WILD LIFE

The Lived Experience of Artistic Creativity

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PhD Website

Please note that this PhD is best experienced through the purpose-built website that was developed for the dissemination of this project. The website was designed to allow for the moving image performance materials to be integrated and accessed from within the written material. Please visit the following site:

http://angelaclarkephd.com

Abstract

This project is a Performance Research investigation that begins with concerns about how binary concepts such as mind/body, subject/object, and conscious/unconscious limit our capacity to gain a more appropriate and precise understanding of the lived experience of artistic creativity. The project lays out an alternative philosophical background to examine and interpret artists' experiences of creativity, and then turns to performance practice to apply, experiment, distil, perform, and articulate how lived experience is implicated in processes of artistic creativity.

To achieve this, I embrace an immersive and evolutionary account of the human condition. I build on the work of Elizabeth Grosz, translating her application of Darwin, Bergson, Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze in her ontologies of becoming into a framework for performance practice. Following Grosz, I put forward a performance ontology of becoming that conceptualises lived experience as a fundamentally creative process, intertwined with worlds and pushed by the generative forces of life. I synthesise Bergson's and Merleau-Ponty's respective fundamental concepts of *life* and *wild Being* to isolate a new phenomenon which I claim is the basis of creativity. I term this phenomenon *wild life* and in this thesis seek to access, activate and enact it through performance practice.

In this performance ontology of becoming, through processes of *accessing experience differently*, wild life is revealed and activated as it manifests in artistic performance practice. Accessing experience differently is achieved by: attuning-to visceral phenomena; focusing in-between things; embodying sensory metaphors; and imagining immersive conditions. In this thesis, I examine the ways I have applied this performance ontology of becoming in the development of an original contemporary theatre performance called *'Imagine This . . .'* that I performed at the Abbotsford Convent in April 2016. I claim that the performance and written work presented in this project accounts for *how* the fundamental structures of lived experience operate in service of artistic creativity in a theatre performance context.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Signature:

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In Memory of Joseph Clarke

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Introduction to Thesis

Introduction

This thesis is about the making of a contemporary theatre performance called *'Imagine This . . .'*. I performed this original work at the Abbotsford Convent from April 15 - 17, 2016, with the help of director, Kirsten von Bibra, and performers, Myfanwy Hunter and Suze Smith. The performance and this thesis aim to further our understanding of the relationship between lived experience and artistic creativity. In this thesis, I reflect upon and distil the philosophical concepts and corporeal practices I used to develop this artistic performance. I describe how experienced, body-centred practitioners, Kate Barnett, Alice Cummins, Jo Kennedy, and Vicky Kapo, fostered supportive learning environments for me to consciously attune-to lived experience differently whilst in the process of developing artistic performance works. The final submission comprises both live performance and theoretical writing. A video recording of the live performance documents the event, and the project is presented in the form of a website http://angelaclarkephd.com so that performance and written material can be meaningfully integrated.

This project begins with concerns about how binary concepts such as mind/body, subject/object, and conscious/unconscious limit our capacity to

develop more appropriate and precise understandings of the relationship between lived experience and artistic creativity. My concerns come from an inability to reconcile some Western academic discourses about these topics with my own experience and the experience of other artists. What emerges is a corporeal investigation into philosophy and artistic performance that raises the question: what is the relationship between lived experience and artistic creativity? Through processes of action and reflection, I discovered that there is a performative and intertwined relationship between lived experience and artistic creativity. Based on this discovery, my central thesis is that lived experience can be consciously accessed differently, through corporeal practices, to activate fundamental structures for artistic purposes. I position this work, like Elizabeth Grosz (2005 & 2011), within a lineage that includes Darwin, Bergson, Merleau-Ponty, and Deleuze. Terms such as life, lived experience, other, world, ontology, and experiencing body, are engaged with primarily in and through this philosophical lineage.

In Chapter One, I present the theoretical frameworks that underpin the investigations that have taken place in this project. I initiate the inquiry with a focus on phenomenology because of its "attempt to describe the basic structures of human experience and understanding from a first person point of view" (Carman 1945/2012, p. viii). Following Grosz, I recognise that phenomenology is not adequate for an inquiry into the fundamental structure of lived experience because phenomenology assumes "the functional or experiencing body as a given rather than as the effect of processes of continual creation, movement, or individuation" (2011, p. 28). Grosz suggests that, "new terms and different conceptual frameworks need to be devised if bodies are to be talked about "outside or in excess of binary pairs" (1994, p. 24). Contemporary artist-researchers too, are now calling for a phenomenology that "manifests itself as a way of living in the world" (Kozel 2007, p. 2).

Following Grosz, I therefore question binary concepts such as mind/body, and subject/object through the lens of Bergson's Theory of Creative Evolution. I embrace Bergson's ontology on the unity and centrality of life, its fundamental self-organising structures, its immersive conditions and its evolutionary processes of becoming (1911/2005, pp. 324 – 341). I discuss how *life* for Bergson (1911/2005), and for Darwin (1859) before him, is the central organising structure of lived experience; that *life* is an adaptive and generative dynamic. In this ontology, as Grosz suggests, *life* uses the forces of difference to generate dynamic, open-ended, ever-changing things (2011, p. 43). Following Grosz, I

embrace these Bergsonian concepts, question the experiencing body as a given, and place it within the broader evolutionary context of all things.

In making this conceptual shift from the experiencing body to Bergsonian *life* as the central organising structure of lived experience, my project becomes an ontological inquiry because I am now concerned, more broadly, with the fundamental structures of being. Grosz (2005) suggests that to raise questions of ontology "we must return, as Merleau-Ponty did, to the question of *wild Being*" (1964/1968, p. 170). I recognise the importance of this concept for my project, as a related but different concept to Bergsonian *life*, because Merleau-Ponty's descriptions of this dynamic have resonances with the way artists describe the creative process. I embrace *life*, *becoming*, and *wild Being* as a suite of complementary concepts that provide a way forward for exploring an immersive account of lived experience. I note that this exploration is made somewhat difficult by the ocular-centric metaphors that Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012), and Husserl (1952/1989) before him, use to describe human lived experience, despite their attempts to do the opposite. I argue that these metaphors perpetuate mind/body, subject/object binary concepts and limit our capacity to gain a more appropriate and precise understanding of the fundamental structures of lived experience.

I go on to discuss how Merleau-Ponty eventually manages to find a way to describe a more integrated "circular course" of lived experience (1964/1968, p. 138). I also introduce the Möbius loop model, suggested by Grosz (1994), as a more appropriate metaphor for rethinking the intertwining and immersive conditions of lived experience. I then examine a range of artists' descriptions of the creative process. This uncovers a corporeal thematic that suggests artists are accessing experience differently. I say this because many artists make note of a heightened sense of visceral phenomena that manifests during the creative process. The analysis of artists' creative experiences and the corporeal thematic that emerged leads me to wonder if a Bergsonian ontology of becoming might provide more appropriate and precise understandings of the relationship between lived experience and artistic creativity. I also wonder if artists' ways of accessing experience might bear any relation to Merleau-Ponty's concepts of *wild Being* and *the intertwining - the chiasm.* The correlations I perceive between these philosophical concepts and artists' experiences of creativity, reveal an under-developed research trajectory that suggests a way forward for my research investigations.

I close the chapter by suggesting that this kind of investigation requires a first-

person approach to research because the things in question need to be enacted and happening in real time. I discuss the need to be inside the investigation, experiencing the phenomenon of artistic creativity in a first-hand way so that a more appropriate and precise understanding of an enacted process can be uncovered. I suggest that research might then proceed with the following question: How might the concepts of *wild Being, the intertwining – the chiasm*, and *becoming* first, support ways of consciously accessing experience differently, and second, operate in service of artistic creativity? I propose that one way to address this ontological question is to take a Performance Research approach to the inquiry.

In Chapter Two, I present the methodological frameworks I used in this inquiry. I propose that Performance Research is ideally suited to an ontological investigation because there is a strong history of body-centred investigations in the fields of theatre and performance studies. I trace that lineage, including activities in theatre and performance that have occurred outside academy, and discuss how this frames the artistic context within which my investigations have taken place. I introduce Josephine Machon's work as a key text in this project because of her formulation of what she calls the "(syn)aesthetic style" of performance. Machon's work is useful in this project because she finds a legitimate way to analyse and articulate a style of performance that substantiates the corporeal, or what she calls the "visceral" sensations and perceptions in and of performing bodies (2011, p. 4).

I go on to discuss how my research enacts an exchange between performance and philosophy by testing philosophical concepts against my own experience, in the act of making creative works. I claim that my investigations have forged an experiential relationship between performance and philosophy that activates a new form of performative philosophical expression and as such, makes a contribution to the emerging field of Performance Philosophy.

Discoveries are made through processes of live knowing which I describe as the activated or practical form of knowledge. Live knowing has its roots in what Ryle explains as the difference between "knowing how and knowing that" (1945, p. 1). I describe how live knowing is the means whereby I can enact and communicate my research insights. I suggest live knowing is an encounter that disrupts typical systems of knowledge and provides opportunities to experience shifts in thinking and/or behaviour.

Through action and reflection in processes of live knowing, I discovered that Bergson and Merleau-Ponty's philosophical concepts required further refinement because they were not entirely adequate for giving an account of the experience of artistic performance. As a result, I have synthesised Bergson's and Merleau-Ponty's respective fundamental concepts of *life* and *wild Being* to isolate a new phenomenon which I claim is the basis of creativity. I term this phenomenon *wild life* and in this thesis explore ways to access, activate and enact it through performance practice. I define *wild life* as a performative dynamic that is primal, wild, libidinal and generative. I propose that *wild life* manifests as a multi-sensory, corporeal intelligence that is a constant structural feature of lived experience. Based on my investigations, I experience this performative dynamic as unpredictable, surprising, open-ended, and singularly creative. I claim that *wild life* can be accessed, through corporeal practices, to catalyse and sustain artistic creativity.

In Chapter Three, I describe the corporeal practices and the multi-mode methods I used to access this *wild life* dynamic. I introduce the practice of attunement and the three body-centred techniques I employed to engage with this practice: the Alexander Technique; Body Mind Centring® ; and Focusing. In particular, I describe a practice that is commonly used in all three body-centred techniques that involves activating sensory metaphors to more consciously attune-to multi-sensory, whole-bodied experiences. This is a body-centred process that has resonances with Bainbridge Cohen's notion of "somatization" (2012, p. 157). I explain how I used sensory metaphors to create experiential shifts that were viscerally affective. I also discuss other key methods that include first-person, discovery workshops, and reflective practices and how I used these methods to record experiences that suggest a more multifarious, multi-dimensional, omnidirectional, immersive account of lived experience.

In Chapters Four, Five and Six I describe the application of these methods to my performance practice and how I have engaged with the concepts of *wild Being*, *the intertwining – the chiasm*, and *becoming* respectively using corporeal practices. I do this by first attuning to visceral phenomena, second by focusing in-between, and third by imagining immersive conditions.

In Chapter Four, I explore the resonances between Merleau-Ponty's concept of *wild Being* and artists' visceral descriptions of the creative process. Using first-person methods, I utilise touch, attuning-to the support of central movement, and embodying imaginative sensory metaphors to activate visceral shifts in lived experience. I found that these corporeal practices helped me to access a

primal, libidinal, corporeal intelligence that feels different to ordinary experiences of intelligence. I recognised these experiences in artists' visceral descriptions of the creative process, and found parallels in Merleau-Ponty's concept of *wild Being*. As a result, this research has helped me to avoid mind/body binaries and attune-to the immersive conditions of lived experience. I also found that utilising these corporeal practices supported and sustained my creative efforts. I claim that this way of accessing experience is about attuning-to the different degrees of conscious awareness that are available as a constant structural feature of lived experience.

In Chapter Five, I focus on Merleau-Ponty's concept of *the intertwining - the chiasm.* I discuss how this concept resonates with the way artists describe the intertwining body-world connection they experience during the creative process. I constructed a body-size Möbius loop and performatively experimented with this object to consciously access experience differently and to see if I could experience this intertwining connection. By focusing in-between things, I discovered that when I was in motion with this object I could more consciously attune-to the intertwining body-world forces that propel, bind, and separate things. I found that the boundaries, edges, and borders of things are porous and intertwined which makes them affected by immersive conditions. Focusing in-between things is a corporeal practice that fosters an ability to attune-to what Merleau-Ponty calls the "thickness" of the "perceived object and the perceiving subject" (1945/2012, p. 53). My experience with the Möbius loop resonated with artists' viscerally immersive descriptions of the intertwining body-world connection during the creative process. I claim that focusing attention in-between things while encountering objects such as the Möbius loop in live performance, makes it possible to eschew subject/object binaries and more readily attune-to *the intertwining – the chiasm* as a fundamental structure of lived experience.

In Chapter Six, I focus on how the forces of difference in, what Grosz calls, *the domain of becoming,* might express the real through artistic performance. Using the concept of becoming employed by Bergson and affirmed by Merleau-Ponty and Grosz, I found that, for artistic purposes, it was useful to attune-to lived experience as a dynamic, generative, and open-ended process of becoming. I claim that this process is a radically imaginative act that actively disrupts mind/body, subject/object conceptualisations of lived experience. Following Bergson, Merleau-Ponty, and Grosz, I approached lived experience as a creative process of becoming by actively imagining immersive conditions during artistic performance. I experimented and documented the ways in which this

conception of lived experience is affective and operates in service of artistic activity. I note of how some theatre practitioners work with this kind of dynamic to unblock the physical body and voice rather than developing acting techniques. By adopting some of these frameworks I was able to imaginatively harness the forces of difference to enact an artistic response to visceral phenomena in real-time, during live performance events. To do this, I consciously employed imaginative sensory metaphors that create shifts in lived experience, and used improvisation techniques that respond to visceral phenomena in real time.

In Chapter Seven, I synthesise my research and put forward the *performance ontology of becoming* that I developed in response to the question: what is the relationship between lived experience and artistic creativity? I build on the work of Grosz, in *Time Travels* (2005) and *Becoming Undone* (2011) and translate her ontologies of becoming into a framework for performance that allows me to get closer to the fundamental structures of artistic creativity. In this ontology, lived experience is conceptualised as a fundamentally creative process, intertwined with worlds and pushed by the generative forces of life. I describe how my contemporary theatre performance, structured in twelve vignettes, utilised corporeal practices through acts of live knowing to foreground ontology and focus on *how* the fundamental structures of lived experience operate in service of artistic creativity. Using examples from my work, I discuss how the phenomenon that I call *wild life* manifests as a creative dynamic that artists can access by closely attuning-to visceral phenomena, focusing in-between and imagining immersive conditions.

In conclusion, I note that developing an ontological position in support of my performance practice is an ongoing process of becoming. I claim the Möbius loop model, put forward by Grosz and activated performatively by me, helps to avoid the problems associated with mind/body, subject/object, and conscious/unconscious binaries. Furthermore this model encapsulates Merleau-Ponty's idea that it is "the intertwining – the chiasm" that makes us invent, create, bring forth our subjectivities, inter-subjectivities and materialities (1964/1968, p. 136). I claim that the (syn)aesthetic performance style I used provided opportunities for me to access experience differently, and activate fundamental structures for artistic purposes. I propose that the performance of *'Imagine This . . .'*, the formulation of an ontology for performance practice, and the isolation of a new phenomenon that I call *wild life* are original contributions that account for the performative and intertwined role that lived experience plays in the processes of artistic creativity. In closing

this thesis I claim that the performance and written work presented in this project furthers our understanding of *how* the fundamental structures of lived experience operate in service of artistic creativity.

Chapter One

Theoretical Background

What we play is life
Louis Armstrong

1.0 Chapter Introduction

In this chapter, I raise my primary research question: What is the relationship between lived experience and artistic creativity? I discuss the fundamental structures of lived experience from a Bergsonian perspective, and in so doing I question mind/body, subject/object binary concepts. I explore the potential Bergson's Theory of Creative Evolution (1911/2005) and the work of Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012 & 1964/1968) and Grosz (2005 & 2011) have for furthering understanding of human artistic creativity. I then identify ways to eschew binary concepts, through my performance practice, for the purposes of researching the relationship between lived experience and artistic creativity.

In Section 1.1 of this chapter, I explore the philosophical lineage put forward by Grosz (2005 & 2011) that includes Darwin, Bergson, and Merleau-Ponty. I discuss how this lineage helps to question mind/body, subject/object binary concepts and proposes an immersive account of lived experience. I take a Bergsonian position on the unity and centrality of *life* and its fundamental,

open-ended, and generative immersive conditions. I then recognise how this radical shift in the conceptualisation of the ways in which things are organised is yet to have its full impact on our understandings of corporeity and materiality.

I discuss how the evolutionary theories of Bergson, and Darwin (1859) before him, have potential to greatly influence our understanding of artistic creativity. The work of these philosophers is important in this context because it makes *life* the fundamental organising structure of lived experience. This questions the phenomenological idea that the experiencing body is a given, and places human lived experience within the broader evolutionary context of all things. The human experiencing body, rather than being a central organising structure, is then conceptually transformed into an organism that is one amongst many. It follows then, as a key contention of this thesis, that lived experience, is an adaptive and generative process pushed by the fundamental immersive conditions of *life*. I note that, if the constitutional structures of *life* are adaptive and generative, this conception of lived experience has profound implications for how we understand the fundamental structures of human artistic creativity.

In Section 1.2 of this chapter, I discuss Merleau-Ponty's concept of "wild Being" (1964/1968, p. 170) as a related but different concept to Bergsonian *life*. I note that, although this work is unfinished and at times ambiguous, I am drawn to the wild, libidinal, primal account Merleau-Ponty gives of *wild Being* because it has resonances with the way artists describe the creative process.

In Section 1.3 of this chapter, I explore how mind/body, subject/object binaries have limited our capacity to gain a more precise understanding of the immersive conditions of lived experience. I discuss the complexities of questioning binary concepts in the wake of the ocular-centric metaphors used by key phenomenological thinkers to describe human lived experience. In particular, I critique the writing of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty and show that, despite their intentions, their ocular-centric metaphors obfuscate thinking about lived experience. I argue that Husserl and Merleau-Ponty do not offer us the means by which we might experientially eschew mind/body, subject/object binaries in everyday living.

In Section 1.4 of this chapter, I recognise that Merleau-Ponty eventually manages to find a way to describe a more integrated "circular course" of lived experience (1964/1968, p. 138). I discuss how he attempts in several ways to

explain what he calls the "the intertwining – the chiasm" (1964/1968, p. 130) and how he develops a new conception of the body as a 'chiasm' or crossing that demonstrates the ontological continuity between body and world.

I introduce the Möbius loop model, suggested by Grosz (1994), as a more appropriate metaphor for rethinking the intertwining and immersive conditions of lived experience. I discuss how this model is not only of value for rethinking the mind/body binary, but is also valuable in rethinking the relations between other binaries associated with lived experience and artistic creativity, such as subject/object, and conscious/unconscious. Throughout the thesis, I note how the Möbius loop model will be explored as a significant framework for guiding the development and expression of my work.

In Section 1.5 of this chapter, I explore how mind/body, subject/object binaries have also limited our capacity to gain a more precise understanding of artistic creativity. I discuss how the prolific research into human creativity focuses on mental states, rather than on the role that body-centred, visceral phenomena might play in the creative process. I critique, in particular, Csiksentmihalyi's claim that creativity is a mental process, and note how this focus inadvertently leads to unhelpful mind/body concepts about creativity. I note also that this conception of creativity is at odds with the way artists describe the corporeal lived experience of artistic creativity.

In Section 1.6 of this chapter, I report on some fragmentary evidence about the link between the experience of visceral phenomena and artistic creativity. I propose that artists' descriptions of sensory experience in relation to the creative process suggest that they are accessing experience differently. I discuss how these descriptions of creativity reveal an under-explored research trajectory that is worthy of further investigation.

I close this chapter by recognising that it is possible to articulate an alternative ontological account of the relations between lived experience and artistic creativity, but that disembodied philosophical concepts can only take us so far. I discuss how, in my project, it was still not clear to me *how* I might, as Bergson says, "act and [to] live" as though an immersive construct of lived experience was true (1911/2005, p. 295). I used this obscurity as the catalyst for employing a Performance Research methodology that involved learning *how* to consciously access experience differently whilst engaged in creating artistic performance works. I enact this process by adopting ontologies that eschew binary concepts

and account for the immersive conditions of lived experience, examining artists' accounts of the link between visceral phenomena and artistic creativity, and activating a Performance Research approach to the investigation.

1.1 Lived Experience: Bodies and Life

I initiate this inquiry into the relationship between lived experience and artistic creativity by examining the work of key phenomenological theorists. I begin with phenomenology because of its "attempt to describe the basic structures of human experience and understanding from a first person point of view" (Carman 1945/2012, p. viii). In particular I examine the work of Merleau-Ponty who asserts that the body "is not like some inert thing, it itself sketches out the movement of existence" (1945/2012, p. 86) and is of central concern because "the body is our general means of having a world" (1945/2012, p.147). As Elizabeth Grosz (1994) notes, despite the range of disciplinary activity surrounding the body, we have still not found adequate ways to reconcile the fact that bodies can never be wholly reducible to a thing; nor can they rise completely above the status of thing. As performance practitioner Susan Kozel says, "bodies are more than just meat; they are sources of intelligence, compassion, and extraordinary creativity" (2007, p. xvi). At a fundamental level "sensory organs and motor organs are in fact co-ordinated with each other" (Bergson 1911/2005, p. 326).

The inability to linguistically reconcile the physical and intellectual modes of lived experience results in persistent mind/body binary concepts about bodies that remain somewhat at odds with human experience. Gallagher and Zahavi note that mind/body binary concepts arise because, when considering the nature of lived experience, it is not clear whether the "thing under study" is "material or immaterial" (2012, p. 7). Neither the seemingly material body nor the seemingly immaterial mind can, therefore, be relinquished.

The problem, according to Husserl, is that the experiencer is both "causal" *and* "conditional", and always in relationship with other and the world (1952/1989, p. 167). The transformation from causal to conditional, which Husserl calls the "turning point", is problematic because it lies hidden from the experiencer (p. 168). Merleau-Ponty later takes up this idea and attempts to reconcile the conundrum of the "turning point" by devoting a whole chapter to what he calls "the intertwining – the chiasm"(1964/1968, p. 130). He explains that this "crisscrossing" only happens because we can feel ourselves from within and from without; "my hand while it is felt from within is also accessible from without" (p. 133). Merleau-Ponty is therefore concerned with what he calls the

"unity of the senses with intelligence" (1945/2012, p. 137).

Many artistic practitioners have found the phenomenological method useful for exploring this *unity of the senses with intelligence*. For example, Kozel notes, "as a method, phenomenology involves a return to lived experience, a listening to the senses and insights that arrive obliquely, unbidden, in the midst of movement experiments or quite simply in the midst of life" (2007, p. xvi). Kozel's project is particularly concerned with addressing the relationship between bodies and digital technologies, and questioning the binaries that exist "between human and computer" (2007, p. xvii).

Grosz argues that phenomenology is not adequate for an inquiry into the fundamental structure of bodies because phenomenology assumes "the functional or experiencing body as a given rather than as the effect of processes of continual creation, movement, or individuation" (2011, p. 28). She suggests that, "new terms and different conceptual frameworks need to be devised if bodies are to be talked about "outside or in excess of binary pairs" (1994, p. 24). She claims that without "some reflection on the most general and abstract conditions of corporeality and materiality, and the forces that weigh on our bodies and their products" we cannot reformulate the "questions of subjectivity, inter-subjectivity, identity, the body and materiality" (2005, p. 114). To catalyse this project, Grosz turns to the work of Charles Darwin (1859) and various other Twentieth Century philosophers who have expanded upon Darwin's ideas.

According to Grosz, the philosophical implications of Darwin's work have still not had their full impact on our understandings of corporeality and materiality. Darwin's "concept of life as dynamic, collective, change" is, according to Grosz, an, as yet, undervalued "gift to the humanities and social science" (2005, p. 36). Darwin transforms life from a static quality into a dynamic process. There is a deeper ontology at play in his work that transforms lived experience into an open-ended process that is affected by the immersive and durational conditions of life. As such, lived experience becomes a radically different proposition.

Using this dynamic concept of life, originating from Darwin, Grosz questions the experiencing body as the fundamental organising structure of lived experience. In doing so, she pulls into focus what she refers to as the "unity of life" (2011, p.33). This unity, according to Grosz, is not about genetic affiliations or taxonomies, but is about the idea that all of life is "equally pushed" in its

origin as a process that emerges from the "prebiotic soup" of chemical elements: that these elements are unified by temporal or evolutionary drives to differentiate and capitalize on material conditions (p. 33). She synthesises this position as follows:

> Although Darwin does not say so, it is clear in the writings of Nietzsche and Bergson and, through them, Deleuze, who elaborate a new kind of philosophy in his wake, that life must be understood as the ongoing tendency to actualize the virtual, to make tendencies and potentialities real, to explore organs and activities so as to facilitate and maximise the actions they make possible. The living body is itself the ongoing provocation for inventive practice, for inventing and elaborating widely varying practices, for using organs and activities in unexpected and potentially expansive ways, for making art out of the body's capacities and actions. (p. 20)

Darwin's conception of life is "profoundly different from that of his predecessors and contemporaries" because he takes account of its fundamental self-organising structure (Grosz 2005, p. 37). This structure is open, and actively generates and sustains change. In this ontology, life no longer has static qualities or disembodied essences but is a generative force that capitalises on its material conditions by becoming "more rather than less complex" (p. 37). The defining features of Darwinian *life* are divergent, variable, and open to accident, chance, and the unexpected.

Grosz recognises the implications that this dynamic concept of *life* has for our understanding of lived experience. Drawing now on both Darwin and Bergson's work, Grosz argues that *life* is the fundamental organising structure of lived experience. Grosz points out "life is, for Bergson, an extension and elaboration of matter through attenuating divergence or difference" (2011, p. 30). In this ontology, binary concepts take a subordinate role to "the unity of the impulse which, passing through generations, links individuals with individuals, species with species, and makes of the whole series of the living one single immense wave flowing over matter" (Bergson 1911/2005, p. 272). Life for Bergson, and Darwin before, is thus a dynamic process that is both adaptive and generative. Both theorists share an understanding of how life cannot be likened to a machine, as is the "standpoint of science" (Bergson 1911/2005, p. 104). Life for these theorists is not the sum of its component parts but is more like a process of "organising work" or a "sum of obstacles avoided" (Bergson 1911/2005, p. 104).

Grosz thus positions what she calls the "living body" as an "ongoing provocation for inventive practice" (2011, p. 20). For Grosz, lived experience is therefore "osmotic" and cannot be understood in binary terms (1994, p. 79). As such, she goes on to also question binary concepts about life and matter (2011, p. 30). Grosz summarises Bergson's position on life and matter as follows:

> Mind and matter, rather than binary terms, are different degrees of duration, different tensions, modes of relaxation or contraction, neither opposed nor continuous, but different nuances, different actualizations of one and the same, ever-differing duration that equally touches and transforms the material and the living world. Matter and life are thus not opposites, binary pairs (plus or minus vital force), as many of Bergson's readers have assumed in labelling him a dualist, but intimately implicated in each other, different degrees of one and the same force. Life is matter extended into the virtual; matter is life compressed into dormancy.... Life and matter cannot, in this tradition, be understood as binary opposites; rather they are divergent tendencies, two different directions or trajectories inherent in a single whole, matter as undivided, matter as it includes its "others" - life, ideality, connectivity, temporality. (2011, p. 32)

This ontology has radical implications for how we might conceptualise human artistic creativity. If, as Grosz suggests, life "touches and transforms the material and the living world" and if life is "for making art out of the body's capacities and actions", then life might be conceptualised as a fundamentally creative process (2011, p. 32). Recognising how duration plays a formative role in actualising life in different directions through lived experience does not dispense with the need for binary concepts. It simply places binaries in a secondary position, and in doing so, creates an alternative conceptual framework for understanding the primary forces that weigh upon our bodies and their products.

Grosz believes Darwin left philosophy with questions that need to be addressed about "the immersion of consciousness in life, and the immersion of life in time and materiality" (2005, p. 116) that others, such as Bergson and Merleau-Ponty, have since taken up. She claims that, "to focus on the subject at the cost of focusing on the forces that make up the world is to lose the capacity to see beyond the subject, to engage with the world, to make the real" (2011, p. 84). For Grosz, this is a process of "eschewing recognition altogether" because, as she says, "I am *not* what others see in me, but what I do, what I make. I become according to what I do, not who I am" (p. 85). For Bergson "reality is

movement" and "what is real is the continual change of form: form is only a snapshot view of a transition" (1911/2005, p. 328).

In note, however, that choosing to focus on transitions and deliberately avoiding binary concepts is a difficult task. Even when artist-researchers do try to avoid mind/body binaries to describe the lived experience of artistic creativity, there is still a subtle schism in their conceptualisations. For example, Warbuton, in his work on the phenomenology of dance, augments the usual mind/body binary by saying dance "engages all aspects of the brain, body, and mind" (2011, p. 67). However, his list implies that the brain, body, and mind are somehow separate even though his intention is to communicate the opposite.

When the brain is singled out in this way, there is a subtle privileging of it as an independent site responsible for, or at least initiating, sensing, perceiving, moving, and sounding. What happens, for instance, if we experiment with making the heart, the bones, or the lungs responsible for sensing, perceiving, moving, and sounding? If we are truly concerned with recognising the multifarious sensations and perceptions of the body, then should not the list also include heart, lungs, skin, and other such itemised physical attributes? I recognise that embracing multiplicity in this way potentially creates a linguistic conundrum because, if we are to always list the component parts, the list then becomes unwieldy and absurdly long. My main point here, however, is about how we might enact multiplicities and truly eschew binary concepts. What happens if we avoid binary concepts by consciously attempting to access experience differently? Can this lead to new terms and more expansive frameworks for understanding the fundamental structures of lived experience?

To date, the search for language to describe lived experience outside and in excess of common binaries remains problematic. The term 'mind' is problematic because it is so often reduced to the cognitive activities of the brain, and the term 'body' is problematic because it is so contested and is often reduced to an object for the enactment of mind. In her seminal work, *Volatile Bodies* (1994), Grosz analyses the heterogeneity of the term body and how it has been variously conceptualised and binarised in Western discourses. In this comprehensive volume Grosz (1994) describes the ways in which the body has been variously explored as object, vessel, conduit; studied from social, political, gendered, biological, and historical perspectives; psychoanalytically investigated from the inside out, and socio-culturally investigated from the outside in; and theorised as passive, active, inscribed, nurtured, natured, and as

non-objectified fields, intensities and flows.

Some philosophers have addressed the linguistic mind/body conundrum by using combinatory terms that include both concepts. For example, in his posthumously published work, *The Visible and the Invisible,* Merleau-Ponty presents what he calls the "sensible sentient"(1964/1968, p. 137) to signify the intertwining nature of lived experience. Deleuze and Guattari develop even more complex conjunctions by focusing on a two-sided thing that faces both the "machinic assemblage" (attributable to a subject), and the Artaudian term "body without organs" (attributable to that which disassembles the intensities of matter) (1987/1988, p.4).

Body-centred practitioners, on whom I focus in this project, also tend to use combinatory terms to signify a non-binary position on the body. For example, Alexander (1923/2004, p. 11) uses the term "psycho-physical" to describe the inseparability of mind and body, Bainbridge Cohen (2012, p. 1) coins the hyphened phrase "body-mind" to signify how "the mind is expressed through the body in movement", and Gendlin (1981a, p. 10) uses the term "felt sense" to signify a kind of "bodily awareness…a body-sense of meaning" which the experiencer can attune to and learn to more readily access.

So, what are we to call this thing that we experience, this living thing that involves moving, sounding, sensing, perceiving, acting, and creating? What are we to call this thing that is activated by the constitutional immersive conditions of life? The answer lies somewhere in the middle of psychic and physicalist terms. Following Grosz, I simply use the term lived experience so that I avoid even the subtle binary inherent in the terms such as living body and experiencing body. In addition, I use the term 'other', as Grosz does, to signify the evolutionary nature of experience whereby, as Grosz notes:

> The subjective, the inter-subjective, the human must be positioned in a context in which the subhuman, the extra-human, and the nonhuman play a formative but not a determining role, in which the human in its diverse forms and corporealities emerges from and functions within natural, technological, and social orders in which it finds itself placed as event and advent rather than as agent. (2005, p. 128)

I also use the term 'world' as Grosz does to signify the immersive conditions of lived experience. As Grosz says, it is "a relation of belonging to and of not quite

fitting, a never-easy kinship, a given tension that makes our relations to that world hungry, avid, desiring, needy, that makes us need a world as well as desire to make one" (2005, p. 128). As Grosz points out, being uses the world to live in, and the resistance of the world to immediate desires creates a temporal waiting that generates problems and *creates* things that act as temporary solutions. I note that desire is not linked to a fantasy that strives for an impossible or unattainable object, such as an unaffordable diamond ring, but desire is linked, in the Deleuzian sense, to what it produces, what it connects with in relationship to other human or non-human bodies/things/energies. Lived experience conceptualised in this way is "a field for the production, circulation, and intensification of desire, the locus of the immanence of desire" (Grosz 1994, p. 171).

Grosz furthers her project by positioning Merleau-Ponty's writing within a lineage that includes Darwin and Bergson rather than the common lineage of phenomenological thinkers, "from Hegel through Husserl to Heidegger, Satre, and de Beauviour" (Grosz 2005, p. 115). This repositioning of Merleau-Ponty's work within this lineage is helpful for my research because it focuses attention on the fundamental structures of human creativity and provides an account of lived experience that strongly resonates with my own and other artists' experiences of artistic creativity as will be reported in Chapters Four and Five.

Following Grosz, I "reflect on the most general and abstract conditions of corporeality and materiality, and the forces that weigh on our bodies and their products" to "see what has commonly remained invisible or unseen in our everyday…habits and assumptions" (2005, p. 114). She suggests returning, as Merleau-Ponty did, to the "question of 'wild Being', to the question of the substance of the world, to the relations between mind and matter, the living and the natural, and the centrality of perception to conceptualising their interface" (2005, p. 114). I raise ontological questions about the invisible mind/body, subject/object binary habits and assumptions that are commonly associated with the lived experience of artistic creativity.

Following Grosz again, I turn to the work of Bergson and Merleau-Ponty because the two philosophers share a commitment to an immersive ontology where active becoming continually drives the development of things beyond their given properties. This ontology holds steady the position that "life is emergent, developed from below, from particular organizations of matter, not a mystical force, a kind of modern "soul" that animates life from above" (Grosz 2005, p. 116). I am guided by the following position that Grosz takes on

ontology:

> As Bergson makes clear, and Merleau-Ponty affirms, it is the resistance of the world to the immediacy of human wishes, its capacity to make us wait, that makes us produce and invent, that makes us human, conscious beings. It is because we cannot but be beings who deal with and through matter, objects, things that we invent imagine, and use the world to live in. (2005, p. 128)

I am drawn to Bergson's concept of *life* because it encapsulates the generative fundamental structure of lived experience that accounts for creative activity in the world. This Bergsonian concept allows the many difficulties associated with mind/body, subject/object binary concepts to "vanish" and "gives us more power to act and to live" (1911/2005, p. 295). In this world-view, "humanity no longer seems isolated in the nature that it dominates" because "all the living hold together, and yield to the same tremendous push" (p. 295). This idea resonates strongly with the ways in which artists live in the world. For example, performance artist Gómez-Peña, says that "performance is an ontological attitude to the whole universe" (2004, XX Time and Space). Musician Louis Armstrong puts it simply as, "what we play is life" (Armstrong cited in Cameron 1992, p. 3).

