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**A Body of Work: Performance and Becoming**

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A Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in  
Theatre Studies

University of Warwick  
School of Theatre, Performance and Cultural Policy  
Studies

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## **Declaration**

At the time of the submission, none of the material contained in this thesis has been published elsewhere.

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that it has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

## Dedication

This work is dedicated to Louise, Neave and Leon. For the endless waiting, I'm sorry.



## Abstract

This thesis explores the relationship between body and site in performance. The research is conducted through the making and examination of a number of the researcher's own works. Touring and site-based works are examined in relation to specific examples of other contemporary artistic practice.

The research is an embodied relationship between theory and practice. Performance works directed by the researcher were created in collaboration with other artists. The process of creating these works is the lived experience of the interaction of the creation of art images and critical theory. These works are then interrogated as part of an ongoing artistic process. This thesis is one element of a tripartite enquiry, comprising practice, theory and documentation, which constitute a 'body of work'.

The 'body of work' engages over time with the notion of life as a quality experienced through the body and occasioned by movement. From this perspective it interrogates the static notion of 'being' and argues that this notion is limited in examining contemporary performance practice. Through an investigation of theories of 'becoming' and an exploration of an embodied practice of 'becoming' this research proposes a model of 'fluid being' to articulate the nature of the body within 'the body of work'.

The research concludes that the 'fluid being' manifest in the lived experience of the 'body of work' is an open constellation that militates against any notion of site as that which can contain it. It therefore speculates towards a notion that, in a practice occasioned by 'fluid being', the primary relation of practice is with the temporal occasion of life as lived experience rather than spatial notions of site.

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## Notes on Illustrations

This Doctoral study has been conducted through my art practice. I argue that the practice, theory and documentation together make up a 'body of work'. It is therefore necessary that the practice of my work is present within the text. This presents certain difficulties which are explored within the thesis. For clarity I have included photographic records of practice, plans and supporting documentation within the appendixes. I have included a DVD disc which can be read by a domestic DVD player or a computer DVD Rom drive. The DVD disc contains video evidence of my practice in the order in which it occurs within the thesis.

The DVD sections are referenced within the text and the same titles appear on the DVD. These titles contain chapter and work reference, for example,

Chapter Two: Bodies  
*Machine Dance*  
Section One  
Diggers as Machines

The video record of practice is not the practice itself. The video performs two functions. Firstly, it is 'evidence' of specific practice. The second function is a provocation to the text. The video does not 'illustrate' the text but seeks to challenge it with the contradictions of lived experience and critical theory. It is necessary therefore, that the text should be read in close proximity to a DVD playback device to allow the reader to engage with this challenge.

## **Acknowledgements**

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## Introduction

### C'est la Vie: A Statement

In starting the process of interrogation that is this thesis it seems appropriate to begin with a question: Why undertake the making of performance? This question asks me to nail my colours to the mast and state what it is I think I am doing as an artist. For me, performance is the mechanism with which to resist the assumption that *this is how life is*. It is my intention that within my life process the casual acceptance of the everyday is resisted by engagement in the activity of performance. This is my passion: that the phenomenon that is the moments of life experienced in the everyday does not pass unnoticed or unquestioned. I seek through my work to 'notice' the everyday that I experience. My work then can be characterised as a reflexive process engaged with *how life is*. This process is intimately linked with my experience of my life.

My experience of my life is as a process, a movement. It is from this experience that I attempt to engage with the life with which I am moving. I shall argue that this notion of movement posits fluid relations of process and flow and implies a temporal quality to my



work. The notion of movement inherent in my work thus questions static spatial descriptions of my work as located or positioned. This leads me to question the spatial relations of my work. Any notion of flow or process implies movement through time. It is necessary therefore to engage with the notions of temporality within my work. Finally, my experience of my life is through the action of embodiment. Without the body there would be no experience of life. This then establishes a tripartite enquiry. The structure of the written element of this thesis is an engagement with each of these relations in three chapters: the Movement of Space; the Movement of Time; the Movement of Bodies. The practical submission of this thesis is these relations occasioned by performance in a series of operations.

The notion *how life is* can be proposed as a strategy of limits which seek to circumscribe the action of living. Edward Dorn<sup>1</sup> the poet engages with the notion of life and limits thus,

The mortal can be described  
the Gunslinger finished,  
That's all mortality is  
in fact.

It is my interpretation that Dorn regards description as death. I do not wish to describe my work

---

<sup>1</sup> Edward Dorn, *The Gunslinger*, 1989, 33



but I must for the purposes of this thesis draw out some of its elemental qualities, to engage with its occasion and thereby embrace its mortal qualities.

My work is a process that is an essential element of my lived experience and cannot be separated from it. My work functions as an exploration of the everyday through play<sup>2</sup>. As such, my work is an ongoing activity to come to terms with a set of relations, which may always be challenged and extended, which seek to bring about a 'mindfulness' of the habit of being. I shall argue that the 'habit of being' is the acceptance of the notion that *this is how life is*. It is my intention that the works that comprise my practice are not a 'knowing' of the subject and thus do not present an insight but rather that they are an attempt at an 'unknowing' through which one might return again to the action of experience: to pursue the moment of discovery and in this respect to strive to be 'insightful'. I propose that a quality of my work is that it is in the middle of things, it does not begin and end and contain an insight but rather starts and stops and strives for the insightful.

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<sup>2</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, 1992. *The Logic of Practice*, Bourdieu argues that "the body believes in what it plays at" the process of play as a practice is a process of actualisation. Bourdieu argues that within play "what is 'learned by the body' is not something that one has, like knowledge that can be brandished, but something that one is." (Bourdieu, 1992, 73) The practice of my work is thus my process of becoming as an artist.

For me, the practice of work is divergent thinking: a growth of multiple possibilities. The process of theory is convergent thinking; a struggle to a 'knowing' which is a process of circumscribing. I am not suggesting a dualism of thinking as I suggest there is another kind of thinking which is 'an embodied mindfulness of becoming' which I will describe in chapter three; the movement of time. I have stated that my work is a questioning of the everyday as manifest in the 'habit' of being. In this way the work must be considered as questioning or working-over (a process of erosion in the geological sense) of the culture within which it occurs.

In this thesis I will argue persistently against dualism. It is therefore necessary to establish that this thesis is not functioning as a dualism of 'theory' and 'practice'. The nature of the submission of practice with theoretical enquiry contains an implicit dualist structure. It could be suggested that the submission of theoretical writing with evidence of practice functions as a straightforward dialectical relationship. I wish to argue that this is not the case. The documentation that forms part of this thesis is not the performance and it is not simply the theory. While accepting that it does in some cases perform an evidentiary role it is also a presence of the 'other' of this relationship. The documentation is a trace of lived experience which exists

outside the page and is no longer the time of its becoming and as such it is residue: the presence of decay. It is in effect the corpse and as such sits between the practice and theory, but it also comes before the practice and after the theory in a cyclical relationship. I see the three components of practice, theory and documentation as life, death and decay. This is a braid: an inseparable relationship of the process of life. This 'braid' of life processes functions as a tripartite structure through which the enquiry of this research is engaged. I shall argue that this 'braid' is occasioned by movement.

The notion that this work is a braid of life processes that are intimately linked with my singular life experience therefore creates a wide-ranging investigation. To engage with the notion of 'life' it is necessary to engage with concepts of space, time and bodies. To narrow the field of this enquiry I have engaged with these concepts through the specific conditions of my work. The conditions of my work are: my experience of life as occasioned by embodiment, the essential conditions of that embodiment as occurring within a world of nature and culture of capitalism. Finally, an engagement with the question of the quality experienced as 'life' as a notion of a 'becoming' (posited as an emerging condition) rather than a 'being'



(posited as a constructed position functioning as an 'established' state). The conditions of my work are a complex intermingling of the material and immaterial elements of life. The everyday conditions of my work are that I make work now, with people. This work is performed in the street, theatres and many other locations and this work is funded by public money. The work exists in, and is 'about', the everyday.

### The Presence of Theory

The question arises "what then is the function of theory in this braid of 'life processes'?" To consider this question we could consider this thesis without theory. The two remaining elements of this tripartite enquiry would then be practice and documentation. I argue that a fundamental quality of practice for this research is movement. The documentation functioning as a 'corpse' comprises fragments and shards that provoke knowledge of that movement as having occurred. The result of an absence of theory would be a submission of movement and its trace.

How then is this movement to be engaged? This movement of practice occurs in the everyday. It can be encountered in the moment of performance. The occasion of performance is a temporal moment from which the

connections of the work ripple out in all directions as image actions in process. The everyday includes the material world of objects and the immaterial world of culture. Theory is the reflexive process which seeks out the moments of interaction that occur between the material and the immaterial through the movement of practice. The reflexive process offers the opportunity for another encounter with this movement from a different temporal and physical relation to the work. This functions as an examination of the work through particular 'strings' of ideas. These 'strings' create the opportunity to observe the articulations of the practice in specific directions. This process works in conjunction with the engagement with the general radiation out from the moment of occurrence that is the experience of the moment of performance.

In this thesis theory operates as a web of geographical relations. This web or lattice of 'strings of ideas' does not 'position' the practice, the relation is dynamic, functioning more as a tracking of the connections and processes through which the practice moves. The practice is permeable to its occasion and encounters with theory, it operates like a sieve through which theory passes into practice and practice into theory in a two way exchange. In this way the 'opening out' of the movement of practice through life can be

discerned in the wake of the movement of practice in its encounters with theory. Conversely, the ingress of theory into the practice serves as a provocation-to-action which continues to fuel the movement of the practice.

This notion of the fluidity between theory and practice militates against the notion that the theory can 'contain' the practice. The engagement of theory could be seen as a placing of limits on the practice. However, the practice in its movement seeks an openness which constantly refuses a final position or strategy of limits. In this way the theory can never be an explanation of the practice. The theory is but one of the three strands which make up the braid of this research.

The theories employed in this research operate as a web of geographical relations. This web of relations is an attempt to focus on how the practice could be connecting to broader knowledge. The notion of theory employed in this research includes not only the focus of specific theoretical ideas but also an engagement with the knowledge and 'other forms of knowing' contained in the art images and processes of other artists.

Within the web of theoretical relations posited in this thesis there are a series of key elements which help to orient the process of this research.

This thesis is structured as an introduction, three chapters and concluding speculations. The introduction is



a theoretical overview and includes the fundamental starting point of the 'fact' of the body drawing on the notion of the body as 'thing' expressed by Elizabeth Grosz. This notion helps to guide the research from the perspective of embodiment and a fundamental precept of that embodiment is the body's status as a 'thing'.

The three chapters divide the lived experience of this body of work into three main areas. These areas are: space, bodies and time. Each of these becomes central to a chapter. It should be noted that the divisions are fraught with problems, each of these elements are not easily separated from each other within the work. However, they appear as the most useful structure for this research.

Each chapter engages with a theoretical orientation for the research questions within that chapter and an engagement with these notions in the practice of my own work. This is expanded into a wider context by examining the work of other artists who I feel are engaging with the same questions in a challenging and apposite way for this research.

The subject of each chapter is huge. Therefore the strategy employed is the creation of the 'idea strings' to focus on particular theoretical aspects of the subject of each chapter.

Chapter one focuses on the body's relation to space informed by notions of site and location as these terms are applied to performance. There is an examination of the contrasting notions of site within site specific performance as proposed by Nick Kaye and Miwon Kwon.

Kaye suggests a notion of site as that which can be constructed and which is defined by 'use' through the work of architect Bernard Tschumi. Kaye focuses on Tschumi's project for La Villete. This is an urban construction project that has the notion of 'use' as central. In engaging with Kaye's theories I contrast La Villete with Rachel Whiteread's project *House*, another urban construction project that engages directly with 'use'. This work offers a very clear comparison with Tschumi's project at La Villete and facilitates an alternative reading of the notion of 'use'.

A focus on a relation between body and space as one of 'use' allows for a direct engagement between abstract notions of spatiality and the experience of space as lived in the everyday.

In exploring alternate readings of the notion of site to that proposed by Kaye, I refer to the notion of site as 'discursive vector' as proposed by Kwon. This notion is then explored in the work *Drunk* by Gillian Wearing. I argue that *Drunk* abstracts from the urban environment the real everyday lived experience of



alcoholism. I further propose that, through her artistic strategy, Wearing contextualises that experience as a site or discursive vector which is not 'sited' by a specific place or location.

The notion of place and its relation to site and location are engaged in my own work through a reading of Marc Augé's theory of non-place and its application to the *True Project*.

Chapter two focuses on the notion of the body as 'other' to simple subject-object divisions. The concept of the 'otherness' of the body is explored in particular relation to Gilles Deleuze's theory of immanence. This establishes an idea 'string' of the body as something which is always in the process of 'becoming'. This allows for the notion of the body as that which is fluid.

To characterise this fluid body of this research a three string enquiry is pursued. These are: what a body has; what a body is; and what a body does. Drawing from Deleuze's theory of 'A Life'<sup>3</sup> informed by John Cage's work on silence and augmented with Jacques Derrida's notion of the 'gift' of death it is argued that what a body has, is a fundamental quality that is called life. This quality of life comprises 'A Life' of the body as well as 'the life' of the individual.

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<sup>3</sup> The notion of 'A Life' is drawn from the work of Gilles Deleuze, in particular *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*, 2001.

The pursuit of 'what a body is' for this research, is conducted through a reading of Grosz's work on corporeality and gender as fluid concept. Grosz's theories are also informed by Deleuze's notion of the body as a zone of 'machinic' connections. Extending on from this 'string' I suggest a notion of the body as extensible surface.

The notion of extensible surface is explored in relation to the work of William Cobbing. In his challenging work on the nature of organic and inorganic form Cobbing has explicitly investigated the extension of surface between the body and environment through the physical extension of surface between the animate and inanimate. This clarity of the idea of the body as a surface that can extend and combine focuses a specific engagement with my work *Machine Dance* which can be read as an extension of this principle into the everyday.

The third 'string' of this enquiry is: what a body does. I suggest that what a body does is 'combine'. Informed by the neurological research of Antonio Damasio: specifically his notion of the biological self as fundamentally related to the physical and social environment, I suggest that the process of 'combining' is a two way process. In such a process the body is both altering and being altered by its engagement with the material and immaterial realm. The concrete reality of

Cobbing's sculptural forms is a very specific provocation to a process that has to be inferred as occurring within my projects *Machine Dance* and *Fearless*.

The process of combination of the body with the material of surface and the immaterial of the everyday world within the context of the everyday experience of capitalism is extremely complex. I have chosen to juxtapose the dynamic flow of *Fearless* with the specific 'moment' of Jeff Wall photographs. Wall's work with the project of modern life focussing on the body is very similar to my own but is diametrically opposed in its execution. This mixture of similarity with the difference of approach I believe is illuminating in its juxtaposition.

Chapter three focuses on the body's relationship to time. Drawing together Helga Nowotny's notion of the 'extended present' and Sanford Kwinter's theories of time as an actualising process, I suggest a reading of contemporary experience of time as cyclical. The inherent qualities of this notion of time are that it is an individual 'proper' time and that it is fluid.

To engage the body specifically in its relationship to time I conducted a two year performance research project in HMP Dovegate, a category B prison. I suggest that within the prison system aspects of the relations between the body, space and time can be seen with an



alternate clarity to the everyday. The relations between the prison, urban environment and bodies are contextualised with reference to Foucault's arguments in *Discipline and Punish*. The project explored performance modes in which time becomes fluid and personal, and implicitly resists the inherent time and discipline structures of the institution.

The *Dancing Inside* project is informed by the performance work of Steve Paxton and the practice of Contact Improvisation. Contact is a form that focuses on the relations at work between two bodies moving together in time and space. This form is central to much of my own practice and was utilised in the creation of *Dancing Inside*.

The *Dancing Inside* project is also informed by a reading of the performance practice of Free Running. Free Running is a practice which implicitly resists the time structure and inherent narrative of the urban environment. The practice is a playing with the environment using the body's potential to meld with the environment in new and exciting ways, utilising a raw physicality. The insertion of the body directly as a challenge to the nature of the everyday experience of the urban environment has parallels with strategies employed in the *Dancing Inside* project.

The relation to time and physicality in both these comparative practices are clear examples of the 'sieve' nature of the relation between practice and theory in this research. It flows into the practice process and out of the practice performance and contributes considerably to the engagement with *Dancing Inside* and relations of time and the body.

The research concludes with a series of speculations on the nature of this research and the notion of the braid of practice, theory and documentation functioning as a 'body of work'.

To choose the work of other artists to include in this research I employed two specific criteria. The first was a wish to engage with a breadth of artistic practice. Second, I looked for work that intersected directly to the 'sieve' notion of the relationship of theory to practice. I did not concern myself with the specific 'discipline' of their practice. This choice adds considerably to the width of practice under consideration and offers a particular clarity to the research. It must be acknowledged however, that this has led to an imbalance within the research of performance based practice by other artists.

I wish to acknowledge that there is a great deal of exceptional work by other practitioners that engages with similar concerns to my own. I do not wish to suggest

by omission that mine is a singular practice that does not bear relation to other performance practice.

The performance based work of Paxton and the Free Runners is included in my research but the work by Alain Platel, Societas Raffaello Sanzio and Shunt for example are not. This is a limit on the depth of the performance research that I have chosen in order to gain the vision of the wider artistic practice. I felt this choice was necessary to allow for a full engagement with the nature of this research within the limits imposed by undertaking such a wide ranging study within the limits of this thesis.

It is necessary to deal with the question of omission and limits throughout the research. This research essentially seeks to engage with a life in process. This is an impossible task. The field is so broad as to be completely beyond the possible scope of a thesis.

Extensive areas of life have been omitted. For example, this thesis does not engage in the psychological and attendant notions of 'self'. There is no engagement with political structures of society. There is no detailed engagement with capitalism as the environment in which the work occurs. There is not an engagement with questions of faith or notions such as 'god'.

I would argue that it is not possible to engage with notions of 'life', space, time and bodies without reference to philosophy. However, this research is not a philosophical enquiry; the general philosophical examination within it is limited. A general notion of 'being' drawing from Heidegger and theories of 'becoming' are stated to establish the terrain for a notion of fluidity rather than fixity as the basis of this enquiry. I am not a philosopher and it is beyond the remit of this enquiry to challenge philosophical notions.

I attempt also to lay out the philosophical terrain in which this research is operating within the notions of space, bodies and time. Any engagement with the notion of time for example needs orienting. As an abstraction time is difficult to engage. This is particularly challenging for this research.

The research is however, effective once the general orientation is established, in engaging with particular philosophical perspectives in relation to the work. An example of this is the relation of the notion of immanence and Deleuze's notion of 'A life' informed by Cage's work on silence and Derrida's theory of the 'Gift of Death'. These relations create a particular perspective of what constitutes 'a life' with which to engage with the ephemeral qualities of *Machine Dance*.



The general tension between the width of enquiry undertaken and the depth to which it is pursued is evident in the relationships between practice, theory and documentation in different parts of the research.

In chapter one the complex nature of the *True* project, and the issues of space, location, site and performance with which it intersects, means that the enquiry is extremely broad. The spaces between the elements of this research are necessarily further apart which results in the relation of those elements being less explicit.

In chapter three the nature of the *Dancing Inside* project and its specific focus allows for the spaces between the elements of this research to be much closer. Foucault's ideas on prisons create a close critical framework augmented by the utilisation of the practices of Paxton and Free Running as directly engaged in the project. This allows for a tighter reading of the relations between all the elements.

I wish to argue it is in the movement between the elements of this research that its strengths lie. What is not examined explicitly in theoretical terms is often engaged implicitly in the occurrence of performance. The 'other knowings' inherent in the lived experience of the practice are a balance to the problems of the width of enquiry.



## The Fact of the Body

An initial engagement with the notion of embodiment must engage with the material fact of the body. In the everyday within which my work occurs, the body is occasioned as a material fact: an object. It can be seen, touched, and appears finite as an entity. It interacts with other bodies that appear to have these same characteristics. I shall engage with these assumptions extensively throughout this research. I shall argue that the body is not defined or circumscribed by its objecthood. It is necessary to examine the nature of the body as a thing. At the outset it is important to resist notions of subject and object dualism. Grosz argues,

The thing is not conceived as the other, the binary double of the subject, the self, embodiment, or consciousness, but as its condition and the resource for the subject's being and enduring. (Grosz, 2001, 240)

The 'thingness' of the body is posited not as the action of embodiment but as a condition for that embodiment, a necessary resource. I shall argue this 'condition' does not have to establish the dualist notion of the independent object of the body. The mind-body split inaugurated by Descartes is predicated upon the subject-object conception of the body. Grosz turns to

notions of the 'natural' world to explore the notion of the 'thing'.

Instead of turning to Descartes or his hero, Newton, to understand things and the laws governing them, we must instead begin with Darwin and his understanding of the thing - the dynamism of the active world of natural selection - as that which provides the obstacle, the question and the means by which life itself grows, develops, undergoes evolution and change, becomes older than it once was. The thing is the provocation of the non-living, the half-living, or that which has no life, to the living, to the potential of and for a life. (Grosz, 2001, 240)

Grosz argues that the thing is of the natural world and is the means by which life grows. The thing is posited as a provocation of, or to, life. Grosz suggests that the relations between 'things' or matter of the material world and 'life' are one of accommodation.

Life is the growing accommodation of matter, the adaptation of the needs of life to the exigencies of matter. It is matter, the thing that produces life; it is matter, the thing which sustains and provides life with its biological organisation and orientation; and it is matter, the thing, that requires life to overcome itself, to evolve, to become more. (Grosz, 2001, 240)

The thing or matter is not life but is that which sustains life and that which produces life in the material realm. The biological organisation of the

physical body (which does not circumscribe the notion of embodiment as I shall argue later) is the accommodation of matter to life. This accommodation of the thing is not a totality of our existence. Grosz suggests the thing is a mode of existing in the world.

The thing is our way of dealing with the plethora of sensations, vibrations, movements, and intensities that constitute both our world and ourselves, a practical exigency, indeed perhaps only a mode, not a necessary condition, of our acting in the world. (Grosz, 2001, 242)

The element of embodiment that is the biological organisation of the body-as-thing is characterised as a 'practical exigency' or a 'mode' of acting in the world. This notion of the thing is a process of accommodation by life as it is lived in the world. That world is a world in which the body pragmatically interacts with other bodies rather than a world which is subject to the body, Grosz argues "Things are our way of dealing with a world in which we are enmeshed rather than over which we have dominion." (Grosz, 2001, 242) Things are a way of living and acting within the world, a world of connections and linkages rather than a world subject to the 'thing' of the material body. Grosz states

We cannot help but view the world in terms of solids, as things. But we leave behind something untapped of the fluidity of the world, the movements, vibrations,



transformations that occur below the threshold of perception and calculation and outside the relevance of our practical concerns. (Grosz, 2001, 243)

The thing of our body is a way of connecting with life rather than an instrument that controls life. The biological body as thing is not simply an object or a total entity, rather it can be considered as a mode or strategy of dealing with materiality. Grosz argues, "The thing and the body are correlates: both are artificial or conventional, pragmatic conceptions, cuttings, disconnections" (Grosz, 2001, 248). The fact of the body as thing is therefore posited as a 'pragmatic conception' of dealing with the everyday being-in-the-world as experienced through the component of embodiment that is biological organisation.

In this way I wish to argue that the biological body is considered not as an object of life, but that which functions as a surface to life. This surface functions as a singular notion rather than the subject-object dualism and will be developed throughout this thesis. At this point it is sufficient to posit this initial notion of surface as an engagement with the fact of the body as a 'pragmatic conception' of 'thing'.

A critical operation employed within this thesis, to engage with the work and orient away from notions of dualism, is the notion of surface. Throughout this thesis

I will be developing this notion of surface in relation to my work drawing on the work of Deleuze, Grosz, Cobbing and Arendt.

The practice of the work with which this research engages occurs in the realm of lived experience. Elements of the work occur in the everyday of social space. Chris Philo has identified what he terms as a "surface account" (Philo, 2000, 231) of the social world in the work of Foucault and Baudrillard. This geographical mapping of the surface of social relations is expressed through the notion of the "geography of thing" (Baudrillard in Philo, 2000, 230). In order to pursue this initial exploration of the 'fact' of the work as existing in a world of nature and a culture of capitalism, understood through the 'pragmatic conception' of the thing, and, to orient appropriately, it is necessary to consider the conditions of the work through the notion of the 'geography of things'. This notion is an initial spatialisation of this discourse that will become expanded and challenged through the process of this research. An engagement with geographic and spatial terms is a helpful starting point but it does not indicate an acceptance of a hegemony of spatial relations over temporal relations which will be argued later in this thesis. Chris Philo identifies a common notion of the 'geography of things' in the work of Foucault and Baudrillard. Philo states of Foucault that

he is "the patient archaeologist of substantive geographies" (Philo, 2000, 229). These geographies are related to the space of lived experience and the world of things thus Philo argues of Foucault's work as

proceeding with a clear attunement to real, worldly spaces ('external spaces') full of substance-ridden things (people, animals, forests, rivers, slopes, buildings, roads, railways [...] all jumbled up together and related through spatial relations. (Philo, 2000, 229)

Philo asserts for Foucault that the world of 'substance' is understood in spatial terms as the geography of things which functions as a non-hierarchical series of spatial relations. In the above quote it is evident that these spatial relations engage with the world of nature 'animals, forests' and capitalism 'roads, railways' (acknowledging that Foucault describes such structures within the specific French capitalist culture). Philo suggests that the engagement with the world of things in Foucault's work is a counterweight to the space of abstraction. Thus, for Philo, Foucault's engagement with 'substance-ridden things' has put "enough content into the picture to prevent it becoming an exercise in formal geometry" (Philo, 2000, 229). Philo argues that Foucault's work is not simply a geographical approach to abstract space but an engagement with "substantive geographies" (Philo, 2000, 229). This



argument is supported by Elden's assertion that "Foucault understands both physical and mental conceptions of space to be merely parts of a greater whole, abstractions from the more fundamental level of lived experience" (Elden, 2001, 119). The world of lived experience within which my work occurs is the world of the thing. This world is made up of relations as Philo draws from Foucault,

The space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which erosion [passing] of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space that claws and gnaws at us, is also, in itself a heterogeneous space...We do not live inside a void..., we live inside a set of relations..." (Foucault in Philo, 2000, 229)

These relations are concerned with what takes place in "specific places, environments and landscapes" (Philo, 2000, 230). It is important to note that Foucault states that the space in which we live is not an abstract void: a simple geometric expanse. Foucault posits a complex but heterogeneous space that is a dense web of interconnection and relation. This is the space of lived experience and Foucault engages with it as a surface to be mapped. Philo also identifies this notion of the social world as a surface in the work of Baudrillard. Philo argues,

Baudrillard visualises the social world in terms of what he calls 'the geography of things': a view that arises from a deep

scepticism about the ability of theoretical endeavour to adequately represent the 'goings on' of the thing-realm (the realm of all objects beyond the hallways of theory, including other people), and a view that thereby supposes the thing realm to obey its own rules akin to deep 'geoseismic' logics and forces whose workings will always remain unknowable to the subjectivity of the researcher. (Philo, 2000, 230)

Baudrillard's identification of the difficulties of engaging with the thing-realm as the world of lived experience points to some of the problems faced by this research. I shall argue that the world of lived experience is occasioned through movement understood as occurring through the notion of a surface of lived experience.

Baudrillard employs the metaphor of plate-tectonics to describe the process of shifting relations and events in the social world. I shall also be utilising this notion in this introduction though I shall develop this notion in relation to a general theory of erosion. The utilisation of a physical process to describe a movement in the world of things that comprise the world of lived experience appears a relevant exercise. However, it is not without problems and I shall engage with the notions of 'nature' and social process later in this introduction. It is important to note that notions of



geo-seismic events contain an implicit notion of movement. Philo cites from Baudrillard,

We could perhaps develop a model of drifting plates, to speak in seismic terms, in the theory of catastrophes. The seismic is our form of the slipping and sliding of the referential... Nothing remains but shifting movements that provoke very powerful rare events. We no longer take events as revolutions or effects of the superstructure, but as underground effects of skidding, fractal zones in which things happen. (Baudrillard in Philo, 2000, 230)

Plate-tectonics is a notion of the movement of the planetary surface. An action understood in terms of a surface in the physical world in which the 'things' of plate structures impact and act upon each other.

Baudrillard transposes this thing-centred action from the physical world as a model to the social world of lived experience.

Philo states that,

Baudrillard and Foucault arrive at this geographical way of looking at the social world as a result of their doubts about the great certainties of order, coherence, truth, and reason [...] and move instead to what might be termed a *surface* account, where the things of the world - the phenomena, events, people, ideas, and institutions - are all imagined to lie on the same level (whether that be advanced capitalism or the toy rabbit) in a manner that strives to do away with hierarchical thinking. (Philo, 2000, 231)

This engagement with the things of the world as a surface indicates that such a notion is not without merit in an investigation of my practice in the everyday. The natural and cultural conditions of the occasion of my work can be investigated in terms of surface. The notion of a relation of terms in the geophysical world and the cultural world, while not without problems, is a viable possibility for this research. I shall expand and develop the notion of plate-tectonics as an element of the process of erosion pertinent to the social realm. I shall argue the notion that plate-tectonics is not merely the causative mechanism of the catastrophic but also a process of long term aggregation in the social realm.

### Embodied Practice

The engagement by the body with the lived practice of performance focuses two issues: the relation of the physical body to the biological world of lived practice and the attendant relations of life processes to the 'natural' world; and secondly, the body as the site of some of the most entrenched notions of dualism.

I shall argue in chapter two, The Movement of Bodies that the body functions as a 'field' of multiple relations. It is necessary however to acknowledge that for this thesis the biological element must be pragmatically considered as the work occurs in the world of things and it is therefore necessary at the outset to establish the relations with the 'natural' world through which the biological moves.

It could be argued that the Western urban landscape is an extremely complex interplay between the developing European philosophical tradition with its roots in Greek culture, and the pragmatic use of space as dictated by a developing market economy. The market economy driven by the production of goods has developed attendant forces of industrialisation. These forces are characterised in the temporal realm by developments such as a clear linear temporal structure to enable regulation of production and the markets. The speed of movement necessary for the movement of goods and the movement of people has produced transportation systems which facilitate a society predicated upon evermore rapid movement. Spatially the forces of industrialisation have led to the conglomerations of people required to produce and consume the commodities of the market economy, and the production of spaces that are functional for those needs. Subsequently these functional service 'spaces' then



become rationalised as the desirable forms of urban development. These structures become institutionalised as the structures of the Western wealth-creating model of society. These structures are then themselves subject to the pragmatic needs and desires of smaller groups within the society - the action of communities and alliances of individuals that create what De Certeau<sup>4</sup> defines as a 'resistance' to these institutionalised structures by the people who inhabit them. This resistance is a reinterpretation of these spaces and an erosion of their forms and meanings by the practice of the everyday choices of the individuals who inhabit them. This process is a wearing away, like water upon rock, which will eventually change the course and form of these structures.

This is a process of human geology - the creation of a physical landscape that is wrought between the forces of our thoughts and our actions. This 'human geology' is subject to different time processes in much the same way as physical geography. The gradual development towards production of wealth through farming and primitive

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<sup>4</sup> Michel De Certeau, 1984. *The Practice of Everyday Life*, in this work De Certeau proposes the presence of resistance by groups and individuals to the prevailing socio-economic order. To this order characterised in Foucault's terms as 'discipline' is counterposed a network of "antidiscipline". The process of resistance or antidiscipline is posited thus: "These ways of operating constitute the innumerable practices by means of which users reappropriate the space organised by techniques of sociocultural production." (De Certeau, 1984, xiv)



industry, and the development of cities, can be likened to the long timescale of plate tectonics, the gradual piling up of the mountains. Plate tectonics is the engine of the ongoing material construction of the planet. Driven by the inner energy of the core, the movement of the plates defines the physical environment. This is manifest in many ways, for example: the release of heat, energy from within the planet to the surface; the refashioning of the features of that surface by earthquakes; volcanoes; and the piling up of the mountain ranges. Planet creation is an incredibly complex geophysical process of which plate tectonics is but a component part. It could be posited that there is a similar component to the development of ideas. The origin of ideas is also an incredibly complex process. It is important to note that this notion is explored in terms of a surface in which the elements are regarded as equal. Thus I do not regard the movement of the plates as the process of meta-narratives or development of institutional structures. Rather, that which drives the plates in the social realm - the energy of the core - is that which Foucault<sup>5</sup> describes as escaping history: the dreams, hopes and wishes of the individual or singular in lived experience. It could be suggested that as ideas become adopted on a large scale, such as the aggregation

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<sup>5</sup> Foucault, Michel. 1994 Dits et Écrits Vol3 1976-1979 p787-790

of human activity around particular notions of 'being', these ideas or 'aggregations' can be viewed as a forming of 'plates' within the social realm. These 'plates' then impact on other cultural ideas or 'plates'; the consequences of this impact are the 'working over' of the 'landscape' of ideas and the shaping and fashioning of the physical world through movement. Events such as industrial revolution can be seen as seismic shifts; eruptions that radically alter the landscape in a relatively short period of time, geologically speaking. Each of these processes is understood to be component parts of this physical movement of the planet. It is their manifestation in the short or long term that appears as separate to us. However, the process of erosion in its different forms continually acts upon this geological process of creating and piling up. Erosion itself takes place in many ways and on different timescales. The gradual wearing away by wind and rain, ice, snow and water gradually reshapes the landscape, but this process can also have sudden, huge and violent shifts, where vast areas may be washed away or collapse. These contrasting temporal experiences of physical erosion can be posited as having correlates in the realm of human interactions. In human interactions the steady wearing away by resistance in De Certeau's terms is a gradual process of erosion. This gradual erosion is

contrasted with the apparently sudden and huge shifts that can result from war or changes in science and culture. Baudrillard identifies these sudden shifts as 'geo-seismic' events. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of communism in that state was such a 'sudden' cultural event. The Soviet empire had seemed a vast and immovable structure, yet it collapsed within a couple of months. It appears that there is a build up of energy until it reaches a critical point and then suddenly the release of that energy can be catastrophic. These changes or 'eruptions' can appear historically 'sudden' but are part of the ongoing human movement that is our experience. Erosion is posited as a process of movement. This relation of the notion of natural processes as 'movement' establishes a corollary between the model of geological processes and notions of body and lived experience as occasioned by movement.

In drawing a correlation between processes within nature and processes within culture, it is important for me to establish a notion of nature and how it pertains in relation to space and lived experience.

It could be argued that the cultural is open to construction, existing as it does in the dynamic field of human interaction, but what is 'natural' (of nature), is often what is given as such. That is, the natural is simply the result of the logic of a series of reductive



processes occurring in the physical world. Stephen Jay Gould<sup>6</sup> argues that this is not the case. In two striking examples he proposes a notion that the impact of the singular or individual within nature can be as powerful as the predictions of forces. The first example draws from the discoveries made by the Voyager probe and the effect of this information on the size theory of planetary surfaces. The prevailing notion pre-Voyager was that the nature of planetary surfaces was determined by size alone. This was based on "The principle of surfaces and volumes, as a basic law of physics and the geometry of space..." (Gould, 1991, 492) The discoveries by Voyager, however, confounded the predictions. Crucially, the validity of the physics was never in doubt. However, the results did not conform to what should have been the reductive 'given' of the planetary size theory. The 'natural' did not conform to a reductive logic. Gould demonstrates that whilst the hypothesis is true it is not overriding. He states, of the size theory,

we have learned, in its failure, that planets are more like organisms than billiard balls. They are intricate and singular bodies. Their individuality matters... We must know their particularities, their early histories, their present locations. (Gould, 1991, 498)

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<sup>6</sup> Stephen J Gould, *Bully for Brontosaurus: Reflections in Natural History*, 1991



The basic notion of a 'given' of physics is replaced in the qualitative realm by a complex field of activity consisting of the action of the temporal, the singular and the relative forces occasioned by their present location. This posits the notion that if 'nature' were simply the working out of a 'given', the results would simply have been quantitatively different, not qualitatively different over time. Thus the model of the natural applied here is not 'that which is given' but rather a multitude of singular instances engaged in action of the temporal. This difference is expanded upon in chapter three, The Movement of Time.

In his second example Gould argues that this complex relationship between the singular and the temporal extends into the fields of lived experience. Noting that historians have accepted the notion that individuals can have a great effect on history, Gould argues that the same can be said of individuals in the 'natural' world. Gould cites two examples of individuals within the animal world who were responsible for major changes to group populations. The killings of babies by a cannibal mother and daughter chimpanzee, and a rogue dog's effect on a Kiwi population, are cited to argue the effect of 'individuals' or 'single creatures' against the notion that, "Predictability under nature's laws takes over at

an amplitude of scale and a degree of generality meriting the name "science." (Gould, 1991, 504) Gould then goes on to offer three rebuttals to this argument. The first of these is that,

Scale is a relative concept. Who can set the boundary between perturbations in systems too small to matter and long-term patterns of appropriate generality?  
(Gould, 1991, 504)

On this point Gould goes on to argue that the human grasp of time is insignificant compared with the timescale of biology. The second rebuttal is the effect of the small or singular upon the larger population, which can be profound thus,

small perturbations are not always reined in by laws of nature to bring systems back to previous equilibrium. Perturbations, starting as tiny fluctuations wrought by individuals, can accumulate to profound and permanent alterations in much larger worlds. (Gould, 1991, 505)

The final point is that there can be an inverse notion of scale that can have the same effect: that larger 'laws' can fail on the small scale, thus Gould proposes that "some natural populations may be so small that individuality dominates over pattern even if a larger system might fall under predictable law." (Gould, 1991, 505)

The view of nature that is proposed here, and which I wish to adopt for this thesis, is that nature does have physical laws but that the individual or single creature can subvert these 'laws' and these 'laws' are time and context dependent. There is the possibility of qualitative as well as quantitative change over time. The interplay in the natural is a complex array of overlaying fields of activity, and as such is not antithetical to an enquiry into the nature of space and spaces.

The problem with any notion that engages with nature is the apparent appeal to notions of biologism, naturalism, or reductionism and thus the imposition of a causative-mechanistic principle. The transfer of knowledge from one system to another within biological sciences has fostered the development of consilience within science. E.O. Wilson states that,

The central idea of the consilience world view is that all tangible phenomena from the birth of stars to the workings of social institutions, are based on material processes that are ultimately reducible, however long and tortuous the sequences, to the laws of physics. (E.O. Wilson, 1999, 291)

This reduction to the laws of physics will ultimately lead to a causative principle argues Wilson, "culture and hence the unique qualities of the human species will make complete sense only when linked in



causal explanation to the natural sciences." (E.O. Wilson, 1999, 292) David Harvey argues against what he sees as Wilson's objective of the "harmonious whole" offering an alternative approach which is framed within the 'natural' but resists notions of a totalising harmony thus for Harvey,

I suggest we view knowledges as constructed more on the model of complex interlocking ecologies made up of distinctive processes and parts dynamically feeding off each other in often confusing and contradictory ways. (Harvey, 2000, 228)

This notion of fields of activity or 'ecologies', complex arrays of interactions in process, is a useful model for the relations of knowledge within the investigation of this thesis. I intend to argue that 'knowledges' that are 'open-ended', that are employed as temporary tools, are valid in engaging with a notion of practice that is embodied and therefore resists totalising notions. This 'open-ended' approach to knowledge can be likened to a chain of linkages rather than a single 'truth'. The process of linkage, of how the knowledge is formed, is a constitutive element of such knowledge and sheds light on the process of 'becoming' known. I intend to argue, in relation to this thesis, for knowledge as a process of the action of making a knowing, rather than a discovery of a 'truth' which becomes the



'known'. Epistemologically I am arguing therefore for knowledge of practice as an open-ended knowledge that seeks to grow as it is lived. A becoming knowledge that relies on experience, intuition and an acceptance of life processes as a source of knowledge; in short, knowledge as a complex ecology. For this thesis the encounter with practice occurs through the body. The body occurs in the world of 'things' and as such the body of lived experience cannot deny its biological component and therefore any interrogation of lived practice must engage with the material and, by implication, the natural.

