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# **WAYS TO CONNECT:**

Somatic Encounters Inside the Terrestrial Zone

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A Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of  
the University of Northumbria at Newcastle for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Research undertaken in the

Faculty of Arts, Design and Social Science

Department of Visual and Material Cultures

January 2022

## Abstract

This research moves with Latour's cosmology of becoming earthly, a reorientation of our relationship to earth described by Earth System sciences. I bring an experiential perspective shaped by the embodied knowledges, practices and languaging of dance making and somatic movement practices. From my dancers' positioning, I step into, move with and get under the skin of questions raised by Latour. My positioning from the inside, relates to the perspective of 'soma' in somatic practice; from inside place, the Scottish Borders; and from inside the terrestrial zone. The research is practice-led, practically orientated and develops ways to connect as an ecological orientation. Curated as three somatic etudes, *Stone Ways*, *Moss Ways* and *Woodland Ways*, each encounter, investigated through an artistic collaboration, explores recomposing and unfiguring as embodied and choreographic processes. In relinquishing fixed patterns of moving, we can re-organise our bodying to allow different anatomical narratives to emerge. I draw on approaches and vocabulary from anthropology, geopoetics and place praxis empathetic to embodied practice and moving with more-than-human relationships. I specifically harness Tsing's definition of encountering as a process for moving with others and Kohn's emphasis on beyond the human perspectives. Thinking through-moving manifests as attuning practices and choreographic scores for real-time composition. Scoring offers a composing process, a form of enquiry and a tool for inviting participation, as we will all need to join in these earthly dances of transformation. The contributions to knowledge extend to movement practice, philosophy and placemaking. The research scopes out directions for the role and contribution of dance and somatic movement to contribute transformative practices at a time of ecological catastrophe. Understanding practices, pied-agogies and anatomies of connection recompose human-centric positionings, make us susceptible to the sentience of others, and support embodied experiences towards becoming earthly. Descriptions of landing inside the terrestrial zone are arrived at that augment Latour's perspective and a distinct embodied languaging contributes to an evolving glossolalia. Alternative descriptions of place as somatic cartographies and a reshaping of the local are provocations for placemaking brought together as a live score for cultural placemaking in the Scottish Borders.

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## **List of Accompanying Materials**

The embodied processes and practice that shapes this research is presented across two publications in the form of PDF documents, namely:

- *Book of Ways* : Appendix I
- *Gatherings*: Appendix II

## Acknowledgements

That this thesis has found its way onto the page is due to the gracious patience and generous encouragement of my supervisor Julie Crawshaw, whose trust in the process allowed the research to reveal itself in its own time. Gratitude also goes to my second supervisor Ysanne Holt with her keen eye for detail and to Kate Craddock for wise words early on to allow the practice lead. I would also like to give a shout out to the librarians at Northumbria University, for whom nothing is ever too much trouble and to Northumbria University for supporting this research with a studentship.

*Ways to Connect* has been a journey in the company of others and is full of the wisdom of dancers, artists, poets, and scholars that I have moved with in the flesh or on the page. I especially wish to acknowledge all the artistic collaborators involved in the research, Merav Israel, Felicity Bristow, Audicia Lynne Morley and Tom Hawson. Likewise, thanks go to In the Making colleagues, the Extending Practice Group, Tim Rubidge and Kate Foster for always asking good questions.

Finally, I wish to thank family and friends for their encouragement from beginning to end and especially to Rory McLeod, who has lived with it all.

I'd like to dedicate this thesis to my parents, Marina and David Osborne who passed away in 2021.

## **Author's declaration**

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas and contributions from the work of others.

Any ethical clearance for the research presented in this portfolio has been approved. Approval has been sought and granted by the University Ethics Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2018.

I declare the word count of this thesis is 40,706.

Name: Claire Pençak

Signature:

Date: January 4th 2022

## Glossary

This glossary brings together some key vocabulary and terms that emerged through the research and writing of the thesis. The definitions given here arise from and are particular to somatic movement practice and dancemaking and contribute to or enrich existent terms and meanings in other fields of practice and theory.

**Being-among** – This is a repositioning of humanity that is ecologically shaped and acknowledges our collective multi-species inhabitation of the terrestrial zone; related to **in-the-midst**.

**Bodyscape** – Where movement creates an experience of the bodymind as terrain, a topographical form not delineated by distinct parts, (arms, legs, head) but which accesses movement at the level of the connective tissue giving expression to other areas of the body; a somatic cartography that relinquishes the usual architecture and organisational patterns of the skeleton. Related to **unfiguring**.

**Breath-scapes** – A somatic cartography shaped by breath.

**Collapse** – A fall into gravity that does not exhibit yielding.

**Contact-contour** – An eco-score and connection practice originated by Anna Halprin; a two-fold process for coming into connection and working in **(very) near proximity**; a way to connect; a relational encounter; a process that makes us susceptible to others life ways; a meeting of the language of landscape and the language of the moving body; a practice for supporting collaboration and co-creation in multi-species making; a close- up practice for placemaking inside the terrestrial zone.

**Contouring** – A complex investigation into shaping as a process for coming to know more deeply; a process for ‘being shaped by’; an alternative to close looking that privileges the haptic.

**Dancing grounds** – A definition that unfixes place; an approach to placemaking that is relational; relates to **under\_standing** and 間 (ma).

**Entering-in** – A process for landing in the terrestrial zone shaped by woodland which invites a view from the inside.

**Entr'acte** – A composing and curatorial practice; an in-between event that allows for interruption, divergence and fragmentation and speaks to sustaining practice.

**Etude** – A pedagogical form in modern dance developed by Sigurd Leeder and Kurt Jooss. More than a technical exercise, the etude is a small-scale composition which explores an aspect or quality of moving close up. It teaches through the experience of doing. The practice etudes in this research orientate towards more- than- human ways and suggests a pedagogical tool for becoming earthly.

**Everywhereness** – Promotes equal consciousness in all parts of the body; what Reeve terms 'biocentric equality' (Reeve, 2011, p. 51); a spatiality that reshapes the notion of centre as either centre-less or many-centred, where focus is distributed, and hierarchies are dissolved; a description of the local in the terrestrial zone.

**Ex-tendings** – A movement towards; 'the capacity of the body to sense beyond its own boundaries' (Irvine, 2014, p. 89).

**Fascia** – Also known as connective tissue, fascia composes us ecologically as 'one complex, holistic, self-regulating organ' (Lesondak, 2017, p. 2); an anatomy of connection; related to **everywhereness**.

**Fold** – A process for re-composing space that articulates new relationships; a re-weaving of borders and edges; a patterning for connectivity that brings together what was separated; an interpretation of the geological process of uplift.

**Following** – A process for going-with and being shaped by; a way to land in the terrestrial zone

**In-the-midst** – An ecological dwelling perspective for becoming earthly (Reeve, 2011, p. 50); a spatiality for collectivity; a recomposing and perception of self in the terrestrial zone; an inside perspective.

**間 (ma)** – Japanese concept of Space|Time that arises through process and is an attitude towards (Bellerose, 2015, p. 11); the live presence of space which comes into being through relationship; a composing of place that is not fixed but invites becoming-with (Nitschke, 2018); relates to **dancing grounds**.

**Peripheral vision** – A ‘neurological example of literally as well as figuratively opening our perspective – of seeing beyond the centre to the margins’ (Albright, 2019, p. 4); a horizontalizing perspective that brings the edges into view; a reshaping of our experience of moving through place.

**Pied-agogy** – A practice of teaching shaped by moving through place and what is underfoot; arises from contact with ground; draws on the French word ‘*pied*’ for foot; related to **under\_standing** and **dancing grounds**.

**Porousness** – A quality of moving that recomposes self; an omnidirectional and ecological shaping that makes us more susceptible to the lifeways of others; a capacity for susceptibility, interdependence and change; a process for ‘landing’ in the terrestrial zone; related to **unfiguring**.

**Scores/Scoring** – A process for composing, performing, curating and researching. Scores communicate processes, invite participation and are a form of questioning through doing. For some, scores act as a set of rules to be followed, for others a framework, an approach, an opening, perhaps we could say an orientation, a compass for navigating a performance. Open scores invite playfulness, allow for experimentation, unforeseen encounters, emergence and becoming with. Ubiquitous in postmodern dance, scores act ‘as task, event and document’ (Brown, 2016, pp. 190 - 192).

**Skin-deepness** – A somatic cartography, a composing of bodymind that brings the ‘superficial’ into question by skin depth; related to **subsendance**.

**Somatics** – *Soma* refers to the perception of the body as experienced from the inside; a field of embodiment study and education originated by Thomas Hanna, that ‘brings us closer to the wisdom inherent in the ancient structures of collagen, nerve fibre, and

cerebrospinal fluid’ (Johnson, 1995, p. xvi); an inside perspective which supports an experiential anatomy and creates the conditions for new patterns of connections to emerge within and across bodies; relates to **skin deepness** and **breathscapes**.

**Spreading** – Movement across surfaces; a form of ‘landing’ across surfaces; describes an anatomy of connection and cohesiveness which is distributed not centralised, where the organising doesn’t reside in one place but many. Related to **everywhereness** and **porousness**.

**Subsendance** – A lively play on ‘subsidence’ described by Morton (2019) as the experience of being ‘so much bigger on the inside’(p. 100); somatic descent in bodymind through moving; a beneath and below positioning; the movement of ‘deeper in’; relates to **somatics** and **under\_standing**.

**Under\_standing** – Literally to stand from underneath; a dynamic grounding practice and extension of the teaching of Dominique Dupuy to becoming earthly; knowing that arises from the contact of the feet with the ground; relates to ‘somatic anchoring’(Reeve, 2011, p. 40) and finding ground in an unstable world (Albright, 2019); a practice for landing in the terrestrial zone; relates to **dancing grounds** and **pied-agogy**.

**Unfiguring** – A process for changing state; the relinquishment of habitual ways of bodying that support human centrism; contributes to Latour’s questioning of our composition, presence and figuration in the context of the New Climatic Regime (Latour, 2018, p. 85); relates to **somatics**, **bodyscape** and **porousness**.

**(Very) near proximity** – A positioning for becoming earthly that allows for encounter and coming into contact.

**Wide-openness** – Related to peripheral visions and the horizontalizing of space; described by Erwin Straus, as ‘neither here nor on the horizon, nor is it on a line connecting the here with any other points of space or such points with each other; it is not quantifiable but is rather a quality of space’ (Straus, 1966, p. 35)



**Witnessing** – A reorientation of the conventional understanding of audience or spectator as an outside viewing perspective, towards a more co-creative, participatory and involved positioning; a quality of being present with that creates the conditions for empathy.

**Yielding** – ‘Going with’ as a consciously performed relinquishment practice that makes us available to being differently organized and reappears in different guises as **porousensss** and **following**.

## Preamble

### *Near, Far, Infinite Space*

*(For 3-5 performers)*

*Begin with all performers in the ideal/perfect place/setting in (very) near space to each other. With focus always on space/spatial awareness move in and out of near, far, infinite space with a clarity of which one you are in at every moment.*

I was introduced to the *Near, Far, Infinite Space* movement score by fellow dancer Sheila Macdougall who adapted it from a score by American dancer Mary Overlie (1946 - 2020) the originator of the Six Viewpoints, who herself cites dancemaker Lisa Nelson as its inspiration (Overlie, 2016, p. 150). I will be working with movement scores, like the one above, throughout this research. They have a lineage and transmit bodies of knowledge through dancemaking practices which evolve to suit the practice conditions and contexts.

*Near, Far, Infinite Space* opens with the performers situating themselves in '(very) near space to each other'. This could be a whole choreography in itself. No sooner than a settling into place seems to be arrived at, than one or more performer moves off, and the process resumes until all have found their place and the score can move on. In asking us to move as relational beings, this score has an ecological tone which I take up in this thesis. The experience of this opening section, as both a performer and a witness of it, is like watching the slow settling of dust.

This might also stand as a description of my research journey towards this thesis and the aligning dance of practice and theory. I was initially drawn to geopoetics through

the writing of the Scottish poet-philosopher Kenneth White and whilst this did not become my main theory ground it remains as a presence within the research. I then drifted towards Deep Adaption which takes seriously the findings of climate scientists and concludes that humanity now faces an existential predicament in the face of the inevitability of near-term societal collapse due to climate change. Deep Adaptation was originated by Jem Bendell, a Professor of Sustainability at Cumbria University in a paper published in 2018 (Bendell, 2018 (Revised 2020)) and is a proposal for living in climate emergency framed, (I might say scored), through four key concepts Relinquishment, Resilience, Restoration and Reconciliation. Since publication of his paper a world-wide community around Deep Adaptation has evolved to consider the implications for individuals and communities. Deep Adaptation in this thesis appears in the practice through two events: ‘Re-reading the RSVP Cycles: Scores in a Climate Emergency’ which brought Deep Adaptation into contact with scoring (Appendix II *Gatherings*, pp. 22 – 35) and ‘Deep Adaptation: How to live in a world governed by Climate Breakdown and Ecological Catastrophe’ which drew on the resources of somatic practices as a way to step into Deep Adaptation thinking (Appendix II *Gatherings*, pp. 36 – 54). I will write with the vocabulary of the Deep Adaptation Agenda in the main text and use footnotes as a place to draw out any connections with or contributions to Deep Adaptation where appropriate. My practice though finally came to situate itself in the Critical Zone and responds to questions raised by this new cartography of earth. The Critical Zone is a redescription of Earth, by Earth System scientists which has been taken on philosophically by Bruno Latour (2017; 2018; 2020b). In this, the near, far, and infinite that is explored in the movement score can be interpreted spatially as local, global and cosmic zones. The latter being the destination of recent space flight activity (NASA, 2020). Far and infinite correspond in Latour’s cosmology, to the Western modernist and global project which has literally and metaphorically sent humans into space, untethering us from earth (Latour, 2018). I do not include all humans here, as indigenous groups continue more knowing ways of living in close relationship to earth that respect the natural resources, they need to sustain them, where dwelling is acknowledged as a multi-species entanglement and human flourishing is not at the cost of other species (Haraway, 2003; Kimmerer, 2003; Kohn, 2013; Tsing, 2015).The chosen proximity for this practice-led enquiry is

moving in '(very) near space' and I extend the score towards more-than-human worlds, a term I borrow from cultural ecologist and philosopher David Abram (2011, p. 7).

Claire: What's been your experience of doing that score, as the performer?

Sheila: I think it gives you, as a performer, an amazing focus in the moment of where you are at any second of what you're doing [...] I think it's quite profound actually and being aware that if you're touching somebody, however your touching them, you've got this really incredible powerful relationship, spatial relationship between two people, and what happens when you move away – maybe I'm not articulating very well. Presence!

Claire: [...] I notice that if I move between near and far, that there is something, there is a whole change in the body. Not just structural, through the skin. The tone of the muscle is different, as the 'mind' of your body tries to find what that far thing is.

(Macdougall, 2019)

In this brief exchange with dancer Sheila Macdougall, the broad contours of the research are loosely sketched: qualities of scale and spatial relationship, coming into contact, presence, and mindful bodies, spoken from inside practice and from a somatic perspective.

**Chapter 1**  
**Openings and Orientations**

# 1. Openings and Orientations

## 1.1. Openings

I have been writing up this thesis between 2020 - 2021, a period shaped by instability including climate catastrophes, the Covid-19 pandemic, Black Lives Matter activism, the American Presidential election and Brexit. At least, these have been the issues writ largest from the Western media perspective and I acknowledge that this represents a very partial and definitely not, impartial view. Tensions within countries and between countries and between people and other species are high. It is a period of loss. Loss of species, loss of habitats and a loss of lifeways that support flourishing. Climate science shows that runaway climate change as a result of human activity is happening now, in far -away countries and close to home. It is all overwhelming, seemingly hopeless, beyond the scale of anything an individual can do. It is, 'here, now. Upon us and immediate' (Carey, Jan 10th 2020). Undoubtedly, it is a precarious time and, as an individual, where to begin? McIntosh suggests:

‘We have to dig from where we stand amidst the ruins. If we are to build a regenerative culture, ours is not to only jump at deadlines. We must cast out lifelines’ (McIntosh, 22nd July 2019).

Don Hanlon Johnson, Professor of Somatics at the California Institute of Integral Studies, sees somatic practice as one potential lifeline for these times because as mentalities are rooted in the human organism, ideological changes will require changes in the body (Johnson, 2020). Ecology also teaches us that changes in one place will elicit changes elsewhere. As a dancer with a somatic movement practice, I have a close affinity to moving with change, impermanence, and instability, and in being earth and flesh bound. So, it is from here that I begin this enquiry and respond to the present situation.

It was in fact the effect of an enigmatic dance movement on the philosopher Bruno Latour that compelled him to confront the present situation, which he calls the New

Climatic Regime (2017, p. 1). His cosmology lands us on earth and brings into question the composition, presence and figuration of the human (2018, p.85). *Critical Zones – Observatories for Earthly Politics*, is the public programme of a thought experiment by Latour and Weibel which explores becoming earthly. The exhibition opened in a virtual format on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 at ZKM the Centre for Arts and Media Karlsruhe, Germany. It is the third think- piece that Latour and Weibel have collaborated on, the others being - *Making things public: Atmospheres of Democracy* (2005) and *Reset Modernity!* (2016). At the virtual streaming festival that opened the exhibition, Haraway asked ‘(w)hat is to be done in periods of profound historical, earthly transformation that are extremely dangerous?’ and suggested ‘thinking together, reading and writing and speaking and performing and dancing and growing and risking and working’ (Haraway, Latour, & Weibel, 2020). These describe some of my research activities which consider whether and how my dancemaking and somatic movement practices might authentically contribute perspectives and processes that support becoming earthly. I do this through a series of somatic encounters with more-than-human ways which explore processes for changing state and unlearning human – centricism in the geography of the Scottish Borders.

## 1.2. Orientations

Felicity:       What do you think you are going to do?  
Claire:         There is something about going deeper.<sup>1</sup>

The title of this thesis *Ways to Connect: Somatic encounters inside the Terrestrial Zone* describes an ecological, embodied and earthly orientation and contributes to what Descola identifies as the most pressing concern of the time, our relationship to nature (2013, p. 8). The research is not only practice-led but practically orientated, shaped by the processes and languaging of somatic movement and dance making and reaching towards practical in-the-world applications. My approach supports a learning-through-doing methodology where ‘moving with bodies’ is a way of researching and creating knowledge (A.C Albright, 2019, p. 7). The bodies extend in this research to the more-

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p.42.

than-human. Why ask somatic practice to look beyond the human? In Latour's cosmology homo sapiens become less differentiated from other earthly species, as we all become terrestrial dwellers within the Critical Zone. This opens us up to processes of becoming-with that are multi-species and as Kohn argues, what lies "beyond" the human also sustains us and makes us the beings we are and those we might become' (2013, p. 221). I also get behind the capabilities and potential of dance that Klein alludes to, where dance is more than an artform for expressing change and movement, it also creates knowledge that can 'get things moving' and be transformative (2007, p. 32). I harness the intelligences of dance making and somatic movement to respond to questions raised by Latour and his collaborators that ask how we might reverse our flight away from the earth and come to land in the terrestrial zone (2018, p. 2). I come at this project from an inside perspective. The inside as experienced through the body, which relates to the 'soma' in somatic practice; from inside place, specifically the Scottish Borders where I live and work, and from inside the Critical Zone.

Whilst this research primarily orientates towards and makes a contribution to Latour's terrestrial project, I would like to acknowledge the earthly cosmology described by Abram (1996, 2011). Where Latour brings a political science perspective and dialogues directly with climate and earth system science, Abram orients towards and listens to more- than -human worlds and old ways to connect preserved by indigenous wisdom and practices. He has, we could say, already landed on earth and cannot conceive of a view from the outside that puts distance between human beings and other earthly species (2011, p. 98). The research then also moves with the question:

'Is it possible to grow a worthy cosmology by attending closely to our encounters with other creatures, and with the elemental textures and contours of our locale? (Abram, 2011, p. 4)

*Near, Far, Infinite Space* establishes (very) near as the proximity for the research and as will emerge, moving in (very) close proximity also takes us deeper in. The writing of this thesis, attempts to corral, conceptualise, and move along with the artistic practice and processes and retrieve something of the somatic experience.



The practice element of this research is a continuation and a development of my existing movement practice and interests and was shaped partly by design and partly organically, by going with what was already happening. For example, some of the artistic collaborations were already in their early stages or in the planning when I formerly began the PhD research which allowed the practice to shape and lead the enquiry and set the tone for how the research developed. Conversely, the academic context of the doctoral research brings a theoretical perspective to my practice that I felt was previously lacking or at least unarticulated. Through the encounters between practice and theory the research arrived at ‘becoming earthly’ and landed in the terrestrial zone. Taking the lead from somatic practices and choreographic approaches that emphasise processes and an inside perspective, I use a biographical approach in the form of practice diaries, to reveal and document artistic processes and activities, and written scores to frame, document and share my movement practice. Being concerned with relational approaches, I framed the research through a series of artistic collaborations to allow for dialogue, exchange and more-than-one artistic visions. To bring a reflective element to the collaborative process, I carried out in-depth recorded conversations with the artists and myself. Conversations were an appropriate form as they have a live, thinking on your feet quality, and could be described as a real-time composition in their own right, a dance of sorts between the speakers. Conversations with professionals from environmental planning, cultural placemaking, geopoetics and dance were also how I surveyed the research territory at an early stage. These brought my practice into dialogue with different descriptions, vocabularies, and concepts of place and placemaking; introduce geopoetics; delve into scores as a performance practice and introduce the theory and practice of dancer Mary Overlie who I refer to in the thesis. As articulating practice and bringing practice into contact with theory and other disciplines was my research interest, these conversations offered an informal practice ground for this approach prior to writing the thesis. These conversations are referenced in the thesis by the name of the person followed by the year took place for example, Macdougall (2019). Establishing a performance series in my studio space also offered a context and practice ground for sharing and reflecting on the research with local audiences and other artists. The final year of the research coincided with the Covid - 19 pandemic. Online platforms allowed me to continue the research activities

like the conversation with Audicia and to engage with the think-piece by Latour and Weibel. The third iteration of BATCH was cancelled, but as the practice research activity in the form of the three collaborations had already taken place, this was not detrimental to the research process or findings.

### **1.2.1. Presenting the Practice**

The research practice is located in two accompanying texts, Appendix I *Book of Ways* and Appendix II *Gatherings*. Each appendix addresses different facets of the enquiry and stands at a slightly different proximity to the thesis. Appendix I: *Book of Ways* describes the practice closest to the thesis and opens with a description of a research day including studio practice and a walk through and around Jedburgh, which hints at the methodologies, processes, and vocabulary to come. The heart of the practice in Appendix I is curated as a series of more-than-human encounters exploring ways to connect, inspired by stone, moss and deer. By serendipity, this ordering reflects the creation order in Menominee belief of ‘rock, plant, animal, and then human’ (Grignon & Kimmerer, 2017, p. 74). *Stone Ways* establishes the conditions for ‘becoming with’ somatically, which land us in practice, place, and philosophy. Ground, patterning, and folding are themes I will be taking up here. *Moss Ways* dissolves our bipedal structure for a more lateral structuring through the fascia and towards a more porous body. *Woodland Ways* take us into sensing place and peripheral visions. An individual chapter is dedicated to each of these practice encounters in the thesis. The *Book of Ways* concludes with *River Ways* which applies aspects of the practice-led research to a live creative placemaking project. Appendix II: *Gatherings* documents public facing events that have provided a context for the practice research including a performance series, symposium, and workshops. Appendix II stands slightly further removed from the thesis than Appendix I.

The practice material in both appendices is presented through a mix of images, scores, publicity material, workshop and practice diary notes. The reader is directed in the footnotes to where they can find specific aspects of the practice should they wish to

follow up or explore anything further, as well as stills and photographs that offer visual information and descriptions. A full reading of the appendices is not necessary for an understanding of the thesis. Being shaped ecologically, the narrative that unfolds through the practice is not linear, but multi-stranded, folded and continuous.

For clarity I differentiate practice from rehearsal. Practice is an open-ended and ongoing exploration and investigation, less concerned with repetition than series and iteration. A rehearsal is more concerned with a sense of ‘getting it right’ and looks towards an endpoint. I follow Albright’s description of practice as ‘the ongoing process of discovery and the recognition that acts of perception are always implicated in any kind of practice [...] a way of committing oneself to being present in a situation, no matter what the outcome’(2019, p. 5).

Each more-than-human encounter is explored through a series of *practice etudes*. The etude in modern dance is a pedagogical form developed by Sigurd Leeder and Kurt Jooss, to whom I am connected through my dance training at the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance. More than a technical exercise in both scope and length, the etude is a small-scale dance composition which explores an aspect or quality of moving close up. It teaches through the doing of it. Dancer Tim Rubidge, who was in Leeder’s last cohort of students, drew on this legacy in the ‘Hope Etudes’ which he presented as part of BATCH:2 *Experiments in Making*. As the ecological orientation asks for relational and dialogic approaches, the practice etudes take the form of a series of artistic collaborations developed through studio practice, workshops, performances, and reflective conversations. Threaded through them are descriptions of practice scores and perception practices which lead the reader towards an experiential realm of embodied knowing. Taken together the practice etudes explore processes for becoming earthly. The dancing surfaces in the thesis through movement scores, visual documentation, and extracts from reflective conversations. Some aspects of this research are presented in article form in Pençak (2019) and this thesis develops and expands on this published writing.

### 1.3. Artistic Collaborations

The artistic collaborations referred to above, are with the visual artist Felicity Bristow (*Stone Way*), scoreographer Audicia Lynne Morley (*Moss Ways*) and visual artist and deer manager Tom Hawson (*Woodland Ways*). The term scoreographer is used by Audicia to refer to her practice of making performances through scores. Felicity and Tom both live in the Scottish Borders and Audicia lives in the neighbouring region of East Lothian. The collaboration with Felicity presented within *Stone Ways*, took place in the early stages of the research and included a durational performance as part of the Being Human Festival in November 2017. Whilst we had worked together in different contexts before, this was the first occasion we had collaborated artistically on a performance piece. The work with Audicia presented in *Moss Ways*, picked up on a process which we had begun just prior to this research, and which continued for several years culminating in a performance *Moss: An Appreciation* as part of BATCH:2 in the summer of 2019. The final collaboration with Tom emerged during the research process after Tom had attended the durational performance *Entr'actes: Alternative Arrangements* (2017) and a performance in BATCH:1 (2018). This collaboration culminated in an outdoor dance/art event 木の間: *Among Trees* as part of BATCH:2 (2019). It is the processes of these collaborations and the more-than-human encounters that they were shaped by, rather than the performances themselves, that are foregrounded and of interest to this research.

The processes and themes of each collaboration are documented through practice scores, workshop notes and visual documentation but it is the reflective conversations between each artist and myself that really draws out the processes, themes and learning. I present these conversations in Appendix I *Book of Ways* as transcripts and I have retained all the 'messiness' of the original conversation, the changes of direction, the incomplete sentences and searching for words, to foreground the thinking processes. The conversations also contextualise some of the vocabulary presented in the glossary and in referencing past and present dance practitioners, reveal lineages of practices. The process of transcribing allowed me to be present with the conversations in a slower, more attentive way, a process for supporting going deeper

in. The conversations with Audicia and Tom took place some months after the work, so we come at the reflections from a distance. The conversation with Felicity occurred every two hours within a durational performance. They were a way for us to recall aspects of what had just taken place in the performance, to reflect on the experience and to discuss the next making session.

The final encounter, *River Ways* is a different offering developed in collaboration with the rural development charity Southern Uplands Partnership and Creative Arts Business Network (CABN), a support organisation for the professional creative sector in the Scottish Borders. *River Ways* draws together some of the findings of the previous encounters into a live cultural placemaking proposition and as such the research continues in the Scottish Borders beyond the pages of the thesis.

To acknowledge the collaborative and embodied form of the research I have chosen to use the pronoun ‘we’ in the writing and follow the dance scholar Albright’s reasoning that this is ‘an affirmation that we are interconnected, not an attempt to universalize one perspective’ (2019, p. 7). ‘We’ also acknowledges that the embodied knowledges of dance and somatic movement are an accumulation and layering of embodied experience that is taken on and transmitted from body to body and has a lineage. Or as Dumas (2014) puts it, when concerning dance, ‘what an artist knows is whom he has worked with’. I acknowledge and accept Morton’s criticism that the use of ‘we’ is an attempt to universalize a single perspective, but have nonetheless decided to go with ‘we’ as the ecological pronoun, imperfections and all (2019, pp. 3-5).

