

**UNIVERSITY OF CHICHESTER**

Department of Dance

**Forming, Returning and Deepening:  
Dance-making with the processual qualities of Authentic Movement**

**by**

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Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

27 June 2019

**UNIVERSITY OF CHICHESTER**

## ABSTRACT

### DEPARTMENT OF DANCE

#### Doctor of Philosophy

## **FORMING, RETURNING AND DEEPENING: DANCE-MAKING WITH THE PROCESSUAL QUALITIES OF AUTHENTIC MOVEMENT**

Amy Voris

This thesis articulates the process of forming movement material within a solo, contemporary dance-making practice from the perspective of the dancer-maker. Since the researcher's dance-making practice already has deep synergies with her Authentic Movement practice, she was able to develop certain *processual qualities* of Authentic Movement into a methodology that speaks directly from the voice of the dance-maker and adequately captures the processual nature of the practice itself. Thus, the making of a solo dance work called *perch* and the development of the methodology and methods by which it is communicated in this thesis are two sides of the same process. In this way, this thesis seeks to fulfil the aspiration within artistic research to recognise 'alternative ways of knowing' and the 'insider-experience' of the artist (Nelson 2013), and provide an alternative to the majority of artistic research in dance, in which practice is interpreted through the lens of an extrinsic theory.

The thesis references core debates and research imperatives within the field of artistic research, as well as contextualising the making of *perch* in relation to North American and European somatically-informed contemporary dance, the dance-historical context of Authentic Movement, and the work of other dance-makers who also draw upon Authentic Movement.

This project offers several contributions to knowledge which may be of value to contemporary dancers and dance-makers, Authentic Movement practitioners and artist-researchers with an interest in embodied creative practice. First, it articulates the activity of forming movement material from the perspective of the dancer-maker. Second, it addresses the need for more research exploring the relationship between dance-making and Authentic Movement. Third, it presents the development of a methodology for dance-making that is *based in* dance/movement principles (the *processual qualities* of Authentic Movement). The final contribution is the detailed account of dance-making as *an attentional, processual pursuit* which takes place between the dance-maker and the dance that is being made.

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## DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Amy Voris

declare that the thesis entitled

FORMING, RETURNING AND DEEPENING:  
DANCE-MAKING WITH THE PROCESSUAL QUALITIES OF AUTHENTIC MOVEMENT

and the work presented in the thesis are both my own, and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that:

- this work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
- where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
- where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
- where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
- I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
- where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
- parts of this work have been published within the following publications:

Cullinane, Garrett Brown, Kipp and Voris (2015), 'At dusk, the collaborative spills and cycles of L219' in *Attending to Movement: Somatic Perspectives on Living in this World*. Edited by Alexander, Garret Brown and Whatley. Devon: Triarchy Press, 135-144

Garrett Brown, N. and Voris, A. (2016), 'flock0mania 2: Women at Work' [exhibition catalogue] Birmingham: Birmingham City University

Kramer, P. and Meehan, E. (2019) 'About Adequacy: Making Body-based Artistic Research Public' [online] available from <<https://nivel.teak.fi/adie/about-adequacy/>> [2 June 2019]

Voris, A. (2019), 'Forming and Returning: Dance-making with Authentic Movement' [online] available from <<https://nivel.teak.fi/adie/forming-and-returning/>> [11 June 2019]

Signed: 

Date: 23 September 2019

## Acknowledgements

This work is dedicated to Nikki Pollard, Gill Clarke, Jill Hayes and Rosemary Butcher.

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisors, Jane Bacon and Vida Middelow, for their steady belief in this project and for their guidance.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Michael Vaughan for his constant companionship throughout the research process.

Thanks to my dear friend Regula Vogelín for introducing me to Authentic Movement and to my Authentic Movement teacher Linda Hartley for her generosity and encouragement.

I would like to acknowledge the very sensitive work of photographer Christian Kipp, whose images appear throughout this thesis. I also thank Christian for providing technical assistance.

Thanks to Anna Macdonald, Emma Meehan, Paula Kramer and Natalie Garrett Brown for their critical feedback and moral support.

Thanks also to the following people for practically participating in this research in various ways: Cath Cullinane, Penny Collinson, Fabiano Culora, James Buchanan, Zoe Robertson, Caroline Salem, Ella Tighe, Hannah McBrien, Barbara Erber, Susanna Recchia, Rosalind Holgate-Smith, Bettina Carpi, Charlotte Darbyshire, Kirsty Alexander, Florence Peake, Katye Coe, Gina Giotaki, Tim Jeeves, Monica Burr, *Legroom* (Manchester) and *a sunday school* (Manchester). I also thank participants in workshops at Coventry University, Northern School of Contemporary Dance, Manchester Metropolitan University, University of Central Lancashire, Clarence Mews (London), Cheshire Dance, Independent Dance (London) and Laban/Barteneiff Somatic Studies International (Toronto).

Thanks to Dee Reynolds for her professional proofreading services and astute observations during the final stages of writing.

Thanks to Ellen Jeffrey, Sara Spies, Dani Abulhawa, Emma Meehan and Simon Ellis for some inspiring discussion on the current state of affairs of artistic research in the UK.

Finally, a huge thanks to the University of Chichester for generously funding this research.

## Introduction

This thesis was written to accompany a solo-dance called *perch*. It emerges out of, follows, observes, reflects on and communicates the dance-making process. It also feeds back into that process, since it is developed from the same movement principles as *perch* itself. The two have developed alongside each other, inseparably. While working on *perch* in the studio, searching for the right movements, I was also searching for the right language and concepts to engage with its making process in ways that are both precise enough and open enough to account for the mystery and complexity that pervade its making. Like its making, *perch* is full of stops and starts and temporary dwellings. 'To perch' marks a moment in time, to pause and then move on in a process of endless accumulation, and I invite the reader to connect with their own capacity *to perch* – to pause – while reading this thesis.

This artistic research project articulates the process of forming movement material within a solo, contemporary dance-making practice from the perspective of the dancer-maker with the aim of giving voice to the 'embodied knowledge' within it.<sup>1</sup> It has emerged from two overlapping streams of practical enquiry. The first is the investigation into how it might be possible to articulate the creative practice of 'forming' movement material within a solo, contemporary dance-making practice *in terms that emanate from the practice itself*. The notion of forming movement material is elaborated upon in some detail throughout this writing, but it is important to indicate from the start that forming is here understood as an *attentional* and *processual* phenomenon. This second term demands some explanation. The forming of movement material is a subtle, fluctuating and ongoing process (rather than the pursuit of a definite endpoint), and I adopt the term 'processual' in order to emphasise that this process (of creation or making) is the subject of the research, over and above the work that is produced. This is a dance-maker's account of the dance-making process, as opposed to an outsider view of a completed work. In the context of artistic research then, the term 'processual' indicates the methodological study of long-term processes (Bacon 2019).<sup>2</sup>

The second stream of practical enquiry is the investigation into the synergies between dance-making and Authentic Movement as they pertain to this processual approach to forming movement material. As I shall explain later, the synergies Authentic Movement already has with my dance-making practice have allowed me to develop out of it a reflective framework that still speaks directly from the voice of the dance-maker. I refer to these synergies as *processual qualities* because these are the aspects of Authentic Movement that

support the processing of movement material in my own dance-making practice and because it is a term that encapsulates the enduring and changing relationship between dancer-maker and movement material.

The articulation of these processual qualities has provided the means of opening up and illuminating the creative practice of forming movement material over an extended period of time. Creating and adopting this intrinsic framework has allowed me to overcome one of the *potential* problems facing artistic research: that of super-imposing extrinsic theoretical perspectives onto practice and thereby replacing the voice of the practitioner with the voice of extrinsic theory.<sup>3</sup> In this thesis, the making of *perch* and the development of the methodology and methods by which it is communicated are two sides of the same process. This allows me *to speak directly from* the voice of the dance-maker, which is still an under-represented voice in research.

Now more than ever, the voice of the artist is important. This research has taken place against the backdrop of severe cuts to arts education and funding, including the loss of several seminal dance departments in UK universities. In my experience as a dance-artist and educator, it is the articulation of the unique qualities of dance as an art form that will prove most efficacious in advocating for the place of dance within culture at large. As artist-scholar Shaun McNiff has observed, arts subjects risk '[reinforcing their] adjunctive status by failing to perceive and implement their unique ways of knowing and communicating as primary modes of research' (2013: 5). Overall, this research project sheds light on some of the uniquely attentional and processual ways of knowing that dance-making can contribute, by communicating in terms that emanate from and belong to the practice of dance-making itself.

Since a critical engagement with the research paradigm in which it takes place is one of this project's main contributions to knowledge, it will be necessary to contextualise it in relation to the wider field of artistic research (including other research initiatives that seek to inform understanding of dancing and dance-making). This will form a significant part of the introduction. I will also provide an extended rationale for adopting Authentic Movement as the basis for my theoretical framework and methodology. I will outline the contributions to knowledge of this research at the end of the introduction, but it is worth providing a brief summary at this stage.

This research project offers several contributions to knowledge which may be of value to dancers, dance-makers, dance scholars, Authentic Movement practitioners and fellow artist-researchers who share an interest in embodied creative practices. The first contribution is the articulation of the process of forming movement material *from the perspective of the dancer-maker*, which, as I shall illustrate below, has not previously been undertaken. The second is the articulation of synergies between Authentic Movement and

dance-making, which, as I shall illustrate in chapter two, is also an original undertaking. The third contribution is the investigation into how the methodology and methods underpinning a dance-making practice (the processual qualities noted above) might serve as both the subject and the means of research, which is new in the context of artistic research in dance. The fourth contribution to knowledge is its location of the epistemological potential of dance-making within the attentional, processual relationship between the dance-maker and the dance being made.

It is worth noting that the manner in which this research may be used by others will differ depending on who is using it. There is no question that other dance-makers could take up this research as a framework or resource for creative work. It is peppered with scores, descriptions of studio practice and reflections on the creative process of dance-making which fellow artists can engage with in whatever way they choose. However, if taken up by artist-researchers as a resource for artistic-research within dance its uses require a little more explanation. By identifying those aspects of Authentic Movement that are relevant to my own dance-making practice, I have provided *an example* rather than a *model* of how one can develop a methodology that is based in dance and movement principles. Importantly, such a methodology must necessarily arise from a close engagement with a specific given practice. My intention, then, has not been to provide a ready-made method that other practitioners could 'use' unproblematically, but rather to open up the possibility for a multiplicity of articulations of the unique knowing of dance-making. Rather than serving a homogenising function, where a variety of unique practices are taken as illustrations of a single method or theory of dance-making, I see the function of this research – with its methodology specifically derived from one instance of dance-making – as inspiring or enabling a variety of unique contributions to knowledge in the fields of dance-making, Dance Studies and artistic research.

#### *A note to the reader: on encountering perch*

This written thesis has been designed to be read prior to encountering *perch* live, so that the reader will be informed in advance about the overall concerns and underlying principles of the research enquiry that takes place during the live encounter. I chose this format and pathway for examination because I wanted the encounter with the live practice to be heavily informed by an awareness of its attentional and processual nature. I also chose this pathway because I predicted that an examination process which functioned the other way around (i.e. viewing the work first, then reading the thesis) would potentially give rise to a line of questioning about the work as an end-product or object which (as the reader will already be

aware) is not the focus of this research. Sharing a processual dance-making practice is not straightforward, but this can be done by framing the encounter as an instance in an ongoing process. The written thesis reveals elements that prepare the viewer to encounter the performance in a particular manner and also gives accounts of previous iterations of the piece (thereby moving away from the notion that a single end performance is 'the work'). What I am 'performing' when sharing the practice, then, *is the continuation of* the process of forming movement material. For those who are unable to encounter *perch* live (which will be the majority of readers), I would encourage you to read this thesis in its entirety and then to access the most recent version of *perch* (lasting around twenty-five minutes), which can be found via these weblinks:

*perch*, September 2018 rendition:

<https://vimeo.com/235243014/41870037d8#t=250m41s>

*perch*, April 2019 rendition:

<https://vimeo.com/235243014/41870037d8#t=273m50s>

## Dance-making

This research enquiry has grown out of twenty years' practice as a dancer, dance-maker and facilitator within the UK 'Independent' contemporary dance sector. This Independent Dance sector emerged out of the New Dance lineage in the 1970s and '80s, which itself emerged out of dialogues with the creative experimentation of the Judson Church group in 1960s New York. In relation to these lineages, the reader will have noticed that throughout this thesis I use the term 'dance-making' rather than 'choreographing'. Dance scholar Susan Foster has traced the emergence of the term dance-making to the Judson Church era and notes that it:

reflected a new status for the artist as more craftsperson than inspired luminary [...foregrounding the...] daily decision to enter the studio and construct movement [...] thus signalling a redefinition of the artist as labourer and collaborator who worked with the materiality of movement (2011: 62).

Since this research revolves around the practice of *forming* movement material with a certain workaday regularity, my solo dance-making practice can be associated with this understanding of dance-maker as craftsperson. The alliance of the term dance-making with *process* and with the materiality of movement correlates with my commitment to returning to movement material. Accordingly, throughout this thesis, I adopt the term 'dancer-maker' in order to emphasise that the creative practice of dancing is also a *making* process.

Through a reflective engagement with the creative practices of dance-making themselves, in this research I am setting out to articulate the *embodied knowledge* of dance-making. My choice of the term embodied knowledge stems from the understanding of the term *embodiment* as it is applied in the domains of body psychotherapy and dance movement psychotherapy (which themselves are already *practices*) to signal a holistic<sup>4</sup> understanding ‘of mind, body, feelings and one’s internal/external worlds of experience’ (Bloom 2006 cited in Karkou and Erber 2019). In the context of this research, embodiment refers to ‘bodily phenomena in which the body as a living organism, body movement, and person-environment interaction play central roles in the explanation of perception, cognition, affect, attitudes, behaviour, and their interrelations’ (Fischman and Koch 2011: 4 cited in Karkou and Erber 2019). This research is concerned with communicating the holistic, situated, embodied knowledge of (a particular approach to) dance-making through the up-close consideration of its creative practices. My use of the term ‘embodied knowledge’ therefore additionally signals a holistic and corporeally-situated standpoint on knowledge itself.

I began this doctoral research with a period of extended reflection on my own dance-making practice. This reflection encompassed a range of works and working processes including solo, collaborative and group works, all of which contribute to the understanding of the creative practices within dance-making that this thesis offers. One general observation that became evident through reflecting on these working practices, especially in my solo work, was the particular way in which they emerged out of my ongoing movement practice. Here, I use the term ‘practice’ in accordance with its widely recognised use within art practices more broadly, to indicate a consciously iterative approach to making which coheres around certain core principles that are defined as important by the artist. Implicit in this widely understood notion of a practice is the generative potential of iterative engagement with materials, an important part of my own practice, which has come to the fore as this research has proceeded. While I do not set out to make dance works according to a preconceived idea or plan of what a piece will be, the works as performed do adhere to a given structure worked out in some detail. And while I do not strictly speaking improvise in performance, my way of forming works has emerged from an open, improvisational approach to generating movement. A work is typically made over an extended period of time during which I work on and off with periods of intensity according to how life circumstances permit. The ‘form’ of the work is in a subtle yet constantly shifting relationship with the contextual and material conditions of the making process.

My reflection on previous works gradually became focussed around *how* movement material is generated and formed within my solo dance-making practice. Which is to say that the focus of this review was not on the end products (what the dances look like as objects), but rather on those embodied processes that endure through the making and performing of them. Specifically, I became curious about how movement material had been formed in relation to my own changeability<sup>5</sup> in a way that tended to identify the work with the process of its making and which also allowed for some consistency in its form across time. I observed how this interest in the dancer-maker's changeability had gradually become intertwined with 'open', holistic methods for generating movement which in turn served to sensitise the dancer-maker to such changeability. Out of this open exploration, certain movements would be selected for further exploration and then, out of these selected movements, some would acquire a more enduring presence. I noticed that those movements that tended to endure possessed a combination of specificity in bodily articulation and multiplicity in their potential signification. Through embodied enquiry into how these selected movements might evolve over time, more material (some of it quite divergent from its predecessor) would emerge. Out of this enquiry into the time-based development – or chronology – of material, the sequencing of movement would acquire a vivid significance. In turn this would give rise to an interest in the energetic shifts between movements (or sections) and an interest in movement detail. Sooner or later within each dance-making process, I would become concerned with creating a sense of coherence within what could sometimes seem like quite disparate content. I observed that the very nature of these compositional priorities (namely: specificity/openness, chronological arrangement, the interest in energetic shifts, attention to detail, cohering disparate content) invites the ongoing re-visitation of movement material and cultivates an attentional, processual approach to making.

While the compositional priorities noted above are not the explicit focus of this research, it is important to acknowledge them here because they may be immediately be evident to (some) audience who encounter the live presentation of my work. This research project might have been focussed around exploring these compositional priorities in terms of the very broad 'mosaic' of contextual reference points that underpin them and even in terms of their perceived resonance with extrinsic theoretical discourses. But to make them the subject of research in this way would not have constituted a genuine research enquiry *into practice* itself. What is more, the process of 'contextualising' these compositional priorities in any kind of singular way would be quite misleading, given their amorphous and multi-layered emergence over two decades of practice. I therefore do not dwell on them as the inferred 'criteria' by which the decision-making in my dance-making practice takes place. Rather, I focus on the methodological underpinnings and methods that give rise to and align with these compositional priorities. With this research, I was interested in cultivating greater

awareness of and congruence between *what* I make and *how* I make it. As artist-scholar Jane Bacon has put it, I was seeking 'to make the process the subject of our study, rather than researching "about" a particular theme, theory, idea, or approach, or to allow external theories to "explain" our [artistic research]' (2019).

One of the underlying motivations for this extended investigation into *my own* dance-making practice has been to argue for the potential for dance-making to be epistemically valued as an attentional, holistic processual endeavour that resides in the relationship between the dancer and the dance being made. So much so that, as a result of this research, I now take the position in relation to my own practice that it is *in* this ongoing relationship with ever-emergent<sup>6</sup> dance that the ontological status of the dance work resides. These fundamentally attentional and processual aspects of my dance-making practice are difficult to describe and not easily interpretable through extrinsic perspectives, so how then would I go about engaging with this practice in its *own* terms? As I became more focussed on *how* movement material is formed – in a way that identifies the work with its process of making – it became clear that Authentic Movement offers a holistic approach that is particularly attuned to such movement processes. In keeping with the ethos of artistic research (outlined further below), I therefore examine the way these synergies are present in my own solo dance-making practice, in a way that remains sensitive to the fact that they shift and change as the practice does. Exploring the creative synergies between Authentic Movement and dance-making is thus a major theme of this thesis as a whole, and is one of its contributions to knowledge. As a direct result of this research project, I can now describe the processes that 'inform the forming'<sup>7</sup> of my work in a language that is intimate with and appropriate to the practice itself. While versions of this language (for example, use of the term 'layering') existed in my practice prior to this research project, I had not yet developed the expanded understanding of these practices sufficiently to describe them in such a precise way. These understandings now exist because my research project set out to unpack these creative practices in terms that resonate with the practice itself.

While this research is focussed on solo dance-making, it is important to briefly acknowledge that my fascination with the process of forming movement material has also grown out of my ongoing work as a dancer and dance facilitator within the UK Independent Dance and higher education sectors. As a dancer, having entered into the creative processes of a number of different dance-makers,<sup>8</sup> I have had exposure to a range of approaches to generating movement material. In addition, much of my facilitation (or education) work has been concerned with creating the conditions for a holistic awareness on the part of the mover in the moment of generating movement. When participating in such collaborative or facilitation-

based practices, I have become aware of the relational and de-centred nature of creative practice. This insight is invaluable because it has allowed me to reflect on the slippery nature of creative practice and authorship in all working processes – even in solo practices (including their situated quality which I will address at several stages in this research). Dance artist and scholar Jenny Roche has pointed out that creative processes executed by dancers within the Independent Dance sector are often rendered invisible because of their embodied status and because of the emphasis on ‘signature artists’ (or sole authorship by a single choreographer) that the dance marketplace mandates (2011: 116). A holistic perspective on the very situated nature of dance-making process – which I believe Authentic Movement enables – can also make visible the knowing in these embodied and collaborative movement processes. My solo dance-making practice operates in tandem with these practices of working as a dancer-collaborator and facilitator. Although it would be beyond the scope of this thesis to fully address the implications of this research for facilitation and collaboration practices, I do briefly address some of these issues in the Conclusion.

Further below I shall return to the role of Authentic Movement, but first I turn to the broader academic context of artistic research, since the parameters and procedures of this emergent field have very much influenced the way in which my research has been framed and conducted.

### **Dance-making as artistic research**

I have found it important at times to ‘play the game’, miming the operations of the academy in which questions surrounding the legitimacy of dance as an academic discipline persist. I play a paradoxical role as insider/outsider, institutional and ex-institutional (Brown 2019).

‘Practice-as-research’ or ‘practice-led research’ or ‘artistic research’ as it is variously termed is an emerging academic terrain that has grown out of the introduction of practice-based arts subjects into the academy. A fuller discussion of these terms is beyond the scope of this thesis, but for a comprehensive overview, see Robin Nelson’s ‘handbook’ on practice-as-research, where six chapters are dedicated to discussing its growing presence in the academy in different regions of the world (2013: 117-187).<sup>9</sup> For another international perspective, see Efva Lilja’s succinct account of regional differences within Europe in her persuasive manifesto on artistic research (2015: 34-49). Until recently, the most commonly used term in the UK has been practice-as-research. While certain controversies remain as to the exact parameters and procedures of practice-as-research, it has gained growing recognition and legitimacy within UK higher education (Nelson 2013).<sup>10</sup>

According to Nelson, practice-as-research ‘involves a research project in which *practice is a key method of inquiry* and where, in respect of the arts, a practice [...] is submitted as substantial evidence of a research inquiry’ (2013: 8-9 my italics). In this project, for example, practice-as-research is evident through an ongoing, multi-modal dance-making practice (*perch*) which has served as the key method of enquiry, submitted in conjunction with a written text. As I will argue further below, practice is ‘a key method of enquiry’ in my research, since my argument is formulated through direct engagement with the methodology and methods of *practice itself*.

Simply put, practice-as-research recognises that ‘knowledge production’ potentially takes place, not only in those research practices traditionally regarded as academic, but also in creative practices. However, the types of output and knowledge produced by creative practices (for example by dance-making) are undeniably very different to the types of output and knowledge produced by traditional scholarly activity. This has meant that, as an emergent field, practice-as-research has had to argue for its place in the academy by demonstrating an ‘equivalence in rigour’ (Nelson 2013: 39). One of the ways through which this need has been addressed is the adoption of standard academic procedures for conducting doctoral research – such as the formulation of ‘theoretical frameworks’, ‘methodologies’ and ‘methods’. Lilja has observed that the ‘British tradition’ of practice-as-research places considerable emphasis on the ‘systematization both of artistic methods and processes, with ideas of using scientific method terminology as the starting point for exploratory practices’ (2015: 56). Part of the ‘systematization’ that Lilja refers to can also be identified in the overriding importance that is ascribed to the written thesis, involving what artist-scholar Paula Kramer has described in her experience of practice-as-research in the UK as:

the reproduction of a rather narrow set of semantic structures and expectations that in turn exclude less regulatable expressions of knowledge. Approximations and multisensory processes are invited in artistic research, but most contemporary examination regulations [in the UK] do not yet allow for a kind of thesis in which they could continue to exist (2015b: 140).

Since the UK is the context I am working within, it is difficult for me to know how my own research might have proceeded in another context, but I can relate to both Lilja’s and Kramer’s observations about the importance placed on systematised writing procedures in the sense that the thesis ‘continues to be *the part* that gets most attention and that easily outweighs the submissions of practice’ (2015b: 138), and in that there is a danger that this emphasis can result in the ‘production of procedure’ rather than the production of knowledge (2015b: 144). This thesis both sits within and pushes against some of these conditions for practice-as-research in the UK – particularly in the way that I have chosen to configure my

use of a theoretical and methodological framework. Further below, I indicate how the possibility for this push has been enabled by recent shifts in understanding which are signified by the replacement of the term 'practice-as-research' with the term 'artistic research'.<sup>11</sup>

I have already explained how the overall aim of my research is to develop a dancer-maker's account of the practice of forming movement material in order to convey to the reader the embodied knowledge that is present in these dance-making processes. I am undertaking it in the academic context of practice-as-research because of my commitment to the view that dance-making can make a unique 'contribution to knowledge'. Within the field of practice-as-research, there has been robust debate as to whether 'knowledge' is the appropriate term to describe what, in fact, art works 'produce' (Nelson 2013: 20/27; Ellis 2018). In response to this debate, Nelson adopts the term 'insider-experience' to account for the potential contribution of practice-as-research projects to knowledge production (2013: 27). He proposes that articulating such insider-perspectives in performance processes is imperative to practice-as-research – for these articulations give credence to alternative, non-dominant modes of *knowing*. In this way, Nelson critically observes that:

the noun 'knowledge' might suggest a clearly bounded object of knowledge separate, and at a distance from, an observing subject by other viewing subjects. The verb (present participle) 'knowing', in contrast acknowledges a subject engaged in the act indicated and perhaps engaged in a processual relationship spatially more proximal to the object to be understood [...] (2013: 20).

To be sure, the 'knowing' of making dances in my own practice is holistic, immersive and processual. Which is not to suggest that the research follows on the practice. Rather, it is present within and forms a key constituent of a dance-making practice itself when considered as a reflective *and* embodied activity. However, it is also important to acknowledge that within the context of practice-as-research, the term knowledge is often purposefully used, as artist-scholar Simon Ellis observes, in an 'ambiguous' manner where 'the absence of nuance enables academics rather fortuitously to speak with different audiences in the academy (with different goals, desires, histories and understandings) as if we are talking about the same thing' (2018: 483). Throughout this thesis I adopt the terms 'knowing' and 'knowledge' interchangeably with such ambiguous potential in mind.

'Artistic research' as it is termed in continental Europe has evolved parallel to the developments of practice-as-research in the UK. Henk Borgdorff, who has been a leading figure within the field of artistic research in Europe, defines it in relatively similar terms to Nelson's definition of practice-as-research, as the space where 'art practice is paramount as the subject matter, the method, the context, and the outcome' (2012: 146). In her keynote speech at the *Per/Forming Futures* conference (2019) (curated by Artistic Doctorates in

Europe), artist-scholar Annette Arlander observed that a distinguishing feature of artistic research in the Nordic context (as compared with practice-as-research in the UK) is the distinct possibility for artists to transform their artistic practice into a means of research – that is, the possibility for artistic working methods to be turned into research methods which, in turn, ‘become a commonly approved way to produce knowledge’ (2019). In the UK context, artist-scholars Jane Bacon and Vida Midgelow have long been arguing that it might be ‘possible for art practices themselves to offer research methods – such that rather than reaching to other (established) research disciplines – we can consider what happens if practice methods are also the research methods’ (2019: 43). Their various initiatives over the past decades have explored the possibility for artistic research (in performance) to identify its equivalence in rigour through being ‘deeply informed by [...] movement, choreographic and performance knowledges at the intersection with reflective research processes’ (Bacon and Midgelow 2019: 41). Bacon and Midgelow’s arguments for engaging with *dance practices* ‘at the intersection with reflective research processes’ as the basis for artistic research has set the direct precedent for my own approach in the UK context. I return to their work further below.

Meanwhile, also in the UK, Ellis has recently argued that ‘the desire for equivalent status is actually a distraction from the profound epistemic possibilities of artistic research’ (2018: 486). He suggests that these epistemic possibilities reside not so much with the engagement with ‘know-how’ (which I understand in his writing to mean engagement with the methodologies, methods and processes informing art-making – as in the subject of this research project) but rather with a more robust acknowledgement of the innately relational nature of performance itself. He argues that the epistemological potential of practice-as-research, ‘what the arts and research community understand differently because of the research – is created through the act of the *thing-produced* being experienced’ (Ellis 2018: 488). Ellis’ critique of the emphasis on know-how within (some) artistic research assumes that such know-how exists ‘regardless of the research project, regardless of whether or not anything happened at all’ (2018: 486) and that this is essentially at odds with what ‘research’ is:

Research is, after all, fundamentally about noticing change: as a consequence of *this* process, *this* experiment, *this* intervention, *this* grappling with historical evidence (etc.), what is different? What has changed? What do I, we, you understand differently, and how are these differences shared? I might be able to articulate what is different or changed, but in the case of practice-as-research how do the artistic works – those *things-produced* – do their own work? (2018: 486).

The main argument here is that the articulation or investigation of know-how does not necessarily evidence research, since it does not necessarily evidence what is differently

understood as a result of that research. On the contrary, I would argue that the engagement with know-how may lead to different understandings of that same practice, and that the significance of these different understandings may lie in their subtlety. In my experience, these differences in understanding emerge in a similar way to how the verbal witnessing of movement arises within the practice of Authentic Movement (a process which I detail later on in this thesis). Those things that I understand differently and more subtly about my dance-making practice – things that have arisen through the engagement with articulating its know-how – are discussed in Chapter 3 and in the Conclusion of this thesis.

I would also dispute Ellis' assumption that the engagement with know-how is somehow discontinuous with valuing artistic research as epistemologically relational. Rather I would argue that it is the very exploration of know-how – of methodologies, methods and the processual – that brings the relational dimensions of making and sharing performance to the foreground. The investigation of know-how – of methodology, method and process – is crucial to investigation of relationality because of how it spotlights the principles and practices of our ways and means of relating: our ethics. Attention to process *is* attention to relationality. So, while I would also locate the epistemic value of artistic research in its relationality, I would add that the processual nature of many making activities (what we might also call attending to their know-how) carries as much if not more profound epistemological potential as what is produced or performed 'in the end', especially when these very processes constitute the practice and carry the ontological status of the artwork. This is because, as is certainly the case in my own dance work, the means by which the work is made and performed – the 'know-how' and 'know-what' as Nelson (2013) refers to them – are indistinguishable. This false distinction between process and product – as if the latter isn't somehow procedurally continuous from the former – is one kind of misunderstanding that can lead to certain tensions surrounding the submission (and examination) of a process-oriented research project (a point I return to in the conclusion of this thesis).

Earlier on, I indicated how this research project aims to give credence to non-dominant ways of knowing within a wider academic context where dance as a subject of study is currently under threat. However, it is also fair to say that the articulation of such non-dominant ways of knowing can be problematic in the sense that the translation of an embodied dance-making practice into language is bound to be inadequate. But if we don't at least attempt to communicate the value of ephemeral, embodied, relational practices such as dance-making, then the unfortunate fact is that these practices are not valued within the context of academia and education more broadly. Following on from Bacon and Middelow (2014b, 2014c) and artist-scholar Emma Meehan (2015), my primary concern when negotiating the inevitable tensions surrounding processes of articulation through language has been to engage with language and writing as an embedded part of my movement

practice (something which Authentic Movement affords). The problems and potentialities of writing *from* and *about* dance-making are issues I return to at several points throughout this thesis.

Following on from the various precedents noted above, I adopt the term *artistic research* to mark the possibility of locating the epistemological value of dance-making within the means and ways of the medium itself, where the medium is understood as an innately processual and relational phenomenon. If most of the leading figures within artistic research in the UK and continental Europe argue that practice ought to function as the key method of enquiry in artistic research (Borgdorff 2012; Nelson 2013; Ellis 2018; Arlander 2019; Bacon and Middel 2019), then why are there not more artistic research projects in dance that choose to draw on the intrinsic methodologies and methods of practice as the subject of research? Perhaps this is because this kind of project can be challenging to formulate in relation to academic norms and is also less likely to be recognised as a contribution to knowledge, due to enduring institutional biases that favour the use of terminology borrowed from extrinsic theoretical frameworks. Given its place in traditional scholarship, the use of theoretical terminology is more likely to be recognised as rigorous and as knowledge-producing. The challenge for the field of artistic research in dance is to figure out how to identify rigour in a way that prioritises practice and the practitioner-perspective without borrowing terminology from another field.

### **Research framework: Articulating the knowing of dance-making**

Since I am adopting the position that my ‘theoretical framework’, ‘methodology’ and ‘methods’ emerge *from inside* my dance-making practice, how can I formulate these in a way that conforms to the expectations of artistic research and that meets requirements for academic rigour? How would I articulate this insider-knowing that is present in my own practice in terms that come out of this practice? Answering these questions will involve looking in more detail at Authentic Movement and how it might form the basis for my theoretical framework and methodology. First, however, I will briefly contextualise this approach in relation to other projects that have claimed, in different ways, to articulate the knowing that is present within dancing and dance-making.

Dance educationalist Soili Hamalainen (2007) points out that – throughout its history in North America and Europe – modern dance has been concerned with the notion of bodily knowledge (and variations of this term),<sup>12</sup> a concern which is also quite prominent within current discourse related to artistic research (Ellis 2018: 483-484). I acknowledge this long

lineage of enquiry before situating this research project in relation to relatively recent initiatives that have sought to articulate the 'knowledge' that is present in dancing and dance-making. Two relatively recent initiatives that explore the particular knowing of the dancer are the practice-based research of dance artist and scholar Jenny Roche (2009, 2011, 2015) and *The Dancer as Agent* project (2013, 2014). It will also be worth looking more briefly at the various 'dance archives' that have emerged in the past decade with the intention to articulate 'choreographic intelligence' (Whatley 2014). Finally, I turn to *The Choreographic Lab* initiative (1996 to date) which – with its methodological emphasis – is perhaps closest to my own approach.

Dancer and scholar Jenny Roche observes that there has been 'limited analysis of the choreographic process by practicing contemporary dancers written from the first-person position' (2015: 16). She sets out to articulate this position in her own practice-based research which focuses on her co-creative labours as an independent contemporary dancer while collaborating with four different choreographers (Roche 2009, 2011, 2015).<sup>13</sup> Roche configures the artistry of the independent dancer through the metaphor of a 'moving identity':

I propose the term 'moving identity' to outline the independent contemporary dancer's 'way of moving' which could be perceived as the accumulation of various factors including training approaches, choreographic movement traces and anatomical structures (2011: 105).

She draws on a number of philosophical perspectives on embodiment in order to further unpack this notion of moving identity. Most prominent in her discussion are the Deleuzian concepts of 'multiplicity' and 'destratification' which she uses to discuss how the independent dancer absorbs a multitude of moving encounters into their embodiment of movement over the course of their career (Roche 2011: 113-114). Roche points out how dancer-collaborators' contributions to dance-making processes are often rendered invisible because of the emphasis on sole authorship by choreographers (2011: 116). Artist-scholar Carol Brown has similarly noted that the notion of a singular artist is 'the residue of modernist ideologies of artistic genius [which obscures] the labour of the many co-creators of the work' (2019). Adding to this invisibility of the dancer is the fact that 'prevalent discourses in dance research often fail to conceptualize the material processes of dance production on its own terms' (Roche 2011: 116). Like Roche, I also attend to the multi-layered and accumulative processes of forming movement material, but my research has a fundamentally different approach in that I am seeking to articulate the embodied knowing of dance-making through a framework that is *intrinsic* to movement processes (rather than via an extrinsic theoretical framework). An advantage of adopting Authentic Movement in this context of investigating dance-making is that Authentic Movement practice highlights relationality (rather than individualism) as being innate to the movement process. It is therefore well placed to draw

attention and give visibility to the contribution of the dancer-collaborator within dance-making processes.

In a similar way to Roche, but in a more collective format, *The Dancer as Agent* project at the University of Dance and Circus (DOCH) in Stockholm also sought to illuminate the unique (and often invisible) knowing of the dancer-collaborator (2014).<sup>14</sup> This project initially took the form of a conference, and brought together sixty participants who devised discussion topics and performative events loosely related to the topic of 'agency'. Writings and videos related to the conference have subsequently been collected on its dedicated website *The Dancer as Agent Collection* (2014).<sup>15</sup> Through a range of media, the website offers dancers' articulations of:

the dynamic interplay between the act of dancing, its history, the languages it generates and the values it brings to daily life. The collection creates a context in which the contours of agency that emerge from dancers' artistic practices can be bounced off, wandered through, felt [...] and shared (Dancer as Agent Collection 2014).

On the website, these 'contours of agency' are clustered around themes such as adaptability, attention, embodiment, invisibility, transmission and virtuosity. Many of the documents are short essays or transcribed conversations which offer a valuable window into thinking about dancing through the voice of dancers.<sup>16</sup> Several of the writings and conversations allude to the embodied processes and politics of co-creating movement material, something which is central to the artistry of the dancer (see for instance Goldberg and Parkinson 2014, Helland and Parkinson 2014, Robb and Parkinson 2014). However, it is noteworthy that there are no entries that investigate or give voice to the intricacies of the embodied processes of forming movement material over an extended period of time, which is the subject of my own research. Indeed, the articulation of the process of forming movement material across an extended period of time is one of this project's key contributions.

In the past decade, a number of 'dance archives' have emerged which seek to reveal 'choreographic intelligence' through the creative application of technology. Prominent examples include *Siobhan Davies' RePlay* (released 2009) and *Motionbank*, profiling the practices of Deborah Hay, Bebe Miller, Thomas Hauert and Jonathan Burrows/Matteo Fargion (released 2010-2013). Since *RePlay* was launched in 2009, head researcher Sarah Whatley notes that there has been a growth in archival projects that work with 'computational processes to remediate dance, to get "inside" the dance and which might be seen as claiming a larger cultural footprint for dance through collaborations with other subject experts' (2014: 132). The overall significance of such dance archives is that they 'preserve' dance processes which serves to 'unsettle our normative historical records in which dance has

tended to be absent' (2014: 123-124). In so doing, such archives may illustrate the unique knowledge that dance-making has to contribute to culture at large (Whatley 2014: 123-124). Perhaps it is an obvious point that these archives are in fact remediated through collaboration with technology, rather than through means that might be most insightful to artists themselves. Through such remediation I would agree, as Ellis has noted, that such archival projects 'tend to attenuate the epistemological value and tangled messiness of choreographic practice' (2018: 484). However, in the case of both *RePlay* and *Motionbank*, the choreographers in question did collaborate quite closely with technologists and researchers in the construction of the archives (Whatley 2014: 123). For example, the agreed aim of the *RePlay* archive was that it would 'reflect something of Davies' choreographic aesthetic' and would 'offer the user ways to make new and surprising connections between content, illuminating the "connective tissue" that is at the core of making and performing dance' (Whatley 2014: 123). Nevertheless, Davies would sometimes refer to the archive as a:

'betrayal' of her past repertoire, perhaps because it inscribes the imagined past as an organised, edited, particular moment rather than something that is 'uncatchable'. She has always been clear that dance works evolve [...] (Whatley 2014: 131).

This is a problem that I too have had to consider in relation to my own practice – one that many practitioners face: how to investigate an evolving process without distorting or ossifying its processual nature? My ongoing attempts to investigate an evolving dance-making process (in this project for example) have ultimately led me toward investigating that practice in very practical and methodological ways. In this sense it is interesting to note that Davies herself shifted her attitude towards the *RePlay* archive over time and began to regard it as a 'compost' for future work (Whatley 2014: 131). Reconfiguring her relationship to the archive as creative and generative opened up another set of possibilities. Indeed, Davies' subsequent project, *The Table of Contents* (2014), was sourced out of archive materials on the *Replay* site, driven by the desire to make 'a strong statement about the inevitable provisionality of the archive and the validity of the dancer's body as carrying the "true archive" of the dance' (Whatley 2014: 132).<sup>17</sup> In this thesis I am also explicitly working with this archival capacity of 'the dancer's body' through what I have come to understand as the practices of *returning to* and *deepening the relationship with* movement material. As we shall see in Chapter 3, the articulation of these practices in relation to *perch* constitutes one of the contributions of this research project to the field of dance-making.

