Dancing in and out of time: noticing the present through repetition

by

Ashlee Barton
BCA (Honours)

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (Research)

Deakin University

May 2019
I am the author of the thesis entitled

Dancing in and out of time: noticing the present through repetition

submitted for the degree of Master of Arts (Research)

This thesis may be made available for consultation, loan and limited copying in accordance with the Copyright Act 1968.

'I certify that I am the student named below and that the information provided in the form is correct'

Full Name: ........................................Ashlee Barton.................................................................
(Please Print)

Signed: ..........................................................................................................................................

Date: ......................................................................9th October 2019..............................................
I certify the following about the thesis entitled (10 word maximum)

**Dancing in and out of time: noticing the present through repetition**

submitted for the degree of Master of Arts (Research)

a. I am the creator of all or part of the whole work(s) (including content and layout) and that where reference is made to the work of others, due acknowledgment is given.

b. The work(s) are not in any way a violation or infringement of any copyright, trademark, patent, or other rights whatsoever of any person.

c. That if the work(s) have been commissioned, sponsored or supported by any organisation, I have fulfilled all of the obligations required by such contract or agreement.

d. That any material in the thesis which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by any university or institution is identified in the text.

e. All research integrity requirements have been complied with.

'I certify that I am the student named below and that the information provided in the form is correct'

**Full Name:** Ashlee Barton

**Signed:** Signature Redacted by Library

**Date:** 9 October 2019
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the following people, all of whom have contributed greatly to the realisation of this project and without them, this accomplishment would not have been possible.

To Tully Doole, Charlotte Evans, Michaela Ottone, Stephanie Spillett and Tessa Teitelbaum for your invaluable contributions to my studio practice in the early stages of this project, I treasured our time dancing, watching and reflecting together.

Thank you to Dr Antonia Pont for your words of wisdom, your insightful and thought-provoking Deleuze conversations, and your advocacy of me and my aspirations.

To Megan Kennedy, I cannot thank you enough for your unconditional support and encouragement every step of the way.

I am eternally grateful to my supervision team, Dr Sally Gardner, Dr Olivia Millard and Dr Shaun McLeod, collectively you have been paramount to my success.

Finally, to Evie Ball, Amber Riches and Emma Riches, your willingness and commitment to share the studio with me, to be part of this journey of dancing, watching and articulating your experiences has been the greatest gift.
ABSTRACT

The relationship between an engagement in practice and an encounter with being present sits at the heart of this research project. I have reinvented and repurposed the working methods of improviser, Dr Olivia Millard, and post-modern choreographer, Trisha Brown, as a lens to examine the relationship between the idea of practising and being present. Key to these ideas are the concepts of repetition and noticing, which are explored and elaborated upon throughout this exegesis with the help of ideas of thinkers and practitioners including: Sally Banes, Bojana Cvejic, Gilles Deleuze, Kent De Spain, Susan Foster, Edward Hall, and Antonia Pont. The project culminated in a performance, *In and out of time*, which was performed at Dancehouse (Melbourne) in November 2018.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** ........................................................................................................... i

**ABSTRACT** ................................................................................................................................ ii

**CHAPTER 1. FORWARD** ........................................................................................................... 1

An Hour of Repetition and Being Present ......................................................................................... 1

**CHAPTER 2. INTRODUCTION** .................................................................................................. 7

My Dancing State of Lucy .............................................................................................................. 8

**CHAPTER 3. THEORETICAL DIMENSIONS** ............................................................................. 11

Deleuze’s Three Syntheses of Time .................................................................................................. 12

First Synthesis: Habit ....................................................................................................................... 13

Habit and Structure ........................................................................................................................ 14

Second Synthesis: Memory .............................................................................................................. 15

Memory and Accumulation ............................................................................................................. 17

Third Synthesis: Empty Future ......................................................................................................... 19

Trisha Brown’s *Accumulation (1971)* ............................................................................................ 21

**CHAPTER 4. HABITUAL AND REPEATABLE STRUCTURES: PRACTICE METHODS** ............. 28

Practice-Led Research ..................................................................................................................... 29

Improvisation Practice ................................................................................................................... 31

Choreographic Practice .................................................................................................................. 39

**CHAPTER 5. REPETITION VERSUS REPPLICATION** ................................................................. 45

**CHAPTER 6. IMPROVISATION, PRACTISING & BEING PRESENT** ........................................... 57

The Taken for Grantedness of Improvisation ................................................................................ 57

Differentiating Presence and Being Present ................................................................................... 61

**CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION** .................................................................................................... 64

**BIBLIOGRAPHY** ....................................................................................................................... 67

**APPENDIX** ............................................................................................................................... 71

**NOTES** ..................................................................................................................................... 84
CHAPTER 1. FORWARD

An Hour of Repetition and Being Present
This research project, *Dancing in and out of time: noticing the present through repetition*, culminated in a performance, *In and out of time*, at Dancehouse (Melbourne, Australia) in November 2018. The performance was an experiment, the first meeting of my two separate dance practices: an improvisation practice largely informed by the working methods I developed following long term participation in Olivia Millard’s practice and a set or learned movement practice based on Trisha Brown’s seminal work *Accumulation* (1971). The practices were undertaken by me and three other dancers on a weekly basis over an eighteen month period.

As a group of performers embarking on the journey of this experiment, there was a heightened sense of energy among us as we began dancing. The excitement of journeying into our anticipated future created a sense of tension within my body. However, along with this tension came the amplification and perhaps even sharpness of my noticing. The floor under my feet was smooth and the air around me was on the cooler side of comfortable. The gaze of the audience projected their anticipation of what was to come, and my nervousness was intensified as we made our way through the famous gestures of Trisha Brown’s *Accumulation* (1971). Overcome by all of these feelings, sensations and thoughts, I remembered something that Trisha Brown had been quoted saying in relation to performing *Accumulation 55* (1972). In her attempt to “keep the separateness and clarity of each move against the blurring effect of relentless repetition” she would say to herself “this is all there is” (Brown in Teicher, 2002, p. 313). Subsequently I too, began saying this to myself and felt calmed in doing so, I was able to find a sense of noticing within my dancing body: was I steering clear of any accent within the rotation of the forearms? Could I release my right arm of tension allowing it to ‘truly’ drop (instructions Brown had apparently given herself). And then before I knew it, I had found what I have come to understand as the habitual. Elizabeth Grosz states, “habits provide the ability to change one’s tendencies, to reorient
one’s actions to address the new, and to be able to experience the unexpected” (Grosz, 2013, p. 221). My body had taken over, and the space for noticing other things and even the possibility of being taken by surprise had emerged. As the accumulation proceeded, one of the dancers left the group to improvise solo, and by this point I was well and truly in the ‘habitual’. Suddenly, she made a loud thump with what I assumed was her foot stamping into the floor. This sound took me by surprise, I smiled and wanted to watch her. All the while, my dancing body continued moving through the accumulation, not even missing a beat, but with a new-found attunement to the sounds that were present within the room. An attunement that I took with me through the rest of this performance...

Without warning, my habitual was ruptured. The other three dancers left the accumulation to move into a trio improvisation and I instantly recalled the conversations which had arisen within the group earlier that week. In that week leading up to the performance examination, there were many discussions within the group about what ‘might’ happen in the moment of performing. One of the things which came up again and again was an apprehension about being the one dancer left standing in the accumulation should a trio improvisation spontaneously take place. Each time this conversation arose, it became clear to me just how much weight this structural constraint (at least one person
performing the accumulation at all times) was having on the other dancers. However, I did not have this same anxiety, rather I was excited by what that particular situation might produce. Consequently, while I wanted to ease their anxiety, I was also deep down hoping that a trio would arise, not because I wanted any of the dancers to be uncomfortable, but because I was excited by the prospect of this situation. Then, in this moment, I suddenly understood why they were apprehensive and I certainly felt this unease. I was very aware of being the sole dancer responsible for the ‘time keeping’ of the work at this point and for the next four minutes, yet I could not help but increase my speed. In the moment of, I felt that speeding up left me less exposed to the audience, and believed it would mean that the other dancers would return more quickly to the accumulation, relieving me from this role of ‘time keeper’. Neither of which are accurate assumptions to make.

Once I had dealt with the heightened state that came with being the last dancer standing in the accumulation while the other three dancers improvised a trio, my noticing of the present shifted from being primarily a bodily and temporal one, to include a spatial noticing. There were many feelings of ‘stuckness’ that were triggered through the arrival of this particular configuration. There was the fact that I was stuck, alone, in the accumulation until the trio of improvisations had come to an end, and I was also stuck spatially inside the pathway of the predetermined movement pattern of the accumulation. Moreover, the other dancers were either intentionally or unintentionally obstructing these spatial pathways forcing me to be constantly aware of where they were in the space, in relation to where I was, and where I was about to be. This was further complicated as one of the movements in the phrase was a fall backwards to catch yourself in the running action before making a ninety degree change in direction of facings. In navigating this backwards fall action, I not only used my vision as a way of noticing spatially, but I was forced to tap into other senses such as sound and kinaesthetic awareness to direct my fall in a clear spatial trajectory. I enjoyed doing this, I relished momentarily falling into the unknown...
I was the first person to leave our accumulation and move into an improvisation: when I walked up towards the back of the space to turn on the timer, I felt a sense of awkwardness as it was, to my awareness, the first moment that our unison had been interrupted. I wondered whether each of the other dancers would feel this same sense of unease the first time they left the accumulation, or whether it was purely because it was the first shift into improvisation. I began to improvise using the score ‘the prolonging of each instant’ (see Appendix - 03.10.2018) playing with the idea that I could actively vary my perception of time. I weaved hastily through the group accumulation and upon reaching the other side of the group I suspended my weight over one leg, and while dissolving my body into the floor, I heard a gasp come from an audience member. Maybe it was because the gasp took me by surprise, but my experience of dissolving into the ground seemed to resemble one’s experience of time slowing down in an emergency – I was aware of every intricate movement of my body before it came to a place of rest on the floor.

About half way through the hour, I became aware that the group had settled into a regular and consistent rhythm, a rhythm that was both familiar and calming, and which was supported by the sound of our collective breath. It was here that I noticed a slight incremental increase in time each time we lay down on the floor. It was perhaps even what could have been considered a bodily lag that meant each time we got to this movement, we momentarily spent just a little bit longer giving our body’s weight to the floor. But what was even more prominent in my noticing, was how all of us, as a group, came to find this lag collectively, always staying in our shared rhythm.

It was at this same point in time, when I realised that my experience of the time that was passing by, seemed to have slowed down. I was heading towards some sort of meditative state where I had found clarity in my noticing of my present, my present had been elasticised. Edward Hall references psychologist, Keith Floyd, who proposes the meditative state to be a state which initially enables perceived time to slow down before stopping altogether (Hall, 1983, p. 147). I perceive that
my meditative state emerged from a point of exhaustion, both physically and mentally: it was as if the more exhausted I became, the more extensive my noticing became. As I spent more time in this state, the initial stage of a ‘meditative state’, the anxiety of making a mistake also seemed to soften, and with this came a reminder of an observation that one of my supervisors had made when watching us performing our accumulation in the studio some weeks before. During that practice there were moments where one of us would momentarily ‘let go’ of the movement to do things like, remove a layer of clothing or turn off a heater, and then just as easily as we ‘let go’ of the movement, we would return back to it. She was quite intrigued by her perception of the effect that repetition was having on us, and she observed that our knowledge that the audience would see the movement again seemed to relieve us of having to be consistently exact…

It seemed as if we were on the home stretch to finishing the work. There was now perhaps only time for one or two more improvisations. During this time, I realised that I was finishing a fifth repetition, a point at which the structure allowed me to move into an improvisation, so I made the decision to leave the accumulation for a chance to engage in one more improvisation. In that moment, so did all three other dancers. As we all went to leave the accumulation, our noticing on high alert, it was as if, temporally speaking, we had missed a beat. There was a
malfunction within our rhythm, a momentary hesitation which permeated our bodies. But then, without another moment of hesitation, one of the dancers and I retreated, stepping back into the exact spot we had left off, and began with the rotation of both forearms, signalling the next addition to our accumulation.

Over the course of the hour, the more and more that each of us left the accumulation and moved into improvisations the broader my noticing of the present became. In the beginning, I had the capacity to notice my body in the space being watched by the audience. However, over time, this expanded to include my noticing of the other dancers, whether they were in the accumulation with me, or improvising alongside me, or whether I was noticing where the other dancers were within the accumulation when I was improvising, or experiencing their improvising while I was busy in the accumulation. I began to notice the reactions of the audience, their smiles, their laughs, maybe (even) their boredom. I noticed the spatial relationships between my dancing body and the other dancing bodies, and the spatial relationships between our dancing bodies and the audiences’ ‘still’ bodies. I noticed members of the audience putting on additional layers of clothing, presumably because they were cold, at the same time as I was noticing my body temperature rising, permeating through my rosy cheeks. I noticed the sun beginning to set, and each time that it peeped out from behind the clouds. I noticed the sound of our bodies’ contact with the floor, and how the sound of our breath not only accumulated in intensity, signalling the fatigue which we endured, but also how we synchronised our breath forming a rhythmic soundscape, filling the room and supporting our dancing bodies right until the final bow of our heads.
CHAPTER 2. INTRODUCTION

My research project reinvented and repurposed the working methods of improviser, Dr Olivia Millard, and post-modern choreographer, Trisha Brown, as a lens to examine the relationship between notions of practising and being present. In order to examine this relationship I first needed to understand what constitutes a practice, which I did initially in relation to the instigator of this project, my weekly studio based, group dance improvisation practice, before transferring this understanding into the development of a set or learned movement practice. Through this examination of practice, I came to understand that although practice is described in different ways by different practitioners, regardless of the mode of practising, in one way or another, practice involves repetition. Repetition existed in both of my practices in various ways, but most significantly through the structural conditions that regulated our weekly practice, and enabled the arrival at the performance of *In and out of time*, a combination of our two weekly practices, in the present.

In coming to accept, and even embrace repetition within my own practice, I came up against the contention between the perceived sameness of repetition and the spontaneity, authenticity and the new which is often said to be what defines improvisation (Foster, 2003, p. 7; Banes, 2003, p. 77). In my practice, rather than shying away from repetition, in favour of searching for these characteristics and having them at the fore of my practice, I have instead placed emphasis on repetition, in its many forms, only to find that repetition is a structure or condition for often unexpected spontaneity and newness. Dance improvisation practitioners often attribute these characteristics to their improvisation practices, suggesting that the nature of dance improvisation is a practising of ‘being present’ (De Spain, 2003, p. 27). Through practising improvisation I have often been afforded the opportunity to experience the present in a way that I did not experience it in other contexts – an opening up of, or expanding of time, which creates space for noticing the many different ‘layers’ that make up the present. And these experiences of the present elicited what I would call hyperawareness,
consciousness, and a heightened sensibility to my body in its surroundings. All of which characterise a particular state of ‘being present’ that I have named the state of ‘Lucy’, and the need to explicate this and what enabled it has formed the basis of this research.

