

Chapter by Donatella Barbieri, included in *Performance Costume: New Perspectives and Methods*, (2020), a volume edited by Sofia Pantouvaki and Peter McNeil, pp. 197 – 212.

The Body as the Matter of Costume: a Phenomenological Practice

Donatella Barbieri

Design and the Phenomenal Body

Proposing the notion of the designer's own 'mind-full' body as critical to a costume-practice-led methodology of performance-making, this chapter draws on movement and materials workshops that I have adopted and devised to expand costume practice, research and pedagogy since 2004. Such practices are considered via perception and the Merleau-Pontian philosophy of the body, thus framing costume here as phenomenological. While I have deployed parts of this research into the founding of the MA Costume Design for Performance¹ at London College of Fashion (LCF) in 2006, other workshops scrutinised here were devised for invited participants who were practitioners, researchers and educators. They form part of a long-term research aim to re-define costume as agent and instigator in making performance. Curriculum development and the research into the agency of costume in performance are intertwined, and are both initially informed by three research projects.² Firstly, the AHRB funded *Designs for the Performer* exhibition (2002 -2005) questioned the established exclusion zones and hierarchies of traditional design practice. Secondly, the cross-institutional, international and devised production of *LES/Forest* (2005) proposed alternative processes to those of mainstream practice. Thirdly, my participation in the École internationale de théâtre Jacques Lecoq's *Laboratoire d'Étude du Mouvement* (L.E.M.) in 2005 saw a new emphasis upon the engagement of participants' bodily movement through material interaction. More crucially, these initiated an on-going practice of devising material-movement workshops as a radical departure from traditional designing that is the subject of this chapter.

The study of established costume design practice through interviews with influential UK-based costume designers³ made evident a process that added significant meaning to performance making.

¹ Agnes Treplin has run this course since 2010.

² See also 'Costume Re-Considered' (Barbieri 2012) and 'War, Revolution and Design' (Trimingham and Barbieri 2016).

³ The designers were Nicky Gillibrand, Pamela Howard, Birgitte Reiffenstuel, Elizabeth Jenyons, Emma Ryott, John Bright, Sandy Powell, Lucy Orta, Lez Brotherson and Marie-Jeanne Lecca.

Via the in-depth analysis of a single production, each designer participating in the *Designs for the Performer* (2002 -2005) research project articulated how costume may shape the show. Their detailed agency in the development of numerous bodies of large scale and impactful productions⁴ was evidenced. However, hierarchical professional structures involving several specialisations, contractual responsibilities including producing sets of costume drawings well in advance, tight production schedules and stretched budgets, precluded processes of the open-ended indeterminacy that an experiential physical workshop entails. These highly efficient structures presume a semiotic approach (Pavis 2003) in which characters are represented through the fixing of 'signifiers' in costume drawing rather than embodied through a process of movement, invention, improvisation and material performativity in which space and one's own body are fundamental components. In these contexts, the demarcation line between moving bodies and costume producing bodies is never breached.

The performers and artists I have associated with over a period of fifteen years to develop workshop-based research, some of whom I engage with here, are practitioners who regularly devise their practice through physical and material workshops, in fields including live art, contemporary dance, *Butoh*, *commedia dell'arte*, physical theatre, mime and dark clown. The L.E.M., pivotal to my research, (Barbieri 2006 and 2007) was conceived in 1968 by Jacques Lecoq (1921-1999) while teaching somatic approaches to architecture at the École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Paris La Villette, and one on his students, Krikor Belekian (Scheffler 2016: 180). I return to Lecoq later in this chapter, specifically to his 'neutral mask' improvisations, core to the École Jacques Lecoq approach.

Similarities with the L.E.M. exist with the costumes for *LES/Forest* (2005 – in collaboration with Jana Zbořilová, Czech theatre designer and Professor of Costume Design at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, Theatre Faculty, DAMU, her students, as well as my BA Costume students at London College of Fashion), devised from temporal explorations of form, movement and materials. The design students' own bodies in movement in the early developmental stages of their designing, which included workshop sharings, shaped the design process. Only once prototypes had materialized did performers and choreographers join in the process of creation of the forty-five-minute physical, non-verbal performance for the Disk Theatre, Prague. Created through movement, the costumes provided impetus for movement that went beyond character and narrative to produce a meaningfully engaging sensory experience for the viewer. Such design-led performance making, as in the expanded scenography described by Arnold Aronson, found itself 'at the centre of interactive networks' in which it was 'at once a tool, a system, a process and a generative organism for understanding' (2017: xvi).

⁴ Selected interviews were revisited with the designers as part of the research process for *Costume in Performance: Materiality, Culture and the Body* (Barbieri, 2017, pp 193-211)

Having started as a somatic approach for architects, the *Laboratoire d'Etude du Mouvement* (L.E.M.) has become an optional part of performer training at the École Jacques Lecoq on the relationship between movement and spatial dynamics. Adapted into physical design workshops as a means to generate a different approach to costume, it enables an understanding of the body in movement as a means through which to design in relation to form, material and space. Traditionally, the explorations offered by physical theatre workshops and laboratories are part of the continuous professional development of performers' versatility, and not specifically developed for costume designers. This chapter exposes the value of adopting approaches such as the L.E.M. in a phenomenology of design as they are transformative of practice itself.

