

**NIGHTFALLING:  
A CHOREOLOGICAL APPROACH TO TWILIGHT  
THROUGH A TIME-SPECIFIC MOVEMENT PRACTICE**

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy at Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts, Lancaster  
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# NIGHTFALLING: A CHOREOLOGICAL APPROACH TO TWILIGHT THROUGH A TIME-SPECIFIC MOVEMENT PRACTICE

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## ABSTRACT

This artistic research project is concerned with the development of a noctographic movement practice using choreological principles. This practice aims to investigate the perception of rural nightscapes through movement. The practice is designed to take place at nightfall in all seasons of the year and is therefore (i) a time-specific practice, concerned with engaging with the durational and temporal qualities of a nightscape, and (ii) a site-specific practice, concerned with co-forming place through the experience of night's darkness. The research uses choreological analysis, phenomenology and new materialism to reflect upon the experiences that individuals and communities have of a site at night. In doing so, this thesis considers how engaging with a night-time, durational movement practice – a practice in which the real and imagined, self and other, become entangled – has the capacity to transform human and more-than-human relatedness.

By engaging with night as a world in which what is visually perceived no longer equates to clarity and accuracy – a world where the imagination anticipates form rather than recognises it – this artistic research endeavours to comprehend the movement of the dancer in the dark as a patterning of potentialities that compose and de-compose within the temporalities of that nightscape. Central to this practice is the inquiry as to whether, at night, movement holds within itself the potentiality to be beyond-form, as much as the dark is beyond-vision.

This written thesis is accompanied by the submission of two time-specific performances: *On the Patterns We Gaze*, which took place 28<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 in Grubbins Wood, Cumbria ([vimeo.com/352720897/6088154a1c](https://vimeo.com/352720897/6088154a1c)) and *On the Traces We Carry*, which took place April 2021, in Lancaster ([vimeo.com/535227668/9b54a4e280](https://vimeo.com/535227668/9b54a4e280)). These performances were supported by a series of night-time movement workshops which took place from March 2018 to February 2019 in Grubbins Wood.

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## **DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP**

I hereby declare that this thesis is the outcome of my own work and has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree at this or any other university. I am the sole author of this thesis and it has not been produced in collaboration with any other researcher. This thesis is submitted with the support and permission of my supervisors, Professor Nick Dunn and Nigel Stewart.

This thesis has been granted an extension to its wordcount by the Director of the Doctoral Academy at Lancaster University. Accordingly, the contents of this thesis – following minor corrections and including all appendices but excluding the bibliography – amounts to 59,556 words.

Signed: ELLEN LOUISE JEFFREY

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> December 2020

Post-correction submission: 20<sup>th</sup> August 2021

This thesis is dedicated to all those who participated in the night-time workshops run as part of this research. Thank you for so generously giving your time throughout the year to wander and wonder in the dark.

## **PROLOGUE:**

### *Night-Walking*

In August 2011 I moved to Helsinki, Finland, to begin my MA studies in Live Art and Performance Studies. For two years I lived in Kumpula – a small town on the outskirts of Helsinki, surrounded by pine woodland. During my first winter there, I began walking through the woodland at night. Following the meandering pathways that circled through the trees became a way of passing the night's many sleepless hours. As I walked, I observed how the night's darkness shifted with the seasons: how the woodland's deep dark of late autumn could be transformed within hours by a heavy snowfall that illuminated the paths and set the whole woodland aglow. The snow transformed not just the landscape but my movement within it: my walk shifted from a quiet stroll into a repetitive, crunching tread that would be my constant soundscape until late spring. And then, summer nights: nights that were in fact not night at all but instead a long turquoise twilight that made my walks in the early hours feel to be a slipway between the after-dusk and almost-dawn. Only occasionally, catching sight or sound of someone in the distance, one of us would take another path, keen to sustain the solitude so carefully cultivated by the night hours.

Kumpula's nights were different to any I had known in England. They were different in depth, in quality. Kumpula is 7 degrees further north than where I grew up in North Yorkshire, England, where the landscape of agricultural farming meant skies were vast, open, and with an earth-carved horizon. The two years I spent night-walking in Finland reminded me of what it was to be out in the night's dark, and what it was to be immersed in the transitory process of its darkening. When I left Finland and returned to London in 2013, I returned to the orange hues of city nights: to a starless stasis that stretched across Deptford's high street and endured the year through. For two years, I continued to walk in London at night. Like London's other night-walkers, I moved always with a sense of purpose and direction even if, in truth, I had neither. I missed the freedom to meander, and to meander unseen. In walking at night, I began to reflect on how differently I moved through these nightscapes, and how differently these nightscapes moved through me.

In moving to London from Kumpula, I felt the loss of the night's dark and the varied spectrum of its darkening. I read of night's diminishing spread in the figures, data and measurements featured in Paul Bogard's *The End of Night* (2014). Yet these did not articulate the particular experiences of moving and encountering that I had of night-time, experiences that I felt to be reliant *on* the dark and diminishing *with* the dark. Experiences that I felt could not be adequately articulated through words, but which needed to be comprehended as – and through – movement. In commencing this PhD research, I chose not to remain with the receding dark, but instead to seek out the potential ways of moving that night's darkness made possible. I wanted to move towards an understanding of moving-with-night that does not simply rely upon darkness but insists upon its necessity.

## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this opening chapter is to provide an overview of the practice, methodology and theoretical frameworks that have shaped and influenced this research. It is divided into three sections. The aims and investigatory purposes of the whole research project are defined in the first section, RESEARCH QUESTIONS. This is followed by A NOCTOGRAPHIC PRACTICE which outlines the significance of when and where the practice takes place before situating this project within the context of artistic research. The third section, CONSTELLATIONS, will serve two purposes. Firstly, it outlines the methodologies and theoretical frameworks that have shaped this research. Secondly, it describes both the structure of the practice and the contents of the thesis. This section draws upon two diagrams – or “constellations” – to illustrate the methods and approaches that it describes.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Primarily, this research asks:

- How might a choreological practice generate new knowledge of nightscapes by proposing alternative ways of “becoming-with” night through movement, thereby potentially challenging human relationships to the more-than-human night-world?

It is also concerned with the following subsidiary questions:

- In what ways might a night-time, site-specific movement practice (described in this thesis as “noctographic”<sup>1</sup>) challenge and develop the current field of choreological practice?
- What might this practice reveal regarding potential relationships between choreological practice, phenomenology and new materialism?

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<sup>1</sup> A definition of this term is provided on the following page, or additionally see GLOSSARY OF TERMS.

- In what ways might the time-specific<sup>2</sup> approach to place of a noctographic practice contribute to the emerging field of environmental movement practices?
- In what ways might choreological practice make nightscapes accessible through movement to both professional-level and amateur-level dancers, and what new experiences and new understandings of nightscapes might a durational choreological practice afford to members of these communities?
- What are the ways in which nightscapes are represented and explored in performance works and other artworks – and how might noctographic performance works provide a unique way of negotiating nocturnal experience?
- By moving-with<sup>3</sup> nightfall’s darkening, what kinaesthetic knowledge can be gained from more-than-visual nightscapes, and why might they be integral to an embodied understanding of our more-than-human world?

These questions are addressed throughout the thesis and practice of this artistic research. The conclusion of this thesis reflects upon them further in its consideration of the key discoveries of this research. To provide clarity and consistency for the reader, the terms and practices referred to in the above questions are described in the following sections.

## A NOCTOGRAPHIC PRACTICE

“*nocto-*”, from the Latin “*nocturnalis*”, meaning “of or relating to the night; done, held, or occurring at night”  
 “*-graphic*”, from the Greek “*graphia*”, meaning “that writes, delineates or describes”<sup>4</sup>

Throughout this thesis I describe my practice as “noctographic”<sup>5</sup>. I use this term to indicate the night-specific engagement that this practice both prioritises and is

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<sup>2</sup> See GLOSSARY OF TERMS.

<sup>3</sup> See GLOSSARY OF TERMS.

<sup>4</sup> Definitions according to the Oxford English Dictionary (2020).

<sup>5</sup> At the time of writing, the term is in little use. It is occasionally employed by night-time photographers to describe their work, whilst the term “noctograph” describes a 19<sup>th</sup> century writing tool used by partially-sighted writers and could also be employed for writing in the dark (as described in Gardiner, 1969, and Wertheimer, 1999).

shaped by<sup>6</sup>. This research explores movement in nightscapes as a means of creating a noctographic movement practice which can be developed to generate time-specific choreographies. Essential to the emergence of this noctographic practice are the time and place in which it is established. The use of the term “place” in this thesis resonates particularly with anthropologist Tim Ingold’s suggestion that “[t]o be a place, every somewhere must lie on one or several paths of movement to and from places elsewhere” (Ingold, 2007: 2). Whilst Ingold’s words build upon those of geographer Doreen Massey – “a sense of place [...] can only be constructed by linking that place to places beyond’ (Massey, 2007: 156) – it is specifically the potential ways through which “paths of movement” might constitute a place at night that this research engages with. However, whilst both Massey’s and Ingold’s notions can be most easily apprehended as constructing an understanding of place through a geographical relationality (for instance, the site-specificity of place) this research is concerned with an understanding of place through its durational relationality (the time-specificity of place). Here, the “places beyond” are not different geographical environments as such, but rather different nights, seasons, or stages of twilight.

In commencing this research, my experiences of night-walking had already made me aware of three essential considerations: firstly, that the *site* in which I work would define the *nightscape* in which I work. Secondly, that the fluctuations of weather and season would continually alter both the quality and duration of night’s darkness. Thirdly, my experiences of night-walking had already made me aware that to adjust to darkness meant adjusting *with* darkness. To step out into an already-dark night requires time for the eyes and senses to adjust (up to two hours)<sup>7</sup>: to step out at dusk is to participate in an environment’s becoming-night<sup>8</sup>. It is, therefore, over the duration of nightfall – the twilight hours that begin at sunset and precede night’s total darkness<sup>9</sup> – that this research practice is established. It is not commonly known that this period of nightfall has been divided into three stages of twilight: civil,

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<sup>6</sup> The term “noctographic practice” does not specify the form of the practice, enabling it to be equally applied to night-time practices that utilise film, writing, sculpture, and so forth, enabling a cross-disciplinary exchange, should other such practices emerge.

<sup>7</sup> Nature writer Robert MacFarlane similarly observes this on his night-walks, “It takes rod cells up to two hours to adapt most fully to the dark. Once the body detects reduced light levels, it begins generating a photosensitive chemical called rhodopsin, which builds up in the rod cells in a process known as dark adaptation” (2010: 201).

<sup>8</sup> See GLOSSARY OF TERMS.

<sup>9</sup> Nightfall is defined as the period of evening twilight which begins with sunset and ends with night. On average, in the UK nightfall lasts around ninety minutes, but this alters with the seasons.

nautical, and astronomical (Davidson, 2015). Each stage is defined by the degree at which the sun is below the horizon (six, twelve, and eighteen degrees respectively). These terms describe a shift in visual perception: the visibility of land and terrestrial objects (civil), the visibility of the sea's horizon (nautical), and the visibility of the stars (astronomical). My own practice, in being concerned with a kinaesthetic, more-than-visual perception of nightfall, offers new ways of understanding its durational shift – ways that are dependent upon embodied, lived encounters. In commencing my research, the three stages of twilight gave a structure to my practice through which to both explore the seasonal alterations of nightfall's duration and to question its place-specific relevance.

To focus the research specifically upon the durational alterations and transformations of nightfall, I established the practice within the nightscapes of one particular site. In moving to Lancashire in 2015, I began to work in Grubbins Wood, an area of ancient woodland that lies on the edge of the Kent estuary in North Lancashire<sup>10</sup>. Grubbins Wood is a nature reserve, managed by Cumbria Wildlife Trust (CWT). The priority in this place are the lives and movements of its more-than-human inhabitants, with the CWT working to preserve the wood as a habitat for red wood ants, Lancastrian whitebeams, hart-tongue ferns, southern wood ants, wild garlic, ancient yew trees and visiting tawny owls amongst many others. Through on-site discussions with CWT's ecologists and volunteering with CWT's ongoing conservation work in the wood, I was able to establish a night-time movement practice which became a part of the wood's crepuscular activity but did not displace it. The dominating facets of the wood's environment – the numerous yew trees, the deep furrows of the paths, the contrasting sites of the saltmarsh and fields that surround it – all shaped the development and implementation of my practice in varied and exciting ways. Therefore, the concern of this thesis is not only how the alterations of nightfall's quality and duration shapes and co-forms movement, but how this kinaesthetic practice manifests within the particular nightscapes of the site.

Throughout this thesis, my use of the term “more-than-human” aligns with David Abram's application of the term to refer to the inseparability of humans and the

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<sup>10</sup> Further information on Grubbins Wood, including its location, can be found at: [www.cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves/grubbins-wood](http://www.cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves/grubbins-wood).

world we live in (Abram, 1996: 16, 262). This is in contradistinction to terms that might suggest a differentiation or reduction, such as “other-than-human”, or “non-human” and “not-quite-human” (Bennett, 2010: ix, 3). The notion of “more-than” is complementary to this research project’s concern with nightfall’s capacity to seep, to spill, and to blur the boundaries between beings and things. In particular, it is Erin Manning’s notion of the “more-than” and “more-than-human” that this thesis draws upon. Abram uses the term to refer to species, critters and phenomena of the natural world as unseparated from humans – “the other forms of experience that we encounter – whether ants, or willow trees, or clouds – are never absolutely alien to ourselves” (Abram, 1996: 16). However, Manning uses the term to suggest a “beyond”, that is not simply beyond the human but beyond form: a beyond that is “movement-moving” (Manning, 2013: 14). In working with nightfall, this research explores the more-than-human environment of Grubbins Wood as a site not simply inhabited by different species, weathers and materialities, but as a site in motion: one in which the movement of nightfall enables a seeping, seeming and blurring to occur, through which the more-than-human becomes more-than what it seems.

Through its dependence on the time and place of its occurrence, the emergence of this noctographic movement practice is appropriately situated within the field of artistic research. In many ways, the term “artistic research” is a fluid one – it not only has a variety of meanings, associations and implications (Hannula et al., 2005: 19) but also encourages a variety of methodologies and outcomes to be utilised. The purpose of such an open approach is to enable the artistic researcher to prioritise those methods and tools that are particularly applicable to the research practice, even if that means using a unique combination of multiple approaches (ibid.: 20-21). Essentially, it is this – the processual mode of a practice (Klein, 2010: 4) – that defines artistic research as such. Mika Hannula’s definition of the field supports this, describing artistic research as “an engaged practice” which:

in each context is imbued with the necessary qualities and substance to make it what it is, and also able to apply its own internal logic to deciding between what makes sense and what is invalid. A practice with a defined direction, but with an open-ended, undetermined procedural trajectory. A practice that is particular, content-driven, self-critical, self-reflective and contextualised.

(Hannula, 2009: 1)

Hannula’s description of artistic research as a practice which has “an open-ended, undetermined procedural trajectory” is re-asserted in artistic researcher Julian

Klein's proposition that artistic research exists essentially as a "mode of process" (Klein, 2010: 4). The field of artistic research can, therefore, encompass a diverse range of practices and approaches. However, it is essentially the processual mode of that practice – and the unique combination of methods it draws upon – that places the work within the field of artistic research.

The focus of this research is the embodied, practical exploration of moving with(in) a site at nightfall. It exists as an example of artistic research through its emphasis upon the unfurling of a movement-based practice: one that cannot be pre-determined but instead is informed and co-formed by the site -and time- in which it exists. In doing so, this research prioritises an engagement with nightfall that is both kinaesthetic and durational, existing as "the mode of a process" (Klein, 2010: 4)<sup>11</sup>. Through its emphasis on the development of its practice, this artistic research generates new knowledge that is not only predicated upon a kinaesthetic approach, but which also serves the development and exploration of future practice-based engagements with nightscapes<sup>12</sup>. As Hannula argues, "it is of great importance that this kind of research is given a fair chance to develop free from excessive formalities, and that the basis for the systematic accumulation of knowledge in the artistic field can be built upon practice" (Hannula et al., 2005: 5). This research interweaves a range of influences, methodologies and theoretical frameworks: an interweaving which supports the specific requirements and materialisation of a noctographic practice, and which I will now detail in the following section and its accompanying diagrams.

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<sup>11</sup> As artistic researcher Julian Klein suggests, "If 'art' is but a mode of perception is, also 'artistic research' must be the mode of a process" (Klein, 2010: 4).

<sup>12</sup> Mika Hannula suggests this to be one of the key elements of artistic research: a practice that creates information that serves practice (Hannula et al., 2005: 21).

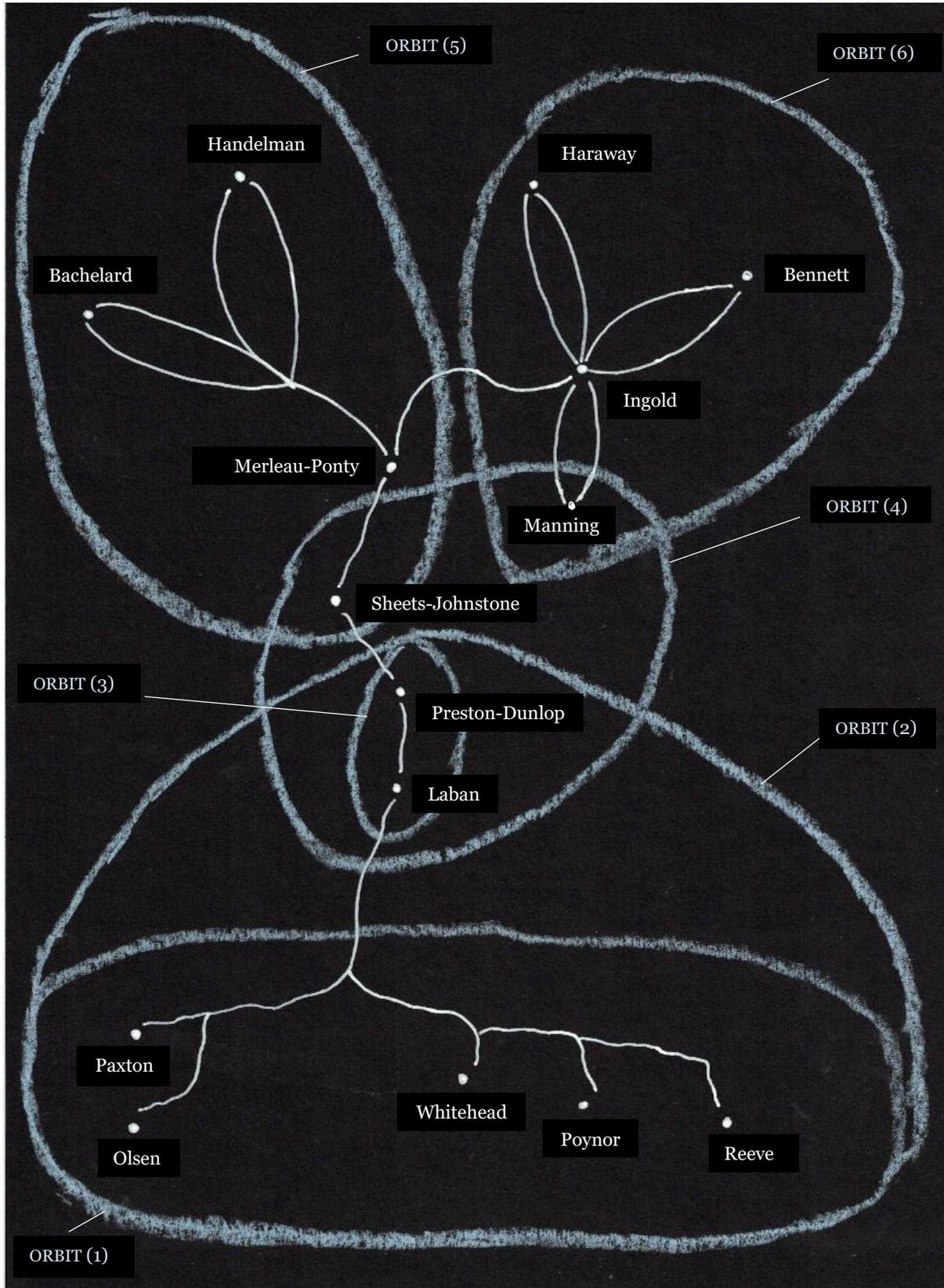


Figure 1: "Constellation A". Hand-drawn diagram representing the movement practices and theoretical frameworks that have shaped this artistic research. ORBIT (1) denotes environmental movement artists; ORBIT (2) denotes the use of movement scores; ORBIT (3) denotes choreological studies; ORBIT (4) denotes theories on movement; ORBIT (5) denotes theories on perception; ORBIT (6) denotes theories on entanglement.