#### The Body and Subject-Object Division

The biological body exists within the processes of nature and culture as a material surface or 'thing'. The 'thing' of the body in lived practice is understood to be living. How the 'fact' of 'life' is conceived and considered has enormous impact on the lived experience of being-in-the-world.

As I stated earlier the body has become the site of some of the most entrenched notions of dualism best illustrated by the subject-object division regarding the body in philosophy: the Cartesian-body, as object, and the Phenomenological-body as subject. Each of these polarising notions engages with the body as container:

either as the limits by which it defines its object status, or as the container of the phenomenological sensations of existence. The binary delineation of subject-object divisions defines a position that functions as a limit, which separates *I* and not *I*: the notion of *I* is a contained and located one. Subject-object division implies a separation from space. Space is posited as distinct and separate. I shall argue for space as a quality of the body. It will be necessary to engage with the language model of space and the problems created by the interpreting of space through language and, more precisely, linguistic terms.

The dualism of the Cartesian-body as object, and the Phenomenological-body as subject, has created something of an impasse in philosophy. As Henri Lefebvre observes, "Philosophy has found it very difficult to get beyond such dualisms as subject and object..." (Lefebvre, 1991, 39). Lefebvre argues that such binary theories are entirely mental in their dualism and are divorced from lived experience. Lefebvre posits that this binarism continues to pervade philosophy despite the "titanic" efforts of Marx and Hegel to resist this constriction; philosophy has "reverted to supposedly relevant dualities" in order to "define intelligibility in terms of opposites and systems of opposites." (Lefebvre, 1991, 39)

This dualism has had a profound influence on the theories I shall investigate in the process of this research. Since Descartes, our Western urban understanding, or model, of space, that is *I* or *me* proposed as an opposition to what is not *I* or *me* has framed notions of space through dualism. This opposition is understood through our language as subject and object. From language, this opposition is represented in our writing particularly semiotics and the dualisms of sign and signifier. I shall argue that this opposition has insinuated itself into structural theories of the text. These theories of writing have become a model for an understanding of space. For the purposes of this research I shall propose another model that will allow us to move away from a 'positional' sense of space. Heidegger states that,

After Descartes, followed by Leibniz and all of modern thinking, humans are experienced as an *I* that relates to the world such that it renders this world to itself in the form of connections correctly established between its representations-that means judgments-and thus sets itself over against this world as an object. (Heidegger, 1996, 119)

Why take issue with this statement and what does it have to do with performance? The essential problematic for this thesis is the circumscribing totalisation inherent within this notion that is then transferred to



spatiality. The human, reduced to the status of object, is therefore a contained interiority and a totally knowable finite object, defined by the boundary of its object status. This interior/exterior division becomes the model for understanding the world. It becomes extended as a model of spatiality. This thesis moves to resist such totalising notions of the body and space in order to examine work that strives to engage with the nature of the incomplete in the body and spatial practice.

### Inside Space

The relation between the body and space is to be explored. It is necessary to engage with the notion that space as the endless void functions as a container of objects and things. Lefebvre states that,

We know that space is not a pre-existing void, endowed with formal qualities alone. To criticise and reject absolute space is simply to refuse a particular representation, that of a container waiting to be filled by content - i.e. matter, or bodies. (Lefebvre, 1991, 170)

Lefebvre argues that under the notion of the container the relationship between space and any content is one of "indifference". This indifference creates a notion of separation between space and objects. I shall go on to argue for the perspective of a fundamental



connection between space and the body, whereby space becomes an a priori condition of bodies. Whilst I shall explore this notion in the following chapters, at this point, however, it is important to establish the justification for such a course. Lefebvre argues that,

There is an immediate relationship between the body and space, between the body's deployment in space and its occupation of space. Before *producing* effects in the material realm (tools and objects), before *producing itself* by drawing nourishment from that realm, and before *reproducing itself* by generating other bodies, each living body *is* space and has its space: it produces itself in space and it also produces that space. (Lefebvre, 1991, 170)

This formulation fundamentally rejects the notion that the body is somehow separated from space; an object held within the container of space. Instead it moves towards the body as a fundamental agency in the occasioning of space. Furthermore, Lefebvre then extends this notion into the realm of "social space" whereby,

This would give us the concept of a specific space produced by forces (i.e. productive forces) deployed within a (social and determined/determining) spatial practice. Such a space would embody 'properties' (dualities, symmetries, etc.) which could not be imputed either to the human mind or to any transcendent spirit, but only to the actual 'occupation' of space, an occupation which would need to be understood genetically - that is, according to the sequence of productive operations involved. (Lefebvre, 1991, 171)

Lefebvre argues for an embodied space that needs to be understood according to "the sequence of productive operations involved", which engages the notion of a produced space. I shall propose a notion of space as *generated* by bodies as a function of life processes. The notion, within this thesis, for an engagement with the theory of surface relations would appear to be problematic in regard to space. However, the notion of space as generated by bodies fundamentally links bodies and space. Lefebvre's notion of an 'immediate relationship' between bodies and space allied with the fact that within science the notion of space as a surface is not dismissed, suggest that an exploration of surface relations is valid. For example, Hawking proposes a theory whereby "time and space together formed a surface" (Hawking, 1990, 136). The idea of space as a surface relation is explored later in this thesis.

Life processes operate as a complex field of activities that resist notions of interior and exterior, totality and finitude. It is important to understand that life processes include the geological, the corporeal and indeed the philosophical, and are not simply a phenomenological process. Lived experience would appear to be a phenomenological position. This thesis will argue, however, that the position of 'subject', which is

an essential element of phenomenology, is not appropriate for this argument. Life processes are not defined through the dualism of subject-object parameters. Life processes are posited as a field of activity, which in the context of this research is embodied. I shall argue that the notion of 'the body' is an open-ended constellation and as such resists totalising notions. The body is an agency of space. This is pursued in chapter two, The Movement of Bodies. The problem of the phenomenological subject extends to the primacy of consciousness itself and its temporalising unity. I shall argue in chapter three, The Movement of Time, that Foucault's notion of the fragmentation of time and its multiplicity no longer centred in time consciousness can be seen in the multiple notions of temporality that are our contemporary experience. I shall argue that multiple conceptions of temporality, such as differential space-time, and the 'proper' times of the observer in the Einsteinian Universe (in which time is understood as relational to the observer) establish a context for positing a notion of time as an internal quality of events. I shall argue that these events are actualised through the nexus of relations of 'a life' of the body and 'the' life of the individual subject. Time, therefore, is posited as a quality of events actualised through embodied experience not necessarily subject to an ordering consciousness.



Life as it is understood in this thesis is a 'generative' force of which 'a life' may be a part, a subject may be constituted but is never total to the generative force and, as a field, resists this enclosure or position. The notion of 'a life' is explored in chapter two, The Movement of Bodies.

In its engagement with life processes through a notion of embodiment this thesis resists the 'polar' positions of subject or object orientation. This thesis will argue for a notion of embodiment that is a field of overlapping and interdependent relations, which are comprehended in the relations between the corporeal and the lived experience, as it pertains to 'a life'.

Within this thesis it has been necessary to pursue the relations at play between the material and the immaterial in performance events that engage with architecture, performance and notions of site. Architecture is posited as the constructing of spaces and a material practice. The generation of space in performance is posited as a real-time process and a product of lived experience that engages the immaterial. This complex interaction between the material/immaterial and notions of temporality is then further challenged by notions of the site of the work, which, through naming, seeks a relationship between the space/place and temporal event of the work in practice. This complex interweaving

of the material and immaterial is tested through the practice of my work.

This thesis will propose a model that considers space and time through the notion of a 'life': the 'natural' and the biological have to be engaged with as vital components of life processes, as described in this thesis. If nature can be seen to not be operating solely under the terms of what is 'given', in the shape of what has been termed natural laws, it is possible that the action of creating spaces that occurs within the human realm is not subject, necessarily, to a profound separation from what is 'natural'. Gould argues that there are two forces at work shaping the surface of our planet: the energy of the core and the resulting movement of the plates and the movement of the atmosphere that powers the process of erosion. These two forces are an interweaving of complex processes over time. I would argue that there are two forces which shape the Western urban environment: they are the process of capitalism and the action of life processes as they pertain to the body. It will be argued in chapter three that time, in regard to life processes, can be seen as cyclical rather than linear. It is, however, pertinent at this point to note that the cyclical in relation to the physical material world is an important notion to consider in relation to space and spaces. The physical world of lived experience

is comprehended within the cyclical pattern of growth/destruction/decay.

Destruction and decay are implicit within the notion of 'life processes'. To consider space, or more pertinently spaces, within these notions is to consider its destruction/decay as vital parts of its cyclical experience.

Erosion, destruction, death and decay are vital parts of an understanding of space and performance in this thesis.

I wish to consider the notion that the performance practice of this submission is part of this process of 'erosion': the shaping of the materials of existence that have been piled up by the action of movement in life. This erosion is an action of the body. Performance, I suggest, has a vital function, as part of the process by which our experience is shaped. Thus, the relations between the lived experience of the constructed spaces in the urban environment and the generated space within performance are necessarily dynamic. It is constantly in process, questioning and reshaping itself as it is acted upon by the constantly evolving practice of 'lived experience'. The notions of 'erosion' and 'lived experience' are also temporal notions and thus spatiality must be considered in conjunction with temporality in relation to 'lived experience'.



I have used the term geology, as in the physical world, the geological process is all pervasive and ongoing to our existence, so too is this action of 'human geology' ongoing and all pervasive to Western urban life. As a process of erosion, functioning as an aspect of the geology within the urban environment, performance is not separate from nature. The relation between the urban environment and nature is posited as an immanent one: the urban environment is within nature both subject to its laws and singularly resistant to them.

This submission engages with the notion of the body not as object or subject. Rather, the body is considered as a lived surface capable of infinite extension. The form of this research is a series of engagements in action, writing, and documentation with this notion. These engagements in action, manifest as performance, seek to actualise the notion of extension as a becoming of the body.

The notion of extension is characterised by this research as a prosthetic relation. This relation is pursued through an interrogation of practice, my own and other artists, from the perspective of space, bodies and time.

## Chapter One

### The Movement of Space

To engage with the notion of my work as a 'spatial practice' it is necessary to explore the relations at play in the 'space' of my work. In this chapter I will be exploring the relations between the terms 'location' and 'site' as they pertain to performance. I will be interrogating them through practice and theory.

I will specifically discuss my performance work *True* - a valediction for Lucy Palmer. The work *True* was a unique large-scale multimedia performance created for, and performed in, the Tramway Glasgow. The Tramway is a venue for contemporary art and performance that has a specific geographic location.

This work is selected precisely because it is not a touring work. It was created for a specific location and was a unique event that occurred within particular parameters of time and space. *True* was an exploration of the body through multiple spatialities which question the relation between the terms location and site in relation to performance. Through the occasion of the practice of *True* and with an engagement with some of the notions it proposes theoretically, we will see my work moving through an encounter with geographical site (which I will propose is best understood in this context as location)

and a body centred discursive site. I will argue that although there are geographic relations at play, geography is not the sole determination of site in relation to performance. I will posit that my work goes beyond such notions of site into notions of site as embodied and as a set of discursive relations. It is in this extension to body and discursive relations that the complexity of multiple overlapping 'fields' as a description of site is explored.

I will also relate my artistic practice in *True* to the work of two other artists. This will be done by an examination of the works *Drunk* by Gillian Wearing and *House* by Rachel Whiteread. This relation will show the particular correlations between each of the works and *True* and thus attempts to identify a wider artistic context for some of the notions explored.

## Beginning

In this section through the *True* project I will engage with the moment of the work's beginning and introduce the notion of 'placement' as a conceptual act that is embodied.

*True* was an enormous undertaking that took tremendous resources and several years to realise. The



manifestation of the project was a large installation which contained film projection, a computer controlled light environment, recorded text, movement activated sound, voice activated sound, a fully navigable virtual reality environment, interactive machines, and a performance by five performers which included a written text and utilised aerial work, additional environments and interaction with the installation.

The *True* project was a seminal moment in my life as an artist. The project allowed me to bring together all of my previous experience up until that time and to generate a course of action to come. The complexity of this project and its relation to my work means that an explication of *True* could fill this thesis on its own. It is necessary therefore for me to limit the scope of enquiry in this chapter in order that space is given to the many dynamics of my body of work after the *True* project. The *True* project questioned the relations between site and body, which is a central notion in the quest of my work.

In order to initiate this project I met Alison Kennedy, a writer with whom I had collaborated previously. We discussed her fascination for the anatomists and the process of anatomy. She felt that this would be a good starting place for work. I knew at once that this would be perfect for a notion of performance

that I wished to explore: the body explored through space. I suggested collaboration and we began to speculate on what we might do.

Alison is based in Glasgow and felt that this project should be based in Scottish culture and have a Scottish 'voice'. That voice would be urban. I knew that this project, as I envisaged it, could not be done in an ordinary theatre for two principle reasons. Firstly, that the established theatre space was too limited for this project. I wanted a fluid relationship with the space and felt that the space of a theatre venue would be too static and would simply not have the volume of space that I was seeking. Secondly, I wanted to have a fluid relationship with the participants/observers of my project. The theatre venue orients its audience towards the role of spectator and is organised spatially in accordance with this notion. I know that there are many successful forms of theatre occurring within theatre spaces that have an explicit relationship with the audience as participants, such as the Forum theatre of Augusto Boal<sup>7</sup>. However, for this project I wanted the

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<sup>7</sup> Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* 1979. The techniques of Forum Theatre developed by Augusto Boal are designed to facilitate a process whereby the spectator is able to intervene in the performance. Through this intervention the spectator becomes participant and crucially the rehearsal of strategies for real life are effected. Developed originally to work within communities, Forum Theatre is also commonly employed within traditional western theatre spaces as performance. An example of the range of this practice can be found in the work of Headlines Theatre, Vancouver Canada. [www.headlinestheatre.com](http://www.headlinestheatre.com). Headlines utilise Forum Theatre in local communities, Theatre venues and public broadcasting.

audience to have a different experience of the space of performance. I still had to consider pragmatically that I would need a venue's support to realise this project. I felt that the Tramway in Glasgow would be the perfect situation.

I had met Susan Deighan, the Senior Programmer at the Tramway, previously and I arranged a meeting between her, Alison and myself. She agreed to become a partner in our undertaking and to produce the project. I was an outsider, with notions of how to employ the body and space, Alison was local, had the specific cultural context and content and Susan Deighan had the geographical location and the access to the resources without which the project would not be viable. Each of us had our areas of responsibility that whilst directly impinging upon each other, were directed with as much autonomy as possible. This was important so that the theory of process to be applied worked from the beginning. The theory was that each of the artists collaborating on the project would have their own time and space with the material during which growth of the material would occur. The project would contain these times and spaces as multiple overlays or 'fields'. The bringing together of the individuals was the first step in the process.



From the meeting the three of us had demarcated an area from the landscape of our experience. This area existed in all four dimensions. For us they were: the physical site; the intellectual 'movement' of the ideas; the cultural landscape of our experiences; and the time of our making.

From the different flows that were the conditions of this project forms a nexus - a lattice of connections that become the point of growth. This is the moment whether individual or collective, where it is decided that here it shall be. This is the moment of 'placement'. This decision of 'placement' predicates all that follows. This moment of placement in the mind, individual or collective, decides the nature of what is to occur, it creates the opportunity to make actual what previously was virtual, it is to make manifest. From this moment structure begins to emerge in many forms - relations between corporealities and spatial structures. The moment of placement is an incarnated singularity that is the result of embodied flow.

This is a process that does not ignore that which went before, or that which is already there, the 'ground' in Heidegger's terms; rather, it accepts the flows, which combine as the nexus and grows from this point. The nexus involves the geographical location of the Tramway, its history within the city of Glasgow, Scottish culture as

the lived experience of project participants, economic determinants, and me as artist and a non-Scottish outsider. These elements work in a process of interactive determination upon each other, creating dynamic relations of flow, in which the process occurs.

In this moment of incarnation that is 'placement' there is an embodiment of intention to establish the conditions for the nurturing of the process. At this point the geographical, cultural, economic sites had been established although I shall argue through the course of this chapter that the 'operational site' was still to arise.

It should be noted that there is a complex relationship between the 'moment of placement' as a singularity and 'the time of our making' which is a complex interplay between many notions of time such as the abstract relation of the calendar period during which *True* was realised and the multiple individual times of the artists collaborating during this realisation. The relation of body and time is pursued in chapter three, *The Movement of Time*.

The literal embodiment of the process by the artists who would undertake it was in itself, I would argue, the first creative act. Three other artists became core to the development of this process. They were Rosa Sanchez

(installation artist), Alain Bauman (composer) and Deborah Pope (aerialist).

Susan Deighan was providing a piece of the landscape, the physical building, and this building was itself a piece of the cultural landscape of Glasgow. Alison was providing a piece of the experiential landscape through the creation within the textual elements of Scottish characters and their experiences within their relationships. I had provided the impetus for the project and was to provide a method of composition and guide the development of the composition.

### Capital Space

In this section I will define the first quality of space in performance in which, I suggest, the *True* project occurred: the notion of capital space.

The *True* project occurred in Glasgow in the built environment that is the Tramway. Please see plan of space marked Ground Floor Plan, T2 section AA and T2 section BB in Appendix One. On the ground floor plan the space is marked Main Exhibition Space. Within that space the project had its own constructed environment.



At this point it is necessary to watch film Chapter One Space. True Section one - Walkthrough of Installation

The film is a walkthrough of the constructed environment for *True*. It is not 'animated' by technology or 'embodied' by performers and participants, and was not seen by the audience like this. Is this the site of the performance? Has this construction constituted the space, cleared the ground and created for us an 'empty space'?

It is important to state that my work in particular, and to differing degrees, the making of performance within the Western urban environment, is subject to a certain pragmatics. All activity that requires the use of resources is subject to the forces of the market economy within which the Western urban environment is established.

My work often engages with constructed spaces through the use of its own constructed spaces. In order to create *True* I had to raise the money. This entailed a 'selling' of the idea. The idea had to be 'sold' to the programmer at the Tramway, Susan Deighan. Subsequently she had to 'sell' the proposal to various state boards and bodies to increase the funds available.

My work is thus situated in an urban environment within buildings that are demarcated for a given purpose and within a direct relationship to the apparatus of

state funding and must therefore have a direct relationship with capital. This relationship can be best understood in relation to Henri Lefebvre's notion of a triad of spatiality<sup>8</sup>. A reading of Lefebvre's notion of the triad of spatiality posits that the space of the *True* project is tied to its means of production. Within the space of representations the *True* project must be considered in relation to how it was produced, the relations of its production. Lefebvre argues that

As for representations of the relations of production, which subsume power relations, these too occur in space: space contains them in the form of buildings, monuments and works of art.  
(Lefebvre, 1991, 33)

This project was occurring within 'representations of space' and as such cannot be separated from the relations of production within those representations. Read argues in relation to the theatre image that

...the social space in which the image occurs is itself a conjunction of political relations. It is not innocent space, neutral space, nor utopian space, but manifestly organised by the dominant relations of production.  
(Read, 1993, 158)

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<sup>8</sup> Henri Lefebvre, 1991. *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre posits a conceptual triad of spatiality comprising 1 Spatial Practice, which embraces production and reproduction 2 Representations of Space, which are tied to the relations of production 3 Representational Spaces, linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art (Lefebvre, 1991, 33)

The social space in which *True* occurred as geographic location is a major international touring venue for contemporary performance. The building is a large tram shed which is located on the south side of Glasgow in an area of some urban decay. The trams are no longer in use. At the time of the *True* project the building was undergoing refurbishment.

The refurbishment of the building kept the look of the interior as industrial as possible, the rough and ready practical feel of a place of industry was preserved. The brickwork and concrete floors were left as original. The building still contains the tramlines in the floor. This sense of place that I experienced coming to the Tramway was a combination of its industrial heritage and all the inherent associations of that heritage and its recent history of performance on a large scale. Within the Tramway the largest single space is designated Tramway Two. This space is simply an enormous empty hall with two rows of steel pillars to support the roof that is approximately fifteen metres above the ground. It is unlike the other spaces as it has not been adapted into a theatre space. It has been used both as a gallery and for performance events. It has two white painted walls, but it appears otherwise unmodified. It still contains the marks of its previous use: the now



redundant tramlines snake across the floor. It is no longer a tram-shed, but nor is it a theatre.

The hybrid nature of this space was interesting. The space was not specifically a theatre. The nature of what this space was and how participant observers would react was more open. It was this sense of a place of possibilities that was intriguing to me. I decided to create a specific work for that building. The 'placement' of the project, the geographical, cultural, economic situation of the work had been established. *True* must be seen as existing in a capital space subject to the 'relations of production'.

### The Undertaking

In this section I engage with the initial content and event concept which I will show began a move away from the notion of geographic location as site of the performance.

Alison Kennedy and I discussed her interest in the nature of the fundamental quest of the anatomists to understand the body and the formal structure they had constructed to conduct that enquiry.

The idea held by the anatomists that one could understand the body by the reductive process of recording

the minute detail of its physiological structures and their workings was extremely interesting to both of us. We felt that the body could not be reduced to the sum of its parts. The anatomists' quest was a model for a type of inquiry and understanding which could not encompass the whole nature of the body. This created an interesting tension with which we could work.

The relationships between the roles of those present at a classical anatomical demonstration became her model for the structure of the relationships within her text. These were: the Professor, the lector, the dissector and of course the body.

Alison translated the structure of the anatomist demonstration model into a set of family relationships. This created a doubling function: there were now two narrative structures surrounding the notion of body within the textual construct. The dead body had a narrative structure of its relations with the anatomist's experience in that it undergoes the process of dissection with the attendant characters of the anatomical demonstration. The body of lived experience (Lucy Palmer as she subsequently became known) had a narrative of familial relations.

Alison created four 'double' characters that were to be: the husband/professor, the lover/dissector, the

daughter/lector and the wife/body. The lover was the lover of the wife.

These characters and their relationships allowed Alison to explore, within the text, the emotional experiences of the body and their relationship to the physicality of the body (Alison's text is included as Appendix Two: True Script). The characters with their rivalries, jealousies, desires, loves and hates were the emotional landscape of the piece.

The wife had a sexual relationship with her lover based on pain; this was counter-posed with a love of her husband that was more cerebral than physically exciting. The daughter was envious of her mother and since her mother's death had started a relationship of sorts with the lover. The husband loved his family and despised the lover. The wife's dead body was also to be present. The wife had suffered a terminal medical condition; the circumstances of her death were unclear.

Alison was also interested in how our society deals with death. The ritual and the process of grieving would be explored in the piece.

I had a vision of the type of event that I wanted to create. It was to be a relationship between installation and performance that would be cyclical. Each of the elements would be able to stand alone but when experienced together would be more than the sum of their



parts. I imagined the event as installation, performance, installation, performance, and continuing on in sequence. The individual experience would be the parts of that cycle that the individual chose; I hoped that choice would be for a sequence of several interactions.

I chose Rosa Sanchez to work on this project for three reasons: I knew that the work she would produce would be innovative and exciting; the content would genuinely interest her; Rosa is interested in the notion of changing the relationship from spectator to participant for those who engage in her work. This was an objective that I wished to pursue as the central tenet of the *True* project.

The notion of the move from spectator to participant will be explored through this chapter. I will go on to posit that the shift from spectator to participant is related to the shift from geographical site to notions of site as a discursive vector which is embodied and that this shift is part of the process which unhinges 'location' as central to notions of site. At this point it should be stated that a series of fields of enquiry had emerged from the material. These were: the notion of 'body'; the nature of grieving; a relationship as participants within it. How these notions were to be achieved was complex.

The body was the most important element as both the subject of, and the object in, all of the relationships. The quest to understand the body was to be a physical and experiential one. In this we would attempt to add another dimension to the quest. As the body is something that resists totalising notions, an attempt to 'know' the body as the sum of its parts becomes the unrealisable quest. We were establishing a process which could never be complete.

The decisions I made to have an installation and an aerial flying rig meant that the project would involve constructing spaces. Rosa, Deborah and I would be constructing spaces that would strive to be participatory. These spaces were constructed around the notion of their 'use'. Did this in fact construct the subsequent 'use' and so define the site of the work as could be suggested By Kaye's (2000) reading of site-specific work? The project would have the possibility of a complex temporal relationship with its participants. The project would be geographically located in Glasgow Tramway. Did these factors 'site' the work? I shall go on to argue that they did not. At this point what began to emerge as central was an investigation of the notion of body, which in turn began to question the notion of site as geographical location. Could the notion of site be

other than location; could it in fact be located in the body? I will expand on this throughout this chapter.

In order to investigate the possibility of a movement away from site as geographic location it is important to establish how 'site' in relation to site-specific performance is conceived.

### Constructed notions of Site

In this section I will interrogate a notion of site specific practice drawn from structuralist theories of text as proposed by Kaye. I shall look at the project for La Villete by architect Bernard Tschumi from which Kaye draws much of his argument, and the sculpture *House* by Rachel Whiteread. These will be compared to the constructed elements of the *True* project to examine the notion of the objectification of 'use' which I feel is central to Kaye's proposal. I shall propose that this reading does not engage with the notion of site as it is explored in the *True* project.

To begin I wish to examine Kaye's <sup>9</sup> reading of site-specific work. My analysis of Kaye's work brings into sharp relief the questions raised by the interaction of

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<sup>9</sup> Nick Kaye, *Site-Specific Art: Performance, Place and Documentation*, 2000



performance and the built environment and the model applied to its reading. In particular, the relations between space, defined as 'real' and 'ideal', place defined in De Certeau's terms as space-as-practiced place, and where site is in play with location.

Kaye chooses to locate his notions of site-specific work within structuralist theories of the text,

...semiotic theory proposes, straightforwardly, that reading implies 'location'. To 'read' the sign is to have located the signifier, to have recognised its place within the semiotic system. One can go on from this to argue that the location, in reading, of an image, object, or event, its positioning in relation to political, aesthetic, geographical, institutional, or other discourses, all inform what 'it' can be said to be. Site-specificity then can be understood in terms of this process... (Kaye, 2000, 1)

Location and meaning are intrinsically linked in this formulation. The problem in applying this to space is that this assumes that the terms location and meaning are stable. The act of reading 'locates' or 'fixes' the space and establishes a meaning for it. For Kaye the work of art is the volatile component that works against the stability of these terms.

...a site-specificity linked to the incursion of performance into visual art and architecture, in strategies which work against the assumptions and stabilities of

site and location, and which offer a context of practices and concepts through which site-specific theatre can be read.  
(Kaye, 2000, 3)

On first reading this would appear to be a view of site-specificity that would be appropriate for the *True* project. As argued above however, there is a problem for me with the treatment of space in this notion. The problem is illustrated by a simple inversion of the qualities of the terms which are said to be stable. Thus, it is proposed that the work of art is the stable element placed between the two volatile components of location and meaning.

This inversion, while presenting a challenge to the argument, fails however to alter the fundamental problem in that it is still a relation of positions in flat space. A fixed point somewhere on a continuum between two locations, still 'located' within the bounds of a complete and inclusive system of fixed points. The space is contained between the 'ideal' (the space of concepts) and the 'real' (the space of actual experience) which is 'located' by its relationship to the other. As I have argued above the notion of a 'stable' construct of the term site is problematic.

For Kaye it is the application of Derrida's theory of deconstruction that holds the key to the problem of duality in semiotics. Kaye argues that deconstruction is

conventionally defined in the de-stabilising of binary oppositions such as concept and experience, signified and referent, and argues its instability drawing on Derrida's notion of *Differance*,

Meaning becomes, like the signifier, not a function of what it is but what it is not. Indeed, where as Derrida argues, 'the signified always already functions as a signifier' (Derrida, 1974, 7), meaning can never be present, for the move towards the signified finds itself caught in the endless play of 'difference' and so 'deferral'; always subject to *differance*. (Kaye, 2000, 45)

Kaye argues the 'restless' relationship between the terms involved in the work involves a blurring of the opposition between the work and its contexts. However, the argument is still 'located' by its having been sited within the concepts of space as outlined above and its 'placing' within a reading of Tschumi's theories of architecture based on Derrida.

Kaye uses the work of architect Tschumi and its theoretical relationship to the work of Derrida to create the framework for his ideas on the relations between site, place and performance. Kaye asserts that Tschumi's project for La Villete is 'performative' and in its operation describes site as subject to the 'event' of location and subject to performance. Thus La Villete is



the object clearly operating within the subject-object binary notions of space.

La Villete is an important reference for this chapter as it shares with the *True* installation the fact that they are both constructed spaces and would appear to be 'performative' in Kaye's terms. I intend to argue that the reading of La Villete as 'performative' can be misleading.

Kaye accepts Tschumi's notion of his work as an architecture of deconstruction: a realisation in built form. Kaye locates Tschumi's work clearly as, "Tschumi's work provides for a reading of post-structuralist theories of the text [...] into architectural theory and practice" (Kaye, 2000, 42). The application of Derrida's theories is not without problems.

Mark Wigley argues extensively in the *Architecture of Deconstruction* that while Derrida moves to collapse distinctions between oppositions developing the concept of spacing which insinuates itself into all discourse on space, he does so within a notion of interiority: everything becomes 'housed' by this notion. Wigley argues that,

Those texts that appear to rigorously pursue the question of spacing, whether they address architecture or not, are inevitably haunted by stable constructions of space that punctuate their arguments

without being called into question by them. (Wigley, 1995, 219)

Tschumi's adoption of Derrida's theories without questioning the inherent notions of the stable constructs of space that 'punctuate their arguments' means that Tschumi's work is subject to the same critique in that it is still working within the framework of a positional sense of space even though it is ostensibly a resistance to that very idea.

Kaye takes Tschumi's work and uses it to posit the notion that the terms site and place, in an understanding of site-specific work, exist between the terms 'real' and 'ideal' space: a duality which functions as a closed and self-reflexive system. The site-specific work is an unsettling or troubling presence between these terms. Kaye drawing from Tschumi has thus located the site-specific work as occupying the same space as the experience of architecture,

Tschumi argued that the experience of architecture is constituted in the very gap 'between ideal space (the product of mental processes) and real space (the product of social practice)' (Tschumi 1994a: 31) (Kaye, 2000, 41)

This placing of the experience of architecture, and through Kaye's extension of the notion, the experience of the site as 'located' between the 'ideal' and the 'real',

is problematic. Thus, the relations of architecture and site are positioned as an in-between on a continuum not as the separate 'other'. The process of this 'in-between' is identified by Kaye as performance.

It is in the moment of performance, a term ascribed by Kaye to the site-specific event and, in relation to Tschumi's work for Le Parc de La Villete, the architecture itself, that the site and place of the work 'troubles' the relationship between 'ideal and 'real' space. Kaye states of Tschumi's project at La Villete, "...in this project, Tschumi provides for an architecture or set of architectural relations, always in performance." (Kaye, 2000, 52)

The ascribing of the notion of performance, which for me is an embodied notion, to the material world of architecture, is a move that is not appropriate for this chapter. The inanimate material of construction is not 'performing'. The sculptures of Henry Moore may be beautiful, thought provoking and challenging, they are not, however, performing.

It is the notion of the conditions of realisation that Kaye argues is the decisive gesture which ascribes 'performative' qualities to the material construction. In arguing the relations at work in the architecture of La Villete, Kaye states,



...La Villete sets conditions for the performance of both architecture and site; for its realisation in multiple, diverse and transforming practices. (Kaye, 2000, 51)

The setting of these conditions for its realisation articulates a key moment for Kaye for it includes the practice of the place by its users as a key element in the realisation of the architecture itself. However, Kaye does not interrogate this notion. Kaye follows Tschumi's argument in expressing the project at La Villete in terms of the structure of language, what Tschumi calls 'an architecture of the signifier rather than signified'. Thus, for Kaye,

Where architecture cannot make an appeal to the transcendental signified, it cannot state or present the site as signified, but must defer to the function of the signifier. Site-specificity, it follows, is found in use; and site, location, like architecture itself, is always being produced, and so is subject to instability, ephemerality, and temporality. (Kaye, 2000, 51)

There are two key movements here. The first is the notion that site-specificity is found in practice and the second is the aligning of the terms site, location and architecture. Kaye notes that these terms are subject to instability, but relates site to the same notion of

production as architecture. Thus, the term site is treated as a material construct.

For Kaye, the notion of 'site-specific' is rooted clearly in the structure of linguistics and deconstructive discourse. It follows then for Kaye that if the architecture in Tschumi's project is merely a sign, then what makes the site-specific is its use, for Kaye and Tschumi the practice of the site becomes a performance of the place and thus subsequently for Kaye the foundation for his reading of the term of site-specific.

La Villete then, is an architecture which can be described, after De Certeau as attempting to catch the 'user' in the act of enunciation, revealing her acting out of a perpetually practiced place. Site for Tschumi, is consequently always subject to the event of location; always already subject to performance, to its realisation in practice. (Kaye, 2000, 51)

La Villete is central to Kaye's proposals regarding site-specific practice.

**Please watch film Chapter One Space. True Section Two - Different Environments**

Did True, in constructing spaces for interaction, thus objectify the use of those spaces and thus create

its site? Did the *True* project function as a sign without a signifier as is posited by Tschumi? I shall argue that the *True* project does not function merely as a sign to which 'use' becomes a material construct to produce the signified and so maintain the essential dualism. *True* contained multiple complex constructed environments. Some of the environments created by Rosa became animated by technology through an interaction with voice or movement as a trigger. Some of the environments created by Alison and I sought to engage in the practice of a space, such as meeting for a funeral, in such a way as to create a sense of engaging in lived practice. The multiple environments overlaid each other in performance. These environments were clearly created with a notion of the subsequent use. They were not accidental spaces (Appendix Three *True: Plans for Constructed Spaces*).

At this point it is useful to consider a work that it could be suggested has objectified 'use'. Is the site of this work defined by this 'use'? I shall argue that in the case of *House* by Rachel Whiteread that a different reading is possible in identifying the work as a process of decay.

The work *House* by Whiteread was a cast, of sprayed concrete, of the complete interior of a typical Victorian terraced house in London's east end. The house was part of a row of condemned buildings. The work *House* was the



last one left standing. *House* stood for two and a half months before being cleared away in 1993.

The sculpture *House* was a materially constructed space, a located space. As a concrete form of the interior space of a domestic house it was a 'raising' up of structure, an architectural structure of no-space.

The 'interior' space of the house was now a solid. The limits of interior and exterior have been kept but the interior is physically inaccessible. The viewer is forever external to it. The homely space, the social space is now a stark new relation to the observer yet it can be argued that the viewer is not excluded from the space, as the viewer would be in the internal/external division. In describing the social space of the house as movement and noise and interchange Doreen Massey states that *House*, "Through its very negation it brought home the true meaning of social space." (Massey, 2000, 51)

This solid space, which was interior and is now presented as exterior, is un-homely and we are external. It is now a space which cannot be entered, and yet a house is meant to be a shelter, a structure for knowing, a space to be commanded. *House* certainly provoked response, much of it in the way of memories concerning the nature of home and nostalgia for what was no longer there. The suggestion that *House* commemorated memory itself, that *House* functions as a memorial needs to be

interrogated. Andrea Schlieker in detailing the memorial aspect of Whiteread's work notes how "... striking is the formal reference that *House* makes to the tomb or mausoleum" (Schlieker, 2001, 59)'.

Schlieker continues to bracket *House* with *Holocaust Memorial* and *Water Tower*, two other works from Whiteread, remarking that these three works share "subtle genealogy and logical development" (Schlieker, 2001, 59), clearly indicating that for her the work functions as memorial. I wish to propose another reading of the work. It maybe that the work *House* has memorial qualities but I wish to argue that it goes beyond the status and function of these terms, that it is more than just a memorial.

In this way I propose that *House* is similar to the constructed space of *True*. *True* also had memorial qualities: it announced itself as a valediction and the audience gathered in memory of 'Lucy'. The installation contains elements of 'Lucy' which can prompt memory. The event *True* does not simply present itself as a high-tech funeral.

I would propose that the first striking thing that *House* accomplishes is to displace the notion of spatial binarism. The observer is no longer divided from the interior of this space. As a solid object the relations with this object are all surface. Its relationship is one of proximity and orientation. Thus *House* is no longer a

limit to the observers' spatial field rather it is a part of that field. In this way the space is once again freely accessible to us albeit as object.

*House* also resists temporarily the 'clearing of the ground',

Part of a row of condemned buildings, *Whiteread's House* was the last one left standing and thus she deliberately foreshadowed the changing history of this part of London. (Schlieker, 2001, 59)

This resistance is not a simple maintenance of the existing structure nor is it a marker, functioning as a straightforward memorial "here was 193 Grove Road", an aid to memory of time passing which focuses a historical sense of time, a 'heritage moment'. Rather, it is a persistence of a space itself, without the original structure, which does not allow the completion of the clearing of the ground; the space cannot be renamed because it has not been 'cleared'.

I propose this resistance to the clearing of the ground works other than just as a memorial to the notion of social space now gone. I would suggest also, that in the physical presence of the object of *House* is an image of the process of decay. It can be argued that there is already an awareness of the process of urban decay; the sight of dilapidated buildings is a part of the urban



experience. What *House* accomplishes is that it makes visible the reintegration part of the process of decay that is understood as the disintegration/reintegration cycle of all matter and energy. The structure that made *House* has gone. The space of that house is manifestly still there, in this case in a different form but as in all cases still there reintegrating into part of our spatial praxis as an opportunity for awareness in the process of construction of lived spatiality. The lived experience is thus not abandoned but seen to be in the process of changing.

The idea at the heart of *True* that we would be dealing with death, relates the material to the notion of decay. *House* was the absence of lived practice made manifest by the object that was the constructed space *House*. An element of *True* was to be the absence of lived practice made manifest by the dead body which on one level, it could be argued, was manifest as a constructed space. However, an essential difference was that *True* through the nature of its structure as a cyclical event resisted objectification by the return of the presence of 'Lucy': it was not absence alone but a cycle of absence/presence/decay as an embodied process in performance.

The process of decay permeates limits and ends notions of containment. By breaking down what was there

previously the process of decay is liberating the materials of growth. Decay is not just the crumbling of the façade but the opening up of the space. This process is made visible in *House*. The process of decay is continually extending the surface of the body by allowing extension into new spaces. *House*, I suggest, presents this process in action.