In *A History of the Theatre Laboratory* (2018), performance scholar Bryan Brown focuses on the Russian tradition, with significant early laboratory (or workshop) practices established in the early twentieth century by Meyerhold (2014) and Stanislavsky (2013). The latter's individual re-examinations of theatre-making, alongside its values and purpose, drove experimental approaches that also typify subsequent practitioners' own experiments 'in a space of labour where knowledge cannot be divided from the act of producing it' (Brown 2018: 6). The centrality of *doing* within the protected creative space of the workshop enables the investigation of alternative imaginings of performance and the 'development of theories and artistic techniques' (Brown 2018: 201) to which the responsive bodies of participants are critical. My research proposes a transformative and expanded practice of costume that considers one's own body in movement as fundamental, concrete, kinetic and affective material amongst materials. It is a design tool amongst other design tools.

The perspective on the body I apply can be understood through phenomenology. Initially expounded by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), a contemporary of Meyerhold and Stanislavsky, phenomenology questioned Descartes' (1596-1650) separation of mind and body, which was at the core of much western philosophy. The latter's privileging the objective and detached mind, which surveys the world through representations such as semiotics and language, eschew a true material engagement based on physical and material interaction. In Husserl's phenomenology, human subjective experience is the grounds from where to develop understanding while the lived body is the medium for perception (1999a: 227). Furthermore, his 'phenomenal' inter-subjectivity, 'the constitution in me of others' (1999b: 84) in which 'worlds' may be constituted between subjects (1999b:85) is relevant to bodies considered as workshop participants, not least because of the 'endless openness' it proposes (1999b:108), nurturing an embodied imagination that is arguably critical to design. The relationship between subjectivity and objectivity in design for performance practice is beyond the remit of this study. Let us note that, unlike an a-priori mapping of the production of traditional design practices,

subjectivity is foregrounded in the physical plunging into the world. Therefore, a phenomenological frame of such workshops is required.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (1908-1961) approach to phenomenology, while building on Husserl's articulation of 'the interconnection between mobility, action and conscious life' (Welton 1999: xi), was also informed by the effects on cognition of surviving soldiers who fought in World War I, corresponding to Jacques Lecoq's physical rehabilitation of injured soldiers through movement, following World War II (Foley Sherman 2016a: 63). Both went on to establish that knowledge is generated primarily through the perceiving body; Merleau-Ponty through phenomenology and Lecoq through performance. For Lecoq, the study of movement is meaningful beyond work with performers, as 'everything moves' which endows it 'with life, giving it authority' (2000: 187). Merleau-Ponty considers that 'the union of the soul and the body [...] is accomplished at each moment in the movement of existence' (1962: 102), specifying that '[i]t is never our *objective body* that we move, but our *phenomenal body*' (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 121, my emphasis). If the objective body is the grounding for a solely semiotic and Cartesian approach, it is the phenomenal perceiving body that must be foregrounded in the study of movement materialized in a devising through costume.

Intentionality, Material Agency and the Perceptive 'Flesh'

Experiencing is the source of action, prior to any rationalization, as the phenomenal body's motivation for movement and action is not thought, but rather is a response 'to either a desire to achieve something or in response to something external' (King 2017: 33). For Lecoq, performance is 'embodied action and only subsequently language' (Evans and Kemp 2016: 3) as '[t]he body knows things about which the mind is ignorant' (Lecoq 2000: 9). Bodily perception precedes movement, thought and language, explained by Merleau-Ponty in terms of the pre-reflective intentionality that comes before the 'intentionality of act'. He writes, '[w]e found beneath the intentionality of acts [...] another kind which is the condition of the former's possibility: namely an operative intentionality already at work before any positing or any judgement' (1962: 498). Corey Anton explains that 'before – as well as underlying – any categorical thought [...] there is a playful, absorptive character to our understandings' (2001: 30). For Merleau-Ponty, engagement with this non-judgmental, playful and absorbing intentionality is central to artistic practice as it is "an art hidden in the depth of the human soul", one which, like any art, is known only in its results' (1962: 429).⁵ Practitioners such as Will Schrimshaw apply an explicitly material phenomenology to reveal an artwork's operational workings through the

⁵ Merleau-Ponty is citing Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (1999) in which he concludes that only with difficulty we may understand how impact is built into artworks. .

responsive body, engaged via 'the material reality of immediate affective experience' (2017: 116). Theorizing around immersion, sound and contemporary art, Schrimshaw builds on Michel Henry's *Material Phenomenology* (2008) which draws attention to the potentiality of materials as 'purely sensuous, lived experiences that are subjective impressions', as matter 'gives itself to form in order to be informed, constituted and apprehended by it' (2008: 11). Such responsiveness of material reveals its agency and demands attention to process as the focus of interaction with the perceiving body.