My Dancing State of Lucy

A few years prior to the commencement of this research project I had watched the movie *Lucy* (2014), which was based around the myth that humans are only able to use ten percent of their cerebral capacity. Lucy, however, was caught up in a drug trafficking ordeal where large amounts of a synthetic drug were leaked into her body, enabling a gradual unlocking of her brain’s full potential. While the plot line is not pertinent to this research project per se, there is one scene in particular where Lucy describes her ability to experience everything, and although these experiences are not the same as mine, it had a resonance to the receptiveness that I experience in my body while improvising. In this scene Lucy says:

“I feel everything. Space, the air, the vibrations, the people. I can feel gravity, I can feel the rotation of the earth, the heat leaving my body, the blood in my veins. I can feel my brain, the deepest parts of my memory” (Besson, 2014)

Since then, I have often found myself in what I now describe as the state of ‘Lucy’: a full bodied, three dimensional body thinking experience full of sensory receptivity, both inside and outside of the body, which alters my experience of the time that is passing by, and facilitates an ability to tap into an observational experience where I can imagine myself watching the dancing which is arising at the same time as I am experiencing in my body. In this state, I imagine that I ‘feel everything’ and this state is what I imagine other improvisers, such as Kent De Spain, to be experiencing when they describe improvisation as a practice of being present (De Spain, 2003, p. 27). Significant to this research project is the term
noticing, and the basis to what noticing is for me is established through this state of ‘Lucy’, and will be elaborated upon throughout this exegesis.

As I have mentioned above, over an eighteen month period, I examined the role of repetition in relation to the question of ‘being present’ with a group of dancers, in two separate dance practices: an improvisation practice established as a result of my participation in Olivia Millard’s weekly improvisation practice, and a set or learned movement practice based on Trisha Brown’s *Accumulation (1971)*. At first, the purpose of these practices undertaken as a group was purely a functional one: to adhere to a set of conditions requiring at least two people, or preferably a small group, namely dancing and watching and articulating our experiences of dancing and watching, which are prominent in Millard’s practice. However, over time I came to understand that their function was not only a structural one, but they also contributed an important articulation of their own experiences of practising, which has informed my own thinking, and provided me with perspectives through which to compare and contrast my own experiences.

Alongside the research that was taking place in the studio, I undertook a rigorous reading practice into the theories and practices of others, which both assisted in the thinking through of what practising was and what it was doing, as well as
offered a language to articulate my experiences of ‘being present’. Chapter Three introduces key theorist, Gilles Deleuze, and his philosophy of time, as set out in his book *Difference and Repetition (1968)*. His theory provided me with a rationale for practising inside of a set of structural conditions, from which the notion of describing practice as accumulative was uncovered, and ultimately to an articulation of the idea of ‘being present’. This discussion is then placed alongside a discussion of the working method and conceptual thinking behind Trisha Brown’s *Accumulation (1971)* which formed the basis of our set movement practice, and gave me useful insights into the notions of practice and ‘being present’ in a choreographic context. The subsequent chapter elaborates on this discussion by describing, in detail, the two studio based dance practices (mentioned above) which were undertaken concurrently throughout this research project and places these practices and the knowledge which came out of them, at the fore of my examination of the relationship between practice and being present. In Chapter Five I examine the key idea of repetition through the lens of practice, before going on to define the term ‘being present’ as I have come to understand it. In addition to the work of Deleuze, Brown and Millard, I have drawn upon the ideas of the thinkers and practitioners including, Sally Banes, Bojana Cvejic, Kent De Spain, Susan Foster, Edward Hall, and Antonia Pont as a means of explicating my key concepts: repetition as a criterion of practice and the idea of ‘being present’. In the final chapter I offer some conclusions as to the contribution my research makes to the dance field.
CHAPTER 3. THEORETICAL DIMENSIONS

This chapter aims to give this project a theoretical lens through which the relationship between an engagement in practice and an encounter with being present can be examined. Through my own practising and with the help of Deleuze’s three syntheses of time, discussed in *Difference and Repetition* (1968), I have arrived at an understanding of the concepts of practice and being present. Scholar, Bojana Cvejic, explains that, with some exceptions like that of Sally Banes, the discourse which currently exists on dance improvisation is mostly as a result of the experiential understandings which emerge directly from the act of improvising itself. She acknowledges that this is unsurprisingly a consequence of dance improvisation being so heavily grounded in bodily experience: the data or knowledge pertaining to it can only really be empirical (Cvejic, 2015, p. 129). I am therefore, introducing Deleuze’s three syntheses of time, which he proposes are all modes of repetition, as a way of supporting my own experiential understandings, to give rise to a further articulation of the dance improvisation literature, to discuss what it means to practise and to be present. Through this discussion, the use of accumulation is revealed as being illustrative of an understanding of practice, so I will then turn to post-modern choreographer, Trisha Brown, and examine her work *Accumulation* (1971) from the point of view
of dancing it, to give a historical underpinning to the notions of practice and being present, in the wider field of dance.

**Deleuze’s Three Syntheses of Time**

In order to define repetition for itself, namely, where repetition is not thought of only in relation to the same or the similar, Deleuze establishes a fundamental line of thought which refers to what he calls the three syntheses of time. In doing so, he does not refer to time in terms of the three commonly known tenses (past, present and future), instead he conducts a temporal analysis of the present through these three syntheses which allow him to entangle the past and the future as dimensions of time that are coexistent with the present. Deleuze states, “it is not that the present is a dimension of time: the present alone exists. Rather, synthesis constitutes time as a living present, and the past and the future as dimensions of this present” (Deleuze, [1968] 1994, p. 76). Deleuze builds these syntheses on the idea that temporally speaking, we are always grounded in the now, that one cannot escape the present. He proposes that “one cannot go faster than one’s own present” (Deleuze, [1968] 1994, p. 77), which supports the notion of a view of time that is analysed from the point of view of the present, but also acknowledges and at the same time problematises a linear perspective on time.

It is important to note that for Deleuze, these syntheses are passive, in relation to the first and second syntheses which primarily involve that of the past and the present; and static in relation to the third synthesis, which is directed towards the future – a dimension of time which is unattainable since it is always just ahead of us¹. Additionally, Deleuze proposes that these syntheses are all modes of repetition which work both independently and concurrently with each other and can be seen to be at play within all events (Williams, 2013, p. 93). For the purpose of this research project, I will be focussing primarily on the first two syntheses, the passive syntheses of habit and memory, as these syntheses give rise to notions that articulate my experience of a noticing of expanded time, an elasticised present, within my dance practices. Before proceeding to discuss my expanded
noticing of the present, which I began to do in the opening chapter of this exegesis, it is first necessary to provide an overview of these three syntheses of time in relation to my dance improvisation practice, the starting point for this project.

First Synthesis: Habit
The first synthesis of time, the synthesis of habit, constitutes the ‘regular’ perception of time, that of linear time where the present is moving in the direction of past to future in successive instances\(^2\) (Deleuze, [1968] 1994, p. 70). To develop this particular synthesis in relation to repetition, Deleuze turns to David Hume’s thesis, *A treatise of human nature (originally published in 1738)*, where Hume proposes the idea of ‘constant conjunction’ – the suggestion that every event causes something to follow (Hume, 2014, p. 191) whereby one would, over time, come to expect or assume that B will follow A. This expectation, forms the basis of the habitual (Deleuze, [1968] 1994, p. 80). An example of this habitual repetition can be seen in what anthropologist, Edward Hall, calls physical time (Hall, 1983, p. 20). This kind of time denotes the pattern of the movement of the earth around the sun which gives us night and day as well as the four seasons of the year. As a result of experiencing the sun rising over and over again to form day time, and then the sun setting again and again causing night time, one will start to habitually expect or assume that night will follow day, just as day will follow night. Returning to the notion that this synthesis is passive, it becomes evident that this first synthesis of time is not only a repetition of events (AB, AB), it also has a foundational characteristic of contraction. The first synthesis of habit is contractile in nature, meaning, each time one experiences something, for example the sun rising or setting, one passively contracts something from this experience which changes their behaviour in the direction of the future (Deleuze, [1968] 1994, pp. 70-71). Here, a secondary active register is enlivened because the knowledge and understanding that one passively contracts through this habitual synthesis, facilitates the capacity for one to then actively recognise situations encountered, as well as recollect experiences from the past, and therefore anticipate what might happen in the future.
Habit and Structure

In coming to understand the potential of the passive contractile nature of habit, I realised that this synthesis elucidated my experience of practising dancing inside of a set of conditions (structures) which were repeated each time we practised. From the outset of this research project, the way in which we practised has, for the most part, stayed the same. It began with the introduction of a ‘score’- a word, set of words, or phrases which enables the dancer to notice the process of their dancing, as it is unfolding, in the present. The score was then taken through the journey of a repeatable four-part structure which comprises various temporal and spatial frameworks in which we danced and watched, talked and listened, both as individuals and as a group. These conditions acted as a stable and known framework, which was utilised consistently throughout the project and always enabled our improvised dancing to follow (see also Millard, 2012). Then, through the repeated practising of experiencing our improvised dancing unfolding in the present inside of these set conditions, our secondary active register was brought to the fore. With this active capacity to notice our dancing encounters with the space and the other bodies moving in the space, there was a sense for me that the present was multiplying in its dimensions, stretching out but also varying and layering, which supported my ability to tap into the state of ‘Lucy’. Deleuze writes, “The duration of an organism’s present, or of its various presents, will vary according to the natural contractile range of its contemplative souls” (Deleuze, [1968] 1994, p. 77) signifying that one has the ability to contract in various quantities depending on the encountered situation. This notion has led me to ask, does practising, in its repetitive nature, enable one to develop and cultivate a space in which contractile capacity is greater than in other circumstances? And is this space what Kent De Spain and others are experiencing when describing dance improvisation as a practising of ‘being present’? This question will be examined further in chapter six.
This first synthesis begins to elucidate how the repeatable conditions of my practising are conducive to a greater contractile capacity and could therefore elicit a state which is perhaps understood as being ‘more present’ than other circumstances. However, my experiences of noticing while in this state also involved other capacities such as the arrival of involuntary memories, and the knowing that even though I was in a heightened state of noticing, I could not possibly retain all aspects of the present through my active register. In order to explicate these capacities as characteristics that imbue the present, I will continue to Deleuze’s second synthesis of time.

Second Synthesis: Memory

The second synthesis is the passive synthesis of memory, which Deleuze describes as the synthesis that enables the present to pass, to fall away and become the pure past. In articulating the relationship between the first synthesis of habit and the second synthesis of memory, Deleuze writes, “habit is the originary synthesis of time, which constitutes the life of the passing present; Memory is the fundamental synthesis of time which constitutes the being of the past (that which causes the present to pass)” (Deleuze, [1968] 1994, p. 80).
Essentially, the past (memory) must exist for habit to operate. To illustrate how this second synthesis of memory functions, Deleuze turns to Henri Bergson’s book *Matter and Memory (originally published in 1896)*, where he introduces the four paradoxes of the pure past. The first paradox, “the contemporaneity of the past with the present that it was” (Deleuze, [1968] 1994, p. 81), establishes the notion that memory is constructed in the present, in the moment of the experience. It is then recollected and embedded in a future present to which the understanding that it has passed, is present. Thinking back to the notion that we are always in the present, when one remembers, the memory (from the past) is inserted into the present as a fragment of the present which is also being deposited as a new present into memory. This gives rise to the second paradox, ‘coexistence’ (Deleuze, [1968] 1994, p. 81), denoting that the entirety of one’s past accompanies each new present that arises, thus opening up the possibility of the arrival of involuntary memory, because the whole of one’s past exists in the present all of the time. Nevertheless, the temporal condition of the past by definition suggests that it pre-exists that of the present, thus causing the present to pass, which constitutes the third paradox, that of pre-existence (Deleuze, [1968] 1994, p. 82). In essence, every present is deposited into the form of a memory, which although it precedes every future present temporally, it also inhabits every future present as a past present. This leads us to the fourth paradox, which builds upon the second paradox of coexistence and relates memory back to repetition. Deleuze writes, “The present can be the most contracted degree of the past which coexists with it only if the past first coexists with itself in an infinity of diverse degrees of relaxation and contraction at an infinity of levels” (Deleuze, [1968] 1994, p. 83). For the past to coexist with every present, the past must first exist as a past itself, alongside every other past (memory). This is represented through Bergson’s famous inverted cone (see figure) – where ‘S’ signifies the present, the first portion of the cone illustrates what one might remember from the
previous week, alongside the totality of the past in its most contracted state. Whereas the third portion of the cone symbolises what one might remember from an event many years prior, again alongside the totality of the past, but this time in a more relaxed state. For Deleuze, “The present is the repeater, the past is repetition itself” (Deleuze, [1968] 1994, p. 94), and therefore the fourth paradox is suggestive of the notion that the whole of the past is repeated in varying states of relaxation and contraction. To simplify this and place it in relation to habit, the first passive synthesis of habit constitutes the present as a contractive state that is made up of the repetition of independent instances, whereas the second passive synthesis of memory constitutes the present as a contractive state made up of the repetition of the entire past in its totality, with both syntheses at play in the present in varying levels of contraction and relaxation (Deleuze, [1968] 1994, p. 82).

Reflecting upon the notion that both syntheses of habit and memory primarily occur on a passive register, I began to wonder whether I was, through practising (repeating), able to notice myself experiencing the passivity of these syntheses. Was I, due to the nature of practising over a long period of time, retrospectively able to notice these passive contractions in various ways?