There are many dancers that I could reference through this thesis, as the scope of practices and ecological research interests are widely shared. In the spirit of being in (very) near proximity, I reference through the research, those people that I have danced with in performances or workshops during the research or, are directly linked to collaborators. For example, Audicia Lynne Morley trained with Anna Halprin, Tim Rubidge with Sigurd Leeder, and myself with Russell Dumas and Françoise and Dominique Dupuy amongst others. Mary Overlie’s work is also referenced as Sheila Macdougall, a performer with *In the Making* and with whom I had a conversation early

on, trained with her. Similarly, regarding artists in other artforms working with ecological perspectives, I predominantly foreground those practising or showing work in the context of the Scottish Borders. Wider connections to other practitioners can be found within the reflective conversations in *Book of Ways*.

The thesis reads as an accumulation and unravelling of research practice through the practice etudes, which is not brought together until the concluding chapter *Connecting Threads*. In recognition of the open-endedness of each of the practice etudes, the transition between each etude is an instruction to ‘Exit’. I am referencing here a compositional technique used by performer and maker Katie Duck, who uses exiting as an action for entering into something new. Where a dancer is usually instructed to enter into a performance situation, Duck conceives ‘entering’ as an exiting from their current activity which ‘opens up the potential for a composition chance’ (Duck). The instruction to ‘Exit’ also appears in the *Inner Director* score below. The direction to remove oneself reappears later in the research.

## **1.4. Inside Practice**

### **1.4.1. Introducing Scores and Real -Time Composition**

This document is written with scores. We have already encountered *Near, Far, Infinite Space* in the Preamble and I introduce another score here to take us inside the practice and to describe a dancers’ perspective.

### **Inner Director**

*A group of people begin. One emerges as the inner director. In this role they can shape the group activity by calling any of the following instructions, whilst still paying attention to being part of the activity. Instructions are called from within the dancing, not removed from the action.*

*Instructions: Stop, Start, Continue, End, New Beginning, Re-arrange, Reset, Exit (plus the name of the person/s to exit), Enter (plus the name of the person/s to enter), New Director.*

The *Inner Director* is a score for exploring composing from the inside that draws on Lisa Nelson's Tuning Scores (Jan 25<sup>th</sup> 2019) and was performed by In the Making (iii) in August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018.<sup>2</sup> The *Inner Director* score offers a comparative positioning to Latour's cartography which situates all living beings inside the terrestrial zone. Being a dancer within the composition I make different choices than from the outside, where the choreographer is more conventionally situated. My sense of the whole composition from this positioning however is impaired. Being in the midst, I have a partial perspective and cannot take it all in or direct the whole. In working with the score, we refined it. It was important, for example, that the group established the beginning, not the inner director, and that the composition was given time to establish itself, before the inner director started to shape it. In this way, there was already something happening that could be worked with, although this doesn't prevent something else being set in motion, as the instructions allow for this to happen. It is also important that the score allows for different dancers to take on the inner director role, so that the performance arises out of more-than-one vision. We observed a tendency for the inner director to take an outside-inside positioning, slightly distant from where the dance

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<sup>2</sup> Appendix II *Gatherings* p.24.

was unfolding. It requires conscious awareness to remain present and a commitment as a dancer whilst also directing.

The composing process described through this score is real-time composition which I differentiate from the ‘elusive subject’ of improvisation which can be described as spontaneous moving in response to whatever arises (A.C Albright, 2012, p. 348). Whilst there are improvisational elements within all the performance collaborations and improvisation has much to offer in times of uncertainty, my interest here is in making practices shaped by scores, as these offer a form that can be shared. Like improvisation, scores invite playfulness. They are ubiquitous in postmodern dance and act ‘as task, event and document’ (Brown, 2016, p. 190). Movement scores are present in published literature (Irvine, 2014 and Qualmann and Hind, 2015) on artist websites like Lisa Nelson and *In the Making* and encountered through workshops. In the course of this research this was the case in workshops with Charlie Morrissey (UK), Rosalind Crisp (Australia) and Karen Nelson (USA). In being shared, passed on, revised, and reinterpreted they evolve over time and are on the move with different bodies. As a documentation, they stand in for performances and is one way, along with still images, that I have chosen to document some of the fifteen performances that took place during the research period. I opted not to use video documentation as we were working with and in spaces in ways that did not make video a useful medium for documentation. In addition, as the research champions liveness and being present with, neither of these are well conveyed through the medium of video. As well as a document, scores for me are a way of composing, curating, and researching. They describe a process for practice and performance, communicate processes, invite participation and are a form of questioning through doing. I am interested in how successfully the practice of scoring can be extended to contexts beyond the studio and performance. In using *Fontana Mix* (1958), a score by John Cage as a preface to communicate ‘indeterminacy’, Tsing, Bubandt, Gan, and Swanson (2017) are thinking along similar lines. The practice scores worked with in this research include scores originated by Mary Overlie, Lisa Nelson, Steve Paxton and Anna Halprin; scores written by dancers from *In the Making* including myself, some of which may be a variation of a known score; and scores proposed by the collaborative artists of *Stone, Moss* and *Woodland Ways*. The practice



scores that are scattered through the practice documentation and which surface in the thesis, form a body of literature in themselves. The scores presented here are all word-based scores, but they can equally take the form of a drawing, a map, or a feature in the land. For some a score is a set of rules to be followed, for others a framework, an approach, an opening, perhaps we could say an orientation, a compass for navigating a performance.

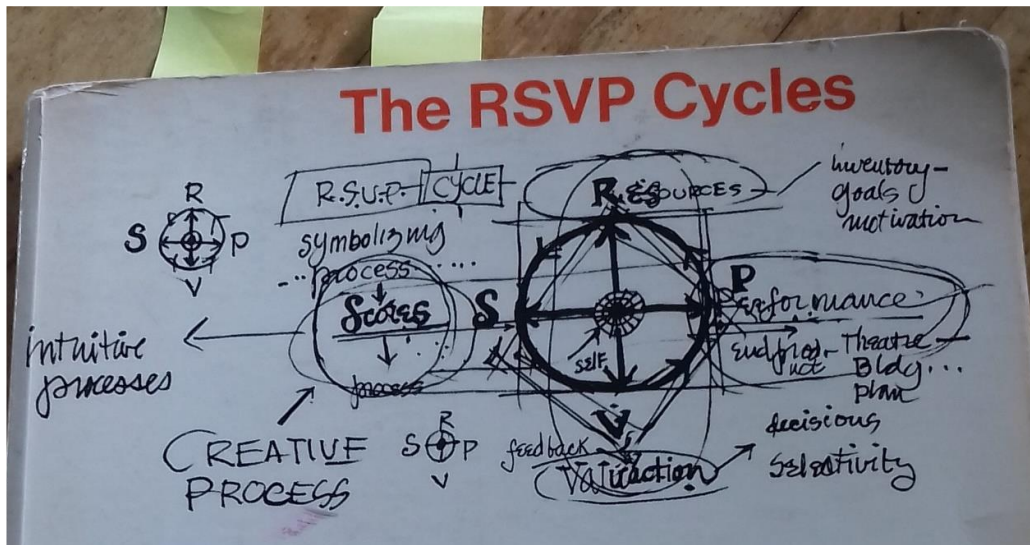


Fig. 1 The RSVP Cycles diagram (Halprin, 1969). Photo Claire Pençak

Scoring as a proposition for composing relationship to place and as part of a process for change has a precedent in 'The RSVP Cycles: *Creative Processes in the Human Environment*' by the American landscape architect Lawrence Halprin in collaboration with dancer Anna Halprin (1969). The influence of dance reveals itself through the focus on movement and motion as a designing principle in the environmental design process and in the use of the process for composing performances. The acronym RSVP stands for: R – Resources – what is available to be worked with and made from, in the widest sense, including materials, environment, motivations, feelings. S – Scores – specifically open scores, which offer a way into creative action. V- Valuation – this the reflective part of the process where revision of a score can happen. P – Performance- the doing of the scores. To get away from it being read as a linear process, Halprin presented The RSVP Cycles in a diagrammatic form (see fig.1) which

conveyed a more fluid sense of order. The process emphasises action and learning-through-doing and accommodates reflection and revision within the process.

Audicia: The RSVP Cycles are not like an external structure, they are like the fabric out of which creativity, the creative process happened.<sup>3</sup>

Anna and Lawrence Halprin pioneered working with scores and ‘The RSVP Cycles: Creative Processes in the Human Environment’ (1969) offers a full description of how scores operate to invite participation and gives a wide range of examples of the different forms they might take from the mundane to the esoteric. Examples include, shopping lists, the Tarot, I Ching, Navajo sand paintings and architectural plans. Halprin also used scoring as the process for the designing and structuring of his book.

‘The real nub of the issue is what you control through the score and what you leave to chance; what the score determines and what it leaves indeterminate’ (Halprin, 1969, p. 7).

Halprin differentiates between closed and open scores by the degree of choicefulness they allow for. Closed scores leave little to chance, whilst open scores allow for experimentation, unforeseen encounters, emergence and becoming with. This research specifically works with open scores.

Much has been written about the artistic collaboration between Anna and Lawrence Halprin and the RSVP creative process itself, from the different perspectives of environmental design and dance (Hirsch 2011; Merriman, 2010; Wassermann 2011, 2012; John-Alder, 2014). Re-reading the RSVP Cycles 50 years on from its publication, in the context of a deepening environmental catastrophe and runaway climate change, has been a facet of this research. The projects in the environment that Halprin describes in ‘The RSVP Cycles’ I read as being between people with a regard for the land rather than a process of ‘becoming with’ through multi-species encounters (Haraway, 2016, p. 40). The anthropocentric leaning is in the title ‘Creative Processes in the *Human Environment*’ (my emphasis). This is not to deny that Halprin’s work

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<sup>3</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, pp. 86.

has a clearly and passionately stated ecological dimension, which has lost none of its relevance and foresees the present ecological situation (1969, p. 199). Half a century ago Halprin was asking a not dissimilar question to the one I cited by Haraway in the opening of this chapter (Haraway et al., 2020) when he wrote:

‘We are facing a period ahead when the very essence of our lives together will rest on how we deal with change in a positive and creative way. That is why we need new ways of looking at change as neither good nor bad, not judged as whether to allow or not allow, but ecologically, which means existentially. Change is going to be. Now how do we work with it?’ (Halprin, 1969, p. 197).

We encounter the RSVP Cycles in the research as a live creative process through the collaboration with Audicia in *Moss Ways* and as the lens for a cross-disciplinary symposium ‘Re-reading the RSVP Cycles: Scores in a Climate Emergency’, which brought them into contact with recent scholarship around choreographic dwelling and place practices, contemporary approaches to landscape architecture, and the context of living with ecological ‘ruination’ (Tsing et al., 2017, p. Gi).<sup>4</sup> The RSVP Cycles are still practiced today in certain contexts. They are taught as part of the Tamalpa Life/Art Process®, used by some contemporary performance practitioners, notably Robert Lepage who works with a process derived from The RSVP Cycles (Dundjerović, 2009) and are currently being picked up by visual artists. In the course of this research, I encountered Circa Projects, based in Newcastle with artists Giles Bailey, Sophie Soobramanien, Jamie Hammill and Nellie Saunby working with them and also New Zealand artist Sophie Bannan. There is little evidence of their influence however, within contemporary placemaking and planning practice. This is surprising, as the RSVP Cycles describe a community visioning tool for placemaking which orientates us towards not only a creative process but also towards place practice. As a community visioning tool, the RSVP Cycles can be situated in the Scottish context of the current Scottish Government Place Standard tool and going further back, to the spirit of Patrick Geddes. Geddes’ Valley Section pre-empted a bio-regional approach and is of relevance to *River Ways*.

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<sup>4</sup> Appendix II *Gatherings*, pp. 28 – 31.

#### 1.4.2. Somatics: An inside perspective

From scoring and compositional processes for dance making, I turn now to what somatic movement practices offer this research. Somatics is the ‘field of study dealing with somatic phenomena: i.e., the human being as experienced by himself from the inside (Hanna, 1995, p. 343). Thomas Hanna introduced the term ‘somatics’ to describe the field of study that has ‘developed alternative ways of moving, touching and being aware that brings us closer to the wisdom inherent in the ancient structures of collagen, nerve fibre, and cerebrospinal fluid’ (Johnson, 1995, p. xvi). Hanna uses the terms *soma* and *body* to distinguish different perspectives on the body from the first and third person positions. *Soma* refers to the perception of the body as experienced from the inside whilst *body* refers to is what is perceived, witnessed from the outside by another (Johnson, 1995, p. 341). Witnessing as a participatory activity and empathetic positioning is developed through the research through scores for audiences and by making opportunities for practising witnessing through public workshops and performances.

The somatic approach in relation to dance then, emphasises the dancers’ sensation of movement and supports an experiential anatomy. It is the lived experience through the soma that is spoken of as ‘embodiment’ and which Edmund Husserl referred to as ‘somatology’, out of which phenomenology emerged. Dance scholar Sandra Reeve clarifies how phenomenology and somatics contribute different approaches to the body by explaining how phenomenology ‘engages with notions of body-mind from the viewpoint of mind, while somatic studies do so from the viewpoint of body’ (2011, p. 14). The somatic movement approaches that I work with draw liberally on a variety of techniques including Feldenkrais, Alexander, and Body-Mind Centering®, that offer practically orientated embodied approaches for change. We can become entrenched and ‘hidden from ourselves by habits of perception’ which stifle our ability to change (Shepard & McKinley, 1969, p. 2). In interrupting and unfixing habitual movement behaviours and directing our energies differently, somatic approaches can renew and change how we organise our moving and allow for new patterns of connections to emerge, within and across bodies. Through attunement practices and sensitive

attending, somatic approaches can cultivate empathetic relationship. The changes tend towards incremental small shifts and localized working of the bodymind to affect systemic change.

Each of the practice etudes explores a different embodied perspective. In *Stone Ways* I am influenced specifically by the work of Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen who originated Body-Mind Centering®, as she invites us to place our attention in and move from, different anatomical systems - the bone, the organs, the blood. *Moss Ways* recomposes our moving through the fascia, the connective tissue and *Woodland Ways* explores the perceptual systems.

### **1.4.3. Ways to Connect**

Whilst somatics starts by working with the ‘self’ through individual practices, it is equally concerned with ‘world’ and offers practices to help us to live closer to the bodymind and to the earth (Johnson, 2020). Hanna’s definition of *soma* extends to ‘all living beings’, including plants, hence somatics is already primed for multi-species encounters and appropriate to my ecological orientation (Hanna, 1995, pp. 346 - 347). In working with ways to connect, somatics overrides the ‘pathological’ mind-body split, a dislocation that the Western world view perpetuates, another being the separation of ourselves from other species (Johnson, 2020). For Reeve, ‘changing the way we view our bodies can help to change the way we view the world around us and the ecosystems of which we form a part’ (2011, p. 2). Shepard was saying something similar in 1969 when he wrote

‘If nature is not a prison and earth a shoddy way-station, we must find the faith and force to affirm its metabolism as our own – or rather, our own as part of it. To do so means nothing less than a shift in our whole frame of reference and our attitude towards life itself, a wider perception of the landscape as a creative, harmonious being where relationships of things are as real as the things [...] we must affirm that the world is a being, a part of our own body (Shepard, 1969, p. 3).

In the final pages of *The RSVP Cycles* Halprin cites an essay by Fosberg in Shepard and McKinley (Halprin, 1969) and despite being written more than 50 years ago, I find

some of the thinking in Shepard and McKinley (1969) extremely prescient to our times. What has evolved since its publication and which Latour's cosmology extends from are feminist political theories and new materialist lines of thought that reframe the human ethically. So far this has not transformed into significant change on the ground.

What somatics works to connect, the English language cannot easily follow. I can find no satisfactory word or combination of words that reconnects what the Western world view has separated out as body and mind. Todd (1937) refers to the 'thinking body', like Reeve, the American experimental dancer Steve Paxton refers to the 'body-mind', so too does the poet Kenneth White in the geopoetic context (2004, p. 112). The hyphen designed to join body and mind together somehow still acts to separate the one from the other and suggests some sort of through line rather than an enfolding of both terms. Body/Mind is an assemblage that echoes Latour's attempt to join Nature/Culture (2017, p. 35). I have decided to go with bodymind akin to Haraway's 'natureculture' as it brings the two terms into as close as possible contact (2003, p. 1). Rather than dwelling on and in the existential gaps between practice and theory, nature and culture, body and mind, my intention in the research is to explore 'ways to connect' - an ecological orientation, for 'we are, first and foremost, ecological beings, woven into our surroundings' (Bigé & Morrissey, 2017, p. 21). Reeve who identifies nine lenses for seeing the body .describes the ninth lens, the ecological body as being in a constant state of flux and becoming, as it moves within an equally shifting environment (2011). How do we know we are moving? was a provocation dancer Karen Nelson began a contact improvisation workshop with at the Work Room, Glasgow (June 28<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> 2019), followed by the direction to be in continuous movement. Reeve differentiates the ecological from the environmental body. Whilst they are both in a state of change, the environmental body is 'viewed through a static lens' (Reeve, 2011, p. 48). I am working here with the ecological body and prioritise moving-with, over looking at bodies. My intention is that in changing how we move we change how we think and in this I am merely continuing and hopefully adding to a movement of thought that has already been started.

## 1.5. Encountering the Critical Zone

The term Critical Zone was originated by Earth System scientists and describes the thin layer ‘a few kilometers thick between the atmosphere and bedrock’, which supports all life on earth (B Latour, 2018, p. 78). It is an alternative worldview to that depicted by the Anthropocene which has called out the impact on earth systems of extractionist production methods that industrial and capitalist economic growth systems are built on, to the extent that it defines a new geological era (Crutzen & Stoermer, May 2000; McNeill & Engelke, 2016). I cannot do justice within the parameters of this thesis to the intricacies of the Anthropocene debate or alternative proposals like the Capitocene that have emerged from it (Moore, 2015). The context of my enquiry is the Critical Zone and the terrestrial project with its dwelling perspective. I would draw attention however, to the critique that the Anthropocene is a Western worldview that demonstrates a blindness to the lifeways of indigenous cultures that have not contributed to the great acceleration but are adversely impacted by it. Critics of the Anthropocene argue that this framing undermines more ecologically driven lifeways because it foregrounds and amplifies the human presence, rather than favouring more-than-human lives and stories (Kimmerer, 2014). In collapsing our perception of earth as the blue planet which we live on and from to a thin, fragile layer which supports all life, the Critical Zone is presenting a different shaping of earth and a reorientation for dwelling with, in and among, that nurtures symbiotic relationships and an ethics of care. Triggered by a dance gesture, Latour has expanded the scientific definition into a new cartography which situates all living organisms within this zone as terrestrials and does not allow for being outside of or removed from earth. ‘The characteristic of the terrestrial is that you are in it’ (B. Latour & Weibel, 2020a).

The think piece and exhibition *Critical Zones – Observatories for Earthly Politics*, curated by Latour and Weibel began as a seminar project with students and alumni when Latour was guest professor at Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design from January 2018 – November 2019. The exhibition expands on Latour’s theory in ‘Facing Gaia’(2017) and ‘Down to Earth’ (2018) by exploring how the Critical Zone might be

represented aesthetically. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the physical exhibition at ZKM, the Centre for Arts and Media in Karlsruhe was extended into the online space as a series of lectures and conversations with such ‘well kent’ scholars as Haraway, Stengers, and Chakrobarty, who draw out and describe this ‘new ground’(B. Latour & Weibel, 2020b, p. 8) Changing the conversation is the stated aim of the publication *Critical Zones: The Science and Politics of Landing on Earth* that accompanies the exhibition, to which artists, historians, philosophers, students and activists contribute different perspectives and descriptions (Latour & Weibel (Eds.). 2020). Of the seventy-two essays there is just one contribution by a movement practitioner (Hirtz, 2020). I was able to ask Mira Hirtz at an online event, about the scarcity of dance and somatic movement intelligences amongst the essays and in the exhibition. She responded that the online workshop programme was trying to address the imbalance in perspectives, which had been acknowledged by the collaborators on the think piece and pointed to two elements in the exhibition that brought a different embodied perspective, one a sound piece and the other a change in the texture of the ‘floor’ demanding an adjustment of balance. As this is an ongoing and evolving project, the online material is constantly being updated and several physical propositions and short practice scores now appear in some sections. My research is tasked with helping us to *step into* the cosmology, to take it on, get under the skin of it. In pursuing this, I will be guided by the following questions that have been prompted by the Critical Zones enquiry so far. ‘How can we re-weave edges, envelopes, protections?’ (B Latour, 2018, p. 11). How might we become ‘differently orientated?’ (B Latour, 2018, p. 49). ‘(W)hat can we do to make ourselves sensitive to the sensitivity of other life forms?’ (Suzuki, 2018). ‘How might we build connection that can be transformative?’ (Haraway et al., 2020) ‘(H)ow can we rethink and renew our arts of inhabiting?’ (Ait-Touati, 2020, p. 437). These offer a structure for considering my research findings and contribution to the terrestrial debate in the final chapter.

A new cosmology also requires a new languaging to articulate and communicate it with. ‘*Glossolalia: Tidings from Terrestrial Tongues*’ is an evolving online glossary of vocabulary and definitions relevant to becoming earthly that can be found as part of the virtual Critical Zones exhibition (Korintenberg, Libeskind, R., & Rau, 2021). I



draw from this in subsequent chapters and offer some contributions arising from the embodied practice, which appears as a glossary to this thesis.

## 1.6. Working relationally in practice and theory

### 1.6.1. A practice perspective.

This research proceeds through working relationally and I introduce here a practice score for working relationally that Merav Israel and I worked with at the start of a research week to set a tone for our working together.

#### *Degrees of Relationality*

*Organise your moving in the following ways:*

- *being still whilst the other is moving,*
- *moving in relation to the other*
- *moving regardless of the other.*

*Move between these different directions in any order, giving as much time to the task as feels sufficient.*

The following is an extract from my practice notes written having first explored the score and discussed it together. The final line references Tsing (2015).

OK. Let me return to carrying on regardless. This is not so easy. How can I unknow what you are doing, unknow your presence? It takes a conscious effort to disengage and carry on regardless. It turns out that you are more able to make the shift but on reflection you said that once you had begun to work relationally then going back to moving, doing, being present regardless, felt like some sort of abandonment. Having worked relationally it is harder to return to the other state, we are in some way contaminated by the engagement.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Appendix II *Gatherings* p.7.

From this account we can say that moving relationally changes us and creates the conditions for transformation, with a small ‘t’, by paying attention to and moving with the presence of another. Different ways of working relationally are drawn out through the practice etudes, *Stone, Moss and Woodland Ways*. Indigenous wisdoms and traditional ways of connection teach us that it is all about listening, being present with and bearing witness to. Somatics movement and dance making practices can help us to attune closely, from the perspective of the *soma*, the inside experience of the dancer and the *body*, the witness perspective. Performances are an event to practice these skills.

### 1.6.2. Encountering theory

The presence of Uexküll in the pre(r)amble to the *Book of Ways* leads us to his concept of *umwelt* which in the Critical Zone glossolalia, is linked to encounters.<sup>6</sup> The entry reads:

‘Life consists of encounters, which can be between or among all entities, humans and nonhumans [...] We exist through encounters, as there is no moment in life when we are not in interaction’ (Korintenberg et al., 2021).

The definition signals towards Tsing, who gifts encountering shape shifting qualities, as it tangles us up with others and in coming into contact, in being ‘contaminated,’ alternative lifeways emerge (2015, p. 47). Other terms under the glossolalia entry for ‘encounter’ like becoming-with, porosity, transformation, and responsibility, are themes I will move with as they address ethical ways to connect and a recomposing of relationships across species. As terrestrials in the Critical Zone, our ‘community’ expands beyond human beings to include ‘groups of plants, animals, and a wide cast of other life-forms (bacteria, fungi, viruses, etc.)’ (Korintenberg et al., 2021). Somatics, as I outlined above, already works with this broad definition of sentient beings. Kohn (2013) in exploring an anthropology beyond the human, through the indigenous culture of the Runa people in the Upper Amazon of Ecuador, describes a world of multi -

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<sup>6</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, pp.7 - 14.

species relationships and shape shifting bodies where selves are distributed across bodies, where '(b)odies are multiple and mutable, and the human body is only one of many kinds of bodies that a self might inhabit'(p. 125). Charles Foster (2016) explores different bodyings in the British countryside through his forays into living as different species. His method is 'to go as close to the frontier as possible [...] We can get surprisingly close to the frontier at two points [...] physiology and landscape' (2016, p. 7). He acknowledges that the boundaries between species are somewhat blurred (p.1), and that we are all engaged in 'a rolling conversation with the land' but that for humans, this conversation is awkward (p. 20). In this thesis the somatic entanglements with stone, moss and deer which leads us into woodland, are not intended as a shamanic shape shifting practice. I present them as an enquiry into how somatic practices in thinking with, following and being shaped-by the more-than-human, allows new anatomies to emerge that compose us differently and extend the range of our experience of embodiment (Kohn, 2013, p. 126). In searching for a languaging that is inclusive of 'nonhuman people', Morton (2019) suggests ecological philosophy might incline 'toward touch, toward the haptic [...] because it is nearer, more intimate' (pp. 112 - 113). The haptic is where somatic movement practices operate and coming into contact is explored in *Stone Ways* as a grounding for ecological relationship and for landing into the terrestrial zone.

## **1.7. Inside the Scottish Borders**

Landing, Latour says, necessitates landing 'someplace' (2018, p. 99). McFadyen (2015), taking a Geddsian and geopoetic perspective, clarifies that 'place' begins with 'the ground on which we stand'. So, this project dwells in the 'local' in that the research takes place in the Scottish Borders where I live and is also somatically localized in the bodymind. Historically the Scottish Borders is an edgy place of debatable lands and this prevailing cultural narrative dominates the story that the region tells visitors and itself and is repeatedly played out in the reiving, rugby, and common riding traditions. The Cultural Strategy for the Scottish Borders describes how 'the idea of 'borders', of boundaries and distinct, often competing, communities, are central to the identity of the region' (Openshaw, 2014). This is an unhelpful

narrative for cultivating collaboration and ecological connection. As stated earlier, I am looking to contribute beyond the scholarly and practice realms to in- the -world applications that offer something to these times. A strand of this research which links to the terrestrial project and my embodied practice is a redescription of place. I take inspiration from geopoetics, an artist-led worldview originated by the Scottish poet Kenneth White who is looking for ‘new co-ordinates and regrounding’ to renew our relationship to earth (2003b, p. xxii). Bill Stephens, Chair of the Scottish Centre for Geopoetics, described geopoetics to me in its simplest terms as ‘a way of relating to and thinking about environment and the way we live’(2019). Like Latour’s terrestrial project, geopoetics describes an earth making perspective and a transdisciplinary approach, which moves across fields of practice and redefines edges and boundaries. Ecological shaping then is ‘a kind of vision across boundaries’ (Shepard, 1969, p. 2), which Latour refers to as ‘*a way of worlding*’ (2018, p. 54 Italics author's own.). Stephens (2019) also commented that people’s connection to place has shifted from communities grounded in place to communities of interest which are not attached to the earth but hover elsewhere and prompts the question how does this affect a process of becoming earthly?

### 1.7.1.     **Bordering**



Fig. 2 Carter Bar. Photo: Claire Pençak, 2017

Some ten miles south of the Border town of Jedburgh is Carter Bar, where the political border between Scotland and England surfaces as a signpost, viewpoint and a car park. Fig. 2 is a view from the layby looking east. In the following extract from the poem

‘On the Border’, White dispenses with geopolitics to give a geopoetic redescription of the Carter Bar.

these Borders border on more than England

the border between nation and nation  
is hardly interesting after all ...  
what matters  
is the border  
between humans and inhuman  
between one field of knowledge and another  
between spirit and matter ...

only  
in a mind on the edge  
a sense of near-infinite space  
and of moving, complex reality

rough wind, a rock and a rowan tree.

(White, 2003c, p. 37).

I take on this more-than-human redescription of the Scottish Borders through the encounters with stone, moss, and deer/woodland in the practice etudes, developing this as a somatic cartography of place. In *Stone Ways* the first of our somatic encounters it was Felicity who said ‘I was thinking to work with edge’.<sup>7</sup>

## 1.8. Ways Through Place Practices

More-than-one is one of the research undertakings and this following section describes ways through the research that offer different perspectives on place. ‘Ways’ suggests methodologies for proceeding, evokes movement and describes a direction of travel which can lead somewhere. They draw things together. Cooper Albright (2019), connects how we think about the world, with the way that we move through it (p. 1). The Scottish Borders is replete with topological examples of connection as ways through the land, which rather subverts the cultural narrative of rivalry and division.