These archival projects resonate with some aspects of my research in terms of their intentions to demonstrate the unique contribution to knowledge that dance-making can offer, to investigate creative decision-making, and to resource practice through a dialogic

relationship with emergent documentation, or with 'companion materials' as I term them. However, my research aims to produce articulations of practice from the subject position of the dancer-maker and in so doing to point to some of the nuances and complexities of the dance-making process from the inside. Hence my concern with exploring the means by which I might articulate and investigate this process in ways that are consistent with the means by which I make dances.

The tendency of dance archives to rely on extrinsic perspectives is not surprising given the intrinsic challenges of articulating dance practice in modalities other than dance, for as Bacon and Midgelow point out: 'Simply put, writing dancing is difficult. [...] It is difficult to evoke the kinaesthetic and the visceral in the written word: it is difficult to transform the experiential into something that can appear on a printed page' (2010: 13). In order to productively address this difficulty, Bacon and Midgelow developed *The Choreographic Lab*, a research initiative with a commitment to developing 'alternative' practice-driven methodologies for choreographic enquiry (1996 to date). One particular outcome of the lab is the *Creative Articulations Process* (2014b) a practice-oriented model for creative enquiry. Another is the journal *Choreographic Practices* (2010 to date) that is unique in its remit to produce writing that 'gives voice' to ephemeral and embodied practices. Bacon and Midgelow established these initiatives:

because of an interest in and commitment to the important process of being fluent in and about our dance and dance making processes that might otherwise be largely hidden or 'lost' as physical, emotional, intuitive and perhaps even ineffable activities (2014b: 10).

The *Creative Articulations Process* (CAP) is thus distinct from other research initiatives in its intention to develop modes of articulation that are more closely aligned with movement processes. With a similar thrust to the *Creative Articulations Process*, in my project I have sought to develop a methodology that is 'fluent in and about' dancing and dance-making rather than drawing on an extrinsic theoretical framework. This is not because I am 'against' adopting extrinsic frameworks per se; on the contrary, interdisciplinarity facilitates the communication of the unique knowledge of dance practice in terms that connect and communicate beyond the field of dance. Such interdisciplinarity serves a very important role for the subject of dance in the academy. However, I do have some concerns about the reliance of (some) dance research on extrinsic sources, and the potential dangers therein (for dance as a distinct subject) of further deferring the voice of the dancer and dance-maker. Particularly, the potential that a variety of unique voices and knowledges within *different* dance practices may become homogenised when they are communicated through a single framework that is extrinsic to all of them. My intention here, through the use of a methodology that is developed out of dance and movement principles, is to provide *an*

*example* that might open up the broader possibility for a multiplicity of articulations of the unique knowledges of different dance-making practices.

### *Choosing a theoretical framework: Authentic Movement*

Nelson notes that most artist-researchers employ an extrinsic theoretical or ‘conceptual’ framework in order to critically engage with and communicate their practice/research (2013: 31-37). While this approach is widely accepted as the ‘norm’ within practice-as-research – a valuable approach which has proved positive and productive for many artist-researchers – one might also question whether engaging with an extrinsic theoretical framework is *the only* way to demonstrate critical engagement and communicability.

Nelson indicates that one advantage of an extrinsic theoretical framework is that it enables both ‘de-familiarisation’ and ‘affirmation’ in relation to one’s practice (2013: 31). The subjective practice is thereby afforded more objectivity (de-familiarization) and can thus more easily find sympathy or ‘consonance’ with theories which are in circulation in other disciplines (affirmation). He suggests that engaging with a theoretical framework in this way ‘mobilizes a process of dialogic engagement’ and stimulates ‘conceptual debate’ with one’s practice (Nelson 2013: 31/33).

While it is true that drawing on an extrinsic theoretical framework can provide the artist-researcher with the means by which to communicate their practice/research within a field of discourse using a ‘critical’ language, is it not also possible that (in some cases) the ‘de-familiarisation’ involved in achieving this communicability might sacrifice something of the very subjective practice that it seeks to communicate? Nelson’s emphasis on making tacit knowledge explicit leads him to characterise research as ‘a process of dynamic movement from the closeness of subjectivity to a greater distance’ (Nelson 2013: 20). If it is true that this movement towards a critical or objective representation of a practice might leave behind some of the very subjective qualities that are essential to it, the question then arises as to how these qualities can be preserved while still being communicated. Can an extrinsic theory adequately convey the insider-viewpoint of the practitioner *in all instances* of artistic research, or is another approach needed? In this research, I propose that it might also be possible to stimulate dialogic engagement and communicability through the development of a framework that is intrinsic to the practice itself. The overall thrust of this research, then, is *critical* in terms of how it questions the assumed norms and values of engaging with an extrinsic theoretical perspective in light of the over-arching research imperatives of practice-

as-research which purports to give credence to alternative ways of knowing and the 'insider experience' (or subjectivity) of the artist.

The precedent for incorporating subjective experience into academic research is relatively well-established in the 'softer' sciences and in ethnographic and educational research where, as Nelson notes, 'a substantial shift away from the data-based, "quantitative" methods of the natural sciences has indeed taken place [for] over almost a century' (2013: 52). A central tenet of practice-as-research itself is the inclusion of practice and thus of 'the body' and subjective experience more broadly as part of the research process. Nelson observes:

At the 'performance turn' it is now widely recognized that we 'do' knowledge, we don't just think it. This important insight mobilizes for [practice-as-research] a number of aspects of new circumstances in which first the subjectivity of the agent – the person performing – becomes a critical factor in the research (2013: 66).

Many artist-researchers working within performance have turned to theoretical frameworks that are perceived to be sympathetic to 'the body' and to the incorporation of subjective experience into research.

It is no surprise, then, that within the field of practice-as-research, many researchers have developed theoretical frameworks that draw from phenomenology (or more specifically the work of Merleau-Ponty 1945/62) and anthropology/ethnography, since these frameworks for research acknowledge one's own 'standpoint' as fundamental to knowing and thus lay the conceptual ground for the fact that 'all thinking is inexorably embodied' (Nelson 2013: 57). Indeed, the pathways between phenomenology and dance research have been well-recognised since the 1960s (Hamalainen 2007: 58; Heimonen and Rouhiainen 2019).<sup>18</sup> Anthropological, ethnographic and auto-ethnographic approaches have been adopted within dance research because of the potential these frameworks offer for working with a highly sensitised and reflexive awareness of one's own standpoint as a 'participant-observer'.<sup>19</sup> Certainly, I might have adopted an ethnographic or auto-ethnographic approach had my research been focussed on researching in close proximity to other practitioners.

The notion of tacit knowledge has also been used to justify the value of subjective experience within practice-as-research. In his seminal text *The Tacit Dimension* (1966/2009), scientist and philosopher Michael Polanyi developed his concept of tacit knowledge, which built on and extended phenomenological approaches to intentionality.<sup>20</sup> Fundamental to Polanyi's concept of tacit knowledge is the premise that 'we know more than we can tell' (1966/2009) or – as paraphrased by artist-scholar John Freeman – 'we are not always aware of the knowledge we possess, or of the ways in which this knowledge might be valuable to others' (2010: 180). The example Nelson repeatedly draws on in order to describe the prominent role of tacit knowledge within practice is knowing how to ride a

bicycle: 'to know how to ride a bike is to ride it' (2013: 9). According to Nelson, the physical and tacit nature of this activity characterises *know-how* – the 'practical knowing-in-doing which is at the heart of [practice-as-research]' (2013: 9). Nelson advocates for practice-as-research as a project wherein such know-how or insider-knowing can become more widely recognised (2013: 37-44). The argument goes that in the process of 'making the tacit explicit' less dominant modes of knowing are made more visible and thereby these less dominant modes of knowing can attain more legitimacy within the academy and beyond. This line of argument has led to tacit knowledge being used as a 'legitimizing agent' for the presence of knowledge in practice (Freeman 2010: 179).

The notion of tacit knowledge has played an important role in influencing the academy to value alternative modes of knowledge, but some of its interpretations have been problematic. First, art-making with all its detail and nuance of engagement, even in an intensely 'physical' art form like dance, is nothing like riding a bike. Second, artistic research certainly possesses the potential to point toward areas of knowledge that are embodied and therefore more 'hidden', but the emphasis on the tacit is counterproductive. For the very notion of tacit knowledge could perhaps reinforce the bias that dance practice is *purely physical* and ineffable, thereby reinforcing a false dualism between physical practice and thinking. Bacon and Midgelow have pointed out that:

the tendency of dancers to evoke bodily knowledge and the sensate, above other modes of knowing, is just as dualistic in construction as the academic inclination to reduce the lived experience to abstracted concepts (2010: 10).

In this thesis, my concern is to articulate and make visible the insider-experience of forming movement material in a holistic dance-making practice. But, in my dance-making practice, the various activities of moving, thinking, writing and drawing are co-existent and integrated into *one* practice. From this holistic perspective on dance-making – coupled with an immersive and processual approach to artistic research noted above – we are more than equipped to research in such a way that culturally constructed binaries between mind and body and between theory and practice need not present any substantial problems. Rather than showing the contribution to knowledge of dance practice refracted through the standards of other fields (that is, through the terminology that an extrinsic theory provides) in this thesis I articulate dance-making practice through the rigour of dance-making practice. So, what more can we say about the nature of holistic, embodied knowing which is present in activities such as dance-making, and how do we go about saying it?

Following on from Bacon and Midgelow's suggestion, in my own research I am seeking to:

'stay close' to creative practice and the somatic in order to know the practice (rather than sidestepping into other discourses or borrowing ways of knowing from systems

that are in some ways removed from the creative experience and the bodily) (2014b: 12).

Because of its deep synergies with my dance-making practice, the practice of Authentic Movement provides the methodological basis and theoretical framework by which to articulate and explore the embodied knowing that is embedded in my dance-making practice. It provides a structure which I refine to fit the specific case of my own dance-making practice. Since homogenisation in relation to other dance practices is to be avoided here, rather than over-generalising about dance-practices beyond my own, one of the contributions of this research is to offer *an example* of how one might articulate dance practice intrinsically. Although Authentic Movement is an established movement practice, not all readers will be familiar with it, so below I offer a brief introduction to the origins and principles of the practice before outlining its direct significance for my research, which I discuss in greater detail throughout Chapters 2 and 3.

### *What is Authentic Movement?*

Authentic Movement was first developed in the 1950s and 60s by Mary Starks Whitehouse (1911-1979), a North American dancer with some training in Jungian analysis. The practice arose out of a unique fusion of mid-twentieth century modern dance, Jungian approaches to creativity and the emergent field of Dance Movement Therapy (Whitehouse 1956; Lowell 2007a, 2007b). Whitehouse sought to develop a format for movement practice that would enable the unconscious (or that which we do not yet know) to surface through open-ended movement exploration (1999a, 1999b, 1999c, 1999d). She initially called the practice 'movement-in-depth' (Frantz and Whitehouse 1999) and later 'inner-directed movement' (Chodorow 2007). Since Whitehouse, Authentic Movement has evolved in a number of directions with therapeutic, contemplative/spiritual and artistic applications (Pallaro 1999, 2007; Bacon 2015). Underlying these varying applications of the practice is a common basis, which has become known as its 'ground' or dyad form (Adler 1999a: 142). This dyad form (practiced one-to-one) involves closing one's eyes and allowing movement to arise in the presence of a witness. Explicit boundaries related to roles and timeframe offer a clear counterpart to the openness of the practice. Periods of moving are always followed by periods of reflection, during which mover and witness seek to articulate their experience (through language) to each other.

It is important to emphasise that, despite its name, Authentic Movement is not concerned with being 'authentic' per se, but rather involves an open and enquiring attitude

toward experiencing and reflecting upon movement. For an effective critique of the term 'authentic' in relation to Authentic Movement see Eila Goldhahn's (2015) article 'Towards a new ontology and name for Authentic Movement' where she suggests using the term 'MoverWitness' instead. I agree with Goldhahn that the descriptor 'authentic' is misleading and problematic, especially given how the notion of authenticity has been contested within academia for decades (2015: 275-279).<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, I continue to use the term Authentic Movement throughout this thesis, not because it is the most accurate term, but because it remains the most widely recognised name for the practice.

I first encountered Authentic Movement through my collaboration with Swiss dancer and dance movement therapist Regula Vogel in a project focussed around solo dance-making (2007).<sup>22</sup> This encounter prompted me to study Authentic Movement with Linda Hartley as part of the Integrative Bodywork and Movement Therapy (IBMT) training and as part of the Authentic Movement Ongoing Study and Practice Group (2008-2011, 2013-2015, 2017-2018). The IBMT training is a therapeutic modality which encompasses the areas of Authentic Movement, Experiential Anatomy, Infant Movement Development and Somatic Psychology, exploring their one-to-one application through movement, hands-on work and dialogue.<sup>23</sup> The foundations of my experience with Authentic Movement have therefore been within a therapeutic context, where the presence of emotion and imagination is fully recognised and where one's personal, social and cultural history are embraced as core materials for one's process. I allude further to this therapeutic context and its relevance for dance-making in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 and in the Conclusion.

I have subsequently encountered Authentic Movement through a range of practitioners who all apply Authentic Movement differently within their distinct professional practices as therapists, teachers, researchers and artists (2008-2019).<sup>24</sup> My experiences with all of these practitioners has profoundly shaped my understanding of Authentic Movement in a way that is impossible to fully unpick and attribute in an academic sense, especially given the oral tradition by which Authentic Movement is passed on. Suffice it to say that I have absorbed many voices and I respectfully acknowledge their finely-threaded presence here. On the one hand, there are clear roots and parameters for Authentic Movement and on the other hand there is an inherent fluidity to it, something that is also evidenced by its myriad applications (Pallaro 1999, 2007; Bacon 2015). My own framework is that of a dancer-maker exploring the processes of forming movement material within the context of artistic research.

As my study of Authentic Movement with Hartley deepened, the practice struck a deep chord with my dance-making practice in several ways. The importance placed on opening to what is arising, on 'witnessing' and on alternating between movement and reflection resonated with the emphasis on processing movement in my dance-making

practice. The way that Authentic Movement embraces different modalities of attention – such as proprioception, sensation, emotion and image – reverberated with my holistic and multi-layered approach to forming movement material. The realm of emotion tends to be less acknowledged in dance training and in the broader terrain of somatic practices (a context which I discuss further in Chapter 1). Authentic Movement addresses this gap by encompassing the full range of bodily experience in the perception of movement phenomena. As we shall see in Chapters 2 and 3, also embedded within the practice is the concern with tracking movement material chronologically across time, where close attention is paid to the details and energetic dimensions of movement. All these practical and processual features of Authentic Movement correlate with the processual and compositional priorities of my practice noted earlier on.

Although one might say that these aspects were part of my dance-making practice already, encountering them in the context of Authentic Movement has allowed me to intensify my engagement with what I am calling the *processual qualities* that they both share (which is the subject of Chapter 3). As we shall see, the distillation of such qualities not only serves to articulate and disseminate my dancer-knowledge to others but also feeds back into the practice by allowing it to become itself more fully through the modulation it enables. In this sense the methodology lends a precision to the creative practice of dance-making that isn't extrinsic but results from seeing the practice refracted through itself. This has enabled me to become more critically reflective about my practice, which in turn has enabled my practice to become more communicable. It is in this way that Authentic Movement can fulfil the function of a critically reflective (or theoretical) framework for the purposes of artistic research.

The intimacy between Authentic Movement and dance-making has certain advantages. It offers a structured approach and a way of using language that is able to deal with the more elusive, emergent dimensions of a processual practice. As McNiff (2013) has pointed out, methodologies that are 'aligned' in such a way are likely to yield insights about arts practice that are *unique to arts practice*. Such theoretical and methodological alignment enables the knowing which is embodied in practices 'to not simply be a demonstration of a pre-theorized intellectual position but [rather to be] an explication of its own internal discourse' (Bacon and Midgelow 2010: 12).

To articulate my dance-making practice through methodologies and methods that are appropriate to it – and to thereby perhaps point toward some of the complexities that may be present in processes of dancing and dance-making more broadly – involves a certain degree of work and concentrated attention. To truly articulate the dance-making process in its own terms involves *slowing* it down and necessitates bringing greater awareness to the processes by which movement is formed, thereby illuminating the nature of this creative

practice in its own terms and potentially cultivating a greater capacity for it. My use of the term 'slowing' here signifies several things in terms of how this research has proceeded.

While slowing down can sometimes mean moving more slowly, more significantly here it highlights the fact that a work is generated incrementally across a long span of time. In this sense my practice proceeds in the same spirit as *The Slow Movement* which originated in Italy in relation to 'slow-cooking' and which has subsequently spread to different cultural domains such as architecture, urban relations and education. As a cultural movement, it has sought to challenge the over-emphasis on individuality and productivity demanded by a capitalist economy by embracing depth and pleasure in practice (Honore 2004, Berg and Seeber 2016). In their excellent manifesto *The Slow Professor: Challenging the Culture of Speed in the Academy*, Maggie Berg and Barbara Seeber propose that being slow can be a form of resistance in the academy, because:

Slow opens up ways of thinking that challenge the corporate ethos [...] *Slowing down is about asserting the importance of contemplation, connectedness, fruition, and complexity. It gives meaning to letting research take the time it needs to ripen and makes it easier to resist the pressure to be faster* (2016: 57).

The approach to dance-making and composition in this thesis is *slow* and time generous. Although insights can arrive in an instant, this artistic research is concerned with long-term enquiry and with giving things the time they need to form. The process of making is something that the practice, as a web of relations between movement and context, endures and absorbs by navigating its conditions moment-to-moment. The emergence of the work is prolonged and winding.

*perch* was made over approximately 120 practice sessions across four years. In contrast with the four years it has taken to make it, the work itself lasts roughly twenty-five minutes. Rather than exploring time as a subject or context for the work – as is the case in 'durational performance'<sup>25</sup> for instance – the relationship with time in this project is actually quite pragmatic: it takes a long time to form a dance. Overall this approach to making things slowly means that I produce fewer dances, but it also means that there is more attention given to the dances that are made. Perhaps the nuance of this slow approach to dance-making could be understood as one of the potential contributions of dance practice to academia more broadly.

In her wide-ranging book on the subject of attention, psychotherapist Gay Watson offers a definition for *attending* which is equivalent to the way I understand (and apply) the term *attentiveness* in this thesis:

To accompany, to take care of, to take charge of, to listen to, to wait for [...] all of these transitive meanings of to attend relate not only to an object, but to a process, a manner

of relationship with that object: a way of relating to the world in a manner that includes receptivity and care (2017: 18).

Indeed, this whole thesis could be configured as a project of 'attending to movement'<sup>26</sup> whereby I am accompanying, taking care of, taking charge of, listening to, waiting for movement – all the while slowly forming a dance. In this thesis, I unpack the very process of attending to movement as it is being formed and I use certain aspects of Authentic Movement in order to do this.

### *Methodology and methods: Creating with Authentic Movement*

This section begins with a cautionary preface.

While artistic research encourages and values the articulation of artistic knowledge, nevertheless potential problems remain for the artist who would seek to do this. Despite the fact that the terms 'methodology' and 'method' have been considerably rethought within artistic research (Nelson 2013: 48-70, 98-99), part of the problem in my opinion lies in the requirement to use this type of language. When Nelson says that artists 'often overlook their methods partly because they do not typically talk about them in these terms' (2013: 98) he omits to add that artists may equally often struggle or even fail to articulate their practice precisely because they *do* use these terms: inappropriate ones (for them) which inhibit their ability to contribute their unique artist-knowledge. When this terminology is forced onto a practice it can open it up to all sorts of criticisms (such as 'its method isn't clear enough'). Moreover, using this kind of terminology creates communication issues within non-academic arts communities, thereby ironically impeding one of the overall intentions of artistic research which is *to communicate the unique forms of knowing that are intrinsic to the arts*.

Owing to the process-oriented nature of my research and in order to work within academic norms for a PhD thesis, I have adopted and even embraced the notions of 'methodology' and 'method' in this research. However, it is also fair to say that my dance-making practice is not 'methodical' in the more widespread usage of the term. For in their more widespread usage the terms 'methodology' and 'method' tend to efface what is most important in my dance-making practice: that I attend closely to that which is emerging and changing, that allowing things to happen can be as essential as making them happen, and that I am participating in what unfolds rather than controlling it. My making process is more responsive and contingent than the terms method or methodology might commonly imply.

However, there is always going to be a tension between the depth of experiential engagement and the description of the practice that a particular vocabulary allows; that is,

the artificial nature of any account compared to the immersive experience of the creative process itself. For this reason, it is important when developing a language (or theory) to remain as close as possible to articulations 'from' rather than 'about' the practice. Authentic Movement has provided me with the means and ways to speak *from* my own practice in a language that is sensitive and appropriate to it.

In explicating the internal logic of a deliberately open-ended dance-making practice, my intention is to find a language that is capable of articulating the 'open' and complex nature of the creative practices which are being investigated. My artistic research is not productive of definitive explanations or formulaic approaches, but rather seeks to generate increasingly more precise ways of engaging with, and reflecting on, both my own and others' creative practices. To borrow an adage from Andrea Olsen who writes in the foreword to her experiential anatomy book *Bodystories*: 'the function of a book about anatomy is not to demystify the body – it is to help embody the mystery' (1998: i). Here too, rather than demystifying the creative process, it is hoped that this project enables a deeper and more precise creative engagement with its mysteries.

Given all this, the methodology employed in this thesis is characterised by one overarching requirement. It has to adhere to a core principle of artistic research: that practice itself generates knowledge and it must communicate this knowledge in its own terms. Again, this means more work – if we are to adequately articulate the contribution to knowledge of a *specific* dance-making process. The research methods used must be supple, not rigid or ready-made, and must develop out of and change with the dance-making practice if they are to communicate its insights in a faithful voice. The methodology and methods must be specific enough to reveal and communicate, and not efface or translate, all the nuance the work contains. In the case of my own work, all this is possible at the interface of dance-making and Authentic Movement.

### *Research methods and documentation issues*

My central research method has been engaging with a regular, solo movement practice for roughly four years (between August 2014-September 2018). I would also include participation in various field activities such as research-relevant workshops as a method of my research.<sup>27</sup> In this thesis, I attempt to offer a faithful account of the processes of forming movement material across an extended period of time. Consequently, I have also been concerned with how to investigate and 'document' (for the purposes of evidencing this

investigation) an attentional, processual dance-making practice in ways that fit the nature and spirit of the research enquiry.

As we shall see in Chapters 2 and 3, the correlations of my dance-making practice with the practice of Authentic Movement are especially evident through the way that certain reflective activities such as writing and drawing (following moving) are embedded within both practices. These different activities might appear to be distinct from one other, such as when one is moving and when one is writing (and indeed I sometimes describe these activities as if they are separate processes) but in actual fact linguistic and movement processes co-mingle in my living body. Language is present for me when I dance and dancing is present when I write. Whatever their manifestation, these activities – or methods – of moving, writing and drawing are different facets or ‘surfaces’ (Ellis 2016a) of the same enquiry into forming, returning to and deepening the relationship with movement material. Therefore, throughout this thesis, the reader will encounter different registers of writing (for example journal entries and scores) that have been incorporated for the purposes of *speaking from* my practice in service of the research enquiry. I do not dwell in any extended way on the general rationale for incorporating different registers of writing (within academic research) since their inclusion within artistic doctorates is now common (Bacon and Midgelow 2019: 40). However, I do elaborate on their disseminating function and on the rationale for thesis design further below and at the start of Chapter 3.

I have also engaged with additional ‘external’ documentation methods such as video and photography to ensure a visual record and to provide evidence of the process. Every few months I would video-record a session and once or twice a year long-term collaborator, Christian Kipp, would witness and photograph a session.<sup>28</sup> While these methods of documentation (video and photography) were not central to my practice as I had initially proposed it, it seemed natural to incorporate them in the spirit of the project as another (less frequent) mode of reflecting on movement material. In order to resource the making process, I have collected the presentation of these integral trace materials (writing, drawing) and external documentation methods (photography, video) within a web space, which arranges writing, drawing, video and photography *in companionship* to one another.<sup>29</sup>

I first used the term ‘companionship’ in relation to the creative exchange between the ‘live’ and ‘virtual’ materials being generated within a collaborative site-responsive project called *enter & inhabit* (2008-2018).<sup>30</sup> Important to the notion of companionship between materials is the attentional, processual and dialogic engagement with them rather than a directly causal or linear relationship. The processes of arranging and reviewing these companion materials (within the *perch* materials web space) has supported the act of forming movement material in my practice through the ‘returning’ to the practice that these materials enable, especially in such a way that the returning continues the generative process.

Compiling these materials has also served as a means of ‘backing-up’ and evidencing the long-term nature of the process. The arrangement of the materials in this web space is thus both functional (in that their review has fed into the making process) and symbolic (in that their arrangement conveys their long-term accumulation as well as the creative exchange across media). Selected companion materials (namely writings and drawings) are interspersed for further consideration by the reader throughout Chapter 3 (where I discuss the process of making *perch* in greater detail). The *perch*-companion materials have been gathered and organised in Chapter 3 in a manner that reflects the processual nature of the dance-making process (a point which I elaborate further below in relation to the rationale for thesis design).

Within artistic research in performance, there has been considerable discussion about issues related to ‘documentation’ of practice (Rye 2003; Ledger 2011; Nelson 2013; Zanotti and Ellis 2019; Ellis and Hilton 2019). The central debate concerns the contradiction between the necessity to document live practice for research-dissemination purposes, given the ephemeral nature of performance, and the inadequacy of documentation to record live performance practice. Nelson notes that one of the main points of contention is whether the submission of and consequent emphasis on documentation compromises the aim of practice-as-research in performance to give credence to the unique knowledges embedded in live practice (2013: 71). With regard to this debate, Ellis has suggested that a more accurate analogy or metaphor might be ‘crystallization’<sup>31</sup> (rather than documentation), where different activities operate like different ‘surfaces’ within a practice:

Each research project is a singular entity with many surfaces. In such a model, documentation is no longer *other* to performance, and writing is not simply a description of a performance that happened in the past. They are enfolded into the same experience and understanding [...] In many respects, this crystal model or metaphor demands that artist-researchers step back enough from their practices so that it is visible (or able to be conceived of) as singular (2016a).

My use of the term ‘surfaces’ in relation to my own multi-modal practice (above) is thus knowingly borrowed from Ellis’ suggestion that this metaphor might be more accurate and productive (than ‘documentation’). I would also characterize my practice as having many ‘surfaces’ such as those outlined above (moving, writing, drawing, photography, video), which constitute its singularity. Their inclusion in this thesis does not in any way betray or detract from the liveness of the practice. Rather, they are ‘enfolded’ in a manner that is reflective and processual, thereby obviating the need to employ or explain documentation strategies that are somehow ‘other’ to my own practice.

Since the debate surrounding documentation in artistic research is not central to my own enquiry, I do not dwell on these issues in the main body of this thesis. Rather, I

characterise my practice as being multi-modal – with many surfaces – and I configure the relations between these modalities in terms of their *companionability*, where companionability is understood as an attentional, processual and dialogic phenomenon. As we shall see, in this research the notion of companionability between the materials generated through the *perch* making process is further extended vis-a-vis my engagement with the processual qualities of Authentic Movement.

Regarding how the reader is to ‘make sense’ of such companion materials as they appear in the thesis: I am assuming that in the context of a multi-modal ‘tradition’ of *artistic research* one might expect the reader to know how to encounter dance, poetry, photographs and drawings (in an artistic context) in the same way that one might expect the reader to know how to read scholarly academic prose (in an academic context).

#### *Rationale for thesis design: An ‘expositional’ approach*

In accordance with its primary subject, the way in which this research has progressed has also been processual. That is to say, the findings have emerged in and through the practice rather than as a result of a retrospective, analytical process subsequent to the making process. Therefore, the thesis ‘tells the story’ of the research in a somewhat chronological way, since it is the very processuality of the research which the thesis is concerned with articulating and communicating. This does not mean that the thesis functions as a mere ‘catalogue’ or ‘diary’ of the research. Rather, the element of chronology in the thesis acknowledges what artistic research advocates Michael Schwab and Henk Borgdorff have called the ‘expositionality’ that might be the most productive means of understanding the epistemic function of the dissemination of artistic research (Schwab 2012; Borgdorff and Schwab 2014). Indeed, Schwab and Borgdorff have observed that one of the primary obstacles that artist-researchers face when entering the academy is that ‘art may be subjected to epistemic regimes that are not suitable to, and thus might compromise, the kinds of practices and knowledges in which artists engage’ (2014: 10). They have thus advocated for an ‘expositional’ approach to the dissemination of artistic research in response to such obstacles.

The significance of the notion of expositionality resides in its emphasis on ‘exposing’ rather than retrospectively analysing artistic research (Schwab 2014: 95). Drawing upon Schwab and Borgdorff’s arguments, artist-scholars Paula Kramer and Emma Meehan have observed that such an expositional approach to dissemination comprises ‘gather[ing] and organis[ing] [research] materials in a creative manner, reflecting the artistic process and

moving it forward, rather than documenting or capturing it in a retrospective motion' (2019). This is likely to involve its 'transformation' or 'translation [...] into a shareable form' (Kramer and Meehan 2019). Kramer and Meehan point out (following Schwab) that the most important feature of these transformations or translations is that the 'qualities essential to the research are kept alive' (Schwab 2012: 25 cited in Kramer and Meehan 2019). They additionally stress that 'what is crucial is that the necessary transformations are developed in ways that allow for a *tangible relationship with the research practice*' (2019 my italics). In this way, Kramer and Meehan advocate for researchers to develop 'ways of *staying with* and *speaking from*, rather than about, their research project' (2019). This is an important point to bear in mind when seeking to articulate an attentional, processual approach to forming movement material in a way that truly gives voice to the embodied knowledge that it contains.

The design of this thesis, then, reflects the desire to expose the epistemological potential of the practical research enquiry. For example, in Chapters 1 and 2, I look at the essential qualities of my practice/research in the context of other dance-making and Authentic Movement practices, and in Chapter 3 I further examine these essential qualities as they pertain to the making of *perch* through the use of different registers of writing and other companion materials. The writing of scores has played a particularly significant and fruitful role in exposing the epistemological potential of the practice. The ongoing writing and re-writing of scores has allowed me to reflect back on the practice, while also serving to shift forward the practice and the research enquiry. While this alone makes their inclusion necessary to a full examination of the practice, they also perform the additional function of transforming and translating the essential qualities of the research/practice into a shareable form which can be picked up and used by others.

The thesis itself is designed to be *expositional* and, in this way, to retain and accurately convey the attentional and processual nature of forming movement material. So, while it is necessary that the thesis communicates its subject matter with some sense of linearity and rationality, it is also necessary to ensure that this linearity and rationality does not misrepresent the creative practice *as itself being* linear and rational.

## **Contribution to knowledge and chapter summary**

This research makes a number of contributions to the fields of dance-making, Authentic Movement, Dance Studies and artistic research. Perhaps the most general issue this thesis addresses is the paucity of research into dance-making presented from the perspective of

the dancer-maker. Although the field of artistic research aspires to recognise alternative ways of knowing and to foreground the 'insider-experience' of the artist (Nelson 2013), the case remains that most of the current research is still mediated through the lens of an extrinsic theory. The first contribution to knowledge this thesis makes, then, is to offer a dancer-maker's account of such a process in its own terms. In order to maintain the same level of rigour that an extrinsic theoretical lens may provide, I spend considerable time throughout this thesis situating my dance-making practice in relation to other practices, those of dance-makers, Authentic Movement practitioners and artist-researchers. I have contextualised my project in relation to certain research imperatives and core debates within the field of artistic research (as well as in relation to other research initiatives that claim to articulate the knowledge of the dancer-maker) in this Introduction. The contextualisation in relation to other dance-making practices is developed in Chapter 1 (where I situate my dance-making practice in relation to North American and European contemporary dance lineages and to other creative practices that prioritise the attentiveness or processual attitude of the dancer/maker), and in relation to Authentic Movement in Chapter 2. This leads us to the second contribution.

Another issue this thesis addresses is the paucity of research exploring the relationship between dance-making and Authentic Movement – a curious gap given the historical overlap between the two. In Chapter 2, I illustrate how Authentic Movement offers a uniquely open, holistic and reflective approach to movement processing that is especially relevant to my concerns with forming movement material across an extended period of time. Thus, the second contribution of the thesis is to outline the potential relationship between Authentic Movement and certain areas of contemporary dance-making (and thereby making Authentic Movement more accessible to the reader who may not have previously encountered it). In the last portion of this chapter, I situate my own dance-making practice in relation to other dance and performance makers who explicitly draw on Authentic Movement and identify how my practice both builds upon and diverges from the work of these practitioners.

Following from the intention to examine dance in its own terms rather than through a theory developed in a non-dance context, the third issue this thesis addresses is the absence in artistic research of any methodology for examining dance-making that is based in dance/movement principles themselves. Chapter 3 explores the overlap between the processual aspects of dance-making outlined in Chapter 1 and the aspects of Authentic Movement outlined in Chapter 2, in order to develop such a methodology. The third contribution to knowledge, then, is the identification of certain *processual qualities* of Authentic Movement which form the basis of the development of a methodology for dance-making based in dance/movement principles. It is important that we are completely clear

about the precise nature of this contribution. In developing a methodology intrinsic to dance-making, an essential factor is that it is specific to *my* dance-making (perhaps even more specific to the making of *perch*). It is not straightforwardly or unproblematically ‘transferable’ to other dance-making practices (of course, it *could* be used by other dance makers – but it would have to be adapted, re-thought and re-developed *in the specific context of another dance practice*). Because of this impossibility of its simplistic re-use, the nature of its contribution is slightly different: it serves as an *example* of the precise, critical engagement with methodology that is lacking in much artistic research. I will look at some of the implications of this methodological engagement for the research paradigm of artistic research in the Conclusion.

In the latter part of Chapter 3, I develop the reflection on forming *perch* by exploring two key findings which emerged out of the practice/research: the processes of *returning to* and *deepening the relationship with* movement material. In a very general sense, the art of returning to and deepening the relationship with movement material was already part of my practice before embarking on this research, but I did not have the language or the nuanced understanding of these practices that this project has developed. This language and understanding have served to expose and to develop my dance-making practice in its own terms. Their broader contribution to knowledge (and the fourth of this research) is that they highlight the epistemological potential of dance-making as an attentional, processual pursuit which takes place between the dance-maker and the dance being made.

## ***A score for the reader***

*please  
read  
this  
thesis*

*slowly*

*not  
quickly*

*if you like  
take time  
to contemplate  
your  
own  
creative  
practice*

*in relation  
to what  
is being  
articulated  
here*

*like  
perch  
this  
writing*

*relies  
on  
you*

*to  
stay  
close*

*to  
pay  
attention*

*from  
start  
to*

*finish*

*(August 2019)*

## 1 Processing movement: Location within lineages of dance-making

I have already stressed in the Introduction how the focus of this research is on articulating the ongoing process of forming movement material rather than on analysing the end-product or 'object' of this processual approach. This chapter contextualises my attentional, processual approach to dance-making in relation to a mosaic of North American and European contemporary dance-makers and dance/movement practices. I first establish how my approach can be situated within a long lineage of somatically-informed dance-making. In the remainder of the chapter I suggest how this attentional, somatically-informed perspective lends itself to a cyclical/iterative method, to a situated attitude to time and place, and to an emergent approach to forming/composing movement. Further context for the way that I make dances can of course also be found within the practice of Authentic Movement itself and within the work of other artists who work with Authentic Movement as a key element of their practice (which I discuss in Chapter 2).

The overall function of this chapter, then, is to offer dance-historical context for the work that I make in a way that is faithful to the nature of my practice. I have chosen to contextualise this practice through a mosaic-approach (rather than drawing on case studies of particular artists, for example) because this seemed to be a more accurate way of conveying the layering of influences that inform the processual dance-making practice that I am investigating. Dance-artist and scholar Carol Brown has noted that 'as a dance researcher citationality acknowledges the body as a living archive of artistic genealogies: It becomes important therefore to know one's history, to be able to speak back to it and transform it' (2019). In order to speak back to and transform the practices that inform my own practice, further contextualisation is woven through every chapter of this thesis. Because my research enquiry emphasises the epistemic value of dance practice itself, and in the absence of an extrinsic theoretical perspective to further 'triangulate' the validity of its findings, such ongoing contextualisation of *practice* takes on special importance for my discussion. In Chapter 3, I refer back to many of the artists and practices that are mentioned in this chapter and relate them to the making of *perch*.

I have already indicated in the Introduction how the attentiveness of the dancer-maker is absolutely central to my practice. Recognition of the attentiveness of the dancer can be traced back to the early twentieth-century development of modern dance in North America and Europe, which itself emerged in relation to certain educational reform movements of the late 1800s and early 1900s (Thomas 1995; Eddy 2009; Carter and Fensham 2011). These educational reform movements emphasized the importance of physical education and often

involved movement practices as part of their curriculum. The wider cultural context out of which these educational reform movements and movement practices emerged is described by somatics scholar Don Hanlon Johnson as a confluence of American pragmatism, European phenomenology, Feminism, Marxism, and Psychoanalysis (1995: xvi). Many such movement practices encouraged highly attentive movement of the body alongside holistic approaches to health and well-being (Eddy 2009; Carter and Fensham 2011). The history of these holistic approaches to movement and the emergence of early modern dance in Europe and North America are thus considered by many to be inextricably intertwined (Eddy 2009). This is line with dance historian Janice Ross' observation that 'a revolution in design or art or dance is by necessity linked to a revolution in pedagogy' (2007: 57).

Many of the holistic movement practices affiliated with the educational reform movements of the early twentieth century have retrospectively been referred to as 'somatic' practices (Johnson 1995; Hanna 1995; Eddy 2009). Derived from the Greek word 'somatikos', the term 'somatic' was coined by Thomas Hanna (1928-1990) in the 1970s to speak about 'the body as perceived from within by first-person perception' (1995: 341). Johnson notes that Hanna was both a Feldenkrais practitioner and a philosopher, backgrounds that provided him with the 'unusual standpoint from which to see [...] the practical healing significance of these [movement practices] and their larger implications for understanding reality' (1995: 339).<sup>32</sup> 'Somatic practices' has now become an umbrella term encompassing a range of movement practices that focus on highly sensitised approaches to bodily movement. Given its holistic and highly attentive approach, Authentic Movement is widely recognised as a somatic practice (Johnson 1995; Hartley 2004; Eddy 2009). However, Authentic Movement is unusual within the wider field of somatic practices in that emotional and imaginal content have an explicit place in its approach to processing movement, not least because of its Jungian and therapeutic roots (which I discuss in Chapter 2). Since I have found the presence of emotion and of imagination to be fundamental to my own dance-making practice, the explicit acknowledgment of these aspects within Authentic Movement has been particularly constructive for my creative work.

