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Ethico-aesthetic practice of improvising: relations through motion

Abstract

In merging relational ethics and improvisation as acts of co-creation the discussion in the following chapter explores the contribution these activities can make in terms of enriching the possibilities of our thinking. By attending to ethics and aesthetic experience in practice we can facilitate the generation of material responses that are deliberately provisional, explored in terms of each practitioners' immersion in a continuously, *in-between* state of being.

Nurturing the facility to prosper in such states of uncertainty can lead to the emergence of unforeseen yet enriched forms of knowledge. To do this improvisers draw on the fluid interchange between their bodily thinking and potential relations forged when being-with others. Appreciation of the varying trajectories that can emerge during such co-determined practice is significant in terms of self-learning and the generation of 'in-common' knowledge. The crux of the argument is, that in the *generation* of this knowledge we come to realize more of our own potential, striving as we do to combine our sensual, intellectual, emotional, responsive selves. Ultimately the concern is to frame relations in terms of identifying an ethico-aesthetic practice of improvising.

Key Words

ethics, improvisation, aesthetics, co-creation, dialogue, affect

Introduction

moving through provisional thought filled scores
offers opportunities for distillation

In the process we move away from a
singularity, of an autonomous 'I'
and towards a social reality of ***resolutions***, a
subjective being in an objectively viewed world

(Bannon and Holt, 2014)

The intention in the following discussion is to explore the ethical practice that is arguably emerging in the work of a range of practitioners who are investigating the generation of knowledge through movement based improvisation. The aim is to establish an argument for considering ethics as an identifying feature of the practice of embodiment. This idea alludes to practice that maintains a sense of complementarity whilst being aligned with relations that are generated through individual 'bodily-dwelling'. Beginning

from the premise that our bodies are ' …our centre of activity in the world' (Schenck 1986, 44), the discussion considers the significant contributions that physicalised experiences make to the ways we each express ourselves. With this said, it is important to remain aware of the continuing inadequacies of our reinforced habits of thinking, where our cultural tradition resists any change in the idea that each of us lives as selves divided; between body and mind.

In considering the ethical potential of relations made in and through movement the discussion includes incidences where we might utilise experience of spatial location and interaction, and where ideas might be generated through a nexus of rational and emotional responses. Ultimately it is a facility to persevere in terms of exploring co-incidences of experience that informs our approaches to personal practice, and to the practice of working with others. This may not be considered as anything new, for arguably dance has always been concerned with situated spatial relations. What is perhaps distinct is the attentive consideration for mingling affective and cognitive relations in terms of experience found moving together. What can be recognised is that within an extending range of practice the previously reinforced distinctions between choreographer and performer; or between performers and audiences are collapsing and the affect of social intermingling experienced in 'doing performance' is becoming a source of attention.

Shifting to a social focus

Included in this attention are considerations given to the nature of the labour involved in performance creation, including collectivity, dialogue, and embodied interaction. These approaches towards making work are significant in terms of the identity of collaborative practice. This heightening of attention towards what are, social relations is not new for those of us who live and work as dancing persons. This is particularly the case for those familiar with the politics of participatory arts practice evidenced in *British New Dance* of the 1970's where practitioners including, Mary Prestidge, Fergus Early, and Jacky Lansley explored ways to realise bodily languages in order to renew art making through non-hierarchic movement strategies.

A similar debate now intertwining social, political, aesthetic and ethical affect has surfaced during the last ten years, with focus shifting to the manner of intent in making performance. In current practice focus more readily shifts to ideas concerning modes of collaboration in terms of attitudes to labour with the consequent generation of performance works that reveal the investigations of such collective endeavour. This 'new' situation may well have evolved from the earlier challenges to authorship in terms of what identifies a dance work.

However, it is engagement with mutuality, and complementarity that now occupies a significant place in terms of an investment into individual and shared improvisational practice. Arguably the shift can be traced through a direction of theorising by Georgio Agamben where he addresses ethics in terms of our individual potential to determine our futures. Agamben argues

that, '… the only ethical experience … is the experience of being (one's own) potentiality, of being (one's own) possibility' (1993, 43). What we might appreciate from this stance in terms of human 'becomings', is awareness of the benefits found by investing in joint activity, wherein we might come to recognise the wealth of opportunity to be revealed in social co-existence. In terms of experiments in performance there has been a clear move towards such deliberate exhibition of social scores as performance. For examples consider, *These Associations* by Tino Seghal (2012); *Schreibstuck* (2002) and *Functionen* (2004), Thomas Lehmen and the documentary film *Vera Mantero: Let's talk about it Now* (2011). Here you can find the signals moving away from a previous materialist drive that is striving to exhibit form, and towards the recognition of the richness of singularities that inform accumulations of shared possibilities.