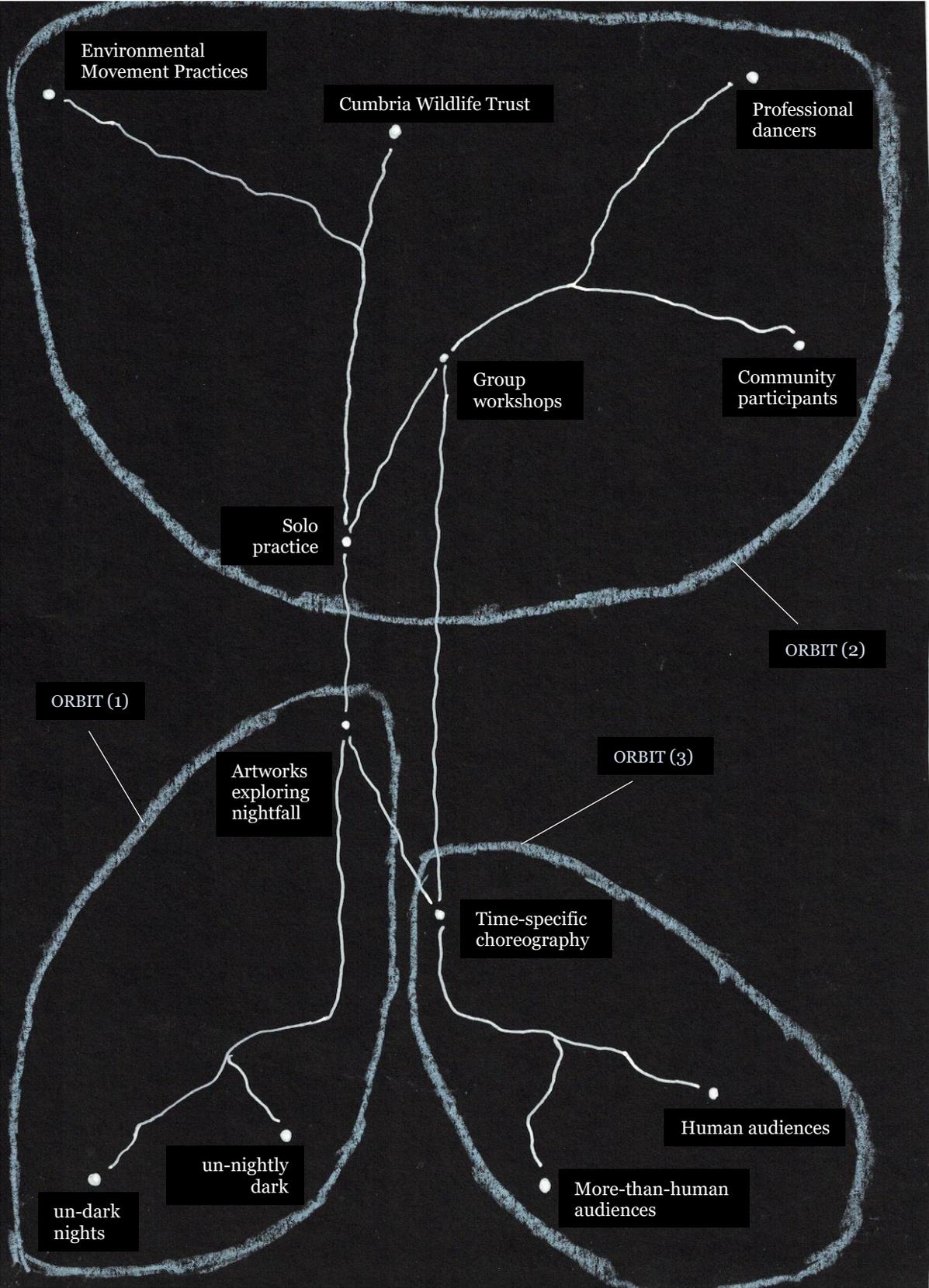


Figure 2: "Constellation B". Hand-drawn diagram representing the relationship between the structure of this artistic research and how it is situated within the thesis. ORBIT (1) denotes the research areas that comprise SECTION ONE of this thesis; ORBIT (2) denotes those aspects of practice featured in SECTION TWO of this thesis; ORBIT (3) denotes those aspects of practice featured in SECTION THREE of this thesis.

## CONSTELLATIONS

This section endeavours to outline the practices and theoretical frameworks that have shaped the methodology and analysis of this practice. It draws upon the above two hand-drawn diagrams: “Constellation A” (fig. 1) and “Constellation B” (fig. 2)<sup>13</sup>. In analysing the content of these diagrams, this section is divided into three parts. CONSTELLATION A: METHODOLOGY refers to the lower-half of that diagram and describes the movement-based practices and approaches that have informed the methodology of this research. This is followed by CONSTELLATION A: THEORY which refers to the upper half of the diagram to outline the theoretical frameworks – and the inter-relations between them – that have shaped both the practice of this research and the trajectory of this thesis. The final sub-section, CONSTELLATION B, details both the structure of this noctographic practice and the contents of this thesis.

### CONSTELLATION A: METHODOLOGY

The lower half of the hand-drawn diagram, “Constellation A” (fig. 1), serves as an illustration of how different practices intersect within my artistic research. In the diagram, the names of practitioners and artists who have influenced my practice are clustered into three “orbits” that form the key elements of my practice: environmental movement practices, movement scores, and choreological studies. I will now discuss each of these orbits in turn.

In seeking to establish an outdoor, place-specific practice, this research emerges into the field of environmental movement practices<sup>14</sup>. In particular, it exists in relation to (i) practices that are UK-based and have a seasonal structure, and (ii) practices that have sprung from an individual movement artist’s solo explorations with place to develop into durational, participatory practices. Therefore, whilst there are many

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<sup>13</sup> These constellations take the shape of species that are prevalent within Grubbins Wood; “Constellation A” takes the form of an ash sapling and “Constellation B” takes the form of a yew tree.

<sup>14</sup> I use the term “environmental movement” – as used by Helen Poynor (2020) – as it is indicative of a regular outdoor movement practice. The term “site-specific dance” is frequently applied to performance works and as a result usually exists in spaces that are both accessible and commonly visited (Kloetzel and Pavlik, 2009: 4), whereas environmental movement practices prioritise less-frequented spaces to allow a durational, immersive practice to emerge.

UK-based artists engaged in environmental movement practices<sup>15</sup>, my noctographic practice most closely aligns with those of Helen Poynor, Sandra Reeve, and Simon Whitehead. These three artists have each cultivated site-specific practices that have durational, seasonal structures, enabling attending participants to encounter that artist's accumulative and embodied knowledge of that site. In 2017, I attended several workshops and intensives with each of these artists<sup>16</sup>; indeed, throughout this thesis I acknowledge the influence of their practices upon the place-specific development of my own, but this research also builds beyond their work in its prioritising of a time-specific engagement with place.

Following Poynor, Reeve and Whitehead, this noctographic practice began as a solo practice that developed simple movement tasks through a kinaesthetic exploration of the durational nightscape. The outcomes of these tasks were co-formed by the weather and season of the site. These solo investigations then evolved into a series of participatory workshops: taking place over several consecutive evenings and throughout the year, these workshops were structured to facilitate a durational, embodied engagement with place. However, unlike the practices of Poynor, Reeve and Whitehead, the timings and duration of these noctographic workshops were attuned to the duration of nightfall in the wood, and therefore shifted accordingly each evening. Such an approach prioritises the more-than-human temporalities of a place, requiring – and encouraging – an awareness of such temporalities in its human participants. Additionally, whereas the practices I attended in 2017 of Poynor, Reeve and Whitehead primarily attracted dancers, artists and movement therapists, the participatory workshops of this noctographic practice ran as two separate strands: one for professional dancers, one for community participants. This approach enabled a deep investigation into the relationship between nightfall and movement that values both the embodied knowledge of movement of professional dance artists and the embodied knowledge of place of local inhabitants. The progression from solo work to group work is, of course, intrinsic to this research practice: taking place across an array of nightfalls in different seasons and weathers

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<sup>15</sup> Such as: Katye Coe's and Tom Goodwin's "Kinship" workshops, Bodyweather UK, Simone Kenyon's workshops and choreographic practice, Nigel Stewart's work with Sap Dance, Louise Anne Wilson Company and Jennifer Monson and others (Stewart, 2010b; 2015) to name a few.

<sup>16</sup> Whilst they occasionally share their work elsewhere, Poynor's practice takes place on the Jurassic Coast, Reeve's in Dorset, and Whitehead's in Pembrokeshire, Wales.

and encompassing a range of experiences from different voices and bodies, this research is able to engage with perceptions of nightfall that are multiple and entangled (as opposed to singular and sole-authored), aligning with the new materialist framework that this research utilises. Through the involvement of dance practitioners and local inhabitants, this research aims to explore how a shared kinaesthetic sensibility towards nightfall might be developed and how new experiences and understandings of nightfall might become accessible to these communities through movement. Whilst each set of workshops were attuned to the participants prior knowledge of movement and prior knowledge of the wood, each drew upon the same movement-based tasks during this year-long, kinaesthetic and durational exploration of the wood's nightfall.

Aside from my experiences engaging with the practices of Poynor, Reeve and Whitehead, the work of American movement artists Steve Paxton and Andrea Olsen has also influenced the structure of my research practice<sup>17</sup>, and are therefore included in “ORBIT (1)” of Constellation A (fig. 1). In particular, Paxton and Olsen's score-based articulations of the relationship between the interior body and the environment that immerses that body (Paxton, 2008; Olsen, 2002) has been influential upon both my early solo practice and my own attempts at score-writing<sup>18</sup>. What I refer to here as “scores” are “verbal propositions, usually relating to physical, bodily or movement notions” (Millard, 2016) that are used to “generate movement to suggest or define an approach” (ibid.). Notably, Poynor, Reeve and Whitehead each shared a form of movement score prior to the group embarking upon embodied explorations – either by reading a text-based score aloud or giving a verbal provocation. During their workshops, I observed how these scores enabled an approach that was both individual and improvisational, providing a framework through which to kinaesthetically engage with a site. My noctographic approach aligns with these environmental movement practices by similarly employing movement scores to prioritise an immersive and durational process. This thesis explores four noctographic scores that were shared verbally in the workshops but are

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<sup>17</sup> It is significant to note that Whitehead also references Paxton as a key influence on his practice (Lavery and Whitehead, 2012: 114).

<sup>18</sup> See SECTION TWO of this thesis.

included in this thesis in their text-based form, having been further refined and developed through the participatory group practice.

Significant to the methodology of this noctographic approach is not just the utilisation of movement scores in environmental movement practices but equally their emphasis on writing or drawing as a way for participants to record kinaesthetic experiences (in particular in the practices of Poynor, Reeve and Olsen). Whilst this is an approach shared by both Authentic Movement (Pallaro, 1999; 2007) and phenomenological movement research<sup>19</sup>, this research practice is concerned with the profound attunement to place that these environmental movement practices enable. In both its solo investigations and participatory workshops, this noctographic practice utilised on-site writings and drawings as a reflective process to culminate each stage of the practice. These thoughts, experiences, encounters and imaginings (which I have anonymised) form a key part of this research practice in offering an insight into shared kinaesthetic understandings of nightfall. These writings, referred to throughout SECTION TWO of this thesis, are analysed choreologically as part of this research methodology: a process which I will detail later in this introduction.

These five artists – Olsen, Paxton, Poynor, Reeve and Whitehead – complete ORBIT (1) of Constellation A (fig. 1), but their use of movement scores sees them also included in ORBIT (2), alongside Rudolf Laban and Valerie Preston-Dunlop. Whereas the text-based movement scores of the artists discussed above act as provocations for creation and exploration, Labanotation<sup>20</sup> is most frequently used to document – in detail – the choreographic structures that have already been created. Notably, the use of scores in American modern movement practices – in particular, those of the Judson Church, of which Paxton was a part – arose through an increasing interest in Labanotation and “the theoretical issues of recording dance” (Banes, 1994: 213). That an overlap exists between Labanotation and the text-based movement scores that now proliferate contemporary dance practices – including the environmental movement practices discussed above – is of significance to this artistic research practice in its combination of the two. Whilst this noctographic movement practice

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<sup>19</sup> This is a broad area, but fundamentally see Preston-Dunlop, 2002; Rouhiainen 2003; Stewart, 2010a, 2015; Fraleigh, 1991, 2018.

<sup>20</sup> Labanotation, created by Rudolf Laban and first published in 1928, is a system for recording and analysing human movement by structuring symbols on a page (Hutchinson-Guest, 2005: 1-4).

uses text-based movement scores to share the practice (in both the workshops and this thesis) it utilised a form of Labanotation, “symbology”, in the recording and analysis of the movement that arose<sup>21</sup>. Symbology<sup>22</sup> lies somewhere in-between Labanotation and text-based scores: like Labanotation, symbology uses motifs to denote rhythms and spatial structures, but it does not do so with the equivalent detail and precision. Instead, similar to the text-based scores discussed above, symbology provides a sketch, an outline of a movement trajectory that requires an imaginative and experimental engagement. This noctographic practice utilises symbology as part of its choreological methodology, which forms the third orbit of Constellation A (fig. 1) and which I will now address in detail.

Choreological studies<sup>23</sup> is an approach to analysing and understanding movement. Developed by movement scholar Valerie Preston-Dunlop but stemming from the movement research of Rudolf Laban (of whom Preston-Dunlop was a student), Preston-Dunlop summarises the field as:

the study of the hidden grammars behind movement and the movement arts, in particular the hidden grammar of spatial form in choreutics, the hidden grammar of dynamics and rhythm in eukinetics and the structural grammar of movement for rehearsal and in notating (2010: 8)<sup>24</sup>.

Having studied choreology under Preston-Dunlop<sup>25</sup>, I approach this research project not only as a practising dance artist and researcher, but also as a choreologist. Fundamental to choreological studies is the analysis of movement as it is both perceived and embodied, making it essential to the methodology of a night-time movement practice. Particular to the experience of nightfall – as will be made evident in this thesis – are the ways in which it blurs and challenges, in a multitude of ways, the perception and embodiment of movement. If, as Preston-Dunlop asserts,

the knowledge from experience and the knowledge from observation are distinct but essentially inter-related and ultimately inter-dependent.

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<sup>21</sup> The use of symbology in this research is predicated upon my studying of the subject under Valerie Preston-Dunlop and Melanie Clarke at Trinity Laban Conservatoire, London (2013-16), towards the qualification of Specialist Diploma in Choreological Studies.

<sup>22</sup> Also referred to as “motif writing” in both LMA (Laban Movement Analysis – see below) and choreology.

<sup>23</sup> Other strands of movement studies that have sprung from Laban’s work include: Laban Movement Analysis (Davies, 2006), Movement Pattern Analysis (Lamb, 1979), Bartenieff Fundamentals (Bartenieff, 2002; Hackney, 1998), Body-Mind Centring (Hartley, 1994), to name a few. For Preston-Dunlop, choreological studies is an evolving field specific to the discipline of dance whereas other movement studies exist as part of a wider analysis of “human movement behaviour” (Preston-Dunlop, 2010: 9).

<sup>24</sup> The terms “choreutics” and “eukinetics” are both Laban’s (see Laban 1966; 1980).

<sup>25</sup> As part of my studies at Trinity Laban Conservatoire London (BA Dance Theatre 2008-11, Specialist Diploma in Choreological Studies 2013-16).

Articulation of this inter-relationship is essentially choreological in that it requires this multi-level of complexity for its knowing (2002: 11).

then a night-time movement practice makes felt this inter-relatedness as a fluid, porous exchange. However, it is essential to note that here Preston-Dunlop is referring specifically to human movement. My night-time movement practice, on the other hand, is equally concerned with how more-than-human movement is both perceived and encountered. Choreology's concerns with the human body's "kinaesthetic awareness of creating and controlling movement" (ibid.: 7) is here de-centred by nightfall to form a kinaesthetic awareness of how more-than-human bodies, forces and materialities shape – and co-create – what is otherwise presumed to be "human" movement as articulated through human bodies<sup>26</sup>. Therefore, as much as choreology is essential to the methodology of a night-time movement practice in its articulation of the inter-dependency of perceiving and embodying movement, its own development as a field will equally be challenged – in various ways – by the formation of this practice. Choreology is well suited to such a task: fundamental to its practice is what Preston-Dunlop refers to as "the WHAT IF principle" (2010: 9) – an impulse to question and probe not only the applications and capabilities of its tools, but also its relevance and necessity to the evolving field of dance; it is with the "contemporary developments of Rudolf Laban's praxis" that it is concerned, not the preservation or conservation of them<sup>27</sup>. Therefore, the challenges that this research practice offers to choreology – its removal from the dance studio to a darkening, rural environment and its application to more-than-human movement, for instance – are in line with the provocation and experimentation that its progression as a field both relies upon and welcomes.

Finally, significant to the methodology of this artistic research is choreology's systematic approach to movement. Laban's Effort Graph (Laban and Lawrence, 1947)<sup>28</sup> organises dynamic movement into four motion factors – time, space, weight and flow – and has since been incorporated into Preston-Dunlop's "structural model" (Preston-Dunlop, 2013a), which in turn dissects movement according to body,

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<sup>26</sup> This position is reflected in my theoretical framework (see CONSTELLATION A: THEORY).

<sup>27</sup> This is evidenced by the current description of choreological studies by Trinity Laban Conservatoire; [www.trinitylaban.ac.uk/study/dance/diploma-programmes/specialist-diploma-choreological-studies](http://www.trinitylaban.ac.uk/study/dance/diploma-programmes/specialist-diploma-choreological-studies)

<sup>28</sup> The Effort Graph is described in further detail in SECTION TWO of this thesis and is included in APPENDIX (1).

action, dynamics, space and relatedness<sup>29</sup>. These categories are not predicated on the idea that movement is divisible, but rather that by separating the strands that comprise it, it becomes possible to better understand the inter-relations between them. Both the structural model and the Effort Graph provide scaffoldings that are utilised by this artistic research in the structuring of its practice and analysis. As a method for familiarising myself with the reflective writings produced by workshop participants, I used the structural model to develop simple table-like structures<sup>30</sup> that displayed the writings according to the evening on which they were written and the choreological strand to which they most closely applied (body, relationships, dynamics, action, space)<sup>31</sup>. Whilst these tables served a basic purpose in enabling me to view the written observations through a choreological lens and observe any reoccurring motifs, SECTION TWO of this thesis revisits the on-site writings in their whole, original form so that their articulations of nightfall as kinaesthetic encounters can be understood through both phenomenological and new materialist frameworks. Here, it is instead the Effort Graph that is utilised to structure the practice: the four movement scores that feature in SECTION TWO are loosely based upon the Graph's four motion factors (weight, time, space, flow). That the motion factors articulate movement as an array of shifting spectrums<sup>32</sup> (Laban and Lawrence, 1947) makes for an essential structure for a practice that investigates the perpetual motional shifts that nightfall's darkening entails<sup>33</sup>. Additionally, both Preston-Dunlop's structural model (2013a) and Laban's Effort Graph use written "motifs" or symbols that enable an efficient, choreological recording of spatial and rhythmical patterns. It is these that form the symbology used in this noctographic practice (examples of which are included in Appendices 5-8) so that I could note – on-site – the emerging movement patterns observed in both my solo investigations and the participatory workshops. In SECTION TWO, this thesis places the symbology alongside the written reflections that I and the workshop participants produced to forge a choreological analysis of moving-with nightfall.

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<sup>29</sup> It is worth noting that the Effort Graph is concerned primarily with dynamic fluctuations whereas the Structural Model encompasses a larger range of movement structures – Rosemary Brandt and Alison Curtis-Jones, in their teaching of Preston-Dunlop's Structural Model, include the Effort Graph as a strand of Dynamics (Brandt et al., 2013).

<sup>30</sup> Table-like structures for analysing movement are similarly used by movement researcher Ciane Fernandes in the preliminary stages of her research (2014).

<sup>31</sup> Examples of these tables are available in APPENDIX (2).

<sup>32</sup> The structural model, in many ways, places the human body at the centre of its analysis with strands such as "body" and "action" whereas the Effort Graph is structured to analyse fluctuations of movement.

<sup>33</sup> As detailed further in the introduction to SECTION TWO of this thesis.

To summarise: a choreological approach is intrinsic to a night-time movement practice. Approaching the spatial-temporal phenomena of nightfall through a practice that is itself predicated upon spatial-temporal articulations requires a method that enables a separating of the strands – of time and space, of lines and rhythms – so that their inter-relation and expression can at once be further understood and kinaesthetically comprehended. However, despite this systematic approach to movement, choreology values an embodied approach that is predicated on “the lived experience of moving” (Preston-Dunlop, 2010: 8): essentially, it is an embodied practice that aligns itself with the phenomenological movement. The entanglement of these two fields is of considerable relevance to the trajectory of this artistic research practice and will now be examined further in the context of its theoretical framework.

#### CONSTELLATION A: THEORY

This section refers to the upper half of the hand-drawn diagram, “Constellation A” (fig. 1) that denotes the theorists, scholars and artists – and the inter-relations between them – whose work has shaped both the practice of this research and the trajectory of this thesis. These form three “orbits” on the diagram that denote the key elements of my theoretical framework: “Perception”, “Entanglements”, and “Movement”, which broadly encompass the fields of phenomenology, new materialism and choreology. Having already introduced the practice of choreology, I will now examine its relationship with phenomenology and how the inter-relation of these two fields has shaped this artistic research.

