Unresolved Differences: Choreographing Community in Cross-Generational Dance Practice

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Abstract

This practice-led research enquires into how ideologies of community as commonality have informed the dominant rhetoric in the Community Dance sector since the 1970s, and formed the conditions of possibility for Cross-generational Dance, a reciprocal relationship between discourse and practice that has arguably been overlooked in the historiography of Community Dance. Framed by Michel Foucault's (1972) concept of the *episteme* – an umbrella mode of knowing that permeates historical taxonomies – Community Dance history is linked here with experimental choreographic processes during the 1960s and 1970s, and Relational Art of the 1990s. Such relationships suggest a more critical, politically-orientated genealogy. Cross-generational Dance is discussed through a reflexive approach to the writing which reveals how philosophies of community are divided into those associated with the idea of commonality – either through shared characteristics or common goals – and those that advocate a break with these imperatives, here examined through the philosophies of Adriana Cavarero, and Jean-Luc Nancy.

Given its perceived agenda to bring people of distinct ages together into a harmonious totality, Cross-generational Dance provides a particular opportunity to discuss community, examined here through case-studies of key choreographers at the time of writing – Rosemary Lee, and Cecilia Macfarlane. The discussion of age is made explicit through an analysis of models of difference, and introduces how an ethical encounter with others can avoid the totalising impulse of community in subsuming these differences. The methodology of 'relational choreography' underpins the phenomenological emphasis on process and relationships in choreography over more conventional conceptions of product and form in dance and supports the hypothesis that community can be experienced as 'being in relation through a phenomenology of uniqueness'. This conception does not rely on polarising the positions of the individual and the community, or self and other, young and old, but rather generates an experience of uniqueness, wherein differences remain unresolved, shared amongst 'others plural' (Nancy, 2000). This thesis therefore reconsiders what community means in the context of dance practice.

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Preface

When I moved from Oxford to Falmouth to begin this research project in 2009 I thought I knew what I was looking for: a community in which people recognised themselves in each other and in so doing felt enabled to dance. I thought that by inviting people of all ages to participate in dance and sharing this dance through performance, audiences everywhere would be up on their feet, asking to be part of this phenomenon, seeing themselves in the dancers: others of the same. The reality of achieving this in a new locality was much more complex, so I sought out philosophies and practices that might support these ideas.

When I started reading philosophies of community that invited reconsideration of this very term, my failure to find what I was looking for, or achieve this community that affirmed itself, did not anymore appear a failure. Instead I began to feel frustrated that Community Dance practice stopped short of recognising any alternative conceptions of community. I began to see that the experiences of community I thought I was looking for were actually only one way of seeing this phenomenon. This was a way of seeing that was rooted in a particular philosophical perspective of community that seemed outdated, limited. I felt stuck in a paradigm for Community Dance that only aimed for one version of community and continually affirmed this vision in the celebratory articulation of this way of doing things. At the same time as being sure that this was a valuable way of working I was stifled by it, tired of my own practice, and the repeated rhetoric that surrounded it.

The philosophy on the other hand was blowing my mind open; I laughed and cried over words, and looked at the world in a different way. A view that helped me to see my practice differently too, not as a failure, but as other ways of experiencing community. I wanted to build on this. What if I could also let this way of seeing, of thinking, of speaking about community change the way I (and others) did things? And in making mistakes along the way if the way I did things could be reflected honestly in discourse with all the unresolved problems, the differences of opinion, the ruptures…but still be considered community? This research is only the start of that project…

Introduction

This research has emerged out of my practice as a dance artist over the last fifteen years. Specifically, this practice has largely taken place in what is known in the United Kingdom (UK) as 'Community Dance'. My professional status in this field as a practitioner and author, and indeed being referred to as a 'Community Dance artist' led me to the premise of this research and the different voices and positions I engage in to construct this thesis. Through these voices I investigate the understandings and definitions of the concept of community and what this means for the way that Community Dance is practiced in specific contexts, in particular through Cross-generational Dance. The concern of this research project is not with definitions of Community Dance itself but with the lived experience of community in Cross-generational Dance, the relationship of this experience to discourses on community, and subsequently how this experience might be re-articulated to contribute to discourse in the Community Dance sector. I use Community Dance as a capitalised term to indicate that I am referring to it as it is defined through the professional creative industry that it has become.

As a sector, this discourse has included debates on the meaning and use of the term 'community'; indeed it has been suggested that Community Dance itself is no longer a necessary term – as I discuss further in Chapter One. Advocates such as Christopher Thompson (cited in Amans, 2008: 2), however, argue for 'keeping the term 'Community Dance' for the reason that it is a thread through our history as a profession and its very generality unites all the different strands of practice'. To put it simply for the purposes of this introduction, Community Dance can be described as participatory dance practices that seek to provide dance experiences and opportunities to people from all walks of life and levels of ability and training. Rather than a specific dance style it is based on the values of disseminating a variety of dance forms to diverse populations, as opposed to maintaining its status as an elite art form. For now this definition serves its purpose.

In particular this thesis focuses on a facet of Community Dance known as Cross-generational Dance. The focus has stemmed from my work with *Crossover Intergenerational Dance Company* (Crossover) in particular. Crossover is a mixed age dance company based in Oxford under the artistic direction of Cecilia Macfarlane and features throughout the thesis as a case study of choreographic practice, in particular in Chapter Three. Although other cross-generational initiatives and projects exist, in the UK at the time of beginning my research, Crossover was unique in following the model of a professional performance company as opposed to operating on a project basis. The particular framing of

Crossover within the sector and my professional experience of working with them mean that they provide a unique opportunity in the context of my research to consider what community means. I consider their practice from different perspectives – initially to critique the view of community presented by the company but in subsequent chapters to analyse how more specific discussions of my practice with them as relational choreography could lead to alternative, more radical, conceptions of community. The historical context of cross-generational dance is presented specifically as a facet of Community Dance, rather than in any other form of social or performance dance because this aligns with my own practice based imperatives which prioritise both the forming and re-configuration of relationships within the context of choreographic practice.

The main hypothesis housed in this thesis is that within the very differences required to make Cross-generational Dance what it is (i.e. cross-generational) participants in the practice can experience community as being-in-relation through a phenomenology of uniqueness. A phenomenology of uniqueness refers to the idea of a lived experience of singularity amongst others who are also, in a particular moment, experienced as unique beings (Cavarero, 2000). As a conception of community this is distinct from articulations that rely on shared identities and traits, a version of community that is commonly referred to in the Community Dance sector, and the one that I kept coming up against in my research: the repeated rhetoric was like a wall that I could not see beyond. Instead this thesis argues that the experience of being-in-relation can be constructed through a collaborative approach to choreography that prioritises singularity and an ethical response to others in improvisations that purposefully make contact – both physically through touch and through the intentionality of engaging in a choreographic process. Intentionality in this instance refers to the commitment to a process that reveals how dancers have an ethical imperative to respond to one another.

The theoretical perspectives and philosophers referred to in this thesis have all been chosen for their specific engagement in the relationship between language and lived experience, not only in relation to community. In the case of Jean Luc Nancy though, his particular concern with community as ‘in-operative’ in that it is always seeking to re-create something that has already passed was particularly compelling to my own enquiry and experiences of leaving a community behind in order to begin this research project.

According to Nancy scholar Ian James (2005), Nancy’s philosophical writing has been heterogenous and is difficult to quantify as a body of work other than as a ‘fragmentary demand’ responding to the fragmentation and multiplicity of post-structuralism and

contemporary society. Two of the questions that most concern Nancy in relation to community are equally pertinent to my own enquiry. He asks: 'what is it to be in a community?' and 'how can we conceive community in a non-totalitarian manner? (Watkin, 2007: 46). In order to respond to the second question in particular I use choreographic approaches that prioritise singularity underpinned by Nancy's notion of 'being-singular-plural'. Cross-referencing this with Italian feminist philosopher Adriana Cavarero's conception of 'uniqueness' provides an alternative configuration of subjectivity that is non-essentialist and therefore resists the totalitarian imperative of Community which is in danger of becoming the status quo in Community Dance projects that seek a harmonious outcome.

Cavarero's larger body of work has largely centred around the interrogation of the canon of philosophy and its patriarchal language. As I was engaging in my own interrogation of the language used in the Community Dance sector to articulate community, this was an appropriate theoretical framework; it allowed me to consider finding my own definitions in the same way that feminists have had to re-define patriarchal linguistic strategies on their own terms. Furthermore, Cavarero's work was rooted in the lived experience and feminist praxis of a group of women telling their stories to one another in a book shop in Milan. This practice-based understanding led to a desire to avoid universalising impulses and the totalitarian tendencies of language and to instead reveal singular experiences of being a woman. In the same way, I am concerned with how the practice of cross-generational dance might expose singular beings to one another as a community without requiring shared traits and commonality.

Similarly, Emmanuel Levinas – who I draw from in Chapter Four in particular – is concerned with how 'the other' is more than a linguistic category and what it means to encounter 'an other' in life, and in my case, in choreographic practice. While Levinas might be considered loosely part of the canon of philosophical thought that Caverero is consciously pitching herself against, he shares a concern with the lived experience of subjects and how that is represented in language and responded to in everyday life. According to Simon Critchley (2002:24) his philosophy can be summarized in Levinas' own terms in the simple words 'Apres Vous Monsieur'; that is by 'acts of civility, hospitality, kindness and politeness', which according to Critchley 'have perhaps received too little attention from philosophers. It is such acts with which Levinas qualifies the adjective 'ethical'' (ibid.) My own qualification of the adjective 'ethical' uses this Levinasian understanding and finds it in the practice of touch in Contact Improvisation as a way to reconceive of community as something existing *between* people rather than *in* them.

These theorists all enable me to construct alternative definitions of community through Cross-Generational Dance practice. The position this thesis takes is arguably a necessary part of contributing to the discourse surrounding Community Dance in order that it can encompass difference in such a way that does not always seek to resolve it through promoting a teleology of harmony and togetherness. I argue that refiguring the discourse in this way simultaneously provides the opportunity for shifting the practice of Community Dance in a reciprocal relationship between the two modes of knowledge.

The alternative articulations of community offered in this thesis have enabled me to see beyond the wall of 'common sense' understandings of what community meant in the context of choreographic practice with participants of different ages which led me to consider and evaluate my practice with a different set of criteria. In turn this opens up the potential for my choreographic choices and indeed outcomes of these choices that may not appear to confirm the positivist, celebratory conception of community, to be equally valued as those that do. Unresolved differences, tensions and failure can also become part of the lexicon of Community Dance and of my practice and how I, and others, speak about this practice.

Cross-generational Dance

Cross-generational Dance is the lens through which I consider the notion of community in the context of choreographic practice. Describing my area of research to a colleague once, I was met with an incredulous *"'Cross-generational'? It used to just be called Community Dance!"* (Bartlett, pers. comm., 2009). He saw it as splitting hairs in the field of Community Dance that is defined by its inclusive nature as providing access to people of all ages and abilities anyway. He was referring to how in previous eras it was not uncommon to find different generations dancing together. Not only in studios working with dance artists but in social dancing that involved people of all ages and was cross-generational without explicitly naming itself as such. For example, one of the earliest records of dance involving different ages dates back to the 1700s: 'To commemorate the laying of the foundation stone of Blenheim Palace, Woodstock, in 1705, three teams of Morris dancers performed on this occasion: 'one of young fellowes, one of maidens, and one of old beldames.' (Chandler, 1993: 26). In this example, social dancing (Morris in this case), does not need to be labelled as 'cross generational' but rather evolves out of the relationships and practices of village life at that time. Arguably, the term 'Cross-generational Dance' has evolved out of necessity, as contemporary culture has become more fractured and communities more disparate; bringing people of different ages together is indeed something that must be

choreographed. As well as using specific choreographic tasks throughout this thesis, I refer to the term choreography in reference to its status as a widening field which includes not only – as choreographer William Forsythe (no date: accessed 12th November 2015) puts it, 'the human body in action' – but also choreography as an 'alternative site for the understanding of potential instigation and organisation of action to reside'. This definition of choreography serves my purposes because I am also suggesting that community should not be considered as something that arises organically – or metaphysically – between people but is instead a phenomenon that can be choreographed through Cross-generational Dance. In this instance, choreography can be seen as the potential to orchestrate relations between people of different ages who may not normally interact and, as such, the ability of dance artists to construct experiences of community.

As discussed in Chapter Two, however, the idea that communities of different ages participated without the need to be brought together and organised is also in keeping with particular ideological perspectives on community; perspectives that view community as an ideal to be aspired to, existing in a golden age of the non-specific past.

In the context of this thesis, Cross-generational Dance refers to projects and practices that work with a range of distinct ages amongst their participants. Cross-generational Dance provides a container in which my research into the unruly topic of community can be housed, for it is too complex a concept to wholly address through the generalist heading of Community Dance.

What is more, at the time of writing, dance work with people of varied ages has been increasing in popularity, not only within the Community Dance sector but in professional performance practices. However, any genealogical narrative of cross-generational dance as a creative choreographic endeavour necessarily finds itself intertwined with the genealogy of Community Dance proposed here. This is not least because 'cross-generational dance' alone is an empty place-holder and could refer to any style of dance in a variety of contexts. Community Dance however, has particular aims and values that are pertinent to my practice and what is more, encompasses the rationale for my cross-generational dance practice as generative, i.e. a practice that involves engaging in a creative process to make something (rather than practising established forms of social dancing for example). This thesis concerns itself with the generative potential of such creative processes to reveal new experiences of community and to promote alternative experiences of self and others.

Furthermore, cross-generational dance is a useful context for my investigation because of its dialectical relationship with the notion of difference. By this I mean the internal contradiction of Cross-generational Dance that relies on different ages as a defining feature yet is always operating at risk of subsuming said difference to promote a totality through the idea of different ages coming together encompassed in a group. This dialectic mirrors key debates on ideologies of community which often set individual difference against group solidarity. Furthermore, the many and varied aims of Community Dance, and the scope of practices that can be included within it, mean that in order to avoid generalisations it is necessary to use case studies to establish specificity.

Evidently, all the choreographic works mentioned in this thesis can be described as instances of cross-generational dance in one way or another. This desire to work with 'people' rather than a generalised idea of technically trained 'dancers' emerges as a driving force for all the artists cited in this thesis. Whether or not these artists would define their work as cross-generational dance however is another matter, not only because it may be unclear what such a label actually means beyond referring to the ages of participants, but also because it implies foregrounding age rather than other artistic or social concerns. One such concern being the interest in an expansive notion of what constitutes a dancer beyond the conservatoire trained 'ideal', and therefore movement that exists outside the taxonomies of codified techniques. These principles can be seen as one of the conditions that make cross-generational dance practice possible and imbricates the social aims of the Community Dance movement with the history presented in Chapter One.

Cross-generational dance is considered under the umbrella of Community Dance, but with the acknowledgement of a broader range of historical narratives included in its historiography which in turn widens the scope of the choreographic practices I am referring to – thereby including those that blur the boundaries between practices considered 'professional' and those that are by self-definition seen as 'community' dance. Placing the evolution of the professional sector of Community Dance within the iconic historical dance narratives of X6 and Judson Dance Theatre exposes the lack of articulation of such a relationship in the existing literature on Community Dance in the UK. Part of the contribution to knowledge housed in this thesis is the articulation of these connections. This acknowledgement of the network of relationships between the practices and ideologies of X6, Judson Dance Theatre and Community Dance also exposes the conditions of possibility for cross-generational dance.

I purposefully use the term *cross*-generational as opposed to *inter*-generational throughout my writing, though the two are largely interchangeable in terms of the practices to which they refer. I chose the prefix 'cross' as it denotes a more fluid engagement with the term generation rather than 'inter' which suggests a relationship between two things – a binary division – in this case the 'young' and the 'old'. This is suitable terminology for my argument because, as Ignaas Devisch (2013: 100) points out: 'The inter only comes into being after a subject first exists and is only in a second moment gathered in a collectivity'. Inter-subjectivity then, according to Devisch requires a self-enclosed subject from which to progress. Many inter-generational projects are built on such an ideology seeking to resolve perceived differences between the 'young' and 'old'. Furthermore, they often prescribe roles for these identities through their methodology; for example a project I took part in in the early stages of this research at Flushing Primary School in Cornwall in 2009. During this project older members of the community were invited to share their stories of the past with schoolchildren. I then worked with these children to interpret the stories into dance and movement. The older members of the group remained passively watching the activity, and were associated with the past rather than the present moment. Similarly, the children were the physically active ones but were also seen as receivers of history rather than creators of it through sharing their own stories. While this project undoubtedly had value for those participating in it, it further confirmed the binary positions of 'old' and 'young', reflected more readily by the term 'inter-generational' that I was seeking to problematise.

By contrast to these positions based on identities of young and old, this thesis argues for a notion of community in Cross-generational Dance as being-in-relation which relies on Nancy's idea of 'Being Singular Plural' (2000). The term 'cross' arguably encompasses this idea of plurality as opposed to binary alterity. Rather than individual subjects with attributed identities such as 'old' and 'young' and their respective roles of passive and active as in the Flushing Primary School project, being-singular-plural proceeds from the idea that existence is always and already relational. Identity is not formed through a recognition of the other as the same but in the shared exposure between other*s* plural, as I discuss further in Chapter Three.

Nancy's pluralistic relational perspective has not been taken up in popular discourse surrounding generational relations. Instead the binary positions of young and old have pre-occupied mainstream cultural commentators and writers dealing with the issue of generational dynamics published in recent years: *What Did The Baby Boomers Ever Do For Us?* (Beckett, 2010), *The Pinch* (Willetts 2010), and *Manifesto for a Jilted Generation*

(Howker & Malik, 2010) to name but three of the more high profile publications on this theme. Set against a climate of an ageing population, these books make claims of 'baby boomers'[1] stealing future economic resources and possible 'intergenerational warfare' as a result. The publication of these books highlight that research into relationships across generations is increasingly important and timely given demographic shifts which see a largely ageing population in the UK at the time of writing[2]. This is also why Cross-generational Dance has itself been increasing in popularity as more Community Dance initiatives and artists seek ways of involving older generations in their work[3]. The rhetoric of 'intergenerational warfare' also indicates that there is often a political agenda for many arts projects working across age groups to counter such claims and to instead promote harmonious communication between the generations. My project in part seeks to demystify this process of creating a consensual community across ages and to problematise it, leaving such claims exposed to philosophical questions of unresolved differences and conflict. Problematising in this way is important because the notion of bringing together disparate age groups into a cohesive whole is overly simplistic. Not least because it collapses any notion of the in-between which is arguably a necessary conceptual and choreographic device to avoid the imperative of totalising the other as the same, as argued in Chapter Four. Indeed the very premise of seeing generation as a group of people born at a moment in time that share traits or cultural preferences is similarly problematic in that it homogenises vast groups of people rather than recognising their singularity.

Cross-Generational relationships can also be defined in terms of how they are manifest through the familial line. In this instance, when parents become grandparents their roles shift and they are considered to be of the third generation, regardless of their age. Simon Frith (2005: 144) states that: 'what is significant here is less the specific age of family members than the age difference between them and how this relates to domestic power and status'. There is much more at play then, than simply a chronological account of how long someone has been alive. Rather, as I argue in this thesis, it is through relationships – or

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[1] Baby-boomers is a colloquialism which has migrated into cultural studies and largely refers to people born after World War Two when birth rates rose dramatically between 1946 until the mid-1960s.

[2] For further evidence of the timeliness of this study see Appendix A for list of relevant publications I have produced during the course of this research

[3] There has been an emphasis on working with older populations in Community Dance in recent years. Initiatives are seen both as a way to combat the implicit ageism within the sector and also as a way to promote healthy active lifestyles for a demographic who may be less able to access activities: see for example Amans (2012), People Dancing (2016), Schwaiger (2011).

rather relationality – that generational experience becomes significant. Through the choreographic practice featured in this thesis, the power and status between families and generations is played out and, as I argue in Chapter Four, reconfigured through embodied interactions and making purposeful contact.

Indeed, although 'Family Dance' is another descriptor that might be used to refer to some Cross-generational Dance projects, I would suggest that the practice I discuss exceeds this definition. It does so through its emphasis on choreographic processes – artistic aims – rather than providing the social aim of a fun and inclusive event 'for all the family', a commonly used turn of phrase for Family Dance events. Indeed Italian choreographer Giulio D'Anna's work that I discuss in Chapter Four is part of an increasing trend for professional dancers to work across age groups. This trend is evident across Europe, for example in acclaimed French choreographer Boris Charmatz's *L'Enfant* which premiered in 2011. *L'Enfant* worked with a group of nine dancers and over 20 children in a staged work that went on to tour and came to the high profile dance venue Sadler's Wells the UK in 2014. This was not 'family dance' but a clear choreographic choice to work with performers of different ages, some of whom were parents and children. Similarly, in 2012, German dancer and choreographer Martin Nachbar devised and performed *Repeater* with his father Klaus Nachbar, an amateur dancer, which also went on to tour internationally. In the UK *Dad Dancing* was a project initiated by three professionally trained dancers Rosie Heafford, Alexandrina Hemsley, and Helena Webb who worked with their fathers to produce workshops and performances that looked at their relationships and what it meant to be a father and a daughter. Similarly, *Men and Girls* by UK-based theatre company *Fevered Sleep* explores the specifics of these relationships through choreography. These practices involve professionally trained and untrained performers in such a way as to question ready-made binaries of professional/Community Dance and as such are more suited to the term Cross-generational Dance than 'Family Dance'. Although this could also potentially be referred to as 'splitting hairs' as my colleague referred to the division between community and Cross-generational Dance, the terminology indicates a clear distinction in my own practice in terms of the aims and objectives of particular events and their corresponding methodologies. Furthermore, as this thesis argues, the discourse used to frame and discuss practice has material results, meaning that calling something 'Family Dance' evokes particular assumptions and arguably ways of working that refer to cultural norms. Cross-generational Dance, therefore, while interchangeable to a certain extent with 'inter-generational' or 'Family Dance', is the most appropriate term in this context to encompass

the fluidity of the practice and philosophy debated. Furthermore, the concept of community as being-in-relation that I argue for, means the reconfiguration of roles and relationships that may constitute a 'family' as such.

From my experience in the field however it is clear that working with people who are already related can provide an easy way to bring people from different generations together in a shared activity. Easy because they are already in an understood and socially-sanctioned relationship, whereas Cross-generational Dance, as I go on to discuss in Chapter Four, can mean engaging in relationships that are potentially 'taboo' in the social contexts of particular relationships; for instance, the aforementioned Fevered Sleep's *Men and Girls* project which specifically sought to bring together groups of people who were seen as not interacting within quotidian social contexts outside of the immediate family; it was, as their strapline for the work indicates - 'celebrating the rights of adults and children to be together, to play together and to dance together'. This 'rights based approach' to participation Matarasso (2016) notes as a political statement in the current cultural climate, as I discuss further in Chapter Four.

Authorial Voices: Proximity and Distance

In order to carry out research into choreographic and social processes in which I am necessarily implicated, I have used different authorial voices within this thesis. All of these voices are encompassed within my reflexive methodology which acknowledges the place of the researcher in the construction of meaning and, as Alvesson and Skoldberg (2004: 271) define reflexivity as: 'ways of seeing which act back on and reflect existing ways of seeing'. These 'ways of seeing' are embodied through my shifting positions as artist, scholar, researcher, writer, and mother.

Navigating these positions and shifting between them, I do not conceive of my role as someone observing an objective reality that exists outside of myself but rather, to use Donna Haraway's (1991) term, I am *situated* within the field that I construct. This notion was made all the more explicit in the early years of this research because my own practice was previously in another geographical location. Initially I had to re-establish my professional practice in a new area (where the hosting University is based) and as such I was less prone to presume that the field was already (Buckland, 1999: 163) 'existing prior and outside of the anthropologist's work' because I already felt like an 'outsider' in the process of creating something new – as this reflective writing from a journal written in February 2010 (one year into the research) indicates:

I feel like I had this slightly utopian dream of how 'community' would organically evolve… having seen it so successfully in Oxford. Yet this was the result of many, many years living and working in a place for Cecilia, and the kind of sustained emotional investment in people that she is capable of. Maybe I wasn't ready to give enough, I felt I needed to regroup instead and gather my energy after a big change in my life. I also don't want to try and be Cecilia but to develop my own way of working.

Getting people to take part in things though is hard work, despite positive feedback on my teaching style (and responding to some less positive feedback) my regular classes have faltered, leaving me approaching people as individuals to try and get them involved. I have had so little interaction with teenagers, why is this? Partly territorial, I wanted to work with students from Penryn College but the resident dance teacher felt threatened, what are the implications of this on my idealized notion of community? I need to try harder to engage with this age group [...] but this is also not what I had in mind in some ways if it is such a struggle then I feel like the work is not speaking for itself. This 'organic' development that I had imagined. Does this say anything towards the conclusions of my research?
The work I am doing feels most definitely constructed – 'choreographed', or put together. Perhaps I need to reassess how I value this … so much good work, bringing people together is done in this way, perhaps that's not such a bad thing?

Echoing the sentiments in the Preface to this thesis, this reflective writing shows the initial lack of empirical material I had to work with. It also illustrates another modality with which the writing in this thesis operates, notes that reflect on the research process as it was evolving.

The challenge of bringing participants together that the above reflection articulates, as well as inviting consideration of what really constituted 'community', created a distance to the research process; a distance which became productive when I used it as a tool with which to write from the perspective of a researcher engaging in the field of Community Dance discourse. In this position I was able to report on the types of resources that document Community Dance history in the United Kingdom. These were mainly, handbooks, evaluation reports and publicity materials[4]. Analysing these resources demonstrated how

[4] See for example Amans, D, *An Introduction to Community Dance Practice*, which is written in the style of a handbook for professionals working in the field and includes topics such as 'Jobs from an Employer's perspective' and 'Project co-ordination' etc.

these created only one perspective on the practice, one that largely lacked a meta-theoretical discourse of the type that is circulating in Community Arts discourse more generally[5]. Writing an historical context for my practice in Chapter One with a broader frame of reference to include such a meta-theoretical discourse became one of the driving forces of the thesis.

From another perspective as a professional practitioner and author in the field of community dance, however, I was writing from an 'insider's' view and as such from a position of proximity. From this position, I have engaged in a critique of the field of Community Dance for which I have previously been a strong advocate in my professional life. I provide this evaluative analysis of notions of community because I believe – as Judith Butler (1993: 26) puts it – that it is possible to engage in 'the critique of something useful, the critique of something we cannot do without'. Similarly, Richard Brodie (cited in Barrett, 2009: 162) comments that 'evolution requires two things: replication with a certain degree of fidelity…and a certain degree of infidelity' so while I remain steadfast to the general values of Community Dance and the proponents of it that I include in this thesis, I have also been, as it were, 'unfaithful' to them through interrogating their practice and the language they use to describe it in order to make my own discoveries and assertions. I have not always felt personally comfortable with this, but it is perhaps the ultimate test of my hypothesis which proposes that unresolved differences can be encompassed in community in a variety of ways without undermining its very premise.

My reflexive methodology also foregrounds this insider perspective through an auto-ethnographic authorial voice; not only through reflective writing such as that featured in this section but particularly in Chapter Four where I write from my position as a mother as well as an artist researcher. These multiple voices create different understandings, broadly in keeping with the premise of ethnography to 'allow multiple interpretations of reality and alternative interpretations of data throughout the study.' (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2004: 241) While this study is not claiming to be an ethnographic one, there are elements of this field that are implied through my engagement with groups of participants throughout the research. Being amongst participants, observing them and interviewing them to reveal aspects of a specific cultural practice are methods that could be equated to ethnographic fieldwork. However, in the same way that Hal Foster in his 1996 essay 'The Artist as Ethnographer' (cited in Kwon, 2002: 138), critiques the 'sanctioned authority of the artist to engage the locals in their (self)-representation', I am not claiming the participants views as

[5] See for example Bishop (2012), Delanty (2009), Kester (2004), Kuppers (2009), Matarasso (2013), Meissen (2010)

revealing an authentic truth but rather recognising my position in creating a particular argument from this data. In addition I use myself as both a subject and object of research through this 'auto-ethnography' to support my contentions.

Auto-ethnography is a way to study culture and relations through one's own interactions with phenomena rather than proceeding from a false objectivity that the scholar studies only 'others' that exist outside of the self. Becoming a mother is an experience in which social life plays an important part in the construction of a new role and previously unknown subjective experiences; auto-ethnography was therefore a particularly appropriate mode with which to approach the case studies in Chapter Four. On inhabiting this new social role I became, as Kristeva (2001:4) put it of the philosopher Hannah Arendt, 'gripped…by that unique passion in which life and thought are one…' and it was increasingly problematic to compartmentalize the different aspects of my life and my research. The search for meaning through both theory and practice had an added urgency, particularly given the emphasis on cross-generational interactions. What is more, the concept of an individual subject hermetically sealed within their own body has been called into question through the corporeal experience of pregnancy, birthing and the evolving relationship with my daughter – highlighting my concern with the ontological premise of being-in-relation.

Tami Spry (2001: 714) refers to auto-ethnographic writing as a 'felt text' which does not occur without rhetorical and literary discipline' but which also requires 'the courage needed to be vulnerable, to step out from behind the curtain and reveal the individual at the controls of academic-Oz'. This metaphor is useful to consider as the mode of writing that engages in proximity – both of the researcher to the material being studied but also to the reader as a relational being engaging in the text. This is brought into play in Chapter Four where I reveal my own vulnerabilities in order to further understandings of how the practice revealed previously under-represented concepts of community.

However, I also use auto-ethnography not simply to become my own research subject as a mother, but because as an artist researcher I am interested in how the personal, immediate here-and-now of interactions in the dance studio can be politicized and expanded to be meaningful in a wider cultural context. I wanted to investigate how moving together has the potential to imbricate our experiences of cross-generational relationships within the socio-cultural sphere because as Dance ethnographer Deidre Sklar posits (cited in Thomas, 2003: 84) 'dance is a kind of cultural knowledge' The desire to contextualise my dance practice in cultural and political terms was part of my motivation and rationale as a researcher.

The scholarly voice I use in this thesis with which to engage in philosophical discourse raises the question of representation. Through my re-articulating of community I am using participant experiences of cross-generational dance and analysing them through theoretical lenses not necessarily available (or of any significance) to the participants themselves. My proposal is however that this mode of writing is a necessary part of challenging orthodoxies of discourse in Community Dance; orthodoxies that also arguably limit the very forms of self-representation and language available to participants to express and articulate these experiences. By this I mean that the conditions of possibility also condition particular kinds of responses. As Linda Tomko (2004: 90) writes:

> People and or groups actualize the potential available in conditions of possibility; they can and do turn potentials to different account. Equally important, particular historical surrounds help conceptualise, condition, and shade the perceptions people form and choices they make.

The conditions of possibility then create certain responses about what community means that arguably repeat and confirm the proliferated vision of communal aims, coming together, and shared belief systems. This is not to say that these are not also experiences that indeed occur, but that through my research I am revealing less-represented potentials – turning these accounts and choices to a different end – as Tomko would have it. In this way the thesis takes on Helen Thomas' (2003: 71) proposal of ethnography as '(textual) interventions *in* cultures' as opposed to representations *of* them that might seek some kind of 'authenticity'.

What is more, the construction of meaning through the different authorial voices and their related positions of distance and proximity have allowed for, as Alvesson and Skoldberg (2004: 241) put it: 'less focus on what the empirical material can tell us about how things 'really are' and more about other virtues – creative ideas, for instance – that are not subject to the empirical norm which shackles us to the 'data''. The creative ideas in this instance being those ideas on what constitutes community – ideas which can be revealed and understood within the context of choreographic practice and theoretical research bought into dialogue. The particular critical perspectives I adopt can be seen as operating broadly within post-structural philosophical paradigms which, in keeping with my reflexive methodology, insist on plurality and the multiplicity of meaning; outlined further in the following section.

Critical Perspective

As identified above, this thesis contributes to a field of discourse on Community Dance in the United Kingdom that, at present, remains largely uncritical due to the need of the sector to justify government spending and to increase its visibility as an effective and useful art practice. By 'uncritical' I refer to the lack of an evaluative analysis which enquires into its own existence through an interrogative approach that asks potentially problematic questions. In my MA thesis (2010), I referred to this discourse as a 'rationalisation of practice' – borrowing from sociologist Anthony Giddens (1984) – whereby dance artists, educators and practitioners are regularly required to articulate their rationale for dance on the basis of transferable skills and successful, celebrated outcomes. My MA thesis was set in the context of the 1997 transition to a New Labour government in the UK which, as Claire Bishop (2012: 29) points out, asked the question, 'what can the arts do for society?' Bishop (ibid.) goes on to reiterate my previous point saying that 'the answers included increasing employability, minimizing crime, fostering aspiration – anything but artistic experimentation and research as values in and of themselves'. The kind of attitudes and approach to Community Dance that such discourse in the late 1990s produced, I argue, is part of what Michel Foucault (1972) refers to as the 'episteme' or 'conditions of possibility' for Cross-generational Dance, and indeed for my own understanding of concepts of community. As such, this research has required precisely the interrogative approach necessary, currently minimal in the field, not least through my own critical reflection and reflexive methodology.

Like much of Foucault's thought, his notion of the episteme has had what Tomko (2004) refers to as a somewhat 'liberating' effect on constructions of history and cultural discourse. Liberating because he can be seen as part of a post-structuralist turn in the twentieth century which challenged any concept that relied on universal truths and generalisations. The 'episteme' in particular privileges relationships rather than points of origin. These relationships are seen as productive of knowledge and practices. I use this notion in order to create relationships across time to reframe the historical perspective of Community Dance in Chapter One. In so doing I am able to demonstrate a more political agenda than previously assumed and articulated in the historiography of Community Dance. This is done not least through aligning their practices to those of iconic movements in historical dance narratives of X6 in the United Kingdom and Judson Dance Theater in North America in the 1960s and 1970s. These moments and movements are useful because they are demonstrative of the episteme, when a particular era manifests shared perspectives on what constitutes knowledge - or in this case ideologies that constitute

dance or performance. Furthermore, identifying the lack of engagement in these historical narratives with what has become known as 'Community Dance' in the UK, it is clear how existing definitions and understandings of the practice have limited its potential as an explicitly political or experimental practice.

Jon Simons (1994: 26) writes in his political analysis of the concept of the episteme that 'discourses of knowledge should not be analysed as unities by reference to psychological individuality or opinions of a particular person'. Foucault proposed that individual views and perspectives are also subject to the limitations of the episteme and must be seen as such, rather than being down to merely individual artistic temperament or aesthetic preferences, for example. This idea of the episteme is useful to situate the articulations and concepts of community held by Community Dance practitioners – including myself – as part of a wider field of knowledge. It also indicates, that while I may find a political rationale for Community Dance a compelling one, the de-politicisation of this field of practice is also due to the type of discourse that circulates in the field. Foucault's (1972: 211) premise that 'the episteme makes it possible to grasp the set of constraints and limitations which, at a given moment, are imposed on discourse' also shows how the limitations on what is thought of as Community Dance goes on to produce its practical effects. Some such effects being the methods used in Cross-generational Dance. This is not necessarily to state limits as negative but simply as the horizon of what is deemed possible at a particular moment in time.

Philosophies of community that form part of the episteme I discuss are many and varied. In the Aristotelian view for example it is defined by essential characteristics, positing that in order for a group of people to be defined as a community they must embody certain attributes and share particular traits. Such a view is problematic in the same way that definitions of generational identity are, always creating an excess. What is more, this is a structuralist view of reality that post-structuralists such as Foucault have long since critiqued, looking instead at the social function and power structures inherent in such categories rather than shared structure and form with an originary model. Similarly, an essentialist view of community, such as that which Alisdair MacIntyre (2007) outlines, presupposes an a priori community of the past and its subsequent moral decay and alienation in modern times. This usefully frames similarly nostalgic views in choreographers working in Cross-generational Dance. The review of philosophical perspectives on

community[6] such as these that I address in Chapter Two provide a point of departure for considering Jean-Luc Nancy's and Adriana Cavarero's radical deviation from such concepts, and the ideas of individual subjectivity on which they are based, in Chapters Three and Four.

As proposed in my hypothesis the notion of being-in-relation coined by Nancy (2000) has great relevance for this research in providing an alternative conception of community as neither constituted by preordained identities nor simply being a matter of choice or imagination. Instead it suggests networks of relationships that shift and change as a basis for human relating and living together. Nancy – like Foucault – though writing more recently, can be considered part of the post-structural turn in philosophical thought in that he too disregards universal truths and seeks heterogeneous ways of engaging with contemporary questions. Although his writing is at times poetic and fragmented, his concerns are rooted in the political realities of the present and the context in which he writes[7]. Nancy's perspective of being-in-relation is ontological, a condition of existence. This thesis proposes that such relationality can be *experienced* through particular ways of working in dance. More precisely, I argue that particular choreographic practices in Cross-generational Dance allow this experience of being-in-relation to occur through a phenomenology of uniqueness – an experience of one's uniqueness amongst others who are also unique. Though being-in-relation is an a priori condition for Nancy, my hypothesis proposes that this can be foregrounded in particular approaches to choreography. I construct this hypothesis through examining practice and interviews with participants of Cross-generational Dance. Other conclusions may also be possible but my aim is to provide critical discourse that reframes the notion of community as it is currently referred to in the Community Dance sector.

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[6] I explore philosophical perspectives on community in Chapter Two initially through writing by Raymond Plant (1973), Adrian Little (2002) and Andre Gorz' (1999) conception of constitutive versus cooperative communities – which he identifies as a contrast between originary and decision based communal ties. Ignaas Devisch's (2013) work too provides a thorough analysis of the concept of community in relation to Jean-Luc Nancy's writing which is central to my own hypothesis. I also refer to Benedict Anderson's (2006) 'imagined communites', which he conceived of as a way to articulate nationalism as an ideology, and briefly to anthropologist Victor Turner's (1969) notion of *communitas* which was influential in the field of performance studies.

[7] In *Being Singular Plural* (1996/2000) for example he is responding to world events such as the wars in Bosnia and Chechnya that were pertinent at the time of his writing and in C*orpus* (2008) he uses his own experience of a heart transplant as a point of departure for discussing political, moral and ethical dimensions of the body.

The 'phenomenology of uniqueness' I describe as a way to articulate the embodied experience of singularity, was coined by scholar Elisabetta Bertolino (2008) to describe Cavarero's (2000) reconfiguring of subjectivity, explicitly influenced by Hannah Arendt[8]. Cavarero (2000) is concerned with uniqueness and what she refers to as the 'unarguable' presence of the human other, as opposed to a metonymic 'Other' of discourse; a perspective that is useful to discuss the lived experience of community as it is embodied in Cross-generational Dance practice. Furthermore, Cavarero's notion of singularity as uniqueness offers a way to re-consider the identification of Cross-generational Dance on the basis of 'difference', as I discuss in Chapter Three. Indeed her brand of feminism has been referred to as 'difference feminism' (Felski, 1997: 26) which, rather than seeking equality with a male archetype, seeks instead a recognition of difference[9]: 'In this usage, difference becomes emancipated from its status as other-than, and is promoted as simply other, as pure, irreducible difference (not 'a/not-a' but 'a/b')' (Ang, 2005: 211).

Due to her focus on the body and materiality Cavarero has been aligned with the philosophy of phenomenology, though she herself resists this stating: '(I am not) a phenomenologist in the great classical tradition starting with Husserl and continuing with Merleau Ponty, not the phenomenology in which phenomena are always thought from the general perspective of the subject but rather a phenomenology of one's uniqueness and the materiality of singular bodies'(Bertolino, 2000: 144). Despite this however she does identify what she refers to as 'the phenomenological horizon' (ibid.) as important to her work.

Similarly, the distant horizon of this way of thinking is significant to the critical perspective I adopt in this thesis. This is because phenomenology is the philosophy which privileges lived experience as a framework for understanding. At the time of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's[10] writing for example it provided an alternative to the logocentric philosophical perspectives that focused on intellect as distinct from the body and on language as an objective reflection of reality. According to Merleau- Ponty (1962: xvi-xvii), 'the world is not what I think, but what I live through,' emphasizing lived experience as the

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[8] In particular Arendt's idea of embodied action as always and already political and part of 'the social' is significant for Cavarero's relational philosophy.

[9] See also Irigaray (1993)

[10] Merleau Ponty's most significant work as a point of departure for dance scholars was 'The Phenomenology of Perception' (1945). His work introduced the idea of the 'body-subject' and rejected mind-body dualism in favour of an existent whose lived experience and perception was always embodied.

basis for meaning and perception. It is for this reason that Phenomenology, and Merleau Ponty in particular, have been popular in dance scholarship (see Fraleigh, 1987; Pakes, 2009; Sheets-Johnston, 2015). As Helen Thomas (2003: 63) points out this is because phenomenology '…facilitates a serious consideration of dance movement…[after all]…not only do we have and are bodies…but our bodies are not generally static'. Similarly, dance scholar Sondra Horton Fraleigh (1987: 3) states that phenomenology 'foregrounds the body as a site for investigation, knowledge and perception'. My own body is a research tool in this study, in particular through the use of a case study in Chapter Four in which I discuss my own experiences of Cross-generational Dance and acknowledge my lived experience and interpretations through engaging with the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas[11]. Levinas has also been described as a phenomenologist, or even a 'new phenomenologist'[12] and studied the philosophy of Husserl and Heidegger extensively. For my purposes, his work provides a useful support for Cavarero's notion of materiality because he has firmly argued for the material presence of 'the other' as opposed to this being something that can be known theoretically. Levinas' notion of the 'face to face' is useful to conceive of the way that dancing in contact with others reveals an ethical response. Levinas' idea in the context of this thesis refers to how the face to face creates, as Critchley (2002: 12) puts it, of conversing with another person, 'an event of being-in-relation with the other as an act or a practice', in this case the act of dancing in contact with others.

The interpretations I make throughout the thesis are part of an act of construction – indeed of choreography – in creating notions of community that can contribute to the epistemological field of Community Dance. As Philip Steedman (1991: 54) writes: 'Meaning comes not from seeing or even observation alone, for there is no alone of this sort. Neither is meaning lying around in nature waiting to be scooped up by the senses; rather it is constructed. Constructed in this context, means produced in acts of interpretations'. These interpretations are part of my reflexive methodology in which I navigate different positions and modes of writing as outlined in the previous section.

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[11] Since the 1980s there has been, as Simon Critchley notes in the Cambridge Companion to Levinas: 'a veritable flood of work on Levinas philosophy' (2002: 5) in a variety of fields. For an examination of his theory in performance studies in particular see Auslander (2008), see also Chanter (2001) for feminist interpretations of his work and also Irigaray in Cohen (1986), see also Letiche (2012) for a discussion of Levinas in dance and performance research. See also Rorty (1998) for a critique of Levinas' ethical philosophy.

[12] See Cohen (1986) Critchley (2002), Simmons and Benson Ellis (2013).

Phenomenology therefore provides a useful critical perspective for interpreting the embodied relationships that occur between people of different ages when choreographing community. It is particularly significant for my analysis given that my focus is on experiences of community rather than representations of the idea through forms or narratives. Furthermore, phenomenology underlines the importance of this research in looking at specific instances and articulations of what community means to participants and choreographers in Community Dance and reframing them to challenge existing definitions which may include desired images and ideas of community projected onto dance practices externally from funding bodies or governments and their arts policies.

The experiential basis for dance practice that phenomenology presents is also pertinent to my methodology of relational choreography and improvisatory practices in which the lived experience of participants is prioritised rather than their ability to perform or master particular physical techniques. Such a framework is particularly relevant in the current cultural context for participatory art, as demonstrated by Claire Bishop's writing. Building on the work of art critic Nicolas Bourriaud who coined the term 'relational aesthetics' in the late 1990s, she refers to a shift in emphasis of artistic practice identifying a 'social turn' in art in the late twentieth century as focusing on processes rather than discrete objects – processes that produce human relations and responses. For example, Bourriaud uses the work of artist Rirkrit Tiravanija whose practice often involves cooking a meal for a group of people attending a gallery[13], the premise of the art work being simply to bring people together. Gallery goers are there to participate in the work itself rather than observe it. Significantly, Miwon Kwon (2004: 126) describes such art events as follows: 'a community group or organization is newly constituted and rendered operational through the co-ordination of the art work itself'. Kwon's statement reiterates the use of the term choreography in this thesis as a means of orchestrating human interactions which might be experienced as community. Practices like Tiravanija's also contribute to the field of knowledge that frames my own dance practice and its participatory premise, which I discuss further in Chapter One.

The critical perspective outlined here evolved alongside the practice-based research; it arose from my position inside the practice working as a dancer and choreographer as well as positioning myself outside the practice through reflection and engaging in relevant theoretical debates as demonstrated by the different modes of writing I engage in in the

[13] See for example *Untitled (Free)* (1992) and his ongoing work *Soup/No soup* (2012).

thesis. Theory is actively used in this thesis in the way that Jonathan Culler (2011: 4) in his introduction to literary theory suggests, as being that which 'changes people's views, makes them think differently about their objects of study and their activities of studying them…' Rather, then, than referring to particular schools of thought and genealogies, I take threads of theories and key points to interweave them with the practice as I discuss it. The pathway between practice and theory has informed not only the hypothesis which examines the effective relationship between discourse and practice in Community Dance but also the narrative of the thesis itself. The structure sets up a framework of particular philosophies of community, and modes of practising Community Dance, which I then interrogate, echoing the process of my own learning, as the précis below summarises.

Précis of Chapters

The content in this thesis broadly reflects the evolution of the research as I undertook it. The case studies and examples outlined occurred during the first four years of the research project between 2009 and 2013. The emergent nature of my methodology was useful as it allowed me to reflect critically on outcomes and challenges at each stage in order to develop the practice and critical perspective as I went along. Chapters One and Two provide a contextual framework for the thesis in both practice and theory while Chapters Three and Four provide more in-depth analysis of examples of practice and key themes emerging from these in relation to the hypothesis. Each of the chapters introduces themes and terms distinct to its own concerns, and while the hypothesis, rationale and authorial voices evidently run throughout, each chapter can also be considered in its own right as presenting a body of work with a very particular focus. Chapter One is focused on a historical and contextual perspective in theory and practice; Chapter Two on philosophical theories of Community; Chapter Three on 'difference' as a defining feature of Cross-generational dance; and Chapter four introduces notions of contact and of ethical relationships through this contact.

Chapter One: *Community Dance, Conditions of Possibility*

Chapter One, Part One provides an historical context for Community Dance in the UK as the field of practice relevant to the Cross-generational Dance discussed, indeed as I argue, forming its very conditions of possibility. In this chapter I examine certain ideologies that

informed dance artists of the 1960s and 1970s involved in the X6 collective[14] in the UK, and Judson Dance Theater[15] in North America and, following this, relational art practice of the 1990s. I focus specifically on certain commonalities of approach to choreography and dance performance and their implications for the Community Dance sector, in particular in the United Kingdom. This historical perspective serves as a way to demonstrate the conditions of possibility for Cross-generational Dance, which forms the main focus of the thesis in subsequent chapters. The theoretical framework used in this chapter is that of Foucault's (1972) 'episteme' which suggests that a particular era manifests – through discursive practices – the possibilities and scope of its forms of knowledge. The episteme therefore enables a synchronic perspective of history. Such a perspective creates relationships between Community Dance practice and more radical experimental choreographic and artistic approaches to the role of art in societies. In turn I argue that this perspective can politicise the historiography of UK Community Dance in such a way as to reconstitute some of its defining features.

Part Two of this chapter introduces the practice by introducing and discussing my methodology 'Relational Choreography' in relation to existing models and drawing from the historical context. This is followed by two key case studies of choreographers Rosemary Lee and Cecilia Macfarlane both working in Cross-generational Dance at the time of writing. These choreographers offer a contextual framework for my practice and are also integral to it in that I have taken part in work with both choreographers over the course of this research as a dancer and as a choreographer. These case studies build on a previous publication I authored for the *Foundation for Community Dance* (now *People Dancing*) called 'Age Inclusive Practice' in 2010 which featured both choreographers. The case studies serve as a way to further define the practice of Cross-generational Dance more specifically and to discuss the historical context introduced in Part One in relation to current models of practice. In Chapter Two I suggest that both choreographers articulate and carry out their practice in such a way that embodies particular notions of, and attitudes towards, community.

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[14] X6 (Maedee Dupres, Mary Prestige, Fergus Early, Emilyn Claid, and Jacky Lansley) were a collective of professionally trained dancers seeking alternative ways of working with dance and performance than their traditional dance educations had allowed them. X6 took its name from the space in an old tea warehouse in London which then became a venue for experimental performances, workshops and discussion in the late 1970s, see Claid (2006) and Jordon (1992).

[15] Judson Dance Theater (1962-64) based in New York was a collective of choreographers who originally used the small theatre space at Judson Church to present an evening of work created in a composition class taught by Robert and Judith Dunn in July 1962. After this first performance the collective evolved and continued to practice there. Their work became associated with avant-garde choreographic methodologies and performance (see Banes 1983, 1987, Burt 2006).

Also introduced in this chapter is the method I refer to as 'relational choreography'. Relational choreography defines my practice as part of a wider field and in relation to prior definitions of choreographic approaches that exist. Relational choreography acknowledges the complexity and reflexive nature of the role of the choreographer in community contexts.

Chapter Two: *Philosophical Perspectives on Community*

Chapter Two outlines particular philosophical perspectives on community that I argue have also shaped the ideologies of Community Dance and the specific practitioners of Cross-generational Dance that I am discussing. In this chapter I identify the concept of community as one of the recurring themes of philosophical thought and as such do not attempt a full review of how it has been addressed but rather identify how particular perspectives appear to dominate the rhetoric and practice of Community Dance. These perspectives are the idea that community is based on commonality, a commonality that supposedly existed before the contemporary era in which relationships, families and modes of communication are arguably more fragmented. I also introduce the communitarian and liberal perspectives which position individual needs and aspirations in tension with communal association as a point of departure for any discussion of the concept of community.

Another perspective on community outlined in this chapter is that of the imagined community which I use to identify how the ideology of community is often just this – a non-material idea – but that nonetheless has material effects. Foucault's (1972) concept of the episteme serves to identify a relationship between these philosophical perspectives and the way that Community Dance is articulated and practiced. In this chapter rather than enabling of historiographical relationships, I use the episteme to propose limitations on both the practical and discursive horizons for Community Dance. These limitations I suggest are in no small part due to philosophies that have Aristotelian legacies, proposing that community is an inherently 'good' thing and that to be in community requires shared aims and goals and a teleology of the 'common good'.

This chapter problematises the philosophical perspectives on community even as it introduces them in order to establish a point of departure for discussing how Cross-generational Dance practice can be theorised and articulated according to radical philosophical perspectives on community according to Cavarero (2000), Nancy (1991; 2000) and Butler (2004) in subsequent chapters.

Chapter Three: *Performing Singularity in Cross-generational Dance*

Chapter Three brings into focus the particular case of Cross-generational Dance by analysing the key theme of difference. Difference emerges from the very definition of Cross-generational Dance being reliant on its identification of 'different' ages. Age is brought into relief through this discussion as a marker of identity and as a precursor to certain choreographic methods often used in Cross-generational Dance, in particular through the case study of *Crossover Intergenerational Dance Company.* I argue that age in Cross-generational Dance is often seen as something to be overcome through the bringing together of different people into a harmonious group where age is no longer an issue. However, like the ideologies of community as commonality discussed in Chapter Two, this proposition is at risk of subsuming individual difference into a homogenous totality.

Similarly, political difference as being either one thing or an 'other' leads to conceptions of difference based on either 'affirmation' or 'negation' as two contrasting ways of approaching the concept; the former being celebratory notions of what it means to be different while the latter relies on the abjection of difference. In Chapter Three I argue that in order to move beyond such binaries (whereby to be in community is to be the same as others, or to be outside of community is to be different), community can be seen as being-in-relation achieved through a phenomenology of uniqueness. The theoretical framework of community as being-in-relation through a phenomenology of uniqueness is clearly identified in this chapter through the practice. The practical examples are framed by key thinkers Cavarero (2000) and Nancy (2000). Cavarero rethinks identity politics not as either the same or different but reconfigures the subject as a unique existent. Her notion of the material singularity of such unique beings led to coining of the term 'phenomenology of uniqueness' (Bertolino, 2008). Nancy also uses singularity rather than any notion of the individual. Furthermore, rather than community as communion or commonality whereby one subject is lost or subsumed within the other, or indeed other*s* plural, he suggests that being is always being-in-relation or 'being *as* relation, a being in common where the being is in the in' (Nancy cited in Watkin 2007: 52).

Nancy's ontology also iterates the singular nature of experiences of community which lends itself to my methodology of using performance. Performance is referred to in this sense not only as the final point in a choreographic process but as part of that process in that it invites participants in Cross-generational Dance to expose their singularity through the moment of performing dance amongst others. This chapter discusses the significance of what Nancy calls the 'singularisation' of community. Singularisation is discussed in relation

to the temporality of performance proposing an alternative to the values of Community Dance that prioritises the longevity and sustainability of projects.

Chapter Four: *Vulnerable Relations: Contact In-between Crossing Generations*

Looking at idiographic[16] instances of Cross-generational Dance that involve parents and children through my own practice and that of Italian choreographer Giulio D'Anna, this chapter looks specifically at the use of Contact Improvisation and touch as a method which can lead to experiences of community as being-in-relation.

As well as identifying the cultural context for the methods I use as part of their very rationale, this chapter uses my own auto-ethnographic writing and experiences of early motherhood through a case study of *Baby Jam* – a Contact Improvisation group for parents with young children. Through this case study I suggest that an experience of community as being-in-relation is also made possible through an ethical responsiveness that becomes available when using methods involving touch and contact. Further case studies of my practice with an adult mother and daughter Paula and Alex Hocking and a piece choreographed by D'Anna and his father suggest the generative potential of methods based on contact. I argue that such methods are productive of experiences of community between people who are related through a reorientating of existing roles and responsibilities.

This chapter suggests that the use of touch and contact in particular choreographic tasks and dance practices by necessity invokes vulnerability and the taboos surrounding adults and children touching in the current cultural climate. In turn it is this very vulnerability that is necessary to recognise being-in-relation as an ethical relation of interdependence. In order to discuss ethics, I refer to the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas (Nancy, 1991, Nancy, 2000) and readings of it by Butler (2004) and psychotherapist Donna Orange (2010). For Levinas, the ethical is an a priori experience in encounters with others and Butler takes his theory forward to implicate the materiality of the body more clearly in her analysis of how grief and loss exposes relationality – a relationality that further implicates a phenomenology of uniqueness.