Merleau-Ponty's concept of *wild Being* shares many attributes of Bergsonian *life*. For this reason it is worth considering this concept in more detail. Grosz wonders whether Merleau-Ponty is actually reformulating "what Bergson understands as creative evolution" (2005, p. 127) in developing the concept of *wild Being*. I am drawn to *wild Being* as a related but different concept to Bergsonian *life* because it adds another qualitative dimension that, for me, is more closely aligned with artistic creativity. The next section explores this concept in the light of my question about the relationship between lived experience and artistic creativity.

1.2 wild Being

In his later work, *The Visible and the Invisible*, Merleau-Ponty initiates a search for what he calls "the brute or wild Being" (1964/1968, p. 170), so that he might articulate his notion of a common "flesh" that refuses to "submit to the exigencies of clear-cut separation or logical identity" (Grosz 2005, p. 125). This is a new ontology that truly seeks to reconceptualise relations between prevalent binary concepts such as mind and matter, subject and object, consciousness and world. Merleau-Ponty creates the concept of *wild Being*

which is an indivisible unit of substance that opens up a "raw perception of the lifeworld's elemental flesh" (Collins 2010, p. 49). According to Collins, Merleau-Ponty needs to "access a primordial sense of reality" (p. 47) by establishing the concept of *brute* or *wild Being* in order to formulate his transgressive notion of the term flesh.

Merleau-Ponty describes *wild Being* as "the perceived world and its relations with…the 'logic' that we produce_ _ _" … the "sedimented meaning of all our voluntary and involuntary experiences" (1964/1968, p. 170, p. 180). His concept of flesh is that which "is bound in such a way" that there is possibility for "reversion, reconversion…transfer, and reversal" (p. 142). For Merleau-Ponty, flesh is not the juxtaposition of the "little private world of each …to the world of all the others, but surrounded by it, levied off from it, and all together are a Sentient in general before a Sensible in general" (p. 142). Much of this thinking is captured in a stand-alone chapter called "The Intertwining – The Chiasm" and in the "Working Notes" included at the end of *The Visible and the Invisible* (pp. 130 – 155, pp. 165 - 275).

Merleau-Ponty's project, however, remains unfinished and these ideas are described in long, unwieldy passages. Terms such as *wild Being*, *brute* and sometimes *flesh* are used interchangeably, which at times makes his writing quite ambiguous. As Baldwin says, there is "a genuine sense of a thinker stopped in midair" (2004, p. 130). Nevertheless, I am particularly drawn to the idea of *wild Being* because it does seem to capture something that precedes mind/body, subject/object binary constructs. As Merleau-Ponty says "an event of the order of brute or wild being" is ontologically "primary" (1964/1968, p. 200). In particular, the words *brute* and *wild* appeal because they signify something in its primal state, something pre-bifurcated and libidinal. Collins points out that Merleau-Ponty does not seem conscious of the "erotic tones" present in his notion of "flesh" but that his language is peppered with libidinal overtones (2010, p. 51).

This wild, libidinal, primal account of *wild Being*, for me, has resonances with the way artists describe the creative process. For example singer/songwriter Fiona Apple says, "playing music with someone is somewhere in between conversation and sex. You're definitely doing more physically with each other than it looks like. There is some kind of knowing of each other, some intimacy, some involvement, some braiding together of people" (2010, p. 18).

According to Merleau-Ponty, *wild Being* also has an evolutionary drive to capitalise on its material conditions through variation and invention. Artistic

creativity shares this evolutionary desire to utilise circumstance and context for the purposes of artistic invention. As musician David Byrne says, "context largely determines what is written, painted, sculpted, sung, or performed" (2012, p. 13). Writer, photographer, and filmmaker David McElroy describes this desire as painfully irresistible saying, "I don't have any choice. I have to create things. When I don't, I start dying" (2013, para. 1). I used theses resonances as a catalyst for research and experimented with accessing experience differently using the corporeal practices that are detailed in Chapter Three.

I note that recognising the centrality of life as a fundamental organising structure has been a difficult process in the wake of ocular-centric metaphors used by key phenomenological thinkers in their attempts to describe lived experience. In the following section I argue that, despite their intention to avoid binary concepts, Husserl and Merleau-Ponty have unhelpfully perpetuated binary thinking about lived experience. Their ocular-centric metaphors pit the dominant sensibility of sight against the multiple and differentiated capacities of the other senses that are collectively reduced to 'the other'. I question their choice of metaphors in this chapter because it has been a critical step in the processes of eschewing binary concepts, embracing a multi-sensory approach to experience and uncovering alternative frameworks for understanding immersive conditions.

1.3 Limitations of Ocular-Centric Metaphors

Critique of ocular-centrism arose in response to the ocular-centric metaphors used by philosophers, social theorists and political scientists in the Twentieth Century (see for example Burrell & Morgan 1979; Pfeffer 1982; Mackenzie 2001; and Kavanagh 2004). Part of that critique focuses on how ocular-centric metaphors make sight the dominant sensibility and polarise the other senses (hearing, touching, smelling, tasting) as a homogenous and undifferentiated group. Kavanagh suggests that ocular-centric metaphors are used because interpretations of knowledge, truth, and reality have roots in the Platonic distinction between the sense of sight that is aligned with human intelligence/soul, and the other senses that are collectively synonymous with material being (2004). She argues that despite the vast opposition to ocular-centrism in Western philosophy and the social and political sciences, ocular-centrism "is now stronger than ever" (2004, p. 459). She writes:

> The dominance of visual metaphors continues to this day in contemporary academic discourse: in conceptualizing we seek insight and illumination; we speculate, inspect, focus and reflect; and when we

> speak of points of view, synopsis, and evidence, we may forget or be unaware of the concepts' sight-based etymology. (2004, p. 448)

Kavanagh is self-aware enough to recognise that, even in her attempt to critique the use of ocular-centric metaphors, her work is "peppered with the language of a spectatorial epistemology (aspect, insight, points of view, perspective, clear, see, focus and so on)" (p. 459).

The problems associated with ocular-centric metaphors is significant in this project because, in the process of eschewing binary concepts, it has been necessary to recognise how ocular-centric metaphors inadvertently and unhelpfully reinforce binary concepts about lived experience. For example in Husserl's view:

> … certain of my corporeal parts can be seen by me only in a peculiar perspectival foreshortening, and others (e.g. The head) are altogether invisible to me. The same Body which serves me as means for all my perception obstructs me in the perception of it itself and is a remarkable imperfectly constituted thing. (1952/1989, p. 167)

This passage reveals an over-reliance on vision as the key appendage for perception. Husserl's position on the body as "a remarkably imperfectly constituted thing" holds true only if we elevate the sensibility of sight above all other perceptions. Seeing is not the only way of knowing. The privileging of one mode of perception over the rest of the perceptions leads to a binary division between sight at one end of the spectrum and all other senses collectively at the other end. Sight does not confirm knowledge of a clock in the room for the ear that hears it ticking or the fingers that touch the clock-hands moving, or for the entity that senses the passage of time with multiple sensibilities. The senses and perceptions are complementary, and all work together to provide a unified holistic experience.

Merleau-Ponty, on the other hand, seems acutely aware of the difficulties metaphorical language poses in describing lived experience. In his attempt to describe corporeity he says:

> We discover beneath intelligence and beneath perception a more fundamental function: a vector moving in every direction, like a searchlight, by which we can orient ourselves toward anything, in ourselves or outside of ourselves, and by which we can have a behaviour with regard to this object. (1945/2012, p. 137)

But then goes on to note:

> The comparison to a search light is not a good one, since it takes for granted the given objects upon which intelligence projects its light, whereas the core function we are speaking of here - prior to making us see or know objects - first more secretly brings them into existence for us. So let us say instead...that the life of consciousness - epistemic life, the life of desire, or perceptual life - is underpinned by an 'intentional arc' that projects around us our past, our future, our human milieu, our physical situation, our ideological situation, and our moral situation, or rather, that ensures that we are situated within all of these relationships. This intentional arc creates the unity of the senses, the unity of the senses with intelligence, and the unity of sensitivity and motricity. (p.137)

Merleau-Ponty, in this passage, has more awareness of the issues associated with using ocular-centric metaphors. He is clearly striving for a description of the *unity of the senses* but in putting forward the *search light* metaphor, even he is privileging seeing above other sensibilities - a searchlight operates metaphorically as a singular-sense seeing agent. Once again the limitations of ocular-centric metaphors does not serve to capture what the multiplicity of senses all working together might reveal about lived experience. Using an ocular-centric metaphor polarises sight with all the other senses, negating the multifarious capacity of our senses to perceive our immersive lived experience. The ocular-centric metaphor entrenches rather than avoids binary pairs. Furthermore, the phrase *making us see or know* equates seeing with knowing. Even his attempted resolution of the *intentional arc* metaphor might also be considered ocular-centric because an *arc* is incomplete and therefore has a metaphorical blind spot, like ocular vision does for humans. This once again privileges the experience of sight because humans do not have eyes in the back of their heads.

However, Merleau-Ponty never gives up on his project. In his posthumously published work, *The Visible and the Invisible,* he equalises the sense of touch to that of vision, and thus begins a fascinating, unfinished meditation on "the two 'sides' of our body, the body as sensible and the body as sentient" (1964/1968, p. 136).

Despite the problems associated with ocular-centric metaphors, I note that there is a way forward for developing deeper understandings of lived

experience and its relationship to artistic creativity using the work of both Merleau-Ponty and Grosz. In the next section I introduce the concept of the intertwining and discuss how both Merleau-Ponty and Grosz find ways to rethink mind/body, subject/object binaries.

1.4 The Intertwining – The Chiasm

In *The Visible and the Invisible* (1964/1968) Merleau-Ponty signals a shift away from ocular-centric metaphors (despite the title) and makes a significant contribution to contemporary concepts of lived experience and our ability to take account of immersive conditions. He attempts in several ways to explain what he calls the "the intertwining – the chiasm" (1964/1968, p. 130). He details a new conception of the body as a 'chiasm' or crossing that demonstrates the ontological continuity between body and world. For example he says:

> There is double and crossed situating of the visible in the tangible and of the tangible in the visible; the two maps are complete, and yet they do not merge into one. The two parts are total parts and yet are not superposable. (1964/1968, p. 134)

And then…

> If one wants metaphors it would be better to say that the body sensed and the body sentient are as the obverse and the reverse, or again, as two segments of one sole circular course which goes above from left to right and below from right to left, but which is but one sole movement in its two phases. And everything said about the sensed body pertains to the whole of the sensible of which it is a part, and to the world. If the body is one sole body in its two phases, it incorporates into itself the whole of the sensible and with the same movement incorporates itself into a "Sensible in itself". We have to reject the age-old assumptions that put the body in the world and the seer in the body, or, conversely, the world and the body in the seer as in a box. (1964/1968, p. 138)

In this passage, Merleau-Ponty convincingly describes the intertwining nature of that which is sensed and sentient. His language, although referencing two things, the *sensed* and the *sentient*, leads us more directly to an integrated *circular course* of experience. This passage posits an expansive corporeality and materiality that is immersive, co-existent, and relational. Although Merleau-Ponty has managed to avoid an ocular-centric metaphor in this renewed attempt at describing lived experience, he has still not entirely solved the linguistic conundrum of describing a unified, two-sided thing. There are still

two segments of one sole body. Even so, I have found this concept particularly useful in enacting the process of eschewing binary concepts through my performance practice.

This has, in part, been made possible by the work of Grosz. Grosz reframes some of the ideas put forward by Merleau-Ponty, amongst others, and, in accord with Darwin and Bergson, explores "ontologies of becoming" (2005, p. 114). Placing Merleau-Ponty within this alternative philosophical lineage allows Grosz to embrace a more immersive account of experience. She puts forward the Möbius loop model as a different conceptual framework for the intertwining relationship between the mind/body pair. As Grosz points out, "bodies and minds are not two distinct substances or two kinds of attributes of a single substance but somewhere in between these two alternatives" (1994, p. xii).

The Möbius loop model has the advantage of showing "the inflection of mind into body and body into mind, the ways in which, through a kind of twisting or inversion, one side becomes another" (1994, p. xii). I find the Möbius loop model particularly useful in not only rethinking the relations between mind and body but in rethinking the relation between other binaries such as subject/object, and conscious/unconscious. I embrace this model through my performance practice and use it as both metaphor and fundamental structure for guiding the development and expression of my work.

In Chapter Five I will describe in more detail how I worked with the concept of *the intertwining – the chiasm* and the model of the Möbius loop. For now, I return to the primary concerns of this chapter regarding the ways in which binary concepts limit our ability to further understand the fundamental structure of human creativity. In the next section, I will consider the limitations of framing creativity as a mental process because this idea supports an unhelpful mind/body binary that fails to take account of the role visceral phenomena might play in the creative process.

1.5 Limitations of Framing Creativity as a Mental Process

If we accept that lived experience is organised by the fundamental immersive and generative conditions of *life*, then we must also assess whether or not our commonly held beliefs about human creativity align with this idea. Only then can we begin to truly explore the relationship between lived experience and artistic creativity. To understand the phenomenon of human creativity is to grapple with and synthesise a complex mix of multi-cultural and multi-

disciplinary perspectives.

The study of human creativity is particularly complex because of its heterogeneity and its highly singular manifestations across multiple domains. As a result, creativity is viewed differently according to its context: education values innovation, business values the entrepreneur, problem solving is prized in mathematics, and performance or composition is highly regarded in music (Reid & Petocz 2004). Sternberg, Lubart, Kaufman and Pretz point out that the reason creativity is so difficult to test and measure is because real-world creativity requires complex multidimensional knowledge that takes many years of study to acquire (2005). To date, researchers have only managed to devise fairly simple problems to measure creativity, and as a result, their findings are based on acts of creativity that are "using only highly impoverished knowledge bases, which is not typical of the way creativity occurs in the real world" (2005, p. 351).

Many academic volumes explore all manner of issues relating to creativity (see for example, Csikszentmihalyi 1996; Ghiselin 1952; Kaufman & Baer 2005; Kaufman & Sternberg 2010; Runco 2012). These books aim to provide theories, original insights, wide perspectives, and methods for researching, understanding, and enhancing creativity. At the same time, many non-academic books written by artists and practitioners have emerged about how to discover, awaken and explore one's own creativity (see for example, Cameron 1995; Harding 1948/1967; McNiff 1998; Tharp 2003; Webb Young 1940/2013). In more recent times, the Internet has played host to numerous talks, lectures, on-line forums, and social networking sites that explore creativity (see for example, Any-Idea? Collective 2016; Gilbert 2009; Popova, 2013).

Despite the complexity and difficulties, research into creativity is prolific in Western academia. This research predominately emerges from the natural sciences that focus on empirical questions concerned with prediction, for the purposes of explanation, or the human sciences that focus on questions concerned with mental and/or psychological representations, for the purposes of measuring ability or indications of happiness. Amongst researchers, the term 'creativity' is still contested and there seems to be no universally accepted definition. Many creativity researchers consider the terms "new" and "useful" to be important in definitions of creativity (Mumford, 2003).

There are also some other elements of creativity that seem to gain general acceptance. For example Cropley (1992), who is widely respected in the field, suggests that creativity is to be daring in one's thinking. Sternberg (1997), Craft, (2006) and Joubert (2001), concur that a central component of creativity is 'risk-taking'. Reid and Petocz (2004) emphasise the need for the element of surprise, problem solving, making connections, absorption, and reacting to new ideas. In the 1960s, definitions of creativity were fiercely debated amongst psychologists (Ghiselin 1952). In more recent times research in this field has converged and many tend toward the idea that creativity involves producing novel or useful products (Mayer 1999; Mumford 2003). Runco (2012), another prolifically published voice in the field, also posits that originality and utility are the most widely recognised requirements for creativity, and argues that creativity is not just about art and invention, it is an everyday human activity that is both proactive and reactive.

This project does not attempt to explore all aspects of the creativity phenomenon. The focus is not about measuring, improving, or enhancing creativity. This project is an ontological investigation that is about uncovering the fundamental structures of lived experience, and how those structures are implicated in the processes of artistic creativity. This research trajectory is not widely explored within the creativity research discourse, and thus provides an opportunity for further investigation.

As discussed in Section 1.1 of this chapter, I affirm that lived experience is an evolving creative process that is pushed by *life*. To accept this proposition requires a substantial reassessment of commonly held beliefs about creativity. This reassessment is necessary because much creativity research focuses on creativity as a mental activity. In my view, this focus on mental activity has led to misleading beliefs that perpetuate unhelpful mind/body, conscious/unconscious binary concepts about human creativity.

For example, Csikszentmihalyi presents a comprehensive, and widely celebrated, volume on creativity that includes interviews with ninety-one people whom he calls "exceptional individuals" (1996, p. 12). Based on these interviews, Csikszentmihalyi develops a theory of "Flow". In essence, *Flow* is characterised by a state of complete absorption in what one is doing. His research subjects are all deeply committed to their practices, and have high levels of intrinsic motivation for their creative pursuits. According to Csikszentmihalyi, intrinsic motivation, creativity, and the state of *Flow* leads to happiness.

Csikszentmihalyi's Theory of Flow is useful, because it identifies the conditions that allow creativity to thrive. However, the language he uses fails to take account of how visceral phenomena might have an impact on human creativity. For example, he begins Chapter Two of his book by asking the question "Where is creativity?" and answers immediately with "The answer is obvious: creativity is some sort of mental activity" (1996, p. 23). This focus on mental activity profoundly negates the role of the corporeal experience in the creative process and leads to a mind/body conceptualisation that is overly reductive. Based on Bergson's theory of Creative Evolution that conceptualises life and therefore human lived experience as a generative process, I reject Csikszentmihalyi's reductive characterisation of human creativity as *some sort of mental activity*. As I have argued, through Grosz, "bodies and minds are not two distinct substances…but somewhere in between these two alternatives" (1994, p. xii).

Perhaps Csikszentmihalyi's background as a psychologist frames the way he interprets his interview transcripts. His research insights focus on mental states and feelings of happiness rather fundamental structures. To be fair, Csikszentmihalyi did not set out to uncover the fundamental structures of creativity. Nevertheless, in my view, the corporeal thematic clearly emerges even in his work.

A closer reading of the interview transcripts published in his book reveals that many of his subjects do actually report on visceral phenomena. For example Freeman Dyson, a physicist, claims that, "it is really the fingers that are doing it and not the brain. Somehow the writing takes charge" (quoted in Csikszentmihalyi 1996 p. 118). Poet, Mark Strand, recognises the need to move: "you're sort of swayed by the possibilities … if that becomes too powerful, then you get up" (quoted in Csikszentmihalyi 1996, p. 121). Writer, Richard Stern claims that, "it has much to do with the relationship of your own physiological, hormonal, organic self and its relationship to the world outside" (quoted in Csikszentmihalyi 1996, p. 144).

This corporeal thematic is largely ignored by Csikszentmihalyi who, in my view, has only told part of the story. The first-person, visceral accounts from artists about their creative processes tell another part of the story. These visceral accounts suggest, if we pay attention to them, that creative people might be accessing experience in a different way, and that this thematic is therefore worthy of further investigation.

So, what is the way forward for those of us concerned with corporeity and its relationship to creative processes? In the first instance, although the documentation is fragmentary, it is worth further investigating the attempts that artists have made to describe their corporeal experiences of creativity. For example, artists describe things such as: checking in with the body to see if "it feels right" (Tharp 2003, p. 70); experiencing a bodily indigestion of sensations and visions that need to be discharged (Picasso quoted in Ghiselin 1952, p. 57); playing host to creative ideas by allowing what George Sand refers to as 'the other' to take charge of the body (Gheselin 1952); being what Sydney Dobell refers to as a 'receiver' or 'mouthpiece' (Gheselin 1952); or as Ruth Ozeki says being a conduit for characters to "find their way into the world" (Wheeler Centre 2013). These body-centred experiences suggest a corporeal thematic that might be useful to a project concerned with the fundamental structures of artistic creativity.

In the next section, I gather together some more detailed descriptions of the link between visceral phenomena and artistic creativity. Using this underexplored research trajectory, I then posit a methodological way forward for this research investigation.

1.6 Artistic Creativity: A Corporeal Thematic

Bindeman (1998) gathers together first-person accounts of artistic practitioners about their creative processes. He synthesises this work and in doing so describes creation as catharsis; unconscious reception of energy; destruction; an exasperating chore; and done through the artist. Although these themes point toward a corporeal process there is disappointingly very little description of visceral phenomena in Bindeman's work. Piirto (2005), in his analysis of the creative process in writers and poets comes a little closer to identifying some actions that point toward a tangible embodied experience of creativity. He claims that rituals, silence, inspiration (from muse, nature, substances, travel, other art works), imagination, flow, fasting, and meditation all contribute to the creative process.

A few researchers in the field of psychology also point toward the importance of corporeal activity in the act of creation. For example Wallas (1926) coined the term 'incubating' to explain the period of time away from conscious problem solving. In the 1980s philosopher and psychotherapist Eugine Gendlin emerged at the fringes of the field of psychology. Gendlin pioneered a therapeutic approach called 'Focusing' which explores an introspective way of being that pays patient attention to the vague and visceral felt senses of the body until meaning unfolds and can be articulated. Gendlin's research revealed that that this Focusing process brought

people into direct contact with the way the body "has a situation" and that this helped people "move to further steps of new thought" (1981a, p. 13). Gendlin argues that much of the declarative knowledge about creativity encourages people to let go of the usual and to tolerate ambiguity but that these concepts simply tell people what *not* to do rather than what they *can* do. Gendlin's Focusing process provides a tangible path into the previously hidden sensations of the body; it guides attention by revealing "exactly what to do, in order to be creative" (1981b, p. 16). When describing the process of focusing in relation to creativity Gendlin says:

> But creativity would be very mystifying indeed, if it were merely the hitting, from nowhere, of new ideas. Where can they come from? Where do thoughts arise? If you pay attention to any thought whatever, you will find that you have some words and images, and also a sense of their meaning to you just now. You will find that this meaning is much more than what the words alone say. The whole context and background is also there, in your sense of what you said. Only from this richer underlying complexity which you do have, can relevant new ideas arise. But there is a bodily way, through quite specific steps, by which you can let this form, as a whole, quite concretely, so that you can attend to it and work with it, rather than leaving it fleeting and silent as most people do. This is what focusing is all about. (Gendlin 1981b, p. 16)

In more recent times, a growing body of literature has emerged that is particularly directed toward lived experience and artistic creativity. In discussions about creativity, attention is often given to the inception of an idea, the moment of inspiration or the flash of insight as being the phenomenon of greatest importance in understanding creativity. But most artists would argue that having the idea is the easy part; that it is the development of a physical process or methodology for the capture, translation, synthesis, and enactment of that idea that constitutes an artistic practice.

For example, in her book *The Creative Habit,* Twyla Tharp argues that creativity is the result of hard work and is a habit rather than some "transcendent, inexplicable Dionysian act of inspiration" (2003, p. 7). Tharp insists that ritualising the mundane helps to deepen creative resolve and reduces the pull toward "turning back" or "chickening out" (p. 15). Tharp notes that "one of the biggest fears for a creative person is that some brilliant idea will get lost because you didn't write it down and put it in a safe place" (p. 81). As a dancer and choreographer, Tharp unsurprisingly believes that movement of the body is an integral part of the creative process because it "stimulates our brains in

ways we don't realise" (p. 24).

Tharp argues that the ideal creative state is something that can be constructed and controlled. According to Tharp, an idea is something that "turns you on rather than shuts you off", and the "tiniest micro-cell of an idea will get you going" (p. 96, p. 99). She discusses how ideas rarely come to the artist whole or complete and how scratching is a process of looking/listening and capturing the "morsels of inspiration" in the form of "lines, riffs, hooks, licks…molecules of movement" (p. 99). For Tharp, an essential part of the creative process is to realise that artists "can only generate ideas when [they] … actually do something physical" (p. 99).

This fragmentary evidence about the link between visceral phenomena and artistic creativity suggests that artists are attuning-to experience differently. I propose that attuning-to lived experience differently might therefore enable what Legrand refers to as a different "type of access" (2007, p. 509) to the body, and that this kind of access might reveal something useful about the fundamental structure of artistic creativity. The starting point, for me then, is to accept that bodies are not, merely as Husserl says, "remarkably imperfectly constituted things" (1952/1989, p. 167), but are fundamentally creative things, in a Bergsonian sense, that are remarkably constituted by and for the conditions into which they are immersed and from which they emerge.

Following Grosz I eschew mind/body, subject object binaries by engaging with key concepts in the work of Bergson and Merleau-Ponty as frameworks for investigating the relationship between lived experience and artistic creativity. I then consider whether artists' ways of attuning-to experience might bear any relation to these philosophical concepts. Given the singularity of artistic expression and how it manifests as profoundly different, domain-specific phenomenon, research into artistic creativity, in my view, is enhanced if it is highly specific and discipline focused. As Grosz says, although there are universal forces at work in the fundamental structure of things, they only manifest in the arts "through an absolute and ungeneralizable singularity" (2011, p. 42). Examining lived experience whilst engaged in particular acts of artistic creativity might then reveal previously unknown details about the fundamental structures of human creativity because those structures are perhaps amplified in such contexts.

Although my project communicates my findings through the singularity of my performance practice, I validate those findings against the experience of other artists. This is a particularly important process because, although their body-

centred experiences are singular, I discovered that artist's descriptions of the creative process do indeed provide a generalizable corporeal thematic. This corporeal thematic suggests that, in attuning-to visceral phenomena more closely, artists are able to achieve a heightened visceral awareness that is generally not available in ordinary experience, and is singularly creative.

This research is an experiential investigation into *how* lived experience might be consciously accessed differently. For this to proceed, I needed to be inside the investigation, experiencing the phenomena in a first-hand way so that deeper understandings of an enacted process could be uncovered. Furthermore, given that human artistic creativity is at the centre of this inquiry, I needed to enact an artistic project whilst in the process of accessing experience differently. Following Heidegger's view that "the question of existence never gets straightened out except through existing itself" (1927/1962, p. 33), I found that the relationship between lived experience and artistic creativity could not get straightened out except through consciously attuning-to lived experience whilst engaged in creative acts.

To this end, I employed a Performance Research approach because Performance Research has a history of placing lived experience at the centre of an inquiry through body-centred activity. I claim that this mode of research was also appropriate because I had a pre-existing performance practice and was committed to gaining a more precise understanding of the lived experience of artistic creativity through this practice.

1.7 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have raised my primary research question: What is the relationship between lived experience and artistic creativity? I have explored how the key ideas in this question are understood in Western philosophy and academic discourses about human creativity. I have embraced, as Grosz does, a Bergsonian position on the centrality of life in the fundamental structure of all things. I have recognised Merleau-Ponty's the concept of *wild Being* as a related but different concept to Bergsonian life that is important because it has resonances with the lived experience of artistic creativity as described by artists.

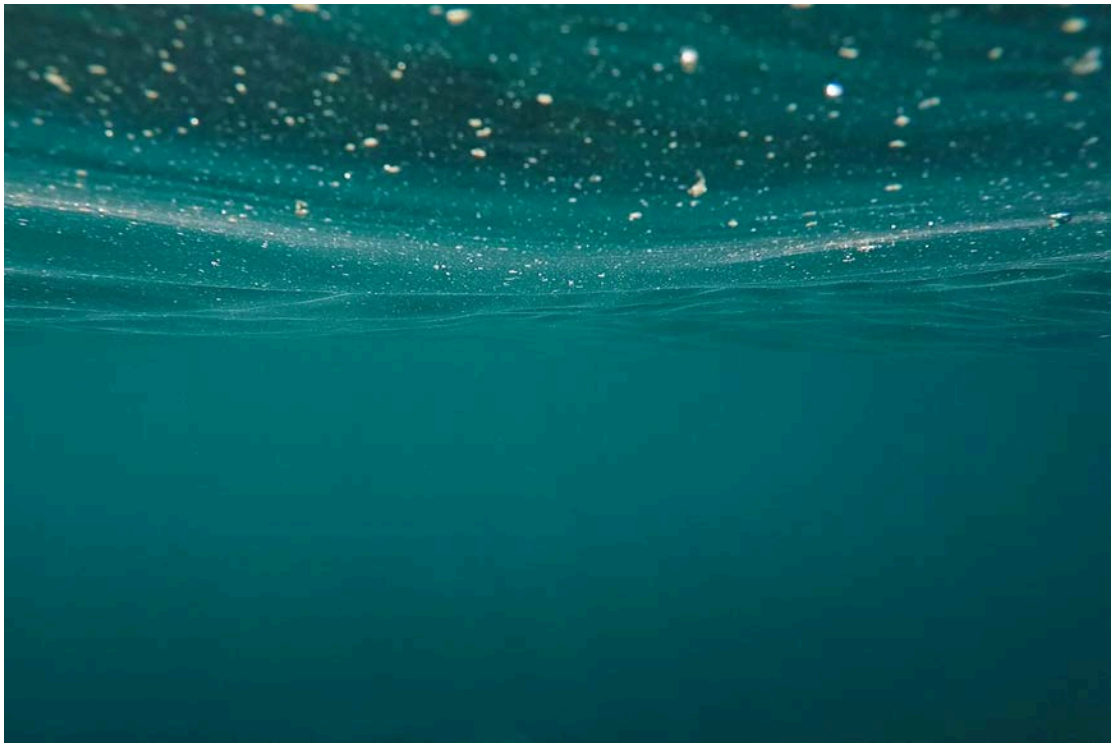
I have identified and explained how persistent mind/body and subject/object binary concepts limit our capacity to gain a more precise understanding of the lived experience of artistic creativity. Despite the prolific use of ocular-centric metaphors by key phenomenological thinkers, I argue that the work of

Merleau-Ponty on the *intertwining – the chiasm* and the work of Grosz on the Möbius loop model provide a conceptual way forward for my research. I have proposed that artists' descriptions of the creative process suggest they are accessing experience differently because they link visceral phenomena to the experience of artistic creativity. I argue that this corporeal thematic reveals an under-explored research trajectory that is worthy of further investigation.

This theoretical background lays the groundwork for furthering our understanding of the relationship between lived experience and artistic creativity. I have suggested that there are three ways to activate and frame this inquiry. They are to: adopt an ontological position that eschews binary concepts and accounts for immersive conditions, examine artists' first-person accounts of the link between visceral phenomena and artistic creativity, and take a Performance Research approach to the investigation. In Chapter Two, I explore why and how Performance Research is an appropriate mode of inquiry for this project.

Chapter Two

Methodological Background



The ephemerality of the performing arts . . . leave only traces
Robin Nelson[1]

2.0 Chapter Introduction

In the previous chapter I proposed that the way artists describe the lived experience of creativity suggested that they were accessing experience differently. I identified this as an under-developed corporeal thematic that was worthy of further investigation if we are to gain a more precise understanding of the relationship between lived experience and artistic creativity. I suggested that one way to progress this research trajectory was to place the lived experience of artistic creativity at the centre of the inquiry by consciously accessing experience differently whilst enacting an artistic project. In this chapter, I propose that Performance Research is an appropriate methodology for this project because Performance Research has a history of placing body-centred, lived experience at the centre of an inquiry.

In Section 2.1 of this chapter, I discuss how it is difficult to define Performance Research because, as Kershaw (2009) says, the singularities of practice in the

[1] Practice as research in the arts, 2013, p. 6

creative arts domain resist any definitive methodological approach. In spite of this, I cite Brad Haseman's (2006) call for a new performative paradigm and lend cautious support to this idea. I suggest that from the multifarious methods and processes of creative arts research, it is possible to identify a set of general principles for research in this domain. Further, I posit that collectively these methodologically individual research projects might indeed have the power to answer Haseman's call and, in the future, establish a new performative paradigm within the academy.

In the Section 2.2 of this chapter, I identify a lineage of body-centred research that takes an intelligent approach to performing bodies. I explain how lived experience is foregrounded in Performance Research by focussing attention on visceral phenomena whilst engaged in performance activity. I identify a theatre Performance Research trajectory that existed before creative arts research entered the academy and discuss how this frames the artistic context within which my investigations have taken place. I introduce Josephine Machon's (2009) work as a key text for analysing and defining the style of performance I use in this project.

In Section 2.3 of this chapter, I discuss how the enactment of this project has forged a performative relationship between philosophy and performance and as such makes a contribution to the emerging field of Performance Philosophy. I claim that the limitations of expressing ineffable ideas through the written word alone have created the need for a new performative mode of philosophical expression.

In Section 2.4 of this chapter, I explain that accessing experience differently for artistic purposes is a process of live knowing that happens in real-time. I claim that live, artistic performance events can create ambiguous, disruptive, playful and creative states that can reveal the fundamental structures of artistic creativity. This claim is based on my experience of developing a live performance event that was held in April 2016. Through processes of action and reflection I found that some of the philosophical concepts that were guiding my practice needed further refinement.

In Section 2.5 of this chapter, I synthesise Bergson's and Merleau-Ponty's respective fundamental concepts of *life* and *wild Being* to isolate a new phenomenon which I claim is the basis of creativity. I term this phenomenon *wild life* and in this thesis explore ways to access, activate and enact it through

performance practice. I define *wild life* as a multi-sensory, dynamic that is ontologically primal, wild, libidinal, generative, and most importantly creative. Based on my research, I propose that *wild life* manifests as a corporeal intelligence that is a constant structural feature of lived experience, and that it can be accessed at any time, if we so choose, to catalyse and sustain artistic creativity. I close this chapter by claiming that the relationship between lived experience and artistic creativity is fundamentally performative and intertwined; that indeed the fundamental structures of lived experience operate in service of artistic creativity.

2.1 Performance Research

Performance Research is particularly appropriate for an investigation into lived experience because it often privileges first-person experiences that are focused on paying attention to body-centred sensation and perception. For example, Mercer and Robson claim that this kind of research "enables thinking and articulating with the whole body" (2012, p. 16). Haseman (2006) asserts that the outcomes of Performance Research hold research knowledge in symbolic meanings that are expressed through performance, and employ artistic practices that are generally experiential, generative, enacted, and performed.

Since the early 1990s, multiple terms have appeared to describe the developing area of academic research in the creative arts domain. The most significant, from my perspective, is the work that has been done using the terms practice as research (PaR), and practice as research in performance (PARIP) in the United Kingdom, Europe, and elsewhere (Nelson 2013; Smith & Dean 2009b), live research (LR) in Australia (Mercer, Robson & Fenton 2012), and performance as research (PAR) in the United States (Riley & Hunter 2009). These defining terms have generated a complex global discourse over the last 25 years, which has resulted in a nuanced and vibrant research trajectory in the creative arts.

Robin Nelson's (2013) recently published volume on *Practice as Research in the Arts* effectively synthesises much of the debate surrounding research in the creative arts domain. His work provides a useful framework for artist-researchers because he clearly defines a "multi-mode PaR methodology", where "intelligent practice is at the core" of the submitted research inquiry (p. 40). Nelson defines his PaR model as follows:

> PaR involves a research project in which practice is a key method of inquiry and where, in respect of the arts, a practice (creative writing, dance, musical score/performance, theatre/performance, visual

> exhibition, film or other cultural practice) is submitted as substantial evidence of a research inquiry. (2013, p. 9)

Although Nelson's work embraces all the arts, he emphasises the performing arts, in part, because less has been published in performance than visual arts. This emphasis on performing arts is particularly useful for my project because, as Nelson says, "the ephemerality of the performing arts poses particular challenges to their inclusion in an already contested site of knowledge-production" (2013, p. 3). For example, the need for artist-researchers to provide durable records of their work, for academic purposes, remains a problem for adequately evidencing essentially ephemeral performance works that "leave only traces" (Nelson 2013, p. 6).