In terms of improvisation-based practice and the communities of movers involved, we might do well to follow the idea of apprenticeships favoured by philosopher, Gemma Fiumara in which she argues for the importance of the role that our emotions play in our reasoning processes and, structures of mind. She argues that,

> If we were apprentices of listening rather than masters of discourse we might perhaps promote a different sort of coexistence among humans: not so much in the form of a utopian ideal but rather as an incipient philosophical solidarity capable of envisaging the common destiny of the species (Fiumara, 1990, 57).

In terms of such relational and dialogic encounters being realised the two practitioners discussed later in the chapter make evident the ways in which their processes of handling ideas embraces objective rationality without supressing their affective emotions or feelings. For choreographer and performer, Elizabeth Waterhouse the experience working with The Forsythe Company has shaped her consequent practice, in which she works *amidst* ideas with others and, where solutions or responses are found together. Similarly, though working in the field of research and educational theory, Antionette Oberg fosters what she calls 'inquiry-without-method'. For Oberg this entails working with individuals to unravel and identify their own significant questions for investigation. Her process favours finding ways to work that are suited to the particular instance and purpose, not through the repetition of methods and answers prescribed by previously sanctioned outcomes.

These practitioners and the others mentioned through the chapter represent and echo the sentiment from Fiumara that, to value rationality is to appreciate that it, ' …is not a matter of detached theorizing, but rather a caring way of being rational or searching for rational ways of caring' (2001, 22). If, when improvising we give little heed to what is happening around us and indeed within us then we are not open to the potential shifts in our attitudes and understanding; we are not improvising. Both Waterhouse and Oberg, though interestingly working in different fields seem to focus on delving into ways that might foster fluid, co-creative practice. In so doing they acknowledge the

shared responsibilities involved in making socially informed artistic responses, in which emerging ideas become the effective co-creations of material thinking. Such works when made 'in-common', help to promote a view that acknowledges how we each affect and are affected by circumstance. In what feels to be something of a groundswell of apprenticeships by dance practitioners who choose to explore such realms of relational interaction, there is a widening field of socio-political debate that questions the idea of in-dependence and co-dependence and echoes the lead from Fiumara in terms of our sharing, a 'common destiny'.

Other examples of practice evidencing explorations in this realm can be found in the work of Meg Stuart and *Damaged Goods (Peeters 2010),* the 'artistwin', deufert&plischke and the work of social choreographer, Michael Klien. These practitioners investigate the social potential of movement improvisation and choreographic encounters in ways that recognise being-together, whether in solo, duet or group forms. In giving attention to the *in-between*, and to the *not-yet,* that informs this generative practice resides a potential for renewed understanding in terms of our appreciation for, *being-with* others. This reflects a particular stance in terms of ethics as lived experience. These encounters guide us to consider our own ethical position in terms of the ways in which we are available to and identified by, our working practice and how we each relate to those with whom we work.

A turn to ethics

With the intention to realize ethics in practice, as a merging of co-creation, complementarity and dialogue, it is useful to recognise that when we make reference to ethics the tendency is often to conjure a series of prohibiting rules that can offer little more than constraint as a form of control. This approach tends to compartmentalize ethics as a trait of culturally enforced behaviour that itself can become part of an implicit, often unexamined background activity. The intention here is to offer an alternate view, fed by the impression that an ostensibly straight-forward adherence to prescribed rules can undermine the enrichment that can be found if we were to attend more fully to the effect and affect of relations through ethics. In agreement with cultural theorist Sara Ahmed (2000) it would be more beneficial to think that ethics concerns the ways we each accommodate encounters with others, and more specifically, '… how one can live with what cannot be measured by the regulative force of morality' (2000, 138). With ethics both a subject of philosophical inquiry and a physical way of being-in-the world, it is worth investigating the ways in which experience found in improvising can enrich our appreciation of social and self-knowledge.