[16] Idiographic is a term borrowed from the social sciences often set against the term 'nomothetic'; the former refers to what can be revealed through looking at particularity and individual meanings where as the latter is concerned with general laws that can be shared.

The embodied experiences of participants in my research referred to in Chapter Four identify that Contact Improvisation, and choreographic methods based on its principles, highlight bodily imperatives or interdependence in such a way as to highlight the 'in-between' that occurs between bodies. Highlighting the in-between in this way resists the homogenisation of bodies melding together in the name of community. Valerie Briginshaw (2001: 14) writes: 'notions of in-between spaces …problematize, challenge and offer an alternative to the dichotomies of binary oppositions'. In this chapter the notion of an in-between space is discussed in both material and philosophical terms as something that exists when dancers experience a phenomenology of uniqueness.

Research Strategies

The research methodologies used in this project are practice-based and as such respond to evolving paradigms of creative arts research that Barrett and Bolt (2007: 1) identify as necessarily using 'emergent, interdisciplinary and subjective approaches'. The subjective approaches they refer to inform my reflexive methodology, a strategy which acknowledges my own place as researcher in the making of meaning, and therefore, the phenomenological horizon described. Similarly, the emergent nature of the methodology is reflected in how I have structured the thesis. Aspects of the methodology are introduced where relevant to the particular discussion or case in question rather than beginning with a preordained set of methods.

My reflexive approach is situated within a post-positivist research environment which has evolved since the 1960s and which ceases to see research as leading to positive truths and measurable outcomes. Rather, research is a way to create ideas, theories and meanings specific to particular people and contexts. The project has meant drawing on my own tacit understanding of the field of Community Dance that I engaged in professionally prior to beginning this project and as such the position of 'proximity' already identified. Many of the methods are not new in themselves but what is distinct is their application to Cross-generational Dance, the critical reflection on them as part of a wider field, and their implications for notions of community. Amongst these methods are 'relational choreography', as outlined in Chapter One as the over-arching ethos of my practice and includes structured improvisations described in Chapter Three and Contact Improvisation which is the basis of techniques and approaches outlined in Chapter Four. Relational choreography acknowledges the contingency of any situation and the complexity of the role of the choreographer in contemporary dance projects that have multiple social and artistic concerns.

The aforementioned tacit understanding can be seen as an important part of practice based research in performance as Susan Melrose (2009: n.p.) points out, because there are… 'knowledges specific to performance making expertise, that are almost certainly only available to those who participate in them'. Henrietta Bannerman (2010) similarly states that this type of knowledge is often seen as intuitive and the challenge in research is to make it more publicly accessible through articulation in verbal and written form. So in addition to the 'tacit' understanding being that which does not need to be stated to be comprehended, this thesis is based on the premise that there is indeed a need to state what Bannerman (2010: 475) refers to as my 'thinking bodily practice' in order to generate new understandings of community in the context of Cross-generational Dance choreographic practice. Indeed the very premise of the episteme in Chapter One relies on a recognition of the way that discourse and practice influence, impede and imbricate with one another.

The new understandings I propose of community as being-in-relation through a phenomenology of uniqueness and embodied ethical responses are based on my practice, experiences of and observations on this practice, conversations and interview data. This data was gathered using semi-structured interviews with participants and choreographers of Cross-generational Dance during the course of this research and in subsequent conversations and correspondence. In keeping with developments in the social sciences I used the narrative model in which interviews are seen as evolving conversations, and as Jaber Gubrium and James Holstein (2002: 5) point out 'Rather than the 'facilitating' interviewer and the vessel-like 'respondent' … two active participants jointly produce meaning'.

Indeed this participatory premise is a central tenet of the methodology in that my own physical and emotional proximity to much of the material, processes and people involved in this project is used as an authorial voice of 'proximity' and indeed seen as one mode of knowledge[17]. I also include choreographic tasks through the thesis, written in such a way that is reflective of my artist's notebook. These notebooks were a tool for my own practice and the tasks are presented here in bold to create distinction with the rest of the text. The decision not to include the notebooks themselves is again due to the conscious construction of the thesis as a text-based submission. The aim is to foreground my

[17] Aside from the major case studies, I use first names when referring to interviewees as it reflects more accurately my relationship to them.

hypothesis for the potential of the conception of community as 'being in relation through a phenomenology of uniqueness'.

My research strategies and authorial voices evolved because, as Bishop (2012: 6) points out, 'when a central component of a project concerns the formation of personal relationships, which inevitably proceeds to impact on one's research…, comfortable outsider status (…critical superiority) has to be recalibrated along more constructive lines'. As well as building relationships with people that were invited to participate in the research, and working with my own daughter in one of the cases in question, I was already personally invested in the project through my ongoing practice as a performer and choreographer with *Crossover Intergenerational Dance Company.* Working with Crossover was the starting point for this research and they feature as one of the case studies in this thesis in Chapter Three in particular. In the same way that Cavarero's brand of feminism calls for personal stories to be narrated as a political act, I narrate some of my own experiences in this thesis in the belief that my 'story' has pertinence to the wider field of practice that is Cross-generational Dance.

The time scale of this project has also impacted on the methodology. Having a year off for maternity leave (2012/13) and the subsequent adjustment to part-time study and employment has created a distance to the practice that I had been involved in the earlier stages of the research. This distance proved useful in providing the opportunity for critical reflection and theoretical research in which the hypothesis was generated through what Efrosini Protopapa (2012) terms 'performance writing'[18]. According to Protopapa, performance writing emerges 'post-event... (and is) concerned with work already made and involves a 'looking backwards', a retro-active mode of analysis. As such, the 'research story' has come into being – as Cavarero puts it in *Storytelling and Selfhood* (2000) – through a mixture of intention and accident.

Cavarero's notion of narrative in her poetic recounting of a story by Karen Blixen (1937) illuminates my own experience. In it she describes a man running up and down in the dark, lost and stumbling to find the source of a great noise that woke him in the night – on waking the following day he sees that his confused footprints have created the image of a stork. In the same way Cavarero (2000: 2) points out that life cannot predict its design but

[18] Note this is a very distinct conception of performance writing from that which Ric Allsopp and Jon Hall coined and which developed at Dartington College of the Arts. Their notion was more concerned with writing as a performance practice itself (see Allsopp 1999).

rather that 'the story comes after the events and the actions from which it results'. This is a useful analogy for describing my own journey as a researcher in which I felt to be stumbling in the dark for the first two years but on looking back on these stumblings I see the sense they make in relation to ideologies of community. Similarly, conversations that I have had during the course of the research became retroactively significant as my hypothesis became what it is here. The progress of the research in this way also reflects the critical perspective that moves away from nostalgic notions of community as something that is always and already past, to the contemporaneity of community as a moment of relating in and through dance performance practices.

Studying Process: Documentation

Due to the way that Practice as Research (PaR) has had to define itself against more traditional modes of academic and scientific research, it is important to note that not only is practice available as a site for enquiry but equally that it is 'a legitimate way of making the findings of such research publicly available' (Piccini in Rye, 2003: 117). This is also, as Barrett (2007: 106) points out, because research is 'underpinned by a secondary order of production, publication, that establishes visibility of the work'. In performance research then it stands to reason that the so called publication would be a performance event where as in visual art practices it might be a gallery exhibition or art object available to view in a specific location. The emphasis in both performances and exhibitions is on a product; however, as disciplinary parameters shift the ways in which art is researched and indeed examined also changes, as Barrett (2007: 160) goes on to say:

> The evolution, stability and successful application of ideas and knowledge derived from research depends on how well such knowledge is replicated and understood by others. However, the replication mechanisms that have traditionally valorised and validated creative arts practices have focused on product rather than process.

By contrast, in the Community Dance sector, the values of participation in a creative process are often cited as more important than those of a final production or performance piece. This is at odds with the emphasis on product that Barrett identifies. As such when considering the mode of submission for this project it seemed inappropriate to only submit a performance. I have considered how to make the process itself available to examiners, however as far as I was concerned this re-invoked the 'critical superiority' that Bishop (2012) identified through placing observers outside of the creative process itself. What is more, as Barrett identifies in relation to scientifically based statements of ultimate truth this would house an 'inner contradiction' in that 'the employment of this procedure

changes and transforms its object' (Heisenberg cited in Barrett and Bolt, 2007: 162). The presence of the institution in the form of examiners would have changed the nature of participation in the artistic process – it becomes something else, arguably a performance of sorts. My object of study being the experience of community would become invalid as this experience would be affected through another gaze. This gaze is one that necessarily engages in discourses and modes of knowledge not always available to the participants in the research, thereby also uncovering ethical issues of authority and representation. This is not to suggest that performances did not often play a role in the very processes I am discussing, however they were not alone considered the 'object' of study that could then be submitted. What is more, 'relational choreography' as I use it, is not something that can be 'seen' as such. It can be experienced and brought into play by a choreographer who is explicitly and reflexively aware of their role in a choreographic process, but it is not available to merely look at. Neither does participation guarantee an awareness of its application given that it is subject to the interpretation and particular acts of relating within a multitude of choreographic tasks and relationships.

Therefore, whilst acknowledging the fact that - as Caroline Rye (2003: n.p.) points out – 'the research may be concerned with exactly those qualities of the live encounter and the production of embodied knowledge/s which cannot, by definition, be embedded, reproduced or demonstrated in any recorded document', it is through documentation that I present my practice within this thesis. The documentation takes the form of photographs, publicity materials and video footage as well as through the 'performance writing' that I engaged in in order to construct this very document. Photos that appear throughout the thesis serve to give the reader visual points of reference for the practices I am discussing, both my own and those of other choreographers that feature as case studies, they are linked conceptually and serve as illustrative in a broad sense though are not necessarily referred to in themselves directly in the text.

The video footage, available as hyperlinks at the appropriate points in the thesis, comprises the recording of a moment, task or performance referred to specifically within the text. Both the photos and the film footage[19] should be viewed as an aid to reading the thesis rather than a presentation of practice in and of itself. As such on the webpages (see p. 14 and supplementary USB) each clip is accompanied by a section of text from the thesis as an indication of how they should only be viewed within the context of the entire body of work.

[19] The links to accompanying webpages are also available on the supplementary USB stick

The documentation is a form of evidence of work undertaken and the hyperlinks create a portal through which the reader is invited to consider the point being made in the text through watching the video. The videos themselves are illustrative figures and do not require further interpretation on the part of the reader. The new understandings generated by this research are not housed in this presentation of practice, but in the text.

The breadth of modes of presentation and engagement evidenced in the film footage and photographs however does demonstrate the variety of ways in which I have practiced Cross-generational Dance over the course of this research – as a performer, as a facilitator and as a choreographer, and as such also provide a broad brush-stroke view of my practice. Furthermore, conducting 'cooperative research' in which I was researching *with* participants rather than doing research *on* them (see Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2004) meant that visual documentation of some aspects of the thesis is very limited as my priority was in being fully part of a process rather than outside it producing film or images. As such the documentation does not attempt to cover every key point being made but rather provides another lens through which to view aspects of the thesis and serves as concise illustrations of the points being made.

Writing this thesis became part of my praxis and as such is the object that I am submitting to be examined. Rather than seeing the thesis as something that is seeking to fix performance or reduce the dance experience to the written form, I found it useful to refer to Barrett's notion of the exegesis as 'meme' in order to consider the role of this thesis itself as documentation. According to Barrett (2007) the exegesis or thesis in creative arts research can be considered a 'meme' in as much as it is a vehicle for an idea to be externalized. She writes:

> …the exegesis may be viewed both as a replication or re-versioning of the completed artistic work as well as a reflective discourse on significant moments in the process of unfolding and revealing. As 'meme', it can operate both as a noun – an artefact in its own right, and a verb – a re-enactment of the artefact as process.
>
> (Barrett, 2007:162)

The process of unfolding and revealing that Barrett articulates here is significant to my own approach in that through the thesis I am discussing processes, both of the research itself and of the choreographic processes I undertook within it. It also describes the way in which my methodology unfolds throughout the thesis in relation to relevant examples. This emergent story is essential to tell in the form of a thesis because, as Barrett (2007: 2) puts it, it 'provides an opportunity for the creative arts researcher to elucidate *why* and *how* processes specific to the arts discipline concerned mutate to generate alternative models of

understanding'. The outcomes of this research process are some alternative models for understanding the concept of community as it occurs in Cross-generational Dance and in the discourse that surrounds these processes. I stress that these are not the *only* ways of understanding the concept of community in choreographic practice but the most appropriate ways to challenge and extend the current orthodoxies in how the Community Dance sector in the United Kingdom articulates such experiences. In turn this could lead to new ways of exploring through practice. As such the thesis, and the articulations housed in this text, can be considered a point of departure for an exploration of new methods in practice both for myself and for the community of dance practitioners and choreographers of which I am a part, such as the case studies. As such these new understandings and ideas will arguably prove useful to the continued development and application of Community Dance.

Chapter One: Community Dance: Conditions of Possibility

Part One: Historical Perspective

1.1 An apolitical project

The term Community Dance to define an area of practice in the dance sector serves an empirical function, however ideologically the grouping together of a diverse set of practices has caused debate in the field. Indeed the usefulness of the term Community Dance has long been a source of contention in the sector[20]. This chapter will not reiterate such debates but rather look to why the debates may have arisen in the first place as a result of a compartmentalization of the possibilities of what Community Dance is considered to be. The chapter analyses the relationship between Community Dance and X6 and Judson Dance Theater in order to establish the conditions of possibility for Cross-generational Dance. In particular it examines the ideology of the X6 collective in the UK, and their relationship to Judson Dance Theater in America. It argues that similarities between what was happening in these experimental choreographic practices and the social agendas in community practice in the arts can be seen as part of what Foucault (2001: xxvi) terms an 'episteme' through observing 'how a culture experiences a propinquity of things…a history of resemblance'.

Such a history of resemblance has been somewhat ignored by the historiography of Community Dance and requires a notion of progression that is not solely diachronic or established on the basis of quantitative historical data, referring instead to diverse fields of practice and the processes of history in order to question ready-made binaries. The genealogy presented in this chapter is my own process of constructing a history for Community Dance that can reposition its somewhat apolitical stance. This history begins with the idea of a rupture. According to Foucault, the notion of the episteme proposes that one mode of knowing in a particular era is replaced by another through some kind of rupture or 'the incidence of interruptions' as he puts it, 'beneath the persistence of a particular genre, form, discipline or theoretical activity' (ibid.). While Foucault himself seeks no cause or agents for such a rupture it can be seen that the era of so called 'New Dance'

[20] See Jasper (1995: 181–190)

and 'Post-Modern Dance' associated with X6 and Judson Dance Theater was part of one such rupturing impulse in the way that the art was being practiced in the UK and US at this time.

Arguably, Community Dance was also very much a part of this rupture, hence the approach of this thesis to bring them into closer relationship. The discourse and literature on the history of Community Dance in the UK is largely uncritical, distancing itself from more experimental and radical choreographic practices. By 'uncritical' I refer to the lack of an interrogative approach of enquiring into its own methods and practices, thereby avoiding critique. Instead, the sector relies largely on reports and evaluations that are often seeking to advocate for the practice or indeed justify government spending on the arts.

These limitations are not the sole problem of dance, indeed Claire Bishop points out that Owen Kelly's book *Community Art and the State: Storming the Citadels* (1984) is one of only two[21] that provide a critical meta-theoretical discourse on community arts, with the majority of literature keeping contemporary art and community art at arm's length. Bishop goes on to say that 'although there is a large literature produced by community arts organisations, very little of this is historical or scholarly, and even less is critical' (2012: 5). This is not only due to the pragmatics of public relations with government spending and a rationale for the arts to exist in the sphere of social work, but arguably also to do with the evaluative meaning of the very idea of community. By this I mean common associations and values ascribed to the term community as being a 'good' thing.

Bishop's work in the field of visual art has been important in addressing the lack of such a critical perspective, asking necessary questions that not only underlie the conceptual concerns of artists working with communities but critique the ethical nature of the relationship between artists and participants in their work. Her work has built on that of Nicolas Bourriaud (1998) and his notion of relational aesthetics in which artists no longer produce art objects but take inter-subjectivity as the very premise for artistic practice. Such a premise means that viewers are no longer passive consumers of art but take part in co-producing art events and products[22]. Bishop goes further, however, and develops this participatory notion of art to look at the broader realm, termed vaguely 'social practice' in the arts.

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[21] The second book Bishop mentions is Charles Landry's *What a Way to Run a Railroad* (1985)

[22] See Bourriaud (1998) *Relational Aesthetics*

Social practice refers not only to artists who use participation as a concept but participatory projects which have a moral dimension in that they are seeking to actively engage with communities and their politics and is increasingly addressed by visual art commentators and critics[23]. Social practice is closely linked to community arts, which also questioned the role of the arts and the artist in society and sought ways in which to democratise art. Bishop points out that in the United Kingdom the history of community arts as it evolved in the 1970s in particular is closely intertwined with how arts funding was distributed (Bishop, 2012: 177). This was also the case for dance as Peter Brinson (1991: 133), dance educator and founder of Ballet for All[24] states:

> From the beginning the Community Dance movement worked within the constraints of charitable and local authority funding, there was little of the political activism known to the rest of Community Arts.

So while Bishop (2012) points out that arts funding played an important role in the development of community arts, it seems that ideologically at least there was an intention to upset the status quo, through as Kelly's book indicates in its very title: '*Storming the Citadels'.* The anti-establishment stance that many artists and community initiatives took was – as Bishop (2002: 177) identifies – 'an opposition to elitist cultural hierarchies'. By contrast, the history of Community Dance in the UK (see Stevens, 2013; Rubidge, 1982; Peppiat & Venner, 1993) often begins with the appointment of three dance 'animateur' posts between 1976 and 1979 in Cheshire, Cardiff and Swindon, which were funded through some of the very organisations that Kelly may have deemed as the cultural elite[25]. Proponents of Community Dance themselves recognised the limitations of this position. Linda Jasper (1995: 184) writes: 'it is difficult to be 'radical' or 'alternative' when posts are funded by state quangos…'. As such questions have arisen about the role, values and purpose of Community Dance alongside its inception as a distinct form of dance practice.

The 'arm's length' approach that Bishop described between contemporary arts and community arts was also apparent in the evolution of Community Dance and its attempts to define itself as a separate field of concern to that of performance dance. In 1984 Sarah

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[23] See in particular *Participation,* (2002) a collection of essays which includes one by Bourriaud *and 'Artificial Hells; Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship'* (2012) in which Bishop identifies the 'social turn' in art before discussing case studies of specific contexts, including Community Arts in the UK in the 1970s and the Artist Placement Group in Chapter 6. See also Kester (2004), Kwon (2002, Matarasso (2013)

[24] Ballet for All was a small touring company which also became a TV series in the 1970s for Thames Television Adult Education.

[25] In 1977 the Arts Council of England established the Community Arts Committee in recognition of this burgeoning area of practice.

Rubidge articulated this, asking whether or not Community Dance simply existed as an opportunity for as many people as possible to engage in dance activity or whether it was to learn about dance as an art form. If the latter then she asks 'how does this fit in with the principles of the community arts movement which are predominantly of a socio-political nature? …. [and] what is the relationship of the Community Dance world to the world of theatre dance and their colleagues in that profession' (Rubidge, 1984: 15). Articulating this relationship is part of understanding the episteme of this era which allows for what Foucault refers to as 'lateral relations' (Foucault et al., 1972: 15). If the historical gaze widens horizontally to encompass what was happening in the world of 'theatre dance' – as Rubidge calls it – in the UK at the same time as the development of Community Dance as a recognized field, the apolitical perspective can change through not only the history of resemblances that Foucault proposes, but also a particular genealogy outlined in this chapter.

Alongside the establishment of the first animateur posts 1976 saw the coming together of X6 – a collective of dancers and choreographers - in a tea warehouse in London. These trained dancers were questioning the very notion of what 'theatre dance' constituted. While Community Dance as a discrete category may have been seen as distanced from the communitarian politics of community arts, X6 were indeed seen as 'politically aware' (Jordan, 1992: 69) and embodied through their practice notions of anti-capitalist, feminist, gay, and anti-racist issues. As Emilyn Claid – one of the founding members – writes 'no ballet step or performed gesture was left unturned, but each must be examined, considered for its patriarchal, capitalist, hierarchical dependencies, de-constructed in its composition…' (Claid, 2006: 54). This de-constructionist stance is in keeping with an increasing relationship to theoretical approaches to dance studies developing at this time. As Helen Thomas points out, the magazine *New Dance* that accompanied the development of X6 was 'an assault on mainstream performance dance and dance criticism…influenced by Marxist rhetoric and the cultural Marxism of Antonio Gramsci' (Thomas in Morris, 1996: 56). She goes on to suggest in particular that Gramsci's concept of hegemony 'could be heard coming through every pore of the magazine' (ibid., 57). Although to analyse Marxism or Gramsci in any depth is beyond the scope of this study, to put it simply, Gramsci's ideas stemmed from his Marxist affiliations and referred to the idea that working classes were not ruled by force alone but by ideas and that these ideas were more often than not the reserve of the educated upper classes. In the same way that Gramsci critiqued this notion, the dancers and choreographers at X6 were questioning the very ideologies that had shaped them. What is also significant about Thomas' description of the New Dance

magazine is the relationship of theory and practice in contemporary dance – and indeed the arts more generally.

Many of the concerns of X6 and Judson Dance Theater were interdisciplinary and stemmed from movements in the late 1960s in which students and artists both began to question 'the proliferation of the art object and to deal with conceptual rather than material concerns' (Forkert, 2011: 51), meaning that ideas and theories had more value in artistic practice. Forkert (ibid.) also points out that the early 1970s saw the inclusion of art history and theory on art degree courses. Feminist interventions that proposed the 'body as site for political struggle' (ibid., 37) were also clearly present in the focus of Claid's choreographic explorations and informed notions of equality and diversity advocated by Community Dance. This is significant to identifying how the episteme of this period highlighted the relationship of discourse and practice to one another as more of an artistic concern. Jacky Lansley (in Claid 2006: 77) wrote in the first editorial of *New Dance* magazine that 'Dance, like any other art form, does not exist within a social or intellectual vacuum…we can never exclude thought from our practice…writing is necessary, as a creative extension of our work…'. While Community Dance did not have its own publication of discourse and critical reflection distinct to its own concerns until 1996, it was featured in New Dance in a variety of ways. Both the New Dance movement and Community Dance practitioners in the 1970s were seeking ways in which dancers and choreographers were not removed from their cultural context but contributing to it.

Links between the experimental artists of the contemporary dance world however – the 'New Dance'[26] movement in the UK specifically – and the development of Community Dance and its conceptual as well as socio-cultural concerns are only nodded to in literature that documents Community Dance history (see Banes, 1987; Jasper, 1995; Jordan, 1992). It can be seen however that New Dance contributed greatly to perceptions of what dance could be, and who it was for – concerns also central to the Community Dance movement and to creating the conditions of possibility for Cross-generational Dance.

The following section goes on to further examine the shared practices and values of experimental theatre dance such as that of X6, their relationship to Judson Dance Theater in America and models of practice being developed in the Community Dance sector.

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[26] 'New Dance' was not only the magazine title but the term coined retroactively to describe the period of activity surrounding X6 and their collaborators

1.2 Ordinary People Dancing

Made up initially of five individuals[27] X6 described themselves as a collective rather than a company, emphasising the non-hierarchical, cooperative functioning of their space. They were, in Fergus Early's words 'not a dance group, not a school, not a rehearsal room but a body of diverse ideas, finding form of collective organisation' (Jordan,1992: 63). This emphasis was a very clear departure from companies set up on the basis of their choreographer's rarefied talent or personal movement style; in keeping then with the community arts scene that sought to overthrow the notion of the artist as an individual with special abilities. Kelly (1984: 59) refers to this as the end of a romantic idea whereby 'the artist was *different* from ordinary people, visited by a genius which stood outside geography and outside history'.

This problematises the implicit assumption in Jayne Steven's (2013) recent definition of Community Dance as delivered by 'professional practitioners' as it appears to create a divide between these expert practitioners and the people taking part in the practice as 'not professional'. This is an ideological distinction that the members of X6 did not readily subscribe to, despite being professionally trained themselves. The interrogation of their training that X6 engaged in was part of the episteme, contributing to the notion that dance was something that ordinary people could take part in, including those of all ages.

A large part of this widening of the demographic of dancers was due to the 'deconstruction' of codified dance techniques thanks to which X6 and their American colleagues in New York – Judson Dance Theater – are credited with bringing a 'pedestrian aesthetic' into contemporary dance. X6 consciously worked independently from formal institutions, arguably the first generation of dance artists to do so, and were also the first to have a close connection to American practitioners Mary Fulkerson and Steve Paxton who are credited with developing release technique and Contact Improvisation respectively (the latter of which features as part of my methodology in Chapter Four).

Despite the rejection of institutional frameworks however, one institution in Britain – *Dartington College of the Arts* – did have a key role in developing the relationships between key practitioners and ideas that have informed the development of Community Dance and the ideas of X6 and Judson Dance Theater. From its inception in the 1920s the ethos of Dartington had embraced the idea that artistic practice be available to all. In the 1970s

[27]Emilyn Claid, Maedée Duprès, Fergus Early, Jacky Lansley and Mary Prestidge

however, it generated what Larraine Nicolas (2007) refers to as a more 'proactive' engagement with the idea of community. Indeed the institution hosted several seminars and events to this effect (ibid., 225)[28], the most significant of which was the 1983 *'An Interdisciplinary Examination of the contribution Theatre Practice can make to the Welfare of the community in which it occurs'*, which, according to one time principle Peter Cox (2002: 43), established the theatre department as 'a European leader in the area that it had chosen to make its own'. Dartington became a meeting place for international artists such as those from X6 interested in experimental approaches to their practice, encouraged by Mary Fulkerson, director of dance and her composition and release technique classes at the Dartington Festival. According to Nicolas the most influential of these visitors was Steve Paxton, an ex-Cunningham dancer who was interested in the so-called pedestrian aesthetic that has become so clearly associated with this period of dance development. Significantly Paxton was also a key member of Judson Dance Theater in New York as well as becoming a regular member of Dartington's teaching staff between 1978 and 1980.

Judson Dance Theater (1962-64) were active until the late 1960s[29] and like X6 were interested in changing perceptions of what dance could be. As a collective they reacted against an expressionist and theatrical imperative for dance and did so in a variety of ways that included performances such as Yvonne Rainer's *Trio A* (1966) which along with her *No Manifesto* (1965) became an iconic example of minimalist dance[30]. As with any epistemic shift, these ways of working were not housed discretely in disciplinary boundaries. Similar changes and experimental practices, for example Fluxus, were happening across the visual arts and theatre.

The term Fluxus was publically introduced (also in 1962) in a brochure/ lecture by the artist George Maciunas at a festival 'Aprés Cage: A Short Summer Festival' in Wuppertal (later to become the home of Pina Bausch's Tanztheater from 1973). This effectively initiated the first of an international series of *FluxFests* that started in Wiesbaden in September 1962[31]. Fluxus became a laboratory for ideas and experimentation across Europe and the USA and is associated with an international group of artists, poets, musicians and architects

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[28] For example 'Arts for the benefit and Care of Disability' (1978) or the 'Theatre and Communities Workshop' (1983). For a full description of the evolution and practices of Dance at Dartington see Nicolas (2007) and for a historical perspective on the origins of the college see Cox (2002)

[29] See Banes (1993, 1987)

[30] See Burt (2006), Banes (1987)

[31] See *Journal for Performance Research* on Fluxus (2002); and Friedman (1998)

including Dick Higgins, Yoko Ono, George Brecht, Robert Filiou, Joseph Beuys and others who, like Judson Dance Theater collective, were simultaneously raising questions about disciplinary parameters and the relationship of art to society. For the purposes of this research, what is significant in terms of the episteme is that Fluxus were attempting to disrupt the status quo of theatrical and artistic practices in the same places and in the same era as Judson Dance Theater through questioning 'the traditional distinctions that sometimes separate art and life, the serious and the humorous, and the categories of work and play' (Smith, 2002: 2). What is more they were reacting against the commodification of art and the art object in ways that parallel Claire Bishop's notes on current participatory practices[32]. Owen Smith (2002: 3) describes them as an 'ever shifting laboratory of ideas' in a journal issue dedicated to Fluxus and perhaps their most notable legacy – not least to choreographic practice – their event scores. The Fluxus event scores are short written instructions that can be carried out and performed repeatedly; as such the events that they engender change depending on the context and who is interpreting them[33]. They form a consistent feature of the Fluxus movement[34] and in parallel with the 'democratic body' (Banes, 1993) of dance proposed and initiated by Judson Dance Theater, they democratize access to the practice, making and reception of art as a cultural and participatory event.

Several dancers associated with Judson Dance Theater worked with Fluxus, these being Simone Forti, Yvonne Rainer and Trisha Brown in particular. Their interdisciplinary enquiries (though less of a concern to the current study) can be seen as part of the rupturing between one episteme and another. What is most significant to Community Dance is how both New Dance and, as Judson Dance Theater came to be known, Post-modern Dance, embraced a set of concerns that made dance a medium no longer the sole preserve of highly trained performers. What is more, dance became connected to its social and cultural context, rather than being seen as a diversion from it. As Banes (2003: xiii), leading scholar on post-modern dance puts it:

> One cannot overlook the correlation between the 'breaking of the rules' in post-modern dance and the political upheavals and 'breaking of the rules' associated with the era in which it was developed, namely the protests against the Vietnam War as well as the emergence of the civil rights movement.

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[32] See Bishop (2006; 2012)

[33] See Robinson (2002); Dezeuze (2002)

[34] Fluxus event scores (See Fluxus Performance Workbook, 2002 for a complete set of event scores) continue to be performed and reinterpreted, for example at the Tate Modern, London in 2008.

In terms of the episteme then, these movements in dance in both the UK and the US demonstrate their relationship to an era of rupturing the systems and hierarchies of knowledge that govern the particular art form in question – dance – but also go far beyond it; entering into a new episteme in which different kinds of knowledge can be produced, and indeed valued. However as Foucault (1972: 211) is keen to point out the 'episteme is not a motionless figure…it is a constantly moving set of articulations, shifts, and coincidences that are established, only to give rise to others'. My own articulation of such coincidences are provided in order to present an alternative historical analysis of Community Dance in the UK. Arguably one of the most significant defining features of the new episteme was the inclusion of 'everyday' or 'pedestrian movement' in performance by experimental choreographers that by necessity then simultaneously involved a reconsideration of who could participate in such performances. Such a reconsideration clearly opened up the field to people of all ages. Choreographic structures and performances at X6 and Judson Dance Theater enabled this reconsideration of performance and its parameters to happen.

A case in point is Paxton's work *Satisfyin' Lover* (premiered in 1967 but performed as recently as 2012). It exemplifies the 'pedestrian aesthetic' referred to through using three movements only: walking, standing and sitting. Yvonne Rainer, another American pioneer of post-modern dance, states of this piece 'it was as though you had never seen ordinary people walk across a space. It was highly revelatory' (Rainer cited in Bishop, 2012: 225). Like the work of several Fluxus artists, Paxton's work emphasized the role of 'the score' in this type of choreographic practice which exists in order that different groups of people can carry out the work through referring to the instructions, broadening its participatory premise to go beyond a singular iteration. Furthermore, Banes (1987: 13) describes at Judson Dance Theater how 'the informality and flexibility of the workshop permitted the use of non-dancers in dance pieces, as well as the presumption by non-dancers that they could not only dance but choreograph', thus reflecting the community arts ethos of equality between artist and participants, and accessibility to the form. According to Banes (1987: 59), this was precisely Paxton's intention, his concern being that 'audiences watching dance performances would leave feeling that their own movement was not worth exploring'.

Despite, then, the continued debates around its rationale and motivations, and the diverse nature of its practices, the non-hierarchical notion of working with 'ordinary people', 'non-dancers' or perhaps 'non-professionals' advocated by Judson Dance Theater and X6 was simultaneously being embraced and developed by the Community Dance sector in the UK.

The reasons why were at times contradictory, but not un-related. For X6 and Judson Dance Theater it was, as Claid (2006:79) articulates, about 'liberation' from their past dance experiences and creating new disciplinary parameters while for the Community Dance sector the agendas appear more socially and financially orientated. In both cases though the notion of 'ordinary' people dancing was part of the rupture between one episteme and another. Involving people of all ages and abilities in a variety of choreographic forms arguably created the conditions of possibility for the contemporary Cross-generational Dance practices referred to in this study.

1.3 Professional/Personal Separatism

In 1980, X6 disbanded from their original collective form and moved out of their tea warehouse, taking the floor with them and reinstating it at Chisenhale Dance Space. Also at this time the Conservative government advocated the empowered individual over notions of collectivity. A rhetoric of business growth and welfare cuts dominated the national news. In keeping with this capitalist discourse, Rubidge (1984) identified Community Dance as a 'growth industry' at this time. Due to the expansion of Community Dance, funding was diverted from companies and their artistic experimentation into outreach and education work. Rubidge (1984) notes the concern from some performers that this was placing the development of the art as a low priority and what is more putting some of them out of work – as such heightening the distance between the ideology of Community Dance and professional contemporary dance or 'theatre dance'. Furthermore, many so called 'outreach' initiatives were funded due to a perceived need to create audiences for national and regional contemporary dance companies rather than the aim of Community Dance to provide ordinary people with access to dance activity.

The distance between community and professional dance practices and their distinct aims has been referred to as a 'professional seperatism' by Rubidge (1984) who also raised issues about the quality and standards of Community Dance work and the process versus product dichotomy which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. This separatism was arguably propounded by what Mindy Levine, in her report on dance education in the United States, refers to as hierarchies of values, attitudes and aesthetics that separated art from living and doing from teaching (Levine, 1994). What is more, dance companies would hire people to do their outreach work on the basis that professional dancers were not always equipped with the appropriate skills to do so; creating further distance between those who performed and those who taught.

Levine's report invited dance professionals to address their own attitudes and assumptions about this divide. Assumptions that often equate to 'those who can do, and those who cannot teach' (ibid., 20). In order to make her case against such assumptions she notes cultural contexts where teaching and doing exist in a more fluid relationship due to the fact that dance and art are more central practices in everyday life as opposed to existing as a metaphysical or purely theatrical phenomenon. Significantly, Claid (2006: 79) too notes that at X6 'art process was life experience and life experience was the art process', echoing Levine's argument for a more holistic approach to teaching. However as Mara De Wit (2000: 298) identifies in her PhD thesis examining the relationship between Dartington and New Dance, the desire of New Dance to embrace a diversity of practices 'ranging from crude participatory practice to specialist technical investigation' also resulted in a danger that it be seen as 'low status'. In turn this 'caused difficulties in terms of criteria, not only for funding purposes but also for technical standards and critical analysis' (ibid.). Bridging the separatism that Rubridge referred to then was not always straightforward in practice.

Ideologically however the practices of X6 and the Dartington ethos in the 1970s, influenced by visits from their American colleagues, changed perceptions of dance and who could engage in it. De Wit (2000: 308) writes that 'it is no coincidence that during this period many (previously under-represented) dance forms and dancers came to the fore, not only in so-called 'ethnic' dance forms but also in terms of gender, age, body shape and ability', again demonstrating how this era of dance development paved the way for Cross-generational Dance projects such as those discussed in part two of this chapter.

The community orientated ethos of X6 is evident in their first projects which are described as 'specifically geared to involving a large dance community beyond the collective itself and to developing contact with the local community' (Jordan, 1992: 62). The effect of these ideas also continued well beyond the late 1970s when, for example, after X6's move to Chisenhale, Mary Prestidge – another founding member of X6 – was appointed as a Community Dance worker by London Borough Tower Hamlets (Potkins, 2004). Andy Ormston in his article '*In Search of a Political Identity for Community Dance*' also identifies this relationship and wrote in 1986 that '…the most politically imaginative dance exponents, the New Dance Movement, find themselves providing one of the more effective community resources in London, at Chisenhale Dance Space' (Ormston, 1986: 12). Chisenhale's program of participatory dance, while tied to the local funding cited by Brinson (1991), was still upholding an experimental ethos, continuing to host regular visits from dancers such as Paxton. Indeed, Prestidge is quoted as saying in 1984 that Chisenhale

encouraged and developed 'work which integrates and uses more than one medium in performance. One of the reasons being to challenge stereotyping and an expectation of what dance is supposed to be and how it is seen' (in Potkin, 2004) [35].

The synthesis of various approaches of X6 and the Community Dance movement in the UK is further confirmed through the fact that Claid, Dupres, and Early from X6 joined Prestidge as members of the first Association of Dance and Mime Artists (ADMA) steering group. It then became National Association of Dance and Mime Animateurs (NADMA) in 1986 and according to Stevens (2013) since its inception has existed to raise awareness of the work of Community Dance and to support those involved in practicing and delivering its many forms[36]. ADMA was arguably the first step in institutionalising Community Dance, seeking recognition of professional standards and policies in the field.

In 1986 the Arts Council published *The National Evaluation of Dance and Mime Animateurs* which focused on specific individuals and their work, while alongside NADMA published the *Animateur Handbook* recognizing that most animateurs 'learnt on the job' (Stevens, 2013: 159) and had a need to articulate and centralise some of their methods. This was at the same time that Kelly's book was advocating community arts as a way to empower individuals and create cultural democracy that recognised not only accessibility to arts but the plurality of culture (ibid.). Meanwhile animateurs were also charged by the arts council with increasing audiences for dance. Animateurs however sometimes experienced tensions in attempting to deliver the aim of audience development. Stevens (2013) points this out in interview with Tamara McClorg – a dancer delivering community workshops in the 1970s. She was given the task of creating workshops that would entice people to come and watch company shows but instead states that: 'Unfortunately what happened was we began to discover that they weren't particularly interested in seeing us – they wanted to do it themselves! Adults, who had been dying to since they were little children, suddenly they had the opportunity to dance.' (ibid., 2).

[35] Other members of X6 also took their philosophy into different contexts and mainstream. Early began Green Candle Dance Company which is still one of the most high profile companies working with dance and older people,Claid ran contemporary dance company Extemporary and recruited practitioners including Cecilia Macfarlane to run education work alongside their performances.

[36]See Stevens (2013)

This example demonstrates how in some cases the arts council was arguably limiting the political potential of Community Dance by emphasising the aim of audience development over the opportunity for participants to have ownership through creating their own art.

In 1995 NADMA changed its name to the *Foundation for Community Dance* and began to publish its own magazine, *Animated*, which featured practitioners writing about their practice, voices from the Arts Council and documented projects and events. In the Winter 1994 edition, Sue Hoyle, then Dance Director at the Arts Council in conversation with Richard Ings (1994: 2) is cited as saying that 'Community Dance is not a useful term…or not any longer, now that what we might call 'dance culture' has emerged…what we have been calling 'Community Dance' is integral to the whole culture of dance'. Hoyle invokes a debate that continues to circulate and is not disassociated from the philosophical status of the term community as Chapter Two goes on to discuss. It can also be seen however, given Hoyle's role at the time, as a strategic statement in relation to funding cuts and the way that financial priorities were being organised. Less separation between practices arguably suggests that funding one branch of practice is not at the expense of another.

It is only as recently as 2014 however that the *Foundation for Community Dance* announced that they would be changing their name to *People Dancing*, though at present this remains a prefix while foundation for Community Dance[37] is still very visible as a sub-title indicating that, despite the continued debates, Community Dance as a term still has currency. *People Dancing* continues to develop frameworks, publish handbooks and present professional development for those in the field while also advocating for dance at regional, national and international levels. It maintains the pragmatic apolitical stance of those such as Jasper (cited in Stevens, 2013: 168) who states of NADMA 'we were not especially political, we were about creating access to dance'. *People Dancing* supports many current Cross-generational Dance initiatives.

The shift in episteme of the late 1970s in artistic and choreographic practice both in the US, but more specifically in the UK, contributed to the idea that ordinary people can dance, and what is more that they should have a right to this experience; values that *People Dancing* and the Community Dance sector still uphold currently. Historically though the documented evolution of Community Dance usually relies on the government-funded institutionalised version of events that begins with Community Dance workers being appointed by local

[37] The name remains also to provide continuity and for legal reasons.

authorities. Instead, this section has illustrated that through creating more synchronic relationships across time and place, it can be seen that the conditions of possibility for Community Dance, and therefore Cross-generational Dance, were created by a much more experimental premise for choreography, particularly that of the X6 collective and their relationship to Judson Dance Theater. These synchronic lines of enquiry also invite the possibility to rethink the political agenda of Community Dance, as the next section goes on to discuss further.

1.4 Politicising Practice

The pragmatic approach that *People Dancing* maintains is useful to the Community Dance industry in promoting the participatory form in a variety of contexts. However, as I have argued, the close relationship of the ideologies and practices of Community Dance and the experimental and political choreographic experiments of X6 and their relationship to Judson Dance Theater problematise this pragmatic approach by situating the methodologies as part of a broader socio-cultural shift – a rupture between one episteme and another. This section argues for a politics of Community Dance framed by this episteme that includes theories of embodiment and positions Community Dance in a more subversive role than assumed by its historiography.

The 'apolitical' historical narrative of Community Dance of, as Jasper (ibid.) put it simply providing 'access to dance' is called into question if – as Andrew Hewitt proposes – dance is seen not simply as 'a privileged figure for social order but…the enactment of social order that is both reflected in and shaped by aesthetic concerns' (Hewitt, 2005: 2). Hewitt suggests that power structures, hierarchies and values are embodied in physical dance practices, not purely something external to them, and that dance is also *productive* of social relationships.

Bishop (2012) demonstrates a similar point through the use of an example of the musical chairs game used by community arts activist Bill Harpe at The Blackie. Harpe reworked the game to be non-competitive: 'when the music stops, participants leap towards one of the tiles, even if there are already people standing on it. The point is cooperation – a balancing act –rather than elimination' (Bishop, 2012: 182). The elimination of participants in traditional musical chairs, Harpe argues, reflects a society where people face unemployment and redundancy. Harpe's view reflects Hewitt's argument for dance as a performance of ideology. Similarly, Cynthia Novack points out of the dance practice Contact

Improvisation[38] that: 'Dancers and audiences saw Contact Improvisation as…a model of, and a model for, an egalitarian, spontaneous way of life' (Novack in Carter, 2010: 171). As such it is associated more with a way of being and social dancing rather than a mode of performance or theatre dance. Contact Improvisation therefore is a useful practice from which to investigate experiences of community as I demonstrate in Chapter Four.

When considering political perspectives on embodiment such as Hewitt's (2005) it can be seen not only that community arts methods reflect social processes but even the very premise of providing access to dance classes, events and projects to 'ordinary' people is arguably entirely political. Practices that invite people of all ages and abilities to dance questions the status quo in the field and, what is more, produces the movement of bodies into spaces and places they would not usually go. Furthermore, the aesthetics referred to as 'pedestrian' have implications for the production of a dancer's knowledge being associated with a highly trained body and what it means to be a professional dancer. The entire economy of production associated with training a dancer is called into question if anyone can walk into a space and perform.

To maintain that Community Dance was apolitical then seems entirely strategic or, as Kelly (1984) put it in the 1980s, part of a 'liberal pragmatism' to maintain relationships with funding infrastructures. At its worst it can be seen, as Eyal Weizman (2010: 9) puts it, as dance artists of this time 'forcefully or willingly aligning one's actions with the aims of power' or to put it another way, as a 'tactical embrace' (ibid.). This embrace tightened during the 1990s and the arrival of a New Labour government which came into power in 1997 with a strong rhetoric of the arts as a means to combat social exclusion. Reviewing this period of time further interrogates the discourse that framed the Community Dance practice at the time and therefore underlines how the current study presents an alternative political narrative.

Social exclusion was a term propagated in the 1990s to describe those that were on the outside of mainstream society. Backed by the Labour theme tune and ideology that 'things can only get better' by popular music group *D:Ream*, the arts were seen as Houston (2005) puts it as 'the road to empowerment' and social inclusion. Houston (2005: 168) writes: 'For the Labour government, social exclusion is the term used to characterize a lack of productivity, wealth, education, and social cohesion within communities'. She goes on to

[38] Contact Improvisation forms part of my methodology and is described in detail in Chapter Four.

point out the implicit assumption that to be socially excluded leads to abjection. Underlying the notions of inclusion and exclusion are some problematic assumptions that presuppose a norm – the included – and those who fail to subscribe to that norm – the excluded. These ideas subscribe to the normative notions of community whereby transgressing the codes of said community lead to exclusion, as I will go on to discuss in Chapter Two. Empowerment arguably became less associated with giving agency to the marginalized to create their own understandings and more to do with conformity to become useful citizens.

The rhetoric of change and transformation that the New Labour government brought with them in 1997 was compelling for the ameliorative agenda for the arts, conceiving of dance as a road to personal betterment. Houston (ibid.) points out that this is a concept that has been circulating in philosophy of the arts since the romantic era, noting that the concept of transformation has been a strong force amongst cultures for millennia – the opportunity to shed one's old skin and become someone new, or in the case of the 1990s political rhetoric, someone included in society. This is significant to Cross-generational Dance in that this too is commonly seen as a way to heal a rift between those of different generations.

Houston's (2005) article is an important critique of the social inclusion agenda for the arts as it considers what is at stake for the people receiving such labels as 'socially excluded'. In a later book chapter she goes on to iterate that '…inclusion is a form of choice not necessarily formed by governments and their policies' (Houston, 2009: 208) highlighting the normative imperative that underlies the very concept of social inclusion and as such the political implications of dance projects seeking this result.

As Houston (2005), Bishop (2012) and more recently Nicola Conibere (2015) in her PhD thesis have identified, New Labour's faith in the arts as a way to implement their social inclusion agenda was largely based on Francois Matarasso's (1997) much cited report *'Use or Ornament: On the Social Impact of the Arts'*. As its title suggests, this report sought to measure the value and purpose of the arts in society at a time when public spending was under the spotlight. While Conibere (2015) states that Matarasso's aim was to establish these things in non-economic terms, Matarasso himself acknowledges later that the very term 'impact' was inappropriately borrowed from economic theory. He writes: 'Impact is produced when forces strike objects, used here the obvious implication is that an arts experience makes an impression on a passive recipient as a die does on a blank' (Matarasso, 2010: n.p.). Matarasso's critique of his own work underlines that this is not an adequate description of how people experience art. So although Community Dance in the

UK was becoming increasingly institutionalised through its close alliance with government agendas in the 1990s, there was another movement in artistic practice taking place globally in which visual artists were turning towards performances and events to make participation the very premise for art work, rather than an addition to it[39]. This is what Bishop (2012: 1) refers to in *Artificial Hells* as 'the social turn' in art projects that encompass what are often called 'post studio practices' in that they dispelled the idea of the artists working alone with their magnum opus in an enclosed studio. The studio walls could no longer contain the desire of artists to collaborate with the world around them and its 'ordinary' inhabitants. Tracing the relationship between these post-studio practices and the practices of Community Dance continues to create an alternative politics to frame my own discussion of Cross-generational Dance - repositioning Community Dance's historiography and slightly loosening the grip of Weizman's (2010) 'tactical embrace' with governance.

As Hewitt (2005) has suggested, ways of moving have implications for the sets of ideas that people live and work by, as such methods of dance practice can be seen as models of action in the same way as many relational art works. Bourriaud (2002: 13) goes as far as to propose that 'the role of artworks is no longer to form imaginary and utopian realities, but to actually be ways of living and models of action within the existing real, whatever scale chosen by the artist'. It is these 'ways of living' and 'models of action' that can be seen to be similarly embodied in the practices of Community Dance artists whose collaborative methods of choreography actively invoke models of community based on equality and cooperation, as examined further in Chapter Two.

What broadly unites the distinct fields of Relational Art and Community Dance is a mixed agenda of artistic and social aims, and as Stevens (2013: 169) identifies of the dance animateurs, the rise of 'a new kind of artist – not one that produced art that was ultimately sold to the public but one that enabled members of the public to create their own art'. Bishop similarly suggests relational art was a retaliation against the consumerist imperative of the 1980s in which the artwork became an object to enter the consumer economy. Instead, processes of dance making, like relational art, exist in the moment of their enactment and as such arguably cannot enter the capitalist system. Relational aesthetics

[39] Significantly, Matarasso (2013) noted the change in terminology from 'Community Arts' to 'participatory arts' in the late 1990's as a depoliticisation of arts due to its seemingly innocuous nature as opposed to the historically loaded term and practice of community arts. Like my own argument and Houston's (2005) writing, he notes that art was used as a depoliticised response to individual issues such as poor health rather than as a means of collective action.

and Community Dance both potentially resist forms of representation, seeking instead an art of encounters in which modes of engagement render the term 'impact' used by Matarasso even more obsolete.

This can be seen as another epistemic shift in that works of art were no longer a static representation of a particular artist's genius. Instead art was seen, in Bourriaud's (1998) terms as an experience or time to be lived through. Significantly, Bourriaud's view is in keeping with Merleau-Ponty's (1962) notion of the phenomenological as a means to understanding the world. Similarly, Community Dance's supposition is that rather than forms of representation shared experiences *in* the form are the priority. This emphasis has had implications for the role of the artist or dancer working in, with and for communities. As Bishop identified such shifts are part of the 'social turn' in which relational forms have become more socially engaged and therefore less reliant on any one discrete individual. In an essay from *Living as Form* (Bishop, 2012: 41) she points out that the artist relies upon the participants' creative exploitation of the situation that he/she offers, just as participants require the artist's cue and direction. She writes, 'this relationship is a continual play of mutual tension, recognition and dependency…' (ibid.) as the following section discusses further.

1.5 Choreographer with/in community

In order to illuminate how my own methodology arose, this section discusses the relationship of the artist to the community. This is a relationship which has been interrogated through the ideals and motivations of the community arts movement in the 1960s and 70s alongside other epistemic changes previously discussed.

Community arts ideology invited the artist down from their metaphorical pedestal to become one of the people. Indeed the very notion of referring to 'the community' and 'the artist' or 'choreographer' as such discreet terms generates a somewhat problematic separation. Given the discussion of ordinary people dancing encouraged by the practices of X6 and Judson Dance Theater and identified by Bishop (2012) as a relationship of dependency, it could be argued that the distinction itself is somewhat obsolete. The complexity of the role of the artist in and with communities however has generated various terms and models of practice that elucidate my own position in the context of this research.

For example, the first Community Dance workers being called 'Animateurs' was based on – as Stevens (2013: 158) identifies – 'an applied theory of social animation developed in

France and continental Europe in the mid 1970s'. Stevens goes on to describe this role as being one in which the animateur aims to facilitate others journey towards their own self-realisation and self-expression as part of their society, able to act on and within it. In keeping with the participatory premise of relational art, the 'work' as an artistic product is less important than the experience of those taking part in creating it. Similarly, as Antony Peppiatt (1996: 6) points out 'the main 'product' of Community Dance is [in fact] the process in which participants are involved'.

Bishop (2012: 163) identifies two distinct models that existed in the UK in the late 1960s and early 1970s: 'one in which the artist undertakes a placement with a company or governing body and one in which the individual artist assumes the role of facilitating creativity among 'everyday people.' The first is usually referred to as an artist residency and, as Bishop points out, may be more dependent on surrounding infrastructure. The latter may be at the desire and impetus of the individual artist and relates more closely to the practices of X6 and Judson Dance Theater's work with untrained performers, as well as the conceptual concerns of relational art. Ballet for All founder Brinson writes in 1976 – the same year as the inception of the posts of 'dance animateur' - that:

> …to place an artist in residence is to that extent to challenge him to relate himself to that community and work out his relationship to it; to see how he, as an artist, is to serve it and how the community should face up to the question of relating to the artist.
>
> (Brinson, 1976:159)

Stevens identifies models somewhat differently to those of Bishop, referring to the artist in residence according to Brinson as the 'animateur model' of community practice. In this model, Stevens (2013: 159) refers to the choreographer as 'a catalyst' for change and the situation is not instigated by the community themselves but by the artist and their funders, or employers. By contrast she identifies the 'community model' as instigated and developed by the community and the needs and practices of that particular community.

The animateur model is the one historically most associated with Community Dance and is also why Community Dance practice has often been seen, as I have argued, as an apolitical project. Indeed Peppiatt (1985, in Stevens, 2013) has critiqued this model, as I have already argued, saying that it pushes Arts Council Policy and prioritises 'peddling established contemporary dance work at the expense of grass roots, community needs'. Arguably however the two approaches are no longer seen as entirely mutually exclusive in a relational framework for choreographic practice as discussed further in the following section.

After the initial shifts in the episteme of the 1960s and 70s, models were still being experimented with in the 1980s as to how artists and choreographers could engage with communities. In 1983 at Dartington College of the Arts, as well as hosting continued visits and dialogues with those artists involved in X6 and Judson Dance Theater, Paul Hulton hosted the Council of Europe Workshop on Theatre and Communities. This came about largely because of the theatre degree program's projects *Rotherhithe Theatre Workshop* (RTW) and *Plymouth Action Community Theatre* (PACT)[40] both of which involved students on placements in urban locations that were deemed as places which precipitated isolation and poverty and could benefit from the intervention of theatre (Nicolas, 2007). Significantly though, Nicolas (2007: 225) notes of the workshop that 'dance as a distinct community art form was invisible in this undertaking' and that it was largely subsumed into notions of theatre and performance more generally[41]. Also significant is that she notes for students on these community placements there were challenges in that although 'they had the relevant skills…sometimes the language in which dance was taught and discussed at Dartington – a language of images, sensations and arcane processes – was alien to this community with its mundane concerns' (ibid., 227). Nicolas' observation then supports my own contention that the pedestrian aesthetic and de-constructivist politics of X6 and Judson Dance Theater were seen as removed from the practices of Community Dance in the existing historiography. Drawing on the parallel practices and ideas of X6 and Community Dance more explicitly may have avoided these particular issues for the students. Significantly De Wit (2000) cites X6 member Early as stating it was an 'uphill struggle' to impart a sense of their radical practice to Fulkerson, the then dance director at Dartington. However the reticence of the students is also because the RTW and PACT initiatives tended to rely on the 'community model' (Stevens, 2013: 159) in which concerns and practices were developed with the community in question rather than through the approach which defined the 'animateur model' (ibid.) or as I refer to it the 'artist led' approach. Though the two approaches are clearly in dialogue, the emphasis on the former method arguably meant that students had the challenge of developing appropriate strategies for interacting with said communities in the first instance rather than relying on their own artistic practice which was itself still emerging in their training.

The warehouse that housed X6 was not far from Rotherhithe itself and members of X6 regularly taught at Dartington meaning that inevitably over time ideas and practices did

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[40] See Read (1992) for theoretical discourse emerging from these practices.