To address the problem of documenting an ephemeral work, I invited my examiners to attend the live performance event developed for this project. This ensured that examiners were able to have a direct experience of the work. I recognise, however, that the substantial gap between the live performance and the submission of this thesis remains a risk to the project as a whole.

To mitigate this risk, I elected to video record the performances so that I might use the recordings as a trigger for the examiners as they complete my assessment. Given the durational gap between the live event and the submission of the written work, the video recording might also operate as evidence of the performance in the event that a different examiner has to be introduced. Nelson notes that in the UK, an understanding has developed such that few examiners of PaR projects "mistake the audio-visual document for the performance itself" (2013, p. 6). In Australia, this understanding has also developed and there is recognition that the video recording does not in any way replace the live performance event.

Research in the creative arts domain, on the whole, privileges differentiation and embraces multiplicities. According to Kershaw, this "boundless specificity" paradoxically ensures creative arts research will "always resist becoming a single discipline" (2009, p. 4). I disagree. A review of the literature suggests that from the multiple individual projects in this domain there are generalisable principles that have emerged. For example, artist-researchers use "making as the driving force" (Makela & Routarinne 2006, p. 22), capture the "messiness of process" (Haseman & Mafe 2009, p. 211), encourage working from the "unknown to the known" (Sullivan 2009, p. 49, p. 62) and allow work to evolve

through “failure and generosity” (Mercer & Robson 2012, p. 13). These are the general principles that have guided my performance research.

What is particular to my project is the focus on first-person, body-centred performative activity. I use the term performative to signal, as does Haseman (2006), a mode of research that is in contrast and different to qualitative or quantitative research. I concur with Haseman that the performative mode of research has its roots in qualitative approaches, but that it is distinguished from other forms of research by how the researcher goes about achieving and communicating their goals. Reporting is offered “as rich, presentational forms”, and “when research findings are made as presentational forms they deploy symbolic data in the material forms of practice; forms of still and moving images; forms of music and sound; forms of live action and digital code” (p. 5).

Haseman’s work is clearly seminal in the field of PaR. One of Nelson’s stated purposes for his volume about PaR is to “propose a distinctive pedagogy for PaR…fleshing out the paradigm of ‘performative research’ posited by Haseman” (2013, p. 6). Haseman coins the term *performative research* (2006, p. 5) in response to the increasing frustrations of artist-researchers who were finding the methodological boundaries of quantitative and qualitative research too limiting for the production and communication of their research knowledge. He argues that *performative research* is actually forming a new paradigm.

Haseman’s assertion heralds the arrival of something new in the academy. I note, however, that ten years later, the idea of a new performative research paradigm has still not definitively taken hold. Haseman himself has even stopped using the term in this way – instead he seems focused on “practice-led know how” (Haseman & Mafe 2009, p. 211). Whether or not Haseman’s notion of *performative research* is a new paradigm, or simply a new methodology within the broader context of relativist research is something that cannot be definitively asserted at this stage. Establishing a new paradigm is a significant academic ambition because paradigms are the broadest epistemological categories. As such, this bold move will require the efforts of many. In the foreseeable future it is possible that a critical mass of artist-researchers will, with their collective efforts, galvanise change within the academy and establish a new performative research paradigm. This is the work of more than one PhD project.

So, for my part, I signal support for this new paradigm but, at this point in time, confine my discussion to the notion of Performance Research rather than

performative research even though, in many ways, their elements converge. For me, Performance Research fosters, like performative research does for Haseman, an "enthusiasm of practice" (2006, p. 4) resulting in artistic work that embodies the research findings in live performance events.

In my project, this enthusiasm of practice is a performative exchange between philosophy and performance. I engage with fundamental philosophical concepts through a process of training myself to access experience differently in the act of making creative works. Watson notes that "the lines between training and research in theatrical performance are often unclear; what is training to some, is research to others, and vice versa"(2009, p. 86). For me, the difference lies in whether or not the approach is open or closed. Stanislavski "seemed more inclined to an open process" (Watson 2009, p. 88). The knowledge of the performer is corporeal but it remains open for investigation and testing. I concur with Kershaw that, Performance Research creates a "dislocation of knowledge by action" (2009, p. 4).

In the next section I identify a lineage of body-centred research that has dislocated *knowledge by action* through an intelligent approach to performing bodies. The body-centred work of the performance practitioners discussed in the next section frames the artistic context within which my investigations have taken place.

2.2 Researching Performing Bodies

Within the creative arts domain there exists a wide-ranging interdisciplinary research agenda that shares a commitment to body-centred research focusing on bodies 'in' performance as well as bodies 'as' "the locus of performance" (Parker-Starbuck & Mock 2011, p. 210). Over the past century, many performing artists have applied an intelligent rigour to their performance practices. This research agenda served to establish Performance Research methodologies well before this mode of inquiry entered the academy. For example Barba (2009), Grotowski (1968), and Stanislavski (1936) all developed substantial research models for their practice. According to Watson, research for each of these practitioners "begins from a challenge" that generates a "series of explorations" that are "tested, and if proven worthy, are applied" and findings often become the "basis of further research" (2009, p. 87). Although as Nelson says, "only academic research requires that you *must* establish new knowledge" (2013, p. 25), the outcome of the research conducted by these practitioners outside the academy has resulted in significant forms of new knowledge. For this reason, these practitioners might be considered the pioneers of creative arts research. Their efforts are therefore significant in the framing of contemporary research

in the performing arts.

For many performance practitioners, the investigation of the daily body is central to their practice. For example, theatre practitioner Lorna Marshall says that the performer, using their "daily body", the everyday body that already has an extensive repertoire of signifying and affective gestures and movements, can attune, and learn to "listen…taste… and remain open" (2008, p. 10) to what they might become from one moment to the next. By observing how the daily body actually moves and sounds, the performer becomes aware of patterns and habits, and enters into a dialogue with those patterns, thus allowing for more differentiation and more openness to the possibilities of what they may become.

There is also a rich trajectory of performance experimentation focused on the "everyday movement" of the body (Burt 2006, p. 36). For example, post modern dance rejected the constraints of modern dance composition, instead focusing on the belief that any movement was dance and any person was a dancer; that everyday movement was valid performance art. This work, pioneered in New York by The Judson Dance Theatre in the 1960s, built on experiments done by Merce Cunningham and John Cage, and took movements from life such as walking and running to create dance performances that influenced not only future dance work, but minimalism in music and art (Burt 2006). These artists, many of whom are still experimenting with their practice today, are interested in the lessons one can learn from everyday lived experience. For example, Deborah Hay (2000) writes eloquently about the body as the locus of artistic consciousness. In her book, *My body, the Buddhist*, Hay documents the "practical wisdom" she gains from her "teacher, the (my) body" (2000, p. xxiii).

In theatre contexts, a significant proportion of developments in twentieth-century actor training have been physically based. From the later work of Stanislavski on physical actions, through Meyerhold, Copeau, Artaud, Brecht, St Denis, (Michael) Checkhov, Grotowski, Decrouz to Brook, Barba, Lecoq and Pardo, one can trace an "insistence on practices of embodiment, physical expressiveness and corporeal fluency" (Keefe & Murray 2007, p. 17).

In the twentieth century, the focus on physical training gave rise to the development of a style of performance known as 'physical theatre'. The work of *DV8 Physical Theatre* in the 1980s is arguably the first group to overtly adopt the phrase in the name of their company (Murray & Keefe 2007). DV8's founder Lloyd Newson, a trained dancer, began to use the term physical theatre because

as he says “the term physical theatre better describes the work I do…I can invent, access, manipulate, combine whatever I like. Be it pedestrian or naturalistic movement, circus skills, film, dance, song, text. Any means necessary to find the most appropriate way to say something” (DV8 Physical Theatre 2016).

In their companion books, *Physical theatres: a critical introduction* and *Physical theatres: a critical reader,* Murray and Keefe have attempted an “investigation and interrogation of the principles, tropes and practices that make up physical theatres/the physical in theatres” (2007, p. 5). They recognise the work of DV8, but trace a rich lineage of theatre practices that for 2000 years might have been called physical theatre if the term had been culturally available (p. 14).

The body-centred work of the performance practitioners listed above frames the artistic context within which my investigations have taken place. However, the analysis of this work, according to Josephine Machon, is problematic because it tends to “separate ideas around the moving body and the written text” (2009, p. 2). For Machon, this leaves no sympathetic mode of analysis for performance that is visceral and inter-disciplinary. In response, she develops her own mode of performance analysis that fuses sensory perceptual experience with a sensate approach to artistic practice. For this reason, Machon’s work is a key text in this project. Her work substantiates the visceral, and finds a legitimate way to analyse and articulate a style of performance which privileges and substantiates the sensations and perceptions of lived experience.

Machon traces a linage of body-centred performance through ancient traditions such as “Noh Theatre, Kathakali, Greek Tragedy; through Shakespearean and Jacobean theatre, to the avant-garde practice of Jacques Copeau, Vsevolod Myerhold, Antonin Artaud, Isadora Duncan, Samual Beckett, Jacew Lecoq or Martha Graham… and onwards to the innovations of the late twentieth century through to the present such as Pina Bausch or Robert Lepage” (2009, pp. 1-2). Machon, in contrast to Murray and Keefe’s (2007) work on Physical Theatre, cites this lineage in terms of a style of “experiential” performance emerging out of the late twentieth century that exploits diverse artistic languages “via the recreation of visceral experience” (2009, p. 1). For Machon, the “predominance of the body is a vital and defining strategy for this style of performance (p. 62).

Machon develops a mode of analysis, she calls “(syn)aesthetics”, for a kind of performance that “fuses disciplines”, fuses “corporeal and cerebral experiences”,

and through its experiential style provokes a visceral response (Machon 2011 pp. 3-4). Machon endows the term (syn)aesthetics with both its Greek etymology (the Greek *syn* meaning 'together' and *aisthesis*, meaning 'sensation' or 'perception') and the scientific study of synaesthesia, a neurological condition where multiple senses are simultaneously stimulated when just one sense is triggered.

In my project, I employ a (syn)aesthetic style of performance by testing philosophical concepts against my own experience, in the act of making creative works, to discover how these ideas might manifest through performance. I argue that this exchange between performance and philosophy makes a contribution to the emerging field of Performance Philosophy. The next section describes how my work lays claim to this field of study.

2.3 Performance Philosophy

Performance Philosophy is an emerging field that is now actively "supported by an international network of nearly 2000 scholars and artists" (Cull 2015). Kirkkopelto believes artist-researchers embrace Performance Philosophy because their methodologies are experiential and enacted which allows them to make direct "contact with philosophical thinking without the advocacy of intermediary disciplines" (2015, 5). Performance Philosophy aims to take seriously the possibility that performance is a kind of philosophy, and philosophy is a kind of performance (Nell 2013).

Theatre practitioner Phillip Zarrilli argues that the actor "implicitly enacts a 'theory' of acting - a set of assumptions about the conventions and style which guide his or her performance, the structure of actions which he or she performs, the shape that those actions take….and the relationship to the audience" (2008, p. 635). This 'enacted' theory of acting according to Zarrilli is informed by a "set of assumptions about body, mind, their relationship, the nature of the 'self', the 'inner' experiences of what the actor does - often called emotion or feeling - and the relationship between the actor and spectator" (p. 635).

Although I have avoided many of the terms Zarrilli uses such as 'self' and 'inner', I still find Zarrilli's thoughts on this matter do resonate. Zarrilli points toward the need to articulate the underlying theories that one uses in the creation of artistic works. My project has been a process of questioning underlying assumptions about lived experience and artistic creativity, and communicating my findings through performance. For this reason I argue that

my work has been an act of Performance Philosophy.

I suggest that Performance Philosophy is perhaps the 'closer relationship' between art and philosophy foreshadowed by Merleau-Ponty. As early as 1959, Merleau-Ponty began his course at the College de France saying that philosophy was "for the moment" in crisis but continued by saying "philosophy will find help in poetry, art, literature, music….in a closer relationship with them, it will be reborn and will re-interpret its own past of metaphysics - which is not past" (Merleau-Ponty in his Notes de Cours, 1959 - 60, p. 39 cited in Flynn 2013). As Deleuze also points out, "the search for new means of philosophical expression… must be pursued today in relation to the renewal of certain other arts, such as the theatre or the cinema" (1968/2004, xx).

I suggest that the challenge put forth by Deleuze in the twentieth century has come to fruition through Performance Philosophy in the twenty-first century. Performance Philosophy provides a performative framework for researching the fundamental structures of life, subjectivity, inter-subjectivity and materiality. In my performance practice I take up Deleuze's challenge and pursue a new means of philosophical expression through performance. Performance Philosophy, in the context of my project, borrows ideas from the continental philosophers of the twentieth century but attempts to reveal, communicate and enact fundamental structures through the subjective corporeal actions and inter-subjective interactions of live theatre performance.

The experiential nature of my work, the focus on lived experience, and the ensuing investigation into the fundamental conditions of human artistic creativity raised ontological questions that could not be ignored during the enactment of my project. I found answers to some of these questions in Bergson's Theory of Creative Evolution and in the way Grosz utilises the work of Bergson and Merleau-Ponty to formulate ontologies of becoming. However, questions still remained about *how* lived experience actually operates in relation to artistic creativity in real-time.

Through reflection and action, I identified a corporeal intelligence that was unpredictable, surprising, open-ended, and singularly creative. I found that live performance could reveal the immersive fundamental structures of human artistic creativity in a way that could be immediately apprehended in real time. These discoveries were made through processes of what I call live knowing. In the next section I discuss the concept of live knowing and how this supported the development of my work.

2.4 Live Knowing

Live knowing is an experiential process that attunes to the interplay between dissolving boundaries and assembling forms and is underpinned by an ontology that recognises that "form is only a snapshot view of a transition"; that "what is real is the continual change of form" (Bergson 1911/2005, p. 328). Live knowing is what I call the activated or practical form of knowledge. It is ontologically process-driven in the "form of movement" (Bergson 1911/2005, p. 329), rather than declaratively epistemological in the form of the written word. The concept of live knowing has its roots in what Ryle explains as the difference between "knowing how and knowing that" (1945, p. 1). Caouette describes the difference between these kinds of knowing using the example of riding a bike. Explaining to someone how to ride a bike demonstrates that you know something about riding a bike but this sense of the word *how* does not imply that you have the ability to do so (2013, para. 1). Having the ability to ride a bike involves practical or live knowing because riding a bike requires movement and is a whole-bodied, multi-sensory activity that happens spontaneously in real time.

My project involves knowing *that* there are immersive philosophical concepts about lived experience, and knowing *how* I might enact those concepts in real time. I am concerned with *how* I might eschew mind/body, subject/object and conscious/unconscious binary concepts to gain a more precise understanding of the lived experience of artistic creativity. My research focuses on the enacted phenomenon of artistic creativity in real time. As Ginsburg notes:

> If the emphasis is made on verbal reports, we impose a cultural bias on our observations and confuse map and territory. The territory is phenomenal experience. The map is what we think (verbally) that our experience is. When one is addicted to map making and conceptualising, a switch is made and the idea takes precedence over the experiencing (2005, p.12).

Following Ginsburg, I therefore attempt to augment the *phenomenal experience* of artistic creativity through performance, rather than simply making *verbal reports* about what I think the experience might be.

Grosz believes there is a need to "welcome again what epistemologies have left out: the relentless force of the real, a new metaphysics" (2011, p. 85). My research attempts to take up this challenge through my performance practice by approaching artistic performance not as a tool for representation but as a live process of discovery and invention. I embrace Grosz' idea that "we need to reconceptualise the real as forces, energies, events, impacts that pre-exist and

function both before and beyond, as well as within, representation" (2011, p. 85). In theatre contexts this concept of live knowing has resonances with what Grotowski calls the "living drive" behind physical actions (Grotwoski quoted in Salata 2007, p. 127). For Grotowski, even though acting is done within an aesthetic frame it is still the real deed or the "deed done again" (Salata 2007, p.127).

In my project I engaged in live knowing within the context of a live performance event. I developed a contemporary theatre performance called *'Imagine This . . .'* that was held in April 2016. The performance event was structured in twelve vignettes and was devised to foreground ontology through acts of live knowing. The structure of the performance was both scripted and improvised. Improvised sections, in particular, allowed me to remain open to the unpredictable and surprising encounters that occurred in performance. This performance was developed and performed in response to my primary research question: what is the relationship between lived experience and artistic creativity?

As I will detail in subsequent chapters, I discovered that live performance can reveal, with the inherent capacity real time has for variation, deviation, mistake, and risk, how life uses the fundamental structures of lived experience for artistic expression. As the musician David Byrne says, the live event "helps focus our attention", and "we listen more closely when we know we only have one chance, one fleeting opportunity to grasp something, and as a result our enjoyment is deepened" (75).

According to Machon "live performance reaches beyond the experience of sensations in the singular due to the fact that it is an amalgamation of all of the senses within a multidimensional, heterogeneous form" (2011, p. 24). This approach results in what Riley calls "perceptual polyphony" (2004, p. 449). Phelan believes live performance colludes in an "interactive exchange" whereby performers and audience unite in a manically charged present" (1993, pp. 146 - 148). To achieve this visceral openness, this capacity for *perceptual polyphony,* and this *manically charged present,* I utilised multiple performance lineages, such as physical theatre, extended vocal technique, and improvisation techniques, in, what Machon calls, "a (syn)aesthetic performance style" (2011, pp. 3-4). In doing so, I isolated a new corporeal phenomenon that I claim is the basis of creativity. I term this phenomenon *wild life.* In the next section, I explore this new corporeal phenomenon in more detail and claim it as an

original contribution to knowledge.

2.5 Wild life

Wild life brings together the Bergsonian concept of *life* and Merleau-Ponty's concept of *wild Being*. Bergson's concept of *life* captures the immersive and generative conditions that weigh upon lived experience and are put into play through the "great blast of life" (1911/2005, p. 141). Whereas the primal quality inherent in Merleau-Ponty's concept of *wild Being* more closely aligns with the visceral descriptions of artists' creative processes, as will be detailed in Chapters Four and Five. Through my performance practice, I experimented with accessing experience differently by attuning-to visceral phenomena that, in everyday experience, abides at the edge of awareness. This process felt different to ordinary experience and fostered a capacity to attune-to a corporeal intelligence that I discovered was unpredictable, surprising, open-ended and singularly creative.

The term *wild life* is important because it helps to more precisely establish the link between the fundamental structures of lived experience and artistic creativity. *Wild life* harnesses the nuances of both *life* and *wild Being* without, I hope, losing the inherent qualities of either. In my research, I have experienced *wild life* as a multi-sensory dynamic that is primal, wild, libidinal and generative. I claim that attuning-to *wild life* during the processes of artistic creativity requires a sustained attentiveness to multiple, visceral phenomena, as well as a sustained attentiveness to that which is in-between things. *Wild life* has a pre-bifurcated quality that accounts for the body-world connections I have experienced, and that many artists attest to, as will be reported in the following chapters. In my experience, *wild life* is a constant structural feature of lived experience that manifests as a corporeal intelligence. Based on my research, *wild life* can be accessed at any time, if we so choose, to support and sustain artistic practice.

I worked with artist, Shayna Quinn to visually capture *wild life* as a fundamental structure (Figure 1). Using the Möbius loop model, this image represents the porous, wild and intertwining structures of creative lived experience.

Figure 1: Fundamental Structure of *Wild life*
Image by Shayna Quinn

Working with the *wild life* phenomenon as a performance practitioner can allow for the unexpected and innovative to arise for artistic purposes. As Grosz says,

> Art induces the real to reveal itself, to make itself more than itself, to discover economies of action, forces, effects that make as they change or unmake…it doesn't grasp or comprehend the real. It intimates it, it feels, enacts, or performs the real. (2011, p. 190)

The interplay between philosophical ideas and artistic performance has resulted in a narrative that ultimately supports the idea that the relationship between lived experience and artistic creativity is fundamentally performative and intertwined; that indeed the fundamental structures of lived experience operate in service of artistic creativity. In the following chapters I will detail the experiences and discoveries from my practice and from the performance event

held in April 2016 to substantiate this claim.

2.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have identified the Performance Research frameworks that have shaped my project. I have outlined an approach to research that takes account of the singularities of creative practice, and recognises the challenges this kind of research poses to the academy. I have argued that Performance Research is an ideal methodology for questioning mind/body, subject/object binary concepts because the focus in this field is often on the lived experience of bodies in/as the site of performance. I have traced a linage of Performance Research that has occurred outside the academy to help frame the artistic context within which my investigations have taken place.

I have discussed the emerging field of Performance Philosophy and highlighted how this interdisciplinary domain is forging a new kind of experiential philosophical expression. I have activated a dialogue between philosophy and performance because philosophical concepts alone did not capture the performative component of my experiences or offer the means by which I might experientially eschew mind/body, subject/object binaries. I have discussed how the lived experience of artistic creativity requires openness to what I call live knowing. I claim that live knowing is enacted through live performance events that are designed to create ambiguous, disruptive, playful and creative states. In doing so, I lay claim to a new phenomenon that I call *wild life*. In the next chapter, I detail the experiential methods I used to access experience differently and create the live, artistic performance event that was held in April 2016.

Chapter Three

Experiential Methods

The body is our anchorage in a world
Merleau-Ponty[2]

3.0 Chapter Introduction

In this chapter, I detail the experiential methods I employed to consciously access experience differently whilst developing artistic performance works. Between April 2013 and February 2016 I worked with experienced practitioners to learn a range of body-centred practices through one-to-one sessions, workshops, group classes and professional development intensives.

In Section 3.2 of this chapter, I introduce the concept of attunement, which in the context of body-centred practice, is about actively sustaining a conscious awareness of multiple visceral phenomena. In many body-centred practices the aim is to avoid using sight as the dominant sense and to instead allow hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting to come to the fore so that a more integrated and unified experience of multi-sensory perception can be experienced. I describe the three body-centred practices that underpin this concept in my practice and introduce the body-centred practitioners who fostered supportive

[2] Phenomenology of Perception, 1945/2012, p. 146

learning environments within which I could develop and build this attunement capacity.

In section 3.3 of this chapter, I detail the first-person methods I employed in discovery workshops with body-centred practitioners. I provide an overview of the ways in which I collaborated with other practitioners in a workshop setting and discuss the methods I used to record and reflect upon these discovery workshop events.

In Section 3.4 of this chapter, I discuss a key corporeal practice that I utilised in this project. This corporeal practice involves activating the imagination though the use of sensory metaphors. I claim that using sensory metaphors can create visceral shifts in lived experience that support the capacity of life to harness and divert things through unexpected and innovative use so that things are always opening out, always differentiating. I describe how these visceral shifts in lived experience can help to initiate and sustain creative ideas, and can be used to catalyse, build, and sustain artistic performative material.

In Section 3.5, of this chapter I describe other attunement practices I have used in the enactment of my Performance Research. These practices are shared amongst myself and other practitioners. They have significantly expanded my performance practice, and have enabled progress to be made on my research inquiry.

In Section 3.6 I close this chapter by describing the reflective practice methods I used in the processes of learning throughout my project. I explain how I have used journals, audience reflections and inter-subjective dialogues to document, test and reflect upon my ideas and practices in processes of continuous action and reflection.

3.1 Attunement

I invited three experienced body-centred practitioners to support me in the process of consciously attuning-to experience differently. These practitioners, quite independently, used the term “attunement” when we were engaged in teaching and learning their methods and techniques. I cannot recall with whom I first encountered the term but it became a significant concept in the enactment of my project and had wide acceptance amongst practitioners in this field. The practitioners were chosen for their extensive experience within their own area of body-centred practice and because I had built collegial relationships with them either prior to or during my PhD studies.

The aim of these collaborations was to apply and, where appropriate, adapt and augment the methods and techniques I learnt from these various practices and practitioners to first, consciously access experience differently and second, make artistic performance works. The aim was also to document discoveries about the lived experience of artistic creativity as they were occurring. These practitioners had expertise in either the Alexander Technique, Body Mind Centring® (BMC) or Focusing. I provide here an over-view of each practice and the ways in which I have engaged with each practitioner. The claims made by the founders of each body-centred practice are based on substantial periods of time developing their practice. I note that whilst it might be possible, from a scientific perspective, to critically question these practices, it does not diminish the productive and useful role they have played in presenting new avenues of investigation in my research into the lived experience of artistic creativity.

i) Alexander Technique

The Alexander Technique, developed by Frederick Matthias Alexander (1865 - 1955), purports to help attune more effectively and with greater coordination to the body "as a whole" (Alexander 1923/2004, p.6). Generally, the teaching process includes touch. Practitioners believe that learning this way emphasises how to focus on the process rather than the desired end. Learning is also about inhibiting that which is striving toward some particular end. According to Alexander, the technique is process driven and learning to coordinate more effectively can help to find the "means where by…ends can be brought about" (Alexander 1923/2004, p. 92). Since the 1940s, the Alexander Technique has been widely applied and researched in a range of contexts including medicine and pain management, anatomy and physiology, acting, swimming, golf, voice, dance, pregnancy and childbirth, stress reduction, running, horseback riding, exercise, and Alexander Technique pedagogy.

Alexander argued that humans were out of touch with visceral sensation and perception and therefore needed to engage in processes of bodily re-education through "the principles of constructive conscious control" (1923/2004, p. 158). He claimed that every act is a reaction to a stimulus received through the full range of the sensory mechanism, and therefore no act can be described as "wholly mental or wholly physical" (p. 52). Alexander used the term *psycho-physical* to describe "the indivisible unity of the human organism" (p. 23). He believed it was impossible to separate the "physical and mental operations in our conception of the working of the human organism" (p. 4). He claimed that

changing mental and physical conceptions of the *psycho-physical* organism could help in gaining greater freedom and control. Whilst it might be argued that this maintains a split between mind and body, the impetus is towards fusion rather than differentiation. My research began in the undifferentiated psycho-physical organism.

Based on his own experience, and that of many students, Alexander observed that humans rely heavily on what he called "subconscious (instinctive) guidance and control … "in the use of the human organism" (1923/2004, p. 3). Based on these observations, he concluded that this "sensory appreciation" … is "unreliable" (p. 26). This realisation led him to further reason that if it is possible for this unreliable sensory appreciation to "become untrustworthy as a means of direction, it should also be possible to make it trustworthy again" (p. 36). Alexander, who was trained as an actor, claimed that his *psycho-physical* organism was becoming unusable for the purposes of performance and public speaking because he kept losing his voice. As a result, he set out to discover ways in which he could use the human organism in its optimal state. The result was a very specific but comprehensive body-centred training program that he first used on himself and later shared with others.

The primary practitioner I work with in the field of Alexander Technique is Kate Barnett (Figure 2). Kate is an embodiment practitioner based in Melbourne, Australia, with a particular interest in improvisation and performance. She has been exploring embodiment practices for the past twenty years and is a trained Alexander Technique teacher. With the help of Kate, I have used some of Alexander's methods to uncover and shift my own bodily habits. I include a detailed profile of Kate here because she and I worked together in an ongoing way for the full duration of the project. Over that time, we co-developed attunement processes that were useful for my performance practice. Together we forged a consistent and ongoing inter-subjective dialogue that was instrumental in helping me to articulate my research findings.

Figure 2: Discovery workshop - Angela & Kate

Kate uses a mix of complementary practices in one-to-one sessions. She is also a trained as a facilitator of InterPlay, a play-based practice for improvising with movement, voice, and storytelling. Her approach to embodiment and the qualities of her 'teaching touch' are also influenced by her long-term interest in Body Mind Centring® (BMC). I found Kate's combination of embodiment practices particularly useful for my research interests, and with Kate's encouragement pursued a deeper connection with BMC practices. Kate learnt BMC practices from Melbourne based BMC practitioner Alice Cummins, who trained with Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, the founder of BMC. Alice was one of the first to bring the BMC practice to Australia.

I first started working with Kate as an Alexander Technique teacher for voice. We have now been working together for almost six years in total. Over that time, deep levels of trust and collegiality have been established. I am particularly drawn to Kate's teaching approach because of the egalitarian principles that underpin the relationships she sets up with students. Learning in Kate's sessions is underpinned by a commitment to Alexander's belief that "all acts concerned with learning something or learning to do something call for psycho-physical activity" (1923/2004, p. 9).

Kate and I held regular sessions that focused on questions arising from my research. At times we set up a series of three consecutive sessions to explore specific questions. Sessions varied between two and four hours in duration. I kept a personal reflective journal throughout the process and with Kate's permission video recorded some of our sessions and audio recorded/ transcribed our dialogues. The sessions were generally co-created. Kate's role was to facilitate the development of my attunement capacity and to bear witness to my processes for validation purposes. The structure of our sessions moved fluidly between attunement explorations, performative experiments, and inter-subjective dialogues. Our sessions were generally designed as reciprocal exchanges that were in mutual support of the specific needs of one another at any given time.

ii) Body Mind Centring® (BMC)
BMC is an experiential attunement practice pioneered by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen in the 1970s. The practice purports to foster processes of attuning-to how "mind is expressed through the body in movement" (Bainbridge Cohen

2012, p. 1). Bainbridge Cohen began by exploring movement from the perspective of the skeletal and muscular systems but soon expanded to the exploration of movement in relation to all body systems. Bainbridge Cohen claims that BMC is as "an ongoing experiential journey into the alive and changing territory of the body" (p. 1).

According to Wright Miller, Ethridge and Tarlow Morgan, BMC has spread globally and is now being steered by numerous teachers and scholars who "delve deeply into one aspect or another of the work" (2011, p. 13). Practitioners claim that the focus in this work is not about arriving at a particular destination, but on continually attending to the experience of alignment between the smallest cellular activity within the body and the largest movements of the body.

Bainbridge Cohen initiated the work to "help people help themselves" (2012, p. 8). She works with the "idea of effortlessness, of not expending unnecessary energy, and also with the principle of lengthening muscles rather than stretching them" (p. 8). The notion of lengthening rather than stretching is significant in BMC. Bainbridge Cohen claims that lengthening changes the "mind of the muscle" and is an internal process of release and change that is activated by our own inner sensory receptors (p. 8). This idea that there is a *mind of the muscle* is a central concept in BMC. Bainbridge Cohen claims "all mind patternings are expressed in movement, through the body. And that all physically moving patterns have a mind" (p. 103).

According to Bainbridge Cohen, BMC work combines traditional physiology, non-traditional physiology, and specific BMC research results (2012, p. 66). For example, the fluids of the body are traditionally considered in isolation. Although BMC practitioners recognise that fluids can be isolated, they choose to explore "the dynamic interrelationships between the fluids as one fluid system" (p. 67). Bainbridge Cohen claims that the fluid system is made up of water but "changes properties and characteristics as it passes through different membranes, flows through different channels and interacts with different substance" (pp. 66-67). In BMC, the focus is on the cells. Bainbridge Cohen believes, the "membrane permeability is what determines the flow of fluids in and out of the cells" and "every cell has a mind" that is able to express itself (p. 75). According to Bainbridge Cohen, when new patterns are opened up for the body and "the body is the instrument through which the mind is expressed, then one can just play more kinds of melodies, or different kinds of verse, kinds

of timbres" (p. 100).

The claims made about anatomy and physiology in BMC are largely unverifiable from a scientific perspective. Nevertheless, the concepts, even if they are working at a metaphorical level, do produce a pronounced sensory and experiential modification, which promotes detectable perceptual shifts in relation to lived experience that are useful for my research. These perceptual shifts are necessary for my research purposes, and therefore produce worthwhile experiential data for me to reflect upon. Bainbridge Cohen's work on breathing, vocalisation, and the organ system of the body is of particular use in the context of my investigation. I use BMC practices to explore the organ system through breath and vocalisation during different phases of the project as a way of developing vocal capacity, generating and refining creative material, and making my body-centred processes more explicit. These experiments have proved very useful in accessing experience differently. The following chapters document how I enact this process in both discovery workshops and within the live performance event.

The primary practitioner I work with in the field of BMC is Alice Cummins. Alice is a dance artist, BMC Practitioner, and internationally qualified somatic movement educator and therapist (ISMETA). She is a master teacher who offers workshops and individual sessions throughout Australia. Alice has a twenty-year history of creating improvisational performances and has collaborated with musicians, writers, visual artists, and filmmakers. Her solo work has been performed at PICA (Perth Institute of Performing Arts); Performance Space, Sydney; and Dancehouse Melbourne. Her work is influenced by BMC, new dance practices, and feminist philosophy. Alice has a Master of Arts (by research) from Victoria University and continues to research different modes of and realisations of the body and performance.

iii) Focusing

Focusing was originally discovered by Eugine Gendlin (1981a) in researching the question, "why is psychotherapy helpful for some people, but not for others?" Together with his colleagues, Gendlin watched hundreds of tapes of therapy sessions. They discovered that successful therapy clients paid attention to their vague, hard-to-describe, bodily, felt sense about their problems. As a result, Gendlin began to teach this technique for exploring bodily sensations and perceptions and called it Focusing.

Gendlin asserts that the experiencer's interactions with the world happen prior

to the development of concepts about the world; that embodied living, as an ordered interaction with the environment, is a knowing that exists prior to conceptual knowledge. As a philosopher and psychotherapist, Gendlin explores an introspective way of being whereby the experiencer pays patient attention to the vague and visceral felt senses of the body until meaning unfolds and is able to be articulated. When describing the process of focusing in relation to creativity, Gendlin states:

> But creativity would be very mystifying indeed, if it were merely the hitting, from nowhere, of new ideas. Where can they come from? Where do thoughts arise? If you pay attention to any thought whatever, you will find that you have some words and images, and also a sense of their meaning to you just now. You will find that this meaning is much more than what the words alone say. The whole context and background is also there, in your sense of what you said. Only from this richer underlying complexity, which you do have, can relevant new ideas arise. But there is a bodily way, through quite specific steps, by which you can let this form, as a whole, quite concretely, so that you can attend to it and work with it, rather than leaving it fleeting and silent as most people do. This is what focusing is all about. (1981b, para. 21)

According to Weiser Cornell, Focusing, as a method of inner awareness, has three key qualities. These qualities include:

1. Discovering a body sensation called the felt sense

2. Accepting an engaged inner attention

3. A radical philosophy of what facilitates change (2005, p. 13).

The first quality of the felt sense is a body sensation that has meaning. It is often very subtle because it is not emotion and it is not thought. As the experiencer focuses on the felt sense it becomes clear that it can be very intricate. Weiser Cornell provides an example of tuning into the felt sense:

> If you're operating purely with emotions, then fear is fear. It's just fear, no more. But if you're operating on the felt sense level, you can sense that this fear, the one you're feeling right now, is different from the fear you felt yesterday. Maybe yesterday's fear was like a cold rock in the stomach, and today's fear is like a pulling back, withdrawing. As you stay with today's fear, you start to sense something like a shy creature pulled back into a cave. You get the feeling that if you sit with it long enough, you might even find out the real reason that it is so scared. A felt sense is often

> subtle, and as you pay attention to it you discover that it is intricate. It has more to it. We have a vocabulary of emotions that we feel over and over again, but every felt sense is different. You can, however, start with an emotion, and then feel the felt sense of it, as you are feeling it in your body right now. (1998, p. 1)

The second quality is a process of bringing interested curiosity to the felt sense. It is about being open to that which does not yet have words to express itself. This process takes time, so there needs to be a willingness and patience that accompanies this curiosity. The taking time, the caring to find out what is there, without trying to change it, is what brings deeper knowledge to the experiencer. The experiencer is then encouraged to accept unconditionally what arises. This acceptance is confident that the *felt sense* will change in its own way; that change is the only constant. Gendlin refers to this as "making steps" because the inner world is never static and by bringing attention to it, that inner world will unfold, move and become something new (Gendlin 1981a cited in Weiser Cornell 1998, p. 14). Focusing brings insight, relief and a shift in behaviour that happens easily and without effort.