### **Somatically-informed dance practice**

During the Judson Church era and subsequent New Dance movement, experimentation with dance/movement as a medium combined with the deconstruction of theatrical conventions gave rise to a new wave of creative work resourced through somatic practices that brought the subjectivity of the dancer to the fore (Claid 2006; Garrett Brown 2007; Bales and Netti-

Fiol 2008). 'Somatic[ally]-informed choreographic practice' refers to the domain of dance practice that incorporates principles of somatic practice into its modes of creation and performance (Garrett Brown 2007, 2011). My own dance-making practice is an accumulation of certain Judson and 'post-Judson'<sup>33</sup> practices that are somatically-informed and concerned with the interplay between improvising and composing movement material.

In her doctoral research, Natalie Garrett Brown (2007)<sup>34</sup> offers a substantial mapping of 'somatically-informed' choreographic practice within the Independent Dance sector in the UK, which is the immediate context in which my own work can be located. Garrett Brown's research incorporates first-hand experience of three somatic practices – the Alexander Technique,<sup>35</sup> Body-Mind Centering<sup>36</sup> and Skinner Releasing<sup>37</sup> -- that have a significant presence in the UK Independent Dance community today. In the course of her study, Garrett Brown critiques the culturally-dominant ocularcentric 'reading' of somatically-informed dance and advocates alternative modes of reception that are more attuned to the embodied modalities of somatically-informed dance work. She observes that a key feature of somatically-informed dance practice is the presentation of the 'somatic moment' of *attending* – of bringing focussed awareness to a somatic stimulus. She outlines the various performative and choreographic strategies employed by somatically-informed dance-makers to this end, including the use of scores and images, of minimal movement, of a durational installation format, of alternative spaces, of close proximity and of making for extended periods of time (Garrett Brown 2007: 209-226). These observations on somatically-informed choreographic practice have been particularly useful for situating my own strategies for dance-making within a wider body of dance-making practices, since I would also characterise my own creative process as a *practice of attending* which makes use of all of the performative and choreographic strategies that Garrett Brown identifies above.

Garrett Brown observes that somatically-informed choreographic practice has tended to prioritise processes of 'purely improvised' work, focussing on real-time exploration rather than on returning to known forms. While her emphasis on somatically-informed dance-making as a 'charting of the new or unknown rather than the construction of a predetermined entity' does resonate with some aspects of my practice, I would question Garrett Brown's assertion that somatically-informed practice is always in pursuit of the 'new' and is '[without the] need to construct form and content' (2007: 161). As a dance-maker, I share an interest in framing the somatic moment of attending consistent with the performative and choreographic strategies noted above. However, rather than adopting such strategies to 'purely improvise' movement material, I utilise such strategies with the intention to *form* movement material. In the process of making *perch*, I have become particularly fascinated by the generative and, indeed, emergent aspects of returning to known forms (a process which I discuss at length in Chapter 3).

However, it is important to stress that the intention to form movement material out of a somatically-attentive state is not at all unique to my practice. The list of Judson and post-Judson, somatically-informed dance artists who have influenced my own dance-making practice in this regard is significant. For instance, my practical encounters with the work of Gill Clarke (1996-2008), Deborah Hay (2005), Caroline Salem (2006-2018), Rosemary Lee (2006), Satya Dunning (2006-2010), Helen Poynor (2008, 2012a, 2012b, 2013), Eva Karczag (2008, 2010) and Rosemary Butcher (2001-2002, 2015) have been influential in the sense that they, too, have forged connections between somatically-informed methods for moving and the forming of dances. These artists centralise sensitized modes of improvisation as a means of enquiring into the emergent form of movement material and as such their practices tessellate between phases of, what I have now come to refer to, as *opening* and *harvesting* (terms which will be further unpacked in Chapter 3). I have been particularly drawn to engage with these artists because of the strategies they adopt for focussing the presence of the performer in relation to scores, images and other stimuli. Such foci create a certain specificity in terms of form/format while also enabling a sense of on-going, moment-to-moment enquiry. The expertise in somatically-informed dance practice is, thus, the capacity to sustain and direct attention – *to attend* – on a moment-to-moment basis in the context of an ongoing practice. In this sense, the dancer's skill could be configured in terms of its constant reorientation and subtle adaptation which lends it a quality of emergence. In Chapter 3, I explore how this process of ongoing adaptation is critical to the act of returning to and deepening the relationship with that material.

Despite burgeoning research into somatically-informed dance/performance practices,<sup>38</sup> to my knowledge there has been no published research which articulates *how*, out of the practice of somatically-informed moving, a work comes into form. My own research attempts to articulate such a link between a somatically-informed movement practice (specifically Authentic Movement) and the act of forming movement material.

### **A cyclical/iterative approach to practice**

This focus on the attentiveness of the dancer coupled with a 'slow' approach to forming movement material lends itself to a cyclical or iterative attitude toward making. This is consistent with the widely understood notion of a 'practice' where the work is deepened and transformed in small and subtle ways by continually returning to it. My cyclical approach to developing movement material can be further contextualised by my engagement with a number of existing models for enquiry into the creative process that have been applied to

dance-making. These include Lawrence Halprin's *RSVP Cycles* (1969), Rosemary Butcher's *Critical Pathways* project (2015) and the *Critical Articulations Process* (Bacon and Middelgouw 2014b). Below I describe the distinctive features of each of these models of enquiry while also indicating how I have synthesised certain aspects of them into my own cyclical approach to forming movement material.

Formulated in the late 1960's by landscape architect Lawrence Halprin (1969) in collaboration with dance-artist Anna Halprin, the *RSVP Cycles* offers a model for collaborative working across disciplines. Inherent to this model is a cyclical approach to art-making, through and across four key stages: Resourcing (R), Scoring (S), Valuation (V) and Performance (P). Implicit in this model is the celebration of collective response and an undoing of hierarchies between art forms and artists. There is also an investment in reflection as an integral aspect of the creative process. Although the genesis of the *RSVP Cycles* was in participatory and collaborative contexts, the process of cycling through alternating phases of action and reflection is perhaps applicable to all kinds of creative processes.

In this thesis, I adopt the term 'score' following the Halprins' model, where the verbals and/or visuals of a score offer a mode of guidance for movement improvisation or other types of action. Lawrence Halprin notes that scores are:

symbolizations of processes which extend over time [...] Even a grocery list or a calendar, for example, are scores. [Scores are] a way of communicating these processes over time and space to other people in other places at other moments [...] (1969: 1).

Here, the function of a score is to convey the parameters for practice. It is 'designed to stimulate a creative response rather than a controlled outcome' (Worth and Poyner 2004: 71).<sup>39</sup> Within my own practice, scores serve as tentative and poetic devices. Their function is to stimulate, support and respond to movement exploration, rather than the other way around, where the movement or physical action might be offered in service to a more fixed concept. Therefore, in my own practice, there is a mutually responsive relationship between the activities of moving and writing or drawing scores.<sup>40</sup> Dance artist and teacher Helen Poyner, who also works with the Halprins' *RSVP Cycles* as a basis for her approach to dance-making, notes that in languaging scores there is a 'sleight of hand (or mind) that allows verbal scores to be received and mentally released, held lightly and intuitively, allowing them to filter through as our kinaesthetic self finds its way' (2014b: 226). This chimes with my own approach to writing scores, where I am constantly refining my choice of language in relation to how it reverberates with my experience of moving. As part of this process, I have been cultivating scores for *perch* that are relevant to particular phases of forming movement material, as well as scores for the work as a whole. One example of such

a score appears further below in this chapter. Additional examples appear throughout Chapter 3.

The notion of a score as an evocative script for practice also bears a certain resemblance to dance-artist Deborah Hay's use of scores in her dance-making process (Hay 1994, 2000, 2005, 2010a, 2010b, 2016). In my experience of Hay's practice,<sup>41</sup> the score, including its underlying questions – which are designed to provoke the attentiveness of the performer – forecasts the form and content of the work and also informs its quality of embodiment (2005).<sup>42</sup> Hay's scores also operate as a means of documenting and disseminating her work more widely. Art-writer Susannah Schouweiler observes that Hay's dance scores 'are animate meditations, musical wordplay peppered throughout with little images, elucidating notes and pregnant fragments of poetry. None of these are static things but suggestive and inviting of elaboration — like conversational prompts' (2012). So too for me the practice of scoring provides a means of annotating, elucidating and prompting my own practice as well as a means of communicating it to others. The practice of writing and re-writing scores has been integral to developing the form of *perch* and to evolving my embodied relationship to dancing it. As with the movement material in *perch*, the practice of revising such scores is endless. Garrett Brown describes the function of scores within somatically-informed practice in a way that also resonates with my own practice: '[Scores] enable the dancer to be fully connected to the inner sensory information of the body while simultaneously open to outside sensory stimulus [...] The meeting of these two becomes the initiation point for movement' (2007: 129-130). The emphasis here on a score as a 'meeting' between inner and outer attention is a strategy that I also adopt, although for reasons I explain further below I prefer the term 'multi-layered' attention to inner and outer attention.

I participated in Rosemary Butcher's *Critical Pathways* (hosted by Independent Dance in London) in 2015. The project took the form of a week-long intensive workshop, during which a small group of choreographers were facilitated through cycles of movement and embodied written reflection in order to critically reflect on the conceptual underpinnings of their making processes. Butcher proposed that the focus of the project would be on the process of exchange between movement and language and that workshop themes would include 'a re-visiting of the past and a facing of the present, whilst continuing the awareness of the sense of progression' (2015). This overall pattern of activity – of exploring the exchange between movement and written reflection – bears some general resemblance to the methodology I develop in this thesis on the basis of Authentic Movement (which I explain further in Chapter 3). The most distinctive aspect of the *Critical Pathways* project was the way in which Butcher facilitated participants through movement explorations which then led to what I might now term *embodied conceptualizations* of their making processes. Butcher's long-term engagement with dance and visual art contexts lent her feedback an unusual

incisiveness – particularly in relation to conceptualizing movement practice. During the workshop, I formulated the following score for the *perch*-making process:

***score for the perch making process***

*perch*  
*is*

*making*  
*from*  
*what's*  
*there*

*receiving*  
*the*  
*uniqueness of*  
*each*  
*moment*

*detail*  
*texture*

*shaping*  
*dissolving*

*distillation*

*temporary*  
*specificity*  
*perpetual*  
*change*

*kaleidoscopic*  
*content*

*how*  
*becoming*  
*what*  
*what*  
*becoming*  
*how*  
*like*  
*different*  
*sides*  
*of an*  
*embroidered*  
*cloth*

*(March 2015)*

Since 2015, I have revised the content of this score several times, but the ideas articulated during the *Critical Pathways* workshop still underpin the making process. In the context of a fuller discussion of the *perch* making process, the updated and most recent version of this score appears again at the end of Chapter 3.

Developed by Bacon and Middelow, the *Critical Articulations Process* offers another model for enquiring into the creative process (2014b). The model synthesises approaches to embodied processing drawn from Eugene Gendlin's *Focussing* (1978/2003), from Josiah Hinck's (2014) *Five Facets Model of Creative Process* (which in itself is Gendlinian in its approach) and from an Adlerian approach to Authentic Movement (Adler 2002). All of these approaches to embodied processing facilitate modes of experiential reflection that are particularly sensitive to the process of 'coming into language' in relation to the 'felt-sense'<sup>43</sup> (after Gendlin) of the body (Bacon and Middelow 2014b: 13-16). Through engaging with the felt-sense, one is '[invited] to consider developments and alterations' in the trajectory of one's practice (Bacon and Middelow 2014b: 10). As a model, the *Critical Articulations Process* is comprised of six 'facets',<sup>44</sup> each of which 'contains prompts to foreground lived experience and embodiment as the place from which there can be a revealing and articulating of creative practice' (Bacon and Middelow 2014b: 12). The 'prompts' of the *Critical Articulations Process* seek to 'give voice' to 'tacit knowledge [...] occurring through emergent, embodied and intuitive processes' (Bacon and Middelow 2014b: 10). The *Critical Articulations Process* is thus distinct from the *RSVP Cycle* and from Butcher's *Critical Pathways* project in its intention to develop modes of articulation that are 'closer to the body' (Bacon and Middelow 2014c: 73). This 'closeness' resides in the relationship between embodied experience and the modes of articulation that emerge *from this experience*.

All of these cyclical approaches (The *RSVP Cycles*, the *Critical Pathways* project and the *Critical Articulations Process*) are geared towards articulating the creative process *from the artist's perspective*. Such articulation takes place in the case of the *RSVP Cycles* via the naming of resources and scores, in the case of the *Critical Pathways* project via the naming of concepts that drive the work and in the case of the *Critical Articulations Process* via insights that emerge from a process of embodied enquiry. In all of these approaches, the emphasis is on alternating phases of movement (or action) and reflection, which gives rise to a reflexive attitude toward the creative process and to language that emanates from and in turn drives the practice forward. My own practice resonates with the reflective, reflexive and processual nature of these approaches and can be further contextualised by the embodied approach to creative enquiry and artistic research contained within the *Critical Articulations Process*. Following the cyclical approach that Authentic Movement suggests (which I

discuss further in chapters two and three), my practice incorporates different registers of writing and drawing that are deeply interwoven with the practices of forming and returning to movement material. As we have already established, in my practice I characterize the relationship between moving and reflective modalities (such as writing and drawing) as a one of creative *companionship*, a term which encompasses the interplay and sense of mutual support between them.

## **Situatedness**

Despite the prevailing perception of somatic practices as being ‘inwardly’ directed, my experience of somatic practices (and of Authentic Movement in particular) is that they highlight the *situated* nature of the moving body through the modes of perception that they foreground. This situatedness is also evident in Hanna’s original definition of the term somatic, which is characterised as a co-sensing inward and outward (1995: 341). Garrett Brown has made some incisive points regarding the situatedness in somatically-informed dance practices in general, describing how they stimulate ‘a corporeal dialogue between inside/outside’ (2007: 69). For instance, the moment-to-moment re-orientation to space via the developmental movement patterns in Body-Mind Centering, the subtle realignments of the spine through The Alexander Technique and the spatially-directed imagery of Skinner Releasing all serve to ‘momentarily or permanently shift the experiential sense of where the material body ends in space’ (Garrett Brown 2007: 62-63). Garrett Brown notes that the ‘mapping and re-mapping’ of the internal body image cultivated through these somatically-informed methods ‘serves to seriously undermine the concept of the body as distinct and separate from the environment in which it is situated’ (2007: 65). Such situatedness is also present, for example, in dance artist Lisa Nelson’s *Tuning Scores*, a participatory improvisation practice where the connections between the senses and the environment are brought to the foreground and used as the basis for ‘composing’ this interrelationship on a moment-to-moment basis (Nelson, L. 2003, 2008; Buckwalter 2010; De Spain 2014).<sup>45</sup> Nelson sometimes refers to this practice as ‘attentionography’ and equates the dancer’s practice of attending to sensory channels with compositional skills (Nelson, L. 2003, 2008; Nelson, L. and Solano 2008).

Direct engagement with different sensory channels – with *sensation* as a body-mind phenomenon<sup>46</sup> -- highlights our innate sensitivity and porosity. Somatically-informed dance artist Andrea Olsen notes that:

We construct our view of the world through our senses. Billions of receptors throughout our structure constantly feed us signals about ourselves and our surroundings. Our ability to organize and interpret these signals is called perception [...] Understanding this perceptual process can help us act from the sensory information available at the moment [...] enhancing our ability to respond (2002: 55).

Somatically-informed movement is, by definition, relational and responsive – that is, sensitised and *connected to its surroundings* (Hanna 1995: 341; Eddy 2016: 5).<sup>47</sup> Because of its explicit acknowledgement of emotion and imagination as perceptual channels within and alongside the sensorial, Authentic Movement offers a means by which to make one's perceptual processes conscious. Owing to its holistic and reflective approach to processing movement, Authentic Movement is by definition inclusive of dimensions of experience that we might describe as personal, social and cultural. Working with Authentic Movement as the primary underpinning of my movement practice has therefore brought my attention to *situatedness* as a key feature of my dance-making process.

This principle of situatedness is evident in my own practice in the following ways. *perch*, which forms the substantive practice element of this thesis, has been developed in a small studio space in a former mill in Ancoats, Manchester, since Autumn 2014. I sought out this space for the purposes of being able to work somewhere consistently and affordably. My only requirements were that it be warm, relatively clean and contained. I was not seeking a purpose-built dance space per se (since most dance spaces are prohibitively expensive) but rather a place where I could imagine moving and writing over a long period of time. Indeed, the working title for this solo practice – *perch* – has resonance for a number of reasons to do with its situatedness: because of the suggestion of a bird's eye view on a process, because of the airy atmosphere of the space where the practice is being developed (third floor of a former mill) and because of the suggestion of a tentative position or location.

Within *perch*, the focus is on the practice of forming movement material over an extended period of time, which has led to the development of a practice that is interwoven with the time and place – the context – in which it has been developed. By 'context' here I mean every circumstance that surrounds the project, ranging widely from things such as a growing awareness of my 'studio' as a former cotton spinning factory, to the process of gentrification outside the space, to the constant presence of weather and thick grey skies, to 'Brexit' and the 2016 US presidential election, to neighbours discussing designs for greeting cards to the loss of an adopted grandmother, to the ever present creaking of the floorboards, to a sore knee, to the context of 'doing' a PhD, and so on. The practice 'holds' all of these contextual elements. In the words of dance artist and improviser Ruth Zaporah: 'It's as if the context itself calls the content' (cited in De Spain 2014: 40).

Developing the work cyclically over an extended period of time in this space has naturally led to incorporating certain features of the site – such as its creaky floor and

relationship with natural light – into the work. I come back to the more detailed manifestations of this situatedness in *perch* in Chapter 3. For now, let us note that the perceivable quality of locatedness within *perch* has grown slowly and organically out of a holistic and situated attitude toward movement, rather than out of an explicit intention to foreground the site in which it takes place. For this reason, it is important to subtly differentiate the ‘situatedness’ of *perch* from the wide variety of ‘site specific’ dance practices that deliberately foreground the presence of the site as ‘outside’ from the outset of their making. As artist-scholar Vicky Hunter notes: ‘[site]-specific dance can be defined as dance performance created and performed in response to a specific site or location’ (2015: 1).<sup>48</sup>

This is not to say that certain discourses related to site-specific dance could not be valuable lenses through which to illuminate certain aspects of my own practice.<sup>49</sup> For example, the area of site-specific dance practice that Hunter identifies as having a ‘body-based’ (2015: 9) or ‘embodied’ (2015: 12) approach to site bears some overall resemblance to the somatically-informed aspects of my own approach to dancing and dance-making through their basis in sensitized and receptive approaches to improvisation. Hunter cites environmental dance artist Helen Poynor as having one such embodied approach, which involves ‘a process of listening, waiting and responding corporeally to a kinaesthetically attuned “sense” of place’ (2015: 12). My own approach to dance-making and scoring processes has been somewhat influenced by the Halprins’ and Poynor’s embodied and cyclical approaches to developing material.<sup>50</sup> In this sense, one might potentially conceive of *perch* as a *deepening into* what Hunter refers to as ‘the experiential components’ of moving in relationship with a site (2015: 25-39). According to Hunter, the ‘experiential components’ of site include perceptual phenomena such as the ‘sensorial’, the ‘haptic’ and the ‘kinaesthetic’ (2015: 31-32) – phenomena which, in the terms of my somatically-informed approach, I consider to be equivalent with movement itself. However, in relation to my own practice, I prefer the term ‘situated’ (rather than ‘site-specific’) for the attention it draws to a holistic awareness of the entire context and one’s personal standpoint in relation to that context.

### **Attitude towards forming or composing movement material**

Given the somatically-informed, cyclical and situated approach to dance-making outlined above, how do I locate my practice in relation to existing models for forming movement material? In order to further contextualise my engagement with the notion of forming, it will be useful to situate my approach in relation to a range of dance-historically located approaches to forming or ‘composing’ movement material.<sup>51</sup>

The term 'dance composition' came into use during the early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century alongside the emergence of modern dance and modern dance curricula within higher education in North America and Europe. Foster (2011) offers a useful overview of the development of dance composition alongside the development of dance as a subject for study. In doing so, she problematizes the emergence of dance technique, dance composition and choreography as discreet sub-categories of study within dance from the 1930s onwards (Foster 2011: 15-72). In her account, the development of dance composition is accompanied by the application of certain 'embodied "universal" principles of motion', which she identifies as innately biased against non-white and non-Western modes of dance (Foster 2011: 47). During this time, dance composition became associated with the treatment of movement 'as a malleable material that could be shaped and re-formed in diverse ways' (Foster 2011: 49). She notes the contribution of Martha Hill, Louis Horst (composer and influential adviser to Martha Graham) – and to this I would add Doris Humphrey (1959) – to the development of dance composition courses where:

students learned structuring principles that imparted an ability to analyze movement in terms of space, time, and weight, creating short studies that demonstrated their understanding of the possibilities for shaping the body as a three-dimensional object in space, and for sequencing those shapes according to various musical structures. Drawing on musical structures such as theme, contrasting theme, return to theme, ABA, or the rondo form ABACADA, students explored how movement could be developed from an original phrase into its repetition, inversion, amplification, or contraction (Foster 2011: 49).

In addition to being associated with movement manipulation, dance composition thus became affiliated with the patterning and shaping of movement according to an extrinsic structural framework, such as that borrowed from Western classical music. Within this approach to dance composition, the practice of forming movement material was perceived as 'a hyper-personalized process wherein the individual became origin of the movement, host to the creative process, and craftsperson of the dance's development' (Foster 2011: 52).

Subsequently in the US from the 1950s onwards, the use of improvisation in performance by artists such as Anna Halprin and Daniel Nagrin, alongside the use of chance procedures in the collaboration between Merce Cunningham and John Cage, catalysed an alternative approach to dance composition that 'provoked a decentering of the artist-as-genius model of authorship' (Foster 2011: 61). Robert Ellis Dunn, a former student of Cage, was in turn a key influence on the Judson Church era. He experimented 'with chance procedures for composition and translated his precept that any sound is valid to the realm of movement where any kind of motion could be a valid part of a dance' (Foster 2011: 62). Foster notes how in the course of Dunn's workshops the choreographies produced 'were not so much the objects of scrutiny as the processes through which the choreography was

realized allowing students to contemplate the array of procedures that existed for inventing and arranging movement' (2011: 62). Thus, during this era, the notion of dance composition was 'expanded' in such a way to include a wide array of parameters that allowed for actions of all sorts to be 'framed' as dance.

In my own practice, I am working with an accumulative approach towards dance composition – or forming movement material – that encompasses the aforementioned dance-historical understandings of it, whereby the act of composing includes the long-term engagement with movement material that is remembered and returned to as well as the moment-to-moment adaptation to what is emerging. This allows for the more traditional understanding of dance composition which treats movement 'as a malleable material' to be amalgamated with improvised and 'expanded' approaches to composition (and to dance itself). While adhering to certain set structures for movement, I engage with the process of forming and performing material as a holistic, cyclical and situated activity.

In its attitude toward forming movement material, my practice could be generally compared with many of the post-Judson, somatically-informed dance artists already cited in this chapter, such as Rosemary Butcher (2001-2002, 2015), Lisa Nelson (2003, 2008), Deborah Hay (2005), Helen Poynor (2008, 2012a/b, 2013) and Caroline Salem (2006-2018) who all stress, for different purposes, that their compositional or making-practices are embedded in an attentional attitude that is built up across extended practice. These artists' practices are quite distinct from one another (in terms of their precise lineages, and the format that the work/practice may eventually take) but what they all share is an interest in the multi-layering of attention which accumulates in the mind/body of the dancer-maker as fundamental to the composing or forming of the work. For example: In Butcher's collaboration with dancers when developing movement material, emphasis is placed on the attentional attitude of the dancer-maker – of 'building up *inside oneself* the things to keep the work alive' as being an essential part of the form of the work (Butcher 2015). In Nelson's *Tuning Scores*, the connections between the senses and the environment are brought to the foreground of the dancer-maker and used as the basis for 'composing' this interrelationship on a moment-to-moment basis – which she calls 'attentionography' (Nelson, L. 2003, 2008; Buckwalter 2010; De Spain 2014). In Hay's practice, the attention of the dancer-maker is engaged with the predicament provoked by instructional multi-tasking which she refers to as a 'choreography of consciousness' (Hay cited in De Spain 2014: 162) and which, according to Hay, comprises the substance of the work (2005). In Poynor's practice, the attention of the dancer-maker is on developing a responsive, kinaesthetic, improvisational and cyclical relationship with site – which she characterises as an 'environmental' approach to dance-making (2008, 2012a/b, 2013). In Salem's practice, the attention of the dancer-maker is on

the embodiment of architectural/spatial and energetic imagery which has been explored through years of guided practice (2006-2018).

My own practice can be likened to all of these in its attentional and accumulative attitude toward forming movement material, but can be distinguished in its explicit enquiry into the embodied co-existence of form and emergence during the dancer-maker's process of developing movement material. In this way, in my own practice, the focus is on the enduring and changing relationship with movement material over an extended period of time, something which the processual qualities of Authentic Movement enable (as we shall see in Chapter 3). Indeed, later on in this thesis, I adopt the terms *returning to* and *deepening the relationship with* movement material – rather than 'repeating' – since returning and deepening both imply a sense of renewed presence to each iteration. In service of this exploration, I have developed scores for my practice which 'expose' and facilitate the processual qualities of Authentic Movement. In developing these scores, I have become curious about constructing 'open' yet precisely attuned structures which can account for the multi-layered and changeable nature of attention itself – that is to say, how one's attention can be attuned to many things and is constantly shifting – even while returning to 'known' forms. I have thus come to configure the act of forming movement material in the interplay between what is known and what is unknown, with each practice being the temporary instantiation of this process. In sum: while my practice can be likened to those of Butcher, Nelson, Hay, Poynor and Salem in that I, like them, employ an attentional and accumulative approach to their understanding of forming movement, it can be distinguished through its explicit enquiry into the very nature of the process of 'forming' from the insider-perspective of the dancer-maker and through the application of Authentic Movement principles to that enquiry.

## **Performing process<sup>52</sup>**

Since the focus of this research is on the embodied processes of the dancer-maker and *not* on the process of performing to an audience, I do not deal in any developed way with issues related to performance or relationship with audience in this thesis. I venture briefly into these issues here because they pertain to how I have decided to frame the work for examination purposes and also because I wish to convey a certain awareness of how the work may continue to evolve.

My attitude towards performance emerges naturally out of the emphasis on the attentiveness of the performer and out of a cyclical and situated approach to forming

movement material. This attentiveness extends to those instances where I am being witnessed. With this understanding of performance as a mode of enquiry, the audience is cast as witness to an ongoing process both in the performer and in themselves – as witness to what Foster refers to as a ‘space where the self might unfold rather than a place where the self [is] depicted’ (cited in Ross 2007: xiv). Foster notes that this tradition of ‘unfolding’ through performance or making-while-dancing reaches back to early modern dance artists Isadora Duncan, Maude Allan, Lois Fuller and Ruth St. Denis (cited in Ross 2007: xiv). This has also been a key concern of many somatically-informed practitioners, who seek to cultivate attunement to the real-time act of dancing and to explore its kinaesthetic affects (Garrett Brown 2007).<sup>53</sup> My ongoing solo dance-making practice (which *perch* is a part of) has largely evolved in small spaces (studios or rooms) where close proximity to movement affords a more visceral response. This is in line with Garrett Brown’s observation that somatically-informed choreographic practice tends to stray from conventional performance settings, often taking place in alternative venues or sites which enable close proximity (2007: 209-226). In my own practice – consistent with the relational underpinnings of Authentic Movement practice – I am likewise intent to explore how *perch* might be received in close proximity to audience in a way that enables a co-creative ‘relational field’ to emerge. In the conclusion, I indicate that a future direction for research could be the exploration of the relational dimensions of performing *perch* as informed by Authentic Movement principles.

In this chapter I have laid out the context for my dance-making practice in relation to certain Judson and post-Judson practices that prioritise the attentiveness of the dancer-maker and that enable a processual approach to dance-making. As an attentional practice (informed by Authentic Movement), my dance-making can be located within the field of somatically-informed dance practices. Foregrounding the attentiveness of dance-making practice in this project has served to emphasise the cyclical/iterative and situated dimensions of making movement from the perspective of the dancer-maker as well as to highlight the emergent approach to composing/forming. In Chapter 3, I refer back to the cyclical, situated and compositionally-emergent aspects of my practice contextualised here, and the many artists and practices mentioned in this chapter, bringing them into direct conversation with the *perch* making process. In the chapter that follows, I illustrate how Authentic Movement offers a unique mode of movement enquiry that is especially relevant to an attentional and processual approach to forming movement material across an extended period of time.

## 2 The synergies between Authentic Movement and dance-making

In the previous chapter I contextualised my dance-making in terms of other dance-making and creative practices. The aim of this chapter is to contextualise Authentic Movement practice in terms of dance-making in order to situate the potential relationship between Authentic Movement and dance-making more broadly as well as to provide a grounding for readers who may not have previously encountered Authentic Movement. In the last portion of this chapter, I situate my own dance-making practice in relation to dance/performance-makers who explicitly draw on Authentic Movement, before then going on to discuss the making of *perch* in detail in chapter three. The content of this chapter therefore explicitly addresses the second stream of practical enquiry driving this research, leading up to articulating the synergies between dance-making and Authentic Movement, something which to my knowledge has not previously been undertaken.

The origins of Authentic Movement can be located within the cultural milieu of the mid-twentieth century during which time modern dance was coming into fuller fruition. During this same time period, many North American and European dance artists were simultaneously enquiring into the nature of dance/movement as an artistic medium.<sup>54</sup> Three practitioners – Whitehouse, Janet Adler and Joan Chodorow – are widely credited with developing Authentic Movement (Pallaro 1999). Since Whitehouse's founding of the practice (see p. 25 of the Introduction), Adler has noted that the development of Authentic Movement can be charted in terms of its 'three root systems' or theoretical foundations, which she identifies as dance, psychotherapy and mysticism (Adler 2002: xviii). These different root systems of Authentic Movement practice are significant for my own dance-making practice because they indicate a multi-faceted, holistic orientation towards movement enquiry. Given my own interests in an attentive and processual attitude towards forming movement material, it is no wonder that when I encountered Authentic Movement I experienced something like a 'homecoming'. Acknowledging the psychotherapeutic and mystical dimensions of experience *as embedded within movement processes* felt both rich and familiar to me as a dance-maker.

Written research that addresses the lineage of Authentic Movement practice in relation to dancing and dance-making is very limited. Despite a variety of written resources on Authentic Movement,<sup>55</sup> to date there has been no critical historical account which thoroughly excavates the socio-cultural context of its emergence, let alone an account which excavates the relationship between Authentic Movement and dance-making. This could constitute the subject of further doctoral research (or a book) but, since this is not the focus

of my research, I limit my discussion here to identifying those *aspects* of Authentic Movement that are particularly relevant to dance-making. Rather than seeking to fully define the practice, I aim to identify those operations and qualities of Authentic Movement that seem most relevant to the practice of dance-making and more specifically to the processes of generating and forming movement material.

Below I give particular attention to the origins of the practice and Whitehouse's work with influential figures within Modern Dance, before discussing Adler's advancement of the practice into a 'discipline'. Chodorow's very significant contribution to Authentic Movement practice (1997, 1999a, 1999b, 2004, 2007), including her profound engagement with Jungian concepts, is of great interest but is beyond the scope of this research. With all this in mind, it is important to emphasise that the contextualisation that follows is not mere description of the practice as it is commonly understood. Rather what I am bringing forward are certain aspects of Authentic Movement that have emerged as significant for dance-making practices. These observations have arisen out of my extended practice of dance-making and of Authentic Movement, and also out of close study of primary and secondary sources on Authentic Movement, through which I am able to bring original insights.

### **Mary Starks Whitehouse**

Whitehouse originally termed the practice 'movement-in-depth' owing to the direct influences of Jungian Depth Psychology on her work (Frantz and Whitehouse 1999). She began her career as a dancer by training with choreographer Mary Wigman (in 1936) and then danced with choreographer Martha Graham (from 1937-1938).<sup>56</sup> Later on, she undertook some training as a Jungian analyst in Zurich. Whitehouse remarks that she went to train with Wigman because:

nothing in America allowed concentration on dance without falling into the category of physical education [...] The Wigman training prepared me for a particular approach, although I did not know it at the time. It made room for improvisation, placing value on the creativity of people moving (1999d: 75).

Whitehouse was drawn to Wigman's pedagogy, which placed high value on individualised response to movement activities (Frantz and Whitehouse 1999: 23).

Whitehouse herself was also a dance teacher. In the 1950s and 60s her teaching practice shifted towards more holistic and therapeutic interests, to which this frequently cited statement testifies:

It was an important day when I discovered that I did not teach Dance, I taught People [...] It indicated a possibility that my primary interest might have to do with process not results, that it might not be art that I was after but another kind of human development (Whitehouse 1999c: 59).

Susan Frieder, a dance movement therapist who worked with Whitehouse, notes that her interest in personal development was informed by a humanistic growth model that invoked '[trust in] the individual's process and believed in the individual's power and resources' (2007: 37). With the project of personal growth in mind, Whitehouse began to experiment with facilitating 'open' movement sessions whereby movers explored 'the sensation of moving and being moved', following 'impulses' for movement as they arose while Whitehouse observed in a supportive manner (1999b: 43). The movement portions of the sessions were typically followed by some kind of reflective or 'transitional' activity to process the experience of moving.

Whitehouse's engagement with Jungian Depth Psychology informed her vision for the format of these open movement sessions. Indeed, it is the Jungian notion of Active Imagination which is most commonly affiliated with the development of 'movement-in-depth' (Lowell 2007a), although Whitehouse has suggested that her slowed-down, deeply sensorial approach stemmed from her experience as a dancer and dance teacher and pre-existed her encounter with Jung's work (Frantz and Whitehouse 1999: 19). Whitehouse understood Active Imagination as:

Jung's term for a process in which, while consciousness looks on, participating but not directing, co-operating but not choosing, the unconscious is allowed to speak whatever and however it likes [...] There is no limit and no guarantee of consistency. Images, inner voices, move suddenly from one thing to another. The levels they come from are not always personal levels; a universal human connection with something much deeper than the personal ego is represented (1999d: 83).

Here, in Whitehouse's description of Active Imagination, one can infer the notion of inner witnessing – 'while consciousness looks on' – as well as a certain permission to follow the non-linear and multi-layered emergence of material. Chodorow notes that, in the development of movement-in-depth, Whitehouse 'was primarily concerned with [...] the inner experience of the mover' (1999a: 283).<sup>57</sup> This attentiveness to inner processes and multi-layered approach to emergent movement is something that Janet Adler has emphasised in her approach to Authentic Movement, which I discuss further below.

Not least because of its Jungian roots, Authentic Movement offers a distinctive approach to movement, which overtly recognizes and welcomes the realms of emotion and imagination into its perceptual field. The possibility for holistic, individual and creative response within Authentic Movement is one of the unique features of the practice which continues to attract attention from dancers and dance-makers for the same reasons as when

the practice originated (Lowell 2007a). While it is now widely recognised that emotion is inextricably intertwined with the sensory motor system and therefore with bodily motion itself (see Pert 1997), the realm of emotion can be side-lined within some dance and somatic practices in favour of the sensorial and kinaesthetic (Hamalainen 2007). Indeed, it is the inclusion of emotion and imagination, within and alongside the sensorial and proprioceptive dimensions of movement, that drew me to Authentic Movement as a framework through which to explore dance-making processes.

There are two aspects of Whitehouse's development of Authentic Movement that are relevant to my dance-making practice. The first is the 'attitude of inner openness' (Whitehouse 1999: 49) and the second is the concern with cultivating a subjective and reflective relationship with movement material. Both of these aspects of Authentic Movement are relevant to my interests as a dance-maker in forming movement material through the holistic qualities of attentiveness that they stimulate.

#### *An attitude of inner openness*

As a dance-maker, I am drawn to the 'attitude of inner openness in the body' (Whitehouse 1999: 49) within Authentic Movement practice and to its interest in the origination of movement, which arouses a sensitivity to the potential for movement to become many things. In my experience, this sensitisation to processes of emergence *slows down* the dance-making process into something that is both open-ended (and therefore somewhat unpredictable) and particularised at the same time. Authentic Movement encapsulates processes of generating and forming, each practice a micro-study in crafting movement. Whitehouse wrote that:

The core of the movement experience [within Authentic Movement] is the sensation of moving and being moved [...] Ideally, both are present in the same instant [...] It is a moment of total awareness, the coming together of what I am doing and what is happening to me [...] (1999b: 43).

This 'coming together' of what is known with what is unknown underlies my own attitude toward forming movement. According to Whitehouse, this condition of enquiry requires 'a kind of capacity for listening to one's self that I would call honesty [...] made possible by concentration and patience' (1999b: 49). What is notable for my own research is that Whitehouse contrasted this open approach with 'rehearsed and repeated' movement:

Spontaneous movement, [when] rehearsed and repeated, loses the very thing it shows: that inner processes take physical form and can be seen, their meaning apprehended,

their value received by the person out of whose body the movement comes (1999d: 85).

Within the context of my own dance-making practice, I would question Whitehouse's assertion that movement that is known or repeatable loses the capacity to reveal 'inner' processes. However, I suggest that in order to maintain an energetic quality of emergence through repeated practice one has to embody a tension: of knowing and of not knowing at the same time. I propose that the open and holistic mode of enquiry into movement that characterises Authentic Movement offers a means by which this tension (of knowing and not knowing at the same time) can be more fully recognised and therefore more consciously re-incorporated into methods for dance-making.

The notion of 'following an impulse' for moving (as opposed to following a pattern of pre-prescribed movement) is frequently cited as the core intention of the mover within Authentic Movement. It is interesting to note that Whitehouse referred to Rudolf Laban's notion of 'Effort' (a theorisation around the psycho-physical aspects of movement dynamics – see Laban 1971) in relation to her use of the term 'impulse':

Where does movement come from? It originates in what Laban calls inner effort – that is, a specific inner impulse having the quality of sensation. This impulse leads outward into space so that movement becomes visible as physical action. Following the inner sensation, allowing the impulse to take the form of physical action is active imagination in movement, just as following the visual image is active imagination in fantasy [...] (1999b: 52).

This statement reveals what Whitehouse considered impulse to be: an enquiry into the sensation-based origination of movement and its potential follow-through in energetic and spatial terms. This understanding of impulse is useful to my own practice in that it indicates an enquiry into the way in which movement is generated and then subsequently formed through the enactment of its energetic quality. Such enquiry into the origination of movement is described by Whitehouse as a kind of 'listening to the body, an emptiness in which something can happen. You wait until you feel a change' (Frantz and Whitehouse 1999: 53). Whitehouse notes that in order to fully notice such impulses she 'had to go back toward not moving. In that way, I found out where movement actually started' (Frantz and Whitehouse 1999: 23). Tapping into a state of stillness (or a stiller state) which precedes movement brackets its point of origination. This enquiry into stiller states is common source of fascination amongst practitioners of Authentic Movement. In other somatic movement frameworks, the enquiry into stillness might be understood as an enquiry into 'pre-movement' (Eddy 2009; McHose and Frank 2006). I will consider movement quality and stillness in more detail when reflecting on *perch* in Chapter 3.

### *Developing a conscious relationship with movement*

As well as exploring the origination of movement, Whitehouse emphasised the importance of developing a reflective attitude towards or 'conscious' relationship with movement material – in contrast to an unconscious relationship with movement material where, for example, movements are learned through externalised memorisation:

The kinaesthetic sense can be awakened and developed in using any and all kinds of movement, but I believe it becomes conscious only when the inner – that is, the subjective – connection is found, the sensation of what it feels like to the individual [...] People can learn movement in a variety of ways. They are not necessarily enabled to feel it when they do so [...] The physical culture courses [...] work with the body as object, not as subject [...] something more is needed than simply body mechanics [...] the feelings hidden in the body, the source of all its movement, must be involved (1999b: 47).