In tracing the etymology of the term *ethics*, it is *ethos* that leads to references concerning moral character or habit. The idea of *habit* in this context encompasses the repetition of certain traits and attitudes that when brought together foreshadow ideas about what constitutes individual character. In this there is a potential worth to be found in a model of *virtue ethics* with attention given to the situation/s wherein we may each find ourselves at any given time.

In this way emphasis leads to the ethical sense present in the negotiation of any subsequent situation or dilemma, utilising an individual's facility to reflect on dialogues as a form of engagement. This approach may in turn go someway in helping us avoid substantiating the critique of Wolfgang Iser in his paradoxical observation that, 'human beings have … become unavailable to themselves; we are but do not know what it is to be' (2000 155-6).

In terms of the experience of improvising, it is important to consider how we relate to difference, variability, chance, interactivity, vulnerability and power. Learning to dwell-in and rehearse ways to suspend the rush to control or to declare premature solutions, implies learning to extend the possibilities inherent in any situation and thereby cultivate sensitivity by identifying with, '…ethical generosity and sensitivity (Bennett, 2001, 3). Whilst improvising in a dialogic relation with others can, at times feel like a loss of personal autonomy, it is in such liminal experiences that we source ideas to feed forward in *doing theory.* What becomes evident in such situations is the importance of engaging with the possibilities afforded by a realm of the 'not-yet-known'. Whilst it can at times be an experience of discomfort, something that we might prefer to avoid, it is worth remembering the comment made by Deleuze that;

> Everybody knows very well that in fact men think rarely and more often under the impulse of a shock than in the examination of a taste for thinking (Deleuze, 1995, 132).

In receptive approaches to improvising we can access lucid thinking and find responses in-common. When engaged in doing-theory we are engaged in exploring the possibilities of thinking through ideas, without rushing to decisions and in the process, learning to savour a taste for thinking. Carolyn Ellis (2006) takes this a step further identifying, *relational ethics* as a way to acknowledge our interpersonal bonds whilst taking responsibility for our actions and their consequences. Taken together these ideas are helpful in identifying an ethical stance that acknowledges the need to deal with reality, as it is experienced. This is an attitude to ethics that resonates with the idea of fostering a non-exploitative environment, a facilitating feature of working in many areas of improvisation.

Through the work of Ahmed, Bennett and Ellis, there are traces of the philosophical thinking of Baruch Spinoza. What I have found in his works is further support for the practise of relational ethics. In terms of improvisation this relates to intentionally focusing on what we should do and how we should respond in respect to any given situation or decided action. Spinoza embraces social contexts as political arenas in which we each move between being singular selves and social beings. What becomes evident is that we need to recognise that we live and experience, as 'beings' in common. How we each consider ways to live in such relations contributes to our evolving ethical identity. Through his work Spinoza disrupts any illusions of fixity or of there being one existing self over time. Instead we each change, and are changed through a multiplicity of engagements and that are evidenced by the very practice of being in relation. Spinoza's argument centres on the notion

that every emotional and/or intellectual state is evidenced in the body, for body is what we are and our minds are an idea of our body.

To appreciate relations found through ethics in this context we need to pay attention to the potential of what we can each achieve in any given situation. This in turn resides with a state encompassing both the power to affect and to be affected; it is a merging of consciousness and corporeality. For Deleuze and Guattari what becomes evident is, that if we do not have the facility to give due care and attention to our 'sitatuatedness', we will remain in the position of each having little awareness of our own or our shared capacities. Their clear argument being that,

> We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body, either to destroy that body or to be destroyed by it, either to exchange actions and passions with it or to join with it in composing a more powerful body (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, 284).

For Massumi's (2003) readings of both Spinoza and Deleuze and Guattari, we see him emphasise the call for individuals to work together in the hope of more fully understanding what it means to be in shared situations at any given time. That ethics in this sense,

> … happens in *between* people, in the social gaps. …The ethical value of an action is what it brings out *in* the situation, *for* its transformation, how it breaks sociality open. Ethics is about how we inhabit uncertainty, together (Massumi, 2003, 7).

With Spinoza championing such interconnectedness, and Deleuze and Guattari emphasising the need to understand what is an affective power to act, we can begin to recognise human experience as something indivisible from the world, rather that it is something that is with the world In acknowledging this argument as a foundation for relations found through ethics opens the possibility to further explore the place of ethics in the practice of movement based improvisation.