The suggestion that this was a 'memorial' to a particular house, or homeliness, or a way of living, appears to be challenged by Whiteread herself. In describing approaching the sculpture she remarks,

Suddenly there was this monolith. You couldn't help but be in awe of this massive, bizarre object that fucked up everybody's perception of their home, their houses, their domestic life, and their 'safe' places. (Whiteread, 2001, 19)

Inherent in this statement is not a remembrance of something but rather a challenge to something. Its purpose is not a contemplation of the past but recognition of the 'now' of the sculpture and by implication of one's own experience. I suggest that it is the spatial and temporal 'nowness' which is important, not the past in either its preservation of memory or its clearing of the ground to appropriate it as a space to be 'commanded' for something new. As Foucault remarks,

What escapes history is the instant, the fracture, the tear, the interruption. What corresponds (and perhaps responds) to grace on the part of men is insurrection. (Foucault, 1994v3, 790)

*House I* suggest was a temporary 'interruption' and an insurrection against the 'clearing of the ground'. It was an interruption in that it made present that moment of decay in which space is reintegrated. Therefore it is not just an appeal to history that would be the function of a memorial. The *House* sculpture was always envisaged as temporary. It was only subsequent to its realisation that others campaigned unsuccessfully for its preservation. The fact that it was temporary militates against the appeal to permanence of the memorial. Finally the specific site was an essential element of the work evidenced by the refusal by Whiteread to re-site the work in Milton Keynes. Whiteread refused this specific re-siting of the work. She is not however against re-siting as a general purist principle as she has re-sited other work such as the work *Water Tower* in New York which shares many of the elements of *House* not least its 'memorial' status.

Finally, the work *House* is still a constructed space of architecture and works as a located space. It does however turn the process of locating space through architecture upon itself; the same inversion that Massey



identifies with the social space holds true of the architectural space in that it is by its very negation that the nature of this space is evident. That is, that the location of space as distinct is always temporary, it is only in relation to the body that space can be grasped as the surface to our experience. In *House* the space can be seen as part of our lived experience connected to our bodies.

I will continue with this notion in more depth in my chapter *The Movement of Bodies*. In *House* it is the trick of objectification that physicalises the space, which allows for the sensuous interplay of bodies: the corporeal and the material object, as a surface on which occurs 'lived experience'. Finally however, it is still a trick, an effect of a particular inversion: the space is still a constructed space that is very clearly located within the totalising boundaries of its object status.

*House* clearly makes an object of use but it does not rely on subsequent use for its completion as Tschumi's project *La Villette* is perceived to. *House* does not attempt to incorporate future use as part of its structure. This is an important distinction which I will engage with in the next section on 'constructed use'. The power of *House* for me is in the present moment, to consider the space as changing, a moment of change, a 'becoming' space which through its 'insurrection' against

a casual acceptance of the changing nature of that space makes manifest relations with the virtual. The space is made visible at the moment at which it is awaiting intersection on the virtual plane<sup>10</sup>. This moment reflects its relations to what it was and what it will be by remaining 'virtual' to those operations. Ultimately the space of use is revealed as present. The objectification of the space of use manifests that space and resists its colonisation by the 'clearing of the ground'. It persists in the present as the 'now' of the observer's lived experience of interaction. It is within these operations that the similarities to that which was striven for in *True* are most evident.

The *True* project has a complex structure of adjacent spaces which are multiply overlaid. Here, for instance, constructed environments which attempt to engage with the notion of body as an extended 'field' of operations, overlay an attempt at a ceremony of grieving in social space which occurs with the relational specificity of Scottish characters in a Scottish environment. This is further overlaid by a temporal notion of discontinuity in which the living presence returns in an 'insurrection' against death, and in which a strategy of presenting the life and 'a' life of the body as separate bodies or

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<sup>10</sup> The notion of the virtual plane as a 'plane of immanence' (Deleuze, 2001, 37) is discussed in reference to the theories of Gilles Deleuze in Chapter two The Movement of Bodies.

characters is utilised. All of these strategies were employed to manifest an insurrection of a casual or unthinking acceptance of the changing space of the body in its relations with notions of life. How space is embodied in life has a correlation to notions of 'use' in the everyday and in moving towards a definition of site for *True* it is necessary to pursue the notion that 'use' can be constructed.

#### The notion of Constructed 'Use'

In this section I will interrogate the notion that the 'use' of Tschumi's structure of La Villete is an element of its construction. I will then refer back to the theories of site as proposed by Kaye to suggest that the *True* project resists this notion and thus that the theory of site defined by 'use' is limited in its application to *True*.

The work *House* by Whiteread is a constructed space in which the space of its 'use' that is its social space, its space of occupation, is made manifest by the form of the structure. The space of use is central to the nature of the *House*. The work *House* was in effect an objectification of the space of use. It is interesting to compare this with the project by Tschumi: Le Parc de la Villete. This is the project which I previously



identified as central to Kaye's notion of site-specific practice. At La Villete the space of 'use' is again central to the construction in a notion that attempts to 'objectify' the use.

It seems that the spaces articulated by Tschumi are subject to a complex interplay in conjunction with the human body. The strategy proposed By Tschumi for La Villete calls for the incorporation of 'use' into the notion of construction and in this way implicates the body in the physical space.

The key articulation for Tschumi in this resistance to a totalising notion or a 'general reading' of La Villete is 'use', therefore 'use' became central to the conception, "The general circumstances of the project, then, were to find an organising structure that could exist independent of use..." (Tschumi, 1998, 193)

Tschumi sets out to find an organising structure that will resist the predefined use of the built structure, which will not allow for the built structure to be seen as a 'totality'. If this can be achieved the architecture will be subversive to attempts to define it. Tschumi's solution is to create the park on three entirely separate but overlaid logics,

The independence of the three superposed structures thus avoided all attempts to homogenise the park into a totality. It

eliminated the presumption of a pre-established causality between program, architecture and signification. (Tschumi, 1998, 200)

Thus for Tschumi there was a presumption of causality between program (occurrences or events), architecture (the built form) and signification, which needed to be challenged, the 'causality' that dictated that a building and its 'use' were inseparable.

To resist this 'causality' Tschumi chose the strategy of superposed structures in order to resist a single logic of composition. By doing this he hoped to liberate the building from a single use and thus a single reading.

The notion of the 'use' of La Villete as central to the built form, is the same as with Whiteread's *House*. In this case however, it is not the space of actual use and lived experience but the imagined occurrence of 'use' which has not yet occurred but is to be 'objectified'. This objectification is its incorporation into the process of construction. Thus 'use' is the final component in the architectural project - in that the use finishes the process of construction. The immaterial is thus apparently privileged over the material in a reversal of architecture's normal order.

In his project for La Villete, Tschumi attempts to construct a structure that resists the notion of a single

use and reading. To do this he employs a strategy that militates against a single use. This very action however, attempts to remove this single use as a choice, and thus implies a reading. Tschumi seems to be attempting to create a signifier without a signified in constructed form. This goes to the heart of the nature of architecture and its problematic relationship within philosophical discourse and the relationship of both to lived practice. To engage with the spatial relations within the practice of this submission it is important to consider the notion that that the nature of the problem is the hegemony of the material over the immaterial. It is a consilience from one form to another that may offer useful relations but is not always directly transferable. The material may be reducible, this is in some debate, but the immaterial is always beyond totalising notions. Tschumi himself refutes the notion of this consilience,

...the one thing that makes the work of architects ultimately different from the work of philosophers: materiality. Just as there is a logic of words or drawings, there is a logic of materials, and they are not the same. And however much they are subverted, something ultimately resists. Ceci n'est pas une pipe. A word is not a concrete block. (Tschumi, 1998, 253)

I suggest then that architecture is a practice that seeks to release the immanent possibilities of the logic



of materiality. It is always subject to this logic. It is always bound by its materiality. In its practice it may realise spaces, but these spaces are always defined by the limits of materiality. It does not constitute the ground because it is always subject to the ground - the laws of its very materials.

The use of architecture within philosophy, the use of the closed system of semiotics and notions 'ideal' and 'real' space and the binary oppositions they exemplify, are attempts to 'construct' space. The critical rupture in these systems is the attempt to 'construct' the immaterial within the laws of materiality. The very power of architecture lies in its materiality: it allows for the creation of physical spaces. This makes it so attractive to philosophers; however, the seduction of this power is to extend this specific facility into a general reading of spatial relationships and space itself as a construct. The notion that space is created or that space can be constructed leads to the commoditisation of space as a product of our architectural practices. There is no evidence for this idea of space as construction; the problematic extension of this would be that if all space can be created then all space is material because all constructing is subject to materiality.

Architecture's spaces do not extend into a general reading of spatiality because they are always material

spaces - that is to say an imagination of, and practice of, the possibilities immanent within a given subset of formulations of the logic of materials discovered during our lived experience.

It would seem reasonable to suggest then that the scope of the *True* project as architecture or constructed environment is always limited insofar as it is a 'material' space. The *True* project I wish to argue is not defined by its material space, an idea that will be explored later in this chapter. It will be important to engage with the constructed space of the project and its relation to 'use' to establish how these elements relate to the notion of site to be proposed for *True*.

To return to the problem of 'use' as a compositional element proposed by Tschumi is to see the same problematic, the hegemony of the material over the immaterial, reversed. To claim that the building is a signifier without a signified Tschumi asserts that the building was composed without a 'use', that the practice of the space would give it its meaning, and that prior to that it had no meaning and no use. Thus the use of the building was proposed as a compositional element.

Here Tschumi is attempting to conscript practice into architecture as simply another materiality. But practice is an immaterial element that is not subject to the laws of materiality. The laws of materiality depend

on predictability. Practice however, is not necessarily predictable. The building cannot rely upon this for its completion. All building is subject to its materiality. Insofar as this relates to the building without use, imagined by Tschumi - the building was created as an 'incomplete' and its 'use', such as it had, was that it was incomplete, it was not purely a signifier and not purely a signified, within the rules of its materiality it was 'completed' as an 'incomplete'.

Once the material construction was finished due to the laws of materials, the material space was constructed regardless of subsequent 'use'. For just as a 'word is not a concrete block', neither is an action, or 'use', a concrete block, materially the building was complete. The subsequent 'use' of the building acted upon it as it does all other buildings.

It could be posited that La Villete actually works against itself. Just as Massey argued the power of absence regarding *House*, so for La Villete, it is the very absence of a 'use' that brings home the nature of 'use'. The construction of a large capital project within the capitalist system where everything is geared to production reinforces that La Villete is there to be used, indeed must be used and makes that use produce itself. It aligns 'use' within capitalism with 'use' that produces- the essence of capitalism. The park conceived



as a 'resistance' to capitalist readings is by its material nature bound to them. Lefebvre suggests that

In the realm of nature rediscovered, with its sun and light, beneath the banner of life, metal and glass still rise above the street, above the reality of the city. Along with the cult of rectitude, in the sense of right angles and straight lines. The order of power, the order of the male- in short, the moral order- is thus naturalised. (Lefebvre, 1991, 305)

The park at La Villete, while different in form, is still part of the metal and glass that rise above the street. The attempt at the colonisation of practice is resisted by the refusal of practice as that which is immaterial to be bound by the material. La Villete takes its place among the constructed urban space. It can therefore be argued that as an urban space it still appears to operate as a space to be commanded, a space of power.

Both Whiteread's *House* project and Tschumi's La Villete objectify 'use' and in this way attempt to colonise it as a space to be commanded. This space is the product of 'lived experience' that is directly related to notions of the body and to temporality. As such it resists such colonisation.

The True project engages with a complex relation between space, the construction of spaces and the notion

of 'use'. The term 'use' has many relations and can be extended between the material and the immaterial. In the material it is the notion of lived practice that articulates 'use'. This means that the body is central to any understanding of use and the body is essentially linked with temporality. In the immaterial realm it is the body's relation to 'a life'<sup>11</sup> that articulates space and 'use'. The notion of 'a life' as life which is not related to a subject or object but is instead a singularity. Temporality for 'a life' is not necessarily the same as for the life of the individual. The body and 'a life' are discussed in chapter three The Movement of Bodies.

To return to Kaye's notion of site-specificity it is rooted in an acceptance of the notion suggested by Tschumi that La Villette functions as a pure 'signifier' within semiotic theory.

The attempt by Tschumi, to create the signifier without the signified is problematic precisely because the semiotic system is closed. There may be 'spacing' between signifier and signified but the duality that the system is predicated upon calls for a signified. Thus it is difficult to accept the notion of an architecture that is merely the signifier. The problem is that to suggest

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<sup>11</sup> Gilles Deleuze, 2001, 27. The notion of A LIFE is posited as pure immanence. This is discussed in chapter three The Movement of Bodies.

that this is possible means that the inverse is also possible in that the architecture can be a sole space of meaning unto itself - a signified without a signifier, an independent constructed form constituting meaning and by Heidegger's extension a 'truth'. Thus the architect founds the temple - an object of a single and irreducible meaning separate from all action and interaction an architectural creation of a space of meaning that, by extension, becomes space-as-meaning. This space-as-meaning is realised as a space of mind of the artist created without a sign thus to be experienced as a 'truth' or 'pure meaning' conceived by the architect/artist to stand-alone.

This appears to become a perverse realisation of the modernist agenda to create the autonomous meaningful object of art. Space can have meaning but that meaning is a play between the space and participants/users/inhabitants/creators/observers. Strangely this is the same reading intended by Tschumi. The problem is in the structural relationship to language. In his attempt to resist 'a' logic of a single meaning Tschumi attempts to create 'a' logic of a single no-meaning. He is caught in a static space between the relations of signifier and signified. To create a disjunction he then simply chooses one 'position' over another, in this case the signifier to open the binary



opposition to break apart the system and to deconstruct the inherent meaning. In the case of La Villete there is indeed a signified and that was inherent within the fact of its construction within a capitalist system.

The relationship between the work of Derrida and Tschumi which Kaye draws on and extends into his description of site-specific work is all couched within the notion of a 'resistance', a 'deconstruction', a 'troubling' of the relationships in an apparently hegemonic construct of stable space. However, as we have seen from Tschumi there is still the tacit belief that the Architect can create space and meaning. By not questioning these assumptions Kaye extends them into the space of art in relation to site-specific practice.

What I am arguing here, in relation to my own practice, is that the architect/artist creates material spaces but not space per se. In architecture as in art, as exemplified by Tschumi and Kaye, there is a continual confusion between the material and the immaterial between the definite and the indefinite. A building may have many and multiple meanings but it is not meaning in and of itself. To deconstruct these meanings is to tacitly accept that you are the creator of meaning and to choose to 'unmake' meaning as a new exercise of the same authority.

## The Constructed Space of *True*

In this section I argue that although the *True* project constructed spaces with the notion of intended use, the employment of the notion of embodiment militated against the 'construction' of a meaning of the *True* project.

The *True* project did not seek a 'clearing of the ground'. Rosa Sanchez's proposal for the space was elegant and engaging on many levels. Within the strong geometric form of Tramway Two, which was emphasised by the two rows of columns, Rosa proposed an oval form demarcated by screens suspended from the ceiling. Within this form were a series of areas related with each of the characters and an additional area, which was to be an emotional space. These sites were to be interactive using new technology. The inclusion of the use of the 'virtual' accessed by computers was a bringing into the project of another spatiality. Rosa was proposing a redefinition of the Tramway space into a series of sites that accepted the existing space creating an egg like structure within. This structure was not a solid however. It did not deny the structure of the room, it sought to create another plane within it. The area of the installation was contained within this form, which was strongly geometric.

The screens were a metre from the floor, a metre apart and extended above head height. The effect was to create two strong horizontal planes within the room. These planes created a series of areas ascending the vertical space. They were in-between spaces on the vertical axis. The screens also created an in-between space between themselves and the outside walls of the room. It would be possible to be in the room but outside the 'body' of the installation. The body could be entered by passing between the screens, or observed as a series of views by walking around the outside. The installation would not be completely contained by the screens however as the sound from the installation would fill the room and some of the projections were deliberately focused much larger than the screens so as to encompass areas of the wall. The installation was engaged with the physical space in which it was sited by the construction of a series of spaces.

Each of Rosa's areas was interactive allowing the observer/participant the opportunity to explore and engage with aspects of the body. In so doing they would become a performative element for other observer/participants. The installation would be working to Rosa's ethos of making the spectator into a participant in the event that they were witnessing. The whole installation would create the virtual body and a journey through its experience in that the spectator



could choose to interact with the constructed environment through any of the 'triggers' within the environment. In this way it was hoped that the living body of the participant observers would be recognised as part of the environment. The visceral body among the other distributed virtual aspects of the body.

Time is a principle experience of the body, and the design of the project was to allow for time to represent the material. The installation space would have a life of its own outside of the time of the showing of the performance. The content would come from Rosa's responses to Alison's material. The visitor to the installation would be able to visit it as often as they wished. It would be possible to visit it before and after the performance event.

Each element also had to stand-alone as an individual experience, which could be more complex with engagement of multiple elements of the structure within the space of the whole event. The elements of the overall structure were not hierarchical and they were there to question each other. The spaces between the elements were opportunities to be explored by the observer/participant.

The constructed elements of *True* and the performance did not attempt to create a meaning. They did not attempt to exercise that authority. Rather I would suggest they attempted to create a space or spaces of the body. These

spaces may or may not be meaningful depending on the interactions of the observer/participant. The space was composed of the material and the immaterial such as constructed objects and virtual reality environments and the possible use of the space. We certainly hoped it would be used. It did not however require use to be completed. The relationship with 'use' was a complex one but not a realisation of construction. There was the unknown of the use by the spectator/observer but also the planned use for the space as a place of performance.

The main space contained the 'body' of the exhibition, which for Rosa was the 'body' of Lucy Palmer the central character created by Alison. The outer surface was, like our own skin, permeable. The outside of the body, the space between the body and the room defining walls, was entirely necessary to Rosa's design to be able to engage with the body as a boundary, however permeable; this boundary was an oval or egg shape, an organic form within the highly structured architectural environment of a large rectangular room with two columns of pillars supporting the roof. It would have been easy for Rosa to use the pillars to demarcate the space with an inner and outer area for example; instead she chose to contradict the formal structural statement of the room with the organic form even though her own structures were highly technological and formal within the inner area.

For me, the fact that Rosa had chosen fabric screens placed at intervals through the space in the oval form in opposition to the hard forms of concrete and steel in straight lines, which created the room, allowed me to visualise this space as a realisation of the 'field' that is the body; the opposition of the soft human form in the built urban environment. The body was permeable in both directions, projections from inside the space were focused much larger than the screens to spill on the surrounding walls, the sounds from within travelled freely beyond the screens, the gaze of the passer by was allowed in, and it was possible to physically enter or penetrate the inner space. I decided that the audience would journey through the space in a spiral pattern, which would travel around the outside of the space, utilising the 'supplemental spaces', and then come in towards the centre of the space and finally, for some, ascend to the ceiling. The spiral journey would allow the audience a passage through the space that would encompass the whole space. This journey would be, in architectural terms, one of outside to inside but it would also be a journey of entering or 'penetrating' the body to attempt to discover its 'secrets'. A physical action, mirroring that of the anatomists, to journey from unknowing to knowing by penetrating the body, paring it away piece by piece, a reductionist journey that says that simply by



knowing the components you will know it entirely. This essentially masculinist position is established as a relation of the male characters as they search to 'know' Lucy and as the process of the male anatomists reductive quest. This 'penetration' is then subverted by a failure to arrive at a conclusion or destination. Thus, this journey has a radically different reading, in which one travels along an ever-extending surface in search of an interior or conclusion that is always displaced. The character Lucy eludes the characters and observer participants she is never 'knowable'. The performance resists a 'knowing' conclusion. At the end of the performance action the observer participants find themselves ushered from the space and the doors are then closed excluding them. In this way there was no performance 'conclusion'. The process of reduction for the male characters, anatomists and observer participants is thus revealed as fruitless. The endless surface notion around which the observer participants have travelled displaces utterly the concept of 'penetration' to an interior to be 'colonised' or 'secret' to be revealed. This shifts the perspective from notions of a conclusion or goal to be found, to a set of relations always in discovery through movement.

Alison and I intended for the participants to experience this journey, she in her writing and I in my

use of the space. This sense of a physical journey as well as an intellectual or artistic journey was very important to the concept of participation that we wanted the audience to have the opportunity to experience. To engage with the body on all of its levels it was important to make the participants in our event physically active. Their bodies had to physically participate with our 'body'. An experience of the body is action; so action on the part of the participants was necessary. A strategy of engagement was devised which called for the audience to actually travel with us in the performance and on that journey the opportunity to become complicit in our actions would be created. The first step in this complicity was the unknowing undertaking of the anatomist's journey: the 'penetration' of the body as we now saw our space.

In this way the space of performance was conceptualised not simply as a material space to be constructed and received by bodies. Instead the space was conceived as an environment in which the experience of the body was paramount. This was a move towards what this chapter would argue is the site of *True*. The physical space cannot be separated from its construction but the conception of that space as a move to embodiment, in order to question the notion of what a body can be said to be, moves away from the question of architecture and

use towards a notion of site as an embodied discursive vector.

### Site as Lived Experience

In this section I will examine the work *Drunk* by Gillian Wearing and propose how a reading of this work and its relations with lived experience move towards a different notion of 'site'.

**Please see film Chapter One Space. True Section Three - Site as lived Experience**

It could be argued that the project *True* moved towards a notion of site as body. As a result I suggest that *True* is not sited by its constructed space or defined by the subsequent use of the space as a design element. Rather it needs a different scope of reference to engage with a performance event which has a complex relation to the body and temporality as site.

At this point I would like to consider the work *Drunk*. This work raises interesting questions regarding the relationships at work between the notions of space/place, temporality, and particularly decay.

The work *Drunk* is a video installation within a gallery in which various groups of people, many of whom live rough, are filmed degenerating through the effects



of alcohol<sup>12</sup>. It is important to note that in this work the people in the film are not actors: the film attempts to record 'lived experience' in an 'observational' mode. This is a work that uses 'real' life as its materials.

In the film long periods of time are concatenated and the effects of alcohol are seen; the individuals and groups degenerate before our eyes. Violence erupts, people lose physical and sensory awareness, they stumble, lose motor function, the capacity for speech is compromised; they slump, stumble, pass out, lose control of their bowels and are finally reduced to an unconscious form. The whole process is one of degeneration: the social relationships; the learned ways of being; the individual's health. We learn that one of the individuals has died in between periods of this filming.

This film is shot in the artist's studio against a white paper background. The film is then seen in a white gallery space, suitably darkened for the needs of the video. It would appear that all reference to space and place has been carefully erased. This work is so interesting because of its apparent contradictions. Where is this work? What are its space/place temporal relations, what is seen in the decay of bodies?

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<sup>12</sup> Gillian Wearing, 1999, 69-71, Monograph of artists work published by Phaidon Press. There are some stills of this work described as 'untitled'.

I saw this work in a gallery in Vancouver<sup>13</sup>. A white clear space created for uninterrupted viewing. The work is filmed in the artist's studio against white paper. The effect is to foreground the subjects. The people in the film are separated from the everyday and they are presented on the walls of the gallery. Is this anthropology or natural history? A presentation of the exotic preserved as object? Wearing's materials are the lived experience of the people in her film but it is not documentary, it does not attempt to record their lives, rather it strives against social context by the abstraction of the people from their environment. The drinkers who appear in the film are not seen in their south London streets.

What is presented is the lived practice of a field of activity. This notion of a field of activity is complex and will need examination through this chapter. This field notion of the activity allows for the notion of many overlapping spatialities to be engaged and interacting within complex temporal relationships. The specific activity of the piece *Drunk* is alcoholism. Can alcoholism be termed a site?

The constructed space of this work *Drunk*, the space it has produced from the mental space of concept to the

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<sup>13</sup> Vancouver Art Galllery, Canada. July 2002, Gillian Wearing: a trilogy. The exhibition featured the work *Drunk*

physical space of materials and projection and the produced space in which it is consumed - the gallery, is an abstract space, a space abstracted from the everyday. It is a produced space as in Lefebvre's terms subject to the laws of its own production and the implicit power relations involved in production.

The site of this work, I wish to suggest, is altogether different. The site of the work is the lived experience of alcoholism. This site has no relation to the actual gallery space. But it is a field of experience that occurs in the real space of the subjects of the film and it is a lived experience with which the viewers of the film may have more or less real experience. The site of this work has its own virtual spatiality that is widely dispersed over 'real' space, where the virtual space and 'real' space coincide for the viewer/participant in the 'actualising' experience of the activity. The experience of the activity is manifest as moments of the actual lived experience of alcoholism. Here, my analysis of the work has some radical shifts between such notions as space and site, lived experience and actual space. To contextualise these movements it will be necessary to continue to examine notions of space and in particular notions of site. The notion of site I am employing in this thesis is not just 'location' but rather a field of activity that challenges completely the



notion of a single distinct geographical space or location. It could be argued that the work *Drunk* engages decay as it is embodied by the lived experience of those within the film by presenting its process in the 'now' of the observer. Large periods of the lived experience of time are concatenated into the installation. In this concatenation the process of decay is 'arrested'; it is an insurgency against an unmarked passing of 'a' life. The process of decay and the passing of 'a' life are evidenced. The observer is not engaged in 'the' life of the individuals as no information regarding this life is present; rather it is 'the life' of alcoholism that is presented. I shall go on to suggest that the project *True* also engaged in a process of attempting to arrest a moment of decay as witnessed in a body. At this point I feel that the *Wearing* piece highlights an interesting dynamic between the produced/constructed space of the work and what I am going on to suggest is the generated experience of space inherent in notions of 'site' within my work.

#### Developing a notion of Body as Site through Lived Experience

In this section I will identify the relationship between the process of the creation of *True* and the notion of body as 'site'.

Please see film Chapter One Space. True Section Four  
- Aerial Duet and Virtual Bodies

To develop the project *True* the collaborators came together for a week in Glasgow to research the project. Each of the members received my original ideas and a description of A. L. Kennedy's script ideas. We discussed the space and shared ideas about the form. We discussed the content, our thoughts about the relationships and our ideas about the body. In order to understand more about the anatomists and their relationship to the body and also to confront our relationship to the body as an independent thing we went to the Laboratory of Human Anatomy at Glasgow University where we met Dr J Shaw-Dunn, an anatomist who had agreed to show us around the department and explain something of his work.

At the time the meeting with Dr J Shaw-Dunn was illuminating and inspiring for all of us. At the meeting we spent time in discussion with Dr Shaw-Dunn about his work. We were then able to accompany him to the laboratory to watch him at work with a cadaver.

The process of the central group of collaborators undertaking this journey was to become a precursor to the structure of the piece. By going to engage with the practice of the anatomists we were undertaking the

journey of 'lived experience'. We came, as did the anatomists, to try to 'know' something of the body.

It was important for us to do this to see the care and respect Dr Shaw-Dunn had for his patients. It was essential for us also to confront the reality of a dead body; stripped of sentience, pared back to reveal its workings. It was an intimate experience for us. We confronted another who had gone and in so doing questioned the nature of ourselves. For me, to gaze into a human body is to realise that humans are more than the sum of their parts. In death the body is no longer like our sentient beings but neither is it a complete object. The temporal link continues for the observer. It is not possible to regard the body and not be aware of its sentient past. The marks and links it carries from time experienced and the calluses on the feet from journeys taken. The scars on the body of trauma experienced and the knowledge for the observer that in this object, which through your observing summons its past, fixes you in the present with its non-presence and your sentient existence now, and pulls back from the future the sight of your own experience to come. The body is a profound temporal marker.

The inner space of the body is a profound sight. For me, the body dissected and open is endless surface, muscle, arteries, organs; each dissection reveals more



surface. For me, the notion of interior as regards the physical structure of the body is dispelled. The surface folds and contorts throughout the body but with no notion of depth. What is revealed is the absence of sentience. The dead body in the anatomist's laboratory functioned uncannily like Whiteread's *House* in that it was an arrested moment of decay. The dead body is a space that manifests a space that was a space of movement and energy. In the arresting of its decay the energy that is its dissipation is stopped. What is left in this temporary inertia is the profound absence. This is an absence that by its inversion makes manifest what is not there in startling clarity. To confront the body in this way is to receive what Derrida would term a gift of death<sup>14</sup>. Confronting the dead body is to "...have the experience of one's absolute singularity and apprehend one's own death..." (Derrida, 1995, 41)

This apprehension is the most tremendous affirmation of life in its singularity and its multiplicity. It is in the dead that the recognition of the absence of that quality which is life, 'a life', a notion that will be explored in chapter three - *The Movement of Bodies*, is most clearly seen. 'A life' could apply to any life of the body and is thus the multiplicity which is many singular lives. 'The life' of the body which is 'my life'

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<sup>14</sup> Derrida, Jacques. 1995 *The Gift of Death*

is the singular experience of life and in this recognition of the relations between multiplicity and singularity is the irreducible singularity of 'my life'. Thus Derrida argues that it is the relation with death that confers the uniqueness of one's own life,

Death is very much that which nobody else can undergo or confront in my place. My irreplaceability is therefore conferred, delivered, "given," one can say, by death. (Derrida, 1995, 41)

What is given by this death is a 'gift'. This 'gift' demands something in return. What was received from this 'gift' are notions of temporality in relation to lived experience, the notion of a singularity which is 'a life' in relation to the life of the body, and the relations between 'a life' and body are elusive and resist totalising notions. What was demanded in return was an engagement with the body as the essence of the project; in this way the notion of the body became the 'operational site' of the project.

#### Operational Site

At this point I shall engage with the theories of Miwon Kwon to establish the possibility of the notion of the body as site and move towards the notion of 'operational site'.

Miwon Kwon suggests that the notion of 'site' has been transformed by recent arts practice,

in advanced art practices of the past thirty years the operative definition of the site has been transformed from a physical location- grounded, fixed, actual- to a discursive vector- ungrounded, fluid, virtual. (Kwon, 2002, 29)

This is a significant departure: the term 'site' is freed from its architectural notions as 'ground'. Instead site is proposed as something 'ungrounded'. Not only is it ungrounded but also it is 'fluid' and 'virtual'. In this reading of site it could be possible to posit site as 'other' rather than 'in-between'.

Kwon, drawing from the work of Henri Lefebvre, argues that space and site-specific work are related to difference. Lefebvre argues that a new space cannot be born (produced) unless it accentuates differences; Kwon extends this notion thus,

It is perhaps no surprise then, that the efforts to retrieve lost differences, or to curtail their waning become heavily invested in reconnecting to uniqueness of place-or more precisely, in establishing authenticity of meaning, memory, histories, and identities as a differential function of places. This differential function associated with places, which earlier forms of site-



specific art tried to exploit and which the current incarnations of site-oriented works seeks to re-imagine, is the hidden attractor in the term "site specificity". (Kwon, 2002, 157)

For Kwon, the key to site-specific art is the differential function of places. The contrast of opinion is startling in that Kaye argues site-specific art as troubling the notion of place and Kwon posits the very opposite in that the notion of place as distinct from other places is central to site-specific art. Kwon's reading of site-specific art is also problematic however, as he appears to adopt an essentially modernist reading of art and indeed asserts that in relation to site-specific practices "...there is a re-emergence of the centrality of the artist as the progenitor of meaning." (Kwon, 2002, 51)

Kwon's claim that the work can establish "authenticity of meaning" appears to support the modernist notion that the artwork can contain a 'truth'. The modernist notion of an independent 'truth' of the artwork is not supported by this thesis. Within Kwon's theory however, there are some interesting conflicts and notions that can help orientate us towards a notion of site-specific practice for this thesis.

Kwon lists a group of artists, who propose a different notion of site, "...as predominantly an

intertextually coordinated, multiply located, discursive field of operation." (Kwon, 2002, 159) This notion of site as a "discursive field" has exciting possibilities in its embrace of the notion of fluidity, and is highly pertinent to my work.

For Kwon however the notion of discursive vector has its problems in relation to the scope to which the concept of fluidity applies. Thus Kwon states his objection to this fluidity observing that the "conceptual shift" (Kwon, 2002, 160) of the notion of discursive vector has

...embraced the idea of meaning as an open unfixed constellation, porous to contingencies...But in the process, the idea of fluidity of meaning has become conflated or confused with the idea of fluidity of identities and subjectivities, even of physical bodies... (Kwon, 2002, 160)

This would appear to be an attempt by Kwon to 'put the genie back in the bottle'. It could be suggested that once the notion of fluidity is embraced artistically the notion of boundaries to that idea will be tested and challenged. The notion of the body as an unfixed constellation is explored in my later chapter on bodies. Kwon clearly does not agree with this extension of the concept of fluidity to the notion of 'body'. His rebuttal is couched in terms of 'conflated' and 'confused', and

his implied rejection of the notion of a lack of limits to what constitutes a body is given with the remark "even of physical bodies". For Kwon this 'confusion' creates a fluidity of the relations between the artwork, the artist and the geographic location of the work that he feels is negative. Kwon argues that,

Not only is the art work not bound to the physical conditions of a place anymore, but the artist is "liberated" from any enduring ties to local circumstances. Qualities of permanence, continuity, certainty, groundedness (physical and otherwise) are thought to be artistically retrograde... (Kwon, 2002, 160)

This essentially modernist response to the discursive field of practice does not allow Kwon to see the power of the notion that the relations between meaning and bodies are not "confused" but pose an alternate clarity. Within the *True* project and the wider practice of my work I embrace the notion that meaning is embodied, that it does not reside in objects or spaces but in the corporealities that interact with them.

This research investigates a notion of site-specific performance as a practice that is embodied and which is the relations at play between the corporealities that perform and the corporealities that observe/participate. The space of this performance is generated between the entities as the 'operational site' at which the work



occurs. The relations between 'operational site' and place are to be explored but Kwon suggests some interesting pointers. There is a relationship between identity and place, accepting that both of these notions are fluid and are embodied. The differential function of places allows for a notion of a play between identity and place and at the same time a play between generated space, constructed spaces, and embodied place. Kwon argues that,

Today's site-oriented practices inherit the task of demarcating the relational specificity... This means addressing the uneven conditions of adjacencies and distances between one thing, one person, one place, one thought, one fragment next to another, rather than invoking equivalences via one thing after another. (Kwon, 2002, 166)

This notion of site-specificity may simply be a modernist rejection of multiplicity but it holds a notion that is important to this research, which is the engagement with the particular, the specific, when seen as one thing next to another. Kwon is arguing for a spatial specificity, which is present in its conjunction, not a temporal specificity such as a narrative, one thing after another or one place after another. The notion of one thing next to another would seem to be able to

encompass a temporality which is not linear but which is subject to 'tears', moments and flows.

So far we have identified a relationship between concepts of space, spaces constructed, use as in lived experience, the notion of 'operational site' (as the space in which it is possible to see one thing next to another), a space of multiplicity which contains all of the elements of the above and a complex relationship to the temporal. This posits the notion of a space of the 'other' as interplay between bodies and lived experience and the operational site. Operational site it is proposed does not have a located space rather it is the notion of site that operates as a field in relation to corporealities, lived experience, spaces and space. This is a notion of site that is open, which resists boundaries because it is continually in play.

Kwon argues for a sense of responsibility on the part of the artist to the relations between their art and the community in which it is sited. He posits that what he identifies as nomadism on the part of the artist is yet another element of global capitalism and as such is an effect of power and is another component of cultural homogenisation.

It may be true that as Kwon suggests much of the work that is created in the sites in which we live is provocative and unsettling. Kwon's assertion is still an

attempt to deal with the 'worth' of art or its justification; it is suggesting that site-specific work should deal with what is special about a site from within that site. This is problematic in that it still assumes that artists would know this, that they have an insight that is other to a sited-insight which is a projection of their artistic intention. It still supports the artist and art as special, and the artist as progenitor of meaning. I would argue that real responsibility of the artist in creating site-specific work is a practice that does not attempt a 'clearing of the ground' an overwriting of the space. Thus Kwon's notion of adjacency could be adopted but without the values of permanence that he seeks and the status of the independent art object containing its own meaning. I suggest that the strategy of adjacency in placing one thing next to another, coupled with an acceptance of the specific nature of place and places allows for an engagement with the tears and interruptions and flows of the condition of 'being'. This is a space to be engaged in creatively which offers participation in the notion of meaning and the spaces created. The strategy of adjacency is the development of a spatial logic of juxtaposition which resists a linear temporal sequencing. It is an attempt to communicate spatially that can be explored through the *True project*.



## Entering the Body

In this section I explore the strategy employed to create a spatial awareness or sensitivity in the performance of *True* drawing on the theories of Marc Augé. This spatial sensitivity was a vital element in the notion of adjacency I suggest can be seen within the *True* project.

The experience of the space that I wished to engender was to be a relationship between constructed spaces, lived experience, virtual space, and multiple experiences of temporality: to experience the 'folds' of the complex densities of social and physical spaces that we were trying to create. To engage with the space in part one, which is Rosa's installation, the audience could come at a time that suited them through the day. They would enter the venue; after so doing, enter the installation.

To engage with the space in part two - the performance element, the audience had to arrive at the venue at a prescribed time. Part three would be the personal choice of the participant observer to re-engage with the material by revisiting either part one or part two or both. The final choice was not to revisit. It

should be noted that the temporal sequence of these choices did not matter.

In arriving for the performance element the audience did not then go to the space of performance and find a seat as would be common in theatre, they were asked to assemble in the foyer. In the foyer the group was gathered together by the ushers and then walked out of the building again and down the street. At the end of the building through some service doors I had created a special transitional space. This space I termed the "Airlock". So having come to the venue in the usual manner the audience were then taken from the venue into the street and re-presented to the space in a different manner and through a different entrance. At this point they were a group of strangers together, who were embarking on a journey. Having started by arriving individually or in small groupings to the venue they were now beginning with a short journey through the social space of the street as a group and then being taken through a small dark entrance into the Airlock: a small, very dimly lit chamber. The purpose of this space was to create what Marc Augé<sup>15</sup> would call a 'non-place': a place of transit.

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<sup>15</sup> Augé, Marc. 1995 *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*

How to bring this together? Constructed spaces, site as not geographic location, site not merely temporal organisation but now, and the body. The answer for me was a liminal zone, not an interior or exterior space but space of the 'other'. To experience *True*, self-reflexively, as an embodiment the audience had to be aware of space and time: aware of their own embodiment as space and time. To do this I created an inversion, an absence that would point up that which was not there. A strategy of space to remove as much as possible the evidence of time passing, the restriction of the social, and an awareness of the senses.

I felt that for this project that sense of place and expectation for the audience would already be created by the impact of the geographical and social factors of the site. These would be accepted by the coming to the venue in the accepted fashion then we would try and extend them by representing the notion of beginning by leaving the venue. The space is entered down the street and is dark and featureless, not a foyer or a theatre space or studio but also not any other recognisable space.

The theory of non-place is put forward by Marc Augé to explain a particularity of what he describes as Supermodernity (1995, 29) - it is important at this stage to engage with theory of Supermodernity as it pertains directly to the work being created.



Augé describes the condition of Supermodernity as one of excess, characterised by three specific aspects. The first of these is the "over-abundance of events" due to an excess of information and the "growing tangle of the world system", the subject of much of the recent writing of Jean Baudrillard. In 'The Transparency of Evil' Baudrillard proposes that this excess has accelerated a need to give meaning to the contemporary experience whilst at the same time posing the impossibility of doing this. This is leading us to what he describes as "culture degree Xerox" (Baudrillard, 1993, 9) which is a non-specific multiplicity of reproductions of experience freed from all meaning. It is this very non-specificity that requires us to attempt to give meaning to everything. This is echoed by Augé, "...we seem to feel an explicit and intense daily need to give it meaning..." (Augé, 1995, 29)

For Augé then we are engaged in searching for a "global" meaning. The experience of 'near' and 'far' is changing; the speed of transport no longer makes that definition a function of time. Now it is more individual, with reference to our personal experience and beliefs. It is the attempt to look beyond giving meaning to our ancient connections of definitions of place, and biological connection to each other and space, which is implied by this new need for meaning, and is significant.

It is an experience that engenders a move away from 'place' and each other.