Memory and Accumulation
The addition of Deleuze’s second synthesis of memory, helps to articulate my experiences of practising in relation to repetition, and assists in creating a dialogue around my initial ‘making sense’ of practice. I began this research project with an already formed studio based dance improvisation practice, which was undertaken with a group, and led my inquiry into what constitutes a ‘practice’ or the engagement in ‘practising’. The way in which we practised improvisation was held by various structural constraints that were repeated each week for the duration of the project. However, the notion of framing practice through the lens of repetition was a daunting prospect, as I believed it placed too much emphasis on sameness (read stuckness), which seemed to contradict my experience of the
openness and freedom that I would find when practising inside of these repeated structural constraints. With this in mind, I initially settled upon the idea that a practice was something that one would ‘revisit’ each week, as this implied the need for regularity and consistency which had underpinned my initial perception of practice, without insisting that all elements of the practice remained the same. One of the structural conditions of my practising is that after each time we dance and watch there is an opportunity to describe what we might have experienced. In these ‘retellings’ of my experiences, I found myself saying things like ‘I cannot un-know what I have previously discovered’ which gave me a sense of continuation from week to week. Subsequently, over time I came to understand that although the term revisit seemed to be suitable initially in framing practice, it too held my practising captive to never really progressing anywhere and was therefore an inadequate way of describing practice. However, Deleuze’s second synthesis provides a mechanism to translate my experiences and process relevant to practising, namely an accumulative one (a concept which repetition inherently exists inside of). Each week in my practice, my noticings of the present became memories. Then in the subsequent weeks they coexisted with and supported my new present in the journey towards the future.
Deleuze’s syntheses of habit and memory have so far framed my experiences of noticing within my dance improvisation practice. However, there is one kind of experience that I have noticed while practising which neither the first synthesis of habit nor the second synthesis of memory can account for - the ability to encounter the unknown, to be what Susan Foster describes as ‘taken by surprise’ (Foster, 2003, p. 4). For this, I will briefly turn to Deleuze’s third synthesis of time.

**Third Synthesis: Empty Future**

Deleuze refers to the third synthesis of time as a static synthesis as it pertains to the future, a dimension of time which he describes as “an empty form of time” (Deleuze, [1968] 1994, p. 88). To grasp the emptiness of this dimension of time, it is helpful to relate it to the previous syntheses, the passive syntheses of habit and memory. These syntheses relate predominantly to the past and the present, the present as a dimension of time where something unfolds within it, and the past as a dimension of time where the contents of each passing present is stored. On the contrary, the future constitutes a dimension of time in which its contents have never been present, they are non-existent (Deleuze, [1968] 1994, pp. 88-89).

While we have the active capacity to anticipate the future, which is invited into the present through the passive syntheses of habit and memory, the explicit contents of the future are by default, unknown. However, if we only experienced time through the passive syntheses of habit and memory - the repetition of independent instants and the repetition of the whole of one’s past in its totality, nothing would ever change, nothing would be unknown, there would be no new. It is here that Deleuze introduces Nietzsche’s eternal return, where he states:

> Eternal return affects only the new, what is produced under the
> condition of default and by the intermediary of metamorphosis.
> However, it causes neither the condition [past] nor the agent [present]
> to return: on the contrary, it repudiates these and expels them with
> all its centrifugal force... which leaves intact nothing of the default or
the becoming-equal. It is itself the new, complete novelty (Deleuze, [1968] 1994, p. 91).

Deleuze’s reading of the eternal return is portrayed here and supplemented by the notion that “time is the most radical form of change” (Deleuze, [1968] 1994, p. 89), signifying that the conditions of the eternal return do not produce sameness, rather the eternal return breaks the cyclical pattern that the first two syntheses of time produce, and reinvents it constituting the new in this empty form of time. He suggests that this pure, empty form of time, the third synthesis, brings together all three dimensions of time (the past, present and future) to materialise in a way in which one cannot possibly know how the contents will unfold (Deleuze, [1968] 1994, p. 115), thus constituting an encounter with the unknown, the possibility of being taken by surprise.

So far, this chapter has discussed Deleuze’s three syntheses of time which have begun to elucidate my experiences of being present in practising improvisation. Through Deleuze’s first synthesis of time, a rationale for practising inside a set of structured conditions was formed, and with the help of the second synthesis of time, the notion of an accumulation was brought to the fore as a lens through which to think about practising. As a result of observing how these syntheses are at play within practice, the third synthesis of time is invited into the present, and collectively, these syntheses facilitate a language to articulate a noticing of an elasticised present. Before employing Deleuze’s theory of time to examine the present more extensively through my experiences of noticing in my dance practices, I will first discuss the notion of an accumulation within the field of dance, as both a dance-making structure and as particular experiences, including of time, for the dancer-performer, which is attributed predominantly to post-modern choreographer, Trisha Brown.
Trisha Brown’s *Accumulation (1971)*

The presentation of Brown’s *Accumulation (1971)* was the beginning of a shift away from her use of improvisation, equipment, site and language as mechanisms for developing work, and towards a concern for choreography’s definitional attribute – movement - which brought her back into the studio confronted with the predicament of ‘choosing gesture’ (Rosenberg, 2016, p. 108). *Accumulation (1971)* and many of her works in the decade following have been categorised under the description of ‘structural’ (Rainer, 2003, p. 48) or ‘mathematical’ (Teicher, 2002, p. 312) dances in which she developed systems that would help to alleviate many of the arbitrary decisions that often accompany the choosing of movement/gesture (Rosenberg, 2016, p. 109). The developing of these systems and a shift towards set or predetermined movement has also been stated to be in opposition to her participation in the Grand Union and an assertion of her own interests and desires in making work. Brown was quoted saying that, “In counterbalance to the Grand Union and all of that pain and pleasure that comes from letting it all hang out I was doing my own work. The ‘Accumulations’ were very carefully organized, each gesture, however absurd, meticulously studied” (Brown in Rainer, 1999, p. 173). Her approach to the making of her accumulation solo was twofold: while the structure began to eliminate arbitrary decision making processes, reducing the subjectivity which is implicit in dance, her way of choosing
gesture came through a rigorous questioning of whether each gesture was an ‘acceptable’ choice (Rosenberg, 2016, p. 108).

Accumulation (1971) was first performed by Brown herself, but it has since been performed by many other members of the company in varying formats. Performed standing to The Grateful Dead’s, Uncle John’s Band, the work begins with the now famous gesture - the rotation of the right forearm, which is repeated before the next gesture is added, and the next and so on (Blackwood, 2009; Brockway, 2012). In making the work, Brown composed independently of the music, creating the dance and then placing it alongside the four and a half minute musical accompaniment. Brown states, “I needed to marshal or learn the dance first without the distraction of music” (Brown in Rosenberg, 2016, p. 115), an intention which is manifested through her performing of the work with the rhythm of the movement countering that of the music. The provocation is then, in performance, to start and finish the dance with the music while keeping the two elements of the work (choreography and music) as separate entities. The structure of the work, however, is not a pure accumulation, that is, the dance does not proceed simply by adding a movement to the end of the sequence each time it is repeated. Instead, a number of additions are substituted by an ‘insertion’ or ‘variation’ of the current movement material. In these instances, the phrase does not accumulate in length per se, but rather the gesture is either transformed into something else through variation or other parts of the body are activated to supplement the original gesture, which again, transforms the gesture. This way of playing with the notion of an accumulation as a structure seemed to emulate the way in which I perceive practising improvising: that sometimes there is a progression forward in a linear sense, perhaps towards an ‘end goal’, and at other times it is perceiving something from another perspective, which creates variation in and of itself. In addition to this digression from a true accumulation, another challenge was generated through Brown’s use of repetition, with each gesture, insertion or variation repeated a number of times before moving on to the next. At present, the current literature pertaining to the work and the video-archived performances indicate a disparity in regard to the exact number of times each
gesture was repeated. Several texts suggest there to be seven or eight repetitions of each gesture (Banes, 1987, p. 82; Teicher, 2002, p. 311), however, archived video reveals the actual number of repetitions to be between three and five (See Trisha Brown Company Private Archive). I had a conversation with Trisha Brown Company dancer, Jamie Scott, and she disclosed to me that she was aware of two versions of the work circulating in and around the company: one which had four repetitions, and one which had five. Scott explained that the version employing five repetitions was the predominant version, however, on some dancers five repetitions of each gesture appeared too fast, in which case, the dancer would instead perform the version with four repetitions. In saying that, Scott also acknowledged the complexity of the work, admitting that variations in the number of repetitions could also be a result of navigating, as a performer, the structural demands in the present (Scott, 2018). A phenomenon I encountered frequently in my own navigation of dancing this work during this research project.

Accumulation (1971) was the original work within a series of works by Brown categorised as ‘The Accumulation Pieces’, all born out of “her now famous accumulating pattern (1. 1. 2. 1. 2. 3)” (Jowitt, 1974). In 1972, Brown expanded this four and a half minute work into a fifty-five minute work by accumulating the number of repetitions of each gesture, as well as accumulating the gestures
(Teicher, 2002, p. 312). It was here that Brown endeavoured to keep the singularity and precision of each gesture while being confronted with ‘relentless repetition’ (Banes, 1987, p. 82), to which she states “I never felt more alive, more expressive or more exposed in performance” (Brown in Teicher, 2003, p. 312). In 1973, Brown had mastered this problem so she further complicated it by spontaneously shifting between the original choreography and talking about the performing of the dance in the present (Banes, 1987, p. 82), which by 1978, was doubled with the insertion of a second story (Brown, 2002, p. 85). Brown states, “Talking while dancing is a ventilation system for my mind. It is explicit expression in a field of muted abstraction, a format in which to assemble some of the peculiarities of my experience” (Brown, 2002, p. 85). The doubling of the story telling in Accumulation with Talking led Brown to consider the need to balance the dancing with the talking and double the dances as well. With this desire in mind, in 1979, Brown introduced her work Watermotor (1978) as another dance to spontaneously splice into the work alongside the other three components (the Accumulation gestures and two stories), presented as Accumulation with Talking plus Watermotor. Brown asserts that, “Quadrilemna (sic) creates an overload which subverts or re-invents the selection process. The form is imposed by the difficulty of the task and mediated by the pluck of the performer” (Brown, 2002, p. 85). Alongside the development of these works, stemming from the original Accumulation (1971), Brown was also developing another strand of works using this same notion of an accumulation, but this time in its purest form. This strand of works began with Primary Accumulation in 1972, which adheres to the strict rules of an accumulation: adding a new movement onto the end of the phrase each time the phrase was performed. This was performed lying down and consisted of thirty movements in total, with the final two movements rotating the dancer by ninety degrees. The entire phrase was performed four times, rotating the dancer a total of three hundred and sixty degrees (Banes, 1987, pp. 82-83). This work was performed as a solo and in a group (in unison), which was then followed by the work Group Primary Accumulation in 1973. This saw the dancers perform the work (Primary Accumulation) twice, with an additional two dancers entering on the second repetition, moving the dancers by means of carrying,
stacking and standing into other positions (Teicher, 2002, p. 314). **Primary Accumulation** was then developed into *Splits Solos* in 1974, whereby one dancer performs all the movements which occur on the right side of the body while another dancer performs all of the movements occurring on the left side of the body (Teicher, 2002, p. 315).

This series of works act as physical depictions of the notion of an accumulation (the works’ idea) which prominent dance scholar, Sally Banes, has stated resembles the approach of conceptual artists Sol LeWitt and Mel Bochner (Banes, 1987, p. 84). LeWitt uses the term ‘conceptual art’ as a way of describing the type of work he engages in, stating that the idea of the work both instigates the work but also drives the work’s form (LeWitt, 1967, p. 80). He suggests that in conceptual art, the artist would design the parameters of the work in relation to the idea, in turn eliminating subjectivity, which is the purpose for using this process. He writes, “When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means that all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes a machine that makes the art” (LeWitt, 1967, p. 80). While there is evidence of conceptual art dating back as early as 1917 with Marcel Duchamp’s *Fountain*, the conceptual art movement mostly developed in the 1960’s (Tate London, 2019), the same period that saw the emergence of post-modern dance, an era which spanned the 1960’s-1980’s. The description above of ‘conceptual art’ aligns with the much of the thinking which surrounded and informed the making of work in this post-modern dance era, a period in which Brown is considered to be a notable influence. Banes notes that it was in fact Yvonne Rainer who first coined the term ‘post-modern dance’ in the 1960’s as a way of describing the work that was coming out of the Judson Church, work that was of an era that followed that of ‘modern dance’¹¹ (Banes, 1987, p. xiii). The term ‘post-modern dance’ was not however, used within literature until the mid-1970’s when professor and editor, Michael Kirby, published an article in *The Drama Review* giving it a stable definition. He asserts,
In the theory of post-modern dance, the choreographer does not apply visual standards to the work. The view is an interior one: movement is not pre-selected for its characteristics but results from certain decisions, goals, plans, schemes, rules, concepts, or problems. Whatever actual movement occurs during the performance is acceptable as long as the limiting and controlling principles are adhered to. (Kirby, 1975, p. 3)

Moreover, Bochner suggests that mathematical thinking in art is not contradictory to the often intuitive art making process, but instead it provides direction and structure to not only the making of the work, but also to the viewing of it too. Bochner says that mathematical thinking in art “forces a shift in consideration from formation [of an idea] as structure to structure as formation [of an idea]” (Bochner, 1997, p. 236), giving the thinking a form rather than portraying it through representation. This way of defining conceptual art with the use of mathematical thinking is illustrative of Brown’s Accumulation (1971): the notion of an accumulation drives the work, with her initial problem of ‘choosing gesture’ apparently not directly represented within it. However, I can see parallels between her original problem of choosing gesture and the structure which she adopted. In questioning whether “rotating a fist is acceptable” (Rosenberg, 2016, p. 108), what if (as a dancer) Brown would have repeated that gesture over and over again, until she was satisfied with its ‘acceptability’? Then, she may have moved onto the next gesture, again repeating it until she decided it was an acceptable choice in gesture, before adding it onto the previous one, repeating this process until all additional gestures, insertions and variations were accumulated forming the final work. In essence, the structure holds the original problem so that the viewer can contemplate the structure of the content (the process of choosing gesture), rather than the content itself (Banes, 1987, p. 258). This idea of the structure being representative of the problem reflects my own rationale behind adopting the use of an accumulation structure as it is illustrative of how I have come to understand practice.
This chapter has examined two systematic approaches to two different problems: Deleuze’s need to define repetition as a concept which is not predicated on sameness and Brown’s problem of choosing gesture. While my own project is not aiming to resolve these problems, both Deleuze’s and Brown’s approaches opened up ways for me to think through and articulate my own ‘problem’ of the relationship between practice and being present. The next chapter will describe my own practice-led systematic approach, making reference to the work of Deleuze and Brown.
CHAPTER 4. HABITUAL AND REPEATABLE STRUCTURES: PRACTICE METHODS

Repetition in practice plays itself out by dint of the first of practising’s criteria, namely settling on a set of structured behaviours able to be repeated (Pont, 2017, p. 40)

As I have proposed in the previous chapter, Deleuze’s first synthesis of habit, the repetition of independent instants, not only provides a rationale for practising inside of a set of structural conditions, but also, due to its foundational characteristic of contraction, facilitates an encounter with ‘being present’. This chapter describes the practices that I undertook throughout this research project: a structured dance improvisation practice with working methods I developed following long term participation in the practice of Olivia Millard, and a choreographic practice based on Trisha Brown’s seminal work Accumulation (1971); and discusses how they have enabled my experiences of what I am calling an elasticised present to be elaborated.