With the evident importance of 'dialogue' within these relationships, new opportunities to investigate being-in-common can lead to enhancing our sense of fulfilment in terms of human potential. From philosopher, theologian, pedagogue, Martin Buber there is further useful insight to be found, in-relation. He argues that, individuals develop and realize the complexity of their personalities through the relationships they develop with other people, with their environment and with their spiritual beings (which, he suggests, are as experiences of art). In the existence of such 'Dialogue' resides wholeness in an understanding of self, arguably the only place from which to engage with others. This stance, promotes the idea that it is through self-knowledge, that we relate to others, rather than through what may be the more fashionable idea of identifying with the experiences of others first (Buber, 1958; Haim, 1986).

Ethics found in improvising

Improvisation recognised as a form of material investigation now utilises a range of approaches to devising as it gradually shifts from the margins of dance learning to be a central feature of experimental choreographic practice. Into this scenario the argument for an ethics of participatory practice wherein relations between aesthetics, sociality and political ideals coalesce might be realised. What is significant here is that it is practice that sustains the accumulations of experience, with practitioners often engaged with context-rich relations that are explicitly ethical encounters. In such scenarios the on-going production of self is aligned with continuous co-production in terms of individuals, being-with others. Through these social structures in which we live, learn and thrive, resides an inevitably of encounter. It is a situation where we learn to recognise interconnections *amidst* ever-evolving complexities. Rabinow (1997, XIX) acknowledges a similar line of thinking in reference to work by Foucault, who argued for us to more fully appreciate that, ' Who one is, …emerges acutely out of the problems with which one struggles'. In light of this it might be suggested that it is perhaps more valuable to forge practice that attends to all manner of experience rather than restrain exploration to any predicted outcome. More usefully we might acknowledge that in improvisation there is the opportunity to work in a place of continuous formation without the need to conceive of an end. In this focus we might foster ways in which we each relate through on-going processes of learning that are not fixed, singular events but instead are realised as multiple iterations of 'ideas'. As Foucault argues and many of us know from experience found in improvising,

> The challenge is not to replace one certitude (evidence) with another but to cultivate an attention to the conditions under which things become 'evident,' ceasing to be objects of our attention and therefore seemingly fixed, necessary, and unchangeable (Foucault in Rabinow, 1997 XIX).

In these ways attention can be given to the local conditions in which one lives and works and the consequences made evident through the continuous changes that ensue. Discussion later in the chapter illustrates this point through the work of Elizabeth Waterhouse, who as a former member of The Forsythe Company, has written a series of reflective evaluations of her experience embedded within a distinct group and process of making work The affective challenges explored in this approach to work include, the attentive interplay that exists between rhythm, movement, and spatial design for participants as they create responses in shared contexts. In this sphere and under the banner of a democratic process, such work comes to gradually reveal a collaborative community, realising outcomes together, through what Ruth Zapora might identify as a 'present mindedness' (Zaporah, 1995, 130).

Through this manner of practice, attention is given to sharing a deepening discipline that respects the changing identity of investigative craft. To evolve

such engagement requires time being-in-practice, which in turn enhances responses to stimuli and contexts drawn from individual resources and circumstance. It concerns affective dialogue, forged in 'conversations' about the ways in which ideas evolve in movement and in language. This is akin to what an increasing number of movement explorers identify as, being *amidst* a living context of art making. It involves a loosening of self-consciousness in favour of evolving something of a differently shared consciousness. In this we might recognise an intertwining of live creation whilst working in association with different artists. It is a fascinating and compelling arena in which there is opportunity to each engage with changing states of 'being embodied'. Similarities in terms of practice can be traced across experiences of a range of practitioners interested to explore the potential of reversals in terms of what Bojana Cvejic (2009, npn) identifies as, '… the economy of ownership and distribution in terms of art products'.