[41] Dartington did not have a dedicated dance department, Fulkerson worked in the theatre department, facilitating somatic practices for theatre students.

begin to be shared with the students. Nicolas (2007) points out how the use of Contact Improvisation developed by Paxton aided the students in understanding the individual as a starting point for movement ideas which was helpful in these settings. De Wit (2000: 302) echoes this statement citing the Dartington premise of the 'present body' (starting from the here and now) and 'the sensory body' (focusing on somatic experience) as lending themselves to a Community Dance context. Both methods are more concerned with experience rather than representation in performance. It can be seen that the legacy of these concerns continues in Cross-generational Dance practice currently and in particular my case studies, presented in Chapter Four.

The role of the student performance maker in RTW and PACT was a somewhat ambiguous one but aimed to engage students in a meaningful way with their surroundings and the people living there. In the late 2000s there remains a variety of ways in which dance artists engage with communities, roles vary from project to project reflected in the variety of terms used to describe practitioners: dance artist, Community Dance artist, dance educator, dance teacher or facilitator to name just some examples.

According to this historical perspective in the case of X6 and Judson Dance Theater the role of the choreographer was defined through, as Claid (2006: 78) puts it 'the creative relations that each dance artist made to the social, cultural, environmental and economic context/climate within which they were working' reflecting Brinson's broad definition of the artist in residence. In this case it was as much about how these climates influenced the artist's work as it was about the power of the artist to create or facilitate change for an identified community. Similarly though, for dance animateurs working to address a particular community or widen participation and education in the form, it was not therefore devoid of artistic intent or direction on their part.

Although the distinctions in approach are useful when discussing the case studies of Cross-generational Dance in this research, the polarisation of the positions 'animateur model' (artist-led) and 'community-model' do not necessarily continue to be helpful. Similarly, Alan Read (1992: 2) went as far as to say that in the 1990s: 'outmoded forms of reference such as 'political theatre' and 'community arts' limit thought to partitioned realms which have very little to do with the complexity of real contexts'. Acknowledging these complexities then sometimes calls for different terminology, hence the recent propagation of terms used to define the multitude of ways in which artists, choreographers and communities interact and participate with each other – to name a few: dialogic art, socially engaged practice, new genre public art, situated practice, applied performance, participatory dance, post-

studio practices, and relational aesthetics. Whatever the label, artists working in these forms arguably 'engage in a process that includes careful listening, thoughtful conversation, and community organization' (Pasternak in Thompson, 2012: 8).

For the purposes of this investigation I refer to my own methodology as 'relational choreography'. In my previous professional work I most frequently occupied a defined role through employers and/or funders in relation to a specific group of people engaged in dance activity. However as my practice based research has developed I have identified the need to acknowledge the complexities – as Read points out – of the specific context of this research and its emergent modes of enquiry.

This chapter has so far identified the historical context for the current research and situated its conditions of possibility as emerging out of the rupture in episteme in the 1960s and 1970s which arguably liberated dance from many of its limiting paradigms. Such a liberation included a more expansive notion of what constituted performance and who could participate in it. In the same way the episteme of the 1990s paved the way for a much more process orientated ontology for artistic practice in general which draws parallels with the Community Dance sector's aims.

Furthermore, in the late 2000s, due to these epistemic shifts many of the binary divisions that choreographic and performance practices have historically relied on are no longer fixed; not only that of process/product and audience/participant but choreographer/dancer, professional/amateur, and life/art even. The interrogation of these binaries all contribute to the conditions of possibility for cross generational dance as it is practiced within the current research project. Part Two of this chapter introduces the practice through examining my own methodology of relational choreography and two case studies which frame this practice.

Part Two: Practical Perspectives

1.6 Relational Choreography

This section discusses my methodology both in relation to the historical context presented in Part One and by way of introducing the practice based research. Relational choreography is not an established term but can be found to frame individual contemporary choreographers practice[42]. The fact that it is emergent lends itself to the amorphous nature of its definition and the continued reflexivity that it requires in practice. For my purposes 'relational choreography' draws on the particular historical perspective outlined in this chapter that has relocated the role of the artist choreographer in relation to communities and wider culture but at the same time recognises that s/he does have a specific role; a role that is one of relating to the particular people and context of each project.

Perhaps all choreography is to a certain extent relational, however for the purposes of this study it is a useful way to describe working practices that acknowledge the unresolved nature of the questions articulated in this chapter; these being the ambiguity in roles between choreographer and performer, between the trained and untrained, the status of the art work and the orientation towards and within communities. Relational Choreography acknowledges and responds to the networks of relationships that impact on choreographic practice in the moment it is being practiced.

Like many contemporary choreographic practices it emphasises collectivity and collaboration in dance-making, rather than singularly authored work, and works in a multi-layered way to both create the performance work and facilitate an experience for those taking part in the process. Jo Butterworth's (2009) analysis of choreographic approaches, 'the didactic – democratic spectrum model' (see **Fig. 1**) is useful to frame this term and the techniques used by most Community Dance artists and choreographers. Relational choreography does not attempt to usurp any terms that may also be in circulation but rather acknowledges the crossover between approaches, allowing for a more fluid conception of the reciprocal relationships occurring in choreographic processes.

[42] See for example Sabisch (2011)

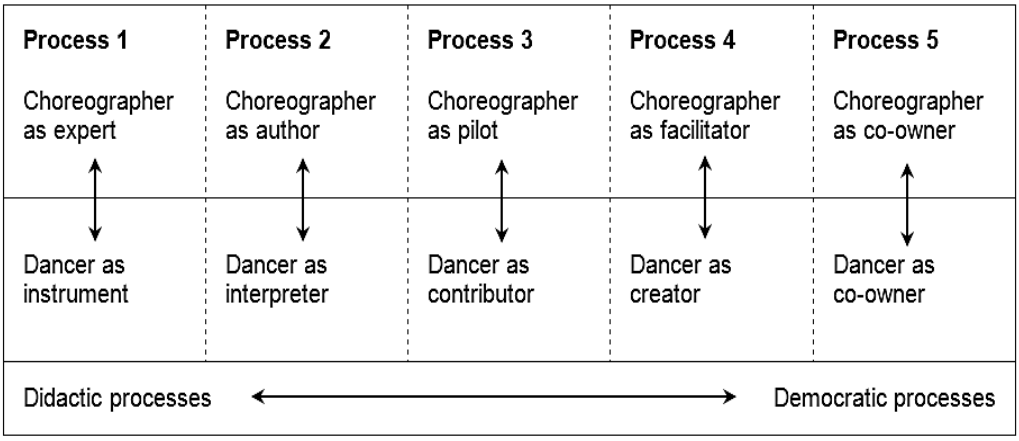

Fig. 1: Butterworth's (2009) simple didactic -democratic framework model

By contrast to relational approaches which acknowledge the contingent nature of movement material developed by both choreographers and dancer/participants, producing a unique personal idiom used to be the 'holy grail' for a choreographer; a movement style so distinct and thorough that it could be turned into an unmistakable choreographic signature and potentially therefore a system of learning. The examples par excellence of such an idiom being Graham or Cunningham technique developed by Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham respectively. Taking its model from the conservatoire training in ballet, a dancer's job was to embody and emulate a very precise way of moving based on the original master choreographer. In this method of training, the dancers become tools to express a choreographer's intentional vision. 'Dancers' in this instance would be considered those with training, able to uniformly physically execute whatever the choreographer required of them, unlike the post-modern premise explored earlier.

This way of working is articulated in Butterworth's seminal study of choreographic processes as 'Choreographer as expert – dancer as instrument' giving very little agency to the dancer who is seen only as a conduit for the choreography (See **Fig. 1**; Butterworth, 2009). Significantly, Butterworth's research was carried out in the UK between 1996 and 2002, the same time period as New Labour's governance and in it she acknowledges the legacy of the post-modern 'egalitarian' approach to dance making from the 1960s. While Butterworth's model seems to exist entirely within a dance studio context, meaning that other contingencies of place and time are not accounted for in the production of choreography as they were at Dartington, it is nonetheless a useful model in identifying how paradigms have been articulated for the distinct roles of choreographer and dancer in recent history.

Process One in Butterworth's model, in which a dancer is considered a tool or instrument is a methodology that was interrogated through the practices of X6 and Judson Dance Theater; indeed it was a response to the strict training that many of the dancers in these collectives underwent through this model. Arguably Process One is entirely redundant if taking relationality as not only an artistic premise but an ontological one as Chapters Two and Three go on to discuss.

Significantly though, Butterworth's third process 'choreographer as pilot – dancer as contributor' (see **Fig. 1**; ibid.) she cites as crossing over with a Community Dance context. In this model the choreographer remains responsible for the overall intent and concept of a piece but the dancer is also an integral part of developing the work through responding to tasks[43], as in Stevens' (2013) 'animateur model'. Butterworth states that Process Four (see **Fig. 1**; Butterworth, 2009) – also known as 'devised dance' – was gaining currency in the independent dance sector at the time of her writing which Claid (2006: 79) also sees as the evolution of New Dance[44]. Devised dance usually refers to processes whereby movement content is collectively produced by dancers and choreographer together by focusing on a theme and using improvisation, discussion and tasks to develop a work for performance.

Acknowledging the 'slippage' that occurs between these processes and their defining features – as Butterworth herself does – both these models are a useful point of reference for commonly agreed preferred methods of Community Dance. Shifting between Process Three (choreographer as pilot) and Process Four, (choreographer as facilitator) (ibid.) most adequately describes my own working methods in Cross-generational Dance and provides the basis for relational choreography as I define it. In my terms, however, relational choreography also acknowledges a broader frame of reference for the notion of relationality that is grounded in reflexivity, in which practitioners must be responsive to the moment and the people sharing that moment.

Distinct from how Bourriaud (1998) and Bishop (2006; 2012) use the term relational, Erin Manning (2009) conceptualises 'relational movement' and shares some of the concerns central to relational choreography. Manning's (ibid.) relational movement is a philosophy of process in which movement is always movement-moving. In this instance, as opposed to

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[43] 'tasks' is a term often used to refer to open-ended practical instructions – e.g. create movement that starts from your fingertips

[44] Development and training agency Independent Dance functions today as an organization from Chisenhale Dance Space and in the 1980s involved a lot of the X6 members and therefore their ideologies. See Claid (2006)

being analysed for form, narrative or structure, Manning sees movement as always in process, even if it were fixed choreography. In the same way the reflexivity I suggest in relational choreography means that while acknowledging the historical perspectives and methods already outlined, it is also to an extent a process that comes into being through its enactment. This does not mean that there is no need to attempt to articulate and share these methods in a more practical sense but also indicates what Lorna Sanders refers to in performance as a 'productive ambiguity' (2008) that it can be useful to recognise when attempting to create definitions of performance making processes.

What is more, while relational choreography shares some of the logistical concerns, artistic approaches and political orientation of relational aesthetics or dialogic art as discussed in the previous section, there are also some important distinctions to be made. In the examples of Cross-generational Dance I am discussing, the participants creating the work know that they are part of it and are actively engaging in the process of this creation and thereby also aware of their own agency as authors. By contrast, relational or dialogic art does not always begin on this premise but may require uninformed participants who take part inadvertently thereby creating the work – what Bishop (2012) refers to as 'incidental people'. In the latter examples participants do not necessarily see themselves as owning the work in any sense, rather they are the mechanism by which the work is produced.

By contrast, in relational choreography, this contribution is made more explicit. For example, in a facilitatory role once a group of people of different ages is brought together for a workshop, I am initially aiming to gain trust and build confidence in order for them to feel they can contribute choreographically. To do this I draw on a wide variety of resources that I have learnt from my time working in the Community Dance sector. For example, the use of a circle to introduce each other allows for eye contact and includes everyone in the room, an activity that is clearly in opposition to the directorial model of dance teaching with a teacher at the front of the class, demonstrating movement with their back to the students, sometimes known as the 'show and copy' model. Name games that involve gentle movement are also useful in introducing participants to each other and starting from something that everyone has – a name – as well as providing the first voyage into creating movement that belongs solely to them. Relational choreography, though, also acknowledges the fluidity needed within such approaches. For example in the documentation *Leap* I am leading a circle game as part of a workshop in which everyone says their name and offers a movement for the rest of the group to copy, the first example of which is a star jump. In this clip, a young child (Freida) clearly does not feel confident to do her movement, so instead I pick up on a movement that she is already doing unconsciously and use that for the rest of the group to copy. Frieda has then still

contributed to the group but without having to conform to a rigid structure of the particular exercise through my ability to notice and act on what was happening in the moment. In this way relational choreography draws parallels to other models of professional practice such as Donald Schon's (1984) notion of 'reflection in action' whereby professionals learn through practical experience how to respond to situations as they arise.

Many of the initial activities I engage in in a workshop setting are movement tasks that are problem solving in order that people begin moving without concerning themselves about the purpose of that movement. They are involved in solving the problem, rather than worrying about coming up with choreography per se. These kinds of tasks are widely used, shared knowledge amongst Community Dance practitioners – though little documented – and reflect the egalitarian principles of Community Dance. For example in the documentation *Flocking*[45] you see *Crossover Intergenerational Dance Company* engaging in a form of follow my leader whereby the leader changes depending on the direction of the over-all group. What is more, the leader can change when someone calls their name. Meanwhile the entire group is also trying to stay in contact with one another as they shift through the space and change directions and echo the qualities of movement that the leader provides. This activity can be seen as an ideal example of relational choreography in that it has a form but it is an emergent and malleable one depending on who is leading and how others respond. Problem-solving task-based methods such as these can also be used as the movement starts to be shaped into choreographic work, as Chapter Two goes on to discuss further.

Dance work in the case of relational choreography then is dependent on the tasks but also on the human interactions that create it and bring it into being each time it is performed. In my own practice, while I would still consider myself as the choreographer of a work - where the 'work' itself resides is in the process of facilitating choreographic tasks and not necessarily in a performance. In this way, as a methodology it shares concerns with relational aesthetics to replace the notion of a finite, repeatable object or product with that of a process or act of relating.

Similarly, the 'process versus product' debate is a well-rehearsed one in Community Dance. In Anthony Peppiatt and Katie Venner's (1986) *Community Dance: A Progress report*, Peppiatt describes Community Dance as on a continuum of process/intention over product/outcome. The value of the product in this instance is embodied through viewing it

[45] The name for this activity has evolved through word of mouth shared between dance practitioners. I first heard it at a workshop with Prof Sarah Whatley at Oxford College of Further Education in 1997

as part of a process. In my own practice based research, performing choreography is only one aspect of an often lengthy process that cannot be examined or distilled into one moment. What I am examining – an experience of community – is not something that can be 'shown' through a choreographic work but rather documented and analysed, as this thesis demonstrates. Peppiatt and Venner's (ibid.) notion of a continuum is a useful one to avoid the binary positioning of process versus product as it posits instead that product can be viewed as part of a process and vice-versa. Furthermore, a process and a product therefore cannot always be so easily separated, particularly when a project may be addressing divergent or multiple social, political and aesthetic aims.

My methodology has evolved in relation to other practitioners of Cross-generational Dance, in particular the choreographers Rosemary Lee and Cecilia Macfarlane. Their practice can also be broadly seen as relational. The following section provides case studies of both of their choreographic practice and examines how their approaches differ from one another in ways that it is useful to distinguish in order to examine corresponding attitudes and ideas of community embodied in their work, and in their articulations about their work.

1.7 Case Studies

1.7.1 Cecilia Macfarlane and Crossover

The case studies of Cecilia Macfarlane and Rosemary Lee were chosen because they both play an important role in Cross-generational Dance in the UK at the time of writing and have become renowned as choreographers willing and able to create work with a wide range of ages. Furthermore, not only do they situate my own practice but their practices also evolved from the genealogy identified in Part One in ways that this section demonstrates. While my writing uses examples from other choreographers (in Chapter Four in particular) Lee and Macfarlane are pivotal as I have a particular practice based understanding of their work due to my own experiences, as such their practice imbricates with my own practice as research. Furthermore both artists can be seen to hold particular views about Community in Cross-generational Dance which serve as a basis for my critique.

Both Lee and Macfarlane were trained professionally, at *The Laban Conservatoire for Movement and Dance* and *London Contemporary Dance School* respectively. In the same way that X6 and Judson Dance Theater were questioning their own training and background, both choreographers refer to a kind of rejection of aspects of professional

dance training as what led them to their choreographic practice involving participants across age groups.

In an article in *Animated* in 2004, Macfarlane reflects on this process after a childhood spent learning traditional dance forms of tap, modern dance and ballet:

> In 1968 I went to the Royal Academy of Dancing [RAD] where we were introduced to a new form – without shoes and in contact with the floor. Suddenly there was a medium that was powerful, expressive and had the potential to accommodate difference. It was just as technically demanding but gave me the freedom to begin to find the "original" dancer in me ... Martha Graham's work had begun to filter into Britain. And it was at The London School of Contemporary Dance that I was able to realise that my body had to strip off layers of habit to find the "original" me - the dancer that was hidden behind an unsuitable technique.
>
> (Dyke & Macfarlane, 2004: n.p.)

While stylistically distinct, Macfarlane's interest in stripping back layers of habit is in keeping with the premise of the experimental dance of the 1960s and 1970s that also sought to interrogate the legacy of professional dance training. Macfarlane (ibid.) refers to bare feet rather than ballet or jazz shoes and the introduction of floor work as revelatory. Unlike New Dance or Post-Modern Dance, however, Macfarlane's comment appeals to the idea of an authentic, originary self which can be revealed through the expressive potential of dance. This is an idea that has gone on to inform her approach to Community Dance in which she very much encourages people to 'be themselves' rather than trying to emulate or copy specific techniques. Conceptually, this poses challenges to the deconstructivist stance of X6 artists who were exploring more fluid ideas of selfhood. The tension between an enclosed interior self and a more open ontology also emerges through discussions of different notions of community, discussed in depth in Chapter Two.

In keeping with the episteme – the master mode of producing knowledge – on graduating in 1973 Macfarlane (ibid., n.p.) refers to how she 'began to break rules, written, unspoken, in my head, in the dance world's head. I knew I would have to create a new, untrodden route – there was to be no fixed pathway…'. Like the proponents of New Dance then Macfarlane had a sense of creating something new with the rupture of one episteme and another. In 1974 she created Cycles Dance Company which, according to Jordan (1992: 62), had 'strong links' with X6, inviting members Claid and Early to choreograph work with them and performing at the X6 space itself. Very much reflecting the episteme of the era for collective working Cycles too ran as a cooperative and Macfarlane continued to teach with them until the early 1980s while at the same time starting a family and developing her practice in release techniques and Contact Improvisation. In 1982 Macfarlane began

working for Extemporary Dance Company on the education team, which was directed by former member of X6, Emilyn Claid, at the time.

Macfarlane (Dyke & Macfarlane, 2004) cites working with Extemporary Dance Company as 'inspirational' making particular reference to *Grace and Glitter,* a piece directed by Claid and Maggie Semple. Through a devising process influenced by her time at X6, Claid (2016: 263) describes how 'performance material was drawn from a wide range of provocative themes that were relevant to our lives…' and that 'G&G, as a women's collaborative venture, bridged two eras of feminist politics'. Macfarlane (Dyke & Macfarlane, 2004: n.p.) states of its influence: 'This powerful work looked at sexism and racism and gave me permission to express myself through choreography. From this came my first solo show *Extensions*, which was built predominantly for mothers and babies.' Extensions illustrates her interest in working beyond the parameters of the typical trained dancer and with bringing distinctly different age groups together from the outset of her choreographic career. Macfarlane refers to the autobiographical as a large part of her working process from this point on and it was her own life situation as a mother of two young children that led to furthering her interest in Cross-generational Dance.

Macfarlane's interest in the autobiographical also reflects the feminist politics that Claid referred to. Discourses occurring in the 1970s highlighted the personal as political, and indeed therefore gave a rationale for personal subject matter as a viable premise for performance work. Claid (2006: 125) writes of the collaborative working methods that evolved at X6 and influenced work such as *Grace and Glitter* that they were 'encouraged by feminist person-as-political agendas, we saw ourselves as people first rather than as dancing tools', reiterating also the redundancy of Butterworth's (2009) Process One (Dancer as tool) at this time. The 'personal as political' referred to by Claid has become an iconic slogan associated with second wave feminism and was originally from a paper published by the Women's Liberation Movement in 1970. Carol Hanisch writes in 2006, in an attempt to analyse the slogan and its emergence, that it evolved in response to critiques that Women's Liberation consciousness-raising groups were simply 'navel gazing' and doing 'personal therapy' (Hanisch, 2006) rather than engaging in anything political. Similarly Macfarlane (Dyke & Macfarlane, 2004: n.p.) notes that for her, before working alongside Extemporary with *Grace and Glitter* 'To dance an autobiographical work was viewed as indulgent…private…'

The autobiographical continues to play a strong role and in her continued collaborations throughout the early 1980s and 1990s, now firmly established as an Independent Dance

Artist (as she refers to herself), Macfarlane (ibid., n.p.) states that she used 'these projects to refer directly or indirectly to my growth and experiences as a person'. Similarly, the idea that a performer does not have to be professionally trained, or indeed have to stop dancing due to their age is highlighted in her emphatic statement that 'my last dance will be my last blink' (ibid.) illustrating that for her dance will be her practice for the duration of the lifecourse and what is more that performance can be construed from everyday movement.

Although she has worked all over the country and more recently internationally in Japan, Macfarlane's practice is largely based in one place, the city of Oxford, where she has now been based for over forty years. She refers to her work there as developing 'organically' and in 1987 began children's dance classes at an arts centre that became the basis of Oxford Youth Dance which still runs currently, employing other local independent dance artists to teach and choreograph alongside her. Macfarlane's work can be seen to be in keeping with Brinson's definition of the artist in residence as understanding their relationship to a community and vice-versa, as she describes here: 'My life in Oxford had become permanent and I learnt that working within a community is a two way process - that artists don't live in a vacuum' (ibid., n.p.). The two way process she describes however does not fit with the 'animateur' model entirely as Stevens defines it, because after working with local authorities initially, Oxford Youth Dance and her adult dance group DugOut essentially function as private businesses. They are open to all without audition or selection on the basis of ability but members pay a fee to attend classes which supports their running and the hire of space. She still receives funding for individual projects, however, such as that of Crossover (see **Fig. 2**) which began as a project in 2003.

Speaking in 2009, Macfarlane describes her work with Crossover as "a logical evolution of my work in the last 30/40 years' and goes on to state that this is because she has 'become more and more passionate that dance can be and should be…for everyone… from whatever age they want to start moving, in the womb, post womb, right up to the last blink and so it is inevitable that therefore my work should include all ages" (Macfarlane, 2009: Appendix B). In the Age Inclusive practice handbook published by the Foundation for Community Dance (Pethybridge, 2010), Macfarlane describes how when teaching young children, the parents would stay until they were settled so eventually she would invite them to join in – she writes: 'I soon realised the fun and huge potential there was for the relationship between adult and child and the possible development of confidence for them through the shared medium of dance…I then began a series of projects with mothers and daughters and

fathers and sons of all ages' (Macfarlane cited in Pethybridge, 2010: 49). It was this work that led to Crossover, as Scilla Dyke (2004) explains:

> As part of this ongoing process Cecilia developed her desire to work for a significant period of time with a small group of dancers spanning all ages. She wanted to look at 'the stereotyping that is inherent in our society about age and to spend time playing, confounding and changing perceptions.'
>
> (Dyke & Macfarlane, 2004: n.p.)

At this time Crossover was comprised of eight dancers, four of whom were female and four male between the ages of ten and sixty[46]. After this initial project it was decided that the group would not finish after that particular project but continue as a company creating and touring performance work and running workshops alongside as Crossover Intergenerational Dance Company. Reflecting the egalitarian approach to choreography that she had developed through her work in the 1960s and 1970s Macfarlane refers to everyone in the company as both a dancer and a choreographer in the same way that Judson Dance Theater and X6 invited untrained performers to not only perform but choreograph. Although many other cross-generational initiatives exist in the Community Dance sector *Crossover* is unique in their formation as a permanent touring company and to a certain extent reflect a 'dance in education' model whereby professional dancers make work specifically for educational contexts[47]. However Crossover is also distinct in that it involved both trained and untrained performers in the creation of choreography. Although Macfarlane's practice with Crossover could be seen as artist-led given her role as artistic director, her rhetoric of personal development and empowerment through dance is more in keeping with the community model and ideas of the democratisation of culture. She writes of Crossover, for example, how it: 'showed how neither age nor disability is a barrier to creating and performing ... [expressing a] more diverse range of humanity and human experience.' (ibid., n.p.) As such her work sits comfortably in the Community Dance sector, if Community Dance is described as it is by People Dancing as providing access to dance experience to a wider demographic. Seeing that it also evolved out of the epistemic shifts in the 1960s and 1970s however also sheds light on Macfarlane's democratic ethos for choreography as an artistic choice.

My own practice with Macfarlane began shortly after I graduated from a degree course in 2000 and joined the performing company Oxford Youth Dance Company for 16-25 year olds. Here I encountered her improvisatory and release based techniques as well as her

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[46] Flocking documentation features five of the original company members

[47] Companies with a similar ethos include Ludus Dance Company, Green Candle Dance Company

movement tasks based on autobiographical and personal material. What is more she has a very democratic approach to the creation of choreography – making sure everyone had made their contribution and felt a sense of ownership and authorship over the work and movement they were executing. All of these approaches have gone on to inform my own methodology that I have termed 'relational choreography' which I discuss in the context of my work with Crossover in Chapter Three, while Chapter Two takes an interrogative approach to Macfarlane's work regarding notions of community. Crossover then provides a pivotal case study, both as my own introduction to Cross-generational Dance in practice and as a springboard from which to investigate philosophies of community. Philosophies that can be seen as limiting and also more radical philosophical views which frame my own choreographic work with the company in Chapter Three.

Fig. 2: Dragons Tale rehearsal with Crossover Intergenerational Dance Company 2007

1.7.2 Rosemary Lee

Lee describes herself as a choreographer, performer and director[48]. Her interest in working with people of different ages and those that do not fit the usual 'ideal' of the conservatoire trained dancer was influenced both by her training at the Laban Centre (graduating in 1981) and by her exposure to the radical practices of Judson Dance Theater. The choreographer Rudolf Laban's work on the observation and notation of everyday movement and his involvement in the development of Community Dance[49]are principles that have consistently informed dance education at Laban[50]. Lee was encouraged to go and watch the movement of passers-by to inform her choreography, an experience as part of her professional training that has underpinned her commitment to ordinary people dancing and bringing dance into non-theatrical contexts. Though much earlier than Judson Dance Theater, Laban's influential and pioneering work in the development of European modern dance[51] between 1910 and 1940 and his attitudes towards movement and dance, to a certain extent prefigure and inform the developments of the 1960s – for example valuing 'the individual's own choice of movement, and self-initiated vocabularies'[52] rather than traditional techniques. Indeed Isa Partsch-Bergsohn (2003: 21) writes that

> …one of Laban's main interests was dance as a community activity. The community, he believed, was the bond that held individual men and women together in a social group [….].

One way that he manifested this interest was through 'movement choirs' – large groups of people working in loose unison. Both 'self-initiated vocabularies' and 'movement choirs' are ways of working that can clearly be seen in Lee's own choreographic processes in the

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[48] For a comprehensive current biography of Rosemary – see http://www.rescen.net/Rosemary_Lee/rlbiog.html#.WJMb5xicaHo

[49] For Laban's work on choreology or the discipline of dance analysis see Valerie Preston-Dunlop, 1998; on his initial and subsequent research with F.E.Lawrence on the effects of movement analysis for industry and the Laban-Lawrence Training scheme at Dartington, see Bonham-Carter, 1970: 95; this research led to the publication (co-written with F.E. Lawrence) of Laban Lawrence Industrial Rhythm/and Lilt in Labour (1942), and Effort (1947). See also Bradley (2008) for a full historical account of Rudolf Laban.

[50] See Preston-Dunlop, 1998; Willson, 1997 for an account of the development of the Laban Centre which includes further details of the time that Laban himself spent at Dartington with the Joos-Leeder School; and Preston-Dunlop (n.d.) http://www.trinitylaban.ac.uk/about-us/our-history/rudolf-laban

[51] For example his work and involvement with Expressionist dance (Ausdruckstanz) from 1910 onwards, the publication of his system of notation - Labanotation (Kinetographie Laban) - in 1928. In 1937 he was forced to leave Germany from where he joined his former pupil Kurt Joos at the Joos-Leeder School in Dartington between 1938 and 1940.

[52] See Preston-Dunlop (n.d.) http://www.trinitylaban.ac.uk/about-us/our-history/rudolf-laban

2000s[53] Although the Laban Centre has become one of the foremost schools in the UK for training professional dancers bound for performance and choreography more specifically, it also houses the post-graduate diploma in Community Dance that builds on work done by Marion North in the 1960s who, along with Bonnie Bird, was influential in setting up the Laban Centre. North also worked with children and was a pioneer in offering dance therapy to patients on doctors' recommendations.

Lee describes in interview her own experience of viewing the highly technical dancer as "very remote from my own experience…I couldn't *be* them. I felt that must ostracise a lot of people, so I was already looking for an aesthetic, before I found Judson Church – that made you feel that you could be part of that activity somehow." (Lee, 2010: Appendix C). Lee's sentiments echo those of Steve Paxton in the 1960s and 1970s who wanted audiences watching his performances to come away feeling that they could explore their own movement rather than admiring the technical virtuosity of those on stage. Twenty years after the first performance of the Dance Theater at Judson Church in 1962 and after graduating from Laban, Lee chose to spend four years in New York from 1982 to 1986 to develop her choreographic practice. She cites the group and their legacy as very influential on her choreographic practice saying:

> I was there very late on but I still was seeing work that had different ages in it, not children so much but there was an untrained bloke who was suddenly being a dancer you know, and I remember seeing Meredith Monk's work, she worked with all different bodies […] so I was seeing pedestrian movement and untrained bodies in the lower east side loft work and then I was seeing […]more mainstream artists like Cunningham, Trisha Brown, Lucinda Childs, some of those names that came up through Judson Church.
>
> (Lee, 2010: Appendix C).

During this time in New York Lee performed in a lot of work outdoors and work with communities that she says 'felt rare' (ibid.) at the time, despite the developments in the Community Dance sector throughout the 1980s. The sentiment that this was an unusual way of working illustrates further the professional separatism between the Community Dance and theatre dance sectors because Lee does not take Community Dance developments into account in her own description of her evolving artistic practice.

Also influential for Lee was Brinson, *Ballet for All* founder and an important figure in dance education throughout the 1980s and 1990s, again advocating a non-elitist notion of dance. Indeed Llockyer (cited in Stevens, 2013: 160) goes as far as to say that without Brinson

[53] See for example Square Dances (2011).

'Community Dance as we know it today would be nowhere'. Significantly, Brinson founded the first institutionalised training course for Community Dance at Laban – now the Postgraduate Diploma in Community Dance. Despite these associations and influences however Lee is reluctant to have her work labelled Community Dance, she writes:

> Early on in my career I sought to try to ignore certain divisions: "professional"; "non-professional"; "community". Some might name a work with a cast of 13 dancers of all ages as a "community" piece. For me, each piece is firmly the next in my body of work; I aim to bring no less rigor nor artistic standards nor production values to the "community" piece so called as to working with a professional dance company. I also try not to be swayed into perceiving the work with a different, perhaps less critical lens.
>
> (Lee cited in Amans, 2008:76)

The very fact that this quotation is drawn from a book called *An Introduction to Community Dance* illustrates that Lee is not always successful in transcending these divisions. Her stance however is clear – "I want to work with these different ages and I want it on a mainstream stage and this is what I am doing you know, and I don't want it to be called 'Community Dance'…I am a choreographer and this is my aesthetic and I want to present it without any apology" (Lee, 2010: Appendix C). That Lee's choreography has received critical acclaim, the like of which is usually reserved for professional dance performance[54], is testament to her ambiguity in this regard, and she herself said that the review of *Common Dance* validated it as a work of art. Lee's view however demonstrates that she subscribes to the hierarchy of values that places Community Dance as lesser than the many forms of dance performance that are not described in this way. The exchange between historical genealogies that puts Community Dance and professional dance in closer proximity in Part One of this chapter can usefully critique this view. Bringing two historical narratives closer together as this chapter does questions the values that distinguish one way of practicing dance as more worthy of critical acclaim than another.

Lee's interest in site-specific work in varied locations for large mixed age casts can be seen to also reflect tendencies of relational aesthetics and socially engaged practice in which people, place and context play a large role in how an artist shapes their work[55]. Lee also identifies in the quotation above the tendency to be less critical of a Community Dance

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[54] Sanjoy Roy in the Guardian newspaper reviewed Common Dance 2009, available at: http://sanjoyroy.net/2009/11/rosemary-lee-common-dance/

[55] Lee has also collaborated with film-makers such as Peter Anderson and created intimate solo work for herself and other professionals. She has worked on installations in galleries and event spaces as well as more established modes of dance performance.

work, confirming Bishop's (2012) assertion that the discourses surrounding community arts work in general lack this critical perspective, contributing to the hierarchy in practice. Her work is more focused on performance outcomes than Macfarlane's, whereas Macfarlane would confirm the view of Peppiatt and Venner (1993) that process and experience takes precedence over the product of performance. Lee's work has a particular aesthetic that she strives to achieve and maintain, albeit one that can involve those of different ages and abilities.

Also in contrast to Macfarlane who for the most part focuses on longstanding work in one geographical area, Lee moves more from project to project, often working on a commission basis and as an artist in residence as defined by Bishop, brought in by local funding initiatives and frameworks. Lee's way of working is very much artist led and demonstrates developments in the dance sector from the 1960s onwards whereby, as Susan Foster (2011: 66) writes: 'unlike the modern choreographers, dance artists no longer formed companies, but instead worked from project to project, picking up a company of dancers with whom to collaborate'. Often working with a core group of trained professionals, when not working with existing groups that come with the commission, Lee uses a selection process in the form of taster workshops for her untrained participants and is aware also of the tensions between being the lead artist and the needs of the group. Here she describes her own inspiration from community arts and awareness of the community model but also the distinction from it:

> In the early 1980s community art was, it seemed to me constructed either as grand spectacle or speaking at a smaller scale of the stories of the participants in their particular situations. Seeing such work inspired me to make dance works that involved huge casts but without spectacular effects: work that despite being on an epic scale, could create subtler levels of engagement for the audience and perhaps deeper levels of communication. However I sometimes felt fraudulent that I came with ideas and an imagined sense of the work I wanted to create…in a compositional way rather than devising from scratch with a group. My task then and now is to find ways to allow the dancers to take ownership of their dancing within those authorial ideas and structures that I have in my head.
>
> (Lee cited in Amans, 2008: 81)

Lee shows an awareness of the ethical tensions in the relationship between participants and choreographer in creating participatory dance work when it is artist led. Tensions that Bishop (2012) described as relationships of recognition and dependency. This also illustrates why she might hesitate to call her work Community Dance. However throughout her career she has taken inspiration from, and indeed been funded regularly, by this sector

and as she puts it in an interview on *Egg Dances*: 'working with local people of all ages and experiences has become something that is part of my life and my work and my artistic vision.' (Anderson & Lee, 1990)

In 1986, on returning to the UK from New York, Lee was involved with Chisenhale Dance Space, the home of independent dance after X6 disbanded, and she also recalls making several trips to visit Dartington College of The Arts for events and festivals. In particular she describes how she was inspired by what she saw as an "innovative" (Lee, 2010: Appendix C) initiative at Rotherhithe – the RTW. Lee states in interview: "I just thought that was fantastic and why wasn't Laban doing anything like that? I was always interested in actively involving people in a common endeavour" (ibid.). Her childhood experience of witnessing people of all ages and abilities taking part in her local amateur dramatics society was affirmed by seeing the RTW.

In 1987, Lee was invited to be an Artist in Residence in Oxford where her work *New Springs from Old Winters* involved a procession of over 200 people including members of Oxford Youth Dance and Macfarlane's large local network of untrained dance enthusiasts. In 1988 she built on the themes of this work that looked at rituals of Spring to choreograph *Egg Dances* which also featured some of the same cast. *Egg Dances* was made for the stage and performed at The Place[56] featuring a cross-generational cast starting at 9 years old with a range of young people and up to 70 years old. Egg dances cemented Lee's ability to work with a wide range of ages. This ability is demonstrated in this work through her minimal approach to movement which uses simple shifts in weight and speed rather than complex movement phrases. She also uses lifts and weight supports learnt from approaches to movement such as Contact Improvisation. This resulted in several large scale commissions to work with groups of all ages throughout the 1990s and early 2000s including *Banquet Dances* (1999) which featured local schoolchildren and senior citizen performance groups and *Passage* (2001) which also incorporated her increasing interest in work with film through a large backdrop of screens featuring portraits of the performers in expansive landscapes.

In all of this work Lee's practice can be described as relational choreography in the same way that I identify my own methodology – it is responding to the people but also to the moment. She writes of her approach:

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[56] *Egg Dances* was later filmed on location in collaboration with filmmaker Peter Anderson through funding provided by The Arts Council and the British Council.

> A sculptor might say that through being so closely attentive to the material they are working with, they are led to the sculpted shape. As a choreographer, I am trying to become intensely familiar with the dancers and their dynamic together so that the work created comes from them, is indeed theirs as well as mine…I liken my most recent work to portraiture; I am trying to support and thus allow the dancer to dance in a way that is most revealing of what I see as the essential quality or spirit of that individual.
>
> (Lee, 2010: 82)

Like Macfarlane then, Lee iterates a sense of seeking an individual essence of each person she works with. Leaving aside for now the theoretically problematic nature of such an essence, which I will address further in the following chapter, what is significant is that Lee describes her approach as one of portraiture rather than autobiographical as Macfarlane does. In her recent doctoral thesis choreographer Yael Flexer (2014) uses the term 'portraiture' to refer to her own navigation between a performance and 'everyday' mode of being in her choreographic work. Flexer uses Victoria Mark's (2003: 139)[57] definition of the term who writes: '[in] creating portraits it is essential that the performers participate in, if not direct, the fashioning of their own representation'. Lee's approach is similar in that she wants her dancers to have a sense of ownership over the material, albeit in dialogue with her own artistic vision. However, she also refers to this notion of portraiture as 'a sense of seeing the performer's own uniqueness, potential and grace, their 'themness' (Lee cited in Amans, 2008: 79). These ideas of self-representation and a performer's uniqueness have aided my own relational methodology and discussion of performances of singularity in Chapter Three. My work with Lee began after meeting her in 2011 after which she invited me to take part as rehearsal director in her cross-generational site-specific performance *Square Dances* for London festival *Dance Umbrella* (see **Fig. 3**).

[57]Victoria Marks is a dancer, performer and professor of choreography at UCLA.

See Marks, V. (2003) in Copper-Albright, A. & Gere, D. (eds) (2003)

Fig. 3: Square Dances by Rosemary Lee 2011

To conclude this chapter I propose that the episteme of the 1960s and 1970s has created the conditions of possibility for the practice of Cross-generational Dance discussed in this study. I have also argued that the separation between Community Dance and 'theatre dance' or choreographic practices is reconfigured through the recognition of the epistemic shift that took place in the late 1960s and 1970s. Such a shift has led to a more fluid relationship that can acknowledge multiple models and processes for community engagement in arts and relational choreography. The case studies presented in Part Two of choreographers Lee and Macfarlane are particularly significant to the development of Cross-Generational dance in the UK at the time of writing. Furthermore, both choreographers have clear links with the historical context presented in this chapter. Lee and Macfarlane have both been central to the development of my own practice and relational choreographic methodology, not least through how I critique aspects of their work as well as draw influence from it.

Chapter Two: Philosophical Perspectives on Community

> If the concept of Community is dead, it stubbornly refuses to lie down.
>
> (Clarke, 1973: 32)

Long before the Community Dance sector was questioning the relevance of the term community for their practice, philosophers, social commentators, journalists and politicians have been debating its meaning and usage. As Raymond Clarke (ibid.) notes in his paper from the *Sociological Review* in 1973, despite claims from some quarters that community is obsolete (then as now) in contemporary society, or indeed arts practice, the term and the concept continues to circulate. What is more, community exists as one of the ways in which people may describe their lived experiences of being in the world and therefore continues to have contemporary relevance.

The contemporary relevance of community is confirmed here through discussing how a range of philosophical perspectives on the concept could be used to frame Community Dance. This chapter argues for considering a break with ideological notions of community based on identity, commonality and a normative imperative (community as commonality) in order to consider new processes and practices for Cross-generational Dance in Chapters Three and Four. Tracing some of the problems with concepts of community that have led to claims that community is no longer tenable – at least in theory – is useful in order to identify the relationship between these theories and the practice of Cross-generational Dance, or in terms of the episteme, to analyse the relationship of discourse to its material effects. The breadth of philosophical perspectives available on community is such that I do not attempt a full review; rather I use the case studies of Lee and Macfarlane, and Community Dance discourse more generally, to identify how theories that are based on essentialism, identity formation, and a moral totality are informing the way that Community Dance is articulated and practiced in the UK.

In the previous chapter I used the idea of the episteme as enabling a greater degree of relationship between experimental choreographic practices of the 1960s and 1970s and the evolution of models of practice in Community Dance. By contrast, in this chapter I use the notion of episteme to identify limitations in the way that community is conceived of in the UK Community Dance sector and argue that this also limits the potential to both practice

and articulate alternatives. In this instance I use Foucault's proposition that the episteme not only produces conventional modes of knowledge and discourse but that it is responsible also for the 'positive unconscious' or 'non-formal knowledge' (Foucault, 2001: xi) that informs choreographer's attitudes and as such shapes current Cross-generational Dance practice, including my own.

Rather than the episteme as occurring in a particular era with defined calendar years attached to it, this chapter suggests a broader conception of the episteme – how an ideology can exist across different time periods. For example this chapter argues that Aristotle's ideas of community as commonality still have a bearing for how it is referred to in current community based choreography. Furthermore, it argues that such ideas potentially limit the development of the practice of Cross-generational Dance as it then always has the imperative of bringing people together to heal a rift between generations.

2.1 Community as Commonality

The particular perspective of community that will be examined in this section, is one that can be described in Devisch's (2013: 4) terms as most suited to the German word 'verfallsgeschicte' which refers to 'history as a narrative of degeneration and decay, as a fall from an earlier golden era'. This conception of community is in opposition to the diachronic momentum of time being synonymous with progress – progress in this instance being a positive force for change and towards betterment of the individual and of society.

These opposing positions also highlight two distinct approaches to theories of community that polarise debates on the subject: that of communitarianism (commonly associated with the communities of the past) and liberalism (evoking a progressive future facing individualist society). While a full review of these positions is beyond the scope of the current study it is clear that any discussion of community uses them as points of reference. The first is in keeping with the idea – identified by Devisch – that community is something relegated to a rose-tinted past that signifies a collective identity or shared history and refers to its original usage in the 14th century to refer to a 'body of commons' (Yudice in Bennet et al, 2005: 51). The latter – liberalism – posits that any community should be made up of free and equal individuals who choose to be a part of said community and defends the right of the individual over that of the collective.

In Community Dance terms, models of practice in the United Kingdom have always sought to recognise the role of both individual and collective modes of engagement in dance. Ken Bartlett, the then director of the Foundation for Community Dance wrote in 1996:

> Community Dance has traditionally embraced a set of values that…recognises the power and contribution of dance in transforming and empowering the lives of individuals and their communities.
>
> (Bartlett in Houston, 2009: 170)

Notions of 'the individual' and 'the community' as polarities are problematised by the position I adopt in this thesis of a relational ontology, discussed in Chapters Three and Four. The terminology, however, is prevalent in discourse surrounding community arts and as such worthy of analysis, not least as my own point of departure for considering alternatives. The way that Bartlett (ibid.) articulates the relationship between the individual and the community it would appear that a community belongs to the individual in the sense that it is their community that they may choose, or not, to participate in. By contrast to state 'communities and their individuals' appears odd grammatically, however this is perhaps due to communitarianism being a somewhat outmoded form of conceiving of community. The idea of the individual as responsible to and for their community, as communitarianism would have it, is one that has historically been eroded with the rise of industrialisation and globalisation[58]. Some argue though that this notion of community was in any case 'ideological rather than empirical…with historical evidence of the kind of social bonds some communitarians refer to as largely lacking in historical material' (Devisch, 2013: 18). Arguably, it is this very ideology that underpins much of the practice of Community Dance whether or not such a community actually existed.

Communitarianism has its own genealogy and range of perspectives within it which cannot be fully addressed here. These perspectives themselves address the debate between individual rights and social responsibility on a spectrum of communitarian theories. Amitai Etzioni (1998) makes a distinction between 'old' communitarian scholars, as far back as Aristotle, and 'new' communitarians – who may not even call themselves such – and whose views arguably share some of what appear to be the defining features of liberalism. What is referred to here – community as commonality – is a founding feature of much communitarian thought; the notion that to be in community is to share something in

[58] See for example Ferdinand Tonnies (1963), Fredric Jameson (1991) for different perspectives and arguments on how capitalist, consumer societies have eroded the values of community.

common with others who are also part of that community and/or that involves working towards a common good or aim.

A community of commonality can be seen as an essentialist view in that it refers to 'something' – a specific entity or attribute – that defines community as such. Essentialism in this instance refers to categories that rely on shared structures and form; anything called 'a hat' for example must share characteristics with the general category of a hat and all other things being referred to as hats. Furthermore, it is an unchangeable category, finite and objectively defined. In the case of Community Dance then, an essentialist approach might be seen in the need to classify by the particular generational identity of a group of people – their age – or divisions of practice such as 'Dance for the Over 50s', 'Youth Dance', 'Boys Dance' and so on.

Promoted by the notion of community as commonality is an ideal in which sharing commonality results in harmony and accord between people who recognise their common being. It is, as George Yudice (2005: 51) puts it, a sense of 'unmediated' fellowship and belonging by default of a preordained identity and existing set of relations. According to Adrian Little (2002: 19): 'communitarians… tend to acknowledge the primacy of human association as a source of self-identity and as a fundamental building block of human societies'. Community Dance rhetoric it seems would agree; in 2001 the Foundation for Community Dance drew up a list of qualities which define the practice, one of them being 'providing opportunities for people to develop more positive and active relationships with their wider communities' (Amans, 2008: 6). According to the Foundation for Community Dance then, the human association that Little refers to can be strengthened through practicing dance. This practice serves not only the individual but also a broader notion of society or 'wider communities' (ibid.) as they refer to it, arguably in keeping with the communitarian vision of the individual positively contributing to his/her community and vice versa.

The positive relationship to community as an affirmation of identity, is further confirmed by Macfarlane's Cross-generational Dance practice which largely subscribes to the orthodox communitarian view that to be in community means to be in harmony. This can be seen both in the content of her dances and the infrastructure surrounding them. The choreography that Macfarlane produces relies on a democratic process that involves contributions from all members of the group (see Chapter Three for further detail) and furthermore it is often structured in such a way as to provide a narrative of resolutions and

happy ending[59]. Crossover member Jeremy Spafford articulates here their democratic working relationships:

> The group has formed well partly because we share a common dance language…The strength of the group also lies in equity…it is fundamentally democratic. All members get paid the same and all members have an equal say in how the company develops, what themes the company explores and how the artistic vision is realised.
>
> (Spafford, 2011: Appendix D)

The harmonious community Macfarlane creates is also evident in the way that her dance practice has a large and committed following. Support structures for her work spill out of the dance studio and into quotidian life – what she described in 2004 as 'the invisible networks that evolve' (Macfarlane & Dyke, 2004: n.p.) between people who are participating in not only the practice itself through performances and classes, but in helping to create its own conditions of possibility. This illustrates another commonly held ideal of community, that as folk musician Burt Feintuch (2001: 151) puts it 'to be in community is to participate in a web of connectedness to others that continues beyond special events'. Similarly, the Foundation for Community Dance advocates 'sustained support' (Amans, 2008: 6) for people and communities and Arts Council England require any community arts project it funds to be able to demonstrate in advance its legacy – what it will leave behind after the project itself has finished.

During my time working as a dance artist at Oxford Youth Dance between 2002 and 2009 the invisible networks Macfarlane refers to were evident in relationships that were being formed that orbited the dance classes themselves. These ranged from lift sharing to performances and rehearsals, child-care so that partners and siblings could participate in dance activity, to volunteers building sets, sewing costumes, or making music for events. Acts of labour in the service of the common desired outcome of a performance or event were regularly offered.

Acts such as these are in keeping with a view of community whereby the specific attributes that make up a community are, according to Little (2002: 3)…

> …based upon the existence or encouragement of certain virtues or principles…community exists where virtues such as friendship, voluntarism and care are exhibited…whereby individuals belong to a social group…where their behaviour and status is not based on instrumental gain.

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[59] Examples of this can be seen in her work *Tryptich* 2005, *Dragons Tale* 2007 (see fig 2), *Suspension* 2009. There is no publicly available record of these works but the author has seen all in person.

This is arguably why, as Plant (1974:6) suggested in 1974, community is, and always has been, a 'warmly persuasive' term, associated as it is with the non-mandatory giving of time and energy. Gerard Delanty (2007: 29) confirms this point in the *Community Performance Reader* stating that 'communitarianism has reflected a very anti-political view of community…it is a view of community that is very much disengaged from the state, locating community in the voluntaristic domain'.

Defining community as a voluntaristic endeavour is seen by some as a way to give autonomy and freedom as Lord Keynes (1945: 21), a founding member of the Arts Council, referred to 'the arm's length principle'; a principle in which funding should not influence artistic output stating: 'the work of the artist in all its aspects is, of its nature, individual and free, undisciplined, unregimented, uncontrolled.' (ibid.) However the arm's length principle is not only to protect artistic integrity as Keynes would have it, nor does it leave community in a hermetically sealed bubble, protected from political agendas. In Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron's 2009 electoral campaign for example community was a so-called 'buzzword'. As Matarasso (2013: 6) notes since the 1990s the term community '…seemed increasingly tainted, as Government co-opted its positive associations to rebrand policies'. For example, Cameron's notion of the 'Big Society' similarly relied on ideas of voluntarism and doing good for society without the need for financial recompense; he saw devolving power to local communities and individuals as creating 'communities with oomph – neighbourhoods who are in charge of their own destiny, who feel if they club together and get involved they can shape the world around them.' (Cameron, 2009). With cuts to arts funding increasing throughout Cameron's term in office, this idea of being empowered to shape one's own destiny through voluntarism continues to circulate to enable arts projects and initiatives. Community arts in this sense are seen as relying on the willing participation of volunteers who wish to support the arts. In turn this can lead to a devaluing of professional skills and services, or arguably undermine the need for arts funding, as Cameron would have it, citing the more intangible benefits of responsibility and pride as reward enough.

Community then in this view is based on a notion of virtue and what is more in Aristotle's terms, the possibility of the 'good life' or working towards the 'common good', invoking therefore a moral code of conduct. This is not an explicit code of law but rather is – as Yudice (2005: 51) puts it – ' felt to be more organic or natural and therefore stronger and deeper than a rational or contractual association of individuals such as the state'. This is in part because what constitutes a community has been defined as being based on the

geography and cultural practices of where someone is born – in the case of André Gorz's[60] (1999) 'constitutive communities' for example, which is a long-standing idea of an essentialist community. In 1924 MacIver wrote that: 'Life is essentially and always communal life. Every living thing is born into community and owes its life to community' (MacIver, 1924: 209), thus in a constitutive community a moral tie is established by default of birth.

According to Little, social philosopher Andre Gorz's concept of the 'constitutive community' is one in which the bonds are stronger than those of the cooperative or 'elective' community – which one chooses to be a part of – because 'we are members of these communities without choice and on an equal footing' (Little, 2002: 159). At Oxford Youth Dance I witnessed people being born into the dance practice, accompanying other members of the family to a class before they began to take part in their own right at two years old. Indeed, my own relationship with Macfarlane began when I was a teenager taking part in Oxford Youth Dance Company, before eventually working alongside her as a facilitator and co-director. In 2004 Macfarlane wrote: 'Over 17 years children, mothers and daughters, fathers and sons, grandparents, began to dance because they were excited and committed to the subject, growing and developing as people' (Dyke and Macfarlane, 2004: n.p.). It was through commitments and connections such as this that *Crossover* itself was initiated with dancers that had grown up with and through her dance practice. For Gorz (1999: 121) though such a community 'protects individuals, sheltering their identities from the changing values, pressures and demands of the society around them'.

By contrast to Macfarlane, and in keeping with 21st century choreographic tropes which are based less on a dance company model, Rosemary Lee's work can be seen to be more in keeping with Gorz's notion of a 'cooperative' or 'elective' community. Given the project based nature of her work people usually choose to take part on a short term basis and may not have worked with her before. Lee works in multiple locations according to commissions and rarely are people born into the practice in the same way that they might be for practitioners such as Macfarlane who are more permanently based in a single geographical location. Lee's way of working is in keeping with the liberalist view of community which, rather than membership by default of birth, advocates the choice to take part or not, and what is more, acknowledges there exists a multiplicity of communities and the ability to belong to more than just one. Little (2002: 24) writes:

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[60] André Gorz was born Gerhard Hirsch but the former was the pen name to which his most prominent philosophical writings is attributed

> …identity, then, is not given by the fact that we are members of a certain group. The importance of any group will vary to different members of the group…individuals are likely to be members of a multiplicity of groups that are each in their own way sources of the self as they contribute to individual identity…we should be careful not to present communities as homogenous forms of association that have uniform impact on their members…

Although this view still subscribes to the idea of a self-enclosed discreet individual which I critique in following chapters, it is significant in identifying the pluralism of contemporary culture, and indeed arts practice. Community Dance projects such as Lee and Macfarlane's are not usually a participant's main occupation or way of spending time but rather one of many activities in which they may participate in their daily lives.