Augé identifies what he describes as an excess of the ego which is manifest as the rise of individualism. This excess of ego creates a move away from each other as the individual becomes complete all-consuming entity.

In western societies, at least, the individual wants to be a world in himself; he intends to interpret the information delivered to him by himself and for himself. (Augé, 1995, 37)

Augé proposes that there is a developing individuated culture where responsibility stops at the self. This ego bound self-culture must naturally search for its own perception of meaning.

It could be suggested that we are, in that ego bound culture, in danger of becoming permanently isolated as we seek to give an individual meaning to everything while dispensing with collective values. This is an accelerating process of an accelerated culture, of movement and information, one that by its very nature must question our definitions and accepted notions of space within the urban environment. Augé accepts the importance of the use of space within given social groups as a way of mapping these groups' relations. Augé suggests that,

The organisation of space and the founding of places, inside a given social group, comprise one of the stakes and one of the modalities of collective and individual practice. (Augé, 1995, 51)

The founding of places is a defining landmark in human behaviour, which is important to us in our perception of place as a use of space, and its development into a way of understanding the crucial role of the sense of place in performance. It is the separation of space and place by the concept of non-place that is so interesting. For Augé then, it is in the definition of what is not that we get a new perspective,

If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place. (Augé, 1995, 77)

The non-place is not then a 'social space' as we have understood the term so far. However it can be seen as a part of our new and developing social condition. This condition is our experience of being 'together alone' an individual and lonely experience being simultaneously felt by large numbers of people. I wish to point out an important distinction that the 'non-place' occurs as a function of the excess of Supermodernity. Thus for Augé



"...Supermodernity produces non-places, meaning spaces which are not themselves anthropological places..." (Augé, 1995, 78) It is our peculiar and contemporary experience that space and place are becoming separated.

The experience of being 'together alone' occurs in the non-places of Supermodernity. These are defined Augé by examples such as airports, railway stations and hotel chains. (Augé, 1995, 79)

In these situations Augé argues an experience is not one of place but one of transit in which we are highly individuated even from ourselves. We are customers, passengers, and as such we are not of 'here': we are travelling somewhere else. An example of such a space would be an airport lounge. We do not have a sense of place as organic, historical and social in an airport lounge. This thesis would argue that the non-place is not a located or positioned space between here or there; rather it is 'other' space. There are in practice as many 'here or there's' as there are travellers in this space. This 'other' space is the site of travel; it is the being in transit in which present spatiality is extended in time and space in infinite directions. Thus, we are instead somewhere else, in transit to somewhere else relieved of immediate responsibility: the airline, for instance, has assumed that, and we are 'together alone' with other passengers to many different destinations. It

is the airport lounge's resistance to the organic, historical and social mechanisms of place that are its defining characteristics as a non-place. Therefore as Augé argues, "The distinction between places and non-places derives from the opposition between place and space." (Augé, 1995, 79)

This "opposition between place and space" would challenge the audience's expectations and notion of the 'place' of performance. I wished to create the opportunity for the audience to challenge the role of passive observer, to take them out of the 'familiar', the 'practiced' space of the performance venue. To do this I had to take them 'somewhere else' and to create the boundaries for this journey I had to have a clear point of departure or in this case 'departure lounge' where there would be a period of waiting "together alone" to travel to the possible multiple destinations of the performance. It was necessary for me then to conceive of a space which was not defined as "relational, or historical, or concerned with identity" in which the audience could be 'together alone', and where the "individual would be able to interpret the information delivered to him by himself and for himself". In this space the 'modalities' and practice of this space would be unfamiliar to the participants coming new to the event

and would therefore be discovered in the practice of the event itself.

It could be argued however, that the people coming to this event would consider the event to have started and that all that was occurring would fall under the broad remit of a 'performance' and themselves as an 'audience' and the practice of the space would be already defined by these parameters. In the same vein you could argue that the airport lounge had a 'practice', its use and way of being are known: that we know where we are, and that it is indeed a 'place'. Augé argues that it is the fact that these spaces have no concern with identity and that one's experience of them is not active participation but passive transit that demarks them as a different phenomenon in our experience; we are not producing space we are receiving it. I would suggest that in the non-place we become consumers of time and space. The airport lounge is the 'zone of reception' experience of space - we wait and we are passively transported through space. This has its corollary in what the television is to the 'zone of reception' experience of time - we wait and we are passively transported through time - the time of watching. I accept that coming to the venue to begin the event had set in motion the practice of that event for the participants. I would argue however that leaving the venue at the beginning and going to a



space that was not expected and had no concern with identity, and which left one in a state of waiting, created the conditions whereby that 'practice' could be disrupted; in the same way that there has to be a disruption of the practice of space when one passes from the street to the airport lounge -from 'place' to 'non-place'. The Airlock had many functions. It had to challenge audience expectations of place and their defined roles. It had to make them aware of space and time; the strategy here was to confine the space, remove the light and to wait. The Airlock had also to make the audience aware of the body. 'Together alone' in the dark, standing, one is aware of one's own body and the proximity of others that cannot be seen clearly. The absence of performers within the space would contrast with the embodiment of the space we were journeying to.

The Airlock was almost completely dark, a small rectangular section of space demarcated by heavy opaque plastic walls and roof. It was devoid of features. As the audience were led in there, there was nothing to do but wait: the audience had given up control to the ushers at this point and was 'en-route'. Audience members would be aware that they were one among a group in this space but in the almost total darkness the experience was one of being 'together alone'. The first part of the journey then was to create this 'waiting' not the waiting of the

audience in the foyer for the show to begin but the waiting of a group of individuals whose roles are to be challenged, who are now waiting having begun, so that the waiting is framed within the experience. It was important to challenge the expectation of performance that an audience member has, so that the move to participant observer may begin.

The strategy therefore was to create a space without performance: the darkened space. This space cannot be called a room, as it had nothing to suggest that the area was a room - a place of human habitation - instead the area was merely defined with no apparent programme of use other than waiting. This space had to be without the expected performers. This absence was heightened by the traces of the performance manifesting their absence. For a long period there was nothing and then slowly came sounds of movement, shadows of figures not among us but, disconcertingly, from above us, slow gradations in the change of light and the sounds of voices, but no physical presence only conspicuous absence.

Over a period of time the senses of those 'en route' were subject to stimulation: different smells, changes in the quality and nature of light, wind and sensory textures, fragments of text. These were to be the sensations of 'travelling'; this information was passively received by those in transit, like the view

from a train window. In the dark there could be little collective interpretations of meaning; this was an experience for the individual alone, in a space that resisted being a place. For Augé,

A person entering the space of non-place is relieved of his usual determinants... Subjected to a gentle form of possession... he tastes for a while-like anyone who is possessed-the passive joys of identity-loss, and the more active pleasure of role-playing. (Augé, 1995, 103)

This was an environment where the previous day's worries and the next day's concerns of our 'passengers' could be distanced. And it was intended, as an environment, to create the conditions whereby the audience would be allowed the choice of the 'active pleasure' and responsibility of role-playing in the upcoming event. The critical movement in this is the 'distancing'. The opportunity of a 'distancing' for the participants' from their day-to-day concerns manifest in the opportunity to be no longer the audience arriving but participants in the event. The 'distancing' also from the performance: not 'watching the show', but in it, whatever 'it' is. The receiving of the sensory stimulation is also a present marker to lived experience and indicator of our own bodies working and passing in time and through time. The Airlock space as a non-place is above all a



place of transit. For *True* the Airlock is a place of transit from the outside to the inside. The 'outside' is the street, from where the individuals are coming to the venue. The 'inside' is where a group of individuals are 'Together alone' participating in *True, a valediction For Lucy Palmer*.

The traces of the material presented to the travellers in the Airlock were an opportunity to present the emotional landscape of the event to them while they were 'distanced' by being in transit. These impressions of our landscape would be gained in much the same way as the view to the passenger through the train window. This information received by the individual in the dark would allow each person the opportunity to form their own personal impression of the temporal 'terrain' through which they had passed. These impressions would be present and individual at the moment of arrival into the next space.

The Airlock was the key space in establishing the "textual narrative" of spaces used in the performance. It has a complex series of uses as a space of transition; as a space where one became aware of the 'other'; a non-place; and an area where one became aware of the presence of space itself - its "felt volume". The experience of the "felt volume" was manifest by the journey through the changing volume of space from the street, the space that

had just been left, through the constricted Airlock to the space to be entered, which was that of the performance. This sequence of spaces was extremely important for it is within this sequence a spatial communication takes place, which at its simplest level is an awareness of the changing nature of the spatial volumes. This is the 'architectural programme', a series of constructed spaces. At the same time this 'spatial communication' has deep resonance for us in understanding our place in the world.

I wished to heighten this sense of changing volumes by contrasting the large interior space of Tramway Two, not to the experience of the outside, but with the small confined space of the Airlock. I was taking great care to compose the nature and sequences of spaces experienced within the event. An awareness of space itself was essential as was its qualities and our role in creating that awareness was composing a journey. This was evidenced in the contrast between the small tight space of the Airlock and the open space of Tramway Two, but also the contrast between a non-place and a series of spaces-to-become places.

These spaces-to-become places would become places through the use and 'practice' of those within them; this was to include performers, and crucially, the participants. The non-place where we could be passive had

given way to a large space containing several sites in which it was necessary for us all - performers and participants - to create a series of places.

These spaces while occurring in a temporal sequence were at the same time always adjacent to other spaces. The porous surface of the central space continued to maintain a leakage and flow in multiple directions between the spaces. Thus one thing was always next to another and yet at the same time each space strove for a relational specificity in that they were within the operations of the performers and their cultural specificity as Scottish and a practice of attempting a ritual for mourning. These places were strange and complex amalgams of our social/spatial experience: uncanny and familiar, homely and un-homely. Most of all however, was a sense that there was more, that not everything could be contained, that things were elusive. In short, that there was not completion.

I refer above to the 'qualities' of the space. The spaces thus required a 'movement' on the part of the participant observer. The Airlock as a space without features provokes the question 'where am I'? The spaces with their 'dislocation' required the participant observer to engage in the action of placing.

The process of being un-placed can create excitement or anxiety among the participant observers depending on



their own experience. This was intended to raise the sense of spatial awareness of the participant observers. My reason for doing this was to try and create a sense that this was to be meaningful to the participant. This is not say that it had 'a meaning' but that it had a value to the participant that hopefully it should be engaged with rather than passively received. The notion was that when things are important or anticipated there is often the sensation of anxiety or expectation on the part of the participant. This reaction to space Anthony Vidler describes as "the initiatory role of space and objects in anxiety production". (Vidler, 2000, 13)

It is important to note that in his reading of psychoanalysis and it's spatial implications Vidler's criticism is "consciously limited to that of representational space, or the space produced by architects, artists, and critics" (Vidler, 2000,13). I shall argue that this reading would apply directly to the participants of the event as they 'received' the constructed spaces created by the group of artists, myself among them. How the participants would then go on to create the 'place' in performance through the 'practice' of those spaces would be subject to a different set of parameters and a different interrogation. In his reading Vidler focuses on the central relationship of architecture and psychoanalysis

as being the 'void', our reaction to it and what it may in fact contain. Vidler suggests that,

All representations of anxiety or horror in the face of the void, these phantom shapes are, as occasion demands, sometimes named architecture, sometimes urban spaces... (Vidler 2000, 14)

Vidler asserts that an awareness of the 'void' permeates increasingly our experience of urban architecture and that it is not simply contained to the physical spaces of urbanism. Vidler argues that,

Their recent entry into virtual space has simply multiplied their potential for morphing, and obscured still further their place and role in relation to their subjects, we who from time to time surrender to their horror. (Vidler, 2000, 14)

Architecture fails to obscure the void. Therefore the philosophical premise that to build, to demarcate space, to limit our experience, was our protection from the void, is called into question. Thus, as Vidler argues our protection has been subverted, our perception of the void seeps into and permeates our apparently stable urban landscape; it can be glimpsed in our everyday experience.

I wish to posit that the Airlock was an attempt to utilise this leakage, to manifest this seeping of the void. This engagement with the 'void' created the

possibility of a disruption to the reading of the apparently stable structures already present, to posit the essential doubt: could they be permeated with the uncanny, the ghosts of other possibilities? The relation between constructed space and body would then be the contrast between the limits that are the formal nature of constructed space and the absence of limits to which the body moves by resisting totalising notions.

The spatial awareness that I wished to facilitate was a strategy of juxtaposition: the leaving of the small space into the large space, from the dark to the light that makes us aware of the space and our experience of it. This was an attempt on my part to create the 'other' space; not inside or outside but an uneasy space where architecture is not shelter. This uneasy space where we are not at home in the performance, we are out in this large space unsure of our 'place'. The nature of the 'place' has been disturbed. Its history as a cultural landmark is present but our expectations of the practice of the space, our homely relations to it, are challenged. The space may appear familiar perhaps but not the same, this opens a gap in which the void may be glimpsed and through which it permeates. At the same time this was also a journey from outside to inside the building; from public to private; from observer to participant. At this point it is interesting to compare three descriptions



from critics who attended the event and experienced the Airlock.

It begins with a journey through a tunnel that feels like a birth; the whole audience ushered in to a pulsating fabric tube-its surface haunted by strange shapes and voices-that leads from the outside world straight into the big exhibition space at the heart of the Tramway. When we arrive we soon learn that we've come not for a birth but for a death. The great yawning space... (Macmillan, 2000, 14)

True opens in a pitch-black antechamber where we hear of the death of Lucy Palmer and glimpse strange, Wraith-like figures in the void above our heads. Moving into the huge Tramway two... (Freebairn, 2000, 17)

You... Are led outside the theatre and back in through a side entrance. The door closes and you're left standing in a narrow, pitch-black corridor. You squint, trying to make things out, while recorded voices talk at you-angrily, mournfully, bitterly - about a woman called Lucy. High above someone is clambering about, but you can only just make her out. It's ominous but elusive. Something bad has happened, or is about to happen... You're then led into a vast hall... (Eaton, 2000, 38)

It can be seen from these three descriptions that the Airlock is not assigned a particular place or social space, as in a room or location. Instead it is variously described as a "tunnel", "antechamber" and "corridor". These are places of transit and places of waiting. It is interesting to point out that Macmillan describes the

experience as "it begins with a journey through a tunnel..." clearly indicating the sense of having travelled, even though the time spent within the Airlock was experienced while being physically stationary; this I would suggest is the experience of being transported, the same as in a car or a train or plane.

The descriptions of the Airlock would appear to support the idea that the space was not a 'comfortable one'. The space is variously described in terms which echo the uncanny and which give a sense of unease such as "ominous but elusive" and "strange wraith-like figures in the void above our heads" and finally "haunted by strange shapes and voices".

At the end of the Airlock material an authoritative female voice, of the type often found in places of transit, asked people to "please proceed", as a space was opened in one end of the Airlock to allow progress into the building and the event. This voice, which would instruct us at various points in our journey would heighten the sense of being in transit and of an 'other' as being in control, and allow us to consider perhaps that we have relinquished responsibility. It is a feature of most of the non-places as specified by Augé that we take instruction from absent voices broadcast to us in stations, airports, and shopping malls. This broadcasting is textual at the moment in cars and communications but

this is only a temporary aberration as we wait for the technology to become all pervasive. This giving up of responsibility was necessary to the Airlock but would appear to present a contradiction to the rest of the event. This 'contradiction' was to be a temptation to the audience to allow them the possibility of considering that they are simply "passengers" to the flow of events; to abdicate their personal responsibility. A temptation for them to stand back and say "I am but a traveller and am not part of this"; an explanation so often given when events have taken a dark or sinister turn. It could be suggested that this threshold is always present in life and choosing when and how we cross it is fundamental to our existence.

The next part of the journey is also described with a heightened sense of space. Even though the Tramway appears to be known to at least two of the critics, the space is described as "the great yawning space" the "huge Tramway two" and as "a vast hall". These descriptions show an awareness of and a reaction to the changing volumes of space, for the 'felt volume'. The Airlock provided the means in which the 'use' of space in *True* could be in the foreground. The strategy was that an absence of place early in the process of the work would create the opportunity for the participant observer to engage in their own moment of 'placement' in the mind



which would allow the conditions for an active engagement with the space. From this moment on the observer participant was engaged in the identification of 'relational specificity' through which the process of placing and notion of meaning can be generated. Fluidity of meaning was an opportunity for the personal creation of meaning.

### Spatial Journeys

A series of spatial journeys were presented in *True*. The journey of the ceremony of grieving began with a long walk down the side of the space to be met in a small room by two characters who struggle with their 'roles' as stewards of this 'ceremony'. The participant observers are asked to take a flower and proceed along to another space where they are asked to remember someone they have lost. Flowers and notes are left in memory of others. The two 'stewards' bicker and are confused about their place and roles. From this space participant observers proceed to another space to be given a stool and encouraged to enter the main space in which their own 'place' can be selected.

Through the ceremony we hear of 'Lucy' and travel finally down the space in which the body of 'Lucy' struggles with death. In this process the participant

observers are implored for help in the consummation of 'Lucy's' death. The chains need pulling to raise the body to its conclusion.

This journey of mourning is one of little acts of complicity. The simple act of staying rather than going home or to the pub; the following of instructions; the taking and engaging with the objects in performance on whatever individual level this was; the moving through the space towards the destruction of the 'body' of 'Lucy'. The tacit acceptance of this role in destruction as bystander or the active engagement of participant, and finally the helping with the body and the sombre leaving of the space are all roles to be experienced at a funeral or cremation and the confusion of roles, moments of awkwardness and embarrassment are evident in the secular experience of the rituals of death. In this journey *True* attempts to interact with the 'lived practice' of the rituals of death. The degree to which this is engaged in is different for every participant observer depending on their willingness to enter this space.

These little acts of complicity draw the performers and participant observers into the 'use' of this space. This is not, however, the site of the work. This 'use' does not complete the construction. This use was a playing out of a possibility of this space.

I would argue that the operational site of this event, in which one thing could be seen next to another, was the nature of this event. The overlaying of the geographical location and its relations to its means of production within the social structure in which it occurs serves to locate the work. This was also overlaid with the experience of the body as elusive and incomplete which relates to lived experience, and the bodies relations with the virtual that occurs as a surface which intersects with the notion of void in its endless possibility. Thus the question of the nature of 'body' becomes a discursive vector. This is then further overlaid with the relational specificity of the intersections between the culturally specific of the Scottish characters and observer participants hearing the 'Scottish voice' of Alison Kennedy's writing interposed with other spaces. And finally, a strategy of 'placement' for the participant observer allow for notions of 'place' to be engaged. The 'operational site' allows for these spatialities to be seen next to one another. There is no attempt to overwrite the space or deny anything already present. In this way it could be suggested that this project was an embrace of space, an attempt at spatial consciousness.

It is important to note that in my creation of spaces for this event there was no 'clearing of the



ground'. The participant observers came to the Tramway, a place that was known within Glasgow. They came into the foyer and bought tickets. I could for example have chosen a space not so well known. They then returned to the street to come into another entrance. I could have had the group assemble in another space and brought into the Airlock directly. After the Airlock and a long walk along the side of the space Tramway Two they meet two performers who begin a ritualised text which is obviously a 'performance' of something which subsequently breaks down. Role playing and performing are acknowledged immediately. There is no clearing away, no tabula rasa. The construction of spaces acknowledges that it is just that, an act of temporary construction.

A relation retrospectively revealed was the nature of the relationship between Rosa's installation on its own and the performance event as the act of embodiment by lived practice. For me the installation was a striking evocation of the body. It succeeded in its multiple spaces and temporalities to evoke the absence that is 'a life'. The installation contained a 'virtual' body which could be navigated in virtual reality. It contained a sarcophagus but this contained only a projected image of the body; there were places in which through movement the sounds of pleasure and pain could be experienced. An environment for engaging with the temporal structure of

the text of the character's life, the text could be uttered and reordered. The incompleteness of life was here, the absence manifest, the body elusive. The life itself, the actual living body, could not be grasped however.

The performance event manifest, in lived practice, the body, but this too was incomplete. The body remained distanced and ungraspable. In the final part of the performance the living body once again dies and is inert. The observer participants are ushered from the room and the doors are closed. There is no acknowledgement of them or of the performance convention. There is nothing but absence, they are left together alone without conclusion, excluded from a death in Derrida's terms that they cannot enter. Left with the juxtaposition of the movement and energy of 'a life' that was embodied during the performance and its absence now.

The body was always the site of this performance. As an artist I attempted to engage with the body by creating spaces that could allow an engagement with the notion of body. The challenge was the contradiction between the construction of spaces that function as structures of limits, and the body as that which resists such limits and is incomplete.

It can be seen from both descriptions of site-specific practice from Kaye and Kwon that site-specific

is in fact the overlay of multiple fields of activity. There is the physical site with its constructed spaces; the operational site with its discursive vector; the embodied site with its generated space and its connection to the immaterial virtual plane of possibilities. This space is entirely fluid and yet specific. It is possible for the body to recombine with its environment in any number of ways. These spaces I felt would be the overlapping fields of activity in the aggregating order of complexity, points of escape and indeterminacy. I felt that this relationship placed at the heart of the work the relationship between person and space. The project was imagined as a heterogeneous experience held together under the structure of the event without necessarily a linear or even a unitary logic.

This is not to say that each of the artists did not work with their own internal logic, they clearly did. It was rather that there was no attempt to contain an overarching logic that could be reduced to a single reading. The complexity of the project was welcome and fruitful rather than problematic. Thus my strategy was to facilitate the independence on the part of each artist to follow his or her own vision and then play with the resulting complexity of the 'fields' that were created.

So far, within practice I have engaged with the notion of the relations between constructed spaces as



created by architecture and other notions of space. I have attempted to show that the development of the notion of site that I have been engaged in is one where site is a 'field' of enquiry. This enquiry is an embodied enactment that occurs within a notion of temporality which places one thing next to another, rather than one thing after another.

The Flaneur for Benjamin was the person who amongst the everyday took the time to dream other realities. The artist in the notion of site-specific work that this paper wishes to explore is the one who takes the time to make those thoughts visible through performance. The site is important because it is particular, and it is within the particular that it is most interesting to see other possibilities. It is in site-specific work, with its mutual generation of space in the embodied moment of performance, that the process is open to everyone to engage in everyday dreaming; the creation of other moments of 'reality', to see one thing next to another. This thesis proposes that it is in this engagement that the possibility occurs, to allow the viewers/participants/performers the opportunity, in the moment of performance, to become what David Harvey terms as 'insurgent architects' and to generate new spaces.

Harvey posits that the nature of our urban existence does not allow time for a consideration of other possibilities,

...the fierce spatiotemporalities of daily life - driven by technologies that emphasise speed and rapid reductions in the friction of distance and turnover times - preclude time to imagine or construct alternatives... (Harvey, 2000, 237)

This driven nature of our existence creates a habit of being. It is the interrogation or opening of habit or routine that is so central to site-specific practice. This is an engagement with the fundamental nature of habit by positing the possibility of another existence of something else within it or beside it. Harvey's term 'insurgent architects' relates to an active engagement with political and social space, he suggests the insurgent architect would,

...have to think strategically and tactically about what to change and where, about how to change what and with what tools. But we also have somehow to continue to live in this world. (Harvey, 2000, 233)

The insurgent architecture that this thesis proposes and enacts is prior to this notion. Harvey posits the insurgent architect within the lived experience of the

social and political. The *True* project engages with these fields and strives to allow the insurgent architect to act. However, prior to the social and political, the *True* project engages with the very notion of being as stable, the body is always displaced or incomplete. In this way the project speculates towards a condition of 'becoming',<sup>16</sup> rather than being. In engaging with the site-specific performance the body is generating the space for that performance. The action of taking time within 'fierce' daily life is an imagining of alternatives and the creation of other possible spatialities. It is in the engagement between bodies in the everyday that there can be an overlapping of fields of complexity between art and experience. Harvey proposes,

... 'where and who we learn it from and how we learn it' overrides the contemporary postmodern fascination with 'where we see it from' as the basis for intellectual engagements. Knowledges are and can be constituted in a variety of ways and how they are constructed plays a crucial role in our ability to interpret and understand our way of being in the world. (Harvey, 2000, 225)

The where, who, and how is played out in the specific nature of a particular place as it pertains to the site-specific performance. The fact that the

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<sup>16</sup> The notion of 'becoming' refers to the work of Deleuze and is explored in chapter two *The Movement of Bodies*.



performance is embodied, no matter how extended that notion becomes, is crucial. The *True* project essentially attempts to engage with the 'habit' of being as an embodied notion with complex relations to space and place. It is the disruption of the habit of being that defines site, as it is presented in this event.

## Chapter Two

### The Movement of Bodies

This chapter engages with the notion of the body as 'other' to simple subject-object divisions. This chapter posits a fluid notion of the body that whilst subject to sexual difference, is not reducible to binary distinctions. It then proposes a notion of being, drawing from the work of Deleuze, as a quality of 'immanence'. Deleuze relates immanence to the notion of *A Life*<sup>17</sup>. This chapter then posits the notion that 'A Life', as immanence, is an essential quality of what a body has. The framework proposed is that the notion of the body can be engaged by a three-field enquiry: what the body has, what the body does, and what the body is.

From this investigation a notion of 'fluid being' is proposed in which the body can be viewed as 'extensible surface'. This notion is investigated in the performance works *Machine Dance* in which a 'prosthetic machine', a JCB backhoe, is posited as an extension of the surface of the body and *Fearless* in which a 'prosthetic' constructed architectural space is posited as an extension of the surface of the body.

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<sup>17</sup> Deleuze, Gilles. 2001 *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*. Deleuze relates the notion of immanence to the notion of A Life "What is Immanence? A Life..." (Deleuze, 2001, 28)

This chapter also engages with the work of installation artist William Cobbing and photographer Jeff Wall in order to comparatively interrogate the relation between these notions and broader aesthetics. Cobbing's work, with great clarity, re-imagines the relations between the body and architectural space and is similar in intent to some of the elements of my practice. However, my own work in its engagement with the 'everyday' also seeks to engage with 'the life' of lived experience. Wall is primarily engaged in the representation of the body, whereas my own work placed in the everyday as live performance, deals with the actuality of lived experience. However, the strategies employed by Wall in his engagement with the body are similar to my own.

#### Machine location

The work *Machine Dance* is different from the other works in this thesis in that it does not occur in an urban location. The location offered a peculiar clarity in engaging the notion of what a body could be. The work *Machine Dance* took place at Watergate Bay in Cornwall. The work was conceived for this location. Watergate Bay is a completely tidal bay surrounded by cliffs. At high tide the ocean covers the beach. The performance occurred



at the far end of the beach away from the only pedestrian access to and from the beach. The timing of the work was such that the tide was coming in throughout the performance. This meant that the work had to be completed before the tide returned in order to leave the beach.

In line with the notion of the relations between site and body posited in the chapter on space, *Machine Dance* was conceived specifically for the geographical location in which it occurred; the site of the work I shall argue was the body.

The work raises questions regarding the nature of the body. The beach prompted the question for me of the nature of being. The beach in being completely tidal is a liminal zone between land and sea. In accordance with Darwin's theory of evolution, the beach could be suggested as a primary location in our evolution to the experience of the actual current biological status of the body. To one side of the beach is the land and with it the experience of our current biological status, and to the other is the sea and presumably a previous biological body experience of our species. For me, the beach in its rawness as an open location exposed to the play of the elements, had a presence as a place of life. The location, as a site where the workings of geologic time can be seen, and an awareness of evolutionary time may be imagined, manifests a much greater temporal span than the

temporal experience of an individual life. This juxtaposition of temporal spans occasioned for me several reflections on the consideration of my own mortal time of being and the impossibility of grasping the notion of death: the state of not being. For me, there was an awareness of the insignificance and temporariness of the experience of being. The temporariness of the individual is also considered in relation to the biological connection to the predecessors without which I would not exist and the subsequent generations who may come after. The image of tracks in the sand creates an awareness of those who have gone before and for me questions the nature of my own fleeting experience of being.

The beach is also a location in which the body is engaged in leisure. The body is engaged in the sensual pleasures of sea, sand and sun; or the active pleasures of wind and waves. Whether sunbathing or kite-surfing, the experience of the beach at Watergate Bay is an embodied one: There is an awareness of the body, and the bodies of others. The body is seen in swimming costumes and observed in action playing on the beach.

It was my intention to manifest in a small way the expanding process of what evolution and the notion of body could be. This was to be explored in the context of the reality of lived experience within the physical world. The decision to place the work against the

incoming tide was a decision to acknowledge that the relationship between the body and the processes of the natural world that are the nature of lived experience could not be ignored. The awareness of the lived body in leisure, which is an experience of the body at the beach, would also create a strong juxtaposition with the presence of the machine on the beach. The work *Machine Dance* engages in practice with two notions that are central to this chapter. They are what a body has and what a body is.

**Please watch film Chapter Two Bodies. *Machine Dance***

**Section One - Diggers as Machines**

"The rest is silence" (Hamlet): What a Body Has.

This section explores the notion that what a body has is life. This notion is then examined through a process of negation. Thus, by attempting to establish what life is not, the field of enquiry of what a life can be said to be, for this process, can be narrowed.

It is not possible for this chapter to define the notion of life. What is possible is the definition of the set of terms by which life is understood for this chapter, accepting that they cannot be definitive.



The work *Machine Dance* was made to engage with the nature of bodies in performance. I choose to describe the work *Machine Dance* as a dance for eight bodies. The dance features four dancers and four JCB diggers. In the film the beach reveals the marks of movement, the tracks in the sand. The machines stand silent, inert.

The machines inertia manifests an 'absence'. What is absent is 'life'. This chapter will argue that an essential quality of what a body has is life. It will be shown that this notion is not simply that of a sentient individual life. Rather, this chapter will posit that life is evidenced in the complex relations of the 'my' life of the body of the sentient individual, and the embodied notion of 'A life' as posited by Deleuze.

To begin an examination of the relations of life and the body it is easier to start to engage with the notion of life by examining death. However, it is as impossible to define death, as it is life. Within this chapter I am employing the notion that death is that which is not life and thus by being the absence of life begins to define what life may be.

In the film the machines are not dancing. In chapter one *The Movement of Space*, it is suggested that the dead body manifests what is missing by its inertia. The missing quality is movement. The notion of a movement as a change between qualities, states, quantities, is a

perception that enables an engagement with the notion of life.

Flow/ebb, life/death are not one state or another but the articulation, the movement, which makes the states discernible to us. The Composer John Cage has expressed this movement in his articulation of silence within his work,

Cage may be the first composer in history to say there is no such thing as silence. He quotes as personal proof, his experience in an anechoic chamber, a room made as technologically silent as possible, in which he heard two sounds: his nervous system and his circulatory system. (Johnstone, 1962, 146)

For Cage then there is always the sound of the movement within his own body. That which was understood to be silent within music, that is the pauses between the sounds, is now understood to be filled with the ambient sounds of the environment thus, "This sound is what happens to be in the environment, and it is called silence only because it does not form part of the musical intention" (Johnstone, 1962, 146). As Johnstone argues, silence in this context does not mean an absence of sound but an affirmation of the continuous presence of sound "Silence means the world of sound, Life" (Johnstone, 1962, 146). This inversion is paralleled by the notion of stillness in dance as revealing that we are all subject

to movement continuously, a notion explored in chapter three, *The Movement of Time*.

Cage then proposes a strategy of doing nothing that one might in the stillness perceive the movement that is the sound of life occurring. Johnstone argues, "his music propounds the necessity of doing nothing. His silent piece, 4' 33'', is an expression of that necessity."

(Johnstone, 1962, 148) The silent piece by Cage (4'33'') was conceived as a performance. At the premiere, the pianist David Tudor walked onto the stage and sat at the piano. He opened the lid and some time later without having played any thing he closed the lid of the piano and left the seat. The elements of this piece are the body of the performer and the ritual of the performance. There was no overt playing of music, no notes were struck, but the ambient sound was the focus for a specific duration of time. The presence of the body of the performer at the piano creates an expectation of playing the piano. However, the manifest absence of playing articulates the absence of 'silence' and draws attention to the ambient sound: the movement of life.

The creation of this absence of playing by the performer makes us aware of what is present in that time period. The presence of the body is now principle in the movement that is understood as music. Thus Johnstone argues in reference to Cage's work that,



"Robert Ashley, a composer, made a striking statement...the ultimate result would be a music that wouldn't necessarily involve anything but the presence of people. That is, it seems to me that the most radical redefinition of music that I could think of would be one that defines 'music' without reference to sound."  
(Johnstone, 1962, 148)

The presence of the body then articulates the sound that is life, either internally through an awareness of the sounds of the biological entity, or externally through reference to the sounds encountered through lived experience. Cage argues,

Is it not a question of will, this one, I mean, of giving consideration to the sounds of knives and forks, the street noises, letting them enter in?... It is evidently a question of bringing one's intended actions into relation with the ambient unintended ones. The common denominator is zero, where the heart beats (no one means to circulate his blood). (Cage, 1978, 80)

The expression of intended and unintended actions with the common denominator of the heartbeat is an overt declaration of the movement of life as the principle articulation of the notion of music. It can be argued that the principle components of music are the duration for which the action of listening engages with the interplay between intended and unintended sound.

Music then could be understood as the movement or articulation of life between the notes. If Cage's notion that there is no silence due to the movement of life is accepted, then any silence must necessarily involve an absence of the movement of life: no heartbeat. Death can be seen as the movement or articulation of inertia/silence between the 'notes' of life.

It is the movement between the two that is the critical factor - the generative force, the life, the movement between the notes and silence (as ambient sound) is the articulation of music; the movement between life and death is the articulation of a life.

Death is the un-crossable terrain which we cannot know until it is our unique time. As Derrida<sup>18</sup> has argued however death confers a gift. That gift is the uniqueness of the individual life, thus Derrida argues "Death is very much that which nobody else can undergo in my place. My irreplaceability is therefore conferred, delivered, "given" one can say by death." (Derrida, 1995, 41) A life is not death. This then begins to define what life maybe said to be. Life is movement and sound, death is inertia and silence. A gift of death is the horizon of what a life may be said to be. Derrida states that the gift of

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<sup>18</sup> Derrida, The gift of Death, 1995, p40 The notion of the 'gift' of death is marked by its "Dissymmetry" as the gift cannot be reciprocated.

death as regards the unique irreplaceability of the singular is unable to be reciprocated. It could be argued however in terms of death-as-that-which-gives-shape to life that the return of this gift is the very finitude of life, which in turn creates a horizon of death. The finitude of life is a 'silence' or inertia of movement. Thus the body in death is an absence, of sentience and of movement. The dead body in its manifestation of 'absence' creates an awareness of all that is not there: the life. The corpse functions as an image of absence.

Kristeva notes this quality of the corpse when she remarks "...as in true theatre...corpses show me what I permanently thrust aside in order to live." (Kristeva, 1982, 3) In this way the dead body is in the inverse relation to the pianist David Tudor in Cage's work 4' 33'', in that, as the presence of Tudor articulates the 'silence' that is the ambient sound of life, the presence of the dead body articulates the silence that is the absence of life.

In the apprehension of the body there is an expectation of life. Thus when faced with the body in death there is in evidence an edge to life, that is the subjective life of the individual as Kristeva remarks in facing the corpse "There, I am at the border of my condition as a living being. My body extricates itself, as being alive, from that border." (Kristeva, 1982, 3)



This is the unique power or quality that the body has - the body communicates to us even in death.

The machines stand silent. Is this a 'death' of the performers of *Machine Dance*? As in the description of the dead body in chapter one<sup>19</sup> the machine bears the marks of its temporal progress, the chips in the paint, the wear on the tyres. Now the machines are inert and silent. I shall argue that this is not the death of 'a life' but rather the shedding of a skin, the discarding of a surface. The machines, I will suggest were part of the surface to a life.

#### Getting 'A Life'

This section argues that an essential quality of what a body has is 'a life'. This section engages with the notion of the moment of 'Becoming' drawing on the work of Deleuze. The section then attempts to establish a philosophical framework for the notion of fluid being as beyond subject-object divisions. The moment of becoming is then posited as occurring within the notion of a 'zone of occurrence'.

**Please watch film Chapter Two Bodies. *Machine Dance***

**Section Two - Machines Dancing**

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<sup>19</sup> Chapter 1 the Movement of Space

In watching the film through the lens of binary relations that are subject and object divisions it is simple to describe the dance as the object machine in action through the engagement of the subject operator.

To suggest an alternative view it is necessary to posit a process in which this dance is seen to be occurring outside of the binary state of subject object divisions.

This chapter intends to posit that the film shows the 'becoming' dance of the extended bodies of the dancers who were performing the dance.

To engage with this notion of 'becoming' and the notion that the essential quality of what a body has is life it is necessary to expand on this notion of 'a life' drawing on the theories of Deleuze. In engaging the question of becoming and 'a life' Deleuze posits the existence of what he terms the 'transcendental field', a notion of something whose presence is inferred but cannot be known by the sensations of lived experience alone. It is in the coming into being that its presence is inferred. Deleuze proposes that the transcendental field,

...can be distinguished from experience in that it does not refer to an object or belong to a subject (empirical representation). It appears therefore as a pure stream of a-subjective consciousness, a pre-reflexive impersonal consciousness without a self. (Deleuze, 2001, 25)

That the transcendental field is outside the realm of experience calls therefore for a new kind of empiricism beyond the element of sensation. Deleuze calls this transcendental empiricism. This is concerned not with the individual sensations that comprise what Deleuze calls 'simple empiricism' but instead it is the movement between sensations that is the key operation within transcendental empiricism. Deleuze, speaking of transcendental empiricism states,

It is, rather, however close two sensations may be, the passage from one to the other as becoming, as increase or decrease in power (virtual quantity).  
(Deleuze, 2001, 25)

Becoming is a key concept, a moment vital to life, the moment of becoming is the movement from virtual to actual. This movement is the generative force of a life. The *Machine Dance* is a movement, a passage from one sensation to another. In this movement is the 'becoming' of the dance. The 'becoming' of the dance is beyond its mere sensation; it is the sensation and what may be inferred from that sensation as 'becoming', which is the relations with the transcendental field.

In the movement the dance becomes 'actual' and the relation between the dance and the body can be seen. The notion of a dance however questions a relationship to



consciousness in that it is only through consciousness that the notion of a dance can exist. Deleuze in the above quotations has been referring to what is posited as a quality of immanence. This movement amongst the immanent<sup>20</sup> is not an action of the transcendental field as immanence is separated from the transcendental field by consciousness. Deleuze drawing from the work of Bergson posits,

Consciousness becomes a fact only when a subject is produced at the same time as its object, both being outside the field and appearing as "transcendent."  
Conversely as long as consciousness traverses the transcendental field at an infinite speed everywhere diffused, nothing is able to reveal it. It is expressed in fact, only when it is reflected on a subject that refers to its objects. (Deleuze, 2001, 26)

Thus consciousness is expressed in what is transcendent and not in what is immanent or transcendental. It could be suggested therefore that consciousness is expressed in the body that is therefore characterised as transcendent.

It should be noted that Deleuze appears to be expressing the notion of consciousness as a dualist notion by stating that consciousness becomes a fact when a subject is produced at the same time as its object.

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<sup>20</sup> Immanent- existing, operating or remaining within (Collins, 1979, 732) As Deleuze posits immanence as A Life the immanent is therefore understood for this research as that which is within A Life.

However, Deleuze clearly states that it is the movement between sensations that is the action of a life and it is this action that makes consciousness discernible. Thus, the notion of subject and object relations are always intrinsically linked to movement and are not positional, there is always the other that is movement; a becoming.