Improvisation: co-determined nimble thinking

Through an inter-relational focus where participants negotiate in a context of '…an ethical economy of exchange' (Williams 1996), attention is given to the ways in which relatedness might be revealed. Understanding the consequences of how, 'movers' engage with such 'potential to knowledge' is probably the most significant thing to learn and to share as a practitioner and teacher. Working through improvisation and collaboration can reveal the value of evolving a deep sense of personal discipline. Through this it is possible to realize, that we come to be in relational dialogue, informed by the nexus of aesthetic acuity and ethical sensitivity. Arguably it is through recognition of this interweaving of perception and affective response that the emergence of mindful-motion comes to be recognised. This is, after all, where greater attention is given to an intermingling of expertise and connoisseurship. The process inevitably revolves around our abilities to notice and to respond. Thereby finding ways to reason through the multiple trajectories that become available and ultimately to articulating resolutions in terms of nuance and affect. Outcomes can include, more subtly felt thinking that is realized as a reflexive orchestration of our relations with ideas and with others. For, it is movement that shapes consciousness, veined as it is with aesthetic awareness, relational ethics and critical reflexivity. Where allowed, practice that at times might be deemed chaotic and ambiguous ultimately facilitates coherence and validity. It takes time to learn to suspend the deeply embedded rush to answers about how to think, or how to move. It takes time to come to recognize the rich benefit to be found in an intertwining of rich, varied speculations and their unknown outcomes.

Forging relations through knowledge making in this way is something that is emergent and illuminated through what are sometimes messy and irrational searches for ideas. For writer-artist, Emma Cocker (2013, 127) the very situation exhibits perceived value, in terms of artistic practices that move towards exploring the realm of not knowing, something she refers to as a 'desirable indeterminacy'. Arguably such moments of flux can be recognised at the very points where new ideas are realized, emerging as a response to

new situations that have not previously been experienced. It these terms Cocker reminds us that, not knowing can arrive unannounced, '… as a space of fleeting liberty or reprieve; a brief interlude of potentiality flanked either side by what is certain' (130). What we need to recognize here is that in the process of being open to not knowing, we enter a transitional state, where we call knowledge into question. It is where what we think we know becomes unsettled by the very act of our unknowing.

In the course of complex movement improvisations the manner in which we relate to one another will come to frame the incremental changes in our understandings. These fluctuations are constituted by the influx of the 'other', to follow Whiteheads notion of folding our past experiences with our present, towards our future, yet to be known. Equally we might frame this complex realm of individual engagement as, 'idea-logics', to borrow a phrase used by William Forsythe via the worlds of design and business management. These ideas insinuate ecology as mindful-motion, recognising that there is value to be found in keeping things indefinite. The ideas follow a trajectory sketched from Brian Massumi's response to the choreographic explorations of William Forsythe, reading Alfred Whitehead; all talking of experiences of enlivened space. When speaking of his own working process it is interesting that Forsythe identifies his need to learn to allow himself to 'not know', to practice being frightened and in the process, to acknowledge the power of being affected by ideas. For as performance theorist Bojana Cvejic suggests in trying to capture dance, it "…works as a metaphor for going beyond contracts, systems, structures, as models of theorizing subjectivity, art, society, and politics …movement operates in the middle of things … Expresses the potential of moving relations" (2004, n.p).

Improvisation evidently can facilitate the exploration of collective thinking in ways that include how we as individuals cope with task-based activities. Indeed for many, such explorations of everyday interactivity are the materials for performance work itself. Each engagement may start from a given impetus, evolving through the use of less formally agreed mechanisms towards an as yet undetermined outcome. In what has effectively been a change of attitude towards working processes; products and the reasons why we might think it beneficial to engage in the first place, philosopher Bojana Kunst alludes to imagining performance itself as something that is open and on-going. She speaks of, '… a continuation of disclosure of lesser acts, acts which do not end in their own finalization, a kind of active present that is intertwined with the unrealized thought of the real' (Kunst, 2009). If we accept performance on these terms, improvisation could usefully be seen as a, social common where fluctuations in attention, cooperation and divergent vocabularies extend the logics of our creative response, and offer us an ensemble of relations through which we might compose.

The living context of art making

In her insightful reflections on working as part of the Forsythe Company, Elizabeth Waterhouse (2010, 153) shares experiences that resonate with ideas outlined by Kunst. Waterhouse refers to what she calls 'the living

context of ... art making' realized by a company who generate performances as a collective of individuals, intertwining both their lives and their dancing. What is revealed is consideration of the potential friction felt by dancers as they encounter each other during improvisations and in their ordinary daily living. What then becomes evident is how this resonates with what she refers to as a, '… positive regard to difference'. It is something she feels to be an active phenomenon that arguably holds the company and performance works together. The ideas seem similar to those shared by Elizabeth Ellsworth (2005, 4) who when talking of the drive towards learning experiences, asserts that we should consider ourselves to be '… continuously and radically in relation with the world, with others, and with what we can make of them'.