The notion of a cooperative community, or indeed multiple ones, however does not avoid the ideology of community as commonality, as it still relies on an emphasis of what is shared between people who decide to come together. This can also clearly be seen in the way that Lee articulates her choreographic practice. Below, she describes her inspiration and movement vocabulary for her 2009 cross-generational performance *Common Dance*[61]:

> The common is where people shared space, met, grazed their livestock, it felt communally owned and used…sensing it as a place to gather and to roam, and being aware that common ground has been eroded, especially in urban settings (along with the right to gather) and is less valued now, I felt drawn to that idea as a foundation for exploring the piece. Soon the idea of commonality and what that might mean as well as ideas of folk dances and communal dance patterns began to occur. I am a believer in strong, diverse communities finding common ground where they can.
>
> (Lee, londondance.com, 2009)

Lee's view and choreographic approach can be seen as in keeping with 'verfallsgeschicte', identified by Devisch (2013) as a nostalgic or imagined view of what community has been and an attempt to somehow recreate this through her choreography, particularly in her cross-generational work. The quotation also illuminates the relationship of physical spaces and places to ideas of community, which are often seen 'as symbolic of a common life past and present' as Clarke (1973: 32) puts it. He goes on to say that 'to argue that place influences community is a very different matter from assuming certain geographical units or areas are synonymous with it…the term community has been applied to places ranging from the small village to an entire nation' (ibid.). In the case of Macfarlane's practice then, her community of dancers is tied to the specific locality of Oxford as opposed to Lee who

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[61] Common Dance was commissioned by Greenwhich Dance Agency in 2009 and was performed by a cast of professional dancers and non-professionals in Greenwhich. It was reviewed in The Guardian which further cemented Lee's reputation as a leading name in participatory dance with artistic credibility.

uses site-specificity as one of her choreographic strategies in a variety of locations. Significantly, Bishop (2013: 191) also notes that the 1990s saw the proliferation of 'long-term, process-based projects with specific constituencies – of the kind initiated by community arts – return with renewed vigour…under the frame of site-specificity'. Like the X6 collective and Judson Dance Theater, Lee in particular has sought out sites beyond the traditional theatre setting to create and perform choreography. More than being simply an artistic premise that uses the site as a stimulus for movement material, this can be seen as an invitation for dance to relate more directly to the social contexts in which it is taking place[62]. In this instance, what a group has 'in common' might be their shared experiences, stories and memories of a specific place or site.

2.2 Imagining Community

Benedict Anderson (2006) makes a useful point about the relationship between theory and practice suggesting that community is an imaginary social construct that has little to do with the reality of people's practical interactions[63]. Whether associated with a particular place as a symbol of commonality, or with shared identities and pursuits, the notion of community is often just that – a notion. Both Clarke and Plant in the 1970s point out the divorce between theory and practice in sociological and philosophical studies of community. Plant (1974: 2) goes as far as to say the philosopher's role is 'parasitic' and of a second order rather than 'trying to understand what the sociologist, the politically committed, the social worker and men in the street *mean* when they talk about 'community'.' This view does not however take into account the idea of the episteme and how there is an affective relationship between what people 'on the street' as Clarke (2006) would have it – in this instance choreographers – mean when they talk about community and the philosophical perspectives informing and existing in parallel with these articulations, whether or not they themselves are aware of it.

His focus is on the evolution of nationalism however it is useful to consider in particular because he writes of the 'emotional literacy' of, and 'deep attachment' to, the idea of community, (ibid. 48) which I also argue permeates Community Dance rhetoric; in particular the idea of different generations overcoming difficulties in coming together

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[62] See Shaughnessy (2012) and Kwon (2002) or further discussion on issues raised by dialogues between performance and site.

[63] This is also significant given current trends in so called 'on-line communities' that exist on the internet but whose participants may never meet.

through taking part in dance, as I discuss in more detail in the following chapter.

In relation to the nation as a political community Anderson (2006: 48) writes: 'it is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of its members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion'. The phenomenological then is not part of this particular definition of community because, as he points out, embodied encounters have nothing to do with an imagined community. Concurrently though the embodied encounters facilitated by Community Dance practitioners such as those featured in this chapter are influenced by such images of communion and togetherness and often rely on living up to these images to evaluate their success. What is problematic about the idea of community based on nationalism, whether imagined or not, is as Delanty (2007: 31) notes, that 'society is based on a pre-established unity over and above the individual and all social groups whose diversity must be denied in the assertion of wholeness'.

Community as the bringing or weaving together of disparate elements to create a cohesive whole, is arguably part of the epistemological horizon for Cross-generational Dance and once again refers back to the idea of 'community as commonality'. Macfarlane demonstrates this in articulating her decision to name the company Crossover:

> I called it Crossover because it was crossing all ages but also because I approached it a bit like a piece of tapestry with the threads crossing over, because I was like how do I work with this intergenerational group who has never met before, has got dance in common, got me in common, but you know, has so much different life experience.
>
> (Macfarlane, 2009: Appendix B)

Macfarlane here also identifies a central tenet of this thesis – the tension between difference and commonality. Such a tension begs the question of how to account for both in Cross-generational Dance without drawing exclusionary boundaries, as the following section discusses in more detail.

My own imagined community on arriving in Cornwall to begin this research process referred back to an originary idea based on the constitutive notion as embodied in Macfarlane's practice in Oxford. As a teacher and as a participant this was a community that I very much felt a part of. Not only the bringing together of people of different ages into a whole but the model of a sustainable Cross-generational Dance company that operated on the basis of a professional dance in education model, creating performance work for touring to similarly generationally diverse target audiences. Having known and been a part of Crossover, I wanted to use them as a model for my own practice. I was

interested in how starting from the inception of such a company I could document what I presumed would be the diachronic evolution of participant's experiences as they went from a company of strangers to one where they felt they were *in* community through the natural evolution of spending time together pursuing shared goals and practice. This imagined simplistic form that the practice as research took was not how it emerged of course, as Chapters Three and Four document and examine in more detail. The approach became a much more fragmented and intermittent one, also reflected by my choice of theoretical frameworks that depart from the perspectives examined in this chapter based on commonality and longevity. What is significant in my experience is how the 'positive unconscious' as Foucault (1972; 2002) terms it – which I am now critically reflective of, was a strong influence on my own conceptions of how to choreograph community in Cross-generational Dance. In Foucault's terms the positive unconscious is a level of knowledge that eludes consciousness of the scientist yet is part of forming – in his discussion – scientific discourse and as such forms part of the conditions of possibility for any structures of knowledge (ibid.). In my case I use it to refer to the way that I had a level of informal empirical knowledge that was unconsciously informing my desired outcome for this research in terms of what it meant to choreograph a community and how a dance community functioned. It was not until the research revealed other possibilities that I became conscious of how these images and ideas were impacting on my research process in trying to make my practice fit with preconceived theory and knowledge.

2.3 Qualitative Community

The images, ideas and concepts of community, then, influence the conditions of possibility for how Community Dance is imagined and performed. In the context of this thesis I am also examining if this epistemological field has a bearing on how it is experienced, as I discuss further in Chapters Three and Four. This section examines the illusive qualitative aspect of community. Significantly, for both Gorz (1999) and Aristotle (MacIntyre, 1981) it is not enough to simply be born into community but rather it is the *type* of relationship between people that engenders a community as such, for example the friendship and voluntarism identified by Little (2002) .

According to Gorz (cited in Little, 2002: 158) the associations between people 'lose their status as communities whenever the bonds move towards the formal through the introduction of contracts or the institutionalization of juridicial status'. In the case of Community Dance then this underlines that a large part of what distinguishes professional from Community Dancers is the fact that the former gets paid – usually entering into a

contractual agreement – while the latter does not. Bishop's (2013) notion of 'delegated performance' provides an interesting counterpoint to these positions.

While community arts focused on providing meaningful relationships between artists and communities and indeed relied somewhat on the altruistic imperative of the practitioners, Bishop's (2013: 219) concept identifies a distinct form whereby participants are paid 'to perform their own socio-economic category, be this on the basis of gender, ethnicity, age, disability…or (more rarely), a profession'. She uses the example of visual artist Tino Seghal (who trained in choreography) as a case in point. He terms his work 'situations' - for example 'This Situation' (2007) in which being that he paid philosophy students to discuss the relationship between subjectivity and objectivity in an art gallery and to invite viewers to join the discussion on the basis of rules he had set. Bishop's point is that the intervention of economics into participation changes both the nature of the participant's labour and the role of the artist, and arguably affects the quality of the relationships engendered. In this case Seghal cannot be seen as engaging in either the 'community model' or the 'animateur model' of community arts practice and neither is he claiming to, however he nonetheless is seen as socially engaged in the way that he brings social life into his arts practice and vice versa.

Crossover too provide a useful discussion point in this regard because they are a paid a fee for performances and rehearsals both for dancers who have had a professional training as well as those that have not. Although the conceptual basis is distinct as they may perform roles or narratives that are not their own as such, being labelled 'cross-generational' means they are in effect doing just what Bishop suggested and being hired for their very identification as a particular generation (see Chapter Three for further discussion of the implications of this).

What is more, at an annual Crossover members meeting in 2011 the question was raised – in the face of cuts to arts funding putting a potential project at risk – whether the company would continue *without* being paid if they had to make the choice. The answer to this question was a resounding yes from all the members present, illustrating that participants value Crossover for far more than financial recompense. Their bonds are not those of the kind that Gorz (1999) ascribes to contractual agreements, albeit that their work does indeed involve such contracts. The value instead is based on the quality of their relationships and their perceived sense of ownership over the work and its processes. In Little's (2002) terms too, this is evidence that defines Crossover as a community because their practice is not driven by profit. Gwen Robertson (2007: 117) somewhat idealistically

argues that this is also fundamental in defining the rationale for community performance as 'a place beyond the law of profit that allows and even encourages 'inter-human commerce'. The equation of relationships with commerce however is significant in the political economy of the arts which have to justify public spending or find a way to survive without it, as I have already pointed out. High profile artists such as Seghal are in a privileged position to be able to pay participants whereas many Community Dance artists may not have these resources available to them and be dependent instead on qualities that do not rely on instrumental gain.

The qualities of community that propose care and voluntarism over and above profit are also those that Lee seeks in her performers. Here she describes her casting of *Common Dance*: 'I looked for people I sensed could listen and could be part of a group and act with kindness and openness, people with empathy, that colours their dancing too.' (Lee in Pethybridge, 2010: 45). The qualities associated with community in this instance then are positive and affirming, people are chosen to participate in Lee's and Macfarlane's work on the basis of such qualities that allow them to sustain their visions of harmonious communities. In turn, people participate because they value what the project has to offer them.

Community, according to the views presented in this section, can be seen as the embodiment of a reciprocal relationship that is mutually beneficial, based on virtuous qualities which further confirm the associations of community with being a 'good' thing, a worthy concept, indeed something to strive for. Arguably Cross-generational Dance often becomes a means to achieve such an end.

2.4 The teleology of the common good

Emotional attachments to imagined communities are perhaps due to what Plant (1974) refers to as the 'evaluative' meaning of the word, referring to the subjective feelings it arouses that are associated with positive qualities and virtues. Similarly, Raymond Williams writes: '…unlike all other terms of social organisation (state, nation, society etc.) community never seems to be used unfavourably' (Williams cited in Matarasso 2013: 6). Community is therefore something to be aspired to and/or desired, as appears to be the case for both Macfarlane and Lee in their Cross-generational Dance practice. Plant goes on to point out though that community work as it originated in the 18th and 19th century was usually the well-meaning upper classes trying to improve the sometimes appalling conditions of the working classes. Such an impulse was not necessarily as benign as it may

seem, Eileen Younghusband (1964: 64) warned in the late 1960s that 'all community work is shot through with assumptions that some forms of social life and change are better than others', again calling into question the role of the artist or choreographer in facilitating such change. What Plant (1974) identifies is the normative tone of community, that to better someone is also for them to conform – a fact that appears to be largely ignored by Community Dance practitioners.

Philosopher and self-proclaimed Aristotelian and communitarian Alisdair MacIntyre in his book *After Virtue* (1981) advocates Aristotle's view of the common aim being that which defines and sustains a community. He states that according to Aristotle it is through the virtuous actions that are, in their very nascency, orientated towards the common good that the bonds of community are created, rather than instrumental individual gain. Indeed, MacIntyre uses the example of a community founded to achieve a common project to demonstrate how virtues are defined through the establishing of a shared aim. People then corroborate what is virtuous in that it 'contributes to the realisation of their common good' (MacIntyre, 1981: 151). For Aristotle the aforementioned moral code is not embedded in the words of law but embodied in virtue and its corresponding actions. This is a view shared by Lee (2008: 77) who writes: 'I believe fundamentally in the positive power of groups of people coming together for a common creative purpose and the extraordinary effect that has on both individual and group'. The idea of a common goal then is a compelling one – easily identified in the dance context as a product in the shape of a performance. In this view, the sense that there is a goal implicit in this coming together is an integral part of what defines a community as such. In this instance, as opposed to Gorz's (1999) focus on how a community comes into being and the qualities that such a phenomenon might generate, community is conceived of by its teleology, or purpose. In the same way much Community Dance practice is instrumentalised through discussions of its 'impact'.

The issue with this view is that Community then becomes imbued with a normative tone – as Devisch (2013) notes – if the individual only counts in so far as he contributes to the development of the communal good and its ultimate aim. This is also the communitarian stance that the liberalists sought to counter. Significantly also, these notions lend themselves to the evolution of the terminology of 'social exclusion' which became a key part of the rhetoric surrounding Community Dance practice in the 1990s. Social exclusion refers to the idea that if someone within a community transgresses what is considered virtuous – working towards the good – then they are excluded from said community (be that permanently or temporarily in the form of punishment). Furthermore, a community must recognise this transgression in order to affirm its position as a community – the

dangerous logical conclusion of which is a totalitarian schema in which any form of difference is denied. The 'in-common' of a goal that unites individuals in their purpose is tied to a conception of virtue, which is affirmed through contributions to said common good. Clearly this view invites critique and begs the question how community can then be something that is achieved without a universal conception of what is 'good'. What is more, the shared understanding of the goal in question in the Aristotelian view puts emphasis on the end result rather than on the processes and interactions to get there. Such an emphasis is at odds with Community Dance discussions of 'process' as more important than 'product'.

By contrast Victor Turner, ethnographer and social anthropologist, significant for his contribution to performance studies[64] has conceived of this very process of becoming a community through his notion of 'communitas' (Turner, 1969). The concept of 'communitas' was based on the study of various rites of passage rituals in specific cultures. Turner uses the Latin word communitas instead of community, for precisely the reasons this chapter lays out, in order to create a distinction between the more fixed notions of identity, and location of a particular community and the *process* of communitas as a lived experience. In his terms an experience which relies on identity roles becoming more 'unstructured and…relatively undifferentiated' (Turner, 1969: 360). Turner argues that through rituals hierarchical roles become less relevant during a period of liminality – or transition – whereby people experience the social bond as equals. He argues that this experience serves an important cathartic and symbolic function to the society as a whole.

Turner (1988: 44) proposes different models of communitas – one of which is 'normative communitas' typified by comradeship and sacrifice on the part of the individual for the group; a model which bears close resemblance to a communitarian vision of community. Concurrently he cites 'existential communitas' as 'a direct unmediated, and total confrontation of human identities, often ephemeral in duration…' (ibid.). What is significant here is that rather than a teleologic conception of community, Turner analyses community as a lived experience and a dynamic process – one that is never fully realised – as opposed

[64] Turner's studies of rituals saw performance as 'the manifestations par excellence for human social processes'. As such he provided a model for performance artists who wanted to link their practice to wider social concerns. What is more Turners work was a core element in Richard Schechner's (1977; 1985; 2013) development of performance theory in the 1970s and the development of the academic discipline of performance studies in the 1980s and 1990s in what was arguably another epistemic shift.

to being based on a substantive essence or building towards a purposeful end. In this instance rather than the teleology of the common good Turner argues for a more immediate focus on the ephemeral nature of experiences of community.

An obvious critique of communitas however is whether such an 'unmediated' encounter is even possible given that it suggests a kind of 'authenticity' that is not socially constructed in any sense. Furthermore, according to Turner (1988), communitas still occurs between subjects perceived as self-enclosed totalities, and is based on specific cultural identifications, arguably shared understandings already need to be in place for this experience to occur. The non-hierarchical equality that he proposes in communitas however is indeed in keeping with Community Dance values in which the choreographer is seen as on an equal footing with participants. Furthermore his articulation of process rather than an end result is also significant to the continuum of process/product in Community Dance. However while Turner's ideas are useful to highlight the *process* of community as opposed to an essentialist perspective or teleological trajectory, arguably his concepts are nonetheless at risk of over-simplifying the relationships at play. Communitas is still deemed as an irrepressibly celebratory and positive experience which reduces participants to the same as one another in a moment of coming together. A moment which is also tied to ritual practices within a preordained shared cultural belief system, as such serving to support the status-quo rather than provide an alternative perspective or an encounter with difference.

2.5 Leaving Community Behind

The ideas discussed in this chapter that conceive of community as based on shared identities, notions of virtue and voluntarism, and what is held in common or working towards a common aim can be seen to be reflected in Macfarlane's and Lee's articulations about their choreographic work. What is more these philosophies are evident in Community Dance rhetoric more broadly. Such perspectives also considerably informed my research journey through this project and I continue to refer to them throughout this thesis under the rubric 'community as commonality'. My own experience of Community Dance with Macfarlane was the impetus for this research project. It was an experience largely informed by a vision of community that necessitated a shared goal and a recognition that what was valuable about Cross-generational Dance was its ability to bring ordinary people together to experience community through the virtuous qualities of voluntarism, kindness, empathy and generosity, as the previous sections have discussed. However, with my own arrival in Cornwall to begin this research and the lack of a cohesive community of dancers

of all ages to share my practice with, I had to address my own assumptions about what community meant and what it was that I had left behind.

I too was subscribing to 'verfallsgeschicte' (Devisch, 2013) in seeking to re-create something from the past by using Crossover as a model for my practice. However while Lee, Macfarlane, and to an extent myself, along with many politicians and philosophers may mourn the loss of community, others argue that it is good riddance. According to the liberalist perspective, this communitarian and romantic view of the past community is not one to be aspired to, or indeed recreated through choreography or any other means. Little (2002: 30) for example, points out that '...the loss of community is no loss at all, in fact it has been a liberating and emancipating development..... the basis of human association is not in tradition, habit and custom but in the contract and consent of free persons'.

In the liberalist view, the rise of capitalism and individualism allows people to consent to be part of multiple communities rather than fixed geographically, or biologically, to just one. It is out of this school of thought that several more radical theories of community have sprung. These theories also go beyond the simple notion of the cooperative community as involving choice and consent. Philosophers such as Nancy (1991) and Cavarero (2000) have sought to identify how community can be something that does not rely on a totalising imperative; an imperative that is present in the dance context. Furthermore, while the commonality that Lee and Macfarlane speak of might have the good intentions to recognise difference, or as Lee put it: "letting the individual shine through" (Lee, 2010: Appendix C), it is in danger of subsuming any real difference in the desire to find common ground or achieve a common aim or preordained 'good'.

For Nancy, (cited in Devisch, 2013: 32) the very theme of the loss of community is in itself a ''philosopheme' – an eternally recurring thematic of political thought'. Not a debate that can be solved within the confines of this thesis therefore, but acknowledging Nancy's point that it is only through recognising this dilemma, and accepting it, that any meaningful discussion of community can begin provides a compelling rationale for my own investigation. Any notion of an experience of community in Cross-generational Dance and how it may be choreographed must begin with the acknowledgment of the evaluative meaning of the word and indeed how these values are embodied through the practice of Community Dance. These conditions of possibility also shape the cross generational dance I have been involved in and my own perspective on how I might practice community through choreographic approaches. This perspective can be seen as my own positive unconscious, or to put it another way, my position in the epistemological field.

Having left Oxford, I faced many stumbling blocks in establishing the kind of consistent practice that Macfarlane had and was therefore often frustrated that the community I had experienced – and indeed imagined – did not appear possible. This was due to factors such as being based in a large, spread-out rural area such as Cornwall which often meant travel limitations and costs for potential participants. Also the fact that there was an existing dance culture that was already fulfilling the needs of those wishing to take part in Community Dance projects and events before my arrival had a large part to play.

It was only through the challenges I faced, however, and distance from the original community I had left behind that my own critical reflection began to emerge, because, to quote Zygmunt Bauman (2001: 12) 'in a true community there is no motivation towards reflection, criticism or experimentation…'. In the same way, my own relationship to Macfarlane and her practice had also meant just this, not only was I close to her personally as well as professionally but when something appears to be working and functioning well it is less likely to invite interrogative questions. As Bauman suggests this is also arguably because to pose such questions risks undermining the very community one is part of, hence what Bishop (2012) points out is the lack of a 'meta-critical discourse' on community arts practice more broadly and the uncritical nature of much Community Dance discourse – practitioners are often unwilling to critique something that they are a part of.

As I have argued in this chapter, the ideological premise of the term community is as much a contributing factor to this apolitical rhetoric as a pragmatic approach to get funding and achieve arts policy agendas. In this particular case I argue that due to the ideologies of community as commonality the practice of Cross-generational Dance also remains largely uncritical – a self-affirming and self-sufficient community at risk of becoming a moral totality. The well-intentioned claims to celebrate or affirm difference in order to avoid such a totality are only achieved in as much as said difference contributes to the unity of the project to create social inclusion and/or equality or the common end goal. Such an equality though leads to nullifying political difference in any affective sense. In order to interrogate such a vicious circle in my own practice (explored further in Chapters Three and Four) I sought to experiment with methods that draw from difference and facilitate an experience of community that does not rely on a falsified notion of equality. Instead I use relational choreography to underpin and reveal non-totalising concepts of community in Cross-generational Dance. The concept of relational choreography that I use to frame my own practical methods – outlined in the previous chapter – is not new but has developed from a particular historical genealogy and my own search to leave community, as I knew it, behind. In the same way as I was trying to use Crossover as a model on which to base my practice,

Community in the sense of 'verfallsgeschichte' is, in Nancy's terms 'in-operative' (1991). In-operative because it is always seeking to recreate something that has already passed, or perhaps was never there in the first place, existing as an imagined phenomenon.

This chapter has sketched just some of the possibilities for theorising notions of community, all of which refer to the communitarian and liberal positions between a discrete individual and a group of which they are a part. This is by no means exhaustive given the wealth of philosophical perspectives on community that continue to be developed – it is a concept that has given rise to what Nancy (1991: 27) suggests is perhaps a 'theoretical excess'. Rather, I have identified those philosophical perspectives that relate most closely to the rhetoric of Community Dance and the cross-generational practice of Lee and Macfarlane and my own ideas about Community; seen as part of the epistemological field in which I was operating. The rhetoric adopted by these choreographers and the Community Dance sector more broadly, while by no means disingenuous, is reflective of the episteme. So while the episteme can be a useful tool in considering a more horizontal perspective of history as Chapter One argued, here it can be used to consider how it creates limitations for how notions of community are articulated and practiced in dance.

Fig. 4: Crossover in rehearsal for Rosemary Lee 2011

Chapter Three: Performing Singularity in Cross-generational Dance

The first part of this chapter focuses on notions of difference as constitutive of Cross-generational Dance through its emphasis on different ages. Difference is also examined through the relationship of the group to the individual as an often cited conception of how community functions. Outlined in the previous chapter, essentialist definitions of community rely on this relationship of the self-enclosed individual in relation to the collective identity of community. Arguably however these positions – communal association or individual freedom – have, as Little (2002: 31) suggests '...diminished the space for alternative perceptions of community'. This chapter investigates some such alternative perceptions by arguing that through the practice featured in this chapter it is possible to conceive of a concept of community as being-in-relation through a phenomenology of uniqueness. Such a conception opposes dyadic conceptions of difference and fixed identities as the basis for experiences of community. I also argue therefore that this conception of community extends the possibilities for how choreographers in the Community Dance sector might think about and articulate their practice, and as such the very epistemological field that produces these ideas.

Crossover serves as a case study in this chapter to identify both the more limiting paradigms of community as encompassing difference within a totality and concurrently to illustrate the potential for articulations of an experience of community that do not rely solely on these paradigms, and indeed, potentially changes them.

3.1 Dancing Difference: Affirmation or Negation?

The views on community examined so far in this thesis confine community to identity, either through collectivity, and the nostalgic notion of a shared common good, or through the idea of the individual choosing to participate in a community on the basis of shared characteristics or goals. As the previous chapter began to identify though, however well intentioned, these positions are troublesome in that their logical conclusion leads to a totalitarian schema. Totalitarianism refers to a system whereby all parties involved are of the same opinions and values. Any individual – or being – that identifies as 'different' to the overarching *in common* identity of the community is therefore seen as 'other'. This totalising impulse further emphasises the duality between a person in community being subsumed as part of a group or being an individual, free of the constraints and obligations

of communal bonds. Considering the theme of difference therefore is pertinent to the current discussion, not least in relation to age as a marker of generation. Generational difference is itself constitutive of the very definition of Cross-generational Dance.

Community Dance rhetoric largely emphasises difference as favourable meaning, as Macfarlane puts it, that it is something to be 'celebrated' (Dyke & Macfarlane, 2004: n.p.). The wider community arts sector too primarily refers to difference as 'affirmative' in the same way that scholar Petra Kuppers (2003; 2011) uses the term as a model in disability studies. As Ang (in Bennet et al, 2003: 141) points out this is because 'claiming one's difference and turning it into symbolic capital has become a powerful and attractive strategy among those who have been marginalised or excluded'. In the affirmative model the excluded or 'other' is positively construed as empowered through that very exclusion[65], reiterating Houston's (2005) point that social inclusion can be seen as a form of choice. The opposing notion of difference is referred to as 'negation', Ang (in Bennet et al, 2003: 141) defines this as the 'a/not a' model whereby something is defined by what it is not. In Foucault's terms, negation operates through what theologian Miroslav Volf (1996: 61) calls a 'double repressive strategy of binary division (i.e. mad/sane, normal/abnormal)', or in this case potentially old/young – with much inter-generational discourse emphasising such a binary. The concept of negation is in direct contrast to the affirmative definition of difference; it implies that the 'other' side of the a/not-a binary – or those outside the safety of the community boundary – are abject; the 'them' as opposed to 'us'. Similarly, according to MacIntyre (1981) Aristotle's conception of community relies on negation of the abject outsider being punished by the community whose codes she/he has transgressed in order to affirm the position and commonality of said community.

As a political category, difference can be embodied in numerous ways and has been addressed distinctly by many writers in varied fields and disciplines[66]. In the Community sector however it tends to embody a particular dialectic which bears resemblance with that noted in Kupper's (2003; 2011) studies of disability and performance. The 'dialectic' refers to the inherent contradiction in that to be different or 'other' can be both a help and a hindrance in generating a public profile, cultural visibility and indeed funding – as Ang pointed out – difference becomes part of a strategy. Crossover, for example, chose to call themselves *Crossover Intergenerational Dance Company* rather than simply Crossover

[65] Queer theory has built on this notion of the abjection of the other to create a discourse of empowerment. See De Lauretis (1991), Butler (1993; 1999), Sedgewick (1990).

[66] See for example, Hall (1989; 2001), Derrida (2001), Nancy (2000), Todd (1997), Levinas (1979), Deleuze (1994).

Dance Company not least for these reasons. Not only is Cross-generational Dance, through its very identification as 'cross-generational', itself 'other' but the explicit iteration of said difference is also central to the ideology and methods of Crossover and many such related dance projects and groups.

The centrality of the theme of difference in Community Dance is exemplified by the then creative director of the Foundation for Community Dance Ken Bartlett's chapter *Love Difference: Why is diversity important in Community Dance,* written in 2008, in which he writes: 'Community Dance over the last thirty years has built up a tradition of being excited by the possibilities of different people and different dance traditions' (Bartlett, 2008: 39). Without saying different to what precisely, readers are left to presume that this refers to different to mainstream Western theatre dance and its traditions of training and performance. The assumption of what might be 'normal' as opposed to 'different' is implicit in Bartlett's assertion. He goes on also to iterate the importance of being inclusive towards such differences in finding commonality – again the rhetoric of Community Dance is reduced to the polarities of individual difference being accommodated in common pursuits and inclusive groups.

3.2: Relating to Age

In terms of difference, the category of age is arguably more troublesome to disrupt than some markers of identity, as this section will examine. This is despite the fact that post-structuralist, feminist and post-colonial theory has made the point that identity can no longer be seen as something fixed. Indeed, the concept of identity has become, as cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1989: 2) puts it, 'a process never completed, always in process'. Such ideas of fluid post-modern identity formation also complicate the idea of a fixed community that can share in its common identity. However the trouble with age is that though convincing solutions exist in theory, as yet there is no way to entirely halt the materiality of the ageing process. Ageing is often seen in contemporary consumer culture as a phenomenon to be transcended, or even reversed, as journalist Anne Karpf (2011: 16) pointed out, 'age denial is a modern phenomenon. Before the 19th century ageing was considered something that had to be endured as part of the human condition. Increasingly this has given way to a conception of old age as a problem to which there might be a scientific [or theoretical?] solution.' Feminist scholar Susan Stocker (2001: 33) also warns against using fluid conceptions of identity to re-frame ageing and argues instead for a 'strategic essentialism that acknowledges the ontology of the material, biological body' and

warns of an 'anti-biologism' that has almost become naturalised in post-modern theory[67]. Arguably dance is in a unique position to realise such a strategy given its embodied form, however this is not always the case given that many dancers retire at an age when those in other professions would be considered in their prime[68].

Furthermore, Christine Victor (2005) notes in her comprehensive study of the social context of ageing that it can indeed be difficult to overcome chronological age as a category in practice. She writes that despite the variety of ways there are to conceptualise 'the lifecourse', as she puts it, these are of limited use practically. As such, she states: '…for all its limitations we are usually left with using chronological age to describe the group of interest.' (Victor, 2005: 7) Similarly, with Cross-generational Dance this appears to be the case in that throughout this research, while I am examining experience as a basis for notions of generation and therefore community, I continue to refer to participants' chronological age as a point of reference, in both writing and in practice. Cross-generational Dance too must, by necessity, refer to the age of its participants. This creates a significant impasse between theory – which may wish to dismiss age as a fixed concept, and practice, which continues to need to refer to it, in dance as in daily life.

Here Macfarlane describes her own idea to form Crossover and how difference was central to the initial premise. The company members were chosen due to their on-going commitment to her already existing practice, how old they were and the age differences between them (see **Fig. 5**). She states:

> I had this idea of these pairings of ages so that it's not just grandchild, grandparent and the mother in-between; it's actually each decade being different and key to it is not being related… I remember thinking ooh I've got that dancer and this dancer etc. and literally casting it and knowing who I was going to come back and ask and that was the beginning.
>
> (Macfarlane, 2009: Appendix B)

Crossover then, was from the outset based on the idea of difference between the ages. Macfarlane has also said that she likes to have an effective 'spread' of generations

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[67] Whilst referring to 'post-modern philosophies' in this manner simplifies a vast array of writers and philosophers from different disciplines (some of whom who would probably reject the term themselves), there have indeed been certain trends with regard to theories of embodiment that it is useful to touch on here. Simplistically speaking, many post-modernists seek to position the body as a fluid project that is available to mould, shape and construct over time. Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1988) for example refer to a 'body without organs', or Judith Butler (1999) discusses an abstract body that is continually 'performed' and made material only through discourse in her notion of performativity.

[68] According to Levine, the average retirement age for a professional dance performer is 35

indicating that each person in the company is also seen as somehow representative of a particular generational identity. Indeed, as the younger children in Crossover grow older (Bee Evans, Tom English in first cohort), younger dancers have been brought in in order to achieve such a spread. What this demonstrates is that the choice of individuals to participate in Crossover is very much influenced by the chronological age of participants in order for it to be 'cross-generational' as such.

Fig. 5: Crossover Intergenerational Dance Company in 2009

However it is not only the developments in cultural, post-structuralist and feminist theory that seek to particularise experience that see identification on the basis of age alone as problematic. Due to the tendency that follows to group people together on the basis of what they have in common, or to define identity from a fixed point of origin, gerontologists too have questioned the excessive reference to chronological age in their area of study. For example Emma Parry (2014: 3) argues 'a description of generations based on birth year alone is not sufficient….a true definition of generation should consider characteristics of 'social space' other than birth year, such as geographical location or gender', in order to avoid reductive assumptions of a fixed identity.

In order to overcome this fixity of age categories in practice, choreographers working across generations – in keeping with the broader rhetoric of Community Dance – tend to seek ways in which different ages become less aware of their generational identity through dancing and participating with others. Lee, speaking of her piece *Egg Dances* made in 1989,

states that 'I'm very interested in the links between the ages. I think these links are quite intangible and quite hard to speak of but are very much there and sometimes in our society at the moment I feel that they are forgotten about…so I am really exploring what connects us regardless of age and experience' (Anderson and Lee, 1990). Not only does Lee's comment indicate the idea of a lost age in which social bonds were made of stronger stuff (as in 'verfallsgeschicte'), but also confirms the rationale for Cross-generational Dance of a positive disregard for difference.

Similarly, theatre scholar Anne Davis-Basting addresses the notion of generational difference in the chapter *Generations of Change* in her book *The Stages of Age* (1998) which looks at paradigms of performance for older people. Through interviews with members of two inter-generational performance groups she establishes the similarity and bonding between people of different generations. Take for example the following quotation from one of the participants of American based *Roots and Branches Theatre*, Ida who is in her eighties says:

> They come to us with maybe a little preconceived idea of older people, and they are a little wary of us – they are ready to treat us like older people. We of course look at them as young people. What's beautiful is the way it melds. All of a sudden we're all one age group. We become family.
>
> (Davis-Basting, 1998: 99)

Ida's positive experience indicates the teleology of many such projects and Davis-Basting takes an unerringly positive tone on the potential for performance to produce similar experiences to Ida's. She asserts that 'a supportive, respectful atmosphere can absorb differences of age, personality and opinion without breeding division.' (Davis-Basting, 1998: 110). This notion of 'absorbing differences' or coming together 'in spite of our differences' is common in politically left-leaning community arts projects such as Crossover, Lee and Davis-Basting's examples, all of which seek to create stronger links between people who may not normally interact. Such rhetoric suggests that the most desirable outcome of such dance work is a recognition of what is shared – or to 'become one' as Ida puts it – again building a community of commonality. Bauman (2000: 13) underlines why this is problematic politically in that '…the unity of community…or the naturalness of communal understanding…are both made of the same stuff: of homogeneity, of *sameness*', thus reducing the social space for difference of any kind as I argued in the previous chapter. Indeed although Lee is referring to supporting and respecting difference, she herself has said that her work addresses a very specific demographic that are in her terms usually "middle class" (Lee, 2010: Appendix C) and well-educated, meaning that potentially such a coming together is easier to achieve. Like Macfarlane for Crossover, Lee has a selection

process in which she hand-picks dancers she wants to work with based on their engagement in choreographic processes and as she has referred to it before a 'gentle presence' that will work well with others (Anderson and Lee, 1990). Indicating that, to quote Bauman (2001: 14) again: '…all homogeneity must be 'hand-picked' from a tangled mass of variety through selection, separation and exclusion; all unity needs to be made'. For Bauman (ibid.) 'concord 'artificially produced' is the sole form of unity available…'

Fig. 6: Rosemary Lee's *Common Dance* 2009

In Bauman's view then 'choreographing' community – which includes socially constructing its demographic make-up – takes on a negative tone. However I am not suggesting that such practices in Community Dance are not 'authentic' in some way as this would again be subscribing to a utopian view of community, but rather that they need to be made explicit in order to redefine the very notion of Community in this context. This thesis argues for acknowledging the choreography of community rather than pursuing it as an almost metaphysical phenomenon in which individuals magically meld together therefore reiterating the rose-tinted desired image of community as commonality.

Instead, reconfiguring difference as singular uniqueness as this thesis does, avoids the binary positions of either the same *or* different. In the current political climate (outlined in Chapter One) with funding agendas encouraging arts projects to be inclusive, generational difference is at risk of being seen as something simply to be overcome in order to promote togetherness which results in a reflection of the other as the same.

3.2.1 Choreographing with Age

Despite the notion of equality and togetherness desired by many inter-generational arts projects which reflect harmonious ideas of community (Crossover and Lee included), the explicit age differences required by Cross-generational Dance are often a starting point for choreographic processes.

For example, the questions posed to the Crossover dancers for their initial task in their first piece *Future remembered, Past Imagined* (2003) were the following: '*What is it like to be you at your age? What can you remember about being you at a younger age? How do you think you will be at an older age?'* These reflections on age and ageing prompted the dancers to create solos. The soloist then directed the group to frame their dance in various formations. For example Bee, who was eight at the time, asked the group to stand in a semi-circle facing away from her while another member of the group asked to be physically supported during their solo. In interview, Macfarlane said she recognised the importance of the group establishing themselves as individuals prior to working as a group (Macfarlane, 2009: Appendix B). The forms that each individual dancer chose reflected their self-determined status and position in the group and drew on Macfarlane's autobiographical methodology, asking participants to refer to their own experiences.

By contrast though, beginning with age as a focus for choreographic tasks can also be problematic in precisely the ways that theoreticians have pointed out, leading to an experience of being fixed to a particular category or 'boxed in' to appropriate peer group markers and activities. In the quotation below, Macfarlane articulates her own experience of negation in relation to age when working with Crossover:

> There have been very challenging moments for me. Once I remember when we were divided into 2 working groups and there was a very energetic 'able' group and then 4 of us older and younger, I…struggled to either lead or stay with ideas. There have been other occasions when this has happened deliberately by dividing into an older group and a younger group and parodying ourselves or when we were all doing a group sequence and the 'more able' dancers were in the front going for it and us older/younger 'less able' dancers were in the back row – a very typical dance moment…
>
> (Macfarlane, 2009: Appendix B)

Macfarlane's comment clearly shows how she has experienced the abject side of the old/young binary in particular in relation to what she refers to as a 'typical dance moment'. She is referring to the model of teaching noted in Chapter One as the 'show and copy' model in which dancers occupy the space in rows front to back with a hierarchy of the 'more able' dancers occupying the front of the dance space. This model of the dance class

draws parallels with the linguistic category of 'the individual' which Cavarero (2000: 89) argues is merely 'a repeatable, atomised, serial paradigm'. In the same way dancers working to a 'show and copy' model can be seen as closed in on themselves through the solipsistic focus on training their own bodies to emulate that of another, as Lee points out: "I Learnt very early on that if I kept trying to teach phrases that I had made up people would not feel empowered, they would just be trying to be me and they wouldn't manage it and I wouldn't be happy with how they did it" (Lee, 2010: Appendix C). This way of working may produce uniformly 'able' individual dancers but has been critiqued through the practice of members of X6 and Judson Dance Theater through their collective choreographic practices.

Macfarlane's description of the experience of being divided according to age proves however that despite the emergence of these radical approaches to choreography in the 1960s and 1970s, many of the tropes of professional performance dance potentially still arise as the standard bearer in particular formations or techniques. It also demonstrates how choreographic methods used in the dance studio have implications for notions of community and how this is experienced. The very form that choreography takes then becomes a way of embodying values and social processes as Hewitt has argued in his conception of 'social choreography'[69] underlining the idea that community is a choreographable phenomenon. Jane Desmond (1997: 33) points out too out that 'Social relations are both enacted and produced through the body, and not merely inscribed upon it'. It is for this reason that Community Dance practice has advocated forms which question hierarchical structures, such as the use of a circle as a way to begin creating relational choreography. Kuppers (2009: n.p.) writes '…circles might create a radical shift in communication situations when they break open other encrusted forms – an orientation to a leader, a group versus individual arrangement, or the singularity of islands out in space. Circles bring lots of multiples into contact, they "gather the tribes"'. Similarly, the *Flocking* (see also **Fig. 7**) task relies on a resonant articulation of movement rather than the precise embodiment of forms and is based on the idea of how birds stay together in a flock, maintaining direction but not total uniformity. This is an example of relational choreography in which a non-hierarchical form can accommodate difference without necessarily subsuming it into a totality, as is clear in the footage. This is similar to Lee's

[69] See Hewitt (2005)

strategy for *Common Dance* (2009) in which she states: "…there were very few moments of individuality, it was more about flow and about energy, but every one of those was different, so if you look at those en masse I think you can see those differences."

Fig. 7: Crossover *Flocking* in rehearsal for Rosemary Lee 2011

Cross-generational Dance however, through its explicit reference to age is always in danger of becoming representative of a specific view, influenced by the notion of community as commonality, about how mixed age groups relate as a cohesive whole. The use of a circle or a group moving together in a flock can be seen as representative of cohesion whether or not that is what is being experienced by the people taking part, or indeed intended by the choreographer. For example Rudolph Laban's movement choirs, while they were known for their 'messy appearance' (Berson, 2007), due to allowing individual interpretations of a set routine in the same way that Crossover's *Flocking* demonstrates, nonetheless became associated with the National Socialist Party's displays of mass physical power in the 1930s.

Arguably these activities can be easily appropriated for political purposes in the name of 'community' – suggesting that the whole form becomes greater than the sum of its parts. While the agendas of arts councils and choreographers are clearly much less ethically intolerable than those of the NSP they require interrogation so that, as Houston (2005: 176)

has pointed out, statements and claims about Community Dance can be 'qualified and specific, rather than general and all encompassing'.

Using choreographic tasks that refer explicitly to age differences and foreground the individual (as in *Future Remembered, Past Imagined*) therefore potentially resists the impulse to merge all ages into one homogenous community of commonality. Similarly, they allow each individual dancer to take ownership over their choreographic choices rather than being divided into groupings on the basis of their generation or indeed following the majority in a flock. However, as Macfarlane's negative experience of being defined by her age indicates, this can also have negative effects that demonstrate the exclusionary character of any taxonomy. Forms used in Community Dance, including the circle, are not exempt from the same problematic tensions of notions of an 'inclusive community' as Kuppers (2009: n.p.) writes: 'circles territorialise as much as they de-territorialise: here is an inside, here an outside'. Kuppers' (ibid.) comments demonstrate again how critical engagement with taken for granted practices in Community Dance is necessary in order to reveal the specificity of particular contexts and modes of difference.

As Crossover's work has evolved the focus on age specifically has seemed less necessary, as Jeremy – a dancer with Crossover – put it: "the content doesn't have to be intergenerational because your process is" (Spafford, 2011: Appendix D). Vicky Marks-Fisher, another dancer with Crossover, here discusses her own response to the idea of their age differences:

> …in some ways now that we have been working together for some time the cross-generational thing isn't so important…because we are just a group of individuals building on the strengths of the individuals. Now obviously, the cross-generational thing defines what we make and how the group is and particularly how its watched, I think it is more for people who aren't used to working in this problem solving, creative way, they notice the difference more whereas for us it's more like we're just a group of people dancing…
>
> (Marks-Fisher, 2009: Appendix E)

Vicky articulates how as a group they have grown accustomed to their differences and that they require a particular way of working that they have come to take for granted. Their choreographic approach is in keeping with that identified in Chapter One as relational choreography – involving tasks and questions that evolve between members of the group rather than set coded movements. She also notes that the age of participants does however define 'how the group is' (ibid.) and what they make, meaning that while she is less aware of the differences herself, or places less importance on these differences they are nonetheless central to their choreographic practice; for example in *Flocking*, although it

does not use age as a starting point it is useful in that it can be understood by all age groups given its reference to a familiar game as a starting point and an analogy from nature as another point of reference.

The notion of difference in Cross-generational Dance is not easily resolved and at the outset of this research I was frustrated by the generalised positions of individual difference and group solidarity that dominated the rhetoric. This difficulty led me to pose the methodological question of how to work with age differences in a choreographic process that does not foreground them leading to exclusionary boundaries, nor dismiss them in a project of denial and supposed unity. It was this question that led me to the notion of how community could be experienced as being-in-relation through a phenomenology of uniqueness. The following section demonstrates further how this theoretical framework came into focus during some early Cross-generational Dance workshops that were put on in part to recruit participants for the research. In order to build the kind of relationships that I thought at that time qualified as a community i.e. working sustainably over a long period of time with the same group of people, my intention was to use Crossover as a model.

3.3 Relationality in practice

On initially arriving in Cornwall in 2009 to begin the current research project, I did not immediately have people to invite to take part in a Cross-generational Dance company in the same way that Macfarlane did. Instead I had to establish professional networks and connections in order to have participants to take part in a longer term project. In order to do this I began with a day of four dance workshops, open to anyone, as described in **Fig. 8** as 'Creative, Contemporary Dance'. I had a small amount of support from local organisation Arts for Health but this was an entirely artist-led initiative in that I had my own artistic and research agenda to fulfil rather than seeking engagement with a community identified on the basis of their specific needs, though it was clear that nothing like Crossover itself existed in the area.

Fig. 8: Publicity for Leap event 2010

The workshops were divided up as follows: 'Parents and Children', '10–16 year olds', '16yrs +', and 'Seniors'. The process of deciding on the generational divisions for the *Leap!* workshops revealed the arbitrariness of such categories based on chronological age. People who are sixteen or just over, do not necessarily consider themselves as adults and people who are in their fifties or sixties are not always comfortable with labels such as Seniors. The dialectic between the notion of the 'in common' pre-supposed by groups according to a given age and the singular experience that did not necessarily conform to this began to arise simply in response to the publicity.

I had several enquiries relating to the descriptions I had chosen in the weeks running up to the workshop. For example: "*which one would be most suitable for my 16 year old daughter?"* from the mother of one participant whose daughter felt she was an adult or *"Is it ok to come to the adults rather than the seniors' session?"* – from a participant in her mid-50s who obviously preferred to identify with the label of adults rather than seniors which, for her, came with negative associations in relation to being on the abject side of the old/young binary.

Participants struggled to place themselves within these groups perhaps because they were not the standard ones they were accustomed to in other areas of their lives such as work and educational contexts, but also because being defined by age alone is – as Parry (2014) noted – insufficient, and does not necessarily align with how someone experiences their age in relation to others. Instead of age based identities relationality is useful to consider because, as Bourriaud (2002: 18) asserts: 'the essence of human-kind is purely trans-individual, made up of bonds that link individuals together…'. This is in opposition to identity theories that attach meaning to particular characteristics (such as age) which also by default produces the idea of a constitutive community, identified in the previous chapter as being created through specific shared characteristics – what Nancy (1991) refers to as 'an immanent community'.

The publicity for *Leap!* created an opposition between the particular and the universal, which is another philosophical problem that Nancy (ibid.) sought to overcome with his relational ontology whereby unique existants are always and already in relation. It also underlines the problems with the opposed positions of communitarian and liberal perspectives on community which denote the polarities of group versus individual. Devisch (2013: 82) notes that for Nancy the question is rather 'whether a specific universal condition hinders a particular perception or lived experience of such a condition'. In this case then, taking age as being the universal, the answer would be that it does not and that potentially 'you are as young as you feel'. This phenomenological or experience of youth though only exists in relation to a presupposed *actual* age in which a person is again defined against their generational community. In this instance I let participants with questions self-determine which workshop would be the most appropriate for them but noted the problems with this approach from the outset, which was already relying on preordained generational differences before I had even begun the choreography. As Devisch (2013: 41) notes, 'there is always something that escapes an immanent community or social identity', in the same way enquiries relating to *Leap!* indicated how social identities of age escape their chronological markers.

By contrast to preordained differences, relationality poses a contingent rather than fixed sense of social relations. The term also provides a way of articulating difference not as based on binary relationships – what Volf (2010) describes as Foucault's double repressive strategy – and therefore divisions such as old and young, same or different, but as plural and located in multiple singularity: being-in-relation. Watkin articulates the importance of Nancy's theory in *Being Singular Plural* (1999) here:

> …it is the search for a notion of the in-common that does not become a body of identity, an 'us' in opposition to a 'them'. This challenge to think being-together other than as a community of essences...attempts to provide an ethics that is not based on the relation of same and other…it is not the question of alterity that preoccupies Nancy but the question of plurality.
>
> (Watkin, 2007: 53)

Watkin notes here how discussions of otherness have often centred on a dyad of self/other – Ang's (2005) 'a/not-a' model – whereby the state of being 'other' or different is reliant on an essentialised notion of self. Nancy's being-singular-plural however goes beyond the dyad of self/other to conceive of how difference is always difference in relation to others plural, 'a plurality that does not imply the fusion of identities' (Devisch, 2013: 30).

I began to see the potential for how Cross-generational Dance in particular could realise an experience of community through being-in-relation when I observed a 16 year old who took part in *Leap!* She had signed up for the adults' session but felt very uncomfortable being the only adolescent. Despite my attempts to be inclusive through approaches common in Community Dance these in fact seemed to make her feel more anxious about the quality of her own contributions. When forming a circle and allowing each member of the group to contribute a movement – in a similar way as documented in *Leap* – she asked me to pass her by so that she did not have to take part. Rather than the circle allowing open communication through eye contact as I had supposed, she felt it exposed her to the gaze of the others in the group. Allowing her to attend this session meant she experienced her difference as negation. She came to me crying during a break saying that she did not want to participate further in the workshop because she felt so uncomfortable as the only teenager. Her experience demonstrates how conceptions of otherness are manifest in those who find themselves in a situation where there is a majority that excludes them by default of the group's 'in common' identification.

Rather than leaving the day altogether however, I encouraged this participant to sit and watch in case she felt like taking part again. Later that day, sure enough, she chose to take part in the 'All Ages' workshop. She was still distinctly the only one of her specific generational identification as a teenager but worked in a mixed age group – with children as young as five years old and a variety of differently aged adults – she was visibly more relaxed. She was smiling, moving and contributing willingly to the choreographic process. Significantly, it was through engaging in structured improvisations – tasks that allowed everyone to have their own singular response - in which this participant thrived. These were not performed in a circle where the mutual gaze was

exposed but involved shifting through the space and also making physical contact with others.

For example at one point we built a living structure whereby one person takes up a shape in the space, and one by one people join onto that shape through making contact with other bodies. The living structure is never static but moves and responds to each new person joining it, before dismantling itself in the same order it was constructed. It has a game-like quality but also allows for participants to observe the structure coming into being and to take part in it at the same time through its gradual construction. The form itself is never set and always dependent on the responses of the group, as such lending itself to a notion of relational choreography. In the structure task in particular and throughout the 'All Ages' workshop, this 16 year old participant arguably experienced difference as being-in-relation: she was different but so was everybody else, there was not a dominant age group that was the normative majority leading to her experiencing exclusion or a sense of 'otherness'.

Fig. 9: The living structure begins to take shape at Leap

Therefore, although it seemed impossible to overcome the problem of referring to age when defining and setting up Cross-generational Dance the 'All Ages' workshop at *Leap,* and the structured improvisations that required physical negotiation through a problem solving relational approach to choreography, arguably provided an opportunity to experience the singular self as plural with others. It can be seen that Cross-generational Dance as a particular mode of Community Dance practice disrupts usual peer group markers and as such heightens such an experience in relating to age. This is not the melding

together of an ageless mass, or even the discovery of common ground but the differentiation that occurs when difference is recognised as plural and relational, rather than based on alterity.

3.4 A Phenomenology of Uniqueness

This experience of being-in-relation can be described as a 'phenomenology of uniqueness' (Bertolino, 2008). In Cavarero's (2000) terms this notion is based on 'the fact that every human being is different from 'everyone else that ever lived, lives, or will live'. This notion is much more reflective of the lived experience of participants in Cross-generational Dance than generalised terms and categorisations of age; hence it is described as a phenomenological concept – a way of articulating lived experience.

The term 'phenomenology of uniqueness' was coined by Italian scholar Bertolino (2008: 131) who writes: 'All voices are unique insofar as they spring from different throats'. She refers to how Cavarero (2005), is concerned with the singular embodied voice as opposed to the semantics of language which is, she argues, immaterial. For the purposes of this discussion replacing the word 'voices' with dances and 'throats' with bodies it is possible to propose that in Cross-generational Dance practice: *'All dances are unique insofar as they spring from different bodies'.* In a phenomenology of uniqueness, this body is always singular – it is someone's body, my body or your body but never '*the* body'. A statement such as this is significant to Community Dance models because rather than dance practice and training that aspire to a normative ideal, it acknowledges that everybody – quite literally *every body* – has something to offer choreographically.

The Community Dance ideology that accepts everyone as having the right to participate – often referred to in Community Dance rhetoric as 'empowering the individual' – but which I argue is better conceived of as singularity can be seen also in what Macfarlane (2009) refers to as 'translation'. Translation refers to the idea of placing emphasis on *how* participants are performing movements or phrases rather than *what* they are doing, in the same way that Lee proposes qualities of movement being more important than content to her. This can be seen particularly in sequences of movement whereby cross-generational groups are all doing the same thing, referred to as 'unison'. Unison is one of many compositional techniques used in choreography whereby all dancers involved do the same movements to the same timing. It potentially offers an image and experience that is reflective of a unified whole and as such could be seen as at odds with the very argument for relationality that I am making. Arguably though, in Cross-generational Dance it is never true unison but rather through 'translation' there is always a break, or rupture, in this unity. Translation as a

specific facilitatory tool refers to the premise that any movement phrase is available for change and variation according to the specific ability, size and shape of a singular body, as seen in *Flocking* . In Crossover this has been informed particularly by wheelchair user Alan's part in the group but equally applies to all company members. Jeremy reflects on his experience of performing so called 'unison' with Crossover here:

> …when we're doing a bit of unison, what we laughably call unison, but when we get anywhere close to unison, it's never unison you know even if we were exactly on the nail, it never ever can be unison, because my arm goes right out like that [indicates a stretch of his arm] and Akasha's [who is 8] only goes that far…it never, ever, can be true unison and that's one of the things for me that is intriguing about it.
>
> You're…always being confronted with a sort of inbuilt different energy and shape that is to do with the age and gender and body shape of that person. And that is true of a peer group as well, it's just true in a different way. A peer group will get something else but they cannot get that…
>
> (Spafford, 2011: Appendix D)

The failure to move uniformly that Jeremy notes can be seen as a 'rupture' in the harmony of unison which exposes the uniqueness of the performers in relation to one another. A rupture that is apparent through the ways in which they perform movement due to their distinct physicalities. Arguably, it is the 'almost the same but not quite' in this experience that allows for reflection on it. Neither are they so much with the same focus that the group dynamic becomes more important than each individual, nor are they closed in on their own individual movement experiences that connection with others is obsolete. Unison in the case of Crossover then can be seen as non-absolute in the same way that Nancy (1991) proposes is necessary for a non-totalitarian community. Reflection on the differences between dancers, and the distinct way they perform the movements, breaks up the totality of community to expose an experience of singular beings in relation.