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<sup>7</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 42.

Some of these ways are created by the movement of people - walking ways, cycling ways, bridle ways and old trade ways in the form of drove roads and herring roads (Moffat, 2017). The most well- known walking routes being The Southern Uplands Way, St Cuthbert's Way and The Borders Abbey Way. Other paths are created by the movement of animals like sheep and deer paths or the movement of water like river ways. '*Pre(r)amble: A foray with Uexkiill around Jedburgh*' describes a practice day which included a walk through, out of and around Jedburgh.<sup>8</sup> It loosely situates my movement practice and connects somatics, place praxis and a following of more-than-human ways. The images of 'ways through the land' in fig. 3 were all taken during the walk. The *Pre(r)amble* acts as a meta-score for the practice research, which is brought to life through *Stone, Moss and Woodland Ways* all of which are prefigured in the walk.

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<sup>8</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, pp. 6 - 14.



Fig. 3 Ways through from 'Pre(r)amble: A foray with Uexküll around Jedburgh' (See Appendix I *Book of Ways* pp.11 -13). Photos: Claire Pençak

### 1.8.1. Conversations Around Place

Place consciousness, our relationship to land, is an extensive, tangled, and wide-ranging theme relevant to this research which I initially explored through a series of conversations with people working around place from different professional perspectives including environmental planning and creative placemaking with particular reference to the Scottish Borders. The people I consulted were: Dave Pritchard, an independent consultant and advisor working in environmental, cultural, heritage and arts contexts; Russell Clegg, Learning Officer at the Patrick Geddes Centre, Edinburgh; Bill Stephens, Chair of the Scottish Centre for Geopoetics and formerly an environmental planner; Mary Morrison, Creative Director CABN (Creative Arts Business Network); Andrew Mackenzie, a visual artist and currently project artist on the Hawick Flood Protection Scheme. From these conversations different theories, practices and vocabulary surfaced around place, planning and place making. Together these conversations offered a context for approaching the description of earth as the Critical Zone, cultural placemaking in the Scottish context and the role of artistic practice in recomposing place.

Ecological anthropology describes wayfaring as a ‘*place-making*’ practice (Ingold, 2007, p. 101 *Italics author's own.*), which ‘unfolds not in places but along paths’ (Ingold, 2011, p. 148). The simplicity of paths disguises the complexity of connections that emerge as the lives of dwellers become entangled with each other. Out of all this movement and activity, places and culture emerge. Mary Morrison and Andrew Mackenzie describe cultural place making in the Scottish Borders from slightly different perspectives. Morrison (2019) highlighted the tension of a bioregional approach in a region with distinct boundaries, the role of artists and the cultural sector in highlighting process-based approaches, enabling change and how this challenges planning processes. Mackenzie (2019) considered how his own practice related to place and how his work with the Hawick Flood Protection Scheme is asking people to locate themselves differently. Mackenzie’s described how positioning Hawick on a river ways map of the Teviot catchment caused a disorientation for two local fishermen



and supports Plumwood's perspective that 'human centredness is not ecologically rational' (2002, p. 100). Mackenzie (2019) concluded that 'a sense of place is a very complex thing'.

A commonly held observation is that many people move through the Scottish Borders but very few stop here. For those in tourism this is problematic and undesirable, and conversely, for others, a reason for choosing to live here. I explore a score for moving and pausing *Walking and Under-standing in Space* in Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 22. Australian geographer Leah Gibbs proposes 'passing – through' as a form of placemaking, where permanent dwelling, fixity and longevity, are not the only ways of forming meaningful relationships with place nor does it detract from the vitality of a place (2013). Place is not necessarily 'settlement'. Drawing on her research in Bundanon, Australia Gibbs observed :

I quickly learned that Bundanon is important to a lot of people. But it's a place that people tend to pass through [...] We learn, and make connections, but we don't dwell here' (Gibbs, 2013).

Plumwood (2008) and Rose (2017) also offer more complex, shifting and relational accounts of place which are 'thicker and more concrete than mere location' (Plumwood, 2008, p. 144). They challenge notions of place as bounded, fixed and singular and offer a recomposing of place which makes way for a less anthropocentric stance and for more ethical co-creative relationships.

The conversation with Dave Pritchard (2019) was a stravaig through the labyrinth of different spatial descriptions and definitions of place used by the environmental, nature, heritage, and cultural sectors. Pritchard highlighted different place assessment criteria depending on who the makers of place are, ranging from the external planner perspective to the inside dweller perspective and taking in the perspective of different species. The spatial definition of the Critical Zone yet offers another definition and designation of place, which this research develops through a somatic cartography. The quality of absence in place also emerged in the conversation with Dave Pritchard which will become relevant as this thesis progresses.

'What would be the role of place or placemaking in cultivating the faculties of imagination and creativity in the population and that could be as much about

emptiness and absence as it is about measurable attributes and other sorts [...] I'm just imagining that movement and dance and so on, could be a great entry point to that kind of question' (Pritchard, 2019).

Indeed, within creative or cultural placemaking, dance and somatic movement approaches are less represented and definitely in the minority compared with visual arts practices, which creates a space for me to move into.

### **1.8.2. Crossing Fields of Practice**

In an account of Scottish Borders hill shepherding practice, Gray drawing on Rodman frames the activity of 'going round the hill' as a form of (sheep-shaped) place-making where '(p)laces come into being through praxis, not just through narratives' (Gray, 1999, p. 443). Moving around unsettles the fixed perspective and supports re-positioning as a theme for coming into ecological relationship. A repositioning that for the American environmentalist Aldo Leopold, needs to shift humankind 'from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it' (1968, p. 204). A citizen of a multi-species community. Shepherding is an example of a practical activity of 'making lives' which Tsing (2015) frames as a world-making practice (p. 22). She argues for an unfixing of world-making from the 'modern human conceit' (Tsing, 2015) of forward progress and growth as championed by capitalism, to allow for polyphonic assemblages and multi-species world-making (p. 22). To do this successfully, she suggests we need to develop different 'arts of noticing' (2015, pp. 17 - 25). This is where my research intersects with anthropology. I am not an anthropologist, and this is not an anthropological study, but I shall be moving with the ideas of ecological anthropology and an anthropology beyond the human (Kohn, 2013). These perspectives offer a vocabulary that is empathetic to the embodied experience, can get close to the slippery languaging of movement, to composing processes and to thinking across more-than-human boundaries. I also specifically draw on Tsing's definition of 'encountering' as a process for new life-ways to emerge. A definition that Korintenberg et al. (2021) take up.

### 1.8.3. Habitat as Action Space

The *Glossolalia* describes habitat as ‘an active process [...] a movement, rather than a place, which is constantly being modified’ (Korintenberg et al., 2021). The composing of place as action space is pursued in the collection of essays edited by Schiller and Rubidge (2014) which offer different practice examples of how choreographic processes, released from the constraints of the dance context can invigorate place praxis. Schiller and Rubidge situate the choreographic within processual philosophy, embodiment theory and draw on mapping and cartographies from cultural geography. They redescribe the choreographic process as ‘an intricate manifold of sensation, action and environment’ and a ‘relational net’ involving performer, audience and place (2014, p. 3). They trace the seed of the concept of choreographic dwelling back to the work of Lawrence and Anna Halprin, not only because of their interaction with environment, but also in the agency they attribute to audiences (p. 20). Like *The RSVP Cycles* (Halprin, 1969), the essays in Schiller and Rubidge (2014) are more inclined towards the environmental than the ecological. Notably ‘ecology’ does not appear in the index of Schiller and Rubidge (2014) whereas ‘environment’ has numerous entries. My choreographic response to thinking about land use in the Scottish Borders ‘Proposal for Engagement: An action score for placemaking’ (Peñak, 2015b) interpreted place as habitat, and habitat as a multi-species action space. The action score which developed out of several days of improvisation beside the Etrick and Yarrow Water in the Scottish Borders, asks people to consider all the ways a site is used by resident and visitor species. Sixty examples are offered and create an action score for place that can be worked with and enquired into through different artistic practices. This score was part of ‘Approaching Choreography’ (Peñak, 2015a), a small paper work in which I began the journey of redescribing dance making more ecologically through the frames of placing and perspective; pathways through; meetings and points of contact and working with materials and sites. Both are cited in K. Foster and Peñak (2016) which narrates a useful backstory to this current research project as it describes individual and collaborative artistic practices which developed in parallel to a pilot Land Use Strategy in the Scottish Borders. This thesis moves on from where I left off and the themes are progressed by steering towards Latour’s

cosmology which, as an ecological redescription of place, could be framed as a proposal for choreographic dwelling and a practising of place. I also engage with the agency of the audience, foregrounded in Schiller and Rubidge (2014), by framing audience as ‘witness’ and in developing scores for audience that develop empathic relationship.

## **1.9. Gatherings**

The research was conducted through individual studio practice, workshops, performances, and other public events. As liveness and performance is integral to the research practice, I started BATCH, a series of Sunday afternoon studio performances at The Bakery Studio, Jedburgh. The title ‘BATCH’ alludes to the Bakery studio building previously being a much loved and frequented bakery where, coming out of the pub late at night you could knock on the hatch in the front door to get hot pies. BATCH:1 took place August 2018 and BATCH:2 *Experiments in Making*, August 2019. Details of the programme for each of these can be found in Appendix II *Gatherings* (pp. 7 – 12). There were to be three iterations of BATCH, but the coronavirus pandemic didn’t allow BATCH:3 *Ecological Bodies* to take place. I include the draft programme for BATCH:3 in Appendix II *Gatherings*, (pp. 13 – 16) as the ideas are relevant to and emerged from the research. The format of the performance series created a performance context for the research in the Scottish Borders and brought some of the research strands together through performances of my own work and that of other artists. The work shown, was predominantly scored real-time compositions and BATCH was able to offer a platform for a style of dance work that is not easily programmed as it does not conform to how dance work is usually packaged by programmers and evades description. BATCH was an invitation to encounter and participate in experiments in making. The studio is a flexible space and creates an informal studio setting which reduces the distance between the performers and the audience and allows the work to be experienced close-up, which is congenial to work that is inviting the audience to be present as ‘witness’ rather than spectator and to become co-researchers in the process.

It might be said that what you give the audience to do are the Findings. The particularities, the intelligence [...] (t)he idea that even if one is working with an improvisational phenomenon, something is gained and given if it is intelligently investigated, and some light shed upon it ‘ (Morrissey, Paxton, & Smith, 2011).

At an extremely modest scale, BATCH fulfils a similar role to the exhibition ‘Critical Zones. Observatories for Earthly Politics’ in creating a context for exploring an aesthetics of the Critical Zone. Post- performance conversations over refreshments created an opportunity for reflection between artists and audiences and there was always a lively dialogue and exchange of ideas.

Alongside the artistic collaborations with Felicity, Audicia and Tom, two other groups were integral to the research – In the Making and the Extending Practice Group. We have come across In the Making already but I introduce them here more formally as they contributed performances to BATCH:1 and BATCH:2. In the Making are a diverse and sometimes unwieldy gathering of 13 dancers of which I am one, who come together around scored performances. We describe ourselves as:

a dancer led initiative – a shifting assemblage of dancers and other artists – a structure for unpredictable encounters [...] an experiment around processes of making, multi-authorship and shared leadership’ (In the Making, 2021)

Our first performance experiment Mushroom! (2016) was inspired by Tsing’s proposition which continues to be relevant.

‘How does a gathering become a “happening”, that is, greater than the sum of their parts? One answer is contamination. We are contaminated by our encounters; they change who we are as we make way for others. As contamination changes world-making projects, mutual worlds - and new directions - may emerge’ (2015, p. 27).

We aspire to cultivating a self-sustaining approach to supporting and nourishing individual practices in the company of others and have an ethos of working it out together. The group is a forum for exploring collective making and for allowing a different aesthetic to emerge. Our audiences are invited to shift positions and to engage

through shared scores. The scores worked with in each of the In the Making performances as part of this research, can be found in Appendix II *Gatherings* (pp.17 – 21). The Extending Practice Group are an informal gathering of people interested in exploring ideas through movement improvisation. Many of them are artists and makers in different art forms. The two-hour sessions are an opportunity to explore improvisational and compositional structures, consider diverse approaches to space and time and to develop alternative vocabularies. Playful in approach there is plenty of scope for individual exploration and experimentation. Over the duration of this research, the Extending Practice Sessions have been an invaluable context for me to explore with other people some of the somatic practices and scores that appear in the thesis and practice documents. *Woodland Ways* in particular, was developed in collaboration with the Extending Practice Group. There were also opportunities to share and develop research through other workshops, events and conferences which are documented in *Gatherings* and *Book of Ways*. These include d.i.n.e (Dance Improvisation North East) workshops, the Scottish Centre for Geopoetics Expressing the Earth Conference, 2019; Re-Reading the RSVP Cycles:Scores in a Climate Emergency symposium, 2019; the Hawick workshop day 'Deep Adaptations, How to live in a world governed by climate change and ecological catastrophe', 2020 and the Connecting Threads consultation workshop.

## 1.10. Emerging into the territory

### Emergence

(for two performers)

*Do a five- minute solo exploration, witnessed by another, working with emergence. The witness is the timekeeper.*

*After five minutes, stop and reflect on the experience together. Move with whatever emerges in the body. Trust to what comes up. Inhibit the desire to judge what arises. Endeavour to stay authentic to the stimulus, refrain from ornamenting or directing the movement beyond what is happening anyway. Allow time for the movement to appear and to disappear and for the next movement to occur. Give presence to the pauses.*

*The witness whilst giving their attention to the dancer can use strategies to keep themselves engaged and making choices. You can choose to view the dancer at different proximities, in different spatial positions from standing to lying, with a gaze that ranges from close up to very wide. Do whatever you need to keep your attention and interest enlivened. The witness takes responsibility for being the timekeeper.*

*After 5 minutes exchange roles. At the end of this round reflect on the experience together. Speak first about your experiences as the dancer and then as the witness.*

Merav and I worked with this Emergence score at Summerhall, Edinburgh and returned to it for a performance in BATCH:1 (2018).<sup>9</sup> The time frames suggested in the score are there to create a temporal parameter for a practice session context but can be adapted to suit the situation. The score might suggest a fragmented composition that lacks coherence, but the observed experience is that so long as the dancer is committing themselves and sustaining their attention to the task of emergence, the process itself creates a coherence and integrity. Bringhurst writes that,

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<sup>9</sup> Appendix II *Gatherings*, p. 8

*'letting something happen [...]* is a way to practice thinking like an ecosystem, thinking like a planet, thinking like a world' (Bringhurst & Zwicky, 2018, p. 31 Italics author's own).

What we perceive as the witness, is movement composing itself in real time. As a form of making with movement, emergence is co-creative with time and the speed and tempo of its unfolding is in-the-making. Sometimes the emerging moments overlap or very closely follow on from. Other times, there is an extended period of 'listening' to allow for the next movement to surface. What is witnessed is the movement of attending, the movement of bodymind. Overlie (2016) describes how witnessing is a somatic activity shaped by mirror neurons where:

the brain of the observer is stimulated in exactly the same manner as the person performing a movement. Neural interconnectivity between performer and viewer functions as a profound element of both acting and dancing (p. 35).

I cannot do service here to the science of this, but it contributes to the making of a collective experience, a collective bodying that invites coming closer and greater connection. The quality of the witnessing is also the movement of attention through which the witness is 'composing' their experience. Both mover and witness are busy with their own endeavours in proximity to each other and the dance exists not only through the dancer's movement but in the relational play between the dancer and witness. In allowing something to happen, we relinquish the urge to control an outcome. Going with what is already happening is also a score I introduced to the Extending Practice Group.<sup>10</sup> It asks that we put our trust in the process and move out from there. This is very much how this research progressed and found its final shaping. So, moving on.

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<sup>10</sup> Appendix II *Gatherings*, p. 42.



## **Chapter 2**

### **Stone Ways:**

#### ***Touch Stones and Dancing Grounds***

## 2. Stone Ways: *Touch Stones and Dancing Grounds*

Where the path ends  
the changes begin  
and the rocks appear  
ideas of the earth.

(White, 2003c, p. 431)

### 2.1. Lithogenesis: *Into the dancing grounds*

This first practice etude is a somatic encounter with geomorphology and geopoetics and leads us to bone and the organising structure of the skeleton as a place to begin to move from. *Stone Ways* follows ‘ideas of the earth’ (White, 2003c, p. 431), where making contact, changing state and spatial reconfiguration are themes that emerge. In the previous chapter Kenneth White gave us a geopoetic redescription of the Carter Bar and we now move some ten miles north to the southern outskirts of Jedburgh to find in Hutton’s Unconformity, a geological border that takes us ‘back beyond Scotland, into the basics of geomorphology’ (White, 1984, p. 7). James Hutton, (1726-1797), was a geologist and Berwickshire farmer and is regarded by White as one of the ‘principal Scottish precursors of geopoetics’, the one getting at ‘earth knowledge’ (White, 2006b, p. 20). Hutton found other unconformities in Teviotdale, on the Isle of Arran and most notably at Siccar Point, Berwickshire. The Unconformity at Inchbonny is the confluence of two earth-building eras where the ancient land masses of Laurentia and Avalonia collided, causing the disappearance of the Iapetus Ocean and from which the borderlands as we know it today emerged (Clarkson & Upton, 2010, p. xii). Alistair Moffat, a Borders’ historian comments that ‘the Borders came neither out of England or out of Scotland but appeared first as they have always remained, independent of either’ (2002, p. 25). The Unconformity confounds our usual expectation of strata being horizontal layers of sediment, as the rocks are folded vertically, like ‘small pleats’ (Hawkes, 1951, p. 48). The patterning at Inchbonny is

most clearly illustrated in the engraving of 1787 by the Scottish merchant, artist and geologist John Clerk of Eldin, see fig. 4, as the Unconformity today is overgrown, neglected, and hard to find and the distinctive rock pattern, as fig. 5 shows is obscured. Visitors are instead directed to a dry-stone sculpture by Max Nowell in Lothian Park, Jedburgh (see fig. 6.) constructed with the same stones as the unconformity itself, whinstone below and sandstone above. Nowell used local drystone dyking techniques to create the public artwork which also echoes the contours of the Jed Water and the Eildon Hills (Nowell, 2008). The story told through these stones is not a continuous narrative but interrupted, folded. As the vertical rocks, that were previously mountains, eroded, 65 million years of geology was erased between them and the more recent horizontal sandstone strata. It is this gap of time represented by the missing rocks and the unexpected patterning of the strata that are unconforming. What is absent has another story to tell and is a theme that will re-emerge in subsequent chapters. Changes in patterning signalling a change of state, relates to bodies as well as rocks and is the foundation of somatic educational methods.

The Unconformities were Hutton's observatories for studying earth which set him on an intellectual enquiry towards a new worldview published in 1788 as '*Theory of the Earth or an INVESTIGATION of the Laws observable in the Composition, Dissolution and Restoration of Land upon the Globe*'. The title identifies processes for making or recomposing, unmaking, and restoring. I note that 'dissolution' and 'restoration' resonate with two of the four R's of the Deep Adaptation Agenda, namely relinquishment and restoration. The first lines of Hutton's treatise describes 'the terrestrial system' (1788, p. 11) - '[...] upon the surface of this globe, the more inert matter is replenished with plants, and with animals and intellectual beings' (p. 11). This can be read as an early draft of what Earth System scientists call the Critical Zone (B. Latour, 2017, p. 11) Hutton's observation that 'matter itself must be in motion, and the scenes of life a continued or repeated series of agitations and events' (1788, p. 11), is carried through in topographical writings by MacDiarmid, White and Massey which describe a dancing ground where 'islands erode, continents drift' (Smith, 2015, p. 77). Through the tectonic story of the Iapetus Ocean, the Unconformity at Inchbonny

is connected to Skiddaw, the Cumbrian mountain which inspired Massey's enlivening of place as 'events, as happenings' (2006, p. 46). So, thinking with tectonics is thinking with movement and establishes moving as the primary ground. Manning following philosopher José Gil affirms that movement is where it all starts (2013, p. 13). Hutton's lines were the starting place for the durational dance|art event *Entr'actes: Alternative Arrangements* (2017) which I will be coming to.

Embryology teaches that movement is the first perception. It is not only we who move, but movement moves through us, it is ubiquitous, 'everywhere, always, at all scales, speeds and slownesses' (Manning, 2013, p. 13). Science has even found movement within rocks, which 'vibrate all by themselves' (Morton, 2019, p. 187). It is not only the rocks that change state, we too, have experienced different anatomies.

'Each of us carries in our veins a salty stream in which the elements sodium, calcium and potassium are combined in almost the same proportions as in sea water [...] inheritance from the day, untold millions of years ago, when a remote ancestor [...] first developed a circulatory system in which fluid was merely the water of the sea (Pencak, 1996 - 1997).

Deep time reveals itself here at a different scale, moving within us. Somatic practices like Body-Mind Centering® which descends into moving at a cellular scale, can attune our attention to scale although I acknowledge Morton's caution around the,

bewildering variety of scales, temporal and spatial, and that the human one's are only a very narrow region of a much larger and necessarily inconsistent and varied scalar possibility space, and that the human scale is not the top scale (2019, p. 186).

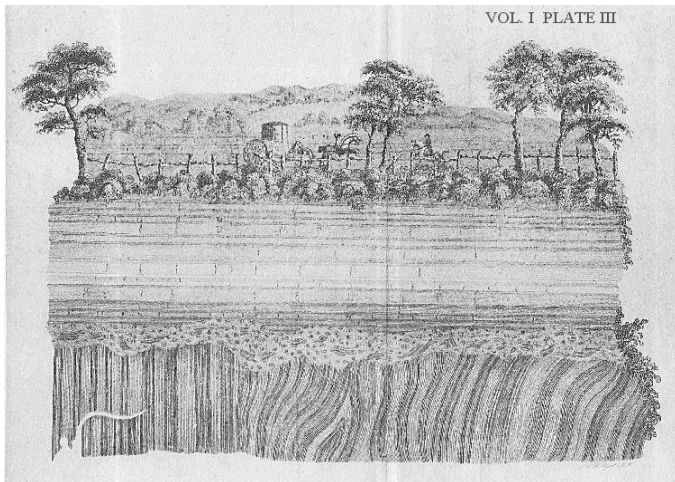


Fig. 4 (left) Engraving of the Unconformity at Inchbonny, by John Clerk of Eldin. In *'Theory of the Earth'* by James Hutton. Image courtesy of © British Library Board, General Reference Collection 1651/958. 32.i.8-9.

Fig. 5 (right) Hutton's Unconformity, Inchbonny, Photo: Claire Pençak, 2017



Fig. 6 (below) Newells sculpture, Jedburgh. Photo: Claire Pençak, 2017



## 2.2. Under\_standing: A ethos for the work (i)

### Under standing Practice

*Come to standing, your feet a fist width apart. Bare foot is preferable. It is helpful to begin with eyes closed. Let the bones of the arms and the legs hang long, the fingers and the toes soft. Take time to become fully present with the breathing body. Let the attention drift down into the feet. Relax the heels and let the soles of the feet open and widen. Where and what parts of your feet are in contact with the floor? Plant yourself but don't take a rigid stance. Stand rooted yet supple like a tree. Is there space behind the knees? Let the standing be dynamic, responsive. Allow your weight to drop. Notice where your weight falls. Perhaps it is back on the heels or forward through the toes. Search for the sweet spot where the weight falls through the centre of the arch. Sense the ground, the earth pushing back, supporting your standing - an energetic exchange. Stand, literally from underneath, from the soles of the feet. Be uplifted through your contact with ground. Let this contact register in the tissue, bones, muscles and enter into the cells. Responsive and responding your standing will never be static, there will always be micro adjustments around the feet, the pelvis, through the spine, into the neck. Let the head rise lightly out of the contact of the feet with the ground and every shift resonate and hum through the central nervous system, awakening the nerves. Let it re-compose your 'standing in awareness' as you open up space between the ground and the sky. Open your eyes. Continuing to work with this under\_standing, take a walk through the space, allowing the ground to direct your going and the feet to carry you along.*

Having established that movement *is* the territory and staying close to the materials and processes present in the Unconformity, we now shift into a more somatic perspective. Hutton's enquiries into the composition of the Earth, represents for White, a '(g)oining into the background' and re-examination of 'the territories' (White, 2006a, p. 6) which is where the geopoetic cultural renewal begins. Here, I go back into the ground of my own movement education and practice to renew an ancient dialogue between stone and bone. I begin with 'the most banal point of contact' our feet with the ground (Dupuy, 2010, p. 15). The *Under\_standing Practice* score lands us in the practice territory and brings us down to Earth. Dancer Dominique Dupuy who I studied with intermittently between 1999-2003, offers a literal translation of the word 'understanding' to describe the kinaesthetic action of standing from the soles of the feet up. I am giving this the written form of *under\_standing*. The underline symbol reinforces that knowing arises from the ground up through the contact of the feet with the ground. *Under\_standing* also acknowledge Steve Paxton's 'small dance' a standing practice which sensitises our awareness to the smallest shifts in the systems of the body (K. Nelson, (ed.). 2015, p. 38). I was introduced to the 'small dance' through the teachings of many different dancers from the late 1980's onwards, the most recent being in 2019 by Karen Nelson at The Work Room, Glasgow. Dupuy describes the 'small dance' as a 'meticulous search for detail' where the smaller the movement, the greater resonance it has through the body (2010, p. 12). Standing in this context is neither static nor a position but an active being in movement.

'Taking up a point of contact is a decision which involves two fundamental actions in dance movement [...] pushing down and pushing back' (Dupuy, 2010, p. 15).

Albright delves into the etymology of contact describing it as a 'reciprocal act of touching and being touched', a being-with that she extends philosophically towards Merleau Ponty's "intercorporeity" (2019, p. 15). This resonates with Dupuy's description of contact (2010, p. 15). Abram likewise describes how being 'met' by the ground changes our relationship to the earth from being 'a passive support' to experiencing 'the surface of a living depth' (2011, p. 59). This tactile orientation

towards ground Reeve describes as ‘somatic anchoring’ (2011, p. 40) and A.C Albright (2019) as finding ground in an unstable world. *Under\_standing* then draws together this collective body of dancing knowledge to propose practices that bring us closer to the earth and land us into dancing grounds. Practices which speak to Latour’s need to ‘look for a place to land’ (2018, p. 5). However, where Latour is eyeing up the ground, somatic approaches land us in it, in the here and now (Maccagno, 2020).<sup>11</sup> This is a turning from the optic, the visual organisation of knowing and being which dominates Western cultural perspectives and languaging, towards the haptic, where we touch the earth. We exchange ‘*I see*’ for ‘*I under\_stand*’. *Under\_standing Practice* was how Felicity and I, began the durational performance Entr’acte: *Alternative Arrangements*, to establish a relational tone for our working together and a dancing ground for the artistic enquiry. In re-orientating attention from the headspace to the soles of the feet Ingold connects the evolution of our bipedalism to our ‘separation’ from the world, and the wearing of shoes to our loss of contact with ground (2011, pp. 33 - 50). We can trace our lifeways and outlook to the impulse to stand on two feet. Charles Foster describes the moment our ancestors came to standing as ‘a journey of more than a few feet’ as it literally changed our horizons and gave us a different worldview (2016, p. 11). Both the feet and the head are present in the two root Chinese characters for the word *tao* (way), which leads White to suggest that Taoism, an eastern worldview, could be interpreted as ‘how to move with your head’ or ‘how to make headway’ (2004, p. 105). Where White appears to stay in the ‘head space’, I am instinctively drawn towards an interpretation of the Chinese characters that is expressed in the *Under\_standing Practice*, where knowing arises through direct encounters and ‘[t]he Earth triggers a metamorphosis on a physical level, transforms humans into their own body, into the body of the world.’ (Maccagno, 2020). Geopoetics acknowledges that ‘world emerges from the contact between the human being and the cosmos, represented by the Earth’ but his cosmological Earth feels quite distant from the embodied perspective (White, 2003a, p. 3).

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<sup>11</sup> Paolo Maccagno, an anthropologist and Feldenkrais practitioner, is a contributor to the seminar series *Becoming Earthly* initiated by Barn Arts, Banchory, Scotland, 2020 which takes Latour’s terrestrial worldview as a starting point for a series of discussion and explorations by artists and academics.



### 2.2.1. Emerging Pied-agogies.

Back in the studio with Felicity, as we walk out of *Under\_standing Practice*, I suggest that we continue with *Walking and Under\_standing in Space* to orientate to the architecture and become present to the space. This score is a modification of Overlie's *Walking and Stopping in Space* which asks the dancer by alternating between walking and stopping for different durations to,

(o)bserve your spatial placement in relationship to the walls of the room and to the other performers. All paths, formations and positions will gradually become vocabularies [...] Use your body to feel relationships (2016, p.145).