The conceptualisation of dance as a phenomenological practice – firstly, and most notably, by dance scholar Maxine Sheets-Johnstone (1979) – has considerably influenced Preston-Dunlop’s development of choreological studies<sup>34</sup> (Preston-Dunlop 2006; 2002). As Sheets-Johnstone describes, phenomenology involves:

descriptions of man and the world as man lives in-the-midst-of-the-world, as he experiences himself and the world, keenly and acutely, before any kind of reflection whatsoever takes place. (1979: 10)

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<sup>34</sup> Preston-Dunlop’s work “locates choreological study at the plane of intersection of semiotics and phenomenology” (2002: 12).

The emphasis placed here on pre-reflective experience is akin to Preston-Dunlop's "lived experience of moving" (2010: 8), an embodied process that is "about presenting something (unutterable) through a tangible person-based medium" (Preston-Dunlop, 2002: 11). Yet it is not simply the valuing of the kinaesthetic phenomena that unites both choreology and dance phenomenology – it is also the description of it, description that can only be had *via* the kinaesthetic experience (Sheets-Johnstone, 1979: 11). However, as Preston-Dunlop notes, embodiment is "a practical process not necessarily compatible with verbal language" (2002: 7). In their attempts to articulate the lived, kinaesthetic experience of dance, the work of both Sheets-Johnstone and Preston-Dunlop follow that of Laban in creating new terminologies of movement: concepts that describe and analyse the phenomena of dancing. Notably, there are some key similarities in both the terms they utilise and the experiences of time and space that they articulate, evidencing an influential relationship between the structure of Sheets-Johnstone's dance phenomenology and Preston-Dunlop's choreological studies<sup>35</sup>. As this artistic research applies choreological analysis in ways that often challenge its structures and concepts, recognising some of the correlations between these two fields is invaluable to not only enable this work to further develop choreology's tools and terminology, but equally to enable this research to produce its own practice – and a vocabulary for that practice – that is drawn from choreological principles of movement.

However, it is not only the similarities between the work of Sheets-Johnstone and Preston-Dunlop that make the work of the former indispensable to this research: it is also the subject matter itself, that of nightfall. As with its approach to movement, this artistic research addresses nightfall as an embodied encounter, an experience that "must be had in order to be described" (Sheets-Johnstone, 1979: 11). In being concerned with the experiencing and describing of nightfall as a "kinetic phenomenon" (ibid.: 14), this research is unavoidably concerned with the kinetic *perception* of that phenomenon. As a result, the work of phenomenologists Maurice Merleau-Ponty – in particular, his essay "Cezanne's Doubt" (1964)<sup>36</sup> – Don

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<sup>35</sup> This is discussed in more detail in SECTION TWO: WADING.

<sup>36</sup> Theodore A. Toadvine describes how this essay "is no less a thumbnail sketch of his [Merleau-Ponty's] own philosophy as developed in *Phenomenology of Perception*" (1997: 545), and that the two were first published in the same year, 1947.

Handelman – in particular, his essay “Dark Soundings” (2005)<sup>37</sup> – and Gaston Bachelard – in particular, his essay on “Nests” (2014) – have been essential in articulating a human perception of nightfall. Whilst it is primarily Sheets-Johnstone's dance phenomenology that has enabled this research to combine a choreological understanding of movement with a phenomenological comprehension of nightfall, it is also relevant that Preston-Dunlop draws upon the phenomenology of specifically Merleau-Ponty and Bachelard to articulate the spatial and perceptual phenomenology of choreological studies (2002: 91-2; 109-111; 125), making their work significant in how this research utilises choreology as a method for kinaesthetically perceiving nightfall. However, whereas dance research usually utilises phenomenology to articulate the experiences of perception that a (human) body in motion enables<sup>38</sup>, this artistic research utilises a phenomenological perspective in its approach towards nightfall as a spatial-temporal entity. It is, therefore, Merleau-Ponty's analysis of the spatial structures in Cezanne's artwork, Handelman's analysis of night's liquidity, and Bachelard's phenomenological expression of space, that are of most relevance to this research practice.

Whilst it is from this choreological-phenomenological framework that this artistic research commences, it is also from here that it departs. Both choreology and Sheets-Johnstone's phenomenology have in common an anthropocentric approach, a perspective that is not sufficient in supporting a practice that depends upon (and therefore is shaped by) the more-than-human bodies, surfaces, weathers, materialities and things which comprise the night-time environment from which this practice emerges. Choreology's notion of embodiment is of one forged by a human body that both creates and controls movement (Preston-Dunlop, 2002: 7); one that aligns itself with the human perceiver of Merleau-Ponty's “lived body” (ibid.). In its reliance on the more-than-human, this artistic research practice necessitates a shift from a constellation of choreological-phenomenological concepts towards those of new materialism. This shift is essential in enabling this artistic research to account for the ways in which its movement is shaped and co-formed by more-than-human entities.

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<sup>37</sup> To my knowledge, this is the only essay that offers a phenomenological perspective on lived encounters with night-time environments (at the time of writing). It does, therefore, offer an essential perspective to this artistic research and is drawn upon throughout the thesis.

<sup>38</sup> See Preston-Dunlop, 2002; Rouhiainen 2003; Stewart 2010a, 2015; Fraleigh 1991, 2018.

The field of new materialism is essentially a turn to matter (Fox and Alldred, 2019), towards the materialities of things, bodies, surfaces, forces and substances and the ways in which they shift, change and entangle. It includes within its mattering both actual and virtual structures – such as imagination and memory – that entangle with material encounters (ibid.). As Jane Bennett asserts, this field “attempts a more radical displacement of the human subject than phenomenology has done” (2010: 30)<sup>39</sup>. Bennett, along with Tim Ingold and Donna Haraway, forms the third cluster, “entanglements”, in “Constellation A” (fig. 1). These three theorists are essential to this artistic research not only for their articulation of human and more-than-human entanglements (Ingold, 2015; Haraway, 2016; Bennett, 2010), but precisely because they facilitate a dovetail between phenomenology and new materialism. Indeed, Ingold (2015) is heavily influenced by Merleau-Ponty and does not directly identify himself with new materialism. Even so, with Bennett and Haraway, Ingold’s work has contributed significantly to the development of new materialist thought. More importantly, the broad relevance and applicability of their work<sup>40</sup> means that the concepts and structures that they introduce can be utilised to not *reject* the understandings of movement and nightfall that might arise through the subject-oriented perspective of a choreological-phenomenological approach, but rather *expand* beyond it – towards the non-hierarchical structures that new materialism evidences as immediately necessary to human and more-than-human relationships<sup>41</sup>.

By including Bennett, Haraway and Ingold within this theoretical framework, my artistic research endeavours to develop choreological movement principles to form a noctographic practice: one that utilises a phenomenological understanding of nightfall in order to shift towards a new materialist, kinaesthetic articulation of nightfall’s more-than-human relatedness. Significantly, the concepts and structures that Bennett, Haraway and Ingold introduce are especially compatible with

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<sup>39</sup> Bennett goes on to recognise that Merleau-Ponty’s work does begin to move in this direction (2010: 30), further demonstrating his relevance to a research practice such as this that chronicles a shift between phenomenology and new materialism.

<sup>40</sup> Bennett’s work describes a “vital materialism” (2010); Ingold’s work develops the concepts of Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology and is therefore equally compatible with that field (Ingold 2015); Haraway’s work is equally influential in the fields of eco-feminism and posthumanism (Alaimo, 1994, 2008).

<sup>41</sup> Notably, Barbour, Hunter and Kloetzel describe a similar relationship by which new materialism offers dance an attempt to “broaden out” from phenomenology whilst still recognising the valuable perspective that dance phenomenologists bring to the discourse of environmental dance practices (2019: 11-12). This relationship between dance, phenomenology and new materialism is reflected upon in the conclusion of this thesis.

movement-based research<sup>42</sup>: the modes of entanglement that they propose are motional and suggest means of exchange that are dependent upon ongoing processes of movement<sup>43</sup>. This is essential to this artistic research not simply because it is itself a movement practice, but because in engaging with night-time environments it looks towards tangible, more-than-visual<sup>44</sup> structures of relatedness through which to process the new understandings that arise through the practice. This “orbit” therefore also includes the work of dance theorist Erin Manning: whilst not a choreologist, her work resonates with this research practice – in particular her short essay with Catherine de Zegher, *Violin Phase* (2011)<sup>45</sup> – in her approach to movement as a more-than-visual process that exists beyond the human body<sup>46</sup>. This thesis also demonstrates how Manning’s understanding of dance is compatible with a new materialist approach to movement, making possible a comprehension of a practice that is at once engaged with more-than-visual, more-than-human modes of relatedness.

In drawing together these particular strands of enquiry, this research practice can be positioned within an emerging field of dance work and research that utilises phenomenological and new materialist frameworks. For instance, through its application of phenomenology to articulate site-based experiences, this research practice exists in relation to the work of Sondra Fraleigh (1991, 2018), Vanessa Grasse (2016), Victoria Hunter (2015, 2019), Paula Kramer (2012, 2015), Anna Macdonald (2019), Andrea Olsen (1991, 2002), Leena Rouhiainen (2003), Nigel Stewart (2010a, 2015), and Amy Voris (2018). Whilst the works of these practitioners diverge in terms of their movement styles and the sites they utilise, the emergence of their work nevertheless demonstrates a shared and growing interest in phenomenologically informed, site-based movement practices. This research contributes significantly to this growing cluster of work: in particular, it aligns with

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<sup>42</sup> Other dance researchers have also found this to be the case: Vanessa Grasse’s *MESH* (2017) worked directly with Tim Ingold in exploring forms of entanglement, whilst Lisa May Thomas’ dance research project, “Figuring” (*The Figuring Project*, 2018), draws upon Haraway’s string figures.

<sup>43</sup> These entanglements are discussed in more detail throughout the thesis: namely Ingold’s concepts of meshwork (2015), Haraway’s string figures (2016) and Bennett’s horizontal relations (2010).

<sup>44</sup> This is a term I use throughout the thesis: it denotes how a night-time practice does not render a loss of visibility but rather requires an engagement that is “more-than” visual. That this is the case when encountering night’s darkness is argued throughout the thesis.

<sup>45</sup> This takes its title from the choreographic work by Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker (1981), with which it engages.

<sup>46</sup> Manning has criticised a phenomenological approach to movement in its emphasis on the subjective body as opposed to the formation of movement (2014a).

the work of Nigel Stewart by combining phenomenology with a choreological methodology, but it also resonates with the work of Paula Kramer, Vanessa Grasse and Victoria Hunter, who engage with new materialism alongside phenomenology to explore the human and more-than-human entanglements of site-based movement. To this developing field, this research therefore uniquely contributes a noctographic movement practice that utilises choreological, phenomenological and new materialist modes of enquiry.

## CONSTELLATION B

Having discussed those methodologies and theoretical frameworks that have directly shaped this artistic research, “Constellation B” (fig. 2) details how the structure of the practice aligns with the contents of this thesis. The practice was structured into three stages, comprising solo investigations, group workshops and the choreographic process (see fig. 2). This structure was accumulative, with each stage building upon the knowledge produced in the one before. Whilst this thesis follows a similar three-stage structure, it does not simply seek to narrate the process of this practice over the timescale it was undertaken but instead addresses the key choreological themes, movement scores and new understandings of nightfall that arose from that practice. In doing so, this thesis gives shape and precedence to the noctographic practice that has emerged from this research process and will continue beyond it. The use of a three-stage structure not only ties together the process of the practice and progression of the thesis, but also roots the research in the three-stage progression of nightfall itself<sup>47</sup>. I will now outline the three sections that comprise the structure of this thesis – further details of their contents is provided in each of their introductions.

SECTION ONE provides a review of the representation and exploration of night in performance works and other artworks. This section uses such works to examine what differentiates durational night-time darkness from the “un-dark nights” of the city and the “un-nightly dark” of artificial darkness<sup>48</sup>. In doing so, this section

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<sup>47</sup> As described previously in this introduction, in A NOCTOGRAPHIC PRACTICE.

<sup>48</sup> Such an approach is essential to enabling this research to comprehend both the relevance of this work in relation to the light pollution of cityscapes and how it is situated in relation to the artificial dark of the interior spaces in which dance most frequently takes place.

outlines how other artists have engaged with night in order to identify any key themes and approaches that might influence the trajectory of my own practice.

SECTION TWO articulates the noctographic practice that has emerged from this artistic research. It draws upon both my solo investigations and the group workshops, referring to their on-site reflective writings and symbology to analyse the kinaesthetic experiences of moving-with nightfall. The section is structured by four movement scores (loosely aligning with the four motion factors of the Effort Graph) that were developed throughout the practice. It is through a choreological analysis of these movement scores that the practice shifts through a constellation of phenomenological theory towards one of new materialism.

SECTION THREE describes how findings from the workshops informed the creation and performance of the time-specific choreography, *On the Patterns we Gaze* (2019). This forms the third stage of this noctographic practice. Combining choreological movement principles with a phenomenological and new materialist approach, *On the Patterns we Gaze* was a time-specific choreography performed for – and with – both human and more-than-human audiences. SECTION THREE draws upon on-site writings from both audience members and performers to articulate how experiences that arose through the practice might be made tangible to participating audiences through the choreographic work.

Finally, the CONCLUSION to this thesis draws together those new understandings of nightfall that have arisen through this artistic research. Mirroring the three-section structure of this introduction, the conclusion reviews the processes with which this research engages and considers the impact of its findings upon valuing an ecological and embodied approach to nightfall, as well as in relation to the fields of choreological studies and new materialism.

As is made evident by “Constellation B” (fig. 2), there exists – throughout this research – an entangled relationship between practice and thesis, and between the choreological lens that informs the practice and the theoretical frameworks that contextualise its analysis. Through its integration of movement scores and documentations of practice, the structure of this thesis aims not to unravel such

entanglements but rather to articulate how their joinings have forged this noctographic, time-specific movement research practice.

## SECTION ONE

### RE-VIEWING NIGHTSCAPES: A THEMATIC STUDY OF SOURCES



Figure 3: Grubbins Wood. Civil twilight on the lower path. Image: Jonny Randall

## INTRODUCTION

This section reviews the representation and exploration of nightfall in performance works and other artworks in order to consider the modes of expression that nightfall makes possible. The purpose of this review is to evidence how movement provides a unique way of negotiating nocturnal experience and, in doing so, aims to identify themes and ideas that have the potential to influence the trajectory of my own dance practice. Accordingly, movement-based sources are given precedence within each section of this chapter. However, night-orientated dance works are placed within the context of a broader spectrum of artworks that are concerned with nightfall, enabling this review to address the far-reaching ways in which nightfall has been thematised and encountered within the twentieth and twenty-first century.

This study endeavours to enrich its perception of what comprises the night hours and to comprehensively review the potentialities of darkness. To do so, it includes within its scope those works concerned with un-darkened nights and un-nightly dark. Firstly, *OVER-SPILL* takes nocturnalisation<sup>49</sup> as its premise, exploring how the illuminated nightfall of cityscapes promotes a blurring of roles and identities, of fears and freedoms, permitted by an urban nightscape. Reviewing such works is essential to a practice that seeks to articulate the necessity for dark nights<sup>50</sup> and to understand how night-time performance works might provide a unique way of negotiating nocturnal experience<sup>51</sup>. Secondly, *UN-VOID* considers the representation and association of darkness-as-absence, and in particular regards the challenges faced in representing it as such through live performance. Reviewing such works is essential to a practice that seeks to discover new ways of moving and experiencing that are not governed by light, but that instead reach towards the more-than-visual modes of engagement that darkness requires. Finally, *SIMMER-DIM* reviews those works which explore nightfall as a durational shift. Focusing on the night works of three dance artists (Rosemary Lee, Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, Simon Whitehead) it reviews those works in which the body is integrated into the site of twilight's

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<sup>49</sup> I refer here to Craig Koslofsky's concept of "Nocturnalisation", which affiliates the colonisation of night with how "enlightenment claims to dispel darkness" (Koslofsky, 2011: 280). Thus, the electric light pollution of technological advancements and the "light" of predominantly white western knowledge are conjoined in their attempt to dissipate darkness.

<sup>50</sup> See the PROLOGUE of this thesis.

<sup>51</sup> See RESEARCH QUESTIONS in the main INTRODUCTION of this thesis.

continuous transformation. The works selected for this section address specifically the non-hierarchical, more-than-human entanglements of nightfall with which this research practice is particularly concerned. Reviewing such works is essential to a practice which not only endeavours to address how becoming-with nightfall might enable new kinaesthetic knowledge to emerge, but which also seeks to generate a more embodied understanding of our more-than-human night-world<sup>52</sup>. Whilst it is the works in SIMMER-DIM which are of most relevance to my own research, their significance is made felt only by firstly reviewing those works that occur in urban nightscapes and artificial darkness. Essentially, the structure of this review utilises the works featured within its first two sections to define and consolidate an understanding of nightfall which is then more thoroughly explored through those works discussed in the final section of the review. It is through this approach that the durational, transformational capacity of nightfall is brought to the fore.

Finally, it is important to note that the title of this section refers to my aim to not merely assess and critically review these night works but rather indicate how such works can enable us to reconsider our perspectives and experiences of the night hours, giving a new vision of the nocturnal world in an age of ecological crisis. After all, compressed between un-darkened nights and un-nightly dark, the phenomenal experience of nightfall – the very palpability of its processual darkening – is at risk of being lost altogether<sup>53</sup>. Whilst this review commences with those artworks which utilise those two extremes, it then gives precedence to works which resist them – works whose durational engagement with site makes evident the necessity of a time-specific, practice-based approach to nightscapes.

## **OVER-SPILL**

### **NOCTURNALISATION**

Human colonising of the night hours through artificial light is epitomised in Berenice Abbott's *Night View: Midtown Manhattan* (1934) (fig. 4). Described as an “anthem to the electrical grid” (Berman in Homann 2015: 43), the image illustrates the point

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<sup>52</sup> See RESEARCH QUESTIONS in the main INTRODUCTION of this thesis.

<sup>53</sup> See *Extinction of Experience* (Soga and Gaston, 2016 after Pyle, 1978).

at which night becomes an architectural tool: “night was no longer there to veil New York’s architecture: it was to exalt it. Artificial light had conquered nature and taken possession of it” (ibid.). The photograph reveals an electric patterning of the city, which transfigures the scale and structure of the architecture without divulging the labour and activity such electricity affords. The human form itself is absent from the image and instead human activity – and the extent of it – is represented through the overspill of electric light<sup>54</sup>.

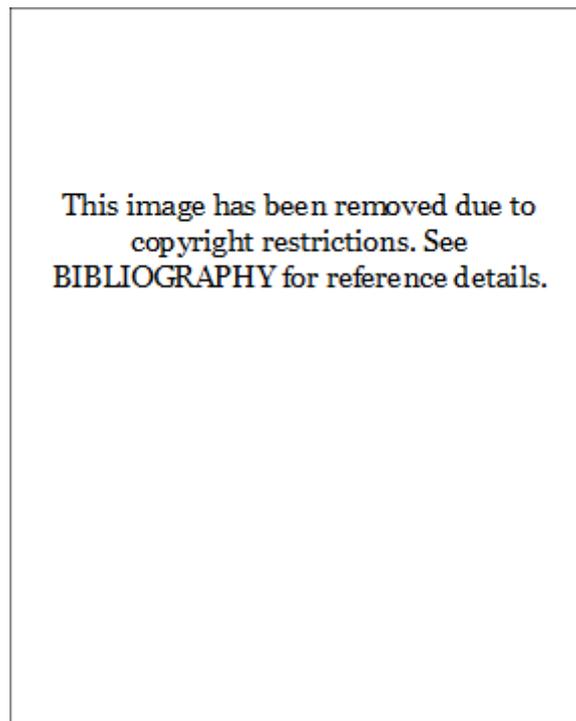


Figure 4: Berenice Abbott’s *Night View: Midtown Manhattan* (1934)

In many ways, the dance equivalent of Abbott’s image is Oskar Schlemmer’s *Stäbetanz* (Poles Dance, 1928-9) (fig. 5). Described as “a dance with spaceless darkness” (Elcott, 2015: 9), Schlemmer created a spectacle of pole-like structures whose brightness in the dark absented the human form of the dancer so that “all that was fully visible were the intricate designs traced in space by the white poles he manipulated” (Anderson, 1984)<sup>55</sup>. As is the case in *Night View: Midtown*

<sup>54</sup> In this way, Abbott’s image acts as a “spectacle” of night (Debord, 1994). Nightlife here is represented through the image of the illuminated, mechanised motion of the city, which replaces – and absents – the experience of night that is directly lived.