Fig. 10: Performing singularity in Crossover rehearsal for Rosemary Lee

Relationality, in the form of particular choreographic approaches such as translation, is conducive to a phenomenology of uniqueness, which in turn provides alternative models for relating to age. Rather than viewing people as aged and lumping them together in their chronological groupings, being-in-relation allows people to be exposed to one another in their uniqueness. Significant also is the fact that, as Cavarero (2000: 3) spells out: 'the uniqueness of each life does not indicate a life lived in isolation but rather the togetherness and intercourse of these single existants.' Rather than being seen as self-enclosed individuals then, performers in Cross-generational Dance are at once connected *and* set apart through being-in-relation. Although arguably this may occur in any improvisatory dance experience to a certain extent, in interview, Roly Carline – a professional dancer trained in visual art who regularly performs with Crossover – indicates how this is embodied in a particular way when working with Crossover. His description indicates how each dancer is performing their singularity as opposed to aspiring to an ideal in a peer group:

> I don't know if it's just with men, but there is - when you're dancing with people of the same age as you – (the need) to be stronger, faster, better…with Crossover, it's not about that, it's about how you do something in that time, in that space, in the body that you're in…that element of competition just is not there which enables you in a lot of ways. Sometimes when you feel the pressure of competition and all that I think that can sometimes stop you from reaching your own potential….dancing with Crossover gives you confidence to go out and do all sorts of things, you're comfortable with your body, with the way that you move and yeah, *who you are*.'
>
> (Carline, 2009: Appendix F)

Eliza, who was eleven at the time also articulates this in her own way: "When I was dancing with people of my own age I felt a bit like we all had to be the same and move in the same way but when I was dancing with people of different ages I felt more comfortable and I knew that we all were going to dance and move differently" (Newell, 2011: Appendix H). Roly's comment in particular though, chimes with Cavarero's concern to replace the disembodied abstract *'what'* of language, the generic philosophical 'man' with a uniquely embodied *'who'.* In relational approaches to devising choreography the dancer is seen as a person, not one of many uniform bodies or what Sally Gardener (2007) refers to as the 'generalised dancer', representative of styles and values of aesthetic modernism that have withheld the personal. Indeed, Lee (2008) goes as far to say that in Cross-generational Dance she is facilitating dancers to 'become more themselves' through what she describes as 'portraiture'. In the case of differently aged dancers then, rather than viewing them for how old they are – as representative of a generational identity – dancers such as Roly arguably experience a phenomenology of uniqueness.

Roly's experience of being in Crossover demonstrates how rather than a fixed identity based on his age, 'who someone is' is exposed amongst others in the moment of performing dance. He goes on to say that:

> …the big difference between being in an intergenerational dance company is like I think you become very aware that when you're watching somebody move, you're not thinking 'oh they did that turn very well'…I'll look at, say Akasha doing a turn and I won't think 'oh that's a perfect pirouette from Akasha', I'll think 'that's how Akasha turns'…and then I'll look at Cecilia and I'll think that's how Cecilia turns, and then I'll look at Jeremy and think that's how Jeremy turns, and then I'll do my own turn and think 'and this is how I turn' so instead of thinking of 'a turn' and seeing how everybody does that turn and deciding who's good at that turn and who is bad at that turn, you just are aware that everybody turns differently…we show that everybody does move differently and to try and get everybody to move the same, in a lot of ways is a little bit ridiculous and the best thing to do is to try and do your own turn in the most unique way that you possibly can…
>
> (Carline, 2009: Appendix F)

Clearly, what these members of Crossover can or cannot do – their dance training – and the fact of whether they are considered to be 'a dancer' or not, able to execute specific techniques, is secondary to their singular presence which is embodied in the qualitative aspect of their movement, rather than through its form. As opposed to viewing dancers as how old they are or the abstract technical forms they create, dancer-performers are viewed as unique beings – people – with a life beyond the dance. Cavarero (2000) would refer to this notion as a sense of being a 'narratable self'.

For Cavarero (ibid.), being narratable means transcending the universal to see each person as the protagonist of their own lives. In the dance context this is arguably through what Gardener (2007) refers to as approaches to dance making that have evolved since the 1960s and 1970s that implicate the personal rather than notions of 'the generalised dancer' associated with ideas and notions of what a dancer should be; a view that is confirmed through the epistemic shift outlined in Chapter One.

Furthermore, unlike simply dancing together socially or for pleasure, the emphasis on the choreographic – the fact that they are in a process of creating something together means that they are observing one another's movements in a particular way. In the same way that X6 and Judson Dance Theater sought to blur the lines between choreographer and dancer, the shifting roles of Crossover as both performer and director of certain parts of any particular work means that they are not only participating but taking on the role of choreographer. The latter role requires an external gaze on the movement taking place, allowing for the reflection that arguably creates non-absoluteness.

What Roly also indicates in the above comment is that the practice of Cross-generational Dance gives him a stronger sense of who he is – in movement terms – in *relation* to others. As such this shows that in relational choreography it is not necessary to resort to a binary of being either in-common *or* other – old *or* young – choosing between universalising the unique for the sake of community or dismissing that which is shared in the name of the individual subject. Rather, through a phenomenology of uniqueness, it is possible to see dancers of all ages for *who* rather than *what* they are – unique, ageing but not simply representative of a broad category of their generation through recognisable traits and characteristics associated with age.

Furthermore, Caverero (2000: xxiii) critiques the limits of philosophical language, she writes: 'Through…a suspension of the disjunction between discourse and life, it becomes possible to imagine a relational politics that is attentive to who one is rather than what one is'. Such a disjunction is significant too in how the discourse of the Community Dance sector limits the way community is imagined, as Chapters One and Two identified. Instead, the experiences and tasks articulated in this chapter provide more expansive ways to consider the concept of community as being-in-relation through a phenomenology of uniqueness. Such articulations arguably shift the conditions of possibility not only for the practice but for the very discourse it is contributing to.

Cavarero argues that language is a system of representation which becomes relational only once spoken by unique beings. She also acknowledges that it is a system she bound by whilst simultaneously critiquing it. In the same way, I am seeking ways to re-contextualise experiences of community whilst also being bound to personal relationships and professional agendas for Community Dance in my on-going career – the practicalities of working with particular people and the requirements of venues for example. This chapter contains a paradox in using Crossover as a way to articulate radical conceptions of community in contrast to the previous examples of how they reflect notions of community in a reductive way. However it is precisely this paradox that uncovers the metanarrative in how such projects are represented, i.e. repeatedly referred to by way of the polarity between communal and individual identity in Community Dance discourse. Rather this chapter proposes a phenomenology of uniqueness as another way to represent and articulate these experiences. Furthermore, it argues that using this theoretical framework can influence, however minutely, the particular language circulating in this epistemological field and potentially then the practice of Community Dance – as Chapter Four discusses in further detail.

Community is choreographed in Cross-generational Dance through approaches that refer to people not only in terms of age differences, but similarly do not disregard their age in a project of commonality. Instead, through relational choreography that attends to who someone is, participants can experience a phenomenology of uniqueness.

A further example of my hypothesis can be seen in my own work with Crossover in choreographing *Gifted*, a work commissioned for the opening night of the newly refurbished Pegasus Theatre in Oxford (see **Fig. 11**) – as the following section goes on to discuss.

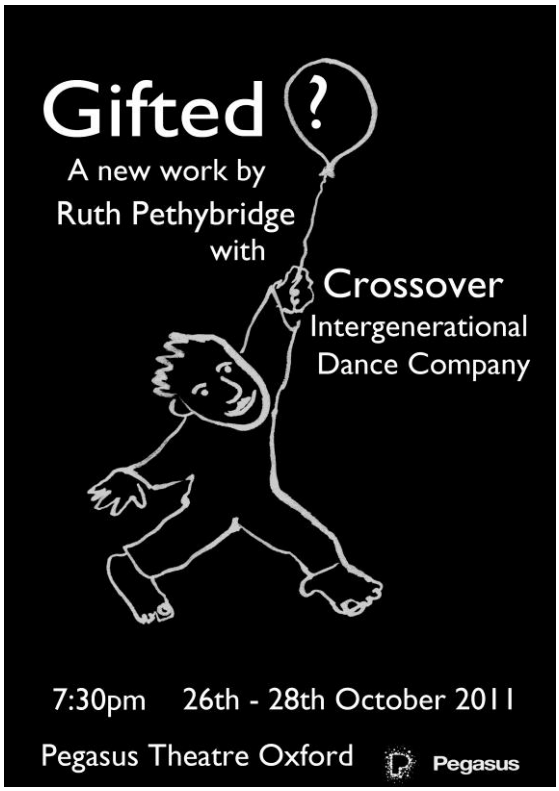

Fig. 11: Publicity for *Gifted*

Having failed to set up the kind of sustainable company I had hoped to in Cornwall and in response to my own changing ideas about the possibilities for community (that it did not necessarily mean I had to bring together a group of strangers to slowly bond over time), I responded positively to the invitation to choreograph a piece with Crossover in September 2011.

Fig. 12: Crossover in *Gifted* 2011, forming a 'living sculpture'

3.5 Look at me: the non-substitutable subject

In the same way that Lee and Macfarlane often work, *Gifted* was created using a lot of structured improvisation. Structured because rather than entirely open, there is a framework for the performers within which they find qualities of movement rather than prescribed ways of moving or specific forms. Structured improvisation is a method central to relational choreography and indeed used widely in Community Dance practice. It draws parallels with what Grant Kester (2004: 1) refers to in relational art practice as artists being 'context providers rather than content providers'. In the film footage *Gifted* for example the dancers have been asked to improvise as if they are catching something that is falling from the sky. This gives them a context for their movement and a focus from which they are then able to create unique responses. Following this the dancers begin a section called '*Look at Me'* which began as another structured improvisation task. In this section of the piece the dancers call out 'look at me' while improvising and take turns to stop and watch each other (see *Gifted*). Below is an articulation of the task that led to this section based on how I facilitated it in the studio. The physical process of researching the task developed slowly, with the performers taking their own time to investigate the proposition, which was as follows:

> **Find a space and begin to explore comfortable pathways for your body, familiar patterns of movement that feel like a recognisable way of moving for you, maybe something you feel frustrated with as that which you always do, always fall back on…Allow this to evolve, responding to the energy in the room and to the echoes of other people's movements as you experience them.**
>
> **When you feel you are really comfortable in your dance, invite others to watch by saying 'look at me'….you can stop them looking any time by saying 'stop looking at me…'**
>
> **Experiment with how long you want the gaze of the other people in the room, who is it you are asking them to look at, how does your movement communicate something about who you are? Be bold, be shy, be greedy. Take your time or offer only a glimpse of your unique movement signature. Fight for space, what happens if there are two or more people to look at? Invite being seen. Acknowledge the others as they dance their own unique movement signature.**

In the footage the dancers are performing in the context of a theatre. A proscenium stage such as this comes with its own set of conventions and expectations, not least performing

in front of an audience. The documentation shows a much more rushed and static version of the task than it was when being explored in rehearsal where the company had more space and time. However, consistent with my methodology which involved my participating with the company in developing the task, I did not invite another gaze onto the rehearsal process in the form of filming it. Instead I provide this documentation of the final performance as a support to reading this section although it does not adequately reflect the relational effect of the task as it evolved during the making process.

During the process of working on this task, the company members often observed each other as they devised what I have referred to above as their 'movement signatures' and spoke about their recognition of the quality of how they each moved in the same way that Roly mentioned each company member by name when observing them turn. Elly Crowther one of the trained dancers in the piece commented on this: "our awareness of each other's ways of moving was quite surprising for me, I didn't think I knew everyone that well, being quite new to the Crossover group but then I saw that they knew me as a dancer and it felt good, reassuring." She goes on to say "I moved quite differently depending on who was watching me, or who I was most aware of and I felt a bit…almost shy at first but then I really enjoyed having my moment saying 'look at me' and playing with this" (Crowther, 2011 : Appendix G).

In this task, the singularity of each dancer is apparent in their unique dancing signature that momentarily appears when they call out 'look at me'. The dancing signatures were themselves a product of a previous task in which dancers explored what made them move the way they moved. I asked dancers to narrate to each other the story of their dance training or movement experience whilst moving based on familiar pathways and ways of moving that came from this training – this became known as their movement signature. They then performed this while another dancer recited their story back to them and over the process of doing this several times observed how the movement, which at first felt habitual, changed every time they performed it and in relation to the other performer. We then discussed how these movement pathways and their associated histories were not as fixed as they may have thought. This further underpins the idea of un-fixing identities based on age, discussed further in Chapter Four. In the 'Look at Me' improvisation they were using aspects of this signature to inform their movement in order to give them a starting point but I encouraged them to also move away from this and develop it in the moment. What is significant is, as Elly articulated, during the choreographic and performance process that she 'moved differently depending on who was watching'. Both the movement

signature task and subsequently the 'Look at Me' improvisation changed according to the relationships at play in that particular moment.

Similarly, for Cavarero and Nancy singularity resists being another essence through its emphasis on exteriority in the sense, as Hannah Arendt (1977: 19) put it, that 'being and appearing coincide'. As Caverero (2000: 20) writes: 'one cannot appear if there is no-one else there…'. Similarly, these improvised dances in the 'look at me' improvisation are performed amongst others who bear necessary witness to them in order for them to exist. It is the necessity of the others in the space and the fact that their presence is constitutive of the movement produced that makes this task relational. To quote Nancy (2000: 159-60) directly this relationality can be seen as constitutive of community because: '…community is no longer the essence of all individuals, an essence that is given prior to them. For community does not consist of anything other than the communication of 'singular beings', which exist as such only though communication'. In the same way, this structured improvisation highlights the communication between dancers[70], the listening and responding as that which connects them in that moment (Chapter Four will expand further on this notion of Community through the idea of the in-between). Each dancer in 'look at me' shows themselves through their qualities of movement amongst others who are attending and responding to these qualities.

The sense in which I use the term qualities here is not to indicate a standard or specific characteristic which would be again at risk of producing an essentialised notion of identity. Rather I use it in the sense of a phenomenological experiencing of each other's movement as unique to that person, in that moment. Qualitative as I use it can be equated with Cavarero's notion of the narratable self-denoting the corporeal singularity of each person as a singular somebody with a story to tell, but is not concerned with the specific content of that story. Or as Devisch (2013: 104) writes of Nancy's notion of exposure:

> …everyday characteristics reveal the plural singular. The moment someone raises his arm in a specific way, when he rolls his sleeve back half way, when he smiles or casts a shy look at the world…these things typify him but they do not on the basis of a number of authentic characteristics of a substantial self

As Devisch notes here the singularity that arises from singular moments of movement is not equivalent to the notion of the 'individual'. For both Nancy and Cavarero individuality in

[70] I reiterate here that the writing refers to the task as it was explored in rehearsal rather than what is seen in the documentation and therefore I do not take account of the gaze of the audience in this discussion which also had its implications.

this sense does not exist because as Cavarero puts it 'each individual, in and of himself is as valid for one as he is for any other, he is equal because he is equivalent' (2000: 89). This is the generic 'individual' of language or indeed the idea that a dancer can be replaced with another of the same age to achieve an ideal 'spread of generations' as in Macfarlane's original conception of Crossover.

This notion of singularity is useful to overcome the recurring tension between the 'in-common' and the individual that appears in both concepts of community and in the way that Community Dance articulates its strategies as a sector. Rather, Cavarero (2000: 36) pleads for 'this and not another' person. Her subject therefore is non-substitutable, meaning that no-one person is equivalent to any other. In the same way, the 'look at me' structured improvisation would produce different movements and responses with a distinct group of people and, as Elly indicated, changes depending on the particular configuration of a certain group of people at that particular moment in time.

The Crossover dancers for example are chosen because of how old they are but also because of *who* they are in a way that Macfarlane herself struggles to articulate because it does not align with her inclusive approach based on equality in which all dancers should have access to the same experiences. All dancers though are not in fact equal, she chose Roly because he is Roly, Vicky because she is Vicky and because of her personal relationships to these dancers in their singular non-substitutability, as Vicky herself pointed out: "…it was really important that Cecilia knew everybody…I know she [Cecilia] feels it problematic that it is an exclusive company and people are invited in but at the same time I think that is partly why it works…" (Marks-Fisher, 2009: Appendix E).

Non-substitutability then can be used to describe how the singular presence of each dancer contributes to a relational choreographic process. A presence that is – to use Nancy and Cavarero's term again – 'exposed' to others in the phenomenological moment of performance and constantly open to change depending on who those others are in their own material uniqueness.

3.6 Being There

The notion of non-substitutability discussed in the previous section resists singularity becoming interchangeable with the idea of an individual essence because it refers to the idea that no one person can replace another to occupy the same space and time. When I

refer to the notion of presence[71] in this thesis I use it to refer to the same material presence of bodies in space that Cavarero (2000: 134) does when she writes 'I believe in facts, bodies and material givens'. In relational choreography performers are asked to be present in the sense of physically being there, as opposed to using their presence to represent something, pointing elsewhere. Quite literally, I refer to the presence of bodies being there with one another in physical space or as Lee puts it: "Dance is a kind of expression of being alive, and it makes you feel alive because it's so much about being present in a space, in the here and now. Being present in time and place is really about being alive…" (Lee, 2010: Appendix C).

Furthermore as Andre Lepecki (2004) suggests, there has been a shift in contemporary European dance from a theatrical paradigm to one of performance. In the same way that he argues that 'the truth of the work resides in its performance rather than its accommodation to previously fixed, established, hermetically sealed aesthetic and disciplinary boundaries' (Lepecki, 2004: 172). I am contending that the truth of someone's singularity is revealed – to themselves as much as anyone else – in the moment of performance amongst others plural. Furthermore, this is a momentary truth rather than a self-sustaining one or an origin for a constitutive community, as the following section goes on to discuss further. Below, Lee articulates further her own notion of presence:

> Watching my daughter dancing this morning I was struck when her teacher Kate Green said to them in preparation- "Can you dance this one? The whole of you has to dance, otherwise you just look like children pretending." This seemed a brave thing to say to nine year olds but so true and it seemed to strike a chord with most of the children who then began to find a concentration startlingly bright and alive which surprised us parents out of our more passive watching…. When I am looking at any dancer be they professional or non-professional, 4 or 74 years old I am looking for the same thing…A sense that the dancer is overtaken with the activity they are engaged with in such a way that every cell in their body seems involved. They are in synch, they are whole, they are present.
>
> (Lee, 2004: n.p.)

As I have already argued, the notion of presence that Lee describes is significant to relational choreography in that rather than asking dancers to represent ideas or characters, they are asked to 'be'. For example the documentation of *Foreward* shows both rehearsal and performance of a section of the piece in which Lee asked us to come into the centre of

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[71] Presence in performance is a slippery term that has been addressed by various writers as a key concept in performance. The discourse (and indeed practice) surrounding it is extensive – see for example Lepecki (2004), Giannachi, Kaye and Shanks (2012) and the research project *The Presence Project Collaboratory* which explored its use in performance, computer science and anthropological archaeology. Available at http://humanitieslab.stanford.edu/Presence/Home

the space and to give the audience what she described as ‘a sense of this is me, this is who I am’ (Lee, pers. comm., 2011); in keeping with her method of using portraiture in her choreography. In the footage different members of Crossover take turns in the central space while the rest of the company perform structured improvisations around them. The choreography of the dancers replacing each other in the central space arguably highlights their singularity in that they occupy the same space but with their unique materiality, unable to entirely take the place of the previous performer in either shape or form, they are non-substitutable. Each dancer then offers their interpretation of Lee’s direction to simply ‘be present'. Being present in performance however is arguably far from simple; the way in which the concept is referred to here is perhaps usefully underlined by Josette Feral’s (2012) distinction between ‘being present’ and ‘having presence’. The latter is left aside in this discussion in favour of referring to the materiality of bodies in the space as ‘being there’. The two definitions of the concept of course collide and imbricate, however this is beyond the scope of the current study. Significantly though, Lee’s approach to performing in this task, which values the presence of the performer as ‘being there’, over and above technical skills or form, has implications for the very ontology of dance performance. The choreographer Jerome Bel has made this explicit through works such as *Veronique Doisneau* (2004) [72] and *Disabled Theatre* (2012) [73] in which he requires dancers to be themselves in performance rather than adopting a role (though of course again there remain margins for debate). Such works raise questions – as members of Judson Dance Theater and X6 did – about whether there is in fact any distinction between the everyday self and performer, and implicate Bishop’s (2012) notion of ‘delegated performance’ which requires people to perform on the basis of their social identities. Similarly, this chapter has argued instead that performers in Cross-generational Dance are required to be present for ‘who’ they are rather than ‘what’ they are, and that this ‘who’ is relationally constituted. These performers can then be seen less for their generational identity, or their ability as ‘dancers’, and more for simply ‘being there’, being *with* others, at once connected and set apart in a singular moment.

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[72] This piece features a ballerina - Veronique Doisneau – performing in the Paris opera house recounting a narrative of her career with the Paris Opera Ballet just before her retirement whilst also performing sections of ballets she has been cast in and commenting on them.

[73] *Disabled Theatre* is a collaboration with Theatre Hora, a Zurich based company which supports the development of actors with learning disabilities. Again, Bels’ concept of choreography as commenting on its own conditions of production and presenting performers as themselves was evident in asking members of the company to describe their occupation, their disabilities and the work itself that they were part of.

Fig. 13: The dancers in Crossover create a structure during *Gifted*

Fig. 14: Crossover dancers in *Gifted*

3.7 Community in a moment

Concepts of community introduced in Chapter Two that depend on the idea of community as commonality often invoke the longevity of such communities as part of what defines them; an idea that was upheld by my own view at the beginning of this project. In my mind community meant sustainability, a view underlined by many arts funding initiatives. This view is, however, at odds with live performance practices that occur in a particular moment in time, begging the question of how community might be theorised in and through performance – one suggestion could be Turner's (1969) notion of communitas which usefully frames many event based communities of practice. As opposed to the equality that arrives through the moment of communitas though, my hypothesis proposes that a phenomenology of uniqueness whereby others are experienced as similarly unique, is a basis for community as being-in-relation. The momentary nature of communitas though can be useful to highlight the temporal aspect of community, something that Nancy's notion of singularity also addresses, as this section will discuss.

Performance theorist Peggy Phelan (1993: 146) makes the point that 'performance's only life is in the present…performance occurs over a time that will not be repeated. It can be performed again, but this performance marks itself as different'. Similarly, my methodological focus is on processes, and performance is considered as something always in and of the moment, a process in itself. Furthermore, such processes involve many relational performances of self, exposed amongst others. While this could be true of any performance, it is perhaps most apparent in using structured improvisations which allow and accept the differences of one moment of performance to the next rather than trying to reproduce a 'work' with fixed status, underlining Lepecki's (2004) point about the fixity of form and style in dance. Similar to Phelan's (1993) notion of performance, during rehearsals for the 'look at me' task, I became aware of how different configurations were momentarily appearing and then disappearing in the space, like a centrifugal force around the dancer who was saying 'look at me'.

Fig. 15: Dancers in Crossover shift through the space during *Gifted*

The appearance of these constellations appeared to me as an appropriate embodiment of singular beings in relation. They were not subsumed into the whole, yet neither were they self-enclosed individuals; in conversation after this task the feedback was similar with one dancer commenting that he 'felt both together with others and alone in my dance' (Baird, pers. comm., 2011). The way that these physical constellations formed and dispersed is useful to consider how Nancy's (1991) notion of community is distinct in its approach to temporality. Rather than a community that has evolved over a long period of time – like Macfarlane's own community of practice – for Nancy, Community is not only made up of singular beings in relation but is itself singular in its occurrence. Devisch (2013: 100) writes: 'Being-together is always being with others and signifies also simultaneity, that is, being at the same point in time thus indicating its temporary character of being thrown into a specific place'. Like performance then, community exists in the moment that a group of people shares a particular time and place – they are present. More recognisant then of project-based dance work which forms around a certain event, rather than the tight bonds of an established dance company that work together year in, year out. In terms of my own methodology this had implications for my practice based research and how I approached it, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter Four through focusing on improvisational methods, in particular through the use of Contact Improvisation.

As I have already argued, certain philosophical perspectives on community suggest the social bonds that have evolved over a long period of time are somehow considered to be more 'authentic' or 'real' than those formed by temporary constellations[74], or that community is itself merely imagined and idealistic with little relation to the material, social world. My own view, on leaving Oxford, was in keeping with ideas of the constitutive community. The social bonds formed over a long period of time were the ones I was keen to replicate by following the model of Crossover in my own practice. Nancy's (1993) conception that community can in fact exist in the most fleeting encounters was useful then, not only for my own practice in Cornwall where I did not have one group of people to work with over a sustained period of time but also for theorising the shifting modes of relating that happen in and through performance, as demonstrated in the examples in this chapter. As Nancy (1993:72) puts it singularisation means 'each time, only this time', in the same way that a performance is unrepeatable so too is any 'together' of a community of dancers of different ages. Devisch (2013: 104) writes:

> I do not differ just from others but also differ continuously from myself. With a friend I behave differently than with my family. In different contexts, I can also behave differently towards the same person…people are not to be distinguished from one another on the basis of whether or not they share a common denominator. There are no archetypal points of comparison or one or another essence against which each character trait can be measured…Each new situation brings another smile (or tear) and thus another origin or singular moment.

In the same way that the 'Look at Me' improvisation encouraged the gathering and dispersing of the group in the performance moment, experiencing being-in-relation is contingent on its situation, on being in the same place at the same time – in this instance a dance studio. Jeremy too articulates the context-specific nature of the Crossover community here:

> ….although a deep affection developed between the dancers, it has remained relatively difficult (and to some extent undesirable) to try and replicate this outside the dance studio. A 14 year old is unlikely to want to invite a 40 year old to their birthday party and is unlikely to want to join an adult dinner party (and vice versa) and yet, within the safety of the group, there can be physical and emotional closeness. This is not a family: it is a group of friends of different ages respectful of (and often amused by) that difference.
>
> (Spafford, 2011: Appendix D)

While Jeremy (ibid.) still refers to his experience in terms of difference, what is clear from his comment is how as a community Crossover is non-absolute. It forms and breaks and re-forms again in such a way that could be seen as a rupture in Nancy's (1993) terms,

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[74] See Yudice in Bennett et al (2005)

revealing the cracks in any totality that make community relational, something that both Vicky and Roly also commented on (see appendices E/F) as well as younger members of the group. Akasha who was eleven at the time, said "if I didn't dance with them, I don't think I'd go over to their house and hang out with them!" (Daley, 2009: Appendix I). Crossover too then, despite the longevity of Macfarlane's practice, arguably exists as a community only in particular moments in which the members are together in space and time singular and singularly. This notion of community takes the emphasis off the teleologic sense of a future orientated common goal and instead puts focus on the here and now of the performance moment as embodying community, however transiently.

In 2013, I choreographed a cross-generational site-specific piece *Via* for Penryn Arts Festival (see Appendix J) – created over two weekends and performed on a third, in keeping with the project based approach to choreography identified by Lee and Foster (1992) the participants were drawn through existing friendships I had in the town, some regular local dance groups and recent graduates from Falmouth University. A diverse group who would not normally have interacted and many of whom will never encounter each other again. However during the time of devising the piece, relationships existed and evolved through embodied interactions, as this participant, Pema Wainwright, said to me in conversation:

> I felt like I got to know people really quickly, but that at the end I realised I didn't know their names or how old they were or anything really! I think we need these kinds of connections too – like, we need our family and friends who know us well, but this is a different kind of knowing, just accepting, and dancing together and leaving it at that.
>
> (Wainwright, pers. comm., 2013)

Fig. 16: *Via* performance for Penryn Arts Festival 2013

The idea of community as an experience that can be choreographed from moment to moment can in turn create shifts in understanding and articulating what Community Dance is and as such what is valuable about the practice. Pema's comment indicates the value she found in forming such temporary bonds, at odds with notions of legacy and sustainability in arts practice propounded by governing bodies such as the Arts Council. Similarly, Macfarlane commented on a recent project that several of the company got in touch late in the day to say that they could not do certain aspects of the project. She commented that:

> The reasons are varied but for the teenagers it is schoolwork and driving lessons, for the professional dancers it is paid project work that they cannot afford to turn down, and for the people with 'other' jobs it is remaining also committed to them. There is an important difference though with the current teenagers that I recruited through my regular classes and the original Crossover. In the past, the teenage dancers had begun as young as 7 and 8 – and so had grown up with the company - they were already in it and it had been part of their lives for so long that they didn't question putting it above certain other aspects of teenage life. It was important to them, as were the social bonds created within it.
>
> (Macfarlane, 2009: Appendix B)

Rather than seeing the original Crossover as the one to aspire to, in the same sense of the 'lost community', the newly configured Crossover that – as Jeremy also articulated is not consistently cohesive – can still be seen as a community. Indeed, it is a community that is experienced as being-in-relation, being-as-relation in its context-specific singularity; in this case of performing dancing together. Similarly, Lee has expressed concern that having

created a community through her work *Common Dance* (2009) she felt anxious about participants no longer having that community to take part in:

> I think it can be quite hard to function in other bits of life and we do but I think once you've tasted that, it isn't the same anywhere else… by the end people had really serious problems with not doing it anymore, so one professional guy he turned up at GDA for three weeks afterwards, he couldn't not come into the space and this was one of the professionals, he just did not know what to do with himself. The older guy, he writes to me quite regularly…because he got quite lonely, the children I think were alright because they go on into their lives and then its school but I think the older people found it really hard to adjust to life after an experience like that…so at one point I really thought, 'My god is this responsible to put people through this?'
>
> (Lee, 2010: Appendix C)

Here Lee indicates that despite her placing value on the ephemeral nature of dance (ibid.), she felt ultimately uneasy about the dispersal of the community. The sustainability of relationships formed through Common Dance was a concern for her. Although these concerns are valid in the sense of providing a duty of care for participants, they arguably also reflect the hegemony of an episteme which places emphasis on a community with

longevity. Lee was careful to point out that she did her best to provide a legacy through using an email group. In terms of the Arts Council such work must provide a 'legacy' for years to come through its impact on specific communities while Lee has said herself of her project based approach to her work that 'I love that there are always these new people, it's new people all the time.' (Lee, 2010: Appendix C).

As Phelan (1993) has suggested, perhaps it is precisely in resisting the call to a 'reproductive economy' that performance's ontology lies. Arguably, even the community of Lee's *Common Dance*, as Nancy (1991) has suggested, would after a time begin to exercise its limitations which are not least that it proposes an ideal of community that is above the ordinary, removed – hermetically sealed even – from the banality and difficulty of everyday life. Rather, I suggest that Cross-generational Dance can indeed be an opportunity for people to come together in community, but this 'together' is arguably as impermanent (and imperfect) as performance, and life, itself.

Fig. 17: A scene from *Via* performance

In this chapter I have argued that the relationship between the individual and the 'in common' permeates much of the rhetoric of Community and Cross-generational Dance, demonstrated through the particular case studies in question and the emphasis on dyadic difference – as chronological age – that is necessary when working across generations. Using examples from Macfarlane, Lee's and my own Cross-generational Dance practice I have problematised this polarity through arguing for the notion of being-in-relation as a basis for community. Rather than relying on chronological age and subscribing to either the

self-sacrifice necessary for an individual to entirely serve the common good of a community, or the impossibility of the 'unencumbered individual self' (Nancy, 1991) who is free of all communal bonds. I have done so through the interpretation and re-articulation of experiences of Cross-generational Dance relayed to me in interview as well as my own observations of and through practice. These interpretations and observations reveal a phenomenology of uniqueness through being-in-relation as a basis for community without totality. Through a recognition of multiple singularity – one's uniqueness amongst others who are also unique in a moment of singularisation – community is not based on commonality or the dichotomy between group solidarity and individual difference.

Through the experiences of community taking place and being articulated as they have been in this chapter, I hope to contribute to a possible shift in the epistemological field of Community Dance that itself produces the practice. Instead of rhetoric that emphasises the legacy of Community Dance projects, and their long term sustainability, or validating authenticity only on a group of people who have known each other for a long time, there can be equal value placed on those projects and events where people come together only to come apart again, or where community is performed in a moment of relating and nothing more[75].

Furthermore, through this chapter I have argued for choreographic methods that do not focus on chronological age as a starting point – as these are at risk of producing experiences of difference based on reductive binaries and assumptions – but rather for relational choreographic approaches that attend to who someone is, in movement terms, in their singular presence in a particular time and space. The chapter has also included documentation as further evidence to underpin this argument. As a result, I argue that alternative conceptions of community are possible and, what is more, that it is possible to choreograph these alternatives through a variety of structured improvisations, in particular those featured in this chapter.

The following chapter continues the examination of particular practical methods that support my conception of community through focusing on my own Cross-generational

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[75] Such notions of community are also significant to current strategies in online communities of dancers who participate in flash mobs, and events such as *Big Dance*, which ask people to participate through learning a dance routine via YouTube before gathering at a specific place and time to perform it all together. Such new configurations of dance-making are fast becoming common in Community Dance projects. While this type of event does not necessarily use relational choreographic approaches, they iterate the significance of the discussion in contributing to the episteme of what constitutes current Community Dance practice.

Dance practice specifically. Such an examination reveals further aspects of what I argue as necessary in both choreographic and experiential terms to reconstitute the meaning of Community Dance.

Chapter Four: Vulnerable Relations: Contact in-between crossing generations

> What is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond the narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of […] differences. These 'in-between' spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood, singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining society itself.
>
> (Bhabha, 1994: 1-2)

As Bhaba (ibid.) suggests, it is through the articulation of differences that 'in-between' spaces are created. This chapter argues that the processes of making contact across generations discussed here presents an opportunity to explore such differences and therefore unsettle fixed categories of age or family. Focusing on choreographic processes and performances involving parents and their offspring in Cross-generational Dance practice, this chapter addresses a notion of 'cross- generational' not yet fully addressed in this thesis. Following on from the discussion in Chapter Three whereby community is conceivable as a fleeting phenomenon in the moment of performance, this chapter looks more specifically at improvisation and contact as both a form and as part of a process.

By this I mean both the particular codified form of Contact Improvisation (hereafter referred to as CI for clarity) which uses touch as a central premise, and contact in a broader sense that might use some of the techniques developed in CI as part of a choreographic process. CI is based on the idea of exploring movement improvisation while in physical, haptic contact with others, while contact suggests an intentionality towards others as purposeful communication whether in physical/haptic contact or not. This chapter argues that using CI and contact in this way can generate an experience of community through a reorientating of predetermined roles and relationships, in keeping with the concept of being-in-relation outlined in the previous chapter.

Nancy's (2000) being-in-relation is developed here through looking more precisely at the body, and what is happening between singular plural bodies of different ages when dancing in contact. Bodies moving together in contact can be seen as a microcosm within which the debates of community are embodied. Although CI has the potential to promote a harmonious melding together or 'becoming one', as is the case in a community of commonality, in this chapter I argue that contact activates the potential of generating an

ethical response to others through noticing the uncertainty and possibilities inherent in Bhaba's (1994) in-between space. The ethical in this sense is presented here through Levinas' philosophy of the 'face to face' in which, as Critchley (2002: 12) points out, the face 'is not something I see but something I speak to…in speaking or calling, or listening to the other, I am not reflecting upon the other but I am actively and existentially engaged in a non-subsumptive relation…I am not contemplating, I am conversing'. In this instance, the non-subsumptive relation arguably comes into being through the act of making contact with others.

Furthermore, dancing together in contact has the potential to reach across social divides, not to collapse subjects into one another (though it can and does do this), but as this chapter argues, to reveal and articulate differences which in turn can reorientate roles and relationships. This reorientation suggests an experience of community for people of different ages already in relationship, as well as those brought into relation through a specific dance project or event. Again, working in this way forced me to address my own assumptions about what community is - or should be - so that rather than a gathering of many people brought together, it can also be seen as a particular mode of relating between just two people who may already be intimate.

Using generation in terms of the familial line also invokes the reproductive notion of the term, and the implications of this in how dance experiences can be productive of society and relationships, not only a reflection on them. Claire Macdonald (2004: 2) writes:

> The act of generation is reproductive, and possibly transformative, whereas the act of creation is 'original' – it may bring something forth from nothing.
>
> In artistic terms the act of creation and the act of generation might be interestingly different, identifying the distinction between originating and making things happen. 'Generating' a text, for instance has connotations that suggest connections to formulae, or to acts of mechanical reproduction, to machine as well as to body. Generation in all its senses suggests context, the making of new material from old.

The terminology Macdonald (ibid.) uses here is significant in that in Chapter One I suggested a relational approach to artistic practice as an approach that is more concerned with 'making things happen' as MacDonald puts it, than producing original works of art. Furthermore, the mechanistic reproduction that Macdonald identifies is part of conceiving of community, not as something metaphysical based on a priori understanding, but as actively produced – and therefore with the potential to be re-produced – through certain choreographic methods. The making of new material from old is also significant to this chapter in particular as established or 'old' relationships are reconfigured or made 'new' in the moment of dancing in contact, as the case studies go on to demonstrate.

4.1 Touching on taboos

The consideration of the use of contact and touch in Cross-generational Dance is timely in an era when revelations of institutionalised inappropriate touch and abuse have led to dance practitioners and teachers of all kinds adhering to policies that regard touch between generations as something to be avoided. The recent 'moral panic' about touch between adults and children in institutional settings came to a head in 2011 when The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children issued a 'don't touch' warning to teachers. The then Education Secretary Michael Gove (cited in Sheperd, 2011) responded to this, saying: 'if we stigmatise and seek to restrict all physical contact between adults and children, we will only undermine healthy relations between the generations…and somehow reinforce the message that any adult who touches a child is somehow guilty of inappropriate contact'. Gove reflects the concerns of many Community Dance artists, such as Macfarlane who herself states that, 'the day we get to the point that a stranger adult can't touch a stranger child in the dance setting is the day I will stop being an artist quite frankly because it [touch between generations] is just so possible and I think what the audience gets from watching it is a real delight in the physicality of it, in the permission to be physical.' (Macfarlane, 2009: Appendix B). Working with touch then is a deliberate choice despite such warnings. Similarly, Martin Welton (2010: 48) writes of Lee's 2009 work *Common Dance*:

> The opportunity to explore touch…with her largely non-professional company was to open up the possibility for human contact usually foreclosed to the social arena. To engage in deliberate acts of touch that do not carry sexual or coercive implications is rare indeed. As she (Lee) suggests in interview, in an era of CRB checks and tabloid scares about predatory paedophiles such contact between adults and children outside of family settings is rarer still.

So while Gove is referring to a formalised educational environment, whereas Lee and Macfarlane are usually practicing outside of this, both artists are aware that introducing touch as part of a creative process when working with dancers across generations is a contentious subject, often seen as a taboo. This chapter makes a case for the use of touch in Cross-generational Dance as a method that has the potential to choreograph community. But rather than conceiving of touch and contact as something that melds people together, bridging the distance between them, it suggests that making contact reveals an ethical relationship of uncertainty. It is also this uncertainty which contributes to the notion of touch between generations as problematic – a taboo.

A taboo, according to Mary Douglas (2002: xii), is a 'spontaneous coding practice which sets up a vocabulary of spatial limits and physical and verbal signals to hedge around vulnerable relations'. The word taboo also derives etymologically from tabu meaning 'to set apart'[76]. Cross-generational Dance however can be precisely about involving, as David Harradine (2014)[77] puts it, 'groups of people currently seen as best kept apart' through Douglas' (2002) spatial limits. As such it does not necessarily lend itself to a practice such as CI in which touch is a central feature, or indeed the inherent physicality – that Macfarlane and Lee referred to above – of any choreographic process.

In the case studies of Cross-generational Dance used in this chapter it can be seen that using touch and contact called into question some of the personal and cultural spontaneous codes surrounding the parent/child relationship. Arguably, it is precisely through the reorientating of these roles and relationships that an experience of community is made possible between people who are related. The following section discusses a project I undertook with my own mother, Sarah Pethybridge.

4.2: Shifting methods

As Protopapa (2011) has suggested, through performance writing as 'looking back', interruptions occur in performance-making processes. In order to elucidate the rationale for how the use of CI came to be part of my methodology of relational choreography it is useful to reflect back on a project I took part in in 2011. In a sense the theoretical research interrupted this process as I was critically reflecting on it as I went along which resulted in identifying contact as a way of working. Practising dance with my mother in a Crossover project proved both rewarding and challenging. The project resulted in performing a piece directed by Macfarlane called *If I were you*; a piece that used themes of difference and empathy I had developed in previous cross-generational workshops also called 'If I were you' (see Appendix K)[78]; this was significant in itself in that it meant experimentation from my own research was already producing influence on the very people at the heart of the practice I was researching. Working as a participant in Macfarlane's project was useful to reflect on my own generational experience in a choreographic process and led me to

[76] According to the Chambers Dictionary of Etymology this definition is from the Tongan and was introduced to English in the 18th century (possibly by Captain Cook)

[77] David Harradine refers here to Fevered Sleep's project *Men and Girls Dancing,* touring in 2015/16

[78] Macfarlane took these themes and worked with them to create a narrative – as evidenced in the documentation *If I Were You*.

explore the open-ended methods using touch and contact featured in the case studies in this chapter.

Initially I found aspects of the process frustrating, which – through critical reflection – underlined my own drive to find ways of working that did not rely on preordained generational identities. The below reflective writing on the choreographic process is indicative of the problems I experienced:

> *I am finding working with Cecilia and my mum on this project quite difficult, maybe it is having two strong matriarchal figures who have influenced me such a lot and that I am still breaking away from! But not only that, it is mediating the fact that I am both adult and child at this event. I feel much more comfortable in my role when I am working with the younger children to help and support what they are doing (I wonder– maybe this is how that girl at Leap felt?). At one point Cecilia asks all the children to skip across the room and I feel SO resistant to it, maybe because for me skipping is a movement I associate with childhood. There is a difference between pretending to be a child, or representing childhood somehow, and performing as I am today, here and now: an adult daughter. When Cecilia asks that all 'children' group together I also find it really hard to be addressed as a 'child' in this context. Referring to the 'parents' as a group of course is less problematic somehow as whether they were a 65 year old parent or a 24 year old one does not define the term.*

In the same way that in Chapter Two I argued against participants in Cross-generational Dance being seen as representative of a general category – a place holder for their generational identity – the movement of skipping here can be seen as representative of an idea of childhood, rather than coming from my own experience of being singularly present in the studio in that time and place as an adult daughter. By contrast, the relational choreographic approach that I am advocating takes the contingencies of any situation – its 'singularisation' to use Nancy's (2000) term – as a starting point. Rather than referencing an idea, or a stereotype of age therefore, the premise is to work with the here and now of a particular moment and the emergent relations between participants that define that moment.

Relational choreography then explores relationships and ideas rather than presenting forms or particular narratives. It is an approach that can be seen as emerging from what Thomas (2005: 81) refers to as a 'crises of representation' which also informed social sciences, the humanities and dance scholarship during the 1980s. This same crisis has also played its role

in informing so called 'Conceptual Choreography[79], of the late 1990s and 2000s and as such the current episteme for choreographic practice.

Community Dance, though not conceptual in the same sense as the work of choreographers such as Jerome Bel and Boris Charmatz, has also moved away from the theatre space, and the role of illusion in performance in order to promote a similar dissolving of boundaries between so-called elite or popular forms of dancing. With increased accessibility to both the creation and performance of dance, finding movement material that is suitable for all ages has been supported by the pedestrian aesthetic introduced in the 1960s and 1970s, as I have already argued. Concurrently however, in a bid for common ground the potential of movement vocabulary is at risk of being reduced as it was in the case of my experience of skipping. Claid (2006: 141) makes a similar point about cross-disciplinary performance practices: 'we need an articulate movement language with which to collaborate in the first place. Cross-disciplinary performance is sparked by the contradictions of specific differences, not the middle ground between disciplines'. What Claid (ibid.) articulates here is also the danger of seeking 'common ground' between age groups, particularly when working with children who, as a result of their specific stage in the lifecourse, may indeed have a very distinct movement vocabulary. As my experience in the skipping task demonstrated, usually common ground requires a nullification of particular differences through compromise and accommodation. Vicky from Crossover underlines how this can be problematic for her as a performer:

> …artistically Crossover doesn't necessarily challenge me that much…we should be pushing ourselves more...a process that is difficult can sometimes have more interesting results and it's all very easy…it's all very nice and fun…there is a danger of going to the lowest common denominator.
>
> (Marks-Fisher, 2009: Appendix E).

Similarly, rather than using the contrast and conflict between my position as an adult daughter and a young child as a point of departure, I was required to accommodate the more vulnerable in the pair and to represent an idea of being a child through a commonly accepted form of movement in the same way that a essentialist community might require adherence to shared forms that makes everybody in the community equals.

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[79] Conceptual Choreography is a contested term but refers to a set of performance practices that critique theatrical representation and comments on the conventions of dance performance. Bel, Charmatz, Le Roy are often cited as its proponants.

Welton (2010) also argues against representation in Lee's work, referring to the risks of seeing Lee's *Common Dance* as a kind of 'dance-as-demography' given the mixed cast that make up its performers. However according to Welton (ibid.), in keeping with the notion of relational choreography, what is distinct is what he refers to as their 'listening' through touch that makes them present in themselves as opposed to mere representations of their age groups. By contrast in my experience of skipping in Macfarlane's project I was not being in the present moment but rather being asked to represent childhood.

Dancing in this project with my mother did however offer other opportunities in which these fixed roles were called into question. In the documentation – *If I Were You*[80] - children and adults are seen balancing, embracing, leaning or jumping over one another as they physically engage with the choreographic tasks; as Macfarlane (2011) says in the voiceover 'the fun in asking a parent to go under a bridge that the child makes is reversing what we expect – we expect the parent to be the strong one'. These kinds of activities provide an opportunity to reorientate relationships and to generate new experiences of relating, as my mother, Sarah Pethybridge also says in interview in the documentation footage: it is a very specific way of interacting and as such it "frees us up from being stuck in particular kinds of roles together". In the context of *If I Were You* however there were limits on how much this could be explored given the short timescale of the project and the onus on coming up with a finished piece for the theatre. Furthermore, as Vicky pointed out, we were not encouraged to find points of tension but to explore working together in harmony, affirming and reflecting an idealised notion of community as a phenomenon in which individual differences come together in a cohesive whole.

It was through noticing the potential of the approaches in this workshop however, and my frustration with its limitations, that led to my decision to work more in depth with CI as a research method because it is a movement practice that arguably allows an open conception of relationships between people through the aforementioned 'listening through touch' (Welton, 2010) as opposed to forms which require dancers to work within the confines of their own body. This potential for being open therefore also suggests the possibility for a more expansive notion of community. By this I mean to suggest an experience of community through the generation – to invoke Macdonald's point made earlier – of being-in-relation . Being-in-relation can exist alongside, and allow a change in –

[80] These are excerpts from a short film made by independent Oxford based film-maker Anne Marie Sweeney to document the events taking place at the Pegasus Theatre following its re-furbishment in 2011. Used here with permission in the context of the thesis but not for public redistribution.

an existing taxonomic relationship such as mother/daughter – as my own mother pointed out.

4.3 Communities in Contact

Contact Improvisation (CI) or 'contact' evolved in the 1970s. Steve Paxton, who is often cited as its originator was also a member of Judson Dance Theater and paid frequent visits to Dartington College in the UK; as such it was similarly part of the episteme in what Novack (1990: 170) refers to as a 'shifting cultural landscape' in the early 1970s.

CI lends itself to my investigation of experiences of community due to its associations with democratic political formations. Novack (1990: 195) points out that during the 1970s many contact improvisers were also living and working communally and that decisions were made through spontaneity in both the social and artistic realms, thereby generating 'a sense of egalitarianism, because nobody appeared to be imposing his or her will on anyone else'. Indeed more recent social experiments in 2013 by UK-based group 'Bread and Jam' have also sought to form social living experiments by building an intentional community on the principles of CI. Daniel Hayes one of the founders writes: 'We hope to explore what it could mean to live in a "Contact Community" and how one could possibly go about building one.' (touchandplay.org, 2015).

According to Paxton these egalitarian principles are embodied physically through the sharing of bodyweight. Starting points for improvisations include balance and loss of it, maintaining a particular point of contact between bodies, or exploring the everyday handshake (Banes, 1987: 65). The corporeal investigations of Contact Improvisation provide infinite possibilities. It has been described by Banes (1987: 57) as 'a democratic duet incorporating elements of martial arts, social dancing, sports and child's play'; while Paxton (cited in Banes) states that each dancer tries to find the 'easiest pathways available to their mutually moving masses' (ibid.).

CI involves pedestrian movement but is also at times virtuosic in a way that is particular to its own concerns – dancers may be lifted or jump across the space in ways that are certainly not pedestrian. However, even the most seemingly dramatic movements in contact evolve from what Foster (1992) describes, (echoing Welton's (2010) description of Lee's choreography) as 'listening' to the body. She writes: 'Dancers….are encouraged to 'listen' to the body, to be sensitive to its weight and inclinations and to allow new possibilities of movement to unfold spontaneously by attending to the shifting network of ongoing

interactions' (Foster, 1992: 491). For the purposes of this case study the inclusion of 'child's play' in Banes' definition and the notion of 'listening' to the body are both significant in that it makes CI potentially suitable as a mode of dancing that can be inclusive of people from diverse age groups. Indeed it is part of the repertoire of techniques often used in Community Dance practice, as Houston (2009: 97) identifies here:

> Since its inception in the 1970s, Contact Improvisation has been a dance form for whom its advocates have welcomed people without movement or dance training to participate. Because of its connection with amateur dancers and the concurrent development of the Community Dance movement, it is a form that is often used in Community Dance workshops.

What is more, the notion of exploring new possibilities of movement that Foster articulates is resonant with watching a baby learn and practice their evolving physical skills which was part of the inspiration for *Baby Jam*, my first case study. I used CI in this context because, as Novack (1990) also suggests, it provides a unique context for touch both in dance and within social relations.

Novack (1990) uses Ballet to provide an example of a contrasting use of touch to that of CI. She writes: 'ballet…often presents the two dancers in a representation of a real social encounter…the concept of a social encounter is suggested not only by the frequent narrative content but by the techniques of the body…' (Novack, 1990: 160). The techniques she goes on to cite are eye contact, gestures particularly with the hands and arms and gesticulations all of which have socially accepted meanings. By contrast, in CI, rather than the representational use of the body, 'the functional use of touching predominates. The form depends on communication between dancers' (ibid., 163)[81] and is free from specific gender roles or narratives. Canadian contact improviser Silvy Panet-Raymond interviewed by Novack (ibid., 168) states: '…Contact Improvisation has redefined a woman's strength capacities and possibilities and a man's sensitivity…it has also changed the quality of the touch in dance…a hand gesture used to have an emotional charge or form a linear design. Now it is not just presentational or expressive, it is supportive'.

The modalities of touch that function as support and embody shifting relationships of power, status and pre-constituted roles made CI suitable for my own investigation. Lee for example argues that through making contact "you can find an intimacy that you can't find

[81] Traces of Contact Improvisation can be seen in many contemporary choreographic works that are far removed from ballet through the partnering and sharing of weight between dancers. Although when used as a compositional device its final iteration is very distinct from the social context of Contact Improvisation, its initial premise remains the same. I have used it in both senses through the case studies in this chapter.

in words and it doesn't need to be talked about, it's just there, and that is through touch, through support, through weight…" (Lee, 2010: Appendix C). Although Lee's comment is in danger of implying the metaphysical a priori understanding of community it is nonetheless useful to identify it as a mode of communication in the same way that Felicity Lawrence (2011) in the documentation of *If I Were You* claims that dancing with her daughter provided "a new way of making contact". The communication available through touch and the sharing of weight makes it very compelling as an example of how social lives could also be conducted, and indeed why the concept of community has been taken up by those practicing Contact Improvisation both historically and currently. However, as my case studies will demonstrate, the complexities revealed in making contact also question the models of community that might be advocated by groups such as *Bread and Jam.* Such models based on equality and mutuality may in fact prove impossible when dancing with those of different generations.

4.4 Case Study One: *Baby Jam*

Fig. 18: Publicity for Baby Jam sessions

I set up Baby Jam[82] in September 2012 as a group for parents and children to explore Contact Improvisation (CI) together (see **Fig. 18**). My own daughter, Romilly, was seven months old at the time and I was keen to bring her into the studio space to explore my own shift to another generational position in the unique context of a dance practice. This experience became a central part of my research and reflexive methodology. My position to the research material in this instance was one of proximity, as such my personal narrative as a researcher is an implicit part of the auto-ethnographic writing. After having a baby, the sense that my body was not my own was acute; leading and participating in Baby Jam was a way of 'reclaiming' my body as it now was in a newly reconfigured understanding of its capabilities and of its status as a self-enclosed entity.

Baby Jam is not the first group to explore the principles of CI with very young children. I first came across it through an article in the Contact Improvisation newsletter on 'Baby Contact' (2011) by Olga Zotova, based in Russia with whom I had an email exchange before setting up my own weekly sessions. Zotova (2011: n.p.) states in her description of Baby Contact: 'There is so much to learn from the babies in terms of developmental movement, freedom and softness of movements, and an easy attitude about mistakes…the idea is this: just continue dancing when you have babies around, and use their presence as an inspiration'. In our email exchange Zotova stated about their approach that:

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[82] 'Jam' is a term appropriated from jazz music improvisation that describes the event of a group of dancers coming together to practice Contact Improvisation and is commonly used by those that practice the dance on a regular basis.

> We take babies seriously and refer to them as our partners. It is also based on developmental approach, following which we don't push development (don't teach babies dance techniques) but rather give them our attention, allowing them to crawl, move, explore…we teach moms some somatic movement, some dance improvisation, some Contact Improv techniques that can help them to dance *WITH* their babies.
>
> (Zotova, 2012: n.p.)

Here Zotova points out some important principles that I took on in my methods with the Baby Jam group. The notion of equality between participants advocated in Contact Improvisation is clear in her articulation of the babies as partners. Despite their reliance on adults in the rest of their interactions, there is an idea that the dance provides a levelling space where both exist in partnership. Furthermore, the notion of dancing *with* the babies rather than getting them to dance specific forms is significant to my conceptualisation of community as being-in-relation in the way that for Nancy, being-*with* others is an ontological matter – an inherent aspect of subjectivity. Watkin (2007: 56) equates this with 'being-open', a quality that is similarly important when practising CI with others.

The basis of my practice in Baby Jam was formed through observing and embodying physical skills and alignment that seemed to come easily to my young daughter. Using Zotova's proposition to simply keep dancing and learn from the babies and in keeping with Paxton's (1990: 124) idea to simply 'let the dance happen', I learnt from watching Romilly's flexibility, her released open hips, the ability to sit with a perfectly straight spine as she pushed herself up, and to fall softly yielding to the floor, almost in slow motion. I invited other mothers to do the same practice and to enjoy rediscovering their own bodies' capabilities alongside those of their children. In the same way that my mother pointed out in the film *If I Were You* that watching younger children "enlivened" (2011) her to move faster than she normally would have, working with the babies clearly had the potential to effect qualities of movement. I also explored ideas central to CI such as balance and weight support, generating movement through changing points of contact, sensing through touch and rolling different parts of the body. Some of these were easier to achieve than others given the vastly different sizes and developmental stages of the bodies of parents and their children. Rather than discovering a democratic equality I found that these relationships remained ambiguous. Engaging in the dynamics of social parent-child relationships as also relationships that create dance together meant that ambiguous borders between life and art were heightened.