The third quality of focusing is a philosophical shift concerning the process of change. Focusing teaches the experiencer that change and flow are the natural course of things, and when "something seems not to change, what it needs is attention and awareness, with an attitude of allowing it to be as it is, yet open to its next steps" (Weiser Cornell 1998, p. 5). The radicality of this philosophy, according to Weiser Cornell, is in the shift from needing to 'do' something to 'make' change happen to an embodied process that is simply about being and allowing change to happen.

The primary practitioner I work with in the field of Focusing is Jo Kennedy. Jo is the founder of Focusing Australia. She is a certified Focusing practitioner/trainer and coordinator. Jo was trained by Ann Weiser Cornell, an internationally renowned, Inner Relationship Focusing teacher, and by Keven McEvenue, who originated Wholebody Focusing.

As well as working with body-centred practitioners who have particular practices that are about accessing lived experience differently, I also work with two theatre practitioners, to help ground my work within the field of theatre performance. These practitioners were chosen because of their experience in the field of theatre performance, and because I felt a connection to their artistic performance work.

In July 2015, I made contact with Melbourne theatre director, Kirsten von Bibra, after seeing a production she directed of *Grounded* by George Brant at Red Stitch Theatre. *Grounded* is a one-woman show, and I was particularly impressed with the Kirsten's direction. The production won best director/best actress in the 2015 Sydney Theatre Awards. Kirsten is a theatre director/teaching artist with over twenty years experience in professional theatre. She was a Lecturer in Acting at the Victorian Collage of the Arts (VCA) for three years, where she directed text-based productions. Recent directing credits include: *Point8Six* at LaMama; *TheServantOfTwoMasters* for Peking University, Beijing; and Tom Holloway's *Sunshine* for Red Stitch.

I felt that Kirsten's artistic acumen would greatly benefit my performance piece and so invited her to work on my project. Kirsten agreed to join the project and during July/August 2015 we initially engaged in a series of four discovery workshops together. The sessions included feedback on performance, workshopping performance text, engaging with impulse work, developing ways of sustaining improvisational material by becoming more attentive and present to the experience, and experimenting with the Möbius Loop. In March – April 2016, Kirsten then worked on the production of *'Imagine This . . .'* as the director.

From December 2015 to January 2016, I invited Vicky Kapo to work with me in a series of three discovery workshops. Vicky is a multifaceted artist, who lives and works in Melbourne, Victoria. Vicky is an alchemist, using whatever tools happen to allow fulfilment of the creative vision. Her works are political, evocative, and mesmerising. They encourage an experience that is timeless and sacred. Vicky has a Bachelor of Arts in Screen and Performance Arts with Unitec Institute of Technology in Auckland New Zealand. She has been resident choreographer and teacher for Wellington performing Arts, The Platform Auckland, Waikato University, and Nelson Academy. Vicky has received creative arts funding from CNZ, Auckland City Council, Auckland Sky Tower, Dancehouse, Melbourne's Next Wave festival, and Wellington and Melbourne Fringe festivals to develop creative works. Her ongoing practice is in movement improvisation under her Melbourne-based mentor Anne O'Keefe. I met Vicky during a series of improvisation classes I attended in 2015. Through conversation we discovered many creative synergies and so agreed to work together. Our sessions included feedback on performance, movement-led improvisations, dialogue-led improvisations, sharing attunment practices to catalyse improvised performance works, and attuning to immersive conditions. I detail the processes I explored collaboratively with Vicky in Chapter Six.

Over the course of my PhD project I engaged with each of these practitioners in different ways based on their individual expertise. What brings these interactions together for my project is that there is a focus on relational lived experience, a curiosity around accessing experience differently, and a commitment to documenting the processes that lead to shifts in lived experience. In the next sections I detail what Nelson refers to as the "multi-mode" (2013, p. 6) research methods I employed to work with these practitioners and to enact my research project.

3.2 First-Person Discovery Workshops

In discovery workshops I utilised first-person methods with four body-centred practitioners, Kate Barnett, Alice Cummins, Jo Kennedy, Kirsten von Bibra and Vicky Kapo. In the following chapters I will use their full names to begin with but when describing a particular session I will refer to them by first name only. I recorded my first-person experience through notes, journals and at times, with their permission, via video.

Space does not permit an extensive analysis of the polarised debates around the value of first-person methods. In brief, the tensions lie between the idea that first-hand experience has value but requires valid forms of investigation, and the opposing idea that first-hand experience has no scientific value at all (Ginsburg, 2005). I have taken my lead from Ginsburg who sets aside the polarised debate and points out the curious overlaps of seemingly disparate views. For example, both positions are "unwilling to take verbal reports of naive subjects at face value" (p. 2). Validating first-person methods is not about dealing with the problem of purely private descriptions of experiencers. For Ginsburg, what is at issue is not whether first person methods are valid forms of investigation, but how these kinds of investigations can have merit and rigour.

For Varela and Shear, this merit and rigour come about by exploring subjective phenomena in a way that is "open to inter-subjective validation" with explicit and active "methods and procedures for doing so" (1999, p. 2). Ginsburg insists that if we are going to use first-person methods then we must "develop ways of improving our ability to be observers…that it is essential that experimenters and observers in general explore being subjects, and take responsibility for being part of their investigation" (2005, p. 6). First-person methods allow for processes whereby "consciousness is turned back to the experience itself in order to affect a shift in that experience. This is the element of awareness which is in this case a listening, or attending to the self while acting and moving" (p. 16). For these reasons, I invited the embodiment practitioners to engage in an

inter-subjective dialogue with me regarding events that transpired during discovery workshops. The following table (Table 1) outlines my discovery workshop schedule.

Date	**Practitioner**	**Activity**
April - Dec 2013	Kate Barnett	Fortnightly individual Alexander Technique 1 hour sessions
February 2014	Jo Kennedy	Creative Whole Body Focusing 2 day intensive
July 2014	Alice Cummins	3 x 1 hour BMC sessions Developmental movement and somatic integration - individual professional development
July 2014	Kate Barnett	1 x 4 hour embodiment session - focusing on the heart, touch and sound
August - September 2014	Kate Barnett	3 x 4 hour sessions working with touch 1 x 2 hour intersubjective dialogue
September 2014	Alice Cummins	1 x 6 hour BMC group workshop - focus on the bones
October 2014	Kate Barnett Alice Cummins	2 x 4 hour embodiment sessions focus on seeing and being seen 1 x 1 hour BMC - individual professional development
November 2014	Kate Barnett Alice Cummins	1 x 4 hour session sounding from the organs /intersubjective dialogue 1 x 1 hour BMC - individual professional development - focus the navel
February 2015	Kate Barnett Alice Cummins	3 x 3 hours Interplay sessions 2 x 1 hour BMC - individual professional development - focus “the plug”
16 - 20 March 2015	Alice Cummins	BMC residential 5 day group professional development
March 2015	Alice Cummins	BMC & somatic integration -individual professional development
April - May 2015	Alice Cummins	6 x 2 hour Improvisation classes
May - August	Kirsten von Bibra	4 x 2 hour performance workshops
June 2015	Jo Kennedy	Whole Body Focusing 3 day intensive
October 2015	Alice Cummins	3 x 2 hour sessions to work with BMC practices

		and the Mobius Loop
December 2015 - January 2016	Vicky Kappo	3 x 4 hours sessions to experiment with accessing experience differently

Table 1: Discovery Workshop Schedule

The aim of the discovery workshops was to augment, build and describe my attunement capacity. The body-centred practitioners lead some sessions whilst at other times I brought a research inquiry to the session.

3.3 Sensory Metaphor

The primary corporeal practice I employed throughout my project was the use of sensory metaphor. This corporeal practice has resonances with Bainbridge Cohen's concept of "somatization" (2012, p. 157). Bainbridge Cohen describes somatization as "a being process" (p. 157). She uses this process to directly engage "kinaesthetic (movement), proprioceptive (position), and tactile (touch) sensory systems (p. 157). Somatization is a word Bainbridge Cohen uses to directly evoke full-bodied kinaesthetic experience. Bainbridge Cohen claims the kinaesthetic nature of somatization is in contrast to the experience of visualisation through visual imagery.

The term somatic, coined by Thomas Hanna, is drawn from the ancient Greek word 'soma', which means 'the living organism in its wholeness' (1979, p. 6). According to Hanna "soma is not an object, it is a process" (p. 8). He uses the term somatic to describe bodies as experiential processes rather than objectified things. Hanna's work has been the catalyst for a range of somatic practices that have developed largely outside the academy in the fields of dance, psychology, psychotherapy, performance, bodywork and anthropology (Reeve 2011). Somatic practices focus on the materiality of bodies and begin from a sensori-motoric functional approach to how bodies attune to themselves and engage with their environments. According to many of these practitioners, this heightened sensorial attunement helps them "to be bodily aware of how they do, as they are doing it" (Reeve 2011, p. 21).

Key to effectively using sensory metaphors is activating the imagination. To create a somatic experience the practitioner must imagine the cells within the different systems of the body and direct attention to the particular region in question in an attentive and focused way. In BMC practice "cellular awareness and expression is accomplished through cellular imagination" (Bainbridge-Cohen 2012, p. 159). The focus might be on the cells of a particular organ such

as the heart or the kidney or it might be on the cells of the skeletal system. Practitioners claim that the focus in this work is not about arriving at a particular destination, but on continually attending to the experience of alignment between the smallest cellular activity within the body and the largest movements of the body. According to Bainbridge Cohen, this alignment can be experienced in a range of ways including through touch, movement, visualisation, somatization, voice, art, music, meditation, verbal and through open awareness amongst others (2012, p. 1).

In my experience, sensory metaphors support experiential shifts that are viscerally affective and result in whole-bodied, multi-sensory lived experiences. The focus on somatization rather than visualisation has been a formative and critical idea in deepening my capacity to access experience differently. It brings into sharp relief the limitations of binary concepts that polarise the ocular sense at one end of the spectrum and all other senses collectively at the other end. In my experience, somatization is a visceral process that attempts to engage all the senses so as to create a more whole-bodied, multi-sensory, unified lived experience. For Bergson, intelligence harnesses and diverts things through "unexpected and innovative use" (Grosz 2005, p.138). I suggest that using sensory metaphors can create visceral shifts in lived experience that support the capacity of *life* to harness and divert things through unexpected and innovative use so that things are always opening out, always differentiating. I have employed this corporeal practice to catalyse, build, and sustain artistic performative material. In the chapters that follow I detail how I have consciously activated imagination through sensory metaphors to access experience differently and create visceral shifts in lived experience.

In addition to this primary corporeal practice, I discovered that amongst the community of body-centred practitioners there was also a repertoire of other attunement practices that had general acceptance within this context. In the next section I present these practices because they represent a suite of methods that I used with the body-centred practitioners with whom I worked. A shared language about these corporeal practices enabled me to frame my investigations and reflect upon those experiences individually and through dialogues with practitioners. They are included here so that I can use them in subsequent chapters to help describe the, body-centred practices I used to enact my project.

3.4 Attunement Practices

During the process of building my *attunement capacity* in discovery workshops,

I identified several attunement practices that were useful in my performance practice. The practices are to: *yield, drop-in, dilate, and imagine*. I describe my experience of these practices as follows:

Yield

Yield is a term used in BMC practice to indicate a quality of resting that is "in contact" with the environment (Aposhyan 1999, p. 64). It is based on the BMC premise that yielding forms the basis of the ability to act effectively in the world. From a BMC perspective, it is about a state of being rather than doing. Yielding is a quality of resting that allows the experiencer to become discerning about the most appropriate push, reach, pull movement pattern to enact, based on their contact with the environment. I have found this way of attuning to the environment particularly effective in the development of my attunement capacity, and in my ability to sense into immersive conditions.

Drop-in

To 'drop-in' is to focus attention on the sensations of the body in a more heightened way than in everyday experience. Attention might focus on the breath, the vocal folds, the hands, the back, the feet, or any other part of the body. It is simply a matter of focusing attention on some body-centered thing and holding one's attention there for a period of time until a sensate shift occurs. In Focusing terms, it is tuning into the felt-sense in a way that can help "bring in what's missing" (Weiser Cornell 2005, p. 239). It is an attunement process that actively shifts everyday attention to a more heightened attentive awareness of lived experience. I note that, to varying degrees, the embodiment practitioners I work with use the term 'drop-in' to describe the sensation of being in a more highly attuned state. This sensation of dropping-in is also akin to Buddhist meditation. Meditation is a process that develops awareness of the present moment by paying attention to the breath (Dhiman 2008). The breath is used as an object of concentration in many forms of meditation training because "it is always available to us" (Bodhi 1994/2000, p. 80).

In my experience, to 'drop-in' is, at first, indeed a feeling of 'dropping'. Usual everyday thinking does seem to have head-centred sensations, so many embodiment exercises begin with taking attention to the feet on the floor or the buttocks on the chair as a way of shifting that focus. This process has a gravitational pull that feels like dropping, particularly when standing or sitting. As my practice grows, I am less inclined to experience this phenomenon exclusively as 'dropping'. I now have multiple entry points as I embrace the multi-dimensional, omnidirectional structure of the body. When I engage in this process now, the experience is more about simply focusing attention on

some body-centred thing and sensing into the shift that comes. I still use the term "drop-in", however, because it is useful short hand amongst embodiment practitioners who tend to have common understandings of this colloquial term. This quality of attention initiates a process of accessing experience differently. Consciously directing attention to body sensations and perceptions helps bring awareness to the ways in which sensorial and perceptual encounters are "given concretely, sensuously and intuitively" (Gallagher & Zahavi 2012, p. 99).

Dilate

To dilate is to expand awareness in a way that can hold multiple body-centred sensations and perceptions in focus at once. In Focusing terms, as attention continues on the 'felt sense', over time it "fills out" so that more is present (Weiser Cornell 2005, p. 239). For example, I might tune into the sensation of my feet touching the floor, and then dilate that experience by noticing the texture of the floor itself. From there I notice the quality of the contact between feet and floor, yielding ever more foot onto the floor. I might dilate further to sense the atmosphere of the particular place where I am located by noticing the temperature of the air, the light, the atmosphere, the space, and so forth. The idea is not to shift attention from one thing to another but to build, over time, a thicker experience of sensation and perception, whereby multiple things might be held simultaneously in attention. This quality of attention brings forth an expansive and different way of accessing experience.

Imagine

Activating the imagination, in this context, is to expand and augment the everyday experiences of visceral phenomena. Attuning to the fundamental structures of lived experience is a radically imaginative and expansive act. For example the process might begin by sensing into the feet on the floor, then dilating that experience to include the floor, the atmosphere and so forth. The process might then expand by using the imagination to endow the feet with the attributes of another sense. For example what is it to *see* with the feet or *hear* with the feet? This act of imagination is deeply embodied. It expands awareness and develops imaginative ways to access experience differently. It might be argued that this act of imagination induces an experience not unlike the neurological condition of synaesthesia whereby multiple senses are triggered by a single sensory stimulus. According to Cytowic, although synaesthesia can be difficult to cope with, it is "an additive experience" that allows for a more complex and "multi-sensory evaluation" of experience (1995, p. 92, p. 167). From a focusing perspective, taking time to slowly increase contact with the felt sense in an imaginative way can lead to the "point where the felt sense seems to have its own needs and wants" (Weiser Cornell 2005, p. 239).

The words that are used to describe these attunement practices are not new. Their linguistic style is decidedly colloquial. This means they can operate as a shorthand signifier for a more complex corporeal process within the context of a workshop setting amongst like-minded practitioners. When these practices are operating at optimal capacity there is a particular experience that many practitioners recognise as the "sweet-spot".

Sweet-Spot

To experience the 'sweet-spot' is to feel and attune more precisely to the forces that act upon lived experience. My experience of the sweet-spot provides visceral evidence of the "force that is evolving throughout the organised world" as described by Bergson (1911/2005, p. 140). In discovery workshops and in performance I have learnt to consciously attune-to the downward force of gravity and the upward force of life a process I will describe in subsequent chapters.

In brief, the sweet-spot, for me, is experienced as a visceral sensation that occurs when I feel pregnant with creative possibility. As Grosz points out the forces that act upon the body are a "process that produces things and the reservoir from which they are produced" (2011, p. 45). Experiencing the 'sweet-spot' is a process of deep listening; it is present, it is live, it hovers in-between the points where the manifestations of life collide, interact and intertwine. The 'sweet-spot' can be found in-between our unrehearsed liveness, our retention/recollection/ anticipation of, our potential for, our choice to, our commitment made, and our idea realized. The sweet-spot is the experiential shift that occurs when attuning to what Bergson refers to as "the great blast of life", where lived experience is viscerally understood "as a progress" (1911/2005, p. 141 – 142). The sweet-spot for me allows for "a glimpse of the fact that the living being is above all a thoroughfare, and that the essence of life is in the movement by which life is transmitted" (Bergson 1911/2005, p.142). The experience of learning and applying these corporeal practices was greatly enhanced by the following processes of reflective practice.

3.5 Reflective Practice

Reflective practice is now well established as a learning method. John Dewey (1933/1998) was among the first to consider the role of reflective thinking in the educational process. Later Donald Schön (1983/1991, p. vii) coined the term "reflection-in action" in his influential work, *The Reflective Practitioner: How professionals think in action*. As both a practitioner and teacher, Schön investigated the relationship between "the kinds of knowledge honoured in

academia and the kinds of competence valued in professional practice" to find a "way to open up inquiry". Central to the wisdom around reflective thinking is the integration of theory and practice. For Schön, this is about always approaching "the practice problem as a unique case" so that the peculiarities of the situation/task are continuously attended to (1983/1991, p. 129). This process fosters an environment of discovery because as he notes, "when practitioners choose to address new or unique problems which do not fit known categories, their inquiry is … a design process artistic in nature … (Schön 1983/1991, p. 170). I utilised the following methods for reflective practice.

i) Journals

I maintained several journals that recorded written reflections about my discovery workshops, and body-centred experiences. I also kept several visual journals I used for concept-mapping the literature and developing diagrams that synthesised concepts that were of use to my performance practice and the development of ideas. I used these journals as points of reference in the discovery workshops to initiate a discussion, a workshop theme, or to check for shared understandings with the other practitioners. Early in the project, I synthesised the literature on phenomenology by concept mapping key texts in the field. This was a formative process that provided the source material for a visual image representing key concepts that emerged from my research. This visual image will be presented and discussed in Chapter Seven.

ii) Audience Reflections

I gathered written reflections from the audience at the end of each performance in April 2016. The audience was invited to voluntarily reflect on the performance they had just seen and write any thoughts, impressions, and/or imaginings that occurred for them during and immediately after the performance. Their responses were recorded on a separate sheet to the consent form and remained anonymous. I used these reflections to validate, augment, or challenge my first-person research in ways that helped me to jointly create "meaning and shared understanding" (Franco 2006, p. 814).

The purpose of collecting audience reflections was not to conduct a qualitative study whereby themes are analysed and synthesised. The purpose was to capture the first-person experience of particular individuals, and to use the description of that experience as a way to further reflect upon my own first-person experience. In the following chapters, I use these audience reflections as part of a first-person narrative about the performance event held in April 2016 and my experience of that event.

iii) Inter-subjective Dialogues

Inter-subjective dialogues took place immediately after a discovery workshop or at an agreed later date. Sometimes we used video footage as a point of reference but mostly we used our memory of the primary event. The purpose of this dialogue was to "jointly create meaning and shared understanding through conversation" (Franco 2006, p. 814). The focus was on finding strength and value in one another's position by working toward mutual understandings. Our dialogue attempted to suspend judgment or preconceptions and fostered, what Roberts (2002) refers to as, equal participation through empathetic listening and the mutual probing of assumptions.

The multi-mode methods I have outlined in this chapter formulate an experiential methodology that has enabled the enactment of my project. They have helped me first, access lived experience differently, and second, make artistic performance works. In subsequent chapters I document the ways I have used these experiential methodologies to further understand the relationship between lived experience and artistic creativity.

3.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have identified the experiential methods that have shaped my research project. I have outlined an approach to research that takes account of the singularities of creative practice, and recognises the challenges that this kind of research poses to the academy. I have identified a lineage of body-centred research in theatre performance that, although initiated outside the academy, creates a useful artistic context for contemporary Performance Research. I have highlighted how body-centred research in performance often focuses on attuning-to visceral phenomena during the lived experience of creativity.

I have introduced the concept of *attunement* and described the process of activating the imagination through sensory metaphor. I have outlined the attunement practices I have used with other practitioners, to conduct first-person, body-centred investigations focused on attuning-to experience differently during creative activity. I have described the multi-mode methods used to validate my first-person research through process of reflective practice.

In the next chapter, I examine artists' accounts of creativity and question whether their ways of accessing experience might bear any relation to Merleau-Ponty's concept of *wild Being*. Using the corporeal practices detailed here, I

return, as Grosz suggests, to the question of *wild Being* and explore how fundamental structures might operate in service of artistic creativity.

Chapter Four

Attuning to Visceral Phenomena

It is a question of creating a new type of intelligibility
Merleau-Ponty[3]

4.0 Chapter Introduction

In Chapter One, I discussed how persistent mind/body, subject/object binaries limit our capacity to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between lived experience and artistic creativity. I proposed that to eschew mind/body, subject/object binaries it is worth considering how Grosz employs Merleau-Ponty's concepts of "wild Being" (1964/1968, p. 170) and "the intertwining - the chiasm" (1964/1968, p. 130), and Bergson's concept of "becoming" (1911/2005, pp. 324 – 341) as frameworks for understanding the fundamental structures of lived experience. These concepts are useful for this purpose because, as Collins notes, they precede "what becomes bifurcated into opposing categories such as subject/object" (2010, p.48).

In the next three chapters (Chapters Four, Five, and Six), I describe the ways in which I enacted these philosophical concepts through my performance practice to access experience differently whilst developing artistic performance works.

[3] *The visible and the invisible,* 1964/1968, p. 268

These concepts are useful for this purpose because they affirm that life does not find itself "in a world" but makes the world into "things, objects, entities" by engaging and labouring (Grosz 2005, p. 121). I discuss the resonances that I perceived between these concepts and the visceral, body-world experiences described by artists during their creative processes. I experientially test these resonances against my own experience through discovery workshops. These chapters do not operate as a linear progression of argument. The complementary substance of each chapter, rather, lays the foundations for the ontological position that I will then go on to articulate more fully in Chapter Seven.

In this chapter, I focus on *wild Being*. I am guided by the question: *How might the concept of 'wild-Being' first, support conscious ways of accessing experience differently, and second, operate in service of artistic creativity?* In Section 3.1 of this chapter, I discuss the resonances, I perceive, between *wild Being* and artists' descriptions of the lived experience of artistic creativity.

In Section 3.2 of this chapter, I note that the process of accessing experience differently cannot be activated before first questioning the conscious/unconscious binary about creativity that has been perpetuated in Western discourses. I argue that it is more useful for artists to work with degrees of conscious awareness than it is to conceptualise creativity as a conscious/unconscious process. Questioning this binary belief about creativity helps to gain a deeper understanding of the fundamental structures of human creativity. I suggest this might be enacted by focusing on body-world connections, and attuning-to visceral phenomena that is ordinarily at the fringes of everyday awareness.

In Sections 3.3 and 3.4 of this chapter, I focus on how I have developed ways to access experience differently through touch and through central movement of the human organism respectively. I describe how working with embodiment practitioners using their attunement techniques first, augments my attunement capacity and second, provides visceral entry points into creative material. I discuss examples of my work to demonstrate this process. I claim that this way of accessing experience feels different to ordinary experience because it brings a corporeal intelligence into more conscious awareness, and that it might be an encounter with Merleau-Ponty's *wild Being*.

I close this chapter by recognising that accessing experience differently is a recognisable and repeatable capability. It helps me to verify and affirm how life

engages and labours through lived experience to make and realise artistic performance works. I make note of how the concept of *wild Being* helps to frame this approach to performance practice because it makes explicit and accessible a pre-bifurcated corporeal intelligence that is a constant structural feature of lived experience.

4.1 *wild Being* and Artistic Creativity

In their descriptions of the creative process, artists seem to be accessing experience differently. Merleau-Ponty says "being needs creative differentiation for it to experience itself" (1964/1968, p. 197). I propose that artists experiencing accessing a corporeal intelligence that resonates with Merleau-Ponty's description of *wild Being*. In my view, artists are more readily able to access this fundamental structure because they actively remain open to dynamic and omnidirectional sensory inputs that are primal, visceral, and often libidinally affective. This idea is captured in Fiona Apple's description of her creative process:

> When I'm singing and playing, it's really the only time ever where I'm not thinking about anything. Every little nerve ending and every loose end in my being is somehow sated. Everybody's trying to be in the moment. That's when I can do it, and it just happens. I don't have to worry if I'm playing and we're in it. You're not always in it, but when you're in it, you wake up from this. I've had the most wonderful moments of my life, and after a song ends, it's like you've just woken up from the most delicious nap, and everything looks really bright and clear. (2010, p. 18)

Although Fiona Apple describes the experience as waking up from a nap, I contend that she is accessing experience differently to ordinary experience. Her description that "every little nerve ending" is "sated" suggests that she is not napping at all but that the experience is viscerally affective in a way that is not available to her in everyday experience. The fact that she can describe the experience means that there is a level of conscious awareness present, albeit different to ordinary conscious awareness. As Merleau-Ponty says, "it is a question of creating a new type of intelligibility" (1964/1968, p. 268). There is a kind of corporeal intelligence at play in Apple's experience that I resonates with Merleau-Ponty's concept of *wild Being*.

Grosz explains that through its activities and labours, this *wild Being* makes itself into consciousness, and is a "dynamic site" of coherence and unpredictability that is inherently oriented toward the future, toward that which "does not yet exist" (2005, p. 121). These are qualities nurtured by artists

in the process of creating works. For example, the composer John Cage, amongst others, believed that music could be a reflection of the "processes and algorithms that activate and create the world around us" … and that this is an "emergent process" (Byrne 2012, p. 331). Singer/songwriter Laurie Anderson says that creativity is about "opening my eyes to see what's there, to be aware" (2010, p. 17).

A number of first-person artist accounts describe the creative process as a sensory experience that opens them as a conduit, receiver, host or channel so that artistic works can move through them. Many artists describe a visceral body-world experience that leads them to feel as though the artist and the art are quite literally one and the same thing. For example Sachs claims that:

> The dance is the mother of the arts. Music and poetry exist in time, painting and architecture in space. But the dance lives at once in time and space. The creator and the thing created, the artist and the work are still one and the same thing. Rhythmical patterns of movement, the plastic sense of space, the vivid representation of a world seen and imagined—these things man creates in his own body in the dance before he uses substance and stone and word to give expression to his inner experiences. (1963, p. 3)

Coleridge muses on this idea by saying, "What is poetry? is so nearly the same question with, what is a poet? That the answer to the one is involved in the solution of the other" (1796 cited in Rothenberg & Hausman 1976, p. 62). Contemporary artists too describe this immersive state. For example, writer Ruth Ozeki believes she is a conduit for her characters to find their way into the world. She elaborates as follows:

> I hear them. I don't really feel as though I'm writing the character of Nao it's more like she's kind of parasitising me and using me as a way of expressing, you know as a kind of vehicle to express herself. It's an odd feeling but I do sometimes get the sense that there are these kind of characters out there in the ether sort of swimming around in this Pirandellian soup this kind of primordial soup, waiting for the right novelist to show up so that they can jump on board and find their way into the world. (Wheeler Centre, 2013)

In her book *The Artist's Way*, Julia Cameron collects the ways in which artists describe this immersive and expansive state. For example, she quotes William Blake who says, "I myself do nothing, The Holy Spirit accomplishes all through

me" (1995, p. xii); Piet Mondrian who says "the position of the artist is humble, He is essentially a channel" (1995, p. xv); and Aaron Copland who says "inspiration may be a form of superconsciousness, or perhaps of subconsciousness - I wouldn't know. But I am sure it is the antithesis of self-consciousness (1995, p. 14). These artist experiences suggest a different kind of sensibility is operating during the creative process. Ghiselin's volume is another collection that includes artist testimonies of this expansive state. He quotes Wordsworth who describes the creative process as "widening the sphere of human sensibility . . . the introduction of a new element into the intellectual universe" (Wordsworth cited in Ghiselin 1952, p. 8).

I suggest that in this creative state, artists might be attuning-to what Merleau-Ponty calls *wild Being*. I propose that by attuning-to omnidirectional sensation and perception more closely, mind/body binary concepts can be avoided, and immersive, creative states can be attuned-to more readily. I suggest that this is actually a highly conscious process. Many artists from across the arts describe a heightened sense of awareness during creative activity, particularly when engaged in improvisation. For example, Jazz pianist Keith Jarrett uses his voice and body whilst playing piano, seemingly as an integral part of his improvisational process. Moreno (1999) theorises that this is a procedure that reveals in Jarrett "the presence of a conscious thought process"(p.75). Jarrett explains in an video interview "improvisation takes everything to do it, no editing possible, it takes your nervous system on alert for every possible thing in a way that cannot be said for any other kind of music… I am essentially an improvisor, I learned that by playing classical music" (Jarrett, 2014). Jarrett's description of improvisation signals a highly conscious process where bodily sensations and perceptions are heightened for the purposes of creation and invention. His ideas about improvisation resonate strongly.

Before I go on to describe the ways in which I have tested the links between visceral phenomena and the lived experience of artistic creativity, there is a need to first raise questions about the conscious/unconscious binary that is often perpetuated in discourses about human creativity. If I am to argue that artistic creativity is a process of consciously accessing experience differently, then I need to explore the limitations that conscious/unconscious binaries impose upon our understanding of the lived experience of artistic creativity more.

4.2 Limitations of the Conscious/Unconscious Binary about Creativity

If we accept that that artist's experiences of creativity are conscious, albeit in a different way to ordinary conscious awareness, we must therefore question the

common and persistent belief that there are conscious and unconscious stages of creativity. In my view, this belief greatly reduces our capacity to gain a more precise understanding of human creativity. In 1926, a belief that creativity had conscious and unconscious stages became part of established epistemologies on creativity when English social psychologist and London School of Economics co-founder, Graham Wallas, theorised creativity.

In his book, *The Art of Thought,* Wallas (1926) presents a theory of the creative process based on his own observations and on the accounts of famous inventors and polymaths. The theory comprises four stages: preparation, incubation, illumination, and validation (Rothenberg & Hausman, 1976, p. 69). The first and fourth stages, according to Wallas, are fully conscious processes and require deliberate and sustained effort directly focused on the creative project. The second 'incubating' phase, however, involves a period of unspecified time where seemingly unconscious processes are taking place, where no direct effort is being applied to the creative project. The third, the illumination stage, according to Wallas, is also unconscious. It is the culminating synthesis, the flash of inspiration that comes after having spent conscious and unconscious time on a project, and is a stage that cannot in any way be willed into experience. Wallas' main contribution is that these stages do not operate in isolation, because the act of creativity is a complex exchange of perpetually moving parts. Whilst the four stages of creativity that he identifies are useful in one sense because they do point toward an experiential truth, linking the stages to either conscious or unconscious modes of awareness perpetuates a false dichotomy that is unhelpful for artistic practice.

Dorothée Legrand suggests that rethinking the notion of the conscious/unconscious divide is to consider instead the "type of access one can have to one's body" (2007, p. 509). This would seem a far more useful schematic for considering the four stages that Wallas identifies in his theory of creativity. It should be noted that the participants in his study are not actually "unconscious" during the second and third phases – a detail Wallas skirts over. Wallas does not correlate these phases to an "unconscious" sleep state, for example. In my view, his famous inventors are simply displaying conscious awareness in different ways because they are doing things that are not directly related to the creative task at hand.

The belief in a conscious/unconscious process was strengthened further in the 1960s by Frank Barron, a pioneer in the psychology of creativity, who claimed "the creative genius may be at once naive and knowledgeable, being at home equally to primitive symbolism and rigorous logic…both more primitive and

more cultured, more destructive and more constructive, occasionally crazier yet adamantly saner than the average person" (1963, p. 224). Even today, the view that artists are inspired by some uncontrollable, unconscious, and unknowable force persists. For example, cultural commentator and blogger Maria Popova (n.d. para. 1), describes creativity as "the beautiful osmosis of conscious and unconscious, voluntary and involuntary, deliberate and serendipitous" experience.

The problem with perpetuating a belief in the oscillation between two states of conscious awareness is that it sets up a false dichotomy, and once again returns us to binary thinking. As Merleau-Ponty recognises, the body is always "available as an indivisible power" (1945/2012, p. 83). The problem is that we do not always attune-to the things that reside at the edges of awareness. Artists, on the other hand, record, observe and pay attention to the many accessible sensations and perceptions that occur during these seemingly unconscious phases, such as vague hunches, nagging feelings, snippets of awareness, flashing images/insights, gatherings, double takings, attuning, listening, observing, documenting, sketching, recording, and many more embodied indications of a creative process that is underway. Paying attention to these vague but accessible sensations and perceptions seems to help artists to expand awareness, recognise the intertwined structures of themselves, others and their worlds, and thus allow creative forces to mobilise in and through lived experience.

I suggest that there is a thin or veiled corporeal intelligence at play, akin to Merleau-Ponty's concept of *wild Being*, that has potential to be augmented, enhanced, uncovered, disclosed, and perceived by closely attuning-to visceral sensation and perception. I suggest this corporeal intelligence can, through attunement training, become a highly conscious state that utilises the multifarious sensory and perceptual inputs of lived experience. The fact that artists are able to articulate these experiences, however vague they may be, suggests that they have found a way of attuning-to something that usually only exists at the fringes of ordinary awareness.

I argue that it is more useful for artists to link the creative process to the degrees of conscious awareness that are available to them as a constant structure of lived experience. Ghiselin argues "on the fringes of consciousness, change is easier because there the compulsive and inhibiting effect of system sustained by will and attention is decreased or ceases altogether" (1952, p. 12). Many artists conceptualise creativity as an ongoing living process by paying attention to the expanded field of conscious awareness. For example, theatre

practitioner Antonin Artaud, through his observations of other cultures, had a strong sense that creativity was a living, ongoing process. In one of his writing fragments he says:

> ...It is the act which shapes the thought. As for matter and mind, the Mexicans know only the concrete. And the concrete never tires of functioning, of drawing something from nothing: this is the secret we want to go and ask of the descendants of high Mexican civilisations.
>
> Upon some lost plateaus, we shall interrogate healers and sorcerers, and we shall hope to hear the painters, poets, architects, sculptors state that they posses the whole reality of the images they have created - a reality which drives them on. For the secrets of high Mexican magic lie in the power of signs created by those who in Europe would still be called artists, and who in advanced civilisations have not lost contact with natural sources and are the sole performers and prophets of a speech in which, periodically, the world must come to quench its thirst. (Artaud cited in Hirschman 1965, p. 67)

For Merleau-Ponty, the "unconscious is to be sought not at the bottom of ourselves, behind the back of our 'consciousness' but in front of us, as articulations of our field" (1964/1968, p. 180). For him, the unconscious is "the constellation wherein our future is read" (p. 180). I suggest these forces that Merleau-Ponty points toward, are simply hidden from our everyday experience because we have not learnt how to pay attention to them or to recognise their seemingly invisible influence in daily life. In the next two sections, I describe how I have worked with embodiment practitioners to develop ways of consciously attuning-to experience differently, and how this process has operated in service of artistic creativity.