The emphases here on 'subjective connection' and on 'feelings hidden' indicate the aforementioned lineage with Wigman's pedagogy as well as an alignment with the emergent field of 'dance therapy'. Dance therapy (or what nowadays we term dance movement psychotherapy) emerged as a distinct profession around the mid 1960s (Chodorow 1999a: 281-282). The intention to develop highly individualised and conscious connections to movement resulted in the incorporation of reflective processes or transitional activities (such as writing, drawing, speaking) following or alongside the practice of moving, through which the act of moving could be processed and articulated. This intention to develop a more conscious connection with movement would be developed in greater detail by the next generation of Authentic Movement practitioners – and in particular by Janet Adler.

### **Janet Adler**

Janet Adler began practicing as a dance movement therapist and studied with Whitehouse in 1969-70. Adler became well known for her therapeutic work with children on the autistic spectrum and credits her particular development of Authentic Movement (in part) to the growing field of dance therapy in North America – and specifically to her encounter with dance movement therapy pioneer, Marian Chace (2007a).

Adler placed particular emphasis on the shared field between mover and 'witness' (the dyad form), which she considers to be the 'container' of the practice (2002). This emphasis on two-way relatedness foregrounds the psychotherapeutic implications of 'seeing' and

'being seen'. It is widely believed that the witness in Authentic Movement practice intends toward a non-judgemental and reflexive attitude of 'holding' which offers the mover space to tolerate a range of emotions and experiences (Pallaro et al 1999, 2007). Drawing on the work of psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott (1971), Authentic Movement practitioners Tina Stromsted and Neala Haze describe the manner in which this relatedness is potentially heightened in the practice:

Authentic Movement recapitulates our first primary relationship in which being seen is inherent: the dyad of the mover (child/client) and a witness (mother/therapist). Not only does it make that recapitulation possible, but, more pivotally, it offers hope for transforming early and unsatisfactory experiences, by establishing the realities of the 'holding environment,' the 'good enough mother,' and the 'potential space' [after Donald Winnicott] as contexts for introducing new experiences and healing (2007: 57).

Adler became especially curious about the experience of the witness and the way in which that experience is shared with the mover.

Adler is widely credited with formalizing the practice and with establishing clear methods and formats. These are detailed in her book *Offering from the Conscious Body* (2002) which is comprised of three sections: 'The Individual Body', 'The Collective Body' and 'The Conscious Body' which respectively explore the dyad format, group/collective explorations and the presence of energetic/spiritual phenomena. Full discussion of each of these areas is beyond the scope of this study. However, some of the principles and procedures outlined in 'The Individual Body' section that arise out of the shared field between the mover and witness in the dyad format are of direct relevance to my own dance-making practice. Adler describes this dyad form of Authentic Movement thus:

The outer form of the work is simple: one person moves in the presence of another [...] The witness [...] carries a larger responsibility for consciousness as she sits to the side of the movement space. She is not 'looking at' the person moving, she is witnessing, listening, bringing a specific *quality of attention* or presence to the experience of the mover. The mover works with eyes closed in order to expand her experience of listening to the deeper levels of her kinaesthetic reality. Her task is to respond to a sensation, to an inner impulse, to energy [...] Her response to this energy creates movement that can be visible or invisible to the witness [...] After the mover moves, the mover and the witness usually speak together about the material that has emerged during the movement time, thus bringing formerly unconscious processes into consciousness (1999a: 142 my italics).

There are two points here – stemming from the principles articulated by Adler above – that are relevant to my dance-making practice. The first is the notion of witnessing (and the 'quality of attention' which this refers to) and the second is the process by which the experience of moving is articulated by the mover.

### *Witnessing and the inner witness*

According to Adler, 'the presence of the outer witness can become a compassionate model for the aspect of the mover that is becoming conscious of her own experience' (2002: 6). This process of becoming conscious of one's experience is termed as 'the inner witness' (2002: 6). Adler identifies the overarching purpose of Authentic Movement practice as the development of the inner witness. She notes that the inner witness might also be described as 'the development of consciousness' (Adler 2007a: 25) – or what I might describe as the capacity for mindful self-observation.

A strong enough inner witness means that the person can track her movements and inner experiences while immersed in them. Her inner witness also must be able to modulate her movement experience (Adler 2002: 41).

In terms of dance-making, I understand the inner witness to be that part of myself that is simultaneously experiencing and reflecting, generating and shaping – making while dancing. Taken as a whole, this thesis offers articulations of the process of dance-making from the perspective of the dancer-maker's inner-witness.

### *Discerning and articulating experience*

After moving, the mover begins a process of speaking *from* rather than 'about' experience. Connecting with the 'felt-sense' of the body (after Gendlin 1978/2003) in the moment of speaking is thus encouraged, as is speaking in the present tense, in order to stay as close as possible to the experience. Here Adler describes the process of transitioning into language:

[You] can choose to open now toward finding words that are born, moment to moment, from the movement itself. If you choose this way, try closing your eyes again as you begin discovering words, choosing some of them, surrendering into others, just as you discover, choose, or surrender into the movement itself when you are working in the space. This continuation of your inner focus as you are sitting here [...] also makes speaking in the present tense natural. The present tense reminds us, holds us, encourages us to remain in the embodied, moving experience, riding it as it becomes language. Learning to speak experience rather than speaking about it means learning how to speak without abandoning the authenticity of the moving experience (2002: 13).

Here we can see how Adler understands the articulation of experience in terms of language to be a continuation of a process, with words 'becoming more vibration than symbol, [bridging] the experience from body to consciousness' (2002: 16).

Adler credits her encounter with psychologist John Weir as being particularly influential in developing certain language-based protocols around the mover-witness

exchange (2002: xiii). Weir developed a method of communication which he called 'percept language', which encourages individuals to express their experience of moving and witnessing 'by using the words "I saw" or "I felt" rather than projecting or interpreting or judging other people's experience' (Stromsted and Haze 1999: 114). Adler notes that her encounters with percept language 'opened me to a whole new way of understanding experience in relationship to another human being [and that percept language] is the source of my work with the witness' (cited in Stromsted and Haze 1999: 115). In my experience, the protocols for communication within Authentic Movement (such as 'owning' one's experience and speaking in the present tense) create an atmosphere of care surrounding choice of language and generate space for multiple and varying accounts of an experience.

According to Adler, the capacity for conscious articulation within Authentic Movement is developed through the practice of 'tracking', which refers to the process of *naming* the predominant qualities of the moving experience following the chronology by which they emerged. The multi-dimensional aspects of the moving experience are embraced when tracking movement; therefore, movers might name emotional qualities, images, sensations or proprioceptive memories when tracking. However, Adler observes that by tracking the physical movement in particular (meaning the proprioceptive or kinaesthetic content), the mover 'carves an articulate map, a sculptural one, which grounds all that the mover and witness share. The map reflects a collection of experiences, pools of movement' (Adler 2002: 17). The term 'pool' here refers to a clustering or section of movement that has a distinct identity for the mover. As the moving experience is tracked or mapped in terms of pools, Adler notes that 'the detail within [...the pools] often becomes more accessible as well as certain transitions between pools becoming significant' (Adler 2002: 17). For me, the capacity to track movement is related to the concentration of the dancer-maker because the capacity to 'hold' and hold onto the experience of moving is very relevant to forming movement material out of the experience of moving.

Adler describes how the process of tracking brings to light the uniqueness of the individual's perspective on his or her own moving experience:

Movers have different natures, specific ways of experiencing their worlds. One is more emotional, another more kinaesthetic, another more thoughtful, imagetic, or tactile. One mover might find tracking emotion quite easy but be more challenged by tracking physical movement (2002: 18).

These 'specific ways of experiencing' movement have been developed by Authentic Movement teacher Linda Hartley into a pedagogical approach where different modes or 'channels' of perception (such as proprioception, sensation, emotion and image) are foregrounded, so that their presence becomes more conscious and so that one might practice speaking from these different channels of experience (Hartley 2010, 2011). In

Hartley's teaching, particular emphasis is placed on naming the proprioceptive dimensions of movement (that is, on kinaesthetic initiation, bodily organisation, spatial pathway and orientation) *in conjunction with* emotional and imaginative content. In my experience, this basis in physicalized movement creates a spaciousness in the relationship with emergent material in the sense that its grounded materiality offers a basis from which other qualities of experience may emanate. I have found that the process of attending to the different layers of experience – while remaining based in tracking the details of physicality – is a rich resource for unpacking the experience of moving and, in terms of this thesis, for unpacking the experience of dance-making.

In the first portion of this chapter, I have identified and historically contextualised certain aspects of Authentic Movement which are relevant to dance-making practices through their attentiveness to movement processes. From Whitehouse's origination of the practice, these include the 'attitude of openness' and the concern with developing a subjective relationship with movement material through transitional processes of reflection. These processual attitudes within the practice were further evolved by Adler into the attentional practice of 'witnessing' and into certain protocols for the very intense reflection on – or articulations of – the moving experience. Authentic Movement enables a holistic approach to processing movement, which allows for the multi-layered nature of experience to be embraced while moving.

As a result of this practice/research (informed by the contextualisation in the preceding section), I would now distil the potential synergies between Authentic Movement and my dance-making practice as: *witnessing, the attitude of openness, articulating the moving experience* (following moving) and *attending to the multi-layered nature of movement* experience. Recognising these key aspects of Authentic Movement for the purposes of researching into my own dance-making practice has allowed me to become more reflective and reflexive about my dance-making practice as well as to become clearer about those features of Authentic Movement that distinguish it from other kinds of movement and somatic practices (a point that I return to in the conclusion). In Chapter 3, I expand upon these processual qualities of Authentic Movement (*witnessing, opening, articulating and layering*) in relation to my practical concerns as a dance-maker with forming movement material over an extended period of time. In effect, in Chapter 3, I configure these qualities into *methods* for dance-making. But first, in the section which follows, I offer an overview of other dance/performance-makers' applications of Authentic Movement in order to further situate my approach.

## Existing applications of Authentic Movement to dance/performance-making

In this section, I locate my dance-making practice in relation to other dance-makers who draw on Authentic Movement as a *key framework* for their creative process. Artists who have explored and explicitly acknowledged the application of Authentic Movement to their dance/performance-making practices include Andrea Olsen (2007), Joan Davis (2007a/b), Penny Collinson (2005) and Emma Meehan (2011, 2012, 2015). To my knowledge, other dance-makers who incorporate some aspects of Authentic Movement practice into their dance/performance-making processes include Jess Allen and Bronwyn Preece (2015), Simon Whitehead (2015, 2018), Jessica Lerner (2015), Shaun McLeod (2016), Anna Macdonald (2016, 2017), and Rosalind Holgate-Smith (2018). *Contact Quarterly* dedicated an entire edition to Authentic Movement in 2002 (Volume 27: 2). Jane Bacon's research (2006, 2007, 2010a, 2012) on Authentic Movement as a mode of methodological enquiry has been a significant influence on my approach.

Authentic Movement is largely adopted as a means of exploring open-ended improvisatory processes and not as a means for shaping and returning to movement material. The one exception to this (that I am aware of) is Meehan's project *Speak*, where she explored her own dilemma related to working with 'pre-rehearsed scores of movement' and whether this is at odds with the ethos of Authentic Movement (2015: 326).<sup>58</sup> About this dilemma Meehan observes:

I felt like there was a gap between the pre-written [material...] and the new information I was receiving from my body-mind in the moment of performance, as I was experiencing myself in a completely new context (2015: 326).

In my own research, I am choosing to deliberately dwell in this 'gap' (between pre-rehearsed material and the new information being received in the moment of returning to it) as a space of creative and immersive attention. I unpack this process of simultaneously attending to what is known and what is emerging (in relation to *perch*) in chapter three.

To my knowledge there has been no written survey of dance/performance makers who work with Authentic Movement. Although such a survey would be valuable to the fields of Dance Studies and Authentic Movement, it is currently beyond the scope of this research. This would be a challenging study to conduct because – as Garrett Brown has observed – the principles and protocols of Authentic Movement proliferate in contemporary dance improvisation practices although they are often unacknowledged as such (2007: 198-207). For this reason, I have had to limit my discussion to those artists who explicitly acknowledge Authentic Movement as being central to their dance/performance-making processes. For the

purposes of situating my own research, the work of Davis, Collinson, Meehan and Olsen is presented below in relation to the two main applications of Authentic Movement to dance-making that I can discern within these artists' practices. The first is how Authentic Movement can inform the awareness or attentiveness of the dancer/performer and thus resource the capacity for improvising and creative decision-making. The second is how Authentic Movement offers a means of exploring the performer-audience relationship.

### *Authentic Movement as an awareness practice*

Since 2002, Irish dance artist Joan Davis has been developing a performance practice which transposes the format of Authentic Movement into spontaneously composed ensemble performances. She refers to this practice as *Maya Lila*.<sup>59</sup> Audiences travel to Davis' seaside home in Wicklow, Ireland, to witness performance 'offerings'. The very experienced performers in Davis' work spend many weeks preparing together before the offerings are opened to unknown public or 'External Witnesses' (2007a). Davis writes that:

In Authentic Movement, there is no intention except to be present to and witness what arises in the movement. In *Maya Lila*, the primary intention is to clarify the movement, or to clarify the vehicle through which the movement emerges, and to offer loving presence to whatever arises. It becomes training in crafting the use of attention, similar to any meditation practice used to discipline and quieten the mind (2007a: 79).

Within the relatively undirected framework of Davis' offerings, the main role of the performer is to attend to their experience:

When a dancer steps into the movement space there is no given structure or form through which to express herself. There is simply her own body, with all of its personal history held in its tissue [...] The dancer's body is the articulate crafted tool through which the content and stories get presented as art in the moment (2007a: 82).

Davis differentiates her practice from improvisation in that she believes that 'staying present within the unknowingness is the art', whereas improvisation (according to Davis) 'is more about playing with the forms as they come up or deciding on a form and then playing with it' (2007: 66). For Davis, improvisation operates more 'at the ego level' whereas she identifies her work (as developed out of Authentic Movement) as 'arising from the emptiness [...] form coming from formlessness' (2007: 66).<sup>60</sup> For this reason and in light of the very open format of the *Maya Lila* offerings, Davis emphasizes the importance of personal responsibility on the part of performers in terms of what they present: 'It is the dancer's responsibility to hold her own boundaries [...] The [...] discernment of our own material and what we choose to show

are crucial' (2007a: 83). Thus, in Davis' preparatory work for performance, the development of the inner witness is crucial to the performers' capacity to discern what material is shown and performed (2007a: 113-114).

In addition to Authentic Movement, Davis incorporates material from Body-Mind Centering and voice work as means of preparation for performance. Davis writes:

The body is not just undifferentiated flesh. It is made up of muscle and bones, organs, ligaments, fluids, connective and nervous tissue and much more [...] I often use Body-Mind Centering as a springboard into Authentic Movement. It helps me to truly enter into my own body (2007a: 64).

The co-existence of Body-Mind Centering material with Authentic Movement in Davis' work reflects their co-existence in the BMC and IBMT training programmes. In these programmes, experiential anatomy, the developmental movement patterns and Authentic Movement are considered to be complementary in that, during experiential anatomy and developmental movement studies, attention is focussed around a particular body system or co-ordination in the body, while Authentic Movement offers a spacious and permissive framework for movement. Hence, in the BMC and IBMT training, Authentic Movement is sometimes offered at the end of a day or training period as a means of 'integrating' more focused material with a wider attention. In the IBMT training, I encountered Authentic Movement alongside the delivery of experiential anatomy and the developmental movement patterns. The practice of articulating one's experience – which is so intrinsic to Authentic Movement – was learned alongside the practice of embodying (and therefore languaging) different body systems and movement patterns. It therefore makes sense that in my own practice I would also have the language of experiential anatomy and the developmental movement patterns to hand as they were braided within my initial, in-depth encounter with Authentic Movement.

A dancer-performer with Davis for four years, dance-artist and Authentic Movement teacher Penny Collinson describes Authentic Movement as an *awareness practice* that infiltrates her practices of performing and facilitating dance with a 'quality of presence' (2005: 29).

Collinson conducted her 2005 MA by research through two types of practice-based research: the development of a facilitation practice for adults of various backgrounds and consideration of the potential relevance of Authentic Movement for the professional contemporary dancer.

The facilitation practice coheres around the notion of 'revelation' and is 'concerned with the experience of listening to our body-self and entering into a liberating state of awareness and play' (2005: 7). The workshops follow a three-phase process of 'descent', of 'extension' (or expansion) and of bringing these into a dyad format (Collinson 2005: 34).<sup>61</sup> Collinson's primary interest is in how the practice of Authentic Movement enables encounters

with what is 'unknown' and how this encounter has the potential to both deepen and expand dancers' movement practice (2005: 30). Collinson writes:

I have come to see that in accepting the condition (emotional, psychological, physical), that we are in at any given time, allows us then to experience the 'truth' of that experience and 'be' it. The 'play' of this is that we are emerged in the unfolding of this state, and in the condition of not knowing what will happen (2005: 7).

Her research enquiry essentially revolves around the embodied awareness that is cultivated within Authentic Movement practice and how dancers might employ the tools that Authentic Movement offers in an artistic/performance context (2005: 6-7). To Collinson:

Awareness is [...] the opposite of habitual or mechanistic actions and responses, and in developing it, we have the potential to move in ways which are freer, unlimited, and have more range (2005: 29).

In Collinson's research, 'awareness' and 'presence' are linked with improvisation practice particularly as they relate to 'to a dancer/performer's capacity to be able to "hold" the tension of not knowing what they will dance next' (2005: 10). She points out that the awareness cultivated in Authentic Movement practice is intrinsically generative:

Participating in the discipline [of Authentic Movement] is a creative process and being attentive to involuntary and voluntary impulses and sensations that arise, in the moment, means that each time I practice Authentic Movement I will experience something different and my movement will change (Collinson 2005: 3-4).

She describes how engaging with Authentic Movement practice has transformed her own movement vocabulary as a dancer 'enabling [her] to find a new movement language: namely, movement which emerges from and [out] of my bodily experience' (Collinson 2005: 3-4). This capacity for developing personal movement material is also briefly echoed in Andrea Olsen's (2007) writing on the ways in which Authentic Movement might inform performance practice.

Like Collinson and Olsen, I too am interested in how Authentic Movement practice can give rise to 'movement which emerges from and out of bodily experience', movement that might also seem to be quite 'personal'. As indicated earlier, I consider the attentiveness that Authentic Movement cultivates – the inner witness – to be equivalent with the mindful self-observation or creative reflexivity of the dancer-maker. In my own dance-making practice, I extend the activity of the inner witness to the project of forming, returning to and deepening the relationship with movement material.

### *Authentic Movement as a model for the performer-audience relationship*

An ongoing area of research for Davis has been the search for the appropriate performance format or 'container' for presenting her work. Davis' understanding of boundaries and containment is related to temporal and spatial parameters, but perhaps more significantly it is related to the energetic exchange between performer and audience (2007a: 44). Davis' training in Process-oriented Psychology<sup>62</sup> (as well as other body-based therapies) underlies her understanding of relationality. She therefore characterizes the performance exchange (between performer and audience) as a mutually influential field of relatedness which is '[co-created] by the Movers and the Witness Audience in their shared presence [...] It is not performance in the traditional sense of the word' (Davis 2007a: 10). Olsen echoes this potential for co-creation in her performance work when she states that 'the relationship between the mover and the witness parallels that of performer and audience [...] This transference of awareness between the audience and the performer enables transformation for both' (Olsen 2007a: 187).

As an analogue for energetic exchange between mover and witness and performer and audience, Davis dedicated several successive research periods to the form and function of the cell. Of primary importance in this analogy is the presence of the cell membrane, which serves to filtrate, nourish, protect and contain the integrity of the cell (Davis 2007a: 155). The fluid exchange across the cell membrane points to the innate relationality of the cell structure and of all life. As a metaphor for performance presence, the cell membrane offers awareness of boundary and of intake from the environment (Davis 2007a: 173). For Davis, the image of the cell membrane is another way of encapsulating her interest in the relational dynamics of the mover-witness or performer-audience relationship.

Within her performance work, Davis believes that the quality of attention the performer models (being fully themselves in the presence of another) may enable 'the Witness Audience to go deep within themselves and [...] experience many unknown layers within' (2007a: 79). From Davis' concern with creating a safe space for performers, the presence of a 'Meta-Witness' was introduced. As the Witness-Audience are not necessarily acting 'in service to the movers' (as they would in Davis' understanding of Authentic Movement), the Meta-Witness is a designated extra-witness whose presence has 'the effect of removing any need or dependency the Movers might have on the Witness Audience' (Davis 2007a: 46-47). Davis believes that the Meta-Witness contributes to the performer's ability to free her/himself from the 'need for understanding, acceptance and adulation', a predicament that unsettled Davis earlier in her career as a performer-maker (2007a: 160).

Collinson likewise describes how her relationship with performance has shifted through engagement with Authentic Movement. The 'presentational' attitude of the performer

within conventional performance practice is contrasted with Authentic Movement practice where the mover:

is not being-for-other, instead she acknowledges herself as a body-of-action and her movement is her lived-body expression. The mover is aware that she/he is in the presence of a witness, but his/her attention is toward her body-self. The mover's intention is to be a container for the energetic experience of being moved, and not to present anything to the witness (Collinson 2005: 16).

By engaging regularly with the practice of Authentic Movement, Collinson describes how she has re-patterned her relationship with performance in a way that has been empowering for her as a performer.

Emma Meehan's doctoral research and subsequent publications (2010, 2011, 2017) revolve around Davis' *Maya Lila* practice and are focused on the mediational role of the performer and on the state of reflection that is stirred in its audiences. Meehan points out that Davis 'places somatic practices usually used in a therapeutic context into the sphere of public performance' and that psychoanalytic theory might therefore offer 'useful insights for understanding the operation of the dynamic relationships' which underlie the performance work (2011: 4). Meehan applies Object Relations theory<sup>63</sup> to describe how, in *Maya Lila*, 'a relational autobiography negotiated between performer, audience and environment' is developed 'which challenges notions of self-identity as stable and autonomous' (2011: 158). Meehan proposes that a unique aspect of Davis' work – in contrast to other forms of participatory performance – is the quality of reflection that is cultivated in audiences as a result of the openness and shape-shifting quality of the performers (2011: 229).<sup>64</sup> Meehan goes on to argue that Davis' practice offers 'tools for developing movement capacity and dealing with personal material as it arises in the rehearsal process' (2011: 4). The relationship with emerging content is key to Meehan's engagement with Davis' work (first as a participant and then as an assistant) and is also key to the independent creative work that Meehan develops alongside her research on Davis (2011, 2013, 2015, 2018a/b). For example, in her current performance/installation work, Meehan is exploring her interest in the interactional dynamics of Authentic Movement through the notion of 'hosting' (2018, 2019). The practice of 'hosting' audience is also something that I have begun to consider through the process of performing *perch*, which I identify as a possible direction for future research in the Conclusion.

Most dancers and dance/performance-makers who have adopted Authentic Movement as a tool for dancing and dance-making have applied it either as a mode of open-ended improvisation, or as an analogue for the performer-audience relationship. However, while I

do acknowledge the primacy of the performer-audience relationship within dance/performance-making, in this research I am focussed on investigating *the dancer's attentional and processual relationship with movement material*. This particular research project can therefore most closely be related to the intricacies of the first point raised above: how certain aspects of Authentic Movement might inform the attentiveness of the dancer-maker within a dance-making process (and as we will see in the following chapter, they also allow that process to be communicated with a clarity that does not sacrifice its subjective nature). Authentic Movement offers an approach to processing movement that resonates with my dance-making practice by offering a *holistic mode of enquiring into movement* that is continually opening to what is not yet known while at the same time deepening the understanding of what is. In this sense then, I propose that Authentic Movement provides an attentional, processual approach which can support, reveal, develop and deepen the practice of forming movement material across an extended period of time. I know of no other artists who have applied Authentic Movement principles in this way. In the following chapter, I articulate and explore the process of developing *perch* in relation to those synergies between Authentic Movement and dance-making that I have identified and synthesised here. I refer to these as the *processual qualities* of Authentic Movement.

### 3 Making *perch* with the processual qualities of Authentic Movement

The process of developing *perch* has taken place sporadically across four years.<sup>65</sup> For the duration of the making process, I have worked (mostly) alone in my studio space in Hope Mill, Manchester. A session would typically last between two and five hours involving alternating phases of moving, writing and drawing. My latest calculation is that there have been around 120 sessions in total. In this chapter, I provide a detailed examination of this process in two ways: first, through expanding on the application of the processual qualities of Authentic Movement in relation to the making of *perch*, and second, by considering the compositional features (or form) that *perch* takes up as a result of this exploration. I explore how movement material emerges and remains, and how the compositional priorities or form of the work are intertwined with and affected by the processual qualities. As such, this chapter contributes to understanding how a work *is formed* out of a somatically-informed dance-making practice, something which (as I indicated in the Introduction and Chapter 1) has not to my knowledge been previously articulated.

By drawing upon the reference points for an attentional, processual approach to dance-making that were contextualised in chapter one, and those aspects of Authentic Movement that I identified as relevant to my dance-making practice in chapter two, it should now be possible to articulate the process of forming movement material within a solo, contemporary dance-making practice from the perspective of the dancer-maker *in terms of the practice itself*. That is to say, in terms adapted from the language of Authentic Movement and developed during my use of it while making *perch*. In terms, then, which fit as closely as possible to the process they are articulating, having been refined in relation to it, and which are thus uniquely able to preserve its evasive, attentional and processual nature.

As we have seen, many aspects of Authentic Movement resonate with my dance-making practice in simple but distinct ways. In chapter two, I distinguished four aspects in particular: *processual qualities* that support the processing of (and long-term relationship with) movement material in my own dance-making practice. We have *the notion of witnessing, the attitude of inner openness*, the practice of reflecting on or *articulating the moving experience* (following moving) and the practice of *attending to the multi-layered nature of movement* experience. Throughout this chapter, I will examine how these qualities are expressed in and through my methods for dance-making. But it is worth pausing here to say something about their status, and how they operate.

As the reader will see, the organisation of this chapter is primarily 'expositional' in that it gives voice to the processes underlying the making of *perch*. But that does not mean that it

is merely descriptive, if by that we mean ‘purely’ subjective, self-indulgent or uncritical. It is expositional in the sense that it looks closely at the making process in all its detail and complexity, and in order to do this – in order to *preserve* what is most elusive in movement practices – it employs the terminology that I have developed out of Authentic Movement. These terms then – *witnessing*, *opening*, *articulating*, *layering* – operate in much the same way that theoretical terms do (for example, when dance-makers choose to take terms like ‘multiplicity’ or ‘destratification’ from the writings of Gilles Deleuze – see Roche 2011), but with an important difference. *Witnessing*, *opening*, *articulating* and *layering* are not concepts or ideas. They are themselves *practices*, refined into a communicative structure that can then function as concepts and ideas – in the sense that they offer a terminology and structure through which I can organise and communicate my discussion. But unlike an extrinsic theory, they are uniquely able to preserve the attentional and processual nature of the practice out of which they were developed.

Indeed, they have multiple advantages when faced with the near impossible task of putting the dance-making process into language. We may notice that they are all verbs. Rather than describing dance-making as something, they describe something specific that is happening *in* the dance-making process. In this sense, they are literal rather than metaphorical, and specific (to my practice) rather than general. They speak the language of movement practices, rather than translating them into another language that was not designed to express them. They render movement practice communicable, just like a theory would, but without sacrificing its uniquely attentional and processual nature. Another thing they preserve of dance-making, in addition to its processuality, is its *particularity*. Rather than general terms that have been used to translate multiple different practices into a common language, these terms are specifically fitted to the practice I am describing. They were refined and developed in relation to it, and share its origins in Authentic Movement practices. Practice and language are sympathetic in this case. They understand each other.

In short, the processual qualities perform the critical and communicative functions of a theoretical framework within the context of artistic research, but without sacrificing a certain closeness to the practice. They hopefully provide a third way, between mere description, and theoretical representation.

This chapter therefore explicitly addresses both of the practical enquiries driving this research: the enquiry into how it might be possible to articulate the process of forming movement material from the perspective of the dancer-maker and the enquiry into the synergies between dance-making and Authentic Movement. It thereby makes several contributions to knowledge: it provides an articulation of the process of forming movement material from the perspective of the dancer-maker; it articulates the synergies between

dance-making and Authentic Movement, and it suggests that, through this ‘insider-perspective’, it is possible to point toward the epistemological potential of dance-making.

*Rationale for chapter design: Expositionality, resonance and correspondence*

One contribution of this project is its critical engagement with the predominant approach to artistic research in dance. By adopting a methodological framework that is aligned with dance-making practices, I am seeking to communicate aspects of practice in ways that depart from the convention of drawing on an extrinsic theoretical framework in order to communicate and validate the findings of the research. Since one of the main aims of this research is to elucidate the process of forming movement material *from the perspective of the dancer-maker*, in this chapter in particular it is absolutely necessary to centralise my own voice. I therefore embrace the subjective account of practice as an essential part of a *detailed* examination of the creative process which is being investigated as a *unique* contribution to knowledge. Alongside this, references to other dance/movement artists and practitioners of Authentic Movement (which were established in the Introduction, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2) are further extended throughout this chapter.

In order to draw the reader into the detail of my making process, the writing in this chapter is interspersed with *companion materials* such as journal entries, scores, drawings and photography that have accompanied the making process. The identities of these various materials are by and large self-evident (as in the case of photographs and drawings) but in the case of different registers of writing they are labelled as either journal entries or scores.

In the introduction, I situated the overall design of this thesis in terms of its ‘expositionality’, in line with one of the emerging imperatives within artistic research, which is to ‘expose’ and disseminate artistic research in a way that remains faithful to its ‘essential qualities’ (Schwab 2012: 25). Kramer and Meehan (2019) remind us that the ‘*exposing* of artistic research is not about illustrating “what the artwork is” but about opening up its (philosophical) implications’ – its ‘epistemic potential’. In this vein, Kramer and Meehan note that expositionality ‘asks us to reflect on what the artistic research process needs [in order] to expose its epistemic potentials and how this might be done in a forward motion and through the practice’ (2019). This expositional approach to dissemination contrasts with a more traditionally academic approach to dissemination, which aims to archive and subsequently analyse a creative practice. Such an archival or analytical approach would be practically and ideologically inconsistent with the attentional and processual nature of this research enquiry

and would therefore also be ineffective in faithfully disseminating its contribution to knowledge.

Kramer and Meehan further unpack the notion of expositiveness in terms of 'resonance' and 'correspondence', for the purposes of generating 'a tangible and conceptually productive relationship between artistic research processes and their modes of dissemination' (2019). They observe that, in the context of artistic research, *resonance* 'emphasises finding formats of dissemination that vibrate and re-sound with the practice' while *correspondence* 'helps us to consider how to set up relations and conditions for sharing (even in less obviously suitable situations)' (2019). These terms offer ways of exploring 'what form artistic research outputs need to take to be productive' for both the artist-researcher's practice and for the encounter with audience/public (Kramer and Meehan 2019).

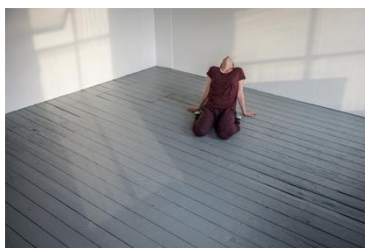
As we shall see, the companion materials that appear in this chapter have been generated and selected (for inclusion here) because of their direct *resonance* with my dance-making practice. Their presence and arrangement give visibility to the epistemological potential of the practice because of how these materials *resonate* with the essential qualities of the research (namely its attentionality and processuality as expressed through the qualities of *witnessing*, *opening*, *articulating* and *layering*). We shall also see how their selective and sequential arrangement within this chapter is *correspondent* with the context in which they appear: a largely written yet multi-modal thesis in the context of artistic research in the UK that has been specifically designed to precede the encounter with a live, processual dance-making practice.<sup>66</sup> This pathway for examination was chosen so that the encounter with the live work would be heavily informed by the epistemological potential of the practice that is articulated in this thesis.

The notion of correspondence creates the possibility for the artist-researcher 'to allow the format for sharing to grow incrementally with the materials, environment, collaborators and audiences' and in this way 'correspondence happens [...] through being immersed so that forms [for sharing or dissemination] evolve together [with the practice]' (Kramer and Meehan 2019). Hence, alongside the incremental growth of *perch*, I also developed and designed this chapter incrementally and chronologically. Writing this chapter has thus turned into an exercise of bringing the act of dance-making into correspondence with the act of thesis writing and therefore into correspondence with the act of imagined thesis *reading*. This is what artist-scholars Kirsi Heimonen and Leena Rouhiainen have described as '[exposing] something while simultaneously making the performativity of this showing apparent' (2019). Similarly, Schwab and Borgdorff have observed that modalities of dissemination in artistic research often involve 'a redoubling of practice in order to artistically move from artistic ideas to epistemic claims' and that the function of this redoubling of practice is to create 'a reflective distance within itself that allows it to be simultaneously the

subject and object of an inquiry' (2014: 15). In other words, in conjunction with making a dance (*perch*) with an imagined witness in mind, I have also been constructing this chapter (and indeed entire thesis) with an imagined reader in mind, *an active reader* who would willingly engage with the essential qualities of the research, first through their own reading process and second through their live encounter with the dance.

In sum: the design of this chapter reflects its subject matter (the epistemological potential of a processual, attentional approach to dance-making), and the overriding research imperative of this project, which is to articulate practice in terms that emanate from the practice itself. The companion materials that appear in this chapter operate as a means of expressing resonance and thereby evoking 'vibrational potential' (Kramer and Meehan 2019) or otherwise 'giving life' to the discussion. Through their arrangement, I am seeking to create the conditions for the encounter with these materials (conditions for the experience of reading itself) that are *evocative* of the *processual qualities* of my dance-making practice. True to the cyclical nature of the practice, the writing process of this chapter has served not only to develop new understandings of the practice but also to further evolve the practice itself. These understandings are articulated for the reader as the chapter proceeds and summarised in the conclusion in relation to the overall contribution to knowledge.

Given that this is an artistic research project operating in a multi-modal 'tradition' of presentation and given that at this stage in the thesis the *modus operandi* of my practice has been thoroughly established, I encourage the reader to bring their awareness of the accumulated content of the thesis up until now, as well as a quality of openness, to their encounter with the materials which follow.



*27 August 2014 (journal entry which poetically elaborates on the title of the work and which expresses its serendipitous emergence)*

*anchor  
secure  
dig  
settle  
sink  
stay*

*'perch'*

### **The processual qualities of Authentic Movement**

The notion of **'witnessing'** – or what Adler also refers to as 'witness consciousness' (2002) – is fundamental to the practice of Authentic Movement and to my dance-making practice. Witnessing aims toward an open yet concentrated 'quality of presence' practiced in relationship between a mover and a witness (Adler 2002; Hartley 2004). Borrowing a term from psychotherapist Arnold Mindell, Hartley describes witnessing as a 'meta-skill' or as an 'embracing attitude which both guides and contains' (2004: 66). Through practice, the witnessing presence is internalized by the mover as the 'inner witness' (Adler 2002).

Witnessing while moving supports noticing how one notices which, in turn, affects the choices that are subsequently made, like revving up receptivity prior to activity. This sensing into the moment prior to action – into contingency – is akin to the sensitivity that surrounds artistic decision-making and live composition. In the context of dance-making, I understand my inner witness to be equivalent with the embodied concentration of the dancer-maker intent on making something, albeit slowly and out of receptive processes. Joan Davis describes the inner – or, in her language, the 'internal' – witness as 'that aspect of ourselves that can follow, recall, organize, describe and give sense and meaning to our internal experiences during and/or after an activity in which we are fully engaged' (Davis 2007a: 10). The inner witness is that capacity to pay attention generously: to remain conscious while also remaining 'open'. In my dance-making practice, I understand my inner witness to include my general presence to what is happening, my awareness of (and criticality around) my own culturally-conditioned standpoint and my discernment as a dance-maker.

Adler points out that the practice of witnessing has the potential to '[produce] a sense of clarity in relation to one's own behaviour, enacted or internal' (Adler 1999a: 149). Witnessing therefore has certain affinities with reflexive enquiry (Etherington 2004), with 'reflection-in-action' (Schon 1983) and with 'mindfulness' (Kabat-Zinn 2016). Although

witnessing (or reflexivity) is identified here as a core aspect of Authentic Movement practice, it is worth noting that reflexivity is also recognized as a core aspect of artistic research (Nelson 2013). Kim Etherington characterises reflexivity as a 'self-awareness [that] creates a dynamic process of interaction' and as a 'circulating energy between context of researcher and researched' which produces a certain transparency regarding the underlying ideologies of that research (2004: 37). With regard to artistic research such as this, reflexivity is key to dealing with the complexities that arise when one's practice is both the means and the subject of research. This research project as a whole could be considered as an extended exercise in witnessing or reflexivity.

Central to the practice of witnessing is the intention to enter the practice in a state of 'not knowing'. Bacon suggests that:

Authentic Movement [...] relies on the individual having a particular attitude of openness towards the process. The mover waits and then allows herself to give shape and form to whatever arises not checked or mediated by a conscious attitude of what one should look like or how one should behave (2010: 68).

From this **attitude of openness** – which has also been characterized by Bacon as 'waiting' (above) and by Collinson as 'listening' (2005) – something arises. Attention moves toward and into whatever that might be. This attitude of waiting and listening raises awareness of sensations, feelings, stories in the body and, in my experience, also intensifies the presence of the surrounding environment and circumstances. The language surrounding Authentic Movement tends to emphasise its introspective qualities, but in my experience, there is also a turning outward. By closing the eyes and maintaining the intention to open, the innate porosity and relationality of the body becomes heightened, drawing attention to one's situatedness.<sup>67</sup>

Following the period of moving and opening to what is present, there is the attempt to sensitively bridge the gap between experience and language (or mark-making), to speak or draw *from*, rather than about, experience. Speaking from or **articulating** experience is a practice or discipline in its own right. Within Authentic Movement practice, 'tracking' is a strategy that is used for this. Bacon notes that when adopting language as its mode of reflection:

Tracking operates much like an anthropologist learning to be self-reflexive or the process of developing an inner therapist [...] where we are aware of our experiencing body as well as our surroundings and the implication of all we are. [...] The mover works to articulate the body's journey through the use of anatomical, rhythmical and dynamic descriptions (2012: 7-8).

Bacon's description of tracking indicates a multi-dimensional awareness (including anatomical, rhythmical and dynamic descriptions). The act of producing multi-dimensional

reflections from experience (whether spoken, written or drawn) inevitably gives weight to certain dimensions of experience over others in that what gets articulated is what gets taken forward or further unfolded.

Adler, Hartley and others sometimes refer to different modes or 'channels' of attention when moving, or 'being moved'. In her teaching, Hartley (2010-2011) differentiates these channels of attention into the realms of proprioception, sensation, emotion and image – an artificial separation of intertwined phenomena which nevertheless allows for the recognition of patterns and preferences and of what layers of experience are being foregrounded. As a practice, Authentic Movement offers the potential to 'unfold' these layers of experience. Teachings by Adler and Hartley (following on from Adler) encourage participants to delve into a single moment and thus to reveal its layers. In such an instance, the description of a brief moment can generate lengthy passages of witnessing. The implication of this approach for creative practice is that each of these layers has 'hidden dimensions' which, when 'opened', offers up a range of possibilities. This process of **layering** finds its way into the embodied forming and transforming of emergent material and into written accounts of my dance-making process in this chapter.