While not directly exposing the agency of materials, in his unfinished, last publication *The Visible and the Invisible* (1968), Merleau-Ponty explores the phenomenon of perception as a two-way exchange between body and world, proving a foundation for later studies around material performativity⁶. Perception 'emerges in the recesses of a body' (1968: 9) and can be understood as 'flesh of the world' through which reversibility is at work between the perceiving and the perceived as 'things pass into us as well as we into the things' (1968: 123). Our 'flesh', or perception, is in a reversible relationship with the tangible world, which is felt, seen and perceived through it:

because my eyes which see, my hands which touch, can also be seen and touched, because, therefore, in this sense they see and touch the visible, the tangible, from within, because our flesh *lines* and *even envelops* all the visible and tangible things with which nevertheless it is surrounded, the world and I are within one another. (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 123, my emphasis)

James Mensch brings attention to Merleau-Ponty's use of the French word *tapisser* 'to cover, drape, line or wallpaper' (2012: 81-82), 'our flesh' and our perception. An intertwining of materials and the body through movement and perception can explain how our phenomenal body may be perceptually 'grasped' as it 'surge[s] towards' the perceived (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 23) and 'it must plunge into the world instead of surveying it' (Merleau-Ponty, 1968: 38). Materials, in this relationship, have the power to expose states of being and emotions. Draping, immersing, surging and grasping; perception engages the physical imagination and dissolves the self into the space of their perception.

The Imaginative Body and Space of the Neutral Mask

'[i]f bodily space and external space form a practical system [...] it is clearly *in action* that the spatiality of our body is brought into being [...]. By considering body in movement, we can see better how it inhabits space (and, moreover, time) because

⁶ See for example Joslin McKinney, 2015.

movement is not limited to submitting passively to space and time, it actively assumes them (Merleau-Ponty, 117: 1962, my emphasis).

Essential elements of the physical theatre workshop (or laboratory), alongside the body, are movement, space and time, defined to separate from the everyday body and engage directly the phenomenal body. A Merleau-Pontian moving body actively *assumes* space and time as 'it is in action that the spatiality of our body is brought into being' (117: 1962). In Lecoq's 'neutral mask's' workshop, the leather mask engenders in the wearer a state of receptiveness, thus enabling the embodiment of space and time through the performer's own physical imagination within the physical workshop context.

Unlike the L.E.M. – a little practiced and under-theorized optional aspect of the Lecop methods – the neutral mask is critical to École Jacques Lecoq actor training, widely practiced and the subject of scholarly studies since the 1970s. Scholar and theatre-maker Laura Purcell-Gates (2017) defines neutral mask as a pedagogy, by connecting it to practitioners before and beyond Lecoq, while Jon Foley Sherman, one of a number of École graduates who have gone on to devise their own workshop practices, recently published phenomenological studies on the topic (2016a, 2016b). Lecoq's collaboration with sculptor Amleto Sartori in the 1950s enabled the devising of the leather, streamlined modernist mask. In *The Moving Body: Teaching Creative Theatre* (2002) the neutral mask is second only to exercises intended to 'delay the use of the spoken word' (2002: 36). If, 'beneath every mask [...] there is a neutral mask supporting all the others' (2002: 38) then the material-neutral mask aligns itself with a pre-reflexive and pre-verbal state of being, as 'beneath the intentionality of acts [...] another kind which is the condition of the former's possibility: namely an operative intentionality already at work before any positing or any judgement' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 498). Engaging what Lutterbie calls 'the mind-full body'⁷ (2011: 56), the neutral mask extends 'a pure economy of movement' to the body in a 'a sensual and physical relationship with the world and its matter' (Murray 2003).

Observing the Neutral Mask at Work⁸

⁷ This refers to philosopher of dance Maxine Sheets-Johnstone's definition, which she preferred to the expression 'embodied mind'. See *Embodied minds or mindful bodies? A question of fundamental, inherently inter-related aspects of animation* (2011).

⁸ These are drawn from my own witnessing of the mask at work in 2005 as part of the L.E.M., cross-referenced against Lecoq 2002), Murray's (2003) as well as Sherman's writing on the subject.

The performer stands in the empty workshop space holding the neutral mask. Stilled, her gaze is on the eyes of the leather mask that she is holding in her hand. Reversibly, her face and that of the mask mirror each other; in the space between 'things and perceivers' involvement with each other [...] the perspective is shared by both' (Foley Sherman 2016b: 63). The mask's skin-like surface may intensify a 'shared perspective' with the holder. The feel under her fingers of the leather may equate to her own bodily flesh in a perceptual exchange in which as 'things pass into us, we into things' (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 123). As the eye holes are rendered focal on its minimalist surface, the mouth of the mask is open. If closed, 'it would act as a marker of separation and would suggest something the mask keeps apart from its environment' (Foley Sherman 2016a: 57). Evoking a temporary kinship with the holding body while breaching the separation from the world, body and mask together may then contain, in its entirety, the temporal arc of the exercise. The symbiosis with this permeable mask creates the condition for 'porous bodies taking on their environment' (Foley Sherman 2016a: 44) in an exploration of space that movement generates.