<sup>55</sup> Schlemmer’s experiments with the artificial dark (1928-9) are comparable with Loie Fuller’s experiments with artificial light, her voluminous silk dresses illuminated from all angles as she turns continuously in horizontal plane (*Serpentine Dance* 1891. See Cooper Albright, 2007; Garelick, 2009). Both works involve a solo dancer on stage, whose human form is somewhat obscured to allow the artificial element – be it light or dark – to take

*Manhattan*, the bright, linear forms that colonise the dark remain inseparable from the human interests – and human presence– that it symbolises. Whilst Schlemmer works with an artificial darkness and not the modulating darkness of night itself, both works exemplify how a human drive to colonise the dark takes spectral form.

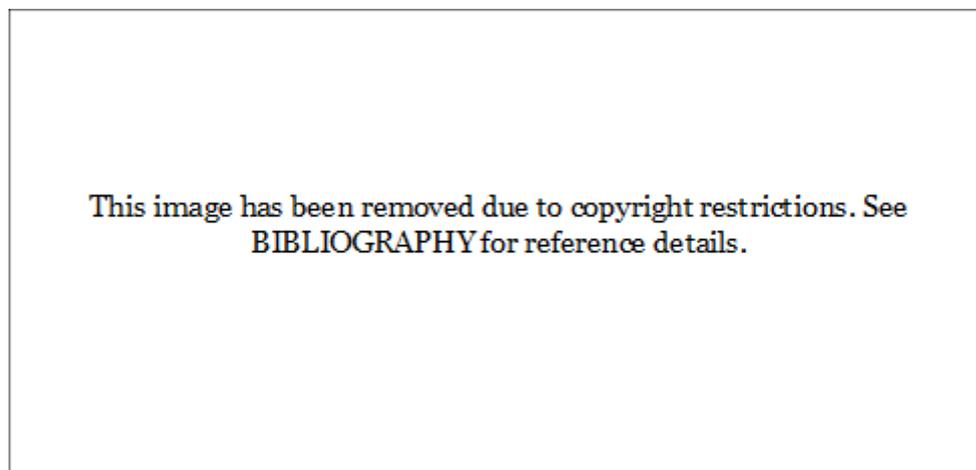


Figure 5: Manda von Kreibitz in Oskar Schlemmer's *Stäbetanz (Poles Dance)* 1928-9. Unknown photographer.

Using the same principle, the twenty-first century neon light works of Tim Etchells, Tracey Emin, and Jung Lee all create short phrases or singular words made of neon structures. Whereas Etchells tends to situate his within cityscapes (*In the Trees*, 2020; *A Stitch in Time*, 2013; *We Wanted*, 2011), synced with the electric lights of urban environments, Lee places her work in rural, almost desolate environments. The isolation that the site alone might otherwise evoke is countered by the intense intimacy of Lee's text – "I dream of you", "I want to be your love" (Lee, 2012). Her series *Day and Night* (2013) is photographed on the cusp of night, her words and their sentiments emerging from blurred forms into stark clarity as darkness falls, subtly endowing the work with a durational quality so that the illumination of the text is enacted equally by night's darkness as much as it is by the artificial light. Here, the night becomes a condition through which the sentiments of her words progressively gain clarity and intensity. These neon installations can be considered performances of a sort: temporal in their duration and undergoing a progressive transition of visibility, their configuration is dependent upon both the length and quality of the nightscape in which they are situated.

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precedence in the work. Essentially, both artists create an interplay between abstracted human movement and illuminated prosthetic devices.

## NIGHT SHIFTS

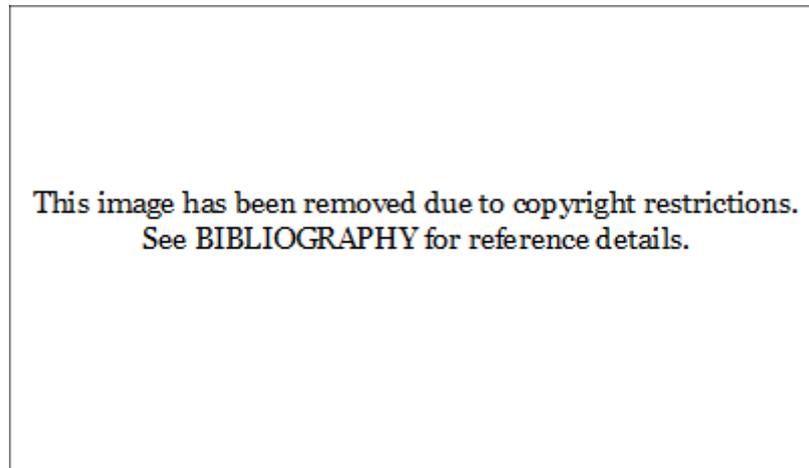


Figure 6: Alison Curtis-Jones' recreation of Rudolf Laban's *Nacht* (2010). Photographer: Kyle Stevenson

Murray Melbin's 1978 observation that "the trend of night-time expansion is under way" is reflected in artworks predating his comment by fifty years: Rudolf Laban's *Green Clowns* (1928) and *Nacht* (1927), Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927)<sup>56</sup> and Kurt Jooss' *Big City* (1932)<sup>57</sup> are some such examples. If we believe that "repetition is destructive to human expressivity" (Preston-Dunlop, 2013b: 88), then these works, which draw parallels between night-workers and a death-like exhaustion through repetitive behaviour, are acknowledging the repercussions of a colonised night<sup>58</sup>. Alison Curtis-Jones' 2010 recreation of Rudolf Laban's *Nacht* exemplifies the meagre distinction between night-time consumers and workers. Influenced by the work of George Grosz<sup>59</sup>, the dancers in *Nacht* (fig. 6) perform a "TanzBar"<sup>60</sup> scene of obscure sexual encounters, before switching fluidly into "Monotony", in which the hunched

<sup>56</sup> In Alison Curtis-Jones' twenty-first century recreation of Rudolf Laban's *Green Clowns*, the dancers crawl over each other in the form of a conveyor belt, their bodies forming the components of the machine whilst the twenty-four-hour clock and shift rotation of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927) alludes to a mode of constant production and exhaustion. Lang's workers and Laban's clowns are literally slaves to a machine that ultimately demands human sacrifice in a way that echoes Tönnies' concept of *Gesellschaft* (see *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* [Community and Society], 1887) in which the machine can be understood as giving precedence to economic needs at the cost of human interaction and individual values, the underground "society" becoming a basis for efficiency and production as opposed to an interactive community.

<sup>57</sup> See Coton, 1946.

<sup>58</sup> Rancière's *Proletarian Nights* (2012) discusses further this relationship between class structure, shift work and the effects on human creativity. Notably, originally published in 1989, the work was re-published in 2012 in renewed relevance to the rise in unstable employment and unsustainable shift work.

<sup>59</sup> Grosz's paintings (e.g. *Suicide*, 1916) frequently portray night scenes populated by prostitutes, the bourgeoisie, the skeletal poor all alongside one another.

<sup>60</sup> See Bob Fosse's *Cabaret* (1972), Jon von Sternberg's *Blue Angel* (1930), Lisa Appignanesi's *The Cabaret* (1975), Djuna Barnes' *Nightwood* (2007) and Karl Toepfer's *Empire of Ecstasy* (1997) for further examples of the 1920's cabaret scenes of the Weimar Republic.

shoulders of Marianne von Werefkin's sketch of night-time workers – *Graveyard Shift* (1924)<sup>61</sup> – are clearly visible as the dancers move in heavy, laborious repetition, denied the night's gifts of recuperation, recreation and sleep, "the first necessity of the night" (Koslofsky, 2011: 6). Under the title of *Nacht*, each of these scenes depict an element of the electric night as time for pleasure, production, labour; the significance of *Nacht* is its demonstration of how such experiences morph from one to another, all subsumed by the cityscape's electric night<sup>62</sup>.

## NIGHT'S DETRITUS

If Laban's *Nacht* of 1927 satirised the accelerated, desperate nights of 1920s Weimar Republic<sup>63</sup>, Juha Forss' untitled performance at Helsinki's *Three Nights of Live Art* festival (2011) sets out to explore Helsinki's bourgeois club-scene of the twenty-first century. In opposition to *Nacht*'s cacophony of activities and people, Forss' work<sup>64</sup> might be termed a "non-performance", playing with a sense of despondency and emptiness which is enhanced by the depiction of absence<sup>65</sup>. Creating a club-like atmosphere, Forss watches, drinks, and re-plays the same track. The performance lasts an hour. Excruciatingly absent from the space are the bodies, pleasure and proximity that night clubs claim to afford. By staging the space as part of a night-time arts festival, Forss plays on the expectations of production and entertainment which we have come to associate with urban night-time. In his connotation of absence, Forss creates a circumstance which toes the line between boredom and despondency, where the night fails to produce the distractions that we crave – in particular, distraction from that which is consistently present, our selves. It is here, in the half-light of boredom and reflection, that despondency creeps in.

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<sup>61</sup> Despite Craig Koslofsky's assertion that servants become "the natural masters of the urban night" (2011: 159), Werefkin's *Graveyard Shift* is unusual in representing night-labour as bleak and dismal, contrasting with the more romanticised scenes of night-work, such as Andrew Wyeth's *Night Hauling* (1944) and Hörmann's *Quitting time for Reaper* (1892).

<sup>62</sup> Comparable to *Nacht* are Djuna Barnes' novel *Nightwood* (2007) and Kurt Jooss' ballet *Big City* (1932): both works similarly use the setting of the night hours in early twentieth-century Europe to juxtapose scenes of despondency against the spectacle of entertainment (see Coton, 1946).

<sup>63</sup> See Valerie Preston Dunlop's *Rudolf Laban: Man of Theatre* (2013b).

<sup>64</sup> The information given about this work is based upon viewing the work live in Helsinki, 2011, and conversations with the artist at that time.

<sup>65</sup> The artists Danny Treacy and Fred Tomaselli similarly use absence to connote urban nightlife. Treacy's *Them* (2013) is a collection of bizarre photographic portraits created from the detritus of forgotten clothes that he finds in the streets the morning-after, whilst Tomaselli's *Portrait of Jim* (2012) creates a night-sky constellation of drugs used by "Jim" (Kingston, 2013).

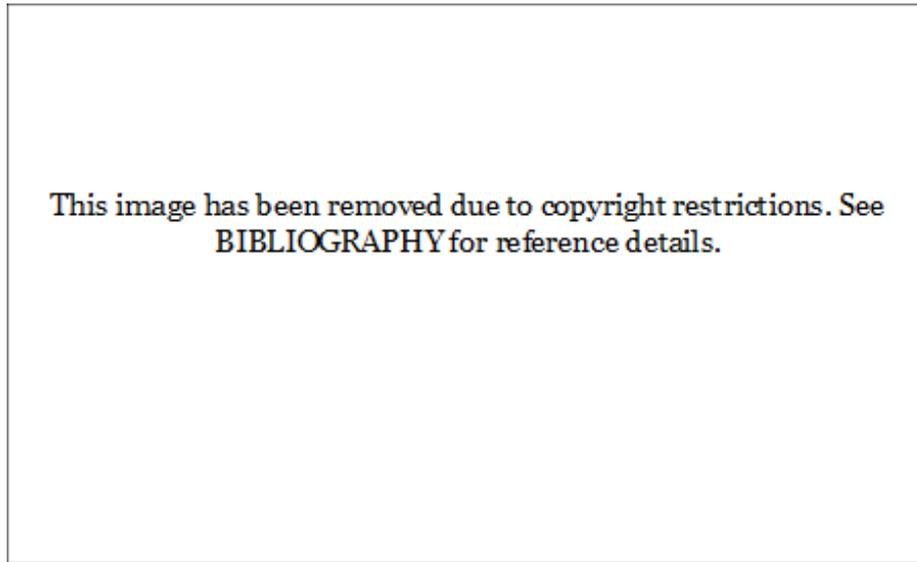


Figure 7: Image from Sarah Lee's series *Tender are the Nighthawks* (2017)

Where Forss' work despairs of the contemporary club scene, Simon Vincenzi's *Operation Infinity: Club Extinction* (2010), and Fleur Darkin's *Disgo* (2010) exalt in it. Using nightclub settings to combine audience and performers in a densely inhabited and neon-lit environment enables the works to explore physical proximity over a large surface area; in particular, Darkin's work invites reaction and propinquity, as "UV-lit dancers slither among us, hands snaking around our waists" (Jennings, 2010). Of course, these performance works deal with an interior contemporary night-scene: the exterior night-life of cityscapes are intimately captured in the photographic documentation series of Nick Turpin's *On the Night Bus* (2016), Sarah Lee's series *Tender are the Nighthawks* (2017 onwards) (fig. 7) and Jens Schott Knudsen's *Beijing Lights* (2016)<sup>66</sup>. Shot in urban environments, these series often capture pensive and withdrawn expressions of individuals, acting as a trace for what we cannot see: the journeys they have taken, the shifts they have worked, all that has preceded<sup>67</sup>.

<sup>66</sup> Edward Hopper's *Night Hawks* (1942), *Night Windows* (1928) and *Room in New York* (1932) and John Sloan's *Roofs*, *Summer Nights* (1906) similarly seek to capture the night-life (and private-life) of everyday people, evoking photographic techniques in their paintings and sketches to give a sense of the momentarily captured, and momentarily seen, gesturing towards what the illuminated cityscape reveals of the night.

<sup>67</sup> Similar scenes of night-time despondency are evoked in contemporary poetry: David Harsent's *Night* (2011) Paul Farley's *The Airbrake People* (2012), and Charles Bukowski's *Shooting the Moon in the Eye* (2002) each explore the physical and emotional debris of night's exploited workers.

Boris Charmatz's *Danse de Nuit* (2017)<sup>68</sup> similarly uses an outdoor, urban nightscape to create images of a fragmentary and disorientated night-time city life (fig. 8).

Taking place atop a multi-storey car-park – in full view of the electric skyline – eight dancers tell disconnected stories and perform rapid, fractured, incomplete movement. The performance space is constantly reconfigured: small clusters group around solo performers whose movements are either disturbed by a rush of bodies or else the performer simply slips away, disappearing into the crowd without conclusion<sup>69</sup> – both leave the audience lost and confused, lacking purpose in their spatial organisation. All personal boundaries are lowered: performers speak to the audience, seeking-out and maintaining eye-contact as they perform jagged movements, using physical touch as they target individuals in the crowd: pushing them forwards, pulling them back. Blindingly bright lights strapped to the backs of non-dancing performers bleach the space inhabited by the dancers, occasionally obscuring our capacity to see, and witness. This uncertainty, randomness and disorientation evokes – not by accident – a state of emergency.



Figure 8: Boris Charmatz's *Danse de Nuit* (2017) Photographer: Damien Meyer

<sup>68</sup> This description is based upon a viewing of the work in London, 20 May 2017.

<sup>69</sup> Willi Dorner's *Bodies in Urban Spaces* (2009) created a similar environment, the performers running through the cityscape with the audience trailing behind so that the city-life becomes entangled within the performance, becoming an inseparable part of the viewers experience.

Making explicit reference to the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, not just in their spoken text but also in their “capering and grimacing like cartoon characters” (Mackrell, 2017) and the sprawling casualness of their graffiti-like movements, Charmatz undoubtedly adopts the urban night-time to create experiences of confusion and fear which denote our “terror-orientated world” (ibid.). Charmatz’s dance of the night is one of fragments and confusion, created from the left-overs of what has already been produced. Yet it is also much more than this: Charmatz reminds us that in night’s detritus of fear and obscurity, there remains – for those that are awake – a freedom to create and play with whatever is left behind, the nocturnal city providing “a discrete time during which creativity may flourish and ideas may be nurtured” (Dunn, 2016: 21). *Danse de Nuit* is timely in the way in which it draws on present fears concerning terrorism to reclaim the urban night-space as a site for possibility: for action and re-action, for gathering and dancing<sup>70</sup>.

## SUMMARY

Of specific interest to this research are the ways in which the artworks reviewed in this subsection exist as by-products of the electric night. They occur as a detritus of Koslofsky’s nocturnalisation (Koslofsky, 2011: 280) – essentially, they are in excess of it – as opposed to re-enforcing or re-enacting its dispelling of darkness through enlightenment. These artworks rely upon the illumination of the night hours in order to exist, and yet they use urban nightscapes to enact specific modes of freedom that are beyond that of the site’s intended function (for example, the carpark in Charmatz’s *Danse de Nuit*, the nightclub atmosphere in Forss’ work, the public transport featured in Sarah Lee’s *Tender are the Nighthawks*). In doing so, these artworks reclaim the urban nightscape as a site for possibility and hint towards alternative ways of being that the night hours might otherwise afford. By using the electric night in this way, these works occur as predominantly visual encounters, existing *in situ* as still or moving images of an urban nightscape. If these works articulate the capacity of the night hours to be more than what they seem, then they

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<sup>70</sup> If we consider Naomi Klein’s opinion that the fear of terrorism can be promoted and manipulated to form yet another means of controlling a population (Klein, 2017), then we can understand *Danse de Nuit* – in the freedom it enacts and its re-claiming of space as a site for action and possibility – to resonate with the modes of revolution cited by Marx in the *Communist Manifesto* (1847) as being the only legitimate means of inducing change (Schaff, 1973). Whilst *Danse de Nuit* connotes no overtly political content in the text it uses, in this context we can nevertheless view the work as a revolutionary act.

do so by relying upon the illuminated and visual-dominant methods that set out to dispel night's existence. They allude to the notions of “more-than” and “excess” that are articulated by dance theorist Erin Manning (2011; 2013; 2014b; 2016) yet lack the sensorial engagement to which, in her view, those terms particularly refer<sup>71</sup>. Essentially, these works refrain from engaging with the potentialities of night itself. As poet Wendell Berry suggests, “To know the dark, go dark” (2018: 37). In what follows, UN-VOID reviews those artworks that engage directly with darkness as a means of exploring its potential worlds and seeks to consider the sensorial and imaginative methods that such an environment makes necessary.

## UN-VOID<sup>72</sup>

### DEAD SILENCE

Four years previous to Kasimir Malevich's *Black Square* (1915), Wassily Kandinsky's asserted black to be “a totally dead silence [...] a silence with no possibilities” (1977: 39). And yet, Malevich's work asserts that black is nevertheless representable. Of course, Malevich is not claiming to represent *night* in his singular black square. With an absence of fluctuation in shade, which would create shadow-play, and with an absence of any durational or transformative quality, which might evoke a natural night-time atmosphere, *Black Square* (fig. 9) affirms precisely what night is not; namely a static and total blackness, devoid of any presence or potential to transform<sup>73</sup>. Taking *Black Square* as a point of departure, it is possible to identify those works which draw upon darkness and night to assert presence through absence. In doing so, this section will examine the difficulties and challenges faced – particularly by live performance works – in attempting such a representation.

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<sup>71</sup> These terms are addressed more thoroughly in SECTION TWO of this thesis.

<sup>72</sup> It is necessary to note the double negation in this title: this section does not endeavour to address the notion of a void as a pure absence but rather explores those works which use darkness and night to assert presence *through* absence (For further discussion on dancing voids see Stewart, 2015: 372-4). The Japanese dance form Butoh is, therefore, of some relevance to this discussion through the association of void with death, and the representation of the latter as a presence-in-absence (see Fraleigh, 2010; Lepecki, 2012; Stewart, 2015). However, of most consequence to this research are those works which directly explore darkness and night, utilising these states through tangible, performative encounters.

<sup>73</sup> Whilst this is a simple distinction to make, it is undoubtedly an important one when we reflect upon the electric nights of the works reviewed at the beginning of this chapter, in which night is often treated as merely an absence of light, a void to be filled with activity and illuminations.

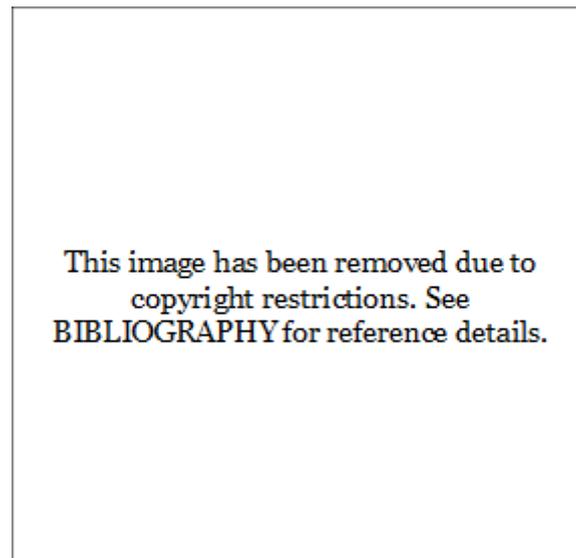


Figure 9: Kasimir Malevich's *Black Square* (1915).

William Forsythe's *Black Flags* (2014), created almost a century after Malevich's work, is a non-human movement piece in which two enormous squares of black material are swung and rotated by two robotic constructions in a tightly choreographed formation (Verghis 2015). In as much as Malevich's *Black Square* connotes absence through a lack of what was at the time expected to be present in an artwork (form, expression, and so on), Forsythe's *Black Flags*<sup>74</sup> similarly play with the expectation of what should be present in a choreography, and thereby emphasises the absence of human form from the work. Comparable to this is Mette Edvardsen's *No Title* (2014) which goes further into the realms of presence and performance than Forsythe's *Black Flags*, but nevertheless endeavours to represent notions of absence and void. *No Title* is a meditation upon "existence through negation" (Edvardsen, 2014), a radical attempt to choreograph with absence (fig. 10).