The notion of becoming as an essential element in the notion of being implies a fluidity rather than the static notion of entity as contained between subject object relations alone. This notion of fluidity is essential to the proposition of the *Machine Dance* as a dance of eight bodies. Is immanence therefore within consciousness? If the notion that consciousness is embodied for this chapter is accepted, does that then create the notion that immanence is therefore a quality of the body? The transcendental field is not a field of pure immanence precisely because of consciousness. As Deleuze states,

The transcendent is not the transcendental. Were it not for consciousness, the transcendental field would be defined as a pure plane of immanence, because it eludes all transcendence of the subject and of the object. (Deleuze, 2001, 26)

The transcendental field therefore is not pure immanence because of consciousness but it is defined by immanence. Deleuze argues that,

Absolute immanence is in itself: it is not in something, to something; it does not depend on an object or belong to a subject. In Spinoza, immanence is not immanence to substance; rather, substance and modes are in immanence. (Deleuze, 2001, 26)

Deleuze is at great pains to posit the independence of immanence, qualitatively and quantitatively, from subject and object. He states that it is not within them, nor does it belong to them, nor is it related to them by nature or action. Deleuze suggests that, "Immanence is not related to Some Thing as a unity superior to all things or to a Subject as an act that brings about a synthesis of things." (Deleuze, 2001, 27) Consciousness then it could be argued is a mode within immanence and does not define it. Immanence cannot be considered as a quality of the body rather, the body must also be conceived as within immanence. What are the relations between the notion of immanence and the body?

As Deleuze shows immanence to be separate from subject and object relations, therefore they cannot then define it. Thus for Deleuze, "No more than the transcendental field is defined by consciousness can the plane of immanence be defined by a subject or an object that is able to contain it" (Deleuze, 2001, 27).

This is a key articulation in that the central locus of subject and object and the nature of position inherent



in them are removed, and instead it is the movement that is important. The nature of existence is posited in terms of a movement not a position or a place, not subject to relations 'between' but a movement in all directions, there is no 'container' of space to existence. Rather, there is the ever-expanding field which Deleuze names as the plane of immanence. The plane of immanence then is always 'other' to 'lived experience' as manifest in the body. It cannot be defined by the body in terms of subject or object relations able to contain it thus immanence is a power of transcendence with which the body engages. Deleuze characterises this notion of immanence as 'a life',

We will say of pure immanence that it is A LIFE, and nothing else. It is not immanence to life, but the immanent that is in nothing is itself a life. (Deleuze, 2001, 27)

'A life' is the unifying term for Deleuze: the singular from which it is possible to posit a notion that is not founded in subject and object relations. The nature of the relations between the power of transcendence that is 'a life' and the embodied notion of lived experience needs further examination. For Deleuze if the transcendental field is 'a life' then it becomes a "genuine plane of immanence", the relationship is therefore expressed as; "The transcendental field is

defined by a plane of immanence, and the plane of immanence by a life". (Deleuze, 2001, 28)

A key determinant of a life is that it is a singularity not an individual life. The individual life is subjective, 'my life'. A life as proposed by Deleuze is not subjective and has entirely different relations thus,

The singularities and events that constitute a life coexist with the accidents of the life that corresponds to it, but they are neither grouped nor divided in the same way. (Deleuze, 2001, 29)

Here Deleuze identifies a 'correspondence' between the notions of 'a life' and 'the life' with which it coexists. This 'correspondence' is the liminal zone in which the notion of fluid being that this chapter proposes could be seen to occur as a set of relations between the lived experience of the 'my life' of the individual and 'a life', a singularity which is neither subjective or objective. This liminal zone can be posited as the 'zone of occurrence' in which the complex interplay occurs between 'a life' and 'my life' in the instants of 'correspondence'. Through what operations could it be argued that the event of the *Machine Dance* is occasioned in the 'zone of occurrence'? Deleuze describes the fact that a life is in every moment of existence,

A life is everywhere, in all the moments that a given living subject goes through and that are measured by given living objects: an immanent life carrying with it the events or singularities that are merely actualised in subjects and objects. (Deleuze, 2001, 29)

But Deleuze turns to Dickens<sup>21</sup> to describe a life in a moment, the moment between life and death, the moment between individuality and singularity.

The description of the movement between individual life and a singular life is in itself a description of the moment when the person is no longer the individual but a life playing with death. Within this notion is the recognition that all life plays with death and thus the singular or the one is the "index of multiplicity". Thus it could be proposed that all life is singular, there can be a multiplicity of singularities or events, a life is the process of becoming which actualises what was virtual on the plane of immanence to the state of things, the action of becoming between sensations which movement occasions, the actuality of the event of 'a life' into an

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<sup>21</sup> Dickens in Deleuze, 2001, 28 "...a rogue held in contempt by everyone, is found as he lies dying. Suddenly, those taking care of him manifest an eagerness, respect, even love for his slightest sign of life. Everybody bustles about to save him to the point where, in his deepest coma, this wicked man feels something soft and sweet penetrating him. But to the degree that he comes back to life, his saviours turn colder, and he becomes once again mean and crude. Between his life and his death, there is a moment that is only that of a life playing with death." Deleuze 2001,28 "The life of the individual gives way to an impersonal and yet singular life that releases a pure event freed from the accidents of internal and external life, that is from the subjectivity and objectivity of what happens: a "homo tantum" with whom everyone empathizes and who attains a sort of beatitude. It is a haecceity no longer of individuation but of singularisation"



event of 'the life' experienced by the individual. As Deleuze shows,

A life contains only virtuals. It is made up of virtualities, events, singularities. What we call virtual is not something that lacks reality but something that is engaged in a process of actualisation following the plane that gives it its particular reality. The immanent event is actualised in a state of things and of the lived that make it happen. (Deleuze, 2001, 31)

A life is a movement to actualisation. The *Machine Dance* it could be argued was the immanent event that becomes actualised in the state of things and the lived experience of the dancers and observer participants. In this model we have 'a life', a singularity that is engaged in a process of actualisation through movement. It is not a passive space or a received space that this life moves through; rather a life is a generative force, the movement allowing the process of actualisation from the plane of immanence.

Space is generated by the complex interplay between a life, events, the multiplicity of singularities and the lives, which intersect on the plane of immanence. The eye of the beholder is not constructed but itself is virtual to the intersection of a life with the moment of actuality. Thus it can be argued that movement generates space. It is not made for us. Not by the architect or the

artist. The space of a life is the movement across the plane of immanence.

In this movement space becomes actualised, within architecture; within art; and within lived experience by the singular intersecting with the virtual on the plane of immanence. Thus space is 'actualised' through a movement between sensations that engenders the actualising of 'the life' of the space. This occurs with each multiplicity of the singular but does not have to be concurrent, concomitant or heterogeneous. It is worth noting that the plane of immanence is an infinite extension in all directions and that the temporal is only occasioned by that which becomes actual or transcendent to the plane, when a life intersects with the life of the lived experience. It can be suggested therefore that the intersection of 'a life' and 'the life' occurs in the zone that this chapter names as the 'zone of occurrence'.

The relations between the notion of 'becoming' and the lived experience must also therefore be occasioned in the 'zone of occurrence'. Thus it is possible to posit that the spatial and temporal relations that are specific to the fluid notion of the body are occasioned within the 'zone of occurrence'.

To return then to the notion of what the body has, drawing from Deleuze it could be posited that it has as its primary quality 'a life', that is a singular life and

it has relations with an individual life or 'my life'. The body also has, in its movement between sensations, the 'other' of transcendent relations of the virtual and actual. The qualities of 'what a body has' can be expressed as being occasioned by the fluid nature of being, in which the body is regarded as an event within the 'zone of occurrence'. To return to Deleuze, it is therefore possible to consider that in performance, on some level, the participant observer has an engagement with the individual life of the performer but also the fact of 'a life' of the body and the movement which occasions this viewing/participating.

Thus it is possible to present a philosophical framework drawing from the work of Deleuze whereby the body can be posited as the site in which the fluid notion of being and the 'zone of occurrence' are manifest in performance.

For *Machine Dance* the locating of the work at the far end of a tidal run beach set against the incoming tide was a move to engage with the fact of 'a life' as posited by Deleuze. An attempt to utilise the geographic location to accentuate the experience of the mortal condition of the body as the singularity of 'a life' that Deleuze uses Dickens to so clearly illustrate. The setting is not a dramatic 'dicing with death' scenario of the high wire or Russian roulette variety. It is a fact



however that the consequences of not leaving the beach in time could be catastrophic. The intention was not to place anyone at risk. Rather, the intention was merely to engage the performers and observer participants with the notion that, with the returning of the tide, the fact of the singularity as a moment of relation between life and death is slightly more present. It is a condition of the mortal experience that death is possible at any moment. In the timing of the performance it was necessary to leave in time to 'escape' from the incoming tide. This 'escape' is the freedom of the embodied experience to choose. There is no choice in death. Once the body is dead there are no more choices. This is a move to engage with the notion that what a body has are the 'relations with a life' in performance.

The choice of the beach as the location for *Machine Dance* places the work into a setting in which multiple temporal spans through which life is experienced are evidenced. The relations between the short span of an individual life is in contrast with the much longer temporal spans of many lives and the process of geologic time visible in Watergate Bay. The beach is in a process of going. As the tide returns the beach will disappear. This 'disappearance' of the beach eradicates the tracks and marks of the performance. The work occurs within a specific temporal event or interval. The framing of the

work within this specific temporal event creates the possibility of an awareness of the notion of 'a life' as a brief temporal event.

The body of Life: Corporeality, Biology and 'Other'

This section engages with the question of what a body is. It then goes on to suggest a philosophical framework for a notion of the body that can be aligned with the notion of the body as a 'zone of occurrence'.

**Please watch film Chapter Two Bodies. *Machine Dance***

**Section Three - Dancers and Machine Dance**

Within the confines of the binary distinctions of the Cartesian model it is clear that in the film what is occurring divides clearly into two sets of binary divisions. They are: men and women as separate and distinct, and the organic body as subject and the inorganic machine as object as equally separate and distinct. However this chapter shall argue that within the performance of *Machine Dance* there are multiple body types in which many different notions of experience of the body in process are concurrently engaged. Thus it is necessary to propose a notion of the body that goes

beyond the scope of Cartesian dualism and binary distinctions.

During *Machine Dance* the relations between the bodies are complex. There are many different dimensions of touch and other sensations of lived experience passing between different body types. What is the 'body' in this dance? To establish the parameters with which this question can be examined it is necessary to consider the notion of the body as 'corporeality'.

To consider the notion of corporeality as proposed by Grosz<sup>22</sup> it is essential to engage with the notion that we are not talking of one homogenous body type. Corporeality, for Grosz, is fundamentally and essentially related to questions of sexual difference and cannot be separated from an acknowledgement of that fact. However, within the work of Grosz, the nature of sexual difference and its relationship to bodies is a complex one. Sexual difference is not located in the notion of two separate types of entity, men and women. Grosz instead argues for a more complex understanding of the notion of "traces and residues" of sexual difference occurring across the corporeal. As such it becomes a pure difference,

Once the subject is no longer seen as an entity-whether physical or corporeal-but fundamentally an effect of the pure difference that constitutes all modes of

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<sup>22</sup> Grosz, Elizabeth. 1994 *Volatile Bodies*



materiality, new terms need to be sought by which to think this alterity within and outside the subject. (Grosz, 1994, 208)

It is clear that she accepts no single entity even on the grounds of sexual difference. The 'pure difference' is an immediate alignment with the theories of Deleuze, the body is considered in relation to the modes of materiality. Thus notions of identity and individuality on the basis of sexual difference are bypassed in favour of the notion of the possibilities of the corporeal to the endless potentialities of that which is immanent to it. Thus for Grosz the notion of body does not subdivide into two independent bodies on the basis of gender "...sexual difference, though, cannot be understood...in terms of a comparison and contrast between two types of sexual identity independently formed and formulated." (Grosz, 1994, 208)

The relations between male and female are not a simple compare and contrast exercise but are the ongoing and recombined action of all that is possible on an immanent plane in which the corporeal is continually making new connections and configurations. Thus while the nature of sexual difference cannot be quantified it cannot be disregarded as it functions as Grosz describes,

Sexual difference is the horizon that cannot appear in its own terms but is implied in the very possibility of an

entity, an identity, a subject, an other  
and their relations. (Grosz, 1994, 209)

Thus for Grosz, as sexual difference is 'implied in the very possibility of an entity' there is no corporeality without sexual difference. It is necessary then to contend with the proposition that corporeality is not a position, that there is not a single notion of the nature of corporeality as there is no single notion of sexual difference. What is presented as corporeality is in fact a field of possibility.

To engage with the field of possibility could it be proposed that the corporeal 'body' in *Machine Dance* is defined by the lived experience of the process of performance? This question is problematic with regard to corporeality in that Grosz suggests that the event of spatial and temporal relations is subject to sexual difference, "Conceptions of space and time are necessary coordinates of a reinterrogation of the limits of corporeality..." (Grosz, 2001b, 32) There can be no conceptions of space or time without corporeality but equally those conceptions of space and time are subject to sexual difference.

Grosz, drawing on the work of Irigaray, articulates clearly that feminine conceptions of space and time are very different to male conceptions of space and time. Therefore it must be accepted that within the performance

of *Machine Dance* there are multiple conceptions of space and time. Thus the relations of corporeality within the lived experience of *Machine Dance* are further complicated. There is the defining of a field in which the elements continually fold back upon each other. Grosz uses the example of the Mobius strip, in which we are seeing the reference of two infinite fields upon each other. For as Grosz goes on to say,

...the bodies infinite pliability is a measure of the infinite plasticity of the spatiotemporal universe in which it is housed and through which bodies become real, are lived, and have effects. (Grosz, 2001b, 33)

This thesis has proposed that space is generated by the singularity through movement as it becomes 'actual' within the plane of immanence. If Grosz's notion that space and time are necessary categories for corporeality is accepted, then it can be argued that the singularity becomes the transcending subject to the plane of immanence in the movement from virtual to actual as a becoming. In that 'becoming' space and time are actualised through movement that is subject to sexual difference and other specificities.

It is important to note that the corporeality has a fundamental relationship with the biological body but is not defined by it.



In her reconfiguring of the notion of the body Grosz draws from the theories of Spinoza and Deleuze. She then relates these theories to the notion of lived experience.

Spinoza is important because he establishes a way out of the dualism of Descartes that is important from the feminist perspective in dealing with the notions of the dualism of the mind/body opposition. Spinoza posits the notion of a singular substance, which is infinite, an absolute. This singular substance is non-divisible as Descartes would wish into separate mind and body but is singular in kind thus, "An individual entity (human or otherwise) is not self-subsistent but is a passing or provisional determination of the self-subsistent."

(Grosz, 1994, 10)

The body is constituted as 'provisional determination', the entity is not pre-described as we may wish to believe in relation to biology. Grosz draws from Spinoza the assertion, "There are no essential attributes, no inherent "nature" for the organism."

(Grosz, 1994, 12)

This gives to the entity an essential freedom from predisposition and allows for the assertion that sexual difference is not merely a result of biological determinism. Instead Grosz argues the 'nature' of the organism is more open, "...bodies, individualities, are

historical, social, cultural weavings of biology.”

(Grosz, 1994, 12)

Spinoza's monist proposition begins to establish a useful path to explore in relation to the body but it is not without difficulties. Grosz notes the problematic that Spinoza sees the body as a total and holistic system. This problem is circumvented for Grosz by the work of Deleuze and Guattari on the notion of difference, “...aligned with feminist struggles against prevailing forms of masculinism in philosophy is Deleuze and Guattari's interest in the question of difference...” (Grosz, 1994, 164). This notion of difference is central to the idea of corporeality and its relationship to sexual difference and is a movement essential to allowing a conception of an entity free from the fixing notions of identity bound in an interior/exterior subject/object dualist relationship, thus identity and sexual difference are a movement which is essential to Grosz's notion of corporeality. This then opens the possibility of how these ideas then impact on the different notions of bodies and space, again from the perspective of sexual difference.

The pure difference posited by Deleuze allows for a comprehension of the singular free from the notion of any 'given' in nature. The singular is thus free of biological determinism, of sexual difference, or any

other categories of identity as unified notions of the subject.

This development from the single unity proposed by Spinoza allows for a more complex picture of the body to emerge whereby the body can be considered as a complex set of practices in relation to the elements that compose and shape it. These practices are infinitely malleable and go beyond biology and gender specificity. The notion of sexual identity is not a subset of the gender typing as gender typing and sexual identity are moveable fields not static positions. Thus Grosz, referring to Deleuze and Guattari concludes,

They provide an altogether different way of understanding the body in its connections with other bodies, both human and non-human, animate and inanimate, linking organs and biological processes to material objects and social practices while refusing to subordinate the body to a unity or a homogeneity of the kind provided by the body's subordination to consciousness or biological organisation. (Grosz, 1994, 164)

The body is thus understood in terms of what it can do and the connections it can make rather than as a biologically pre-determined form. This notion provides for endless difference in biological form and extends the notion of the body into a relation of social practices.

This freeing of the body from biological determinism and Cartesian dualism in relation to the



rebuttal of the notion of a mind body split, while still creating a notion of a positive realm of difference creates the framework for notions of corporeality in which the biological body is but one element in a field at play in the act of becoming which in Deleuze's terms is the subject.

The subject of corporeality has become a much wider field than just its biological body. For this chapter then the notion of what a body is, can be formulated as a field of operations aggregating around the notion of corporeality which consists of the material and the immaterial, the biological body and the connections and reconfigurations it can make both biological and non-biological. It includes the animate and the inanimate, social practices, cultural images and sexual difference.

The *Machine Dance* considered from this perspective could be argued as a dance of eight bodies. The bodies are viewed as corporealities that are a field of activity that is constantly making connections between the biological and non-biological and being subject to sexual difference and the lived experience of performance. This is occasioned within the zone of occurrence, which engages the connections of 'a life' and 'the life' in performance. The event of *Machine Dance* is a specific engagement with the lived body, machine and environment. The JCB backhoe is a manmade prosthetic extension of the

body. The beach environment is subject to particular temporal events. The bodies of the eight performers are constantly in play with these elements. The performance functions as a testing of the relationship between the three elements of body, machine and environment.

For this thesis it is proposed that the notion of the connection between the biological and 'other' is understood as an 'extension of surface' in which the notion of the corporeality is extended beyond biological determination. Thus the binary division of subject operator and the object machine presented at the beginning of this chapter is instead posited as an operation of the 'zone of occurrence' whereby the dancer is manifest as a field of operation in which the surface of the corporeality is extended to include the inorganic and is thus engaged by the actions of 'a life' and 'the life' in performance. The machine thus becomes an extension of the surface of the body and the processes of life with which the body is engaged.

Thus it could be suggested that the empty machines in the film, Chapter Two Bodies Section One Diggers as Machines, are no longer corporeal extensions and have been 'shed' from the surface of the life and are therefore returned to a set of relations that are inorganic and subject only to the relations of 'a life'. The location of the work on the beach posits this

'extension' within the 'zone of occurrence' as a temporal event. It can therefore be considered as an element of what a body has: a life. This quality of life is manifest in the body's ability to extend its surface relations as a quality of its "infinite plasticity" occurring within the temporal event of an embodied life. The exploration of this notion of the extension of surface in *Machine Dance* is seen in the context of the machine component that is animate. However in the next section it will be proposed that the same process of the extension of surface can be posited to occur when the inorganic does not necessarily become animate as is the case in *Machine Dance*.

### The Living Room: The Surface of Body as Architectural Space

Through an engagement with the performance work *Fearless* and the work of installation artist William Cobbing I will now explore the notion of the relations between architectural space and the body as one of 'extensible surface'.

The work *Fearless* was conceived as a touring work which could be situated in any urban location. The work



occurred in theatres, streets, shopping centres in Britain and Europe.

The work was created to engage with a particular notion: the body's relations with the urban space around it. *Fearless* was a work for three performers and an architectural space. The space was conceived as a structure which would be an 'echo' of contemporary urban space. The notion of 'echo' is that the space would resonate as an element of contemporary urban space without being a direct representation of a specific urban space. The space was conceived as a minimal architectural structure, which could be perceived as many different spaces (Appendix Five *Fearless* Plans). The space is thus stripped down and composed with a few basic geometric structures to indicate the creation of a constructed space. Thus the space is comprised of the basic elements of steps and corners and throughout the performance the interior and exterior divisions are explored and re-imagined. The intention was to create, in as simple as possible a form, elements of the lived experience of urbanism.

**Please see film Chapter Two Bodies. *Fearless* Section four  
- Interior space**

The performers in the film are engaged in a series of actions in relation to the nature of the space. How can these operations be posited as an 'extension of surface'? The relations between the body and architectural space are complex. At this point it is helpful to consider this notion in the work of William Cobbing. This work has a strong correlation to the practice of my work although it is in a very different form.

Cobbing is an installation artist who interrogates the relationship between the body and architecture by his use of the placement of organic form in relation to the inorganic structure in such a way as to resist the apparent divisions inherent in this notion. It could be suggested therefore that Cobbing's work can be viewed as a material re-imagining of the relations between the body and architectural space. The work *Fearless* is also a re-imagining of those same relations.

In her reading of Cobbing's work Sue Hubbard<sup>23</sup> relates the work to Spinoza's notion of a singular substance arguing, "The growths, physical extensions and prosthetics in the work of William Cobbing are an aesthetic manifestation of this intellectual dilemma." (Hubbard, 2004, 12) Cobbing's work engages the question of what a body is by simultaneously drawing out the

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<sup>23</sup> Sue Hubbard, 2004, William Cobbing (Catalogue) ISBN 1-872940-13-7

inorganic qualities of the corporeal and the organic qualities of the inorganic in stark juxtaposition.

In Cobbing's works 'Column' and 'Parting #1' it is the sentient body that has a direct organic connection or fusion with its architectural environment. In juxtaposition it is the vein like pipes and organic oozing shapes from the bottom of the gallery walls that manifest an organic quality of the space of architecture. In her description of 'Parting #1' Hubbard identifies a relation she characterises as co-dependent "...the connective tissue is as much part of the architecture as it is a part of her body. Like conjoined twins they appear co-dependent - the sentient and the inert." (Hubbard, 2004, 12)

It is interesting that Hubbard refers to co-dependence, given that she describes the work in relation to Spinoza's monist position. Hubbard refers to the relationship in terms of a duality forced to be singular. The conjoined twins are an image of two living as one. An alternate reading could suggest that the body and the room in which it is placed are one as an extension of the singular that is both organic and inert. The 'connective tissue' is not an aberration but rather the extension of the surface of a singular body.

Cobbing's work with great clarity places the notion of extension in the visual realm. The connection is



manifest as a material connection. For *Fearless* however it is more complex; the bodies are not, within the visual realm, materially linked with the clarity that Cobbing is able to manifest. In *Fearless* the bodies are occurring in the realm of lived experience and manifest notions of identity and character.

Cobbing's figures are singular. They do not have relations with individual characters or notions of identity as is observed: "The figures in Cobbing's work have lost their self sufficiency and their identities." (Keijer, 2002,) In this way the singular re-imagined form such as the work 'Sitzmaschine' is a vision of Deleuze's notion of the bodies 'machinic' interconnection with its environment.

Cobbing's work then can be characterised in its operations as the singular quality of surface. Thus when the work inverts its relation to the body by creating architectural space with organic qualities without reference to the figure of the body, it is manifest as singular surface. Keijer also notes the inversion in Cobbing's work "...the gallery space, by just a few interventions, obtains the character of living organism, with veins that pump around fluids." (Keijer, 2002) It could be posited that Cobbing's work engages in relations with 'a life' of the body and does not engage with 'the life' of lived experience.

This draws a distinction between Cobbing's work and my own. *Fearless* seeks to directly engage with the relations between 'the life' of the body and 'a life' of the body as operations which can have an extension of surface into the architectural realm. In this way *Fearless* engages with the complexity of the field of operations encapsulated in the notion of body described earlier in this chapter, which includes notions of lived experience. In analysing *Fearless* in performance it is necessary to engage with the biological body and notions of self and identity inherent in biological lived experience. It is necessary to propose an argument that resists the reduction of the biological body towards binary distinction as either subject or object. Specifically the challenge in analysing *Fearless* is the notion that biological bodies in performance with 'characters' and 'identities' can be suggested to have extensible surface relations with architectural space.

Within Cobbing's work the relations with 'a life' as the extension of a single surface, which functions as a plane on which the organic and inorganic are realised as the singular, is manifest in the visual realm with elegant clarity.

*Fearless* in its 'moment of placement' was not conceived as an architectural space to be placed in specific locations, rather it was conceived in its

'placement' as a relation between the body and structure to occur in the space of everyday experience.

Cobbing in a different way explores the notion of body and structure in everyday experience as an intervention at the 'moment of placement' of an actual space of lived experience by insertion of the organic in the architectural plan. This is not an attempt to co-opt the immaterial in the process of construction as was proposed by Tschumi; rather it is an engagement with 'a life' of the organic within a proposed constructed space.

The architectural drawing of the plan for the second floor of the Wellcome Trust building in London continues the notion of single surface in which the placing of the names of the office inhabitants, the interaction between geometric architectural space and organic spatial forms, are all seen as one. The conception of this space is not binary. It is not expressed within subject and object divisions, rather it is a space in which there is the clear presence of the 'other' an extending relationship between body and space. Cobbing's plan is the assignment of space to bodies and functions within existing notions of economic/social operations, while simultaneously recognising the presence of the space as body and body as space. The architectural plan is an intervention situated at the moment of the idea of constructed space. It is an insertion of the space of the body into a reading of



architectural space. As such its operations have a clear corollary with my work and *Fearless* in particular.

The conceptual relations involved in the creation of *Fearless* as an extension of the surface of the body are present in the moment of 'placement' and are similar to those in operation in Cobbing's work. The actuality of these relations in the realm of lived experience that is performance requires a model for this thesis of the interaction between the organic and inorganic within the lived experience of the performance.

The clear challenge to me within the work *Fearless* is in its relations to the everyday. *Fearless* was actual lived bodies engaging in performance occurring within the everyday (Appendix Six *Fearless* Photograph's). The animate experience of the life of individuals has to be considered in relation to a notion of the body that resists totalising notions. What must be examined then is a notion of the indeterminate self as open to becoming which is not conceived of in simple subject-object distinctions but as an open construct that also engages with the body in the biological realm. The two key areas in this engagement are the body's capacity for difference in its relations between the material and the immaterial, and the body as present to the moment of 'becoming' that is a body continually in the making. These two notions are resistant to the notion of the body as a totalising

unity. Is it possible to propose a notion of 'self' which can engage with the notion of corporeality established in this chapter?

This chapter posits a notion of corporeality as an open constellation porous to endless reconfiguring possibilities. This notion resists limits and any notion of a fixed identity and even of a fixed biological entity.

In considering performance work what, then, are the relations between these theories and the biologically based performers who inhabit the work? Is the notion of 'self' a fixed biological determination that predicates subject-object divisions? Does the biological component of lived experience align the performance with reductive relations of the 'natural' world in which these performances take place?

Earlier in this thesis I discussed Gould's theories on how perturbations at either the large or small end of the scale could effect major qualitative changes over systems of multiple orders of complexity within the 'natural' world. It is possible to consider the notion that biological predisposition is but a factor in what is to be the complex 'becoming' path of an organism.

The ability of the biological to interact with other fields of complexity, such as technological and cultural, simply increases the field depth that the becoming is

being realised within and creates an expanding order of complexities. The biological is provisional and continually open to the process of augmentation. Corporeality also resists any notion of a fixed identity. What relations are possible in the pragmatic necessity to deal with the individual lives that the performance encompasses? What are the proposed relations between the biological and notions of identity? If we accept that the model works to reject totalising notions of 'self', are there propositions that can reconcile this openness with the pragmatic dealing with the individual in the everyday?

The neurological research of Antonio Damasio has some interesting possibilities. Damasio refers to relations between body and 'self'. It is important to recognise how he is employing the term self. Damasio essentially rejects Descartes' proposition of the separation between mind and body. The self is not an interpretive homunculus inside experience. In effect Damasio offers a biological basis for Spinoza's proposition in which mind and body are one. Damasio proposes that the 'self' is a "repeatedly reconstructed biological state". (Damasio, 1995, 226) What is proposed is biological 'self',

For the biological state of self to occur,  
numerous brain systems must be in full



swing, as must numerous body-proper systems. If you were to cut all the nerves that bring brain signals to the body proper, your body state would change radically, and so consequently would your mind. Were you to cut *only* the signals from the body proper to the brain, your mind would change too. Even partial blocking of brain-body traffic, as happens in patients with spinal cord injury, causes changes in mind state. (Damasio, 1995, 227)

The biological 'self' is a quality of the body not an independent entity. This activity is not a function of consciousness, but an interactive process between brain and body functioning as biological relations in which signals from the body reach the brain and signals from the brain reach the body without entering into consciousness. Damasio posits that mind arises out of an organism rather than a disembodied brain.

The biological self is not 'established' within the body/mind as a permanent fixture rather "At each moment the state of self is constructed, from the ground up. It is an evanescent reference state". (Damasio, 1995, 240)

To support this notion Damasio has to go beyond representations of subject and object as dualities within the brain. Damasio posits that while there is a set of neural structures holding images of the self, a set of neural structures holding images of an object, that there is a third set of neural structures that functions as a 'convergence zone'. This convergence zone which is an

'other' to pure subject-object relations is functioning to build "a dispositional representation of the self in the process of changing as the organism responds to an object." (Damasio, 1995, 242) This proposition argues for a neural basis to a state of change occasioned by the body as an essential element of being. This, Damasio argues, is where the subjective perspective arises in the constant image of change.

In this way Damasio argues for an "organismic perspective" (Damasio, 1995, 252). This perspective however is not a totalising independent notion, rather it posits the interrelatedness of the organism to other systems of complexity thus,

...not only must the mind move from a non-physical cogitum to the realm of biological tissue, but it must also be related to a whole organism possessed of integrated body proper and brain and fully interactive with a physical and social environment. (Damasio, 1995, 252)

This relatedness of the body and its environment gives a pragmatic basis to adopt a set of relations between the notion of corporeality and its rejection of a non-totalising unity and the notion of the 'biological self' as proposed by Damasio where that 'biological self' is understood to be fundamentally related to the physical and social environment in a continual act of becoming. This action is an interactive state that exists outside

of totalising notions of the body. Thus it could be argued that the biological body is producing a cultural landscape but is produced by that landscape in a loop of reciprocal interaction. The biological body is creating representations of the physical landscape that in turn are acting upon the recreation of the biological self. Thus the body is producing and being produced by the physical environment.

This is a working proposition whereby notions of the philosophical nature of corporeality are related to notions of the biological body not withstanding an awareness that the body does not have to be merely or solely biological. The body then is thus unique or singular; each body is different in notions as diverse as its relation to the horizon of sexual difference, physical environment and cultural interaction.

Within this notion of the body there are multiple orders of complexity and perturbations at any level of the system can have complex results. The notion proposed by Gould of changes in nature works equally well here. It is in the 'perturbations' that change occurs. It can be posited that these 'perturbations' constitute a 'movement' within the complex field of the body. This aligning of change or perturbations within a system with the notion of movement is a gesture towards the philosophical notion of movement proposed by Deleuze. The



system is a nexus of activity around the locus of movement that is perceived as change. This movement/change can occasion multiple movement changes throughout the system. In this way the biological body can be seen to be working within the notions of corporeality.

It may appear a wilful conflation to relate a movement between two sensations occurring on the transcendental plane and the movement between two sensations on the plane of biological existence however it can be proposed that in the world of lived experience in which the actuality of performance occurs the effect is the same.

It can be argued that a body functions as a surface upon which an evolving set of relations are continually played out. These relations include the notion of corporeality subject to sexual difference; the notion of the biological self in constant remaking; and the notion of 'A life' of the singular, which goes beyond the sentient life<sup>24</sup>. These relations are in constant play with the subjective 'My life', which functions as a set of temporary relations by which the sentient being engages

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<sup>24</sup> This can be illuminated by consideration of the brain dead body on life support. The 'body' continues to live and augment its structure functioning now in an extended interface with machines that have become indispensable body parts. This body continues to live without sentience. There is a complex ethical question as to the status of the living non-sentient body. The lack of sentience or the fact that recovery of sentience is unlikely is often a key issue in whether such a body should continue to live.

with spatial and temporal relations and other beings. This complex series of interrelations all interact through the nexus of the body and this is not a unity of a single form but a pragmatic frame for the process of engaging with lived practice.

The performers in *Fearless* it is suggested are then in the 'zone of occurrence' as corporeality present to the becoming of movement from virtual to actual. At the same time it is suggested the biological component of lived experience is operating a 'zone of convergence' in which the notion of 'self' is constantly constructed anew in a fluid relationship with the movement of becoming. The performers generate the environment as the environment generates the performers. In this way it is suggested that the relations between the corporeal and the architectural space are functioning as extensible surface. Surface relations are not superficial. Hannah Arendt argues for "the value of the surface" (Arendt, 1978, 26) suggesting that life processes "is there for the sake of appearances" and not the reverse. The surface is not dismissed as less than the inner 'being' rather, the opposite is posited, Thus the importance of surface relations in a 'becoming' relationship is observed by Arendt when she asks "Since we live in an *appearing* world, is it not much more plausible that the relevant

and the meaningful in this world of ours should be located precisely on the surface?" (Arendt, 1978, 27)

The physical structure of the *Fearless* environment functions as a prosthetic to the body, not as a replacement for something or as a standing in for something which is absent but as an extension of the body; a function of the body's endless capacity to reconfigure and endlessly combine. It is important to note that there is no notion of replacement in the use of the term prosthetic. I am arguing for a notion of extension of the body. Baudrillard argues that,

A prosthesis, as normally understood, is an artefact which replaces a defective organ, or an instrumental extension of the body; a DNA molecule, however, which stores all information relative to a given body, is the ultimate prosthesis in that it allows this body to be extended *ad infinitum by itself* - 'itself' being nothing more, now, than this infinite prosthesis. (Baudrillard, 1993, 117)

In this argument Baudrillard considers the body as fundamentally a biological entity. The notion of prosthesis is purely one of replacement. Baudrillard suggests that the DNA molecule stores all the information relative to a given body. I suggest that this is a simplification. As I have argued earlier, the body is a complex overlay of multiple fields of activity of which biological structure is but one. DNA coding merely begins



a sequence, which becomes interactive with the complex environment in which bodies operate. The code is simply an element at the beginning, which is developed, extended and transcended as the body goes through lived experience. The lived body is not simply the sum of the code. The body's ability to combine and extend itself which Deleuze characterises as 'machinic' connections is a fundamental quality of what a body can be said to be. I propose that this process within my work can be best understood as a notion of prosthetic extension.

It can be suggested that *Fearless* attempts to test the notion of 'a life' of the body through an engagement with the relations between organic and inorganic material posited as the extensible prosthetic relations between the lived bodies and architectural structure. This extension occurs in relation to the field of 'the life' of the performers and the interplay between performers and the extended field of performer/participant/observer relations occurring in the lived experience of performance.

### The Stumbling Block

In this section I will engage with the relations between the philosophical propositions around the nature

of the *Fearless* performance and the artistic strategies employed to create the performance.

The strategies are discussed in relation to the work of Jeff Wall to create a distance from the work *Fearless* and to show its relations to wider artistic practice.

The notion of an extensible surface relation between performers and structure could be seen as an abstract theory in relation to the actual lived experience of performers and observer/participants. The notion of extensible surface relations is a philosophical engagement with a series of operations, which can be suggested as occurring in lived experience. It must be accepted that as such they are always separate from the lived experience of the moment.

Therefore it is equally possible to engage with the operations of *Fearless* as three people dancing on a small stage in the middle of the street. The rest is hyperbole, the Emperor's new clothes. The problem is that if the Emperor's new clothes are not in the scopic realm it is difficult or impossible to prove that they are there. The notion of a prosthetic relation to space can only ever be inferred as an implicit rather than explicit relationship due to the body's relations with the immaterial, which take it beyond the scopic realm.

The notion of the body as engaged in *Fearless*, which is supported by a series of strategies in its composition, is operating as an extensible surface between the organic and inorganic elements of the performance. This surface functions as an implicit relationship of these elements in the moment of 'becoming'.

To engage with the strategies employed in *Fearless* it is useful to consider the work of photographer Jeff Wall. The work of Wall I feel contains qualities that my own work aspires to. Wall is employing strategies, which are similar to my own although this is a retrospective revelation that I was not aware of at the time of composition.

An element of Wall's work that is illuminating in relation to my own process is an engagement with the lived experience of capitalism through the medium of the body. I recognise a shared focus on the body as the locus of activity and the acknowledgement of its communication across boundaries between Wall's work and my own. There is a similar engagement with the 'gestic' qualities of the body. Wall's strategy of 'improbable' qualities of his characters creates in his work a relation between the life of the individual, and 'a life' in process; a life of the body.



The first strategy employed in all my work and in the particular example *Fearless*, which is a corollary with Wall's work, is the nature of the body as the locus of the work. Wall states, "My work is based on the representation of the body." (Wall, 1996, 76)

In addressing the problem of representation creating a unified subject and attendant relations, Wall states that subsequent to the critique of the last thirty years,

all representation, mine included, has been augmented with a kind of critical iconophobia, an inner antagonism which compels representations to rebuild themselves with a different legitimacy.  
(Wall, 1996, 119)

Wall creates what he describes as "cinematographic" pictures that are carefully constructed compositions. They are exhibited as light boxes. The composition works towards the sense of a picture within painting rather than the strategy of the 'fragment' within photography.

*Fearless* can be considered a "cinematographic" composition. The image is carefully constructed as a picture but never seeks to hide the fact of performance. It does not represent itself as a fragment of real life captured. Rather it seeks to accept its essence as performance and to establish relations to the world of lived experience through the action of the bodies which manifest the performance.

In considering the work *Fearless* as 'cinematographic' the danger is an alignment with notions of completeness within the image. This however is negated by the centrality of the body to the image which refuses any totalising notions.

Wall's work has been criticised for not displaying the fragmentation considered important within art of the last thirty years. Wall does not abandon notions of 'continuity' within his work. Rather, the response from Wall has been to propose work that does both: exploring the relations between discontinuity and continuity. This contradiction is central to Wall's work. Thus Wall expresses of the picture that he would "...want it to make visible the discontinuities and the contradictions of my subject matter. The picture is a relation of unlike things..." (Wall, 1996, 11) For me this gesture is precisely what *Fearless* seeks to be as 'cinematographic' image which engages the notion of the 'extensible surface' of body thus the body and architecture function as a "relation of unlike things".

In Wall's work the picture is presented as a light box, the images are often extremely realistic yet within them are contradictions and qualities that trouble the completeness of the image. *Fearless*, presented within the everyday, functions as a three dimensional image. The performers within the work are living bodies of

experience. Within the spatial order of the work the image has boundaries. Placed within a shopping street the work could appear as "cinematographic" image beyond which it is possible to see the everyday. In this way it functions as a picture. This picture 'stands out' from the backdrop of the everyday by the taking of space within it. It functions in a similar way to Wall's light box, creating a three dimensional phenomenon. Within the 'picture' of the performance, the steps and angles of the structure, the use of curtains and chairs, the exploration of interior and exterior space, the modes of inhabiting the space, are all familiar actions of the everyday. These actions of the everyday are all connections to the world of lived experience within which the work is occurring. Like Wall's light boxes, *Fearless* could appear to be a representation of the everyday. This representation is subverted by the contradictions within the work. The gestural language employed by the performers is taken from everyday movement. The movement is then developed and extended and thus 'heightened' beyond the everyday. In Wall's work, the conjunction of the image of the body and light box, presents a two dimensional image as a surface of a glowing three dimensional form. Light energy leaves the image and appears to create depth. Yet within Wall's work the image



of the body is often presented as artificial or strangely unreal. This creates a tension within the work.