Gradually in the writing a sense of spatial relatedness unfolds. What becomes evident is that apprehending the energetic influence of proximity that operates between individuals, performances and locations makes a significant difference to the '… codetermining relationship' of working collectively. In terms of explicit and implicit engagement with ethics what appears most pertinent is the honing of an appreciation for cooperation as a working ethos, particularly when realized as an embodied process of being in relation. It is not about becoming the same people in terms of performance. It is about learning to understand yourself and those you work alongside, taking time to work amidst a range of possibilities that can be felt to be both cohesive and particular. Waterhouse ponders in considering ways that space, can be understood as a device to explore relationships of mind, of self, of world and of community. Ultimately she argues that choreographic space is a human phenomenon of meaning making in action. Through this manner of engagement with what is a distinct working process, as individuals and as community, they establish a communal space that in turn affords further creative investigations. It is in this way that '…meaning is created. It lives amidst spatial coordinates' (Waterhouse 2010, 154).

The complexity of the work involved in learning to recognize varied connections between people becomes evident. Her preference seems to be to talk of 'dancing *amidst*' as an adopted term for, being of the world. In this she seeks to clarify her position by arguing that,

> To dance amidst implies in the middle of (space) and during (time). Amidst space imbricates space with people (culture), objects (tools), buildings (architectures), and history (events in time) (Waterhouse, 2010, 163)

What becomes clear is that sensitivity to the force of spatial dynamics forges connections between individuals. In this there are echoes of Merleau-Ponty speaking of our being of the world, an arena in which we can each co-exist without closed boundaries. It is the outcomes of our shared spatial relations that establish the designs and decisions that we recognize as performance and that offer windows on to further, future meaning making. The approach relates well with what Nicholas Ridout (2011) refers to as being in a state of '*constant becoming'*, where learning to work and to relate offers the potential to nurture engagement through deep investment in human potential. For

Waterhouse, dancing is an activity of her whole self, where the articulation of complex movement resides within a cultural ecosystem. It includes what she refers to as learning to multitask her attention and concentration into '… observing/feedback and anticipation/ feed-forward' (2010, 161) reminiscent of comments made by Steve Paxton who in referring to his own experience of making art speaks of finding ways to 'knead his thinking' (T'Jonck, 2011,19).

The attitudes of other practitioners working across a range of fields resonate with these ideas, for example, Antionette Oberg (Chambers 2004) working in the field of educational research and supervision, talks of adopting an approach to investigative and generative learning as, 'inquiry without-method'. Effective processes involve churning dialogue through questions about a 'not yet imagined' interest. What becomes evident in the process is a meeting of creativity, artistry and scholarly endeavour working as a unifying experience.

Similar imaginative processes can be found in the open source, *Generique* performance, part of the score container in everybodystoolbox. The score elicits opportunity to create a collective post performance review of a 'not yet presented' performance. What is perhaps most vibrant here is the sense of emergence; that through a process, not forced but instead, of 'waiting' and lingering we might learn to ask questions differently. In the process of exploring method itself we become part of a reciprocal process that enriches our awareness. It is something quite different from addressing the known or making attempts to prove or disprove in terms of closed answers. Grosz's comment that, 'Artworks are not so much to be read, interpreted, deciphered as [to be] responded to, touched, engaged, intensified …' (2008,79), is significant here in terms of how we might strive to persevere in our relations and inter-connective motivations. With these thoughts in mind what seems important and valuable in terms of the ethico-aesthetic acuity is to be honed in improvising, is that we come to understand ourselves, as sensing, thinking, social and responsible persons.

Whilst embarking on a quest to find words to talk of rich, yet illogical processes found improvising may run counter to the practice for some, we may find that in the process virtuosity is revealed by the very waywardness of such a 'fascination'. Blanchot proposes what we might recognise as ' …a non- methodological method of progressing [that can] speak from the experience of the artist and an aesthetic that is [foremost] unengaged with the will-to-knowledge' (Peters, 2003, npn). Here we find support for a way of sharing ideas about experience that continue rather than complete that experience. For Peters who references, Blanchot in relation to his own work in music improvisation, the importance of this proposal is the call for a mode of engagement that is ' … insistent in its sustained articulation of the neutrality of the work'. He references this as he moves to identify, what Blanchot considers as, 'non-systematic coherence (Blanchot 1993, 140). In this, he alludes to the idea that; it is the work of the work, to reveal without rushing to answers, or indeed to completions. Instead it comes to be identified with fragmentary modes of thought and experience that move through and along theoretical perspectives in search of order that can be provisionally affirmed rather than confirmed. These thoughts resonate with comments by

choreographer Boris Charmatz who calls for a new virtuosity, something that he sees not as a means to display technical agility or bodies saturated in codified languages but rather a continuum of dynamic forces moving between mastery and ordinary ability. Following his argument it is the potential of action that is key to the experience for,