Having donned her mask, and now supine, sleeping, she is invited to 'wake as if for the first time'. A series of initial encounters are prompted verbally by the workshop leader, including embodiments of elements, materials and colours (Murray 2003: 75). She may then journey 'standing in the sea, across a beach, through a forest, up and down a mountain, across a stream and onto a plain' (Foley Sherman 2016a: 42). The invisible is rendered visible though body and space via displacement of the air that exists inbetween, as the performer is prompted to move with words such as: 'I am facing the sea, watching it, breathing it. My breath moulds itself to the movement of the waves and gradually the picture shifts as I myself become the sea' (Lecoq 2002: 44). Breath, as air or wind, is rendered gestural and material in a corporeal interaction that performs 'sea' bodily. Her breathing, moving body becomes scenography, charged with its own material substance, as 'bodily space and external space' are intertwined through movement.

The neutral mask's work changes from when held to when worn. A catalyst towards an expanded, imaginative body while being held, its neutralizing of the face draws attention to the body in movement while worn. Having initially engaged the performer's touch, sight and perception - her 'flesh of the world'- in a reversible relationship, its role transforms in its wearing to supporting assuming and creation of space through the body in movement. Sartori and Lecoq's discoveries that transformed physical theatre⁹ continue to enable, sixty years on, what Foley Sherman calls non-reflexive astonishment (2010) in physical performers' workshops. To apply the principles of material

⁹ On the rediscovery of leather in relation to L.E.M. (2006) and to the Victorian Clown see my 'Performativity and the Historical Body' (Barbieri 2013). On the grotesque see my *Costume in Performance* (2017).

performativity that have guided my own practice, however, participants may start with pliable objects or raw matter. It may lend itself to form 'in order to be informed, constituted and apprehended by it' (Henry 2008: 11) through its and one's own responsive bodily movement. As such time, space and movement may be generated *between* materials and body.

Material Desires

As one of the participants in live artist Tim Spooner's two-day workshop, *A Hole in the Shape of Something*¹⁰, I was part of a group who were able to explore how material performativity may be enacted. If the artist's own body is in a reversible relationship with materials, Spooner, who has designed costumes for Lea Anderson's *Ladies and Gentlemen*¹¹ while producing solo performances and art installations, asked the twelve participants, largely live artists and performers, to connect with the intention of the object or material while minimizing attention to the human in the interaction. As materials and objects had been placed on the stage of the Toynbee Studio Theatre in East London, Spooner's revealing of the liveness of materials, evident in his performances and artistic practice, found expression in individual extended exchanges between participants and objects. He asked how senses and emotions may be engaged through the feedback participants received from matter and objects. We were to not conceptualize, just to be and do, in a process that required trial and error, seeking the most economical way to express the material's intentions through its movement. The question was: what are the desires of the material?

Lecoq's materials in movement workshop perform a different function. Simon Murray notes the range of movement rhythms in the performers' 'becoming' or 'being' through materials in motion such as rubber, steel, glue, earth (Murray 2003: 75). Providing diametrical opposites in trajectories between states, the material behaviors invite an excessive use of body 'becoming' them as materialization of movement does not, to quote Merleau-Ponty, submit 'passively to space and time' but rather assumes it (117: 1962). The resulting improvised action has direct immediacy, and as such the assuming of material behavior may generate emotional responses. For example, Lecoq notes how elastic materials when overstretched and then released are nostalgic for a return to their initial shape, even though they may not quite succeed' (2002: 89). Crucial as they may be to Lecoq's physical practice, these

¹⁰ 'ArtsAdmin's Weekender Lab: A Whole in the Shape of Something, by Tim Spooner'. See <https://www.artsadmin.co.uk/events/4102>, accessed 3rd February 2019.

¹¹ Anderson has discussed how costume enabled her to establish rules in her own performances (Connolly, 2017) as she collaborates with highly influential costume designers, such as multiple costume Oscar winner Sandy Powell and live artists including Simon Vincenzi and Tim Spooner.

imagined materials, however, having communicated their desires which are then absorbed into the phenomenal moving body of the performer, disappear. Conversely Tim Spooner minimized the attention on the body by entering into dialogue with the movement of materials, which themselves assume the Merleau-Pontian entanglement of space and time through movement, almost displacing the human while nonetheless evoking human emotions through their performance.

My practice considers the body as real, live, spatial, visible, tangible, kinetic and affective material amongst materials of the workshop, as such it brings together both these two perspectives. In a transformative and expanded field of costume research, the aim is to embed, from the start, specific material performative qualities through costume that may, in turn, engage the body of the performer in movement and, as such, be equal partners in the performance. An empathic relationship with carefully selected materials is nurtured from the start in workshops, designed to be attentive to materials' behaviors, while bodies are rendered phenomenal, mind-full, or as to borrow Foley Sherman's term, porous. Workshops such as these are structured according to a number of tasks that progressively immerse participants into an embodied understanding, through an act of doing.

Since participating in the L.E.M. in 2005, I have learnt by doing, by devising my own workshops, collaborating with movement practitioners or participating in their workshops. Starting from the blindfolded clay figure task intended to engage a material and phenomenal body, in the section that follows I apply a phenomenological perspective to selected moments that provide examples of how a bodily exchange with materials exposes phenomenological practicing.