4.3 Touch and Accessing Experience Differently

Touch of other enlivens experience because, as Bainbridge Cohen says, "when we touch someone, they touch us equally...the art of touch and re-patterning is an exploration of communication through touch - the transmission and acceptance of the flow of energy within ourselves and between ourselves and others" (2012, p. 6). This section describes some of the body-centred processes that Kate Barnett and I used to help me consciously attune-to experience differently by using touch.

Discovery Workshops with Kate

Kate and I designed a series of discovery workshops around what we came to call 'the spreadability of sound', as a way of accessing experience differently. I

was interested in how I might create an experience of whole body-world sounding. Kate began the first session by leading me through a series of attunement processes that focused on sensing the force of gravity and the particularities of place. Kate suggested that we experiment with the BMC process of cellular touch and invited me to exchange this process with her. Cellular touch draws on Bainbridge Cohen's claim that cells resonate in relation to one another (2012, p. 162). As more cells within us become "aware of themselves and are responsive, there is a fuller resonance between them" (p. 162). Whilst it is not possible to cite physiological evidence that this is actually what happens to the cells, the process does create a shift in everyday experience whereby the sensory metaphor allows for a more expansive awareness of the millions of multifarious cells that make up the human organism. This shift in attention is viscerally affecting and results in an experience that resonates with what Merleau-Ponty calls the "thickness" of the "perceived object and the perceiving subject" (1945/2012, p. 53) and signifies the performative power of sensory metaphor.

The process of cellular touch usually involves one person lying down as the other person uses their hands to touch their partner's body in one or more places. The touch is held for a period of time as both parties attune to an experience of cells resonating. The premise is that the more each participant senses into the multiple sensations and perceptions that are available, the more they can include in their awareness. In my experience, the process compounds over time whereby the co-presence of another person engaged in the same activity augments the experience for both participants. After the exploration with cellular touch we moved into the process captured in the following Discovery Workshop (Moving Image 1).

https://vimeo.com/212426572

Moving Image 1: Discovery Workshop – Kate & Angela

In this discovery workshop, it felt like Kate and I were traversing new territory to access experience differently. We seemed to be fluidly utilising a mix of Focusing, Alexander Technique and Body Mind Centring® (BMC) methods. In my reflective journal, I made note of the "range of sounds, how breath signifies a shift, the different qualities of Kate's touch, and the emergence of a strange narrative" (Reflective Journal, August 29th 2014). As Ginsburg says, "the territory is the phenomenal experience. The map is what we think (verbally) that our experience is" (2005, p. 12). Our bodily activities captured in the video highlight the territory for a live evolutionary performative event, and my notes and the

following subsequent inter-subjective discussions become the map of that experience.

A year after this footage was captured Kate and I made time to view the footage together. We engaged in an inter-subjective dialogue to reflect on the experience and check for shared understandings. We agreed that the reciprocal exchange of touch that preceded the footage in this discovery workshop disrupted the usual teacher/student power dynamic and situated both experiencers as equal players. Kate reflected that she wanted "to make things more accessible and equal" (Kate, Recorded Dialogue November 25th 2015). The act of exchanging cellular touch gave me agency in the process and as Kate said, " I gave you a particular quality of touch and then when you were inhabiting that quality of touch within yourself you were able to give that back to me" (Kate, Recorded Dialogue November 25th 2015). This relational experience was then carried through into the exercise recorded in the Discovery Workshop.

Kate also noted that she was "approaching it as a dance – otherwise it becomes objectifying" (Kate, Recorded Dialogue November 25th 2015). Kate noted too that using her Alexander training to focus on "the key landmarks of pelvis, shoulders and head/neck" meant that her touch gave me a deeper, more whole-bodied connection (Kate, Recorded Dialogue November 25th 2015). We agreed that the exchange of touch beforehand was helpful in bringing forth the vocalisations in the Discovery Workshop footage.

Another year later, I revisited this footage again to check for shifts in understanding. In the following journal entry, I have attempted to describe the visceral experience of this performative event. It is written more than two years after the initial experience as a way of integrating what I have learnt during the course of my PhD. I used the video footage to re-enter the experience and consciously wrote a detailed description based on my memory of the primary experience, the inter-subjective dialogues I had with Kate, and my now expanded capacity for understanding that experience.

> Journal Entry September 7th 2016
> Emergence of sound and movement feels like an energetic pulse that seems to be initiated, at first, by Kate's touch. Direct attention to specific places that are being touched, send a sound/movement impulse to that place. A shift occurs, no longer sending sound/movement there but allowing that place to initiate sound/movement. Body shows how to create more space by shifting the position of hips, allow that movement

> and notice the sound change, open up, become more resonant. Eyes closed helps focus on visceral sensations arising. At times feel lost, so sense into feet, become aware of the vast supporting structure of the earth beneath. Become aware of the delicate touch of vocal folds and notice breath shifts attention, suggests a new direction. Imagine aural tracts opening wide, expanding into the space like large elephant ears. Another shift, the sounds of the room mobilise and suggest vocal rhythmic patterns, a kookaburra's laugh, a cooee call. Drop into something. Notice a reservoir of sound in hips that has its own desire to move through and mobilise the whole organism. Feel saddened by lamentation that arises.

This journal entry more accurately captures what I now recognise as a corporeal intelligence that operates when I am accessing experience in this way. I suggest this corporeal intelligence has resonances with Merleau-Ponty's expansive concept of the body. As he says,

> The ontological world and body that we uncover at the core of the subject are not the world and the body as ideas; rather, they are the world itself condensed into a comprehensive hold and the body itself as a knowing-body. (Merleau-Ponty 1945/2012, p. 431)

I experience this corporeal intelligence as very different to the ordinary experience of intelligence. It oscillates between directive thoughts and a sense of allowing things to emerge. It is a kind of thinking but is different to everyday experiences of thinking. Language is present but words are not used in the ordinary way and there is no use of the personal pronoun. This, I believe, suggests a more immersive account of experience. Corporeal intelligence shows something through a body movement or by taking attention to a particular body part or sensation. The more I notice and respond to this corporeal intelligence, the more I can let go of directional thought and simply allow things to shift, change, expand, condense, and move. For Merleau-Ponty, "it is the body that shows, that speaks" (1945/2012, p. 203). I suggest the performative event captured in this footage is an expression of how life shows and speaks through lived experience.

This discovery workshop, recorded at the very beginning of my PhD project, documents a process of deep listening and patient waiting for something to arise. Kate and I attuned-to sounds arising and, using touch, allowed sound and movement to emerge. There is something primal about this experience that perhaps utters what Merleau-Ponty might call the "brute and primordial world"

(1964/1968, p. 193) of something wild. This footage displays a corporeal intelligence that was far more complex than I had capacity to express at the time of the primary experience. It is only in hindsight that I can articulate the significance of this event for my research.

The performative experience captured in the above footage is strange, imaginative, and highly visceral. Kate and I are responding to omnidirectional, multifarious sensory inputs. This footage is perhaps evidence of Grosz's idea that "life brings the virtual, the past, memory (but also the future, the new, intentionality) to bear on the actual, the present, the material: it brings out the latencies already there but unactualized" (2011, p. 35). There are snippets of songs that seem latent and sounds that emerge from childhood that eventually make their way into the final performance. For example the 'Cooee' sound that emerges here takes on a significant role in the final performance. This particularly formative experience increased my body attunement capacity and established a foundational methodology for consciously attuning-to experience differently.

The vocal sounding that emerged in this footage cannot be considered in isolation. It is influenced and informed by listening to the work of Meredith Monk (Biography 2016) and Tania Tagaq (2009). Monk' s work attempts to weave together new modes of perception through what has been called "extended vocal technique" and "interdisciplinary performance" (Biography 2016). She uses the voice as an instrument to create what Service calls "sonic landscapes" and experiences through "extraordinary ululations and incantations, vertiginous leaps, drops, cries and other wordless acrobatics" (2012, para. 4). Monk's work uses repetition, drones and modal harmonies. Her strange and at times challenging works require patience and a deep attentiveness from the listener because, as she says, "she wants her pieces to give her listeners an alternative vision of concentration and attention amid the ever-diminishing and ever-increasing speed of the world around us" (Service 2012, para. 6).

Similarly, Tania Tagaq's work uses non-verbal sounding. Her strange, visceral vocalisations bring forth an encounter with a primal way of accessing experience that is fully embodied, affecting, and wild. Tagaq performs a self-taught form of traditional Inuit throat singing. According to Tagaq, the technique "involves circular breathing where you are expelling air but you teach yourself how to make sounds on the inhalation as well" (Tagaq interview, 2009). The first thing you learn is to "growl like a dog….it's a growl but more of a vibration using the word huma" (Tagaq interview, 2009). The movement of

air operates on the vocal cords like a bow does on the string of a violin…"like you have a bow in your vocal cords" (Tagaq interview, 2009). Tagaq's body and her art seem inseparable and for her "the music is sacred"…."the more you take in the more you can put out" (Tagaq interview, 2009).

Listening to the work of these artists and engaging in the embodiment work I experienced in discovery workshops first, increased my attunement capacity and second, provided visceral entry points into my creative work. The following section describes how the attunement work directly supports artistic creative activity through the development of a vignette for performance that I simply called "Sounding".

Sounding

In the Sounding vignette, I worked directly with non-verbal communication through vocal sounding, and I utilised the methods of accessing experience differently that I developed with Kate during our discovery workshops. These methods include augmenting body sensation, dilating awareness, and engaging in a deep, attentive listening process. In performance, I focused on the sensation of touch between the vocal folds to initiate movement. There was an agreement between the musician, Myfanwy Hunter, and myself that I look up and draw something from above through sound and that at some point she would join in (Figure 3). The performance was improvised.

Figure 3: Initiating sound through the touch of vocal folds

The sounding work with Myfanwy allowed for a live performative investigation

into immersive conditions. In performance, the silence became as important as the sounding, and I directed attention to visceral sensation so that I might harness and heighten any corporeal impulse. I applied David Darling's idea that "you are always playing a duet with the silence around you" (Making Music, 2016).

In this vignette, I actively attempted to foster the conditions that would allow vocalisation and sounding to spontaneously emerge. One audience member noticed that, "the voice grew from the body and came back to it" (Audience reflection 15 April, 2015). I allowed sound to travel from my vocal folds to my feet and became aware of the soft surface of the Möbius loop upon which I stood. I became particularly aware of the arches of my feet and how they were filled with the squidginess of the Möbius loop. This heightened visceral awareness gave me a sense of elevation, lightness, flight, and upward motion. At times the sounds that emerged were surprising and unexpected. As one audience member said, "the sound pieces were new and unexpected, and either discordant or had moments of being rhythmical, and I guess forever changing and therefore novel and absorbing" (Audience reflection, 17 April, 2015).

Using a (syn)aesthetic performance style, I also focused on developing a "chthonic response" whereby both performer and audience member can "tap into primordial, pre-verbal, communication processes" (Machon 2011, p. 22). This is evident for one audience member who noticed a visceral shift in their own experience - "it was your primal, abstracted sounds that opened me up" (Audience reflection 15 April, 2015). Another suggests "what you were doing felt primal and expressive and right" (Audience reflection 17 April, 2015).

In this vignette I explored how life can, as Machon says, generate "a wholly sensate form of expression" that is corporeal and "communicable in its own unique form" (2011, p. 22). The live performance event attempted to bring forth Merleau-Ponty's "flesh of the world" where there is "a pregnancy of possibilities" (1964/1968, p. 250). The evolutionary and improvised nature of this particular vignette attempted to enact, in real time, how life uses the material conditions of lived experience to create, to invent, to remember, and to respond. As Grosz says, "life can be understood as the becoming-artistic of the material world" (2011, p. 39). In the performance of this work I was able to experience a visceral, life-world connection that affirmed a link between lived experience and artistic creativity.

The sounding vignette (Moving Image 2) can be seen in the following excerpt taken from the live performance event in April 2016.

https://vimeo.com/172660779

Moving Image 2: Performance Vignette - Sounding

In the next section, I detail formative BMC sessions with Alice Cummins, again noting how touch plays a significant role in the development of my attunement capacity. The focus here is on the way touch activates a visceral understanding of how coordinated, full-bodied movement is made more conscious by initiating movement from the centre of the organism. Attuning-to central movement affirms for me how lived experience can progress a creative idea through visceral sensation and perception.

4.4 Central Movement and Accessing Experiencing Differently

This section describes some of the BMC processes that Alice Cummins used to help me access experience differently. Alice, as trained by Bainbridge Cohen, used touch to invite a re-patterning process that involved what Bainbridge Cohen calls a "dialogue between movement and touch" (2012, p.117). This dialogue is about stimulating "tactile receptivity", and is based on the claim that lived experience requires "feedback from itself and from its environment" (p. 118) for coordinated, full-bodied and aligned movement in much the same way that the foetus receives immediate tactile feedback when in utero. Bainbrigde Cohen claims that:

> Learning is the opening of ourselves to the experience of life. The opening is a motor act; the experience is interaction between sensory and motor happenings. When the experience of movement is integrated into our education, our perception of ourselves and the world changes. (2012, p. 118)

This conception of learning has resonances with Merleau-Ponty's ontological project. Bainbridge Cohen and Merleau-Ponty share a commitment to immersive experience that is situated in a world and activated by the tactile. They also share a commitment to finding language, often through sensory metaphor, that eschews binary concepts and more fully expresses lived experience. In Chapter Four, I elaborate on how Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological description of hands touching one another forms the basis of his absolute intertwining life-world system. Here, the focus is on how Bainbridge Cohen makes meaning of lived experience through an extensive system of experiential anatomy and physiology that involves balancing the "various tissues within the body" by drawing on knowledges from Western medicine as well as philosophies of the East (2012, p. 1). Bainbridge Cohen

purports to be developing a new kind of "study" that is coming "out of this time of East and West merging" (p.2). She claims to be working with the idea of "dualities blending, rather than sets of opposites conflicting", the focus being on how "opposite qualities modulate each other" (p. 2). For Bainbridge Cohen, the "qualities of any movement are a manifestation of how mind is expressing through the body at that moment" hence the term "body-mind" (p. 1).

Discovery Workshops with Alice

I have found the principles and techniques of BMC instrumental in building my attunement capacity. This has, in part, been experientially achieved through one-to-one sessions, group improvisation classes, and professional development workshops with Alice Cummins. In my first session with Alice I lay on the floor. She placed her hand just above my navel and said, "meet your breath". I recorded this experience immediately after in my journal as follows:

> Journal Entry 10th October 2014
> Alice makes suggestion about connection between navel and mouth. Begin to feel this. Alice places her hand on my sacrum inviting me to allow the full weight of my sacrum to be on her hand. This is intimate and nurturing. Alice's arm, tail-like, extends from my sacrum and feels umbilical, thick and strong. Alice now makes suggestion of connection between mouth, navel and anus. Am sensing a big stone disk in my throat, want to move neck. Invited to move with the cascading motion of the central limb without losing the head to anus connection. Relief comes, am invited to move with reptilian like capacity. Difficult to maintain sense of connection between mouth, navel, anus whilst moving - have glimpses of this.

This session is focused on stimulating the mouth to anus, head to tail connection. In an email exchange, Alice explains to me that, from a BMC perspective, this connection is important because it "supports the developmental evolution of central movement" … "as adults we also get support centrally but we move more peripherally – centre to periphery" (email dialogue, 7th November, 2016). The importance of central movement comes from the work Bainbridge Cohen has done on the different systems of the body, in particular the organ system of the body. Bainbridge Cohen claims that organs "provide us with our sense of volume and full-bodiedness, and the inner vitality and support for our skeletal alignment" (2012, p. 29). The mouth to anus connection underlies and precedes the head to tail connection. In this session, I experienced the volume of the organs that felt like it directly affected my sounding in a way that made sounding more easeful and full-bodied. Alice

verified this experiences by noting that my "voice came with fullness and weight" (7th November 2016).

Alice built upon this work in our next session. Questions arose about my perception of the location of the navel: what is it attached to? What actually is the navel? I realised I had only a vague knowledge of this region of the body. Alice encouraged me to work with a small exercise ball and led me through a process that helped to more precisely locate and viscerally experience the navel. I recorded this session in my journal as follows:

> Journal Entry 11th November 2014
> Lying across the ball from the navel. Uncomfortable. Attention goes to organs. Organs feel very hard and do not yield at first. Couldn't stay there for long had to move. Worked with sensation of being a starfish. Could imagine and sense a mouth at my navel, searching, searching out food. Sense this long tubular connection to my mouth, can sense evolutionary connection between mouth and navel. It is such a non-verbal, embryonic experience that I find it hard to explain. Wrapped body around the ball, was surprised by how much further legs could fold in. Alice continues to reinforce the head to tail connection verbally and with her hands. Worked with floating as if in the sea. Came to resting on my side.

This session is focused on what is known in BMC as the "navel radiation pattern". Bainbridge Cohen suggests that coordinated movement is initiated from the navel; it "is a circular pattern, radically symmetrical, as in a starfish" (2012, p. 101). To work with this pattern, Bainbridge Cohen uses a sensory metaphor of a starfish to encourage an embryonic conception of lived experience explaining that:

> …the head is no more important than any of the other extremities; the six extremities are equal – head, two hands, two feet, and tail with the control centre in the middle of the body. (2012, p. 101)

During the three years of my PhD project, I worked extensively with this sensory metaphor for the navel radiation pattern. It is now integrated into my everyday life but I still need to bring an attentive awareness to the pattern. As a result, I have found myself being more observant of the movement patterns of animals. For example, observations of my dog Bella have been extremely useful in helping me to further integrate knowledge about navel radiation. I noticed that Bella's movement is initiated from a central place. This can be clearly

observed in the following short video (Moving Image 3).

https://vimeo.com/212375543

Moving Image 3: Bella & Central Movement

Bella's movement in this footage is a typical canine pattern. The movement is clearly initiated from the centre and moves to the periphery. Using a central impulse, Bella's entire organism is engaged from the tip of her nose to the tip of her tail, and to all four paws. She is immersed in the forces of gravity that keep her grounded. Her activated movement is in relationship with gravity as the energetic movement patterns that she displays push upward against gravitational forces to keep her animated. The movement captured in this footage is vital, and physically coordinated. It seems pleasurable for her, and so I argue that it has the libidinal qualities of *wild Being* that I have already discussed in relation to creativity. By observing this vital, full-bodied movement I learn how coordinated movement is organised and enacted from the centre of the organism. Observations make it more possible to translate this knowledge into my own experience.

So, why is an engagement with navel radiation so important? In my experience this pattern has helped me to find a more precise and practical understanding of the relationship between lived experience and artistic creativity. In March 2015, I spent five days immersed in BMC professional development workshops. This work began by lying prone on the floor with an intention to allow as much of the body as possible to be in contact with the earth. On the fourth day, I had an experience that felt embryonic and pre-verbal as recorded in this journal entry:

> Journal Entry 19th March 2015
> Invitation to move from navel radiation – spent a lot of time staying in prone. Eventually had a movement where I looked up and noticed there were other creature-like things in the room that looked a bit like me. Notice there were all sorts of shapes in the room – some were on their backs. Thought "wow – didn't know you could do that!" Gathered that information into myself. Started to try and experiment to see if I could move like that but found I couldn't – it was too soon – needed to stay prone for longer. I have a strong sense that this is an evolutionary process; that the purpose of sensory perception is to galvanise the entity into creative action. I sense that this cannot be hurried; needs its own time.

In this experience, I gained some cognitive insight into the workings of corporeal intelligence. In discussions with the group afterwards, I shared my experience and described my insight into the evolutionary purpose of sensory perception and the experience of receiving this insight. It became clear to me that creative evolutionary development is dependent on sensory perception, in this case visual perception. For example, I used vision here to gather information about the world. I was not even identifying as human because as I noted there were other "creature-like things" in close proximity. I noticed they were "like me" which propelled me into action and the desire for experimentation to see if I could do what they were doing. Sensing became purposeful and guided my action. I noted there was a conscious awareness that was different to ordinary awareness.

One of my fellow participants, Kuniko Yamamoto, concurred with my interpretation of this being a different kind of awareness. In her experience of working between two languages, translating Japanese and English, she suggested my experience was in-between language and action. She discovered this when learning English. Kuniko suggested that there is an experience where meaning is made, where something profound is being grasped, something essential to living that for her was neither in the language of English or Japanese, but was something that she grasped fundamentally. For her, it was about experiencing meaning before she could communicate this in either language. This idea resonated with how I experienced the event described above. It was fluid, interstitial, and seemed focused on the experience itself rather than on communicating that experience. I recognised that when experience is in a state where meaning is made, it does not yet have worldly symbols attached to the things it discovers. There is no codification in place to pin it down or give it a boundary. This event affirms for me that attuning-to experience differently can provide pathways into artistically creative material.

These formative BMC experiences became core to building my attunement capacity. They created a full-bodied experience that felt more expansive than ordinary experience because more sensory and perceptual information was consciously included in my awareness. First, I learnt how to attune-to a heightened state of awareness that felt more connected, integrated, immersed, and fully embodied. Second, I found visceral entry points into my creative material that were activated as a result of attuning-to a corporeal intelligence that I experienced as a constant feature of lived experience. The following section describes how a particular vignette was initiated and subsequently developed for performance after I had spent time working intensively on

developmental movement patterns with Alice.

Sometimes

During a BMC professional development week in March 2015, I wrote a passage that was triggered by some of my experiences of the mouth to anus connection that I had during workshops as well as by the windy conditions that were present at the time. I used these experiences to draft the following:

> Journal Entry 19th March 2015
> Sometimes my anus is hungry for air…not the usual exploding sulphurous kind no, no, no! My anus hankers after fresh, rich, sumptuous air. You heard me. My anus is so wet with salivary desire that like a puffed up alpha male he injects every drop of oxygen in the air. My anus wants to slurp atmosphere deep inside his colonic oesophagus. When the feisty north wind rolls in, my anus, so amorous for air, goes to the neck of the valley, mouth agape, gulps it in.

I wrote this piece at 3am whilst unable to sleep because of the wind rattling down the valley where I was staying. It was written in a kind of frenzy. The sexual overtones are very heightened but this piece awakens a kind of energy that I think is worth capturing in my performance. The words and the sensations I felt have an amorous, greedy, and gluttonous quality that for me captures the qualities of a self-critical dynamic that can at times gleefully and greedily sabotage, ingest, and quash creative activity.

Sometimes (hence the title of the vignette) this self-critical dynamic is loud, harsh, and judgemental, and sometimes it manifests as insecure voices of doubt. Cameron refers to this phenomenon as a "creative virus" that can eventually be neutralised once it is recognised as such (1995, p. 42). This aspect of the creative process is widely experienced by artists.

In discovery workshops, I experimented with this self-critical dynamic by using the mouth to anus connection. For me, attuning-to the mouth-anus central structure helped to access a self-critical dynamic. Using imagination, by taking attention to the central movement of the organism, I allowed anus to lead and initiate movement through a series of improvisations. I first discovered an insect-like walk, with hands on the floor. Later it became upright but maintained close proximity to the ground (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Mouth-Anus Connection

Figure 5: Working with downward force of gravity

I also experimented with attuning-to a strong downward gravitational force. By maintaining a sense that the anus was leading I was able to sustain a performance of this self-critical dynamic (Figure 5). I shifted from this viscerally heavy dynamic into a sequence that attempted to fuse the somatic experience and the semantic meaning of a series of common self-critical phrases. The

script is as follows:

Really? Tsk
Oh for Fuck's sake! Tsk
Get to the point. Tsk
Cliched! Tsk
Ah uh!

I fragmented these words to somatically find the affective semantic meaning of each phrase. This approach to performance cannot disassociate, as Machon says, "semantic sense from somatic sense" (2009, p. 20). With the help of Kirsten, my director, I began by deconstructing the syllables of each word. For example, I experimented with the tone of vowels in the word "really". The more I exaggerated the "eee" sound the more I was able to identify a visceral sensation that was like a squealing pig. This led me to think about how the self-critical dynamic can snort or squeal disapproval, pig-like at a creative idea. My intention then became about finding a harsh pig-like sound that could somatically communicate this idea through voice and movement. The word "really" then encompassed a pig's squeal. This process allowed me to somatically embody the sematic intention of the phrase (Figure 6).

This approach resonated with one audience member who noted, "on the whole I connected more to the pieces of movement and sound without words (or just fragments of words) than the more 'familiar to the ear' pieces of structured song" (audience reflection 17th April, 2016). This sequence (Moving Image 4) was a section within the following excerpt from the recorded video of the live performance event:

https://vimeo.com/172672413

Moving Image 4: Performance Vignette - Sometimes

Figure 6: Performing semantic meaning of words

The *Sometimes* vignette created a disturbance within the structure of the whole performance. It was a challenging piece to perform and, for some, it was a challenging piece to witness. For Machon the "(syn)aesthetic style" of performance consciously augments sensory perception and therefore has capacity to affect the performer and the spectator at a visceral level (2011, p. 4). As the following audience members note:

> Audience Reflection, April 17, 2016
> There was a piece when you gallumped around the floor, leering at the audience in a grotesque fashion, speaking. I found it funny and off-putting all at once, and felt myself pulling back from it, relieved when you were on the other side of the room and glad when that piece had finished

> Audience Reflection, April 16, 2016
> It was a challenging piece in that it provoked a response in me where I was in the uncomfortable space of recognising and remembering my own times of self-doubt.

I note that this vignette triggered a sense of heaviness in my nervous system and my organs that I needed to consciously shift so that I could transition into the next piece. I used the word "nothing" to signify that this section was over and to allow time for my nervous system and organs to settle. I also used a sensory metaphor to imagine the vast earth beneath and sense into the support that the earth gives to every cell (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Transitions Between

This performance vignette allowed me to explore how attuning-to central movement can help to more consciously embody the semantic meaning of a text. I recognised that as Bainbridge Cohen says:

> it is through our senses that we receive information from our internal environment (ourselves) and the external environment (others and the world). How we filter, modify, distort, accept, reject, and use that information is part of the act of perceiving. (2012, p. 5)

This is a process of attuning-to a corporeal intelligence that is a constant structural feature of lived experience. For me, consciously attuning-to the mouth-anus connection, the navel centre of the organism, and the omnidirectional experience of the unified senses profoundly shifts lived experience. It brings a greater sense of alignment, and coordination in performance. It does this through the use of imaginative sensory metaphors and directed attention to central movement. This corporeal practice also provides visceral entry points into my creative material and helps to sustain this practice in performance.

The extent to which my performative intentions are received is not the point of this particular research. The research is focused on first-person experience, and how the use of touch has enabled me to more consciously attune-to experience differently and support my creative activity.

4.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have discussed how Merleau-Ponty's *wild Being* resonates with the way artists describe the visceral experience of artistic creativity. This led to an exchange between philosophy and performance whereby I experimented with ways to consciously access experience differently, and experience how *wild Being* might be an embodied dynamic that is sensorial, imaginative, and evolutionary. This account of lived experience and the fundamental structures

of creativity led me to question persistent binary beliefs about the conscious and unconscious stages of creativity. Instead, I propose that the experience of artistic creativity is more about degrees of conscious awareness than it is about conscious/unconscious states.

Based on my research, I suggest that attuning-to visceral phenomena might be akin to attuning-to what Merleau-Ponty calls *wild Being*. In my view, *wild Being* is a corporeal intelligence that is a constant structural feature of lived experience. This corporeal intelligence can be experientially activated through touch, attuning-to the support of central movement, and using imaginative sensory metaphors that create perceptible visceral shifts in lived experience. This process is about consciously paying attention to what is at the edges of awareness so that a corporeal intelligence, different to ordinary experiences of intelligence, comes to the fore. This occurs because I have framed lived experience as a creative process, applied a (syn)aesthetic style of performance, and in doing so have allowed this corporeal intelligence to generate, respond, and invent.

The process of consciously access experience differently has revealed that the relationship between lived experience and artistic creativity is intimately intertwined. This occurs when I consciously pay attention to visceral phenomena that in turn creates a shift in lived experience. This shift dilates attention and simultaneously holds multiple sensory experiences in a unified, full-bodied dynamic. In the next chapter, I discuss how I have used Merleau-Ponty's concept of "the intertwining – the chiasm" (1964/1968, p. 130) to guide another series of experiments to consciously access experience differently. I describe how working with a body-sized Möbius Loop has developed my attunement capacity and led to deeper understandings of how lived experience operates in service of artistic creativity.

Chapter Five

Focusing In-between

He who sees cannot possess the visible unless he is possessed by it, unless he is of it
Merleau-Ponty[4]

5.0 Chapter Introduction

In the previous chapter, the focus was on *wild Being*. I discussed the ways I engaged with this concept to eschew mind/body, conscious/unconscious binaries and access experience differently in the process of making artistic performance works. In this chapter, I focus on "the intertwining – the chiasm" as presented in Merleau-Ponty's posthumously published work (1964/1968, p. 130). I discuss the ways I applied this concept in my practice to eschew subject/object binaries for the same purposes. I am guided by the question: *How might the concept of the intertwining – the chiasm serve two aims: first, support conscious ways of accessing experience differently, and second, operate in service of artistic creativity?*

In Section 4.1 of this chapter, I examine how Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological description of hands touching one another forms the basis of his absolute intertwining body-world system that accounts for embodiment,

[4] *The visible and the invisible,* 1964/1968, p. 135

inter-subjectivity, and the world. I describe my own experiences with this phenomenological exercise and discuss the insights and experiential understandings that I have gained by engaging with this exercise over time.

In Section 4.2 of this chapter, I explore the resonances between Merleau-Ponty's body-world *intertwining chiasm* and the body-world experience artists' describe during acts of artistic creativity. In particular, I use Picasso's account of the creative process as evidence of how artists attune-to experience in ways that are open to the body-world *intertwining chiasm*. I recognise that Picasso's experience is singular, but I use it as an example of how the body-world *intertwining chiasm* plays a critical role in the creative process. I note that Picasso's description of the body-world chiasm is articulated through a sensory metaphor that he describes as "an indigestion of greenness". I argue that this sensory metaphor signifies an experiential shift that, for him, operates as a visceral entry into the creative process.

In Section 4.3 of this chapter, I explain how I use Grosz's suggestion of the Möbius loop model to not only rethink the relations between the mind/body binary, but to also rethink subject/object, body/world binaries, and in doing so activate my own experiences of the body-world *intertwining chiasm*. I theorise the Möbius loop model as a useful thing and as a metaphor for fundamental conditions. Like Grosz, I consider "the thing" as that which is not conceived as the other but is conceived as the "resource" for "being and enduring" (2005, p. 131). My experience leads me to argue that attuning-to the body-world *intertwining chiasm* can help to develop deeper understandings of how the fundamental forces of invention work in service of human artistic creativity.

In Section 4.4 of this chapter, I describe the knowledge gained from working with a body-sized Möbius loop in discovery workshops with body-centred practitioners. I encounter the Möbius loop as a thing and, like Grosz, I follow Darwin in thinking that "the thing is the real which we both find and make" (2005, p. 132). I describe the process of building a relationship with the thing and noticing what happens when the thing is endowed with the qualities of a conceptual idea such as 'creativity'. I also discuss the difference between representing something and embodying something, and how these things require different qualities of attention.

In Section 4.5 of this chapter, I use excerpts from my performance practice to demonstrate how *the intertwining - the chiasm* manifests through my performance practice. I discuss the visceral processes I devise to sense into

what Merleau-Ponty calls the "thickness" of the "perceived object and the perceiving subject" (1945/2012, p. 53). I contend that by focusing attention between things, embodying sensory metaphors, and encountering the Möbius loop in performance it is possible to more readily attune-to the fundamental body-world structure of lived experience. I close this chapter by claiming that this fundamental body-world structure is a dynamic and generative force that acts upon lived experience, and is therefore deeply implicated in the processes of artistic creativity.

5.1 The Crisscrossing

In his later work, Merleau-Ponty attempts in several ways to explain what he calls the "the intertwining – the chiasm" (1964/1968, p. 130). As discussed in Chapter One, Merleau-Ponty details a new conception of the body as a 'chiasm' or crossing that demonstrates the ontological continuity between body and world. This *intertwining chiasm* combines subjective experience and objective existence and accounts for our immersion in a world. It affirms Bergson's notion of how life "is intended to secure the perfect fitting of our body to its environment" (1911/2005, p. xix). Merleau-Ponty argues that in the same way, looking palpates visible things, touch, in an even closer relationship, palpates the tangible, saying:

> This can happen only if my hand while it is felt from within, is also accessible from without, itself tangible, for my other hand … Through this crisscrossing within it of the touching and the tangible, its own movements incorporate themselves into the universe they interrogate, are recorded on the same map as it; the two systems are applied upon one another, as the two halves of an orange. (1964/1968, p. 133)

This widely quoted and significant passage forms the experiential basis upon which Merleau-Ponty is able to extrapolate and extend his thinking to formulate his ontological notion of 'flesh'. For Merleau-Ponty, this flesh is a process of exchange between body and world. It is a kinship between the sensing body and sensed things, between the perceiving and the perceived. This phenomenological experience provides a tangible, embodied event that he uses to expand his ideas into an absolute intertwining system that can account for embodiment, inter-subjectivity, and the world (Collins 2010, p.48).

It is significant that Merleau-Ponty privileges an embodied performative event in this passage because it signals the limits of language for expressing ineffable concepts. The discursive method used in philosophy presents certain challenges and limitations when engaging with such concepts. As Collins notes,

at the "edges of language" Merleau-Ponty crosses a threshold and "turns to the body" (2010, p. 48). It is particularly significant for this project that Merleau-Ponty crosses this threshold because the premise upon which he bases his new ontology is performative. In this project, I recognise the radical importance of this phenomenological event in catalysing a new interface between philosophy and performance.

Using body-centred approaches, I bring philosophy and performance together to understand what Merleau-Ponty means by "he who sees cannot possess the visible unless he is possessed by it, unless he is of it" (1964/1968, p. 135). I experiment with his hand touching experience and record the following journal entry:

> Journal Entry March 21st 2014
> Bring hands together and train attention on the sensation of touch, first in right hand and then in left hand, back and forth. Exert slight pressure in the hand that is touching to isolate the sensation. Notice directional force in right hand and yielding in left hand. Direction touches, yielding is touched. And yet the opposite is also true. Yielding touches and direction is touched. Try to hold both touch and touched in awareness together. Can't do straight away. Something shifts notice tingling sensation in the head moves from frontal lobes to parietal lobes. Can now hold both in awareness. Notice breath slows, eyes close. Aware of contemplative mood. Direct attention to space between hands. A different quality arises. A sweet-spot holds attention in equilibrium. Notice tingle sensation moves from parietal lobes to occipital and temporal lobes.

This phenomenological exploration helped me to activate an embodied experience of Merleau-Ponty's crisscrossing. I recognise how attention training triggers different degrees of conscious awareness. The close attention to sensation and perception is affective and creates a visceral shift that allows me to access experience in a different way. As a result, I am simultaneously able to hold a more expansive repertoire of visceral phenomena in my awareness.

Over the course of my PhD project, I regularly returned to the above phenomenological experience. Over time, I have less interest in attuning-to the sensations of the hands and more interest in attuning-to that which I sensed between, through and around the hands. I learnt that experience is thicker and more immersive when attuned-to in this way. I began to experience the "broad current" of life that, as Bergson suggests, is "loaded … with an enormous

multiplicity of interwoven potentialities" (1911/2005, 199). For example, I did not only identify with hands but could sense into their inextricable, immersive connection with the world. I dropped-in to something that felt more primal, less bifurcated, and I became aware of being immersed in a multifarious, living world. In this way, I was more attuned-to the movements and desires of life that act upon lived experience through visceral phenomena.