My understanding of practice has arisen through my participation in Millard’s improvisation practice, a weekly studio based dance improvisation practice,
undertaken with a group of dancers (including Millard) which has as its foundation the premise of ‘scores’. Millard describes scores as “verbal propositions, the suggestion of a way to notice; a notion to hold onto in order to enter into a state of willingness not to plan or dance in a certain way” (Millard, 2015, p. 44). I have employed scores similarly as a way of building awareness of my dancing as it unfolds in the present. Over the past five years I have danced in Millard’s weekly improvisation practice which, in my experience, has always had the same three part structure. It begins by dancing simultaneous solos alongside all other members of the group, before moving into an exercise undertaken in pairs or groups of three, where touch aids and supports the dancing that manifests, and finishes with Millard setting up a framework in which we dance and watch in various ways. This idea of structural frameworks reflects scholar and lecturer, Antonia Pont’s first criterion of practising stated in the opening quotation of this chapter. It was this structural perspective on Millard’s practice that showed me how fundamentally repetition frames practice. This way of practising improvisation, where a set of structural constraints is established is characteristic of the post-modern dance era, as I discussed in the previous chapter (Kirby, 1975, p. 3). Choreographer and scholar, Susan Foster, presents this relationship between improvisation and structure as an encounter with the unknown through an engagement with the known (Foster, 2003, p. 4). Foster describes the known as, among many things, the predetermined “overarching structural guidelines”, “a score” or “set of rules” (Foster, 2003, p. 4), and through repeated engagement with these knowns, one is enabled to move beyond what is previously imaginable, and into an encounter with the unknown.

**Practice-Led Research**

In her essay *Philosophising Practice*, Pont writes that “people tend to begin practising because they want to fix their ‘problems’” (Pont, 2017, p. 24), and although I wanted to fix my problem (understand my experiences of noticing the present in this context), I did not begin practising in a particular way in order to do so. Instead, the problem emerged through my practising, and as a result of
continuing to practise in this same way, I was able to interrogate both the context of the practice and my experiences within it in order to answer my research question. This methodological approach to creative arts research is described by Professor Brad Haseman as practice-led research where the research problem is both initiated and answered by means of practice (Haseman, 2006, pp. 98-102). Referencing Haseman, authors of Dancing between Diversity and Consistency: Refining Assessment in Postgraduate Degrees in Dance (2009) define a practice-led methodology as one that is “initiated in practice [and] where problems and questions are formed through the needs of practice, using methods and methodologies familiar to the practitioner” (Phillips, et al., 2009, p. 12). Such was the approach that I undertook throughout this research project: the problem arose while practising and was interrogated by means of this same practising. While it could be argued that this approach constitutes a mix between a “practice-led research” and a “practice-as-research” methodology (Barrett, 2007, p. 3), it was important for me to place emphasis on the practice as the ‘leader’ or agent of the project in order to try to relinquish my active capacity to anticipate the outcome and instead preference the passive and habitual foundations of practising, which allowed me to participate in a state of not knowing. The Creative Industries Faculty at Queensland University of Technology proposes that “practice-led research not only situates practice within the research process, but also leads the process through practice” (Phillips, et al., 2009, p. 12). As I was both the researcher and a participant in the project, I needed to find a way to have an objective perspective on what was coming out of the practice as ‘research findings’, and in approaching my research methodology as practice-led research, I was provided with a means to do so. In handing over attributes of leadership to the conditions (structural frameworks) of both my improvisation and choreographic practices, through practising, I was afforded the opportunity to experience Deleuze’s first synthesis of time, the synthesis of habit – the idea that through repeating, one can passively contract something from the repetition that alters one’s behaviour in the direction of the future. It also allows something to be taking place at the level of the body, with reflective or consciousness-based
processes of meaning-making being provoked by sensation or bodily feelings or events.

**Improvisation Practice**

In order to grasp how the structural conditions of my practising constitute the habitual, I will describe what occurred during our weekly studio sessions and discuss my understandings which arose out of practising. Each week we met in the studio to undertake what became a repeatable four-part structure, proceeding from the introduction of a ‘score’. The scores we used were words, sets of words or phrases that we kept more or less in mind while dancing and for the duration of the practice. The purpose of using the scores was to consider the words in an embodied way and although it was certainly possible to utilise representational or theatrical style as a means of enabling the words to manifest in the dancing which arose, my intention for using the scores was not to elicit a particular kind of dancing, but rather as a mechanism for sustaining one’s curiosity about the body’s relationship to the words, sets of words or phrases that I presented, but always in relation to the present. I have listed all of the scores that were used in this project as an appendix. I came to decide upon the scores for each week’s practice session according to what was sparking my curiosity at the time, often, but not always, in the reading and thinking that I was doing alongside my dancing practices. For example, the first score I used in this research project was ‘repeat, revisit, retry’, which came out of my initial inquiry into how I perceived practising. At the time, however, these words seemed to contradict the fact that I was only just beginning to practise with this group of dancers, most of whom I had never danced with before. Since they were not repeating, revisiting or retrying anything they had done with me before, I felt released from trying to consider and interpret their verbal meanings as relevant to understanding practice. Instead, the words were left to stand and be understood through dancing with them and vice versa. This set the precedent, each time we practised, for how I could disassociate the words from the reading/writing context they came out of. I would then feed this
embodied understanding, my/our dance with the score, back into the reading, writing and thinking I was undertaking alongside my dancing.

After the introduction of the score, we would begin with an exercise that I borrowed from Millard’s practice, which I then adapted to suit the needs of my own practice. We would split into pairs where one dancer, lying down, was touched and moved by her partner. After six minutes, timed by a timer, the lying down person would begin to move while still receiving touch from their partner for a further three minutes. Finally, the timer would indicate that the last few touches were to be given, before leaving the dancer, with partner watching, to dance solo for one further minute. The purpose of using touch and being moved was to transfer and share information (often in relation to the score) from one body to another. However, even though the experience of touching and being touched was a shared one, there was no expectation that the toucher and receiver were understanding this information in the same way, or that a particular kind of dancing would arise through the touch that was received. Instead, this was the initiation of an embodied journey in relation to the score, which was carried out individually, but in the intimate presence and thus also under the influence of the other members of the group. In the beginning, rather than using a timer as the prompt to progress to the next phase of the exercise, I or another member of the group gave a verbal cue even despite also being participants, which mirrors the
approach taken by Millard in her practice. However, at a certain point within the project I came to realise that this approach was imbued with subjectivity, with a level of control shifted from the conditions of the practice and passed to the choices of the participants of the practice. In consideration of the conditions of the practice leading the project, I felt that it was therefore necessary to adapt this exercise. In the way that Millard approaches the verbal cueing, the dual toucher and time keeper uses what anthropologist Edward Hall describes as “personal time” (Hall, 1983, pp. 19-20) as a way of arbitrarily deciding how much time had passed and therefore when the next phase of the exercise should begin. While this approach afforded the dual toucher and time keeper the opportunity not only to notice the body of their partner, perhaps in relation to their own body and the space around them, but also to notice these things in relation to their experience of the passing of time. However, it became apparent to me that it was less about noticing the bodies in the space in relation to time, and more about whether I (or the other time keeper) had given their partner ‘enough time’, since the experience of being touched is generally felt to be a pleasurable one. Moreover, because the responsibility of the time keeping was up to one person, predominantly me, it had in this exercise the effect of placing emphasis on me (or one person) as the ‘leader’ of the practice. While acknowledging that I cannot deny my role as leader, I realised that by using a timer I could transfer the emphasis back to the conditions of the practice leading the project. This had the effect of enabling me to participate more objectively, whether I was touching or being touched, dancing or watching, to notice my body, the other bodies, and the space in relation to my own perceived passing of time, which was held by the timer.

The second section of the practice was named a ‘group dance’: over a period of thirteen minutes, again timed by a timer, we would spontaneously shift between the role of dancer and watcher as we pleased, but according to a rule that at least one person should be dancing and at least one person watching at all times. The idea of a group dance was established on the grounds that, unlike the previous section, this exercise was undertaken together, as a whole group. However, it became apparent to me fairly early on that the intended ‘groupness’ of this
section was not manifesting as the other dancers had, without intending to do so, placed the roles of dancing and watching in a hierarchy, with dancing surpassing that of watching. The way they approached this group dance was that if they were in the role of dancing, they were no longer responsible for the entire group’s adherence to the rule of one person dancing and one person watching at all times, giving themselves licence to shut out their noticing of the other bodies and direct their attention solely to their own body in the space. As such, the role of dancing drove the spontaneous shifts that occurred between dancing and watching. I suspect this was for two reasons. Firstly, in the previous exercise when the dancer lies down to receive touch, they had their eyes closed and would often continue to keep them closed until the end of the exercise. In this instance, it was the responsibility of their watcher to keep them safe, placing importance on the dancer and their noticing of their own body, which can be heightened, we agreed, as a result of having their eyes closed. Secondly, while this section of the practice was named a group dance, it was probably more accurately described as a collection of solos occurring in the space. In an attempt to eliminate the hierarchy which seemed to have been formed between dancing and watching, through my own dancing, I deliberately tried to force spontaneous shifts between the two roles which very rarely occurred. For example, if I was soloing, I would stop dancing and move to the role of watcher, forcing one of the others of the group to start dancing. While this started to eliminate the hierarchy which had been formed, it also had the effect paradoxically of asserting my leadership on the group as it then became apparent that I was solely responsible for inflicting perhaps undesired shifts between dancing and watching. Even though, according to our verbal sharing of experiences following our improvisations, these forced shifts between dancing and watching were at times undesired, they generated a kind of surprise in the other dancers, which instantly shifted their noticing from a narrow, to an expanded sense of what was unfolding in the present. This generation of surprise, or anticipation of being surprised, confirmed to me that while these shifts were sometimes unwanted, they were an important inclusion in the practice. However, rather than actively pursuing these forced shifts between dancing and watching, I again turned to the conditions of the practice.
for the answer. I put in place an additional rule, namely, that it was the responsibility of the entire group (both dancers and watchers) to ensure that the rule of at least one person dancing and watching at all times was adhered to, meaning that if there was only one person dancing and they wanted to shift into the role of a watcher, they could do so, but this would force at least one watcher into the role of dancer – and vice versa. By handing over responsibility to the entire group for the unfolding of the group dance in the present, I again aimed to dissolve my role as leader within the group. For me, at least, this decision had the effect of opening up my noticing to a constant expansion of attention between my own body in relation to the other bodies (who were dancing and watching) and the space, all of the time.

The third section of the practice was borrowed from dancer and dance maker, Rhiannon Newton, who mentored me in a two week residency that I undertook in Sydney in August 2017, through the organisation, DirtyFeet. I will talk more about this residency in chapter five. In this section of the practice, two dancers would begin dancing in the space, while the others watched. After every one minute, again timed by a timer, one dancer would leave and another would enter, enabling each dancer to ‘duet’ with all other dancers of the group. This process was repeated two times before concluding. We called this section ‘rotating duets’, however, the approach that each dancer took as to what it meant to ‘duet’ with another dancer was constantly shifting in the moment of dancing with or alongside of their dancing partner. At times, it felt as though my improvised dancing was unfolding in relation to my partner’s dancing, and at other times, I felt that my improvised dancing had no clear relationship to the other dancer in the space. Nevertheless, my expanded noticing which had come out of the group dance, supported me in each duet to notice how my improvised dancing was sitting alongside of, or was relating directly to my partner’s dancing. This section of the practice was added to what had formerly been a three part structure as, prior to its inclusion, I had felt as though there was a considerable shift between dancing and watching in the group dance and in the final section of the practice, a series of solos. In the group dance, the weight of being watched seemed to be
less significant than when soloing, as more often than not there were multiple dancers in the space and knowing whether or not you were being intently watched was less clear.

The final section of the practice was, as mentioned above, a series of solos. It was an opportunity for each dancer in the practice to dance for three minutes as a soloist, watched by all other members of the group. The purpose of these solos was primarily to give each dancer time to consolidate the dancing experiences as these had arisen throughout the practice, but it was also a pivotal point where the number of watchers was guaranteed to be greater than that of dancers. It was here that the weight of being watched had a significant impact on my noticing of my dancing in the present, due to the fact that I had multiple people who were attentively watching my dancing. I almost always experienced a very short period of time where I had to overcome the weight of being watched so intently, after which I found that I was able to experience my body in the space and journey with my noticing with the help of being watched. Over the duration of the practice, the arrangement of dancers to watchers shifted in a very deliberate manner, but never one without the other. In the beginning, there was one dancer and one watcher, which established a relationship between the role of dancer and watcher, one that was present in various ways for the entirety of the practice as a collective partnership of mutual support in dancing, watching and being seen. This relationship between dancer and watcher was then taken through each section of the practice and, as I experienced it, gradually increasing the weight of being watched on the dancer.

The final section of the practice could be considered as the ‘dancing consolidator’, nevertheless at the end of each section of the practice there was another opportunity for each dancer to consolidate or ‘relive’ experiences of dancing and watching through a verbal retelling to the rest of the group. There were no explicit expectations of these retellings of the experience, nor was it a requirement to say anything at all. The dancer or watcher would just try to convey what it was they experienced. At first, I considered these discussions to be a sharing of our
experiences through spoken word, however, over the course of this project, I came to understand that these discussions give rise to another form of repetition inherent in my practising. They were a repetition of the experience of dancing or watching, manifested in a linguistic form. The recapturing of these experiences and articulating them through language built upon the experiential understanding of the present (Stern, 2004, p. 9): knowing that these verbal retellings of our experiences are going to occur, brings us into a heightened state of noticing. It was as if knowing that I would discuss my experiences forced me to actively store my present or many presents into memory in order to articulate them in words.