I simply replaced the instruction to 'stop' with to *under\_stand*.<sup>12</sup> Sustained practice with the score develops a finely tuned kinaesthetic sensitivity towards time duration and inhabiting space. The apparent simplicity, even mundanity of the score opens up a field of complexity and choicefulness in the detail of its performance, and in the constantly shifting patterns of relationality that emerge. How long or short a duration might you stand and then walk for? In which direction do you go? In what proximity do you stand? How slow or fast do you walk? Add in the possibility of moving and making choices from the perspectives of 'a spectating-self, a composing-self, and a performing-self' and the palette to compose your walking and standing with, is vast and endlessly fascinating for the dancer (L. Nelson, p. 1).

Claire: It reminds me that a very small shift, reads very large.

Felicity: The scale of it changes.

Claire: Yes, definitely. You can always do less [...] well, not less, it's actually going further in and making what you do resonate more.

Felicity: It's not about producing but refining.<sup>13</sup>

Similar to the somatic experiences of Paxton's 'small dance' and *Under\_standing Practice*, the smallest displacement can have a deep somatic and compositional effect.

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<sup>12</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 22.

<sup>13</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, pp. 35- 36.

Ingold's description of an Orochon hunter 'his entire being alert to the countless cues that, at every moment, prompt the slightest adjustment to his bearing' could equally be describing the performance of *Walking and Under-standing in Space* (Ingold, 2007, p. 78) Different kinds of ground under the foot will shape our walking differently (Reeve, 2011, p. 34). Hence, a Japanese style of walking from the knees is appropriate to uneven ground 'since with the lowered centre of gravity, the risk of tripping or falling is much reduced' (Ingold, 2011, p. 40). Walking as a process for coming to know a place is a subject in the Scottish context that has been taken up by anthropologists and cultural geographers Ingold and Vergunst (2008) and Lorimer and Lund (2003). Staying in the Scottish context, Nan Shepherd describes how 'setting the foot sideways to the growth of the heather and pressing the sprays down' makes moorland walking easier (Shepherd, 2011, p. 103). Robert Macfarlane in his introduction to Shepherd (2011) describes how the land shapes her knowing. 'As on the mountain, so in the book: the knowledge it offers arrives slantwise, from unexpected directions and quarters, and apparently limitlessly' (Shepherd, 2011, p. xxxiii).

These are all examples of how our moving through can be shaped by the more-than-human. I find these to be *pied-agogies*, a play on the French '*pied*' for foot. We will encounter other *pied-agogies* in *Moss Ways* and *Woodland Ways* but for now, we extend our walking practice in the company of stones.

## 2.2.2. Walking in the Company of Stone

### *Walking in the Company of Stones: A deep time walking practice*

*We are going to take a long, slow walk with stone. We can practice this in the open air or a studio space. If working inside, it is ideal to walk towards a window which has a view beyond the room to extend the sense of distance. In either situation, it is best practised barefoot if the ground allows.*

*To begin, choose two stones that you like and that will fit well into the palms of your hands. Hold one stone in each hand. Hold them securely but not tightly.*

*Sense the density of them falling into your palm, and let the fingers have a looseness to them. Too much muscular tension reduces our sensitivity to the heft of the stone.*

*Direct your attention to the stones and let them ground your focus and your breathing.*

*We are going to step in a way that is more a planting or dropping through the feet. Where we usually transfer the weight through the foot from heel to toe, place the foot down as a whole.*

*On each step lift the foot just enough off the floor to move it forward, placing it down so that the heel is in line with the arch of your other foot. Each step is about a half a foot length.*

*Feel that you are walking into, rather than on the surface of the ground, allowing the action of placing the foot down to finish completely.*

*There is no hurry to progress to the next step. Take all the time that it needs and then a bit more. Only then take the other foot just off the ground sufficiently to be able to move it level with the arch of the other foot.*

*Be aware of the quality of the gaze as you go along. Let the eyes be soft and fall into their bony eye sockets. It can be helpful to keep the distance in view rather than an inward gaze, whilst keeping the eyes light and alive. Continue like this either until you run out of space or have travelled some distance.*

*Do not be tempted to stop too early.*

*Let the patience of stone lead you on a long journey.*

The practice that the score above describes, has been likened by participants to Buddhist walking meditations. Paramananda gives an example of one (2007, p. 114). I prefer to focus on the somatic rather than any spiritual qualities and situate the practice within what Robert MacFarlane calls an ‘aesthetics of inordinate slowness’ (2008, p. 44). Slowness is presented in my research as an interruption of our habitual faster pace of moving, as a somatic practice for heightening awareness and attending to moving differently and as a potential strategy for becoming earthly. Different perspectives on slowness in artistic research is one of the themes of a forthcoming issue of RUUKKU titled ‘Slowness and Silence in Artistic Research’ (Loukola, Erkkilä-Hill, & Timonen, 2021 forthcoming). Prof. Ranulph Glanville, formerly president of the Institute for the study of Coherence and Emergence, describes slowness in Qualmann and Hind (2015), as a process for revealing nuances which is in step with the tempo of both my artistic process and somatic processes which take time to reveal themselves. The stepping described by Paramanda (2007), places the toes down first and the step is to be slightly longer than ‘the length of a foot’ (p. 114). The stepping I suggest, dropping the whole foot down, creates a different somatic experience that reinforces the relationship to ground established in the *Under\_standing Practice*. I emphasise the quality of the contact between the stone and the hand, as too tightly held and the focus becomes the act of holding tightly rather than an encounter with stone. Too loosely held and we literally fall out of contact and lose touch. Encountering is a delicate balance of forces meeting. In placing our attention into the stone we are holding, we loosen the attachment of ‘mind’ to the headspace and open up to being ‘many-minded,’ in the somatic practice sense which recognises and works with the intelligences of the multiple systems of the body.

A participant of a *Stone Ways* workshop I lead at the Expressing the Earth in the Year of Indigenous Languages, Scottish Centre for Geopoetics Conference in 2019, was moved to share her experience of *Walking in the Company of Stones* with the rest of the group. Part way into the score, which we were practicing barefoot in a mossy woodland, she felt compelled to cast away first one and then another of the stones and found herself laughing followed by a strong upwelling of grief. To be moved registers at different levels and whilst emotional states are not an emphasis in this research, we

will encounter further occasions when moving with the more-than human shifts us into somatic territories that change us.

My own experience of *Walking in the Company of Stones* is of moving into an expanded timescape towards a distant horizon and the sensation of a slow opening of the bodymind to a far-off space, where time changes thickness. Overlie describes something similar to this change of temporal state when she writes how time ‘becomes a living, breathing ephemeral material that unfolds itself so that you can physically inhabit it’ (2016, p. 23). Writing about the experience of working with ‘*Walk and Stop in Time*’ Overlie notes how ‘the whole classroom shifts location and we are in Montana with time lapping at our feet as we walk up into the mountains and look across the plains’ (2016, p. 26). The Unconformity rocks proved for Hutton that the earth was far older than the prevailing Christian worldview and that earth-building processes of erosion, deposition and uplift are an ongoing live event. These findings ushered in the concept of ‘deep time’, a term coined by John McPhee (1981, p. 79). Arne Naess’ concept of the ‘ecological self’ (Drengson & Devall, 2008, p. 82) describes a way of being, an awareness and sense of belonging that is expanded, complex and entangled with human and more than human others (Drengson & Devall, 2008, p. 45). He suggests that geological scale is a useful tool for scaling human presence. Eco-philosopher Joanna Macy who reaches back to Naess, also finds that Western civilization has largely forgotten how to inhabit timescapes of more-than-human scale, particularly geological ones. In re-learning this, ‘the expression “act your age” takes on a different meaning when we see ourselves as part of an amazing flow of life that started on this planet more than three and a half billion years ago’ (Macy & Johnstone, 2012, p. 94). Macy suggests that whilst vertiginous timescales of geology diminish the human presence, learning to inhabit larger timescapes offers ‘new allies and sources of strength’ which increase our capacity for resilience (p. 157).

### **2.3. Stone Lives: An Ethos for the Work (ii)**

The heft of stone held in my hand in *Walking in the Company of Stones* takes me to my underlying structure, the bones in my hands, arm and shoulder. The skeleton

presents us with a recognisable image of ourselves, a familiar architecturing where we can organise ourselves from the head, the top -down approach or from the ground up through the feet. How well do we know the shape of our own bones? I digress briefly here, to draw on a previous collaborative research project between dancers Merav Israel, Tim Rubidge and myself, with environmental artist Kate Foster called *Stone Lives* (2014) which explored just this.



Fig.7 (left) *Stone Lives* (Improvisations), Merav Israel. Fig.8 (right) *Stone Lives* (Improvisations), Tim Rubidge. Both photos: Kate Foster, 2014

Merav: There was a whole process of finding the right stone to put on the head [...]. How do you know the shape of your skull?

Claire: By placing a stone on it maybe?

Merav: So, that's what we did! I remember trying one. I can't remember the shape, I think it was flat and then realising that I needed some kind of curve to fit into, a larger curve than that stone had, to fit into the curve of my own skull and I found that stone and put it on top of my head and felt at home with it.

(Israel & Pencak, 2014).



Fig. 9 *Stone Lives (Improvisations)* Merav Israel and Tim Rubidge. Photo: Kate Foster, 2014.



Fig. 10 *Stone Lives (Improvisations)* Tim Rubidge. Photo: Kate Foster, 2014.



Fig.11 *Stone Lives (Improvisations)* Tim Rubidge. Photo: Kate Foster, 2014

This conversational extract and the following images in figs. 7 - 11 document how playful encounters repositioned our habitual relationship to stone. Here the stones shift us away from the organising structure of the head to the bony casing of the skull. It is a small shift which brings the materiality of the skull to our awareness and displaces the focus of the face with the crown of the head. A certain displacement of the ego. The stones posed questions.

‘And how do you walk with a stone on your head? My sense was of becoming a taut and aware line, moving between the shapes under my feet and the touch of the stone on my head. Attention is drawn to what is above and below!’ (K. Foster, 2014).

Simone Kenyon, a Scottish based somatic practitioner and artist whose place sensitive performance project *Into the Mountain*, inspired by the writing of Nan Shepherd and the Cairngorms, refers to the above and below relationship as Land Side/Sky Side, a description of ‘the geological, land-bound, and weather, air space’ (Kenyon, 2019).

Whilst attending to stone can bring us closer to our mineral bone-self, the weight of stone is a potentially discomfiting encounter that requires strategies of care.

Tim: [...] carrying a rock on your head! Well, the river can carry these rocks and yet the river is so loose and flowing and fluid and here today and gone tomorrow and yet it can carry rocks with such a lightness of touch. Whereas when we carry the rocks on our heads, I didn’t feel there was a lightness of touch because one had to adopt a lightness of touch otherwise the rock got too rocky!

Claire: I noticed [...] how we need to go to meet the rock, so that you don’t get crushed by it. If you go towards it actually, rather than away from it, then somehow you can manage it.

Tim: Yes, sort of like take it on. Bring it into you.

(Rubidge & Pencak, 2014).

Here reaching towards rather than moving away from is the ‘mindful’ response of bone to stoniness. Tim goes on to articulate an ethos of care arising from meeting stone that I extend to this whole enquiry.



Tim: just by setting things up with the rock on the head which introduced caution and being gentle and kind, that kind of set a tone, an ethos for the work [...] and somehow when we started off with the rocks on our head that seemed to bring to the fore working slowly and more mindfully[...] there was no beginning or no end (Rubidge & Pencak, 2014).

The last lines here, echo the final lines of Hutton's *Theory of the Earth* 'we find no vestige of a beginning – no prospect of an end' (Hutton, 1788, p. 75). Lines that are carved into a bench beside the Jed Water. As Tim implies, this can be about managing risk so that you aren't injured by stone, but it is also 'a tender expression of relationality and its complex emotions' (Heim, 2020). Heim suggests reading the introduction to Maria Puig De La Bellacasa's book, *Matters of Care*,(2017) as 'it follows the lines of thought of Bruno Latour' (Wallace Heim, 2020). From now on, when referring to the human species, I will adopt Morton's term 'humankind', as a quality to aspire to in the terrestrial zone (2019).

#### **2.4. Entr'actes: Alternative Arrangements: A Geopoetic Score**

Entr'actes: *Alternative Arrangements* unfolded as a real-time composition of scores folded within scores.<sup>14</sup> The scores inspired by the Unconformity exemplify Halprin's description of a scoring mechanism within the land itself (1969, p. 100). I am reframing Halprin's 'eco-score' as a geopoetic score in three parts: erosion, deposition and uplift. Felicity and I could individually work with any of these parts in different sequences and at different times as, in the spirit of geological processes Hawkes explains that 'while one layer is being laid down another is being denuded' (1951, p. 23). We interpreted erosion as removal, dis-accumulation, gap, and fragment; deposition as accumulation, strata and layering; and uplift predominantly as fold but also as a movement through different levels from floor to standing.

The whole event was framed by an over-arching score which organized the flow of time and activities by directing us us to shift between two hours of making followed

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<sup>14</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, pp. 22 - 26.

by a reflective conversation which repeated throughout the day. This was a practical way to sustain ourselves creatively and physically over such a long duration.

Felicity: I found that stopping doing something and then attending to something else was quite a nice break.<sup>15</sup>

This was a score for taking care of ourselves and to create the conditions for collaboration by bringing us into different forms of dialogue. The conversational aspect brought a reflective element into the practice as research and corresponds to the valuation element of the RSVP Cycles. It became a curation through conversation of the previous making session and an opportunity to revise our scores for the forthcoming one. It was our 'entr'acte', an in-between event that had a shaping element and takes on a compositional form. Traditionally the entr'acte was an interlude between two acts of an opera or play, usually taking the form of a dance or music piece. Its function was to break up a longer performance by providing a 'something else', usually inserted as a bit of light relief. The entr'acte allows for interruption, divergence and gap within ongoing-ness which is not necessarily a fluid moving on but also a more fractured, fragmented form. This alludes in practice to Manning's description of a 'cut' of the 'total movement' and through 'this cracking, new durations will create new processes' (2013, pp. 13 - 14).

In September 2016 Wallace Heim, dancer Saffy Setohy and myself in collaboration with Creative Carbon Scotland, hosted a one- day exploratory workshop to consider 'Choreography and Sustainability' that included working with scores. (W Heim et al., 2016). I recall a provocation on friction by Wallace Heim.

'sustainability isn't a smoothly managed plan, or something that only exists for the comfort and endurance of humans. There are fragmentations, gaps, frustrations, imbalances of power and justice, conflicts' (W Heim, Setohy, & Pencak, 2016).

The highly regarded dancer Nancy Stark Smith who alongside Steve Paxton was responsible for the development of Contact Improvisation, describes gap as the place 'where you are when you don't know where you are' and where something new can

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<sup>15</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 43.

appear (1987, p. 3). This can be related to the breath cycle, as in the pause at the top of an inhalation, the space in-between one phase of the breath and the other, which we call in dance the suspension. A place to encounter change through the bodymind (A.C Albright, 2019, p. 12). We might call the suspension, that place where dancers can ‘extend’ time, an entr’acte.

Our durational event, Entr’actes: *Alternative Arrangements* entwined different temporalities.

Felicity:           Wow! Time – it’s funny! I thought it would have seemed longer, but it seems to have flown by for that session. <sup>16</sup>

There was clock time, literally the ten hour performance punctuated throughout by the town bells every 15 minutes; the episodic structure of a two-hour making session followed by a reflective conversation; the subjective experience of how the making sessions passed more or less quickly or slowly for the two performers; the body time created within the moving; the spectral presence of deep time through the context of the Unconformity which was represented in the studio through a short film periodically projected onto walls, pillars, paper scrolls and clothing (see fig.14); the camera fixed to one of the ceiling beams, programmed automatically to take a photograph every 10 minutes;<sup>17</sup> time measured through the changing light conditions over the day which was the most interesting element captured by the fixed camera and the different quality of time created by people entering and exiting the space.

Another entr’acte that emerged during the studio performance, was the comings and goings of the public, who brought a different dynamic to the event through their presence, their interactions and their moving through and around the space. We had no expectations that people would stay for the duration and the performance was scored as a drop in event. To encourage people to enter into the studio, to create some sort of context for it and to invite repeat viewings through the day, the performance was programmed alongside other events, including one led by W.A.L.K (Walking, Art, Landskip and Knowledge), a research centre at the University of Sunderland co-

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<sup>16</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 35.

<sup>17</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 34.

founded by Prof. Brian Thompson, Dr. Tim Brennan and Dr. Mike Collier (W.A.L.K., 2021). In discussion with Collier and natural historian Keith Bowey, the morning and afternoon guided walks and our performance were interwoven, to create an experience. The walks started from and finished at The Bakery Studio, making it easier for people to drop by the studio and hot drinks were available as an enticement for people to linger. There was no designated area for our event to be viewed from, the invitation being to move through and around the studio in which Felicity and I were working. As the walks would attract a diverse group of people, not all of them contemporary art or performance goers, I proposed *A Score for Audience* as a guide to participation. The score supported people to engage with the performance by underscoring processes for becoming ‘present’ to what was occurring in and beyond the studio.<sup>18</sup> A state of ‘being alive to our experience’ that the performers were also engaged with (Paramanda, 2007, p. 16). The direction in the score to ‘*notice where other people and materials are placed in relation to the architecture*’, references aspects of *Score for Architecture and Figures*.<sup>19</sup> Directions to ‘*extend your listening*’ and ‘*take in what is happening beyond the studio and within the studio*’ references a previous Extending Practice session score.<sup>20</sup> ‘*Take the time to remember part or all your journey to the studio*’ echoes one of our performance scores to recall part or all of a walk Felicity and I made to the Unconformity some weeks prior to the event. This score was a way of bringing the Unconformity closer to the performance through a process of recollection and re-imagination and accompanied the film taken at the Unconformity previously mentioned, which was projected onto the architecture, the body and paper as in fig.12 below. Bringing people into the work through practices that are similar to, or shared by the performers, creates the conditions for coming to the work as a witness rather than spectator and co-opts them as participants. With the whole studio available to the audience, individual choreographies and group compositions emerged as some people delineated the peripheries and edges of the space and others traversed it in more of a gallery mode. We all participated in a dance of walking and pausing. The score was pinned to the walls in the reception space and printed copies were available for people

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<sup>18</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p.32

<sup>19</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 24.

<sup>20</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 22.

to take with them into the studio. Audience feedback indicated that having the score written up on a larger scale within the studio itself would have been a more useful.



Fig.12 The Unconformity in Performance. Photo: Felicity Bristow, 2017.

#### **2.4.1. Performance Findings**

I will use the geopoetic score of erosion, deposition, and uplift as a way to bring something of the collaborative process to the page and curate some of the findings by drawing on the reflective conversations which being recorded at the time of the performance, get us as close as possible to the real-time composition practice.

##### **2.4.1.1. Erosion: Shedding of form**

Felicity: I was looking at eroding, eroding the paper and I was noticing your movements and scraping the paper back and how your body changed as well – just when you were turning in front of

the table [...] but it was only when I tuned into that, there was an awareness of making something that made an effect.

Claire: The sound gave me the sense of something eroding away the skin [...]

Felicity: [...] The final thing that I just started on before we broke, was testing erosion to the point of breakage. So, in a single page rather than a built-up signature, what it then becomes – a slash or a gash – it actually felt quite physical [...] it felt a bit brutal.<sup>21</sup>

Tom Hawson, had a similar physical response in making an Action Drawing , ‘thinking about the heaviness of glacial ice [...] and thinking about the paper and wanting to rip it up actually! Going, I want to scratch great holes in this because I’m thinking of that rock underneath that ice!’<sup>22</sup> Likewise, archaeologist Jacquetta Hawkes had a not dissimilar physical response to erosion, which made her ‘flesh weary to recall this seemingly endless levelling down’ (1951, p. 13). Erasure and loss are the destiny of dance movement. Dupuy suggests ‘we side with it, to the point of profiting from it at every moment of the dance’, relinquishing any ‘desire to make progress’ (2010, p. 5). This echoes the reflection that we can ‘always do less’ [...] well, not less, it’s actually going further in and making what you do resonate more’.<sup>23</sup> Active relinquishment, returns with a different nuance in this exchange.

Claire: we could maybe think about disappearing [...] a slow erosion of some description [...] I don’t want to add more movement ideas – I’m happy to go more into them and to have the idea of cutting them back.

Felicity: In terms of making that is probably something I would quite like to do now. To think of binding, accumulate some of the material in terms of sets, to work round these things [...] to experiment with curating the research really [...]

Claire: I may work with being removed [...] taking myself out rather than always putting myself in. Extraction is perhaps a better word.

Felicity: Extraction or erasing.

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<sup>21</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p.35.

<sup>22</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p.147.

<sup>23</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 35.

Claire: That thing about gap – what’s there when I’m not there.<sup>24</sup>

I note two sets of vocabularies here, one being around curation and the other around erosion. Felicity brings her bookmaking vocabulary to propose curation as a ‘binding’ of materials. In moving with the geopoetic score I find a curation of processes, experiments in making. Disappearing, erosion, extraction, removal, erasure and gap appear as vocabulary as I consider displacing my own presence. A kind of disappearing act. Removing oneself from the space is counter-intuitive to much dance training. I am reminded of the workshop *Moving Material* with dancer Charlie Morrissey at Dance Base, Edinburgh in December 2017, where he asked us to ‘move away from the space of our past movement’ (Bigé & Morrissey, 2017). This dematerialisation practice is an act of kinaesthetic imagination and a kind of exquisite extinction practice. From the performers and the viewers perspective the experience is palpable. As the performer I experience it as an extraction of myself from the space I have just inhabited that requires being at all moments in complete attention with the act of removal. When I witness others working with this activity, the effect is of the opening up of the shore on the back wash of a wave as the water withdraws.

#### 2.4.1.2. Deposition: Patterning in the Making

Claire: It was repeating but it’s not repetitive! [...] It was doing it again and then doing it again and again and again and again [...] which is different to doing something and then going, now try to repeat that!

Felicity: I think that’s what I felt about pressing onto the windows as well. It didn’t need to be the same pattern [...] That’s repeat too.

Claire: I suppose in terms of geology- the repetition basically - [...] it’s just this ongoing action I suppose, rather than repetition perhaps. But that ongoing action produces patterning.

Felicity: That’s quite interesting isn’t it, that perception of what pattern is. That it has to be a mirroring or an exact repetition.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 45.

<sup>25</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 37.

Patterning is pertinent to this enquiry because somatic practices disrupt habitual and fixed patterns of movement behaviours to allow alternative movement pathways and connections through to emerge. Drawing on the work of Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, who originated Body-Mind Centering<sup>®</sup>, I explored moving from different anatomical 'strata' (Cohen, 1995). I began with bone, where this chapter is located and then moved through skin, fascia, muscle, organs, fluid and cellular systems.<sup>26</sup> This describes a somatic cartography of the territories beneath the skin which also accommodates the lives of more-than-human others if we take in bacteria and viruses (Haraway, 2016). This going into the territories of experiential anatomies, allows for new connections within the body and generates a vast resource for movement. I interpreted deposition compositionally as accumulation, a modular expansion of movement material that harks back to post-modern compositional structure dexterously used by Trisha Brown particularly in her 1970's repertory - Accumulation (1971) Primary Accumulation (1972) Group Primary Accumulation (1973) Accumulating Piece (1973) Accumulation with Talking (1973) Group Accumulation I (1973) Group Accumulation II (1973) Raft Piece (1974) (Trisha Brown Dance Company, 2021). It is a transparent score in that it reveals the making process through the gradual unfolding of a movement phrase. It is another form of patterning. The audience is 'in on it' from the beginning as they witness the process and understand the workings. In a more conventionally choreographed piece, the dancer is accumulating a known movement phrase and the work is in keeping present to the material and to perform it as if for the first time, surprising yourself each time, not short cutting anything in the materialisation of the movement, as there is always the possibility of getting lost within the sequence. In the context of real-time composition where the material is emergent and unknown, the accumulation score became, for me, an epic task of memory and retrieval which prevented me from remaining responsive to what else was occurring in the space. Here the composing score I would say was incompatible with a collaborative performance situation.

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<sup>26</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways* p. 19 and Appendix II *Gatherings* pp. 41.



### 2.4.1.3. Uplift: An Etude on Folding

We interpreted uplift, a process for re-composing, as ‘fold’, an action that rearranges space. Felicity did this through working with paper and I by working through movement and the architecture. What was below is now above, what was edge touches centre, what was far apart is brought together. Folding refreshes and confuses peripheries, surfaces, inner and outer, under and over. As edges are brought together the contours and size of the original form change, becoming literally, enfolded or gathered into itself. It is a patterning for connectivity that Deleuze values philosophically as it brings together what has been separated and offers a way to resolve the Cartesian divide of body and mind (Briginshaw, 2001, p. 156). Briginshaw dedicates a chapter to how the Deluzian theory of fold can be applied to dance, through a close reading of choreographic works by Trisha Brown, Lea Anderson and Yolande Snaith (2001, pp. 139 - 161). Coming into contact as a grounding for collaboration is a theme which fold contributes to through its rearrangement of space that allows for different encounters and connections to be made. The locus for experiencing fold in the skeletal structure, is in the joints. To explore going beyond the obvious movement possibilities, an Extending Practice session explored fold through a dialogue between movement and paper where the paper pieces became scores to work from for moving and the moving inspired different ways to consider folding paper. The folding scores and photographic documentation of the results can be found in Appendix I *Book of Ways*, pp. 25 – 30. I wrote an open score for In the Making (iv) drawing on all these movement experiments, to test edge and fold as a performance of realignment. My score for the duration of the performance was ‘*Pay attention to the edges. Fold the edges into the centre.*’ It was a provocation to myself, to work differently with space, to bring attention to the edges, which is not traditionally where the focus settles in dance performance.



Fig. 13 Crumpling



Fig. 14 Crumpling (detail)

Photos: Felicity Bristow, 2017.

Both Felicity and I independently came to consider crumple as a variation on fold, which leans towards the vocabulary of collapse. Figs. 13 and 14 show Felicity's play with crumpling paper.

Claire: I started to have a sense of ... how 'to crumple' is different from 'to fold' ... it's a different kind of going in on itself.

Felicity: I liked that because it was less precise [...] I was folding pre-folded paper, so it had like a technical thing [...] which is why I then turned the paper sideways and started to crumple it at different points so ending up with the different shapes.<sup>27</sup>

Crumple creates encounters similar to fold, but as Felicity notes these are less precise. Crumple requires giving in to a more unknown arrangement and it is less easy to control the shaping and compositional forms that happens as a result.

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<sup>27</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, pp. 38.

Claire: And so, did you think you learnt anything about the Unconformity or geological processes?

Felicity: [...] I think through your movement is probably something that has made it more obvious in terms of ground, and how you spoke at the beginning [...] that connection to space in the body and the ground [...] But do you think you did?

Claire: [...] quite a lot of complexity, there are so many possibilities to fold and crumple and compress and shatter [...] people talk about how it all gets pressed [...] and it suggests that there is one kind of pressing up [...], but actually, when you start working with 'pressed up' [...] then you realise that it can realise itself in so many different ways.

Felicity: [...] and that's probably what I've learnt that I wouldn't have made that connection before between the body and geology.<sup>28</sup>

**EXIT**

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<sup>28</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, pp. 49.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Moss Ways**

#### *Unfigurings*

### 3. Moss Ways: *Unfigurings*

‘The first inhabitants were lichens, mosses, bog cottons, birch, holly, pine, hazel, oak’ (White, 1984, p. 9).

#### 3.1. Introducing the Somatic Encounter and the Collaboration

With the keen eyes of a botanist, Kimmerer, our moss guide, sees moss everywhere.



Fig. 15 Moss on stones beside a burn, Jedburgh. Photo: Claire Pençak, 2017.

‘Between the cracks of a sidewalk, on the branches of an oak, on the back of a beetle, or on the ledge of a cliff, [...] in the empty space left between the big plants’ (2003, p. 15).



Fig.16 Moss on a tree, Jedburgh. Photo: Claire Pençak, 2017.