The use of the body within *Fearless* has a similar tension. The performers use movement from the everyday yet this is seen within a space of performance which occurs within the everyday but is clearly not the everyday. The space is real but distanced from the everyday. The use of the architectural structure of *Fearless* creates a frame of the image that is both supported and subverted as is the case with Wall's light boxes. Within *Fearless*, certain scenes are constructed from everyday movement and simple everyday activity such as sitting, holding a plant or moving curtains. These scenes attempt an engagement with the everyday through the utilisation of movement of the everyday. In other scenes the intention is to create movement that functions as 'unreal'. Movement structures that work clearly to create the artificial, functioning clearly as dances, conforming to their own interior logic. In this way the work is clearly distanced from the everyday and presented as performance which does not pretend to be 'real'. The clarity and quality of Wall's images invite the observer to look at them. Within *Fearless* I created scenes that invited engagement through the simple seduction of the pleasure of the execution of dances. The fact of performance is explicit within these scenes. They are

constructed to create a critical distance and also to be engaging for as many casual observer/passers-by as possible. Through these strategies the performance contains many discontinuities and contradictions which struggle against the notion of completeness within the image. The structure however has within the temporal event of its unfolding, a logic. This logic is the 'relation of unlike things'. The 'unlike things' unfold through the extensible surface relations between the lived bodies of the performers and the architectural space which generates all the action of the *Fearless* event.

As I stated in chapter one *The Movement of Space*, the context of my work has to be comprehended as inseparable from the relations of its production. My work engages with the fluid nature of 'being' and more specifically, in relation to its engagement with urbanism, it engages with the nature of 'fluid being' within capitalism within which it occurs. This is another corollary with Wall's practice.

Wall posits capitalism as functioning as continuity through a period of culture when it is more common to consider culture in terms of discontinuity. The most orthodox way of thinking about culture is in terms of discontinuities; Wall accepts this but posits that this can lose its meaning with constant repetition. Wall

argues that "Discontinuity does not exist in isolation from what seems to be its polar opposite..." (Wall, 1996, 112). Therefore, Wall embraces the inclusion of reinventions and rediscoveries within his work. Thus for Wall,

I felt that a return to the idea of *la peinture de la vie moderne* was legitimate. Between the moment of Baudelaire's positioning this as a programme and now, there is a continuity which is that of capitalism itself. (Wall, 1996, 112)

Wall accepts that capitalism has changed but points to its continuation as the context for a working out of unresolved questions within art, which are changed but still relevant within the context of a continuing capitalism, therefore Wall says of his work "I feel I am working within and with a dialectic of capitalism and anti-capitalism, both of which have continuous histories within, and as, modernity." (Wall, 1996, 112)

The context for Wall's work then is capitalism and its struggle with anti-capitalism. Wall's engagement with capitalism is through the medium of the body. In Wall's project of the painting of modern life his figures and scenes are fictional, they are created by him; the bodies in his photographs are characters within his construction. They do not claim a truth, to be reportage of real life, a photojournalism of reality. His works are



'cinematographic' compositions of modern life that function as a representation of lived practice and a critique of capitalism in which that lived practice occurs. Despite the apparent 'realism' of his work there is a quality of distance in his pictures and characters, that Wall characterises as the 'improbable'. This improbable quality works in double function to challenge the apparent truth of the image as 'real' and to challenge at the same time the relations it has as a work of art within the capitalist structure: the 'improbable' resists totalising notions about the picture.

The 'locating' of *Fearless* performances in city centres, streets and shopping centres presents the work as a 'cinematographic' composition of every day life. It is occurring within the space of capitalism in the locations within which it is located. The critique of capitalism that the work seeks to propose is inherent in the location of the work as the engagement with the frantic pace of the 'habit of being' that is a fundamental quality within capitalism; in this way the work attempts to function as a 'stumbling block'.

*Fearless* was 'sited' within the notions of the body. As a performance located in the sites of capitalism it was intended to function as a product of that capitalism, in a similar relation to that of the work *The Stumbling Block* by Wall.

The work *The Stumbling Block* is a work of wry and black humour in which the city provides a service in the form of an employee known as *The Stumbling Block*. Dressed like an ice hockey guard, or 'blocker'. This employee knocks over those citizens who would like to arrest their uniform progress through capitalist life. The passers-by who have been literally bowled over are afforded the opportunity of a moment to break the routine and think. This is a benevolent service provided by the city.

*Fearless* attempts with similar humour for the passer-by to be interrupted. This interruption is an opportunity for an engagement with the notion of a singular life, in which a relation between the body and the environment as mutually constructing can, for a moment, be considered. This notion is inherent within notions of extensible surface as engaged within *Fearless*. In this way it can be considered as an 'insurgency' against the everyday experience of capitalism. The work is 'located' within capitalism. Located within city centres the work temporarily interrupts people shopping. The relentless experience of capitalist consumption is briefly challenged. The work creates the temporal space to consider the pace of that capitalist experience. The phenomenal experience of the everyday is expanded for the participant observer by an engagement with the temporal event of *Fearless* within the nexus of capitalist

relations of the everyday. The time of engagement with the performance is time taken from the process of shopping. In this way the strategy of placing the work in the street is, as Read suggests, a strategy to "bring it back into contact with its subject and the everyday life of that subject." (Read, 1993, 144)

The site of the work *Fearless* is the body and the notion of extensible surface; this is explored in the lived experience of the generation of the body by capitalist spaces and the generation of those spaces by the body as the operation of a single surface.

The content of *Fearless* presents the experience of the everyday within capitalism as one of strange alienation. The characters are living at ever increasing speed within the performance. The everyday is evermore hectic and out of control and the performance becomes a headlong rush to its conclusion. The space inhabited by the performers is constantly frightening for them. The performers are frightened at different times in the performance by what is outside, what is inside, and what is underneath. Performers awake within the performance to find their 'reality' totally changed. The characters search for control. The everyday of capitalism becomes ungraspable. The hectic pace of the performance creates, for the characters, an experience of drunkenness or delirium in which they are finally fearless. The physical



space is transformed through the use of an inflatable floor, and a movement language of a lack of control of the body. The content posits the notion that disorientation may be either a viable strategy for coping with, or an end result of, a 'fearful' accelerated world of capitalism.

It is necessary to engage with the notion of 'improbable' in relation to bodies. In much of Wall's work the 'improbable' is a quality of the body. There is a question posed by these bodies for Wall. "What are these bodies? - that question requires an interpretation of the picture in which they appear, and I'm not the best person to do that." (Wall, 1996, 13) Thus for Wall the bodies in his work whilst being carefully controlled within the composition resist a final enclosure: they are always 'other'. The quality of this 'other' to the body in Wall's work is fluid, "I have always thought of my 'realistic' work as populated with spectral characters whose state of being was not that fixed." (Wall, 1996, 13) In this way Wall resists the fully constituted subject within his work.

*Fearless* employs a strategy of incompleteness that functions in a similar way to the 'improbable' in Wall's work. Wall posits the notion of 'spectral characters' which would appear to implicate a lack of substance. *Fearless* seeks to employ an intense physicality and

extreme relationship with the environment with 'characters' that are no more than their actions. In performance they are in the middle of experience and cumulative knowledge of who they are; the representations of how they live life as complete characters are resisted. They are always incomplete, constantly becoming, in the moment of the relation to the space. They are fluid. The body is constantly in process with the environment.

**Please see film Chapter Two Bodies. Fearless Section Five  
- Body and Environment**

In this work, the body and the space cannot be considered as separate; the body is mediating the space and the space is in turn mediating the body through the connection of extensible surface. Just as in the work of Cobbing the body and architectural space are 'connected' as an occurrence of an entity. This is an entity however that is never fully formed; it is always permeable to the moment of becoming. The space is conceived only in its relation to the body as 'a life' and the body in performance as 'the life' is occasioned only in relation to the structure.

The body within *Fearless* exists at a frantic pace. The lived experience of *Fearless* for the bodies that

manifest the lived experience is one of fierce intensity. This intensity performs a doubling function in that it emphasises an 'improbable' quality in relation to character while at the same time testifying to the lived experience of performing. This is a strategy to provoke a visceral response to the actuality of the body as manifest in the intense and sustained physical effort the bodies in performance undergo. The actuality of lived experience cannot be denied as the performers labour to complete the performance.

In the realm of lived experience it is the body that is the bridge between architecture and culture, the material and the immaterial. As I argued earlier architecture is ultimately material, the body in relation to it is however both material and immaterial. The body as lived experience and sexual difference is a 'life process'; it exists 'between' or indeed throughout architecture and culture as an 'other', consisting as it does of the elements of each of them in its material/immaterial form. The life process of the body within *Fearless* is seen to be intense.

The body contains the ability to recombine endlessly with these structures and can appear as material to culture as an embodiment of components of that culture and yet immaterial to architecture as an immanent possibility of other spaces to be actualised.



The body then can be considered simultaneously as a breach in the system or the locus of the system insofar as an infinite set of possibilities can be described as a system. The body does not allow closure. It does not allow any system to seal itself or to be presented as encompassing. In this way the body is the nexus of the notion of fluid being with which my work seeks to engage, through the practice interrogated within this chapter.

### Chapter Three The Movement of Time

This chapter engages with a notion of time as cyclical rather than linear. It proposes that the real time event of performance be considered as a 'zone of occurrence'. This zone is occasioned by movement in which time is generated as plastic and real by activity, thus making time discernible.

The relations between the body, performance and its temporal occurrence are explored through the work of Sebastien Foucan, originator of Free Running, and Steve Paxton, creator of Contact Improvisation. The temporal dynamics of my own practice are analysed through the work *Dancing Inside*. *Dancing Inside* was a process occurring in a maximum security prison HMP Dovegate. The group of men with whom I worked had received long sentences for a range of serious offences. The group included 'life' sentence prisoners. The process occurred over two years with a performance at the end of each year.

The location for this work was extremely specific. A prison is a highly controlled environment. Foucault<sup>25</sup> argues that prisons are institutional instruments of

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<sup>25</sup> Foucault, Michel. 1977 *Discipline and Punish*

capitalist society whose function is the 'normalising' of behaviour through punishment and discipline.

As is the case with all my performance works it is important to engage with the work's relation to its own production. The work was paid for by the Arts Council of England as special research into the notion of the impact of art on 'social exclusion'. It is obvious therefore that the social system felt that this work might serve the system. It is logical to suppose that the prison also felt that this project might be of benefit in achieving its aims as an instrument of the 'normalising' of behaviour. Therefore, it could be argued that this work was simply an extension of the work of the institution and a furtherance of capitalism's aims.

Foucault suggests that capitalism requires discipline,

If the economic take-off of the West began with the techniques that made possible the accumulation of capital, it might be perhaps be said that the methods of administering the accumulation of men made possible a political take-off in relation to the traditional, ritual, costly, violent forms of power... In fact, the two processes - the accumulation of men and the accumulation of capital cannot be separated. (Foucault, 1977, 220)

Foucault argues that the accumulation of men is not possible without "an apparatus of production capable of both sustaining them and using them." (Foucault, 1977,



221) The prison takes its place within a structure predicated upon discipline and is part of the "apparatus of production", thus for Foucault,

Discipline is the unitary technique by which the body is reduced as a political 'force' at the least cost and maximised as a useful force. The growth of a capitalist economy gave rise to the specific modality of disciplinary power...  
(Foucault, 1977, 231)

The prison is the ultimate instrument of discipline within the capitalist system. Foucault describes the prison as "an apparatus intended to render individuals docile and useful, by means of precise work upon their bodies..." (Foucault, 1977, 231)

If the *Dancing Inside* project is seen as an extension of the work of the institution it could be argued that notions of time and space within the work would be subject to the prevailing notions of time and space within the institutional structure. This chapter will show that the work was a resistance to these notions of time and space. The 'normalising' of behaviour is essentially a compliance with the rules and prohibitions of the capitalist system. It is not the intention of this chapter to imply that the process of *Dancing Inside* was in any way to deny the will to abide by the laws of the state or even to deny the possible efficacy of the process in a 'normalising' of the behaviour of the

participants in line with the aims of the institution. However this chapter will argue that although any reading of this work must be mindful of its conditions of production, the work *Dancing Inside* engaged with notions of time and being in such a way as to allow for the investigation of 'fluid being' within an institutional structure predicated upon a rigid notion of time and space and operating within prescribed notions of behaviour fitting an institutional notion of 'normality'. It is necessary then to propose a notion of time as it pertains to capitalism and the built environment which is taken to its hyper extension within the prison and a notion of time that is pertinent to the concept of 'fluid being'.

Foucault<sup>26</sup> posits that prisons are structures of power that operate as scopic regimes utilising the term panopticism<sup>27</sup> to name their essential quality. It must be accepted that although the central watchtower is no longer a feature of the design of prisons it can be argued that the panoptic function has simply mutated from the built form to technology in that what once took the form of radiant corridors from a central visual hub is

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<sup>26</sup> "Thanks to the techniques of surveillance, the 'physics' of power, the hold over the body, operating according to the laws of optics and mechanics, according to a whole play of spaces, lines, screens, beams, degrees and without recourse, in principle at least to excess, force or violence." (Foucault, 1977, 177)

<sup>27</sup> "Bentham's *Panopticon* is the architectural figure of this composition." (Foucault, 1977, 200)

now a more dispersed design but still subject to the omnipresent eye of the surveillance camera. The prisoner is watched, from the peephole in his door to the camera at the gate, by an ordering authority. The experience of space within the prison is a tightly controlled series of spaces. Time is incremental in the highly ordered routine of daily life in which passing days slowly add towards the completion of a prisoners 'tariff'.

In this way, time is served as an external incremental measure. The use of the word 'tariff' quite literally seems to align the time served as a 'price' for transgression committed and thus operates as a commercial 'transaction'. This 'transaction' is determined by an external law of value which keeps the function of the prison within the terms of the capitalist structure of which it is a part. Foucault argues that this notion of transaction aligns the prison with a notion that capitalism is 'natural' and the penalty for transgression is, in its essential nature, 'natural' and, by implication, fair and just. Thus for Foucault,

There is a wages-form of imprisonment that constitutes, in industrial societies, its economic 'self-evidence'- and enables it to appear as a reparation. By levying on the time of the prisoner, the prison seems to express in concrete terms the idea that the offence has injured, beyond the victim, society as a whole. There is an economic-moral self evidence of a penalty that metes out punishments in days, months



and years and draws up quantitative equivalences between offences and durations...one is in prison to 'pay one's debt'. The prison is 'natural', just as the use of time to measure exchanges is 'natural' in our society. (Foucault, 1977, 232)

By positing the notion of the penalty of discipline as "reparation", the system aligns discipline with morality: offences which transgress are regarded within a penalty framework of economic-moral equivalence. The prison structure can then be posited, through this operation, as a 'moral' structure. The prison structure and the action of discipline in general act upon the body. The prison is built to contain the body, It is through the body that the effects of moral judgements and choices are felt. These effects upon the body are measured economically.

#### The Geometry of 'Truth'

This section will posit the notion of the prison as a structure that controls space and time as an exercise of power. It will then seek to establish the temporal relations at play within this location and therefore establish the notion of temporality with which *Dancing Inside* engages.

In engaging with notions of time it should be noted that each of the theories presented in this chapter comes from a tradition of thought within a Western society that is already predicated upon a particular relationship to time. It is well documented that those cultures that have not followed the Western capitalist model have a very different notion of time, particularly those cultures that have a more nomadic basis such as aboriginal cultures of North America and Australia for example. It will be shown in this chapter that the Western philosophical model is inextricably linked to our science-based understanding of time and space whereas it can be argued that aboriginal cultures have a more myth based experiential relationship to space and time.

This chapter will posit the notion that the optically measured and governed space of the prison institution is a distillation of a notion of space which, it is suggested, is a reflection of the built environment of capitalism. This environment it is suggested has a particular set of relations to time predicated on a notion of mastery.

Victor Burgin argues that the predominant worldview in the West is an "amalgam of Newton and Aristotle - 'places in space', a system of centres of human affairs (homes, workplaces, cities) deployed within a uniformly

regular and vaguely endless "space in itself" (Burgin, 1996, 42).

This chapter will suggest that by adding the figure of Euclid to Burgin's amalgam the prison becomes an example of the worldview proposed by Burgin. The prison structure is understood by this chapter as being constituted as an arrangement of spaces that functions as a centre of human affairs operating as an organised system of place within abstract space subject to an external incremental notion of time.

The space of the prison defers to a notion of scopical primacy which, it shall be argued, comes from a notion of space in its relation to geometry as containing a priori 'truths' which are not found in notions of time.

Aristotle argues for an infinitely extended space that is empty and real. Objects and places are located in space. Space can be measured by the 'here' or 'there' of motion. Time is measured by the before or after of motion. While space and time would appear to have the same attributes as being infinite, real and measurable, time as even and regulated is measurable only through counting whereas space is measurable optically.

The development of Euclidian geometry was to create a measurement of space that contained an apparent internal 'truth', in that it is a deductive system that has validity independent of empirical confirmation. Space



was to become knowable and measurable through the logical operations of geometry.

It could be argued that this understanding of geometry provides the framework for an acceptance of the notion of an a priori truth of space. Thus, when Descartes<sup>28</sup> considers the nature of material things he demonstrates the existence of an a priori 'truth' through geometry.

It is therefore proposed that Euclid could be considered as the missing figure in the description of Western space proposed by Burgin. It could be argued that Euclid's geometry and its axiomatic method permeates Western thought. The notion that the discoveries by Euclid in geometry contain the primary 'truth' of a priori conditions of space elevates it above time as the demonstrable example. Thus, when Kant sets out his philosophy of the a priori nature of space and time he privileges space over time as the demonstrable medium.

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<sup>28</sup> "When for example I imagine a triangle, even if perhaps no such figure exists, or has ever existed, anywhere outside my thought, there is still determinate nature, or essence, or form of the triangle which is immutable and eternal, and not invented by me or dependent on my mind. This is clear from the fact that various properties can be demonstrated of the triangle, for example that its three angles equal two right angles, that its greatest side subtends its greatest angle, and the like; and since these properties are ones which I now clearly recognise whether I want to or not, even if I never thought of them at all when I previously imagined the triangle, it follows that they cannot have been invented by me." (Descartes, 44, 1996)

Kant<sup>29</sup> proposes the notion that space and time share a commonality but goes on to suggest that there are more propositions "especially about space" and thus space becomes his "primary example". The "propositions" to which Kant is referring come from geometry. The essential quality for Kant is the notion that geometry contains "universally valid truths". Furthermore, for Kant, these "truths" are purely a priori, in that they do not rely on empirical experience. Time however does not have an equivalent 'geometry' of its own; a demonstrable appeal to the "absolute universality" which Kant posits is inherent within geometry. Time can be measured by geometry and with no universal appeal of its own becomes secondary to space in Kant's argument.

Newtonian mechanics drawing from Euclidian geometry are similar in form to Kant's propositions in that they postulate a series of fundamental or a priori principles that are not empirically derived. Newton's laws of motion are based on the motion of bodies in a straight line: a set of rational principles in which matter is conceived

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<sup>29</sup> "Thus, if it were to be supposed that space and time are in themselves objective and conditions of the possibility of things in themselves, then it would be shown, first, that there is a large number of a priori apodictic and synthetic propositions about both, but especially about space, which we will therefore here investigate as our primary example. Since the propositions of geometry are cognized synthetically a priori and with apodictic certainty I ask: Whence do you take such propositions, and on what does our understanding rely in attaining to such absolutely necessary and universally valid truths? There is no other way than through concepts or through intuitions, both of which, however, are given, as such, either a priori or a posteriori. The latter, namely empirical concepts, together with that on which they are grounded, empirical intuition, cannot yield any synthetic proposition except one that is also empirical, i.e., a proposition of experience; thus it can never contain necessity and absolute universality of the sort that is nevertheless characteristic of all propositions of geometry." (Kant, 187, 1998)

as object/located points in space moving in a Euclidian universe of straight lines and pure geometric form. Time is therefore measured as intervals between points along a straight line. Space is therefore something that is traversed through time. Again, the laws of space appear more amenable to concrete a priori formulation. Space appeared to be a universal, regular expanse that could be observed, measured and discovered through the discernment of its fundamental a priori conditions. This even space became the backdrop to the growth of mercantile capitalism in the West. Space was infinitely extensible subject to the gaze of the observer.

It could be suggested that contemporary prison building in Britain continues to follow this 'amalgam' proposed by Burgin. New prisons are invariably built in more remote areas away from metropolitan centres. The structure is a highly organised spatial system of human affairs. Time is spatially organised. The amount of space a prisoner is allowed is controlled by the power of the institution. The power of the institution is embedded within a scopic regime. Time is measured by the spatial changes allowed during the day. The organisation of the spatial progress of the day around such functions as the process of meals and lock up, association and lock up, exercise and lock up strictly meters the time by the space allowed the individual during the day. The body is



subject to an explicit spatial regime. Transgressions within the system can result in much longer periods of lock up and even isolation.

Newton's infinitely extensible space exists outside the main wall; inside the wall is an ever diminishing cell like structure which functions as a network of places which condenses finally to the cell to which the individual is confined. This entire structure is subject to the external gaze which constructs and administers these spaces. The outside world of extensible space is divided from the spaces within, thus the prison structure functions admirably as an Aristotelian notion of 'places in space'.

The prison thus functions as a division; outside of the prison is the extensible space, inside the prison is only the internal contained experience of spatially produced time of 'spaces'. Thus within the prison it could be argued that time is subordinate to and measured by space. This division is mediated by the external position of the 'eye' that watches and divides as an exercise of authority.

The time and space of the inmate is constructed by the external 'eye' of the institution that watches extensively the progress of the individual through the day as an exercise of power. In this way it is proposed that prisons are a reflection of the masculinist

position<sup>30</sup> in philosophy which it can be argued is one of mastery.

In engaging with this notion of mastery Grosz proposes that temporality seems more physical and less objective than space in Western philosophical models of time. Grosz's argument for this is predicated upon a notion of a masculine bias as being the primary locus of these models and that they are part of an intrinsic notion of the male agenda which is domination. Grosz overlays Irigaray's notions of the genealogy of space-time with Kant's model of space and time as a priori categories in order to suggest that man positions himself as master of space and time by this positioning. Thus,

If Irigaray is correct in her genealogy of space-time in ancient theology and mythology, space is conceived as a mode (indeed God's mode) of exteriority and time as a mode of interiority (Irigaray, 1993a: 18). In Kant's conception too, while space and time are a priori categories we impose on the world, space is the mode of apprehension of exterior objects, and time a mode of apprehension of the subject's own interior. (Grosz, 1995, 98)

From this it is suggested that space is an exterior mode and time an interior mode; these different modes are then proposed as inherent in the opposition of male and female - they create an opposition and through this

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<sup>30</sup> A position typified by Heidegger's 'ground' which is 'cleared' and then appropriated as a space to be 'commanded'.

process two respective positions, one of which is privileged (the male), and one which is diminished (the female). Drawing from Irigaray's argument that man is placed as a being with an interior and women are placed as simply an externality to men, by implication without an interior of their own, Grosz goes on to argue that it is man's placement of himself as the axis of space and time, his ability to be external and objective to what is interior and subjective, that creates for him a position of power and control over time, space, and women. Thus Grosz states,

...Irigaray claims that in the West time is conceived as masculine (proper to a subject, a being with an interior) and space is associated with femininity (femininity being a form of externality to men). Woman is/provides space for man, but occupies none herself. Time is the projection of his interior, and is conceptual, introspective. The interiority of time links with the exteriority of space only through the position of God (or his surrogate, Man) as the point of their mediation and axis of their coordination. (Grosz, 1995, 99)

The important gesture here is the position of externality. This externality is a position that allows command. It is a position of "God" which Grosz suggests is assumed by man: his surrogate. This description is grounded in the dualisms of subject and object, interior and exterior oppositions. Time is the interior of man,



which is controlled by him from the space of the exterior. Grosz identifies that there is no place for a female experience of time within this model and that mastery is predicated upon exteriority of space. Thus space as the exterior province of God can be seen to be ascendant over time - the interior space of man. Time as the interior can be held by man and by his placement as an object the exteriority of space is subject to his gaze (the gaze of the superior and the surrogate). The male agenda of domination proposed by Grosz which finds its expression in the position of the exterior objective space of man as separated from the interior subjective space of time is, it could be suggested, the model that the prison system realises in built form as an action of domination and power.

Sanford Kwinter argues that for the institutions of Western society "Western Being is time" (2001, 4), our very nature is created by our relationship with what Western society perceives as time. Kwinter characterises this society in relation to what he proposes as seminal events,

...the advent of rationalised accounting practices, the discovery of universal mechanical laws and constants, the application of systematic techniques for governing populations, the rise of humanistic disciplines and experimental method, the birth of the Cartesian or modern "self". (Kwinter, 2001, 4)

Kwinter describes these events as the development of a series of tools for an "instrumental culture" based around a notion of time which holds at its core a narrative construct of incremental time. Thus, these 'tools' are for Kwinter an "abstraction" that are "...contrived to distribute the senseless procession of events in nature with an external, thinkable space of measure, management, and mastery." (Kwinter, 2001, 40) It should be noted that the prison system is an operation of this 'instrumental' culture which promulgates this narrative construct of incremental time.

Kwinter, as with Grosz, identifies that the end game is one of mastery. Although Kwinter takes no account of sexual difference within his notions he also postulates, in accord with Grosz, that the subordination of time to space through 'externality' is a central gesture of this control. Thus for Kwinter,

Each thing, it may be said, changes and arrives in time, yet the posture of externality that permits precise measure and perfect mastery can be struck and assumed only in space... (Kwinter, 2001, 4)

Thus the 'external' posture is only possible in a taking of space that is external to time and is a place from which time can be observed. This 'external' space has been established by Descartes and Kant as containing

a priori 'truths' and is posited as separate and distinct from 'I' by Descartes. This attempt to 'stand' which establishes a 'position' in spatiality and observes time as incremental and steady, can be seen as an aspect of a space of mastery described by Heidegger as the "realm of command" (1987, 144). The being which 'clears the ground' is external and this gesture allows for a mastery of space. Standing in space, assuming the "posture of externality" (Kwinter, 2001, 4), steady incremental time is an instrument of measure which is used to position the observer in relation to the flow of events, which occur in relation to the observer and the "temple which grounds", in this way extending this mastery over time.

It is proposed then that the prison functions as an exercise of this same power. The prisoner is separated from the exteriority of space and is subject to the gaze of the controlling authority. Through these operations the prisoner is disempowered. The space of the prisoner is 'constructed' by this authority in that the space to which the prisoner has access is an exercise of power. The prisoner's access to space is controlled ultimately by the exercise of his 'tariff' which functions as an abstract notion that is directly linked to external incremental time and other associated notions of value.



## Clocking On

In this section I engage with the notion of linear time and posit that linear time functions as an abstraction within the prison system. This linear time is equated with capitalism's law of value and ultimately constructs the time of incarceration through the exercise of the prisoners 'tariff'.

In the making of the work *Dancing Inside* the process was very much subject to the clock. Sessions had to start and finish at particular times. The relation of time and value was present throughout the project in the amount of time the work took to complete, for what costs, the length of time dancers could work, appropriate breaks, and the rigorous internal schedule of meals and movement within the institution. The clock was very much part of this process. Was the project subordinate to this external 'regular' time?

The symbol that stands for a universality of time in Western consciousness is that of the clock. The clock symbolises eternal regular time: it may be possible to have different experiences of time, but the actual time - clock time - it is proposed, is regulated and constant for everyone regardless of sexual difference, experience or indeed anything else. Later in this chapter it will be

shown that this statement is challenged by the notion of 'proper' time in relativity.

Helga Nowotny argues that for Western society the discovery of geological time was crucially important. The period of the establishing of a geological time frame for the Earth took place in a fifty-year period from the 1800's, the same time frame of the intensive industrialisation of the Western world. Nowotny states that, "Around 1850, however, history was a well-ordered sequence, embracing the whole world, of unrepeatable and recognisable events." (Nowotny, 1994, 81)

Geological time was the perfect instrument for the development of a 'modern' culture, as it appears to support the linearity of time and the notion of an evolutionary narrative. Thus as Nowotny argues "...the time discovered by the geologists soon turned into an ideological justification of the new conception of time which had infiltrated society." (Nowotny, 1994, 82)

The advent of geological time provides the 'linear continuum' in which all other developments occur. Nowotny argues that by analogy with the machine geological time creates a synthesis, a unifying strategy between scientific and political developments. Thus for the machine age "The time structure of the linear, homogenised, arbitrarily divisible continuum is

transferred through the machine from the realm of nature to that of society." (Nowotny, 1994, 83)

The qualities of this time are that it is linear and progressive; it is also universal in its application. The time of science applies to nature and society equally. Historians could construe the linear past as a narrative structure. Time as a sequence of unique and unrepeatable events could be construed as a narrative of progress. It could be argued that this narrative through the unification of time concepts from science to nature applied to all and hence took on an authority as a universal construct.

Constant incremental time separates time from the experience of being and Kwinter argues is itself a gesture of control. For Kwinter, the movement of time away from the event inherent in the external notion of constant incremental time is the action by which time is subjugated and in turn is used to subjugate nature. Thus,

the very gesture that carries thought away from the "event" and towards the "thing" abstracts and spatialises time in the act of instrumentalising it; it subjugates the contingency and the volatility of time by reconstituting it external to phenomena as a finitude and a regularity: it becomes a technique of measurement embodied in economic axioms and algebraic laws.  
(Kwinter, 2001, 4)



Thus it can be argued that clock time becomes an essential component of the Western economic system: as a regularity, it becomes a rule against which multiple exchanges can be measured. Regular time applied as a rule for exchange aligns the notions of time and money leading to the inevitable realisation that 'time is money'. Clock time becomes an essential element of a system of exchange, an exchange upon which can be placed an abstract external value.

This system of money and time as external concepts to the flow of existence allows for a separation between the actual duration of things experienced and the clock time in which they occur and the abstract value of things placed against each other totally divorced from the actual effort of production. This gives credence to the notion that there is an external rational scale of value measured in equal increments of 'money', an apparently universal system of exchange. This gives rise to capitalism's catastrophic system of 'value'. This gesture of externality is the mechanism of control, masquerading as a rational unit of measurement. It is thus possible within the money/ time system that a minute of a lawyer's time in New York or London is worth a week of a sweatshop labourer's time in China. Money cannot have a fixed relationship to 'value' as value is fluid and experienced and subject to sexual difference and highly volatile.

Thus, money can be devalued or even worthless, revealed as having no actual relationship to things, as it pretends in its guise as external measure. It is the lived experience of value that subverts the external posture of money.

The lived experience of biological time as cyclical birth, growth, decay was seen, after the advent of geological time, as the arrow of time - a stream of non-repeatable events, a sedimentation of geology, layers of lives in a linear progression which mirrors a building up layer by layer of society through constant accrual. The abstraction away from lived experience is a move away from the experience of death and decay that is now just the temporary condition of the individual, for society however, the condition is one of constant growth. Sylviane Agacinski argues that,

As total movement-past, present, and to come-history unified what the temporality of the world seemed to dismantle. From a corrupting factor, time for humanity became the condition for its fulfilment.  
(Agacinski, 2003, 16)

The process of constant accumulation that is the fundamental precept of capitalism was accelerated by the industrial age and the advent of a conception of time that was understood in terms of hours worked and time spent. External time as an order of measure that could be

commensurate with other systems of measure, such as the measure of exchange applied to goods and money, functions as a process of abstraction and detachment that creates external and necessarily arbitrary units of exchange. This arbitrary unit of exchange is represented within the prison system by the notion of the 'tariff'.

Lefebvre argues that this process of abstraction is spatially driven and its affects are both spatial and temporal. Abstract space took over from historical space, becoming the dominant space of capitalist societies. Lefebvre posits that,

Abstract space relates negatively to that which perceives and underpins it- namely the historical and religio-political spheres. It also relates negatively to something which it carries within itself and which seeks to emerge from it: a differential space-time. (Lefebvre, 1991, 50)

Here historical time and the new emergent space-time are all subsumed by the space of abstraction: a space of power and production. This space of abstraction dominates the spatial and the temporal through its relations with the historical and the space-time that it carries within it. The project *Dancing Inside* I will suggest was a small 'insurgency' on the behalf of differential space-time against the powers of abstraction concretised within the prison system.



## Time conflicts

This section engages with the notion that there are multiple experiences of temporality that can be said to occur within our contemporary experience of time which Nowotny proposes is characterised as the 'extended present'. The notion of the 'extended present', it is proposed, is an experience of time which is both cyclical and linear and as such establishes a framework for the temporal experience through which the *Dancing Inside* project can be viewed.

In resisting the notion of external incremental time the key arguments are the following: the gesture of externality which does not appear appropriate to the experience of the work undertaken, the lack of inclusion of the female in conceptions of time, and the lack of contemplating that existence is subject to "difference". This sexual difference multiplies conceptions of temporality and spatiality. This complexity moves towards a singular experience of time and space and is parallel with the notion of the multitude of 'proper' times of the Einsteinian universe. This complex relationship militates against the universality claimed by "man" or latterly "human" in writing and the philosophy as expressed above takes no account of sexual difference or 'proper' time of

the body and is therefore limited in not engaging the possibility of multiple temporality or indeed, flux.

The notion of spatiality that it is suggested is reflected in the prison system, the amalgam of Aristotle Euclid and Newton is called into question by developments in science. The notion of Euclidian space was fundamentally challenged by new developments in geometry. The development of three-dimensional geometry was to redefine notions of space, "The rigidity of Euclidian space has been annihilated by Lobachevsky, Gauss, and Reimann." (Lissitsky in Burgin, 1996, 43) The new discoveries in three-dimensional geometry not only challenged the notion of space as an even, infinitely extensible, regular system but also the notion that this space was not a space of a priori conditions but rather was discovered more through empirical research. Grosz argues, "Reimannian geometry enabled spaces of n-dimensions to be theorised, and this work enabled geometry to claim a much closer affinity to the production of empirical (rather than a priori) truths about the world." (Grosz, 1995, 95)

The formulation by Einstein of the theory of relativity rejected the separate space and time of the Newtonian universe and instead proposed that space and time were linked in a continuum space-time. The operations of space-time become localised subject to the

object to which they are related. Therefore within the notion of space-time we have not one space but many types of space, curved and n-dimensional. Not one time, but many types of time, characterised as the notion of a proper time of the specific observer relative to their position and speed. Thus as Nowotny explains,

If two observers are equipped with clocks and move at constant speed relatively to one another, the clock of the one or the other will slow in comparison. The concept of simultaneity for two events occurring in different places has thus lost its significance in terms of physics. Each observer has his or her 'proper' time, which is measured by an accurate clock and which is always borne with him or her.  
(Nowotny, 1994, 36)

Time in the Einsteinian universe is no longer a universal constant but relative to external factors. The notion of not one fixed observer but two or more mobile observers, each with their own proper time, fundamentally relates time to the relative motions of the observers each in their own proper time rather than a simple measure of a single motion occurring in a universal time. In the scientific realm time is no longer fixed but mobile. The movement from a priori 'truths' about time to an inclusion of empirical discoveries elevates the lived experience of space and time in that what can be inferred from experience is meaningful in our understanding of space and time rather than just the discovery of a priori



'truths'. This allows for a notion of time as relational rather than just discoverable.

Nowotny argues that since Einstein there are two notions of time that are struggling to be reconciled within Western culture. Firstly the abstract, as Lefebvre would describe it, of the external clock time of institutions and production. This singular time has striven with a harmonising of capitalisms markets for a worldwide simultaneity. This simultaneity is an illusion essential for the trading of stock prices, futures and the organisation of global government. Against this is the Einsteinian universe in which time is relative to the observer; a universe in which we can imagine as many clocks as we want. Individual 'proper' time is in a conflict with standardised global time. Thus Nowotny proposes that,

Proper time, viewed as self-time from the perspective of the individual, has to come to fresh terms with the time of others, with outside time, above all in the institutionalised complex of working hours... (Nowotny, 1994, 41)

The taking up of proper time as self-time is a recognition, supported by its apparent relevance in relativity theory, that the individual's notion of time - personal time - was important: that it had a reality. This reality is the proper time of the observer carried

with them always. This has created the complex juxtaposition that is prevalent in our society where the everyday experience is one in which there is the "temporal co-presence of proper times, which is technologically held together and yet temporally differentiated by the illusion and the norm of simultaneity." (Nowotny, 42, 1994) This questions the notion of 'now' to which time can 'now' belong. The "spatialised time" to which Kwinter refers which functions as an abstract, external, linear referent to the space of Western capitalist society is being challenged once again by science and experience.

The notion of 'horizons', a spatial concept applied to space and time - as in the horizon of the future - is questioned optically and temporally. New technologies that appear to extend the primacy of the optic sensibilities at the same time challenge the primacy of that optical 'truth' of measurement. Paul Virilio<sup>31</sup> argues that in the world of new technology the panoptic sense is reduced to the surface of the screen; it is the fact that space is subject to the real time of processing speeds that is now primary. The extended visual horizon of new

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<sup>31</sup> "...the irruption at this end of the millennium of an indirect horizon, fruit of the appearance of a "third interval" of the light type (neutral sign), alongside the traditional intervals of space (negative sign) and time (positive sign), leads to the unexpected invention of one final perspective in which the depth of real time wins out over the real space of territories. At this point the indirect light of signals illuminates the world of sense experience a giorno by momentarily reducing the optical thickness of our planet to nothing." (Virilio, 47, 2000)

technology has no depth. The temporal however is crucial. It could be argued that the temporal horizon of the 'future' as distinct and separate has its roots in linear time and particularly the tendency for the use of linear time to be interpreted as narrative. This occurs on the macro level of society and the micro level of the individual, thus, the narrative of history with its notions of 'progress' and the narrative of the history of a life of particular individuals from birth to death are discerned against the backdrop of time travelling in one direction endlessly to the 'new' of the future. This notion of the future as separate is being challenged. Nowotny argues that,

...under the pressure produced by the collapse of the concept of progress and the potentially negative consequent effects, which are becoming manifest with delays in time through the effect on the natural environment. The temporal category of the future is being abolished and replaced by that of the extended present. (Nowotny, 1994, 51)

This abolition of the temporal notion of the future is echoed by Virilio who states that in the disestablishment of the narrative structure of the past: "everything has plunged headlong into a discontinuity that has destroyed the age-old agreement of tenses: the chronaxy that only a little while ago still made sense of history." (Virilio, 2000, xi) For Virilio, it is the



refusal of the past and the future to stay in their respective places spatially and temporally, the past has invaded the present and the future has disappeared, that creates the absence of the future. He asserts, "the temporal horizon is now based exclusively on the crest of the anecdotes of a present that has no future..." (Virilio, 2000, xi). As the future disappears so does the certainty of history; the continuity offered by a narrative approach to time is being abandoned. Agacinski observes in philosophy that "...events have ceased to be inscribed in a comprehensive movement and no longer seem organised according to a unique direction or a single meaning." (Agacinski, 2003, 16)

The perception of time within Western capitalist society is changing. Nowotny argues that there is now a complementary view between notions of a linear time and cyclical time: "The arrow of time admittedly continues to point forward, but it is now composed of many, recurring cycles." (Nowotny, 1994, 54) Nowotny speculates that there is an increasing awareness of the nature and importance of biological time, cyclical in nature, which is the term of the biological "programme - or temporal code", found in all living things, of birth, growth, senescence. This reconfiguring towards a more complex notion of time in which both linear and cyclical temporal

structures are interwoven is a central element of the notion of the extended present.