Research in early child development puts great emphasis on non-verbal communication[83] as forming cognitive understanding and relationships. Forms of movement analysis have also been suggested as ways of mapping infant development in what Ruella Frank and Frances Le Barre (2011: 22) refer to as a 'changing relational field' of environment and carer in the first year of life. However, while the movement material at Baby Jam was no doubt relational, in the sense I have already identified as part of my methodology, my research focus was on the inner experience of changing roles and relationships in the immediate moment of practicing CI rather than analysing specific movement patterns. Significantly, a baby is not aware of their ability to represent or perform something and as such the duality of being present versus representation was less apparent in Baby Jam than in the context of Macfarlane's mother and daughter workshop that I took part in. Unlike the more codified and reiterated movements such as skipping which represented experiences in my past, Baby Jam invited consideration of the very moment of moving itself.

In addition to the skills and qualities of alignment I was learning, the size and weight of Romilly's body with mine held many movement possibilities for us to improvise with as Macfarlane articulates in the documentation of her own approach to teaching parents and young children. She reiterates this in relation to a particular project called *Whisper and Shout*: "The whole workshop was based on how can you get under this person? How can you get around this person, etc? But it's the reversibility of this touch – swapping roles – how can you as the parent go under, over or around and that's where the fun begins and that is the empowerment" (Macfarlane, 2009: Appendix B). The use of the word empowerment indicates a shift in responsibility or authority, for example when a young child watches, amazed, as their parent slides under the bridge that their small body is making they become the supportive structure for the activity rather than the parent always providing it and can therefore experience themselves as more powerful. These activities demonstrate how in the context of a dance workshop it is possible to reconfigure roles that may exist in other social spheres.

In the same way that Novack (1990) suggests CI as providing alternative gender roles, parents and children can discover non-verbal ways of relating through their physicality that address their respective roles differently. Toddlers at Baby Jam were often keen to explore how they might lift or support their parents. In one exercise I encouraged them to lift their

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[83] See Le Barre and Frances (2011), Gerhardt (2004), Winnicott (1957)

parents' limbs whilst the latter was lying on the floor and for the parent to relax as completely as possible, as the following task documents:

> **Find a space in the room and lie down, your baby can sit or lie with you.**
>
> **Lie still at first and focus on your own body, let your weight sink into the floor and concentrate on your breath, what does it feel like to let go of the constant vigilance of your baby or toddler for a moment?**
>
> **Stay still and let your child explore you, around and over, away and towards… respond to their touch, let it provide the impetus for a movement. (To the toddlers) Try lifting mummy or daddy's arm or leg, how heavy is it? Are you strong enough? Maybe you need to use two hands, or a different part of your body.**
>
> **Parents relax and let your limbs be heavy but you can also respond to the touch your baby is giving you – depending on their age it might be more or less directed.**
>
> **Do as little or as much as you want in response to their touch.**

It would be easy to suggest that such changes in roles – whereby, as Macfarlane puts it, the children are empowered by the activity – promote the kind of equality that Zotova seeks in referring to babies as 'partners'. In the same way Turner (1987: 44) suggests of existential communitas that there is 'a total confrontation of human identities' promoting a state in which hierarchies of power from social spheres no longer function. As I have argued elsewhere, however, equality usually equates to homogeneity or the lowest common denominator in movement terms, rather than choreographing community based on the conflicts of specific plural singular differences. The extreme difference not only in size and weight but in responsibility between babies and adults make such an equality arguably only possible as a principle rather than an embodied practice. Engaging in this task with Romilly did shift my attention to the way that if I was more passive Romilly would come to me, rather than me having to follow her all the time. Meanwhile, closing my eyes to try and sink into the exercise felt like going against instincts to be constantly in surveillance of my young child, and so the invitation to 'let go' was only responded to partially and momentarily. Such experiences revealed how unresolved our differences remained.

4.4.1 The vulnerability of responsibility

In addition to the movement possibilities of CI, Baby Jam was a response to the non-verbal relationship I had with my daughter. In the early weeks and months of motherhood I spent so much time focusing on what her physical sensations might be – guessing at what she could not articulate in language – that I forgot my own physicality. I felt absent from my own body – beside myself – particularly after the 'hyper-somatic' experience of pregnancy in which I was aware of every tiny shift and change my body went through. Butler's (2004: 28) statement that we are 'by virtue of being a bodily being, already given over, beyond ourselves, implicated in lives that are not our own' rings true for me now as my notion of myself as a separate individual was corporeally called into question through the experience of pregnancy, birth and early motherhood.

Cavarero (1997) too discusses natality as the human condition, as opposed to – she argues – the patriarchal philosophical concern with mortality. She understands birth to be the corporeal event whereby a unique person appears to the social world already and always in relation, indeed always in community:

> The first setting in which uniqueness and community meet each other is that of birth. Here the existent is found in its incarnated concreteness: this boy, this girl. The aspect of the community, on the other hand, is presupposed in the fact that this singular comes into the world, from the start, *from and with* another existent: the mother, this mother.
>
> (Cavarero, 1997: 21)

Cavarero (ibid.) refers here to the notion of the non-substitutable subject explicated in the previous chapter – *this* girl, *this* boy. In the same way, in order to choreograph a non-totalising experience of community in Cross-generational Dance, dancers must be seen as non-substitutable, unique and singularly present in that moment as opposed to a representation of their generation.

In Cavarero's (ibid.) example and my own experience, pregnancy, birth and motherhood become the example *par excellence* of Nancy's (2000) being-in-relation whereby the atomised individual does not exist but is in fact from and with another. Being-with others however does not mean losing distinction to become homogenous or – as I did with Romilly – losing yourself in the other – as the following reflective writing demonstrates:

> *During these first months of being a mum I am no longer aware of what my body is doing other than functioning. My shoulders feel curved and heavy from breastfeeding and carrying my small daughter, my back is stiff and I haven't taken a*

> *deep breath for what feels like years because I am constantly alert to someone else's needs, struggling with uncomfortable levels of anxiety my startle reflex is all too quick…when she cries, I cry. I realise this only on stepping into a dance studio and I am amazed by it, not because of my discomfort but because of my lack of awareness of this discomfort, when normally – maybe because I am a dancer – I am so attuned to my body's needs. Stopping doing for a moment and letting my weight sink into the floor I notice all this. But more than that, I feel empowered by my ability to carry on regardless of pain, exhaustion and anxiety. I know I am powerful because I am necessary to sustain the life of another being. Later, reading Emmanuel Levinas I realise it feels like the embodiment of his notion of ethics as 'a being for the other before oneself'.*

According to Simon Critchley (2002), Levinas' methodological premise was to reflect on everyday experience, in the same way that I do above. Bringing my daughter into a context where I was allowing myself the time and space to engage in this reflection was essential to the philosophical discoveries I made. In the same way that the ethnographic gaze invites consideration of, as Thomas (2003: 65) writes, 'how inter-subjectivity is negotiated and sustained through the routine mundane practices of everyday life' Critchley (2002: 7) refers to Levinas's model as that in which 'the philosopher, unlike the natural scientist, does not claim to be providing us with new knowledge or fresh discoveries but rather…reminders of what we already know but pass over in day to day life'. In this instance, my day to day life was a blur of sleepless nights and monotonous days tending to the needs of my young child; however, this reflection led me to an applied understand of Levinas' key idea of the a priori ethical responsibility one human being has to another[84].

My experience is significant because rather than the emancipatory promise of bonding with other bodies in CI, this experience can also be seen as at risk of totalising the other, subsuming them in a homogenous whole in the same way as reductive notions of community as commonality can. As Philipa Rothfield (1994: 83) states of CI: 'movement happens. It's unplanned, between bodies, and continually open. So how many bodies are there here? [...] what bodily boundaries exist and where do they exist?'. Similarly, my own experience of early motherhood with Romilly was blurring the sense of where her body

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[84] Levinas' philosophy is often described as a 'first philosophy' in that he was proposing that ethics was a prioi, i.e. before cognition. His theory can be more thoroughly understood in the context of which it was a critique of Heidegger, not only his philosophy but his association with the Nazis and what is more Levinas' own theological interest in Judaism and the Talmud (see Critchley 2002).

ended and my own began.

In Baby Jam I found I could not entirely give myself over in the way that I could in an adult jam as there was a profound sense of inequality in the giving and taking of weight – it was (still is) physically impossible for Romilly to take mine. As such, despite exploring the democratic principles of CI, and playing with shifting roles with parents and toddlers as described in the previous section, it appeared to be impossible with such a young baby who was ultimately still dependent on me for so many of the movement possibilities. By contrast, in an adult jam situation it is usually achievable in some shape or form to engage in an exchange of weight through a process of non-verbal negotiation. Despite the impracticality of trying such a thing with a baby, I experimented with laying my head in Romilly's lap or letting my arm rest heavy on her shoulders, something she seemed to find quite disconcerting, perhaps because it was an unfamiliar physical sense of our relationship. It was not necessarily our generational identity as such but the developmental stage and corporeal differences between us that dictated how we moved together. I began to question whether my idea of working with parents and babies in this way was even possible given that CI was formed on an ideology that includes the democracy and mutuality that Banes (1987) described and which might in fact be impossible in this singular instance of dance practice.

Arguably, however, it is in fact the very inequality in this process that refutes the possibility of totalisation in the name of the whole – or community – and as such explains why Cross-generational Dance in particular can lend itself to a conception of community as being-in-relation because as an experience it confronts you with this difference constantly, making itself non-absolute. According to Critchley (2002: 12) it is in the 'non-subsumptive relation of reflection on the particular individual in-front of me…an event of being in relation as an act or a practice' that Levinas' ethical relationship is embodied. The 'other' is therefore beyond reductive comprehension. Being in relation as an act or practice can be seen in the asymmetry of responsibility present in CI between different generations, as such producing an experience of community as being-in-relation.

This is not to say that CI is by necessity a practice that facilitates such an experience of community; indeed there is a risk of equating touch to authenticity – a non-verbal capacity for a kind of essential truth perhaps – as Lee has implied. It is also quite possible when moving together in contact to perform the violence of reducing the other to the same through an 'axis of cooperation' that David Williams (1996: 25) argues is necessary for contact to function and as Rothfield (1994) identified as a 'blurring of boundaries'. By

violence I mean a risk of totalising our dancing partners through melding with them, through trying to become one; through – as Jaques Derrida (2005: 2) puts it – contact becoming the 'death of between'; if 'contact' is defined as something that always intervenes between two objects – these being the hermetically sealed 'self' and 'other'.

Derrida (2005) refers here to Nancy's philosophy in his 2008 work *Corpus*. As the title of the book suggests '*On Touching: Jean Luc Nancy'*, Derrida's investigation of the sense of touch centres on Nancy's writing. The 'death of between' refers to the idea that contact collapses the space between things in the same way that notions of a community based on the fusion of common identities does. In choreographic terms this might be described as 'the benumbing acceptance of the presence and pressure of another's body upon or against one's own' (Welton, 2010: 50). Welton's quotation identifies the potential for the death of between, bodies squashed against one another in a non-defined mass. Rather though, in the same way that Lee cites the touch in Common Dance as 'relational and directional, requiring openess' (Lee cited in Welton, 2010: 50), the notion of contact I use does not refer only to the immanence of touch but to, as Manning (1994) has referred to it a 'reaching towards' others. Such a 'reaching towards' serves in fact to highlight what exists *between* bodies interacting, precisely because, as Nancy (in Manning, 2007: 28) would have it: 'Touching one another with their mutual weights, bodies do not become undone, nor do they dissolve into other bodies, nor do they fuse with a spirit – this is what makes them, properly speaking, bodies'.

It is the same ability to separate as well as bond that is arguably essential for parents and children. This concept opens up an ethical space in relationships so that rather than people being lumped together in their generational groupings, they are recognised in their singular uniqueness. The ethical aspect of this relationship between people of different generations is explored further in the following section. Not only do specific physical exercises generate and produce moments of embodied communication as community, but in order for community not to be reduced to its totality, the totality must be ruptured by the recognition of the spaces between singularities and their ethical responsibility to one another.

4.4.2 An ethics of touch

The ethical space I refer to underlines the notion of reflection (evaluating behaviour/movement in relation to others) as creating a non-absolute sense of community. The physicality of engaging with my daughter in Baby Jam became a place in which I

understood this ethical relationship more clearly particularly given the anxiety I had been experiencing in early motherhood about what Butler (2004) describes as our 'primary vulnerability' being the absolute reliance humans have on other humans in early life.

The exposure of my anxiety about this condition invites further consideration of Levinas' proposal of ethics as the first philosophy and how this is embodied in and through the ways in which touch is actualised. In theories of non-verbal communication I mentioned previously, much has been written about the benefits of touch to a young baby (Gerhardt, 2004; Winnicot, 1957). At the beginning of her book *The Politics of Touch: sense, movement, sovereignty* Erin Manning (2007: xi) cites a medical study at McGill university that comes to the conclusion that: 'early life experience is intrinsically linked to touch [and that] healthy children are directly proportional to touching mothers'. What is articulated less is the story of the mother's touch from the mother herself and as such the relearning of the relational field in a new generational position. This is partly because, as Gerhardt (2004) notes, early motherhood is often hidden from cultural representation as a private experience. In keeping with my reflexive methodology, this chapter uses an auto-ethnographic voice to reveal such private experience and as a way to invoke the very singularity and relationality that I argue is necessary for an experience of community[85].

Ruth Behar (1996: 13-14) writes in *The Vulnerable Observer:* 'The exposure of the self who is also a spectator has to take us somewhere we couldn't otherwise get to. It has to be essential to the argument, not a decorative flourish, not exposure for its own sake'. As both self and spectator then I propose that attesting to the vulnerability implicit in some of the more difficult aspects of motherhood that I experienced supports an understanding of a reconfigured notion of community. In this instance 'community' can include difficulty and tension as well as understanding and support. I draw this conclusion because the difficulty in these experiences in no way diminished my bond or relationship to Romilly, we remain as it were in relation and in community with such difficulties. Similarly, as Novack (1990: 158) notes, by the 1980s there was also an interest in CI practice in 'conflict, in being surprised and not doing the expected action…' which added to the repertoire of touch available to improvisers.

Likewise, Manning (2007: 14) writes that 'a politics of touch cannot be conceived as a politics of community…a politics of touch is based on the logic of disagreement, of

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[85] See also Pethybridge (2014) *Journal of Dance and Somatic Practices*, Vol 6 Issue 2

misunderstanding'. Touching others according to Manning (ibid.) is an ambiguous and unstable act. This ambiguity is the antithesis of consensus upon which accepted notions of a cohesive community are based (but is not to say that these conceptions of community are not also possible in the context of choreographic practice). As I have already argued such a consensual version of community is the one most often cited as a result of bringing people together through Cross-generational Dance. By contrast, in this thesis I am arguing for rethinking the conditions of possibility for community without said consensus and in such a way that the ambiguous, vulnerable and unstable relations between different generations can still be considered a community.

As my reflective writing articulated, in the early weeks and months after Romilly was born, I felt lost in her, but I also felt powerful in my ability to continue irrespective of my own levels of discomfort. This sense of empowerment was not only because of my size and weight compared to Romilly's but because I was necessary to sustain her life. This ultimate responsibility was not always a comfortable feeling however. As Rachel Cusk (2001: 91) puts it in her memoir on motherhood *A Life's Work*: 'love… lies close to the power to destroy, having never before remotely felt myself to possess that power I am now as haunted by it as if it were a gun in a nearby drawer.' Cusk's awareness of her potential to do harm to her vulnerable newborn baby is a taboo subject amongst popular discourses on motherhood however it was also part of my own experience at this time. In recognising that I was necessary to sustain my new daughter's life, I had to also acknowledge my ability to extinguish it, which filled me with fear[86]. Having talked to other mothers, this is a surprisingly familiar experience to many as they come *face to face* – to use Levinas' terminology – with the embodied being that is their child and the urgency of the responsibility they now have. Butler (2004: 26) states: 'The body implies mortality, vulnerability, agency: the skin and the flesh expose us to the gaze of others, but also to touch and to violence, and bodies put us at risk of becoming the agency and instrument of all these as well.' It is perhaps the latter that is the harder idea to accept, not only for mothers. The social codes and taboos that people live by mean that violence is not part of the lexicon for touch, particularly in the parent/child relationship and certainly in a dance workshop or choreographic process. Similarly, in the Community Dance sector, any notion of violence would be explicitly denied and prohibited for reasons of safety and security. As Levinas would have it though, rather than because of obeying rules or law, it is the choice we make not to commit this violence that makes us human and provides the basis of an a

[86] I came to know in retrospect that this was a form of perinatal obsessive compulsive disorder which new mothers can experience up to a year after the birth of a child, usually successfully treated with cognitive behavioural therapy.

priori ethical relationship with others. For Levinas, when we are '*face to face'* with another person, ethics is the foundation of that encounter. To paraphrase Orange (2010: 80), this encounter transcends all concepts, representations or ideas of who or what the other might be – in this instance then, their age or preordained generational identity. As such, the notion of ethics that Levinas proposes is useful to underpin the sense of inequality in contact between different generations. The acknowledgment of varying degrees of responsibility, rather than a falsified notion of equality, reveals an in-between space, therefore resisting the imperative of CI as an idealised 'coming together' in the same way as a community of commonality.

The notion of the 'face to face' is a useful concept in discussing the ways in which participants in Cross-generational Dance may experience others as not solely defined by their age but also not reduced to a homogenous whole in the name of commonality. Levinas (in Moran, 2002: 518) states: 'The face, still a thing among things, breaks through the form that nevertheless delimits it'. At once a material encounter grounded in the body then, the face speaks without recourse to language – as Orange (2010: 80) goes on to say*:* 'The face says: you shall not kill'; hence Cusk's metaphorical gun stays in its drawer. Such an ethical relation to others in Cross-generational Dance means that touch can function as a way to recognise the vulnerability that is implicit in the very touching taking place - the potential for the misunderstanding and disagreement that Manning (2007) cited as well as care and cooperation[87], demonstrated further in the following case studies. It is, in Levinas' terms, an obligation to respond to others, rather than protocols that define 'safe touch' or acceptable and unacceptable zones[88] that relations to others are ethical. Touching others in practices such as CI renders participants responsible to each other in their uniqueness in a singular moment of performing dancing. This is significant because it goes beyond the standard rhetoric of Community Dance as the ways in which performers are brought together behind a common aim whilst simultaneously recognising individual difference and instead suggests community as an ethical experience of being-in-relation.

Levinas himself uses moralistic language such as 'you shall not kill', however his philosophy of ethics can also be demonstrated through everyday examples such as how the ethical encounter is present in the simple courtesy of '*after you,*' or indeed in my own reflection on a mother's ability to put an infant's needs before her own. Or as Williams (1996: 30)

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[87] Macfarlane touches on this in her voiceover on the documentation 'If I Were You' stating that dancing between adult parents and children is imbued with mutual and changing responsibility for the other.

[88] See section 3: Touch in Age Inclusive Practice in my previous publication 'A Handbook for Age Inclusive Practice (2010).

suggests through an ‘axis of cooperation’ that the practice sets up between moving bodies. Paxton (1990: 183) refers to this axis as ‘‘it’ – a third force – created by the cooperation and interaction of two people’. In my case I iterate this ‘it’ as the in-between space and as what defines relationality as the ontological basis for community.

In my own case, I found that in Baby Jam by touching my daughter with different intent, other than the mother’s caress and instrumental nappy-changing hands – and through my reflection on these experiences – I came to believe in her existence as a separate being. Significantly, it has been argued in dancer teacher training that touch should only be necessary and functional to avoid the ‘moral panic’ about adults and children touching outlined in section 3.1; however, in my experience with Romilly the touch in Baby Jam went necessarily beyond the instrumental. It was this touch that allowed me to understand her as separate from me. I can only describe this as getting a sense of her weight, of the mass of her and of her exterior form. This was achieved through a variety of CI activities. These included rolling with her, gently squeezing and massaging her limbs, providing gentle brush strokes over her body, lifting her with different parts of my own body or allowing her weight to sink into mine and be the starting point for moving, rolling or falling with her. This was touch that was functional for the purposes of the dance practice but that went beyond our everyday interactions.

Through engaging in activities like these, and as she grew, I found I became less afraid of the potential power that I wielded, coming to understand that she too has the power to destroy me through the simple fact of her existence and the intensity of my love for her. The fact that she is distinct from me – and singular – Cavarero’s (2000) ‘this and not another’, was key to this understanding as was the use of touch that was outside the norms of the usual care and caresses I would give her. I use the word ‘love’ to denote the particularity that is inherent in Cavarero’s proposition of ‘this and not another’ subject – my non-substitutable Romilly. In the same way, Christie – another participant in Baby Jam – articulates here her experience of recognising her son’s uniqueness through the open-ended tasks involved in CI:

> I like the fact that I turn up and have no idea what you are going to ask us to do but I am excited by the ways in which I see my child change in that space, I mean I know he’s changing all the time, but somehow when I am also down on the floor with him, or crawling over another mum as he crawls under us, I feel like I respect the fact that he is not a ‘mini-me’ and I don't know what he is going to do but I’m ok with that, not trying to rein him in for a change!
>
> (Taylor, 2012: Appendix N)

Christie's experience, like mine, demonstrates how Baby Jam allowed her to reconfigure her role with her son and see him as very much distinct to her, his own unique being. Similarly, the love that I experienced for Romilly relied on our differentiation and separation as much as on the fact that she existed within me for nine months and was born from me – socially constituted. Love, by necessity, implicates Butler's (2004) 'primary vulnerability'.

Though Butler's (2004) argument centres on the experience of loss, it is significant in how she identifies the notion of relationality. Like Cavarero's (2000) phenomenology of uniqueness, which does not rely on a fixed identity, for Butler it is not through the 'content' of the other – which would denote an essence – that uniqueness is revealed but through mutual exposure with others. Butler's notion of relationality comes into focus on the following point – she asks when you lose someone, what is lost other than a sense of who you are in relation to that person, stating: '…perhaps what I have lost "in" you is that for which I have no ready vocabulary, is a relationality that is composed neither exclusively by myself nor you, but is to be conceived of as the tie by which those terms are differentiated and related' (Butler, 2004: 23)

Butler's point is significant in that it is this 'tie' that constitutes relationality. A tie that is also arguably what Levinas (1981: 16) refers to as our proximity to others being 'both our nearness and distance to the other'.

CI re-orientated my relationship to my young daughter through implicating the inherent vulnerability of our asymmetrical relationship, identifying a phenomenological sense of our distinction to one another. In the same way, rather than the melding of bodies to become a unified sensing mass, it is through maintaining this exteriority of bodies, surfaces against surfaces – entities that remain separate in order to come together – that Nancy refuses a body of identity. In the same way, he proposes being-in-relation as a non-absolute community (see Chapter Two). As Landes (2007: 87) states, in so doing Nancy (2008: 87) suggests 'the possibility of an open ontology that is always in motion'– a useful concept then for a dance practice that involves moving bodies and for an experience of community in Cross-generational Dance that does not seek equality – the other in the image of the same – but rather produces a phenomenology of uniqueness. Such a uniqueness acknowledges the necessary asymmetrical relationship of dancers of different ages to one another which, as Lee suggests, requires an 'openness' in listening through touch. So while notions of equality in Community Dance are necessary to question the elite nature of

certain dance practices, this rhetoric can also obscure and oversimplify the embodied experiences at play in Cross-generational Dance.

The following section goes on to discuss how the ethical relationship conceptualised by Levinas (1979) was manifested through the second Case Study *Where you End* with Paula and Alex Hocking, before discussing the third and final case study, Italian choreographer Giulio D'Anna's work *Parkin'Son* (2012). As opposed to an auto-ethnographic emphasis, these case studies still highlight participant experience but are analysed through looking at particular methods and interview data. Distinct from CI as an approach in its own right, the following case studies look at the use of touch, and principles of contact as part of a choreographic process. I thereby also invoke a broader definition of contact as intentionality.

4.5 Case Study Two: *Where you End*

This is Alex.

This is Paula.

; where you end

A duet devised by Ruth Pethybridge with Paula Hocking and Alex Hocking

Accompanied by Tim Popkin on piano

This piece explores the relationship between a mother and a daughter through their immediate physicality, their relationship to boundaries in the space and the embodiment of each other's movement material.

The tasks used to create the work asked the question 'where do you end and I begin?' revealing the intimate dynamic that already exists between Paula and Alex – the choreography and the relationship became inseparable.

A huge thank you to the dancers for their generosity, honesty, humour and ideas throughout the process.

Fig. 19: Program notes from performance

I met Paula and Alex at a training day that I was facilitating for working in dance with older people. It seemed unusual to meet a mother and daughter both working in the same field like this and I was immediately interested to work with them in order to further my research. Alex had just returned home after finishing her dance training, meaning that they were embarking on a new phase of their relationship. Therefore a relationship ripe for exploring the shifting domestic power and status which define generational relationships. When approached, both Paula and Alex were happy to take part in the project but cited different reasons for doing so. For Alex it was an opportunity to engage in professional

development as a recent graduate, while for Paula she simply liked the idea of dancing with her daughter. Working with Paula and Alex over the course of several months resulted in a piece that was performed as part of the festival of student work at Falmouth University in 2011. However, in keeping with my research strategies, the discussion centres on choreographic processes rather than the finished work.

The title of the piece ;*Where you End* implies the tension between togetherness and separation that occurs in the parent and child relationship as demonstrated by my own experiences with Romilly in Baby Jam. In the program detail (see **Fig. 19**) the definitive nature of the full stop that states '*This is Paula. This is Alex*.' simultaneously calls these statements into question. Furthermore, the use of a semi-colon (at the beginning of the title of the piece) is used when two sentences are too closely linked to be seen as separate and yet at the same instance could both work as separate entities. In the same way the mother and daughter relationship I have described with Romilly and that of Paula and Alex, require subjects that are both bound together through the 'tie' that Butler (2004) identifies, and set apart through an acknowledgment of distinction and singularity[89].

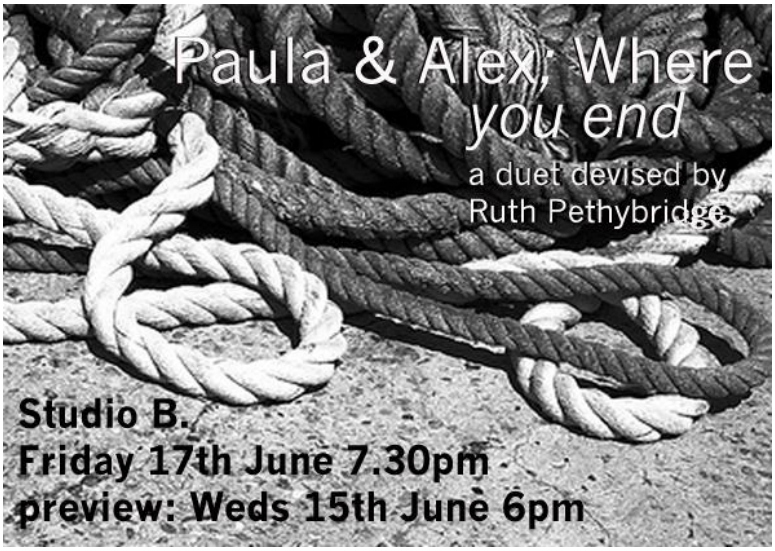

Fig. 20: Publicity for Where you End

[89] These themes were also embodied in the costume choice which consisted of T-shirts with 'You' and 'Me' written on them. These were swapped at various points throughout the performance at moments of coming apart and coming together.

4.5.1 The ties that bind

After my experience in Macfarlane's 'Family Dance' workshop I was careful to always speak to Paula and Alex as singular and I use their names as an indication of this in my writing. I did not continually make reference to their relationship as mother and daughter but rather let the reflections on the specificity of their relationship evolve from the movement tasks and working with a piece of rope. My role as choreographer in this process became one of mediator, whereby communication between the two of participants was negotiated rather than immediate, as Alex put it "I saw Ruth as a mediator and sometimes her experience gave me a voice…", (Alex Hocking, 2012: Appendix L) a sentiment which echoes the role of the artist as a catalyst for the marginalised voices in a society to be heard as in Steven's (2013) 'community model' of dance practice. However Paula, Alex and I did not engage in the process on this premise, rather my method was one of relational choreography. Although I was instigating choreographic tasks and the framework for the project, I was also relying on their willing involvement and ability to interpret the tasks I was giving.

The first method I discuss refers quite literally to the 'child's play' that Banes (1987) inferred as part of a definition of CI. For this task I used the technique usually referred to as 'the three legged race' to enforce a point of contact between Paula and Alex by binding their legs together with a rope. Often in CI points of contact such as this would be prescribed only through sensation; however, I was interested in externalising the relational ties that bound them together. The task then involved exploring the movement possibilities that this restriction created. In the documentation Paula and Alex are rehearsing the material that they eventually set after improvising with this idea. As with much of the process, I needed to be entirely present as they were devising the movement in order to offer my direction and support. What was filmed in the documentation *Rope Task* is the final version of movement they were happy with which they then used as an aide memoire[90].

[90] I decided to use this footage despite its poor quality and lack of sound as it is more indicative of the process than the final performed version of this task.

Through the familiarity of the device used in the task both Paula and Alex referred to their experiences of playground games, Paula said:

> The three legged phrase was fun … I became acutely aware of our differences … this time not our physical differences but a personality difference. I was very physical as a girl, sporty, my playground activities were three legged races, skipping, net ball etc … while Alex shared how much she hated three legged races in the playground because she was small and got pulled around…
>
> (Paula Hocking, 2012: Appendix M)

Perhaps because of her own understanding of these experiences of being pulled around Alex's own reflection was that: "I was surprised at how aware of my mum's fragility I've become. It made me think about the times I may have been clumsy with her heart and maybe her body." (Alex Hocking, 2012: Appendix L). In this comment Alex reveals her own agency to hurt her mother in the same way that Butler (2004) identified earlier as an inherent part of being embodied and what Levinas sees as forming the a priori ethical relationship between people as they come face to face. Paula said that working with Alex in this task and trying to remember the movement material made her feel vulnerable:

> … I can't say if this is an age thing or perhaps it's a lack of training… perhaps Alex's body is so trained that she remembered things much quicker. I didn't want to ask for more time as I felt Alex would get impatient with me which made me feel a bit vulnerable in an aging women way and as a dancer, Alex is so strong she could pull me over if she chose to...
>
> (Paula Hocking, 2012: Appendix M)

Paula makes clear that she is aware of the strength and capability of her daughter's body in reference to her own idea of being a dancer. The fact was that in addition to remembering and executing the movement material with more ease, both Paula and Alex were aware that if Alex chose to engage in a tug of war she would win. This is a distinct shift from the adult and child relationship when the child is still small and in the case of Baby Jam in which the parent holds most of the responsibility for the distribution of weight. Instead, in this instance the child's strength overtakes that of the parent. This experience also indicates why any fixed notion of this relationship is problematic, as it was in the workshop with Macfarlane.

For Paula and Alex there was a lot of tension as they created this section because Alex was moving faster and remembering the material with more consistency, she struggled to slow down and be patient with her mother. Because they were tied together with a rope, Paula had little choice but to go at Alex's pace – at times she would get angry with Alex in response and force her to stop by standing her ground or risk simply getting pulled along by the pace of her daughter. Paula reflected that Alex's irritation with her during creating and

improvising with this enforced point of contact was very emotionally painful and yet she recognised that perhaps it was necessary otherwise it would be too difficult for her to "let go" (Paula Hocking, 2012: Appendix M) of Alex in the sense of relinquishing her responsibility as her mother and responding to her as an adult in the here and now.

Butler (2004: 137) writes of the ethics that Levinas proposes saying that it 'does not come from a peaceful place, but rather from a constant tension between the fear of undergoing violence and the fear of inflicting violence'. This condition of fearfulness is influenced no doubt by his own life experiences as a Jewish prisoner of war, however the tension he describes – and Paula and Alex's experience of this task – indicate the necessary asymmetry of the ethical relationship in which they were forced to take note of each other's difference. This asymmetry is also implicit in my experiences of Baby Jam through acknowledging the difference of power and responsibility in my relationship with Romilly, as I have already discussed.

Recognising this asymmetry of responsibility is important to the project of conceiving of community as arising from an experience of uniqueness. It refutes uniqueness simply becoming another version of an individual essence. The notion of the individual is problematic as Cavarero (2000) argues because one individual is the same as any other, equality therefore also meaning equivalence or homogeneity, as Bauman (2000) has also identified. Alex for example said becoming "like her mother" (Alex Hocking, 2012: Appendix L) was one of her biggest fears. Such homogeneity also means that a group of said individuals – for example of a certain generation – are available for collective representation as a totalised community, they are for example the 'Over 50s' or 'Teenagers'.

Instead, the open-ended nature of such a task as the three legged race and Paula and Alex's subsequent reflections also respond to Macdonald's (2004) point about the re-productive capacities of the term generation made earlier. Through dancing together in contact it was possible for Paula and Alex to generate a new experience of their existing relationship. Using CI as a choreographic tool arguably allowed this because, as Anne Cooper Albright (2003: 110) writes: 'improvisation is one of the few experiences that cultivates a self open to possibility', as the following section discusses further.

4.5.2 Generating new from old

This section begins with a description of a task that I led with Paula and Alex near the beginning of the choreographic process for *Where you End*:

> **Close your eyes and place your hands on one another. Let your hands be soft and open, receptive. Gently start to apply a small amount of pressure through letting the weight sink into where your hand is placed.**
> **Use your hands to explore the body of your partner as if it is a new discovery, what can you find out that you don't already know? Use other surfaces – thighs, heads, backs, to continue this exploration. What can you sense, feel, touch?**
> **Allow your body to be porous, responding to this touch eventually by moving in the directions it offers and coming off the spot, continue your journey into the space, always discovering, exploring, finding out – a moving dialogue.**

After leading Paula and Alex in the above task I asked them an open question to reflect on their experience of participating in it. Alex commented that Paula had a tendency to pre-empt her movement and as a result she found it hard not to do what was expected of her rather than following her own spontaneous pathways. She said that this reflected that there were things she felt that her mother does not know about her, or has not taken on board, due to the fact that she is still growing and changing all the time. Paula noticed this too, saying: "I realised that Alex knew that I didn't know her very well and this was a grief for her…." (Paula Hocking, 2012: Appendix M). This could be seen as what Devisch (2013: 85) articulates in Levinas' terms as 'the epiphany of the face (which) contains a surplus beyond the adequation of intentionality and to which it aims. This is why I cannot reduce him or her to something that appears in its entirety to my consciousness'. Paula and Alex recognised the inability to know someone in their totality, thereby 'respecting the other as other' as Devisch (ibid.) puts it. This recognition of the absolute otherness of the other was also articulated in Christie Taylor's (2012) response to her child at Baby Jam in Case Study One as 'not a mini me'.

In this instance, Alex went on to say that "sometimes you are just too close to a person to really see them" (Alex Hocking, 2012: Appendix L) noting the danger of melding with the other discussed in the previous section. By contrast though it was in fact through being physically close in the task that their proximity was revealed. Contact allowed for the in-between to surface and as such they were no longer 'too close to see' one another, instead it provided the opportunity for what Devisch (2013: 86) refers to in Nancy's philosophy as

'…a crack (to) open up in the economy of the same'. Paula too commented on how for a long time you are just seen as in your role as 'mum' by the other members of your family and then as the children become adults this changes and they get to know you for who you are again, without that role. Dancing together in this task Paula felt had given Alex this opportunity to experience her as Paula – non substitutable – rather than simply 'mum'. Paula and Alex then came to know each other in the here and now of dancing in contact, reflecting Nancy's notion of an unfixed ontological status and the possibility to generate 'new' experiences of relating from 'old' or existing relationships.

Fig. 21: Paula and Alex dancing in contact during a performance of *Where you End*

The ethical implications of the experience outlined above – in which the phenomenology of the moment of dancing is foregrounded – are for an expansive conception of others rather than reductive notions of identity based on age, 'being mum' or any other taxonomy. Touching one another in practices such as CI can be seen as a gateway to an embodied understanding of such an ethics, as my own experiences with Romilly in section 3.1 also testify. It is in this embodied understanding that a reconfigured experience of community can exist, one that does not rely on shared traits but rather on the responsibility of interdependence – the ties that bind.

4.5.3 Exchanging weight

CI works frequently with exchanging weight between partners. In the task described below I used this premise to invite Paula and Alex to carry one another. This simple physical task was one in which the specificity of their relationship as parent and child was brought to bear. In the documentation *Weight Exchange*, Paula and Alex are doing the final version of the task as it was in performance; what I write about, however, are the processes that led up to and including this point.

> **Carry each other's weight completely.**
>
> **Take turns.**
>
> **Manage the transitions.**
>
> **Follow a circular pathway while continuing this constant exchange.**

Like the practice of CI this task invokes the ethical as the uncertainty of potential misunderstanding that Manning (2009) described because the dancers are reliant on their trust for one another and the embodied understanding of 'response-ability'. The practicalities of this task meant a lot of negotiating for Paula and Alex, both physical and verbal, in order to maintain the constant exchange of all of their weight and smooth transitions between roles of lifting and being carried.

During these negotiations Paula revealed that she did not feel comfortable giving all of her weight to Alex, but said she also felt that this reflected reality somehow in that as the parent to give her weight in this way meant something very specific demonstrating, as Mark Minchinton (in Williams, 1996: 24) writes: 'the giving and receiving of weight are not neutral things…', also recognised by Novack (1990) in relation to the non-gendered roles in CI. Alex articulated her awareness of this afterwards in her reflection:

> I found it frustrating that mum struggled to let me carry her. And my mind did use the action of lifting her as an analogy for times we have carried each other. I don't think we'd remember the same times though. It's hard that mum doesn't see the times I was there for her as a good thing because she thinks she shouldn't need me to carry her.
>
> (Alex Hocking, 2012: Appendix L)

Here Alex notes that she considers herself a capable adult in ways that perhaps Paula does not yet, illustrating again the sense that an open ontology is necessary in order not to 'fix' who someone is or their generational identity. In the same way that Macfarlane pointed out in the film footage *If I Were You* that the parent child relationship changes in the

context of a dance project, Paula corroborates Alex's sentiments in the following comment, saying that:

> I found it difficult at first. As a mum you are the strong one, you do the carrying so it was a difficult transition to allow my child to take my weight and become strong. Added to that I have always struggled to be lifted, as I am conscious that I may be heavy! But ultimately it was significant because it is what is happening to me personally and I believe why the dance was powerful… as the body gets older and the younger generation gets stronger the older generation must yield some of its strength and independence and trust the younger generation can share the weight… the responsibilities … In our culture unfortunately what seems common is that in that transition there is no glue to hold those relationships…Anyway I thank you for our dance, as it has provided some glue and I have gained some understanding about Alex that will feed our relationship well!
>
> (Alex Hocking, 2012: Appendix M)

Paula demonstrates how engaging in this activity with her daughter not only induced a reflection on their particular relationship but widened to include comments on the nature of cross-generational relationships in general. She illustrates what cultural theorist Thomas Csordas (1993: 139) refers to as 'the cultural elaboration of sensory engagement' meaning that rather than being locked into her own solipsistic experience, she was able to reflect on how this experience was relevant to social and cultural values and norms. In the same way my own auto-ethnographic reflections on my relationship with Romilly hold the possibility to contribute to the maternal meta-narrative which arguably sees such experiences as taboo. Similarly, Williams (1996: 30) states that: 'Levinas recognizes that the ethical relation of the face-to-face cannot ever be self-sufficient, hermetically sealed within an apolitical private space removed from the public sphere. Rather, he insists that ethics is always, already social and political.' For Levinas, the concern for the other embodied in the face-to-face encounter is precisely what stops violence and atrocities such as those committed by the Nazis which he experienced first-hand. Embodied experiences then are also capable of generating alternative ways of being in the world. Or as I argue in this thesis being-in-relation can have an impact on conceptions of what constitutes a community, specifically within the dance context but also beyond it.

Fig. 22: Paula and Alex preparing to perform *Where you End*

Paula also identifies in the above comment the idea of understanding, this is not the mutual understanding or consent of a consensual community that 'does not need to be sought, let alone laboriously built or fought for', to quote Bauman (2013: 10). It is instead something that, according to Paula, requires glue, in this case through a choreographic process. The sense that it requires this glue is due to their shifting generational positions but is also testament to Paula's recognition of her own and Alex's separateness; of their exteriority as exposed to one another, bodies in the sense that Nancy articulates as necessarily sharing their limits, rather than their interior selves. The notion that the choreographic process can be seen as the glue in their relationship underlines my definition of contact as purposeful communication in the sense that they chose to engage in the project with one another. Furthermore, the experience of Paula and Alex demonstrates the singularisation of experiences of community as relying on sharing a moment in space and time – being there – in this instance in the specific context of a choreographic process. During rehearsals for *Where you End* I discussed with Paula and Alex their previous experiences of dancing together. They had danced together often in the same room, at the same classes and events, such as the one I met them at, yet they had never danced together in contact, 'face-to-face' like the tasks in this chapter required them to do.

Paula and Alex demonstrated how, as Williams (1996: 30) puts it, contact can be seen as a 'continuous re-membering and re-making in relation', in that their observations of each other in the immediate moment after practising contact together were based on the here and now rather than preconceived roles. Furthermore, the practice invoked an awareness of their responsibility towards the other through the sharing of weight and points of

contact. Working with Paula and Alex did not demonstrate the ameliorative premise of much community arts that seeks personal betterment, but rather these participants experienced a shift in perspective, that – however momentarily – can be seen as experiencing community in such a way that does not totalise others through the generalisations and limitations of language and predetermined generational positions.

The following case study continues to explore these themes through the work of a father and son who also specifically worked with touch and contact as part of their choreographic process.

4.6 Case Study Three: *Parkin'Son*

Italian choreographer Giulio D'Anna explored similar concerns to *Where you End* in his duet *Parkin'Son* with his father Stefano D'Anna[91]. The changing roles of the generations and the experiences of power and vulnerability this revealed were not only as a result of age and their particular relationship in this case, but also of Stefano's Parkinson's disease – a progressive and changeable condition[92].

Like the dance artists of X6 and Judson Dance Theater, and indeed Macfarlane and Lee, D'Anna – though a professionally trained dancer – expresses an interest in the notion of 'alternative bodies' through reflecting on his own limitations and the tropes of classical dance training. In interview he states:

> I had been studying ballet but I developed scoliosis when I was 10, so I question a lot what is perfect, what is the dancing body? I developed this idea of the alternative dancing body, or the unconventional body and somehow to give back dance to humanity…
>
> (D'Anna, 2013: Appendix O)

In addition to the concerns of alternatives to the idealised dancing body, *Parkin'Son* was created using a relational choreographic approach. This is evident in the way that D'Anna speaks here about his father's contribution to the choreographic process:

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[91] I will refer to Stefano D'Anna by his first name in the writing to avoid confusion with Giulio D'Anna.

[92] Parkinson's is a disease of the nervous system and as such specifically effects movement causing tremors, and freezes as well as making basic day to day tasks more difficult. Recently there have been several studies (Houston and McGill, 2015; Hackney and Earhart, 2009) into the benefits of dance in for the symptomatic treatment of Parkinson's resulting in several 'Dance for Parkinson's initiatives in both the UK with, for instance, the English National Ballet and America with Mark Morris Dance Company.

> …whatever I would propose he would say why, why are you doing that? What do you want to say? So that was creating a lot of tension sometimes because I was like – I don't know – sometimes you could say yes I want to show this, or investigate that, but sometimes it was like I don't know…
>
> I realised that he was somehow co-creating with me the work…because with his critiques and with his desire for understanding from his point of view, without necessarily embracing art as an artist…but rather I'm a human and I want to understand…He actually co-created the work and so he choreographed also the way of thinking…
>
> (D'Anna, 2013: Appendix O)

The concept of co-creating and producing the work in this quotation demonstrates how the idea of relational choreography was a central premise in the work *Parkin'Son*. D'Anna's comments also illustrate how relational choreography requires much more than the simple contribution of movement material from all participants; instead it is an approach which takes on board the different perspectives and experiences of people who are invited into the choreographic process. As such it is also in keeping with the ideology of Community Dance to, as choreographer Adam Benjamin (in Amans, 2008: 103) puts it – 'take real note of the physicality of…dancers, to respect and learn from each in order to understand what they might offer that is unique, and how that might add to our understanding of dance'. Benjamin (ibid.) is referring to his own work with dancers with disabilities in which the concept of 'uniqueness' is again an important way to overcome normative binaries of able and disabled. What his point underlines of D'Anna's cross-generational practice is how it is not only the movement vocabulary that is influenced by this unique physicality but the very concepts underpinning what the choreography is; the reflexive capacity of choreographers to be responsive to these ideas is part of what defines such work as relational.

4.6.1 Acts of Relating

In addition to this relational approach, D'Anna had very clear ideas about what he wanted to explore, which included the use of touch and contact. In *Parkin'Son*, although there are improvised sections of the piece, he is using contact as a way to devise choreography as much as a practice of improvisation itself.

The focus on performance for D'Anna could be seen as one of the distinctions between his practice and broader agreed frameworks for Community Dance. In 1996 Sue Akroyd (in Amans, 2008: 64), then Head of Development at the Foundation for Community Dance wrote that '…Community Dance practice is characterised by an emphasis on process as opposed to product and by the conscious 'tailoring' of content and method to suit the

specific context and needs of a group…'. As it can be seen, however, D'Anna is not so much tailoring the content of the piece as working *with* his father in such a way that the distribution of power is more shared than that of the animateur model of social practice in which there is an ameliorative premise. Rather he is aware of the differences and conflicts in their views and seeks ways for this to inform his approach to choreography as opposed to accommodating his father's needs which is closer to a healthcare model of diagnostic or therapeutic practice.

Furthermore, D'Anna and his father made a consensual agreement to engage in an artistic process, as did Paula and Alex, which meant they were happy to test their limits whilst also being aware of how they were crossing culturally sanctioned boundaries or indeed Douglas' (2002) 'spontaneous codes' or taboos; as D'Anna describes here:

> …I feel I cannot hug my father…I will do that with an unknown 64 year old man but I cannot do it with my father, why? …I worked with the idea of breaking …these personal taboos…so we went through everything, we went through screaming, hitting, being naked, grabbing each other in all possible parts, spitting at each other, slapping…I was really trying to see if it was possible to erase this uncomfortable feeling.
>
> (D'Anna, 2013: Appendix O)

Whether seen as socially constructed or uniquely personal, D'Anna illustrates how particular ways of touching others are acceptable in certain contexts and relationships and others not. Houston (2009: 99) writes that for Douglas '…the construction of a stable world in many communities or societies leads to acceptance of a particular order. A taboo is maintained to protect the status quo and to guard against ambiguity and anomaly'. D'Anna's artistic process, described above, however meant entering precisely into such ambiguity and anomaly for the presumed order of their father/son relationship which would not, under day to day circumstances, include the modes of touch he describes above.

Fig. 23: Giulio and Stefano D'Anna in *Parkin'Son*

Similarly, in CI the rules of engagement differ from those in other social interactions. In keeping with the developments in the form in the 1980s that also saw conflict and surprise as part of the idiom, in my experience the touch given and received in a CI jam, and the movement it engenders, may be by turns pleasurable, surprising, un-nerving, disturbing, or downright painful. All case studies also demonstrate the potential for this. Arguably, it is when this potential is acknowledged – rather than denied for the sake of a consensual community – that the possibilities for ethical relations with others constitute community not through shared identity or fixed relations but through reflexive responsibility that exposes a phenomenology of uniqueness.

In the context of Cross-generational Dance practice this responsibility in the moment of performing dance allows for an interruption in the taken for granted nature of relationships that we are born into, a 'rupture' – to use Nancy's language – in the constitutive community that requires roles such as mother, father, daughter or son. As Nancy (1991: 69) puts it: 'singular beings share their limits…they escape the relationships of society (mother and son, author and reader, public figure and private figure, producer and consumer), but they are in community, and are un-worked.'

Here, D'Anna reiterates this by going on to articulate what could be described as such an 'un-working' that occurred through dancing in contact with his father – how breaking their personal taboos – qualitatively changed his relationship to his father:

> I have this feeling that I am a friend with my father sometimes, like we are in a train…or an aeroplane and then I turn and I am not speaking with my 64 year old father, I am speaking with Stefano, he's the soul that is beside me, and it's very beautiful then it is just about communicating, it is not necessarily about playing with the interface of the role…but when you are really free and connected, I think that this is just possible through dance. The moment that physically you have been slapping each other, you have been laughing, you have been naked, fighting and swallowing each other's sweat…like physically it changes things… I guess what happens is that for a moment, the social…what has been given us from society disappears and what is saved is the reality of our selves together,
>
> (D'Anna, 2013: Appendix O)

This response indicates that despite D'Anna's somewhat metaphysical language, his shift in perspective was entirely embedded in the physical processes he and his father went through together. He also infers that dancing in contact refers to communication that goes beyond simple definitions of the dance practice. It is a mode of communication that highlights the in-between space of connection rather than a subsuming totality whereby closeness precipitates a kind of blindness based on the 'taken for granted', as Alex commented on in the previous case study. Paradoxically such a 'blindness' can be seen as associated with an overemphasis on the visual rather than the embodied senses that contact requires, as Paxton (cited in Houston, 2009: 102) put it: 'when you focus strongly through the eyes as our culture trains one to do, then you can be quite oblivious to the fact that something is approaching, or that the surface you are standing on is changing…you can over-ride, in other words, signals that are coming in.'

D'Anna's experience also highlights how the exposure of singular presence transcends roles and preconceived identities – not in such a way as to create the other in the image of the same or equal but rather to provide a recognition of uniqueness. Uniqueness in this instance does not mean special or extraordinary, but refers to the exposure of one unique being with others who are also unique.

Like Cavarero, Butler (2001: 3) emphasises the exteriority of such an exposure, she writes that any knowledge of self comes from outside, that the possibility of 'the speaking knowing I, resides in a perspective that dislocates the first-person perspective whose very condition it supplies'. Arguably this is precisely what happens when working in contact. In order for relational choreography to function when using contact, no matter whether the role of the choreographer is one of pilot or co-producer, their 'I' must be displaced by a

relation. This relation is the 'it' that Paxton refers to, or as Williams (1996: 25) puts it the ''third element' [which] is not a unit but an axis, not an entity but a state of being, less a relationship than an act of relating'. Actions in the here and now of sharing a point of contact, or of lifting one another and exchanging weight can be seen as physical embodiments of cross-generational relationships and as of generative of different ways of experiencing these relationships.

In the same way, rather than choreography that represents ideas and narratives through forms, all the participants in the case studies in this chapter engaged in acts of relating through their singular presence with others in a particular time and place. As Paula wrote to me after their performance: "I like the playing with performance and reality and felt you were drawing us to share who we were and aspects of our relationship through dance rather than an acted performance" (Paula Hocking, 2012: Appendix M) . Paula's reflection echoes sentiments articulated by Lee in her conception of 'portraiture' (Amans, 2008) in her choreography that allows people to be themselves. Furthermore it implicates aspects of relational art and conceptual choreographic practices that provide frameworks rather than specific content for performers who are simply invited to be present as opposed to perform.

4.7 An ethical response

By including modes of touch that might be considered to transgress the social codes or taboos of their father/son relationship D'Anna and Stefano also question the socially sanctioned versions of those roles and how they personally inhabit them. In addition they push the boundaries of what would be considered acceptable in many CI jams. The following quotation taken from an interview with Brian Massumi (2015) indicates how the shift in perspective can be seen as an ethical one. Like Levinas, Massumi (ibid., 11) sees ethics as relational, contingent on its situation and furthermore that 'it happens between people, in the social gaps…' He writes: 'The ethical value of an action is what it brings out in the situation…how it breaks sociality open. Ethics is about how we inhabit uncertainty, together.' (ibid., 11-12)

Massumi's (ibid.) uncertainty is implicit in the improvisatory nature of CI and the anomaly and ambiguity that taboos prohibit according to Douglas (2002). Having an ethical response to others when dancing in contact means that it is not always enough to make contact in the sense of touching one another; rather to 'make contact' often requires an implicit trust in those you are dancing with, as well as your own bodily knowledge. At times because of a

very real physical risk, or the disorientation of hanging upside down, or simply because of being in the unknown as improvisation in all its forms calls for. Levinas' face in this case perhaps says '*I couldn't do this without you*'. Similarly Nancy's (2000) notion of being-in-relation requires necessary others in order to exist.

In the same way, reaching towards others to make contact is not closed in on itself as a solipsistic somatic experience but demands action and response from others without which it does not exist. Similarly, Levinas proposes that 'the face' demands a response. Such an ethics is perhaps what Judith Hamera (2007: 185) describes as 'an ethics of obligation, an ethics of presence to others as bodies rooted in these dancers' physical interdependence…it is corporeal, rooted in physical proximity, in touch'. Or as Gail Weiss (1999: 1) puts it an ethics 'that is grounded in…bodily imperatives. Bodily imperatives can be understood as ethical demands that bodies place on other bodies in the course of our daily existence', and indeed in dance practice.

All the processes referred to in this chapter have required that participants trust one another in order to embark on the choreographic processes or improvisations in question. This trust comes from the embodied quality of attention towards others which is necessary when making contact and might be seen in Levinas' terms as the 'readiness to respond' (Orange, 2010) – as I am constantly to Romilly in daily life and in dancing together in Baby Jam. This 'response-ability' is a somatic attending to both our nearness and our distance to others. In the particular instance of parent and child the readiness to respond is an ethical imperative that Levinas (cited in Williams, 1996) argues arises from 'the first foetal touch' or as Butler (2013) puts it 'our fundamental sociality' of being born from and with another.

'Contact' in the dance context can be seen as a kind of somatic attending to others, rather than as something that collapses space leading to 'the death of the between' as Derrida (2005) put it. Rather, as I am arguing, contact creates an in-between space that is at once uncertain and full of possibilities. Feminist theorist Elisabeth Grosz (2001: 91-92) argues that, 'the in-between defines the space of a certain virtuality, a potential that always threatens to disrupt the operations of the identities that constitute it', or in this case disrupting the identities based on age and defining community without fixed identities and common ground.