I noticed too that accessing experience in this way involved a kind of thinking that is different to ordinary experiences of thinking. There was a corporeal intelligence at play that I could sense and feel. For example, I observed that what initially seemed like a gap between my hands was not a gap at all. It became clear that the gap is thick with fecund possibility and I began to have a sense of what Merleau-Ponty means by the "continuous fabric" (1964/1968, p. 44) of lived experience.

Attuning-to this *continuous fabric* brought forth a quality of experience that felt different to ordinary experience. The more I worked with this quality of experience the more I noticed and appreciated the movement of my breath and the subsequent effect of breath on other regions of the body. Sensory perception was heightened, and I became aware of the sounds of the environment, the temperature of the air and, and the ever-growing expanded field of visceral phenomena.

Later, the thick, *continuous fabric* of experience has a libidinal quality that feels pregnant with creative possibility. This libidinal quality is pleasurable, fluid, malleable, and highly responsive. The more I accessed experience in this way, the more immersed I become in its qualities and the more it is available to me with relative ease and repeatable certainty. The simple shift of attention from the substance of my hands to the thick *continuous fabric* of experience has profoundly transformed my understanding of and approach to lived experience.

In subsequent explorations I introduce the process of attuning-to what Gendlin calls the "felt sense" (1981a, p. 1). In my experience, the *felt sense* includes body-centred sensations, visceral inklings and/or sensory metaphors. Attuning-to the felt sense invariably creates a shift in understanding. I concur with Afford (1994) that the felt sense need not always be physically felt. For Afford, it doesn't matter if there is no physical referent, what is important is that the experience feels body-centred.

Gendlin's ideas about the body have resonances with Merleau-Ponty's immersive accounts of the body. As Gendlin says, "we are setting up a new

conception of the body" … "there is no body separate from process", and "the body is not only what is inside the skin-envelope" (1997, p. 19, p. 27, p. 26). Attuning to sensation and perception in this way helps to interrogate what Merleau-Ponty says is "open to us…an intercorporeal being…which extends further than the things I touch and see at present" (1964/1968, p. 143).

Working in this way has developed a more expansive attunement capacity. My investigations reveal that it is possible to access experience differently, shift attention viscerally, and thus attune-to immersive and generative modes of experience. I argue that this process paves the way for a more tangible, consciously embodied approach to artistic creative activity.

Through experience, I now understand Merleau-Ponty's desire for, "a simple state of non-thought" or at least thought that is different to everyday thinking (1964/1968, p. 44). Accessing experience differently makes that which moves between things more available to conscious awareness. The experience of in-betweenness is significant for creative practitioners because, as Szakolczai (2009) says, in-betweenness dissolves order and creates a "fluid" (p. 145) or "malleable" (p. 148) situation that enables new institutions and customs to become established. These qualities are often associated with the role of artists in society particularly in the advent of modernism and beyond whereby "art was created as a revolution" (Mitchell 2015, para 5). Accessing experience in this way helps to create a visceral understanding of why the simple phenomenological exploration of hands touching one another is such a formative event in Merleau-Ponty's ontological project.

This ontological exploration was a primary investigation in my research project. The secondary investigation was about using this different way of accessing experience to find visceral entry points into creative material for performance. One way I achieved this was to transpose the hand exploration to the vocal folds as captured in the following journal entry.

> Journal Entry September 18th 2015
> With short, sharp bursts of sound, can sense vocal folds coming together, moving apart. Experiment with sounding both on in-breath and out-breath. Drawn to that which is between the touching surfaces. The live and activated breath stimulates vocal folds and makes sound. Wonder – is breath creativity? Play with this idea - stay on one pitch for both in-breath and the out-breath. Notice realignment of spine and neck until sound emerges with less effort, less tension on vocal folds.

> Visceral shifts are spontaneous, support breath to move through organism with greater ease and with more creative flow. Feels creative. Nasal passages and auditory tract have sensation of opening. A reciprocal exchange between sounds in room and sounding. Sounding on in-breath brings attention to the body as a resonating chamber. Can sense the bones in my skull and chest vibrate. Slowly include all bones, all muscles, all organs until whole organism - buzzing with sound and vibrating in response to sound; no longer on one pitch but activating the full vocal range in undulating vocalisations that are spontaneous, improvised and highly pleasurable.

This journal entry reveals that by holding more and more in my awareness I am able to feel the visceral terrain of lived experience. I no longer feel the vocal folds in isolation or as the source of sound but, as a vocal freedom emerges, I can sense into the whole body-world sounding organism. I recognise this as a creative process and wonder in this journal entry if indeed I am sensing the forces of creativity in action. I affirm that it certainly "feels creative".

I share Merleau-Ponty's wonder at the intertwining structure of lived experience. During this period of discovery I made many notes to capture in words the ethereal qualities of the fundamental intertwining nature of lived experience. Eventually, the only way I can communicate my experiential findings is through the following performance text titled *Curious & Closer*.

Curious & Closer.

The following text is sung on an improvised descending scale.

I am close
So close
Closer than finger to nail
Closer than eye to lid
(Smack lips together)
Closer than lips

Performer speaks the rest of the text,
uses fingers to discover the two sides of the mouth and two sides of the hands.

Doubled up,
Two sides of the same
Knowing the other,
not wanting,
not needing

to be, be, be the other
Terrified inhale of breath
But without whom…

I am close
So close
Closer than singer to song
Closer than fire to flame
Closer than lips

I am a reversible chain,
Woven into the lacuna of
Intimate intertwining windings

Finger touching finger finding
Tissue turning tissue linings
Between the lips of things,

Between the lips of things,
Nuzzle impressions and depressions
Assemble protrusions and exclusions

I expand, condense, boundaries between
That which is seen and unseen
Known and unknown
Felt and unfelt
Heard and un…..
Performer inhales, exhales,
uses breath to build to a wolf howl

Am, in the middle of things,
No sum,
No ending
No solution,
No looking back
Ask not
What am I ? Who am I?
No No, No!
Wolf howl
How, how, how am I?
Event, agent?
Yes…No

"Do I contradict myself?
Very well then …. I contradict myself;

Performer approaches an audience member and asks them a direct question.

How am I?

Performer allows time for audience member to respond and vocally plays around with their response - encouraging the audience member to do the same.

I am large …. I contain multitudes… and am not contain'd between my hat and boots"
(*From Leaves of Grass, Walt Whitman, 1855*)

But am simply
Closer
than
lung
is
to
air
.
.
.
(*slow inhale/exhale of air*)

This libidinal account of what animates lived experience is a reminder to the artist that creativity is close. As I prepared this piece for performance in April 2016, I struggled with finding the dramatic intent. I settled on it being the voice of creativity. I embraced Merleau-Ponty's idea that in order for "gesture or speech" to be expressed "the body must ultimately become the thought or the intention that it signifies" (1945/2012, p. 203). My intention was therefore, to personify creativity, and thus express something of its fundamental structure. A recorded version of this performance poem can be seen here:

https://vimeo.com/172670198

Moving Image 5: Performance Vignette – Curious & Closer

This vignette is a direct reference to Merleau-Ponty's "crisscrossing" and his example of the double-sided experience of the hands. It also attempts to capture Merleau-Ponty's idea about how being needs creative differentiation to experience itself. The performance moves from a kind of terrified gibberish into the text of Curious & Closer. It is the first time that comprehensible language is

used in the performance but even here meaning is shrouded because the first words are sung in a kind of recitative before I move into comprehensible speech. In the transition from gibberish to comprehensible speech there is a visceral sense of discovery. For example, the digits of the hands find first one lip then another lip (Figure 8). In so doing, the fingers scamper across the whole mouth, which creates a palpable sense of excited discovery. This continues as I move behind the audience touching their backs. One audience member affirms this sense of discovery saying, "I thought the discovery of the lips were salient moments. This was reinforced by your general very clear articulation" (Audience reflection, 16 April, 2016).

Figure 8: Fingers discover lips

The attunement capacity I developed during my PhD project allowed me to apply what Machon (2011) refers to as a (syn)aesthtic style of performance in this vignette. The (syn)aesthetic style is a contemporary form of theatre that can be seen in works by Theatre de Complicite's *Street of Crocodiles*, Caryl Churchill's *The Striker,* and De la Guarda's *Villa! Villa!*, Samual Beckett's *Not I*, Steven Berkoff's *Metamorphosis,* Pina Bausch's *Bluebeard,* and DV8's *Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men"* (p. 3) .This contemporary style of performance "emphasizes the sensuous" and foregrounds "the corporeal" (p. 23) by bringing attention to the body through gesture, movement, sound, and breath. The text itself might be what Machon calls a new kind of "writing as sensation" that as she says is "explicit, contradictorily tender and confrontational" (p. 31).

A performance text such as Curious & Closer requires an experimental approach, and so I spent time with my director Kirsten, exploring different voices, perspectives, vocal-tones, and points-of-view to acquire and associate a visceral sensation with every line. For example, we particularly worked with how I might communicate the sensorial qualities of lines such as "finger touching finger finding, tissue turning tissue linings" and "nuzzle impressions and depressions". We experimented with how I might fully embody and sound words such as "nuzzle". As discussed in Chapter Three, this was a process of fusing "the somatic and the semantic in order to produce a visceral response" (Machon 2009, p. 14).

For Machon, "Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological theory is important in theorizing around sensual and embodied perception" because he "highlights the significance of the 'felt' effect of a thing or experience and in doing so supports the primordial basis in which human perception is rooted" (2009, pp. 22-23). In the Curious & Closer vignette, my intention was to communicate how the body-world dynamic is a fundamental structure of creativity. In the following section, I examine a description of Picasso's creative process that I believe highlights how this fundamental structure operates in service of artistic creativity.

5.2 Intertwining and Artistic Creativity

I contend that Merleau-Ponty's conception of the intertwining body-world chiasm has resonances with experiences of artistic creativity. For example, Picasso describes the ebb and flow of the creative process in terms of how it moves between the world and his body as follows:

> The painter passes through states of fullness and of emptying. That is the whole secret of art. I take a walk in the forest of Fountainbleau. There I get an indigestion of greenness. I must empty this sensation into a picture. Green dominates in it. The painter paints as if in urgent need to discharge himself of his sensations and visions. (Picasso cited in Ghiselin 1952, p. 51)

Picasso's account of creativity, points toward a relationship between the lived experience and the world that is osmotic, porous, and intertwined. Picasso has an experience that is triggered by a *walk in the forest*. During this walk, he has a very direct visceral experience that he describes as *an indigestion of greenness*. This direct experience is what Bainbridge Cohen might call "full embodiment" (2012, p. 157). Full embodiment, according to Bainbridge Cohen, is a "direct experience" that has no "intermediary steps or translations" (p. 157). The

premise in BMC is that there is a process of embodiment that involves three cyclical steps: visualisation, somatization, and embodiment (Bainbridge Cohen, 2012, p. 157). Visualisation is when a mental image of the body confirms its own existence. Somatization is a process that involves "kinaesthetic (movement), proprioceptive (position) and tactile (touch) sensory systems" that create visceral conformation of existence (p. 157). Embodiment is a letting go of "conscious mapping" and attuning-to a quality of "cellular attention", where the cells become aware of themselves and the "experienced moment is initiated from the cells themselves" without the "mediation of images" (p. 157). In my experience, this embodiment phase is achieved through the use of sensory metaphors that can provide a visceral shift in experience.

In Picasso's case, the experience is full bodied. It is so affecting that he feels *full* and then *empty*. The experience is so *urgent* and directional that he must *discharge* this sensation. What is interesting about this passage is that the process is triggered not by Picasso picking up a paintbrush, but by walking in the forest. It points toward the crisscrossing or intertwining body-world connection, and to me signals a highly conscious process that is readily available to the artist.

Grosz claims that, "to focus on the subject at the cost of focusing on the forces that make up the world is to lose the capacity to see beyond the subject, to engage with the world, to make the real" (2011, p. 84). This experience described by Picasso is a salient example of how artists use *the real* to not only see but to feel *beyond the subject*. Picasso returns to his studio, not to paint the forest but to discharge *the real* forces, the *greenness*, of the world that infused his experiencing body. In my view, Picasso is accessing experience differently by attuning to what Bainbridge Cohen might call "cellular knowing" (2012, p. 157) by attending to and acting upon his highly visceral, body-centred sensations, and perceptions.

This description of Picasso's creative process highlights the importance of the intertwining body-world chiasm in understanding the relationship between lived experience and artistic creativity. It is important to recognise that Picasso's experience is singular. I am not arguing that this example sets out any formulaic pathway for enacting a creative process. The generality one can take from this experience is that it is body-centred, immersed in a world, and highlights a body-world chiasm. Picasso seems to have a heightened sensory awareness of the world and is viscerally affected by its forces that, in turn, lead

to a creative event in the form of an artwork. This way of attuning-to lived experience is an underdeveloped research trajectory that is worth further investigation.

So, what is the way forward for those of us who are perhaps not as highly attuned-to this body-world chiasm as Picasso? How might we develop the skills to attune-to lived experience in this way? In my discovery workshops, but also in daily living, I develop activities to help expand sensory awareness by taking account of the world and sensing into the intertwining structure of lived experience. I experiment extensively with the use of sensory metaphors to open my senses and perceptions to the fundamentally intertwining structure of the body-world chiasm. The following section describes some of these experiments and how I applied them to the Möbius loop model.

5.3 Intertwining and the Möbius Loop

In her early work, Grosz puts forward the Möbius loop model as an alternative conceptual framework for the intertwining relationship between mind and body (1994, p. xii). I argue that, in the same way, the Möbius loop might also be an appropriate metaphor for the body-world chiasm. I have found this model particularly useful in rethinking the relations between a range of binary pairs, body/mind, subject/object, inside/outside, conscious/unconscious. As Merleau-Ponty says, "once a body-world relationship is recognized, there is ramification of my body and a ramification of the world and a correspondence between its inside and my outside, between my inside and its outside" (1964/1968, p. 136).

Grosz's postmodern Darwinism presents all of life as modes of competing and coordinating forms of openness. These intertwining forces create conditions whereby things collide and encounter one another. I do not use the term 'thing' in the traditional philosophical sense, within a lineage that includes Descartes through Kant to Hegel (Grosz 2005, p. 132). I use the term 'thing', as Grosz does, in a Darwinian sense whereby "the thing, the object, or materiality is not conceived as the other, the binary double, of the subject, the self, embodiment, or consciousness, but is the resource for the subject's being and enduring"(2005, p. 131).

In this intertwining body-world chiasm, things evolve, change, and adapt, and the site of action is in-between. In my view, this crisscrossing between body-world has potential to uncover, what Grosz calls, our "indeterminate creativity" (2005, p. 121) because this crisscrossing is ever-changing and always oriented toward the future.

Working kinaesthetically with the Möbius loop model helped me to develop a visceral sense of how this model might tangibly reveal the body-world chiasm. I made 3D paper models of the Möbius loop, first as a single loop (Figure 9), and then by continually dividing the original and subsequent loops one-third the distance from the edge (Figure 10). Regardless of how many divisions were made, the loop remained connected to all other loops. The kinaesthetic and spatial nature of this experience enabled me to develop a deeper appreciation of the Möbius loop's capacity for both enacting and representing the fundamental intertwining structure of the body-world chiasm.

Figure 9: Single loop

Figure 10: Multiple loops entwined

I then created a scaled, three-dimensional test model (Figure 11), and finally a body-sized model using mattress foam, industrial thread, glue, twine, and calico (Figure 12).

Figure 11: Scaled Möbius loop model

Figure 12: Body-sized Möbius loop model

The choice of calico, a material in its raw state, referenced the conceptual ideas of my project. For example, fashion designers use calico to make test versions of a garment, called a toile. The material, therefore, references the idea of uncovering, looking beneath, and working from first principles. The addition of the central red-twine strip was to highlight the intertwining nature of things. It does this because as the red-twine strip appears and disappears it reveals the torsion of one into the other.

For me, the Möbius loop model encapsulates, as a metaphor, Merleau-Ponty's idea that it is the intertwining "body-world" chiasm that makes us invent, create, and bring forth our subjectivities, inter-subjectivities and materialities (1964/1968, p. 136). This intertwining requires attuning to lived experience in ways that regard bodies as "borderline or threshold" fields that hover between binary pairs in a moving spiral of action (Grosz, 1994, p. 23). I used this concept as a framework for engaging performatively with the Möbius Loop structure in a number of discovery workshops during my PhD project.

i) Encountering the Möbius Loop with Kate Barnett
In September 2015, Kate and I arranged three sessions that focused on the "spreadability of sound". In the third session, I brought in the Möbius loop so that we could work with it in relation to sounding in preparation for my performance. We began this session by entering into a ten-minute sounding improvisation with the Möbius Loop. Our aim was to include as much as we could in our awareness and to notice what we were responding to during the improvisation. Adding in the extra dynamic of the Möbius loop proved much more difficult than I anticipated. In our post improvisation discussion, the complexities of this encounter become evident:

> Angela & Kate, Recorded Dialogue September 14th 2015
> **A**: It's a complicated process adding in the object – sounding and working with the object feel like two really big things … what is it I'm trying to say … it took us a while to get there … I think maybe we got there towards the last minute.
>
> **K**: Can you describe what "there" is?
>
> **A**: Feeling connected to the multi-sensory sense of (long pause) it felt like I was forcing the work with the Möbius…the sound is a process on its own in a way and then to ….

K: So what was the work you were doing with the object?

A: There was a sensing into it, a touching of it…connecting with it ….but it felt like that was almost a separate process to the sounding.

K: That's showing you some really interesting things about what sound is for you and what sounding is for you.

A: I felt really conflicted …yes that's the word …because if I was giving over to the sound I was forgetting the object…even though the object was there and I was working with it…so there was a point where I was simply in the object and I wasn't touching it …and I thought… 'let me sound the sound of this small space that's contained by the object'…that felt like a cleaner connection… I could allow the improvisation to evolve in a much more integrated way if I wasn't touching the object at that time but I was aware of it so I could take in its presence.

This dialogue reveals the difficulty of holding multiple things equally in awareness. I felt pressure for it to be all that I had symbolically endowed it with. As Kate noted, "this object is a laden thing for you…it is overwhelming when you try to think of them all at once". We continued to experiment with both of us working with the Möbius loop - what emerged was the sheer joy of the Möbius shape, the playfulness that we were able to experience in the three-way interplay and how we were tuning in and out of different aspects of the experience. For example Kate notes:

Kate, Recorded Dialogue September 14th 2015

I loved your pulling the loop and that it changed my balance and so I went with that and sounded with that and sometimes I would more consciously think 'oh that's an amazing sound Angela's making'..I want to join that in some way and then at other times I forgot you existed

Later I also note:

Angela, Recorded Dialogue September 14th 2015

It also felt good to have another body in there – I loved using the loop and moving you or being moved by it and then lifting it up – yes I felt like in those moments I was …my direction was either to the object or to the sound – even though I was doing both one had to recede for the other to happen.

As a way of addressing the conflict I was experiencing, Kate suggested that

perhaps it is enough to simply be with one or the other thing, to just notice - that's where my attention is and to just note it:

> Kate, Recorded Dialogue September 14th 2015
> Now I'm with the sound of this object or this movement … voice in that sense may just emerge … might be good to have the spaciousness to know that you don't always need articulate sound to come out …note whether that would make the conflict between the foregrounding of one over another less of a conflict.

The discussion progressed further when Kate said, "your seeing is your sounding". When I thought about this unfamiliar idea it occurred to me that I had in fact tuned into my eyes at one point. Kate probed further with "how is your vision part of your sound?", and the following exchange emerged:

> Angela & Kate, Recorded Dialogue September 14th 2015
> **A**: Vision being part of my sound did come actually – when that (*makes a sound*) sound came - that was as a direct result of me attuning-to eyes and I was kind of giving a wateriness to them - squelchy
>
> **K**: So was your use of sound then to enact that wateriness or was it more about being with the wateriness of the sound that emerged?
>
> **A**: More about being in the wateriness of it – to feel what it sounded like to be in the gurgliness of eyes and ….oh yes it's coming back to me now… then I let that ripple through and I got tummy and I got fat man tummy gurgling and that's how that emerged and then at some point the loop came over the top of me and so I felt fat – I was bigger than myself and then I think you picked up on that sound
>
> **K**: I did, that was one of those examples of me thinking 'there's a really great sound'
>
> **A**: That sound came from me thinking 'okay I need to do something here to be more multi-sensory'
>
> **K**: Cool – bingo!

This exchange highlights the pedagogical nature of our sessions and how skilfully Kate allows me to make my own discoveries. The distinction Kate makes between enacting something and being something is particularly

significant in this exchange. I now recognise that there is a difference between representing an idea in the body and embodying something in a cellular way. By using a sensory metaphor, I could sense into the shape and place of eyes and experience the sensation of *gurgliness* that was then creatively and spontaneously translated into sound. This rippled through my body in a way that took attention to *tummy* and *fat man tummy gurgling*. I note that the loop comes over me at that point and serendipitously augments this feeling of *fat man tummy*. This experience was somatic rather than image based. The Möbius loop enhanced and augmented what was occurring for the experiencing body in that moment. It became clear to me that I was in the experience of *gurgliness* and that the sound emerged from this direct experience rather than from a cognitive process where I was using sound to try and represent *gurgliness*.

The pathway into this experience was a process of focusing in-between things. Just prior to the *gurgliness of eyes experience,* I was paying attention to the points of contact between my body, the floor, the Möbius, the surrounding space, and other objects/people in space so that more and more could be included in my awareness. To achieve this, I dilate, widen, and swell my circles of attention to expand awareness and recognise the intertwining nature of things and the forces that act upon them. There is a thickness present whereby one thing affects and exponentially drives forward the other. I developed this body-attunement capacity through an exercise I adapted from a common practice that visual artists use to shift perception. Artists learn to focus attention on negative space rather than positive shapes; a foundational activity used to "perceive the shape of space" (Edwards 1979, p. 97). In a similar way, I shift my attention from the visible shape and sense of things in the world, including the experiencing body, to the invisible forces, energies and intensities that act upon and between those things. This process of applying a sensory metaphor was extremely effective in building my capacity to shift to a more immersive sense of lived experience.

The new way of experiencing eyes and the resulting sounding of eyes, where, as Kate says, my *seeing is my sounding* is not verifiable in any anatomical sense, but the sensory metaphor creates a visceral shift that does allow me to enter into a different kind of experience. I cannot say for sure that that my experience of *gurgliness of eyes* is the same as Picasso's experience of *an indigestion of green*. What the two sensory metaphors share, however, is that they are body-centred and result in some form of creative output; for Picasso, a painting, and for me, sound. What I can verify is that by using a sensory metaphor, I was able to attune-to experience differently to bring forth a deeply embodied sound.

Kate's recognition that she heard *a really great sound* and her desire to follow it verifies too that something was different about the way this sound emerged. Our discussion became the catalyst for a deeper understanding of the visceral process that we had just shared, and thus created a moment of inter-subjective congruence.

Accessing experience in this way was initiated by focusing in-between. It involved crossing thresholds or borders, displacement, dealing with uncertainty and restriction, accepting paradox, and, importantly for this project, eschewing binary pairs. The interval between provided a fluid site for desire to connect, produce, formulate, invent, and create. Responding to this desire was about co-existence and co-creation. This desire, at first seemed intangible but that was simply because the desire is "not an object, but it is that through which objects are possible – it is between them as the interval of the trees between the trees" (Merleau-Ponty 1964/1968, p. 180). I applied this capacity to focus in-between things into my performance so that I could embody rather than represent ideas. In the next section, I discuss how Alice Cummins also helped me to embody rather than represent ideas.

ii) Encountering the Möbius Loop with Alice Cummins

In October 2015, Alice and I also did a series of discovery workshops that focused on encountering the Möbius loop. These discovery workshops helped me to clarify my relationship with it as a thing and understand how the Möbius loop could not only metaphorically represent the intertwining nature of things but, could, as a thing itself, personify something conceptual such as creativity.

In the first session, we focused on my relationship with the Möbius loop and how it might be seen as a relationship of 'pragmatism'. Alice noted:

> Alice, Recorded Dialogue, October 19th 2015
> … don't set up a confrontation with it … it's not that it's not about curiosity but it's not a conceptual curiosity. It's a cellular curiosity, and that's also in the pragmatism – does that make sense? Otherwise all I see it through is your face, your head… I don't see it through your body.

Alice provided the following suggestions for working with the Möbius loop on a daily basis:

> Alice, Recorded Dialogue, October 19th 2015
> … practise starting in different places in the space … you could start in

front of it and go around it … you don't know yet where the work will evolve. So practise coming at it from anywhere at all … just moving with it every day for set periods of time.

We discussed how I could allow the Möbius to reveal itself - without me always doing something to it. I wondered whether I needed to move slower but as Alice notes:

> Alice, Recorded Dialogue, October 19th 2015
> … it's not a question of moving slowly it is a question of embodying it every single moment and that you are revealing something. What you did then was you found a place and you held it, you found a place and you held it so I don't want that predictability … at the beginning of the session … I think there was that quality of what I would call 'wonder' you're in this thing. And I think that's the truth Angela I think sometimes we do find things magically and then the creative act is … well how do we make a pathway so that I find that every time? The rehearsal is to secure something. The research is, well what are those qualities? What are those embodied qualities? You started the session with effort and then I said this is my score for you "breathe, wrestle, sound" – three words. They are my words but perhaps you could add to them. When you do a practice that feels right to you maybe pause and write down what are the qualities that I am experiencing in my body-mind. Be careful of being wilful. It won't respond to your wilfulness.

I learnt from this session that it was the quality of whole-bodied touch that allowed the Möbius to reveal itself. I discovered that there was less effort required. As Alice notes:

> Alice, Recorded Dialogue, October 19th 2015
> You don't really know what shape it is from here, and as you said I'd only have to go touch it and it would change … it's like an animal … it changes with one touch. (*walks over to the Möbius to touch it*) But the quality of touch …the quality of our attention in the creative act is what transforms things so I can do a big thing (*moves Möbius*) and I can also do a small thing (*moves Möbius*) but it changes everything – each time. It changes all the time … that is a beautiful section of the work that I would like to see you explore because for me it shows the entanglement of the body and the Möbius and that the one is the other and that is what we are doing…that inside/outside … make sense?

The following image from this discovery workshop (Figure 13), demonstrates how the object disrupts the viewer's usual perception of the body and shows the living and the nonliving in relationship.

Figure 13: Intertwining
Photo: Alice Cummins

In these discovery workshops I learnt that the Möbius loop is a thing and, like Grosz, I follow Darwin in thinking that "the thing is the real which we both find and make" (2005, p. 132). I recognized that the thing in my project, the Möbius loop, had a history and was not "simply a passive inertia" against which I measured my own activity. As Grosz states, the thing "has a 'life' of its own, characteristics of its own, which we must incorporate into our activities in order to be effective, rather than simply understanding, regulating, and neutralizing it from the outside". I discovered too that, as Grosz notes, "we need to "accommodate things more than they accommodate us" (2005, p. 132).

In the next session with Alice, we focused on the concept of creativity. Alice raised questions about creativity and how this idea related to the Möbius loop. She asksed, "What shape is creativity? What are you calling up? Who are you calling up? What is it that you are wanting to invoke? (Alice, recorded dialogue 26 October, 2015). These questions helped me to articulate my intentions and I responded:

> Angela, recorded dialogue October 26th 2015
> In some ways the Möbius loop is the shape of creativity and maybe I'm invoking that in my body before I even get to it. I mean it is the manifestation of my idea of creativity – the seen and the unseen.

Alice and I discussed the many facets of creativity and my intention to reveal an aspect of these different facets within each vignette of my performance. As an experiment we decided to actively endow the Möbius loop with the idea that it was creativity itself in a five-minute improvisation. Afterwards Alice noted:

> Alice, Recorded Dialogue October 26th 2015
> What I saw was that you tried to plead your way back into the relationship with creativity and what you're revealing here is something of great interest to me - creativity is not passive – it's a dynamic force so sometimes you have to jump on board … almost like it's out of control. You had an accident and were cast off, so you had to get on board again and grab it. But the creativity manifests in all sorts of ways and one of its manifestations is playfulness, violence, physicality… it's not refined and polite.

Alice also mentioned the "numinousness" of creativity; that creativity is "of other, not human". She noted "creativity is in your service … you are not dominating it … it is a constantly shifting relationship…maybe it even fools you into thinking you're in charge briefly" (Alice, Recorded Dialogue October 26th 2015). We discussed how difficult it is to maintain the fresh, spontaneous quality of the work that is present the first time you do something. Alice noted:

> Alice, Recorded Dialogue, October 26th 2015
> That is the amazing thing about the practice – what you have to do is keep the practice going – the spontaneity of the early stuff has to still be there after a hundred practises and I think it can be, as you find more in it … don't lock things in too early…you absolutely need to keep opening it out ….

Alice encouraged me to keep going with the work but to "do it through the practice, not by sitting with a piece of paper, feel it in your body". These sessions integrated the BMC and improvisation work with Alice and the body-centred practice with Kate that I had done over the three years of my PhD project. In the next section, I describe how this work with the Möbius loop model was translated into performance.

5.4 The Möbius Loop in Performance

My performance work with the Möbius loop required a body-centred, physical encounter that was not about dance technique but was about movements from life. I wanted the performance to be an encounter with a thing that was both

found and made. The work of choreographer and theatre maker Pina Bausch was of influence in this regard. As Bausch says,

> To understand what I am saying, you have to believe that dance is something other than technique. We forget where the movements come from. They are born from life. When you create a new work, the point of departure must be contemporary life – not existing forms of dance. (Bausch 1989, p. 91)

According to Climenhaga, Bausch "reduces the ballet down to its most essential image, and concentrates on the depth and power of that motivating image" (2009, p. 11). Similar to Bausch, and after Antonin Artaud, I approached my performance as a process of creating "a world *of* the stage rather than a world *on* the stage" and a process of shifting the performer from one that is "absorbed in character to one as elemental and actual" (Climenhaga 2009, p. 34).

The development of my performance was also influenced by the work of Brendan O'Connor and Tony Yap. Their 2015 performance, Dionysus Molecule, was an "enactive, immersive, ritual work" (Rothfield 2015, p. 23) that also took place in the Oratory at the Abbotsford Convent. Yap and O'Connor created a performance that was, as Rothfield says, intended to be "striking or powerful, rather than representational or conceptual" (p. 23). What I take from their highly visceral work is a commitment to being open to the forces and intensities of the intertwining body-world chiasm. I noted in their performance a desire to augment everyday experience through a mix of Yap's Malay Shamanism and Butoh, as well as a more contemporary performance practice. The performance of Yap and O'Connor becomes, as dance does for Bausch, "a confrontation with behaviour and bodily presentation, it is an organization of action that addresses life itself rather than an imitation created from the comfortable distance of an intermediary technique" (Climenhaga 2009, p. 50). Using this approach, I attempted to encounter the Möbius loop in performance and therefore embody rather than represent ideas about the intertwining- the chiasm. I describe those performance attempts in the following discussion of excerpts from my performance event in April 2016.

Vignette 1: Breathe

In the opening sequence I am pre-set in the space, wrapped and folded into the Möbius loop. Only my legs are visible from the far end of the space. As they entered the performance space, the audience encountered an unidentifiable, seemingly non-human object in the centre of the space and heard the

soundtrack *Earth Seen from Above* by Meredith Monk. This soundtrack is a contemporary choral piece, chosen for its mix of tuneful and discordant vocalisations. The musical intervals are similar to a Gregorian chant. The tonal quality of this work references the religious history of the Abbotsford Convent and was intended to evoke a sense of ritual.

Opening the performance in this way allowed time to connect with the space before the audience entered, and to use breath to calm the nervous system and attune-to experience differently. I directed attention to points of contact I could sense; contact between my legs, back, head, Möbius loop, floor, and the density of internal organs. This vignette fostered an environment where I could drop-in to the sensation of whole-body breathing. My folded shape was somewhat lung-like and so I use this idea as a sensory metaphor to activate a process of what Bainbridge Cohen calls cellular breathing. She claims that:

> We enter the state of cellular breathing by bringing attention to our breathing. We initially feel our external breathing between our lungs and the air around us. Gradually, we release into internal breathing through fluid exchange in all the cells of our body. We then feel our whole body expanding and condensing as one cell. With practice, we experience increased density and vitality in our breathing as our regular breathing becomes more concentrated and we open to increasingly subtle breathing of all our cells. (Bainbridge Cohen 2012, p. 162)

My hope was that this attentiveness to my own body breathing, and the visceral shifts that the sensory metaphor of imagining myself as a large lung brought to my experience, would trigger attentiveness in the audience. This powerful metaphor, supported by the quietude and minimal activity within the space as the audience entered, supported an experiential shift for me that led to an experience of whole-body breathing. I became more aware of the body-world chiasm in these moments, and I could sense a quiet attentiveness as the audience entered.

For some audience members, the abstract and unfamiliar opening did act as a catalyst for them to slow down and become more attentive. For example, one person could "luxuriate in a very gradual unfolding, emerging, taking all the time in the world to form" (audience reflections 17 April, 2016). Another suggested an attentive state was triggered as they wondered "was it an embryo….then a bird? Raised lots of questions for me". One person thought the opening piece was symbolic of the metamorphosis in life … as we transition

from one state to another" (audience reflections 16 April, 2016). Another became attentive by letting go of meaning making altogether, " I was uncertain of what was going on. Then, I just stopped wondering and everything flowed" (Audience reflection 17 April 2016). For others, the quietude was difficult because it went "on for too long".

The audience reflections are not presented here as empirical evidence that my research intentions were realised but are used to validate my own experience. They signal a possible inter-subjective congruence that validates my own attentive state and the attentiveness I sensed from the audience during this opening sequence. In the next vignette, I changed the pace and more actively worked with the Möbius loop which dramatically changed the mood.

Vignette 2: Intertwining

This sequence directly followed the opening vignette. At the conclusion of the Meredith Monk track in Vignette 1, I allowed my head to emerge from the Möbius loop and to actually see it rather than just feel and be in it. There was a moment of stillness where I allowed a sense of loss to be present as the music finished, followed by a moment of decision to continue without the music. The movement in this vignette was in stark contrast to the stillness of the previous vignette. The score I used during rehearsal was the following series of words:

Fold, unfold, hold
Grasp, struggle, resist
Release, flutter, soften
Gather, contain, assemble

These words also helped to trigger a felt sense of how the downward forces of gravity and the upward forces of life co-exist and work upon the body. I spent time experimenting with the heavy downward pull of gravity - endowing the Möbius loop with this quality and playing with this against my body. I then worked with the lighter, soft upward pull of life - endowing the Möbius loop with this quality and allowing this to affect my body. During the performance event in April 2016, I no longer used the words as a trigger and I simply allowed myself to sense through the sequence (Moving Image 6). By the third night, I was able to include more and more in my awareness. The texture of the floor, the ever-changing shape, angles, weight and pull of the Möbius loop. I had moments of actively dilating my attention to include the people in the room, the whole room itself, and the entire site of the convent.

https://vimeo.com/171898241

Moving Image 6: Performance Vignette - Intertwining

The Möbius loop model was a significant devise for understanding, experiencing, and communicating Merleau-Ponty's concept of the intertwining - the chiasm. Even the structure of my performance in April 2016 utilised the Möbius loop model. For example, vignettes folded into one another and moved smoothly between sound, speech and song. Ideas vacillated between the abstract and the concrete, and communication shifted between gibberish, coherent text, and song.