> What we actually *see* is no thing or action extra ordinary; instead, what we feel is a person or action rife with potential, full of vitality and force that isn't actually visible but sensed. We sense the potential for something extraordinary. We *sense*, … our own capacity or potential toward ourselves becoming *other* (Charmatz cited in Durning 2011,89-90).

Improvisation and patterning relationships

Integrating rhythms and dynamics of our individual and shared experiences, entails negotiation and compromise in facilitating reciprocal engagements. In turn this generates 'foldings' of our sensory somatic selves, where our histories, experience, ideas, and fabrications can be felt to intertwine. Through experiences found improvising we can access bodily-idea-logics between our senses, contexts, interpretation and relations and in turn embrace an ethico-aesthetic paradigm; a life-world lived in a fluid sense of moments (Guattari 1995). Through this emerge opportunities to realize our sensual, intellectual, emotional and responsible selves as unitary experience. In adopting this attitude to engagement with improvisation we might emphasise the inherent virtuosity to be found in fluidly intertwining memory, facility and adaptability, drawing as we do on a sense of the 'immediate', and of the uncertainties of a future, yet-to-be-known.

By embracing this trajectory we might eclipse the continued appropriation of improvisation as 'skilling', in terms of repertory display and thereby bypass, '… the danger of creating improvisational clones' (Paxton 1995). For as Blanchot suggests improvisation may well be tamed as it slides into, ' the tranquil discursive continuity' (1993, 8) of evidence based assessment outcomes inside institutional frameworks. What if the drive could be to generate '… arti-*facts* - crafted *facts* of experience… experiential potentials brought to evolutionary expression' (Massumi 2008, 18)? With Guattari speaking of the need to draw ethics and aesthetics together because of the degeneration in the very fabric of our social awareness, it is evident that experience gained improvising in collective collaborative practices has a contribution to make to '…a new art of living in society' (2006, 20).

Guattari's talk of the need for change in terms of the way we live and respond to each other and to the world are sentiments he shares through his work in *chaosmosis* (1992). The furrow is rich and pertinent in terms of engagement with improvisation where once again we find the wisdom that it is our relationality through ethics that informs embodied co-creation. Guattari reminds us that,

> Our survival on this planet is not only threatened by environmental damage but by a degeneration in the fabric of social solidarity and in the modes of psychical life, which must literally be reinvented … The only acceptable finality of human activity is the production of a subjectivity that is auto enriching its relation to the world in a continuous fashion (Guattari 2006, 20-21).

Improvisation can facilitate an approach to working and learning that is deliberately experimental, deliberately provisional. In terms of the production of material the sense for many practitioners is of being immersed in a state that is *in-between*, that is speculative. This is an environment where nomadism can facilitate the emergence of a range of possibilities; where affordances are stimulated and made tangible through engaging with the potentials found in shared action and response. Whilst for many a will to seek structural form remains paramount, it is interesting to acknowledge the ways in which creative investigation has become more openly embraced. We now see practice that engages with more diverse social practice and that generates thinking through encounters with what is, as yet unknown.

In exploring ways to recognise relations formed through ethics as a constitutive feature of movement based improvisation, we can acknowledge the creative opportunities afforded by giving attention to ethics as something more than the operation of agreed moral codes. In the process what becomes apparent is a frame of reference that addresses the multiplicity of encounters that also affect and inform our everyday relations in motion. Working in varied forms of improvisation means embracing experiences of working with others where we each contribute to the realisation of shared ideas. This, in turn effects how we interact in the on-going negotiation of ourselves both as productive artists and as social, responsive and responsible persons. In creating elegantly designed frameworks through which to view experience, comprehend ambiguity, appreciate profundity, and our essential interconnectedness, we can come to practice mindful means towards understanding and cohesion, that extends '…thought, stretches the mind, and leads us into new and uncharted territory' (Diffey, 1986: 11). Within this arena it is the ability of individuals to function within a series of social and self-regulating processes that offer significance in terms of an evolving ethico-aesthetic practice.

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