Over the duration of this four-part structured practice, I was led into a heightened state of noticing as a result of dancing, watching, utilising scores, the implementation of a timer and verbal retellings of our experiences throughout the practice, all constituting a set of conditions, which I have discussed above. Even though the scores that we used, the dancing that manifested, the way in which we watched and the discussions which transpired varied and changed from week to week, the way we practised with these conditions remained the same, forming our ‘habitual’.
I perceived that the conditions of my improvisation practice constituted a greater contractile capacity, and I was curious to discover whether this was unique to this particular structured dance improvisation practice, or whether this greater contractile capacity could be experienced in other dance practices, for example a set or learned movement practice. At this stage, alongside my weekly improvisation practice, I had been working in the studio by myself, learning Trisha Brown’s *Accumulation* (1971) from her Early Works DVD (Brown, 2004) as a way of examining the notion of an accumulation in relation to my understanding of practice and the role of repetition. During that time, I encountered something which I had not anticipated, an appreciation of Brown’s commitment to ‘being present’ inside of this complex movement structure she had set up for herself. It was here that I began to see another parallel between Brown’s *Accumulation* (1971) and my weekly dance improvisation practice, this time in relation to one’s experience of the present while dancing. When I first watched this work, my initial perception was that the dance was quite simple, both in movement content but also due to its structure - a perspective of the work which it seems is not uncommon. Former dance critic and cultural news reporter for *The New York Times*, Anna Kisselgoff, likened Brown’s accumulation structure to that of “a partridge in a pair tree” (Kisselgoff, 1971). However, while the structure could be viewed as ‘simple’, her use of repetition intensifies the level of attention required to fulfil the task. Brown is quoted saying, “Many people say that my dances are easy and that a basic accountant could do them … actually my dances are very structured. They are planned carefully and require immense concentration” (Brown in Rosenberg, 2016, p. 113). In learning this dance, I found that the intricacies within each movement, the opposition of movement rhythm to the rhythm of the sound, as well as the ‘relentless’ repetition, all created a difficult task. I found that the only way to accomplish this task was to navigate my way through each movement, one at a time, as it arose in the present: to not get caught up in what was coming up next. This to me became the epitome of ‘being present’. In coming to understand this about the work, I became interested in establishing a second practice, a set movement practice, based on the structural constraints which Brown had generated for herself, and in doing so I created a
continuum in terms of a dancing practice between the spontaneous (improvised) and the set or learned (choreographic).

**Choreographic Practice**

As a group, we began this weekly choreographic practice in August 2018, as a second practice which upheld my understandings of what constituted a practice and also what it meant to ‘be present’. It was undertaken concurrently with our weekly improvisation practice and was divided into two phases: the first phase involved choreographing and setting the movement material inside of Brown’s structure; and the second phase consisted of the practising of this material. We began by learning the gestures of *Accumulation (1971)* from Brown’s Early Works DVD (Brown, 2004), which formed the first thirteen movements of our thirty-nine movement accumulation. I gave each gesture a directive: add movement, vary a movement or add a body part. The directives were ordered as follows:

1. Add two movements
2. Vary a movement
3. Add two movements
4. Insert a body part
5. Vary a movement
6. Insert a body part
7. Add two movements
8. Add two movements
9. Add two movements
10. Add two movements
11. Insert a body part
12. Insert a body part
13. Insert a body part

I decided on these directives by determining whether the gesture was an addition, an insertion or a variation on the previous gesture. For example, the first movement is a rotation of the forearms constituting an addition (add movement), then the second movement does not increase the length of the first gesture, instead the right arm is lifted to chest height and extended forward to half of its full extension when the forearms are rotated inwards, insinuating a variation on the previous gesture. Additionally, movement number six, for example, does not
extend the length of the current phrase, nor does it change the previous five gestures. However, it does have the insertion of the rotation of the head to the right on top of the original third gesture.

This was the score for setting the movement according to each directive. Like the accumulation structure, it removed some of the arbitrary decisions inherent in conventional dance-making (Rosenberg, 2016, pp. 108-109). Brown is quoted saying:

For me to make a movement, to make a dance, to choose a gesture: I have to have reason to do it. It’s just as simple as that. I can't get up and fake extravagant movement. I can't do something that has no logic to it. That’s just who I am. The Accumulations have a very direct, simple, logical structure. That frees me to go ahead and do what I want within that (Brown in Robertson, 1974).

We had not only a predetermined structure (an accumulation) but we also had an instruction (directive) which while narrowing the choices available to us when deciding on each movement, also freed us from having to justify our selection beyond that the movements fulfilled the instruction. When I came into the studio with the other dancers, I was not entirely sure how we would approach choreographing and setting the movement material outside of using the structure and directives described above. Nevertheless, I followed the example of what I had come to understand about the conditions of my improvisation practice, thus placing confidence in the conditions of this choreographic practice, the structure and the directives, which led us as a group, to collectively select the movements that formed our final accumulation. Outside of the structure and directives, the movements that materialised were chosen primarily as a result of choices in relation to level, direction, duration etc. In saying that, the movement also seemed to resemble the kind of dancing that often manifested in our improvisation practice, which in relation to Brown’s movements, appeared to be more full bodied and expansive where hers were more gestural.
Once we had finalised the thirty-nine movements which made up our accumulation structure, we moved into the second phase of this choreographic practice where, each week we practised the structure from start to finish. Even though the first phase, the choreographing of our accumulation, was significant in realising the practice’s structure and how that played a role in understanding the notion of being present (which will be discussed further in chapter six), the practice, in the way that I have come to understand the term, really only began once we had progressed into this second phase. It was the practising (repeating) of our choreographed dance which was in fact the practice. Our choreographed dance involved five repetitions of each of thirty-nine movements - the first thirteen of which were Brown’s gestures and the remaining twenty-six movements constituted two repetitions of Brown’s structure using the directives to choreograph our own movements. Executing this choreographed dance from start to finish took us approximately one hour.

To begin with, when we practised our choreographed dance, there were only two thoughts on my mind: ‘what repetition are we up to?’ and, ‘what comes next?’ Solving these two questions with each new addition, insertion or variation was a constant concern which I had to navigate alongside the other dancers. At times I
followed whoever happened to be in front spatially, at other times I, or another dancer, would verbally ask one or both of the aforementioned questions out aloud, and at other times one dancer would momentarily leave the ‘practising’ in order to confirm (check our written order) what movement was coming up next. In these early stages of practising, there were numerous discussions regarding our anticipated navigation of this practice and whether or not we would manage to move beyond a preoccupation with these structural and memory concerns.

A few weeks prior to the examination performance, one of my supervisors came to watch us in the studio, and it was on this particular occasion that I seemed to let go of these preoccupations, with the result that my noticing of the present while dancing our choreographed dance began to resemble the way in which I noticed the present while improvising. Reflecting on my experiences of noticing throughout this practise, I can see that I moved through three stages of noticing my body in relation to the other bodies and the space, in the present. Firstly I encountered a surge of adrenaline that left me with almost uncontrollable tremors in my hands affecting my ability to perform Brown’s gestures, which involve primarily that of the hands and the arms. This initial stage of noticing was narrowly focussed on the experience of these uncontrollable tremors, shutting out my ability to notice my lower body, the space, what I was seeing, or even notice my supervisor watching us. However, once we had reached the beginnings of our own movements, I began to settle into the movement material and this formed the second stage of my noticing, the stage which I would consider as the most significant. Here I was able to cultivate a state to notice my body in its surroundings, and each time we practised our dance after this, I found more and more of this space to notice. It was here that I started to make the correlation between the way that I notice the present while improvising and the way that I noticed it while undertaking this choreographed dance: namely, an opening up or expanding of time, which in Deleuzian terms, elicits a noticing of the multiple layers of time that make up the present, a present which is imbued with the past and the future in both their passive and active capacities. In the conversation I had with Trisha Brown Company dancer, Jamie Scott, about her learning Accumulation
from another Trisha Brown Company dancer, Tamara Riewe, Scott recalled this process as being less about the structural component of the work, with more emphasis being placed on the detail of each movement. She described this detail as specific bodily specificities and values which were given to her to attempt while undertaking the movement. Some examples of these bodily cues were: not accenting the rotations in the forearms or in the turn of the head and to attempt to completely let go of the right arm when it drops down in front of the body. It was in this second stage that I remembered this conversation with Scott, and realised that I had the time to try to attempt these bodily cues, as well as decide upon my own cues for the movements we had choreographed as a group (Scott, 2018). For example, in the small fall to the side, I would attempt to ‘let go’ in the front of my left ankle, so that I could set myself up to experience a fall, before I would catch myself on my right foot. In addition to this, it had become apparent from the outset of practising that we had choreographed an exhausting dance, which at times felt almost too laborious to complete. On this occasion, I noticed after we had gone past the point where I would usually start to tire that I was not yet tired. I said to myself ‘maybe I am fitter than I thought’ and then continued dancing with my expanded sense of noticing. Perhaps it was because I was considering my own fatigue that I then started to notice that as one dancer was getting tired, she began to cut the circle of the left arm off at the top, and drop the arm straight down in front of her rather than taking the arm out to the side and finishing the circle. This drew my noticing back to my own body, to notice what values and specificities diminished when I started to fatigue. I noticed when my supervisor checked her watch and started worry that our dance was too monotonous and uninteresting to watch which led me to consider the difference between my supervisor watching us and the way we watch each other in our weekly improvisation practice. Then, without any forewarning, my body was met with fatigue. I did not know whether I had it in me to finish it, and this final laborious push to the end made up the third stage of noticing. My only way to get through the addition of the final five movements was by continuing to attempt the bodily tasks I had set myself and to notice how the other dancers were managing their own levels of fatigue. It was at this time when I realised that I was
no longer solely concerned with what repetition I was up to, or what movement came next, but instead it was as if the active capacities of Deleuze’s first synthesis of habit had been made available to me. I had the capacity to recall my memories, to anticipate what movement came next, and to recognise both what repetition I was up to as well as my body in its surroundings.

This chapter has placed practice at the forefront of my practice-led methodology, and in doing so, has not only examined the structural conditions which define the practice, but it also elucidated my experiences of practising and how, over time, I came to understand the function of those structural conditions in relation to my noticing of the present. Having discussed the theoretical background: Deleuze’s three syntheses of time and Brown’s *Accumulation (1971)*, and explicated the practice methods which were undertaken as part of this research project, I will now move on to examine the notion of repetition in more detail.
CHAPTER 5. REPETITION VERSUS REPLICATION

*Repetition changes nothing in the object repeated, but does change something in the mind which contemplates it* (Deleuze, [1968] 1994, p. 70)

The relationship between an engagement in practice and an encounter with being present sits at the heart of this research project. The previous chapter established repetition as a criterion of practice by means of assigning agency to the structural conditions of my practices: the combination of the dancing, watching, utilisation of scores, implementation of a timer, and verbal retellings of our dancing and watching experiences in my improvisation practice, and the accumulation structure and directives in my choreographic practice. In relation to the opening quotation of this chapter, I consider these structural conditions to be the object of my practice, the somewhat stable frame that gives my practice visibility and tangibility and in turn, enables it to be identified as something in particular that can be repeated¹. Deleuze’s first and second syntheses of time situate repetition at the core of practice with the first synthesis of habit, denoting the repetition of independent instants, providing a rationale for practising inside of a set of structural conditions that are repeatable. The second synthesis of memory, the repetition of the entirety of one’s past in its totality, grants practice the capacity through which one can accumulate the knowledge and understanding that enables the practitioner to develop and grow their practices and the work which manifests as a result of it - thus, giving repetition in practice a sense of dynamism, rather than stagnation. This chapter examines repetition, through the lens of our practising, as a concept which is entangled in difference. Related to the discussion of repetition is the notion of being present which I will define and explore in the next chapter.

In his introduction to *Difference and Repetition (1968)*, Deleuze provides us with the paradoxical claim, “to repeat is to behave in a certain manner, but in relation to something unique or singular which has no equal or equivalent” (Deleuze, [1968] 1994, p. 1). This claim sets in motion a consideration of repetition as less
about sameness, and more in relation to what scholars, Marie Bardet and Isabelle Ginot, describe as “experiencing multiple variations through repetition” (Bardet & Ginot, 2012). Moreover, Deleuze claims that “it is rather a question of knowing what it means to ‘produce movement’, to repeat or to obtain repetition” (Deleuze, [1968] 1994, p. 12), which Antonia Pont points out is a linking of repetition with movement rather than with its more recognisable counterparts, sameness or ‘stuckness’ (Pont, 2017, p. 25). While these statements were initially intriguing for me in my inquiry into the role that repetition played in defining an engagement in practice, I did not fully understand what Deleuze was suggesting until over halfway through this research project, when I questioned through moving (dancing) the difference between repetition and replication. Before I discuss my emerging understanding, I will first describe my initial (unknowing) encounter with the difference between repetition and replication.

In August 2017, I had a two-week residency at Ready Made Studio in Sydney through an organisation called Dirty Feet. I worked with six other dancers (one of whom was a dancer in this Master’s research project) with the guidance of a mentor, Rhiannon Newton. We began by undertaking the three-part studio-based improvisation practice, described in the previous chapter, with the introduction of a new score each day. This was the basis of exploration throughout the
residency through which various structural frameworks were experimented with and to be performed for the invited audience on the final evening, one being the rotating duets that were subsequently inserted into my ongoing improvisation practice. In the decision-making process, I was faced with a problem which I had not anticipated, nor had any idea how to fix. Rather than experiencing the infinite variations (or possibilities) that could arise while dancing, each time we practised (repeated) a structure, the dancers were, instead, endeavouring to replicate what had arisen previously. The first time we tried each structure, I was excited by what arose, it seemed to me that the structural frameworks enabled each dancer to notice their bodies in relation to the other bodies and the space, and to be in a state of play with their dancing.

Artist and theorist, Erin Manning, and philosopher, Brian Massumi, have proposed the idea of ‘enabling constraints’ as a tool to be utilised within improvised performance. These constraints could be anything that is put in place to enable improvised dancing to materialise, for example, the structural frameworks that were decided upon for my Dirty Feet residency, or even, the structural conditions of my practices for this research project. Manning and Massumi state, “an enabling constraint is positive in its dynamic effect, even though it may be limiting in its form/force narrowly considered” (Manning & Massumi, 2014, p. 93).
Manning and Massumi developed the idea of the ‘enabling constraint’ in response to their perception that improvised performance interactions that claim no constraints often do not produce valuable effects for those who are not directly involved, such as, the audience (Manning & Massumi, 2014, pp. 93-94). Although my concern when dancing is primarily for those directly involved, it was helpful for me to think about the structural frameworks and conditions in my improvisation practice as both constraining and enabling: constraining in that I was inhibiting freedom and choice, which are usually said to elicit spontaneity, authenticity and the new, yet enabling as it yielded positive outcomes of noticing the present.

In the instance of my Dirty Feet residency I could not understand why with the practising (repeating) of these structural frameworks (enabling constraints), the dancers seemed to lose their sense of noticing. In the interest of ensuring that the dancers found a heightened state of noticing of the present for the final showing, I found a temporary solution through the notion of enabling constraints so that, with each time we practised, I layered an additional constraint on top of what was already being employed, which cultivated a generative space where the dancers were enabled to continue to notice the present while dancing, rather than aiming to replicate their previous experiences.