The visceral processes I used to build my attunement capacity helped me to sense into what Merleau-Ponty calls the "thickness" of the "perceived object and the perceiving subject" (1945/2012, p. 53). Accessing experience differently, therefore, fostered a deeper understanding of the body-world chiasm, and helped me to apprehend our "living communication with the world that makes it present to us as the familiar place of our life" (p. 53).

The Möbius loop model operated on two levels in my performance. First, it operated as a three-dimensional symbolic representation of the body-world chiasm. Second, it operated as a performative thing that I could encounter in performance. The physical presence of the Möbius loop was central to the first five vignettes and then, as an object in space, it was hoisted to the ceiling and its presence remained metaphorically available for the rest of the performance. For some, its physical position in the space fostered reflection during the performance. As one audience member says:

> Audience Reflection, April 16th 2016
> Once the Möbius loop was hung up above us all, having settled there … well, it never really settled. It swayed, due, I think, to the rising heat in the room from the heater and body heat. This added to my sense of aliveness in the room - in us all indeed. I kept reflecting from it moving, to the audience member, to you, and so forth…

Using the mode of performance to heighten experience through my interactions with the Möbius loop created the conditions whereby live forces and energies could be felt and experienced by me as a performer. The close proximity of the audience, as I propelled myself with Möbius loop, had an element of risk and unpredictability that required focused attentiveness to the

surroundings, to the floor, to my breath and to others in the space. The form and shape of the Möbius loop, when in motion with my body, and when I was attuned-to the forces and energies between, developed, for me, a visceral apprehension of non-binary, unpredictable, and creative forces that are fundamental to being immersed in a world.

Based on my research, I claim that focusing attention between things, embodying sensory metaphors, and encountering the Möbius loop in performance makes it possible to attune more readily to the fundamental intertwining structure of lived experience. It is therefore, a key contention of this thesis, that the fundamental intertwining structure of lived experience works upon lived experience as a generative dynamic. It follows then, that lived experience is deeply implicated in the processes of artistic creativity. In the next chapter, I discuss other ways I have accessed experience differently using the concept of 'becoming' as discussed by Grosz in a lineage that includes Darwin, Bergson, and Deleuze.

5.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have discussed Merleau-Ponty's concept of *the intertwining – the chiasm*. I have suggested that Picasso's account of the creative process is evidence of how artists might access experience in a way that is open to the body-world *intertwining chiasm*. I suggest that this way of accessing experience is different to everyday experience and is worthy of further investigation. In workshops and in performance, I attempted to research the process of accessing experience differently, by closely attuning-to visceral phenomena using body-centred practices that focus on the concept of *the intertwining-the chiasm*.

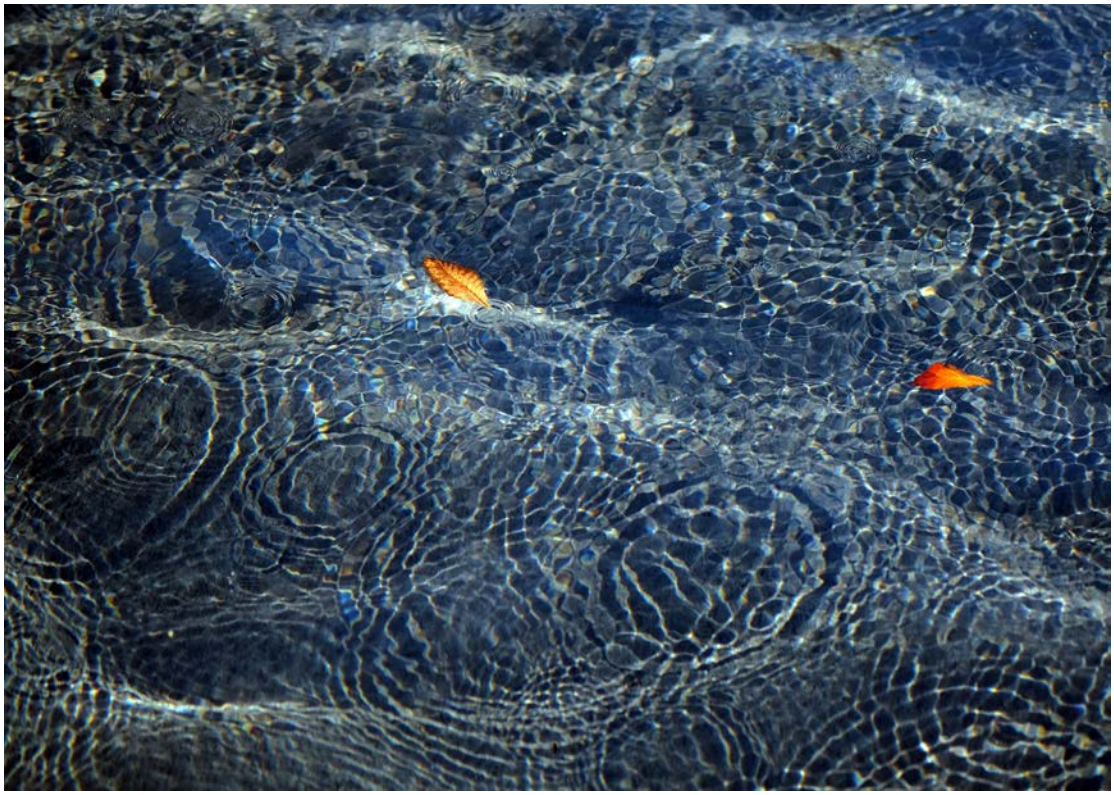
As a result, this Performance Research has helped me to build attunement capacity. I discovered that when I was in motion with the Möbius loop I could attune-to the forces that propel, bind, and separate things. I discovered that things have distinct forms, shapes, and assemblages that manifest in time and place. They have boundaries and edges but these structures are porous which makes them affected by their immersive conditions. As a result, I developed practices to focus in-between things.

My research reveals that focusing attention between things, embodying sensory metaphors, and encountering the Möbius loop in performance, makes it possible to more readily attune-to *the intertwining – the chiasm*. Based on my experiences, I propose that this fundamental structure works upon lived

experience as a dynamic and generative force, and is therefore deeply implicated in the processes of artistic creativity. In the next chapter, I will focus on how Bergson's concept of *becoming* has also helped me to access experience differently and develop artistic performance works.

Chapter Six

Imagining Immersive Conditions



There are fields and fields of fields
Merleau-Ponty[5]

6.0 Chapter Introduction

In the previous chapter the focus was on Merleau-Ponty's concept of the *intertwining – the chiasm*. I discussed the ways I engaged with this concept to consciously access experience differently whilst developing artistic performance works. In this chapter, I focus on the concept of "becoming" as discussed by Grosz in a lineage that includes Darwin, Bergson, and Deleuze. I am guided by the question: *How might the concept of 'becoming' first, support conscious ways of accessing experience differently, and second, operate in service of artistic creativity?*

In Section 5.1 of this chapter, I use the work of Grosz, following Darwin, Bergson, and Deleuze, to discuss the real and the forces of difference in what Grosz calls the "domain of becoming" (2011, p. 43). I use this philosophical position to affirm that life in this domain uses the forces of difference to generate dynamic, open-ended, ever-changing things. These forces operate in

[5] *The visible and the invisible,* 1964/1968, p. 171

the field of duration to create and generate the real. The real in this context is "positive, full, has no lack or negation" (Grosz 2011, p. 54). Following Grosz, I use this account of the real to affirm that the constitutional forces of lived experience are fundamentally creative.

This leads me to propose that it is useful to consciously approach lived experience as a dynamic, generative, and open-ended force of difference. I go on to discuss how the same forces that affect lived experience also affect theatrical performance but in a more heightened or compressed way. I discuss how some theatre practitioners work with this dynamic and focus on unblocking the physical body and voice rather than on developing acting techniques. I affirm that this theatrical lineage contributes to shaping my research and its creative outputs.

In Section 5.2 of this chapter, I discuss the ways I test the concept of becoming against my own experience. I describe how I have activated this process in discovery workshops by accessing experience differently and consciously, employing imaginative sensory metaphors to achieve a thicker, more whole-bodied sense of lived experience.

In Section 5.3 of this chapter, I discuss how I have held issues of gender at bay so that I can consider the most general and abstract conditions of corporeality. I suggest that it is important to eschew binary divisions not because they do not exist but because this helps to uncover more useful fundamental frameworks to account for lived experience and its creative outputs. Using excerpts from my work, I discuss how avoiding gender altogether is an almost impossible task because the constitutional force of difference, manifested through gender, did play a role in the development of some creative works.

I close this chapter by affirming that engaging with the concept of becoming through my practice has first, helped me to consciously access expereince differently, and second, provided visceral entry points into performative material for the development of creative works. My research affirms that life, in the domain of becoming, is a fundamentally creative dynamic, and my experience of this dynamic reveals how the fundamental structures of lived experience operate in service of artistic creativity.

6.1 The Real, Difference and Becoming

If, as Grosz suggests, the domain of becoming is constitutionally generative, open-ended and creative, then becoming is an important concept in the context of this project. In fact Grosz already identifies resonances between this philosophical position and art by linking the concept of becoming to creative

activity. For example, she suggests the arts can "express more directly than the sciences" the "continuities and connections" between life and matter (2011, p. 42). Following Bergson and Deleuze, Grosz recognises that art can "express the real" (p. 42). The real, in this context, is defined, as the open-ended and ever changing forces of difference that operate in the domain of becoming.

Following Bergson and Deleuze, Grosz gives an account of the real based on two principles: "first, the real is positive, full, has no lack or negation, except through its own positive capacity for self-enfolding; second, the real is dynamic, open-ended, ever-changing, giving the impression of stasis and fixity only through the artificial isolation of systems, entities, or states" (2011, p. 54). My research, therefore, focuses on verifying this position on the real for myself through performative action within a theatre performance context. I suspend mind/body, subject/object binary concepts and attempt to attune-to the immersive constitutional conditions of becoming that play upon lived experience through visceral phenomena and observe, where possible, how these open-ended forces operate in service of artistic creativity.

According to Grosz, Deleuze is an ontologist because his philosophy is interested in "redynamizing our conceptions of the real" and "freeing up becoming from any determinate direction" (2011, p. 55). This capacity to free oneself of any determinate direction is an attribute that artists believe is of critical importance to the creative process. For example, in theatre contexts improvisation is used to "set in motion the creativity of the actors" where "chaos is necessary" and because there is no determinate direction "truly creative work makes use of chance" (Callery 2001, p. 164). Deleuze's philosophy is about mobilising the force of difference, and for Grosz, "it is the becoming-artistic of scientific knowledge and the becoming-scientific of artistic creation" (p. 55).

Grosz uses the work of Darwin, Bergson, and Deleuze to highlight the concept of "difference as a force" (2011, p. 40). The argument is complex and nuanced, and whilst there is not time to fully elaborate here, it is worth citing the following synthesis by Grosz to help frame this philosophical position:

> Bergson develops Darwin's idea that species are separated by degrees of difference; they are forms of variation that contain a common elaborative force but that diverge, fan out, and differ from each other more and more as time passes. Deleuze develops from Bergson the idea that these differences, differences of degree that enable species to differ

> from each other and differences in kind that create lines of cleavage between the material and the living, are constitutive differences - not differences between already existing entities, but those differential forces that internally differentiate things, including living beings. (2011, p. 40)

Entities, in this world-view, are made up of differential forces that are dynamic and temporally sensitive. According to Grosz, duration is the 'field' in which difference lives and plays itself out, the 'domain' of becoming; duration is that which undoes as well as makes" (2011, p. 43). To adopt this conceptualisation of lived experience is to imaginatively and quite radically activate a process of consciously attuning-to experience differently. It allows lived experience to then be felt as a dynamic, generative, and open-ended force of difference within a temporal field. In my experience this is far easier to say than it is to enact.

In the moments, fleetingly at first, of consciously accessing experience in this way, I have begun to notice energetic patterns, swirls, and forces that quite literally move through lived experience as visceral phenomena. By accessing experience in this way, I have felt myself as an entity amongst many others that is affected and moved by the generative and open-ended forces of difference within the durational context of becoming. The time-based nature of live performance, therefore, makes it an ideal medium for the embodiment of these particular ontological ideas. Live performance draws on the inevitable force of differentiation and elaboration within systems that emerge or actualise "only in duration" (Grosz 2011, p. 43). In the heightened or compressed context of theatre performance, and thus also in the everyday or the expanded context of life, lived experience and artistic creativity are inextricably entwined because the very constitutional attributes of the former can lead to the latter.

This concept of the continuous field of experience in the domain of becoming can also be seen in Merleau-Ponty's later work. He says "there is for example no positive flux of singular…; there are fields and fields of fields, with a style and typicality…which are also a relation between the agent (I can) and the sensorial or ideal field" (1964/1968, p. 171). These fields of experience are seemingly intangible because they are not objects, they are "that through which objects are possible" (p. 171). In the context of performance, these fields are that through which performative events are possible.

Deleuze and Guattari also provide insight in this context because of their

commitment to the notion of the multiple, non-hierarchical, and transversal energies that continually assemble and disassemble in connection with one another. Their work is a radical rethinking of experience that considers living beings as dynamic matter, energies, and flows that are no different from other assemblages of matter, energies or flows (1987/1988, pp. 3 - 7). It is a truly egalitarian conceptualisation where no one assemblage is more important, fundamental, or essential than any other. It affirms that things only seem fixed because of the durational and artificial isolation of systems, entities, or states.

When the performer attunes-to the durational forces of difference in the domain of becoming they can recognise how there are degrees of intensity in lived experience. Life and play (as both verb and noun) can dissolve the boundaries between everyday living and artistic performance. However, the performer is not naive in this conceptualisation. As Diana Taylor (2003) notes, performances function "as vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity through reiterated, or what Richard Schechner has called "twice-behaved behaviour" (p. 2). Taylor recognises that performance operates on different levels and that performances such as dance, theatre, ritual, or political rallies can be bracketed off because these events begin and end at specified moments in time (2003, p. 3). The performer knows that the performance is a heightened version of everyday living but, because the performance is bracketed off, it operates at a greater intensity. The performer knows that the performance is still immersed within the continuing life of human lived experience, which itself is also bracketed off by the moments of birth and death.

Influential theatre practitioners such as Peter Brook, Jerzy Grotowski, and Eugenio Barba worked within this kind of bracketed performance by challenging "the notion of audience as distanced observer and the monopoly of text-based theatre" (Reeve 2011,p. 10). These performance practitioners developed actor-training methods that focused on unblocking the physical body and voice rather than on the accumulation of formal acting skills for the purposes of presentation and representation. Grotowski's laboratory, in particular, where small groups of actors experiment with the physical aspects of theatre and its relationship to role, audience, spirituality, and ritual is highly influential in contemporary physical theatre. For example, in an unpublished interview with Mary Luckhurst in 1987 DV8's Lloyd Newson acknowledges that his use of the term 'physical theatre' invokes a short hand for a range of practices associated with Grotowski's laboratory (DV8 Physical Theatre 2016).

This theatrical lineage, focused on unblocking the physical body and voice, has been formative in shaping my research related to fundamental structures. My performance practice has never been about developing formal acting skills to represent characters. My pursuit of body-centred practices such as the Alexander Technique, Body Mind Centring® (BMC), and Focusing highlights a desire to work with and harness the fundamental structures of lived experience.

In the following section, I describe the ways in which I test and validate, through first-person experience, the conceptual ideas associated with difference, the real and becoming from a performance practice perspective. I share the ways I actively engage with imaginative processes to reconceptualise and enact "the real as forces, energies, and events" (Grosz 2011, p. 85).

6.2 Becoming Whole-bodied

In this section, I focus on a particular discovery workshop with Kate Barnett that helped me to test the concept of becoming through a process of whole-bodied sounding. I brought with me to this session some thoughts about creating a whole-bodied, immersive experience of my voice. I wanted to experiment with ways I could remain open to omnidirectional multiple sensory inputs. Kate and I discussed the frustrations I was having with my voice 'catching', and what I felt was a false binary idea: that there is a chest voice and a head voice. I wanted to play with sensations of transitioning smoothly through the entire vocal range, as a whole-bodied experience, by allowing open-ended sound improvisations to emerge without any determinate direction.

With these ideas in mind, Kate led me through a number of activities that emphasised attuning-to whole-bodied sounding. Kate and I discussed the roundness of the body and how attuning-to this might be supported by working with an exercise ball. She also suggested attuning-to the breathing capacity of every cell in support of listening and producing movement and sonic phrases. We activated the BMC naval radiation movement pattern as described in Chapter Three. This supported a continual, whole-bodied process of expanding and condensing that helped me to effortlessly produce sound. A shift came for me when I began to focus on the sensation of the breath moving across my vocal folds equally on the in-breath and the out-breath.

We also exchanged touch in an activity that involved one person moving and sounding in response to three interspersed gestures of touch from the other. The following video (Moving Image 7) was recorded at the end of this two-hour

workshop in May 2015. In this discovery workshop I am attempting to sound in a multi-directional way – without a conscious 'front'. To help work with this idea I asked Kate to circle me while filming so that I was not aware from one moment to the next where the camera was.

https://vimeo.com/212437309

Moving Image 7: Discovery Workshop - Whole Body Sounding

The footage above demonstrates an engagement with the forces of difference within the durational field of this performative event. In this discovery workshop, my attunement capacity has grown because I had been working in this way for nearly three years. The experience is whole-bodied, multi-sensory, omnidirectional, and sonically responsive. The connection between conceptual ideas and experience is central to being able to attune-to a more whole-bodied, immersive experience in this session. As Kate says, "there was quite a shift from when you arrived - to about half an hour into the workshop after working with the idea of the roundness of the body" (Kate, recorded dialogue 22/11/2015).

We also noted that two months earlier, I had participated in a five-day BMC professional development workshop with Alice Cummins. The focus in those workshops was on developmental movement and as Kate said, "once that shift occurred (in our session) all that developmental movement work you had done with Alice became so much more available in the rippling way you were moving" (Kate, recorded dialogue 22/11/2015). The whole-body sounding described in this discovery workshop laid the groundwork for the visceral (syn)aesthetic style I intended to use in my performance. What follows is a description of how this research eventually manifested in one of the vignettes in my April 2016 performance.

Vignette 8: I AM

In Vignette Eight, I perform the first fully formed song: I AM. The first line of this song, "I am, therefore I think", is a direct inversion of the famous Cartesian formulation, "I think, therefore I am" (Descartes 1637). The lyrics, as included below, are representational on one level as a meditation on the relations between life and matter, and how the body as singer becomes song.

I AM

I am, therefore I think
I breathe,

I inhabit this place in time
Infuse this room with a lilting melody

I have four feet, planted upon the ground
Poised to hear sound
Rattle bones with overtones

Receive with ease a crystal frequency
Then breathe, breath meets word and word is heard
For I am singer, I am singer
I am song, I am song

Gliding between what cannot be seen
Taking it slow and letting it flow

Flesh and blood hold sway
Pulse on my lips, live fingertips
Wired, wired, wired, wired
Flesh and blood, hold sway

Don't want to miss, vocal folds kiss
Don't want to miss, vocal folds kiss
Don't want to miss, vocal folds kiss (whispered)
Don't want to miss, vocal folds kiss (whispered)

Ready to transmit – ow!
Read to transmit – ow!

On another level this text provides the poetic territory for me to embody the process of *becoming* singer, becoming song in real-time. The creative work in this vignette is not the song itself but is the song in performance (Moving Image 8).

https://vimeo.com/172675991
Moving Image 8: Performance Vignette – I AM

From a performance perspective, the challenge is about *how* I perform the words of the song so that I might service a fully embodied experience. In performing this vignette, my intention is to use the utterance in Austin's sense of the word to perform the words/musical phrases in a way that by their enunciation could "generate effects" (1975, p. 17). One way I try to achieve this is by how I approach the keyboard - from behind rather than from the usual

position. This unfamiliar approach to the instrument disrupts usual perception and calls forth a new way of becoming. By approaching the keyboard in this way, I am attempting to make the boundaries between my body and the keyboard more porous. One audience member picks up on this by saying:

> Audience Reflection, April 16 2016
> The prolongation of the single sound you finished with on the keyboard as you rotated around your finger held on the key in order to get from inside to the circle to the outside to assume a conventional presentation position for song was not only clever but pinned a relationship between the human and the machine - complicated relationship, no doubt, one of interdependence, as everything was felt to be during the entire performance

Another person, although they were a little unsure, suggests that I wasn't just representing something but that I was becoming something by saying:

> Audience Reflection, April 16 2016
> You became the sound you became the movement?

These audience reflections show that, for some, I was able to communicate an enacted sense of our immersive conditions and the process of becoming. This was achieved by the many hours I had spent working on attuning-to experience differently, but also in part by particular moments of insight in the lead up to my April 2016 performance event. For example, prior to the second performance, I had an encounter with Myfanwy Hunter, my music collaborator, that helped me to achieve this way of becoming in performance. Myfanwy and I played through the songs as a warm up. Kirsten von Bibra, my director, reflected that I seemed much more present when I was rehearsing the songs in isolation. She noticed there was something that was held when the songs were in the context of the whole performance – particularly the "I Am" song. She wondered how I might enact a more fully embodied performance.

I took some time to think this through. I reflected that when I play the keyboard I expect my hands to operate on automatic pilot, but sometimes automatic pilot does not kick-in. This is frustrating and unsettling because I notice there are gaps in conscious awareness around my keyboard playing. I notice too, that when I am attuning and identifying strongly with voice, I forget about hands. As a result, my hands tend to go rogue. I notice this makes me anxious which in turn shifts attentiveness away from voice. Kirsten strongly

affirms these self-reflections. Kirsten wonders what would help me find a more grounded way of playing within the context of the whole performance. She asks, how can you stay present in each moment and include both voice and hands?

I suggest that I could closely attune-to the tips of my fingers. Myfanwy strongly affirms this as if I have found something significant. I remember observing how Myfanwy, as a string player, spends quite some time warming-up her hands and fingers before performance – shaking, massaging, wriggling them. I reflect on how I attend to my voice in the warm-ups with Kate, and how I attend to sensing into whole-body awareness but do not attend to the specificity of my fingers and hands. We discuss how perhaps the voice takes care of itself because I know it so well, and that perhaps I need to bring my attention more consciously to the tips of my fingers.

Myfanwy then speaks to me very quietly and makes a significant offer regarding how I might achieve this. She suggests it is about the quality of *how* my fingers touch the keys. She suggests I approach the keys as I would the clitoris gently, tenderly, and as if I were massaging the keys in a pleasure seeking way that begins softly and then grows in intensity. She reminded me that the clitoris is a gateway to deeper, vaginal, and labial folds, a passage to the fecund region of the body that is the source of creativity. This resonates strongly for me because to awaken and consciously connect to this uterine flesh goes to the very heart of my work. It enacts a process of attuning-to visceral phenomena in service of artistic creativity.

I experiment by attuning-to the very point at which my fingers contact the keys, allowing this point of contact to be initiated from my deepest female anatomy. I discover the action is softer, smoother, and more aligned with what I am actually trying to communicate through the song. I am able to clearly sense the tip of my finger touching the single note on the keyboard and imaginatively sense that connection through clitoris, vagina, uterus, and naval, and simultaneously hold all of this in my awareness. The use of a sensory metaphor and attentiveness to the point of contact expands further as I include more and more in my awareness. I begin to sense how the larger forces of the fleshy materiality of my whole body and the electronic materiality of the whole of the keyboard are pushed together. I am then able to criss-cross between the visceral phenomena present in whole-bodied awareness and then back through the whole of the keyboard. This resulted in a larger, more connected, and

grounded performance. This experience has resonances with the libidinal quality of *wild Being* that I discussed in Chapter Three, and the intertwining-the chiasm that I discussed in Chapter Four. It also reveals a process of becoming that operates in service of artistic creativity, and hence makes way for artistic expression to thrive.

Grosz recognises the importance of this libidinal quality of experience in the creative processes of becoming. For example, in *Becoming Undone*, Grosz uses Darwin's theory of sexual selection to further develop her ontology of becoming. She describes how natural selection is disrupted by sexual selection. Sexual selection makes way for aesthetic factors that result in the manifestation of individual will, desire, or pleasure, and is "above all creative" (2011, p. 132). According to Grosz, Darwin "has suggested that sexual selection provides the artistic raw materials for song, dance, painting, sculpture, and architecture, or at least for the animal preconditions of these human arts" (p. 132).

By attuning-to experience in this way, I remain open to the libidinal forces of becoming that act in service of artistic creative expression. In discussion afterwards, Myfanwy affirmed that my performance had a different quality of attentiveness. I felt a moment of elation and gratitude toward her about this discovery. I was grateful too for Kirsten's initial enquiry that was the catalyst for this discovery.

This experience has helped me to understand what Merleau-Ponty means by the "flesh of the world". He explains this concept as follows:

> … my body is made of the same flesh as the world (it is perceived), and moreover that this flesh of my body is shared by the world, the world reflects it, encroaches upon it and it encroaches upon the world (the felt [senti] at the same time the culmination of subjectivity and the culmination of materiality), they are in a relation of transgression or of overlapping - - This also means: my body is not only one perceived among others, it is the measurant of all, Nullpunkt of all the dimensions of the world. (1964/1968, p. 248)

Enacting this concept becomes possible through performance. What I discover through this process is that, as a performer, I need to augment my daily experience of the keyboard and bring it into a heightened sense of awareness. According to Zarrilli, the actor must attune-to a heightened form of every day life. He refers to this as "the non-ordinary, extra-daily lived body" (2008, p. 661).

If the performer is operating at virtuosic levels, argues Zarrilli, then this attunement requires a sophisticated modulation or oscillation between that which has been rehearsed and that which is created and brought forth within a live performance context. Whilst I am not arguing that I am operating at a virtuosic level, I am acknowledging that the attunement capacity I drew upon in this particular situation is operating at a heightened level because of the time I have spent learning to attune-to experience differently. In the next section I discuss how I have harnessed the forces of difference, manifested through gender, for creative expression.

6.3 Becoming Woman

In this project, I have attempted to hold issues of gender at bay so that I could consider the most general and abstract conditions of corporeality and creativity. However, as Grosz points out, there is not a neutral body, "there are only bodies - male or female, black, brown, white, large, small and the gradations between them" (1994, p. 19). That said, Grosz in her later work suggests that it might be useful for some researchers to reflect on the most general and abstract conditions of corporeality and the "forces that weigh on our bodies and their products" so that we might reformulate "questions of subjectivity, inter-subjectivity and identity" (2005, p.114). On the whole, I have been able to take up this challenge and hold gender at bay. However, I was not able to completely distance myself from the fact that I am gendered female. In spite of my attempts to distance gender, there were some creative works that emerged that specifically referenced gender.

For example, the song *This Bloody Woman Body* emerged in response to the resonances I felt with the feminist work of Elizabeth Grosz and Luce Irigaray. Whilst this song is about the experience of difference that manifests through gender, it also explores general conditions of corporeality by taking account of the one thing that unites all humans: we all come from the body of another. As Irigaray says:

> As we move farther away from our condition as living beings, we tend to forget the most indispensable element in life: air … To forget being is to forget the air, this first fluid given us gratis and free of interest in the mother's blood, given us again when we are born, like a natural profusion that raises a cry of pain: the pain of a being who comes into the world and is abandoned, forced henceforth to live without the immediate assistance of another body. (1984, p. 127)

The lyrics acknowledge that, although we all come from the body of another, the body from which we are born is only ever female. The language used in this song focuses on the visceral nature of the female lived experience of birthing and child rearing. The lyrics draw directly from metaphors used by feminist writers. For example, the line "four fertile lips" references Irigaray's reflection on how the female body morphologically has two mouths and two pairs of lips:

> The mouth lips and the genital lips do not point in the same direction. In some way they point in the direction opposite from expectations with "lower" forming the vertical…two sets of lips that, moreover, cross over each other like the arms of the cross, the prototype of the crossroads between. (1977, p. 18)

In her early work, Grosz aims to find a way for women to "develop autonomous modes of self-understanding and positions from which to challenge male knowledges and paradigms" (1994, p. 19). She recognises that "knowledges, like all other forms of social production, are at least partially effects of the sexualised positioning of their producers and users; knowledges must themselves be acknowledged as sexually determinate, limited, finite (p. 20).

For Irigaray, the feminist project is to provide an autonomous notion of female subjectivity, sexuality, and corporeality, but in a way that it is not "expected to speak the same language as man's" (1977, p. 25). However, for Irigarary, this autonomous voice is not expected to enact a complete reversal of the current paradigms; supplant the autonomous voice of men. The task according to Irigaray is to "go on living and creating worlds" but recognising that this can only be accomplished "through the combined efforts of the two halves of the world: the masculine and the feminine" (1984, 127).

In my performance, life, manifested in feminine form, becomes autonomous through song. This song is about life embodied female. As one audience member notes:

> <u>Audience Reflection, April 16, 2016</u>
> The birth and growth of the singer and song was a suitable framing of the exploration. The culmination of the journey in "This Bloody Woman Body" was an appropriate ending of the time we spent with you. The time of adulthood and what still lies ahead. 'Where do we go from here? How will I/we create?'

The lyrics are as follows:

This Bloody Woman Body

This, this bloody woman body
Arise, arises from the earth
This, this bloody woman body
Incubates our mirth

This, this bloody woman body
Is not neutral is not one
This, this bloody woman body
Gives birth to not just sons

Four fertile lips, Consume and bear fruit
Two working hands, refuse the soldier salute

This, this bloody woman body
Subterranean and fecund
This, this bloody woman body
Knows there's more of her to come

Up to elbows in shit, vomit, blood, tears, snot,
In every fold of skin, she has not forgot

No more she cries, the stakes are so high
No more, no more, this bloody woman cries

This, this bloody woman body
Heaves a sorrowful sigh
For this, this bloody woman body
No longer stands by

No more she cries, the stakes are so high
No more, no more, this bloody woman sighs

Recognising the sexual difference of bodies at this point in human history, according to Irigaray, helps give voice to what she calls the "right to the 'for itself' of the spirit" (1984, p. 117). According to Irigaray, "the female imaginary" has been repressed and woman "accedes to generality through her husband and her child but only at the price of her singularity" (p. 28, p. 117). But what is this female imaginary, this singularity, and how might it be uncovered?

According to Grosz, corporeality can no long be associated with one sex (or race) and the bifurcation of sexed bodies is "an irreducible cultural universal" (1994, p. 160). Social conditions that create an unequal division between the sexes are able to do so because women are often connected more closely to the body than men. This connection is justified because the reproductive, physiological, and endocrinological transformations of women somehow make them "more corporeal and more natural than men" (p. 14); hence this coding of femininity with corporeality frees men to occupy the conceptual order of society. Grosz refuses the divisions between the function of one group freeing another group to create values, morality, and knowledges, for example, women for men, or blacks/slaves/immigrants/indigenous peoples for white people. Following Grosz, I hold that the sexed body is of particular relevance for this project because first-person methodologies are being used, and my status as *woman* therefore has a direct impact upon my research findings.

Despite this assertion, I have attempted to eschew the binary divisions of gender not because they do not exist but because I am seeking a more fundamental framework to account for the lived experience of artistic creativity. I have attempted to enact the torsion between the corporeal and the conceptual in the most general and abstract terms. I have discovered that, at the interface of this torsion, there are indeed general and abstract conditions that can account for human artistic creativity. Artistic creativity, however, manifests in the singular creative outputs of individual artists who, without exception, are gendered. In my case, this singularity is expressed through a song that calls for an end to the subjugation of women and the violence that is enacted upon their children.

The performance (Moving Image 9) is a process of empowerment that, as one audience member affirmed, was a "journey of self-actualisation (that) was not self-indulgent. It ended at a place of humility and quiet empowerment rather than one of self-congratulation" (Audience Reflection, April 16, 2016).

https://vimeo.com/172683744

Moving Image 9: Performance Vignette - This Bloody Woman Body

I close this chapter by affirming that engaging with the concept of becoming

through my practice has helped me to immerse in the domain of becoming. I have learnt how to prepare and approach performance in a more consciously whole-bodied way. It has also made me more aware of what Grosz calls our "animal preconditions" (2011, p. 132) and how this provides the raw materials for the development of artistic works. It has resulted in creative works that enact the most general and abstract relations between corporeity and artistic endeavour, as well as allowing works that enact the gendered singularity of becoming woman. My research affirms that life, in the domain of becoming, is a fundamentally creative dynamic, and my experience of this dynamic reveals how the fundamental structures of lived experience operate in service of artistic creativity.

6.4 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed how the dynamic and open-ended forces of difference can express the real through artistic performance. I affirm Grosz's position that lived experience is in the domain of becoming, and that this domain is fundamentally creative. This lead me to suggest that, for the purposes of artistic endeavour, it is more useful to approach lived experience as a generative and open-ended dynamic that plays itself out in the field of duration.

I have discussed how some theatre practitioners have worked with this dynamic to unblock the physical body and voice rather than develop acting techniques. I have affirmed that this theatrical lineage contributes to shaping my research and its creative outputs and have used a Performance Research approach to test the concept of becoming against my own experience. These tests were activated by consciously employing imaginative sensory metaphors to achieve a thicker, more whole-bodied sense of lived experience.

In this chapter, I also considered issues of gender in relation to the most general and abstract conditions of corporeality. This lead me to assert that it is important to eschew binary divisions not because they do not exist but because it helps to uncover more useful fundamental frameworks to account for lived experience and its creative outputs. I have noted that it is almost impossible to set aside gender and that in my project gender did play a role in the development of some creative works.

In closing, I have affirmed that engaging with the concept of becoming through my practice has first, helped me to consciously access experience differently and second, provided visceral entry points into performative material for the development of creative works. Affirming that life, in the domain of becoming,

is a fundamentally creative dynamic has, therefore, been a significant factor in gaining a more precise understanding of the performative role that lived experience plays in artistic creativity. The complementary substance of Chapters Four, Five, and Six have laid the foundations for the ontological position that I will now go on to articulate more fully in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Seven

Performance Ontology of Becoming

To be a consciousness, or rather to be an experience, is to have an inner communication with the world, the body, and others, to be with them rather than beside them.
Merleau-Ponty[6]

7.0 Chapter Introduction

In this final chapter, I put forward the *performance ontology of becoming* that I developed in response to the question: what is the relationship between lived experience and artistic creativity? I build on the work of Grosz, in *Time Travels* (2005) and *Becoming Undone* (2011) and translate her ontologies of becoming into a more useful framework for performance practice. Using examples from my work I discuss how this ontology is enacted through my performance practice.

In Section 7.1 of this chapter, I discuss how the performance ontology of becoming, that I have developed, is a process of live knowing. Using an example from my work, I discuss live knowing as an encounter that disrupts typical systems of knowledge about mind/body, subject/object binaries and provides opportunities to experience a shift in thinking or behaviour.

In Section 7.2 of this chapter, I discuss the collaborative work I did with Vicky Kapo, an experienced choreographer and theatre maker. I describe how,

[6] The Phenomenology of Perception, 1945/2012, p. 99

working in a discovery workshop setting, we engaged in a range of experimental improvisations to practise accessing experience differently.

In Section 7.3 of this chapter, I describe how I applied my performance ontology of becoming in a scripted section of my performance. The particular piece, called *IDEA,* enacts the process of listening, attuning-to, noticing, dilating, and augmenting visceral phenomena as a way of developing creative ideas.

In Section 7.4 of this chapter, I detail how I used a Focusing session to help articulate the concept of *wild life*. I discuss how the processes of employing a sensory metaphor helped me to apprehend a complex human problem and experientially discover solutions and insights. I close this chapter by recognising that I have forged an experiential relationship between performance and philosophy that activates a new form of performative philosophical expression.