The blindfolded clay modelling task which I borrowed from my participation in a second Complicite' interdisciplinary workshop the *Photography, Image and the Body*¹² (see Barbieri 2007) with photographers, performers and visual artists, introduced an immersive materiality through clay. Sitting around a large table, each participant was asked to don a blindfold. Thus temporally blinded they made a body figure, a version of their body, from a lump of modelling clay that had been placed in their hands. The sensory feedback received from the clay guided the figures being shaped under their fingers as perception was channeled through touch. Upon shedding their blindfolds, the participants were often surprised by the unexpected human shape that greeted them. Expressive and unruly modellings populated the table, embodying a group of diverse participants made from the same clay.

The blind handling of clay shapes a sense of a body other than the everyday one, a porous body, perceiving as much as being perceived through touch. If it established a body/clay relationship,

¹² On this workshop see Barbieri 2007, pp. 7-9. It was organised by Natasha Freedman, Complicite' 's then Education and Marketing Director, photographer Sarah Ainslie and movement director Lilo Baur.

Moving/Drawing (2007) (devised by me with movement director Lilo Baur and fine artist Charlotte Hodes and for which design students from across the University of the Arts London registered) addressed drawing as movement and vice-versa. One set of drawings was made around the 'bamboo pole task' intended to develop a sense of extended perception. Pairs of participants held a cane at either extremity, each applying pressure via the tip of their index finger, with movement escalating and de-escalating levels of energy, angles, directions, while crawling on the floor or flying above head, with tension multiplied as participants joined other pairs. While pushing in order to keep it from dropping to the floor, the shared cane lost its objective status and began to be part of the extended 'scope and radius of touch' (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 165) as it guided the movements of the connected participants' extended bodily perception,¹³ with participants experiencing their bodies as a kind of tail extension of the cane. The latter was also demonstrated by a short experiment referring to Merleau-Ponty's experiencing of his own body:

If I stand in front of my desk and lean on it with both my hands, only my hands are stressed, while the entire body trails behind them like the tail of a comet. It is not that I am unaware of the whereabouts of my shoulders or back, but these are simply swallowed up in the position of my hands, and my whole posture can be read so to speak in the pressure they exert on the table. (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 115)

Applying Merleau-Ponty's later articulation of reversibility, the desk might be pressing back into his hands, as his dynamic body becomes 'as an attitude directed towards existing or possible task' (1962: 114). Drawing activities following such as exercise can result in expressive and dynamic line work with regard to plasticity, exaggeration and energy.

Drawing and Movement into Design took place in 2008 at LBAC Eastbourne House, London. It was aimed at practitioners from a range of different disciplines and was advertised as a workshop run by Donatella Barbieri and Marie-Gabrielle Rotie to explore the relations between drawing, movement and space. Butoh movement expert Rotie plunged the participants into two-meter squares of drafting papers, or 'skins', in a slow sub-merging and re-emerging of bodies through paper, while spaces, cocoons, monsters, merged into one another and separated, as the paper, which had been used for drawing tasks by the participants, gradually disintegrated during what had appeared to be evenly matched slow dance between bodies and paper. I have since used smaller squares of paper in a 'waking for the first time' exercise in which the paper then leads, as it is led, movement. These paper exercises materialize a Merleau-Pontian perceptive 'flesh', extended through sheet materials.

¹³ On the notion of cognition in terms of scenographic practice, see Melissa Trimmingham's *Ecologies of Autism: Vibrant Spaces in Imaging Autism in Scenography Expanded* (2017), eds. McKinney and Palmer.

Participants' heads are draped with a sheet of either fine white tissue paper which is animated by their breath, the beginning of a 'waking up' through a mirroring breath/material motion. The room becomes filled by buoyant cloud-like paper being followed by bodies, until the fluttering is suddenly rendered still by the paper floating to the ground, ending the dance with the vitalized paper. In a 'doing' that does not immediately reveal its meanings, phenomenal bodies and material intertwine. Elemental materials such as sheets of paper, clay and bamboo sticks are used to awaken playful empathic exchanges with materials, to enact an equality between the performativity of bodies and matter in the confines of the workshop.

Rendering the Body Porous

To permit one's own body to become malleable matter requires a safeguarding through preparatory warm-up that also anticipates a responsive physical imagination. Lilo Baur, during the warm-up for the *Moving/Drawing* workshop in 2007 at LCF, applied a Feldenkrais¹⁴ method focused on the anatomical body in which small, precise movements engaged the whole body, expanding bodily awareness. For example, a pair of workshop participants walked slowly together, one carried in their hands the weight of the other's head, letting go after a few minutes. After my partner released their hold of my head, I continued to feel lifted and light while pointedly aware of my body as material and malleable. Here, much like Lecoq's intention of embedding 'rich deposits' of embodied, physical knowledge in his students (2009: 46), a more than a decade-old bodily sensing of lightness is recalled by its memory. In the chapter *Awareness through Movement* of *The Elusive Obvious*, Moshe Feldenkrais relates an ancient Chinese proverb 'I hear and forget. I see and remember. I do and understand' (1981: 89).