I however, passed moss by in the *Pre(r)amble around Jedburgh*, as being small it is easily overlooked. A closer look at some photographs from the day, see figs.15 and 16, show moss was present on the surface of stones and trees, hence its positioning here between *Stone Ways* and *Woodland Ways*. Kimmerer, hears ‘an ancient conversation going on [...] poetry to be sure’, between moss and stone (2003, p. 5) and advises that now in this time of earthly catastrophe, is the moment ‘to take a lesson from mosses’ (Yeh, 2020). Moving with moss in this practice etude occurs within and across bodies – mine as the dancer, Audicia Lynne Morley as the scoreographer (the author of a score) and ultimately the audience in a witnessing role. The collaboration with Audicia unfolded through a long slow process of monthly sessions between 2017 - 2019 at State Theta Galleries, East Lothian. There is not space enough within the thesis to articulate all the aspects of the collaboration with Audicia and I foreground those that speak most strongly to the underlying themes of the thesis. For further information on the collaboration and artistic process I direct the reader to the wide-ranging and in-depth reflective conversation with Audicia in Appendix I *Book of Ways*, pp. 78 – 102. Our collaboration culminated in a performance *Moss: In Appreciation* presented as part of BATCH:2 as a mixed bill titled ‘Pioneers and Legacies’ alongside *Hope Etudes* by Tim Rubidge on August 4<sup>th</sup> 2019. The pioneers here being Sigurd Leeder with whom Tim studied and Anna Halprin with whom Audicia studied. The performance was in three distinct episodes which we referred to as Moss, Moss Protector and Spiral. Audicia describes the figure of Moss Protector as being ‘[a]lert, alive, I want to say astringent, not aggressive but really present and like a kind of a panther – a mother panther or something – protecting her children type of fierceness but not aggressive, not angry, just fierce. Standing for life.’<sup>29</sup>

Each of the three sections could provide material and thinking through practice relevant to the broader research themes, but as ‘close up’ is a positioning I explore here, and foregrounding-backgrounding a compositional practice throughout, I will take only the first episode of Moss to draw out my main themes of ways to connect

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<sup>29</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 92.

and recomposing bodies. Documentation of the other sections can be found in Appendix I *Book of Ways* if the reader is interested.<sup>30</sup> The following practice score, adapted from a conversation with Audicia, introduces us to moss and stone somatically.

**Material Bodies**

*Hold or imagine holding a stone in your right or left hand. Let the quality of stone be absorbed into your hand, your arm.*

*Now hold or imagine holding moss, in the other hand. Be with the moss. Let the quality of moss be absorbed into your hand, your arm.*

*How does moss feel different to holding stone? Where do you sense this difference? What changes in the hands, arms do you detect from each?*

*We will put stone down and turn to moss with its lightness of touch. Let the quality of moss move you.*

Whether we can actually hold stone and moss or connect to this imaginatively, the encounter triggers a somatic response beneath the surface of the skin.

Audicia: [...] the creative imagination has a huge impact on us somatically. And a huge impact on the nervous system. So, on a subtle level when I invited you to be either moss or stone something happened in your system.<sup>31</sup>

This capacity for imagining makes moss and stone accessible regardless of location, but our kinaesthetic and somatic imaginings exist and are the richer for having been present with and touched by moss and stone before. This supports the importance of access to different habitats to bring us into direct contact with more-than-human

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<sup>30</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, pp. 104 -105.

<sup>31</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 82.

worlds. The practice research in *Stone Ways* and *Woodland Ways* includes both field and studio practice. This collaboration with Audicia developed solely as studio practice but we both drew on previous experiences of moss in different locales and habitats. I introduce this practice context as moss-scapes.

## **3.2. Moss-scapes**

### **3.2.1. Moss-scapes in the Scottish Borders**

Threepwood Moss

Din Moss,

Drone Moss,

Bemersyde Moss,

Whitlaw Mosses,

Gordon Moss,

Hare Moss,

Dunhog Moss

Murder Moss

This roll call of remaining mosses in the Scottish Borders are gathered from the Scottish Wildlife Trust (Scottish Wildlife Trust, 2021) and the Scottish Borders Local Biodiversity Plan 2018 – 2028 (Scottish Borders Council, 2020, p. 20). Hare Moss and Dunhog Moss are two adjoining wetland sites close to where I live. Kate Foster, who has an artistic research practice around bog moss and peatland culture in the South of Scotland and further afield, dipped her toes in Dunhog Moss to celebrate Bog Day in 2019 (K. Foster, 2019b). Mosses refers to the habitat of bog and peatland as an ecology of species, to moss ‘en masse’. Hare Moss and Dunhog Moss are adjoining wetland sites close to where I live. Kate Foster, who has an artistic research practice around



bog moss and peatland culture in the South of Scotland and further afield, dipped her toes in Dunhog Moss to celebrate Bog Day in 2019 (K. Foster, 2019b). The agricultural practice of draining wetlands has shrunk the presence of mosses in the Scottish Borders, the exceptions being a number of sites protected by the Scottish Wildlife Trust and peatland restoration projects managed by Tweed Forum (Tweed Forum, 2021). Otherwise, mosses exist predominantly as spectral presences in place names and as part of the unruly history of the region as *Moss-troopers* was the name given to the horse-back outlaws that operated between Northumberland and the Scottish Borders in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century. The Borders' poet Will H. Ogilvie (1869 – 1963), in his poem 'The Raiders', poetically measures the depth of moss in relation to their horses - 'the moss is fetlock-deep' (Ogilvie). These mosses are themselves debatable lands as environmental organisations currently take on the ethics of commercial peat extraction in the South of Scotland. Currently the Scottish Green Party is campaigning to stop peat extraction for horticultural purposes at two sites - Nutberry Moss and Lochwood Moss (Scottish Greens, 2021). Before continuing with *Moss: In Appreciation*, I will go back into moss territory, to a previous encounter with moss as peatland.

*The Crossing* (2004 -2007), a cross-art research collaboration with playwright Jo Clifford, landscape architect Lisa McKenzie, composer Peter Nelson and myself, is the background context for this practice etude. *The Crossing* began with a visit by playwright Jo Clifford and myself, to the Museum of Scotland to look at the Ballachulish Goddess, a figure, made from alder with quartzite pebbles for eyes. Also known as the Goddess of the Straits, she is dated at around 600 BC and was found buried in the Old Ballachulish Moss, near a dangerous strait linking Loch Leven to the sea. The project took the form of a series of creative labs and residencies which took us out onto the raised bog of Flanders Moss, Stirlingshire managed by NatureScot (see fig. 17) and onto the blanket bog at Forsinard Flows Nature Reserve, Sutherland, managed by the RSPB, where the earth really does move.

‘I am standing quietly on the surface of an earthly Drum, my feet supported by the floating *Sphagnum*, responding to the smallest movement, rippling under my shifting weight. I start to dance. In the old way, heel and toe, in slow tempo, each footfall rippling across the bog and answered by the returning wave rising to meet my step [...] buoyant on the surface of the peat, I feel the power of connection with what has come before, the deep peat of memory holding me up’ (2003, p. 119).

Kimmerer, here dances between the knowing ways of her Potawatomi heritage, empirical scientific training and on the moss itself. On the bog she can really move with dancing grounds and in stepping in the ‘old way’ Kimmerer describes an *Under-standing Practice* and dances a ‘pied-agogy’ shaped by bog moss.



Fig. 17 Flanders Moss. Photo: Jo Clifford, 2004.

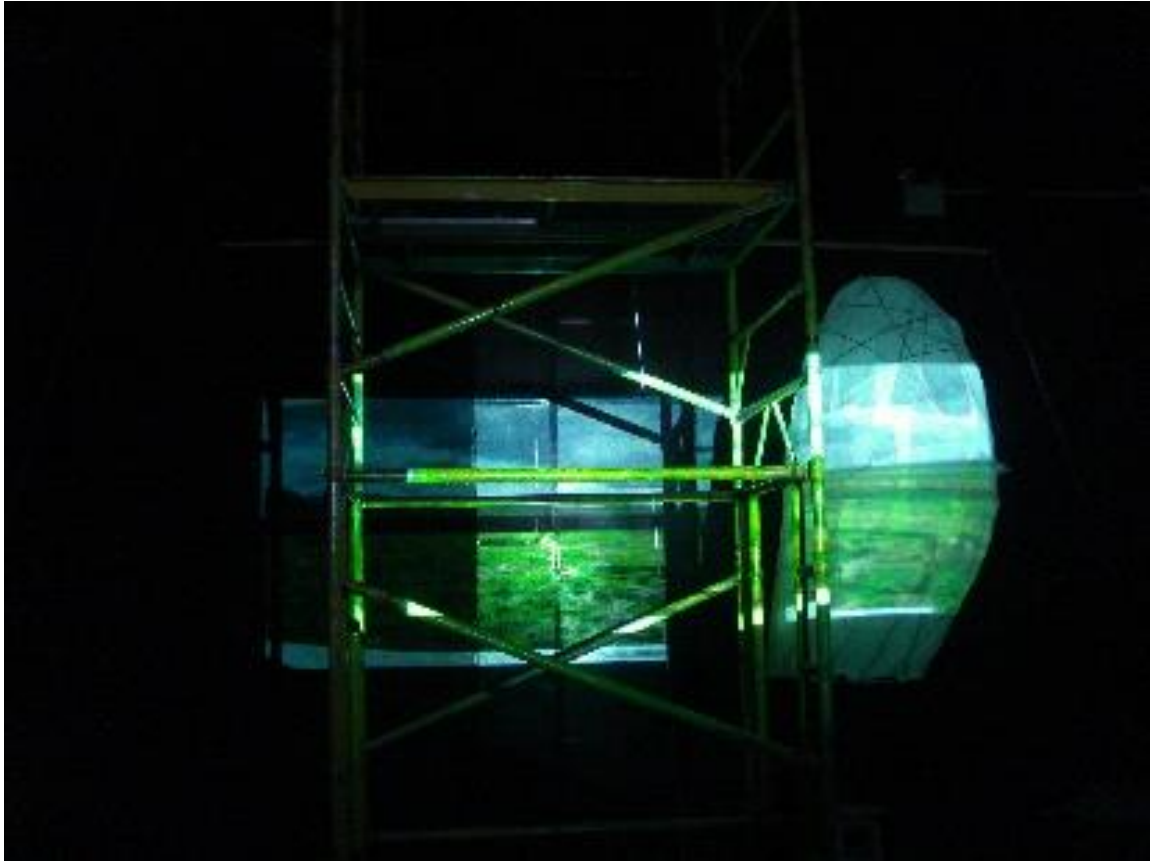


Fig. 18 (top) *The Crossing* Creative Lab. Photo: Lisa Mackenzie .

Fig. 19 (bottom left) Composing a collaborative score. Photo: Lisa Mackenzie.

Fig. 20 (bottom right) Spaghnum Moss. Photo: Jo Clifford, 2004.

Working with attention to deep time scales and contrasting spatial scales from wide open moss-scapes to close up looking all featured in the project as well as working with scoring as a way of organising. Figs. 18 – 20 give a snapshot of the process.

In preserving memories of the earth, peatland offers a context to consider the memory of the body and the increasing cultural forgetfulness by Western civilization of ecological connections and sustainable lifeways.

‘Perhaps it is no coincidence that Alzheimer’s is so huge a scourge of the Western world. A condition that erodes memory. Perhaps it is because we are forgetting so much that is crucial of our links with the world that we are so often forgetting our own selves’ (Clifford, 2004).

Hanna, the originator of somatics, describes a condition called sensory-motor amnesia (SMA), which occurs when deeply learned habitual movement patterns blunt our embodied awareness. (Hanna, 1995, pp. 349 - 351). It is this that somatic practices re-awaken and which I draw on here to explore ways to connect. Clifford reflected on being:

[...] intrigued to learn that the whole of a peat bog is inter-connected [...] a single living organism [...] an image of the connections that unite us all on this planet and it would be good to explore ways of communicating and expressing and physically understanding this better (2004).

I take up Clifford’s suggestion to explore how moving with moss might help us to remember ourselves somatically and spatially within the terrestrial zone.

Unrolling an early research drawing from *The Crossing* ( see fig. 21), I find words that resonate with this current enquiry. There are references here to geological vastness, deep timescapes, ‘connecting skull to heel’ and a ‘quality of stepping’ which were explored in *Stone Ways*. ‘Breathing spaces, ‘skin spreading’, ‘opening’, ‘contour/outline’ will appear in this etude and describe an emerging *bodyscape*.



Fig. 21 *Bodyscape* drawing (detail). Photo: Brian Hartley, 2004.

In wide-open moss-scapes we need to bend down, get closer to the earth to absorb the detail. In doing this at Forsinard, we encountered transformative processes in the cocoons of moths and the way sphagnum moss although individually small in size, collectively changes an environment to create the conditions for peat formation. I was reminded of this when a Practising Deep Time Group Residency at Timespan, Helmsdale, Sutherland in November 2016 took me out again onto Forsinard Nature Reserve. The deep time dancing practices generated from this residency connect with and inform this research.

For Kimmerer, moss ways celebrate smallness and in ‘slowing down and coming close [...] patterns emerge and expand out of the tangled tapestry threads’ (2003, p. 11). Wendell Berry, who we meet again in *Woodland Ways*, observing a mushroom growing through moss, records how he felt his ‘mind irresistibly become small, to

inhabit that place’ (2018, p. 33). Kate Foster who introduced me to Kimmerer, observes that bog mosses reveal more to the close-up eye.

‘I saw more of the interconnectedness and minutiae of life on the bog. A distant view misses all this liveliness’ (K. Foster, 2019a)

In conversation with Armanfar and Villanueva, Foster develops ideas around close looking and entanglements in peatland which is different to the close looking of a scientist placing moss under the microscope (Villanueva, Armanfar, & Foster, 2019). Moss, in shifting the scales of our attending, moves us in close, a positioning which makes us susceptible to contamination (Tsing, 2015). Somatic practices, which know about scale, teach us that smallness is neither shrinkage nor diminishment but a different qualitative state. This is what Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen is getting at when she uses movement and touch to direct our awareness to the cellular, metabolic and neural dimensions of the body, to open up the expanse of internal spaces and different anatomies (Cohen, 2020). A somatic example of Bachelard’s phenomenological observation that ‘(a)ttention by itself is an enlarging glass’ (1969, p. 158). Morton describes this somatic descent of consciousness and the experience of being ‘so much bigger on the inside’ as subscedence (2019, p. 100). Somatic practices might converse with this theory in a lively way through a ‘*subsendance*’ (my italics). Visual artist Florence Freitag and dancer Rosalind Masson, whose is coincidently part of *In the Making*, are taking forward this enquiry (Masson & Freitag, 2020).

### **3.3. Re:figurings**

#### **3.3.1. Contact-Contour**

I pass now to Audicia who describes her meeting with moss.

Audicia: *Moss: In Appreciation* really came from my explorations of working with Anna Halprin in nature at the Tamalpa Institute between 2005 and 2008. [...] I was doing the level 2 training programme and I remember being there on my final days and walking outside the iconic dance deck, out into Anna Halprin’s

Redwood grove. And as I was walking, I was aware of all these beautiful large moss-covered stones and also within the Redwood grove there's old Redwood growth, new Redwood growth and there's the old grandfather roots and bare trunks. And these also would be covered in moss. And we had done a lot of work in the grove and I don't know where it came from, but I just heard this voice coming up saying 'You must dance me. You must move me'.<sup>32</sup>

Kimmerer's describes how '(l)ying cheek to cheek with rocks and logs, mosses are intimate with the contours and textures of their substrate' (2003, p. 15). This orientation towards the haptic and the inhabiting of surface takes us into the studio practice and to *contact-contour*, the score that Audicia brought to the process at the start, and which shapes the first episode of *Moss: In Appreciation*. Audicia explains the genesis of contact-contour and how it works.

Audicia: ...*contact-contour* is one of Anna's [...] key environmental scores, that are designed to really help people connect. So, contact-contour, the languaging as I'm discovering, is a mix between her languaging as a dancer of how to make contact with herself on an inner level but also how we make contact with our environment.<sup>33</sup>

*Contact-contour* mobilises a two-fold process for coming into connection and is a shaping that arises through an entanglement of bodies. I will separate out the two instructions, contact and contour, to consider them individually and then reunite them to consider what the process brings. Being in contact with stone led to bone and the vertical axis of the skeleton, from the feet to the skull.

Audicia: So, the contact piece came up for me in terms of just looking at moss, its architecture. It has no roots it grows over things. So, it's an immediate contact. It's not a plant that is suspended in space it relies on the contact that it has with the substances around it and that's how it grows.<sup>34</sup>

Moss inspires a quality of contact which takes us into low level horizontals, to lying on the floor, a place where we can begin to let go of our bipedal structure and

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<sup>32</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 78.

<sup>33</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 79.

<sup>34</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 79.

recompose ourselves differently. Laurence Louppe writing about dancer Trisha Brown, describes a process for unfiguring.

‘As in Brown’s body, there is only matter dropping downward, resting evenly on the ground, a place without architecture where the weight is distributed so that nothing is assembled or erected’ (2010, p. 118).

As moss is wedded to surface, Audicia directed me to move with my hands, feet, and head in constant contact with the ground. This was a simple instruction that was less simple to achieve being habituated to propelling and organising the body through especially the head and feet. The task proposes a physical question. Where else can I move from and what does that do? We went to where movement was already occurring, the breath, by slipping through the bony rib cage into the structures of the lungs and into the breathing space the diaphragm activates, more places became available to move with. We experimented with small, discrete displacements, undulations and isolations of individual shoulder blades, the pelvis, different places in the spine, that would appear, disappear, and reappear differently. We also explored different qualities of contact shaped by the dual imaginative positioning of moss covering and stone being covered. Out of this a different kind of shaping emerged, what I can best describe as a *bodyscape*.

*Bodyscape* is represented visually in this ambiguous moss figure in fig. 22 which might be taken for a moss-covered stone, but a closer look reveals it as a moss-covered figure. The image created by Audicia, overlays a practice photograph of myself as the dancer, with close-up photographs of moss by Alan Watson Featherstone, an ecologist, nature photographer and founder of Trees for Life. It was Featherstone’s photographs that gave us a better appreciation for the life cycle and diverse structures and patterning of different mosses and stimulated early movement explorations. The experience of *bodyscape* is not a less differentiated, but differently differentiated experience of form, where the process of forming, the emergence of form, is discovered rather than achieved. Manning (2013) describes it well as ‘a force taking-form rather than simply a form’ (2013, p. 31). In dissolving the usual shaping of the human figure, different bodyings become available which changes the tone of moving.





Fig. 22 *Bodyscape* Image courtesy of State Theta Galleries, 2019.

Audicia: [...] and also what it does, it contours. It moulds itself around the specific shape of that which it is moving and growing over.<sup>35</sup>

To understand contouring more deeply I workshoped it with the Extending Practice Group.<sup>36</sup> We first explored *contour* with a partner and found that our experience of contouring had elements of outlining but was also responding more multi-dimensionally to mass and texture. What was experienced was a cartography of very fine, qualitative shifts in the contouring of folds, hollows and extensions. It was an endlessly rich practice to get lost within and required a deep attention to detail. We also worked with contouring at a distance, rather than in direct skin contact. Here the somatic imagination was activated in the moving and there was license to contour what could not be touched. One dancer shifted her attention internally to work with contouring internal organs, heart, lungs and liver. Contouring is a complex investigation into shaping as a process for coming to know more deeply and which leads us away from the self-generation of shape to ‘being shaped by’. Working with contouring expands our embodied vocabulary, unfixes habitual patterns of moving and can get us closer to multi-species bodies. Audicia outlines her understanding of the subtle distinction between contact and contour here.

Audicia: So, our micro movements, our muscles, the activation of the nervous system starts to change when we give ourselves a

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<sup>35</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 79.

<sup>36</sup> Appendix II *Gatherings* p. 46.

different instruction [...] they hold different qualities [...]to contour you have to deeply meet what you're with. Whereas to contact is more on the surface in a way. But to contour – it's like I've got this image of a Redwood tree and the bark of a Redwood tree. So, I can contact that Redwood tree I can feel the texture of it but to really contour it, I have to go into it. I have to really kind of find its pathways which for me it's a softer and a deeper form of contact.<sup>37</sup>

So contouring is the somatic and haptic equivalent of looking closely as described in Villanueva et al. (2019). *Contact-contour* recalibrates the human figure towards a *bodyscape*, which I define as a somatic ground that allows for shapings other than the distinctly human, making the moving body available to the influence of other life ways.

I came to understand contact-contour as a process of unfiguring and refiguring, a recomposing of the body through moving which requires an unravelling of movement patterns brought about by actively relinquishing the architecture and organisational patterns of the skeleton. It invites a way of bringing our attention to another that is directly experienced and is an example of how '[c]onnectivity thinking 'radically challenges hyperseparation' (Rose, 2017, p. 494). I could find no reference in any written literature by or about Anna Halprin that explicitly refers to or describes *contact-contour* as a practice score, so I asked Audicia about its origins. She describes here how the Halprins' have really fine-tuned the language of connection.

Audicia: They were constantly working together on the relationship between space and environment and the body. And contour is very much to do with landscape architecture, with landscape. The contours of the land, how the land moves and then if you bring something into the land, like a path, how does that pathway move within the contours, within the structures of the landscape. So [...] what I understood was that the language of contour comes in from this language of landscape, and the language of contact comes in from this language of the body, of the movement. And so, what I'm with is this beautiful marrying of the language of the land and the language of the body coming together.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 80 - 81.

<sup>38</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 80.

Audicia is describing *contact-contour* here as an eco-score. It is both a languaging and a practice for supporting collaboration and co-creation which can be extended to support multi-species making. In Audicia's tracing of contact to the body and contour to the land this extends the possibilities of *contact-contour* as a close-up practice for place making inside the terrestrial zone.

### 3.3.2. Skin Deepness

'Mosses inhabit surfaces: the surfaces of rocks, the barks of trees, the surface of a log, that small space where earth and atmosphere first make contact' (Kimmerer, 2003, p. 15).

Kimmerer's description of surface resonates with the spatiality of the terrestrial zone as a boundary layer. Surface as we will discover is not as superficial as it sounds and is where pattering is often found. Light in the form of moss projections patterns surfaces in Figs. 23 – 25. It was not intended that the projections convey information about the relationship of light to moss. In scaling up the projected moss structures the human is also scaled down to converse with moss visually in a moss-scape. Audicia directed me to explore 'stone covered by moss' and 'moss covering stone' as kinaesthetic experiences to engage the moving body in. This accounts for different relational perspectives and acknowledges encounter as a meeting of more-than-one. Being rock covered by moss I was taken somatically to the surface of the body, to the skin which has more than one facing. The outer facing is open to earthly encounters and the inner facing to encounters beneath the skin. Embryological development begins from three primitive cell types—the endoderm, mesoderm and ectoderm—each responsible for the development of different parts of the body. Embryology, which shapes somatic knowledge, complicates the usual meaning of 'superficial' when it shows how the skin and the central nervous system both develop from the same primitive cell, the ectoderm.

'Depending upon how you look at it, the skin is the outer surface of the brain, or the brain is the deepest layer of the skin' (Juhan, 1995, p. 364).



Fig. 23 (top), fig. 24 (bottom left) and fig. 25 (bottom right): Details of moss covering, Claire Pençak. Photos: State Theta Galleries, 2019

In this deciphering of anatomy by Juhan, a practitioner of the Trager® approach to movement therapy, we are, then, all skin deep, and the skin and brain are an extended unit from ‘cortex to fingertips to toes’ (1995, p. 364). He describes an anatomy of connection and cohesiveness which is distributed not centralised, where the organising doesn’t reside in one place but many. Scottish choreographer Rosanna Irvine rephrases ‘skin deepness’ as ‘surface and depth are a continuum’ which allows for a nuanced relationality of where you are at any moment (2016, p. 17). Working with moss covering stone, invoked a spatial movement of spreading.

Audicia: So, the thing about moss is that it spreads [...] in all sorts of different directions. [...] and we worked a lot on how your body could expand in all directions [...] on how we could get this sense of equanimity in the body, that had a shift from the mammal into the moss species and became multi-directional.<sup>39</sup>

From my kinaesthetic experience this arises through working with the quality of *porousness*, which encourages a seepage of form and dissolves the familiar architectural form of the body, contained by skin, structured by bone and secured by

<sup>39</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 82.

muscles. *Porousness* overflows edges and boundaries, brings us into contact with the world and creates the conditions for exchange. Here we move close to Dewey when he writes:

No creature lives merely under its skin; its subcutaneous organs are means of connection with what lies beyond its bodily frame' (1934, p. 12).

The *Glossalalia* underlines the importance of *porousness* for the well-being and functioning of the terrestrial zone.

'porosity is vital to the health of the ground, which affects not only that which grows from it, but the entire system of atmospheric cycles from the ground to the sky and back again' (Korintenberg et al., 2021).

Working with *porousness* kinaesthetically, I'm aware of moving with a different anatomical figuration.

Claire: it wasn't to not be human but to find another figuring [...] to find a re-composition of the body in some ways that was approaching moss.

Audicia: [...] And one of the things in terms of this un-figuring, was to find different patterns of movement. We've all got preferential patterns of movement and what we were exploring in the early stages was how to bring [...] equal consciousness to different parts of the body and how to find motion, very isolated, in different parts. So, I remember we did a lot of work on just moving one part of the scapula, then finding a part of the rib and then moving down to a pelvis. This kind of separating out of something we so often bind together as a whole to create beautiful, sensual, large, complicated movements. What I was doing was really taking, sort of like de-structuring in a way and within that then we met different rhythms, different tones in the body, different capacities of movement that a rib can move very differently to a shoulder blade. So, it was like opening up the vastness of this inner landscape'.<sup>40</sup>

In working with isolations to break open the possibilities of where moving could arise, it not only dissolved the skeletal architecture, but opened up an omnidirectional 'vastness', an equal consciousness through all the parts of the body. Reeve (2011) calls this 'biocentric equality' and relates it to a more ecologically conscious spatiality

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<sup>40</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 83.

(p.51). Audicia and I also found that in attempting to find a moss figuring, we needed to reorganise movement elsewhere in the body.

Audicia: [...] when I see the head on top of the spine I'm immediately flooded with stories, like so much comes from seeing the figure, the human figure [...] and those stories were connected to the human and so it was really clear how I was looking for - how is the head a continuation of, instead of something that is organising? [...] how to let that not be the driver, how to surrender that and how to let the head be part of, as opposed to, a place [...] how to release the head from this responsibility of being on top of the spine [...] we'd done a huge amount of work in the body on finding different body parts and the head then becomes another body part as opposed to being the organiser.<sup>41</sup>

Once the head wasn't leading and interfering, it was easier to move in any direction. This directionality which I call *everywhereness*, is an anatomical shift into 'a brave, new fibrillar world' of fascia (Lesondak, 2017, p. 16). Lesondak, a fascia specialist describes fascia, also known as connective tissue, as 'one complex, holistic, self-regulating organ' (2017, p. 2). It is everywhere within the body and allusive to imaging. Dumit and O'Connor (2016) describes fascia as:

'the viscous goop that connects, divides and slides between muscles, organs, skin and cells [...] found to be active, intelligent, communicative, and a sensory organ' (pp. 35 - 36).

Moving with fascia complicates the figuring of the moving body through a web of multi-dimensional relationships and connection. It is most usefully imaged experientially, that is somatically tracked and traced through moving. Chung describes moving through fascia as an 'evolving frame of reference' that stimulates more diffuse dancing and overrides:

'the dualistic worldview of the body composed of parts making a whole organism to the complex view of the body as differentiated from a single whole into functional systems that interact synergistically' (O'Connor, 2016 p. 71).

In short, the fascia composes us ecologically and we can sense that through the moving. Along with contact, A.C Albright (2019) links connective tissue to resilience

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<sup>41</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 84.

as it supports an ability to expand and receive (p. 14). In supporting resilience, fascia can bring an anatomical shaping and embodied meaning to Deep Adaptations use of the term, resilience.

This final extract supports what has been arising in the conversation through moving between Audicia and myself and echoes the cartographies suggested by skin deepness.

‘A greater sense of permeability and diffusivity within my body is created when I attend to the fascia. This gives me a sense of a larger interior space, which provides more opportunity for movement initiated from the interior, and thus makes me more available for movement and forces from the exterior to connect to my interior space. The interior space being not just the deepest innermost regions but also all the regions between the skin and the deepest’ (O’Connor, 2016 p. 70).

These alternative anatomies of *bodyscape*, *porousness* and *everywhereness*, reshape conventional notions of edges and borders in relation to our own sense of self, which are not contained by, but fielded through skins and describe an ecological body. Bringhurst and Zwicky (2018) describe the wild as ‘a big self-integrating system whose edges are everywhere’ (p. 33). Perhaps these somatic movement processes can be framed as a rewilding of moving.