In sum: these processual qualities of Authentic Movement (*witnessing, opening, articulating* and *layering*) lend a precision to the creative process that arises out of the making itself. These qualities are *processual* because they nurture an attitude of ongoing enquiry (in effect a process) and because they offer a means by which to attend to that ongoing enquiry as it is taking place. These aspects of Authentic Movement underscore my methodology, for they are appropriate to the movement practice that they remain part of, and thus allow us to preserve emergent knowing as the product of artistic research. As such, they provide my dance-making practice with a critically-reflective dimension that isn't extrinsic but which results from seeing the practice refracted through itself.

In the remainder of this chapter, I explore the convergence of these processual qualities with my methods for dance-making. I have already established above how the processual quality of witnessing (or attending) underlies all aspects of the process at all times, so in what follows I expand in particular on the qualities of *opening, articulating* and *layering*. The discussion moves through these qualities of opening, articulating and layering consecutively as *if* they were consequential and distinct from one another, but it would be more accurate to characterise these qualities as practices which are overlapping and intertwined. Nevertheless, differentiating them in this separated and chronological way has served to bring these otherwise obscured processes of forming movement material (at least somewhat) into view. At this point it is important to signal to the reader that there are two key

themes/practices that have come to light as a result of this practice/research into the processual quality of layering: the practice of *returning to* movement material and the practice of *deepening the relationship with* movement material. As a result, these themes/practices of *returning to* and *deepening the relationship with* movement material have become recognisable as *practices* in themselves and are thus each given their own section of exposition further below.

In what follows I offer scores for each of these qualities/practices (*opening, articulating, returning, deepening*) in order to articulate, expose, explore and thus also disseminate these practices. Dance artist and scholar Kent De Spain notes that the attempt to '[frame] improvisational process in language [...] both reflects and produces specific qualities in practice' (2014: 37). In this sense, each of the scores that appears below has been composed to describe, to animate and to communicate these phases of my practice. *When reading such scores, I invite the reader to slow down and imagine their own dance-making (or other) creative practice.* With this suggestion I mean to emphasise how the readers' *process of reading* – or attentive, processual engagement with these scores – is part of the dissemination process of this research. The scores that appear in this chapter are also indicative of the facilitation and collaborative practices that have accompanied this research into my solo dance-making practice: practices that I will pursue subsequent to this doctoral research, but which are not the focus of this project.

## Opening

The process of making *perch* began (as my solo dance-making practice always does) by opening to what is present. This involves opening to all manner of circumstances – including personal, material, contextual conditions – which infuse the project as a whole. In the initial stages of making the work, I began each session by following the general format of Authentic Movement (but in a solo mode) moving for varying amounts of time (anything between five and thirty minutes) according to circumstances and personal inclination. The witness in this solo-scenario is my 'inner witness' – the capacity to be immersed in an experience and witness to it at the same time. My intention is to move in an undirected way and, while doing this, to witness what is arising. As Olsen notes in relation to the processes of witnessing and opening in her own dance-making practice, the aim is to 'observe ourselves without interrupting the natural flow of our movement' (2014: 42). I would usually set a timer to mark the end of the moving time and, following moving, I would reflect on the experience through drawing or writing or both. Sometimes the reflection time would be longer than the moving

time but it would never be shorter. *perch*, as a dance, has grown out of this simple procedure. I have attempted to express this quality of opening in the following score, which aims to both describe and facilitate this process:

***opening score***

*opening  
to what is  
present*

*acknowledging  
respecting  
what's there*

*sensitising*

*softening towards  
what is  
emerging  
in this  
context*

*situatedness*

*listening*

*receiving  
the details  
of experience*

*the uniqueness  
of each  
moment*

*'the importance  
[or potential significance]  
of small things'  
(Prestige 2015)*

*noticing and following  
impulses for movement  
as they arise*

*following  
appetites  
curiosities  
desires  
for moving*

*your inner witness*

*noticing what  
is emerging*

*allowing things to  
surface  
remain  
transform  
pass through*

*the act of  
noticing  
offering  
some space  
between you  
and what  
you are noticing*

*recognising  
the presence of  
sensations*

*sensations of the skin  
exteroception  
shifts in texture, temperature, pressure*

*the special senses  
seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting*

*sensations of the organs  
interoception  
blood flow, digestion, breath*

*proprioceptive organisation  
the presence of gravity  
orientation to  
ground and air  
earth and sky*

*welcoming  
imagination and  
emotion  
as companions*

*noticing the  
edges of awareness*

*widening*

*yielding into  
what is  
there*

*welcoming  
shifts in  
intensity*

*and  
duration*

*imagining  
being seen*

*witnessing  
your movement  
and  
your movement  
witnessing you*

*moving witnessing*

*the space  
as witness*

*vectors  
of relatedness*

*emerging  
interplay*

*offering*

*(September 2019)*

This score expresses a key interface between my core interests as a dance-maker and as an Authentic Movement practitioner: that of opening to and making from what is present. I refer back to this score as a general reminder of the sensitivity and curiosity that I experience when practicing Authentic Movement. Writing it, reading it and rewriting it conjures up a working atmosphere. Throughout all stages of working on *perch*, I have this opening score lightly in mind; it reminds me to notice what is surfacing in me in relationship to everything else. I have found some resonance in the writings of somatically-informed artists Miranda Tufnell and Chris Crickmay who convey a similar process of opening through terms such as ‘being receptive’, ‘allowing’ (1990: 11) or ‘widening’ (2004). However, it is important to note that Authentic Movement is not overtly acknowledged as an influence in Tufnell and Crickmay’s creative work, so these writings are perhaps an instance where some Authentic Movement principles can be seen in other somatically-informed improvisation practices.

In the language surrounding Authentic Movement practice, this notion of opening is often characterised in terms of ‘being moved’ or ‘surrendering’ to forces beyond one’s self. Language evoking these transpersonal dimensions of Authentic Movement is present for example in Whitehouse’s original writing about the practice:

The moment when 'I am moved' [...] is a moment when the ego gives up control, stops choosing, stops exerting demands [...] It is a moment of unpremeditated surrender that cannot be explained, repeated exactly, sought for or tried out (1999d: 82).

Like most movers, I have experienced this transpersonal phenomenon of 'being moved'. However, I generally refrain from overt reference to transpersonal dimensions of the practice in my own writing. This is because we are all subject to forces and energies beyond the bounds of our bodies, whether we are conscious of those forces or not and whether we are in Authentic Movement practice or not. Prior to my encounters with Authentic Movement, I would have understood this phenomenon of being moved by phenomena beyond myself as part of any open and sensitised approach to movement improvisation or embodied performance practice. Therefore, I prefer to avoid language that might mark this kind of experience as being exclusive to practitioners of Authentic Movement or as being reified in any way, since the capability for such experiences is (to my mind) part of being human.<sup>68</sup> Chodorow notes that Whitehouse also referred to this phenomenon of 'being moved' as a kind of *yielding* (1999b: 269). In my own practice, I am drawn to this term 'yielding' (see score above) for its potential to suggest a *giving in* to the particularities of circumstance and for grounding in what is present as a gateway into a process of opening.

Because of this attitude of inner openness, the movement that appears in *perch* hasn't consciously been generated around a particular theme, subject or style. Likewise, Tufnell and Crickmay note that movement which emerges in their somatically-informed, open approach to movement improvisation 'is not concerned with style, reflecting instead the particular and subtle intelligence of an individual body' (2004: 48). Similarly, Poynor adopts the term 'non-stylised movement' to refer to the kind of individually-driven emergent movement that 'ultimately becomes [one's own] style which ideally remains in a state of constant evolution' (2014b: 226). In relation to my own practice though, it would be false to equate this quality of openness either with the absence of style or with the intention to produce highly individualised movement. This is because, whenever one moves, one is always consciously or unconsciously drawing on physical memory – on one's 'body archive' (Whatley 2014: 131-132).<sup>69</sup> Moreover, within the practice of Authentic Movement, any kind of movement (or stillness) is welcomed, so this gives full permission to explore movement that is habitual and enculturated as well as movement that may appear to be idiosyncratic or unfamiliar. Stylised or 'received' movement vocabulary is welcome within my own practice since such vocabulary is an important part of my (or anyone's) movement heritage, which might also provide a rich source of investigation. Roche formulates the body archive of the independent dancer in terms of its 'moving identity' which she understands to be an:

accumulation of choreographic movement incorporations and training influences, which also includes the life path of a dancer as a gendered, socially and culturally located subject; [the moving identity] is a crucible, a host to the haunting power of choreographic traces (that remain available to be re-embodied again) (2015: 116).

Whenever I move, I am drawing on this crucible of traces and accumulations, which includes those socially and culturally conditioned parts of my identity. What is more, I consider my moving identity to be a major resource for the dances that I make.

What the quality of openness brings to this overt engagement with my body archive or moving identity is the fact that these pre-existing and pre-determined parts of oneself are accompanied by an awareness of those things that aren't yet known and are 'other' to my conscious understanding of personal identity. Educationalist Parker Palmer's description of identity is relevant to how I understand identity as an emergent phenomenon:

[Identity is] an evolving nexus where all the forces that constitute my life converge in the mystery of self: my genetic makeup, the nature of the man and woman who gave me life, the culture in which I was raised, people who have sustained me and people who have done me harm, the good and ill I have done to others and to myself, the experience of love and suffering – and much, much more. In the midst of that complex field, identity is a *moving intersection* of the inner and outer forces that make me who I am, converging in the irreducible mystery of being human (1998: 13 *my italics*).

This attitude towards identity as a moving intersection and as an interdependent phenomenon extends into my orientation toward art-making in the sense that it becomes possible to perceive dance-making as a deeply playful pursuit where the dancer-maker is coming to both know and un-know themselves, the movement material and the circumstances that they are immersed in. I return to the relevance of this point for facilitation practices in the conclusion.

This condition of continual knowing and unknowing is further reflected in my approach to dance-making in the sense that a wide range or *volume of movement content* is permissible and this content is subject to alterations throughout the making process. Olsen likewise notes how the openness of Authentic Movement cultivates the potential for 'endless diversity' in movement choice (2007: 322). Within *perch*, this diversity manifests in the co-incidence of different types of movement which themselves are constantly under construction. I indicated in the introduction how one of my long-standing compositional priorities as a dance-maker has been the search for coherence between disparate materials, so this is another reason why I have felt drawn to Authentic Movement as a basis for my own practice since its capaciousness provides the wherewithal for this compositional pursuit.

The condition of open-ness could also be conceived as a mode of *resourcing* my practice. The notion of resourcing is knowingly borrowed from the Halprins' *RSVP Cycles*

where resources are understood as 'the basic materials we have at our disposal. These include human and physical resources [including things such as one's own] motivation and aims' (Halprin, L. cited in Worth and Poynor 2004: 112). De Spain offers another way of defining resources, which resonates with my own approach:

'Resources' [...] are elements that you call upon, or that call upon you, when you are seeking material and inspiration for moving. They are what you are moving 'with' or 'about' or sensing the relationships between (2014: 14).

In the context of my dance practice, I consider 'resourcing' to refer to the process of actively noticing (or witnessing) the interplay between my moving presence and the dynamic circumstances which surround it – the process of opening to those things that call to me through their sense of potential.

The dual intention to witness and to open lends a sense of 'agency'<sup>70</sup> to this practice, for the purpose of opening is not to open to everything, but rather to decipher in the moment of moving what needs or wants to come forward – what is given attention. According to psychiatrist Bessel Van Der Kolk:

'Agency' is a technical term for the feeling of being in charge of your life: knowing where you stand, knowing that you have a say in what happens to you, knowing that you have some ability to shape your circumstances (2014: 95-96).

Being attentive to what one feels in order to understand why one feels that way and then enquiring into the impact of those feelings and understandings on one's actions is also relevant to the moment-to-moment processes of dancing and dance-making. I would argue that the capacity to find developing clarity about what one is feeling in relation to one's surroundings and circumstances is also a skill that one can cultivate – the skill of being resourceful. I return to the relevance of this point for facilitation practices in the conclusion.

Adler's understanding of the process of opening in Authentic Movement also emphasises the importance of consciousness, choice and thus agency:

You may choose to move or you may wait for an impulse to move. If an impulse arises you may choose to surrender to it, or you may choose to bring your will in relationship to it and say no. *What matters more than what you choose is your freedom of conscious choice, creating a developing clarity of your own subjective experience* (2002: 9 my italics).

In my experience, the framework of Authentic Movement cultivates resourcefulness on a personal and creative level because it offers a way of attending to the circumstantial particularity of experience while also opening one's attention beyond that particularity: a way of being in relationship both with what is present and with what is potentially present. The simultaneity of these two orientations of witnessing and opening is key to my own practice of

forming movement material over a long period of time, because it means that there is always something 'new' to be found in something that is known.

*13 October 2015 (journal entry which relates poetically to the processual quality of opening)*

*'opening' is like  
entering a room  
falling into a crevasse  
unravelling*

Acknowledging this quality of openness in my own dance-making has offered a means by which to articulate this rather amorphous aspect of my practice. In so doing, I have felt encouraged to commit more fully to this quality of openness (and amorphousness). So much so that I now recognise this 'phase' to be more like an underlying condition of my practice, something that is also shared by Bacon and Midgelow's *Critical Articulations Process*, whereby the phase of opening is understood to be implicit throughout, like 'a chorus weaving between the other phases and giving shape to the whole' (2014b: 12). Which is to say, that even while forming and performing *perch*, I am always opening. In this sense I now understand the processual quality of opening to be akin to what dance-maker Susan Rethorst describes as the 'dailiness' of her practice where time and again: 'One has to know and not know, prefer and not prefer [...] Dailiness allows [...] for embracing the excitement of being led by that stranger – the unmade dance' (2012: 7). As a maker, I experience this facility to open as a kind of creative optimism – that something can be made from anything. Hay's description of her own long-term solo practice is also relevant here: 'Over time, I learned to trust that my body had an infinite source of material, a new dance for me every day' (cited in Schouweiler 2017).

With this understanding, the generative potential of dancing and dance-making resides in the relationship between oneself and the world. This generative potential is neither solely within oneself nor outside of oneself. It is both within and reaches beyond oneself, and it is always there. In this research, I have been seeking a way to articulate (both to myself and to others) this holistic-relational-resourcefulness, which I perceive to be an underlying condition of my own and others' dance-making processes. As described in this section, the quality of 'opening' has become one way to articulate this.

## Articulating (or Harvesting)

*'The feeling,  
the experience comes first;  
then there's the naming of it,  
calling it into being'  
(Hay cited in Schouweiler 2017)*

*'What does that word do to what you are doing?'  
(Butcher 2015)*

As noted above – following the format of Authentic Movement – my own studio sessions alternate between periods of moving and periods of designated reflection which seek to articulate the experience of moving, using transitional processes of writing and drawing. Borrowing David Boud's definition, the term 'reflection' here is thus understood as 'a process of turning experience into learning, that is, a way of exploring experience in order to learn new things from it' (2001:10). In the context of somatic practices, Eddy notes that the alternation between moving and reflective activities engenders a 'creative interplay' of activity (2009: 8-9). Whilst discussing Authentic Movement more specifically, Johnson has pointed out that the 'disciplined' approach to reflection in Authentic Movement is one of its distinguishing features (compared with other somatic practices) wherein the aim is 'to allow words to emerge in the same way that movements emerged, not talking about the experience, but allowing words and thoughts to come from it' (2007). In Authentic Movement and in my dance-making practice alike, the practice of reflecting following moving is an act of remembering – of transliterating moving experience into language or drawn image – as well as being a generative process.

Harvesting is a term which I knowingly borrow from Contact Improvisation teacher Nancy Stark Smith, who uses it to refer to a period of active reflection where movers are 'gleaning from their experience of moving' (De Spain 2014: 50; Buckwalter 2010: 67). Stark Smith notes that this process of harvesting has 'a sort of fertilizing – composting you could say – effect on everybody else's awareness for the next time we're practicing' (cited in De Spain 2014: 50). Therefore, the notion of harvesting seems a particularly apt epithet for this reflective phase of my practice, both in terms of the labour that it implies (in looking back) but also because of its fruitful or productive dimensions. The act of harvesting both reflects back and projects forward. I therefore use the term harvesting interchangeably with the term articulating from now on in this thesis because of its existing usage within dance and also because of its metaphorical connotations.

In Authentic Movement practice, Davis notes that to reflect in an *embodied* way:

means all one's thoughts, concepts, stories and imaginings, projections, interpretations and judgments are experienced at a bodily level and expressed directly from that experience. We are not talking about something; we are talking it, right now in this moment (2007a: 91).

In order to speak or write directly *from* experience, movers are encouraged to adopt the use of the present tense and to employ the strategy of 'tracking' to map and to name what took place. In the process of tracking, I identify those moments and 'pools' (or sections) of activity which *feel* most significant, while also searching for the language or image that *feels* most attuned to the memory of the experience. While I am tracking, I hold a full awareness of different modes of bodily attention, which imbues the tracking with a multi-layered content. I have attempted to convey the process of *harvesting* within the score below, which has been developed to both describe and facilitate the activity of harvesting:

### ***Articulating/Harvesting score***

*taking time to  
receive echoes  
of the experience*

*remembering*

*listening  
in*

*what's resonating  
now*

*drawing*

*writing*

*speaking*

*from  
the experience  
of moving*

*the options to*

*map the whole*

*identify 'pools'  
of significance*

*to identify moments  
or transitions  
of impact*

*'tracking'*

*what took place  
and  
what is taking place  
in the moment  
of tracking*

*tuning in  
attending to  
different  
layers of  
experience*

*sensation:  
interoception  
exteroception  
proprioception*

*emotion*

*image*

*energetic states*

*teasing out  
language  
that reverberates  
that chimes  
that resonates  
with  
the embodied  
memory  
of the experience*

*writing  
drawing  
as a continuation  
of the experience*

*'acknowledgment  
builds  
embodiment'  
(Collinson 2015)*

*unfolding the experience  
of moving  
with the process  
of returning  
in mind*

*'what is  
tapping  
at your consciousness*

what is ready  
to be returned to'  
(Olsen and McHose 2017)

what is  
calling for  
further attention

noting the  
range of possibilities  
of what that thing  
might be

creative  
'looting'  
(Hay cited in Schouweiler 2017)

taking time  
to let  
that thing  
surface

discerning  
selecting  
something  
to return to

generating  
'talismanic' markers [for returning]  
(after Lee and Pollard 2010: 28)

(September 2019)

In order to reflect and harvest *from* the experience of moving, time and space are set aside. Olsen notes that in the process of embodied reflection one shouldn't 'grab at language' (Olsen and McHose 2017); rather, one waits and feels into words, carefully checking how that language or drawn image *resonates* with the lingering sense of the experience. Bacon and Middelow echo this sentiment in relation to processes of embodied reflection or articulation in the *Critical Articulations Process*: 'there is a testing – a passing around of a word, a phrase, to sense its appropriateness, its "fit" to the felt experience the words seek to encompass' (2014b: 16). They add that the process of locating the appropriate language or image is not meant as a matter of judgment from 'external criteria'; rather 'judgement [...] is an internal and ethical [...] process – I judge that this or that word is right and good for me and my work at this moment' (Bacon and Middelow 2014b: 16). In Authentic Movement

practice, the term that is typically ascribed to this intuitive yet selective process of internal and ethical judgement is 'discernment' (Adler 2002). In my experience, discerning what feels like the 'right' written and visual expression emerges from a 'felt-sense' (after Gendlin 1978/2003) of what is drawing my attention based in interoceptive sensations.<sup>71</sup> Such sensations might be expressed in subtle shifts in the heart energy/heart rate, rhythm of breath or digestive tract – 'gut feelings'.<sup>72</sup> Van Der Kolk suggests that agency 'starts with interoception, our awareness of our subtle sensory, body-based feelings' (2014: 95). Indeed, it is often when employing the strategy of 'tracking' in my own practice – that is, when attempting to map and to name the experience of moving – that my own sense of creative agency in relation to such moving experiences comes to the surface.

The process of harvesting writings and drawings cultivates sensitivity and clarity toward the embodied memory of moving which, in turn, gives rise to certain verbal and visual markers that serve to simultaneously reflect, project and in a sense thus 're-invent' that experience. Below is an example of successive harvestings which illustrate how the reflection following moving moves fluidly between different modalities of perception, for example from sensorial/kinaesthetic descriptors to more imagistic emotional description.

***4 February 2016 (journal entry – harvested writings after the initial phase of moving that gave rise to the section I now term 'beaks and talons')***

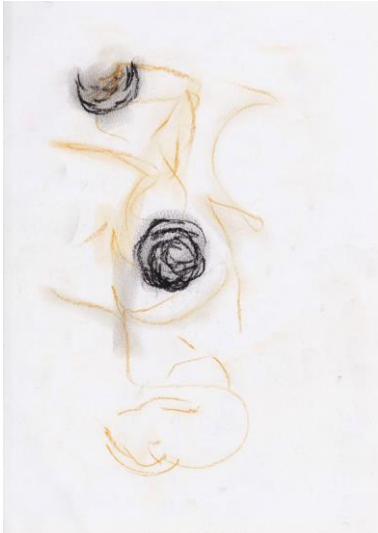
*led by the extremities  
distal initiation  
fingers tips and toes  
carving space  
zig  
zag  
constantly  
changing  
direction  
jagged  
limbs  
voracious  
vigour  
sharpness  
softness*

*beaks and talons  
flight*

*endurance  
unending-ness  
all around  
ourselves*

*the image  
of a bird  
in a room*

**19 February 2016 (harvested drawing associated with the subsequent movement session, for which the journal entry is also below)**



**19 February 2016 (journal entry – harvested writings after returning to ‘beaks and talons’ for the second time)**

*fingers  
toes  
pelvis  
spine  
carving  
carving  
carving  
turning and swirling  
something  
predatorial  
marking space*

*a sense of reduction  
piercing outward  
flipping inward*

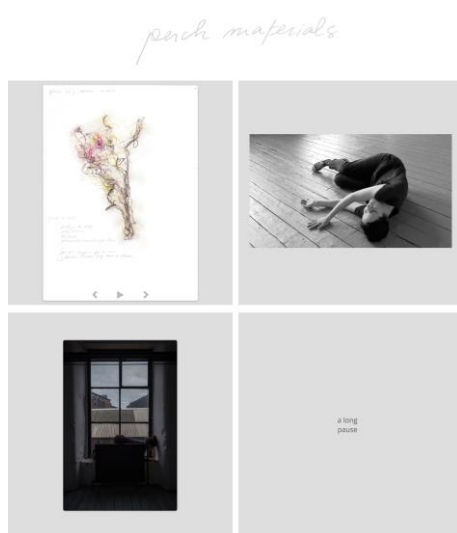
*perforating space  
perforating self*

The harvested materials hold an in-between space in a chain of ongoing activity, as in the drawing and written materials above wherein the 'beaks and talons' section of *perch* was coined and crystallised. In the subsequent move, the physicality of initiating movement from the extremities and the image of a bird in a room were returned to, leading to the intensification of curved pathways and a sense of carving or perforating space. As Meehan notes, the act of writing following a period of moving 'engages with the movement [...] expressing experiences but also unravelling, breaking apart and creating new forms, making something new appear or become clearer' (2015: 317). In the *perch* making process, such harvested materials can thus serve what dance artists Niki Pollard and Rosemary Lee have described (in relation to Lee's journaling process) as an 'evocative function' for they '[carry] not descriptive, but inventive, talismanic force' and they thus 'compress mobile, charged potential in ways particular to this piece yet also connected to [...] ongoing choreographic practice' (2010: 28). Hay characterises this process of 'turning one thing into another' (turning embodied experiences of moving into language) as a kind of creative 'looting' or 'alchemy' (cited in Schouweiler 2017). Harvesting is a mode of nascent forming.

Harvesting in this sense is the phase that relates most closely to reflection, and specifically to reflection in its generative capacity, feeding forward into the next cycle of moving. In the awareness and selectivity that it brings to movement practice, harvesting contains the seeds of the transition between the openness of the practice itself and the forming and performing of work. The overall purpose of harvesting in my own practice is to enable another layer of understanding or consciousness to be folded back into the practice of moving. It might also be understood, then, in terms of Halprin's *RSVP Cycles* as a mode of 'valu-action' (Halprin, L. 1969). Valu-action is 'a neologism [invented by Lawrence Halprin] that encapsulates the combination of reflection on/evaluation of performance and the action that results from these responses' (Worth and Poynor 2011: 151). One might therefore consider the harvested companion materials that have accompanied my moving process as another mode of 'scoring' – with the understanding of scoring (described in chapter one) as poetic, instructive and tentative devices. The processes of writing and drawing accompany my dancing and my dancing accompanies this writing and drawing. There is a looping, a back and forth, a companionship.

The process of harvesting written and drawn materials has been absolutely central to the act of forming movement material in *perch* (as exemplified by the 'beaks and talons' section above). For the purposes of containing (and backing-up) these hand-made companion materials in a way that might functionally serve my making process, I have collected these written and drawn materials in a web space<sup>73</sup> where writings and drawings appear adjacent to video and photography documentation of the work, since video and

photography have offered another (more sporadic) mode of reflecting on the making process. Below is a screenshot of this web space:



In this space, these materials continually loop through slideshows of varying rhythms in order to mirror back the hand-made, messy and cyclical nature of the making process. Returning to the notion of expositonality raised at the start of this chapter, this format *resonates with* the fact that *perch* has been formed, accumulatively, through the attentional weave between these materials and the movement-based activities that they recall and bring forth. This format also *corresponds with* the context of a web-based/digital depository (of these materials) for the purposes of my own making process. I make light mention of this web space here because it relates in a general sense to the process of harvesting which is being exposed in this section and also because it is in this web space where the 'evidence' for the longitudinal nature of the work is stored. I do not expect the reader to engage in any detailed way with these materials in order to access an understanding of my process. Rather, what I aim to offer by mentioning these materials here is an overall impression of the process of accumulation that underpins the making process.

The act of reflecting on the experience of moving (or harvesting) in an embodied way serves to build up a relationship with movement material as it is emerging and to cultivate self-awareness in a more general sense. Hartley notes that the 'rigorous discipline' of tracking cultivates 'a strong internal witness [...] In this way we come to know ourselves more

fully, to see ourselves with clarity' (2015: 307). So too Van Der Kolk points out that 'knowing what we feel is the first step to knowing why we feel that way. If we are aware of the constant changes in our inner and outer environment, we can mobilize to manage them' (2014: 95-96). In relation to dance-making, I suggest that becoming more conscious about what one feels and more aware of the constant changes in one's inner and outer environment is key to growing a responsive relationship with movement material as it is emerging. The very act of noticing one's feeling-states and changes – through the processes of harvesting – is key to becoming more tolerant of and curious about these embodied processes in a way that can be insightful for the creative practice of forming movement material. One of the wider intentions behind bringing these processes of harvesting or embodied reflection to light (in this writing) is so that such processes might be articulated and valued in their own terms and so that it might become possible to further cultivate them both in my own and in others' dance-making practices. Authentic Movement offers certain strategies for nurturing creative agency that may be useful to makers who are committed to making out of embodied experience and to artist-researchers who are committed to articulating the 'insider-experience' of their making processes. I return to the value of this contribution to knowledge/insight in the conclusion in relation to facilitation and collaborative practices.

### **Layering (Returning to and deepening the relationship with movement)**

To remind the reader, in this chapter, I am offering an exposition of the processual qualities of Authentic Movement outlined at the start of this chapter (*witnessing, opening, articulating, layering*) in relation to their practical manifestation in the *perch* making process as it pertains to forming movement material across an extended period of time. The quality of *witnessing* is the act of attending to what is happening and it therefore underlines, informs and enables the entire process. Thus far in this chapter I have offered exposition for the ways in which the qualities of *opening* and *articulating* (or *harvesting*) manifest within the dance-making process. In this section I offer further exposition for the processual quality of *layering* movement.

As I began to explore the notion of layering, two dimensions of it or practices within it began to emerge: the act of *returning to* movement material and the act of *deepening the relationship with* movement material. As *perch* further evolved, these dimensions of layering (that is, the practices of *returning to* and *deepening the relationship with* movement material) came more and more into the foreground, which has led to their designation as processes in

their own right below. This understanding signalled a 'staging avenue' in the research in that the exploration of *returning to* and *deepening the relationship with* movement material has brought the dancer-maker's attentional, processual relationship with movement material to *the forefront of the forming process* and to the forefront of my understanding of the dance medium. The designation of *returning to* and *deepening the relationship with* movement as processes in their own right in the latter stages of research has thus further enabled the investigation of the processual and attentional dimensions of forming movement material. In what follows, I unfold these dimensions of layering and I address how these practices of *returning to* and *deepening the relationship with* movement material give rise to the compositional features or form of *perch*.

### *Returning to movement*

#### **10 June 2016 (journal entry which muses on the process of returning)**

*the research is in the returning  
it's like wearing something  
that reflects back  
its process of being worn*

On the basis of *harvesting*, I select something to be *returned to*. Key to the process of returning to material is engaging with the embodied memory of the experience, which is in a state of resonance with the verbal or visual markers that both recall and project that selected thing. This focus operates like a portal into another cycle of opening and of harvesting. In my own practice, at least initially, I have the intention 'to honour the original' – whatever 'it' may be that is being returned to. At the same time, the very notion of 'returning' – to turn back – implies encountering material with a quality of openness. Olsen has referred to this process of returning to movement material in her own practice as 'the art of allowing consciousness to participate but not dominate' (Olsen and McHose 2017). As indicated in Chapter 1, my approach to 'forming' involves attending to what is known about the movement material in conjunction with attending to what is arising (or unknown) in the moment of moving. As we shall see, returning to movement material over and over again has, in turn, stimulated certain compositional processes within the movement material as a whole, including preoccupations with chronology (that is, arranging material across time) and with energetic shifts or transitions between 'pools' (or sections of movement). Below is a score that aims to both describe and facilitate the activity of returning:

***returning score***

*returning*

*to turn  
back*

*welcoming  
any  
awkwardness  
strangeness  
in returning*

*returning  
as witnessing  
and opening*

*what remains  
what is it now*

*returning as  
receiving*

*how does  
witnessing  
something  
feed back  
into it*

*re-opening  
re-entering  
re-visiting*

*honouring  
specificity*

*where  
does it begin*

*inhabiting  
re-inhabiting*

*returning  
as a state  
of enquiry*

*sensing  
feeling  
into  
potential*

*portals  
puzzles  
of re-entry*

*creative  
tensions*

*returning  
as  
adapting*

*situatedness*

*'the past socialising  
with the present'  
(Davies et al 2014b: 4)*

*returning as  
'anticipating'  
(Lee and Pollard 2010: 28)*

*sensing into*

*exteroception (touch)  
the organ of the skin  
sensations of  
temperature  
texture  
pressure*

*the special senses  
smelling  
tasting  
hearing  
seeing*

*interoception  
internal sensations  
organ presence*

*proprioception  
orientation to space*

*'reaching  
into sensation  
for the next wave  
of action  
to arrive'  
(Recchia 2015)*

*emotion and  
imagination  
as companions*

*filling and*

*emptying of  
form*

*fleshing out*

*receiving  
the totality  
while diving into  
detail*

*investigating  
particularity*

*what  
generalities  
emanate  
from this  
particularity*

*the familiar  
and unfamiliar  
side by side*

*the known  
and the unknown*

*precision  
as a  
perceptual  
portal*

*how to be  
precise and  
open  
at the same time*

*the mundanity  
and grandiosity  
of each moment*

*returning  
as  
digestion*

*fermentation*

*distillation*

*allowing  
for development  
for transformation*

*witnessing  
movement*

*movement  
witnessing you*

*the 'felt-sense' (after Gendlin 1978/2003)  
of  
personal  
significance*

*the embodied  
details  
of metaphor*

*encapsulation*

*bringing questions  
about the material  
back into the material*

*forming  
and generating  
simultaneously*

*the duration  
of staying  
with something  
'tests' that thing*

*what  
else  
is there*

*what  
does it  
want*

*seeing  
how it  
ignites*

*remembering  
and imagining*

*forming  
and dissolving*

*forming  
and transforming*

*composing  
and decomposing*

*returning  
as  
adaptation*

(September 2019)

There is a vast spectrum of possibility in terms of how *returning to* movement can take place. For example, I might return to a gesture, a spatial orientation, an energetic quality or a concept or more likely a clustering of properties: an arising movement phenomenon or what choreographer Rosemary Butcher referred to as a 'landmark of recognition' that suggests potential for development (2015). Sensations or an emotional tone might also offer a way back into moving. In other words, the proprioceptive organisation of the body (what is traditionally understood by the phrase 'setting movement' in the context of Western contemporary dance) is only one means of or stimulus for returning.

While moving, I bestow the 'thing' being returned to with a sense of autonomy, which may lead to it deviating from its origins. In relation to her own process of forming material within the context of structured improvisation, dance-artist Simone Forti offers the analogy of flying a kite where the thread of the kite is the focus of your improvisation and 'your imagination, your associations, are the wind [...] If you lose the thread, the kite won't stay up' (cited in De Spain 2014: 40). If I extend this analogy to *perch*, the movement or idea being returned to is the thread and my attentional embodied imagination – which is to say my capacity to witness and to be open – is the wind. As Davies et al have indicated, returning to previously-danced material is an act of 'socialising the past with the present [...] and of trying to maintain a double consciousness about what we are doing live, as well as where it came from' (2014b: 4). Through the process of returning in my own practice, the material may remain recognisably similar (as it did in the past) or it may undergo major shifts depending on the attitude of returning which the selected material invokes and where the 'live' embodied attention or witnessing while moving – 'moving witnessing' – takes me.

Below are some edited extracts from one of the earliest segments of movement in the *perch* making process which are suggestive of how this pool or section of movement has evolved through multiple renderings. I ended up calling this pool of movement 'conjuring' because this word and image seemed to encapsulate the combination of movement qualities and properties that were present at the time of its emergence. Although the movement itself has shifted over time, the name 'conjuring' still resonates.

**27 August 2014 (journal entry – harvested writings from returning to ‘conjuring’)**

*‘conjuring’*

*movement initiated from  
hands  
wrists  
elbows  
subtle  
rotations  
arms  
winding  
and rewinding  
in the centre  
of the space  
opposite arm  
to leg  
it feels like  
a gathering  
a welcoming  
a conjuring  
something  
powerful  
concentrated  
suspended flight*

**14 May 2015 (journal entry – harvested writings from returning to ‘conjuring’)**

*‘conjuring’*

*gesturing  
oiling the joints  
the occasional pause  
something grand  
space holds  
in the arms  
stirring space  
a state of coordination  
an atmosphere*

**8 June 2015 (journal entry – harvested writings from returning to ‘conjuring’)**

*‘conjuring’*

*right elbow  
left foot  
chest up  
channel through the elbow  
a softening through the centre  
left heel crossing over*

*experimenting  
with isolation*

*with integration*

*steadfast  
waver  
linear  
curvaceous*

*placed in front  
of the window*

*permutations  
of repetition  
like a groove*

**5 October 2015 (journal entry – harvested writings from returning to ‘conjuring’)**

*‘conjuring’*

*a sense of stirring up  
the space  
irregular rhythm  
of the arms  
something grand  
investing in being seen*

*turning  
swirling*

*‘it’s about energy’  
this sentence comes to me  
while moving*

*strength  
grounded  
withstanding*

**8 December 2015 (journal entry -- reflections from watching video recording of ‘conjuring’)**

*‘conjuring’*

*not convinced  
by this material  
at all*

**11 December 2015 (journal entry – harvested writings from returning to ‘conjuring’)**

*‘conjuring’*

*strange  
reach  
hold for a long time*

circulate  
circuit  
perhaps rotating  
around self  
full circle  
atmosphere of dusk  
is quite special

thinking about death  
about Rosemary Butcher  
her practice  
of erasure  
accumulating  
and subtracting  
mistakes  
making and  
unmaking

strange  
slightly sick feeling  
in my belly  
coming and going  
swansong

**6 January 2016 (journal entry – harvested writings from returning to ‘conjuring’)**

‘conjuring’

wipe on floor  
sacred air  
fragile  
hang  
endurance  
holding  
for real  
intensity of focus  
keeping balance  
articulation of the ribs  
to the left  
watching the breath  
tightening  
harder and harder  
to sustain  
hold longer  
a test

to feel  
the release  
let the arms gesture  
back and away  
evenness  
restored

*5 September 2017 (journal entry – harvested writings from returning to ‘conjuring’)*

*‘conjuring’*

*slow  
unfurling  
wavering  
stance  
arms  
flailing  
waving  
holding  
and  
being  
held*

Because I am intimately familiar with this particular pool of material (‘conjuring’) and all its permutations, I perceive the thread of continuity as I re-read these harvestings. I feel its corporeal history in my body, which manifests as the muscular memory of hanging onto something with the whole effort of my upper body and as the energetic sense of anticipation. Even while sitting here typing, I imagine and feel the ache in my arms. As a certain discomfort surfaces around my shoulders, I recall the image of being held by three-dimensional cushioning. While reading these scores now and thereby returning to this pool of movement in my imagination, I also project my current state of body/mind onto it. In every practice of this ‘conjuring’ score there is such a familiarisation and de-familiarisation, an echoing and a calling forth. In providing the reader with the above written renderings of conjuring, I mean to evidence how in returning to movement material there is this ‘socialising of the past with the present’ (Davies et al 2014b: 4) but, crucially for the creative process, there is also an act of imagination and invention in returning to movement material.

Returning is a generative process because part of the act of returning to material is plumbing out its multi-faceted potential. There is opening in returning. This bears some resemblance to the notions of ‘raising’ and of ‘anatomising’ in Bacon and Midgelow’s *Creative Articulations Process* where, for example, ‘anatomizing’ is understood as the phase that ‘elaborates and expands your practice, giving rise to iterations, tangents and potentialities as we bring into being many versions, many shimmering refractions respond in your response’ (2014b: 25-26). In my own dance-making practice, the process of returning to movement material is labyrinthine, full of twists and turns, additions and subtractions akin to the process of ‘sculpting’ material across time.<sup>74</sup> In this sense, I still feel that there is much more to explore in the ‘conjuring’ pool (noted above). Partly it is the lingering sense of its incompleteness that pulls me back to it. Drawing attention to the generative capacity of

returning to movement material is one of the wider understandings of dance-making that this research contributes (a point that is developed as this chapter proceeds and also in the conclusion).

Perhaps it is worth mentioning that the act of returning to material is a highly individual process. In facilitating this practice with others, I have noticed that different movers have different preferences for returning to movement, echoing Adler's observation in the previous chapter that (within Authentic Movement) movers possess different movement tendencies. Becoming reflexive about one's own preferences – including about what one tends to return to – has further implications for how dance-making might be facilitated within educational contexts (a point that I also return to at the end of this chapter). For one, I tend to return to material that possesses a slightly 'charged' constellation of kinaesthetic, emotional and imaginal cues. This potent combination of entry points lends a certain endurance or staying power to my relationship with it. One can see that this is certainly the case with the 'conjuring' example above and is also the case with the example below, which offers a dense constellation of physical, imaginative and emotional cues.