In July 2018, in one of our weekly improvisation practices, I came to fully realise what I had been confronted with in Sydney during my Dirty Feet residency: namely an encounter with the dancers’ desire to replicate the improvised dancing which manifested, rather than a repetition of working within the enabling constraints which were put in place. It was the score that I introduced which helped me to realise this. In this particular improvisation session, we used a score which was a set of words that I had been contemplating in relation to how I was perceiving practising, as part of my research project. These words were; repeat, revisit, retry, return to, retrace, accumulation, collection, replicate, consciousness, and noticing. In this practice, many of these words as scores were being revisited, some of them I have used in examples earlier in my exegesis, and all of them were
introduced alongside a list of definitions relating to each word (see Appendix – 24.07.2018). When setting the score for this practice session, I had not predetermined how I was going to use the score within my dancing, however, while being touched by my partner I started to scrutinise how I perceived the difference between repetition and replication. This came up for me because I had been touched by this partner many times before, but for some reason on that day the touch felt more familiar than it had on other occasions, primarily through particular touches that she gave me. She started out by holding my arms up towards the ceiling at about chest height, and then very slowly and gently she lowered my arms out perpendicular to the sides of my body, until they finally hit the ground. This, and other touches which occurred afterwards, felt as though they were being repeated from previous practice sessions in which we had been partners. This got me thinking about the definitions of repetition and replicate. Had my partner just repeated this particular movement in my body? Or had it been replicated so that I experienced exactly the same sensations despite the two experiences being months apart.

Tate London defines replica as “a copy of a work of art that is virtually indistinguishable from the original” (Tate London, 2019). When I began dancing, I considered the dancing that arose to be my aim of replicating the dancing which had arisen previously when my partner had given me these same touches, but it was impossible. While I perceived it to have evoked similar bodily sensations, and perhaps even similar shapes in my body, the original and the ‘copy’ or ‘replica’ were absolutely distinguishable. The sensation of having my partner lower my arms in the way that she did evoked a particular tone in my arms which was then carried through to the dancing which followed on the first occasion, it felt as if my arms were being carried through the space with a denseness in the underside of my arms and a sensation of floating through the top side. However, the second time I received this same bodily sensation from my partner’s touch, I could not seem to find the opposing tone through the underside and top side of my arms, instead, the entirety of my arms felt as if they were floating through the space. To state it clearly, the act of improvising (“to compose extemporaneously, on the
spur of the moment” (Foster, 2003, p. 4)) denies us the possibility of ‘replicating’ the original improvisation. Thus, replication is unquestionably impossible in improvised dance, but does this also exclude repetition?

Pont writes that, “the mode of practice is the container within which repetition of all kinds, and at various registers, will be set going” (Pont, 2017, p. 37). I have recognised repetition within my improvisation practice in numerous ways, the first being the repetition of the structural conditions of my practising, which have been discussed at length in the previous chapter. The scores that we used were also sometimes repeated (see appendix). In addition to this, even though we were improvising, the movement forms that materialised in our improvised dancing were without a doubt repeated, both in deliberate and unconscious ways. Often while improvising, I would find myself deciding to intentionally repeat a movement which had just arisen in order to know more about it. For example, in April 2018, I was using the score ‘the shapeliness of a fall / a catch’ (see Appendix – 17.04.2018) in the final section of the practice, and was experimenting with what a fall and a catch might look like. I started standing upright and while keeping my whole body in a vertical alignment, started to tip my head forward until my head reached a point far enough past my toes that I was taken off balance (into a fall) before having to quickly pull my feet back in underneath me in order to catch myself. I repeated this movement over and over again, each time noticing and understanding something that I had not understood the previous times: how far forward my head needed to go in order to send me off balance; the relaxation of the muscles in the front of the ankle; the length of my steps in the catching action; and my desire to contract the muscles in the front of my hips as I was reaching the point just before I would fall, causing me to leave my pelvis behind in an attempt to stay on balance for longer.

Aside from this kind of deliberate and intentional encounter with repetition of movement, there was certainly unintentional repetition of movement which perhaps is only recognised as I reflect upon the kind of dancing that manifested throughout our practising. During this project, I came to notice that my dancing in
our improvisation practice sessions was unlike my dancing which arose in other contexts where I improvised\textsuperscript{2}. Apart from noticing that the pace of my dancing was consistently slower than in other contexts, I also found myself engaging much more in floor work. Some particular movements which arose frequently were, crawling on all fours; while on all fours lowering down onto one or both elbows, reclining as if I was sun baking on the beach; placing weight onto my right forearm in order to come to standing via my left leg; and ‘commando’ crawling. In terms of the other dancers, I cannot determine whether there were differences between the dancing that occurred inside of our practising and that of other contexts, however, I can say that over time I started to recognise various movements that would repeatedly arise in each dancer. These individual movements which arose in each of us, could be perceived as our dancing habits, habit in the sense of idiosyncratic movements that have been acquired over the time of our practising and are almost automatic in their usage\textsuperscript{3}. In the field of dance where there is a perception that the utilisation of improvisation enables a manifestation of the ‘new’, the embracing of habits is perhaps unfavourable as they are, as Pont describes, “sticky and hard to lose” (Pont, 2018). However, in our practising, we came to find that by welcoming habit we were granted an encounter with difference and the new.

After the first section of an improvisation practice in October 2018, one dancer described her experience of touching her partner which was aided with the score ‘the revisiting of your habits’ (see appendix – 10.10.2018). She revealed that her usual tendency when being a toucher, was to predetermine the kind of touch she would give to her partner, which she deemed as ‘new’ or ‘different’ to what she had given before. Except, in the actual giving of the touch, she felt that she often did not succeed as she was almost always met with the same or the similar. However, on this occasion, she let go of her desire to find the new, and indulged in what she felt were her habits, only to find that, over time, new or unfamiliar kinds of touches arose.
Although the term improvisation perhaps implies a lack of repetition, it is clear to me that repetition, at various levels (structural and movement), was inherent in our practising of improvisation. However, in reference to a work by dancer and choreographer, Jonathan Burrows, and theatre director, Jan Ritsema, called *Weak Dance Strong Questions (WDSQ) (2001)*, Cvejic suggests that using improvisation obviates the need to repeat movement, thus implying that repetition does not exist within improvisation. She writes, “improvisation was given as a necessary condition of the choice of their collaboration, since the ‘non dancer’ [Ritsema] wasn’t capable of repeating the same movement; hence improvisation here stands for no more than working with non-set movement” (Cvejic, 2015, p. 142). Here, Cvejic raises an important question, is replication or repetition the aim of choreographed (set movement) dance?

To elucidate this, I will turn to Cvejic’s discussion of the term ‘repetition’ from a linguistic point of view, and its relationship to dance and apply this to the work which we undertook using Trisha Brown’s *Accumulation (1971)*. Cvejic states that repetition is the French word for rehearsal (Cvejic, 2015, p. 156), a word that is commonly used in the field of dance, and implies the work that is often done in preparation for a performance, or the culmination of a project. Cvejic proposes that the repeating, or rehearsal, of movement and/or movement practice is perhaps the main method of a dance coming into existence, and while words and
image provide a way to understand or translate the movement on an intellectual level, imitating/aiming to replicate or repeat the movement is the only way to grasp it intrinsically (Cvejic, 2015, p. 156). I learnt Trisha Brown’s Accumulation (1971) from her Early Works DVD (Brown, 2004) with the intention of replicating the movement which was based on my perception of the shapes that Brown was creating, the movement pathways and sequences she constructed, and the tone and dynamic in her body. Using this observation, I embodied each of the thirteen gestures through a process of repetition and logged them into my bodily memory, before using these gestures as the beginning of our choreographed dance, and the basis upon which the remaining twenty-six movements were created. After we had determined the thirty-nine gestures making up our accumulation, we began practising our choreographed dance. In this instance, the movements were set (choreographed) and we were practising these movements in an established order in preparation for the examination performance. Cvejic defines rehearsal in the following way:

The conventional notion of rehearsal involves repetitions as trials in striving to reach an ideal form that the performance is supposed to take. Thus, rehearsal installs the regime of representation, in the repetitions that re-present the same work over and over again towards its perfection (Cvejic, 2015, p. 157).

To this extent, it could be understood that we were in fact, rehearsing our dance, however, although rehearsing involves repetition we were not aiming to reproduce the work repeatedly nor was there the aim of perfection. In fact, when I established the parameters upon which we would merge my two practices together (one improvisational, one choreographic), I recognised the difficulty I was imposing on us as a group. In discussion of these parameters with my supervisors, I said that I was very aware that I was likely ‘setting us up to fail’ but, the point of our practising was not about success or failure, instead, only about our noticings of our experiences – being present. In addition to this, Cvejic’s definition of rehearsing implies that the use of repetition is a striving for the
possibility of replication of performance, whereby, each iteration of performance would be the same. Based on this, I would propose that the term practising is a better word to describe the kind of repetition that we engaged in, and allows us to direct our noticing on the present rather than on an ideal form that can be replicated⁴.

In spite of this, after we had practised our accumulation a number of times, I asked one of my supervisors to come into the studio to watch and give feedback to us, with the aim of ensuring that each movement was performed by all of us in the same way. At the time, I did not question whether this was a necessary exercise, I just accepted it was the thing that you do in the lead up to a performance where there are set movements in a fixed order. However, upon reflection, I have realised that the purpose of our practising was not to dance in a particular way, or to dance in the same way as each other, instead, it was to undertake each of the thirty-nine movements in the present. If I return briefly to my original encounter with repeating and replicating in my Dirty Feet residency, it becomes clear to me what was underneath the problem I was faced with. I had, at the time, not understood that as dancers we are trained to repeat and rehearse movements with the aim of replication in mind, and often we are seeking validation from an outside eye – whether it be from the choreographer/director or the audience. In the case of this residency, my anticipation for what arose within each initial undertaking of a structure, gave the dancers validation in their dancing, and in turn pushed them to try to re-present it the next time we attempted the structure.
Deleuze introduces the idea that repetition can be observed in two ways, there is bare repetition, denoting repetition of the same, and there is internal repetition, which is repetition with difference. He says, “the interior of repetition is always affected by an order of difference: it is only to the extent that something is linked to a repetition of an order other than its own that the repetition appears external and bare, and the thing itself subject to the categories of generality” (Deleuze, [1968] 1994, p. 25): that is if we look inside repetition we find that “difference inhabits repetition” (Deleuze, [1968] 1994, p. 76), meaning it is more than a matter of the same thing occurring over and over again. Instead, “repetition for itself” is an active force which gives rise to variation (Parr, 2005, p. 225). Over the time of this project, I have come to recognise the multiple ways that repetition has made itself known. There was bare repetition in the fact that (mostly) the same four dancers, met at the same dance studio, at the same time, every week for the duration of this project, to undertake the same four part, structured improvisation practice. This was then taken one step further with the introduction of our choreographic practice, insofar as we were also, at that point, undertaking the same movements every week as well. However, in consideration of the opening quotation of this chapter, “repetition changes nothing in the object repeated, but does change something in the mind which contemplates it” (Deleuze, [1968] 1994, p. 70) and a reflection on the knowledge that came out of
the sameness of our practising, I am able to articulate the changes that occurred in the way practising functioned, many of which have been discussed in the previous chapters, and will be elaborated on, in relation to being present, in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 6.
IMPROVISATION, PRACTISING & BEING PRESENT

Throughout each chapter of this exegesis I have recounted my experiences of dancing in the present and, collectively, these have established the foundation on which I am defining the term "being present". The preceding chapters have grounded being present in an expanded noticing of the layers of time with which the present is imbued, through the lens of Deleuze, and built upon the engagement in practice, again with the help of Deleuze and also Brown, Millard and Pont. The purpose of this chapter is to explicate the concept of being present as I have come to understand it through reading, writing and practising where, along the way, I encountered tensions between the reading that I have been doing and my experiences of dancing. These tensions involved the apparently inherent or definitional presentness of improvisation and a differentiation between the terms presence and being present.

The Taken for Grantedness of Improvisation

Bojana Cvejic proposes that there are three ways in which improvisation is utilised in dance: the first is in performance, where the choreographing and performing of the dance occur simultaneously in front of an audience, the second is when one improvises as a tool for generating movement material, which can then be set and repeated, and the third is that which is taught in institutions as part of contemporary dance training (Cvejic, 2015, p. 131). The second and third methods were not used in this project and therefore will not be discussed here. The first approach to improvisation, as described by Cvejic, is useful in my discussion of the inherent or definitional presentness of improvisation which arose throughout my project in relation to the concept of being present.

Cvejic’s description of the first approach to improvisation as that which is used in the mode of performance, implies a heightened sense of presentness beyond the fact that, by definition, improvisation is something which emerges in the present,
since not only are the dancers experiencing the fleeting nature of the material that is arising in the present, but this is also being experienced by a watching audience. In an interview, improviser, Julyen Hamilton, describes improvisation in performance as a creative moment which is being realised in the presence of an audience and leaving no opportunity for it to be altered (Hamilton in Benoit, 1997, p. 199). He says, “The instant decision is left to stand for what it is... Improvisation is performance without a safety net and this is a particular intensity which is being shared with the public” (Hamilton in Benoit, 1997, p. 199). I experienced this heightened sense of presentness in this project in two ways: the first, and most obvious, was in the performing of *In and out of time*, when we left the set movement material of our accumulation, and moved into improvised dancing with the aid of a score, for a set period of time held by a timer. The second was a more indirect adoption, yet it existed every week in our practising through the structural condition of watching and being watched. Implicit in Hamilton’s description of improvisation in performance is the notion that the significance of a performer’s spontaneous decisions is amplified through sharing these decision-making experiences in the same ‘temporal space’ as an audience (watcher). As stated in my discussion of my improvisation practice’s conditions in chapter four, although the arrangement of dancers to watchers shifted over the duration of the practice, there was in fact, never one without the other, and therefore, we were always afforded the opportunity to experience this heightened sense of presentness due to what resembled performance conditions in our practising.

From the outset of this project, I understood that when I was improvising, both in the studio and in performance, I could be in a complete state of presentness – I was able to find the state of ‘Lucy’, and while this is hardly surprising based on the above discussion of the inherent presentness in improvisation, it set in motion this exploration of the concept and meanings of being present. Initially, I claimed that, when improvising, I was never searching for anything in particular, and instead, I was just allowing everything that arose to be available and noticed through dancing. This attitude towards improvisation felt as if it was heavily grounded in the present as a dimension of time, and seemed to reflect my interpretation and
acknowledgment of Deleuze’s proposition that one cannot escape the present, that we are always grounded in the now (Deleuze, [1968] 1994, p. 77). This, coupled with the fact that improvisation is, by definition, “that which is composed extemporaneously, on the spur of the moment” (Foster, 2003, p. 3), led me to claim that my improvisation practice was by default, like Kent De Spain’s, a practice of “being present” (De Spain, 2003, p. 27), without actually questioning the premise that I had built this statement upon. I thought the solution to explicating the concept of being present was located specifically in the nature and significance of improvisation, rather than, as I have come to understand over the course of this project, in an engagement in practice.