Making contact across generations then, has the potential to remind us of the ethical not as a moral code of shoulds and should-nots, of 'safe zones' and taboos, policies for Community Dance artists to obey or ignore, but as an embodied ethics of touch. The term

'response-ability' has been purposefully reiterated in such a way as to denote that in the context of dance it refers precisely to an ability to corporeally respond to others in the moment that it is required. This is significant for conceptions of community, as Butler (2013: 31) articulates:

> …by living in a world of beings who are, by definition, physically dependent on one another, physically vulnerable to one another…is this not another way of imagining community, one in which we are all alike only in having this condition separately and so having in common a condition that cannot be thought without difference…

Similarly, as Chapter Two articulated, Cross-generational Dance cannot be thought of without difference. Butler's (ibid.) argument also resonates with both Nancy and Cavarero in that likeness exists only in a recognition that others plural are singularly unique and that this is, as Butler puts it, another way of imagining community.

The notion of the in-between I articulate in this chapter is that which both separates and brings together distinct generational experiences through choreographic tasks inviting contact. It is a spatial concept implicit in the craft of choreography where bodies moving constantly create in-between spaces and the axis or 'it' referred to as the third factor in any CI duet. Philosophically, it is manifest in Butler's 'tie' (2004), the 'in' of Nancy's (2000) being-in-relation, what Cavarero (2000) and Nancy refer to as the exposure of the self amongst others, and articulated as a 'social gap' by Massumi (2015). I am not suggesting that all these terms are merely interchangeable but rather that they all invite a consideration of relationality as that which exists *between* people, rather than *in* people through an interior essence or in their existing roles and relationships; roles that are necessary, according to Douglas (2002), to maintain social orders such as the essentialist communitarian vision in which power and status is maintained through the acceptance of governance and shared values and aims. By contrast, and in keeping with my own argument, Bhaba's (2004) quotation at the very beginning of this chapter iterates in-between spaces as crucial to the articulation of difference, as such providing the opportunity to elaborate new strategies for communal collaboration and contestation and therefore redefining communities themselves.

Working with dancers of different ages using touch and contact, I find these dancers do not experience themselves as melding together as ageless indeterminate bodies. Dancers across different ages relate to each other in the immediacy of negotiating their materiality. The physical risks they are taking, and their 'response-ability' for the others are of more immediate concern than any concept of age. Generational experience is brought into relief through the asymmetry of differently aged bodies and the power and vulnerability this

implies, an asymmetry that is not only ethical but which directly effects the possible movement trajectories in both improvisation and in relational choreography that uses contact. What is more, responsibility towards others is highlighted in practices that require participants to purposefully make contact across space, bodies and social relations. Making contact also reveals aspects of generational experience particular to the familial relationship which can cause ruptures in their taken for granted nature – an un-working – that may be unexpected or surprising and lead to new understandings and conceptions of these relationships.

To conclude, I have argued through the case studies presented in this chapter that, community as an experience (rather than as a collective identity or pre-figured set of requisites) can exist between people of different ages through the reorientating of roles and responsibilities when dancing in contact. Engaging in processes like Romilly and I, D'Anna and his father and Paula and Alex also means crossing the spatial limits set up by taboos in order that such experiences of community become possible. By referring to crossing these social divides, however, I do not mean to reiterate the generational 'gap' that somehow needs suturing but rather the intentionality of a process of relating and of putting oneself in a position to allow it to happen. In simple terms through taking part in such a process or reaching towards others – as Alex commented on her duet with her mother – "committing to this process meant there was nowhere to run to when things became difficult" (Alex Hocking, 2012: Appendix L).

Rather than community being upheld as an ideal of human relationships, or relational aesthetics' aim to create 'micro-topias', as Bishop (2013) puts it, arguably community can also include 'difficult' experiences that do not lend themselves to these idealistic notions. Experiences of community in contact arguably exist in tension with the violence that is implicit in its very absence. Using touch and contact in Cross-generational Dance means breaking open the fundamental sociality of interdependence in such a way that can be painfully problematic, and politically sensitive as well as fun and pleasurable, as such invoking physical and emotional risks to bodies, and to people in their non-substitutable singularity.

The acknowledgement that touch does not necessarily mean care and support as we might presume it to in the dance context is an important one. Although contact relies on trust, it also relies on an openness to the very emergent process of being with others. Williams' (1996) 'axis of cooperation' does not always function in CI which can also be uncomfortable and insensitive as much as it can create a sense of joy. The dancers in cross-generational

practice featured in this chapter are aware of this fact at a phenomenological level, however this fundamental vulnerability is also that which defines people as human, embodied and relational. As such, contrary to the apolitical stance identified in Chapter One, Community Dance too might conceive of a critical engagement with its practices that admits to failure and problems, and to differences that cannot be easily resolved, but without undermining the very premise of community on which it is based.

Similarly, the complex asymmetrical ethics that can exist between ages in making contact need not be denied or turned away from for fear of alienating those who see Cross-generational Dance as a way to promote understanding between different ages. Instead, it is possible to imagine an ethics of touch that becomes a way of 'being together' in our singular plurality; an ethical imperative – rooted in the body – that can permeate beyond the dance studio as it did for D'Anna and his father, Paula and Alex and myself with Romilly and become a way of being-in-relation in and *as* community.

Conclusion

This research was borne out of my own practice as a dance artist within the Community Dance sector in the United Kingdom. Over fifteen years in this position I learnt – through practice – the skills necessary to facilitate contemporary dance in a wide variety of settings with people of all ages and abilities. The choreographic processes I engaged in in these settings use a wide variety of tools, approaches and methods common to the professional sector of Community Dance. Many of them however remain under-represented in debates on, and documentation of, choreographic approaches. Part of the work of this thesis then involved observing my practice as it was, without seeking to change the practice itself or develop anything 'new' per se in its application, but rather to seek ways of articulating it, and 're-articulating' understandings of Community which in turn have the potential to enrich the practice and its surrounding discourses. As an artist-researcher this thesis has now become a point of departure for further research of how the alternative understandings of Community as 'being-in-relation through a phenomenology of uniqueness', might impact on my practice.

Reading over the final version of this thesis again, the 'infidelity' to my previous communities of practice in the form of critique does not always sit easily with me, and while I think this was (and is) necessary, the times in which I write now in 2016/17 already feel so different to the ones in which I began in 2009. Perhaps now more than ever the premise of community in all its forms needs to be defended. Finding common goals, shared identities and cohesive collective forms of representation may be a valuable part of the political landscape that I now find myself in and be an important sense in which experiences within the dance studio become significant to the wider cultural context.

At the outset, however, my experience of researching concepts of community – specifically in the Community Dance sector in the UK – was a frustrating one. The literature and rhetoric repeatedly referred to the same themes time and again of the individual actor versus communal experience, mirroring the primary debates in philosophies of community between liberalism and communitarian thought. My own practice too was restricted by these ideas through a lack of critical reflection on a dancing community that I was very much a part of. The wide variety of more radical philosophical perspectives on community were barely acknowledged, yet I knew through my practice that the experiences at play in the choreographic process were far more complex than solely the individual versus group dichotomy. How these experiences can be articulated and understood as 'community' became the focus of my research in order to reconfigure this concept in the context of

cross-generational dance, which in turn has implications for the Community Dance sector and beyond.

The introduction to this thesis referred to Barratt's (2007) notion of the exegesis as meme in the sense of an idea that can be spread through forms other than its originary one. Similarly, this thesis serves the same function, because although the ideas came from the practice, it is through language that they are now being circulated. Seeking to articulate alternative ways of speaking about Community Dance other than the dominant rhetoric also interrogates the danger of Community Dance becoming a meme itself in the sense of being imitated through its general characteristics, rather than developing approaches and articulations that are specific to each context.

I do not refer to Cross-generational dance as a field in itself (for it would refer to nothing more than chronological age differences) but at the time of writing it is an increasingly favoured approach to casting performers in both professional and community dance performance. As such my research is timely, and serves to identify some of the practical, methodological and philosophical concerns that are pertinent to creating choreography with a mixed age group. Furthermore, working with cross-generational dance opened up the question of community in a particular way due to its very definition being based on difference and the subsequent teleological emphasis on bringing these differences together in a cohesive whole, as such satisfying the ideology of community as commonality. Cross-generational dance was used throughout the thesis as a specific context for examining notions and experiences of community, not least because the choreographic approaches used in cross-generational dance also mirror the trajectory of debates on community. For example, often working with tasks that focus on individual experience and movement material before joining particular vocabularies together to create group phrases of movement or joining in on group structures and forms, demonstrating how particular differences are forgotten in pursuit of the common goal of performance.

Through my choreographic practice and my writing as both a documentation of, and a window on, that practice, I have mined for alternative meanings and understandings of community through a research process that has involved observations of myself and others engaging in choreographic tasks. The former observations were made through an auto-ethnographic mode of research and the latter through an analysis of participant responses to particular choreographic tasks and events filtered through my reflexive methodology which acknowledges the act of construction I am engaged in as a researcher-practitioner.

The reflexive research strategy was central to the ethics of the project as indicated in the Introduction. In engaging in re-articulating experiences of community that occur in relational choreography I was taking what has been said in interview and making meaning specific to my argument from it. This has meant some careful editing processes and has intentionally presented only one aspect of what has been revealed in the wider research process. This is precisely the point in that it is this particular perspective that is under-represented in the sector and, as I have argued, limits the potential of an ever-evolving practice. Marrying choreographic strategies with radical views of community in this way allows marginalised experiences into the discourse on what constitutes community. The relationship between discourse and how Community Dance is practiced is central to my methodology and also provides a point of departure for further research in considering how changing current paradigmatic language might impact Community Dance practitioners' thinking and practice.

With that in mind, this thesis examined the idea of community using the theoretical work in particular of Nancy, Cavarero and Levinas who, broadly speaking, can be seen as part of a post-structuralist paradigm. All these writers underpin my methodology which focuses on lived experience and the relationship of this lived experience to philosophical discourse on community. From my engagement in their perspectives, I have concluded that community is not a passive 'always and already being in' but an active phenomenon that is produced through making contact and in the ethical response to others. Such responses are facilitated by relational choreographic approaches highlighting plural singularity and therefore, as I have argued, invoke a conception of community as being-in-relation.

Relational choreography offers a way to define and practice choreography that acknowledges the contingency of any creative process, dependent as it is on relationships that are formed in the moment as well as external agendas that impact on a making process. The triangulation of task/participant/choreographer is proposed as being at the heart of this methodology, again contingent on the responsiveness of both agents and the wider context and aims of the overarching project. The existing models of the relationships between choreographer and dancer that I was referring to in my research did not adequately acknowledge the necessary responsiveness of these processes. While collaborative choreographic processes are now largely acknowledged as the standard bearer in most productions of contemporary choreographic work, relational choreography could arguably provide an ontological reconsideration of what it means to work ethically in contemporary choreographic processes. Relational choreography acknowledges the multifaceted professional, political and artistic skills of a choreographer in these contexts

and contributes to the growing body of work in the wider field of participatory and community art that is addressing the complexity of these relationships.

Using relational choreography in my cross-generational dance practice became a necessity because of the explicit differences between participants and their generational identifications. It is these explicit differences that also made cross-generational dance an ideal case study for my research as it embodies the problem of community as commonality in a specific way that ultimately brings differences together. Instead of this teleologic view of community, the contingencies of relational choreography underpin my improvisational methods and the notion that community may itself be temporally singular and context specific.

The singular iteration of community existing in, and as, a performance moment supports the use of contact as a research methodology that is the focus of Chapter Four. In this chapter I looked particularly at Cross-generational Dance involving parents and children in order to examine how using touch and contact could be seen as generative of experiences of community between people already in existing relationships. This was not to presume the use of touch as a defining feature of cross-generational dance but rather to suggest that it provides another mode of choreographic practice through which to understand notions of community as they are experienced corporeally. The ethical relations I discuss in the final chapter may be experienced through simple changes of weight, or movement games that draw on the tools and techniques of Contact Improvisation. Through Levinas' ethics and Butler's notion of primary vulnerability, I propose that Contact Improvisation demands a response. In a relational choreographic approach using contact, an in-between space is brought into play which draws people into a relationality that transcends preordained identity and can be construed of as an experience of community that relies instead on the exposure of unique singularities.

Chapter Four also argues, however, that rather than always and already presuming that such a response will be virtuous and based on the consensus of a community towards the common 'good', that the open nature of contact as a question means that the response also has the potential to include difficult experiences and vulnerable relations. Such experiences however do not necessarily undermine the ability to refer to them as community. Significantly, this recognition is important for the very episteme, identified in Chapter One, that produces the discourse and practice of contemporary Community Dance, meaning that claims made about the practice can include experiences that do not lend themselves to an understanding of community as a kind of 'paradise lost' or upheld ideal of

human relationships and understanding – or in the case of Cross-generational Dance in particular, the harmonious bridging of a generational 'gap' or divide.

The recognition of how discourse shapes and is always in dialogue with practice, made explicit in this thesis, has implications for practical approaches to participatory dance involving people of different ages. In particular, relational choreography provides a modality that can include many of the approaches already being used by choreographers in the sector but highlights some of the less tangible skills of being 'ready to respond' and underscores the complexity of the co-existing aims and agendas at play. Relational choreography also means dance practitioners can embrace projects that are process orientated – not in the sense articulated as promoting the quality of *experience* over and above the quality of any performance or 'product' but rather process as a method in and of itself. It affirms the place of structured improvisation and contact as useful tools in many of these practices. The choreographic methods I discuss also encourage the use of touch and purposeful contact in such a way that may support Community Dance practitioners with a rationale for using it in their practice rather than succumbing to the climate of fear – or taboo – surrounding this approach to working with dancers of different ages.

The future implications of a shift in the episteme for the Community Dance sector at the level of discourse means beginning to include critique and the acceptance of difficulty and failure in the largely celebratory rhetoric surrounding the practice, without fear that this undermines its very premise. For example, policy directives for dance projects might value the ephemeral ontology of dance performance – its singularisation – while still highlighting its capacity for experiences of community.

The specific insights this PhD offers are specific to Cross-generational Dance and the case studies I use, but clearly also have far wider reach and relevance to the Community Dance sector and contemporary dance more broadly. My critique of the form of community as a body of essences, or as leading towards the common good, is not new in itself, as Chapter Two pointed out; however, such critiques have failed to impact on Community Dance. Furthermore, relational choreography – as indicated – could provide additional ways to illuminate contemporary choreographic practices currently in circulation.

This thesis not only provides a necessary interrogative approach to the choreographic ethos of the Community Dance sector in the United Kingdom, but also rewrites its history to put it in closer dialogue with experimental practices in the professional performance sector in

which shared approaches may be more relevant than distinctions by way of ‘quality’, genre or style.

Reaching beyond my immediate dance community, as I have done in this research, means creating a ‘crack in the economy of the same’, as Devisch (2013) would have it. Through this crack it is possible to experience the non-absoluteness of being-in-relation and as such to recognise the ethical implications and limitations of referring to community as only one kind of experience. Instead, recognising the localised and intimate complexity of politics in specific choreographic contexts and the singular plurality of people who embody these contexts is essential to broaden the scope and understanding of Community Dance. This thesis does just that and itself becomes part of the contemporary episteme and body of knowledge for Community Dance.

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List of Performances

Jerome Bel (2012) *Disabled Theatre,* [dance performance] performed by Theatre Hora [Espace Pierre Cardin - Théâtre de la Ville. 3rd June]

Jerome Bel (2004) *Veronique Doisneau* [dance performance] [Palais Garnier, Paris. 22nd September]

Boris Charmatz (2011) *L'Enfant* [dance performance] [Popes Palace, Paris.12th July]

Guilio D'Anna (2012) *Parkin'Son,* [dance performance] performed for Roma Equilibrio [Parco Auditorium della Musica, Rome [within Festival Equilibrio]. 8th February]

David Harradine (2016) *Men and Girls* [dance performance] for Fevered Sleep Theatre [Quarterhouse, Folkestone. 8th April]

Rosie Heafford, Alexandrina Hemsley, Helena Webb (2014) *Dad Dancing* [dance performance] [Battersea Arts Centre. 29th October]

Rosemary Lee (2009) *Common Dance,* [dance performance] for Dance Umbrella Festival [Greenwich Borough Hall, London. September 22nd]
Rosemary Lee (2011) *Square Dances*, [dance performance] for Dance Umbrella Festival, [London. 8th October]

Martin Nachbar (2007) *Repeater* [dance performance] [Sophiensaele, Berlin. 8th November]

Cecilia Macfarlane (2007) *Dragons Tale* [dance performance] [Warwick Arts Centre. 15th February]

Steve Paxton (1967) *Satisfyin Lover* [dance performance]

Ruth Pethybridge (2011) *Gifted* [dance performance] [Pegasus Theatre, Oxford. 26th October]

Ruth Pethybridge (2011) *Where You End* [dance performance] performed for Platform festival [Falmouth University, Cornwall. 17th June]

Yvonne Rainer (1966) *Trio A* [dance performance] [Judson Church, New York. 17th June]

Tino Seghal (2007) *This Situation* [live installation] [Marian Goodman Gallery, New York. November 18th]

Rikrit Tiravanija (2012) *Soup/No soup* [live installation] for La Trienniale, [Palais de Tokyo, Paris. 7th April]

Rikrit Tiravanija (1992) *Untitled (Free)* [live installation] [303 gallery, New York. 8th February]

Appendices

Appendix A: List of publications

Pethybridge, Ruth (2009) *Age Inclusive Practice – A Handbook for Dance Leaders in the Community,* Foundation for Community Dance: Leicester

Pethybridge, Ruth (2013) Cross Generational Dance or Just Communities Dancing? in *Age and Dancing – Older People and Community Dance Practice,* Palgrave MacMillan: Basingstoke

Pethybridge Ruth (2014) Relative Proximity: Reaching Towards an Ethics of Touch in *Journal of Dance and Somatic Practices* Volume 6, Issue 2. Intellect: London

Pethybridge, Ruth (2016) *Any Age, Any Body, Any Dance*: Dance Ideas for Every Body inspired by Cecilia Macfarlane's dance practice in the Community, People Dancing Foundation for Community Dance: Leicester

Pethybridge Ruth (2016) *A Song in My Own Breath*, dance film produced in partnership with the above publication available at: https://wordpress.com/page/unresolveddifferences.wordpress.com/123

Appendix B: Interview with Cecilia Macfarlane

Interview excerpts taken from an Interview with Cecilia Macfarlane, conducted in Oxford on 27th July 2009

RP: How do you define Age Inclusive and why not Inter-generational?

CM: It comes about from my speaking and hearing from Celeste Dandaker who had been passionate that before she left Candoco that had been described as an 'integrated' dance company that the company shouldn't be called 'intergrated' anymore; she didn't' want that classification that defined it by its difference. So I started thinking about Crossover….after talking with Celeste and really becoming more and more aware that we classify difference, it's always to do with difference….all those 'inter' words which can be so patronising potentially, and sort of saying you can now fund me because I've got an 'inter' word. It's actually a misuse of the word because inter should be something really positive but in a lot of peoples thinking I think it is quite patronising – that's my feeling anyway.

My work was described as being intergenerational at the meeting for Foundation for Community Dance Summer School and I realised I wasn't comfortable with it so we sat round the table and came up with Age Inclusive, which seems slightly better than intergenerational….but then in a way intergenerational doesn't have the same connotations as integrated but then in dance terms I think intergenerational does have the patronage…if you talk about intergenerational art or even theatre I feel differently about it but somehow intergenerational dance company does again say that it is ok to be all ages. What would be lovely is if we get to a point in the world where we don't have to even label because we presume that all companies are mixed ability, all companies will be mixed ages, mixed nationalities etc., etc. and maybe we get there and I think that was Celeste's dream and so I suppose I was dreaming with her.

Why Intergenerational and not cross-generational? Beth Johnson Foundation who talk about cross-generational is older and younger coming together with the middle making it happen!

Inter means between, for me I like the fact that we call it Crossover so we've got the cross word in there but that intergenerational to me sounds like it is between all ages. So although when we were planning I wanted to look at the terms we were using, I never intended to change Crossover's name to Crossover Age Inclusive Dance Company – I like Crossover Intergenerational Dance Company and at one point I think I did talk about shall we just call it Crossover Dance Company and everybody said, "no we should keep it is it is because people know what we are".

RP: Why is Age Inclusive Work important to you in your work?

CM: It is a logical evolution of my work in that in the last 30/40 years have I become more and more passionate that dance can be and should be and is for everyone and so if I've got that philosophy then that includes everyone from whatever age they want to start moving, in the womb, post womb, right up to the last blink and so it is inevitable that therefore my work should include all ages. It's funny because I do think one of the things that has happened is that Dugout is 18 years old and could also be given the title intergenerational but I have never thought to call it that, as far as I'm concerned it is an adult Community Dance group because as far as I'm concerned any community group should represent all community and all ages with no definition of 'up to 60' or '60 and over'. The evolution of it came from my parent and children's classes when the parent didn't want to leave the children or the children didn't want the parents to leave – it wasn't labelled as inter-

generational but there was clearly something very important happening. Then I became interested in these fathers that wanted to dance or boys who dance and their fathers who don't so I set up projects for mother and daughter, father and son….specifically same sex but also relations. I suppose the other part of the equation is that as a dancer getting older, I mean ok I could make endless solo work but there wasn't really many opportunities for me so I suppose it's if you don't have an opportunity you have to make it!

I've gone on creating environments that mean I can continue my expression as a dancer. The weird thing is that as a dancer you would naturally expect there to be less opportunity as I get older but actually I think I'm getting more…and that's partly because I've laid the soil and so there's the plants growing but it's also because society is changing and so it's more populist, it's tasty, so I happen to be riding the crest of a wave that is actually old hat, or done it before, or can't do it. So then, what happened with Crossover was that having done the mother/daughter father/son was that I can remember it very clearly. I was walking the Olpic(??) peninsula in Seattle and thinking about 'what next' 'what next' then I had this idea of these pairings of ages so that it's not just grandchild, grandparent and the mother in-between; it's actually each decade being different and actually key to it not being related; Crossover has never had anyone related, there was a point when Dora (daughter of one of the members) could have been a member and we decided categorically no because it would change so much the dynamic of the group. Sometimes we used to describe ourselves as a family and Jeremy in particular gets quite cross at that because in a way Crossover is better than that because it doesn't have those behavioural dynamics that happen in families. So I thought I'd like to have one from each decade and I remember thinking ooh I've got that dancer and this dancer etc. and literally casting it and knowing who I was going to come back and ask and that was the beginning. I called it Crossover because it was crossing all ages but also because I approached it a bit like a piece of tapestry with the threads crossing over because I was like how do I work with this intergenerational group who has never met before, has got dance in common, got me in common, but you know, has so much different life experience. I think I thought we would work as a group first but it became clear that we needed to work as individuals first so we began by creating solos which were based on you as a dancer, who you are as a dancer, the statement you make as a dancer based on the point you are at in your life but also using the rest of the company if you want to support you. So for example I can remember Bee particularly…aged 8 or 9 doing a solo and she used us by putting us in a semi-circle not facing her – it was private you know! Whereas somebody else wanted us all to lift them so we all lifted that person. Then the second thing was really delightful, unusual pairings, so paired with somebody who was a completely different age and looked at that and then the third one was I think my favourite – the four women, the four men and really working vertically as opposed to horizontally, so it created a different stitch and those were really good pieces that emerged and we shared and performed every stage and it was fascinating because it made a really good fabric, a really good cloth, a really good tapestry which was the foundation for Crossover which hasn't faltered.

RP: The fact that none of Crossover are related – is your approach different when you're working with a family and when you're working with people who aren't? And the issue with contact work and people who aren't related?

CM: Well I think that's huge – I mean there isn't a problem within families, at least you hope there isn't because there is a kind of etiquette that makes it ok but then I think that's quite its why I quite enjoy the same sex ones and I have more hesitations with the father/daughter and the mother/son. I was in the other mother/daughter with Emily and I am in Crossover so that's quite interesting in terms of what that means. I am not outside eyeing it, I am actually embedded in it, and it's also my vehicle. Creating work that you can be in and my being in it in Crossover is fundamental but not impossible not to be in it.

But the thing about the Touch, we are all CRB checked – that's fundamental and then if you look at the adults we are quite capable of saying if we want to be touched or not and we make the children's voices heard on that too and I think then there is a parental conversation that needs to happen too. But it's a minefield; I think the most formal approach would be a signature from parents saying this is alright but also regular conversation within the group about what you're doing and if it's alright. In Crossover we have regular conversations about what we're doing – is this lift alright? Who wants to be lifted, who wants to partner? But still we know as adults if you get asked to be someone's partner it can be very hard to say no but the day we get to the point that a stranger adult can't touch a stranger child in this dance setting is the day I will be stop being an artist quite frankly because it is just so possible and I think what the audience gets from watching it is a real delight in the physicality of it, in the permission to be physical.

If I take the project I have done two years running in Wales in a really deprived area where this project is absolutely essential, and has turned out to be a turning point in many children's lives, either permanently or temporarily and that is family but they can come with a grandmother, someone comes with an aunt and the whole touch thing is essential and demonstrates so much and is so much about the content of the work i.e. Whisper and Shout… the physical connection to the concept. In some cases it was real evidence of how we need to make it visible. The whole workshop was based on how can you get under this person? How can you get around this person etc.? But it's the reversibility of this touch – swapping roles – how can you as the parent go under, over or around and that's where the fun begins and that is the empowerment.

RP: I know you have spoken about not always working with age as a starting point but it does occur a lot – have you ever found it limiting or challenging working with such a range of ages?

CM: As you know I have had to adjust to very different Crossover make-up of the group sometimes and have been very aware of the age gap in the group sometimes more than others and so there have been very challenging moments for me. Once I remember when we were divided into two working groups and there was a very energetic 'able' group and then four of us older and younger, I…struggled to either lead or stay with ideas. There have been other occasions when this has happened deliberately by dividing into an older group and a younger group and parodying ourselves or when we were all doing a group sequence and the 'more able' dancers were in the front going for it and us older/younger ' less able' dancers were in the back row – a very typical dance moment…

RP: How do you make the work appeal to people in the first instance?

CM: Within Oxford it's still not fair because there is an inherent understanding of the work I do and often it has been seen before and it is families and friends, or friends of friends etc. but the first time I put Dugout and Oxford Youth Dance Company together it was a big deal because it was like can I do this? For Dugout it is a delight but what about for OYD – so in theory it's ok.

With Oxford Touring Theatre Company the director wanted this piece made by older dancers being performed to younger dancers and I felt that if we were doing this to 15/16 year olds we needed a cast to reflect this so half our cast were teenagers and half of them were in their 50s and 60s and to me this was immediately ok because otherwise there would have been an undercurrent of 'I don't relate to this'.

With Dragons Tale I worked in Banbury where there was an existing dance group…they had never worked with older people so what we had was this 15,16,17 year old group of girls

with attitude doing street dance and this group of older people doing keep fit and how we dealt with it was very, very carefully and it could have been a disaster but I believe the skills I brought to it and the planning that I brought to it made it happen. Both groups had dance leaders so there was a meeting beforehand with the project co-ordinator, the group leaders and myself as the project artist and one thing that came up very specifically in that meeting was that I found myself saying to the youth group dance leader that her group could perform in its own right as part of the Crossover show as well as working with the older people because I was finding myself wanting to give her as leader and the dancers confidence that what they were doing was legitimate in our show and I thought that that was one way of wooing them, then I found myself listening to the silence at the other end of the table and I realised my gap and so I offered it to them too so then we had an even playing field and in that particular performance of Crossover's, which had loads of room for dance because it was about the fairground…the older people had a slot when they performed, the younger people had a slot AND we put them together, and that was the secret for that particular group of people so that when we put them together they also had their own isolate identity so something about keeping your identity or confirming its ok….maybe next time if I worked with them again we wouldn't have to do that and then what happened is that we had to be very careful about how we hosted it so I went to both groups separately and told the groups what I thought about their work and watched it etc. and then we had two hosting sessions so the old people came out at night which they never normally do, to an area of Banbury they never normally go to but the youth were just as nervous, they were absolutely petrified! They were in their concrete building with their graffiti and their music but they were absolutely petrified so the co-ordinator laid on food and drinks etc. to make it feel more like a party, but one of the main things that broke the ice was that I asked the older dancers to comment on what they had seen and so the older people told them what they thought and of course it was all good and you could just see the defence of these cool girls melted as they heard the older people saying, 'Wow! How do you do that??' I had Dan with me (I teach intergenerationally too) and you could just see the dancers sitting taller and the observers relax…and then the second day was the making day. We made brilliant work and it wouldn't have happened if we hadn't had the preparation time so I think an acknowledgement of who you are in your own right is key.

With crossover too we started with a statement about how you are, who you are now and a statement about how you were and at how you will be in the future – Imaging age as a creative starting point because we have such stereotypes about age and in a way the first crossover project was about exploring that and dispelling it too, playing with them, questioning the stereotypes as well as acknowledging them too.

RP: You mentioned earlier that sometimes doing crossover projects more recently without the original cast is problematic; can you talk a bit more about that?

CM: The reasons are varied but for the teenagers it is school work and driving lessons, for the professional dancers it is paid project work that they cannot afford to turn down, and for the people with 'other' jobs it is remaining also committed to them. There is an important difference though with the current teenagers that I recruited through my regular classes and the original Crossover. In the past, the teenage dancers had begun as young as 7 and 8 – and so had grown up with the company – they were already in it and it had been part of their lives for so long that they didn't question putting it above certain other aspects of teenage life. It was important to them, as were the social bonds created within it.

Appendix C: Interview with Rosemary Lee

Excerpts from Interview with Rosemary Lee conducted in London, 24th September 2010

RP: What motivated you to work across generations or when was the first time?

RL: Maybe because of my age I'm enjoying looking back and seeing what must have prompted me as a much younger person….so I had the experience of growing up in a small town that was really quite remote from the 60s even though I was born in '59. I grew up in Lowestoft, a pretty sad and poor town now and it probably had elements of that when I was growing up. And my dancing sort of life was the biggest part of my life really from when I was very little but I was also danced for the amateur dramatics society, now they don't seem to happen so much but then in those sort of towns there was always one and they always collected this sort of odd motley group of all ages and ballet schools did all the dancing. So you'd get all the little ones like me doing the dancing and then up into the sixties and plus perhaps, I can't remember how old but certainly all ages and all walks of life and particularly I think what was interesting for me was all social classes so some of my teachers were there some of the scientists that worked with my dad was there…and then there were bus drivers and people with learning difficulties so there was a real mixture and I did grow up understanding that as a community. As a particular group and perhaps I didn't have another group like that and I think that really influenced my view of what art was and what its role was. I do remember when I say that that when I told my dad about the arts council funding my work he was like well why don't they fund the Lowestoft Am Dram?! He was just being difficult but in those days they didn't and I remember thinking well that is a really valid question and he was asking a very thoughtful question….

For me that was the beginning of my community work, but then when I went to Laban I was influenced I guess by Laban's work, not only working with professional dancers but with workers and looking at movement in industry and personality assessment through movement and being encouraged to go and watch passers-by. So all of that was about anybody's movement, so that enforced the belief that dancing didn't just need to be for an elite group. And then I don't know I guess as an artist I was very socially and politically aware, I wasn't a Greenham Common woman but my sister was and I did anti-nuclear stuff…so I was quite politically active and I kind of wanted to tie all that up and actively work with dance in a way that didn't – I just felt that the dance I was seeing when I was a Laban student was for dancers…maybe some mums and dads and maybe the odd granny but not really, it was dancing for dancers and I thought…what is the point of that? If I'm going to be an artist I want to be there for other people and to reach people who can't afford to come into the theatre or would never think of doing so. So really from early on I wanted to do that. And I also studied with Peter Brinson who was the first sociologist of dance so to speak and I went to Dartington where….I wanted to see what they were doing there because they did this sandwich year where they went to Rotherhide before it was Docklands to work with all the kids from the very poor council estates and they had a theatre there right in the heart of it and I just thought this was fantastic and why wasn't Laban doing something like that, and they came to Laban because they thought they weren't getting enough technique!

…so I was always interested in what actively involving people in a common endeavour, and for me a creative common endeavour, but not necessarily, I was also interested in people coming together for ecological purposes or for any kind of meaningful pursuit really but for me I wanted to bring people together in an artistic pursuit and it's kind of what I had grown up doing in a sense and I hadn't realized that they were all tied up….so I think that's how it all started…but also seeing how elitist it felt and I think also I wasn't a really technical dancer either so I also possibly myself felt that the LcDC that I would have seen and possibly admired was very remote from my own experience and I couldn't *be* them. I felt that must

ostracise a lot of people, so I was already looking for an aesthetic, before I found Judson Church – that made you feel that you could be part of that activity somehow.

RP: So when you started was it always with a mixture of ages?

RL: ….the dancers were always wide ranging in their technical ability so I think yeah I was always working in this Judson Church kind of way but then that's also because there was that kind of movement, probably less so now in a funny kind of way…there were a lot of dancers that hadn't been trained but that were dancing through Chisenhale and X6 particularly and I was part of that Chisenhale scene a little bit when I got back from the states. I lived in New York for about four years after I graduated and in the states I was also working with a group that both worked with trained dancers (I was one of the core group) and we did community stuff and a lot of outdoor dancers, and that was rare, there weren't a lot of companies doing that so all of that influenced what I was doing but right from the start I was doing both, working with highly trained dancers and non-trained…

RP: So what are the differences if you are working with a highly trained peer group and a much more mixed group in age range and ability?
Does your approach remain fairly the same?

RL: There are some real similarities about my approach I think…but I can spend so much more time on detail and phrasing and intricacy I suppose with trained dancers but the approach of the actual work is very similar in a way so I do find it quite hard to separate. It's bound to look different because of what they bring but because I work task-based a lot…. I'm thinking of a piece I made in Liverpool with a trio of very experienced dancers…all of that comes from them making and then weaving the phrases in and out of each other and improvised sections…so all of the structures are kind of the same but it's the material is going to be more sophisticated on some level isn't it?

RP: You mentioned that the process for *Foreward* was very rushed…do you think some of that has to do with the way these projects are set up?

RL: Yes I think so, so when you think about it, I didn't say that this just isn't possible, I don't think I quite realised that you wouldn't all meet at another point and do it, I wouldn't normally do that. The money is different for every project.

… I think the last two pieces I've done: Forward and Common Dance, I did have a lot less time than I would have with professional dancers so you're right, maybe it is the structuring of it… because you could get more picky about detail and musicality but like the Crossover group have had quite a lot of dance experience so it depends if you are starting with real beginners or you know…

RP: And does any of that have to do with age do you think rather than whether you have had training or not? Or how your approach might differ?

RL: Yes I'm kind of struck by in the one I just did with you that I didn't make anything different with the children whereas normally I think there would be a sense of difference in the role, even in Common Dance where I really did try to get the sense of everyone having the same role there is still a sense of when the children have a slightly different sense, like they are onlookers or something… and really (in Forward) there's only one – the three lifts are dependent on them being children but all the rest is the same – and I think I sort of did that consciously saying this is this group and everybody does everything and that's that and nobody's different. And also I knew that mothers and daughters and families and sons

would have that difference where as I knew that this piece wasn't really about showing difference it was about 'this is us' and 'this is the space' or maybe I am more interested in everybody doing the same thing and noticing the difference as you go. There is a difference with timing and it does depend what children I am working with and it is probably important to say really that it is rare that I make work for anybody that comes along because I haven't set myself up for those circumstances, I used to do that but for Common Dance I had to select and crossover is eight selected people, New Springs it was anybody so that was quite different in the late 80s, the earlier works was anybody that wanted to be in it could be in it to a certain degree…I cater for who wanted to be in it and looked for specific ages for specific parts and therefore if 600 people came along I would have made it fit whereas for Common Dance I had a very particular vision for it so I knew it couldn't fit everyone so I guess what I am saying is I am first and foremost a choreographer, whereas Cecilia is in a different position where she has these ongoing groups and grass roots work whereas all my work is one of projects so I am selecting the project…I am a bit different to people working on their own in regions, I have a very different kind of starting point and so I am trying to keep that true. I am trying to say I am a maker first even though I have really strong principles about why I do what I do and who I want to work with, I try to make the art be the first call. Does that make sense?

RP: Why was the 'balance of ages' as you call it important to you in Common Dance?

RL: It was called Common Dance and it was supposed to be a dance of humanity… it was an aesthetic and a narrative in the piece that I needed people to see it as every man and every age…

I felt for Common Dance looking at the space first of all I felt I wanted to fill it with people because of its civic life and because of its plain like dimensions. I was very interested in Common ground and what a common is and what community means and where the root of the word is and I'm interested in folk music and folk culture and what it means, or what it used to mean as it doesn't now, but what it used to mean…I was reading John Clare's work and thinking about land and people. I suppose I thought I want to make a contemporary folk dance, and I would never normally say this and if you wrote this in the PhD I would find it really hard because you see it on paper and it looks so naff! So I really keep my mouth shut because it does sound simplistic but if I'm honest that is really what I was trying to do, to make a dance that spoke to all of us and is not age specific – which a lot of dance is, like hip-hop with its fashions etc. So then I thought if dance is a universal language, which I have a lot of questions about, I used to believe it but I'm not sure I do now but we used to think oh well its non-verbal so it can reach everybody it can cross-boundaries but having working with Muslim children I now know that those are really hard boundaries to cross. And where movement and physicality and body, especially in our times now have a very different meaning I think it's a bit simplistic to say that. Having said that, I think it's not dance that is universal its movement and senses. Dance is a kind of expression of being alive, and it makes you feel alive because it's so much about being present in a space, in the here and now. Being present in time and place is really about being alive at its simplest core so although it sounds simple, I think it has great profundity. So if dance is about being alive could I make a dance about what it is to be alive for all ages, and what it is to die. Really my Common Dance was about living and dying and very much about passing and going and the life cycle is very transient. In my investigating I found what was common wasn't sort of folk forms… what felt common was rising and falling, leaping and stillness, running and stillness, it was all things that were really, really simple. We know what it is to melt and what it is to be hard, not only because of our bodies but because of our environment…so even if we are in a wheelchair we still have the sensory knowledge that we all share and trying to make the audience more aware of themselves in that space and then they were more equal to the dancers. So I am really interested in how you create something that enlivens an audience and wakes them up to their presence. So for me Common Dance wouldn't have

worked without the children, without the older people because it was about that. Like we experience being alive differently being a child or being an older person but we all still know that… fundamentally, even if the words aren't quite right.

I don't feel I can make statements about the human condition without that age range. So for me that's my starting point but of course politically with a small p, and in my advocacy, I absolutely believe in the community arts movement and empowering people through the arts but I try not to say that above what I want to make because actually I might wake up tomorrow and think I just want to work with hip hop dancers for a while…because there are times when I have thought I would love to work with the same group of dancers for the rest of my working life and I don't keep moving around… but actually I love that there are always these new people, its new people all the time.

RP: You spoke about bringing groups together in meaningful pursuits, that could be as much about gardening or demonstrating together…can you talk about the particularity of dance? Why dance, what is that in particular to you? What does dance bring to these relations/interactions?

RL: I think I would go back to that universal thing, there is something about language…I am really interested in language at the moment and poetry…I think there are occasions, and maybe this is really personal, but for me where intimacy isn't at all about being able to speak to someone, it's about being able to be with them and dancing offers you a way of being intimate (not in a sensual way at all, although I think that is an interesting area that we haven't got to grips with, but we can put it to one side) but I think you can find an intimacy that you can't find in words and it doesn't need to be talked about, it's just there, and that is through touch, through support, through weight through watching each other dance and particularly in this kind of area of dance it is quite non-judgemental – it's come down through New Dance and through Laban. There is less criticism and less judgement about how you do something so there is an appreciation of how you do something and what you have to offer, so in most of these set ups this is a given so that effects the quality of the communication. But I do believe there is something profoundly different about music and dance because of their non-verbal nature… a very safe intimacy, and for me something I find quite difficult in my ordinary life, I don't think I ever get as intimate as with the people in the studio, and I think that's quite hard for us sometimes. I think it can be quite hard to function in other bits of life and we do but I think once you've tasted that, it isn't the same anywhere else and so if you feel like that's kind of love, it's a kind of love that you get when you dance with people. Like for me, I feel like I love the people I work with quite profoundly and I think about them a lot after I've worked with them and it doesn't need to go further than that but it feels like it's quite hard then because the rest of life doesn't feel like that, other things get in the way and with dancing it doesn't need to…I don't know if that's with all dance, is it something about this particular way of working and this particular physical aesthetic? Because if you were all dancing a Finn Walker piece, I don't think you would feel very intimate or is it something particular in the movement, and the approach to the movement…

RP: So it's to do with an approach to movement – you mentioned task-based choreography, can you talk a bit more about that?

RL: Yes I Learnt very early on that if I kept trying to teach phrases that I had made up people would not feel empowered, they would just be trying to be me and they wouldn't manage it and I wouldn't be happy with how they did it…even trained dancers to be honest… its always qualitative and sometimes they just can't get it. I can't work like that, especially with people who aren't trained… there is of course set choreography, I am very particularly about spacing but ther phrases of choreography are never kind of learnt…there

are bits that become set but they are all out of your own whatever. So the task based thing came from people being empowered because I felt like they looked weaker trying to do my movement and it felt wrong… so if I am trying to reach the potential in these people it's not through this way of working it's through image based or tasks… because then I feel like I am getting at who they are and that their individuality is valued…although I sometimes think it is a cheat actually, it's because I can't choreograph! And I really can't anymore! And task based means I get something that I wouldn't have thought of, but qualities I am really specific about… the way quality of that animal has to be embodied…and we are still dealing with the difference of people en masse rather than trying to make everybody look the same because then why am I doing it if I am trying to create something that is meaningful for me, why would I want everybody to look the same? But then sometimes I do, maybe I am more into that now.

RP: So in relation to what you have just said you said it is more about who they are and you mentioned individuality – so while people don't look the same, there is a sense of uniformity in Common Dance and there is a sense of choral mass, you don't tend to work with personal stories or narratives…

RL: I tend to find if you work with people's stories it gets too drama'y… but I think that's a very good point, there is a choral sense, it's hard to see your own work and I think certainly in the work I am making now there is a choral wash of energy…and I think you still…with Common Dance I was very aware of that, there were very few moments of individuality, it was more about flow and about energy, but every one of those was different, so if you look at those en masse I think you can see those differences…I think it's a really good thing to pick at because I do write a lot about the individual… I think I must be quite interesting in trying to show that we can operate as a community when again in life it doesn't really feel like that, it does feel like everybody is different, we are all these little individuals rushing about… its all about cooperation and I think that is probably a plea from my heart that if only we could feel like life could be like that because I am quite cynical but yet that's kind of what I am trying to present on stage is that there is something like that does connect us even if we can't talk about and that is our experience of life and death, sorrow and joy…on a deeper level.

RP: So is it the connections between the people rather than the individual perhaps?

RL: Yes it probably it is… common dance was profoundly effecting for the people involved for lots of reasons. This work because of the touch and the subtlety of the movement and the experience of doing some of those movements, like melting into the ground and being held, and soaring, you know, or being lifted, it's so profoundly exhilarating and touching that although it is that choral mass I think probably what I am trying to get at is that all that choral mass of known quality and emotion then speaks to you quite specifically if that makes any sense…

RP: Speaks to each person quite specifically?

RL: Yes, and then may be a comfort or something that they hadn't expected to think about again, and also going through the process of common dance I had three bereavements – quite close ones – and I did tell the groups, most of the adults – you know so and so is not here because their best friend's just died etc. so sometimes I told the children because she wanted people to know but didn't want to talk about. There was a lot going on in people's personal lives that some of us knew and some of us didn't… I was surprised by how much happened…this is extraordinary I thought. We had a lot… and someone was diagnosed with terminal cancer just after dancing in Common Dance…I think it was very helpful for people

to be dancing it out so I think that's what the choral side of it is, it's kind of a safe way…I have to be so careful, like I know my work has a therapeutic nature to it but I don't want to say that the art is about therapy because I think it is on some level but I don't want to make that statement.

RP: So in terms of that group of 50 people who came together for Common Dance, they didn't really know each other when they came together did they?

RL: No not really, although a few of them did… that's another thing I mean whatever an intergenerational community means, these people they had all danced, there were one or two compete beginners but they had all danced, or loved dancing. There was one GP who hadn't danced much but loved contact… funny mixtures…the oldest man was a very accomplished ballroom dancer. They did come with something…

RP: And did you notice the feeling at the end of the project as opposed to how they began and how relationships developed over that time, did you witness anything about that evolution?

RL: I think with Common Dance I am still trying to get to grips with it actually, I was going to try and set up a sort of study but I found it really …sigh… really interesting because Common Dance, not only was it a common endeavour – you had this experience of performing, we performed it six times, that's far more than usual for something like that. That was something that was new and different for me and was different for them, they really owned the piece, then they had the audience reaction which we hadn't expected, we had a standing ovation every night and they felt oh my goodness, this is something we are giving…and I had always said that this is something you are sharing, giving away and common dance is as much them as it is you…so there was this sense of real responsibility to the audience and I think that is profound in terms of what you feel. So there were some things that it is hard to put your finger on but it was almost a euphoric experience, more than other projects have been because of the nature of what the dance was about and the words, so you were constantly dancing your heart out…six times you know, and it is physically gruelling…by the end people had really serious problems with not doing it anymore, so one professional guy he turned up at GDA for three weeks afterwards, he couldn't not come into the space and this was one of the professionals, he just did not know what to do with himself. The older guy, he writes to me quite regularly…because he got quite lonely, the children I think were alright because they go on into their lives and then its school but I think the older people found it really hard to adjust to life after an experience like that…so at one point I really thought my god is this responsible to put people through this? I didn't realize how profound it would be for people, so I felt slightly responsible and I immediately felt like people were really suffering and I thought right, we have to write to each other and I tried to minimize tears at the end and to make it more jubilant, so we had a party right at the end, and I held it together, because often I don't, I fall apart…but I thought this is too fragile for people so they were all given flowers and everybody was called up, every single 101 people including the choir.

RP: And are those email groups used?

RL: Yes they are still used a bit, there is a common dance group, we then tried to do some reunions but it hasn't been that easy but it's been nice. So some people still write to each other and they know each other, some people dance with each other and I think some of the older people dance at GDA a lot more so there is a legacy, and I am sure some of the practice and the methodology will go on to effect the younger dancer who can use those methods and trust that you can work in certain ways, because I do a lot of work that people

would see for people who are not trained but it is my belief that a lot of the work is all for trained or not because it is experiential, loads of touching, pushing and pulling, and playing, grooming and hands on work. But the way I deliver it I am really careful that it doesn't go into a new agey place… I really believe that children can feel it as well and they can feel it even more those lines and fountains…so I work really somatically…very experiential.

I learnt early on that even if you think it is not going to work but you trust it in your work and you absolutely trust it and talk as if it is really going to happen then you can do it with anyone. I mean I don't work with teenagers who don't want to dance, I mean I just never do that so again I try to say I am in a very different position to lots of people working in the field you know where they *have* to work with groups who don't want to be there and don't want to do the work, I'm not having to do that, I am a choreographer first and that's all Ill do is Ill make work and in general I won't make a piece with teenagers who don't want to do it, occasionally I'll do a primary school but I don't quite have the patience now that I used to for that. I don't choose to do that so I might find my methods wouldn't work with a certain group, I'm not sure it would work with a group of socially excluded young people, I would have to think about how I approached that and I know Cecilia has more experience of that than I do… but given the right territory they will be able to do it but you've got to find the right way of presenting the material.

RP: But you do this with people of all ages?

RL: Yes and I know this is really wrong now but I get them touching really early on…I refuse to change my practice…as far as I know I've never known that I had somebody who'd been abused…I mean if I was in a different setting I might really rethink… I feel it breaks it down so touch doesn't become predatory or sinister or anything other than it is in that kind of dancing. Having said that I had to watch the older man did like a cuddle and stroking and touching and that he had a slightly different approach to touching so I just had to keep touching him so that he could feel the difference…perhaps being a ballroom dancer, there was just something very different, but he got there.

RP: Were they from quite a mixture of social backgrounds in Common Dance?

RL: It was quite middle class, but there were the twins who were a real issue and so was the mum, so we did have some problems behind the scenes… she tried to pull them out on the day of the performance. SO I have come a cropper before, there have been sort of edgy moments when I haven't known a child is vulnerable and sort of you know…but I'm not often in those circumstances…

RP: And is that because you are in a position to choose more?

RL: Yes, yes it is and then often they are from a different kind of social class because they are volunteering… (through GDA, Dance Umbrella, Royal Albert Hall etc).

RP: I find it really interesting what you have been saying about working with different ages because that is your artistic vision rather than any other agenda, so it brings up this idea of labeling – calling something 'Community Dance' or 'Cross-generational Dance'…

RL: I know, I know, it is really interesting the labeling thing because I use the word community a lot but my administrator who doesn't come from that kind of background and works with kind of performance artists and various experimental avant garde artists and I sort of thing I am not that but then I think maybe I am, its avant garde in a different way, in

this sort of lyrical gentle way because no one else is doing it, I mean they are but in these different settings…where as I am saying this is what I want to make, I want to work with these different ages and I want it on a mainstream stage and this is what I am doing you know, and I don't want it to be called 'Community Dance' (this was Egg Dances in 1988 at The Place). I was trying to say I am a choreographer and this is my aesthetic and I want to present it without any apology but I still have a problem with that as someone came up to me after Passage and said, 'that is the best I have seen of that kind of work' and I thought 'what do you mean that kind of work?' couldn't you look at that in the same kind of way as you look at Random but then I know you can't to be honest. I know that it is a difficult jump and so critics find it really hard but I am still trying to say 'this is a piece of art that I would like judged as a piece of art…but I still get it wrong sometimes.

RP: Yes it is difficult because as soon as you say you are not making those divisions you have already made them in a sense…

RL: I think in this country it's harder, I mean in New York I was there at the tail end of Judson Church…I was there very late on but I still was seeing different work that had different ages in it, not children so much but there was an untrained bloke who was suddenly being a dancer you know, I remember seeing Meredith Monk's work, she worked with all different bodies, I loved Meredith monks work, that was seen as avant garde… so I was seeing pedestrian movement and untrained bodies in the lower east side loft work and then I was seeing slightly more dancey dancey small scale and more mainstream Cunningham, Trisha Brown, Lucinda Childs, some of those names that came up through Judson Church were working with not balletically trained dancers and bringing them into their companies so there was this strange mix of what I was seeing as a young artist and Butoh was starting to be seen and yet the critics didn't have a problem writing about those things as works of art but yet somehow here the division is still there…

Common Dance helped me in that way, because it got that review, a bit of an odd review, but still it became a piece that people wanted to see and it sold out and was seen as a 'good' piece of work you know…

RP: How do you gauge audience response?

RL: Well we had blackboards and a comments book and through conversation too… and mostly it was good, I mean you've seen the emails, but you do get one or two that say they didn't know how to read it or something and that's good you know, like someone said they were too aware of the difference between the trained and the untrained dancers and was very uneasy with that which was very interesting, it made me give them very different instructions for the next performance because I could see what he meant as some of the dancers were becoming too dancerly about the jumps so I went back and reminded them that it wasn't certain shapes in the air and they were falling back into their habits, because that's where you will see something and recognise a language and I was hoping it would just be bounding…

Appendix D: Interview with Jeremy Spafford

Interview Excerpts from Interview with Jeremy Spafford conducted in Oxford on 12th January 2011

RP: Can you tell me how you got into Crossover?

JS: I was in it from the very beginning…Cecilia had a chat with me and then I got this letter, the whole thing was carefully planned, well-constructed.

Funded through the arts council… I got the invitation and thought this was brilliant!

My relationship to dance was dropping the kids of at dance on a Saturday morning and then I got a letter saying would I like to go to a fathers and sons workshop with Joss…. I'd never been to a single dance class in my life before that…

It was delightful…some of the sons were in their twenties and had older dads and some were toddlers with much younger dads so there was this whole generational thing going on you know…Cecilia did one of her classically inclusive, open things and the next week we ended up performing, and that was it, after that I joined DugOut.

RP: Did you know everyone?

JS: Yes… Friends of friends and friends of their children etc.

RP: Can you describe how your relationship to those people has evolved? Has it evolved?

JS: Oh yes, it's been an extraordinary journey, I just feel completely blown away by it really because I think we were all a bit tentative and curious as you would expect and Cecilia was very much leading as you'd expect and she was doing that very well.

…Because we invested so much of our selves in it, it was all about ourselves at our age. The first piece was quite introspective because in that it was all about, what's it like to be 43, what's it like to be – future remembered, past imagined. A lot of the exercises we did was me remembering what it was like to be Eluned's or Roly's age and them fantasising about what it might be like to be my age…how they might be. So we were very much playing with identity and age, and how much that was linked to age. That's what the piece was all about, it was very much about ourselves and each other and we were doing these intriguing exercises with Tom imagining what it was like to be my age and my imagining being Tom's age in the same space. So we got to know each other quite quickly. Of course I could pick both Bee and Tom up with one hand at that stage…they were little, little kids and they were running around and full of enthusiasm and so on.

But what then happened was that having done the first project we had a little social and from Cecilia's point of view it was about closing the project and we all sort of looked at each other and thought well, 'why on earth are we stopping?'

I think it was Tom who said change it from Crossover Intergenerational Dance Project to Company. Cecilia was quite taken aback… one of the things that freed her up to say yes was that I said I would do around it as she had done all of that herself.

The next bit that was interesting to me was that when she then came up with another opportunity, which was Dorchester and I thought there was then this thing well are we going to do this introspective thing about our ages or are we now a company that can do anything,…it doesn't have to be about intergenerational stuff because as soon as you walk on stage its about intergenerational stuff anyway you know? The content doesn't have to be intergenerational because your process is where as in the first piece the content was.

You've got this built in intriguing thing which is having a nine year old and a sixty year old and a twenty year old on stage together so you don't really need to talk about that because you're doing it anyway so then what becomes interesting is what happens if you do a piece about institutions, like Box, or relating to the space around us and our emotional reactions to it as in Triptych or a romping narrative as in Dragons Tale or anything else you want…. But you're doing it as an intergenerational company rather than about intergenerational company.

RP: What's different about that? How is it informed by the fact that you're intergenerational?