***7 January 2016 (journal entry – harvested writings from what later came to be called 'wild chicken' into 'spear head')***

*eruption  
spurting into  
different directions  
I feel fast and  
agile on my feet  
pecking head  
around and  
around*

*wild hose pipe  
messy untamed  
physicality  
erratic  
skipping*

*I am embodying  
fear  
'embody  
the chicken'*

*the joy of  
becoming  
a chicken*

*then*

*sudden  
stop*

*small gesture  
spear head  
containment  
quiet  
pensive  
punishment  
in the switch  
of a second*

*walking toward  
a window  
thrown into relief  
against backdrop  
of sky*

This pool of movement described above emerged ‘fully formed’ in the sense that this material (‘wild chicken’ into ‘spearhead’) still very much resembles and internally feels like this initial reflection above. I think this is because ‘it’ surfaced with such a multi-dimensional clarity that any major deviations from its ‘gestalt’ seemed to somehow diminish it. Dance-maker Barbara Dilley has noted that the material which she tends to return to has to do ‘with vibrational intensity, with clarity, with something being seen beyond the ordinary, but being able to hold a kind of metaphoric drumbeat’ (cited in De Spain 2014: 123). I experience this metaphoric drumbeat as a multi-dimensional ‘click’. In my own practice, it is rare for material to emerge fully formed (as ‘wild chicken’ into ‘spearhead’ did above) because the multidimensional click that I am seeking usually evolves – if indeed it ever does – through the process of returning to it.

### *Returning, chronology and arranging*

This process of returning to movement material gives rise to segments or ‘cells’ of material. These segments accumulate more segments, which grow into a temporal chain of materials. This is akin to what sculptor Ann Hamilton describes as an ‘associational process’ where material is built up ‘one step after another’ in a chronological and pragmatic fashion (cited in Hamilton and Tippet 2015). In other words, the investigative process of returning to material is carried through to the process of investigating its sequencing across time. This eventually lends the work (*perch*) an episodic or serial structure. One example of this is in the opening

section of the work when I shift from the first pool of movement (where I am constantly stepping in the space for nearly two minutes) into the second pool of movement (where I slowly fold in half). In retrospect, I can see how this opening image of stepping (referred to below as 'seahorse sidestep') has 'seeded' the subsequent chain of events and, therefore in a sense, seeded the remainder of the work:

***22 Sept 2015 (journal entry – harvested writings from 'seahorse sidestep' into 'curtsy bow' which is alluded to in the preceding paragraph)***

*small shifts  
changes in rhythm  
the sound  
of steps  
inauguration  
of space  
a sense  
of 'opening'*

*scanning  
drifting*

*a pattern of  
accidental  
coverage  
for a long  
while*

*hearing  
seeing*

*settling  
in a  
corner*

*folding  
awkward  
bow  
haphazard  
curtsy  
humble*

***8 December 2015 (journal entry – harvested writings after watching video of 'seahorse sidestep' into 'curtsy bow')***

*I sense how  
prominent sound is  
and then  
its absence*

*I am struck  
by the resemblance  
[of this stepping material]  
to Butcher's work  
Hidden Voices (2006)  
interrogate  
this reference  
embrace it*

Given how the work has been constructed from initial segments or 'seeds' of movement (such as the opening stepping described above), in the process of returning to material, *transitions* and *stillnesses* have become a significant source of enquiry in the way that they draw attention to the changeability of experience. In the introduction to this thesis, I indicated how, as a dance-maker, I am drawn to processes of change or energetic shifts in the body. Through returning to material again and again, such transitions become a source of enquiry in their own right. They open up and expand to such an extent that their transitional status is erased or transformed. This is evident in the example above from the very start of the work where the incessant stepping decelerates ('seahorse sidestep') and gives way into a bowing action ('curtsy bow'). I have investigated this transition in multiple ways – sometimes drawn out, sometimes sudden – which eventually led to expanding the bowing action into a whole pool in its own right. This kind of investigation into transitions is endless.

***12 October 2015 (journal entry on the topic of transitions in perch)***

*investigating  
transitions*

*a sense of  
taking care  
of the whole*

*sensing into  
the proportionality  
of material*

*sometimes I discover things  
by accident  
for instance  
when I sat up differently  
in the 'curtsy bow landing'  
and discovered the potential  
for a long pause*

**13 October 2015 (journal entry on the topic of transitions in perch)**

today  
this transition  
from 'curtsy bow landing'  
into 'conjuring'  
feels better  
why?  
I think it has to do with  
embedded contrast  
from all fours downward  
to the upward facing conjuring  
from the symmetrical formation  
of all fours  
to the more asymmetrical movement  
of 'conjuring'

reflecting on this point  
makes me imagine 'forward'  
into the potential transition  
between 'conjuring'  
and what happens next

over time  
the practice of opening  
becomes more invested  
in investigating transitions  
and  
in extending material

opening is like  
entering a room  
falling into a crevasse  
unravelling

**20 April 2016 (journal entry on the topic of transitions in perch)**

investment in transitions  
in what is 'between'  
over time  
the sense of being between  
is erased

repeated treading  
through material  
creates a  
through-line  
threads  
a journey

**21 June 2016 (journal entry on the topic of transitions in perch)**

*in my daydreams  
about the work  
I dwell often  
with the transitions  
in how  
these blossom  
into an event  
in themselves*

*through this investigation  
into transitions  
radical shifts  
in energy  
become both natural  
and surprising*

*in the transitions  
there is  
emanation  
giving rise  
to more material*

In my experience, attending to transitions between movements and between sections draws attention to the liveness of perception itself through the distinct sensorial shifts that they encapsulate. I consider stillnesses to be transitions of sorts, akin to 'pivot points' in the perceptual landscape of the work. Below is an example of one such stillness in the work – which has tended to last for around a minute – when I place my forehead on the rounded corner of the windowsill.

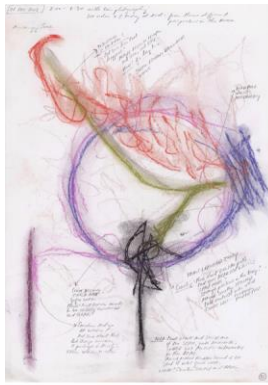
***13 January 2016 (journal entry exemplifying the fullness of stillness -- harvested writing from returning to 'mind meld')***

*my head  
meets  
wall  
cool  
sturdy  
broad  
presence  
relief  
something  
in the contact  
brings  
my flesh  
back to me*

here I am  
in all my  
meagre  
humanity  
sense of  
sorrow  
behind the  
eyes  
calling  
to be still  
and  
simply  
receive

The function of stillness within the work is that it offers space for the mover (and for the audience-witness) to reorient and recalibrate attention.

Through the gradual accumulation of transitions between segments, at a more developed point in the making process, I begin to concentrate on the chronological arrangement of movement material *as a composite whole* – what dance-maker Tere O'Connor calls its 'kinetic structure' (cited in O'Connor and Clarke 2009). During the *perch* making process (which spanned four years), this concern with arranging material as a composite whole began to emerge more prominently about halfway through the process. There are several ways that I *feel into* and work on this process of arranging movement material across time. One way I do this is by tracking the time-based progression of material while moving through the work from beginning to end; another is through drawing the spatial pathways and energetic textures of the work, and yet another is through writing a poetic score for the entire work. Each of these methods offers a way of rehearsing the arrangement of movement material (its composite whole) across time. At the very end of this thesis (following the conclusion) the reader will find the most updated version of the written poetic score for the whole work (which is provided for the reader to optionally engage with). Below are examples of drawings of the work as a whole which are offered here not for detailed scrutinization or rational analysis, but rather for the purposes of offering a general visual impression of this iterative practice of arranging movement material across time (through returning to it) that I have just been describing in this section.



21 December 2015



6 January 2016



13 January 2016



3 February 2016



23 February 2016



10 June 2016



7 September 2016



3 December 2016

One can observe in these drawings certain overt similarities and differences: the consistency of certain spatial pathways alongside the emergence of new textures. Such drawings enable the process of re-entering the practice with an internalized sense of the composite whole and they assist in making certain further arrangements and adjustments between material. The very process of drawing reflects back what is present in the work (and what is not) through the practice of returning, which it enables.

**28 August 2019 (journal entry on the topic of returning to/arranging material across time)**

*moving  
through  
material  
as a composite whole*

*returning as  
arranging  
pools of movement*

*in relation to one another*

*'an associational process' (Hamilton and Tippett 2015)*

*listening to  
the adjacency of material*

*enquiring into transitions  
enquiring into duration*

*how one thing reframes the next*

*'how things pertain to each other proportionally' (Butcher 2015)*

*proportional resonance*

*'multi-vectored intuition'  
'an evolving array'  
(Halley and Tillmans 2014: 33)<sup>75</sup>*

*enquiring into shifts in  
tone  
space  
action*

*'sequencing as a cooker' (Rethorst 2012: 11)*

*the presence of  
yield  
push  
reach  
pull  
in the very structuring of the work*

*'kinetic structure' (O'Connor and Clarke 2009)*

*development  
transformation  
saturation  
diffusion*

*time-based contingency*

*'sculpting time' (Tarkovsky 1986)*

*materials combining  
to create a world*

*searching for  
internal logic*

*emergent shaping  
shaping emergence*

*returning and arranging*

*as moment-to-moment  
adaptation*

*returning and arranging  
revealing processes of  
construction*

*returning and arranging  
revealing themes of  
transience  
temporary location  
passages  
peculiarity*

*returning and arranging  
as absorption*

Through the small and large adjustments that emerge from the process of returning to and enquiring into the arrangement of material, I am seeking to amplify the proportional resonance between elements. As a result of this attention to arranging material across time, a steadier structure or sequencing for the work as a whole begins to emerge. Rethorst's observation of sequencing resonates with my own: 'Sequence is more than an ordering of unchanging entities. Sequence is a cooker, an alchemy [...] Time is more than a container; time participates' (2012: 11). Like Rethorst, I perceive this attention to chronology as a way of expressing the *time-based contingency* of material. In this way I have found some inspiration in learning about Russian film-maker Andrei Tarkovsky's editing process (subsequent to actual filming):

In a curious, retroactive process, a self-organising structure takes shape during editing because of the distinctive properties given [to] the material during shooting [...] Editing does not engender, or recreate, a new quality; it brings out a quality already inherent in the frames that it joins [...] (1986: 116-120).

Tarkovsky's articulation of the relationship between the moment of filming and the moment of editing bears some resemblance to my own exploration of the time-based arrangement of movement material. He notes (above) how the attention given to the moment of filming is carried through to the process of editing. So too in my own dance-making practice there is the intention to maintain a quality of emergence while simultaneously exploring the potential for sequencing elements. Key to this exploration of sequencing (while maintaining a quality of emergence) is the sensitisation to time-based, emotional and 'energetic' processes in the body as well as the need for strategies for returning to movement material, something that the processual qualities of Authentic Movement (*witnessing, opening, articulating, layering*)

has further enabled in my practice. The following journal entry poetically elaborates on the time-based, emotional and energetic processes in the body in relation to the practice of returning to/arranging movement material:

**25 May 2016 (journal entry which poetically elaborates on the time-based, emotional and energetic processes in the body in relation to the practice of returning to/arranging movement material)**

*during this practice  
of returning and  
arranging today  
I sense a flow  
a thread  
from heart space  
that links and holds it together  
soft and humble  
sensation in my core  
that is moving through  
it all*

*returning and moving  
through the whole  
the sense of  
individual scores  
now diminished  
a loosening  
rejuvenated the work*

*the presence of emotion  
as a resource  
emotion opening something up  
in my own presence  
generosity towards  
the work*



## *Returning and situatedness*

### ***9 September 2014 (journal entry on the topic of situatedness)***

*We are all membranes*

This notion of returning is also echoed in the desire to work consistently in one place, rather than developing a more 'migratory' work, which might be adapted or reconstructed elsewhere. As indicated Chapter 1, my understanding of movement (and of the body itself) is that it is intrinsically situated. Therefore, an openness to context and to circumstance underlies the practice at all times. In relation to her own situated approach to generating movement, Tufnell writes: 'It is as if I begin to put out small roots that extend both down into the detailed sensations of my body, and also outwards into the particular feel of wherever I am' (2004: 47). So too in my own situated approach to forming movement, I am attending to the details of my moving while also sending small roots out into the contextual conditions of how and where I am on any given day. The movement material that I return to blurs with and adapts to life's happenings both within and beyond the studio. In each session, certain emergent circumstances of the working process (moods, events, happenstance) come to the fore and these circumstances co-mingle with the work as it is forming. As sculptor Hamilton notes in relation to the situatedness of her own making process: 'Making happens everywhere. Everything is reciprocal: everything feeds everything else' (cited in Hamilton and Tippett 2015). Through returning to movement material, some traces of this situatedness linger, gradually becoming more consistent features in the work. As it now stands, the form of *perch* contains traces of these traces.

### ***7 June 2016 (journal entry on topic of situatedness in perch and what gets returned to in relation to this situatedness)***

*I look over notes from past few days  
and realise I am not naming everything that is going on*

*first of all, it is HOT*

*the heat slows me down  
I spend long periods of time  
on the ground releasing my weight  
patches of sun, patches of shade*

*next door two new artists  
are sewing and chatting  
machine sounds  
I enjoy their presence*

*the porosity of perch  
with everything around it*

*the place  
the weather  
history  
moods*

*a loose net*

*in each image  
in perch  
there is a matrix  
spun out  
of the moment  
they emerged  
and evolving  
through  
their practice*

*it's like  
cooking  
or growing things*

*the things  
I return to  
are the things  
that I trust  
will grow or  
cook themselves  
into something  
worthwhile*

One example of how this situatedness manifests in the work are the pronounced periods of stillness which mirror the pervading sense of dormancy that has accompanied this (sometimes seemingly eternal) making process. Another example would be the spatial patterning of the work – suggestive of temporary locations – which echo the condition of renting a studio space, of residing in Manchester as a foreigner and of the multiple relocations of my own upbringing. The movement quality of ‘poised tension’<sup>76</sup> that permeates the work also resonates with this condition of being unsettled. Another very obvious example would be the interplay with sound in the work – the echoes of creaky floorboards and the vivid presence of ambient noise when the creaking ceases. Another is the relationship with

two predominant windows in the space. With hindsight, I can now see how the constant presence of weather and light through these windows has fed into the mood and palette of movement imagery. Indeed, as a result of this presence of the outside on the inside of the space, I began to imagine performing *perch* across dusk, the time of day when the diminishing light and quietening atmosphere of the surroundings seemed to coalesce with the work's emergent energies and content.

**27 August 2014 (journal entry related to topic of situatedness)**

*really hearing the reality  
of the floor boards*

*all movement having consequence  
of sound*

*will I get used to this?*

**28 August 2014 (journal entry related to topic of situatedness)**

*I think about the historical context  
of this space as a cotton spinning factory  
hard industrial labour  
women and men  
and children  
working<sup>77</sup>*

*and me  
here now  
dancing*

*this  
incomprehensible  
juxtaposition  
haunts  
the practice*

*the way  
the windows  
frame the sky*

*the presence  
of outdoors  
inside*

**14 January 2016 (journal entry related to topic of situatedness)**

*the feeling of*

dusk  
evening  
blue  
light

emptiness  
clearing

immanent  
change

the rising of the  
outdoor  
sparkle

prominence  
of sound  
as light  
fades

eyes  
adjusting  
to  
quiet



On the surface of it, some of these features of *perch* (such as working with the sound of the floorboards or with the window space) might seem to suggest that the site has been overtly foregrounded above all other circumstances from the start of the process. However, as noted in Chapter 1, I regard 'site' as being *part* of a much broader amalgamation of contextual circumstances that surround the work. Perhaps it is also worth noting that this quality of situatedness (and, with it, a seemingly direct interweave with site) would surface in any work I make, including those works made in more conventional spaces for dance-making such as dance studios and theatres which would not attract as much attention as 'sites' *per se*. That I can now pinpoint the multitudinous outcroppings of this situatedness within *perch* in a clear and consistent way does not contradict the fact that the work has emerged rather

sporadically over an extended period of time. Indeed, it is only through the act of returning to movement material that this continuity has emerged. A long gestation period breeds perspective and coherence, a bird's eye view – perching.



#### *Deepening the relationship with movement*

*'How do you stay with something that has some mileage?'*  
(Butcher 2015)

In the previous section I have been illustrating how movement material becomes more *layered* in its embodied understanding *through the practice of returning to it*. I have also been illustrating how this practice of returning to movement material stimulates certain compositional or formal enquiries into the chronology/arrangement of (and transitions between) movement material across time – that is, into a sense of the 'kinetic whole'. Returning to movement also brings the feature of situatedness to light in that each practice of the dance is in conversation with the moment-to-moment conditions of its context. In this section I unpack how the process of returning to movement material over an extended period of time simultaneously cultivates another kind of layering – what I am calling a *deepening relationship with* that material. These practices of layering (of *returning to* and *deepening the relationship with* movement material) are simultaneous and intertwined, but I have chosen to (somewhat artificially) separate them out in this writing for the purposes of illuminating the attentional, processual practices that are at the heart of my dance-making practice. In this section, I endeavour to expose this phenomenon of *deepening the relationship with* movement material.

Hartley states that one of the overall purposes of witnessing within the dyad format of Authentic Movement is to 'deepen experience' as well as to 'deepen the relationship with the mover' (2010-11, 2012-2015, 2017-2018). In this section I discuss how the attempt to

unpack this notion or practice of 'deepening experience' and of 'deepening the relationship with' movement material has ultimately led me towards exploring affiliated compositional movement processes, such as *detailing*, *distillation* and *attending to movement quality*. I also discuss how this process of deepening the relationship with movement material manifests as a kind of care for or intimacy with movement material – the capability to *stay with* something.

Within Authentic Movement practice, Hartley (after Adler and Mindell) describes how certain 'channels' or modes of perception can operate as an 'opening' or a 'gateway' for another level of understanding to emerge (2010-11, 2012-2015, 2017-2018). The channels or modes of perception that Hartley (artificially) differentiates in her teaching for the purposes of refining the 'discipline' of the practice are proprioception, sensation, emotion and image (2010-2011, 2012-2015, 2017-2018). In recognising the channel that is surfacing when one is moving, one can embrace and then, in a sense, follow it. Adler observes that, as the mover develops 'an increasing capacity to concentrate, to listen to inner impulse', so too 'the mover learns to recognize the channel within which the creative or authentic energy flows' (1999a: 156). In a similar vein, Hartley notes that by 'amplifying' engagement with a certain channel, it opens up the possibility for that material to be 'embodied, "digested" and [thus] integrated at a psychological level' (2004: 215). I recognise similar processes of embodied amplification and subsequent transformation in my dance-making process. For example, while making *perch*, I have noticed that returning to the kinaesthetic or proprioceptive properties of material tends to unfold an emotional clarity, that returning to an emotional state tends to unfold an image and that returning to an image tends to unfold kinaesthetic or proprioceptive clarity. There is a 'filling up' or 'filling out' of form to the point that that material can be felt and imagined from multiple perspectives. In my experience, this process of unfolding movement material layers and deepens the embodied relationship with it.

***18 May 2016 (journal entry reflecting on the process of deepening the relationship with movement material)***

*each section or pool  
of perch  
is its own world*

*the earlier images  
(‘seahorse sidestep’ and ‘curtsy bow landing’)  
are more loaded or  
accumulated  
with meaning  
or significance*

*I trust their place  
in the work*

*the newer bits  
(‘window dance’ and ‘beaks and talons’)  
are fledgling*

*as I watch the video  
I wonder whether  
precision is important*

*I have become interested in how  
returning to material in a precise way  
can also embody a quality of  
subtle variation  
or layering*

*deepening the relationship  
with movement  
is the process  
of embodying  
this subtle variation*

### *Deepening as detailing, distilling and attending to movement quality*

This practice of deepening the relationship with movement material gives rise to a concomitant concern with movement *detail*. Detail might also be understood as a growing sensitivity towards the precise substance of movement, such as its proprioceptive articulation in the body, its sensorial, emotional, imaginative dimensions as well as its ongoing social and cultural signification. My understanding of detailing movement can be further contextualised by a particular practice within Authentic Movement – referred to by Hartley (after Adler) as the ‘ritual practice’ – whereby the mover offers and receives extended witnessing of a choice ‘moment’ of movement (2012-2015, 2017-2018). ‘Drilling down’ into such a moment has the potential to expand on its significance in terms that are grounded in physicality (in proprioceptive and sensation-based signals for example) while also reaching into other perceptual channels (such as emotion and image). Attending to the layered complexity in any given moment is relevant to my own dance-making practice in that it offers a way of immersing oneself in existing, known material. Continuously exploring one movement or moment encourages one to go beyond what is most conscious by finding out more about it. The following example points to this practice of detailing (and deepening) where I am describing a ‘moment’ of movement which lasts around five seconds:

**10 February 2016 (journal entry related to detailing – harvested writings from returning to ‘pole pow’)**

pushing from pole  
left hand  
still attached  
feeling  
cold metal  
right hand  
floating  
above head  
wrist waving  
head bobbing  
sinking  
drowning  
upper torso  
joins in  
the feeling of  
fading  
away  
from an upper world  
hand rests  
behind head  
spinal  
flexion  
rolling  
onto belly  
arms threading  
through  
‘reaching  
rock  
bottom’  
this phrase  
comes  
to mind  
maybe one leg  
is bent  
dead  
body  
breathing  
arms threading  
back up  
to shoulders  
a clear  
push  
through  
fleshy palms

Enquiring into the details of movement generates language and images that in turn loop back into the forming of that material. In attempting to name (or language) movement in detailed terms, its potential significance or metaphorical content might also surface – as is evident in the above example where movement description drifts into metaphorical description (for example ‘sinking’ into ‘drowning’ and ‘one leg bent’ into ‘dead body’). In my own dance-making practice, this *excursion into* a moment functions as an intensified form of harvesting which allows material to develop, not in the sense of generating more movement but rather in the sense of allowing that moment to reveal its innate generative capacity. Perhaps this is similar to Process-oriented psychotherapist Arnold Mindell’s observation of the ‘governing paradigm of process work [which] is that the process which presents itself in the moment contains all the elements necessary for its own solution’ (1989: 25 cited in Hartley 2004: 217). I have sometimes characterised this investigation into a moment as *unearthing the magic within the nitty-gritty*. In my experience, the investigation of detail in such a way cultivates a closeness or intimacy with movement material that is also elastic. As Tufnell and Crickmay note, ‘paradoxically it is [the] attention to detail that opens and loosens the field in which we perceive things’ (2004: 41). So, while details are generally characterised by their smallness in scale, I experience the enquiry into detail to be a portal into an expansiveness of perception. Perhaps this is like what sculptor Anne Hamilton describes as the moment when ‘particularity becomes abstraction’ (Hamilton and Tippet 2015).

As the relationship with movement material becomes more detailed in my practice, I have noticed that the material also becomes more ‘distilled’. This distillation takes place through processes of *accretion* and *erasure* – to borrow terms that are sometimes applied to Rosemary Butcher’s dance-making practice – whereby movement material is layered (through processes noted above) and then pared down gradually over time (Butcher 2001-2002, 2014, 2015; Stoddart 2005: 97; Leask 2005: 152). As the form of the movement becomes more distilled, my experience is that the potential signification of such material becomes more manifold and ‘open’. From this distillation process, layers of content continue to surface. These emerging layers of content are then folded back into the work as a whole. This distillation process in turn stimulates an intensified quality of attention. De Spain has noted that distilled movement in Dilley’s dance-making practice ‘[leaves] the mover no option but [to go deeply] into the moment’ (2014: 24). So too my feeling is that distilled movement can ‘hold’<sup>78</sup> the depths and layers of content that is poured into it. Accordingly, I have noticed that the movement material that endures in *perch* long-term possesses a combination of specificity and simplicity on the one hand (arrived at through processes of erasure) and also multiplicity of potential signification (content) on the other hand. All of the examples of movement inserted thus far in this chapter – ‘seahorse sidestep’, ‘curtsy bow’,

‘conjuring’, ‘wild chicken’, ‘spearhead’, ‘beaks and talons’ for example – possess (at least to my mind) this combination of specificity and multiple signification.

Content that is currently surfacing within *perch* (as a whole) includes the sense of tentative locations and of temporary dwellings, the exploration of edges, a sense of being haunted and my own awareness of aging as a woman – all themes which have, as it turns out, further associations with the title *perch* (a title which surfaced serendipitously four years earlier). Ultimately this emerging content has led to certain choices related to how I might go on to present the work, such as the decision to show it at dusk. This time of day, the crossing into evening, resonates with emergent themes and mirrors back the changeability of the work through the direct engagement with changing light.

**12 November 2017 (journal entry related to the ‘emerging content’ of *perch*)**

*‘emerging content’ of perch:*

*a tentative location*

*a bird’s eye view*

*the exploration  
of edges*

*sky  
look out*

*perspective  
near and far*

*visible  
invisible*

*flight  
rest  
quiet*

*hunt  
prey  
predator*

*the light  
in the darkness  
the darkness  
in the light*

*holding on  
being held*

*hauntings*

*otherworldliness*

*aging  
as a woman*

In my experience, the process of distilling movement and thereby also attending to its potential content or signification gives rise to the use of *imagery* as a guiding resource for movement. My use of the term ‘image’ or ‘imagery’ here refers to an all-encompassing, holistic-sense of something. De Spain observes with regard to his own improvisation practice that that an ‘image’ exists most ‘profoundly [as] a combination of senses that work together (or, at least, simultaneously) to create a “presence”’ (2014: 128). Through the processes of repeatedly *opening to, harvesting from, returning to and deepening the relationship with* the images in *perch*, they gradually acquire such a multi-sensory ‘presence’. The reader will have noticed that I have coined such images through succinct, even terse, language – such as ‘conjuring’ or ‘seahorse sidestep’ or ‘beaks and talons’ – but it is important to stress that this language operates as a kind of short-hand for a whole history of holistic, embodied exploration which the language itself might efface.

Working with movement imagery in turn brings *movement quality* to the foreground. My use of the term ‘quality’ here refers to certain energetic subtleties of movement that are engrossing and ineffable. Since movement quality is, in my experience, one of the subtler aspects of dancing which compels a holistic and immersive concentration, finding language to describe it can be difficult.<sup>79</sup> Dance-maker Rosemary Lee’s understanding offers a useful encapsulation:

By ‘quality’, I am thinking of those times when a dancer is so absorbed in a task that they almost seem to become transparent and taken over by the task. Their body will show what I see as a fundamental, un-acted, knowledge of what it is doing. For example, a dancer might reach a state of hovering through an anatomical task or image of a hawk hovering. Whatever the means, when they find it, how they move will be taken over by that condition of hovering (Lee and Pollard 2010: 30).

The imaginal dimension of movement quality (as in dancing with the image of a hawk) brings to light its interface with sensorial and proprioceptive capacities in the body. Such qualitative and imaginative foci blur the perceptions of ‘sensing’ and ‘shaping’ movement – a conventionally *false* distinction that Olsen (and many others) make, for example when she states that ‘choreographing involves being inside the sensation, and also outside as the shaper of sensation’ (2014: 83-84). In my own dance-making practice, I regard movement quality to be a pivotal dimension of its shape or ‘form’. Below are some written and drawn

extracts that express a focus on movement quality – which eventually became the section I refer to as ‘languid pool’. (The drawing is not provided for detailed scrutiny or rational analysis by the reader, but rather to offer a general visual impression of the practice which the journal entry preceding it describes, as it pertains to the energetic dimensions of movement quality which I discuss further in the paragraph thereafter.)

***1 June 2016 (journal entry related to movement quality – harvested writings from ‘languid pool’)***

*whole body  
undulating  
porous  
edges*

*lopsided  
disoriented  
glowing*

*rapture*

*confusion*

*broadness  
inside  
something  
soft  
acceptant  
ecstatic*

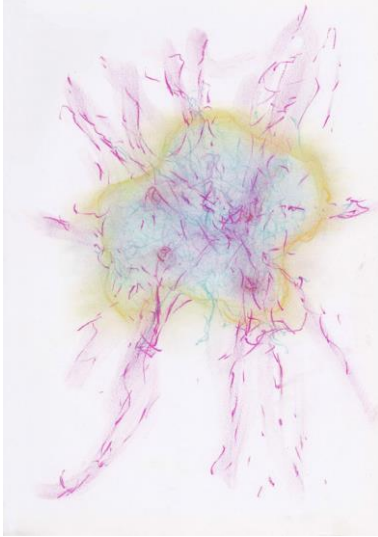
*soft arms  
in the joints  
soft spine  
organs*

*tentacled  
light  
reaching  
softly  
tasting  
the world  
things coming  
through me  
in the mind of  
skin  
tactility*

*whole body  
pouring  
tidal*

rolling

**Drawing of 'languid pool' (1 June 2016)**



In my experience, as is evident in the example above, the concentration on movement quality sensitises the mover to the intrinsic porosity and vitality of movement itself. With this sensitisation comes a meta-awareness of the moment-to-moment situatedness, 'liveness' and absorbency of movement itself. I would characterise this as yet another way that the deepening relationship with movement material manifests: through the attention to image and to movement quality, an openness of presence is enabled.

In sum, the process of deepening the relationship with movement encompasses various processes of *layering* the embodiment of it. Most notable in my own practice in this regard are those processes of detailing and of distilling movement material and of attending to movement quality. The overall outcome of layering or *diving into* movement in this way is that as movement becomes more specific, known and articulated, there is at the same time an accompanying process of opening to the more energetic or qualitative aspects of embodiment, which foregrounds its emergent properties. As a result of this research, I now understand these emergent properties to be central to the forming of the work and thus, in a sense, *to be at the heart of the work's identity*. Below is a score which I have, in the latter stages of this research, composed to synthesise those aspects of *deepening the relationship with* movement material that I have been discussing in this section. This score aims to both describe and facilitate the process of deepening the relationship with movement material:

## ***deepening score***

*recognising  
the channel  
which is calling*

*diving  
into  
a moment*

*entering  
and  
following*

*hidden  
dimensions*

*filling up  
filling out*

*detailing*

*accretion  
paring-back  
erasure  
(after Butcher 2001-2002, 2015)*

*distillation*

*image  
quality  
energy  
vitality*

*constancy  
continuity  
between  
and beneath*

*what helps me  
be in partnership  
with this thing*

*ongoing  
adaptation*

*cultivating  
intimacy  
with material*

*exploring  
the pleasures  
of commitment*

*staying  
with*

*ritual  
container*

*(September 2019)*

### *Deepening as staying with*

Hand-in-hand with this growing consistency that manifests through deepening the relationship with movement material comes a growing sense of ‘objectivity’ about that same material. While experiencing the work ‘from the inside’, I can clearly sense it as a whole ‘from the outside’. This back-and-forth between the subjective and objective relationship with the material exists for the duration of the making process, but grows more vivid the further along in the dance-making process I go. As Bacon notes in relation to the nature of the self-awareness that Authentic Movement can cultivate: ‘This is the territory of both/and, a place where we see and know our bodies as both ourselves and as an object belonging to me’ (2010: 69-70). The dual perspective that Authentic Movement facilitates is particularly constructive for dance-making and for artistic research projects (such as this) where one is making from the inside of practice while also attempting to reflexively comment upon it.

Through returning to movement material, the form of the work becomes steadier while, at the same time, my ever-changing relationship with that material affords it a sense of endless variation. Naturally this includes how my own state and emotional attitude toward the work can be quite changeable. Given the literally fluid and dynamic nature of emotion itself (Pert 1997), this is hardly surprising. Nevertheless, I find this to be one of the stranger aspects of practice itself: that my own feelings toward (and convictions about) movement material can significantly shift from one day to the next. My experience of this changeability is perhaps another reason for the compulsion to repeatedly return to material. However, as my relationship with the work deepens, a greater consistency in my own emotional relationship with the material also develops. Joan Davis likens the attentiveness of the performer to a cell membrane: ‘Inside the cell [it] is extremely busy, but the membrane is constant [...] That constancy is like the underlying ground of [...] attention’ (2007: 100). So too in the case of my own practice, I would liken my attentiveness – my inner witness – to the membrane that holds the work together. Developing this membrane through tolerating the work’s and my own changeability has been key to deepening the relationship with movement material.

As part of the *Critical Pathways* project, Rosemary Butcher urged a group of dance-makers to 'build up *inside yourselves* the things to keep your work alive' (2015). With this research, my intention has been to offer some insight into those things in my own practice that enable this 'building up inside'. Perhaps another way of understanding this research is as a process of *attunement* to my own ongoing relationship with the work. The articulation of this process of building up inside (or attunement) is a contribution of this research in the sense that it 'gives voice' to these processes – to this 'insider perspective' on the work – and points the way to other makers for how they might explore these processes for themselves.

The capability to attune to or *stay with* movement material over an extended period of time is resourced, in part, through my ongoing dialogic relationship with it. Adler notes that: 'What matters more than the specific content experienced within the witness, though she must address it, is how she comes into relationship to it' (2002: 66). So too with regard to my own approach to dance-making, it is the ongoing dialogue with movement material – or the *coming into relationship* with such material – that informs the attitude toward *forming*, *returning to* and *deepening the relationship with* movement material. I have configured this dialogic mode of enquiry of Authentic Movement within my own dance-making practice in terms of the processual qualities of *opening*, *articulating (or harvesting)* and *layering (or returning to and deepening the relationship with movement material)*. In relation to the generative function of dialogic or 'conversational' modes of creating more broadly, Tufnell and Crickmay observe that:

Conversation connects us to what is other, lets in the converse, the opposite – we allow the solid walls between things and events of our lives to melt; we step to the side of positions we habitually hold, we explore, fall silent, hesitate [...] (2004: 42).

The longer the conversation with movement material persists, the deeper and broader the personal investment with that material becomes. My experience of deepening the relationship with movement material over an extended period is that it imbues the experience of returning to movement with a sense of intimacy and expanse at the same time. This awakens an attentional intensity that is felt and imagined. There is always more to know, even in the well-known. It is in this sense that 'the novelty [of attending] may be in the looking, not in the object' (Watson 2017: 26). As Watson suggests: 'intimacy with our surroundings, held with imagination and love [...] reveals the underlying predictability and possibility' (2017: 26). The practices of *opening*, *harvesting*, *returning* and *deepening* are thus endlessly explorable in this way.

The experience of holding this unpredictability, possibility and conversational to-and-fro within a dance-making practice is akin to a kind of *journeying*, a metaphor which I borrow from Roche's research into the 'moving identity' of the independent dancer (2011, 2015).

Roche observes that the dancer 'is a kind of journeywoman or journeyman [...] building a corporeal portfolio of enfleshed experiences and embodied paradigms' (2011: 114). She notes that the layering of bodily experiences that constitutes this journeying can be experienced by some dancers as destabilizing. However, she also points out that this sense of destabilization is accompanied, for some dancers, by a certain *continuity* of experience (Roche 2011: 113). In my own explorations of forming movement material, I have also identified an underlying continuity of experience that resides beneath the constant shifts in returning to movement material. This continuity of experience exists *because of* the capacity to be attentive, responsive, reflective and reflexive.<sup>80</sup> In terms of Authentic Movement, this is the capacity to 'witness' one's own experience as it shifts and changes and layers across time.

**6 July 2016 (journal entry related to journeying and capaciousness)**

*today in  
returning  
to the material  
I experience  
spaciousness*

*the gap in time  
the happenings of life  
since the last practice  
can be absorbed  
by the work*

*hospitality  
of the practice*

*the practice  
can hold  
it all*

*porous like skin  
looking out  
looking in  
simultaneously*

*DIY  
spirit*

*endurable  
durable  
able*

Adler notes that many Authentic Movement practitioners recognise that ‘the clear and boundaried form [of Authentic Movement] marks [a] ritual space’ (2002: 77). Lowell observes that this ritual space is created through the ‘container’ or ‘ritual structures’ within the format of Authentic Movement itself – which include the coexistence of ‘boundaries and freedom’, the intensified embodied focus and the presence of others who share an understanding of its core values (2007b: 292-318).<sup>81</sup> So too there is also a *ritual-like* dimension to the practice of returning to and deepening the relationship with movement material. Now, in the final stages of completing the project, I hold an awareness of the span of life that has been absorbed into its form: the passing of fourteen seasons and a lot of weather, illnesses and deaths of loved ones, a slew of catastrophic current events, personal successes, failures and disappointments as well as the incessant marvellous mundane occurrences of daily life. When I move through *perch* for the thousandth time I have a felt-sense of life passing and progressing. For reasons I don’t fully understand, I experience enormous relief when working with this time-generous (or slow) attitude toward making something. Through its adaptive and emergent ‘form’ *perch* absorbs and records the process of its making.

In the latter half of this chapter, I have expounded upon how the process of returning to movement material generates the capacity to further return to it, for each instance of returning to movement material affords new experiences which can be harvested and folded back into the practice. The practice is endlessly accumulative in this interplay between what is known and what is yet to be known. The cyclical practice described in this chapter has brought the variations in forming movement material to light, which has made visible an inherent paradox in dancing, dance-making and embodied practices more broadly: that as the work becomes more known, its subtle variability also becomes more vivid. Dilley notes that the act of forming or structuring movement material is ‘a device that we use for corralling our experience’ (cited in De Spain 2014: 165). It is the ‘worked-through-ness’ of the movement material – that is, the practiced relationship with it (what I call returning to movement) – that lends it the potential to ‘corral’ one’s own variation in relation to it. It is in this sense that the *dance work* – both in terms of the artistic product and the labour invested in making it – can be located in the dancer-maker’s ever-expanding and *deepening relationship with* that movement material.

In relation to Authentic Movement practice, Adler has noted that ‘to see and to be seen with clarity, creates intimacy. The utter detail of intimacy can become infinite compassion’ (cited in Olsen 2014: 239). ‘Seeing’ in this sense is coming to know something closely with an attitude of openness. The processes of returning to and deepening the relationship with movement material have manifested within *perch* as a multi-layered and

ever-expanding relationship with it – as a kind of intimacy with movement material. The ultimate work has been growing the capacity to witness and ‘to hold’ the awareness of the dance-making process in close situated relationship with all that surrounds it. The ‘dance’, then, lies in the relationship between all these things. This long-term and total concentration on something or someone, when offered in the spirit of wanting to nurture growth of some kind, is also a mode of loving, after M. Scott Peck’s definition of love as a volitional (rather than purely emotional) mode of attending (2008: 107). In this sense, love is expressed through taking care of the moment-to-moment encounter between what is known and what is yet to be known. Returning to movement material and deepening the relationship with that movement material over an extended period of time requires an attitude of enquiry and commitment. Lee and Pollard have suggested the possibility that a choreographer ‘does not so much make or build a dance but creates some of the conditions for its growth’ (2010: 34). The processual qualities of Authentic Movement presented in this chapter are the methodological conditions that have enabled the committed enquiry into dance-making in this research to take root and grow.

As a direct result of this research, I can now succinctly articulate the process of forming movement material in my own practice in the following terms. A making process begins by *opening to* (or improvising with) ‘what is present’ in a holistic sense and by incorporating those immediately present materials or conditions into resources for making the work. Phases of moving are followed by phases of *articulation* or *harvesting*. What resonates in the moment of moving (and through the process of harvesting) is what remains and what gets *returned* to. Out of this holistic and cyclical process of returning to movement material more material is generated (through further processes of opening and harvesting). Gradually, movement material begins to settle and with this settling a multi-layered quality of embodiment – or a *deepening* relationship with that material – begins to emerge. This chapter has expanded upon these methods for forming movement material through written exposition – including carefully composed scores – and companion materials which, through their combined arrangement, serve to expose and disseminate these creative practices through the observations and reflections they provide. The articulation of this methodology and methods (particularly through the scores which have appeared in this chapter) offers a framework for solo dance-making which other dance-makers might adapt to their own practices. Its development also constitutes a distinctive contribution to strategies for artistic research (a point which I return to in the conclusion).