During the work, Edvardsen coincides the dimming of the lights with the declaration "Choreography – gone", effectively discarding that spectacle of dance which depends upon the "fantastically lit, fantastically illusionary images" (Lepecki, 2016: 62) that the theatre space provides. If Malevich painted without representation, and Forsythe choreographed without human form, then Edvardsen's radical act is to perform

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<sup>74</sup> Forsythe has denied that the title – described as "provocative" by journalist Sharon Verghis (2015) – holds any contextual relevance to the black flags of so-called Islamic State, having chosen it "well before current political events" (Verghis, 2015). However, we can recognise the possible associations that spectators of the work might make within this context, and in doing so acknowledge that the simple structure of a black square (whose purpose may be to connote absence and emptiness) is still loaded with possibilities via the associations that spectators bring to the work.

without light. *No Title* is, in many ways, an enactment of Yvonne Rainer's *No Manifesto* (1965) yet dance scholar André Lepecki is insistent that whilst *No Title* functions through negation, its apparent "no to light" is rather an affirmative "*yes to darkness*" (ibid.: 64). Lepecki asserts darkness to be not simply an absence of light but rather a presence in and of itself, a realm of potentiality: in performing in darkness, Edvardsen is not simply rejecting the "illusionary images" of stage-lit choreographies, rather she is choosing a radical assertion of darkness as performative<sup>75</sup>.

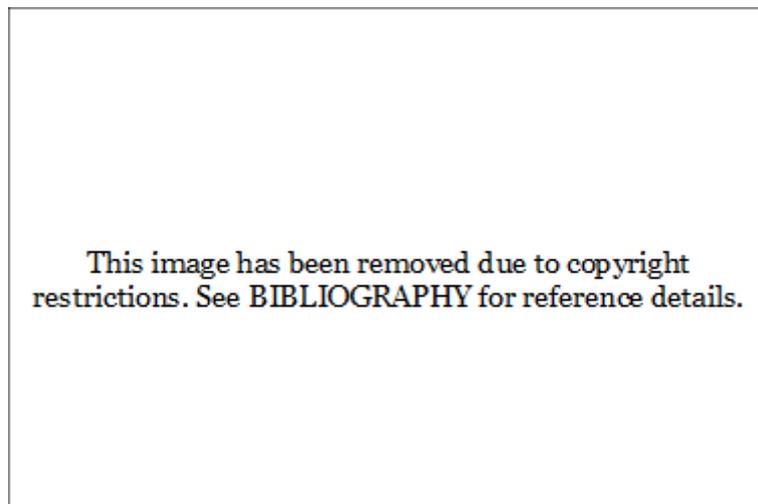


Figure 10: Mette Edvardsen's *No Title* (2014). Photographer: Massimiliano Domati.

Using *No Title* as an example, Lepecki promotes the potentiality of the dark to liberate choreography from dance, and movement from choreography<sup>76</sup>:

In the dark, images remain choreographic but must be understood now as *movements of thought*: a thought freed from the limitations of what it means to think, and a choreography freed from the limitations of what it means to make a dance (ibid.: 64).

If Lepecki entices his reader to imagine a choreography of thought in the most fragile state of potentiality, then this is a notion that is barely graspable. Just as the concept of a void – a nothing-ness, a total absence – eludes the imagination, so does a visual imagining of dark-based choreographies. Yet this is precisely Lepecki's intention: if

<sup>75</sup> Similarly, Xavier Le Roy's *Low Pieces* (2009) uses artificial darkness performatively, as a state which unites audience and performers (alternating between everyone unseen, or everyone visible), using it as a tool to equalise the roles of those present and to further dismantle the boundaries between observing and performing, so that the distinction between those paying-to-see and those paid-to-be-seen are gradually conflated (Lepecki, 2016).

<sup>76</sup> It is necessary to note that, for Edvardsen, such a choreography is pre-dominantly text-based rather than movement-based. In *No Title*, her choreography in the dark is one of speaking and writing (yet that is not to say that these cannot be considered forms of moving and dancing).

dark-based choreographies re-imagine the possible aesthetics of dance and reject dance's "fantastically illusionary" illuminated images, then they are not a possibility we are able to anticipate – they inhabited the dark, in all of its elusive and ungraspable potential.

## HOPE IN THE DARK

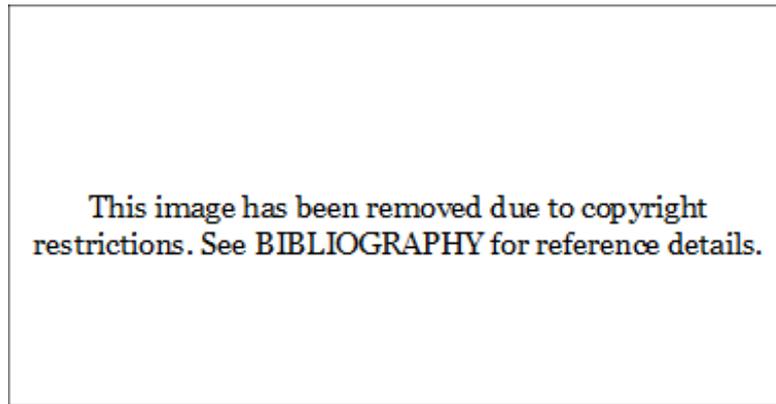


Figure 11: Still image (from film) of Mette Edvardsen's *Black* (Edvardsen, 2011).

Edvardsen's *Black* (2011) acts as a sort of opposing prequel to *No Title*: rather than taking place in a dark space, it takes place in a black space. Instead of creating the space through negation, *Black* (fig. 11) is essentially a choreography of affirmation, a counterargument to the "silence with no possibilities" of Kandinsky's black (1977: 39)<sup>77</sup>. Using no more props than *No Title*, Edvardsen uses spoken word and action to choreograph the work through the spectator's imagination. In the same way that "gone" became the repeated utterance in *No Title*, in *Black* Edvardsen describes with her voice and physically enacts different objects and items of furniture several times before repeating them again as she moves between them as part of a choreographed sequence. In doing so, Edvardsen simultaneously choreographs and imagines a space in which she inhabits. Once the absurdity of her method has been realised, the

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<sup>77</sup> Whilst *Black* is a playful choreography which asserts presence in an otherwise empty, black room, Edvardsen's assertion of black as presence does have racial implication (although this is not discussed as her intention in the work), making it comparable to Marcelo Evelin's *De repente fica tudo preto de gente* [Everywhere is black with people] (2012) (see Carone, 2012) and Zwoisy Mears-Clarke's *Worn and Felt* (2019) (see Stengl, 2019). Both works demonstrate the intertwinement of blackness and darkness, and the challenges faced in establishing each as a presence and entity rather than simply as an absence of light or whiteness. Whilst this thesis advocates for darkness-as-presence as part of its concern with night-time environments, it is important to acknowledge the relevance of this approach in recognising the deeply problematic notions through which darkness and blackness are frequently conflated to represent absence (see also Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, 2008, and Diana Taylor's *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 2003).

spectator is able to follow her narrative: the imagined is made present through her movement, emerging from within an otherwise abstracted and apparently blank space.

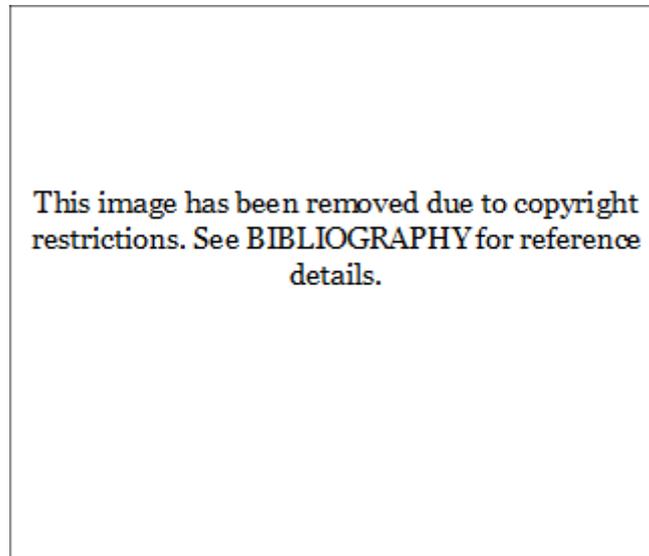


Figure 12: Miroslaw Balka's *How it is* (2009). Photographer: Gianluca Onnis.

It is, of course, debatable as to whether *No Title* intends to connote darkness as a void-like absence. As the work progresses, the presence of darkness becomes the one consistent element in the performance, so that as it unfolds *No Title* effectively stretches from a work that associates darkness with absence into one which celebrates the potentiality that its presence affords. A similar transition is palpable in Miroslaw Balka's *How it is* (2009). The huge steel structure is a "black, open void", entirely extinguishing any trace of light from the Tate's Turbine Hall (fig. 12), so that "you can't see into the depths. Even perspective seems distorted; there is no discernible vanishing point" (Searle, 2009)<sup>78</sup>. Years after encountering *How it is*, a bodily and multi-sensory recall of the sensations of the work remains with me: in such immense darkness, the space is explored through the hands, the feet, and the ears. Void-like as it may be, in the darkness of *How it is* we encounter presence. As Adrian Searle observes, "Balka reveals darkness rather than cloaking it in mystery"

<sup>78</sup> The aesthetics of the work allude to the atrocities experienced in the holocaust: as with Elie Wiesel's written account, *NIGHT* (2008), Alain Resnais' film, *Nuit et Brouillard* (1956), and Juergen Teller's photograph *Hitler's Podium* (2005), night and darkness are frequently utilised as metaphors when referring to the trauma experienced in this period of history.

(2009) – we are immersed into the darkness, becoming a part of it, becoming the dark which others encounter<sup>79</sup>.

Effectively, Balka’s installation illustrated the capacity for darkness to replace the spectacle of vision with an immersive experience: one which is not solely produced through the eyes but through the whole of the body, and which is not constricted or compressed by the dark (as I anticipated it would be). Rather – given our necessity to sense our environment – darkness functions as an opening, inviting the senses out to meet it, and encounter it<sup>80</sup>.

### IMAGINATIVE REALMS

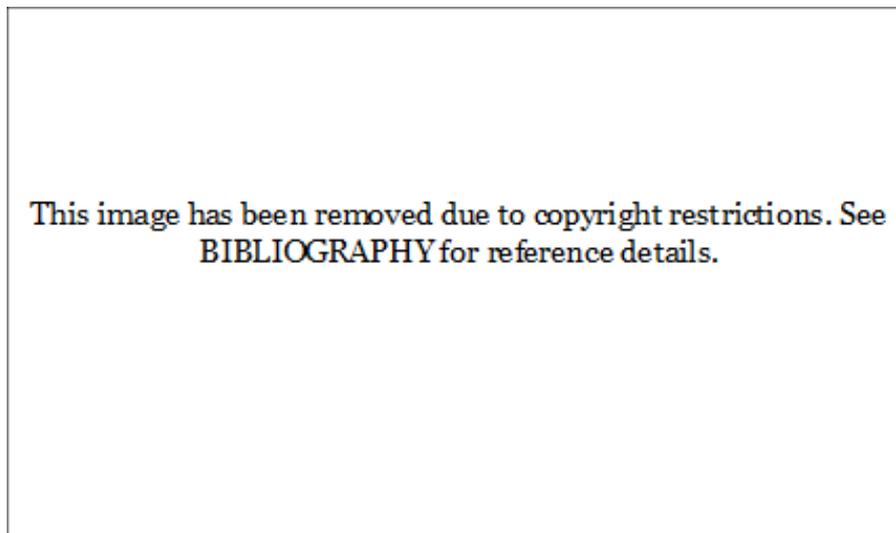


Figure 13: Mette Ingvarsten’s *Speculations* (2011). Photograph: Studium Generale Rietveld Academie.

Mette Ingvarsten’s *Speculations* (2011) is comparable to Edvardsen’s *Black* in similarly using narrative and action to co-create the work through the spectator’s imagination (fig. 13) – yet shares with *No Title* the use of artificial darkness. For Lepecki, it is this darkness that enables Ingvarsten’s narrative to “activate collective imaginative realms” (Lepecki, 2016: 71) as past, future and present fuse into a virtual disorientation (which is reflective of the audiences’ physical disorientation in the

<sup>79</sup> Such an experience is comparable to that of Tino Sehgal’s *This Variation* (2012), in which the audience become “shadows within shadows” (Searle, 2012) as they merge with performers and each other in the artificial dark.

<sup>80</sup> This relates to John Cage’s anecdote of his quest for silence, in which he enters a vacuum to listen to the absolute absence of sound only to be hindered by that of his own pulse in his ears (Revell, 2014). In searching for absence, we inevitably encounter the continuing presence of the self as a physical and sensing entity.

dark). Lepecki views this disorientation as essential to what he terms the “black speculation”, the way in which Ingvarstsen’s “language-choreography” establishes the virtual, imagined world in the dark to be as real and actual as the room encountered before the light was dimmed (ibid.). Through her unseen speculation, Ingvarstsen reveals the dark to be a space “full of virtuality, of potentiality” (ibid.: 72). Whilst neither Edvardsen nor Ingvarstsen bring anything into the space other than their voice and their movement, they assert black spaces (*Black*) and dark spaces (*No Title and Speculations*) as having the potential to enact alternative modes of choreography. By inviting the spectator’s imagination to engage and co-create with such spaces, darkness becomes a realm of sensorial presence rather than visual absence.

The same is true for Manuel Pelmus’ *Preview*<sup>81</sup> (2007), a solo comprised of movement and spoken text, taking place in the artificial darkness of a theatre space<sup>82</sup>. *Preview* follows a simple structure in the dark. Firstly, Pelmus describes to his audience the movement he is doing whilst moving; secondly, he describes a more complicated movement phrase, without moving; and thirdly, he performs the movement phrase without speaking (Lepecki, 2016). Essential to Pelmus’ construction is the fact that whilst the movement is visually obscured, it can be heard and therefore perceived (Estrada Prada, 2012). Through his breath, pattern of speech, sounds of his movement – and the increasing or decreasing distance at which these sounds are made – the audience can infer his speed, direction and whether he is static or in motion (ibid.). Our sensorial experience of the work is therefore increased, necessitating the reliance upon senses other than sight so that the “immediate and unmitigated contact between dancer and viewer” is not compromised but rather enhanced (Foster, 2011: 1), enabling the viewer to decipher, to interpret through the imagination those events which unfold before us. In contrast to *Black* and *Speculations*, *Preview* does not use the spectator’s imagination to create a virtual reality, but rather simply describes what physically inhabits the dark: movement.

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<sup>81</sup> The title suggests a before-viewing, a pre-seeing which aligns with Rebecca Solnit’s assertion, referred to in *SIMMER-DIM*, that darkness is as much of the womb as it is of the grave (2016). However, it also alludes to the potentiality and possibility which inhabits the darkness of *No Title and Speculations*.

<sup>82</sup> Cindy Van Acker’s *Nixe* and *Obtus* (2012), Yael Flexer’s *Disappearing Acts* (2016) and Gisèle Vienne’s *This is how you will disappear* (2012) similarly utilise artificial darkness to visually absent the human form from the work, but all use the dark merely as a visual effect as opposed to a choreographic method.

However, the darkness in *Preview* does not serve to cloak or conceal Pelmus' movement, rather it reveals the movement in a non-visual way: as with Edvardsen and Ingvarsten, Pelmus uses darkness to redefine how performing and moving might exist, and how they might be witnessed. Essentially, each of these works (excluding *Black*) uses artificial darkness to create “a phase-space where collective processes of experiencing vague things can take place” (Lepecki, 2016: 72). Significantly, despite the dark in these works being artificial, it is nevertheless sustained throughout the duration of the work. Exposing the audience to extended periods of artificial darkness enables them to adjust to the darkened environment and to relinquish any hold on orientation and vision<sup>83</sup>. But also, the long duration of darkness enables these works to establish narratives as a method for co-creating and co-choreographing the performance: they rely upon the durational and continuing implementation of these methods to establish them as the work itself. Duration becomes necessary for the audience to trust, follow, imagine and see.

## SUMMARY

Each of the works reviewed in UN-VOID demonstrates the alternative ways of experiencing presence that darkness invites. They demonstrate darkness to be not an absencing of the visual, but rather an asserting of the more-than-visual, enabling a sensorial otherness to flourish. In particular, performance works engaging with darkness – such as Edvardsen's *No Title*, Ingvarsten's *Speculations* and Pelmus' *Preview* – advocate for a mode of choreographic thinking which moves beyond dance as a spectral image (Lepecki, 2016) and instead use darkness to create space for moving, thinking and imagining dance as a more-than-visual art form. In doing so, they employ darkness as a means of instigating sensorial imaginings of movement. Effectively, the works featured in UN-VOID build upon the freedoms alluded to by those works in OVER-SPILL by utilising darkness to explore the potentiality of the more-than-visual. Here, the notions of “excess” and “more-than” move beyond a simple doingness – an enactment of an alternative relationship between site and action, as featured in OVER-SPILL – and instead are experienced

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<sup>83</sup> Lepecki describes this experience of disorientation from the spectator's perspective in his review of Ingvarsten's *Speculations* in Lepecki (2016: 72).

sensorially, by both performer and spectator, as an assertion of presence beyond that which is visually represented<sup>84</sup>.

This chapter has so far explored the notions of night and darkness as separate entities. It has reviewed artworks engaging with night independently of darkness (OVER-SPILL) and artworks engaging with darkness independently of night (UN-VOID). Doing so has brought to the fore that which is significantly absent from both and which, therefore, definitively characterises night-time darkness as such – temporality. By absencing dark from night and night from dark these artworks bring into focus the freedoms that each permits yet, in doing so, denies the durational fluctuation of a night-time dark. In particular, the shifting transformation of the twilight hours – of the almost-dark and the not-yet night – are lost entirely. The final section of the review, SIMMER-DIM, seeks to explore those artworks that acknowledge night-time as a temporal phenomenon, giving prominence to those that engage with the transformational, shifting qualities of twilight.

## **SIMMER-DIM**

### **SEQUENTIAL NIGHTS**

SIMMER-DIM examines the core sources for this study, reviewing those artworks which focus upon twilight as the durational shift from day to dusk to dark, seeking to evoke night's transient, shifting qualities. The durational transformation that comprises nightfall is addressed in this research not just as a matter of day into night, but also as a seasonal shift in which the shadow-play of light and dark at night is dependent upon the tilt of the earth's axis. The term "summer-dim" refers to the summer nights of the north in which a glow of twilight remains throughout the night. Writer Amy Liptrot describes the nights of the summer-dim as "a perpetual sunrise or sunset" (2016: 125) which disorientates her sense of time and duration: "in my confusion I don't know where I am. Dusk blends into dawn and I can't say whether the day is ending or beginning" (ibid.: 128).

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<sup>84</sup> In this way, the works of UN-VOID edge closer to Erin Manning's own employment of the terms (2011; 2013; 2014b; 2016). These terms are of particular relevance to my research practice and feature prominently in SECTION TWO of this thesis.

Liptrot is describing summer nights in Orkney, but it is 400 miles further south along that same east coast trajectory that, in viewing Rosemary Lee's *Circadian* (2019), I experience Liptrot's words off the page. Described by Lee as a reaction to the "unique and beautiful eastern light" (Levy 2019), *Circadian* (fig. 14) takes place at midsummer on Lowestoft beach<sup>85</sup>: once an hour, for twenty-four hours, a single dancer enters the space and performs the same twelve-minute choreographic score. Each hourly iteration is performed by a different dancer, dressed in blue and accompanied live by musician Isaac Lee-Kronick. Present for twelve of these hours, I witnessed *Circadian*'s development throughout the June simmer-dim. Whilst the use of dim electric lighting from 11pm-3am suspended the dancers' relationship with the dark, it also served to enhance – and prioritise – the ongoing-ness of the work: the piece unfolds itself through each dancer, asserting the choreography within each repetition. *Circadian* emerges, therefore, not as a series of twenty-four solos but rather as a durational group piece that spans the hours of its completion.