### Return of the Biological

This section posits a notion of temporality in which 'thought is returned to the event' as a process of 'becoming' and thus time can be viewed not as an external measurement but rather as an internal quality of events. This becomes a central strategy for the concept of 'Fluid Being' with which *Dancing Inside* engages.

Development of the biological perspective has created notions such as product 'life cycles' in the market, economics now focuses on economic cycles, and there is the life cycle of technologies. Nowotny proposes that "To be on the trail of the proper time of technological, scientific, or artistic innovations, or of a whole 'system' of works, also means internalising the time discipline contained in such regularities..." (Nowotny, 1994, 62). Thus the awareness of the cyclical is gradually gaining influence. Therefore, the complex experience of time in the present as a part of a cyclical biological structure of birth, growth, and senescence is other than linear, as Agacinski proposes, "...time always makes and unmakes "at the same time." Advances and

declines are contemporaneous with each other; births and deaths are both daughters of time. History becomes disoriented." (Agacinski, 2003, 16) The time of the present within cyclical notions of time is not merely a step to the future or a position from which the past is constructed into an ongoing narrative but rather it is the time of 'becoming'. Nowotny suggests "the present contains the process of becoming, which is removed and also differs in its methodology from the reconstruction of the past." (Nowotny, 1994, 58) The temporal shift here is to a complex understanding of the multiple proper times within individuals and systems. This is a plurality of times. This notion of the plurality of times is used by Bruno Latour to argue against the notion of modernism as an epistemological break with the past. Latour posits that society is poly temporal, mixing the ancient and the contemporary endlessly so that "we are exchangers and brewers of time...it is this exchange that defines us, not the calendar or the flow that the moderns had constructed for us." (Latour, 1993, 75) The totalising narrative of the arrow of time manifest by the linearity of history is rejected in favour of a notion of the understanding of the temporal as a present expanding in all directions. This expanding present is engaged in the endless recombination with the past in the proper times of objects and functions thus,



We do have a future and a past, but the future takes the form of a circle expanding in all directions, and the past is not surpassed but revisited, repeated, surrounded, protected, recombined, reinterpreted, and reshuffled. (Latour, 1993, 75)

Within the notion of proper times for both systems and organisms is the experience of duration.

Duration is the process of becoming-ever-different; a process that is also ever different as it is perceived via sexual difference: there is no single perception of duration. Duration is not male or female it is matter becoming-ever-different, subject to the perceptions of the singularity that is constituted of matter and thus also becoming-ever-different. Duration is not external to phenomena it is within; it is the process by which becoming is revealed or manifest. Duration is not external to the singularity or 'a life', it is within 'a life', the process of 'a life'. With duration, time is not an external abstract referent to life, but is instead a vital element 'within' a life. Bergson's notion of duration as being of and within a singular 'vitalism' creates the framework for a notion of the dynamism of life from within, which would allow the development of the unity of time with becoming. It evokes a primacy of the process of becoming as a movement within life over the static moment of 'being' as external to life. The

notion of becoming introduces the action of movement as central to this formulation. In this way it is proposed that time is subject to flows and fluxes, as it is constituted in the process of becoming, a process manifest by movement rather than by 'being' a state or position. This is a separation of time from the Cartesian dualism that engenders the separate 'I' of 'I think therefore I am' which allows for an external relation, a separation from time and space, a position from which they can be viewed and understood.

A constant process of becoming evokes a condition of 'middleness' to life, there is no beginning or end, no 'position' or 'foundation', rather we are within it becoming. This would indicate a dynamic and emergent time ebbing and flowing with events. Kwinter argues that a central notion of the new as both possible and necessary to existence is only possible through an understanding of time as the site of qualitative processes of change. A key articulation for Kwinter is the understanding of time not as a notion of the movement from the 'possible' to the 'real', rather as a movement from the 'virtual' to the 'actual'. Drawing from Bergson, he argues that the journey from possible to real is one of realisation in which time is external. Kwinter argues instead for a journey from virtual to actual, which is one of innovation and invention in which time is contained thus,

...realisation (of a possible) and creation (through actualisation-differentiation) are two intrinsically distinct and irreducible processes. The first programmatically reproduces what was already there, formed and given in advance, while the other invents through a continuous, positive, and dynamic process of transmission, differentiation and evolution. (Kwinter, 2001, 10)

A key movement here is the movement by Kwinter, which aligns the journey from virtual to actual with the biological. The process of actualising is described in biological terms such as evolution, creation and, in this context, differentiation. This biological basis of actualisation, which aligns itself with the work of Nietzsche, Bergson, Foucault and Deleuze, wherein the continuous production of the real is the dynamism of life, a dynamism which is an inherent quality of the nature of biological life 'to be', to actualise as real. Biological life exists in time, and with time: it is an operation of time. For this thesis this operation is a vital element in that the corporeal as described earlier is composed of a biological element and that biological element is within time not external to it. This dynamism of life related to the biological model creates the notion of time as fluid within the interaction between the biological and the moment-event. From this it is possible to suggest a notion of time that flows in both



directions, that is occurring in time and through its interactions 'with' time, thus time can be generated by the event and the singularity in interaction as the time 'of' the biological moment. This is a time of flows, 'bulges', 'points', 'vectors', 'velocities', not regularly spaced intervals. Kwinter posits the notion that in the process of actualisation time is 'real',

The crux lies here: Actualisation occurs in time and with time, whereas realisation, by limiting itself to the mere unfolding of what preexists, actually destroys novelty and annihilates time. In the first instance time is real; in the second it remains artificially derived and abstract in relation to events. In the one case time is a dynamically and perpetually activated flow, in the other, the result of an externally built up succession of static images. (Kwinter, 2001, 10)

The radical gesture here is the suggestion that time can be generated within the moment-event. Time in this context is within the movement of all matter towards the actual as a "dynamic and perpetually activated flow". Thus time is volatile and unstable, emerging and receding fractal-like in its complexities and discontinuities. This notion of time creates a time of qualitative as well as quantitative changes. If time can be generated by the interaction between the singularity and the movement-event towards becoming, the 'middleness' of experience is multiplied endlessly in complex flows where the 'new'

emerges in its creation and time not as a constituent of a time narrative as suggested by modernism towards progress etc, but rather, as an endlessly bifurcating time that resists all notions of linearity and narrative construction, tending rather to what Kwinter dubs the 'minute and ceaseless procession of catastrophes' (2001, 10). This notion of time can take account of sexual difference and of the notion of 'proper' times, it is a time, which is embodied as it is actualised in the movement that is becoming, and as such it is not a gesture of control. It is an insertion of the body into the notion of time.

### Dancing and Streaming

This section frames the strategies employed by the process of *Dancing Inside* to engage with 'now' of its occurrence as central to its notion of a temporal work.

**Please see Film Chapter Three Time. *Dancing Inside*  
Section One - Documentary**

The *Dancing Inside* project was an engagement with the body. The work occurred only in HMP Dovegate. While this may have been the location of the work, it was not the site of the work. It is proposed that the site of the

work was its temporal occasion as embodied by its participants.

The work sought to engage with the moment-by-moment experience of being which is the nature of 'becoming', which it is posited, can be accessed in the nature of the physical process undertaken. In so doing the work had to challenge the experience of being that it is argued was inherent in the constructed architectural space of the prison and the experience of 'normality' that the architectural space constructs. This 'normality', which is subject to an external incremental time, functions as an abstraction that relates directly to the abstraction of capitalism's notion of value. The work sought to engage the notion of 'now-ness' as the temporal occasion of the moment, such that the moment of becoming was the focus of temporal relations, rather than the focus of an external time of measurement.

To engage with this notion of a challenge to the architectural space of normality and the habit of being inherent within it the project created the opportunity for the participants to explore the space in new ways. The conventional rules of architectural space and codes of behaviour were disregarded in a creative exploration to challenge the limits of this space. Within the process large amounts of time were given over to exploring the space physically. Time was spent walking up walls,



crawling along the ceilings, sticking to walls, bouncing of walls, flying over each other and tumbling through space. The essential challenge was to the rigid notion of being in space, with the assertion that where one could go, and what one could do in the environment was limited only by imagination and resources. The space was re-imagined by physical interaction that resisted the prevailing spatial narrative of the architecture.

To engage with this notion of a re-imagination of architecture and its narratives by the body it is interesting to engage with practices that work in a similar ethos. The fundamental quality is the interaction between the body in action as becoming and the notion of time.

The notion of matter as flow with which the body can play is found in a surprising variety of manifestations. Kwinter cites the examples found in sports such as paragliding, delta-planing, hang-gliding, noting how these sports are focused on the interplay between the streaming intensities playing endlessly with the interweaving temporal physical patterns. These sports have an older precedent in surfing, a focus on playing with the endless permutations of becoming, within the myriad microsecond possibilities of the interplay of time and wave. The surfer is tracking the forces and flows not originating them. The process is one of continual becoming and

reacting as it emerges, placing oneself in time and playing with time and energy. Each wave has endless possible journeys but the action of surfing creates one actual physical journey. Each journey is unique and real in time and space. The development of board sports has seen similar developments in snowboarding and skateboarding. Each of these are an interplay with the flows and intensities of the environment around them whether natural or urban, playing with the movement and flows of mountains and the urban environment. The practice of snowboarding consistently comes into the cities in winter allowing the riding of rails and gaps, hips and surfaces. This allows for new articulations of the flows and intensities within the urban environment. The focus in all these activities is the personal expression within the flow of the environment; being aware of real time focused on the moment of becoming to incarnate the new from the virtual through becoming actual in the moment of choice. This process activates the different quality emitting surfaces of the landscape in relation to dynamic flow. Skateboarders scour cities looking for new and 'pleasing' possibilities from the urban structure, trying to find different flows and intensities from slopes, stairs, drops, rails and hips, placing themselves in a real time relationship with the environment.

The nature of these explorations of the myriad possibilities of the physical environment are a 'playing' with relationships, in order to become aware of the movement in the environment (the streaming space), and to insert oneself into it - to become soft and fluid in time. These qualities allow the body to enter the streaming space flowing within the environment and thus as Kwinter suggests momentarily recover "real time".

I understand the process and nature of my work to be situated in this streaming ethos and I suggest that it is central to the two other examples of practice that I wish to align my work with: Free Running and Contact Improvisation, in which the key correlate is the primacy of movement as the fundamental state of becoming.

Each of these forms is free from any sort of mediating equipment such as a board and focuses purely on the body and its own state of dynamism and movement. The body is explored as an interface with the streaming matter-become-form that is its environment. Each of these two forms focus on the body in relation to its environment from a streaming ethos and the common element is on 'becoming' either in the interplay between two bodies as in Contact Improvisation or in the interplay between body and urban environment in the case of Free Running.



## Free Running

This section will argue that Free Running is a practice that resists the prevailing architectural narrative habit of being by the implementation of the tactic<sup>32</sup> of a re-imagined use and way of being within the architectural space. Free Running is important to this chapter, in this respect, as there is a direct correlation and application within aspects of my own practice.

Free Running is a physical play with the urban environment. The practitioners run up walls, leap from building to building, walk on handrails and pass across apparently impossible gaps. They leap and twist and fly across spaces in which an accident could mean serious injury or death. The continual practice has allowed the practitioners to build up a tremendous body of knowledge and physical skills to enable them to survive huge drops and impacts. The practice resembles a mixture of acrobatics, climbing, dance and the pure play of physical daring. Free Running is a practice in which architecture is seen not as an obstacle and narrative structure but as a 'playground' open to endless opportunity. Free Running began in France in Lisse, a suburb of Paris. It developed

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<sup>32</sup> As defined by De Certeau, 1984, 37

from children's games of chase and superheroes and it was continued, as its participants grew older, to negate what was perceived as the boredom of the urban milieu. It is a way for the participants to be 'free' in towns and cities built to contain them.

Sebastien Foucan, an originator of Free Running, remembers that the "whole town was there for us" (Optomen TV, Channel 4 2003) and that they had to continue to "think like children" and see space as a playground. The essential nature of children's play is their focus on the 'now', a total engagement with the reality of the game, which allows for spontaneous invention.

Free Running has developed to the point where its practitioners appear to defy gravity using speed and momentum to allow them to run across sheer walls between buildings, to leap from balconies, to land on railings, to jump between buildings at huge heights and so make features and landings and pathways from surfaces ignored by the rest of us as inaccessible, dangerous, or simply inconceivable as a movement pathway. The architectural programme of movement pathways constructed within the urban environment of walkways, stairways and pavements as the primary locus of our journeys within the urban experience which are generally passively accepted by most of the inhabitants of the urban setting is fundamentally challenged by Free Running. The practice of Free Running

resists this preordained order of movement for the urban environment, an order of single predetermined flows controlling and containing the passage of movement in the urban environment. Thus a spatial and temporal 'narrative' of the city in the ordering of its flows is imposed. Free Running rejects this ordering and its inherent programme, developing instead a practice and discipline of reinterpreting this ordered urban landscape into a free flowing playground. The architect Will Alsop describes this process by Free Running as "corrupting the use" (Alsop, Optomen TV, channel 4, 2003) of the buildings. The imposed order is resisted and instead the environment is returned to its raw state as streaming matter to be interpolated into - to become once more a place of creation.

To its participants, Free Running has become a discipline, a daily practice in which the everyday is confronted, doubts and fears are faced, and thus for Foucan "Free Running fights fears and demons and can be applied to life" (Foucan, Optomen TV, Channel 4, 2003). This facing of personal fears is allied to a belief in the moment of becoming; as the complex interplays and patterns emerge, the focus is on joining the energy. Therefore, for Foucan, the philosophy is "Go forward, there is always a path, always go forward whatever the path may be..." (Foucan, Optomen TV, Channel 4, 2003). This



going forward is not a movement into the future but a 'becoming' in the moment a remaining-in-motion; an engagement with the now of the temporal moment. This engagement with the moment allows an unfolding of physical opportunities from which a 'path' can be actualised.

An essential nature of this engagement is the path to be found and a belief that it is there. This is not a case of a new mastery of the environment but instead a new melding with it, a merging of the flows of one's own body, the architecture, gravity, space and time. Free Runners express this relationship as a harmony with the environment and they refer to an essential quality of the path as being one of elegance, not a brutal dominance. Thus for Jerome Ben Aoues,

...harmony between you and the obstacle.  
Length and distance only add to the beauty  
of the movement. If you manage to pass  
over a fence elegantly that's beautiful  
rather than saying 'I jumped the lot.'  
What is the point of that? (Aoues, Optomen  
TV, Channel 4, 2003)

In the split second complex co-ordinations that are required in the execution of the complex paths undertaken it is impossible for the conscious mind to overtly control the body as one. Instead the muscles, joints and tendons are functioning instantly as a distributed system controlling balance and fall. At any moment a lack of

focus could result in fatal consequences but the system flows and adapts, in microseconds, channelling energies from tremendous falls, releasing energy that would be disastrous for the body to absorb through falling and rolling.

The human system works as many independent points flowing as one in a timescale too fast for the conscious mind. This ability is developed as and through a practice that is a method of constant becoming in the moment. This development of practice is exactly the same in Contact Improvisation discussed later in this chapter. All of this process has to be expressed in "harmony" and "elegantly" with the environment. Fluidity and economy of effort are prized. The unity of this moment of creation with an aesthetic sense is a wish to fulfil the moment of creation as a moment that is 'artful' and expressive. It is no longer the accomplishment of physical tasks for their own sake but a will to accomplish them for a sense of expression; the point as expressed above is the moment of unity of body and aesthetic purpose in a moment-of-becoming that is recognised simultaneously as a moment of 'real' time and a moment of creation. The actuality of the moment-become-movement pathway of a jump between buildings, for example, is a moment 'of' time 'in' time that asserts a sense of becoming in that time, a sense that is aesthetically presented and asserts an

affirmation of the 'vital' nature of that moment and crucially a singular relation with that moment.

The flow and the presence at the moment of becoming when the path is found and the choices are made, when a virtual path has become an actual path, are understood to be creative experiences. As expressed by Foucan, "After the jump you feel a surge, it's the happiness of creating something, achieving something and doing it well."

(Foucan, Optomen TV, Channel 4, 2003)

It is important to note that the feeling occurs 'after' the jump, the moment of the jump itself, is in the jump completely. After the jump is a pleasure at having created something, which it could be argued, was a pleasure of recognition of, or presence at, the moment of becoming. Time in a jump sequence, duration, is expanding and contracting, flying through the air between buildings, making actual through the virtual new pathways, occasions a different experience of time brought about through the moment event. The nature of this time is observed as real time, described by the mountaineer Bear Grylls, when discussing Free Running as, "A certain freedom and expression and something that was very real and very raw" (Grylls, Optomen TV, channel 4, 2003).

This observation from someone involved in the same pursuit in a different field is recognition of a kindred



wish to actualise the moment spent within flow by placing the body within the streaming matter; to be present at the moment of becoming. Grylls characterises this activity as the 'real' and his assertion of its quality of 'rawness' promotes a sense that this activity is a primary visceral experience within the temporal flux and the 'vital' element of 'a life': it engages on a fundamental level with the action of living. This time when the singularity is streaming with the environment could be described as 'vital' time. A becoming within time, which is an interpolation between the singularity and what Bergson describes as the vitalism of life that could constitute in the process of becoming a temporal flux being 'in' time and simultaneously 'of' time; a 'vital' time which is both a quantitative and qualitative experience of temporality in a moment of change.

The film *Jump London* by Optomen TV, broadcast by Channel 4, is a performance in which three Free Runners flow with a series of London's famous buildings over a period of one day. In so doing they express their individual relationships with those local environments in the manner described above. The film attempts to highlight the implicit questions of this activity by juxtaposing Free Running with the everyday activity of those sites over a day and by implication the temporal order of the everyday. This juxtaposition raises

questions concerning the active nature of becoming and, through routine, the inherent social inclination to a passive acceptance of being, a being that is subject to acceptance of the inherent narratives of architecture. A mode of being that is positioned by external notions of time and space in a gesture of control, grounded in Heidegger's terms by the 'temple' or architectural figure that creates the ground upon which it stands and, by implication, the temporality in which it exists as time is subordinate to space. The Free Runners' activity does not accept the temple as is, instead seeing the urban landscape as streaming matter to be played with, the activity is thus not everyday, but is instead in the 'now' of the moment of its doing. Focused on the inherent temporal structure it attempts to play with, Free Running plays *within* time *with* time.

The architect Will Alsop sees Free Running as a welcome and productive challenge to the nature of the built environment, "We build all this stuff... what else could that stuff be used for?" (Alsop, Optomen TV, 2003) This questioning of the nature of the built environment created through the process of architecture suggests that "all this stuff" should not just be passively accepted; it should be explored. This questions the function of buildings. Free Running is actively engaged in this exploration but the question goes deeper, the programme

explicitly engages with this. Rather than just a challenge to the function of buildings, it poses the question, "The Free Runner's performance begs the question, what's a city for?" (Optomen TV, Channel 4, 2003)

This open question is a direct challenge that Free Running engages within the fundamental nature of its own practice. Free Running is a practice, which in De Certeau's terms functions as a tactic in which the space of a tactic is "a space of the other" (De Certeau, 37, 1984). Free Running is a manifestation of the 'otherness' of the built environment and as such very clearly resists the prevailing narratives of the built environment. Will Hutton sees the Free Running activity as out of the everyday, a view through the window of habit in which we domesticated beings trapped by routine, see outside to the wild and raw 'becomings' that are explored in 'real' time as they are expressed by the Free Runners. Hutton expresses the challenge of Free Running as, "Cities are places of escape but can become predictable and safe. Free running says you're trapped, come and escape with us, think afresh." (Hutton, Optomen TV, Channel 4, 2003)

The implication here is that the architecture is imposing a spatial and temporal order on ways of being that is an external construct. The gesture of Free Running is to reengage with an internal temporality which



reinvigorates the relationship with the built environment returning it to its raw primacy as streaming matter and thus becoming present at the moment-of-becoming. In this way it embodies perfectly De Certeau's description of a tactic as "...a tactic boldly juxtaposes diverse elements in order to suddenly produce a flash shedding a different light on the language of a place..." (De Certeau, 1984, 37). Yet it could be argued that it is more than this: the language of the city is 'illuminated' and this action creates opportunities for new configurations, potentials and actualisations but the body is also simultaneously, in its potentials and limits, 'illuminated' in action. The body is also explored in its temporal nature in the reconfiguring of an immediacy to experience which focuses on becoming 'in' time thus resisting past and future 'narratives' 'of' time, instead accepting a moment of singularity free from the apparent spatial/temporal determinism of the city structure.

In this way Free Running is an experience of polyvalent temporality in that it engages with the 'proper' time of the singularity in the moment-of-becoming, it also engages the temporal ordering function of the 'city as clock' process through which the city through it's ordering of all of its participants' basic actions and temporal relations through functions and transit comes to become a way of 'being'. Within this

polyvalent temporality there is an engagement with cyclical time, because what can be accomplished as a Free Runner will inevitably be determined by the singularity's relationship with the cycle of birth, growth and senescence. The final element of this temporal engagement is the fact that once the actualisation of Free Running is over, linear time will 'have passed' in that the 'event' of the Free Running will have concluded and practitioners will still be within the socio-economic system and its inherent external time.

As a practice it is in the simplicity of its relationship with the built environment that Free Running makes such a clear and 'vital' presence.

A central theme of all of my work since I turned professional in 1985 has been the body's relation with the habit of being and particularly the architectural space. In the practice of Free Running I can see similarities with my own practice, particularly with the strategies employed to explore space. As with the *Jump London* performance, the performances of *Dancing Inside* were a resistance to the 'prevailing narrative' of the architectural structure in that they were 'corrupting the use' of those structures. Just as *Jump London* was a challenge to the 'normality' of the everyday, *Dancing Inside* was a challenge to the nature of 'normality' within the institution.

The re-imagined use of the walls, ceilings and floors is a very different notion of 'normality' to that fostered by the institution. Within the *Dancing Inside* project the use of physical tasks as a sense of expression combined with a re-imagining of the nature of the physical environment engages the individual in a different habit of being in which the temporal is occasioned as central to the body. The moment-become-movement pathways of time in time are illuminating not only of the environment but also the body. The *Dancing Inside* project was re-awakening of the expressive body as streaming in time with time and thus experiencing another notion of time other than external incremental time. External incremental time is not 'real' while spiralling through the air: then only the 'now' of duration in sensation is 'real'.

#### Contact Improvisation

In this section I will engage with the practice of Contact Improvisation within my work. The practice of Contact Improvisation has been my primary engagement with the movement of the body. I utilise the practice to create much of the movement in my work. I also use the practice as a primary teaching tool about the body and space.



Central to the *Dancing Inside* project was the relationship between the experience of the body and the habit of being within the institution. To explore this relationship I utilised the practice of Contact Improvisation in which the relations between one's own body and the surrounding environment are questioned with the particular focus of relations with other bodies. The primary experience of Contact, it can be argued, is the experience of temporality in which the participant seeks to discern the 'movement' between the sensations of 'being'. The process of Contact allows for the investigation of the body as subject, object and other through an extended range of touch. Issues of touch in prison environments are sensitive in that they are usually constructed as exercises of power through sex or violence. Contact Improvisation is a dance form that investigates 'streaming matter' by its interaction with another body and in this way can be seen as a 'vital' relationship with the body.

Most dance disciplines can be understood as an attempt at mastery over the environment. The body is trained and developed to allow the assertion of control over the forces of gravity, space and time within the dance activity. Contact differs in that it attempts to develop the skills and the sensitivity to play with these forces rather than assert mastery over them. This is an

extension of the streaming ethos that allows for a giving up of control. Within Contact there is a search for an awareness of the moment-by-moment information that is perceived through the senses, which in turn bifurcates endlessly into multiple movement choices. These choices are then engaged with as transparently as possible, to allow a harmony of all the variables within the dance such that a flow can occur between two bodies in time and space. The process of Contact therefore manifests a search for a melding of the forces, space, time and bodies in order to allow a moment of becoming that is the dance to occur, with no preset notion of what that dance should be. This search for the moment of matter-in-motion is a wish to be present at the simple place of becoming that is streaming matter. In the documentary film *Fall after Newton* Steve Paxton, the progenitor of Contact Improvisation, commentating on the role of the apple in Isaac Newton's theories, said,

Newton described his three laws of motion. These became the foundation of our ideas about physics. Being essentially objective Newton ignored what it feels like to be the apple. (Paxton, 1987)

This wish to be the apple - to be the matter-in-motion - is a gesture that places the activity within time and space, a movement within phenomena experiencing the moment, not as an external observer measuring against

an abstract notion of time and space. The wish to be the apple is a 'qualitative' change to the understanding of the notions of forces, space and time. This insertion of oneself into the play of the physical forces is, as in the case of Free Running, a playful and creative gesture as Paxton explains,

When we get our mass in motion we rise above the constant call of gravity towards the swinging circling invitation of centrifugal force. Dancers ride and play these forces. (Paxton, 1987)

The image of riding and playing the forces is parallel to the description of all the 'streaming' sports. Inherent in this notion is the belief that there is a 'flow' within these forces that can be actualised by the path of the body as object - as the matter it is, engaged with interplay between the streaming matter that surrounds it and flows through it and the forces that act upon the body of the dancer. This is not a passive acceptance of the body as matter being subject to forces with determining results. The key articulation here is an awareness of the fact that there is not a single path or flow but myriad possibilities from which choices are made, thus for Paxton, "Beyond Newton's third law we discovered that for every action several equal and opposite reactions are possible, therein lies an opportunity for improvisation." (Paxton, 1987)



This posits a choice at the central moment whereby the corporeality does not respond in a predictable way to the action of physical forces, it has the opportunity to be not purely subject to them. The unique capacity of the corporeality is that whilst it is matter and acted upon by physical forces it has the opportunity by being present to the moment to choose how it is to be acted upon and thus in turn, how it acts upon and with, the streaming matter of which it is an element. This is a moment of being 'in' time, aware of the possibilities and making choices.

Contact Improvisation is a practice that requires a discipline of attention to the moment and the articulation of choices within that moment. Thus time is spent observing the nature of the body as a continuously moving structure. The unconscious mind has taken over the task of balancing the structure against gravity, the unconscious mind is dealing with the 'now' of standing. In Contact this 'now' is reengaged with, observed to be happening; the idea that one can stand still is exposed as a fallacy. "Standing still is not actually still. Balancing on two legs demonstrates to the dancer's body that one moves with gravity always." (Paxton, 1987)

This engagement with the action of standing is a repositioning of the awareness of the mind to the moment of becoming in this case as standing. This is a notion

that configures the occasion of movement as central to the now for the corporeality, thus it is movement that occasions the 'now' of the corporeality. The awareness of movement, and the decisions of whether to occasion changes to that movement, are decisions to be made in the moment. These decisions are made in the now and are often instinctive and reactive rather than the process of a detached observing consciousness. The sheer speed and variable nature of the data in all the streaming activities calls for a corporeal response that relies on the whole corporeality making decisions on a distributed basis. Thus, in Contact, when falling disoriented at higher velocities, it is the body in the moment that can make the choices that will avert destruction. As Paxton expresses, "there are hazards, one of them is thinking ahead. What the body can do to survive is much faster than thought." (Paxton, 1987)

By thinking ahead, the moment of being completely in time and of time, the 'streaming' moment is broken. The shift to future planning means that the body is no longer completely one with the moment, the conscious observing mind has moved to an external time of the future. In this way the body is no longer the fluid body in time but is instead an observed body predicting the nature of falling time and is thus qualitatively changed from being the apple to being instead an external 'Newton'. This process

becomes one of watching the fall and measuring prediction against actuality. Through this process an imagined fall becomes realised. As a result of this qualitative change the body is no longer present to deal with the moment-by-moment changes and as such is out of the flow and in some cases at risk. This is the same body state that occurs in Free Climbing, Free Running and the boarding sports, it is the body as a unity of distributed decision making in which sinews react in fractions of time to minute and constant change in the flow of energy which occurs at a speed and frequency beyond the conscious mind. Paxton, from experience, attempts to describe this state of mind of the dancers thus,

Inside their minds the many touch events,  
and constantly changing relationships  
blend into a continuity of moving masses,  
which creates a logic reached only in the  
heat of the dance. A logic as secure as  
that found when standing alone and  
watching the reflexive dance of ones  
bones. (Paxton, 1987)

The 'logic' of the dance is not the realisation of a plan, not an imagination realised but rather a virtual dance that has been actualised by the path of movement occasioned by moment-by-moment choices. The choice of words "blend into a continuity" shows the same wish for the harmony within the flow as expressed by the Free Runners. The moment-by-moment nature of becoming is



expressed as 'continuity' rather than as discrete intervals of an externally measured time, it is a continuity reached only in the "heat of the dance" that is to say in the moment of its actuality in time as a moment of time, it is experienced as a flow. The dance is as ephemeral as the surfing of a wave or the jumping from roof to roof existing only in and of its time. As Paxton expresses, "I have little memory, muscular or mental, of what I've danced. The specific movements my body executes do not register consciously and I can't reconstitute them." (Paxton, 1979)

The emphasis is on the moment of becoming as a part of time and as matter. The past is as unimportant as the future in the process of becoming, it is an experience of 'middleness', a moment 'of' time as matter. The singularity is simply playing with its constituent matter. Paxton attempts to describe the experience thus, "I feel transparent in the action causing it only a little and holding no residuals." (Paxton, 1979)

This description as transparent to the action is an effacement of the role as causal objective and external whereby the action is measured. Rather it is recognition of an interpolation between all the elements as something to be passed through, not the vessel to hold the dance but rather a portal through which it passes. Thus the corporeality is not as something external to the moment

but rather within as a medium through which it passes. This is 'vital' experience, a sense of becoming the moment.

The relation between art and sport here is linked to the notion of 'play' as a fundamental element through which personal expression is possible. In the above examples artists and sports people concerned with the 'streaming' sports play with the moment of being and the moment-by-moment changes in its temporal flow. The practice of Contact Improvisation involves the development of physical skills as in all the other 'streaming' sports; it also requires a development of the sensitivity to the senses in order to perceive the continuous motion of the individual's body and the environment around them. There is a focus on returning to the primary state of dealing with continual motion. The nature of the dance is not pre-planned but is allowed to occur on the spot in time, a vital relationship with the 'now'.

Contact Improvisation has developed a vocabulary of movement that functions as a resource base of choices, along with a development of techniques that allows the dancer to stay within the flow and even to 'flow' upwards -harnessing centrifugal force. The attainment of these skills is the development of a balance of the forces at play to enable the choice of action. Just as the infant

must learn basic balance and locomotion at an instinctive level to be able to react fast enough to the movement of forces, so the dancer or jumper or surfer must learn an extended instinctual awareness of the balancing of the flows. With all of these forms the basic vocabulary is transcended in the moment of becoming; new possibilities unknown to the corporeality are discovered and utilised in the moment. With free climbing and Free Running the route may be pre-planned but the actual route is subject to the flows and deviations of the moment. The dance or surf or jumps are not then objectified and kept, rather they are experienced and actualised and released. The activity is focused entirely on its temporal relationship with the now of becoming. The becoming is occasioned by the movement hence the complete focus on the movement as occasioning the generation of the action and its temporal qualities, spending time or moving time, in time, in a 'vital' relationship with the 'now'. The actions may be recorded and it may even be approximated in the act of repetition but it cannot be replicated.

In this context the movement of becoming which plays with temporality raises the interesting concept that within work of this nature the site of the work is not in fact a spatial concept at all, rather it is a temporal concept. The work must occur within an actual site, a geographic location with which it has relations, but this



is secondary to the event of its occurrence. The site of this work is its temporality - the occasion of the work. A key element is that there is no gesture of externality to the event. The dance or surf or jumps are immanent to the temporal experience of their unfolding.

The gesture of externality is a constructed one. The "temple that grounds" from Heidegger's argument takes from the architectural cannon in order to construct a vantage point which in turn constitutes the environment in which it stands. As argued in Chapter One all construction is ultimately an engagement with materiality therefore the notion of constructed space becomes a material construct and time becomes an external referent to this constructed space. This is a gesture of externality. The model of an external incremental time of measure can then be applied from this vantage point. The streaming activities however work with a notion of space and time generated by movement as not necessarily as constructs but rather as streams, morphogenetic forms billowing in multiple overlaying fluid patterns. In this gesture there is no externality, construct or 'temple', rather a focus on the moment of becoming that is the essential 'nowness' of its temporal nature. In this way the activity is not viewed externally but comprehended from within.

The notion that matter is streaming and constantly moving between virtual and actual is to be attendant to the generation of the matter as actual and the time of the event. The gesture here is to recognise the corporeality's place within the generation of the actual and to play with the forces as this occurs from within. In effect this is a participating role within the nature of the events occurring rather than an observational role that is simply external. The singularity is 'transparent' to the action of actualisation as a 'becoming-of' the moment through the process of actualisation-differentiation, a process of invention in time rather than an originary controlling role as in the constructor realising the 'given-in-advance' of a possible over time.

### Contact in Prison

In this section I explore the use of Contact Improvisation within the prison context.

The process of Contact Improvisation within a prison environment is extremely complex. It was necessary for me to create a working process in which the habit of being within the prison was suspended in order for new relations to be formed. The habit of being was not only the external one of discipline related directly to

abstract notions of an external and regular temporality imposed on the men by the institution but also the nature of touch relations between the men as purely an exercise of power.

The process implemented was as un-didactic as possible. The nature of the time spent was as co-operative as was possible.

At the same time as the project was in process there was a drama project in operation with a different group of men. The leader of the drama group had keys so that he could come and go at will. I was very clear that I should not have keys. The keys to me (and I supposed to the men) were symbols of institutional power. It was important to establish a distance between the process of the project and the institution.

The men would be brought to the room and we would begin. The process was very physical and demanding in the early stages; the men were doubtful and reserved. The structure of the sessions was that people were encouraged to join in but if they needed to they could withdraw to the side of the room and 'rest' from the physical or emotional challenges of the work.

The work was observed by an officer who would not interfere until the session was finished. As the process of the work developed we were often left on our own



locked together in our working room with an officer outside.

The early part of the process was very much me teaching basic skills of movement survival and developing awareness of 360 degree space in movement. The early part of the process was also dealing with touch. This is done by working at quite a fast pace extending the range and type of touch experienced under the guise of function based movement. Thus extended areas of the body are touched in order to facilitate particular lifts or falls. As the process develops the nature of the touch is developed through much more caring and gentle encounters when the group is ready for more sensitive exploration through being exhausted and encouraged by the process. At this stage the use of massage and other touch qualities are introduced.

It was an essential element of the project I felt that the issue of sexual difference in conception of time and space was engaged. It was important that not just a male vision of time and space was prevalent. It has to be accepted that sexual difference is not an issue of gender, however it must be accepted that while working with the biological entities in current form within the institution it was necessary for me to work with women to bring the 'other' to my own experience of space and time. The intention was that by extending the range of bodies

within the sessions sexual difference would be more widely represented. The female dancers with whom I worked engaged in dancing and sharing the process with the men thus issues of touch and power and the range of human interactions were present to the moment of making. The process explored our habit of relations to architecture by physical exploration of the type employed in Free Running. The process was also an exploration of the body in space and time through the use of Contact Improvisation and an exploration of the nature of the body which is inherent within Contact's engagement with the connections a body can make by the unity found in the 'heat of the dance'. The process was also engaging with the habit of being by the nature of its undertaking, the process as a shared experience. The process of the work was essentially that of creating the time and space for the work to occur through the use of as many different ways of being as possible within the time of the sessions. As the work progressed it was important to establish some sessions in which there was a shared practice relationship rather than a simple didactic approach. A sharing of a practice in which we all participated in dancing and exploring with each other and sharing time and observations. The process became a sharing of time in which participants, in which I include myself, could engage in exchange.

The key operation is the creation of time through mutual consent whereby the focus is given to experiencing the body in time, becoming moment by moment.

The *Dancing Inside* project was conceived as having two performance parts created and performed one year apart. The first performance took place outdoors in the exercise area. The second performance took place in front of the cell doors in the cell blocks. The notion was for the first performance to be about the men and for their relations with each other to be the central focus of the work. The second performance also had the men and their relations with each other at its heart, plus the added element of an engagement with the architecture. The 'use' of this architecture as one of containment was challenged by the same operations as Free Running and the 'freedoms' of alternative explorations. Therefore the structure that is meant to contain, when viewed as a streaming environment, can no longer maintain the status inherent in the notion of containment and becomes porous to contingency in its relations to the body.

The men in the two groups composed their own material for the performances from a mixture of the resources we had given them and their own discoveries. It was my role to direct the process and compose the performance structure. The composing of the performance structure was not an autocratic process as it was open to



suggestion and development by the group at all times. However, the status of the men with their peers was vitally important. It was essential that the men were seen to have achieved. It was necessary for me to assert authority within the rehearsal stage of the process to calm the nerves of the men and to facilitate the performance of the material by the men to its highest standard. Peer acceptance was vital for the men and I knew this would be more likely if the performance was well executed. What was important was not the standing of the piece of work as great art, rather the occurrence of the work as an exploration of the habit of being for its participants and observers.

It is important to state that the work is not promoting a set of values or a right or wrong way of being. It is not so facile as to suggest that, by engaging in this way of being, the crimes that the men had committed (murder, armed robbery, and rape) would not occur again. The work seeks only to question the habit of being. The occurrence of the work as the moment by moment 'becoming' creates the opportunity for the habit of being to be observed in its function as a habit. In this way the work is an 'insurgency' in that it challenges the notion of normalised behaviour. The process of normalising behaviour is an acceptance of a habit of

being, inherent within the architectural construct, as a manifestation of the capitalist system.