At the outset of this research, I established the intention to cultivate an engagement with methodology and methods that were intrinsically aligned with the compositional priorities

of my solo dance-making practice. In this way, through investigating the practice itself, the processes of *returning to* and *deepening the relationship* with movement material emerged as significant themes/practices and *cohering disparate content*, *chronological arrangement*, *attending to energetic shifts*, *attention to detail* and *distillation* were affirmed as compositional priorities of the work. While I indicated in the introduction that these practices and compositional priorities were present in my solo work prior to this project, elaborating on these features through this writing has enabled me to more subtly understand their correlation with those aspects of Authentic Movement which underlie my methodology as well as to elaborate on how they are *embodied through the practice*. In other words, I now understand (with greater nuance) *what I make* and *how I make* to be two sides of the same process. These compositional priorities are embedded within the methodology and methods for making, which means that when I am in the process of making a dance I am already engaging with them. The ‘form’ of the work is continuous with the processual and attentional means of enquiry that lead to its making. What I am now able to more subtly articulate is how the process of forming movement material (and thus how my understanding of the dance medium itself) is inextricably intertwined with the attentional dimensions of the practice – with its processual qualities.

I end this chapter with a score for the *perch*-making process. Placed here, its function is to synthesise many of the ideas which have been covered in this chapter and to thereby offer the reader a cumulative document in a poetic format.

#### ***cumulative score for the perch making process***

*perch*  
*is*  
*opening*

*making from*  
*what's there*

*yielding into the*  
*uniqueness of*  
*each moment*

*situatedness*

*perch*  
*is*  
*harvesting*

*receiving and*  
*articulating*

*the echoes  
of the experience*

*fruitfulness*

*seeking a  
multi-dimensional  
click*

*generating  
'talismanic' markers  
(after Lee and Pollard 2010: 28)*

*perch  
is  
layering and  
returning to  
movement*

*looping  
backward and  
forward  
at the same time*

*what is present  
and  
what is potentially  
present*

*zooming  
in and  
out*

*attending to  
chronology*

*listening to the  
adjacency  
of material*

*playing  
with  
duration  
stillnesses  
transitions  
energetic shifts*

*shaping and  
dissolving*

*seeking the  
arrangement  
of material which  
amplifies its  
resonance*

*across time*

*outcroppings of  
situatedness*

*perch  
is  
layering and  
deepening  
the relationship  
with movement*

*diving  
into  
a moment*

*detailing*

*accretion  
paring-back  
erasure  
(after Butcher 2001-2002, 2015)*

*distillation  
simplicity*

*layers of  
surfacing  
content*

*imagery cultivating a  
multi-sensory presence*

*movement quality  
intrinsic porosity  
vitality*

*cultivating  
intimacy*

*staying  
with*

*companionship*

*perch  
is  
a collection  
of  
moments  
that are  
belonging  
and  
disparate*

*hidden  
unity*

*kaleidoscopic  
content*

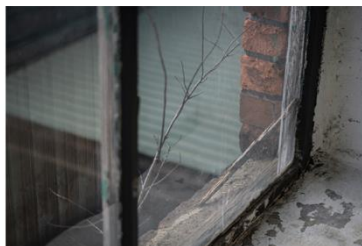
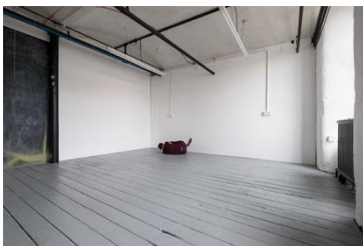
*perch  
is  
temporary  
specificity  
perpetual  
change*

*how  
becoming  
what  
what  
becoming  
how  
like  
different  
sides  
of an  
embroidered  
cloth*

*perch  
is  
intense  
wide  
weaving  
adaptation*

*perch  
is  
pragmatic  
gigantic  
absorption*

*(September 2019)*



## **Conclusion: Contribution to knowledge and future directions for research**

This research has been driven by two predominant tasks. First, to provide a detailed account of the way that movement material is formed within an 'open' practice. Second, in order to do this as precisely as possible, to identify and refine aspects of Authentic Movement in a way that will best facilitate this process of articulation. Effectively then, what I have been pursuing in this research is the possibility for adopting certain aspects of Authentic Movement (itself already an intrinsic element of my dance-making practice) as a framework that can provide a structured approach to the overall task of communicating the contribution to knowledge my practice is able to make in its own terms. This project has provided several contributions to knowledge in the fields of dancing and dance-making, Authentic Movement, Dance Studies and artistic research:

- First, it has contributed to a hitherto neglected area by offering a dancer-maker's account of the process of forming movement material. This account is distinct because it is articulated through a language that belongs to dance and movement practices (which is called for within artistic research), rather than adopting the terminology of an extrinsic theoretical perspective (which remains the convention in artistic research) in order to validate its findings.
- Second, it has addressed the need for research that explores the relationship between dance-making and Authentic Movement. The historical relationship between Authentic Movement and dance-making as articulated in chapter two is significant in that it demonstrates that Authentic Movement is by far the most appropriate framework for the careful investigation of my own dance-making practice. Particularly through the processual and attentional approach to dance-making that it recognises and enables.
- The third contribution to knowledge is the development of a methodology for dance-making that is based in dance/movement principles. The synergies between Authentic Movement and my own dance-making practice mean that this methodology can adapt to changes and developments in the practice itself – something that is absolutely necessary to a faithful account of a processual practice. As such, this particular project can serve as an example of how Authentic Movement may be adapted by others in order to articulate their own unique practices.

- The fourth contribution to knowledge is the articulation of the embodied knowledge of dance-making (in my own practice) as an attentional, processual pursuit which takes place between the dance-maker and the dance being made. In the *perch* making process, this embodied knowledge has become evident through identifying the practices of *returning to* and *deepening the relationship with* movement in the latter stages of the research.

I will now offer some further reflections on each of these contributions to knowledge and on the ways in which they might be ‘used’ by other artists and artist-researchers. This is followed by outlining future directions for research and by some concluding thoughts on the current state of affairs in artistic research.

### **1 Developing a descriptive language: Reflections on articulating the process of forming movement material from the perspective of the dancer-maker**

Throughout this thesis, I have argued that the detailed articulation of the process of forming movement material from the perspective of the dancer-maker is itself a contribution to knowledge since, to my knowledge, it is not something that has previously been articulated. I have also been arguing that it is *through the immersion in practice itself* that the enduring insights for the wider fields of dancing and dance-making, Authentic Movement and artistic research will arise. As Roche (2009, 2011, 2015) has pointed out, it is very rare for dance-making processes to be articulated from the perspective of the dancer or dance-maker. It is even rarer for such dance-making processes to be articulated in terms that are *aligned with* dance-making processes. An ongoing concern of this project, therefore, has been the search for a language (and format for presenting that language) that could adequately articulate the complex, processual and holistic processes of forming movement material in my own dance-making practice in a way that would still be both critically-reflective and communicable.

Because I sought to articulate the insider-experience of forming movement material in terms that are in alignment with and emerge from *the practice itself* (rather than in terms adopted from an extrinsic theory in order to judge, explain or validate the practice), the first portion of the research process (prior to developing *perch*) was dedicated to figuring out how to faithfully give voice through language to the uniquenesses of the practice. This led to the exploration of the synergies between Authentic Movement and dance-making which, in turn, led to the articulation of the processual qualities of Authentic Movement. The articulation of

these processual qualities has provided the basis for a *methodology* for dance-making which can effectively account for the coexistence of form and emergence – a defining characteristic of my own dance-making practice. The integration of the processual qualities of Authentic Movement into the practices for forming movement material has offered a means of further articulating *methods* for dance-making, which are understood to be overlapping cycles of activity.

These articulations of the practice of making *perch* are in themselves a contribution to knowledge in that they give voice to the insider-experience of forming movement material in a dance-making process. When read superficially or taken out of context however, the content of chapter three, in which they are examined in detail, might seem like a ‘mere’ subjective description of a practice. There are two points to be made here. The first is that writing about creative practices from an insider-perspective is not necessarily any easier than doing so through an existing theoretical lens. Indeed, an argument could be made that it is more difficult (or at least more labour intensive) since it requires the slow development of an appropriate language for dance-making from inside the practice, rather than the adoption of ‘ready-made’ language from outside it. Underlying this writing, then (and that of chapter three in particular), there is an intensive labour through immersive, embodied practice that belies the apparently simple or subjective presentation. As Bacon and Midgelow point out, one of the issues that comes up for artist-researchers who are seeking to articulate the insider-experience of art-making is ‘the assumption that subjective experience is easy to articulate and easier to access than objective knowledge [and that] there is a growing body of research that shows this is fundamentally incorrect’ (Bacon and Midgelow 2011: 6). It has taken several years of carefully contemplating practice in conversation with the ideas and contexts which drive it *to even begin* to formulate my practice/research in this way.

The second point is that while writing that is, or appears, more subjective or descriptive is easily assumed to contribute less (in terms of knowledge) than something more ‘objective’ or ‘theoretical’, in the articulation of a unique and open creative practice the opposite is actually the case. It is specifically tailored to the articulation of the practice in all its detail, and preserves the nuanced nature of the making process that would be exceptionally difficult to communicate through the language of an extrinsic framework. As Adler has noted: ‘As people explore writing [*from*] the embodied experience rather than writing about it, they can discover new ways of knowing the distance between experience and word, as well as the absence of such distance’ (2002: 154). In my experience, words that emanate directly from dance/movement practices are more likely to give voice to the *specific* knowledge that is embedded in dance-making processes, rather than representing them in pre-existing terms.

Moreover, wrestling with the challenges of articulating an amorphous and ephemeral practice is itself a creative process, one which, if done with adequate care, can enrich the research enquiry. Assembling this writing has helped me to articulate my working processes and to get to know the work – or, as Lee and Pollard have put it, ‘to grow’ the work (2010: 34) – which maybe means getting to know it differently or to expose it through language. As dance artist Juliette Mapp<sup>82</sup> observes: ‘translating the experience of our physical imagination into spoken language confirms our connection to the world around us’ (2018: 9). She adds that the processes of reflecting ‘through language can re-engage us with our history and move us forward into community’ (2018: 9). The right language offers a shared modality of communication and, with this, comes a positive relational potential, which can be edifying.

## **2 The significance of processuality and situatedness: Reflections on articulating the synergies between Authentic Movement and dance-making**

The second contribution of the thesis is how it addresses the need for more research exploring the relationship between dance-making and Authentic Movement. Given their historical overlap (as outlined in chapter 2), it is curious that there is not more written research that addresses the shared lineages of Authentic Movement practice in relation to dance-making. I have identified those operations and qualities of Authentic Movement that seem broadly relevant to the practice of dance-making and specifically to the processes of generating and forming movement material across an extended period of time (in Chapters 2 and 3). I have also situated my own dance-making practice in relation to other dance and performance makers who explicitly draw on Authentic Movement and have identified how my practice both builds upon and diverges from the work of these practitioners (in Chapter 2). Most dancers and dance-makers who have adopted Authentic Movement as a tool for dancing and dance-making have applied it as a mode of open-ended improvisation or as an analogue for the performer-audience relationship. My own research builds upon and also diverges from these approaches in that I have sought to explore certain principles of Authentic Movement in relation to the processes of *forming* movement material. In this sense, the articulation of the synergies between dance-making and Authentic Movement in Chapters 2 and 3 is something which, to my knowledge, has not previously been undertaken. This research project has therefore served to explore my initial hypotheses about what Authentic Movement might potentially offer to dance-making, but what insights can it now afford (in return) to the practice of Authentic Movement?

One observation that can now be offered back to Authentic Movement concerns the language that surrounds it. The practice is typically characterised in terms of ‘going inward’

or responding to ‘inner impulses’ – language that reflects the rich interiority that I too experience, but which also seems only partially true. I would rather describe the practice of Authentic Movement as a *turning inside out*, where one’s sensorial, kinaesthetic, emotional and imaginative engagement is experienced in porous exchange with the context one is immersed in. Within Authentic Movement, such situatedness is generally recognised within the relationship between mover and witness, probably as a consequence of the central role of witnessing in the ‘ground’ or dyad format. Not surprisingly, then, psychotherapeutic frameworks are frequently adopted to elucidate the relational dynamics that emerge in Authentic Movement.<sup>83</sup> Less often articulated is the broader relational field – that is, the embodied relationship with the environment and contextual circumstances, an omission that is somewhat mis-attuned to the holistic nature of the practice.<sup>84</sup> It is in this sense that the processual qualities of Authentic Movement articulated in this thesis might serve to redress the predominant portrayal of the practice as a turning inward.

### **3 Reflections on the development of a methodology for dance-making based in dance/movement principles**

Leading figures in artistic research have continually called for the development of a robust methodology developed specifically out of and in relationship to artistic principles themselves (Borgdorff 2012; Nelson 2013; Ellis 2018; Arlander 2019; Bacon and Midgelow 2019). The content of chapter three has explored the overlap between the processual aspects of dance-making outlined in chapter one and the aspects of Authentic Movement outlined in chapter two, in order to develop such a methodology. The third contribution to knowledge, then, is the identification of certain *processual qualities* of Authentic Movement – *witnessing*, *opening*, *articulating* and *layering* – which form the basis of the development of a methodology for dance-making based in dance/movement principles. Unlike methodologies taken from other fields and applied to dance however, an intrinsic approach cannot be straightforwardly or unproblematically transferred from one practice to another. The methodology developed here is robust precisely *because* it is specific to *my* dance-making practice (specific, even, to the making of *perch*), and in order to remain robust it would have to be re-thought and re-developed in the specific context of another dance practice. Thus, it serves as *an example* of the precise, critical engagement with methodology that is lacking in much artistic research.

The relationship between dance-making and Authentic Movement that I have articulated in this thesis emerged from my long-term engagement with both practices. Having articulated the deep synergies between them and developed Authentic Movement

into a method for both creating dances and articulating in detail that process of creation, it is true to say, now more than ever, that Authentic Movement (or aspects of it) is an integral part of my dance-making practice, just as parts of my practice now bear some resemblance to Authentic Movement. Specifically, then, when dance-making or writing about dance-making, I am doing so from within this area of overlap, one that I have delicately constructed within my creative practice using the principles adapted from Authentic Movement. To borrow Nelson's terminology, the means by which I make dances ('know-how'), the methods and principles that consciously guide and emerge from that making process ('know-what') and the theoretical framework that informs my practice ('know-that') are not discrete things (2013: 37). Rather the coalescence between the know-how, know-what and know-that in my own practice has enabled the creative process to grow and speak on its own terms. This is the triangulation that Nelson indicates is essential if artistic research is to contribute to knowledge in an academic context (2013).

Drawing on methodological and theoretical frameworks that are *intimate with* movement processes is an efficacious way for artistic research in dance to articulate its unique place in the academy and in education more broadly. Perhaps, then, this casts some doubt on Nelson's suggestion that the employment of an extrinsic theoretical framework (the 'know that' within his model) is *necessarily* desirable *for all* artistic research projects. At the very least it ought to be acknowledged as a distinct possibility that an extrinsic theoretical framework *might* create a distanced, distorted or even simplified account of one's practice precisely because of its extrinsic nature, with the additional concern that when a number of different practitioners describe their work according to the same theoretical framework then that framework can serve to homogenise what in reality are distinct practices, each with their own unique contribution to make. Given the intimate familiarity that an artist has with their own practice (when compared with the relative unfamiliarity they may have with a theory taken up from a field within which they are not expert) is it not likely that a precise account of practice (developed in its own terms) will yield a far more precise articulation of it for the purposes of illuminating its epistemological potential? One only has to look at the history of art-writing in fine art (that is to say, the writings by artists about their practice) to see the immense contribution to knowledge that artists have made by developing their own languages, when free from the pressure to utilise an extrinsic language from outside of art (Writing Art n.d.).<sup>85</sup>

However, while one might question the priority given in academia to insights that are gleaned from an extrinsic theoretical framework, there is no doubt that it can be valuable to explore resonances between ideas from different fields or disciplines. As Nelson points out, 'it is important to reflect upon the nature of the relation between ideas and processes in one field and another' (2013: 32). Engaging with extrinsic theories can provide terminology

through which the articulation of practice can be communicated across disciplines. But this may not *always* be the most appropriate route for artistic research – a field which purports to give value to knowledge produced *in and through practice*. My hope for the still emerging domain of artistic research is that it can be emboldened to research through practice on its own terms. As Kramer has observed: ‘Practice-as-research [...] provides an academic context in which the body and embodied experiences are traced rather than erased, just like bone can be felt when tracing the shoulder blade in a somatically-based partner exercise’ (2015a: 30-31). In relation to my own dance-making practice, Authentic Movement has offered the means by which to closely trace the body and embodied experiences.

The long-term vision for the movement-oriented, reflective scope of this research has been to *give value to practice*, and to pave the way for other artist-researchers within dance to centralise their practices in their research in a similar way. Encouraging a confident voice from inside the practice of dance-making, drawing on some of the strategies for articulation offered in this thesis, has certainly become one of my imperatives as an educator. Nevertheless, I have had serious concerns along the way that this research had become too narrow or inward-looking. One of the common criticisms of prioritising the ‘insider-perspective’ in artistic research is the risk of developing a self-indulgent, myopic or even solipsistic perspective. However, during my career as a dance-artist and educator, I have longed for more robust articulations of dance-making processes from the perspective of the dance-maker – rather than articulations from the dramaturg, the creative technologist or ‘expert spectator’ (Melrose n.d.) – for the overriding purpose of developing deeper understandings of those practices. For, as one can observe in the long, widely recognised tradition of ‘art-writing’ within Fine Art (a tradition that pre-dates artistic research in dance by hundreds of years), writings from the perspective of the artist serve as another means of disseminating the vision of the art-practice and therefore offer useful primary source material for communication between artists and between artists and their audiences (Writing Art n.d.). In this research, I have sought to offer a precise and detailed articulation of the dance-making process in a way that is thoroughly grounded in and reliant on practice itself for its means of articulation.

#### **4 Returning to and deepening the relationship with movement: Reflections on the epistemological potential of dance-making**

A significant insight which has emerged through the course of this research is how the processual qualities of Authentic Movement foreground the dancer’s ongoing holistic, attentional relationship with movement material as central to the process of dance-making.

By associating dance-making more with the lived relationship with movement material than with the end-product or 'object' of the work itself, the act of dance-making becomes even more fleeting. At the same time, in a way, it becomes more enduring. Performance studies scholar Rebecca Schneider has suggested that, rather than being understood as an act of disappearance, performance might be better understood as a 'ritual of reverberations' that resides in the body memory of the performer-maker (2002). In this sense, the dancer-maker's holistic relationship with the dance – shape-shifting as it is – will extend beyond its performance because that relationship remains and reverberates in the dancer-maker's moving body. The practices of *returning to* and *deepening the relationship with* movement material are what create and maintain these reverberations.

This research has served to shed light on the processes of *returning to* and *deepening the relationship with* movement material so that these embodied processes might become more visible and valued as *creative practices*. Another significant insight of this research, then, is the recognition that the generative or 'creative' capacity of dance-making is present not only in what is 'new' but also in the act of returning to known forms of movement. Returning to movement material is a creative practice. Following on from this, one could question general assumptions surrounding 'emergent' processes in dance, which, at least rhetorically, tend to emphasise that which is 'new' and 'unknown' in binary opposition to that which is 'formed' and thus 'known' (Garrett Brown 2007: 161). Continually *returning to* and *deepening the relationship with* movement material means that performer-makers working in traditions that prioritise scored material potentially – and continually – embody and contain this paradox of knowing and not knowing at the same time. It is in this sense that the processes of forming and of returning to movement material can be, in principle, an emergent process.

Both of these insights articulated above – relating to the significance of the dancer-maker's relationship with movement material and relating to the *creative practice* of returning to movement – configure the epistemic potential of dance-making as an *attentional and processual phenomenon*. This research has articulated the understanding of 'forming' movement material as an embodied phenomenon that is closely interwoven with the awareness of and ongoing adaptation to its surrounding conditions. Through this research I have sought to give greater visibility to the holistically-intricate embodied knowing of the dancer-maker and thereby to ascribe greater epistemic value to such knowing within the academic context of artistic research and beyond.

By articulating my own dance-making practice (the making of *perch*) through a movement-oriented methodology, this research suggests an approach to artistic research through which

it may become possible to deepen understandings of dance-making practices more generally. The articulation of my dance-making practice in this thesis may be of value to other dance-makers if it resonates with the holistic and multi-layered dimensions of their own practices. Also, the scores (and processes described in Chapter 3) can be taken up by other artists in whatever way they themselves find useful. More significantly however, this research has sought to offer *an example* of a practice articulated through the practice itself, rather than through providing an account that (inappropriately) generalises its 'applicability' in relation to other dance practices. Therefore, my greater hope for this research is that the concerns articulated in this thesis may spark other dance-makers (whose *practices* are under-represented within the academy) to articulate those methodologies and methods which underscore their own tastes and values, and in so doing to develop their own languages for what they do in terms that are important and integral *to their own* practices. Perhaps then it may become possible for artist-researchers to speak about their work in terms that are precise and unique to their practices, resulting in more unique contributions to the field of artistic research.

This concludes our consideration of the contributions to knowledge. The precise articulation of the process of forming movement material from the perspective of the dancer-maker, along with the articulation of the synergies between Authentic Movement and dance-making, together demonstrate the epistemological potential of a processual, attentional dance-making practice when looked at in detail on its own terms. This research has provided an alternative paradigm for artistic research and also has implications for future research in the domains of performance, facilitation and collaboration. I will now draw out the some of these future directions. Before doing so however, I offer a cautionary note.

### **Future directions for research**

The reader will be well aware that, within artistic research, there has been considerable debate about the notion of knowledge production (Nelson 2013; Ellis 2018). Less debated is the troubling conflation of 'knowledge production' with 'applicability' within the current 'knowledge economy' of UK higher education.<sup>86</sup> I agree with Ellis that it is 'unfortunate that academics are being cajoled and conditioned by the corporate university to understand our scholarly worth as being about the extent to which we can *apply* our scholarship; that is to produce useful knowledge for the knowledge economy' (2018: 482-483 my italics). This emphasis on applicability is unfortunate *and* misplaced in the context of artistic research, especially if we accept that the 'epistemic value of practice-as-research [...] is created

through the act of the thing-produced being experienced' (Ellis 2018: 488). This is yet another variation on a now familiar theme: we've seen that writing about creative practices is valued above the practices themselves, along with the expectation that the writing adopts recognised academic forms from other fields regardless of whether they illuminate or obscure the 'insider knowing' of the artist; we've seen open and creative processes assessed in terms of quantifiable aims and outcomes, and now we see the dissemination of artistic research *not* located within the encounter with the art-form itself, but in how it might latterly be 'applied'; (additionally, we will see later on how a generic examination format is reproduced regardless of whether it suits the work itself). The theme is clear, that artistic research, on transitioning into an academic context, is (still) struggling to develop its own identity and is (still) preserving its acceptance in academia through the attempt to imitate the way in which more traditional academic fields contribute to knowledge. Yet, as Schwab has observed, to superimpose 'expectations of utility' upon artistic research 'is regressive and potentially detrimental to [how we value] artistic practice' (2013: 10).

Further below, I will discuss the potential applicability of the processual qualities of Authentic Movement to the contexts of pedagogical and collaborative practice. This was and remains a kind of side note or appendix. With the above critique of the knowledge economy in mind, to have brought it to the foreground, and to have presented this research as a 'model' for dance-making or for facilitating dance-making in such a way would not only have been inappropriately formulaic considering the unique nature of creative practices, it would also have diluted the intended focus of this research on a single unique practice of dance-making. In short, it would have served to falsely homogenise the field of dance through any such claims for widespread applicability. This is not to say that there are not valuable applications of this research that I will be pursuing beyond this project (for there are, and I shall – particularly in the areas of facilitation and collaboration). The concern here is that in artistic research *in dance in particular* we are prone to undermine the value of our art form and the value of practice itself by overreaching the scope of our research in order to demonstrate our productivity within the knowledge economy. If we truly want to value dance for its unique epistemological potential, then we need to start revising the way that we evaluate it.

### *Implications for performance*

Since the focus of this research has been on the process of forming movement material – that is, on the embodied processes of the dancer-maker and *not* on the process of

performing to an audience — I have not dealt in any detail with issues related to performance or relationship with audience in this thesis. Nevertheless, it is important to indicate that my attitude towards performance emerges as an extension of the emphasis on the processual attention of the dancer-maker (see also the section on ‘Performing process’ in Chapter 1). Part of the practice (of *perch*) is maintaining the integrity of its structure while also maintaining a certain level of openness to what is arising in the moment of moving through it. In this sense when I am performing my dance-making process I am exploring, as performance-maker Sandra Reeve puts it, ‘my relationship with being seen [as well as] my relationship with having to present something’ which is then cycled back into the work as another resource to explore (cited in Meehan 2018a: 128). That is to say, the compositional and performative strategies for developing *perch* are one and the same.

As part of the process of figuring out how to share *perch* ‘live’ with an audience, I have been experimenting (very occasionally) with inviting ‘critical friends’ to witness it. The experience of this witnessing has been folded back into how I perceive *perch* and continue to work on it.<sup>87</sup> Such witnessing could serve to affirm my perceptions of the practice but could also serve to challenge my assumptions, encouraging me to perceive the work differently. For example: Caroline Salem’s witnessing offered the phrase ‘poised tension’ for the overriding quality or state of the work (as we saw in the previous chapter) and reflected back the experience of ‘going on a journey’ through being witness to the work. Garrett Brown’s witnessing reflected back a sense of its imagery – ‘the sensual and visceral movement of a woman moving framed by windows, walls and corners’. She also reported that the action of opening of the window felt like the ‘climax’ of the work, which was surprising because it was a section that I had nearly let go of several times due to the felt-sense of its insignificance or what I might also call the waning of its ‘multidimensional click’. Macdonald’s witnessing reported that the work was ‘intense’ to experience – ‘like watching a woman doomed to repeat’ – which surprised me both in its feeling-tone and in the image of a doomed woman. In turn, this made me question to what extent the intensity of her experience had been ‘transferred’ through my own relational presence during the practice. Macdonald also characterized the work as a ‘holding’ space – language which she uses to characterize the psycho-dynamic affect of her own screen dance work on the viewer – language which I used and attributed to Macdonald in the previous chapter.

In conjunction with the process of PhD submission and examination, I further experimented with sharing the work with small audiences of two to six people across the time of dusk.<sup>88</sup> Meehan has observed that ‘in bringing somatic approaches [into] performance there is a quest [by artists] to seek formats that encapsulate and allow for the sharing of the processual nature of the practice’ (2018a: 132). In order to allow for sharing the processual nature of my practice, I couched the act of showing *perch* within social interactions with

audience-witnesses before and afterwards. Through these sharings, I have come to understand that part of the process of performing the work is a period of 'hosting'<sup>89</sup> prior to it, followed by time afterwards to transition out of the space. As part of the process, I welcome audience to the space, we chat, I show the work, we chat some more over tea and together we meander out of the building. During this time, it has become dark.

In Chapter 2, I situated my work in relation to other artists (such as Davis, Meehan and Olsen) who explicitly draw on the sensitized relational awareness of Authentic Movement practice in relation to their dance/performance-making practices. So too, while performing *perch*, I imagine the relationship between myself and audience as aligning with the intentions of the mover-witness relationship within Authentic Movement, a relationship which I experience to be both responsive and spacious at the same time. Future directions for research in this regard could be to investigate this practice of 'hosting' the work and to explore the social, relational dynamics and feedback exchanges that ensue from this approach.

### *Implications for facilitation practice*

Although the focus of this thesis has been on my solo-dance making practice, alongside this research I have also been experimenting with how I might utilise certain aspects of this practice within higher education and professional-development settings, not least because facilitation is an activity which figures significantly in my working life. Indeed, the *perch* scores (related to the processes of *opening*, *harvesting* and *returning/deepening*) that appear in the previous chapter have also been delivered within these different facilitation contexts.<sup>90</sup> Through its emphasis on articulation processes, this project has provided the opportunity to articulate the principles that these areas of work (dance-making and facilitation) share, to the extent that I could characterise this research as being somewhere on the threshold between a making and a facilitation process. However, in this thesis I have chosen to emphasise the processes of forming movement material within my solo dance-making practice for the purposes of deepening the understanding of that practice and for the purposes of giving voice to it in an immersive, first-hand manner. Indeed, it is through this focus on my solo practice that the scores originally arose, although I now deliver them within and accordingly adapt them to facilitation contexts. If I had chosen to make facilitation processes the focus of the research, this project would have been driven by a different research enquiry, which would have explicitly acknowledged the relational dimensions of facilitation and, needless to

say, would have generated a different modality of practice. Such a focus on facilitation practices would also have required a fuller contextualisation of dance facilitation practices within the history of Western contemporary dance.

In chapter one, I pointed out how an attentional, highly-sensitised approach to generating movement is not new within the context of dance-making, for the origins of many somatic practices coincided with the origins of modern dance itself (Eddy 2009, 2016). It has become increasingly common for somatic practices such as Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais and Experiential Anatomy to be delivered within undergraduate dance training and education programs in the UK (Reed and Whatley 2016: 155-163). However, these practices are usually attached to the delivery of dance technique; it is less customary for somatic practices to be linked with dance-making or choreographic practices (Reed and Whatley 2016: 162).<sup>91</sup> Indeed, Garrett Brown has noted that the 'main argument for the inclusion of somatic practices as part of dance training is the enhanced technical performance and the capacity to shift movement patterns' (2007: 123). I would suggest that if we can understand 'technique' broadly as 'facility', and if we can understand facility as being inclusive of the creative skills associated with dance-making, then the traditional 'schism [between] technician and creator' (Garrett Brown 2007: 123) that still remains within some dance education and training curricula becomes problematic indeed. In this vein, directions for future research include the application of the processual qualities of Authentic Movement to the facilitation of creative practices within dance education and training settings.

What the processual qualities would bring to this area is an emphasis on dance-making in a *holistic* manner with the intention to cultivate a sense of *creative agency* in the dancer-maker. For example, consciously working with the practices of *witnessing*, *opening*, *harvesting* and *returning/deepening* can cultivate resourcefulness, in the sense that the capacity to make becomes located in the capacity to notice, respond to and *stay with* something long enough for it to generate its own dialogic sensibility. Facilitating these practices (to undergraduates in the context of dance-making, for example) can serve to 'mirror back' and affirm personal and cultural movement preferences while also allowing for those preferences to deepen and develop. In such an approach, the style or vocabulary of the movement is less of a concern. Rather, it is the ongoing processual relationship *with* that material as it is emerging and transforming over time that assumes importance.

The holistic nature of this enduring relationship with material opens the way for the inclusion of certain less-recognised, subtle elements in dance education. The act of harvesting, for example, serves not only to build up a relationship with movement material as it is emerging but also to cultivate self-awareness in a more general sense, for it provides a way of getting to know oneself (reflectively and reflexively) *as a maker*. Similarly, part of

deepening the relationship with movement material is engaging with its emotional resonance. As dance educationalist Soili Hamalainen has pointed out, the over-emphasis on sensation in some dance and somatic practices 'is an escape from emotions' which 'represses emotional integration' (Hamalainen 2007: 74). I would add that this repression of emotion may potentially inhibit creative development (and indeed, Hamalainen also notes that 'the significance of feelings and their use has received less attention [even though they] play an essential role in creative work' (2007: 64)).

In this sense, the processual qualities of Authentic Movement as proposed in this thesis have much to contribute in an educational or facilitation context. They suggest a means of engaging with feelings, or emotion, in a way that is integrated, self-directed and self-regulating while also being closely in tune with dance-making processes. These processes serve to not only nourish one's own practice but also to nourish the art form more broadly in the way that they may enable the communicability of one's practice to the broader field. Further research into facilitating the processes of *witnessing*, *opening*, *articulating* and *returning/deepening* (alongside research into pedagogical theories that align with the attentional and processual values of the practice) would be worthwhile indeed.

### *Implications for collaborative practice*

Greater awareness of the holistic and situated aspects of dance-making processes can also make visible some of the embodied movement processes in collaborative devising processes. Davies et al propose that a dance work is 'animated by the liveness and distinctiveness of the performer, whose performance inhabits a liminal space between interpretation and authorship of the work' (2014: 4). On the basis of this research, I would further assert that the live, distinctive, liminal interpretation of the dance-work (by the dancer) is in fact a mode of authorship that is deeply creative. Overall this research has been concerned with the creative potential that a somatically-informed methodology (namely Authentic Movement) might offer to the practices of forming movement material. Placing greater value on the lived relationship with movement material above and beyond the movement material itself in turn places greater value on the relational qualities of the dancer-maker and on the holistic and embodied processes of dance-making as an artistic medium. The capacity to sense, feel, imagine and reflect upon movement is crucial to the acts of forming and of performing movement material *meaningfully*. These capacities are also crucial to relating to others. Rouhiainen suggests that tuning into our bodies in a holistic way gives us 'valuable insight into who we are and how we relate to the situations we find

ourselves in [which can lead to] the cultivation of ethical subjectivity' (2008: 242). Another direction for future research, then, is the further application of the processual qualities to co-creative and collaborative processes. Although beyond the scope of the discussion here, I have begun some preliminary experiments in this direction. Links to three different collaborative projects are provided here (in an endnote) for readers to optionally engage with.<sup>92</sup>

### **Some concluding thoughts on the current state of affairs in artistic research**

The principal drive of this research has been to give visibility to the processual nature of dance-making – which I have argued resides in the growing intimacy between the dancer-maker and the dance – and thereby to give greater value to such practices (and the embodied knowledge contained within them) within the dance community, academia and education at large. However, the difficulty of achieving such an aim is widely recognised. As Ellis has noted:

What's key is that we find ways to allow art to do its work on its own terms [...] The role of the artist-scholar then becomes how to bring their materials into the academy and to shape them in such a way that their context changes while preserving what is at their heart (Ellis and Hilton 2019).

Have I 'denatured' the ephemeral, embodied subject of this research simply by making it a subject of research? And in so doing have I unwittingly capitulated to the dominant, dualistic, logocentric ideologies of academia? The sheer length of this thesis, which now stands at approximately 62,000 words (approaching the length of a fully written thesis at the University of Chichester) certainly runs the risk of reinforcing the biases it seeks to challenge in the context of academic research through its emphasis on rational articulation through the written word. As Schwab and Borgdorff have observed, one of the primary obstacles that artist-researchers face when entering the academy is that 'art may be subjected to epistemic regimes that are not suitable to, and thus might compromise, the kinds of practices and knowledges in which artists engage' (2014: 10). Have I done enough to challenge such epistemic regimes and to prioritise the practice of dance-making? Even in the attempt to articulate dance-making from the voice of the dancer-maker, is it possible that I may still be 'explaining' too much? For, as Ellis also notes, 'part of our role as artists is to recognise what can be said, and to be open to what can't be said [...] That there are things of value (even to the academy) that ought to remain tacit and/or implicit' (Ellis and Hilton 2019).

These difficulties of communicating the knowledge a practice contains might be mitigated if the overriding responsibility for communication does not lie with the thesis alone. Rather than replacing the practical work with a written submission that must provide a total 'explanation' of it, the two can be taken together as *companion pieces*, each serving to illuminate aspects of the other. In this sense, I would agree with Ellis that the 'epistemic value of practice-as-research – what the arts and research community understand differently because of the research – is created through the act of the *thing-produced* being experienced' (2018: 487). What then are the implications of this understanding for how we conceptualise, construct and participate in processes of dissemination of artistic research? I would argue that the understanding of the dissemination of artistic research should be firmly located within the encounter with the art-form/practice itself (which in turn would enable the artist-researcher to further specify the terms of encounter for submission and examination).<sup>93</sup>

Thus, the problem that cultural critic Thomas Holert has observed – that it is 'somewhat contradictory to claim a critical stance with regard to the transformation of art education through an artistic research paradigm while simultaneously operating at the heart of that same system' (Holert 2009: section 2 cited in Bacon and Midgelow 2019: 13) – is not inescapable. Personally, I would be optimistic about the potential for artistic research to do justice to the creative practices it encounters. But this would necessitate some significant shifts in the way it relates to its 'objects of study'. First and foremost, the correction of the overemphasis on writing already noted above. Second, in order to *genuinely value* alternative modes of knowing within the academy, it would be necessary to create a space of 'critical tolerance' within which alternative modes of knowledge could be explored and developed. It would mean *learning from* rather than seeking *to explain* art practices, *listening to* what they have to say (in whatever new language is most appropriate) rather than *telling them* what they mean.

Bacon and Midgelow observe that a supervisory (or examination) system that 'only focuses on language that expresses that the research was achieved or is related to a particular discourse will itself be unable to attend to the potential knowledge contained within the artistic research itself' (2019: 6). There is no doubt that what is being called for is a move away from the necessity to 'use' extrinsic theory in a way that limits what the artist is able to say and a move away from assessing creative practices in terms of their verbally articulated aims and outcomes. The UK higher education system is unique in that there are numerous examples, at the undergraduate and postgraduate level, of courses where practice is located at the heart of the curriculum (Bacon and Midgelow 2019: 7). And while artistic research has an increasing presence at the doctoral level in the UK, 'there has been little change in the systems of support, training and assessment of Artistic Doctorates' (Bacon and Midgelow 2019: 7).

Unless we can shift the systems for submission and examination in a way that prioritises the epistemic value of dancing and dance-making (which is to say, that prioritises the encounter with the art form itself) then as artist-researchers we run the risk of compromising the potential contribution to knowledge of artistic research by attempting to structure it in imitation of what a contribution to knowledge looks like in other fields or in academia generally. Is it really appropriate to assess art in terms of outcomes, or to apply a scientific method terminology to a creative process? Seen from such perspectives, dance would be regarded as having little to contribute to knowledge, while its real contribution would be obscured. If we do not immediately and critically reform these systems for submission and examination, artistic research will be usurped and appropriated by the dominant dualistic, logocentric framework of the academy. All this is a far cry from the central doctrine of artistic research: to give credence to alternative ways of knowing.

To conclude: unpacking the process of attending to movement as it is being formed has been long and slow. However, this slowness does have certain advantages in that the insights produced have been born out of a deeply embodied process. Process-oriented research values the long-term potentiality of the work by investing more time into the process. A slow approach to research helps to re-value knowledge as 'knowing', as a verb, a thing you do (learn, develop, grow) rather than a thing you have (a commodity within a knowledge economy). However, one of the perceived 'disadvantages' of this slow approach is its inefficiency. Making things slowly is counter to 'the corporate ethos of speed' in the university and 'challenges the frantic pace and standardization of contemporary culture' (2016: xvii-xviii). Yet such slow deliberation is fundamental to researching dance-making if we are to avoid doing so in a merely superficial manner. Researching should mean *searching deeply*. As Berg and Seeber state, 'time for reflection and open-ended inquiry is not a luxury but is crucial to [academic research]' (2016: xviii). I have been extremely fortunate to have this time to investigate an aspect of my dance-making practice.