It was Deleuze’s first synthesis of habit (the repetition of independent instants) that not only gave me a lens to view practice as something that requires a set of structural conditions which can then be repeated, but it also established the foundation to an expanded noticing of the layers of time with which the present is imbued. I have come to understand that through my repeated engagement with, and examination of the set of structural conditions of my practice (which I discussed in chapter four), I cultivated a state which had a greater contractile capacity than in other circumstances. In turn, this state invited the second passive synthesis of memory (the repetition of the entirety of one’s past in its totality) into
the present to be experienced and noticed, in varying degrees of relaxation and contraction. It was only then that the third synthesis, the empty form of time with unknown contents, yet infinite possibilities, was enlivened in the present. My experience of these multiple times, an ability to notice my living present layered with the possibility of my past to be either passively or actively contracted and embedded into my present, along with an anticipation of what my future might entail as well as the opportunity to be taken by surprise, produces a verticality in my temporal experiences of noticing. Deleuze’s three syntheses of time have provided me with this language to further articulate the concept of being present, in addition to which, just as I came to understand that repetition is a criterion of practice, I would propose that noticing is a criterion of being present.

Initially my experience of being present, a noticing of an elasticised present, was evoked through the state of ‘Lucy’, which only ever arose while improvising. As such, I was led to believe that the experience of being present was confined to the practising of improvisation. However, through the examination of what constitutes a practice, I began to question whether my experiences of being present had less to do with improvisation as a mode of practice, and more to do with the structural conditions which govern the practice. With this in mind, alongside my improvisation practice, I introduced a choreographic practice based on Trisha Brown’s Accumulation (1971), which had as its conditions a repeatable structure and ‘directives’ which were used to choreograph the movements, as described in chapter four. While it was not immediately perceivable, in undertaking these two practices concurrently, it became apparent that the way in which I noticed the present in my improvisation practice was similar to that of the choreographic practice. At first I thought that knowing the movements to come would limit me to an anticipated present, and obstruct my capacity to be taken by surprise, however, this was not the case. As I mentioned in chapter four, I found that the only way to accomplish the undertaking of dancing the accumulation was to attend to each movement in the present, one at a time, not allowing myself to get caught up in the anticipation of the movements to come.
Differentiating Presence and Being Present

In current scholarship in the field of dance there is an ambiguous relationship between the notion of being present and presence, where practitioners and scholars tend to conflate the two terms without necessarily clarifying what is meant by either. Often, it is suggested that in order to cultivate presence one must attend to and commit to the present moment (De Spain, 2003, p. 27; Kaylan, 1991, p. 49; Louppe, 2010, p. 208), however, in my experience presence is not necessarily a by-product of being temporally in the present, and therefore, should be distinguished as a separate term. In her article, *Performance Act: The Presence of the Performer*, scholar, Mine Kaylan, adopts the common understanding of the term presence within the fields of theatre and performance art, which she states is a “particular quality of attention that the actor or performer invites from her/his audience” (Kaylan, 1991, p. 48). This accepted understanding suggests that presence is something that relies on the observed experience of an outside audience or watcher to make real the existence of presence, implicating it in the concept of charisma. Elinor Fuchs, proposes that one component of ‘theatrical presence’ is “the circle of heightened awareness flowing from actor to spectator and back” (Fuchs, 1985, p. 163), setting up a cyclical process where the performer and audience are continually affecting and arousing each other’s state of awareness. In reading both Kaylan’s and Fuchs’ interpretation of presence, I questioned whether the condition of watching and being watched while dancing in my improvisation practice could be perceived as entailing ‘presence’?

As part of the group dance in an improvisation practice in April 2018, I was using the score ‘the shape of my bony body and the in betweens’ (see appendix – 17.04.2018), I was sitting on my knees, and went to move through all fours before rolling onto the ground, however, I never quite rolled onto the ground as I paused on all fours, in what I had decided was my ‘in between’ movement. For the next couple of minutes, I intricately explored the shapes that my bony body could create in this position, most of which were subtle shifts occurring as a result of aiming to move each singular vertebra in my spine. All the while I was very aware that the dancers who were in the role of watchers were (most likely) watching me,
and even though I felt somewhat exposed as I was not producing much movement, I also felt very supported by being watched in what I perceived to be a non-judgemental way, to spend time exploring and experiencing these shapes, a noticing of, and being in the present. I acknowledge that my experience of being present was often shared with a watcher in the same ‘temporal space’, whether it was with another dancer with whom I was practising or the audience in the performing of *In and out of time*, however, my experience was different to that of presence, it was caught up purely in a ‘temporal noticing’. Noticing, as I have come to understand it, incorporates an expanded sense of the vertical layering of the three dimensions of time, all coexisting in the present.

After I had observed the similarities in my noticing between my two practices, one improvisational and the other choreographic, I speculated whether these two practices could coexist as one. I was curious to know whether I could maintain this ‘temporal noticing’ of the present, while staying true to the combined structural constraints that I put in place. This aim formed the basis of the performance of *In and out of time*, from which I have described some of my experiences in the first chapter. Before undertaking this ‘experiment’, I thought it would be possible to notice it all at once, that I would be able to be improvising and noticing what was happening in the accumulation, and vice versa, as well as notice the audience and
my surroundings. However, in the actual doing of it, I found that being present was not a constant noticing of everything, I could not notice it all at once, instead, it was an elasticised state which was always varying.
I concluded the previous chapter with the contemplation of what I had arrived at in the final stage of our practising, in the performance of *In and out of time*. Collectively, we, the dancers and the audience, were present to an event with various forms of repetition, and in turn, I had an expanded experience of time which I am calling an encounter with being present. Although dance is understood as a time-based art, dance has arguably more often been discoursed in spatial terms. My research makes a contribution to discoursing and understanding dance in temporal terms.

The dancing in this project was founded upon an engagement in practising under the same set of conditions every week over an eighteen month period, where we danced and watched and articulated our dancing and watching experiences with the aid of scores and a timer. At no point throughout our practising did I question whether to practise in the same way every week, in fact, I took it as a given, as this was how I had understood practising through my participation in Dr Olivia Millard’s practice, and this kind of practising seemed to be conducive of the state of ‘Lucy’ – the state of being present. Instead, I questioned what the conditions were, and how they were functioning, as a means of determining what constitutes
a practice or an engagement in practising. In doing so, and with the support of the theoretical discourse of Deleuze’s three syntheses of time, I have come to articulate the creative agency of practising itself, putting practice, and its conditions, at the forefront of practice-led research, contributing to the ever-growing discussion on creative practice research. Dr Shaun McLeod, proposes that improvisation (particularly in Australia) tends to struggle as an art form due to improvisation practitioners’ hesitation to examine and articulate their practices and creative interests, which therefore diminishes the form’s legitimacy (McLeod, 2017, p. 55). To this extent, in addition to my contribution to creative practice research, through examining the conditions of my improvisation practice, I am strengthening the visibility and tangibility to a fleeting and impermanent mode of arts practice.

I have also drawn on Deleuze’s three syntheses of time to locate a language which explicated the idea of being present, in the way that I had come to understand it through practising: as an elasticised present – an opening up of, or expanding of time, which creates a space for noticing the many different layers that make up the present. Initially, this idea of being present was associated in particular with the mode of improvisation. However, when I introduced Trisha Brown’s seminal work, Accumulation (1971), as the basis to a choreographic practice which upheld the conditional criteria of practice, I found that this state of being present was not exclusive to improvisation, and thus clarified and articulated a continuum between improvisation and choreography in terms of temporal experience of the dancer, while also maintaining difference in these approaches to dance. This discussion has not only contributed to the research of renowned post-modern choreographer, Trisha Brown, but also to the growing body of scholarship on Deleuze and dance.

The merging of our improvisation and choreographic practices to form the singular practice which we undertook in the performance of In and out of time, was not subject to the same fundamental condition – repetition - under which the individual practices were examined. Although repetition was definitely present in
various ways within the performance, the event itself was not repeated, and I am therefore left contemplating what could have been realised, and where would this have taken me had we undertaken the practice of repeating this combined improvisation and choreographic practice...
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Besson, L. (Director). (2014). *Lucy* [Motion Picture]. USA.


Brockway, M. (Director). (2012). *Beyond the mainstream* [Motion Picture].


Foster, S. (2003). Taken By Surprise: Improvisation in Dance and Mind. In A. Cooper Albright, & D. Gere (Eds.), Taken By Surprise: A Dance Improvisation Reader (pp. 3-10). Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.


McLeod, S. (2016). The Movement Between: Dance Improvisation, Witnessing and Participatory Performance. Deakin University, School of Communication and Creative Arts, Faculty of Arts and Education.


Millard, O. (2012). From Score to Work: Making a group, improvising a dance. Deakin University, School of Communication and Creative Arts, Faculty of Arts and Education.


APPENDIX

13.07.2017 - repeat, revisit, retry

20.07.2017 - weight, wait and waiting

27.07.2017 – invent, repeat, drop, remember, borrow

3.08.2017 – the self / the other, internal / external, action / reaction, noticing / directing

10.08.2017 - “dance is hard to see” (Yvonne Rainer in Lambert-Beatty, 2008, p. 1)

Consider the temporal and spatial existence of the body

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bones speed</th>
<th>Rhythm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muscles</td>
<td>Momentum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organs</td>
<td>Stillness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fascia</td>
<td>Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nerves</td>
<td>Tone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24.08.2017

Stumble upon your desire
Inhabit a pathway
An arrival at the in between
Depart from a place
Explore sameness
Observe your identity
Disrupt the familiar
Interrupt the unknown
Unsettle
The journey to

31.08.2017

Meander through
Stumble upon
Adjacent to
Roam together
Stray away from
Drift between
Go under
Journey over
Navigate a fall
Travel the distance
In the midst of

**07.09.2017** – *Read Manifesto (Phenomenologically) and Manifesto (Discursively) from Taken by Surprise (Foster, 2003)*

**14.09.2017** - What is it?
Stay with
Leave behind
Follow on from
Rediscover
Find another
Get deeper into
Return to
Hold onto

**21.09.2017**
Where does it begin?
How long does it take?
How do you know if it is something?
What if it is something else?
What do you know about it?
What happens if you let it go?
Where does it take you?

**28.09.2017** – The body as object / The body as subject

Listening
Feeling
Tracking
Sensing
Noticing
Thinking
Scanning
Playing
Responding
Exaggerating
Letting
Forcing
Manipulating
Following

**05.10.2017**
“Fear is a big part of it. Being lost is not valued. We mustn’t be lost – we must know where we are and where we’re going at all times. Which is odd because we live in such a very weird world – one in which we really don’t know where we’re going and we’re all lost in so many ways – living somehow suspended in a land of unknowing – we don’t know what’s happening to the world, what will
happen next, we don’t know what controls us and what we have control over. So being lost and uncertain is maybe the most ordinary of conditions – being lost and trying to look like we actually know what’s happening” (Charlie Morrisey, n.d.)

12.10.2017
Dispersible attention
Subtle differences
Simultaneous actions
Collective senses
Perceptive qualities
Fragmented awareness
Solid centring
Impermanent instances
Invisible detachment
Uniting moments
Abandoning resemblance

26.10.2017 – Experiencing your dance from within
Touch
Sight
Sound
Kinaesthetic awareness
Pathways
Momentum
Force
Speed
Tone
Shape

09.11.2017 – Experience your dance from within
Welcome
Enter into
Recognise
Reveal
Open up
Uncover
Follow
Embrace

14.11.2017 - _____________ your dance
Direct
Consider
Notice
Ignore
Displace
Search for
Enact
Trace
Exaggerate

21.11.2017 – Mapping
1. Graphical representation of a procedure, process, structure, or system that depicts arrangement of and relationships among its different components, and traces flows of energy, goods, information, materials, money, personnel etc.
2. A transformation taking the points of one space into the points of the same or another space
3. An operation that associates each element of a given set (the domain) with one or more elements of a second set (the range).

The body
The space / the landscape
Your memory
Your imagination
The temporal shifts
Your interests
Your cognition
The in-betweens
The sameness and differences

06.12.2017 – repeated last week’s score

12.12.2017
Return to:
1. To go back to a previous state or way of behaving
2. To go back to a subject that has already been mentioned
3. To go back to an activity after an interruption
Accumulation:
1. The acquisition or gradual gathering of something
Atmosphere:
1. The pervading tone or mood of a place, situation, or creative work
Collection:
1. A group of things or people
Impression:
1. An idea, feeling, or opinion about something or someone, especially formed without conscious thought or on the basis of little evidence
2. A mark impressed on a surface
Consciousness:
1. The state of being aware of and responsive to one’s surroundings
2. A person’s awareness or perception of something
20.03.2018
“Repetition and difference are forces of creation, entwined in a repetition that produces variation in and through every repetition. Deleuze entangles difference with repetition in order to affirm the power of the new and the unforeseeable. To repeat is to begin again, and to regard each beginning as an experiment.” (Cvejic, 2015, p. 155)

Difference – the state or condition of being dissimilar
Repetition – to do, make or perform again

Speed/tempo
Force
Attention
Stillness/arrest
Shape
Momentum
Rhythm
Temperature

27.03.2018
“how do we pass time?” – Tehching Hsieh
“time is an empty container waiting to be filled” – Edward T. Hall
Repeat, wait, pause, change, accumulate, gather, infer, speed, rhythm, duration, force, momentum, stillness

03.04.2018
Revisit  Repeat  Retry

“Fear is a big part of it. Being lost is not valued. We mustn’t be lost – we must know where we are and where we’re going at all times. Which is odd because we live in such a very weird world – one in which we really don’t know where we’re going and we’re all lost in so many ways – living somehow suspended in a land of unknowing – we don’t know what’s happening to the world, what will happen next, we don’t know what controls us and what we have control over. So being lost and uncertain is maybe the most ordinary of conditions – being lost and trying to look like we actually know what’s happening.” (Charlie Morrisey, n.d.)

17.04.2018
The shapeliness of ____________

A fall / a catch
Your noticing
Your decisions
An unexpected pathway
Your bony body
Constancy
The in betweens
Something that is barely discernible
Stability and instability
Your dancing body

24.04.2018
To listen
To stumble
To catch
To hang on to
To observe
To tune into
To follow
To be occupied
To neglect
To toe the line

01.05.2018
___________ your dance

Reorder
Repeat
Reproduce
Reverberate
Reinvigorate
Represent
Restrict
Restore
Reintroduce
Resist
Reconstruct
Reset
Reinvestigate
Regift

08.05.2018
Ambiguous shapes
Delicate gestures
Indecisive meanings
Slippery speeds
Fluctuating tones
Whimsical rhythms
Consequential
Unpredictable

15.05.2018
Dispersible attention
Subtle differences
Simultaneous actions
Collective senses
Perceptive qualities
Fragmented awareness
Solid centreing
Impermanent instances
Invisible detachment
Uniting moments
Abandoning resemblance

05.06.2018
Exploring new territory
A pace that is unstoppable
When the dust settles
The dance is permeated with sliding movements
Going in an unexpected direction
The body moving in an unknown place
Democratic distribution throughout the body
Shifting relations of body parts

12.06.2018
The sameness of ________________
the variation of ________________

Repetition
Presence
Rhythm
My dancing body
Constancy
My noticing
Surprise
The imposed structure
Duration
A sensation
A stumble and a finding

10.07.2018
Where does it begin?
How long does it take?
How do you know if it is something?
What if it is something else?
What do you know about it?
What happens if you let it go?
Where does it take you?