The process of the work and the two performances engaged with the institution on many levels. It can be suggested that the practice of the work as a co-operative form of partner work created in its practice an embodied ethical set of relations which are embedded within the action of that practice. These are embodied as a culture of co-operation without which the practice is not possible. This notion of ethical practice applies directly to the lived practice of bodies and not an abstract moral reasoning. The particularities of the body are important to a notion of an embodied ethics: as Weiss argues it is important "to do justice to the particularities of the lived body, particularities which are an indispensable feature of our moral practices" (Weiss, 1999, 143). The dance practice which required care, consideration and co-operation in intercorporeal relationships between participants must, therefore, offer a care and consideration of the intercorporeal multiple self images of the individual participant in the practice of this new embodied experience<sup>33</sup>. This ethical action of

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<sup>33</sup> Weiss argues that "we turn our attention to the intercorporeality that already exists within our bodies rather than between our bodies, an intercorporeality that gives depth to our body images and which, I have argued, enhances rather than diminishes, our sense of bodily integrity." (Weiss, 1999, 169). In the performance documentation there is evidence of some change in self-image for some participants. It is beyond the scope of this research to engage in the significance

the lived body engages the body in a lived practice of ethical behaviour, as Weiss argues,

It is an embodied ethics grounded in the dynamic, bodily imperatives that emerge out of our intercorporeal exchanges and which in turn transform our own body images, investing them and reinvesting them with moral significance. This moral significance, which is itself continually changing, depends not on a detachment from others but can only arise in and through our relations with others (Weiss, 1999, 158)

The practice of this work then, through the embodied experience of its occurrence, has reciprocal effects on the bodies that participate. Weiss posits that,

To be moral does not require, as the Platonic model holds, separating my conscious "self" from my body and its desires; it involves developing a moral agency that can only be experienced and enacted through bodily practices, practices that both implicate and transform the bodies of others. (Weiss, 1999, 158)

The question of whether morality follows ethical judgement as suggested by Weiss is beyond the scope of this thesis. The practice of the work involves opening up the bodies of the participants to an extended range of contact and touch. The whole body becomes a passage for movement. In a mixed group of male and female

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of this. However, the fact that this was occurring suggests an alternate phenomenological experience of the everyday that in turn suggests an alternative temporal experience of the everyday.



participants with multiple sexual proclivities the boundaries to appropriate touching are stretched beyond the everyday. It is relatively easy to "cop a feel" and pass it off as an accident. Sexual touching or indeed violent touching is not considered appropriate for the work. Failure to respect this code would result in a member of the group being forbidden from participating. I feel that this constitutes a framework for an ethical practice that is temporal in nature rather than the establishment of a moral law. Within the practice of the work accidental inappropriate touching is possible and is not subject to censure. Touch relations are extremely complex. Each decision is context dependent and not simply judged by an external prohibition. It is not suggested that this project created any long term moral change among the participants rather that, within the temporal occasion of the actual engagement with the process and the performances, it created a culture of co-operation embodied in the relationships between the participants. In this way the occasion of the practice is creating its own culture that contains within it a notion of an embodied ethical structure of physical relationships. Through this occurrence it can be argued that there is a temporary change which occurs through consensual participation in the activity. This change is a lived and therefore temporal experience of an

alternative culture to the pervading institutional phenomenal experience.

The process engaged with the site progressively. The first part of the project introduced the practice of the work as a different way of being within the institution. As I have shown, the practice of the work enables a different set of values and a different experience of temporality.

The first performance took place in the exercise area within the prison. This space could be associated with the space of 'leisure' within the institution. Although the exercise area is still within the temporal/spatial order of the prison it must be concluded that the work was mediated by its physical location in the exercise area. The temporal relations were not primarily between the structure of the institution and bodies. Rather the focus was the spatial/temporal relationship of the bodies in performance. The site of this work as embodied time functioning as discursive vector was, I believe, less evident. The work occurred within the exercise area and must appear as somehow sanctioned; the work's resistant capacity was more diffuse in the complex space that is the exercise area. The exercise area is part of the system of discipline and cannot really be regarded as a space of 'leisure'. If the men were not incarcerated they would not choose to spend

time in the exercise area. However, as the small open space within the institution that the men have access to, it must be seen as a space of some small respite from the tight control of the cell. The challenge to the inherent order and discipline of the institution must then be considered as less direct. The work however did challenge the notion of the relation between bodies and the general spatial/temporal relations within the institution. The performers explored the space and time of the performance through the body. Bodies flew through space, impacted upon each other, and played with what it is to be a body in space. The performance allowed for an exploring of a physical freedom of choice in space and time and this was combined with the permission to explore other bodies in action that had been part of the practice. The touching and co-operation involved in the dancing and the alternate notions of temporality involved in the execution of the practice of the movement allowed for a becoming of the bodies in performance which was culturally and phenomenally different to the 'everyday' of the institution.

The second performance project occurred one year later in front of the participants' cell doors in the residential units. This physical location was the space of the participants' 'everyday'. This space is directly subject to the discipline and order of the institution



and its spatial and temporal ordering. Within this space the actual physical location of the cells of containment and discipline, and the discursive site of the performance as time and the body, were in sharp relief. In this performance the participants ran along the cell doors and walls, walked across ceilings, and both scaled and hung from balconies. The physical space was reimagined in a similar mode to that of Free Running. Surfaces were played with and engaged with as streaming space. In this way the body fully engaged its creative capacity within a location of discipline and order. This type of play with the environment is a transgression (a very serious one) within this institution but it was allowed within the temporal order of the practice and the performance. This instigates a direct temporal conflict between the temporal order of the performance and the temporal order of the institution. Inherent within the artistic practice was a new time and new order which was the site of the performance. This temporal conflict changes the phenomenal world temporarily. What was transgressive in action is, temporarily, permitted. Yet this transgression occurs within a framework of an alternate ethical order that is inherent within the practice. This new time and order occurs within the 'real' of lived experience, and in reference to Free Running, is at the same time "raw"; dealing with the now

of its occurrence in the extended physicality of its execution.

I suggest that the location of the work on the residential wings creates an awareness of its 'rawness' and the possibility of observing that its site, as embodied time, is occurring outside of the structures and temporal order of the institution. The occurrence of the work with its own cultural/ethical/temporal/spatial framework within the physical location of the everyday experience of the participant observers creates an awareness of the possibility of those other frameworks in the moment of becoming. The bodies of the performers manifest this culture as a 'materiality' within the embodied notion of culture; as Weiss argues, corporeality is "the materiality of culture itself, a fluid materiality that is characterised not by self-sameness but by alterity." (Weiss, 1999, 169) The external and fixed order is shown only as a habit of being. Consequently, in the moment of becoming this habit can be changed. The body offers this fluidity. This is a celebration of an awareness of choice. A habit can only be challenged through choice. To insert oneself into streaming matter is to become, in Paxton's words, "Newton's Apple" and to choose how we are acted upon. This performance, I felt, engaged in the ways of being that are a 'becoming'. After the conclusion of the

performance the institution will reassert its discipline and order but an awareness of other temporal experiences has been created.

Within *Dancing Inside* the engagement with the moment of becoming as the now of 'a life' and 'the life' are experienced as the possibility of an open constellation, in the moment of becoming the body is simply that; the body in space and time.

#### The Relations Between

The question of why *Dancing Inside* occurred in a prison setting is important. It can be argued that the placing of performance within the gallery or the theatre space is a placing into a 'constructed' space. A constructed space has undergone a 'clearing of the ground' in Heideggerian terms which functions as a tabula rasa; the viewer of this work is external to it as a constructing eye. The theatre or gallery is a viewing mechanism which dictates the temporal relations between participants and observers.

The temporal nature of the everyday was to be engaged by *Dancing Inside* so it was important that it occurred within the everyday that is the temporal experience of its participants and observers. The placing of work outside of the constructed spaces of theatre and



gallery into the space of the everyday is a strategy of engagement wherein the nature of the everyday as streaming matter is engaged. The siting, or occasion, of the work is its temporal nature in becoming, as occurring in real time in the generated field of experience.

The prison setting crystallises relations between notions of abstract time and real time as explored in this chapter. The prison structure is the manifestation of scopic ascendancy in built form, the panoptic structure. This thesis would propose that 'everyday' is the generated space of 'a life' in relation to the multiplicity that occurs within the multiple constructed spaces of the urban world. The prison system is a distillation of the everyday in miniature in which there is clarity of the 'spatialisation' of time. The prison system is a structure for defining and producing a notion of 'normality'. In seeking to engage with the temporal nature of its becoming the site or occasion of the work is then to become the 'now' of the performer and the 'now' of the observer/participant. The gallery or theatre is another 'temple' that is understood to be self-constituting; they construct the ground upon which they stand external to time. The event that occurs within the everyday has the opportunity to be within time to be generated 'now'. The urban environment is itself a constructed space. However, it is the ability of

performance to engage with the streaming nature of that space, in the 'real' time of the participant observer. The interesting notion is that this engagement is accomplished in the everyday without the overt construction of an abstract time which is in operation in the viewing mechanisms that are theatres and galleries. In this way it could be suggested that the work gains critical distance from notions such as a purely masculine notion of time and capitalism's law of value by moving towards a notion of time as subject to sexual difference and the notion of 'proper' times and by embracing the 'real' moving away from the abstraction that is fundamental to capitalism.

The attempt to understand the temporal essence of the work is difficult within the terms of site and indeed architecture as they are panoptic terms that seek to prioritise space over time. However notions of site with which this thesis engages are expressed in these panoptic terms. Therefore this thesis has engaged with these terms to extend the scope of the questions and relations that are explored in chapter one The Movement of Space to the proposition so far. It is necessary to go further however to look at the real time event as a 'zone of occurrence'. The 'zone of occurrence' is occasioned by movement in which time is generated as plastic and real by the activity within the zone to the effect that it becomes

discernible. The movement of the action or the work is an operation that is primarily temporal and manifests the temporal as 'real'. Between the observer and the participant there may be multiple time zones at work within the 'zone of occurrence' but temporality itself is occasioned as primary to the zone. Within the 'zone of occurrence' many different temporal generations are possible depending on the movement within the zone of the corporeality's present.

This then is where this thesis must diverge from the notion proposed by Kaye; the extension of the panoptic principle of visual art into performance is troubled by the refusal of the corporeality to be sited. Even in the prison system where the panoptic principles are most evident it is suggested that the corporeality refuses to be sited. The work was most certainly 'located' at HMP Dovegate. However, while it is incontrovertible that the inmates never left the prison and its prevailing orthodoxy of time and space, it can be suggested that the insertion of the body into matter and time as the principle experience of fluid being thus engages the body as the site of 'other' relations which cannot be sited in this way. This thesis proposes that the corporeality is manifest within the zones of occurrence of the many temporal events that are the occasions of change from



movement to movement. It is this movement that struggles  
against the notion of siting.

## Concluding Speculations

In seeking to conclude this research it is important to note what may be concluded and what resists such an action. The primary elements of this research are: the nature of the body in my performance practice; the fact of my performance practice as an ongoing reflexive process; and the traces of the work that make up the elements of this submission.

Rather than a 'conclusion' I shall propose an argument that this process is a snapshot of an evolving practice in time. The knowledge or knowing to be gained from this snapshot is the linkage that this practice makes between culture, theory and actuality as performance. These performances function in the world of lived experience.

I shall propose that the practice, theory and 'becoming' that characterise this research is best engaged as a set of 'bodily relations'. I shall then propose a conceptual model within which these 'relations' can be considered: not as a definitive model, but as an attempt to engage with the spatial-temporal occasion of the research as revealing, retrospectively, a quality of immanence.

Returning to the questions of site it is posited that the work moves towards a performance based notion of site as both embodied and discursive vector.

### Practice as Body

The research within this thesis has been embodied. As embodied practice it has sought to interrogate notions of its manifestation as time, space and body. It is necessary then to consider this as a 'body of work' which is subject to the same observations as are pertinent to the body in this research. Therefore this research has to take account of its temporal occasion, its becoming. The work in this submission is essentially a 'middleness' to its 'fluid being': it cannot be separated either from the work that went before or from the work I am making as I conclude this research. The work does not constitute a linear narrative in the fact of its occurrence. Neither does the work constitute a series of individual separate 'issues'. The work is, as Bruno Latour<sup>34</sup> would describe, a complex 'brew' of times that are the 'body of process'.

It is important to state that the nature of the submission as theory and practice contains an implicit

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<sup>34</sup> Latour, Bruno. 1993 *We Have Never Been Modern* Latour argues that "Time is not a general framework but a provisional result of the connection among entities." (Latour, 1993, 74) Latour also argues that "our actions are recognised at last as polytemporal" (Latour, 1993,75) The mix of objects and entities is that which characterises us as "complex brewers of time" (Latour, 1993, 75) Latour argues that "it is this exchange which defines us." (Latour, 1993, 75)



trap: that the submission could be perceived as a clear subject and object division. This is antithetical to the nature of my work and this submission. Each of the elements of this submission, which are posited as the text, the practice and the life, are not separate but flow freely between each other. They are not positions but are best considered as qualities which achieve cogent 'presence' in the co-mingling of all elements.

#### Elements of Relation

The text of this submission necessarily contains engagement with the thoughts of experience. The mixture of experience and theory within the text creates a gap even within the text itself. Adorno argues that,

knowledge comes to us through a network of prejudices, opinions, innervations, self-corrections, presuppositions and exaggerations, in short through the dense firmly founded but by no means uniformly transparent medium of experience. (Adorno, 2002, 80)

In regard to experience and its relation to text, Adorno suggests that both the objective and subjective position give a "false picture". The phenomenological position of the intuition of essences which Adorno asserts fails for it denies logic its "rights" which assert themselves in each and every thought. The Cartesian rule, to address only subjects, fails in that

it relates to "each single intellectual act" and therefore fails to reckon with the "whole flow of conscious life". There is an "inadequacy" between text and life which Adorno speculates "resembles that of life". This life of the text is that which,

describes a wavering, deviating line, disappointing by comparison with its premises, and yet which only in this actual course, always less than it should be, is able, under given conditions of existence, to represent an un-regimented one. (Adorno, 2002, 81)

The un-regimented life which this thesis engages cannot therefore be 'described' by the text. The text can not be reduced to a step by step exegesis. As in the nature of life, there is a distance which is not necessarily a negative relation: as Adorno asserts "the value of a thought is measured by its distance from the continuity of the familiar". (Adorno, 2002, 80) The familiar of theoretical argument is frequently distanced, disrupted and deviated by the elusive nature of the lived practice with which it is engaged.

Within the research, aspects of different works have been highlighted to engage with specific notions of theory. This does not separate these works from other connections that it makes with practice, theory and bodies.

Essentially this research is subject to movement, which does not allow for a consideration of a series of separate elements, but must be considered as a series of encounters with the body in motion which seeks to reveal 'a life' of that body which cannot be engaged by an interrogation of the static corpse of the research documentation alone.

How then to cope with this submission as a text? As Thomas Pepper argues "One can only prepare the way for the encounter with a text". (Pepper, 1997, 172) This submission seeks to resist the singularity of the text and a 'reading' or 'case history' of practice, and the gesture of externality of the reader which moves to the notion of an 'understanding' of the body of work. This notion of understanding is problematic: "Every attempt at understanding will be such a misunderstanding, a *méconnaissance* that is, however, inevitable for every subject that reads, necessarily, with its own arbitrariness, in the strongest and most ironic sense." (Pepper, 1997, 171) The text alone cannot be a narrative of the practice. The work occurs in a polyvalent relationship to its participants. Thus the text alone, as an account of, and critical engagement with, this practice, is necessarily limited. Pepper posits that the failure of the text to communicate the narrative of psychoanalysis for instance, is inevitable as "The



singularity of every transferential encounter structurally forbids that the knowledge such an account would try to convey be accessible to a third." (Pepper, 1997, 172) The encounter with the lived practice of this work is a singularity which structurally challenges the validity of an independent text.

Therefore, the text has to be considered in conjunction with the strategy of encounter, possible only in lived practice: as that which engages with 'a life' discerned by the linkages and interactions that occur as the process of a life, as it intersects with other lives in lived experience. In the observation of this movement it is possible to know something of what one beholds. As Pepper posits, "if one wants to see how someone behaves, watch how he or she behaves with the dead. Watch him or her dance alone, as one does nowadays." (Pepper, 1997, 172) It is hoped, therefore, that the structure of this research as practice, theory and documentation can posit the 'other' that is the life of the 'body of work'. It is hoped that, in this submission, it is possible to see the text separated from the dead, which exists as documentation, and the dancing alone of the practice of performance. It is hoped therefore that it is possible to see how 'one behaves' in relation to seeing the behaviours of the 'body of work' within the encounters that this research documents.

Thus this research seeks an immanent relationship between practice and theory; it is within, and resists the gesture of externality that is simply a textual relationship to practice and theory.

The first concluding speculation is in the nature of this research itself. If it can be accepted that this research functions as a 'body of work' in its manifestation as an embodied process and the 'other' of its infinite connections, then the notion of concluding is, itself, problematic. The notion of body as argued in chapter two is one that resists totalising notions. However, it is possible to speculate on the nature of this body as encountered through this submission. These speculations however, must also be seen as immanent or within the notion of the work and the space-time of its occurrence.

The presentation of the documentation then is to drag the corpse into view, to present that which no longer lives. The documentation without the 'life' of performance is simply abject. Kristeva suggests that "the corpse... is the utmost of abjection" (Kristeva, 1982, 4). What then is the function of this 'abjection' to this body of work? It is not simply a record of the life of practice, or a testimony, or indeed a memorial to avoid forgetting.

Kristeva posits that the abject is "something rejected from which one does not part, from which one does not protect oneself as from an object." (Kristeva, 1982, 4) Thus the lived practice of performance as vital experience is not present in documentation: it has ejected from, and thus rejected, the corpse that is manifest as documentation. However this separation is a distancing, in that the abject is not parted from. The documentation cannot be seen to function as separate object. As such it must be seen as integral to the body of this submission.

Therefore the abject is not resisted; there is no action to 'protect oneself'. Rather, for this submission, the documentation as the abject, is embraced as that upon which the traces and marks of lived practice have been inscribed. What then of the body of work from which this corpse is abject? Kristeva remarks that "The one by whom the abject exists is thus a *deject* who places (himself), *separates* (himself), *situates* (himself) and therefore *strays* instead of getting his bearings..." (Kristeva, 1982, 8) Thus Kristeva argues that the 'deject' is subject to a particular spatialisation that causes the 'deject' to become a "stray".

The "stray" is thus searching in space for that which is not realisable in purely spatial terms. The *deject* searches for location rather than realisation as



Kristeva argues "Instead of sounding himself as to his "being" he does so concerning his place: "Where am I?" instead of "Who am I?" (Kristeva, 1982, 8) In the case of this submission, the abject is not to be 'strayed' from; rather it is embraced as 'other'. The question, then, for this research is "Who am I?" in this *becoming* of a body of work: the 'who' being recognition of the 'being of becoming', not as individual identity, but as a life of practice which is embodied and, as such, resists an external spatialisation or siting. In this way it is possible for the body to have bearings; to discern relations at play in movement, to be essentially fluid rather than the static notion of being situated, grounded, or sited.

The body of work then must be conceived as that which seeks realisation: not as a pre-given revealed, but as an actualisation from what is virtual. The body of work is therefore conceived as occasioned by movement, in this way it refuses to be situated. The question could then be posed: does this mean that this research is without substance, ungrounded, and thus unfounded?

This question is useful only insofar as it illuminates an essential quality of the 'body of work' and the philosophical tenets within which I suggest it operates. The primary movement here is away from a notion of static solid, to a notion of the motion of the fluid.

The solid ground proposed by Heidegger upon which 'being' can be constructed is limited in its application for this research. The notion of solid ground is a will to permanence that fixes things, through the process of location and construction, in their 'place'. As I have argued in chapter two, the notion of 'a life' as a reference for 'becoming', drawing on the theories of Deleuze, is no less substantive an idea with which to engage the nature of 'being' than 'ground' and is more interesting in its application for the development of these arguments, embracing, as it does, the notion of the fluid rather than the static Heideggerian solid ground. Solid ground is too limiting a notion for the 'body of work' with which this thesis is concerned. The ground, however, is but one element of 'being' which Heidegger privileges above all else. However, the other elements are just as vital to being, as Irigaray<sup>35</sup> argues,

Air, this there, which gives itself boundlessly and without demonstration, ever unfurled-unfurling, and in which everything will come to presence and into relation supplants, first, an absence.  
(Irigaray, 1999, 43)

Air is, first and foremost, not an absence. It is fluid and in motion and in it everything 'will come to presence'. In this way air is substantive of being and is

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<sup>35</sup> Luce Irigaray, *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger*, 1999

substantive of 'fluid being'. Our experience of air is one of excess: an excess forgotten by Heidegger as Irigaray argues,

Isn't excess-according to Heidegger-what characterises the entry into philosophy of presence? The excess of air is both so immediately "evident" and so little "apparent" that he did not think of it. (Irigaray, 1999, 40)

Air is discerned primarily by its movement. Ground however is subject to the gaze; the scopic realm. Air cannot be ignored as without it there can be no 'presence': it is 'vital' to 'being'. For this coming into presence that is the moment of 'being', "Free air would thus be the material substratum..." (Irigaray, 1999, 41) Air may not be 'apparent' but it obviously exists. It is discerned by movement, a movement that is embodied primarily in the action of breathing and, in the scopic realm, air is discerned by its action upon other elements. Air, fluid and invisible, is not easily 'placed'. Air can be navigated, utilised, compressed and otherwise manipulated. In this way it can be argued that this 'body of work' presented in this research as a fluid concept is substantive and may be navigated, utilised and otherwise manipulated. The 'body of work' is evident in its movement. In this way it resists being grounded and



founded but claims a vital presence as fluid, discernible and substantive.

It is important to note that within the notion of this submission of a 'body of work', I am promoting a series of relations that do not necessarily aspire to a 'unity' of scientific or rational enquiry. Adorno argues that "the structure of scientific unity has always been the same." (Adorno, 1997, 7) This notion of unity strives towards a notion of universality that ultimately promotes an abstract equivalence, thus,

the multiplicity of forms is reduced to position and arrangement, history to fact, things to matter... degrees of universality provide an unequivocal logical connection between first principles and observational judgements. (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997, 7)

The arguments proposed struggle to resist such a 'position'. The notion of body is not a unity, as such, but a series of connections and articulations which often question each other, and resist notions of finite readings or finite form. The body resists the process of reduction. It is argued in chapter three that each body is singular and the relation between bodies is as a multiplicity of singularities. The body of work is singular subject to sexual difference and, as such, resists totalising notions of 'unity'. It can be posited, however, that the absence of 'unity' does not necessarily

equate to an absence of coherence. The body is able to cohere, in all its manifestations, in its moment of 'becoming' in relation to the movement that occasions that 'becoming'. The body of work is a process; a movement embodying 'a life'. The work of this life of practice is in a state of testing 'becoming' and is fluidly relational.

In undertaking the presentation of this research, I have 'laid out' the corpse of a wide range of practice. The particular pieces are extremely diverse in form, scale and situation. The work does not function as a series of examples in pursuit of a goal. As such, there is no narrowing path to an answer. The relations have to be continually sought and invented by the movement of the reader. Is this an abdication of responsibility? Not at all, the body exists to be engaged, however it is in the relations between the elements that movement is possible: the elements themselves are static and unable to communicate the essential quality of 'life' other than by defining its absence. As one stands alone, for it is always alone such is the 'gift of death', in front of the corpse, there are no answers: all questions are greeted with profound silence. The silence is received by those who encounter the corpse: the onlookers are 'together alone' in the face of death. What, then, is to be gained

from this encounter? Where, then, are the relations between diverse practice and an encounter with theory?

In the 'dancing alone' that is the practice of this submission, whilst there are many different pieces, they are aspects of a singular practice. That practice is a coming into being of performance, in part occasioned by the movement of my self. I am intimately connected to this work as it is a process of living and an element of my lived experience. The work, then, functions as interplay between bodies: my body, the body of work, and the respective bodies of participant observers. These bodies are not meaning or signs, rather as Jean-Luc Nancy observes they are "No longer bodies that make sense, but sense that engenders and shares bodies." (Nancy, 1993, 196) As such, the description of this submission can be considered as "thought and writing given, given over to bodies" (Nancy, 1993, 197): a search for a 'sense' of bodies, to be present to that moment when 'sense' as 'becoming' can be discerned. This 'becoming' cannot be understood as fixed but must be considered as 'fluid being' and the 'thought and writing' must be considered as reflexive of this process.

A concluding speculation, therefore, is that this work may be considered as functioning as an expanding series of bodily relations. The work may be concerned with space and time but these are manifest as bodily



conditions. Therefore it can be postulated that, for this practice, the body is not subject to space and time but is, instead, the means by which space and time are determinable. Thus the work finds itself in sympathy with Grosz's suggestion that "space and time are not as Kant suggests, a priori mental or conceptual categories that precondition and make possible our concepts; rather, they are a priori corporeal categories..." (Grosz, 2001b, 32) The body is thus a primary locus for the practice of the work and the nature of this research. The practice essentially strives to realise this relation of space and time as corporeal categories. The transfer from this philosophical notion to the lived practice of this research is not entirely speculative, as similar notions in the research of lived experience have been promoted within anthropological research.

The work of Nancy Munn<sup>36</sup> follows similar precepts: in examining Aboriginal cultural practices through spatial articulation, Munn identifies a relation of "a complex kind of relative spacetime" (Munn, 2003, 93) that is engendered by the body and utilised culturally. From this basis Munn proposes that space-time be considered as "a symbolic nexus of relations produced out of interactions between bodily actors and terrestrial spaces." (Munn,

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<sup>36</sup> Nancy D Munn Excluded Spaces: The Figure in the Australian Aboriginal Landscape (2003 , 94)

2003, 93) A key movement by Munn is the notion of location and 'locatedness' as a bodily quality: thus Munn states that "locatedness refers primarily to mobile actors rather than things." (Munn, 2003, 94) Drawing from Lefebvre's notion of 'a field of action' and a 'basis for action' Munn argues that 'field of action' can be considered the "mobile spatial field of the actor" (Munn, 2003, 94) and that the 'basis for action' is that which "lends itself at any given moment to the actor's moving field." (Munn, 2003, 94) In this way the temporal is implicated as central to the notion of 'action'. The spatial field is posited by Munn as "space defined by reference to an actor, its organising centre." (Munn, 2003, 94) The actor as one-who-acts is aligned with notions of the body. Munn argues that, "Since a spatial field extends from the actor, it can be understood as culturally defined, corporeal-sensual field of significant distances stretching out from the body". (Munn, 2003, 94) Interestingly the notion of the body as location and as 'locatedness' appears, at first, to be problematic to the proposals of this thesis: however Munn defines the notion of body as beyond the notion of limits implied by location. The body as spatial field extends beyond simple corporeal 'location' thus,

This field can be plotted along a  
hypothetical trajectory centred in the

situated body with its expansive movements and immediate tactile reach, and extendable beyond this centre in vision, vocal reach, and hearing (and further where relevant). The body is thus understood as a spatial field (and the spatial field as a bodily field).

The particular locale that a spatial field embraces changes with the mobile actor from one 'moment' to the next. The field is literally a 'shifter'...that constantly goes with us as we move around. (Munn, 2003, 94)

The spatial field is thus posited as a bodily field. Munn posits that this field can extend further than sensorial boundaries and this bodily field is subject to the temporal 'moment' as occasioned by the movement of the body. In this way it can be suggested that, even for Munn, the notion of the body is not simply that of a physical body in space manifest by biological determination. The bodily field is posited as existing beyond the direct articulated space of the senses.

In her positing of the body and its relations, Munn clearly engages with the body as the practical locus of space and time within her work. The body as a field which extends beyond its corporeal and direct sensorial limits is an effective relation to the notions of body that I am proposing for this research. Munn identifies that the spatial-temporal field is constantly in flow in relation to the movement of the body: "the shifter". Munn's model goes some way towards the notion that space and time are



discernible though the movement that is engendered by life.

While not directly aligned with the arguments of this thesis, there is no engendering notion of space and time within Munn's model, the practical application of the notion of the body as spatial and temporal nexus clearly can establish a wider scope for the theoretical basis for such a notion. As such it bears witness to the validity of such a notion to this research.

### Embodied Theory

If the nature of this research is to be considered as bodily relations, is there a discernible quality of this 'body' upon which to reflect? I wish to suggest that, by engaging with the notion of an 'immanent realism' proposed by Linda Alcoff<sup>37</sup>, it is possible to discern this quality within the practice. Alcoff proposes that it is viable to consider an epistemology based on 'becoming' rather than 'being'. This notion establishes a framework for what she describes as 'immanent realism', a term that is useful to apply to this work.

Alcoff asserts that philosophy is incapacitated by a "bipolar disorder" which manifests two "impossibly stark alternatives" (Alcoff, 1999, 55) characterised by the

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<sup>37</sup> Linda Martin Alcoff *Becoming an Epistemologist*, 1999

engagement with the notion of 'truth'. Thus Alcoff posits,

Truth itself is grounded in an ontological picture of "man's" relationship to the world as a thing over and apart, separated from human practices of knowing and interpretation as if across an abyss or a chasm. Claims of knowledge are conceptualised as linguistic items positioned on one side of the divide, and as successful to the extent that they correspond with a bit of reality or discrete event on the other side. (Alcoff, 1999, 55)

Firstly it should be noted that this 'bipolar disorder' as described, with the practice on one side of the chasm attempting to provide the 'correspondence' for the theory on the other, is exactly the separation that this submission resists.

The 'lived' nature of the work militates against such a separation. The work that has been created has existed in the world and has engaged with its 'becoming' in the world as a necessary element of what it can be said to be. Alcoff identifies the fundamental error of the bipolar approach as being "Its representation of the structure and referential relations between the world and the known." (Alcoff, 1999, 56) Alcoff argues that this is not a "true characterisation of the truth." (Alcoff, 1999, 56) What are missing, for Alcoff, are the fundamental relations between a notion of truth and lived

experience as formative to the notion of truth: thus Alcoff argues "There is no hint of mutually constitutive relations, of the immanence of truth to a lived space inflected by power..." (Alcoff, 1999, 56) Alcoff seeks to align truth to a consideration of the whole lived reality in which the claim to truth is made. Thus 'truth talk' is,

Not merely talk, or empty talk; it is a form of discursive practice with associated effects. It is embedded within a lived corporeal context, and not merely an ethereal linguistic realm separated from bodies, practices, and material reality. (Alcoff, 1999, 71)

Alcoff is arguing that 'truth' does not exist separately from bodies. Alcoff posits a notion of an immanent account in which truth is related to 'becoming' rather than 'being' through the notion of context-dependence. Context-dependence is a wider scope than just the application of theoretical versions of reality that have been constructed. Alcoff suggests that,

Context-dependence involves a relationship not just to theoretical description but to a larger setting which also includes not only theory, version, and language games, but also historical, spatiotemporal, and social location and a domain of practices and institutions. (Alcoff, 1999, 74)

There is no gesture of externality within this formulation. Rather it is posited as essentially 'within'



that which it seeks to engage. In this notion the political and cultural are understood to be constitutive of the 'larger setting' of the basis of truth. The nature of the truth or knowing is thus inseparable from lived reality. This lived reality is the centre of this research and practice.

It should be noted that this submission has attempted to engage with the 'larger setting' in establishing its form of enquiry. Therefore the theory of this research is but one of its constitutive elements and the practice cannot be circumscribed by it. As Alcoff states, "On an immanent realist view truth is an emergent property of all the elements involved in the context, including but not limited to theory." (Alcoff, 1999, 75) Thus the knowing subject in a 'becoming' body of work is no longer privileged as "the centre of the knowing process". Instead, what is posited are "multiple forms of knowing and practices by which truths are ascertained." (Alcoff, 1999, 75) In this way the nature of the knowing involved in this body of work is always context-dependent. The context comprises all of the elements of the body of work in relation to the ways in which the body of work are encountered. Thus, as a 'becoming', the knowing of the body of work must be considered as fluid. The interplay between theory and recorded fragments of historical 'actuals' that characterise documentation are

elements of a 'larger setting' in which the life of the practice engages with lived experience.

Immanent realism is understood as that which is *within* life. It is not an external absolute. As such, in relation to the practice, it establishes an interesting field of relations through which the occasion of the work can be engaged.

The qualities of the work that have been suggested are its engagement with the notion of 'becoming' rather than 'being' which have become manifest in the engagement of 'fluid being' as a state in which the notion of continual becoming is posed as a challenge to the 'habit of being'. The notion of 'becoming' in performance is indivisible from the context of the actuality of the work in lived experience. It is the 'within-ness' which relates directly to the 'about-ness' of its occurrence. Performance is engaged/encountered in the world of lived experience. The *Dancing Inside* performances are essentially occurrences which are 'about' the 'within-ness' of their occurrence. The relations at play within the work of time, space, politics, individual bodies and institutions become the 'knowing structures' through the occasion of the work as a constant 'becoming'. This is a refusal of a final 'being' from within. What is posited then is a framework that engages with the notion of life as continual 'becoming' from within life in the everyday.

The immanent relations of the work are clearly expressed, within the notion of extensible surface, as an engagement with the notion of 'becoming' within performance.

### Extensible Surface

The extensible surface is the putting into practice of the notion that the body is capable of continually recombining with other elements in its development in a 'machinic' way, as proposed by Deleuze, and thus proposing a challenge to an uncritical acceptance of the notion of the body as a simple finite object. This research identifies a mechanism by which the process of recombination and articulation is engaged as central to performance, through the notion of 'extensible surface' and the implicit prosthetic relationship that the 'extensible surface' offers.

The 'extensible surface' notion posits a move away from notions of space and time to which the body is subject to conditions, whereby space and time are generated, and acted upon, by the body, as a priori conditions of corporeality. This reconfiguring of the relationship allows for an exploration of the object status of the body as finite barrier. The relation of discrete objects positioned in extensible space is reimagined with a notion of 'fluid being'. In this re-



imagining it is the 'being' which spreads and flows; endlessly combining and recombining between the biological and non-biological. This extensible surface is the essential spatial practice of my work.

This notion is contrary to the gesture of externality promoted by Heidegger, seeking instead a notion of the immanent as that which is within. The 'fluid being' as central to the work of this submission is posited as being 'within' relations of space, time, and beyond such binary distinctions of subject and object divisions. The notion of 'fluid being' posits that the separation necessary for binary distinction can, in fact, be viewed as porous to the 'other' of 'a life' through instants of 'correspondence' which make up a 'zone of occurrence': an occurrence contingent upon the movement that is 'embodied'.

The *True* project was an investigation of the changing space of the body in its relations with the notion of life. The body as object is continually questioned and expanded by machinic connection with other objects; the body's presence as virtual in cyberspace, connection with other bodies, and the multiple spatial relations explored in the performance project. What is engaged in the practice of *True* is the notion of the finite in relation to the body. The notion of the body coalesces and disperses throughout the

performance/installation cycle. Even though the work is composed of multiple constructed spaces, the space of performance is only present through the process of embodiment of the participant observers, in which category the performers are also included; this functions through the notion of 'operational site'. This notion of site does not have a 'located' space but instead operates as a 'field' in relation to corporealities, lived experience, spaces and space.

It can be suggested that the 'fluid being' of extensible surface flows throughout this project, engendering spaces through the action of embodiment in a process of 'becoming'. Throughout *True* the body is frequently combining and recombining with machines: the writing machine, the text machine, the sensorium chairs and the virtual reality body. These combinations are accessed by performers but are available to the participant observer in the installation phase or performance phase, although it is accepted that the performance phase is a more intimidating environment for experimentation by participant observers. It is through the body that the 'relational specificity' of one thing next to another is created and, in the process of *True*, it is, as an extended surface, that the body manifests that specificity. Throughout the process of *True* the bodies of performers and participant observers are

generating spaces through the movement of the performance. This process is suggested as a 'becoming' space of performance. Therefore it can be suggested that it is through the extension of the body, through those spaces, that the relational is evidenced.

The relations between the notion of extensible surface, and the works *Fearless* and *Machine Dance*, are explored at length in chapter two, in which the implicit prosthetic relationship is postulated. However it can be stated that the primary quality of each of these works was the notion of the moment as 'becoming'. Thus the notion of the body, as extensible, was investigated by the *Machine Dance* in which the body was becoming 'other', through performance, in its combinatory relationship with the machine as extensible surface. This occurred within a temporal framework of the tide which highlighted the lived nature of the body.

*Fearless* was constituted by the moment by moment 'becomings' of the body as it shaped the physical environment with which it combined as extensible surface. This was most clearly seen when the work occurred within the everyday.

The relationship to temporality of the practice of this submission is one of immanence. The work is posited as occurring within time, not exterior to an abstract incremental time. The work is conceived as occurring



within a polyvalent temporality of multiple 'times' operating within Nowotny's notion of the 'extended present'.

This notion, whereby the work seeks to operate within the everyday, is explored through its placing within the everyday, such as the beach or the street or the prison, as encountered within my practice. The engaging of the participant observers in a complicity of action, such as undertaken within *True*: a strategy which, it has been suggested, separates them from the position of external observers also operates to bring the work within the everyday by engaging the participants with the 'actual' of the performance. The focus of this engagement is the notion that constant incremental time separates time from the experience of being. By engaging the participant observers with performance, either within the everyday or in the creation of their own action within performance as a real time event occurring within the 'zone of occurrence', it is intended to facilitate the possibility of a departure from the external constant of incremental time to a 'now-ness' on the part of the participant observers allied with the experience of becoming, that is the notion of 'fluid being'.

Within the *Dancing Inside* project, the notion of extensible surface is present between the organic and the inorganic, in that the relations between bodies in the

heat of the dance establish a 'continuity' that is an extensible surface between bodies. An extension of surface that lasts briefly but establishes connections that work much faster than the conscious mind is capable of. Two move as one without conscious direction from one or other. The two-become-one engages in a play with gravity and the material surfaces of the environment in which extensible surface relations are forming and disappearing in fractions of seconds. Bodies reconfigure with other bodies and with the material environment endlessly in a process made visible through performance.

The extensible surface notion within my practice has become the means for engaging with the 'habit of being' in the everyday. The work speculates on this notion as an element of the 'becoming' of the everyday and attempts to explore what this might mean to the experience of an everyday life within capitalism. As such it can be revealed as an immanent relation.

Within the prison environment, manifest as the built form to establish 'normalcy' in its residents, the exchange value of capitalism is challenged by the bodies' use of the environment for play. Adorno suggests that,

In his purposeless activity the child, by a subterfuge, sides with use-value against exchange-value. Just because he deprives the things with which he plays of their mediated usefulness, he seeks to rescue in them what is benign towards men and not

what subserves the exchange relation that equally deforms men and things. (Adorno, 2002, 228)

During this project the environment is reconfigured from a capitalist space of production, a space for the production of 'normal' citizens, to a space which, through the extensible surface of the body, is made personal, playful and expressive as an alternative functional use of materiality. In this way, what was built to contain becomes utilised as a freedom; the body is thus 'Newton's apple' and plays with its 'becoming' in space and time. The environment is deprived of its 'mediated usefulness' and, thus, the environment can be expressed as a use-value. This use-value is engaged in terms of 'becoming' as the walls and floors of containment for production are instead considered as the waves and flows of streaming matter with which to play. In this way the bodies of the participants resist the pressure of the institution to make them subjects of exchange in that, by actively participating in 'becoming', "reality is not yet real" (Adorno, 2002, 228). Thus the work is able to posit that the nature of being is always open to question. In this way the 'habit of being' is engaged.

In the moment of becoming the body is unable to produce anything other than itself as 'becoming'. The



focus on the now, of the temporal occasion as paramount, removes the body from production of a future product. Rather, the body is engaged simply in the process of its actuality. In this way the notion of the body is not a static entity conceptualised as 'being' but is, instead, constantly in the process of becoming posited as 'fluid being'. This shift to a non-producing now, in capitalist terms, is a small insurgency within capitalism's law of value. This insurgency is posited as a continual questioning that attempts to show that 'being' and capitalism are not the a priori states that the 'habit of being' would suggest. An awareness of the notion of 'becoming' gestures towards a notion of the nature of things as fluid, rather than static as social systems would suggest.

As an immanent realist practice the work engages with ways of knowing which include, but extend beyond, theory and empirical determination reaching to 'knowings' that are body centred and context dependent. This includes the knowing of the body that does not even register in the conscious mind, such as body logics of the distributed body in action, balancing survival and the vitality of the temporal 'now'. The knowing that occurs when the body is 'combined' or reconfigured through extensible surface relations is an experience of the otherness of life from within. It speculates towards

the singular. The nature of the body in this type of practice militates against a notion of site as that which can contain it. The body within this work struggles against the notion of 'being' as that which must be the final notion of site, positing instead a 'becoming', thus the work suggests only a relationship to life as the tenuous relationship to notions of site.

The practice can therefore be seen as that which is fluid and which seeks, ultimately, to be related only to life as that which is lived.

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