### **3.3.3. Breathscares: An invitation to participate**

Audicia: [...] in the work that the Halprin’s have been doing for years, you’re involved!<sup>42</sup>

For *Entr’actes: Alternative Arrangements* a score was offered to close the gap between performer and audience. Likewise, for *Moss: In Appreciation*, a score for audience guided a journey into moss. How to shift the ‘fast paced, adrenalized way in which we often see and interact with things’ was a question Audicia and I often asked in the context of the first eight - minute episode of the performance which was composed of small details of movement and a slow progression across the floor.

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<sup>42</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 94.

Audicia: if you were out in nature, if you were interested in something, you'd go close up to it and you'd have a look at it, or you might look at something further back. So, I was playing with a score of Anna's, which is to do with focus, which is Near, Mid, Far.  
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A compositional component of Anna Halprin's work is around 'eroding the distance' between performer and audience. Rather than the more conventional spectator role with its more removed perspective, audiences were invited to be involved as 'co-creators or witnesses' (Worth & Poyner, 2004, p. 76) where 'presence is crucial' (p. 144). Audicia expands on how she understands the role of the witness.

Audicia: A witness is actually like a live participant, their presence is participating in what's happening [...] when something becomes witnessed, when something is seen, somehow a dynamic, changes [...] it becomes often more alive, sometimes it can also become more conscious, self-conscious but it heightens something.<sup>44</sup>

Audicia proposed a score for the audience in three parts. The invitation for the opening section which this chapter is concerned with, was to find a place in close proximity to the performer to observe 'the micro movement'.<sup>45</sup> People either stood, brought their chair with them or sat on the floor.

Audicia: I'm interested to hear how it was for you because you were the performer. How did that impact you as the performer?

Claire: [...] it was great to have people quite close, because [...] this kind of work [...] it's about showing the detail and in a way it allowed me to have more integrity with that work knowing that I didn't need that to carry through a larger amount of space [...] the moment I need to 'project' [...] something gets lost because I'm already extending beyond myself in a way. So, [...] it gave me more confidence in being able to [...] just do the work and not have to amplify [...] Also, the audience themselves, they are in movement, they're sitting here close, and then they need to move back, so they are already bringing some sort of experience of moving in the space. I mean that's what we're working with isn't it. So somehow, we're existing in some sort of zone that's similar, they become part of the performance rather than

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<sup>43</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 94.

<sup>44</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 94.

<sup>45</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 95.



external to the performance from the performers perspective I suppose.<sup>46</sup>

Bringing people closer to the source of the movement allows for a deeper somatic engagement between performer and witness, an empathetic experience mediated on this occasion by connecting through the breath.

Audicia: I feel like this sense of the breath and the presence of the breath in the work is really symbolic of a process of coming in to meet ourselves and this is something you were talking about in terms of the witness coming close to you, they're also coming close to themselves by coming to the breath.<sup>47</sup>

In this extended extract Audicia links time to breath and change, particularly as a way to let the audience as witnesses participate in the work.

Audicia: [...] we did a lot of work on the breath and how we could articulate that motion [...] and it's such an archetypal movement for life, that by focusing on that it brings the witness to that place in themselves as well. And so, when we all come to our breath, we really shift in our nervous system, we really come into more of the parasympathetic space and this where, it's not that I think about this explicitly, but healing happens. The body starts to self-regulate when the parasympathetic system is allowed some space and some time. So, the blood sinks down into the organs, there is a kind of sinking which is a metaphor for moss close to the ground.<sup>48</sup>

Audicia is identifying here how coming into breath together can affect a subtle somatic change of state in the body of the witness that shifts them into a slightly different time-space and brings them into presence with the performer. Coming into breath with another was how I began the public workshop with a diverse group of non-dancers exploring Deep Adaptation in Hawick. 'Breathing into Deep Adaptation' established a supported, supportive and empathetic tone for a day that was considering some difficult topics around societal and environmental collapse. We might call it a resilience practice. For this practice score go to Appendix II *Gatherings*, p. 37. Large scale breath drawings were to have featured in BATCH:3 *Ecological Bodies* as part of

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<sup>46</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, pp. 95 - 96.

<sup>47</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 99.

<sup>48</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 99.

Rosanna Irvine and Kian McEvoy's work *Empathic Bodies*. I recognise in Audicia's description an ethics of care which links back to the use of moss because of its healing properties in indigenous societies. Mosses, particularly sphagnum because of its capacity to absorb liquid and its antiseptic qualities, have traditionally been used by indigenous societies including the Gaelic and native American Indian culture for babies' nappies and for bandages. Sphagnum became widely used in World War I because of its healing properties (Boissoneault, 2017).

Witnessing, in closing the gap between the viewing perspective and the performer perspective, can create the conditions for empathy. It is a way to connect with others and with ourselves. From my own experience of witnessing from a close up position I find that it offers an opportunity to make choices about what you attend to and as such you contribute as a co-composer of the work. Personally, I find this makes for a more engaging, enlivening experience and brings with it a certain responsibility that a more remote view does not ask for. A reminder that our presence in a space involves us in what is occurring.

**EXIT**

## **Chapter 4**

### **Woodland Ways**

*木の間 Among Trees*

## 4. Woodland Ways: 木の間 *Among Trees*

### 4.1. Entering in

I must enter this birch-world

And speak from within it.

(White, 2003c, p. 275).



Fig. 26 (left) and fig. 27 (right). Audience entering into Hundalee Woods and following ways. Photo: Jenni Ozwell, 2019.

In figs. 26 and 27 we see the audience for the performance of *木の間 Among Trees* programmed as part of BATCH:2 Experiments in Making, entering into woodland at Hundalee, Jedburgh where the visual artist Tom Hawson, one of my collaborators for this practice etude, lives and works. They serve to lead us into this next practice etude. Woodlands invite entering-in. The geopoetic perspective White describes above is a multi-species cosmology; a more-than-human worlding. In following Wendell Berry

who Bennett credits as one of those who helped her cultivate a ‘sensory attentiveness to nonhuman forces’ (2010, p. xiv), we are led ‘under the trees’ deeper into interiorities and into sense perceptions.

‘I go in under the trees. I pass beneath the surface. I am enclosed, and my sense, my interior sense, of the country becomes intricate [...] Here the eyes become dependent on the feet. To see the woods from the inside one must look and move and look again. It is inexhaustible in its standpoints’ (2018, p. 17).

These are views from the inside, where the trees and the lay of the land insist on a different rhythm of looking, where seeing is reliant on the feet. Berry suggests a pedagogy for *under-standing* woodland that is an invitation to move. He describes an episodic choreography of walking and pausing, that is a kaleidoscope of partial perspectives. Through the lens of the ecological body, which is always in movement, Reeve (2011) describes ‘stillness’ or ‘stopping’ as pauses in the line of movement’ (p. 48), whilst Irvine (2014) speaks of movement and stillness ‘co-existing’ (p. 91). We have already encountered a score for *Walking and Under-standing in Space*.<sup>49</sup> I take this as a rhythm for this chapter, where entering in is a process for landing in the terrestrial zone and perceptual practices refresh ways to connect.

## **4.2. Encountering Deer-ness.**

The thinking through practice, gathered here as *Woodland Ways*, began not with trees but with deer. Both of which shape the artistic practice of Tom Hawson, a visual artist who knows wood and is also a deer manager. Deer management is predominantly about controlling deer numbers through hunting, with stalking being the process for getting close to deer. The knowledge and practices required for this emerge from deep connections to the lifeways of the animals woven into their natural habitats. Tom describes deer management as a ‘dance in the landscape in symbiotic relationship with the herd’ and recognises a connection to performance practice ‘it’s the same world, it’s the same thinking, the same kind of physical intelligence’.<sup>50</sup> In 2008, Tom created and performed a masked deer dance within a gallery setting; an intersection of his

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<sup>49</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 22.

<sup>50</sup> Appendix III *Book of Ways*, p. 140.

artistic and deer management practices. Tom describes performing this deer dance in Appendix I *Book of Ways* pp. 153 - 154.

Tom [...] if I was going to do it again it would be in a different way [...] Probably exploring some other avenue of deeriness!

So, this is what we did over a series of workshops with the Extending Practice Group from October 2018 to April 2019. Tom was interested in how his deer dance might evolve with a group of movement practitioners and I was curious about movement research practices shaped by roe deer and where they might lead us. Whilst we were following roe deer, Scottish based artist Hanna Tuulikki, was simultaneously doing her own artistic research amongst red deer, white-tailed deer and reindeer. *Deer Dancer*, a two-channel film and sound installation was the result of this practice-led investigation into 'how the imitation of deer behaviour constructs 'wilderness' as the site for the cultivation of hetero-masculinity and how hunting mythologies shape and impact real ecologies' (Tuulikki, 2019). Tuulikki's research is a cross-cultural and gendered enquiry into traditional deer dances performed by men. Mimesis appears not only within the deer dances but in the way that she adopts a variety of male guises relating to masculinity and deer, namely 'Monarch, Warrior, Young Buck, Fool and Old Sage'.

Our project was sensed out 'on the hoof'. The practice diary for *Woodland Ways* with practice scores and reflections on the workshops, can be found in Appendix I *Book of Ways* pp. 110 - 123. In hindsight, my methodology is best expressed as 'following deer'. Reeve (2011) offers a definition of 'following', derived from a somatic bodywork approach called matching or kinetic mirroring, which puts trust in 'listening, being patient and acceptance' (p. 29). Bennett also writes of following, and acknowledges following Derrida 'following the scent of a nonhuman, thingly power, the material agency of natural bodies and technological artifact's' (2010, p. xiii). In adopting this attitude of 'going with', deer, became our guides for this practice etude. Before we could begin to follow deer, we needed to get closer to them.

Tom: the more you empathise with them the closer you can get [...] and to understand them, you really have to appreciate their ecology, their habits, their relationship with the sun, the wind.<sup>51</sup>

In the first session Tom introduced us to vocabulary associated with deer ecology. We learnt details about roe deer's eating behaviour, that deer browse on a varied diet of different shrubs, small leaves, shoots, and berries, whereas cattle graze on low-level vegetation usually grasses and have a less varied menu. We learnt that roe deer are either does or bucks, whereas red deer are hind and stag; that deer orientate through the ears which move independent of each other; how the herd follows the snow line; how bucks shake branches and make a stand; how learning from the environment is transferred through the herd; how 21<sup>st</sup> century human behaviour is changing and shrinking their habitats. How our choice of a good picnic spot, a sunny meadow with an open view perhaps close to water, is also a favoured place for deer. Tom describes the embodied ways when working in the field to get closer to deer, like crouching down, bending over, seemingly engaged in an activity, and by diverting the gaze, as a form of shapeshifting.<sup>52</sup> The result being that deer either ignore you or move closer. This change of shape was not through imitating deer but by embodying a less (predatory) human stance, becoming in some manner a woodland creature through being at home amongst trees. Like a badger rooting around in leaf litter or maybe a wild mushroom picker 'the concentration of eyes downward, the careful tread of boots' (Grigson, 1975, p. xii). For us to really get closer to deer we needed to follow them into their habitat.

Tom: [...] you realised very quickly that we needed to go to the woodland [...] to get the context of that.

Claire: Yes, we did a little bit of work in the studio, which was fine as a way of starting but it felt like, for me I have to say, I need to be in the place.

Tom: You need to immerse yourself in the environment, yes, that's right.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, pp. 139

<sup>52</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 140.

<sup>53</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 139.

And so, on a chilly November morning the group met in the Haining Woods, near Selkirk.<sup>54</sup> The Haining is an 18<sup>th</sup> century manor house within a wooded estate which formerly belonging to the Pringle family and was gifted to the people of Selkirk in 2009 by its last owner.

### 4.3. Perception Practices

#### 4.3.1. Unsighted Practice

##### *Unsighted Practice*

*We are going to explore the woodland unsighted.*

*Find someone to work with. One of you will close your eyes and the other will be your eyes. Your partner is there to accompany and assist you in navigating the woodland safely. They can act as a guide when necessary, to keep you safe but are not leading or directing the exploration. Guiding might be by lightly taking the elbow and forearm of the unsighted mover, which allows for some gentle steering, and/or by giving verbal directions to help navigate obstacles and changes of ground.*

*Continue exploring in this way for 15 – 20 minutes, then, find a place to pause. Before the unsighted partner opens their eyes, try to describe where you think you are in the woodland.*

*Exchange roles, saving any observations until both of you have had a chance to experience the practice.*

*In sharing the experience, you might reflect on how being unsighted composes your moving differently. What new elements of the woodland reveal themselves to you?*

*And from the experience of guiding, does accompanying an unsighted mover change your moving? How? What is revealed to you?*

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<sup>54</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways* pp. 113 – 115.



There is nothing original about this practice, and I have done it many times in different contexts, and for me, it is always an absorbing experience of re-enchantment (Gablik,1994). Fig. 28 below shows the Extending Practice Group working unsighted in the Haining woods and fig. 29 is a *Woodland Ways* workshop in woodland at Wiston Lodge as part of the Expressing the Earth Conference, June 2019.



Fig. 28 Unsighted Practice, Haining Woods. Photo: Claire Pençak, 2018



Fig. 29 Unsighted Practice, Wiston Lodge. Photo: Claire Pençak, 2018.

Un sighted Practice is most usually experienced within a studio setting to bring a different awareness to moving and as part of a process for building trust with another mover before going on to more risky partnering activities. In a studio with even ground, the practice can evolve from walking to include trotting and running, and to the guide staying close by but not necessarily in physical contact. The practice is mainly concerned with the self. Out of doors the experience and orientation are differently shaped. Aside from the unevenness of the ground which asks us to slow our moving down, our attention is given over to sensing. We become more intensely present to and with our surroundings through touch, smell, temperature and changes of light and textures, shapes, aromas, and movement are more keenly felt. Working unsighted, we literally lose sight of where we are and ‘re-orientate our attention’ from the optic to the haptic (Tsing, 2015, p. 22). Each contact, the feet navigating the woodland floor, the hands finding a branch as it extends away out into the space, the movement of air, our sensitivity to changes in light and shade, is an opening into a fresh way of knowing, moment by moment. We become alert to every encounter, listening through the fingers, the skin, hearing the sounds underfoot, the rustle of leaves, the alarm call of birds, perhaps a dog and dog walker passing through, the voice of your partner at your side. Time shifts as you are absorbed into the activity, and duration, as a measurement of minutes, falls away. We slow down for the obvious reason of working unsighted, and because we are filling each moment in gathering invisible data through touch, sound, smell, the proprioceptive and kinaesthetic sense. Much time is needed to be in such close contact with the multiple and shifting complexities of place and the presence of more-than-human worlds. We are moved from the mundane and rehearsed, to experience more intensely and in fresh ways, what the eyes can overlook.

This is how a workshop participant responded to *Un sighted Practice*.

‘walking around blind [...] the sense of touch is increased. i notice light and dark. vulnerability is increased. the need to rely on my outer awareness [...] touch, [...] the skin’ (Personal email correspondence, 2019).<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Appendix *Book of Ways*, p. 127. The use of no capital letters is the respondents’ own.

A renewal of the senses as a process for reformation and restoring connection is a practice that dancers already explore. Lisa Nelson's 'Tuning Scores' for example, are a process for developing bodymind as 'a tuning instrument composed of finely differentiated antennae. These are our senses, and they measure change' (Nelson, 2004, p. 3). Japanese Butoh dancer, Akira Kasei, also composes with the senses to transform both the dance and the dancer.

'If your senses do not change your dance does not change [...] when the senses change, consciousness changes and the physical body itself changes' (Fraleigh, 1999, p. 233).

As well as nourishing the senses, the practice makes us susceptible to vulnerability, a feeling mostly associated with insecurity, something to avoid. Accompanied by a partner we can rest in the experience of susceptibility safely, as someone is looking out for us. 'Susceptibility' Morton reminds us, 'is very good news for ecological ethics and politics. I can be touched' (2019, p. 112). In this instance, we were touched by the liveliness of woodland. Honing the senses through *Un sighted Practice* was a preparation for exploring practices to attune to woodland as a multi-species action space. I acknowledge that I risk hugely oversimplifying the senses and the sensory experience here and in conflating them not only across cultures but between species.

Claire: [...] I call them Perception Practises. And some of them I'd maybe done before in a similar way, but [...] deer [...] gave it a particular context.

Tom: Yes, it was a focus wasn't it to draw you deep into that way of sensing the environment, the woodland.<sup>56</sup>

Tom's deer managing knowledge directed and sharpened our noticing towards deer ways. We looked for visual signs - frayed branches, nibbled shoots and deer paths. We practiced listening in to sounds from within the woods, near and far, inspired by how deer use their ears like antennae, picking up information from different directions and at different distances. We orientated through our cheek bones to up and down wind positionings to be in the best position to pick up scent signals. Tom sniffed out the musk of deer on branches, I could only smell the tree. And so, we tried to follow into

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<sup>56</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, pp. 139 - 140.

the densely woven, textual habitat that deer move within and through. Of course, we could never succeed in this to the extent that deer do, but in honing our attention slightly differently we exited from a very different woodland to the one we entered at the start.

‘the way that moving up through the ferns i came into the light. a sense of reaching for the light [...] and when i was down with the rotting log, amidst the dampness and the softness [...] it gave before me, the sense of the dark as homely. i imagined burrowing, and this being a safe place for beetles and grubs. imagining myself as part of the environments that i was moving through. sense of curiosity. of slowness (you necessarily need to slow down). of wanting to spend time with. the sense of smell. (also of sound)’ (Personal email correspondence, 2019).<sup>57</sup>

#### 4.3.2. Peripheral Vision

##### Peripheral Vision

*Stretch both your arms out to either side, level with your shoulders. Now wriggle the fingers of both hands. You should be able to register this movement in the corner of your eyes. This is peripheral vision, a widening of the gaze to take in what is happening at the edges. It is a practice shared by deer managers and dancers, to increase spatial awareness of what is happening around them.*

*Explore the woodland now using only peripheral vision, maintaining an awareness of where others are. What do you notice?*

How we cast our gaze and the ‘too-easy linkage of seeing and thinking’ (Morton, 2019, p. 112), reinforces the positioning of the world existing out and over there and from which we are removed, contributing to our ‘hyperseparation’ from the biosphere (Rose, 2017, p. 493). Nan Shepherd was already on to this when she wrote that ‘our habitual vision of things is not necessarily right [...] and to glimpse an unfamiliar one,

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<sup>57</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 127.

even for a moment, unmakes us, but steadies us again' (Shepherd, 2011, p. 102). Unmaking is a process that somatics contributes to and in this section our habitual ways of seeing are challenged by looking out the corner of our eyes (Vannini et al., 2013, p. 5). Tom explained that deer managers practice peripheral vision before going into the field to attune themselves to the environment and to embody a more empathetic, less predatory manner of behaving which is less likely to trigger alarm amongst birds and mammals. Sustaining peripheral vision requires practice and is difficult to maintain over a long period. In fig. 30 we see an audience member working with the practice score in the woodland.



Fig. 30 Audience member performing *Peripheral Vision* score. Photo: Jenni Ozwell, 2019

The placement of our eyes in the front of our skull and not to the side as deer, necessarily organises our moving differently. Navigating uneven ground is tricky when what is directly in front of you has disappeared from view. I noticed as I worked with the practice that I was lifting my feet higher than usual, as a strategy to avoid tripping over branches or uneven ground. The stepping had a quality of lightness and

there was something deer-like in this action that wasn't mimicry and which I hadn't consciously achieved but had emerged from moving through woodland with a different orientation, as if the feet know their way around, self-organising their moving through. I identify here a *woodland pied-agogy*.

Peripheral vision asks for a different action of the eyes, a dropping and relaxing of the eyes back into the bony sockets of the skull. It opens the gaze and rouses a listening quality with the eyes, cheek bones and skin as well as the ears. Manning extends this changing tone of the senses beyond the body to mingle with other bodyings so that 'looking becomes a touching, a feeling becomes a hearing. But not *on* the skin or *in* the body. Across strata, both concrete and tending, attending to the world' (2013, p. 2). This shift from foveal to peripheral vision is a movement away from the targeted gaze cast with precision where the environs are somewhat fuzzy, towards an open field and a sensing, sensitising gaze. This is the quality that Irvine (2014) gives 'gaze' when she describes it as being 'a soft focus towards another human being' which is receptive towards what is being seen (p. 89). In *Woodland Ways* the gaze is extended towards more-than human others. Responding to exploring woodland with *Peripheral Visions*, a workshop participant observed a different quality of centre.

'i felt to be the centre but extended out. not necessarily a self in the same way. because extended, relational' (Personal email correspondence, 2019).<sup>58</sup>

White says the same differently, when he writes in 'Walking the Coast' that 'the whole I'm out for is centre plus circumference' (2003c, p. 154). Walking amongst the trees with peripheral vision, the architecture of the woods becomes more apparent and the presence of movement at the edge registers clearly. For Albright heightening awareness of the peripheries of our gaze 'is a neurological example of literally as well as figuratively opening our perspective – of seeing beyond the centre to the margins' (2019, p. 4). Organising space around 'a less vertical plane' and horizontalizing our perspective is a spatial reorientation (Bennett, 2010, p. ix). Kimmerer recalls how a Cheyenne elder told her 'the best way to find something is [...] to watch out of the corner of your eye, open to possibility, and what you seek will be revealed' (2003, p.

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<sup>58</sup> See Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 127.

9). Something of this sidelong shaping has composed this research which is a foraging amongst more -than -human ways to seek practice scores that are less a way forward, than a way into. For Bennett (2010) this sideways positioning

‘[...] tends to horizontalize the relations between humans, biota, and abiota. It draws human attention sideways, away from an ontologically ranked Great Chain of Being and toward a greater appreciation of the complex entanglements of humans and nonhumans’ (p. 112).

So peripheral visions in recomposing our spatiality, contributes to an ‘unfiguring’ practice where we literally view the world and move within it differently. The next phase of the research takes us closer to Bennett.

### **4.3.3. Ex:tendings**

The rain kept us inside for the January session, so we reflected on our woodland explorations through a making and moving process in the studio.<sup>59</sup> What emerged was a collection of sculptural sensing apparatus, a playful response to the ways that roe deer gather information about what is taking place in the near and far space around them through sound, smell and vision. You can see the resulting paper and withie pieces in figs. 31 and 32 below. Come the spring we took these sculptural attuning devices to Bowhill Woods, Selkirk. The sculptures became our ‘guide’ to entering into and moving through the woodland where they took on a liveness of their own, as we were drawn on by pathways not of our own making, sensing the suppleness of place through the willow. The instruction was to hold the withie with a secure but not too tight grip between the thumb and forefinger so that movement could be channelled through the arm and flow through the nervous system. My own experience was of being drawn into an ex-tended sense of self. An ex-tension of bodymind through the withie and paper sculpture, and a spatial amplification that led me into zones of the woodland habitat that I wouldn’t usually reach. I follow Irvine’s definition of extending as ‘the capacity of the body to sense beyond its own boundaries and with the surrounding MIILIEU’ (2014, p. 89).

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<sup>59</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, pp. 119.





Fig. 31 Tendencies and leanings towards, Claire Pençak  
Photo: Jenni Ozwell, 2019.

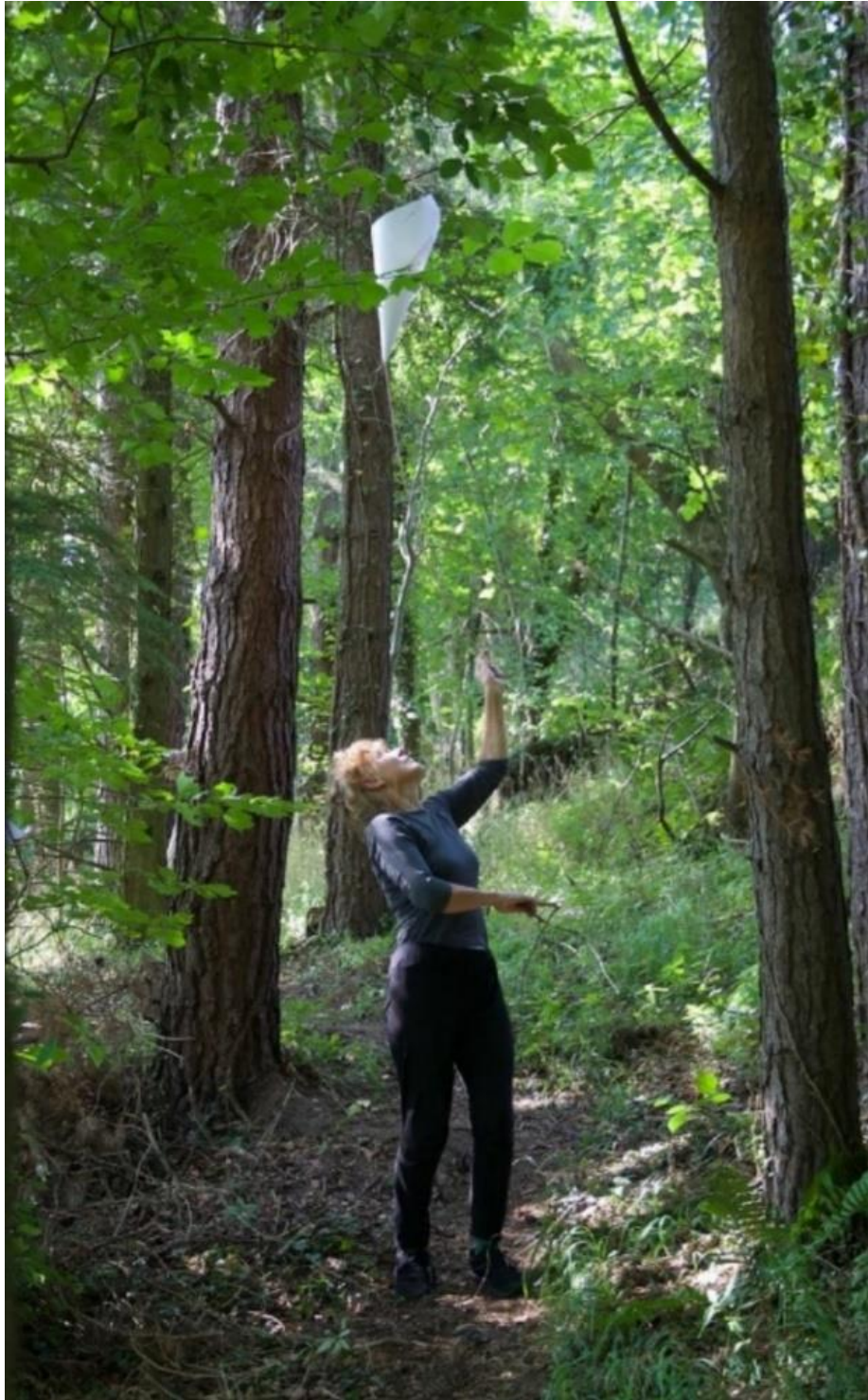


Fig. 32 Extendings, Helen Douglas. Photo: Jenni Ozwell, 2019.

In being drawn up into the heights to hover amongst the branches there was a sense of listening into trees, ‘tuning to moving air, bird chatter, tree talk, and a hatch of insects attracted to the white paper trumpet’.<sup>60</sup> The attention of the dancers in figs. 31 and 32 convey something of this listening quality.

Responding to moving with the paper and withies, a workshop participant noted that:

it seemed to be drawn to the sun. sometimes it got tangled in the trees. it liked the sensory interest of the trees. sound was augmented. it was all rustley. it didn’t like being on the ground so much. it much preferred the heights to the depths. ferns were ok [...] it felt curious [...] the curiosity was taken out of my hands. also like a nose. it was nose-y. sometimes it wanted to eat things. probably because it was shaped like a cone. it was very wavery and wobbly. there was definitely some information being conveyed down to me by touch. (Personal email correspondence, 2019).<sup>61</sup>

These observations foreground the sensory experience as a conduit for inviting curiosity and the sculptural listening devices as a way to connect to the higher reaches of the terrestrial zone, the treetops. This is quite different to the somatic cartography in *Moss Ways* which connected through internal and external surfaces. Where moss is down to earth, woodland ways takes us up to earth, as the terrestrial zone encompasses the atmosphere which I haven’t directly included here, but which the trees and their biological processes point to.

#### **4.3.4. Collective Bodies**

In following deer, we found ourselves in woodland where the sense of centre was replaced by an in-the- midst positioning, a more communal and ecological perspective. (Reeve, 2011, p. 50).

‘...this deer, bird, plant, tree, air, weather, insect place. A gathering together. A herd. Deer pass through this way, Tim says.’<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 124.

<sup>61</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 128.

<sup>62</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways* p. 124.

