* Second Edition, Abingdon: Routledge.

Zarrilli, P. (2004) Toward a Phenomenological Model of the Actor's Embodied Modes of Experience. Source: *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 56, No. 4, Theorizing the Performer pp. 653-666. Published by: The Johns Hopkins University PressStable [online] available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25069533> (Accessed: 22 October 2010).

Zarilli, P. (2009) *Psychophysical Acting: An Intercultural Approach After Stanislavski,* Abingdon: Routledge.

Zarilli, P., Daboo. J., Loukes, R. (2013) *Acting: Psychophysical phenomenon and process*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Zemach-Bersin, D. (2012) Discovering the Feldenkrais Method. *New York Spirit*, Dec 2012/Jan & Feb.2013 [online] available at: <http://feldenkraisinstitute.com/images/uploads/ Feldenkrais.pdf> (Accessed: 14 July 2014).