17.07.2018
When I begin painting all other painters in history are there, and when I start painting they leave one by one – Francis Bacon

Reveal
Unravel
Fall away from
Disentangle
Unwind
Project onto
Open up to
Underneath

24.07.2018
Repeat:
1. To reproduce, in the manner of an echo, phonograph, or the like
2. To do, make or perform again
3. To go through, or undergo again

Revisit:
1. To come or go to
2. The act of or an instance of visiting

Retry:
1. To attempt to do or accomplish
2. To put to the test
3. To try on / try out / try out for

Return to:
1. To go back to a previous state or way of behaving
2. To go back to a subject that has already been mentioned
3. To go back to an activity after an interruption

Retrace:
1. To trace backwards
2. Go back over
3. To go over again with the sight or attention

Accumulation:
1. The acquisition or gradual gathering of something

Collection:
1. A group of things or people (same or different)

Replicate:
1. To bend or fold back
2. To repeat, duplicate, or reproduce, especially for experimental purposes

Consciousness:
1. The state of being aware of an responsive to one’s surroundings
2. A person’s awareness or perception of something

Noticing:
1. To pay attention
2. To perceive
3. To acknowledge
4. To mention of refer to

31.07.2018
Bones live. We must sense them alive if we are to understand their
interdependence with their adjoined soft tissues – Mabel Todd
- the shapes of our bones and the shapes our bones make
- the forces that are imposed on our bones and the forces our bones create
- the distances our bones travel and the distances between our bones and the
space around us
- the rhythm of our bones
- the memories that live in our bones

14.08.2018
“The creative moment is an improvised moment. It is just that at the moment of
going it in front of a public, there is no time for further qualification of what’s
been made... no rehearsing or altering. The instant decision is left to stand for
what it is. ... Improvisation is performance without a safety net and this is a
particular intensity which is being shared with the public (Julyen Hamilton in
Benoit, 1997, p. 199)
The intensity of a moment
A moment which is shared
A shared decision
The decisions intensity

22.08.2018 – The truth of your dance
1. Being in accordance with the actual state or conditions, conforming to
   reality or fact
2. Real, genuine, authentic
3. Sincere, not deceitful
4. Being or reflecting the essential or genuine character of something
5. Conforming to or consistent with a standard pattern
6. Exact, precise, accurate, correct
7. Legitimate or rightful
8. Reliable, unfailing, or sure
9. Exactly or accurately shaped, formed, fitted, or placed, as a surface,
   instrument, or part of a mechanism
10. Honest, honourable, upright

29.08.2018 – Opening
1. A space or gap that allows passage or access
2. A beginning; an initial part
3. A recognised sequence of moves at the beginning of a game
4. An opportunity to achieve something
5. Come apart; lose or lack its protective covering
6. Unfold or be unfolded; spread out
7. Become wider
8. Make available or more widely known

12.09.2018
a slow reveal
a slow burn
a slow dance
a slow flick
a slow realisation
a slow noticing
a slow eruption
a slow pass
a slow encounter
a slow transformation
a slow emphasis
a slow impulse
a slow fall
a slow movement
a slow landing
a slow bend
a slow switch
a slow play
a slow rendering
a slow reaction
a slow thought

19.09.2018
Contemplate
1. To look at or view with continued attention; observe or study thoughtfully
2. To have as a purpose
3. To have in view as a future event
4. Look thoughtfully for a long time
5. Think about
6. Think deeply and at length
7. Have in view as a probably intention

Contemplate _______________

Your dance
Your fluctuating or consistent rhythm
The space
Your fellow dancers
The shapes you make
Your body
The length
Your speed
What is on the horizon
What has already happened

26.09.2018
Mapping
1. Graphical representation of a procedure, process, structure, or system that depicts arrangements of and relationships among its different components, and traces flows of energy, goods, information, materials, money, personnel etc
2. A transformation taking the point of one space into the points of the same or another space
3. Record in detail the spatial distribution of (something)
4. Be associated with or linked to

- The body
- the space/the landscape
- your memory
- your imagination
- your habits
- the temporal shifts
- your interests
- the in-betweens
- the sameness and differences

03.10.2018
The dancing that you’ve done
The shapes that you will create
The rhythm which transpires in the moment
The possibilities which might arise
The memory which is enlivened in the now
The potential of the unknown
The knowing that something is passing you by
The knowledge which has come out of experience
The expectation that something will happen
The taken-for-grantedness of the present
The speed that captures the process
The revisiting of your habits
The prolonging of each instant

10.10.2018 – repeated last week’s score

17.10.2018
Meander through
Stumble upon
Adjacent to
Roam together
Stray away from
Drift between
Go under
Journey over
Navigate a fall
Travel the distance
In the midst of

24.10.2018
To listen
To stumble
To catch
To hang on to
To observe
To tune into
To follow
To be occupied
To neglect
To exist in between
To take a risk
To begin again

31.10.2018
a slow reveal
a slow burn
a slow dance
a slow flick
a slow realisation
a slow noticing
a slow eruption
a slow pass
a slow encounter
a slow transformation
a slow emphasis
a slow impulse
a slow fall
a slow movement
a slow landing
a slow bend
a slow switch
a slow play
a slow rendering
a slow reaction
a slow thought
06.11.2018
Teetering on the edge
Rrriving at your destination
Noticing what is on the horizon
Anticipating what is to come
Landing in your dance
The journey to the present
Differentiating between an arrival and a departure
Exploring familiar territory

07.11.2018
Where does it begin?
How long does it take?
How do you know if it is something?
What if it is something else?
What do you know about it?
What happens if you let it go?
Where does it take you?
Chapter 2.

1 Lucy is played by Scarlett Johansson
2 I came across the term ‘body thinking’ in the book Dancing Identity: Metaphysics in Motion by Sondra Fraleigh. She writes, “When I improvise I bring about a wonderful state of non-rational body thinking. I love to let go this way. I feel the outside of me match the inside as thoughts of colour and form slide into motion. My body becomes warm and whole, sometime happy, often sad, but fully alive in the now” (Fraleigh, 2004, p. 54). This is similar to the way that I am using it in this context, where the term’s function is to unite the mind/body relation which is often discussed in the field of dance.

Chapter 3.

1 The idea of passivity here has come from Husserl, who denotes that these happen to us - they are prior to one who actively chooses (Roffe, 2012). The term static is used for this synthesis as it relates to the future, which is an empty form of time where nothing (movement) has happened (Deleuze, [1968] 1994, p. 89).
2 James Williams suggests the term ‘expectancy’ as another way in which one might understand this first synthesis in relation to habit and repetition (Williams, 2013, p. 93).
3 James Williams describes this synthesis using the word ‘archiving’ (Williams, 2013, p. 101). Deleuze relates this second synthesis of memory to what he calls the pure past. The term ‘pure past’ comes from Henri Bergson, which is based on the idea that the present is understood as ‘is’ and the past as ‘is not’, however, due to the fleeting nature of the passing present, the present is difficult to hold onto, yet the past is preserved and laid down in one’s memory. Therefore, the present is better understood as ‘is not’ and the past as ‘is’, which subsequently enables to present to pass (Smith, n.d.).
4 James Williams refers to this synthesis as ‘chancing’ (Williams, 2013, p. 109).
5 It is important to note here that Deleuze’s reading of Nietzsche’s eternal return has been described as an incorrect reading (Roffe, 2012).
6 Brown first performed this work on the 22nd October 1971 at the New York University Gymnasium.
7 Brown participated in the Grand Union from 1971-1976. The Grand Union was a collective of choreographers and performers who devised group improvisations which challenged the nature of dance and performance (Banes, 1987, p. 203).

Described by Brown as “the most reckless, ricocheting, high-driving piece of never-ending now you see it now you what is going on, although precise and sometime poignant dance to date. It is erratic, emotional, unpredictable and the opposite of Accumulation” (Brown, 2002, p. 85).

Judson Dance Theater was a collective of artists: dancers, composers, visual artists, who made experimental work which rejected the codified values of modern dance which were performed at the Judson Church in New York (Banes, 1987, pp. 12-15).

In reference to Kirby’s definition of post-modern dance, Banes indicates that it is a narrow view on an era which traversed three decades, which Banes proposes has four stages of development (Banes, 1987, p. xiv). The first stage which occupied early post-modern choreographers in the 1960’s is described by Banes as an acknowledgement of the eras of dance which had come before them, but also with an anticipation of what this new dance might be (Banes, 1987, p. xvii). This developed as a preoccupation with defining dance and manifested through transcending previous inquiries into space, time and the body, as well as the adoption of other art forms (Banes, 1987, p. xix). In the final few years of this stage, additions themes of politics, audience engagement and non-western influences were also interrogated. It was not until the second stage, which Banes calls the ‘Analytic Post-Modern Dance’ stage when a discernible style had emerged among post-modern dance choreographers, to which Kirby’s definition relates. This was a phase where expressive and traditional elements (ie. costumes, lights etc) of dance performance were stripped back, in lieu of an emphasis on choreographic structure and objectivist values (Banes, 1987, pp. xx-xxi). In the late 1970’s a third phase developed, ‘Metaphor and the Metaphysical’, incorporating the ‘spiritual’: non-western dance influence continued to prevail and the inclusion of other disciplines such as martial arts were introduced (Banes, 1987, p. xxii). The final stage, ‘The Rebirth of Content’, could be understood to be in opposition to the ‘stripped back’ nature of the work coming out of the 70’s and a desire to reoccupy dance with meaning (Banes, 1987, p. xxiv).

Chapter 4.

1 Pont gives examples of “Hiking, cooking, painting, dancing, singing, listening, reading, prayer, life-drawing, golf, swimming, gardening, movement practices, cleaning, sculpture, meditating, drawing, climbing, and sewing” (Pont, 2017, p. 17) as examples of practising.

2 This was a two year project supported by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council, aiming to “refine a code of assessment for postgraduate research studies in dance in Australia encompassing the two primary modes of investigation, written and multi-modal theses, their distinctiveness and their potential interplay” (Phillips, et al., 2009, p. 1).

3 My choice to use words as scores was to “proposition” ourselves into dancing, watching and noticing, which references Millard’s definition of scores (Millard, 2015, p. 44). Sometimes I would decide which score I was going to use prior to dancing, and then notice the dancing which arose in relation to the word or phrase that I had chosen, and at other times the dancing enlivened the score without the need for prior selection. The scores also provided us with a language to articulate our noticing of our dancing and watching experiences.

4 In the beginning there were eight dancers (including myself) who participated in this weekly practice.
Personal time, according to Hall, denotes the way in which one experiences the passing of time, and how this is affected by various contexts and emotional and psychological states (Hall, 1983, p. 19).

To see more about Rhiannon Newton, go to: [www.rhiannonnewton.com.au](http://www.rhiannonnewton.com.au).
To see more about Dirty Feet, go to: [www.dirtyfeet.com.au](http://www.dirtyfeet.com.au).

This relationship between dancer and watcher has an alikeness to the relationship between mover and witness in the therapeutic practice of Authentic Movement, see (Adler, 1999; McLeod, 2016). However, the practice of Authentic Movement will not be discussed as it is not in the scope of my project.

In a psychotherapy interview terms ‘the micro-analytic interview’, which entails a discussion after the fact, Daniel Stern asks the patient “what did you experience this morning at breakfast?” (Stern, 2004, p. 9), and after a little probing he is usually able to distinguish a ‘clear happening’, which is generally something of around five seconds. Stern states “I then conduct an interview about what was experienced in that five seconds. The interview lasts about an hour and a half. I ask what they did, thought, felt, saw, heard, what position their body was in, when it shifted, whether they positioned themselves as an actor or an observer to the action, or somewhere in between... In other words, I ask about anything I can think of to capture their subjective experience most fully” (Stern, 2004, pp. 9-10).

It should be noted, interpreting and learning the movement material from video footage is not a substitute for the usual transmission of Brown’s work by a company dancer. I did however, receive permission to quote the gestures from Accumulation (1971) by Co-Artistic Director of the Trisha Brown Company, Carolyn Lucas.

Chapter 5.

1 Dictionary.com states a definition of object to be ‘anything that is visible or tangible and is relatively stable in form’ (Dictionary.com, n.d.).
2 For the duration of this project, I continued to participate in Olivia Millard’s weekly improvisation practice, which gave me the chance to reflect upon how my improvised dancing in my practice differed to other contexts.
3 I want to make it clear that this application of the term habit is different to Deleuze’s adoption of the term habit. Scholar, Jon Roffe, describes Deleuze’s habit using the term *habitus* (a concept coined by Pierre Bourdieu (Boudieu, 1977)) explaining that habitus is used to explicate that it is not referring to our habits, rather the foundation to which our habits are built upon (Roffe, 2012). Dictionary.com states a definition of habit to be ‘an acquired behaviour pattern regularly followed until it has become almost involuntary’ (Dictionary.com, n.d.).
4 In Millard’s PhD, she proposes a methodological approach of ‘practising over time’ where she describes the term practising, from her perspective, as something which has a sense of being ongoing as well as something which is engaged in in the present (Millard, 2012, p. 14).

Chapter 6.

1 It should be noted that in Deleuze’s language it might be becoming present (he uses becoming rather than being consistent with his energetic and dynamic mode of thought, rather than one that thinks in terms of ‘objects’ or solids). However, I am using the idea of being present from the dance field.
The movements for the extended part of the accumulation were made from the directives of, add two movements; insert a body part; vary a movement.

In her epigraph, Kaylan writes: “Annie Griffin is an extraordinarily charismatic performer and when she delivers her central solo narrative, the glint in her eye is so bright it seems to illuminate her whole face” (Kaylan, 1991, p. 48) which more or less equates charisma with the presence she is interested in teasing out.

Chapter 7.

1 See (Dempster, 1999; Gardner, 2010)

2 Although McLeod is discussing this predominantly in reference to ‘open improvisation’, which is defined by McLeod as follows “where the performer walks into the performance space largely without pre-determined structure, movement or intention” (McLeod, 2017, p. 55), I would argue that it is also true of any approach to dance improvisation.