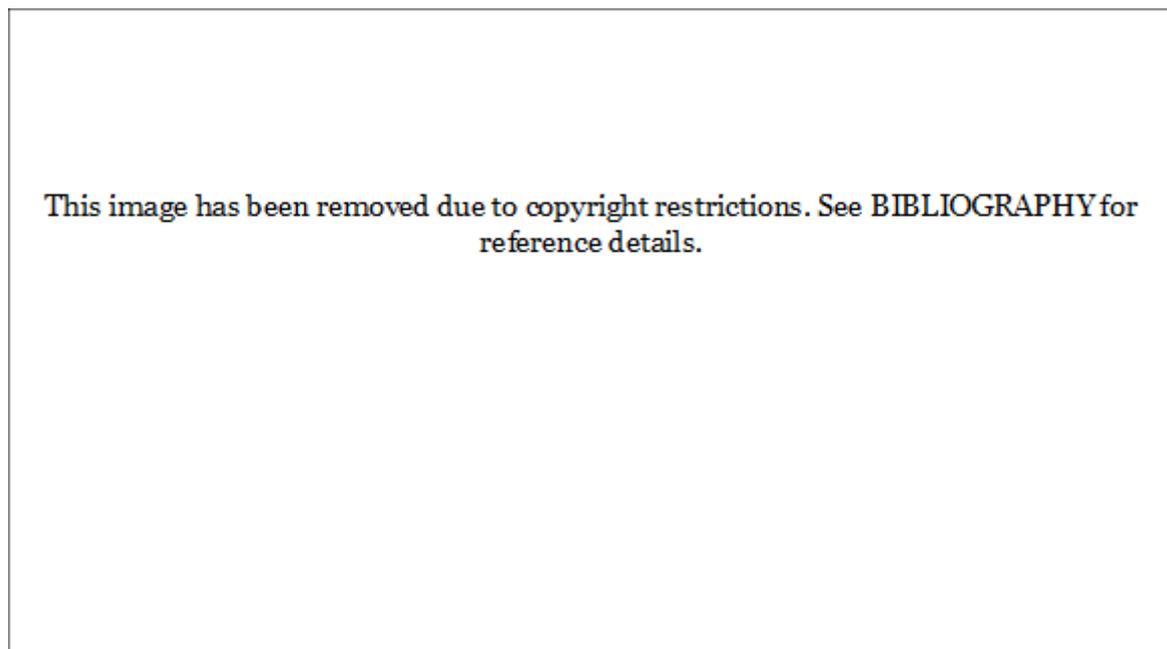


Figure 14: Rosemary Lee's *Circadian* (2019). Photographer: Flora Moyes

In considering the work in this way, it is possible to view *Circadian* as a choreography in beyond-human temporality: effectively, Lee uses movement to place human temporality in relation to the larger temporality of the site. The presence of

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<sup>85</sup> Lowestoft beach is a long, flat stretch of sandy east-facing coastline located in Suffolk, UK.

each dancer is fleeting and momentary whereas the ongoing-ness of the choreographic pattern out-lasts their individual performances: as an audience, we encounter both. In each hour, I am struck by the intensity of the dancer's individual performances: the ephemeral 'once'-ness of their dancing is accentuated by the 'again'-ness of the choreography's recurrence, making the brevity of each dancer tangible to the audience. The choreographic structure outlasts their presence, and that of the site outlasts ours: integral to this recognition of a beyond-human temporality is the simmer-dim, through which the duration of the site's temporality becomes perceptible within each turning of the hour. The 48-minutes between each iteration of the choreography serves to enhance the audience's recognition of the site's temporal shift, of the changes-in-place between one dancer's movement and the next. The dancer entering the space on the striking of the hour chronicles our own ongoing transition through the simmer-dim, our ride on this rotating earth.

As dawn approaches, the lights are switched off and we witness the edge of night's retreat: the dancer's form emerges from the silhouette, a stark clarity of detail still perceptible in the outline, the body still holding the night in its peripheries. In Liptrot's account, an entanglement occurs between herself and the night within which she is situated. In describing the process of becoming "dark-adjusted" (ibid.: 125), Liptrot evokes simmer-dim as a bodily encounter with twilight, one to which she progressively attunes throughout the course of the night. Whilst Lee's *Circadian* resists descending into night's darkness, it nevertheless uses movement to lay bare a durational attunement with site. As the hours of its movement unfold, it attests to the beyond-human temporality of the site and nightfall's capacity for making such a temporality tangible.

In taking place each hour, the solos in *Circadian* act as a sequencing of the midsummer night, so that each exists as a part of a series, a part of night's cycle. This sequencing of the night hours makes Lee's work akin to the nocturnes of classical music<sup>86</sup> – perhaps the most notable being those by Frederic Chopin, Claude Debussy

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<sup>86</sup> The first composer recognised as using the term nocturne as a title for their work was Irish composer John Field (1782-1837), composing sixteen nocturnes. Whilst the term in Italian (notturmi) and German (nachtmusiken) had been used previously by Mozart and Haydn, the premise of the nocturnes as a "crystallisation of an idiom", as opposed to a lyrical night-song, is accredited to Fields (Piggott, 1968). The definition of the musical nocturnes, then, is not dependent solely upon the application of the term but rather the

and Béla Bartók – and to the visual art of James Whistler and Mark Rothko. Whether the transient nature of day to night is explored through the shifts between light and dark (Debussy and Rothko) or by acknowledging night as a time- and place-specific phenomenon (Chopin, Bartok and Whistler), these works recognise night to be cyclical, an entity which evolves durationally. By existing through multiple compositions, each series creates a repetition of night which serves to evoke difference, not sameness. This recognises the durational shift that comprises night-time and differentiates each night – and each moment of night – from another, and in doing so gives precedence to the temporal experience of night.

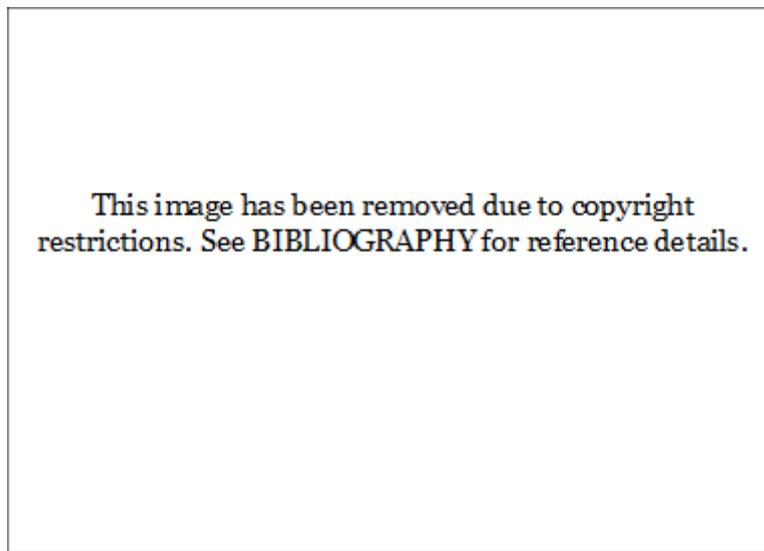


Figure 15: Rothko's nocturnal murals on display in Rothko's Chapel (1971). Photographer: Hickey Robertson

Rothko's series of "nocturnal" murals (De Menil in Baal-Teshuva, 2010: 75) are of particular interest to this study. A series of intensely dark – but never wholly black – canvases that dwarf the viewer in their size and depth (fig. 15), they comprise a subtle layering of colours and shades which only reveal themselves gradually as the viewer's eye adapts to the darkness of the work, creating "a sensation of atmosphere through illusory methods" (Rothko, 2004: 56-7). Rothko wished to accentuate this process of acclimatisation, stipulating that "lighting level should be kept low [...] encouraging the spectator to look carefully into the veils of colour of which they were composed" (Harrison, 2009: 50). Whilst Rothko's work is visual (in contrast with the temporal

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ways in which the composers attempt to create an experience of the night by evoking its atmosphere and subtle process of transformation.

structure of the musical nocturnes), the encounter is nevertheless a durational one as the colour and details of the work gradually become apparent.

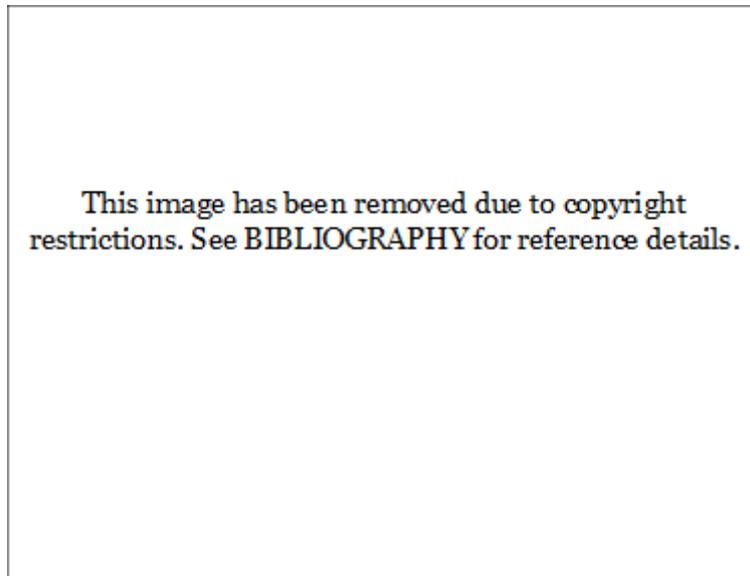


Figure 16: Whistler's *Nocturne: Blue and Silver - Chelsea* (1871).

For Rothko, colour generates an experience of movement, as it “intrinsically possesses the power of giving the sensation of recession and advancement” (Rothko, 2004: 59)<sup>87</sup>. We can see earlier examples of this in James Whistler's *Nocturne: Blue and Silver – Chelsea* (1871) (fig. 16): whilst the small figure in the foreground is perceivable, the detail in the horizon and shoreline reveal themselves gradually, and only through prolonged engagement with the work. Whistler's nocturnes, like Rothko's murals, ask of the viewer not only vision, but time – the work becomes tangible only through duration, much like the night itself. For Hélène Valance, the nocturnes timely emergence in reaction to the advent of electric light and industrialisation did not reject the vision that technology offered but rather “proposed a renewed form of seeing that reflected deep transformations within the culture” (2015: 19). Essentially, by being a durational encounter (one which relies upon physical presence) the nocturnes of both Rothko and Whistler do not attempt to separate vision from the sensing body (as in the case of electrically-lit nightscapes), but instead highlight the role of vision in what is a bodily encounter

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<sup>87</sup> The following sub-section, SHADOW-PLAY, discusses this concept in further detail.

with night. In their evocations, Whistler and Rothko's nocturnes explore night as a phenomenon of presence, transformation, adjustment and emergence<sup>88</sup>.

These same values are apparent in *Animal Days and Nights* (2003-14), a durational film series by performance artist Annette Arlander, spanning an eleven-year process of working site-specifically on Harakka Island, Finland. Just like the nocturnes and Lee's *Circadian*, Arlander creates a sequencing of night, capturing herself in the landscape at two/three hour intervals. As a result, the series demonstrates a frailty to the terms that form its title: over the course of the films we witness undulating shifts in the durations of light and dark, the lengthening light of summer versus the abrupt arrival of winter-dark. *Day and Night of the Rat* (2008) (fig. 17) is one such example. Taking place in December, the film begins in the half-light and descends quickly into darkness which lasts for much of the sequence. Watching the work, I am reminded of Alice's fall into Wonderland, in which time slows and space expands: "Down, down, down. Would the fall *never* come to an end?" (Carroll, 2003: 39). Just as Alice's drawn-out experience becomes that of the reader (her fall taking the space, and reading duration, of almost two pages), Arlander's film provides an experience of altered duration, one that is felt through the eyes by the observing viewer.



Figure 17: still image from Arlander's *Day and Night of the Rat* (2008)

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<sup>88</sup> In evoking a sense of how nightfall's duration is visually perceived, these works create a phenomenological experience in that they "depict matter as it takes on form" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964: 13). This evocation of nightfall is particularly relevant to the discussion of my practice in SECTION TWO: WADING.

If Liptrot and Lee distinguish nightfall as a seasonally-dependent phenomena, Arlander's series recognises it to be equally a site-dependent one. In *Day and Night of the Dragon* (2013), the snow glows dimly in the barest of light, forming a ghostly outline just decipherable in the nightscape of early February, mimicking Rothko's murals in asking our eyes to adjust durationally to – and with – the dark, whilst in contrast, the blue hues of simmer-dim in *Day and Night of the Rooster* (2005) are reflected and amplified by the ocean that occupies much of Arlander's frame.

Always within shot is Arlander herself, sitting, standing or swinging consistently through the yearly cycle of the site, becoming a visual constant against which the temporal fluctuations of the site's dimming and brightening become apparent. However, in *Sitting on a Rock* (2003) Arlander speaks of the possibility of the human form to be viewed not as a fixed constant (and not as an animal that wanders and alters the world through its movement) but rather as something more akin to the rocks she sits on, which are enacted upon and changed by (and with) the world of which they are a part. I find this notion to be made most tangible not in Arlander's sitting, but in her movement: in *Day and Night of the Pig* (2008) Arlander performs a slow rotating movement with her arms outstretched, each hand holding a small torchlight. As the site enters nightfall, the two lights reveal to us how her movement is altered by the dark. They trace the slowing of her turns, the wavering undulations that emerge as Arlander navigates her footing in the dark. This sequence evokes the process through which her body and the environment encounter the dark, and become the dark: site, body and nightfall are no longer discernible as separate entities as Arlander's rotation is altered and enacted by each, becoming an entangled mesh of processes<sup>89</sup>.

This process of the site acting-upon the body and changing its patterning also occurs in Thomas Freundlich and Valterri Raekallio's site-specific dance film *North Horizon* (2010a). Shot in Svalbard, Freundlich describes a process through which the movement in the film accumulated traces of the site through improvisation

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<sup>89</sup> It is necessary to note that in sharing her practice through film, Arlander limits the audience's sensorial engagement with the site. Similarly, Pascal Magnin's *Reines d'un Jour* (1997), Thomas Freundlich and Valterri Raekallio's *North Horizon* (2010), Anna Halprin and Isak Immanuel's *NIGHT SUN* (2012), Joanna Young's *Under Dark Skies* (2014) and Experiential Dance Company's *Bridging the Void* (2015), involve a performative, sensorial engagement with nightfall which is then shared through film – condensing the performers experience into a visual representation, one which splices the durational experience of nightfall.

(Freundlich, 2010b) so that the dancers' movement becomes a sort of ongoing compost<sup>90</sup> of their durational experience of the site. Freundlich's words invite the viewer to see the movement metonymically: to see in their motion a compression of the weather, days and light they have encountered in Svalbard, including the movement of each other. We might consider Lee's *Circadian* to offer this very same invitation: that in each dancer's solo, we are viewing a duration that far surpasses the twelve minutes we share with them. Our viewing acts as a small window into a far larger, ongoing process of that body's being-patterned-by-place, becoming-with<sup>91</sup> place.

## SHADOW-PLAY

Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker's *En Attendant* (2010) and *Cesena* (2011) are hour-length performance works, taking place at dusk and dawn respectively. Unlike the serial, fragmented approach of the nocturnes and Lee's *Circadian*, these works are sustained throughout the twilight, enduring the shadow-play at the edge of night. At the core of both works is De Keersmaeker's curiosity to "see what appears in darkness and what is going to disappear in light" (Cvejić and De Keersmaeker 2013: 18). *En Attendant* (fig. 18), commencing at dusk, experiments with what appears in darkness. Dressed in black pedestrian clothes, the group of eight dancers gradually undress to enable the luminosity of the dancers' naked skin to "glow in the dark and make movements more visible" (ibid.: 69), becoming a hesitant glimmer that would otherwise be unnoticeable in the light. It is in those moments when the transition from light to dark is most tangible that De Keersmaeker's choices are most visible, and in *En Attendant* this occurs towards the end of the work. In correspondence with the duration of the fading light, De Keersmaeker minimalizes the movement of the dancers, "the night comes quickly, and suddenly it is completely dark. Immobility might yield more clarity in darkness than movement" (ibid.: 74). Significantly, what the audience therefore experiences as the darkness draws in is not a veiling or cloaking, but instead a revelation of the dancers' naked bodies and stillness. In making such choices, De Keersmaeker maintains an element of visual clarity for the

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<sup>90</sup> This is in reference to Donna Haraway's use of the term "compost" (2016), which is discussed further in SECTION TWO.

<sup>91</sup> This term, introduced by Donna Haraway (2016), is discussed further in SECTION TWO.

viewer, prolonging – if only for a short duration – the visual tangibility of the dancers before night inevitably descends.

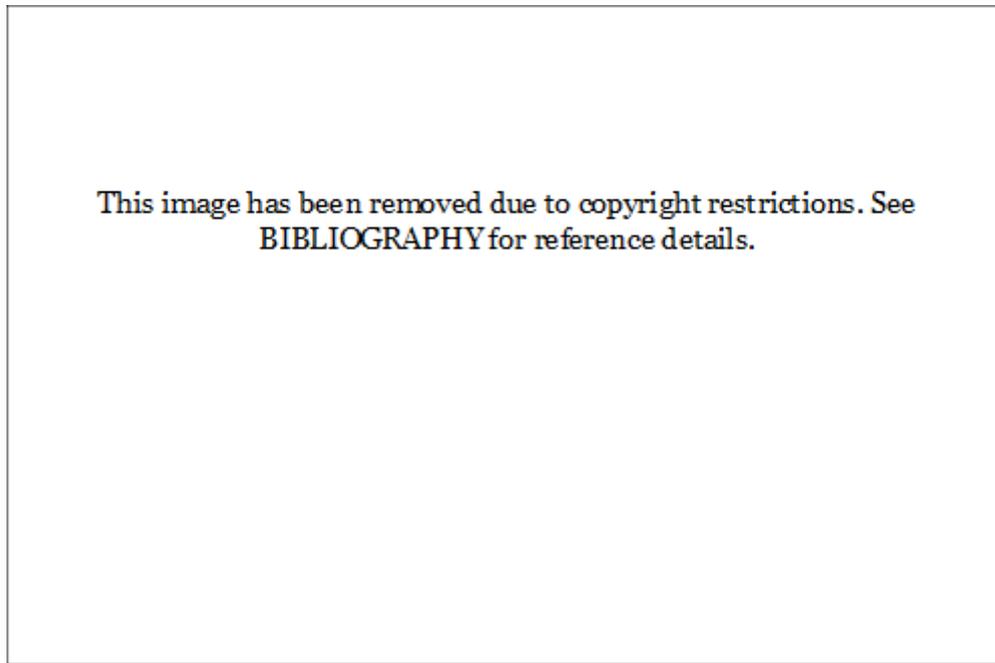


Figure 18: Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker's *En Attendant* (2010). Photographer: Anne Van Aerschott

Just as *En Attendant* choreographs the audiences' perception within the ongoing transience of twilight, Ian McKeever's *The Hartgrove Paintings* (1992-4) creates layers of light and dark so that each canvas conveys a different state of shadowy transition (fig. 19). For Norbert Lynton, the light and dark represented in McKeever's work are not "two colours", but rather "are an infinity of hues and tones" (Lynton, 2010: 18). Effectively, this suggests a co-dependency of light and dark, the appearance of each being defined by the degree to which the other is present (or absent). Wassily Kandinsky suggests that the manipulation of these variable hues (and the warmth or cold that they exude) creates a sense of motion within the work, asserting that "the movement is an horizontal one, the warm colours approaching the spectator, the cold ones retreating from him" (1977: 36)<sup>92</sup>. McKeever echoes this, suggesting the balance of light and shade in his canvases give the experience of

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<sup>92</sup> In choreological terms, the motion that both Kandinsky and McKeever are describing is a sagittal one, a movement of forward and backwards motion: whilst Kandinsky describes it as a "horizontal" experience, he is presumably referring to the motion as existing on one, flat level, rather than suggesting that it takes place side to side, as in the "horizontal plane" in choreological studies. However, for philosopher Don Handelman the experience of night does emphasise the horizontal plane, both in terms of the perception of horizons as light recedes but also the horizontal alignment of the body in sleep (Handelman, 2005). The experience and relevance of the horizontal plane to moving-with nightfall is considered in detail in SECTION TWO: GROUNDING.

“moving either towards the light or away from the light” (Lynton, 2010: 30). Whilst this is a discussion of the effects of light and dark as they exist on the canvas, such thoughts are equally (if not especially) applicable to their natural circumstance – twilight, simmer-dim, dusk and dawn – in which light and dark are most tangibly experienced. Therefore, where we experience the shifts in between light and dark, we essentially experience duration, the effect of time upon space made visible.

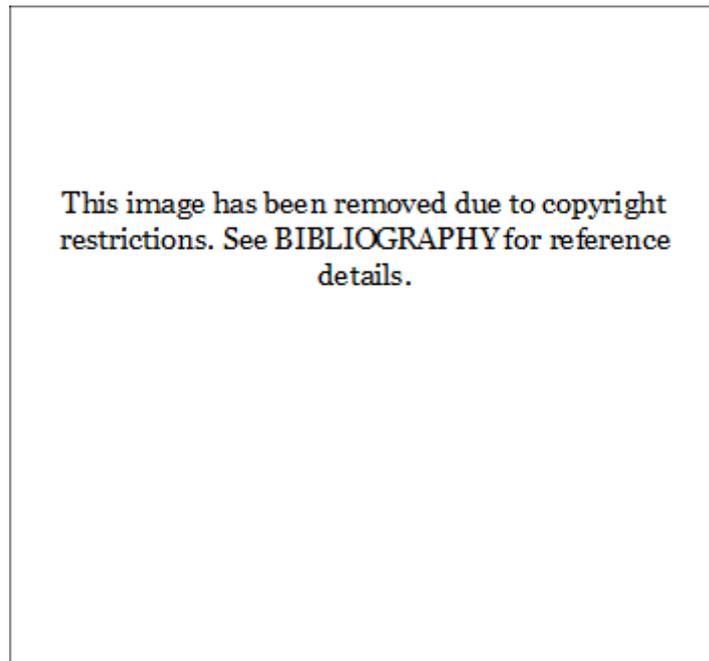


Figure 19: Ian McKeever’s *Hartgrove Painting. No. 5* (1992-4).