A heightened corporeal awareness was achieved in *Drawing and Movement into Design* (2008) workshop through Butoh movement led by Rotie. Chinese philosophy scholar Pao-Yi Liao for whom the study of perception and Butoh explain one another, compares a 'merging with the universe', shared by many ancient philosophies from Asia, with a phenomenological '*transformation* both of the external object or space into a subjective field and of the *phenomenal body* into a thing-like object with the texture of materiality' (1999: 95, Liao's emphasis). The condition for Butoh's 'state of emptiness' through which such bodily '*encountering* and *transforming*' may occur (1999: 61) is arrived at through an emptying of 'the aggressive ego of self' (Liao 1999: 113). A Butoh exercise described by Liao, also deployed in a variant form by Rotie in *Drawing and Movement into Design* (2008), is 'Insect

¹⁴ Moshe Feldenkrais was a scientist and an engineer who established therapeutic movement methods that promoted the awareness of the whole body. M. Feldenkrais, (1981). *The Elusive Obvious*.

Biting'. From a standing position with bent knees, the participant moves slowly forward while imaging insects crawling from underneath the floor through her body. They are gradually eating away at her 'joints, the ears, the eyes, and hair' leaving only the skeleton. As they 'come out of the body, and fill the entire space, so as to make no difference between the inside and outside of the body', the insect 'function in the same way as the lines or eyes, representing the relationship between the body and the environment' (1999: 218). 'Eyes', here refers to an exercise previously discussed by Liao, 'Walking with Eyes', which invites participants to imaginatively place 'eyes' on different parts of the body, which then push it into directions defined in relation to the space (1999: 216). By the same token, 'lines' refers to the Butoh exercise simply entitled 'Walking', with the body imaging itself gradually separated into 500 sliding pieces being pulled in different directions by lines, which, 'spread within the whole space' allow 'body and space to merge and become one' (1999: 215). For an expanded practice of costume that engages with embodiment, such merging of body and space is instructive, as '[t]he Butoh costume is like throwing the cosmos onto one's shoulders. For Butoh, while the costume covers the body, it is the body that is the costume of the soul' (Hoffman and Holborn [1987] quoted in Barbieri, 2017: 28).

In 2007, the first year of the MA Costume at London College of Fashion, Marie Gabrielle Rotie's initial collaboration with student designer Kumiko Takeda¹⁵, who had participated in Butoh workshops in her native Japan, later extended to the movement direction of several of the performances produced with the students. While most of the coursework does not align itself to Butoh specifically, aspects of its practice continue to engage designers and collaborating performers. In the one-to-one physical workshops I currently organize with Peta Lily¹⁶, identification with costume as environment, or 'cosmos onto one's shoulders' in improvisations around its materiality remains one of the approaches to which we return, as Lily's movement direction, renowned for Dark Clown and Archetypal characters performers' workshops, draws on a wide range of schools of movement including Butoh. The MA demonstrates the connections of bodily movement with costume in the range of applications by its graduates, which, beyond costume design, include design-led experimental performance making, costume-led site-specific and site-responsive performance-making, and costume as artistic practice.

My own costume-led collaboration with performer Mary Kate Connolly was also influenced by Butoh.

¹⁵ Takeda's performance (2007) concerned Oscar Wilde's *Salome*'. While the costume was designed along Butoh lines, the performer was a *capoeira* specialist working with Butoh movement and ideas.

¹⁶ See <http://www.petalily.com/workshops.html>, accessed 3rd February 2019.

In our *Old Into New* performance (2011)¹⁷ Connolly appeared to have been internally consumed by insects biting into the deep folds of her skirt pleats, that, once cut open by her from an initial bound and sculptural form, defined a dance in which different parts of her body led the transformation from elegantly contained to monstrously unruly states of being. An understanding of the body as material informed the *Wearing Space* physical workshops for Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space 2015 (Barbieri 2016). The warm-up devised with Connolly, the suddenly stilled, silent, shut-eyed, standing bodies of participants were calmly and verbally encouraged to consider their breathing as a letting go of their everyday selves. In her warm-up, a noticing of the body from the inside, beginning to move just one bone at the time, in a sequence through which each joint could gradually be re-discovered, led to the eventual raising of one's own foot to take a first ever step with the body rendered, in Merleau-Pontian terms, phenomenal. Interdisciplinary groups of participants, including designers, performers, visual artists, professors, and students became engaged in a pre-reflexive encountering of the world created within the workshop. We ran three full workshops and I was a participant in the first two, becoming a leader in the last, channeling Connolly's verbal qualities and scripted prompts, which she had allowed me to record previously. Once the first few very slow steps forward had been taken, participants were invited to gently open their eyes, which to this participant meant experiencing the familiar space anew. While this immersive warm-up shared aspects of the neutral mask's, (waking for the first time), of Butoh's (the emptying of the everyday self) and of Feldenkrais (attention to anatomy and small but precise movement that effected the whole body), my physical memory was of a renewed consciousness around materials and objects we had placed neatly around the workshop space. In the process of rendering my body porous, receptive and mind-full in the creative process so as to be plunged into the potentialities of matter, I was aware of my body being matter that 'gives itself to form in order to be informed, constituted, and apprehended by it' (2008:11), thus rendered conversant with other matter such as the objects in the space of the workshop.