Overlie observes that dancers with undeveloped spatial perception ‘unconsciously behave as if they are the centre of attention’ space being, ‘only where they are and centre stage just seems the right place to stand’ (2016, p. 12). This could be extended to describe human- centism more generally. Indigenous ways invite a different composing and perception of self, where the idea of being alone in a forest is meaningless, ‘and perhaps “wild” fades away as well’ (Grignon & Kimmerer, 2017, p. 70). For Wendell Berry the woods are where we can learn to be in a more ecological relationship spatially.

‘As I go in under the trees, [...] I enter an order that does not exist outside, in the human spaces. I feel my life take its place among the lives – the trees, the annual plants, the animals and birds, the living of all these and the dead – that go and have gone to make the life of the earth.’ (2018, p. 28).

In extending our sense of self towards others, we move closer to dances of collectivity, which in Manning’s words, ‘cuts across individuality’ and are fielded by bodies (2013, p. 27). Reeve finds that ‘from a position of ‘being among’ rather than ‘being central to’ we experience our own ‘system as an intrinsic part of a wider set of systems and act accordingly, rather than perpetuating an attitude of ‘using’ the environment.’ (2011, p. 50). This workshop participant’s experience brings Manning and Reeve’s positions together.

‘i could empathise (thinking about deer) with the feeling of being part of a herd [...] a one amongst many. not an individual as such. just the centre point of an extended awareness (from which my awareness was being cast outwards)’(Personal email correspondence, 2019).<sup>63</sup>

Herd suggests a collective of the same kind – a herd of deer - but the more we followed deer the more herd expanded to become a multi- species collective – ‘a more than one living breathing sensing BODY attuning as one body. (Irvine, 2014, p. 89). Tom explained for example, how deer take cues from bird calls to know what is going on. An alarm call by a bird is registered meaningfully by deer.

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<sup>63</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 127.

‘There is no body that isn’t always already collective, always already active in the relational interweaving of more than one tending, more than one phase, more than one ecology in the making’ (Manning, 2013, p. 27).

We began this practice etude with a focus on individual deer behaviour, then took a more ecological turn as deer led us to and then dissolved into woodland, a multi-species habitat, a gathering of mammals, including humans, trees, plants, birds, insects, moss and mushrooms (Tsing, 2015). Akira Kasai, in conversation here with somatic practitioner Sondra Horton Fraleigh, directs this understanding back to the bodymind.

Kasai: The fingernail does not grow apart from the body and the body if a human being does not grow apart from the community. It grows with the community, and that community includes all things in nature, not just the human community [...] Your body does not develop unless you develop the community as well.

Fraleigh: This is an important idea in terms of our position in history, our ecological body (1999, p. 236).

What is the shaping of this interdependence? Tsing (2015) suggests that assemblages ‘get around the sometimes fixed and bounded connotations ecological “community”’ (p. 22). She defines assemblage as ‘open-ended gatherings’ that ‘don’t just gather lifeways; they make them’ (pp. 22 - 23). I am drawn to ‘gatherings’ as a compositional form, as a series of live events, and as a way to score a dancing place. Gathering is a verb, it assembles and brings together. From the experiential perspective, somatic ecologies gather together a multiplicity of anatomies that shape and compose our moving within, through and across. We have moved with some of them - bone, skin, fascia and the senses - in *Stone, Moss and Woodland Ways*.

#### 4.3.4.1. 間 (*Ma*)

Widening and deepening are how Arne Naess describes the processes needed to develop a more ecological self and both of these spatial perspectives are being explored in this thesis (Drengson & Devall, 2008, p. 82). Going deeper has been the overall direction, deeper into practice, place and philosophy and widening has emerged as a theme around edges, porousness, and peripheral visions where verges, margins

and border are the dancing grounds for alternative perspectives that help us connect in more ecological ways. The German – American phenomenologist and neurologist, Erwin Straus, a contemporary of movement theorist Rudolf Laban, used the term ‘wide openness’ which,

‘is neither here nor on the horizon, nor is it on a line connecting the here with any other points of space or such points with each other; it is not quantifiable but is rather a quality of space’ (Straus, 1966, p. 35).

Space in this description is a ‘discrete material’ with its own organising qualities, a definition that contemporary dancers can move with (Overlie, 2016, p. 10). ‘Walk through a perceptual door to Space’ writes Overlie, ‘and it begins to be your partner in performance’ (p. 6). She is articulating here, a poetics of space. From my own movement experience, I think of the use of the baton, a development of Joseph Pilates early work taken up by Dominique Dupuy’s teaching, which I was first introduced to at the London International Festival of Theatre, London in 1999. In working with the baton ‘we become two at the same moment – the one who opens up the space (with the baton) and the one who breaks into it (with parts of the body)’ (Dupuy, 2010, p. 8). The vitality of space is made palpable by ex-tending movement through an object, a following of the baton where the bodymind is organised ‘in favour of the movement’ (Dupuy, 2010, p. 4). The tending towards happens in two directions, by ex-tending through the baton towards the world out there, we simultaneously deepen the in-tending, by the same degree opening up inner spaces of the bodymind. It is more easily perceived as a dancer or witness, than written about.

This materialisation of the ‘presence’ of space connects to the Japanese concept of Space|Time denoted by the character 間 – pronounced ‘*ma*’ - which articulates the spatial essence of Noh theatre and Butoh dance, the traditional Japanese visual arts and garden design. *Ma* is not absence or gap but the live presence of space which comes into being through relationship, that which is in between. *Ma* arises through process and is an attitude towards (Bellerose, 2015, p. 11). Nitschke (2018) chooses to translate *ma* as ‘place’ which invites a shaping of place as not fixed but which arises between. I took *ma* into the title of the art/dance event that emerged from this practice etude. The Japanese character 木の間 – pronounced ko-no-ma – translates as ‘among trees’

and literally means the place/time/mood of trees (Nitschke, 2018). It chimes with the in -the- midst positioning I described earlier which I propose as a dwelling perspective for the Critical Zone where we no longer live on earth but dwell inside it, amidst multi-species gatherings, as terrestrials.

I described the art/dance event *木の間 Among Trees* in the BATCH:2 programme as ‘an etude for bodies, woodland and sculptural objects accompanied by live drawing [...] an investigation into sensing place’.<sup>64</sup> The framing of the event as an ‘etude’ foregrounds the creative processes and steers away from the idea of a performance as a finished product. It was both a strategy for managing audience perceptions and creating a context for the performers that was as close to the spirit of the Extending Practice sessions as possible, which was never intended as a vehicle for performance but for sharing experiments in making.

As in the two previous practice etudes I wrote a *Score for Audience* to connect the audience to the composing and somatic processes that we had been exploring and to bring them closer to the performers.

Tom: you cohort the audience not to be an audience but to be co-collaborators in a journey.<sup>65</sup>

The score, which you can find on pages 131 - 132 in Appendix I *Book of Ways*, drew on perception practices for close looking, peripheral vision, near and far listening. Fig. 33 shows me talking everyone through the *Score for Audience* in Tom’s studio before heading into the woods.

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<sup>64</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 130.

<sup>65</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 148.



Fig. 33 Explaining the Score for Audience. Photo: Jenni Ozwell, 2019

This journey was into woodland as a tuning space for perception. The audience were free to make their own choices about what to watch, where and for how long, there being no designated audience space or positioning. People performed a dance of walking and pausing at different places along the way, gathering close to performers as in fig. 34, leaning into trees, trying perception practices and witnessing performers listening in and attuning through the sculptural devices. Tom brought deer back into the performance through his action drawing where he drew with both hands simultaneously working with charcoal made from trees in the woodland (see fig.35). The drawing was a response through energetic gestures to sounds in near and far distance, birds, cars and motor bikes, to land and river forms, geological processes and time.

Tom: well, a deer kind of draws on the trees and then does a little performance to show off to everyone in the area both with his scent, the number of marks he's made and then line of sight, showing off by rattling the tree, so the drawing was all of those things as well, in a way.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Appendix I *Book of Ways*, pp. 147.





Fig. 34. Audience gathered around dancer, Helen Douglas. Photo: Jenni Ozwell, 2019



Fig. 35 Action Drawing, Tom Hawson. Photo: Jenni Ozwell, 2019

## **Chapter 5**

### **Connecting the Threads**

## 5. Connecting the Threads

let's call it

a rediscovery of Alba

cartographies

topologies'

(White, 2003c, p. 36)

### 5.1. The Story So Far

In responding to questions raised by the cartography of earth proposed by Latour, I wanted to explore how dance making and somatic movement practices could authentically contribute different perspectives and processes for becoming earthly. The somatic encounters with more-than-human ways, have explored processes for changing states to unlearn human centism and reorientate us towards terrestrial zones. Dances of symbiotic relationship and anatomies of connection have emerged that orientates our moving towards ecological relationships of dependency and sets an embodied tone for an ethics of care. In paying attention to alternative ways to organise bodying through relational encounters, we can begin to dwell in the changes required of us if multi-species flourishing is to be given a chance. In reflecting on how best to contribute to the precarity of the ecological situation we find ourselves in, I offer no solutions or revelations that have not already been arrived at. At best, the research points towards approaches for preparing the potential for change within ourselves and identifies resourceful practices that we can draw on. In the spirit of scores being a process for asking questions, the research offers provocations for my own future practice, and opens a potential territory for place practice. These are raveled together having emerged one out of the other through being brought into contact and resist being teased apart but I try here to consider them separately by first recalling the story so far through each practice etude, followed by a consideration of the contribution to

artistic practice, to the think-piece by Latour and Weibel and as a provocation for placemaking in the Scottish Borders. I then scale up the findings to offer some reflections on where the research might contribute if considered at a big picture scale. To take us out of the research and into the world, I return at the end to the local scale and reconnect the different research strands through *River Ways*, which describes a proposal for cultural placemaking called *Connecting Threads*. The development of this project in collaboration with Southern Uplands Partnership, Creative Arts Business Network and Tweed Forum is documented in Appendix I *Book of Ways*, pp. 155 - 190.

The performance series 'BATCH' served to contextualise my practice alongside other Scottish based movement practitioners, contributed a new event to the cultural landscape of the region and created a performance platform for dancers, and a practice ground for witnessing guided by *Scores for Audience*. The curation of BATCH holds traces of the research process. BATCH:1 was a fortuitous gathering together of work that was already happening, and emergence was a thematic thread through the programme. Details of all three programmes can be found in Appendix II *Gatherings* pp. 14- 22. Borrowing the language of the RSVP Cycles, the first programme was a curation based on resources already available - the resources being collaborators and their willingness to join in with the idea, performance work already in progress, availability of the studio space and a small audience for such work locally. BATCH:2 *Experiments in Making* was differently curated partly because support from Creative Scotland provided financial resources to invite artists and to extend the marketing and publicity materials and activities. The subtitle to BATCH:2 - *Experiments in Making* held the different pieces of work together as an assemblage and the theme of pioneers and legacies in the opening programme brought a perspective through time from Sigurd Leeder (Germany) and Anna Halprin (USA) to dancers today, some like Ian Spink, being a pioneer in his own right. BATCH: 2 extended the 'studio performance platform' to the woodlands at Hundalee. BATCH: 3 *Ecological Bodies* if the global Covid pandemic had not emerged, would have gone further with widening the encounters and extending the studio out of doors into the town.

### 5.1.1. Stone Ways

Landing into earth making theories and the practice ground was the direction for *Stone Ways*. In this gathering of geologists, geographers, poets, visual artists and dancers, past and present, we asked ‘questions of the stones’ to describe the somatic ground from which this project unfolds (Gordon, 2019, p. 10). *Changing states* was our theme and Hutton’s Unconformity the geological provocation for thinking through place which moves us beyond geo-political bordering and into a geo-logical terrain, where tectonic events reconfigure spatial perceptions of edges and borders through folding and set us adrift on dancing grounds. Hutton’s theory was a radical repositioning which diminished and dented the human presence and creates an historical context in the Scottish Borders for considering Latour’s worldview. My enquiry is framed as somatic cartographies. I take White’s ‘ideas of the earth’ literally, and move through stone and bone, materials from which geological and skeletal organising structures are composed (2003c, p. 431). Starting from where we stand, the theme of *under\_standing* evolves as a dynamic contact with the ground beneath our feet, an embodied process of knowing that connects the feet to the head and brings the liveliness of ground into our consciousness. Through standing practices, we experience small dances of alignment which resonate deeply within the body. *Under\_standing Practice* extends this to the earth as a practice for landing ourselves in the terrestrial zone. In extending into stone and taking on its stoniness an embodied ethic of ‘care’ was introduced, where going to meet the stone with lightness set a tone of attention, without which we lose contact and fall out of touch. *Walking in the company of Stones* moves us into an ‘aesthetics of slowness’ associated with ecological approaches which sensitise us to different scales of temporalities both vast and small. We find that moving in relation to deep timescapes, brings us fully present into the now, allowing us to move along with the trouble (Haraway, 2016). Being ‘present with’ is also prescient for the recasting of audience as a witnessing presence.

Drawing on Lawrence Halprin's description of geological composition as an eco-score, *erosion*, *deposition*, and *uplift* become processes to move and make with in the studio and in performance and the following findings emerged from these practices. *Erosion* allows for disappearance and ruination, a shedding of form where nothing endures except the process itself, a continuous state of re-composition. This is a dancing ground of relinquishment, where the dance is given up at every moment. Both the privilege and curse of dance which dissolves instant by instant, lingering in the embodied memory of the dancer and as slippery fleeting gestures in the witness, as Latour found. In working with erosion as a withdrawal of presence, we disrupt traditional Western performance training which encourages the performer to dominate the space and draw attention to the human figure. *Erosion* asks for a decomposing of our presence, a small extinction practice, where we are directed to consider what else might become present, that is overlooked or backgrounded. Somatic movement practices challenge habitual unconscious patterning of movement and shift the experience of *deposition* as a continuous accruing of more of the same, towards a more nuanced sense of accumulation as a re-finding or experiencing again, encouraging a critical awareness of how we are moving at every moment and the possibility therefore of moving differently. *Uplift* also allows for something else to emerge, which in the Unconformity manifests as *fold*. We find that *fold* actively recomposes space in bringing together what is seemingly separate, like edge, corner, and centre, and proposes a way to connect that articulates new relationships. In contrast to *fold*, collapse was experienced as a fall into gravity that does not exhibit yielding. Yielding being an intended relinquishment, a 'going with' that uses contact (with ground or skin) to aid the recovery of movement, to move elsewhere, what might be described as a capacity for resilience (A.C Albright, 2019, p. 13). Yielding introduces 'going with' as a consciously performed relinquishment practice that makes us available to being differently organized and reappears in different guises as *porousness* in *Moss Ways* and *following* in *Woodland Ways*. Considered as a geo-story, which is an eco-story, the world making processes do not in the telling offer a neat beginning, middle and end. Rather it is a messy, folded, and fractured tale which invites an alternative coherence for dance making in the terrestrial

zone. One that veers away from singular continuous movement narratives and from an aesthetics of recognizable spatial forms and set steps. The durational performance *Entr'actes: Alternative Arrangements* was the performance context for exploring this recomposition of making and moving, and how it might support audiences to access the style of the work. Relationality finds compositional form in the *entr'acte* where moving-between creates a dialogic relationship that supports difference. Like the walk and pause practice, our use of the *entr'acte* created a dedicated space and time within a performance for reflection and refreshment and speaks to sustaining practices and making from an inside perspective.

### 5.1.2. Moss Ways

*Moss Ways* works with change from the perspective of *soma*, from the inside of a creative and somatic process and takes up Jo Clifford's wish to communicate, express and physically understand the image of connection that moss offers us (Clifford, 2004). The proximity and scale in this chapter is close up and small, where movement reverberates at a cellular, metabolic, and neural dimension and, where sensing the breath of another, can affect a change in your own system. Moving with moss reorientates us from the skeletal structure and the organising head towards the skin and connective tissue. It describes a process of shedding one composition of the body for another, another kind of erosion of form. Relinquishment of habitual ways of moving rise to the surface in *Moss Ways* through an unfixing and dissolving of where we organise moving from that allows other anatomical narratives to shape our moving. *Unfiguring*, *bodyscape*, *contact-contour* and *porousness*, processes of shaping, unshaping and reshaping, contribute to Latour's questioning of our composition, presence and figuration in the context of the New Climatic Regime (B Latour, 2018, p. 85). This is subtly different to *Stone Ways* which was more concerned with making, unmaking, and remaking. The latter tends towards the choreographic and the former towards the moving-dancing. *Unfiguring* and *bodyscape* share a similar intention. The human presence is modified through the process of *unfiguring* which relinquishes habitual ways of organizing movement that exhibit more dominant cultural and human

tropes, like leading with the head. *Bodyscape* is what *unfiguring* might arrive at, where movement creates an experience of the body as terrain, a topographical form not delineated by distinct parts, (arms, legs, head) but accesses movement at the level of the connective tissue giving expression to other areas of the body. *Bodyscape* tends towards *everywhereness*, a spatiality that reshapes the notion of centre as either centre-less or many-centred. Either way, the focus is distributed and fielded and describes a more equitable spatiality where hierarchies are dissolved. *Contact-contour* describes ways to connect that generates embodied knowledge of the other and of ourselves. In shifting who/what is doing the shaping, the propensity to orientate lifeways towards ourselves is weakened. *Contouring* brings us into deeper contact as we take on something of the other in moving closely. In privileging the haptic over the optic *contouring* in *Moss Ways* shapes an alternative to close looking that unsteadies the dominance of vision as a lens for knowing. *Porousness* contributes to *unfiguring* as a kinaesthetic process that prompts a less contained figuring of ourselves. Working with mutability, leakage and flow, borders and edges dissolve making us more susceptible to the lifeways that we encounter. Working with porosity, movement can seep through the skin connecting internal and external spaces and expand our capacity to contact surfaces in all directions. As omnidirectional bodies we are better equipped to relate ecologically. *Porousness* describes another process for ‘landing’ in the terrestrial zone. Being rootless, moss inhabits surfaces and so can be described as superficial. A term that deep earth scientists have also given to Critical Zone scientists (Arènes, Latour, & Gaillardet, 2018, p. 8). Somatic knowledge that connects the skin and the mind brings the definition of the ‘superficial’ into question with the notion of being skin deep giving the superficial an unexpected depth and proposing a super-fascial orientation. The anatomy of connections found in moving through the fascia and the unfiguring processes described in *Moss Ways* contribute somatically to a ‘Gaia-graphy’ (Arènes et al., 2018, p. 5). The reflective conversation with Audicia clarifies the vocabulary that I have been using in *Moss Ways*, some of which we inherited from Anna Halprin and some we evolved through our collaboration. Practices of care resurfaced in this etude through the cultural use of moss as an antiseptic dressing for wounds, for soaking up liquids, and in the preserving qualities of peat. The material and chemical properties of moss point to the preservation of old ways of connection,



a knowledge resource that might be restored. Kimmerer expands on the Scottish context of the cultural value of moss through her Potawami heritage. The score for audience developed for *Moss: In Appreciation*, was an invitation to come into breath with another. This is both a way to connect with other (multi-species) bodies at a deep level and a practice that encourages a somatic change of state in the witness. The spatial reorientation in *Moss Ways* from the vertical towards the horizontal seeps into the next etude.

### **5.1.3. Woodland Ways**

*Woodland Ways* responds to a call to enter into the woods where *entering-in* is offered as another way to land in terrestrial zones. In following deer, we find ourselves amongst trees, a perspective from the inside which supports becoming earthly as it gives ‘a much better feel for what is necessary for every life form to subsist’ (Arènes et al., 2018, p. 122). Somatic practice is itself a perspective from the inside, so this etude presents a nesting of interior perspectives. What emerges from the experience of working unsighted is an intensity of engagement in the detail and texture of a habitat and an opening up of curiosity to encounters with the multiplicity of others that are felt, heard and smelt. Where sight can keep the earthly at a distance, somewhere over there, working unsighted we have to move in close, and become susceptible to the presence of others. A renewal of the senses invites changes in perceiving, bodying and understanding that entangle us in dances of intimate encounters. Kimmerer expresses something similar, although the visual languaging remains, when she says that ‘(i)ntimacy gives us a different way of seeing, when visual acuity is not enough’ (2003, p. 13). Being led by deer, when we did work with vision, our gaze was drawn horizontally, towards the peripheries, where movement became visible at the edges. We discovered that peripheral vision reshapes our experience of moving through place and contributes processes for recomposing edges, that has been a recurring theme. The experience of the inside in *Woodland Ways* is of *being among* not only trees but birds, mammals, insects and plants, an alignment towards an earthly perspective. We found ourselves moving ‘down with the rotting log, amidst the dampness and the

softness’(Personal Email Correspondence, 2019) and up into the canopies, to sound, taste and smell the air waves amidst the leaves and branches. Explorations that describe a sensing out of the Critical Zone. Drawing on eastern aesthetics, the concept of ‘*ma*’ enhances the presence of the space between as a composing structure which materialises relationally. Allowing for the presence of space translates into a performance activity of dematerialising that gives presence to what is revealed by the dancer rather than the dancer themselves and subverts the Western performance convention of personalities which resonates with the exploration of erosion in *Stone Ways*. In a rewilding of perspective, woodlands give us a fragmented, partial view from the inside, a view from within this terrestrial zone where being among describes an ecologically sensitive relationship for dwelling. It is a provocation for dance making as a composition made from and witnessed from the inside where dancers and witnesses both inhabit the performance. Following, being guided, and guiding appear through all the etudes. In the unsighted practice we rely on an attentive guide, and we were later led by the withie and paper sculptures into low and high places. Through all these improvisations curiosity, trust, care, and attention were all exhibited in different ways and an alternative style of leadership was enacted that allowed for exploration and comes from a positioning and responsibility shaped by care. The connection practices in *Woodland Ways* cultivate an empathetic tone and a leaning towards that brings a listening quality to encountering others that might be usefully applied also to cross- disciplinary as well as multi -species collaborations. Like the peripheral vision practice that deer managers use before going into deer territory, Hawson recognises traditional skills of connection which persist in animal management practices like herding stock as a resource to draw on. He makes connections between the transmission of traditional land practices and somatic movement and dance practice where learning takes place on the back of another, very literally in Tom’s experience.

Tom: [...] my dad was a stockman, and I was born on a dairy farm and I was taken out on his shoulders, in a papoose or whatever, and as soon as I could sit up, I was on his shoulders apparently going out at whatever age that is, one, or one and half, bringing the stock in, at five in the morning and five in the afternoon.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> See Appendix I *Book of Ways*, p. 141.

It is also the case in contact improvisation and somatic movement that the haptic shapes our navigating of bodies.

## **5.2. Becoming Earthly: Landings into Practice and Place.**

‘What if thought is not born within the human skull, but is a creativity proper to the body as a whole, arising spontaneously from the slippage between an organism and the folding terrain that it wanders?’ (Abram, 2011, p. 4).

Abram elegantly encapsulates in this question how the contributions to knowledge were arrived at in this research, the terrain being not only ground, located as the Scottish Borders, but more-than-human encounters. He is also describing metaphorically the relationship between the movement practice and the theory, where moving with theory slipped it off the page and into the dancing ground of bodies, which is to say, not head on. Slippage emerges not as absence, but as gap and *ma*, which are thick with material presence, and which we can move into or remove ourselves from.

So, what can we glean from this foray into becoming terrestrial for somatic movement and dance making and do they offer different things? Somatic movement practices contribute alternative starting points, perspectives and processes for transformation and describe a dance of changing states that occurs between inner and outer spaces. They offer and guide us into an embodied experience of change that is more directly experienced than words might be and act as a practice ground for transformation. Speaking from the inside positioning of the dancer within the research, from the positioning of *soma*, *unfiguring* evolves as a slow accrual of small shifts that is a letting go of habitual ways of moving, to which there can be a resistance. It takes time to reorientate, and I experience the process as an uneven series of frustrations. It feels like nothing is changing and the more I try the worse it becomes yet processes of change are taking place invisibly in deep structures until one day I surprise myself by finding that I am in a different dancing place. Finding an image or direction to work with and guides to follow can be helpful. Transformation or reorientation is not necessarily experienced from the inside as a huge event but can be a small shift that

registers deeply. It was helpful to work with following more-than-human ways to reorientate attention outwards and away from oneself. Turning towards more -than-human figurings is not to become less than, but more fully human, for 'we are human only in contact, and conviviality, with what is not human' (Abram, 1996, p. ix). *Porousness* and *contact-contour*, support us with becoming susceptible to the presence of others which opens us up to, in Naess' words 'an extension and deepening of care' that makes us vulnerable (Drengson & Devall, 2008, p. 311). This language of deep ecology speaks to the somatic process. Becoming earthly for me is experienced as a greater choicefulness of moving and an opening to different anatomies of connection that are already present. Here begins a 'rewilding' of dancing possibilities and the need for embodied processes for changing states.

Reflection on the experience of changing state by others than myself, was possible through *The Melting of the Individual* score by Boris Charmatz which I explored in public workshops (2010). Melting begins in places that are not easily visible, a slight change of tone here, a relaxation of a muscle there, a giving into gravity somewhere else. The simplicity of this score, conceals a more complex experience. Responses by participants to the score revealed that movers have 'different levels and areas of melting points', and the quality of melting is not a smooth and even change of state, but fractured, 'punctuated by sudden breaks and shifts.' The direction 'to melt', a dissolving of form, met with resistance particularly in the bones - 'the spine doesn't melt.' In the act of melting, itself another unfiguring practice, there was for some a sense of letting go, a surrender and 'eventual disappearance into the earth' that wasn't experienced as uncomfortable. The experience from the witness positioning, was sometimes strikingly different to the embodied experience of the mover. One witness noted '(d)eep sadness evoked. I was surprised how affected I was.' Perhaps the instruction to 'witness' rather than 'watch', elicits a feeling with, that makes us more susceptible and would support an ecological positioning that is not fixed but moves with. A coda to the score, suggested by Tim Rubidge, to 'restore yourself in whatever way you wish' is an invitation for renewal and resilience, experienced by one participant as a 'spring in the muscle'. This rebound out of contact with ground that takes you somewhere else, offers a future and hope-orientated process. These somatic

responses are an embodied exploration of the Deep Adaption key action words - Relinquishment, Restoration, Resilience and Reconciliation.

I have been drawing on an existing canon of practices for bodying that connects dancers and dance makers across time and through bodies. This enquiry has afforded the opportunity to reflect on and acknowledge the legacies of the embodied knowledge passed on to me over the years and to consider the capacities these movement practices might offer to the terrestrial project. In drawing out these practice lineages I am more closely connected to my own practice as an evolution of the practices of others which we take on, pass on and become the caretakers of. Lineages were also overtly acknowledged in the *Pioneers and Legacies* double bill in BATCH:2 through the links to Sigurd Leeder through Tim Rubidge and Anna Halprin through Audicia Lynne Morley. This is an ethics of care and connection extended towards our practices as part of a process for becoming earthly. Movement practices here are given an ecological turn that supports resilience and relationality and teach us to move and make decisions like an ecological system, that could go beyond the training of professional dancers and the creative context. This is not a novel idea. Ben-Gurion, the Prime Minister of Israel for example, wanted Feldenkrais' technique to become part of the educational programme (Levin, 2014, p. 2). An internal *subsendance* performed as a breathing with and into others, to tune and hone us towards an embodied ethics of caring-with by moving-with.

The research considered making, moving, and witnessing from an inside perspective and as such can only be a partial view from within the artistic practice, from within the Scottish Borders and from within theory. It was the somatic encounter with and dancing grounds of *Woodland Ways*, that foregrounded partial perspectives and offers an embodied experience of inhabiting the terrestrial zone as described by Earth System scientists and articulated philosophically as a new cosmology, by Latour. Composing through gaps, *being among* as a positioning, removing oneself, backgrounding/foregrounding, partial perspectives, *everywhereness*, (*very*) *near proximity* and slowness all suggest an aesthetic for dance making that aligns with becoming earthly. As this research has an ecological orientation there are implications

not only for making and performing but also for the training of dancers, the programming of dance and for audiences. Performances can be a practice context for witnessing which supports empathetic relationships and participation and scores for audiences are a process for refiguring audience as witness – as Svane notes, ‘[i]t matters what you give an audience to do’ (Morrissey et al., 2011). I reiterate that witnessing is not a new concept. It is present in Anna Halprin’s artistic practice and has been taken on by therapeutic movement practices like Authentic Movement. Again, it is a reorientation and foregrounding of a more marginal approach which is extended from a studio to a performance context. An example of bringing the edges of practice into view. Witnessing in the context of dance is a way to genuinely participate in connection practices and a way of being with others that sets a tone of care which can be extended to all earthly beings.