Comparable to McKeever’s shadow-play on canvas is Russell Maliphant’s shadow-play on the moving body (fig. 20). In the first section of *Afterlight (Part One)* (2009), dancer Daniel Proietto performs a solo of almost continuous turning in horizontal plane, the perception of his body and movement being altered by the shadow-play of Michael Hulls’ lighting design, so that “a totalising vision of Proietto’s body” is refused to the spectator (Stewart, 2016: 60). In the constant spiralling of Proietto’s shadowy form, his body alternately catches and evades the light so that Hull’s design creates an effect that is “like that of an old film or cartoon flip book that flickers so much that the illusion of motion is both revealed and concealed” (ibid.: 61). The perception of the dancer’s body through the eye of the spectator is transformed through the interrelation of light and movement. In *Afterlight (Part One)*, the

perception of the body is not only altered when it engages with this shadow-play, but the body itself becomes a site of continuous transformation<sup>93</sup>.

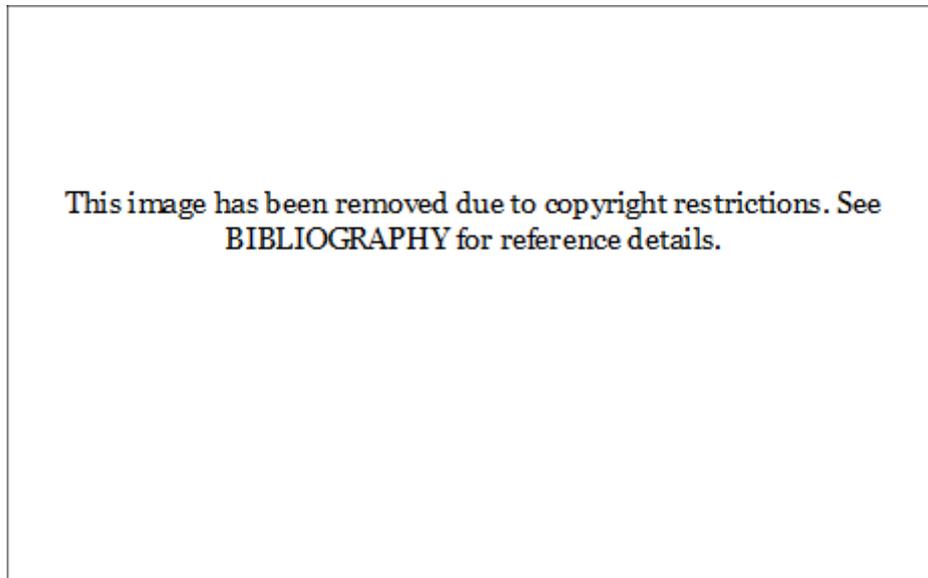


Figure 20: Daniel Proietto performing in Russell Maliphant's *Afterlight (Part One)* (2009).  
Photographer: Hugo Glendinning.

The same can be said for De Keersmaeker's works, in which the night's transience is located in the dancers themselves. Whereas *En Atendant* attempts to prolong the visual experience of the performance into the night, *Cesena* (fig. 21) exalts in the obscurity that the pre-dawn darkness brings. Dressed in black, the dancers use touch and proximity to navigate as a group, merging into a seemingly single-bodied community in the darkness (ibid.: 130). The obscureness of the dancers' "number, gender and individual characteristics" (ibid.: 123) is dependent upon the duration of darkness which causes it, disappearing with the advancement of dawn's light. Rather than using stillness to define form, and nakedness to reveal individuality (as in *En Atendant*) the performers gather in to form a close but moving mass, asserting Don Handelman's suggestion that "contiguities – of persons, of persons and place, of bodies coming together – come more to the fore in darkness" (Handelman, 2005: 254). These contiguities that form in the dark are not just of things, but of the senses too. In *Cesena*, De Keersmaeker is eager to blur the boundaries between visual and aural perception, the dawn inviting the audience to "start to listen to how the light

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<sup>93</sup> Similarly, theatre-based performances of the Japanese dance form "Butoh" frequently utilise artificial darkness to support the movement in portraying the human body as a site of transformation. See Marie-Gabrielle Rotie's *Mythic* (2010), Sankai Juku's *Kinkan Shonen* (2008), and Sondra Fraleigh's *Dancing into Darkness* (2010).

changes” (Rochette, 2013). Valerie Preston-Dunlop suggests that sound can “overcome the kinaesthetic gap [...] The spectator is helped to feel by hearing what he is seeing” (2006: 163)<sup>94</sup>. This “kinaesthetic gap” lies between the experience of the performer and that of the spectator. I suggest, though, that sound enables this precisely because it highlights the durational experience of the work: the unavoidable, transient transformation of the present moment into the next<sup>95</sup>. If darkness increases our bodily capacity for perceiving beyond ourselves, as De Keersmaeker’s work so beautifully demonstrates, it also drags ourselves out with it. In darkness, De Keersmaeker effectively encourages her audience to replace “the orthodox, speculative notion of vision” with “a participatory or existential one” (Ingold, 2000: 266), one which both draws upon and informs the whole, sensing body. In both works, De Keersmaeker engages with night’s dark not to bring the capacity of perception back onto ourselves, but rather to bring the self forward into the perceiving world.

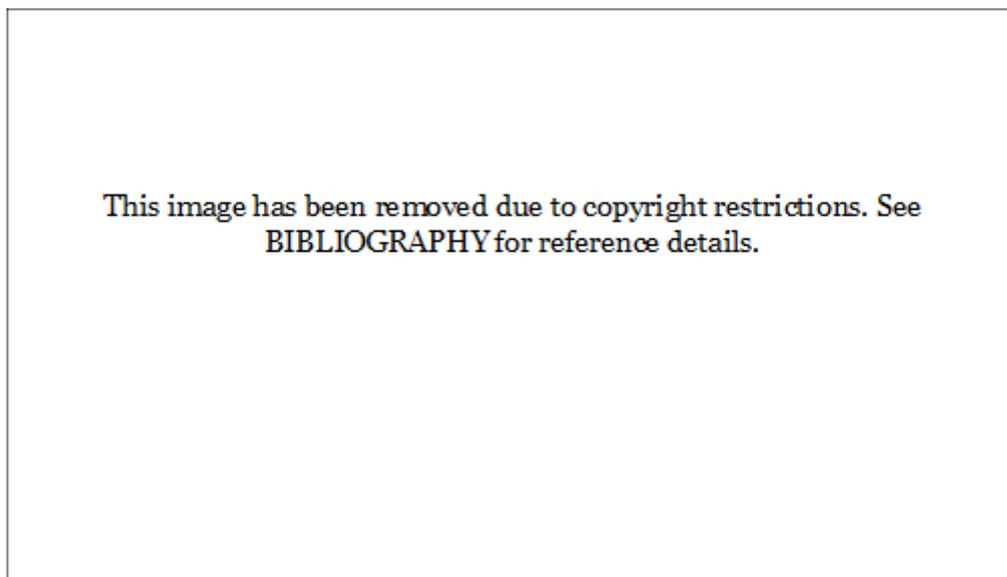


Figure 21: Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker’s *Cesena* (2011). Photographer: Anne Van Aerschott

<sup>94</sup> Notably, theatre-based performance works use artificial darkness or a blindfolded audience to ensure the experience of the audio takes precedence over the visual. See Ghost River Theatre’s *Tomorrow’s Child* (2014), David Rosenberg and Glen Neath’s *Fiction* (2014) and Benjamin Vandewalle and Yoann Durant’s *Hear* (2016).

<sup>95</sup> Similarly, Rosemary Lee’s site-specific work *Passage for Par* (2018) uses the natural, live sounds of the landscape as its score. Whilst audience viewed the dancers across the distance of the sands (Spence 2018), the sounds of the site help to bridge the kinaesthetic gap but also – importantly – accentuated the time-specific nature of the event.

## TENDING

Whilst the time-specific nature of *En Atendant* and *Cesena* means the audience are outside, sharing the same durational, transformational experience of nightfall as the performers, they are otherwise experiencing the work in a manner not dissimilar to inside a conventional proscenium arch theatre. Seated as a large group for the duration of the work with clear differentiation between the performance space and viewing space, the performance begins and ends with the movement of human performers. In contrast, the work of environmental movement artist Simon Whitehead subverts this by requiring a much more active, sensorial engagement with nightfall. In doing so, he opens the participating audience's awareness to the more-than-human night-world<sup>96</sup>. Whitehead's night work encompasses workshops (*Tender is the Night*, 2018; *Urban Darkness: All Nighter*, 2018; the ongoing *Locator* series), night walks (*Walks to Illuminate*, 2006), and participatory performance (*En Darken*, 2018). Often using walking as a way of establishing an initial relationship with(in) a site<sup>97</sup>, Whitehead's work engages participants in tactile interaction with found or brought objects, opening the group to an acknowledgement of the more-than-human night-world they inhabit.

The participatory performance (or “action research”) of *En Darken* (fig. 22) took place in Wales, at dusk. The participants, invited to engage in playful activities, use hazel branches and found objects to create temporal compositions in the site. Parts of the hazel branches were dipped in clay paint so that – similar to the bared skin of De Keersmaecker's performers – they “appear to glow as the light fades” (Whitehead, 2018a). The play of the participants sees the branches become entangled, creating

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<sup>96</sup> There are various city-based night-walking performances to which Whitehead's work is comparable, such as: Andy Field's *Nocturnes* (2018); *Walk Walk Walk* (2006-10), a series of nightwalks in London run by Gail Burton, Serena Korda and Clare Qualmann; Saffy Setohy's interactive installation *Light Field* (2016); Forced Entertainment's *Nights in This City* (1995) and *Night Walks* (1998) both use the premise of observing cityscapes performatively at night. Whilst all of these works take night walking and wandering as their premise, their urban environments limit the degree of more-than-human interaction, and the illuminated nightscape prevents the audience's experience from being entangled within – and affected by – night's darkness. Night walking is also a popular subject in contemporary non-fiction writing. See Richard Mabey's *the Unofficial Countryside* (1973), Paul Farley and Michael Symmons Roberts' *Edgelands* (2011), Christopher Yates' *Nightwalk* (2012), Rick Adams' *Into the night* (2013), Matthew Beaumont's *Nightwalking: A Nocturnal History of London*, (2015), and Nick Dunn's *Dark Matters* (2016). Night walking is not, of course, a contemporary phenomenon. See Charles Dickens' posthumously published collection of writings *Night Walks* (2010), and Virginia Woolf's *Street Haunting* (2013) for earlier accounts of night walking in London.

<sup>97</sup> Whitehead's work prioritises a sensorial experience of place through following and wandering, making it comparable to the work of Sensory Labyrinth Theatre, in which participants follow sensorial stimuli to discover and immerse themselves in the site and performance (Kershaw, 2007: 317).

odd scribble-like structures whose lines gain definition as they are formed into silhouettes by the progressing twilight. But the branches are not the only thing altered by the darkening. As Whitehead observes, “the social space changes, we cannot see each other’s faces. We blend with the dark, each other, objects and the sounds of the sea and wind” (ibid.). In *En Darken*, the terms of play – the ways of relating – are altered by the twilight. As Whitehead’s work subtly demonstrates, to endarken is to entangle.

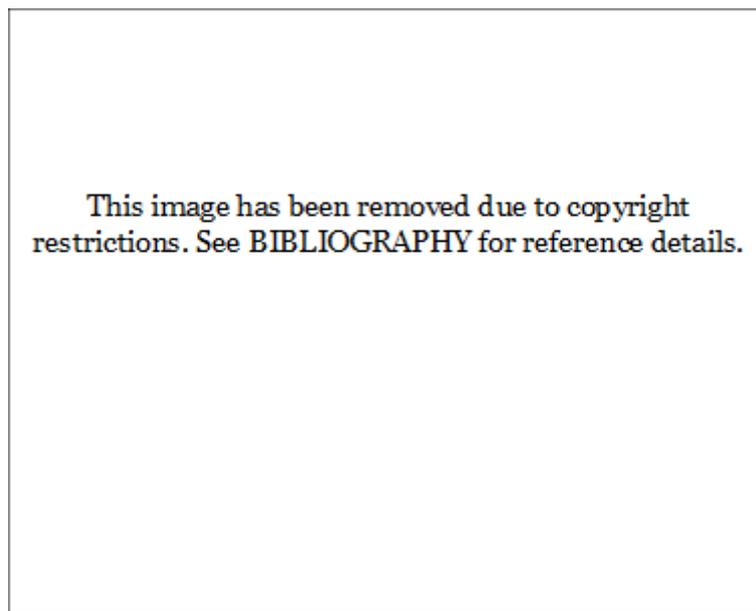


Figure 22: Simon Whitehead’s *En Darken* (2018). Photographer: Julian McKenny

Essentially, Whitehead’s approach creates a durational experience of becoming-nightfall. Rather than simply observing it as a visual phenomenon the participants doing becomes the mode through which they observe the night’s darkening, intrinsically weaving themselves into becoming a part of it<sup>98</sup>. His method of re-treading pathways and revisiting sites over numerous evenings or seasons<sup>99</sup> enables each participant to cultivate an after-dark familiarity within the site. Effectively, Whitehead’s work does not “reveal” the site-at-night to its participants but rather becomes a tool, a method which enables them to embark upon that discovery for themselves. Such a process requires a generosity of time spent within place. Unlike the majority of dance events whose start and finish is determined by human action,

<sup>98</sup> This discussion of Whitehead’s work is based upon my participation in a selection of his workshops in 2017-18.

<sup>99</sup> Whitehead describes this process as “homing” (Lavery and Whitehead, 2012): of prioritising familiarity with a site and bringing the participants into relation with it over a sustained period.

Whitehead's work functions by acknowledging that the participants/performers are always already comprising of a more-than-human community<sup>100</sup>. This approach enables him to effectively entangle his practice within the more-than-human durations of the night-world, so that to participate in Whitehead's work is to experience the fall of darkness to be far more than a blurring of the visual outlines between things, but rather a blurring of distinctions, a subtle dismantling of differentiations between all that participates in becoming the site at night.

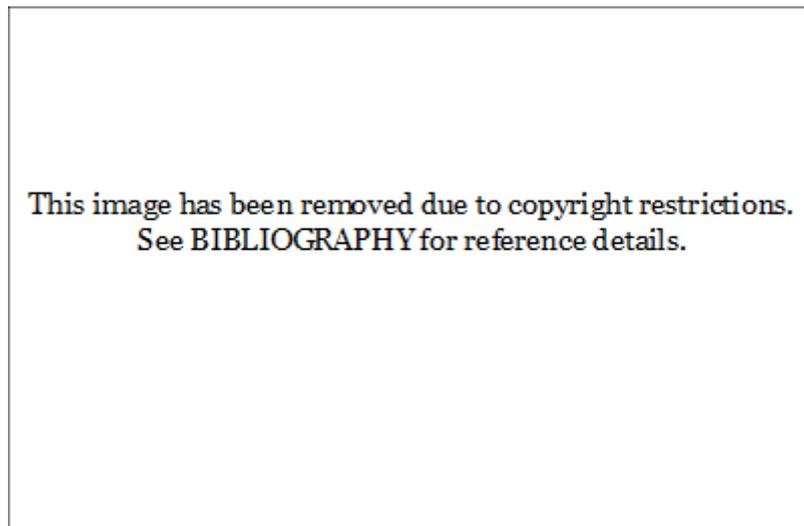


Figure 23: Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker's *Keeping Still* (2007). Photographer: Herman Sorgeloos.

Beyond my own research, there are few – if any – works or processes which are comparable to Whitehead's<sup>101</sup>. Dancing in the natural dark of night, as both a workshop-based practice and a means of generating performative works, remains a radical act – particularly in an age of electrically illuminated nightscapes. However, comparable to Whitehead's approach is Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker's solo *Keeping Still* (2007). Whilst it is an indoor work using artificial darkness, like Whitehead's work it uses darkness to de-centre the human performer. In *Keeping Still*, Ann Veronica Janssens' sculptural lighting creates long corridors in an otherwise

<sup>100</sup> His work is therefore comparable to that of Tuija Kokkonen and Paula Kramer, both of whom have established performance practices which endeavour to recognise the performative role of the more-than-human (see Kokkonen's *Non-humans and Performance*, 2011a, and Kramer's *On the Surface of Time*, 2018). Whilst their works take place during daylight hours, they nevertheless function on more-than-human durations: this concept is discussed in further detail in Section Two.

<sup>101</sup> Anna Halprin's *Planetary Dance* or *Circle the Earth* (1985 – present. See Halprin, 1995) are similarly time-specific, participatory projects, but lack the dark-specificity of Whitehead's work.

rectangular space, the harsh linearity of light contrasting with De Keersmaecker's tentative movement which shrinks and softens in comparison (fig. 23). Considering that the work begins with the reading of *The Earth Charter* (2000), detailing the age of ecological crisis, we might view De Keersmaecker's work as a comment upon the fragile relationship between human life and planet earth. The disappearance in the work is not just of her own form as she slides into the dark shadows cast by the environment around her, but through the movement of her torchlight she renders forms visible or invisible through a constant flow of movement. In doing so, the work evokes the impossibility of its own title as De Keersmaecker's movement chronicles a consistency of change through what disappears and appears. Like Whitehead, De Keersmaecker's work is driven from ecological concern but its expression is ultimately hopeful. Her disappearances into the dark can be read as subtly aligning with Rebecca Solnit's assertion that "the future is dark" (2016: 5) for, through both her movement and her torchlight, De Keersmaecker's darkness is proven to be an inhabited one. It is "the darkness in which hope lies" (ibid.: 34), alluding not to an absence or void, but rather to an inhabited unknown, one which is full of presence, possibility, but also uncertainty, as illustrated by the tentative quality of De Keersmaecker's motion as she disappears into the shadows which surround her, her torchlight highlighting the presence of other forms at the cost of the disappearance of her own.

## SUMMARY

Through their acknowledgement of night's temporality, the artworks of SIMMER-DIM emphasise the phenomenality of encountering nightscapes. Creating experiences of night and shadow-play that are durational and transformational, these works enable a recognition of inter-play between environment, body and movement. Of particular interest are those works that embody night as a spatial-temporal occurrence – such as those of Lee, De Keersmaecker and Whitehead – demonstrating how the choreography of movement can enhance the palpability of night's duration. In doing so, these works reveal an entangled relatedness between bodies and nightscapes through motion. As with the works featured in earlier sections, the artworks of SIMMER-DIM make felt a notion of an excess, a more-than which is produced by – and yet exists beyond – the work, the encounter and the

environment. Here, what is “more-than” alludes not just to freedom of action (as in OVER-SPILL) nor is it limited to the notion of a sensorial, more-than-visual encounter (as in UN-VOID) but rather through the site -and time- specific nature, the works of SIMMER-DIM reveal the more-than-human entanglements of darkening nightscapes. As the works of Whitehead and Arlander highlight, such entanglements make evident the non-hierarchical relationship between humans and more-than-humans, bodies and environments. Effectively, these works advocate for encounters with(in) night’s darkness that are embodied and kinaesthetically felt.

## CONCLUSION

In closing this chapter, I offer an overview of the key elements that have emerged from this study. The intention of this conclusion is to highlight those concepts which will be of particular relevance to the following chapters and which have directly shaped the ways in which I have devised and formulated my own night-time movement practice.

Following those works reviewed in OVER-SPILL, it is possible to observe how an artwork interweaves itself into a site’s function. The works of Charmatz, Forss and Jung Lee all echo the orange-white hues of the night-glow as the artworks themselves become by-products of the electric night by adopting excessive luminosity for creative purposes. In doing so, these artworks enact specific modes of freedom, reclaiming the urban night-space as a site for possibility. The playful, incidental nature of these works situates them in opposition to the labour and consumerism that so frequently populates the urban night, instead hinting towards alternative ways of being that the night hours might otherwise afford.

Conversely, UN-VOID demonstrates how the recent trend of choreographing in the artificial dark has become a way of subverting the production and rhetoric of the visual image by simply removing it entirely. Works such as Edvardsen’s *No Title*, Ingvarsen’s *Speculations* and Pelmus’ *Preview* offer alternative, non-visual methods of creating and imagining, which in turn provide new ways of moving and experiencing that are not governed by light (or anticipated by expectations of aesthetic) but instead step into an unknown – an unknown which is dark, yet full of

potential (Lepecki, 2016). These choreographies demonstrate that to associate darkness with absence is to dismiss the potentiality for thoughts and movements that are outside of the lit, visual-dominated (and therefore image-dominated) realm of our knowledge. These works advocate an adventure into the dark involving an openness towards pure potential, of an unknown and unseen presence.