If we want to ascribe greater cultural value to embodied cultural practices such as dance-making, then we need to take the time to immerse ourselves in them so that we can also effectively advocate for such practices in terms that are capable of communicating their unique contribution. Indeed, as McNiff has observed, arts subjects risk '[reinforcing their] adjunctive status by failing to perceive and implement their unique ways of knowing and communicating as primary modes of research' (2013: 5). If we want the knowing of dancing to be valued, carried forward and passed on within our educational institutions and funding bodies – if we want to avert adjunct status – then we need to also take the time to speak from the voice of dancing and dance-making itself.

**perch score**

(poetic score which describes the work as a whole – provided here for the reader to optionally engage with)

[seahorse sidestep]

sideways  
stepping

mapping

internal  
readying

listening to the  
intricacies of  
sound

deep  
abdominals  
responsiveness  
in  
legs

breaking  
up  
ground

filling  
the space  
with rhythm

being  
the rain  
and  
being  
rained on

surreptitious  
drift

accidental  
coverage

plain  
seeing

latent  
longing

petering  
out

hovering

*[curtsy bow]*

*hearing the  
absence of  
sound*

*right leg  
crossed  
over left*

*pelvic  
lever  
eternal  
fold*

*fingertips reaching  
into  
spiralling*

*rooting  
suction*

*gathering  
something  
ancient*

*tip  
fall  
gentle  
rebound*

*unrolling  
receiving  
upward  
space*

*birthing  
one foot  
then other*

*jagged legs*

*pause*

*seamless  
roll*

*[wall nugget]*

*to meet wall  
compact*

*a long  
pause*

*frog hands*  
*listening*

*accordion*  
*lungs*

*gradually*  
*extending*

*finding*  
*front*

*melting*  
*into stilted*  
*all fours*  
*in the corner*

*pause*

*[detectorist crawl]*

*asymmetrical*  
*shape*

*stutter*

*awkward*  
*zigzag*

*scanning the*  
*ground*

*organisational*  
*attitude*

*micro pause*  
*under desk*

*listening*

*[conjuring]*

*softening*

*sinewy*  
*rise*  
*from*  
*low to*  
*high*

*tube*  
*reaching*  
*toward the light*  
*of the window*

*balls of feet  
joint spaces  
in legs*

*lean  
hold  
hang*

*endurance*

*oiling  
joints  
wrist  
wobble*

*something  
grand and  
self-conscious*

*leaning up  
and back*

*fragmented  
lasso  
arm*

*stirring  
space*

*strange  
signals*

*[orbiting retreat]*

*breezy  
release*

*circular  
step pattern*

*light on  
the legs*

*[polepow]*

*pow  
out of  
nowhere*

*clunky  
accident*

*cosmic  
bump*

*chute  
drain  
fly*

*rigid  
then fluid  
response*

*smooth  
descent  
delicate  
aftermath*

*escape  
hatch*

*a beat  
of rest  
in flight*

*arrested shape  
in space*

*flail*

*gather  
head  
spinal flexion  
flat on belly*

*floating down  
reaching  
rock  
bottom*

*breathing  
into  
ground*

*push  
through palms  
and elbows*

*slithery  
after-birth*

*[circular trench]*

*weird  
underworld*

*yielding  
pushing*

*hands  
sucking  
ground*

*tail  
leading  
coming onto  
right side*

*circumnavigate  
and  
protect*

*animal  
knowingness  
imprinted  
action*

*strange  
strength*

*groove  
of labour*

*circuits  
of  
mermaid  
crab  
bear  
slow  
standing  
high  
release*

*tasting  
wall  
with back  
and hands*

*gentle push  
to re-enter*

*[wild chicken]*

*spurting  
hose pipe*

*fast  
agile  
skips*

*strange  
faces*

*edges*

*of space*

*disorientation*

*'embody  
the  
chicken'*

*arms  
flap  
head  
peck*

*short  
erratic  
duration*

*[spearhead]*

*drop it*

*switch*

*centering  
relief*

*containment*

*pensive  
punishment*

*calm purposeful  
walk to corner*

*then  
to wall*

*[mind meld]*

*convex  
corner  
touch*

*receiving  
cool  
sturdy  
presence*

*relief*

*flesh  
mirrored  
back*

*sorrow*

*stillness*

*front of  
the body  
soft and  
sensual*

*cheek  
to wall  
descent*

*[window dance]*

*left  
foot  
grounded*

*right  
leg  
extending*

*awkward  
sprawl  
splay*

*grapple  
stuck*

*muscular  
heroic  
push*

*tender  
slip  
into  
edge  
precarity*

*boundary  
between  
inside  
outside*

*backward  
slither*

*[pathetic corner]*

*nudged  
into  
corner*

*seamless  
slide*

*long pause  
soaking  
it up*

*head  
reaching*

*[jester diagonal]*

*easy  
tumble  
to  
stand*

*soft  
stepping  
across  
the space*

*arms  
behind  
back*

*tidy*

*long  
diagonal  
seamless  
turn*

*repeat  
repeat  
repeat  
repeat*

*corkscrew  
on the spot*

*[beaks and talons]*

*juicy  
swipes*

*sharp  
peripheries*

*hooking  
the air*

*jagged*

*carving*

*constantly  
changing*

*directions*

*tailbone*  
*talon*

*led*  
*by*  
*extremities*

*over*  
*reaching*

*capability*  
*adventure*

*a bird*  
*in a room*

*something*  
*predatorial*

*berserk*

*perforating*  
*space*  
*perforating*  
*self*

*predator*  
*prey*

*being*  
*done in*

*[concentrated crunch]*

*soft*  
*sideways*  
*descent*

*partially*  
*consumed*  
*undulation*

*[driftwood arm]*

*relaxed*  
*wrist*  
*something*  
*weary*

*encapsulation*

*digestion*  
*of gesture*

*[languid pool]*

*whole body  
pouring*

*tidal  
tentacled*

*tasting  
space  
being  
tasted*

*organ  
presence*

*winding  
down*

*kneading  
constructing  
nesting*

*staying*

*[coffin]*

*resting*

*dead  
centre  
of the space*

*smirk*

*unpeeling  
from ground*

*rotating  
preparing*

*[spurt slap]*

*hunker  
swipe  
fell  
swoop  
sudden  
impact  
gentle  
landing*

*something  
sweeping*

*able  
knowing*

*on a  
diagonal*

*repeat  
repeat  
repeat  
repeat*

*tumble  
mess*

*refuge*

*[shored under desk]*

*subdued*

*[hoist]*

*bearing  
weight  
on shoulders*

*brief  
heroic  
potential*

*[kettle]*

*pedestrian  
drop  
to push  
mundane  
button*

*[steam]*

*retreat*

*emergent  
spirals*

*easy  
soft-shoe  
turns*

*[door and rattle]*

*super slow  
bowing*

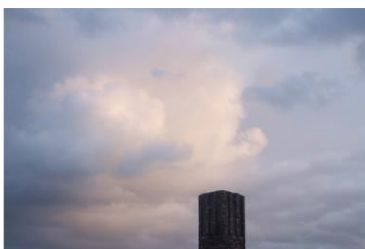
*sitting*

*while  
boiling*

*glass  
rattling*

*ding*

*(September 2019)*





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<sup>1</sup> The terms 'artistic research', 'dance-making' and 'embodied knowledge' will be further defined as the introduction proceeds.

<sup>2</sup> My use of the term 'processual' is informed by the work of artist-scholar Jane Bacon who has advocated for the development of practice-driven, process-oriented research methodologies within the context of artistic research (2006, 2013, 2019). Within academia more broadly, the term *processual* has been adopted by researchers in a wide range of fields (such as anthropology, archaeology, ethnography, engineering and business) to refer to the methodological study of processes (Bacon 2019).

<sup>3</sup> For a concise overview of issues related to 'the integration of theory into (professional) practice' within the context of practice-as-research, see Nelson (2013: 80-83).

<sup>4</sup> The term 'holistic' is adopted according to its common usage throughout this thesis to mean: 'Emphasizing the importance of the whole and the interdependence of its parts' (American Heritage Dictionary n.d.).

<sup>5</sup> I am using the term 'changeability' here in a very general sense to refer to a person's capacity to change from one moment to the next as well as to refer to the potential to transform across time. Although not the focus of this research, I return briefly to this subject of a person's changeability in Chapter 3 when I discuss the making of *perch*.

<sup>6</sup> The term 'emergent' is adopted according to its common usage throughout this thesis to mean: 'Coming into view, existence, or notice' (American Heritage Dictionary n.d.).

<sup>7</sup> I am borrowing this phrase from a published discussion between artistic research advocate Michael Schwab and scientist Hans-Jörg Rheinberger in relation to the relevance of the notion of 'experimentation' (derived from a scientific model) to the research paradigm of artistic research (2013: 198).

<sup>8</sup> Such as Ruth Segalis (1996-2003), Amanda Gough (1996), Ionna Portolou (1996-1999), Meghan Flanigan (2001-2006, 2012), Deborah Hay (2005), Caroline Salem (2006-2018), Satya Dunning (2006-2010), Katie Coe (2008), Helen Poyner (2013) and Anna Macdonald (2019b).

<sup>9</sup> The regions that Nelson covers in his book are Aotearoa/New Zealand, Australia, Continental Europe, the 'Nordic Context', South Africa and the United States (2013: 117-187).

<sup>10</sup> Historiographical accounts of the development of practice-as-research in performance in the UK can be found in Angela Piccini (2003) and in Nelson (2013: 11-17). The research initiative *Practice as Research in Performance* (PARIP 2001-2006) based at Bristol University was fundamental to incorporating performance-based activities into academic research. Indeed, it is the framework of practice-as-research in the UK that has opened the gates for projects such as this to exist in the context of doctoral studies and I am grateful for the committed work of the artist-researchers before me who have carved out this space.

<sup>11</sup> See for example Ellis (2018), the *Artistic Doctorates in Europe* project (2019) and Bacon and Midgelow (2019: 5) for recent writings (addressing the UK context) that actively adopt the term 'artistic research' over 'practice-as-research' for what I recognise to be strategic, educationalist purposes.

<sup>12</sup> Advocating for the cultural value of dance/movement practices in terms of the 'knowledge' that they contain can be traced back to early developments of modern dance and dance movement therapy in North America and Europe (Hamalainen 2007: 56). For example, dance/movement practitioners such as Isadora Duncan, Margaret H'Doubler (1940), Rudolf Laban, Mary Wigman, Doris Humphrey, Alma Hawkins (1991), Ruth Foster (1976), Marian Chase, Mary Starks Whitehouse, Trudi Schoop, Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen and Janet Adler all adopted terms like 'bodily knowledge' (and variations thereof) in order to illustrate the important role and function of dance/movement practices within education and culture at large (Hamalainen 2007: 56).

<sup>13</sup> The choreographers that Roche collaborated with were Rosemary Butcher, John Jaspers, Jodi Melnick and Liz Roche.

<sup>14</sup> *The Dancer as Agent Conference* (2013) was curated by dance-artists Kristine Slettevold, Chrysa Parkinson and Cecilia Roos.

<sup>15</sup> *The Dancer as Agent Collection* (2014) can be accessed via this link:  
[http://oralsite.be/pages/The\\_Dancer\\_As\\_Agent\\_Collection](http://oralsite.be/pages/The_Dancer_As_Agent_Collection)

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<sup>16</sup> In this vein, see also the work/writings of Rebecca Hilton (2017) and Katie Coe (2018), two participant-organisers of *The Dancer as Agent* project, who seek to give voice to 'dancerness' (Hilton) and 'she dancing' (Coe) through playful and performative writing strategies.

<sup>17</sup> To this end, Davies collaborated with five UK-based dancers (Andrea Buckley, Helka Kaski, Rachel Krische, Charlie Morrissey and Matthias Sperling) to explore the question: 'How does a potentially ephemeral art form create a lasting presence and how is embodied movement passed on, captured or remembered?' (2014a, 2014b). The work was performed as an installation and toured to major art galleries. My experience of the work at the ICA in London (Davies 2014a, 2014b) was that it brought to light what Roche (2011) has referred to as 'the moving identity' of the dancer-collaborator; that is, the layers of embodied understanding which the independent contemporary dancer accumulates across a career.

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<sup>18</sup> See for instance Sheets-Johnstone (1966), Fraleigh (1987, 2018), Parviainen (1998), Rouhiainen (2003), Kozel (2007) – important texts for the field of Dance Studies which explore dance practice through the lens of phenomenology.

<sup>19</sup> See for instance Sklar (1991), Ness (2004), Thomas and Ahmed (2004), Bacon (2005, 2006), Giotaki (2015) and Kramer (2015a).

<sup>20</sup> See Preston (2017) for an account of this philosophical lineage in Polanyi's work.

<sup>21</sup> Goldhahn notes that the concept of authenticity 'in its contemporary reading could be seen to be antithetical to the premise of acceptance of being and becoming that is a cornerstone of Authentic Movement practices' (2015: 282). In this vein, there are many different names for Authentic Movement currently in usage that avoid use of the term authentic, such as 'embodied active imagination', 'active imagination in movement', 'Contemplative Dance' and 'Danced and Moving Active Imagination' (Chodorow 2015: 260).

<sup>22</sup> The project with Vogelín, called *invisible overlap*, was generously supported by Chisenhale Dance Space in London in 2007. Documentation of the project can be found here: <https://www.amyvoris.com/invisible-overlap/>

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<sup>23</sup> Founded by Linda Hartley in 1996, the *Integrative Bodywork and Movement Therapy* (IBMT) training programme 'aims to support the unfolding of process through the body, and the cultivation of awareness, clarity and compassion in the therapeutic relationship' (2019). *Experiential Anatomy* refers to the approach to learning about human anatomy 'from the inside' by integrating anatomical information with movement-based exploration of the felt-sense of it (Olsen 1998: 8). *Infant Movement Development* (or the developmental movement patterns) refers to the experiential, psycho-physical study of the development of movement in the infant. In the IBMT context, it is assumed that the embodiment of developmental movement patterns 'underlies the development of a sense of self; and the way the infant is supported, or not, in this process influences the embodied patterns of relating and being in the world' (2019). *Somatic Psychology* refers to the practical study of 'the interface of psychotherapy and psychological theory with the somatic practices of bodywork and movement therapy' (Hartley 2004). Within the IBMT training, the study of Somatic Psychology 'seeks to enable [the practitioner] to dialogue [with the client] and interact meaningfully with material arising from the unconscious in bodywork and movement therapy practice' (2019).

<sup>24</sup> Those Authentic Movement practitioners who have influenced my understanding of the practice include: Regula Vogelín, Ellen Emmett, Issy Terry, Penny Collinson, Fabiano Culora, Barbara Erber, Emma Meehan, Jane Okondo, Mari Winkelman, Kerstin Wellhofer, Brenda Naso, Jane Bacon, Andrea Olsen, Susanna Recchia, Rosalind Holgate-Smith, Nicola Herd, Gulliver Brodbeck, Charlotte Darbyshire, Rosey Cole, Gaelín Little, Paul Beaumont, Susanne Barry, Rebecca Hastings, Aki Omori, Simon Whitehead, Stirling Steward, Jessica Lerner and Susan Schell.

<sup>25</sup> In reviewing a collection of durational performances at the Night Watch festival in Cambridge in 2014, theatre critic Tom Hutton broadly defines durational performance as the performance situation in which 'an audience and the performers go on a journey together over a sustained period of time' (n.d. Hutton).

<sup>26</sup> The phrase 'attending to movement' is here knowingly borrowed from the title of the 2013 *Dance and Somatic Practices Conference* at Coventry University and subsequent book of the same name, co-edited by Sarah Whatley, Natalie Garrett Brown and Kirsty Alexander (2015).

<sup>27</sup> Practical/workshop-based encounters with the following practitioners have been relevant to this research: Gill Clarke (1996-2008), Deborah Hay (2005), Caroline Salem (2006-2018), Rosemary Lee (2006), Satya Dunning (2006-2010), Linda Hartley (2008, 2008-2011, 2013-2015, 2017-2018), Helen Poynor (2008b, 2012a/b, 2013), Eva Karczag (2008, 2010), Charlie Morrissey (2010), Karen Nelson (2013), Rosemary Butcher (2001-2002, 2014/2015, 2015), Jane Bacon (2014b), Bacon and Vida Midgelow (2015), Andrea Olsen and Caryn McHose (2017) and Anna Macdonald (2017a). I further refer to many of these artists as the thesis proceeds.

<sup>28</sup> I would like to gratefully acknowledge the work of photographer Christian Kipp, whose images of *perch* appear throughout Chapter 3 (and on the *perch* materials web page). I would also like to acknowledge that I have taken some inspiration from the work of dance artist and scholar Paula Kramer (2015a) in terms of how Kipp's images are formatted and incorporated into Chapter 3 as a way of 'disseminating' the happenings of an embodied practice.

<sup>29</sup> The link to this web space is provided here for the reader to optionally engage with: <http://www.amyvoris.com/perch-materials/>

<sup>30</sup> Further explanation of this notion of companionship as it pertains to the multi-modal and collaboratively-generated materials of *enter & inhabit* can be found in 'Dancing with Dirt and Wires: Reconciling the Embodied and the Digital in Site-responsive Collaborative Practice' (Garrett Brown, Kipp and Voris 2015).

<sup>31</sup> Ellis (2016a) draws on the writing of sociologist Laurel Richardson (as cited in Ellingson 2008) in order to develop this analogy.

<sup>32</sup> Somatic practitioner and researcher Martha Eddy notes that Hanna retrospectively apprehended the common methods employed by practitioners (such as FM Alexander, Feldenkrais, Gindler, Rolf, Todd, and Trager) which included things like slowing down and relaxing, bringing sensory awareness to the foreground and exploring 'increased responsiveness [to] skilled touch and/or verbal input [...] from a somatic educator or specialist' (2009: 7).

<sup>33</sup> I adopt the term 'post-Judson' following Bales and Nettl-Fiol (2008) who use it to refer to those developments within Western contemporary dance significantly influenced by the 1960s Judson Church era of experimentation in New

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York City. In this vein, see also the *Live Legacy Project* (2018) which is concerned with documenting the influence of the Judson Church era on the development of contemporary dance in continental Europe.

<sup>34</sup> Garrett Brown's PhD thesis (2007), titled *Shifting Ontology: Somatics and the Dancing Subject, Challenging the Ocular within Conceptions of Western Contemporary Dance*, investigates the affinities between somatically-informed choreographic practice and the theoretical framework of Corporeal Feminism.

<sup>35</sup> *The Alexander Technique* (AT) was founded by Australian actor F.M. Alexander (1869-1955). AT focusses on the holistic impacts of subtle re-alignment of the spine within functional movement (Alexander Technique n.d.). It is applied widely within dance and actor training.

<sup>36</sup> Initially developed by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen in the 1970s, *Body-Mind Centering* (BMC) encompasses the experiential study of the developmental movement patterns and experiential anatomy through the use of guided and improvisational movement, touch and voice. Its uniqueness as a somatic practice can be located in the 'the specificity with which each of the body systems can be personally embodied and integrated', both 'in the fundamental groundwork of developmental re-patterning' and 'in the utilization of a body-based language to describe movement and body-mind relationships' (Body-Mind Centering n.d.). Its applications within dance are multifarious and widespread.

<sup>37</sup> The *Skinner Releasing Technique* (SRT) is an approach to movement training developed by North American dancer and educator Joan Skinner from the 1970s onwards. In SRT classes, 'spontaneous movement evoked by guided poetic imagery, supported by music and sound, enables a creative and easily accessible exploration of technical movement principles such as multi-directional alignment, suppleness, suspension, economy and autonomy' (Skinner Releasing Network n.d.). One of its distinguishing features as a somatic practice is the way in which it 'integrate[s] technical growth with creative process' in the context of dance education and training (Skinner Releasing Institute n.d.).

<sup>38</sup> The *Journal of Dance and Somatic Practices* (2009 to date), *Choreographic Practices* (2010 to date), Sandra Reeves' edited collections *Nine Ways of Seeing a Body* (2011) and *Body and Performance* (2013), Amanda Williamson, Glenna Batson, Rebecca Weber and Sarah Whatley's edited collection *Dance, Somatics and Spiritualities* (2014), Katya Bloom, Margit Galanter and Sandra Reeve's edited collection *Embodied Lives* (2014), Sondra Fraleigh's edited collection *Moving Consciously: Somatic Transformations through Dance, Yoga, and Touch* (2015) and Sarah Whatley, Natalie Garrett Brown and Kirsty Alexander's edited collection *Attending to Movement: Somatic Perspectives on Living in this World* (2015) are relatively-recent publications which give attention to somatically-informed performance practices. Such practices tend to be Western, located in Europe, North America, New Zealand and Australia. Gina Giotaki's (2015) doctoral dissertation *Emergent Movements: The Role of Embodiment and Somatics in British Contemporary Dance* gives particular attention to the influence of somatic practices (particularly Body-Mind Centering) on the development of New Dance in Britain.

<sup>39</sup> Anna Halprin further defined her use of scoring on a continuum from 'open' to 'closed' where an open score offers relatively minimal instruction which can be interpreted in a variety of ways and a closed score is more prescriptive and predetermining in the way that it is formulated (Worth and Poynor 2004: 74).

<sup>40</sup> For an overview and broader discussion of different types of scoring practices within Western contemporary dance practice, see the research of Miriam Van Imschoot and Ludovic Burel (2005/2010)

<sup>41</sup> I participated in the *Deborah Hay Solo Commissioning Project* (DHSCP) in Findhorn, Scotland in 2005. Over the course of a week, participants were coached through the process of learning a solo score called *Room* which Hay herself had developed during the previous year. When the coaching phase of the project was complete, participants were entrusted with the activity of practicing the score (daily) for a minimum of three months before taking the work into public performance. Underlying the practice of *Room* were certain contemplative questions and performative strategies that the performer was meant to hold in mind/body while practicing. It is interesting to note that the significance of *the content* of the score for *Room* was not addressed during the project. When directly asked about its significance, Hay claimed that it was 'arbitrary' and re-emphasised the performative strategies as the substance of the work. Like Hay, in my own dance-making practice, I am interested in developing performative strategies through which the performer's attention becomes layered, but unlike Hay I regard the content of the dances I make *to be significant* to this process of layering, not arbitrary.

<sup>42</sup> The act of practicing Hay's solo work requires an attentional multi-tasking, which Hay herself refers to as a 'choreography of consciousness' (Hay cited in De Spain 2014: 162). One of the functions of this attentional multi-tasking is that it may 'disrupt habitual movement choices' (De Spain 2014: 28).

<sup>43</sup> The term 'felt-sense' was coined by psychologist and philosopher Eugene Gendlin as follows:

A felt-sense is not a mental experience but a physical one [...] A body awareness of a situation, person, or event. An internal aura that encompasses everything you feel and know about the given subject at a given time – encompasses it and communicates it to you all at once rather than detail by detail. Think of it as a taste, if you like, or a great musical chord [...] (1978/2003: 32).

<sup>44</sup> These six facets of the Critical Articulations Process are *Opening, Situating, Delving, Raising, Anatomizing* and *Outwarding* (Bacon and Midgelow 2014b).

<sup>45</sup> Lisa Nelson's *Tuning Scores* are regarded to be widely-influential within contemporary dance improvisation practice in the USA and Europe (Nelson, L. 2003, 2008; Nelson and Solano 2008; Nelson and Van Imschoot 2003; *Live Legacy Project* 2018). Nelson points to two fundamental influences on her approach to improvisation: the work

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of perceptual psychologist of J.J. Gibson and Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen's approach to experiential anatomy within the Body-Mind Centering curriculum (Nelson and Solano 2008). My encounters with Nelson's *Tuning Scores* – which I have not experienced directly from Lisa Nelson but rather through her protégés Karen Nelson (2013) and Charlie Morrissey (2010) – is that they foreground the sensorial and perceptual range that is available to the performer in any given moment.

<sup>46</sup> Use of the term 'sensation' in this thesis includes the four biologically recognised 'categories' of sensory receptors (also adopted in the in the IBMT and BMC curricula) as follows:

The *interoceptors* (which monitor the processes of the internal organs such as blood chemistry, heartbeat and digestion), the *exteroceptors* (skin and connective tissue which are responsible for monitoring the outer environment through touch), the *proprioceptors* (found in the joints, ligaments and tendons, muscles, and the inner ear, are cumulatively responsible for registering movement, balance, and body position in space) and the *special senses* (sight, sound, smell, taste and touch) (Olsen 2002: 57).

<sup>47</sup> Somatic scholar Martha Eddy has likewise suggested that somatic awareness 'opens the gateway to various types of "connectedness": with a person, between people, and with the mysterious or unknown' (2016: 5).

<sup>48</sup> Hunter notes that the term site-specific 'began to emerge [from the late eighties onwards] and was applied by practitioners and theorists to describe a form of work that very clearly concerned itself with attending to and exploring the non-theatre location in which it was created and performed' (2015: 11).

<sup>49</sup> For a variety of practitioner accounts of site-specific dance practice, see Hunter's edited collection *Moving Sites: Investigating Site-Specific Dance Performance* (2015) and Melanie Kloetzel and Carolyn Pavlik's edited collection *Site Dance: Choreographers and the Lure of Alternative Spaces* (2009).

<sup>50</sup> Perhaps it is worth mentioning that I am involved in a site-responsive project that explicitly acknowledges Halprin and Poynor as major influences. *enter & inhabit* (2008-2018) is an ongoing collaborative project with dance-artist Natalie Garrett Brown and photographer Christian Kipp which explores embodied presence in sites of flow and transition. The project is underpinned by an interest in the different modes of perception invoked by somatically-informed movement practices, drawing specifically on experiential anatomy (*enter & inhabit* n.d.).

<sup>51</sup> In my experience as a dance practitioner, the terms 'forming' and 'composing' tend to be used interchangeably and so my usage of these terms in this thesis reflects this.

<sup>52</sup> 'Performing Process' was a one-day symposium which took place at Coventry University (in May 2014) leading to a subsequent book, *Performing Process: Sharing Dance and Choreographic Practice*, edited by symposium organisers Hetty Blades and Emma Meehan (2018). I have borrowed its title for this sub-section.

<sup>53</sup> See Garrett Brown (2007), Foster (2010) and Reynolds and Reason (2012) for further research that explicitly explores the kinaesthetic affect of dance practices in performance.

<sup>54</sup> The most canonised of these figures being Rudolf Laban (1966, 1971), Mary Wigman, Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey (1959).

<sup>55</sup> These include two books of pre-published articles compiled by dance movement psychotherapist Patrizia Pallaro (1999, 2007), Janet Adler's treatise on practice *Offering from the Conscious Body* (2002) plus a small collection of articles appearing in the journal *Body, Movement and Dance in Psychotherapy* (Bacon 2007, 2012; Stromsted 2009) and in the *Journal of Dance and Somatic Practices* (Bacon 2010; Meehan 2010). The *Journal of Dance and Somatic Practices* 7.2 'Authentic Movement: A field of practices' edited by Jane Bacon (2015) offers a collection of articles collected with the intention to further articulate the multifarious applications of the practice. *A Moving Journal: Ongoing Expressions in Authentic Movement* (published three times per year between 1994-2006) was a self-published magazine edited by Annie Geissinger, Joan Webb, Paula Sager and Mary Ramsay that profiled the practice according to different themes with a strong emphasis on the practitioner perspective. Online, the Authentic Movement Community website (2006-2018) and *The Journal of Authentic Movement and Somatic Inquiry* (2005-2018) provide means of communication between peers within the field.

<sup>56</sup> Authentic Movement practitioners Edith Sullwold and Mary Ramsay (who both worked with Whitehouse) suggest that Graham's 'fascination with mythology and the human psyche set the foundation for Mary's interest in Jungian analysis' (2007: 45-46).

<sup>57</sup> See Chodorow (2015) for further observations of Whitehouse's development of movement-in-depth in relation to her contemporaries Alma Hawkins (1991), Tina Keller-Jenny (2011) and Trudi Schoop.

<sup>58</sup> Meehan adopted Adler's notion of 'embodied text' as a working method, which involves the act of returning to movement via textual cues from previous moves (Adler 2002: 176).

<sup>59</sup> Meehan explains that Davis 'borrowed the term [Maya Lila] from Richard Schechner's book *The Future of Ritual* (1993), where he describes the performance attitude called "maya-lila" in the traditional Indian performance form of Raslila' (2010: 221). In her discussion of Davis' work, Meehan notes the potential problems with the adoption of the term Maya Lila and at the same time also indicates Davis' very respectful engagement with the ideas behind it.

<sup>60</sup> Of course, many improvisers (including myself) would disagree with Davis' definition of improvisation. I am rather in agreement with De Spain's broadly defined understanding of improvisation as 'the process of creating and/or choosing your movements as you are doing them' (2014: 5).

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<sup>61</sup> The descent phase follows the sequence of becoming still and then bringing attention to particular sensations such as the breath or weight. Attention is also brought to boundaries. The second phase is concerned with expanding the dancer's 'range' of movement. The third phase involves clear use of the dyad form and of witnessing protocols (Collinson 2005: 34).

<sup>62</sup> Process-oriented Psychology – also referred to as 'Process Work' – was initially developed in the 1970s by Arnold Mindell, a Jungian analyst and physicist. Process-oriented Psychology is 'an evolving, trans-disciplinary approach supporting individuals, relationships and groups to discover themselves [...] Process oriented psychology uses awareness to track psychological and physical processes that illuminate and possibly resolve inner, relationship, team, and world issues' (aamindell n.d.).

<sup>63</sup> Object Relations theory is a branch of psychotherapy developed in the 1940s in Britain by therapists such as Melanie Klein and Donald Winnicott (1971): 'Object Relations theory focuses on the relationships between the client and other "objects", referring particularly to other people, but also parts of the body, things, and so on' (Meehan 2011:164)

<sup>64</sup> Foregrounding the direct engagement of the audience in this way has also been taken up by Australian dance artist and scholar Shaun McLeod, who has explored 'the ethos of the mover/witness dyad as an experimental frame for participatory performance' (2016). A central part of McLeod's work is the development of 'Watching Scores' for audiences which serve to foreground the 'relationship of exchange' between mover and witness. The scores function as 'written prompts' for those watching by suggesting ways to engage with what is taking place (McLeod 2016: 2). McLeod's work has only come to light in the final stages of my research. His body of work is certainly one that I would return to if I were to conduct a more comprehensive survey of performance work informed by Authentic Movement or if my own research in this project were focussed around the performer-audience relationship.

<sup>65</sup> Between August 2014 and September 2018 (with additional performances during the month of April 2019).

<sup>66</sup> In the Introduction, I pointed out how practice-as-research in the UK is relatively 'conservative' in the over-riding emphasis that is placed on rational modes of argumentation within the written thesis (Kramer 2015b).

<sup>67</sup> See the section on 'Situatdness' in Chapter 1 (p. 46-49), where the innate relationality and porosity of the body is established: via Hanna's original definition of the term somatic which is characterised as a co-sensing inward and outward (1995: 341), via Garrett Brown's research into somatically-informed dance-practices and the way in which they 'seriously undermine the concept of the body as distinct and separate from the environment in which it is situated' (2007: 65), and via the biological presence of sensation and the role that sensation plays in the perceptual process (Olsen 2002: 55).

<sup>68</sup> However, I would like to convey the highest respect for Authentic Movement practitioners who *do* choose to highlight the transpersonal (or spiritual) dimensions of Authentic Movement practice in their own writing and research, such as Adler (1995, 2002, 2015), Hartley (2001, 2004, 2014, 2015), Collinson (2005), Hayes (2007), Stromsted (2001, 2007b, 2009, 2014, 2015), Bacon (2012) and Halstrup (2015).

<sup>69</sup> See Siobhan Davies' *Table of Contents* as (2014a, 2014b) as well as Rachel Krische, Sally Doughty and Lisa Kendall's *Body of Knowledge* (2015) for examples of projects that bring the dancer's 'body archive' to the foreground of their creative research.

<sup>70</sup> The concept of agency is a complex subject that has been addressed across a range of discourses such as psychology, philosophy, social science and anthropology (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy 2015). In this thesis, I position my use of the term in relation to its application within the fields of psychology and psychotherapy (Van Der Kolk 2014).

<sup>71</sup> Interoception is one of the four biologically-recognised modalities of sensation. Interoceptors regulate organic processes of the internal organs such as blood chemistry, heart rate, breath and digestion (Olsen 2002: 57).

<sup>72</sup> Gut feelings are rooted in sensory receptors – interoceptors – which run through the digestive tract, sometimes referred to as the 'gut brain'. Van Der Kolk, who specialises in treating the effects of trauma, writes that: 'Our gut feelings signal what is safe, life sustaining, or threatening, even if we cannot quite explain why we feel a particular way [...] If you have a comfortable connection with your inner sensations [...] you will feel in charge of your body, your feelings, and yourself' (2014: 96).

<sup>73</sup> The link to this space is provided here for the reader to optionally engage with: <http://www.amyvoris.com/perch-materials/>

<sup>74</sup> Here the notion of 'sculpting time' is borrowed from the work and writings of Russian filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky (1932-1986) who sought to re-investigate the medium of film via the articulation of time, a process that he described as 'sculpting in time' (Tarkovsky 1986: 121).

<sup>75</sup> I borrow these terms – 'multi-vectored intuition' and 'evolving array' – from photographer Wolfgang Tillman for the process by which he arranges (and effectively self-curates) his multifarious photographic work into site-sensitive installations. One could similarly say that the structure for *perch* has arisen out of 'multi-vectored intuition' with regard to the 'evolving array' or overall arrangement of material across time (Hally and Tillmans 2014: 33).

<sup>76</sup> I am grateful to Caroline Salem for offering this description of the work in November 2016.

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<sup>77</sup> Out of this growing awareness of my studio as a former site of industrial labour, I curated a project that sought to encompass this social history of the space (and the history of women's work within it) as well as the matrilineal lineages of my own and several peers' making practices. I ended up titling this project *a shrine to women's work* (2016). Further documentation of the project can be found via this link: <http://www.accumulationsproject.com/a-shrine-to-womens-work>

<sup>78</sup> I am grateful to Anna Macdonald for providing this characterisation of the work. For in-depth exploration of the theme of 'holding' in screendance and performance-making, see Macdonald's film works, writing and doctoral research (2013a, 2013b, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c, 2018, 2019).

<sup>79</sup> A further note on *movement quality*: the reader may have noticed that, in the harvested materials coming out of the *perch* process, I sometimes draw on language for embodying movement quality derived from two (widespread) models for movement quality with dance that I have practically encountered. These include Rudolf Laban's approach to identifying 'dynamics' in movement commonly referred to as 'Effort' (1971) and the approach to embodying 'body systems' within Experiential Anatomy (Hartley 1989, Bainbridge Cohen 1993, Olsen 1998). Laban's approach is rooted in noticing the energetic or 'inner attitude' toward movement that is being expressed through four categories of weight, space, time and flow (1971). Within experiential anatomy one 'moves with' the imagined biological imagery of certain systems, for example the skeletal system, the digestive system or the nervous system. This process is usually assisted by the use of 'somatisation', movement improvisation and bodywork (Hartley 1989, Bainbridge Cohen 1993, Olsen 1998). Such sensorial-imaginative foci have the potential to arouse different qualities of movement. Within Body-Mind Centering and IBMT, these qualities are usually referred to as being 'in the mind' of a system (Bainbridge Cohen 1993, Hartley 1989).

<sup>80</sup> For another perspective on this notion of internal continuity, see Leena Rouhiainen's (2012) article 'An investigation into facilitating the work of the independent contemporary dancer through somatic psychology' where she argues that the modes of embodied reflection that Somatic Psychology offers are valuable to the contemporary dancer because of how they serve to foster this sense of internal continuity.

<sup>81</sup> For further contextualisation of this point, see Lowell's writing 'Authentic Movement as a Form of Dance Ritual' (2007b).

<sup>82</sup> Mapp was a participant in *The Dancer as Agent* project (2013).

<sup>83</sup> See for instance Hartley (2004), Parker Lewis (2007), Brown and Avstreich (2007), Musicant (2007a, 2007b), Holifield (2007), Wyman-McGinty (2007a, 2007b), Pallaro (2007b), and Stromsted (2007a).

<sup>84</sup> Exceptions to this include Bull (2007), Allen and Preece (2015) and Olsen and McHose (2017) who incorporate Authentic Movement into their environmental dance practices.

<sup>85</sup> See the MIT publication series *Writing Art* for historical overview of such writings: (<https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/series/writing-art>). The convener of the series, Roger Conover, notes that: 'Writings by artists convey a specific type of knowledge or way of thinking about artistic practice that the writings of academic and professional observers do not' (Writing Art n.d.).

<sup>86</sup> See Ellis (2018) for a fuller discussion of this issue.

<sup>87</sup> I am grateful to these critical friends who offered witnessing of *perch* during its development: Caroline Salem, Natalie Garrett Brown and Anna Macdonald.

<sup>88</sup> During the months of September 2018 and April 2019, I performed *perch* to small audiences across dusk. In total, 175 people attended 40 performances of the work. Below is a link to a flyer, paper versions of which were posted to individual audience members as an 'invitation' to attend: [https://www.amyvoris.com/wp-content/images/projects/perch\\_flyer\\_april.pdf](https://www.amyvoris.com/wp-content/images/projects/perch_flyer_april.pdf)

<sup>89</sup> Recent projects by Meehan (2018a, 2018b, 2019) focussed around the notion of 'hosting' (inspired by Authentic Movement practice) offer a precedent for research in this vein.

<sup>90</sup> During the course of this research I have begun exploring how to facilitate the processual qualities in relation to developing movement material within higher educational and professional development contexts. For example, I have delivered workshops to undergraduates at Coventry University (2013), Plymouth University (2014), Manchester Metropolitan University (2015), Northern School of Contemporary Dance (2015) and University of Central Lancashire (2018, 2019) and to fellow artists within professional development contexts of Independent Dance 'Morning Class' (London 2015, 2018, 2019), Cheshire Dance 'Enquiring Bodies' (Plymouth 2015) and Clarence Mews 'Maker's Lab' (London 2017). In addition, I have offered one-to-one sessions with a number of artist-peers who have expressed interest in exploring these processes during the next phase of research into the application of the processual qualities to facilitation and collaboration contexts. I am grateful to Natalie Garrett Brown, Emma Meehan, Penny Collinson, Florence Peake, Susanna Recchia, Ella Tighe, Hannah McBrien, Bettina Carpi, Rosalind Holgate-Smith, Barbara Erber, Paula Kramer, Caroline Salem and Rachel Rimmer for their participation in this one-to-one facilitation practice.

<sup>91</sup> Exceptions to this that I am aware of – where somatic practices are integrated with the facilitation of creative work/dance-making – are the MA in Creative Practice co-run by Independent Dance and Trinity Laban in London and undergraduate courses at the University of Chester and Coventry University.

<sup>92</sup> Further documentation of these collaborative projects, including writings which address the application of Authentic Movement principles to collaborative processes can be found via the following links:

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*L219* (2013) <http://www.amyvoris.com/l219/>

*skirting* (2014) <http://www.amyvoris.com/skirting/>

*flockOmania* (2015-2018) <http://www.amyvoris.com/flockomania/>

<sup>93</sup> I would like to acknowledge conversations with fellow artist-researchers Ellen Jeffrey, Dani Abulhawa, Simon Ellis, Sara Spies, Emma Meehan, Paula Kramer, Anna Macdonald, Carolyn Roy and Gina Giotaki as being influential on the way this point is being expressed.