The dance and somatic literature and practices presented in the thesis, demonstrate how movement research can converse with and contribute to the pressing themes of the moment around how we might consciously become and move as more ecological beings. And how it can move with and interrogate ideas and perceptions, refresh vocabulary and articulate difference. The research revitalises, extends, and reorientates existing movement practices towards becoming earthly. What we learn from *porousness*, *fold* and *being among* can be applied to the practice itself, to where and what it orientates towards. The emphasis here is on becoming earthly and suggests ways forward that change who is doing the making, how it is experienced, and how relational encounters can be composed as a dialogue of ‘dancing with’. *Porousness* and unfixing boundaries allow for a seepage of movement research practices into other contexts, and in these encounters we can become susceptible to and evolve with other ideas and influences. It asks for a wider consideration of what constitutes dance making at the edges of practice and where movement practitioners can contribute and ‘think’ beyond what is in front of our eyes to what is at the peripheries. As Braidotti clarifies, ‘(d)ifferences of location between centres and margins matter greatly’ (2013, p. 16). It matters where we move from.

### 5.3. Moving with new cartographies of earth

In this section I consider the contribution to philosophy, starting more broadly by bringing geopoetics and the terrestrial project into contact and then going deeper into Latour's cosmology. I will use the questions gathered from Latour and his collaborators to consider the contribution of this research specifically to Latour's and Weibel's think piece. Geopoetics and the Critical Zone theories are not so far apart, as both are transdisciplinary open world projects concerned with a renewal of our relationship to earth. White, echoing Bashô's call to 'learn of the pine from the pine', looks for cultural renewal in more-than-human shapings (Bashô cited in White, 2003c, p. 213). White's writings get us closer to tree, deer, bird, stone and river cultures, offering different descriptions of earth and a languaging shaped by the 'grammar of rain, tree, stone, blood and bone' (2003c, p. 280). Latour is similarly on a quest for new descriptions, and hands it over as a 'new mission for cultural institutions and arts' (B. Latour & Weibel, 2020b, p. 11). Artists and scientists come together in the think-piece, to generate representations of the terrestrial zone for a public space, whilst the publication is conceived as a Handbook for Practising Landings in the Future' and for 'practising a language that enable people to spell out their relation to the Earth in a new way' (B. Latour & Weibel, 2020b, p. 11). This practice ground for language spills out into the online *Glossolalia: Tidings from Terrestrial Tongues* (Korintenberg et al., 2021), which draws from the vocabulary of scholars like Tsing and Haraway and scientists like Lovelock and Margulis. In looking towards an open world perspective White, from his Atlantic positioning, leans into eastern philosophy and aesthetics. Likewise, although I move within a canon of Western movement practices and forms, the practice etudes and more-than-human encounters also connect to Eastern ways of attending through an aesthetics of slowness and attention to spaces in between (*ma*). In this sense, I am closer to geopoetics than Latour, who orientates towards the sciences and posthumanism. White aims at new cartographies of earth through rewilding language from the experiential knowledge of blood and bone, and through sensing more-than-human ways. Yet, he never quite escapes the headspace which fixes *homo sapiens* in a particular figuring. A dance gesture roused something that Latour wanted to get at, yet movement practice appears only at the edges of his description of

the terrestrial zone. I start from a place of movement to attempt a redescription of our relationship to earth that dances with and between Latour's political earthscapes and White's mindscape-landscapes and brings them closer together. What is offered to both are *bodyscapes*, arrived at through ways to connect, an ecological orientation and an inside perspective which takes the form of embodied practices to support landings in terrestrial zones.

Since first encountering the Critical Zones exhibition which is still being added to in the online space, I notice that somatic provocations have started to appear. This somatic contribution is being worked out in the context of the public 'activation programme' through workshops and experiments in movement led by Mira Hirtz. The titles of the video tutorials show that overlaps are appearing with this thesis. For instance, 'Regarding a place to land: Groundings' and 'On the perspective of being: Folding' (Hirz, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c).

### **5.3.1. Landings in the terrestrial zone**

Weibel and Latour state that their aim is to change the conversation around climate change by 'literally *shifting the ground* on which it takes place' (B. Latour & Weibel, 2020b, p. 8 Italics the authors' own). In coming into contact with stone, moss and deer, different possibilities for landing emerge that bind us closer to earth's dancing grounds. Landing in *Stone Ways* is shaped through revitalising our contact with ground where standing becomes *under-standing* and what is underfoot offers *pied-agogies* shaped by moving through place. In *Moss Ways*, *porousness* and *spreading* helps us alight upon surfaces and *Woodland Ways* invites *entering-in* as a form of landing. No doubt different habitats, ecosystems and species will inspire other possibilities for landing in this new spatialization of earth. In articulating the movement processes, a languaging has emerged that contributes to the evolving glossolalia for becoming earthly which is also a way of landing and changes the conversation.

I turn now towards the questions posed by Latour and his co-investigators for becoming earthly. I take them one at a time and offer some findings from having



moved with these enquiries. To remind ourselves the questions were ‘How can we re-weave edges, envelopes, protections?’ (B Latour, 2018, p. 11). How might we become ‘differently orientated?’ (B Latour, 2018, p. 49). ‘(W)hat can we do to make ourselves sensitive to the sensitivity of other life forms?’ (Suzuki, 2018). ‘How might we build connection that can be transformative?’ (Haraway et al., 2020) ‘(H)ow can we rethink and renew our arts of inhabiting?’ (Aït-Touati, 2020, p. 437).

I’ll begin with re-weaving edges, envelopes and protection.

On reflection, we can all think of ways to negotiate, redefine or even reclassify the boundaries, and when we do so, we change the systems they serve and our relationship to them (Hamilton, 2008, p. 30).

*Peripheral visions*

*Pay attention to the edges. Fold the edges into the space.*

This performance score written for In the Making (iv), draws together elements from different practice etudes. I gave myself a general instruction to pay attention to what was already happening and either join in and support that or propose something else. Paying attention extends noticing with the eyes to include unsighted working, listening (near or far) and the haptic. The score introduces folding, as a way to recompose edges and complicate the relationship between edge and centre. It also draws on peripheral visions from *Woodland Ways* which horizontalizes the architecturing of space in a way that favours the margins, sensitises us to movement at the edges and backgrounds what is in our direct vision. Moss brought attention to skin and offered *porousness*, *spreading* and *everywhereness* as different spatial compositions where bodying is across and through skins connecting interior to exterior spaces, where exchange or contamination can occur, and which constructs space as field where spatial hierarchies disappear. The spatialities we moved with were (*very*) *near proximity*, *contact-contour* and *being among*. These do not allow for separation and as we brush up against and

seep into lifeways other than our own, boundaries and protective selves are eroded, opening us to vulnerability and susceptibility. These are all *unfiguring* practices that contribute embodied processes for re-weaving borders and edges and integrate different positionings through *fold* and *everywhereness*.

How might we become differently orientated? The instruction to reorientate moving to a different spatial plane, to elsewhere in the body, or in relation to something else that is going on, is an activity that dancers' practice and are adept at, and dance making works with as a composing process. Somatic movement practices support processes for becoming differently orientated through encouraging greater self-awareness as movers, in recognising and inhibiting habitual movement patterns, and increasing our choicefulness by making other movement possibilities available. As an articulation of perspectives from the inside, somatics opens up the vastness of internal spaces, and takes us into deep structures down to the scale of the cellular, into *skin deepness* and *breathscapes*. Supported by what these embodied practices already offer, the etudes orientated towards more-than-human shaping to compose our moving in less human centric ways. In doing this we drew on processes like *contact-contour* which brings us into close proximity to encounter and move with different bodies and take on different bodyings. *Unfiguring* practices shift us into organising movement through the fascia, renewing the senses, and seeing with a different gaze from which different architecturing of space can arise. As ecological bodies moving through anatomies of connection, we make different movement choices and by following or going with as processes for making we can allow our dances to be open to the influence of others and for other forms of leadership to appear. Relinquishment and letting go has been a recurring theme explored through *erosion*, *melt*, *porousness*, and *being among* that allows us to become susceptible to changing state which is one approach to becoming differently orientated and contributes to the following question which asks how we might better attune to the sentience of other beings.

In considering ways to connect, the research has been shaped by an ecological perspective that recognises that life in the biosphere is supported and organised through a web of connection. A small shift here or there twitches the connective tissue

of different lifeways in the terrestrial zone. Coming closer to and going deeper in, makes us available to encounters. Attuning and perception practices heighten the tone of our attending, allowing us to be present with and touched by other lifeways. In drawing our attention in different directions and situating ourselves differently, especially sideways, we can perceive the margins and foregrounding-backgrounding turns up the presence of others whilst simultaneously toning down our own presence. I have drawn attention in each of the practice etudes to where an ethics of care surfaced through working relationally, including learning from old ways of connection, renewing the senses to complicate and renew our perception, taking a less human stance and breathing-with. All these sensitising practices draw us into more empathetic relationships with ourselves as well as with others. Witnessing as a form of participation guided by scores, reorientates the more traditional concept of ‘audience’ as an outside viewing perspective, towards a more co-creative, participatory, and involved positioning. Studio performances served as a practice ground for developing this empathetic positioning and open scores can act as guides whilst allowing some wriggle room to allow for individual preferences.

Where Haraway asked how we might build transformative connections I have been concerned with how we might move into transformative connections by creating the conditions for transformation from the perspective of the *soma*. The research has explored different examples of how somatic practices can heighten perceptual awareness and suggests other ways of being in relationship to, how bodymind is distributed and how we are composed differently through brushing up against and moving with world. These somatic competencies support us in being present in more playful, respectful, and sensitive ways. Moving with moss brought us to porosity which opens up the possibility for exchange, collaboration and contamination and directed us to moving through the fascia. In being able to access the experience of organising our moving through the connective tissue we discover other figurings that support what it is to move into connection with others and arrive differently into place. In *Woodland Ways* this process brought us to *being among* and an embodied perception of woodland as a multi-species bodying. These movement processes can operate as practice grounds for becoming earthly and create the conditions within

ourselves for change. They are educational and can be transformative at a somatic, which could be described as a local level, in terms of the individual. As our focus is ecological, a reorientation and turning towards in one area requires a turning towards everywhere. We need a curriculum for becoming earthly that moves across all zones of learning and training and then out into the world. There is an urgent need to foreground embodied knowledges, to work towards *under-standing* as a symbiotic dance of relationship with more- than-human others, to practice different positionings and spatialities which are less human centric. My short response to Haraway's question of how we might build transformative connections would be by dancing more to get things moving.

Renewing our arts of inhabiting is the final question. The practices grounded in processes for *under-standing* describe *pedagogies* for becoming earthly and somatic experiences of systemic change, as small transformations that are profoundly felt as anatomies of connection and which extend the range of our embodied experience. In orientating to and through movement rather than fixity; in recomposing bodymind through somatic cartographies, *bodyscapes* and ways to connect; in working with perception practices that enhance the haptic over the optic; in moving into the architecturing of the terrestrial zone, we have been renewing our dwelling practices in symbiotic dances of place. Collaboration and coming into contact land us somewhere (else), landing being one of the arts of inhabiting that becoming earthly explores. Through seeking out somatic encounters with more -than- human others we can become more susceptible to and present with other arts of inhabiting, which, if we stick with it, supports the emergence of alternative ways of kinaesthetic dwelling. Taking a different stance, is itself a recomposing of inhabiting that changes our relationship to being in the world. Recall how moss recalibrated our inhabiting of surfaces, through *contact-contour*, *skin deepness*, *everywhereness* and *porousness* and deer took us into the architecturing of the thinness of the terrestrial zone. All these embodied practices bind us closer to other lifeways and bodies of knowing, enhance the positioning of being inside of and not separate from the biosphere. In seeking different configurations of place and to unsettle narratives we must prepare to shape shift ourselves, to unlearn habitual patterns of moving-thinking. By giving ourselves the direction to follow ways

for become earthly in whatever field we practice in, we are searching out and renewing arts of inhabiting. Personally, I again propose more dancing as a way to continue.

#### **5.4. Scaling the Findings**

I began this thesis by asking how, as an individual, I might begin to respond and act when the scale of the calamity being faced globally is so overwhelming. I followed McIntosh to ‘dig from where we stand’ (McIntosh, 22nd July 2019) and to work with somatic approaches because as mentalities are rooted in the human organism, a change in our orientation and worldview, will require changes in the body (Johnson, 2020). As I chose to situate the research close up and in (very) near proximity I have been describing in this final chapter so far, how and where the research contributes at a ‘local scale’, by which I mean not only the locale of the Scottish Borders but also at the somatic locale, a scale of individual experience, a scale at which as citizens we can perhaps attempt to reorientate and effect change. At this scale it has reorientated somatic movement practices as practices for becoming earthly, grounded Latour and geopoetics within the context of the Scottish Borders, and articulated theory through embodied processes to offer different perspectives and ways of understanding that are experiential, perceptual and less tethered to the visual and to language. The research has shown how somatic processes can enhance our appreciation and awareness of scale - from the minuteness of the cellular to the magnitude of deep time – and complicates our understanding of scale when we experience how a small shift can resonate deeply which speaks to the work of Margulis and Lovelock but through a somatic lens. In this section I will now consider the implications of the threefold contribution of the research to movement practice, to theory, and to place-making if magnified to a big picture scale, and offer some examples of where it might have real world implications.

I begin with movement practice as this is how the research was undertaken and shaped and where the bulk of the contributions lay. Reorientation and recomposing have been recurring themes through the practice and I direct a proposition now, specifically towards the context of dance education, whether that be in community, educational or

professional settings, which can equally be taken up by an individual dance practitioner. The question is how might dance training encourage a more ecological framing and a 'rewilding' of dance practice and performance? Certainly, foregrounding somatic practices is somewhere to begin as they attune the individual to changes within the bodymind and to the environment. Sharpening the dialogue between dance practice and ecological theories will encourage critical reflection around how we dance and make work, who we make it with and who we make it for, and the context in which we perform. The emphasis on control and mastery in dance training, be that through the body, or compositionally, for example in the teaching of the use of space, is highly orientated towards enhancing the human presence and dominating the space. A more 'terrestrial' approach might include practices for relinquishing and loosening control and dematerialising the human presence, where making and moving gives space and agency to other living beings, and allows weather, ground and animals to disrupt and participate in what is occurring. On a practical level incorporating more outdoor working would take dancers out of the studio environment of mirrors and wooden floors and allow them to become keen to details of place, to climatic and surface conditions, to work sensitively with what is around, to include it into the dance, to take it in and take it on. Dance breathes differently in the open air, where people, beasts, birds, trees, insects, rivers, clouds and wind are all on the move. There is no neat frame of a proscenium arch to contain the action and we are just another participant in the many choreographies of place already taking place, prepared to dance along with whatever else is happening, to be in-the-midst rather than 'centre stage'. This is not a total revolution of dance pedagogy and training but a shift in orientation that will bring more focus to and hone practices already existing at the edges, and which asks dancemakers to consider different questions, as a reorientation of dance practice will need a new aesthetic to represent a more ethical relationship to earth. This might include the reorientation of the role of the audience from passive spectator to a witness participant and raises questions around how we conceive of and design participation in dance projects, which is generally framed as ways to encourage others to participate in what we do. Might it also be interpreted the other way? How might we, as dance makers, participate in what else is happening? This is a shift in expectation and there are implications here also for how funding

bodies frame and evaluate participation. If somatic practices help us to land in the terrestrial zone and offer ways to connect to ourselves and more-than-human others then there is an imperative for placing these practices within formal education settings from nursery level upwards, not as an extra-curricular activity but as a weekly if not daily practice. The field of movement and dance has resources to hand that are relevant and crucial to the societal changes needed in the very near future and there is an imperative to step up and step into this movement for change. In turning now towards a consideration of the findings to theory, there is room for a greater articulation of and emphasis in dance training on how dance as a form and dancers as individuals, might orientate towards, become more porous to, and meet other disciplines, not only as an approach for extending practice but to promote dance and dancers as agents for change beyond the dance sector.

Bringing more embodied perspectives to theory and philosophy contributes to challenging the dominant Western discourse of separation, which the Capitalist worldview has promoted in order to objectify the earth as a resource for human use. It does this through emphasising relational approaches and connection both at an individual level, through bodymind approaches, and at a more communal level, as somatic approaches make us susceptible to other earthly beings. In this sense somatic approaches can enrich knowledge making and sharing. In particular, somatic practices resonate with the restoration of old ways of doing that are more tuned to earth ways and local conditions and where knowledge makers are located within communities rather than academic institutions. Even where, as in the case of Latour, it was a dance gesture that sparked a thought, embodied knowledges tend to have a quiet voice and are situated at the edges of knowledge making. This research advocates for a reorientation towards the edges and hence for the inclusion of more diverse ways of knowing and a wider recognition of the legitimacy of different forms of knowledge. By drawing on other perceptual systems somatic approaches is also able to counter the dominance of the visual by offering different descriptions, languagings and ways of knowing. As well as creating knowledge, embodied practices help to articulate theory by moving it off the page and bringing an inside perspective. In the worldview put forward by Latour, it brings theory down to earth and grounds it in the terrestrial zone

and offers a different approach to description. It is a pragmatic approach for entering into and sharing knowledge and lands us into place, both the place we inhabit as bodymind and the place reframed as the terrestrial zone. Let's see more dance practitioners involved in thought experiments and more inclusion of dance theories and methodologies in philosophical departments.

The terrestrial turn has framed 'situating', as landing, and needing for the purpose of the research 'to land someplace', this has been the Scottish Borders (B Latour, 2018, p. 99). In orientating somatic movement and dance making practices towards the terrestrial zone a redescription of the Scottish Borders has emerged as a somatic cartography that embraces a more ecological patterning and is a strikingly different description to the dominant cultural and political narrative of the region that is focuses on competition and delineated borders. Somatic encounters elsewhere would contribute their own distinctive practices and scores and different cartographies would emerge at the local level. Somatic cartography contributes an alternative mapping approach for placemaking practices that is embodied, relational and offers an inside perspective rather than the distant overview of earth presented through traditional cartographies. The redescriptions of place that emerge through somatic cartographies can be transformational. They suggest ecological compositions of place that are co-designed and shaped through connection and which replace singular centres with a more distributed patterning. By taking an ethical positioning that recognises the collective inhabitation of the earth and the diversity of its citizenship, we need to ask questions of cultural placemaking processes. Whose culture is shaping this making? How are more -than- human others included in and accounted for in this describing and composing of place? If *being among* was how we were situated, if borders were folded, edges porous and *everywhereness* the local scope, how might we organise and inhabit place differently? In responding to questions about how we might dwell in the terrestrial zone, new questions surface and the enquiry becomes one that is continuously in the making.

If shifts in world view demand a recomposing of bodymind, they equally demand a recomposing of constitutional bodies and legislation because ecological modelling



asks for change in all areas. In relation to placemaking, this research would then have implications for planning practises and legislation. A planning system that allows for and takes account of more-than-human shaping will be making different design choices. In Scotland more emphasis is being put on the participation of local people particularly through the vehicle of local place plans. The questions currently being asked, and the criteria used for assessing place, are entirely human-centric. How might visions for place shift if assessments were orientated towards place as a multi- species habitat ?

Interpreted politically, the research advocates for a relinquishment and redistribution of power that weakens centres and empowers communities, cultures and species in the edge spaces. This would imply a reorientation of resources, strategies and perspectives that recomposes privilege and the status quo, not only in terms of human society, but also in terms of the positioning and privileging of homo sapiens needs in relation to all other living species. It is a reorientation of the political zone towards the earth and earthly politics requires embodied practices for becoming earthly.

## **5.5. River Ways**

To take us out of this research, I am returning to the scale of the local. As my practice extends towards place making and I want this research to offer something back to the Scottish Borders, I developed a fourth practice etude which redescribes dwelling through *River Ways*. The proposal called *Connecting Threads*, is presented as a ‘live score’ for a cultural placemaking project where rivers shape the multi -species assemblage, a gathering of waters, fish, animals, plants, and peoples. I have guided and facilitated the vision for *Connecting Threads*, but the process has been a collaboration with Southern Uplands Partnership and in close dialogue with Creative Arts Business Network, Tweed Forum and individuals and organisation in the cultural and heritage sector. It is the cultural strand of a much larger multi-stranded landscape project, *Destination Tweed*, linked to a source to sea trail which hugs a narrow corridor (2km width) down the riverbanks. The project has secured funding for an 18-month development period and on successful completion of this, a further five- year delivery

phase. The aspiration is for the project to be sustained and extended to the whole Tweed Catchment beyond this period. At the time of writing, *Connecting Threads* has recruited a River Culture Animateur (Middle Tweed) and a River Tweed Cultural Heritage Curator, who both started in post in November 2020. Whilst I sit on the steering committee, the unfolding of the project has now shifted to the post holders.

The score draws on learning from this research and previous placemaking projects in the region namely, *Working the Tweed* (2013), *Stone Lives* (2014) Hawick Flood Protection Scheme Artist Residency and ‘th’ fleety wud’, a remapping of the Upper Teviot watershed and proposal for flood remediation by Alec Finlay with Gill Russell (2017). In its bioregional approach *Connecting Threads* references the framing of Geddes’ Valley Section which connects work, place and folk through river ways . In foregrounding connections and interrelationship, the worn cultural narrative of rivalry, from *rivalis* meaning s/he who dwells on the opposite bank and uses the same source of water, which portrays the river as a divider, is challenged. In its place a more ecological shaping is offered, where bordering is about meeting with, rather than dividing. Porousness means that the river is not solely the water we see flowing between or overspilling the banks but includes anything that runs into it from off the land, chemical residues and all. The river flows with multiple timescapes, containing water that might have fallen as rain today or that fell as far back as the Battle of Flodden in 1513.

The river is not only integrating everything that has happened over the large area of the catchment, but [...] it’s integrating through history’ (Soulsby cited in Pencak, 2015).

In shaping the region through its rivers, we become figured as river dwellers, living amongst, beside and between rivers, where the local is a dance of different rhythms as Tweed flows from its source(s) in the uplands down to the estuary at Berwick Upon Tweed and beyond. A recognition of the local being not self- contained but relational to other locales. A porous shaping of place that is sensitive to the vicissitudes of climate and increasingly overflows it banks. In constant motion, Tweed organises itself through meanders, modifying the land as it is modified itself through landward encounters, dissolving the political borders of Scotland and England, flowing out and

on into sea ways, migration routes and other geopoetic currents. The Scottish Borders becomes through the rivers literally, metaphorically, and politically porous. *Connecting Threads* takes forward, revitalises, and repurposes the creative processes described in The RSVP Cycles, recontextualising them within multi-species world making and *being amongst* as an ecological relationship for recomposing place. Having shifted into the connective tissue as an anatomy of connection we can extend this organizing principle to ‘place’ where pathways through are more than a transport network and might shape dwelling practices and livelihoods through the region. The river ways score is a composing of the region that could transform cultural narratives, generate collaboration, learning and exchange, and bring thinking through practices of all kinds, including dance making, to work with the concerns and questions that this research has contributed to. A cultural orientation towards more-than- human shaping that can help to change the conversation and orientate us towards becoming earthly.

### **5.5.1. Connecting Threads**

Collaboration and participation have been shaping factors of *Connecting Threads* from the outset, as has developing a vision of many voices that takes account of who is shaping the making and how the making happens. Rather than describing the Scottish Borders as a series of separate towns and settlements, *Connecting Threads* goes with the flow of the environment and describes a river culture which is emerging as a cultural placemaking approach distinctive to the Scottish Borders (Kohn, 2013, p. 51). It moves across and between places along the River Tweed where people move among fish, water, plants, trees, birds, insects and mammals. The funding criteria in placing limits on the size of the zone activity can take place within, restrains the project at this stage from being a catchment approach but the aspiration that the project is working towards is that it will extend up the tributaries to all areas of the catchment including where the Scottish Borders flows into Northumberland waters and the North Sea and beyond to Atlantic Waters. A dissolving of political boundaries in favour of earthly processes. A recently published report ‘Embers - Creative Placemaking for the South of Scotland’ makes the case for creative placemaking to be recognised as a way to

ignite community led sustainable development in the South of Scotland, an approach that is participatory and changes where the organising is happening from – not top down but from communities themselves. The report shapes a proposal for South of Scotland Enterprise which make the case for resourcing creative placemaking across the South of Scotland as ‘ a key tool in making the economy and communities of the South of Scotland future facing thriving and inclusive’ (The Stove Network, 2020, p. 4). The report although speaking for the South of Scotland only references examples of cultural placemaking in Dumfries and Galloway. If the consultation had included what is emerging in the Scottish Borders, it might have offered a slightly different and complementary description of cultural placemaking from a Borders perspective. One that is river ravelled.

Short listed applicants for two new *Connecting Threads* project posts were asked to respond to at least two of the following three questions at the interview. How would you describe cultural placemaking, what and who might it include? What does a “cultural audit” mean to you, what might it include, who might it involve, how might it be presented? How would you define ‘river culture’? The project will continue to ask these questions in different ways to different multi-species communities along the river.

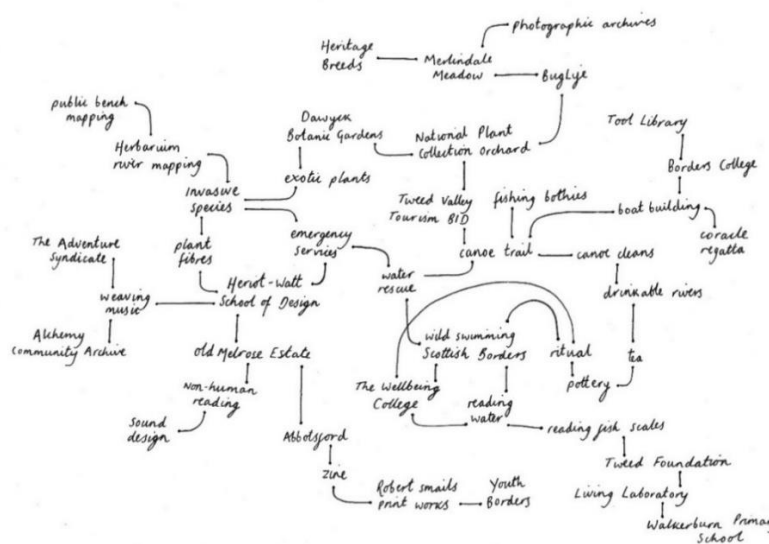


Fig. 36 Connectivity drawing (River Ways). Image: Emily Cropton, 2021.

Fig. 36 is a draft working out by Emily Cropton, the newly appointed River Culture Animateur, of connections and collaborations that are emerging in the development phase. I present it here as an illustration of how the project is being figured through connectivity, which is an ecological shaping, and bringing together communities, creative practitioners, cultural and environmental organisations. The ‘score’ is a curation of events and activities in the form of artist residencies, river festivals, cultural symposiums, river guides and a learning exchange programme where activities take place in, on, across and beside the river which becomes an open studio space for experiments in making. A different kind of cultural leadership can happen that takes on *following* and *going with* and is a more-than-one vision. A cultural audit goes beyond the usual mapping of cultural and heritage sites to engage communities along the river to identify aspects of river culture from human and more-than-human perspectives. In encountering river ways as the dancing ground, different *pied-agogies* will emerge or submerge as becoming earthly includes becoming watery. It suggests a refiguration of place that edges towards a composition of the local ‘designed to differentiate itself by opening itself up’ (B Latour, 2018, p. 54). The project posts are situated within an environmental rather than within a cultural organisation which creates the potential for greater connection between these two disciplines, strengthens the possibility for collaboration, and the exchange of knowledge and practices. In this way *Connecting Threads* is a reorientation and repositioning of cultural activity in the Scottish Borders towards the terrestrial zone. My hope is that this research and what emerges from the *Connecting Threads* project contributes to and suggests practical ways of moving towards Abram’s vision of a ‘replenished participation in the human collective, forging new forms of place-based community and planetary solidarity’ (2011, p. 9).

### **5.5.2. Future Orientations**

I have been speaking to becoming earthly from within my artistic practice, as a dancer, to better *under\_stand* what this positioning offers in the way of resources to be shared and how best to contribute to wider conversations around ecological change that brings

a vocabulary drawn from practice. I concur with dancer Jonathon Burrows when he says that dance as a community of practices and practitioners has no answers ‘but the ethics of our activities and self-organisation are part of the micro-culture needed to create change’ (Burrows, 2018, p. 262). This research offers directions to follow for my own future artistic practice, and is an articulation of hope-orientated, empathetic practices that nourish ecological relationship. Deep ecology reminds us that ‘transition to green societies must occur simultaneously at many sections of the long frontier of change’ (Drengson & Devall, 2008, p. 286). When the scale of change called for by science to keep earth habitable can seem so overwhelming, somatics offers a scale of inhabiting that gives agency to an individual to dance and dwell in changing states.

**EXIT**

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