Extended, Material Perception

¹⁷ Devised for PQ11, 'Extreme Costume Talks', Prague and the UK Exhibition opening performance also at PQ11 . Movement by Mary Kate Connolly, performance concept and costume design, Donatella Barbieri, realised with Claire Christie assisted by Emily Ni Brohim. Funded by Prague Quadrennial and London College of Fashion: University of the Arts London, supported by Simona Rybakova and the Society of British Theatre Designers. See <http://ualresearchonline.arts.ac.uk/4967/> Accessed 3rd February 2019.

The *L.E.M.* (2005) introduced a way of moving through objects made during the two-week workshop by us individual participants, in an iterative process that oscillated between movement and fabrications (Barbieri 2006; and 2007). Materials used for the latter were elemental (e.g. corrugated cardboard, balsa wood, string, bamboo, paper) resulting in impermanent though timeless constructions, body extending forms, intended to direct its movement. These materializations of expanded movement enabled participants to experience their body as material, spacious and dynamic. Objects were mostly destroyed at the end of the L.E.M. as the drive was to embed deep deposits in physical memory. Nor did the majority of movement objects survive Rotie's Butoh movement in *Drawing and Movement into Design* (2008). For the latter, paper "skins' and pre-made 'body –extensions' [...] which further the boundaries of the body and articulate the space and physicality of the performer' (Rotie 2008) were made by me with the help of assistants in the weeks leading up to the workshop. Large paper skins, conical limb extensions, unfolding forms and large fan-like paper attachments were destroyed during the work with participants in a workshop beginning with Butoh's emptying of the ego exercises. As a participant, I moved through a pervasive sense of melting into the patch of floor designated by a paper skin while invited to perceive by Rotie's recited poetry lines of imagined insects reaching inside my limbs. Equally, intersubjective connection with the other participants with whom I shared a similarly materialized and embodied experience, remains potently vivid ten years on, as does the sound of scrunching and tearing paper filling the room, alongside that of charcoal scratching on it. Performer and phenomenologist Suzan Kozel, in her chapter *Process Phenomenology in Performance and Phenomenology* (Bleeker et al., 2015), writes that

All reflection is past reflection, even if that event happened 10 seconds ago, and events from 10 years ago are not necessarily phenomenologically or experientially stale. This opens the suggestion that phenomenology relies on a sort of corporeal, experiential archiving. (2015: 57)

Kozel's corporeal archiving is aligned to Lecoq's deep deposits of bodily memory and Feldenkrais' understanding through doing and therefore remembering. Likewise, materiality holds on to gestural intentionality embedded in a physical/material memory through the reversible relationship with the perceiver encountered in the workshop. In the creation of objects prior to a workshop, even when these were ultimately destroyed, the relationship with the raw materials remains full of potentiality, holding memories of previously made objects or intent on creating new ones. Such performative interaction persists in physical memories, fueling further interdisciplinary material encounters.

Conclusion

While effective within the conventional production process, an approach to costume design that initially explains itself primarily through a set of character drawings as a detached, external overview of a set of bodies may deny the creative force that is implicit to matter in movement, be it human or non-human. This chapter has proposed ways in which pre-reflexive phenomenal bodies, including the designer / performance-makers' own bodies, may be plunged into a process of discovery in an expanded practice of costume that is spatial, dynamic, malleable and discursive. Such porous practice can permit boundary transgression in instigating ways of working through costume while reclaiming the space of the rehearsal room as design space through an open-ended interaction with materials and wearable performative objects that we call 'costume'. A perceiving, responsive and transmitting body that reflects on the ongoing and constant change of human experience both inside and outside rehearsal rooms and making workshops is critical to the work that costume can 'do' and to defining costume's own agency before, during and beyond the performance.

Bibliography / References

- Anton, C. (2001), *Selfhood and authenticity*. New York: Suny Press.
- Aronson, A. (2017), 'Forward', in McKinney, J. and Palmer, S. eds., 2017. *Scenography Expanded: An Introduction to Contemporary Performance Design*. London and New York: Bloomsbury, pp. xiii-xvi
- Barbieri, D. (2006), 'An Exploration of the Application of the Laboratoire'. *Costume Symposium 2006: Academic Research Papers*. Bournemouth: The Arts Institute at Bournemouth.
- Barbieri, D. (2007), 'Proposing an Interdisciplinary, Movement-Based Approach to Teaching and Learning as Applied to Design for Performance-related Areas'. In *Prague Quadrennial 2007, Prague, 14th to 24th June 2007*. London: London College of Fashion. Available from: <http://ualresearchonline.arts.ac.uk/1755/> (accessed 2 April 2019).
- Barbieri, D. (2012), 'Costume Re-Considered'. *Endymatologika 4, 'Endyesthai (To Dress) - Historical, Sociological and Methodological Approaches, Conference Proceedings'*. Athens: Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation.
- Barbieri, D. (2013), 'Performativity and the Historical Body: Detecting Performance Through the Archived Costume'. *Studies in Theatre and Performance*. 33 (3): 281-301.
- Barbieri, D. (2016), 'Costume before and beyond the production: The spacelab costume workshops at Prague Quadrennial, 18-28 June 2015'. *Studies in Costume & Performance*, 1 (2): 199-207.
- Barbieri, D. (2017), *Costume in Performance: Materiality, Culture and the Body*. London and New York: Bloomsbury.