7.1 The Encounter

This performance ontology of becoming is enacted, as discussed in Chapter Two, through processes of live knowing. In my experience, live knowing moves us toward the ever-pregnant latency and potential performativity of what Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 4) call "intensities" that continually assemble and disassemble. Live knowing is an encounter that places practitioners between the edges of things and thus, through live performing bodies, creates ambiguous, disruptive, playful and creative states that are open ended and generative.

For Deleuze and Guattari, the encounter is that which "forces us to think" because our typical systems of knowledge are disrupted (1994, p. 139). Following Deleuze, O'Sullivan (2014) explains that when we have an encounter we are not faced with something we already know, something that assures us of our identity, but rather a genuine encounter ruptures something. O'Sullivan says that an encounter consists of two kinds of moments. One is a moment of dissent or turning away or refusal, the other is a moment of affirmation, of creativity, or a turning toward something else. I find this explanation of an encounter very useful for my performance practice because it is about constructing a performative encounter that might provoke a shift in experience and understanding.

Machon suggests the (syn)aesthetic performance style has potential to provoke

a shift by enhancing the capacity to "perceive the details corporeally" (2009, p.7). In my experience, attuning to visceral phenomena, focusing in-between and imagining immersive conditions allowed for an encounter with *wild life* that created shifts in lived experience that presented inventive and surprising possibilities for artistic purposes. Some audience reflections also revealed that, in their encounter with my performance, they experienced something of a shift, expansion, disquiet, sense of confusion, or provocation into thinking or behaving differently. Comments included, "I loved the fabulous vocal sounds. I'm going to try them on the way home. I want to stretch my face and show my teeth", and "I absolutely wanted to join in the voice", and "when you were rolling around inside and outside the Möbius loop, I actually wanted to join in. You were so unknowing and curious and tumble-full" and "you evoke deep and thoughtful feelings and thoughts" (Audience responses 15 April 2016).

I do not refer to these audience experiences as evidence of knowledge transfer or that my intentions were realised. As Kershaw says, any "knowledge" or "profound dislocation" that an audience member might experience "cannot be confirmed: one can only indicate the conditions that may have made it possible" (2009, p. 11). I simply make the claim that by having an ontological position that guides the creative decisions one makes, it is possible to foster the live conditions that can make transformation possible. The performance practitioner achieves this by attuning-to visceral phenomena, focusing in-between things, and actively imagining immersive conditions. What these audience responses point toward is, as Machon says, "the way in which the (syn)aesthetic style, when manipulated to its full, encourages performance to be an experience in its purest definition; to feel, suffer, undergo" (2009, p. 22).

An example of how I achieved this in my performance was when I invited the audience to physically move from one part of the space to another. I was interested here in making myself and others performative by bringing, as Carlson says, "consciousness" to ourselves and others "in/as performance" (2004, p. 5) I was inspired here by the *Marina Abramovic in Residence* show that I saw in Sydney in 2015. In this work, Ambramovic engaged in what she calls "live experience performativity" (Gibson 2015). She invited audience members, or exhibition participants as they soon became, to engage in a series of physical attunement exercises led by a video recording of a person doing these exercises. Participants were then, amongst other things, invited to sit and count rice, to sleep in a bed, or to sit opposite a stranger in silence. Abramovic's work resonated with me because the seemingly everyday activities, framed within an aesthetic context, brought a heightened attentiveness to my experience and a

surprisingly moving connection with the strangers I encountered. My experiences I recognised were performative and hence affective. I was keen to create this *live experience performativity* within my own performance.

The director of my performance, Kirsten von Bibra, and I began to think about how creativity requires one to constantly shift one's perspective or point of view – like turning a painting upside down. We decided to include a section in the performance where I would attempt to move the audience from one side of the performance space to the other using only gesture. Using her Alexander training, Kate Barnett gave me very specific ways of holding my hands in ways that would invite and make it easy for people to stand up. She showed me how close I needed to be to the other person if I wanted to invite them to stand up with ease and make my intention clear through my body and without any words – I noticed that this meant I needed to be surprisingly close to the other person (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Inviting audience member to move

Changing the audience point of view by inviting them to move was my way of creating a moment of live knowing for both performer and audience. This experiential moment in the performance was an attempt to enact, with the audience, the process of shifting one's perspective to expand perception.

In performance on the second night, there was anticipation in the room. I sensed the audience wondering what was going to happen next as I took my eyes directly to the faces of the audience and gestured to a person to stand and be moved. I used gesture, facial expression, and touch to then communicate my request to the whole group. I noticed that the audience started to become a bit agitated when they all stood up. I made a 'shhh' sound to them but was very unsatisfied with the result, partly because not everybody heard my 'shhh', and partly because I wanted to achieve my objective without using my voice at all in this section. My frustrations were echoed in this audience response:

> *Audience response 16 April, 2016*
> The touching of shoulders, one's touching of the persons in front and the touch of the person behind me in the line re-enforced communality and subject/object relation. When the line moved, the heightened sense of hearing the audience's sounds of walking was exciting. I found the "Ssssh!" you gave distracting to my engagement at that moment. However, I, and the whole audience, I sensed, took control of that sound and more or less pursued its making and tuned into it in an even more heightened way. This may have been your intention.

This audience member and I both experienced the 'shhh' as an interruption. As this person noticed, after the 'shhh' the audience was "tuned into it in an even more heightened way". I suggest that this was a moment of collective 'dropping-in' and 'dilating' of attention. Another audience member observed that the experience expanded their field of attention:

> *Audience response 16 April, 2016*
> When you made the audience move, I liked it very much 'cause it allowed me to be part of the space actively and see your work from a different perspective.

In performance on the third night (Moving Image 12), I was calmer, more attentive and more able to invite people into a moving process during this sequence. The first person I approached did not want to stand, but I was able to reassure him, and meet his need to stay seated, without being phased. I then placed my hands out, palms facing upward. I assumed my gesture was clear but he drew a question mark on my hand with his finger. This performative act was surprising, creative and communicative. We exchanged a look, I moved closer to invite him to stand but he clearly wanted to stay seated. As a way of settling us both, I placed my hands gently on his shoulders to reassure him that our

interaction was over. There was an exchange of mutual vulnerability. I calmly moved to the next person who was happy to take part in what I asked of her with my gestures.

I decided to take the two deep breaths. This served to settle us both. I dilated attention further to include: the space behind me, the bodies of the audience, the spaces between us, and the space behind individual audience members. In this heightened state I noticed, when working with the whole group, the effect my gestures had on them as I could see them moving in the directions I prompted. No words were needed. I felt my research come alive in these moments. There was a palpable complicity between the audience and myself, we understood one another and had an unspoken but clear goal – to move around the space. As the audience began to physically move, with my help, this goal gained momentum and clarity. The attentive silence in the room suggested that we had all dropped-in to a more heightened awareness, or what I call a moment of live knowing.

https://vimeo.com/172685252
Moving Image 10: Inviting audience to move

During this section of my performance my senses were heightened, I communicated through gesture and movement, without spoken language. As Merleau-Ponty points out, "there is a world of silence…where there are non-language significations" (1964/1968, 171). This *live experience performativity* highlights the ways in which my performance ontology of becoming can be enacted through live performance.

In the following sections, I provide other examples of how I have activated and enacted my performance ontology of becoming in a discovery workshop setting, in a scripted section of the live performance, and in a focusing session. I note that the corporeal practices that I have used are by no means the only ones that might underpin such an ontological framework but they are the ones that emerged most prominently from my particular research project during the time of its enactment.

7.2 In Practice

In December 2015/January 2016, I invited Vicky Kapo, an experienced choreographer and theatre maker, to participate in three discovery workshops. In these workshops, we practised closely attuning-to one another so that we might feel and sense our immersive conditions. The aim was to be open to the

visceral phenomena that arose in, through, and between our bodies and within the environment. Our task was to wait, listen, notice, respond, and allow the immersive and generative forces within and between us to mobilise. At the time, I had no words for what we were doing but through processes of reflection and action, I recognised that we were attempting to attune-to what I now call *wild life*. In these workshops, we attempted to enact Merleau-Ponty's idea that "to be a consciousness, or rather to be an experience, is to have an inner communication with the world, the body, and others, to be with them rather than beside them" (1945/2012, p. 99). Closely attuning-to visceral phenomena, as well as attuning-to the thickness of the perceived and the perceiving, awakened a body-world connection that supported and sustained this artistic practice.

In the following footage (Moving Image 11), taken during the first workshop, Vicky and I moved and sounded in relationship with one another and the environment. There is evidence of us attuning-to one another as the sounds and movements we utilised referenced one another. Vicky began the improvisation in the centre of the space, her feet firmly planted on the ground in a lunge position. She created loose circular movements with her arms. I entered the space on the periphery and circled Vicky. We occasionally glanced at one another. Our connection was evident when, for example, I eventually began to make sound. At that moment Vicky paused her movements. As the improvisation progressed, short, rhythmic patterns and pitched soundings were exchanged and picked up from one another. There were also small hand gestures that were mirrored. An audible breath from one of us signalled a shift in mood and although we were not obviously looking at one another, our movements often simultaneously coincided.

There was a significant shift in mood when I was sitting on the ground and moving in a circular motion. A vocal keening emerged along with the circular movements. Once again Vicky paused as something new entered our shared environment. She moved in support of this vocal keening, this time providing physical support with her back against mine and then with her hands on my back. The keening eventually softened until something softer and less intense emerged, triggered by tiny finger movements. We simultaneously found an end to the improvisation.

In this improvisation there is a palpable but invisible bond between us that, for me, was experienced as an intertwined dynamic. At times, the piece appears choreographed or planned but I know that when I was in it I was not thinking

about the effect of gesture and sound in a linear or choreographed way. I was being attentive to visceral phenomena in a heightened way. Decisions were being made about what I might take up, but this decision-making process was different to ordinary decision-making. I was conscious of attuning-to experience differently because a corporeal intelligence was at play that felt different to ordinary intelligence. In this improvisation I consciously activated my peripheral vision by taking attention to the eyes and eye sockets, to become aware of what I could perceive at the edges of vision. This created an openness that allowed for greater capacity for attuning-to the bodily sensations and perceptions that emerged. It also fostered an awareness of what was occurring in the environment more broadly.

In the discussion that followed, we agreed that we had both moved through at least three different states. Each state had a particular mood that was signified by a gesture and/or sound. For example, the circular movements at the beginning seemed to both define and open the performance space, preparing it for something to enter. Our sounds were similar and purposeful. This moved to a more conversational exchange where my sounds were high pitched and Vicky's sounds were low pitched. This exchange in vocal sounds imperceptibly shifted until eventually, my sounds were low pitched and Vicky's sounds were high pitched.

The vocal keening occupied the middle section of the improvisation. We both felt that we had prepared the space for this keening to enter. We discussed afterwards that the keening felt bigger than us. We noticed at first, a mood emerged that was based on the personal experience of grief, but that soon shifted and felt like a deeper and more universal grief. Something about the unspoken experience of sorrow is awakened through the keening sounds and the circular movements of our bodies. These whole-bodied circular movements occurred in the centre of the space referencing Vicky's earlier circular arm movements. This time we were on the ground and the experience was emotionally charged and affecting. Although it was not a conscious decision to reference Vicky's opening movements, I felt viscerally drawn to that central space and remained open to the movements/sounds that emerged as I entered and the spiralling motion suggested itself to me. This is perhaps an example of where, as Grosz says, "the personal gives way to the impersonal and the living connects with and is driven by events beyond it" (2011, p. 38). For Grosz this is "when a consciousness follows and joins matter, when matter and life align to form art" (p. 38).

From a performance perspective, the intensity of this keening was more fully realised because of the support I received from Vicky through her back and her hands. The spiralling motion also gave this keening dynamic a way to enter and exit. We discussed afterwards that this pattern of keening spiralled through us and then left the shared environment. The tiny finger movements at the end signified, for us, that something was dissipating. The intensity was gone and there were just traces left behind until we both came to a place of stillness.

https://vimeo.com/172691483

Moving Image 11: Discovery Workshop – Vicky & Angela

The performative experience I had with Vicki in this discovery workshop helped me to understand what Grosz means when she says, "life brushes up against matter as its inner core" (2011, p. 52). I came to know how lived experience is capable of "housing the aspirations that life imposes on it" (p. 52). In this discovery workshop, I learnt how to actively sense into changing moods, states, and dynamic intensities by attuning to the multi-sensory corporeal indications that emerged during our improvisation. This is a dynamic process, ever changing, unpredictable and open ended. It was made possible by applying a performance ontology of becoming that consciously acts and lives with an awareness of immersive conditions. This particular experience was the catalyst for a piece that eventually made its way into my performance event in April 2016.

I took the keening idea to Myfanwy Hunter, the musician who was working with me on my performance. In the first session, we entered into a wild and energetically charged improvisation. I was sounding and moving while she played the viola. The improvisation was playful and excessive at first but it soon became darker and more charged with the sorrow-filled intensity of my early improvisation with Vicky. At the time, I had no clear direction or through-line for this performance piece. Myfanwy and I did translate this work into the April 2016 performance, but the idea never really fully resolved for this event. The vignette was performed differently each night, and both Myfanwy and I never fully captured our ideas for this piece. It remained unresolved for the duration of the performance.

I now have a clearer idea about how I would perform this piece and have an

image of this piece as a future work. I realise that during the performance season it operated as a loose thread that was pointing toward future developments. Upon reflection, I can accept that it was perhaps important to have an unfinished work included as part of the performance event, even though this sat slightly uncomfortably with me. It reflects an important constitutive aspect of the creative process and so deserved a place in the piece as a whole.

In my experience, ideas do not come fully formed, but turning attention toward bodily indications of an idea gives the artist something to focus on – something to do. Tharp (2003) says that she realised she would "never get to the essential core of movement and dance through a cerebral process", and that artists "can only generate ideas when [they} … actually do something physical" (p.99). As Bergson claims, "invention gives being to what did not exist; it might never have happened" (1946/1992, pp. 58 - 59). This conditional element of invention creates endless possibilities and/or multiple beginnings. It was therefore appropriate to include an unfinished work in a performance about human artistic creativity. This is how creative practice is sustained over time. There are always threads that can be picked up and augmented from within the practice itself. Ideas are everywhere and for me ideas reside within and emerge from lived experience. In the next section, I describe another vignette I developed for performance that explored how ideas actually manifest through visceral phenomena.

7.3 In Performance

In the April 2016 performance I developed a piece about the process of how ideas manifest through visceral phenomena. The piece, called *IDEA,* enacts the process of listening, attuning-to, noticing, dilating, and augmenting visceral phenomena. This text reflects my own experience of creativity, as well as the artists' descriptions of the creative process that I refer to in Chapters Four and Five. The sense of being in the dark, scratching around for ideas, needing to be silent, and receiving only snippets of things through bodily indications are constant themes in artists' accounts of creativity. For example, Tharp (2003) argues that the ideal creative state is something that can be constructed and controlled; a process that is about actively seeking inspiration. She refers to this process as "scratching" (p. 95). Scratching is what artists do as part of the first steps of a creative act. Tharp describes these moments as looking ugly and desperate because they are random, chaotic, and feverish as the artist casts around for an idea. Her main point about scratching is that ideas are everywhere; that everything we need to create already resides in and around us

and can take on many forms. Tharp discusses how ideas rarely come to the artist whole or complete and how scratching is a process of looking/listening and capturing the "morsels of inspiration" in the form of "lines, riffs, hooks, licks…molecules of movement" (p. 99).

In performance, I began this piece by literally scratching around on the wooden floor of the Oratory, "scratch, scratch, scratch all around, there's an idea here to be found". The sound of my nails on the floor, amplified because the lights were in blackout, became an improvised rhythmic pattern that I could experiment with and augment. As one audience member notes, "I loved the irony of scratching around on a hard block floor for an idea - you're a true creative" (Audience Reflection, April 16, 2016). This piece enacts, through lines such as: "the quickening, the rush, the furious fumble to scribe", the desperate, random, and feverish state that Tharp describes about the creative process. It is an enactment of the artist's choice to listen closely to the multiple visceral phenomena that are at the artist's disposal as a constant structural feature of lived experience. The performance text is as follows:

IDEA

Performer places blindfold over eyes.
Sequence is performed as a duet with another performer
who lights this vignette with hand held lights.

Scratch, scratch, scratch all around
There's an idea here to be found

Body quivering
The quickening, the rush,
The furious fumble to scribe.

To ingest, to divest its cajolings.

Ahhhh

Flash of light
Rushes out to edges of flesh
Morsels given, startle and surprise
In fevered state ignite and politicise

Come hither idea

Don't wither away

Oi idea
Get over here!

Ahhhh

Fragile fragments lurk within fascia of feet,
Alliterative allusions jibber-jabber in joints,
Riffs and rhythms, in resounding semibreves,
Appear like shadows that disappear in the dark.

Idea, buried deep

Between the crevices of breasts,
You taste of sorrow and care not for the morrow
Your shape and form in a tender moment will be born.

Shh Shh Shhh

Lured to the threshold of sleep
Be silent, not a peep
Idea is here.

Idea, Idea won't you stay?
Idea, Idea, come let's play

In my experience, much of the creative process is literally in the dark. It is often not clear what is actually coming forth until the work is fully realised. Creative practice feels risky and requires a deep trust in the process. To help enact this experience, I decided to blindfold myself, literally work in the dark. The blindfold referenced the Möbius loop in design, and I endowed it with a certain reverence toward the end of the piece as I began to recognise 'idea' as an honoured guest; "be silent, not a peep, Idea is here". The size of the blindfold was also manageable; I held it in the palm of my hand. As one audience member noted, the Möbius loop "by the end, has transformed to the manageable, pocket sized version" (Audience reflection, 16 April, 2016).

The blackout during this vignette quite literally enacted the idea of being in the dark. The lighting designer/performer Suze Smith, entered the space and we improvised in the dark. I was blindfolded; she had a torch. Removing the sight sense by being blindfolded was an attempt to actively awaken the other senses. I listened to where I could hear Suze move in the space and responded

accordingly. Suze held the torch to my body and improvised with my movements using the torch to highlight sections of my body. I could feel the heat of the torch upon my skin and sense its light through the blindfold. At one point the heat of the light on my lips encouraged me to respond and enunciate with more precision. One audience member said, "the torch on your mouth reminded me of Beckett's "Not I". But it is I/you! that you are creating in this particular way" (Audience reflection, 16 April, 2016).

The performance of this vignette enacts the process of consciously attuning-to visceral phenomena in a multi-sensory way. It attempts to reveal through an enacted process *how* ideas form through visceral phenomena such as sounds, movements, gestures, phrases, words, rhythmic patterns, and musical riffs that happen when a creative process is underway. These bodily indications or corporeal snippets of information are part of the constant structure of lived experience that I call *wild life*. Attuning-to visceral phenomena and bringing them to more conscious awareness for creative purposes is a dynamic and consciously activated process that feels different to ordinary ways of accessing experience.

For me, these bodily indications start as small sensations such as a hum or a twitch in the toe. I might then imagine the depth of the earth beneath the feet or the vast sky above the head, sound into specific body parts to gain a thicker sense of organs, bones, skin, and muscles. I might then allow improvised vocal sounds to emerge and develop through humming, gibberish, and rhyming nonsense phrases. This awakens the hearing sense, which I might then actively engage by imagining the ear canal opening up beyond its physical boundaries into an elephant ear-like structure to expanded hearing capacity. I might then direct attention to the nostrils, noticing the breath, and consciously opening up the nasal cavity to enliven the sense of smell. Allowing visceral phenomena to grow and develop in this way without imposing an end point, or planning the next step can lead to surprising, strange and inventive creative outputs.

When immersed in these experiences lived experience feels more substantiated. I have a thicker connection to bodily sensation, a more heighted awareness of the physical conditions that present themselves, and a deeper awareness of and connection to other entities and things within the environment. It is an act of imagination to focus attention on visceral phenomena and then expand that experience so that phenomena are heightened, dilated and brought more vividly into conscious awareness.

Whether or not anything is changing from a physiological sense I cannot say, but the lived experience is viscerally affective.

My research comes alive in these moments because the process is performative and I have dropped-in to a deeply enlivened state. I claim that these corporeal practices utilise fundamental structures of lived experience in service of artistic creativity and highlight a corporeal intelligence that is ontologically primal. In my experience, activating this process creates the conditions that allow *wild life* to capitalise on its material conditions for artistic purposes. In the following section I describe how I applied a sensory metaphor to experientially discover ways to define the *wild life* dynamic.

7.4 In Focusing

Although my ontology is based on the work of Grosz, it builds on her work by focusing on performative action in both the discovery and communication of ideas. For example, using a sensory metaphor helped me to synthesise knowledge about my concept of *wild life*. For most of the project, I could sense something of the quality of *wild life*, even though in the early days I didn't have a name for it. Weiser Cornell says "the felt sense … holds a space…for something not yet in words" (2005, p. 238). The following journal entry records a Focusing session. It reveals how I was able to feel into a complex problem and as Gendlin says, "come up with an answer to a complex human living question" (Gendlin 1981 cited in Weiser Cornell 1998, p. 181). It reveals how I came to experientially understand and define the *wild life* dynamic.

> Journal Entry October 28th 2016
> I notice an image of a seedling emerging from the earth. I am frustrated by this image at first because it feels regressive. Once again things are being bifurcated ie. earth and seedling. But there is something different about this embodied image. I can shift between sensing into earth and sensing into seedling but more than that I can also sense into both simultaneously, and allow the experience to be both seedling and earth simultaneously. This brings a deep breath and a shift in understanding about *wild life*.

Through the use of sensory metaphor, the Focusing process here helps me to embody an idea about the "co-becoming" (Grosz 2011, p. 39) of life and matter, and therefore, sense and feel into the "reciprocal insertion and intertwining of one in the other" (Merleau-Ponty 1964/1968, p. 138). This experience helped me to realise that *wild life* is not a thing. I kept trying to describe it in terms of its properties but it does not have properties like other things. Through this

experience I came to understand *wild life* as a dynamic corporeal intelligence that animates things. This Focusing session gave me an experience of a something that Grosz refers to as "larger than a living being and no longer able to be controlled by an agent" (2011, p. 39). Grosz suggests that this process is a "temporary, unstable, perhaps unsustainable union of the living and the non-living, a co-becoming … in which unliving forces (an event) and living forces coalesce … for a moment … [and] lives a life of its own" (p. 39).

When I moved as the seedling, I also moved as the ground from which the seedling was emerging in a process of *co-becoming*. I had a visceral sense of what Merleau-Ponty might refer to as the thickness of their intertwined "continuous fabric" (1964/1968, p. 44). The deep breath came when I realised that the movement of my body was enacting this intertwining dynamic in a single performative action. The ground and the seedling were transposed into a sensorial movement that was affective and the encounter provoked a deeper level of kinaesthetic understanding. A breath, as noted in this journal entry, is often what signifies a shift in understanding during a Focusing session. Focusing encourages a process of paying attention to "something larger than the physiological processes bordered by the skin" (Weiser Cornell, 2005, p. 225). For me, this includes viscerally sensing into visual imagery as I did in this example. Attuning-to the sensory metaphor of the seedling/earth was a performative act that created a shift in lived experience and hence a shift in conceptual understanding.

An exchange between philosophy and performance has been core to my project. I have engaged with particular philosophical ideas and applied them within workshop and performance settings to access experience differently whilst engaged in artistic performance activity. Based on my investigations, my central thesis is that the relationship between lived experience and artistic creativity is performative and intertwined; that the fundamental structures of lived experience operate in service of artistic creativity. Furthermore, my investigations have forged a particular experiential relationship between performance and philosophy that activates one form of performative philosophical expression.

7.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have put forward the *performance ontology of becoming* that I developed in support of my performance practice. I have discussed how life, as a self-organising structure, develops itself through a body-world connection. In this ontology, I have isolated a corporeal dynamic that I call *wild life* and that I claim is the basis of creativity. I have discussed how live knowing is an

encounter that places practitioners between the edges of things in ways that can disrupt typical systems of knowledge about mind/body, subject/object binaries. In performance I disrupt these binaries by closely attuning-to visceral phenomena, focusing in-between things, and imagining immersive conditions in acts of live knowing. Using an example from a discovery workshop, a performance vignette and a Focusing session, I discuss how I have enacted this performance ontology of becoming by attuning-to *wild life*.

I claim that *wild life* manifests as a corporeal intelligence that is a constant structural feature of lived experience, and that it can be accessed at any time if we so choose. I propose that attuning-to *wild life*, in support of artistic expression, requires a sustained attentiveness to visceral phenomena, as well as a sustained attentiveness to that which is in-between things. In my experience, attuning-to *wild life* also awakens a body-world connection that supports and sustains artistic practice. I also claim that employing the imagination through sensory metaphor activates *wild life* so that things are always opening out, always differentiating. I argue that engaging in live knowing through performance events can reveal how *wild life* uses the fundamental structures of lived experience for artistic expression.

Finally, I note that engaging with philosophy, examining artists' accounts of the creative process, and applying my findings to practice have helped me to question binary pairs, consciously access experience differently, and identify how lived experience operates in service of artistic creativity. In doing so, my research forges a closer relationship between philosophy and performance. I argue that the enactment of philosophical ideas through the employment of a (syn)aesthetic performance style has allowed me to make direct contact with philosophy, and contribute to the emerging field of Performance Philosophy. My original performance work is an experiential form of philosophy that creates the conditions for a witnessed, present moment, creative evolutionary event. This particular kind of performance fosters a corporeal attentiveness that recognises the events of *wild life* as they occur in the domain of becoming.

Conclusion to Thesis

Conclusion

I began this project with concerns about how binary concepts such as mind/body, subject/object, and conscious/unconscious limit our capacity to gain a more appropriate and precise understanding of the lived experience of artistic creativity. My concerns arose from an inability to reconcile some Western academic discourses about these topics with my own experience. The project has laid out an alternative philosophical background to examine and interpret artists' experiences of creativity, and then turned to performance practice to apply, experiment, distil, perform, and articulate how lived experience is implicated in processes of artistic creativity. As Merleau-Ponty says, "to understand is to experience the accord between what we aim at and what is given, between the intention and the realization - and the body is our anchorage in a world" (1945/2012, p. 146).

Grosz claims that there is a need for researchers to "reflect on the most general and abstract conditions of corporeality and materiality, and the forces that weigh on our bodies and their products" if we are to "see what has commonly remained invisible or unseen in our everyday…habits and assumptions" (2005, p. 114). I embrace this challenge by questioning the invisible binary habits and

assumptions underlying the study of the relations between lived experience and artistic creativity in Western academia.

Following Grosz, I position my work within a lineage that includes Darwin, Bergson, Merleau-Ponty, and Deleuze. In particular, I engage with Merleau-Ponty's concepts of *wild Being* and *the intertwining - the chiasm*, and Bergson's concept of *becoming*. I explore resonances between these concepts and artists' descriptions of artistic creativity and then experiment with this material through my performance practice.

In doing so, I have found that utilising touch, attuning-to the support of central movement, and embodying sensory metaphors, create visceral shifts in and give a different kind of access to lived experience, particularly in the field of artistic creativity. I have recognised these experiences in artists' visceral descriptions of the creative process, and found parallels in Merleau-Ponty's concept of *wild Being*. As a result, this research has helped me to avoid mind/body binaries and access a multi-sensory, corporeal intelligence.

However, I discovered, through action and reflection, that Bergson and Merleau-Ponty's philosophical concepts required further refinement because they were not entirely adequate for giving an account of the experience of artistic performance. As a result, I have synthesised Bergson's and Merleau-Ponty's respective fundamental concepts of *life* and *wild Being* to isolate a new phenomenon which I claim is the basis of creativity. I term this phenomenon *wild life* and in this thesis have explored ways to access, activate and enact it through performance practice. Based on my investigations, I have defined *wild life* as a performative dynamic that is primal, wild, libidinal, generative, unpredictable, surprising, and singularly creative. I claim that *wild life* can be accessed, through corporeal practices, to catalyse and support artistic creativity.

I have also found, through my own first-person performance research, how Merleau-Ponty's concept of *the intertwining - the chiasm* resonates with artists' body-world descriptions of the creative process. In an attempt to experience this body-world connection, I constructed a body-sized Möbius loop with which to experiment and consciously access experience differently. By focusing in-between things I discovered that when I was in motion with this object I could more consciously attune-to the intertwining body-world forces that propel, bind, and separate things. I found that boundaries, edges, and borders are porous and intertwined which makes them affected by immersive conditions. I discovered that focusing in-between things fosters an ability to

attune-to what Merleau-Ponty calls the "thickness" of the "perceived object and the perceiving subject" (1945/2012, p. 53). My experiments with the Möbius loop resonated with artists' viscerally immersive descriptions of the body-world experience of creativity. I found that focusing attention between things and encountering the Möbius loop in live performance made it possible to eschew subject/object binaries and more readily attune-to *the intertwining – the chiasm* as a fundamental structure of lived experience. I claim that attuning to this body-world connection can support and sustain artistic creativity.

I also discovered, again through first-person experience, how the dynamic and open-ended forces of difference in what Grosz calls *the domain of becoming* might express the real through artistic performance. Using the concept of becoming, as employed by Bergson and affirmed by Merleau-Ponty and Grosz, I found that, for artistic purposes, it is useful to consciously imagine lived experience as a dynamic, generative and open-ended process of becoming. Following Bergson, Merleau-Ponty and Grosz, I claim that lived experience is a fundamentally creative process.

To activate the creative process in this way, I shifted my attention towards sensory experience while making creative works. I discovered that this is an effective way to more consciously engage with immersive accounts of corporeality and materiality. By embracing a Bergsonian position on Creative Evolution as employed by Grosz, within a first-person inquiry, I was able to get closer to the underlying processes of artistic creativity and adopt a new felt-sense of the fundamental structures of lived experience and their influences upon my artistic creative efforts. This also made it possible to communicate experiential research insights in/through performance.

Following Ginsburg, I attempted to augment the *phenomenal experience* of artistic creativity through performance, rather than simply making *verbal reports* about what I thought the experience was. In doing so, I developed a contemporary theatre event and explored the work of theatre practitioners who have worked with a visceral dynamic to unblock the physical body and voice, particularly through improvisation, rather than developing acting techniques. I employed a (syn)aesthetic performance style to activate the forces of difference by artistically responding to visceral phenomena in real-time during a live performance event. In doing so, I performatively communicated ideas about the lived experience of artistic creativity and created the conditions whereby others might have their own visceral experience in response to my work. I claim that experiential insights are difficult to apprehend through written language

alone. For this reason, I privileged relationship, encounter, and in-betweeness in a live performance event.

This research is thus an attempt to more consciously gain access to the visceral phenomena that underlie artistic performance practice and constitute its embodied materiality. It was enacted by working with body-centred practitioners to develop attunement capacities associated with the Alexander Technique, Body Mind Centring® and Focusing. In developing this attunement capacity I was able to achieve a thicker, more immersive, and embodied sense of lived experience through performance. I discovered that attuning-to visceral phenomena shifted me toward both the universal forces of differentiation and the singularity of my practice. As Grosz points out, "neither science nor art can grasp simultaneously both the relentless universal force of difference, and its absolute specificity" (2011, p. 42).

In the process of seeking to reconcile the universal forces with the singularities of practice, I found there was a need to articulate the underpinning first-principles that governed my practice: the ontology of my practice. Building on the ways in which Grosz employs the ontologies of becoming developed by Darwin, Bergson, and Merleau-Ponty, I put forward the ontology I developed for performance whereby lived experience is conceptualised as a creative process, intertwined with worlds and pushed by the generative forces of life. This *performance ontology of becoming* accounts for the role lived experience plays in the processes of artistic creativity. It is of use to the performance practitioner because it is enacted through corporeal practices. These practices help to consciously attune-to the libidinal, pre-bifurcated corporeal intelligence that I have experienced as a constant structural feature of lived experience and call *wild life*.

My central thesis is that the fundamental structures of lived experience can be consciously attuned-to differently and activated, through corporeal practices, for artistic purposes. My research shows that *how* I perform as a theatre maker/performer/singer is equally as important as *what* I perform. This research, therefore, foregrounds the ontology of my practice and as such is not simply a conceptual epistemological exercise; it is a process of becoming whereby things are called forth in a creative manner through live performance events.

In this project, I make direct contact with philosophy through corporeal practices and thus, make a contribution to the emerging field of Performance

Philosophy. I claim that articulating the ontology of one's practice can shine a light on immersive conditions and, in artistic fields, can reveal how fundamental structures operate in service of artistic creativity. It is also possible that Performance Philosophy might lead to deeper understandings of our creative capacities in general – a body of work for the future perhaps.

We encounter all manner of things in every living moment, and we have sophisticated embodied filtering systems in place to help us navigate, attune-to and live through these things. Our lived experience always includes that which is easily highlighted in everyday living, and that which is only available through conscious attunement processes. If we consciously imagine our intertwining, immersive conditions, and conceptualise lived experience as a creative process then we can attune-to how life, and hence creative capacity, is affected by its fundamental structures. The crisscrossing between that which is readily available in everyday awareness and that which is at the edges of conscious awareness is the site of my research. Recognising that the fecund and rich site of artistic creativity is in-between and resides in the embodied flows, intensities, and multiplicities of things can provide a roadmap for artistic endeavour. This research shows that articulating an ontological position provides a set of values, principles and practices that can frame artistic experience.

In closing, I would like to draw attention to the multi-disciplinary nature of this research. It synthesises and applies knowledge and skills from academic disciplines such as philosophy and performance studies, and knowledge and skills from a range of body-centred and performance practices that sit outside the academy. In my view, what unites these multi-disciplinary domains is the human capacity for imagination. The importance of the imagination in this research was crystallised for me during a two-day workshop I attended with Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen (the first she has given in Australia) just prior to submitting this thesis. During this workshop on the *Embryological Foundations of Movement* I witnessed Bainbridge Cohen, at the age of seventy-six, employ her unique system of Body Mind Centring® in practice as she delivered master classes with the agility of a twenty-year old.

In the workshop, participants were encouraged to imagine our embryological heritage by employing a range of sensory metaphors including the support of the yolk sac, the folding of the amniotic cavity, the development of the umbilical cord, and so on. Throughout this process of experiential anatomy, Bainbridge Cohen reminded us that "this is not a fact, but it's true, because I

believe it to be true" (Bainbridge Cohen, 2017). This workshop helped me to recognise how the imagination operates as a uniting factor across the spectrum of my theoretical frameworks. For example, in developing ontologies, the philosopher *imagines* the fundamental structures of corporeality and materiality. The body-centred practitioner *imagines* sensory metaphors to more consciously experience the embodied human condition. The theatre and performance practitioner enacts a 'willing suspension of disbelief' a phrase coined by English poet S.T. Coleridge (1772 – 1834) about the process of writing poetry but commonly used in discussions of theatre to describe the process of *imagining* an alternative reality (Lowe & Rush 2004, p.110). What is unique about this research is that these imaginings have been distilled and activated in the realm of the experiential.

Consciously activating the imagination thus becomes a significant factor in furthering our understanding of the role that lived experience plays in the processes of artistic creativity. The very title of my performance *"Imagine This . . ."* is an open ended invitation for performer and audience alike to willingly suspend disbelief and to imagine what might be. Artist-researchers, like the traveller in Robert Frost's (1874 – 1963) poem *The Road Not Taken*, see "two roads diverged in a wood" and take "the one less travelled by" (1983, p. 913). The road less travelled is, by its obscurity, the road less imagined. This research might therefore be described as the road less imagined. It highlights the convergence of knowledges from both the academy and beyond and has for me, like for the traveller in Frost's poem, been the thing that has made "all the difference" (p.913).

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