JS: There are two things that are just always there and you can't avoid them, one is that whatever your subject matter, your interpretation will be very different because of your different life experiences, now I know a bunch of twenty-year olds will have very different life experiences and will bring very different experiences and that's completely valid…but there's something intrinsic about an 11yr olds experience of institutions compared to a 50 year olds. Firstly they are likely to have been less powerful in institutions, they are likely to have been members as schoolchildren and possibly as hospital patients… but they are unlikely to have managed institutions or worked in the, and there are a whole load institutions that they probably haven't come into contact with, like the workplace is the most obvious one or prisons…and then the other way you can use that word like the institution of marriage, the way in which people are institutionalised, we're all going to have very different feelings about and experiences of that. So when I think about school, I have two relationships with that, one is a very long time ago and one is as a parent taking kids to school whereas you talk to Joel or Akasha about school and it is a very immediate, very vibrant reaction – it's there for them. So that means you've automatically got a very different perspective simply because of age but the other thing that happens is the way that gets expressed so differently because our bodies are so different,

…so even when we're doing a bit of unison, what we laughably call unison, but when we get anywhere close to unison, it's never unison you know even if we were exactly on the nail, it never ever can be unison, because my arm goes right out like that and Akasha's only goes that far…it never, ever can be true unison and that's one of the things that for me that is intriguing about it. Your sort of always being confronted with a sort of inbuilt different energy and shape that is to do with the age and gender and body shape of that person. And that is true of a peer group as well; it's just true in a different way. A peer group will get something else but they cannot get that…like Akasha cannot stand still, I mean she almost can but she'll always twitch or something and that's because she's eleven and that's what eleven year olds are like.

Appendix E: Interview with Vicky Mark-Fisher

Interview Excerpts from Interview conducted with Vicky Marks-Fisher, Oxford 10th September 2009

RP: Can you tell me when you got involved with Crossover?

VM: well, Cecilia actually phoned me up, when she was first setting up, I can't remember if she had already got the money or if she was applying for it…I remember exactly where I was standing (laughs). I was at college and she was telling me all about this exciting project and I had to say it does sound fantastic but I'm expecting a baby in May (laughs)

RP: Wow!

VM: So I didn't do the first project because the first performance was actually in May, so I didn't do that one but I was asked to do it which was nice because I was still connected to it. And then when they decided to do another project I think Nadine was pregnant and couldn't do it so Cecilia came back to me and asked me to do it. I think it was Dorchester but I can't really remember, but yeah I think that was the first one for me. And then fortunately for me, Nadine moved away so there wasn't this tension of sort of who's going to do which thing…so um I carried on from there.

RP: so did you know it was going to be with people of different ages from the outset?

VM: Yes, Cecilia explained that it would be with mixed ages and also that there would be two of each approximate age group

RP: Ok, so it was quite specific. And how old were you when you started?

VM: Well, Sophie was born in 2003 so I was 33.

RP: and that's 7 years ago… and you had obviously been dancing before that and had danced in other companies, Candoco being one of them. How did it feel to do this in comparison? Like did it feel different dancing in this configuration with the different ages?

VM: Yeah, I've never really thought about it that much, for me it's a performance opportunity with somebody that I really respect and connect with and I think everybody in the group as well. I think there are some similarities with companies like Candoco and any sort of integrated group, cross…. Um…. Cross, I don't know, how do you define these things? (laughs) but um I think a lot of it is down to the general approach of it being a sort of problem solving type of choreography and the main problem is what are the best starting points for this group of individuals. And obviously Cecilia is fantastic at instinctively, well I don't know if its instinctive or whatever but she knows these things and it was never really an issue because it was obvious I mean, this is what you're doing. Yeah, I mean in some ways the cross-generational thing isn't so important as a participant, as a performer because we are just a group of individuals building on the strengths of the individuals. Now obviously, the cross-generational thing defines what we make and how the group is and particularly how its watched I think is more for people who aren't used to working in this problem solving, creative way, they notice the difference more whereas for us it's more like we're just a group of people dancing.

RP: So there is something quite particular about Crossover…

VM:…yeah and having the children

RP: Is that what makes it distinct somehow?

VM: Um I think yeah, I think it does bring something different. I guess it's largely about when you're working with a group of adults who have had dance experience then we're used to working in a fairly similar way and have, um, a similar sort of level of self-discipline and have a similar sort of level of self-discipline and responsibility, whereas under a certain age they are sort of learning that. So there are sort of different considerations in how to use the time or how to present things and when Tom and Bee became sort of 'adults'-ish, there was no question that we had to bring in some younger people because it loses that…

RP: mmm yeah that's interesting, how was that decided? Were you all involved in the decision?

VM: Yeah we were but I think it was probably Cecilia that proposed it, I think it was when we were away at Cote, we've been away a few times…but it was definitely discussed and there were no dissenting voices at all. The question was about the age, because we were originally thinking of people around the age of 11, which is how old Bee and Tom were when they started but I suppose because Crossover had become this longer term thing...um…and also because um, we'd had the experience and got a sense I suppose of the different energy younger people could bring into it and we knew we could cope with it, it was like, yeah no they've got to be younger than that because look how fast Tom and Bee have grown up. We need people who have a little bit longer to be children…

RP: So then although you sort of said, you're just a group of people dancing at the same time there is something about as you said 'the different energy that they bring'?

VM: Yeah I mean I don't want to be disingenuous (laughs)…because I'm not sort of belittling the differences and everything but it's a type of dance and an approach to dance that encourages that sort of exploration and experimentation and that said 'it's a bit *boring* having people who are all similar, you know' what happens if we expand that, you know, so that whole post-modern 'what if' approach to things you know 'what if we do this?' that makes life more exciting.

RP: So the sort of ideas based work?

VM: Yeah, which is sort of the post-modern thing I suppose rather than the more modernist 'pure movement' type thing, um…yeah so its not that the company that are all the same age are automatically dull and boring but it helps give a sense of direction

RP: Helps give the dance a sense of direction you mean?

VM: The whole project, the whole shebang

RP: Can you say a bit more about what you mean by that or not really, I can see you are trying to find ways to describe it… a sense of direction in terms of..?

VM: I think it comes back to the process, not process centred because it is about performance but you know it's that post-modern thing of trying to explore process you know 'what can we do, how can we achieve that?' so you make something… so it, the differences within the dancers, it dictates that to some extent, I don't know about dictates… enriches it I suppose. But I mean the sorts of activities and exercises we use to make work is the type of way a lot of companies work, I don't know about professional companies but um, because I haven't got that much experience of them but certainly the way we worked at university and the way we work in community groups um, yeah that whole process based thing of 'this is our idea, how can we.." sometimes it's about the type of piece you want to end up with but more often it's the different starting points. When you're not doing a piece specifically about being different ages, what are the starting points? And it can be anything just as it can be anything in any company… but then how you explore that, break that down and start to make something is partly shaped by knowing who the dancers are and knowing what their needs and abilities… interests are.

But I think that's largely down to the individual so I think that's why it was really important that Cecilia knew everybody and I know she has a problem… she feels it problematic that it is an exclusive company and people are invited in but at the same time I think that is partly why it works and they work well together I think.

RP: and so if a piece isn't about age and in many ways the approach could be with any group of people, does it in any way make you reflect on your age or your stage in life? Do you feel like that is something that comes up for you?

VM: Yeah, sorry, I've just remembered something that reminded me… I think I was worked into Future Remembered Past Imagined, because Nadine was pregnant so I took her part and I remember having a solo in that and it was all about juggling all the different things in life that I juggle…

So yeah I think it does make me reflect on my age

RP: But that was very specifically asked of you in that instance

VM: I think yeah it does actually but more to do with the organizational side of things when we have these meetings when we figure out when we're going to rehearse and things you know we're all at different stages and so like I said the other day, I'm the only one with young children and so for me doing stuff in the daytime when they're at school is much better than the evenings when I've got to do stuff with them or weekends and then it has an impact on Simon and when it is in those times, or that I have to pay for childcare and then I feel bad about claiming that money. So in that way it makes me think about where I am in my life stage rather than my age (laughs)

RP: So that's in a more logistical sense?

VM: Yeah, rather than artistic or performance wise. Perhaps its liberating because I'm sort of less conscious of my age because everybody in this group is dancing and and so Im not feeling like 'ooh am I too old to do this' and actually in many ways I feel I'm dancing better now than I ever have. So I don't think the dancing actually. Sometimes I think if anything I'm the boring one, although maybe I've got past that now because I'm 40, you know because at first I thought 'oh I'm the most boring because this is the age that people *are* dancers'

RP: Well, and it's about the configuration of those people of different ages anyway…

VM: Yes, because I think the biggest group of people we've got to call on for different performances because...is the sort of 18-30 thing. And it's interesting because as I was sort of saying that I was thinking that Tom and Bee to me, now sort of fall into that thing of yes, they're at the younger end of it but it feels like a lifestage I guess, 18-30, whereas when they started they were kids

RP: So you feel that somehow that span is important for the company?

VM: Well I think it all is, but it is the age that has turned around more because it's the age that you do go off and travel around and do things before settling down to have a family (laughs) but yeah, most people settle in some way, not necessarily with a family.

RP: Um, and you talked a bit, more than others I have spoken to, you have talked about the choreographic process because there's a sense of being a group of people who dance together but who also socialize together and I suppose I sort of want to know, one is how you see your relationship to those people and the other is dance – what the dance process actually brings, the form – I mean why bother dancing?

VM: Well, the social thing – Jeremy and I have had chats about this actually because I do feel a warmth and a connection with everyone in the company and I would happily spend time with any of them but it tends not to happen that much. I mean sometimes there are parties, there might be a party that is appropriate (laughs) I mean and when we go to Cote there is such a warmth and connection that it doesn't feel weird at all, it's a family, it's a community and I'm also conscious of the whole hug thing that we do, and again it's about feeling part of something, but I'm aware of how Akasha and Joel seem less comfortable with that and so I don't tend to hug them and I don't know if it's just because they haven't done it or if it's because they don't want to. I suppose there's sensitivity and an awareness that comes from dance, being responsive to that kind of thing, personal space and that kind of thing, so I think dance informs that. Does that answer that part of it?

RP: Yeah it does, very much in terms o your relationships, how you relate to each other in those in-between bits, when you greet each other and stuff, and that's really significant and noticeable for me coming into the group from the outside.

VM: Does this person want to be hugged? Is this something that they would like to be part of it?

RP: What about how you relate more in the actual dancing together?

VM: Yeah, there's just one more thing on the sort of social side of it that I wanted to say – like one has conversations with people and I do have different kinds of conversations with um with different people and I don't know how much of that is related to their age, I think with Joel and Akasha it is, I mean I have had more conversations with Joel but that's partly because he goes to the same school as Thomas (her son) so I have a point of entry other than dance, but with Alan its usually more about sort of functional life and things, I think that's partly. I don't know, I mean sometimes we might have deeper philosophical things but it tends not to be. I think with the people in the middle it's much more about their individual personalities ad interests but when you are talking to the kids it is much more you leading the conversation because they haven't got to that stage yet of having those kinds of rambling conversations, so that is an age thing, but the dance thing – we wouldn't

have the connection we have if it wasn't for Crossover but then with anything you wouldn't have a relationship with anyone if you didn't have some sort of connection.

RP: Anything that you would like to add?

VM: Yes, um, what was I going to say, in terms of, I said the fact that I am dancing better now than I probably every have but that's not necessarily always within Crossover performances I guess and that artistically it doesn't necessarily challenge me that much, or technically, I suppose, because it is not about those sorts of things, um and perhaps it could go further, the fact that you're supposed to build on the individual strengths. We could go further, all of us should be pushing ourselves more, all of us, in whatever direction that is…

RP: Is that to do with the fact that you improvise a lot?

VM: Improvisation yeah, but also because we get on so well we play it a bit safe whereas sometimes a process that is difficult can have much more interesting results in some way…and what we do is all very sort of easy, I wouldn't say lazy, but the rehearsals are tiring but they're not exhausting, it's all very nice and fun and that's perhaps what the audience respond to, they can see that but perhaps as individuals we could be doing more and pushing it further as well so there is a danger of this kind of going to the lowest common denominator, or it being easier than perhaps what is valuable artistically.

Appendix F: Interview with Roly Carline

Interview Excerpts from Interview conducted with Roly Carline, Oxford, 6th September 2009

RP: When did you join Crossover?

RC: Oh no not dates and numbers! I joined Crossover when I was 22…. I think it was 2003 actually – is that what everyone else is saying?

RP: I can check that out with Cecilia

RC: I think I was 22 (counts) 7 years ago. I joined crossover 7years ago.

RP: And have you been working with them throughout that time?

RC: Yeah, I've done everything bar like two shows.

RP: How did you get involved, did Cecilia just approach you?

RC: yeah she rang me up, I was at my mum's house… and staying there and she rang me up and said do you want to get involved in a dance piece? It was Future Remembered Past Imagined.

[Cecilia walks in totally by chance and interview is interrupted for a short time.]

RC: I said, that sounds great, I was just off the cuff of finishing my degree and didn't know what to do next, that came a long and I was like, brilliant!

RP: And did she explain to you from the outset that it was going to be with people of different ages?

RC: To be honest, remembering back to that phone conversation, I didn't really understand what she was talking about (Laughs) she was just talking talking talking and I think I was upstairs with my mates smoking a bit of weed and I was just like, Cecilia it sounds great. I'm there, whatever it is, I'll do it. But then when I discovered what it was all about I was just really glad cos it was great.

RP: So when did you discover what it was all about? Was it just a case of arriving on the first day and going 'oh right' we're all different ages or what? Did that filter through at some point?

RC: yeah, it filtered through when I got into rehearsals it was all like, yeah ok, this is cool, people of different ages. I think I knew most of them

RP: Yes, I was going to ask that…

RC: I was like oh right Cecilia has sort of selected different people from all the different groups that she works with, different kids from all the classes she works with and I recognised them because I had helped out with some of the classes and seen them all

performing and stuff. And um the first piece that we did was all about what it was like to be the age we were and imagining what it would be like to be older or thinking back to when we were younger so we were dancing about the idea of being different ages so that's when this idea of intergenerational dance became apparent to me and became important to me.

RP: So that was quite explicit in the first piece that you were thinking about your age but do you think it does make you think about how old you are?

RC: yeah definitely. I think the big thing for me, being in Crossover and like the impact that has on the rest of your life is that before I started being in Crossover I didn't think of people who were older than me as you know friends and people who I would necessarily be able to relate to all that well. It was more like I have my dad and I have my granddad and I had like all my relatives who were older than me who I would talk to and then like friends parents who I knew I had to be polite to and stuff like that but that was just you know, the procedure. But I never really entertained the idea that I could learn a lot from them, but also just enjoy their company and same with younger people as well. To me, when I was that age younger people were sort of people that I worked with or people in my family that I hung out with. What Crossover did for me was actually make me realise that speaking to a younger person you can get a lot out of that you know, not just in a working environment but you know, it kind of set up a situation where you were working with people who are older than you and people who are younger than you but not in those sort of social contexts. They suddenly became friends rather than older relatives or younger kids that you were responsible for. So that opened up a whole new world really because all of a sudden you look at older people and younger people in a whole new way.

RP: You do feel like that was a direct result of working with Crossover then?

RC: Yes I do

RP: Great.

RC: and I think that in the society that we're in at the moment where like if you're an adult, like I'm 29 now, and you spend time with a younger child and they're not your son or your daughter or you're not in a school teaching environment, to hang out with somebody younger than you and be friends with them is kind of a bit weird and the public would look on it as quite strange and something that needs to be watched quite carefully but you know Crossover allows a friendship between a 29yr old man and a younger girl to be ok and you know, I know that I'm not a weirdo but if I was to have a friendship with a younger girl I would feel a bit weird but Crossover allows that friendship to develop and also it's a unique relationship because it's not just talking to each other, its developing a dance relationship so its unique.

RP: Yeah, I suppose that would be y next question because I know relationships in the group have developed and there are times when you sort of just do social things or meet up outside of dance so what is the role of dance? What does dance bring to it? The choreographic process? Why dance?

RC: Well I think there's something really…I think the reason that there is a really strong bond between everyone who dances in crossover is because going about having ideas together and then playing around with movement ideas together and then creating choreography together and then performing it in front of an audience together is you

know, like giving birth to something and creating actually makes a relationship much stronger than it would be if you were just socialising together so again that is something really important and you know I think in every relationship or friendship that I have if I have been involved in making something with that person then our connection is a lot deeper and a lot stronger and there is an understanding because creating something there is a lot of negotiation that goes on and when you realise you've finished it is quite an achievement between two people, let alone between 7 or 8 people.

RP: I don't want to put words in your mouth but I noticed something quite interesting in terms of the physicality of the work, there's a lot of negotiating that has to go on in terms of kind of safety or who's doing what and checking its ok etc. and that seemed really strong and important.

RC: Yeah, definitely, there's all that kind of simple stuff like when you first meet someone you're not sure if you trust them or not and you know a great way to know if you do trust somebody is to be caught by them or be able to push against them and know that they can hold your weight and that they're going to be there when you fall back on them and stuff. So, you know, once you've been through that with somebody there's an instant bond.

RP: And at the meeting you talked about how Crossover was going from strength to strength as the relationships develop. Do you feel then that the company has grown artistically too? Choreographically? Do you feel like you have grown in that way? If so how?

RC: Yeah I think so – so what I'm talking about is how Crossover has grown artistically…

RP: or yourself personally, whether you have learnt, be that of one individual or everyone

RC: I think that the most important thing that crossover allows me to do is to explore my own movement which is something that I don't necessarily get an opportunity to do the rest of the time but also the big difference of being an intergenerational dance company is like I think that you become very aware that when you watch somebody move, you're not thinking 'oh they did that turn very well' , I'll look at Akasha doing a turn and I won't think oh that's a perfect pirouette from Akasha, I'll think 'that's how Akasha turns' d'you know what I mean? And then I'll look at Cecilia and I'll think that's how Cecilia turns, and then I'll look at Jeremy and I'll think that's how Jeremy turns and then I'll do my own turn and I'll think and this is how I turn so instead of sort of thinking of 'a turn' and then seeing how everybody does that turn and then seeing who's good at the turn and who's bad at the turn you are just aware that everybody turns differently and then you celebrate that and I think that is a really important thing about Crossover is that we show that everybody does move differently and to try and to get everybody to move exactly the same, in a lot of ways is a little bit ridiculous, the best thing to do is to try and do your own turn in the most unique and individual possible way that you can….and I think the more that I dance with Crossover the more I become aware of my own identity as somebody who moves and dances.

RP: Yeah, so you feel like that is definitely heightened through being in an intergenerational company? Because you could say that if you were dancing with a load of people your age do you think that would be the same?

RC: Yeah, I mean if I'm dancing with body types that are very similar to my own I think you know again what's nice about dancing with Crossover as opposed to people the same age as you is that there's an element of competition that comes in, especially with…I don't know if it's just with men, but there is when you're dancing with people of the same age as you, to be stronger, faster, better, but like I say with Crossover it's not about that, it's about how you do something at that time, in that space in the body that you're in and so that competition doesn't exist which enables you to, in a lot of ways, I think you know, sometimes when you feel the pressure of competition it can prevent you from realising your own potential

RP: And how important do you think performing is? Do you think you could get together and dance and explore and not perform?

RC: Yeah, like you know, we do lots of different things. I think the two things that Crossover have done is we've done workshops in different environments which don't have to lead up to performances but sometimes they do and they're really good. Especially sort of crossover as an intergenerational company working with different groups of people – the falling workshops that we did for example were really successful things because again we were working with an even older generation to the generation that we had… and you know I think our company created a really nice sort of comfortable environment for them to talk and explore movement and stuff like that so that was really cool. I think you know, there is something, you know you were talking about the creative process and a performance is something that puts stamp on it, which is always a great way to finish something.

RP: Yep, and have you been aware of audiences reactions?

RC: Yeah, and also like for a show that recently happened I was in the audience as well so I've watched the company and I've performed in it as well and you know, I think there is a kind of an emotional response to the work which is quite unique and I think whenever I'm making work, I'm always thinking where is that going to come, d'you know what I mean? Because I think the nature of the company means that at some point an audience is suddenly going to get that there are lots of different generations dancing together and that its unique…it can touch an audience and I think like with every piece we've done there's always been a couple of moments where I'm like this is where people are gonna get it and they're gonna understand and they're gonna feel what we're feeling sort of thing. I think there always is a moment like that in the performance.

RP: And what is it that you're feeling?

RC: I don't know, I think it's just to a certain extent it's kind of like, what I was talking about before about a kind of trusting, a unity between lots of people of different generations and it's a beautiful idea really, it's like the kind of er the you know the source of the concept of community d'you know what I mean? People extending themselves outside of their own family units and coming together. And I think yeah, I don't know… it's weird like, in the first piece that we did there was a moment that would always sort of choke people up, I think it was Bee was on the floor and I think Cecilia would take the whole weight of Cecilia and she's got grey hair and Bee was only sort of 6 or 7 at the time and then like a voiceover came on and it was kind of Bee's solo but she was sort of carrying Cecilia and then she said 'I'm going to be dancing until I'm a very old lady' and I don't know why that was but it was

just a really amazing moment and everybody always talked about it like, I remember that bit in your piece when etc. etc. and then there's another bit in Triptych again. I'm not sure if the audience are actually aware that Alan can get out of his chair and stand up and there's a bit in the piece where we all sort of help him get out of his chair and we're all in a line sort of supporting him and then he goes higher and Vicky goes up high with him and they have a little moment together while we are all sort of dancing around him and the music is kind of getting to its high point and stuff like that. Again I think that was a defining moment and everybody was always like, 'I remember this bit in the piece when you did that and it was amazing and I just thought it was great'. I think it's always when there's a lift but it has to be really carefully done d'you know what I mean? It has to be really built up to and I think to create that is a wonderful thing and to know that it is having that impact.

RP: And do you think it is the same moments for you as it is for them?

RC: Yeah, well I think that's what's great about it is that you are feeling the exact same thing as the audience – there's a dialogue there that it's happening and you're not even talking to each other which is quite amazing. And like I said, it's a bit like improvisation, you can improvise for sort of an hour and a half and there's one or two minutes that are just gold dust and I think in all of our pieces there's a load of cack and then every now and again there'll be a moment when everything will come together and people will understand what Crossover is all about, not that we necessarily know to talk about it but they will understand and we will understand and everybody in the room will be feeling the same thing.

RP: Yep…

RC: And I think to be part of that is quite amazing

RP: And this issue of money that Jeremy brought up at the meeting – do you feel like it is something that you would try and do if you weren't paid?

RC: Um, I think Crossover, the relevance of Crossover in my life. Sometimes Crossover is really important to me and other times like, I'm not... I don't need it so much. There's so much that I get out of Crossover in terms of emotional support… I mean I think because I've been in Crossover so long and its based in Oxford where I grew up, it's very much a part of my home so if at some point in my life I'm feeling a little bit homesick you know, then I've been working with Cecilia since I was 6 years old and been in all of her shows and stuff, so if I need some emotional support or something like that then Crossover suddenly becomes very, very important to me and you know, if I got an email and I was in a bit of a low point or something like that, or needed a taste of home or something then I would gladly do it for free but then there's other times when I'm really busy and er I'm feeling fine, I'm comfortable and I'm happy and Crossover would be great but if there's no money in it then it's an expense that I have to pay for which I would have to work to earn money to afford to get down to Oxford and to take time off work and stuff to do that so I think it really depends at what sort of chapter of my life it comes along.

RP: And lastly do you see that you have a kind of role in Crossover? You know Jeremy was talking at the meeting about how he feels like he gives over control when it's time to learn the sequences to Bee etc. do you think you have a role like that?

RC: Yeah, it's interesting how everybody's skills get used and they're not necessarily obvious skills um, but yeah I think that's true...Jeremy is brilliant with Logistics and Bee is brilliant with timings and counts and stuff like that. I think… oooh you've put me on the spot here Ruth I don't really know what my role is. I think one thing that I bring to it is that sometimes everyone is talking at once and starts taking the whole thing a little bit too seriously and I think it is important for us all to laugh during the creative process um and so I think that to have somebody there who recognises that at the end of the day all we're really doing is doing a little dance in front of a few people in East Oxford and it's not really that big a deal is quite important and I think I'm the person that does that and also just takes the mick out of everybody which again is good and I think that's really nice if you can feel comfortable enough to make fun of people during a creative process um.. but as well I mean I guess I'm the time that's holding people, lifting people, carrying them around, because I'm a bloke in my twenties…but also I think I enjoy the creative and the choreographic and also I'm really into improvisation and I enjoy those aspects of it but yeah, unfortunately not very good at the old logistics, dates timings of rehearsals! *(laughs)*

Appendix G: Interview with Elly Crowther

Interview excerpts from Elly Crowther, conducted over email, September 2011

RP: In reflecting on the process of *Gifted* which we started back in June are there any moments that stand out as significant? I.e. a favourite task or activity that we did and can you say why?

EC: Loved the process of choosing a significant moment (milestone) and recreating it as a group.

Always interesting warm ups and games/movement exercises.

RP: What did you enjoy least about the process of making *Gifted*?

EC: Loved the whole process, wish I'd been less, injured and knackered on the performance week!!

This is kind of irrelevant as I went into it knowing it was a community piece etc but funding for expenses e.g. time and transport, are always welcome when fitting it in around a freelance schedule even if it's only a tiny bit. This is minor though and is only because I'm more broke than usual after travelling!

RP: Did it feel different to any of the other pieces you have been in with Crossover? OR If this is your first project with Crossover, how did it feel to be working in this group?

EC: Great, felt immediately welcomed into the group and my ideas and opinions were highly valued (despite me being a bossy boots in terms of always having something to say!). I love the mix of ages in the company as it just reminds you what you're doing this for and how special it is to be in a company that really values and supports one another. It naturally works like a family and therefore brings so much more to the emotional and physical development of a piece and consequently produces a richer and more enjoyable quality of work.

RP: Did you feel part of the group before you started work on the piece, and if not did that change as the process evolved? How?

EC: Yes, because of the lovely people I knew I'd be dancing with! It increased as time went on as I got to know people better. In the look at me improvisation our awareness of each other's ways of moving was quite surprising for me, I didn't think I knew everyone that well-being quite new to the Crossover group but then I saw that they knew me as a dancer and it felt good, reassuring, in this task I moved quite differently depending on who was watching me, or who I was most aware of and I felt a bit…almost shy at first…but then I really enjoyed having my moment saying 'look at me' and playing with this'

RP: Did the working on *Gifted* challenge you in any way, if so, how?

EC: Yes, the exercises to generate material and shape the piece, the newness of dancing in an intergenerational company, fitting it in round my revision schedule!

RP: Did you feel you were working to the best of your ability and that you were on an equal footing with the rest of the group?

EC: Definitely, and that's credit to you as choreographer too as your ideas were enough to inspire and lead us and the fact the group works so well together anyway made it feel easy to develop what became a brilliant piece.

RP: What did you enjoy most about the process of making *Gifted*?

EC: Everything! I was really sad the day after we finished, as it was such a bright spark in my manic term!! But what I enjoyed most about the milestone task was that we each had the opportunity to imagine an event or scenario special to us that we could re-create. I felt the group worked really well in supporting each person to come up with suitable ways of making these ideas come to life. Everyone was great at making suggestions about how to achieve our vision and although it was a quick process as we had quite a few of us to get through, we still pushed together to make the ideas come to life.

The milestone I chose was climbing a mountain after seeing it come alive before me, and I have wanted to try a similar climbing lift in the past but it worked so well in this situation, especially with an intergenerational team of dancers who could provide the different heights and strengths needed to make the mountain come alive so I could climb up! I also enjoyed that I was facing the back of the stage and glad you stuck by that... the look back to the audience and 'Look at Me!' jump down therefore felt much more significant.

It was great fun and I was really chuffed to have it included in the final piece.

For the task as a whole, it felt really special to have that individual attention on each dancer (even if some didn't make it into the piece) the creation process itself felt very warm and had a strong emotional content which helped us all feel more connected as a group. Cecilia's Tree was especially poignant for me, especially when I connected with Alan to make the trunk and gave him a massive grin onstage!

It was also just nice in a simple way to try out so many different lifts, journeys, catches and scenes as choreographically it's so rich.

RP: Any other comments?

EC: Just a massive thank you!!! And the feedback I've received from people from dance and non-dance backgrounds has been excellent.

Appendix H: Interview with Eliza Newell

Interview Excerpts from interview conducted with Eliza Newell in Oxford, 4th November 2011

RP: When did you start dancing and why?

EN: I was 3 when I started dancing with Cecilia and I was about 8 or 9 when I started with crossover. I started dancing when I was little because it was something that I could do with my mum and enjoy moving. Crossover was a bit different because by that time I was old enough to make decisions by myself. And over those years from when I first started dancing I had learnt to move with my body and I found out that it was something that made me happy.

RP: Can you remember when you first saw Crossover dance and what did you think?

EN: It was when I was about 8 and I was Oxford playhouse with my mum watching. I remember coming out of the Playhouse and asking my mum if I could join. The first time I saw a crossover performance I thought it was amazing!

RP: How did you feel being invited to join Crossover? Were you nervous, excited, happy for example?

EN: I felt so happy and surprised to think that people wanted me to come and dance with them. I was also a bit nervous about the whole idea of joining a new dance group.

RP: How is dancing with Crossover different from your normal dance class with other people your own age? Did it feel different dancing with people of different ages?

EN: When I was dancing with people of my own age I felt a bit like we all had to be the same and move in the same way but when I was dancing with people of different ages I felt more comfortable and I knew that we all were going to dance and move differently.

RP: This time you weren't new to Crossover but there were some other people that were – did you feel comfortable dancing with everyone even if you didn't know them very well? Did that change as you got to know them? Is there anyone you feel more comfortable dancing with and why?

EN: When the new people came I didn't feel any different and it didn't affect the way I danced at all. I think that I will always feel more comfortable dancing with people that I've known for a longer time. I feel very comfortable dancing with Akasha because we both get along and work together really well!

RP: Have you learnt anything new dancing with Crossover?

EN: That I should be more confident to put myself forwards and say 'look at me!'

RP: Would you like to continue dancing with Crossover and why? What role does it play in your life?

EN: Yes I would like to continue because dancing is part of me my personality and without it I'd be lost. Dancing with crossover plays a big role in my life because if I didn’t do it I don't think I could become a dancer, which is what I want to be.

Appendix I: Interview with Akasha Daley

Excerpt from interview with Akasha Daley, Oxford September 15th 2009

RP: What was your first project with Crossover?

AD: Triptych

RP: And how old were you when you did that?

AD: Er, 6 I think.

RP; And how old are you now?

AD: 11

RP: How did you feel when she asked you, did you know what it was?

AD: No, my dad just came and talked to me about it and I didn't know what it was about at first

RP: But you thought you would do it, so what made you want to do it?

AD: I don't really know, I just kind of agreed to it because I wanted to find out what it was and what it would be like to do it.

RP: Did you know it was going to be with people of different ages?

AD: Yeah

RP: So you knew that?

AD: Yeah

RP: And what did you think about that?

AD: I thought it was a good idea because when I was doing dance it was mostly with people of my age area not with older people than me

RP: And when you met the people you were going to be dancing with, were you surprised? What did you think?

AD: I thought some of them were a bit crazy! Like Vicky looked really crazy, she had her hair up and it was like…out there!!

RP: So it was quite easy getting to know them? How was it different dancing with people of different ages to dancing with people of your own age?

AD: Cos they had a lot more experience with dancing so they could like do more things than me. Like I hadn't learnt as much things as they had

RP: So do you feel like you've learnt lots of new stuff off them?

AD: Yeah

RP: Can you say, have you learnt more off like one person than others or is it like the whole group?

AD: The whole group. Because everyone like does different things, you couldn't say that Jeremy does exactly the same thing as Roly and Dan cos they're a lot more tumbly and jumpy and cartwheely and stuff.

RP: Because I mean if you guys all got together and hung out, like, because you've done things like that before haven't you? Socials at Cote and stuff. Is it different socializing to when your dancing?

AD: A little bit, if I didn't dance with them, I don't think I'd go over to their house and hang out with them – laughs!

RP: Yeah.

AD: Cos that would be a bit weird, but because we dance together its kind of, you do it.

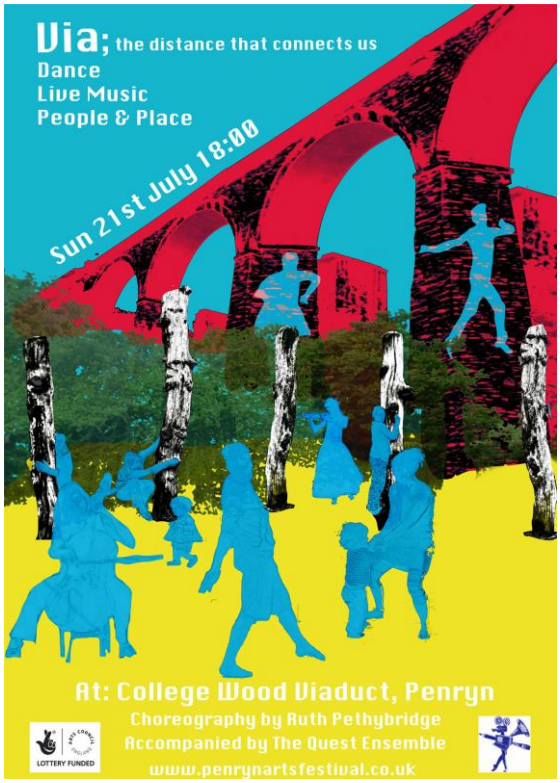
RP: What's your favourite thing about being in crossover?

AD: Um, you meet new people and you get to dance with them and it's like a whole new way

Appendix J: Publicity for *Via*

Via was commissioned by Penryn Arts Festival 2013 and was collaboration with London based quartet 'Quest Ensemble'. I worked with structured improvisation and task based relational choreography to respond to the site and to the themes within it that were relevant to participants and to the agendas of the festival itself.

Publicity for *Via*:



Appendix K: *If I Were You* task

If I Were You…

Not wanting to risk subsuming difference in some of my early practical research I too worked with age as a starting point for creating duets. I used the very age differences that are explicitly required in Cross-generational Dance and made them an integral part of the choreography. *If I Were You* was a score for performance which investigated the extent to which we might be able to empathise with those of different ages through observations about a person's particular physicality, and to create movement from explicitly observing and noting said difference. With a group of ten, I worked with cross-generational pairings. The task went as follows:

> **Just looking.**
>
> **What do you see? try to keep it to the physicality**
>
> **Write down what you notice as different to yourself.**
>
> **Take your time….**
>
> **Meet with your partner and discuss your responses…**
>
> **Now move. What do these words invite you to do? …. You can be as literal as you like but use the fact that it is dealing with your physicality to inform your movement, you may find it becomes more about qualities but let it start from this list. Notice if you reflect on yourself/your body as you are doing it.**

Ultimately I do not include this task in the thesis because it was not underpinning my research into creating non-totalising experiences of community as it relied too overtly on fixed generational categories and through noticing differences, old and young were often involved in 'othering' each other through this gaze. Answers included things like **Lips pinker, Teeth yellower, Flat lean stomach, Long waist, Curly greying frizzy hair, Lighter skin tone, Maybe freckles, Small bones, Fresher face, Laughter lines round eyes.** Many of the descriptions relay the fact that if lips are pinker, they are pinker *than* something, similarly teeth yellower etc. Often this led to a conversation whereby the older member of the pair would reflect on changes in their bodies as a result of ageing meaning that difference was experienced as negation, as the a/not a model.

Despite its issues for my research, after sharing this method with Cecilia Macfarlane, *If I Were You* became the starting point for a cross- generational piece of hers involving mothers and daughters (myself and my mother included). I include it in the appendix as a point of reference because my rejection of it was a useful point of departure for further research into methods involving contact as evidenced in Chapter Four.

Appendix L: Email evaluation from Alex Hocking on *Where you End*

Alex Hocking response to evaluation for Where you End, conducted over email March 2012

RP: Why did you agree to take part in the project/What was your motivation?

AH: Not having danced in a while, so the idea of working like I used to and maybe performing attracted me.

I knew my mum would love it if we did it together.

RP: Was it what you expected and if not, why not?

AH: The process was close to what I may have expected, but I don't remember any specific expectations or preconceptions of Ruth's work.

The performance was more of a surprise. Working in the round, live accompaniment and voice weren't what I was expecting; I'm not sure why though, perhaps because I've never used those elements with my mum.

RP: Which of the choreographic tasks did you enjoy and why?

AH: Writing on the floor. I hate to admit it was just nice to do something that wasn't dancing but also, to notice things I was writing correlating with movement my mum was doing.

The accumulation of my material while mum was speaking had the same "satisfying" feeling.

Ironically, the three-legged task was one of my favourite task. I'm not sure if that would have been the case had I been in a bad mood the day we were given it. Although it was the hardest material to rehearse for the performance the actual process was my favourite creative session. That day we were able to work together and be really productive (maybe that was because mum was willing to be told what to do by me, so perhaps a "team effort" was just me getting away with being bossy, I'm not sure!).

RP: Which of the choreographic tasks did you find particularly challenging and why?

AH: I struggled some days to rehearse the three-legged duet as often as mum needed to but the task itself I didn't feel that way.

The task beginning with feet and playing with different body parts was a disaster for me to remember and really challenging for me to be true to the task and not get caught up in tidying the movement up.

The nuzzling section was really hard. I think that section reflects an area of our relationship that is quite raw.

RP: Did working on the piece reveal anything new/surprising or different about your relationship?

AH: I was surprised at how aware of my mum's fragility I've become. It made me think about the times I may have been clumsy with her heart and maybe her body without realizing at times.

RP: How did you feel about performing the piece?

AH: The first performance didn't feel safe at all, but maybe that was my lack of preparation. The second felt like it sat well. However, overall it was just reminded me I'm not comfortable performing anymore for lots of reasons but not because of the piece.

RP: What was it like for you carrying each other at the end of the piece?

AH: I found it frustrating that mum struggled to let me carry her. And my mind did use the action of lifting her as an analogy for times we have carried each other. I don't think we'd remember the same times though. It's hard that mum doesn't see time times I was there for her as a good thing because she think she shouldn't need me to carry her.

RP: Do you think the process has had an effect on the way you relate to one another since?

AH: Not really but at the time it did. Its helped me process some things and let go of some things.

RP: How did you see my (Ruth's) role in the process?

AH: I saw Ruth as a mediator and sometimes her experience gave me a voice and something to hold on to, to know my process in relationship with my mum is not abnormal.

RP: Any other comments?

Appendix M: Email evaluation from Paula Hocking on *Where you End*

Paula Hocking response to evaluation for *Where you End*, conducted over email 2012.

RP: So...casting your mind back, please try to be as honest as possible and remember what we did (I can help with this if you get stuck!):
Why did you agree to take part in the project/What was your motivation?

PH: My first thought was, I'd love to create and dance with Alex. I thought how potentially profound a piece with a mother and daughter could be for an audience.

RP: Was it what you expected and if not, why not?

PH: I didn't have any expectations … I was happy to abandon myself to the process. Although saying that I didn't expect it to touch our relationship in such a deep way.

RP: Which of the choreographic tasks did you enjoy and why?

PH: The process which formed the material 'This is Paula, this is Alex', immediately brought an awareness of our differences – I like what you said Ruth, about our physicality's saying something about our stories… ie Alex thinking her body is like mine but my memory of her Dad at 21 connects her more in his likeness than my own.

The three legged phrase, was fun … again I became acutely aware of our differences … this time not our physical differences but a personality difference. I was very physical as a girl, sporty, my playground activities were, three legged races, skipping, net ball etc … when Alex shared how much she hated three legged races in the playground because she was small and got pulled around, I became conscious of what I didn't know about Alex… and perhaps she wasn't as naturally as feisty as me… and that her early social life was very different from mine. I missed so much when she was a little, like most parents, I did my best but you aren't perfect and things get missed. I realized that Alex knew that I didn't know her very well and this was a grief for her. I also reaslised that Alex is so strong she could pull me over if she chose to! My peace lies in that no matter how much we try you can't know the whole of another person … every soul is deep and life is complicated … also my own story reveals a lack and you can't give out what you don't have … but you can love with everything you have and I feel content in my own soul that the choices I made helped me do that.

RP: Which of the choreographic tasks did you find particularly challenging and why?

PH: I found the setting movement from the Contact Improvisation most challenging. I would choose to work through repetition, redoing and redoing, finding movement from a repeating it, and seeing what recurs … I didn't feel we allowed enough time for me to fulfill that process. I think perhaps the reasons why a two-fold … I feel like I work slowly, I give myself lots of time … I can't say if this is an age thing or perhaps it's a lack of training… perhaps Alex's body is so trained that she remembered things much quicker. I didn't want to ask for more time as I felt Alex would get impatient with me which made me feel a bit vulnerable in an aging women way and as a dancer, rubbish. The result though was that the contact phrase was short and strong and worked well.

RP: Did working on the piece reveal anything new/surprising or different about your relationship?

PH: Answered in question 3.

RP: How did you feel about performing the piece?

PH: I like the way you work so was more than happy to be part of your work and showing that to an audience. I like that the integrity of the choreography and its relationship with us as dancers remained related and I was therefore happy to perform the work. I like the playing with performance and reality and felt you were drawing us to share who we were and aspects of our relationship through dance rather than an acted performance so I was comfortable being part of that.

RP: What was it like for you carrying each other at the end of the piece?

PH: I found it difficult at first. As a mum you are the strong one, you do the carrying so it was a difficult transition to allow my child to take my weight and become strong. Added to that I have always struggled to be lifted, as I am conscious that I may be heavy! But ultimately it was significant because it is what is happening to me personally and I believe why the dance was powerful, it is universal; as the body gets older and the younger generation gets stronger the older generation must yield some of its strength and independence and trust the younger generation can share the weight… the responsibilities … In our culture unfortunately what seems common is that in that transition there is no glue to hold those relationships … other cultures are under girded with unquestionable values, where the younger generation respects and takes care of its elders but sadly on the whole we don't seem to be a society that holds to those values… our post war generations desire for independence is taking its toll!

Anyway I thank you for our dance, as it has provide some glue, as we have shared a common goal, I have gained some understanding about Alex that will feed our relationship well!

RP: Do you think the process has had an effect on the way you relate to one another since?

PH: I do feel I have a better understanding of Alex and see her more as a women than my child … it is difficult because she lives at home but not as an adult as she takes no responsibility around the home … I think if she lived separately it would be more apparent that I see her as an adult … I don't think she thinks I see her as an adult! … she's at home for practical reasons, she's saving for her trip to Africa and I want her to fulfil her dreams so we put up with the uncomfortable positioning! Love doesn't always play out sweetly! As a mum I feel like I'm losing a daughter … dealing with the grief of that is painful but seeing her step in to the things she wants to do makes it better and easier to let go. We've just had our last family holiday and we all laughed a lot … here's to the new chapter!

Also, this process has affected my relationship with my mum. My mum had no emotional language when we were growing up and when we were teenagers we all left home really rejecting her. Since I've been a mum myself, and been faced with my own failings, I have been able to forgive my mum for not being perfect and slowly build a relationship with her. Working with you and Alex on this piece has touched vulnerability in me that my mum must have felt. Committing to the process meant I could not run away and hide in doing something else and gave me the opportunity and space to think about my mum and the

pain she felt and still feels … but she runs and hides … so we I have been having some deep chats and I feel like I am getting to know her!

RP: How did you see my (Ruth's) role in the process?

PH: You brought your personal experience to the process and used that as a catalyst for the work. You did brill! Managing to address the balance at moments of intimate tensions in our relationship because you have been through the growing up process with your mum … you are really mature! Sometimes when you're going through stuff you can think you're the only one … it is so reassuring to realize that its natural process!

Any other comments about the whole experience?

Appendix N: Email correspondence with Christie Taylor on *Baby Jam*

Email correspondence between Christie Taylor and Ruth Pethybridge, 3rd November 2012

Hi Christie,
Thanks for your kind words after class last week, as you know I am thinking of using Baby Jam for some of my research, so if you have a moment (ha!) I wondered if you could elaborate a little in writing about what you said about Arthur's 'mini me'ness…?

Don't worry about how you say it, just along similar lines that we were discussing would be much appreciated.

See you soon
Ruth

Hi Ruth,

Not something I get asked every day but yes really enjoying Baby Jam so I'll do my best. I like the fact that I turn up and have no idea what you are going to ask us to do. I am excited by the ways in which I see my child change in that space, I mean I know he's changing all the time, but somehow when I am also down on the floor with him, or crawling over another mum as he crawls under us, I feel like I respect the fact that he is not a 'mini-me' and I don't know what he is going to do but I'm ok with that, not trying to reign him in for a change! He's such a handful sometimes, I don't get much space to just enjoy him for who he is, you know? Baby Jam gives me that.

Not sure if that's useful, shout if you need more.

Can you remind me when the adult contact classes are up at uni? I might give it a go sometime.

See you next week
Cx

Appendix O: Interview with Giulio D'Anna

Interview excerpts from Giulio D'Anna conducted via Skype on 26th April 2013

RP: Have you worked with people of diff ages before or was it specifically working with your father?

GD: Since the beginning I use a lot of autobiographical elements in my work, it is very important for me in my creative process to use reality, to use something that I really feel I need to tell and in that sense I feel often more close to theatre than dance because I really work with content in my creative process.

And because I went through myself as a dancer – I been studied ballet but I developed scoliosis when I Was 10 so I question a lot what is perfect, what is the dancing body? So I developed this idea of the alternative dancing body, or the unconventional body and somehow to give back dance to humanity. I don't hold anything against …or ballet but I want to expand that in my work. And working a lot with autobiographical elements, after two or three works were made on me it was a natural desire to start to think about my parents and originally the idea was to make a work with both of them...like a post-modern musical…and what I wanted to do was to embody the family tree on stage and create this sense of time but it is a very complex thing so I kept postponing it until the day that my father was diagnosed with Parkinson….and this created a sense of urgency and I thought ok either now or never again and I did it and I concentrate just on my father just because if I had to work with both my parents I couldn't work so long and just focusing on my father he is in pension so I could have more time, my mother is still working. I found also very interesting both what I wanted to discover more about the disease and our relationship as father and son rather than just parents and son…so this is why I made a piece with my dad but I have always worked with alternative bodies and now I have started to work with a mother and daughter…((and before this I have also worked with three dancers – one in the fifties, there is me in my thirties and one in their twenties and we are trying to embody three different ages by embodying masterpieces in art.))

The thing is that actually it is not something that I named because it starts from wanting to tell something…not necessarily wanting to create a beautiful dance but to explore something through the body then it comes naturally that sometimes you need to use people, real people, and not a specific group of people and so you would need your father…or your friend who is a bit overweight so this idea of alternative bodies comes from this idea….

RP: Were there certain things about your choreographic process that changed because he was your father…were there changes in your approach somehow?

GD: The fact it was the first time I had made a real piece with an amateur and not a dancer…and so in the first condition that it put in the space was that I couldn't use technical words, I can't just say 'improvise' he is like 'what is improvise?!' I found it a very interesting process because he made me consider what words I use and what's behind each word I use or what I wanted and what I was trying to do because like yeah…'connect', 'use your centre' – it's all things we take for granted but they are really abstract things, we just pretend we know! So that was the first thing that as a maker I had to readapt my vocabulary. The creative process itself it wasn't different from my usual. The situation with my father basically is that many things were happening at the same time – I had my own ideas, my own desires, then there was his condition of being an amateur, being 64 and being Parkinsonion and what the idea first was to check limits and to understand what was possible. How our dance could it be? How strong could it be? How fast it could be? So I was

working with limits. The very first day I had all my rehearsal plans, he arrived in the studio and we were in a dance school and I look at myself in the mirror and I thought 'Fuck' this is my father, this is for real, its as like all my ideas became very concrete and I thought I am going to go through that, then it became a bit more I didn't know and then suddenly I realized that it was something different – what I had in my hands, than my initial ideas. I thought like this is very interesting, like I feel like I cannot hug my father…I will do that with an unknown 64 year old man but I cannot do it with my father, why? And basically within the work of finding the limitation I also worked with the idea of breaking these taboos, these personal taboos…so we went through everything, we went through screaming, hitting, being naked, grabbing each other in all possible parts, spitting at each other, slapping…so I was really trying to see is it that possible to erase this uncomfortable feeling…

RP: How did this process change your relationship, or did you feel like there was a certain way of relating in the dance studio and then back to your old patterns in the same way outside of the dance studio…or is it too soon to tell, you're still touring it? That feeling that we create in a dance studio, they don't necessarily permanently shift…

GD: I believe that a dance process, especially when you use real material so its not just a cool move or an arty practice it transforms people deeply and you cannot change it, you just can't , and so when you energetically change something in your body that manifests in your life. With my father it's a very, very, very intense process, especially the making of it because there was the situation of getting to know each other in that way professionally…of course the relations in the studio had a different power relationship because I was the maker, I was the initiator and so it was very intense to play with these roles you know, I mean all of a sudden the person that used to give you orders and restrictions and boundaries, all of a sudden is like under your own control which was both exhilarating, thought provoking, confronting, it was a lot, it's very difficult to put into words. My father had an enormous courage and trust in myself and so I am really, really grateful to him. Though he also contributed with a very critical spirit meaning he has this big critiques towards contemporary art which is like 'I don't understand it…I don't see why I can't understand it...so you just make art that I can understand. So whatever I would propose he would say why, why are you doing that? What do you want to say? So that was creating a lot of tension sometimes because I was like I don't know…sometimes you could say yes I want to show this or investigate that but sometimes it was like I don't know, I just want to create an energy in the space and that was both very interesting because I realized that he was somehow co-creating with me the work…because with his critiques and with his desire for understanding from his point of view, without necessarily embracing art as an artist as in ah yes I understand it because I understand it, I'm a human and I want to understand and what is that? He actually co-created the work and so he choreographed also the way of thinking, so that was really interesting…and to go back to the relationship, the making was very intense. It was the only process where I could laugh and I could cry over nothing and I could really become mad and irritated like small things, because I think it was so metaphorical and so intense. Even though you are not trying to make like a self-analysis…

I remember like he would say something like 'yeah I don't understand this' and then all of a sudden things would come up like 'yeah you never understand 'when I was a teenage you never understand and I was like what is happening here?!!

The success we had, we didn't expect that. I thought the audience would understand my urgency but I didn't even think and we are having a great response from people and getting prizes and being invited to festivals and people writing to us and sending us gifts and its amazing…. basically it was really strange because, its not 24/7 but I have this feeling that I am a friend with my father sometimes, like we are in a train for somewhere or an aero plane and then I turn and I am not speaking with my 64 year old father I am speaking with

Stefano, he's the soul that is beside me, and it's very beautiful because those moments are very precious to me because then it is just about communicating, it is not necessarily about playing with the interface of the role and not that when I talk to him, I think ok I speak to my father, but when you are really free and connected, and I think that this is just possible through dance. The moment that physically you have been slapping each other, you have been laughing, you have been naked, fighting and swallowing each other's sweat…like physically it changes things. It's a bond…

I guess what happens is that for a moment, social…what has been given us from society disappears and what is saved is the reality of our selves together, our thoughts together, our souls together, this creates feedback – emotional, technological, physical that are not easily accessible in other ways.

RP: You mention your fantastic response from people – would you say that is from a dance audience, or are they from people in the Parkinson's community or are they from all walks of life?

GD: It's more like I am really, really happy and my father is really, really happy because we are getting to people, and not necessarily dance people…

RP: So possibly his co-creating the piece as you describe means the piece has that accessibility?

GD: The piece is very communicative so people from different ages and backgrounds can enjoy it and can be moved by it…it's actually a bit too much so that I am actually going to make a research project from it because I am really interested. I think somehow it touched something that was very universal and not just personal and I am very interested to go more into that because it seems like many people are touched by it from different categories which in my work I never managed to have …people like it, then dance audience wouldn't like it, when dance audience would like it (I mean like critics and contemporary artist…) then normal people wouldn't like, I've never had a work that was somehow embraced by everybody and I realized that like I don't think that my choreographic artistry is amazing, I think it is because of the urgency of it people accept it no matter what.

RP: And that relationship maybe? We're all someone's son or daughter…

GD: Yes, the theme is very universal and I think its confronting for many people and I found it very interesting…like I think this work is like I am trying to be a bit bland about some things, like I am not trying to make art of it, I am just trying to let the art of it unfold so I try deliberately to touch the fear of my father of becoming sick, my fear of losing him, the human condition of dying and our history so I try to be really human, and bland and very honest and I think this is what people are responding to…I don't know…

RP: You spoke about the physicality with your father, and obviously the disease may be progressing, on your website you speak about stories being inscribed on the body so I am wondering how this process is inscribed on your father's body, if you can sense that from your physical interactions?

GD: I do, I have many perceptions of his body…In the last two months I started to see for the first time the disease, I was confronted again…it was a very emotional moment for me because I realized that in some way, somewhere, some part of me were convinced that I could heal him, that I could …I don't' know, it wasn't conscious at all but that somehow I had solved the problem. But no, actually the problem was upgrading somehow. But yes I sense very clearly when he is strained, when he is not, when his energy is circulating more. I have a sense of his emotional state from touching his body…um…and I have a stronger empathy of what it is to be Parkinsonion, not just by observing it but by embracing a Parkinsonion body and then you can kinesthetically feel how it feels for a body that wants to hug but cannot hug less or is lower in the hug..also you have information from your own body and not from the brain, it's a lot of information.

…I was studying a bit of medicine but I quite because the approach was really really not interesting to me, I studied for four years and it was all about information and studying the body as a machine and it was not at all about human beings and about healing so that made me really distant from the thing and I thought I would really like to live in a world where university doctors have to hug their own patients…and not in a new age way but just to hug them and to do as I would though a machine – to read the body through my body and I think we would live in a different world, but really cutting the new age idea to connect but using the body as a reading machine.

RP: Do you think your father considers himself differently now? Would he consider himself a dancer or performer in any way now? Is he more open to other forms of dance and art now having engaged with this process with you?

GD: He's more open, meaning like that he has more, beside the understanding of how work is made and the understanding of how in a theatre all of a sudden there is lighting and there are people dancing and stuff…so he has something of that but…

Once we were in a festival and he has a more direct approach through the body and an understanding through the body – still he is very critical most of the time but I see that he can approach art from different points of view now. Like during the after talk he keeps saying, its all my sons merit because I am not a dancer…and the other thing like just lately we had the discussion that I said, like the thing is you know dad like I graduated from one of the best choreography schools and at the moment you are the person that has been more trained by me than other person so he is the dancer of my technique! So I think you should stop saying that and say you are a professional, like you've got two years of Giulio D'Anna technique! He is very modest, and he really enjoys to meet the people afterwards…of course he is living this as a big gift and as a dream because he entered art by making a very intense work, very intense, very meaningful, very life changing, with an amazing response something that all of us that have to sweat through rejection and everything and he is entering through the red carpet and I find it beautiful because I want him to have that and he doesn't have to carry the weight of art and all that