- Brown, B. (2018), *A History of the Theatre Laboratory*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Camilleri, F. (2013), 'Between Laboratory and Institution: Practice as Research in No Man's Land'. *TDR/The Drama Review*, 57 (1): 152-166.
- Connolly, M.K. (2017), 'Hand in Glove: Reflections on a performed costume exhibition and the stories behind the garments'. *Studies in Costume & Performance*, 2 (1): 9-25.
- Evans, M. and R. Kemp, eds. (2016), *The Routledge Companion to Jacques Lecoq*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Feldenkrais, M. (1981), *The Elusive Obvious*, Capitola C.A.: Meta Publications.
- Foley Sherman, J. (2010), 'The Practice of Astonishment: Devising, phenomenology and Jacques Lecoq', *Theatre Topics* 20 (2): 89-99.
- Foley Sherman, J. (2016a), *A Strange Proximity: Stage Presence, Failure, and the Ethics of Attention*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Foley Sherman, J. (2016b), *Space and Mimesis*, in M. Evans and R. Kemp, (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Jacques Lecoq*, 83-90. London and New York: Routledge.
- Fraleigh, S.H. (1999), *Dancing into Darkness: Butoh, Zen, and Japan*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Henry, M. (2008), *Material Phenomenology*, trans. S. Davidson, New York: Fordham University Press.
- Husserl, E. (1999a), *The essential Husserl: Basic writings in transcendental phenomenology*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Husserl, E. (1999b), *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. D. Cairns, Dordrecht/ Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Kant, I. (1999), *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. & eds. P. Guyer and A. W. Wood, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kemp, R. (2012), *Embodied Acting: What Neuroscience Tells Us About Performance*. London and New York: Routledge.
- King, I. (2017), *The Aesthetics of Dress*. New York: Springer.
- Kozel, S. (2015), 'Process Phenomenology', in M. Bleeker, J. Foley Sherman, and E. Nedelkopoulou, *Performance and Phenomenology: Traditions and Transformations*, 54-74, London and New York: Routledge.

- Lecoq, J. (2009), *The Moving Body (Le Corps poétique): Teaching Creative Theatre*, trans. D. Bradby, London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Liao, P.Y. (2006), *An Inquiry into the Creative Process of Butoh: With Reference to the Implications of Eastern and Western Significances*, Doctoral dissertation, Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, City University London.
- Lutterbie, J. (2011), *Towards a General Theory of Acting: Cognitive Science and Performance*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- McKinney, J. E. (2015), 'Vibrant materials: the agency of things in the context of scenography', in M. Bleeker J. Foley Sherman, and E. Nedelkopoulou, *Performance and Phenomenology: Traditions and Transformations*, 121-139, London and New York: Routledge.
- Mensch, J.R. (2012), *Ethics and selfhood: Alterity and the phenomenology of obligation*, New York: Suny Press.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962), *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith, London: Routledge.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1968), *The Visible and the Invisible; Followed by Working Notes (1964)*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University.
- Meyerhold, V. (2014), *Meyerhold on theatre*, E. Braun (ed. and trans.), London: Methuen Drama.
- Murray, S. (2003), *Jacques Lecoq*, London: Routledge.
- Purcell-Gates, L., (2017), 'Puppet bodies: reflections and revisions of marionette movement theories in Philippe Gaulier's Neutral Mask pedagogy'. *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training*, 8 (1): 46-60.
- Scheffler, I. (2016), 'A brief history of the LEM', in M. Evans and R. Kemp, R.(eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Jacques Lecoq*, 179-192.
- Sheets-Johnstone, M. (2011), 'Embodied minds or mindful bodies? A question of fundamental, inherently inter-related aspects of animation'. *Subjectivity*, 4 (4): 451-466.
- Shrimshaw, W. (2017), *Immanence and Immersion: On the Acoustic Condition in Contemporary Art*, New York and London: Bloomsbury.
- Stanislavski, C. (2013), *An actor prepares*. A&C Black.

Trimingham, M. (2017), 'Ecologies of Autism: Vibrant Spaces in Imaging Autism', in J. McKinney and S. Palmer (eds.), *Scenography Expanded*, 183-196. London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama.

Trimingham, M. and D. Barbieri (2016), 'War, revolution and design: exploring pedagogy, practice-based research and costume for performance through the Russian avant-garde theatre', *Studies in Theatre and Performance*, 36 (3): 269–280.

Welton, D. (1999), 'Introduction: The Development of Husserl's phenomenology' in *The essential Husserl: Basic writings in transcendental phenomenology*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.