Finally, in SIMMER-DIM the analysis of Rosemary Lee's *Circadian* demonstrates the significance of nightfall in making tangible beyond-human temporalities through performance, whilst the analysis of Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker's works has demonstrated not only the way in which the perception of moving bodies is altered by night's transitions, but essentially how the choreography of movement can enhance the palpability of night's duration. In performing in response to the night, the dancers in *Cesena* and *En Atendant* serve to highlight this visibility of time in space through the gradual transformation of their movement. In addition, reviewing the works of Annette Arlander and Simon Whitehead reveals practices which utilise nightfall to evoke a more-than-human entangling, acknowledging beyond-human possibilities of inhabiting, experiencing and knowing nightfall. In particular, Whitehead's methods create a tangible experience of nightfall by blurring the lines between observing, participating and performing, thus creating an embodied and sensorial encounter with nightfall for all those that are involved. Indeed, it becomes possible to perceive how Whitehead's *En Darken* opens up the possibility of an alternative notion of "nocturnalisation": one which refers not to the colonisation of night's darkness (Koslofsky, 2011: 280) but instead suggests ways of knowing through and with darkness, one which require – by necessity – an embodied and kinaesthetic engagement with the world.

Whilst my own site-specific movement practice at nightfall at first appears to be a niche area of research, this review has made evident its absolute relevance to current developments in contemporary dance. It follows the example of Charmatz in reclaiming the night hours back from capitalist notions of production and consumption to instead instigate methods for play, recreation and happenstance. Whilst the use of artificial dark marks the works of Ingvartsen, Edvardsen and Pelmus as very different to my own methods of practice, they nevertheless correlate in utilising darkness as the necessary means of subverting spectacle-oriented

choreographies in favour of a choreography of potentiality. And finally, it joins the site-specific practices of Lee, De Keersmaeker and Whitehead in creating work that responds to the fragile temporality of a site, charting a significant shift towards what we might therefore term “time-specific” choreographies, a shift made at once more relevant and more poignant by the ecological crisis from which it emerges.

Despite the possibilities evidently inherent in the artificial dark of indoor spaces, this review has demonstrated that a live encounter with nightfall remains imperative to valuing the durational and shifting entities which comprise its time-specificity. Rejecting the static indifference of un-dark nights and un-nightly dark, the oscillating, ever-temporal nightfall exists – always – as a site of its own making. Whilst the artworks in OVER-SPILL invite a Marxist reading of nightscapes – one that might include Rancière’s proletarian nights (1989) and Debord’s critique of the spectacle (1994) – and the artworks of UN-VOID invite a continuation of Lepecki’s Deleuzian analysis of darkness (Lepecki, 2016), the relevance of the artworks of SIMMER-DIM make necessary a very different yet multi-stranded approach. Firstly, a phenomenological approach becomes essential to build upon SIMMER-DIM’s recognition of night’s temporality, the shifting, fluctuating darkness emphasising night as a phenomenal experience. Secondly, several artworks – such as De Keersmaeker’s *En Attendant*, Lee’s *Circadian*, Whitehead’s *En Darken* – use movement to embody nightscapes as spatial-temporal occurrences. To continue along this line of enquiry entails a choreological practice, a method of movement analysis that has the tools required to articulate the relatedness between temporal and spatial structures<sup>102</sup>. Thirdly, SIMMER-DIM reveals the non-hierarchical, more-than-human entanglements that nightfall makes tangible. This necessitates the employment of new materialist theory in order to more thoroughly consider the elements of composting (Haraway, 2016), entanglement (Ingold, 2015), and non-hierarchical assemblages (Bennett, 2010) that the artworks of SIMMER-DIM have already brought into focus.

Whilst throughout this review the relevance of Manning’s notions of “excess” and “more-than” are frequently noted, it is only in SIMMER-DIM that their potential

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<sup>102</sup> See the main INTRODUCTION to this thesis for a further description of this methodology and its relevance to this research.

connotations are taken beyond Manning's own intentions. Here, their compatibility with new materialist theory becomes apparent, enabling the consideration of more-than-human entanglements through movement to commence. In this way, the works of SIMMER-DIM suggest an understanding of nightscapes to be not that which can be objectively observed but, rather, invite an approach to perceiving nightscapes that is at once embodied, multi-sensorial and kinaesthetically engaged.

## SECTION TWO

### NIGHT SCORES: TOWARDS A NOCTOGRAPHIC PRACTICE



Figure 24: Grubbins Wood. Nautical twilight on the lower path. Image: Jonny Randall

## INTRODUCTION

This second section addresses how an embodied, kinaesthetic approach to nightfall leads towards the creation of a noctographic movement practice. It examines how a place-specific approach enables new understandings of moving-with darkness to emerge. To do so, this section examines the development and exploration of four noctographic movement scores. These are: *The Dappling Score* (fig. 25), *Lines of Descent* (fig. 34), *Star Figures* (fig. 39), and the *Seep-Seem* score (fig. 45). These scores are place-specific, attuned to the seasons and weathers of nightfall in Grubbins Wood. They were developed and practised throughout my solo research and participatory night-time workshops<sup>103</sup>. As a result, throughout this section I draw upon the written reflections, drawings and symbology that emerged throughout these processes. In doing so, I endeavour to describe an embodied experience of the scores in practice.

This noctographic practice uses a choreologically-informed methodology to both analyse the movement that emerges and develop the trajectory of the practice. As a result, this section is divided into four key sub-sections: each sub-section is structured not only around the analysis of one of the four noctographic movement scores, but also around one of Laban's four motion factors of the Effort Graph (1947) – time, weight, space, flow. In doing so, each sub-section draws upon key choreological movement principles to articulate the kinaesthetic alterations that night's darkening brings. Consequently, this section unfolds through the following structure: WADING examines a kinaesthetic embodiment of nightfall's temporality and duration using *The Dappling Score*. GROUNDING then explores experiences of weight through wandering and falling using *Lines of Descent*. FIGURING examines spatial structures using *Star Figures*. And finally, CLUSTERING explores experiences of flow-in-motion at nightfall through the *Seep-Seem* score.

Each sub-section begins with an overview that introduces both the relevant choreological principles and the score itself. From there, I discuss each stage of the practical explorations of the movement score, drawing upon choreological analysis

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<sup>103</sup> See CONSTELLATION A: METHODOLOGY in the main introduction to this thesis for further details.

and written reflections to articulate the kinaesthetic knowledge of nightfall that this practice makes possible. Each sub-section closes with a summary which indicates those new terms and tools that have been introduced within that section of research and which will continue to be used to analyse my practice further in SECTION THREE of this thesis.

In following the progression of the score, each sub-section also follows the progression of nightfall, investigating the alterations in motion that the site's processual darkening brings. The new understandings of night, place and movement that emerge from the practising of each score are drawn together in the CONCLUSION of this section. The scores are included in this section in full, each preceding their relevant sub-section, creating an alternation between practice and theory that suitably reflects – on a smaller scale – the overall structure of this research project<sup>104</sup>.

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<sup>104</sup> The submission of this thesis has been preceded by the submission of practice – *On the Patterns We Gaze* (2019) – and will be followed by a second submission of practice, *On the Traces we Carry* (2021).

# DYNAMIC ATTUNEMENT PRACTICE<sup>1</sup>

## *[The Dappling Score]*

<sup>1</sup> The creation of this score has been directly influenced by the following practices and practitioners: Steve Paxton's "Small Dance" (*Material for the Spine*, 2008); Andrea Olsen's "Inner and Outer Awareness" (*Body and Earth*, 2002); Sandra Reeve's "Asking Questions, Making Statements" (2017). The term "attunement" is taken from Maxine Sheets Johnstone's notion of attunement as a way to "open ourselves to new possibilities" (2009: 144).

Figure 25: Title page of *The Dappling Score*.

## CIVIL TWILIGHT

Eyes closed.

Settle in to here: to the un-still of your standing.

Take a breath. Let it go.

Let your weight drop.

Let your body shed its tension.

Notice the small shifts.

Notice the minor movements of your standing  
(that is also your dancing).

What are you holding. What can you let go?

Just notice.

Unfurl the ears – what can you hear?

What can you hear of the distances in this place.

What are you touching, and what touches you?

Things, bodies, scents...

What can you smell of the distances in this place?

What of the ground, what of the weather?

What does this contact feel like for you?

What does this contact feel like for ground?

Give your attention to your fingers.

Let them unfurl, a small stretch.

How small can it be?

Take a breath. Let it go.

Once again – a small stretching of fingers.

Small, delicate reachings. Let it go.

Imagine opening your eyes. To what might they open?

Imagine closing them and re-finding this place.

Imagine opening them.

Open them. A meeting.

Settle in to here: to the un-still of your standing.

To the un-placed, un-stable-ness

Of here.

Figure 26: stage one of *The Dappling Score*.

## NAUTICAL TWILIGHT

Let the eyes follow.

Lines, edges  
trans-material.  
Going, and on-going.

Let go, re-find.  
Imagine the textures  
of these lines.

Skull follows eyes,  
spine follows skull.  
Feet  
they shift, they support.

The gaze-journey, the gaze-wander.

Invite the fingers  
carving, curving  
their lines are almost-actual.

Invite the toes  
and the lines they bring  
muscle, bone, fascia  
meet bark, rock, moss.

Play in the score as if it were water  
paddling or immersing  
Returning and repeating  
staying and going.

Figure 27: stage two of *The Dappling Score*.

## ASTRONOMICAL TWILIGHT

What distances do you hold?  
What is the texture of this distance?

*How close is close?  
Where is the almost-touch?*

Let the fingers imagine -  
almost becoming actual  
actual becoming almost.

*A meeting.  
A settling, un-still and un-centred.  
Small shifts.*

A temporal architecture.

*Let go.  
Move on, re-find  
the almost, almost.*

What are you holding?  
Just notice.

*What holds you?  
Just notice.*

Shifting, changing, playing  
Letting go of precision  
allowing for change and being changed

*forming and un-forming  
shaping and un-shaping  
trickling into sequence  
and disappearing*

Shifting, changing, playing

*Re-find your un-standing place.*

Performing for place.

*Performing with place.*

Intention, attention  
where does it lie  
and where does it lie-with

*Performing for place.*

Performing with place.

*Intention, attention  
where does it lie  
and where does it lie-with*

Figure 28: stage three of *The Dappling Score*.

# WADING

## OVERVIEW

WADING examines how duration and temporality are experienced at nightfall through movement. To do so, it discusses a practical engagement with *The Dappling Score* (fig. 25). Using choreological analysis, WADING articulates how altered experiences of duration at nightfall inform a noctographic practising of movement. Before beginning this analysis, I firstly need to introduce three key themes that are integral to this process: choreological notions of time and temporality; the three stages of twilight and their role in this practice; and *The Dappling Score*.

Within choreological practice, the duration and temporality of the movement phrase as a whole is comprehended only through the analysis of the dynamic variations that comprise it, that is, the rhythm that is produced in individual movements (Preston-Dunlop, 2006: 102). This rhythm arises through change, through the difference that is perceptible between one movement and the next: temporal changes which can be felt, observed and analysed in terms of speed, duration and weight (ibid.).

Choreology is therefore not concerned with an objective measurement of movement but rather with the experience of the temporal fluctuations which comprise it. In this, choreological practice aligns with Sheets-Johnstone's phenomenology of dance<sup>105</sup>, which recognises that "to move is to change qualitative relationships [...] It is phenomenologically evident that each successive movement creates a qualitative change, and this, in turn, creates an accentual pattern, changing intensities" (Sheets-Johnstone, 1979: 103-4).

If we concern ourselves with the "accentual pattern" of movement, the overarching phrase being defined by its "changing intensities", then effectively we consider temporality to be made manifest by the movement itself – as Sheets-Johnstone asserts, "time is not a thing which pre-exists and awaits carving up by the dancer, because it is something created by the dance itself, it exists specifically only in

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<sup>105</sup> As addressed in the main INTRODUCTION to this thesis, whilst Valerie Preston Dunlop's development of Choreological Studies builds primarily upon the work of Rudolf Laban it nevertheless incorporates a phenomenological approach, drawing considerable influence from Sheets-Johnstone's *Phenomenology of Dance* (1979). See Preston Dunlop's *Looking at Dances* (2006) and *Dance and the Performative* (2002) for discussion on the application of phenomenology within a choreological practice.

relation to a specific movement within the dance” (ibid.: 102). Sheets-Johnstone’s words are reflective of both a phenomenological and choreological understanding of movement, in which “movement rhythm arises from our experiences as sentient kinetic beings” (Preston-Dunlop, 2006: 101), so that the temporality of the movement phrase is shaped not by any measurable, clock-based notion of time, but rather is defined by the doing of the dancer. This leads into the second key theme of this section – the three stages of twilight.

The three stages of twilight comprise of Civil, Nautical and Astronomical. In the early stages of this practice-based research, the dissonance between the clock-based timing of the stages of twilight and the experience of twilight’s duration created by the environmental features of a site gradually became apparent. On-site writings produced within the solo research and workshop series demonstrate how commencing the practice within a different part of the wood became akin to commencing the practice at a different point in twilight’s duration, and it is this – the emergence of a kinaesthetic sensing of twilight’s duration – that *WADING* primarily explores. It does so not by rejecting the clock-based timings of twilight but rather uses this three-part structure to comprehend the duration of nightfall through choreological analysis, enabling a method to emerge through which to explore the intertwining of a phenomenological perception of nightfall alongside the clock-time measurement of its duration. This method consolidated to form *The Dappling Score* (fig. 25), which forms the third and final key theme of this section.

What became known as “dappling” is a Dynamic Attunement Practice with which my solo research began in the wood. The score forms a guided improvisation that lasts the duration of nightfall. Used – and refined – in workshops for both professional and community dancers, this score became a popular method with the dancers for re-entering the wood after a period of absence, enabling them to attune to the shifts that had occurred in the hours, days or months of our absence. Choreologically speaking, the score progresses through three types of choreutic unit and manner of materialisation (ChU/Mm) (Preston-Dunlop, 2006: 133). These units are body designs, spatial projections, and spatial tensions. This sequencing of choreutic units emerged in accordance with the dynamic and durational shifts perceived at nightfall. Effectively, each choreutic unit aligns to a stage of twilight, so that by engaging with

the score the dancer progresses through a sequencing of movement that is itself embodying the sequencing of twilight.

In what follows, I address the choreutic formation of the score through the durational experience of nightfall, beginning with dusk and concluding with night. To do so, I divide that experience into three progressive states: THIS IS STANDING, GOING AND ON-GOING, and IN THE ALMOST-TOUCH. Each corresponds to a stage of *The Dappling Score*, and therefore to a particular choreutic unit and stage of twilight. In discussing each in turn, I examine what *The Dappling Score* can reveal about nightfall's duration and our bodily engagement with it through motion. A final sub-section – NIGHT-TIDE – summarises these findings and demonstrates how the embodiment of a noctographic movement practice enables new understandings of nightfall's duration to emerge. NIGHT-TIDE suggests that it is through a kinaesthetic experience of nightfall's duration that it becomes possible to comprehend the potential for moving between the stages of twilight to be a spatial shift as much as a temporal shift – to be a movement between here and there, as much as then and now.

### **THIS IS STANDING**<sup>106</sup>

*I'm standing on the lower path, one of 6 dancers – we are scattered along its length. It is the beginning of the night, the beginning of our time here in this place. Each dancer is stood, each a vertical form dwarfed by those of the trees. Minor movements are perceptible: small shifts of posture, adjustments to ground, wind through branches and hair. The unknowing-ness of nightfall is already here, already in motion: the face of the furthest dancer is lost to me, and the others are becoming so. Night seems to be a horizontal movement in this place, a creeping-towards rather than a falling-down. The path acts as a measure of the night's smudging, the smudging of forms and details. Things here are becoming two-dimensional, becoming sketches of themselves.*

Figure 29: Extract from my on-site writings, observing workshop participants (April 2018: civil twilight).

Upon entering the wood at civil twilight, what was observable in both myself and the workshop participants was a need to begin by simply standing still. The practices of Steve Paxton, Andrea Olsen, Sandra Reeve and Helen Poynor similarly depart from

<sup>106</sup> The title of this section refers to the beginning of Steve Paxton's "the small dance" – see Paxton's DVD-ROM *Material for the Spine* (2008).

this place<sup>107</sup>, pausing in order to attune to all that is moving. For Paxton and Olsen, this begins with noticing the movements within the body – the “primary dialogue” (Olsen, 2002: 4) of the breath, the minor adjustments that form the body’s “small dance” (Paxton, 2011). *The Dappling Score* proceeds from this same premise (fig. 26). However, whilst commencing with the action of standing initially emerged from my own need to attune to the wood upon arrival, the enactment of the score took on a very different experience when perceiving the standing and practising of others.

In choreological studies, stillness is an action (Preston-Dunlop, 2006: 98), described as “more than stopping, it is continuing the state just arrived at [...] a body holding still” (ibid.: 98). It is important to note that here this “continuing the state” quality of stillness – that can also be identified choreologically as “body designs”<sup>108</sup> – refers specifically to the dancer’s preceding movement and is understood to be brought into appearance through the dancer’s intention (ibid.: 133). The experience of body designs at civil twilight, however, reveals them to be co-formed by the site in which they come into appearance: their “holding still” is not just the arrival of the dancer in that moment, but the arrival of the site as it manifests itself within the dancer’s holding. It is an arrival that is, due to nightfall’s durational shift, always ongoing. In the opening passage (fig. 26) my witnessing of “small shifts of posture, adjustments to ground, wind through branches and hair”, suggest the effects of the environment to cause an observable un-stilling of the body designs, so that the dancer’s forms are equally “continuing the state” of the site’s durational shifts. Such a process enforces performance scholar Tuija Kokkonen’s assertion that “[a]n organism cannot be in a relationship with its environment without also being in a relationship with the various temporalities of that environment” (Kokkonen, 2011a: 15). Nightfall is one such temporality. If my observations above reflect a site-specific un-stilling of body designs, nightfall engenders a time-specific un-stilling of their form that only becomes observable through a durational practice.

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<sup>107</sup> See Steve Paxton’s “Small Dance” (*Material for the Spine*, 2008); Andrea Olsen’s “Inner and Outer Awareness” (*Body and Earth*, 2002) and Sandra Reeve’s “Asking Questions and Making Statements” (2017).

<sup>108</sup> This notion of body designs relates directly to Sheets-Johnstone’s concept of areal designs, “visual-kinetic forms which do not actually exist” (Sheets-Johnstone, 1979: 123). Notably, both theorists point to almost-ness of these shapes existence, recognising the formation of the designs to be dependent upon the intention of the dancer (Preston-Dunlop, 2006: 134; Sheets-Johnstone, 1979: 123-4).

Preston-Dunlop describes body designs as “almost actual” (ibid.: 134); during the minutes of civil twilight, this almost-ness comes to the fore – it is made tangible as the spatial entity of the design becomes smudged by nightfall’s beginning, becomes a form not-yet formed, becomes pre-form. In the earlier passage from my notebook, I describe a “smudging of form and details” that is initiated not by the dancers’ movement but by the movement of night within this site. Here, holding stillness at civil twilight reveals the dancer’s movement and presence to be inseparable from the perpetual motion that is the site’s temporality, so that the dancer’s doing is always a doing-with. This is made evident in the following extract from a workshop participant’s notebook, a concise and succinct summary of civil twilight’s progression which echoes the brevity of the duration of a January nightfall:



*soft focus blurredly blur  
everything becoming the same colour  
forms forming  
trees swaying  
swaying movements beginning within me.*

Figure 30: Extract from a workshop participant’s notebook, January 2019: civil twilight.

Here (fig. 30) the participant succinctly evokes the process by which civil twilight’s durational *visual* merging – the “blurredly blur” by which “everything becoming the same colour” – is echoed by a durational *dynamic* merging, the swaying of the trees not merely observed but felt and experienced, “beginning within me”. Notably, Preston-Dunlop describes dynamics as the “colourings” of a dance work (2006: 115), suggesting that each rhythm can be “regarded as a dance colour” (ibid.: 113). Whilst Preston-Dunlop is using the notion of “colourings” metaphorically, the passage above suggests that at nightfall there is a resonance between the blurring that is visually perceived (in the shift of colour) and that which is kinaesthetically felt (in the shift of dynamics). In this way, the “becoming the same colour” that the participant visually observes coincides with a shared movement quality between herself and the trees as darkness falls so that, choreologically, the dancer and the environment are becoming the same *dynamic* colour. In civil twilight, observed form shifts into felt form as nightfall’s beginning creates the “blurredly blur” of the dancer’s vision.

This notion of blurring is similarly reflected in the writings of other participants who describe bodies “morphing from trees and each other”, “fingers entwine like

branches”, and movement “steady like a tree grows”. Prominent in these writings is a durational, processual quality that is mirrored kinaesthetically in the dancers’ dynamics. The “steady”, “morphing”, “becoming the same” is evident in the symbology<sup>109</sup>, which denotes the emergence of small, subtle and indirect rhythmical shifts in what are otherwise held, vertical body designs, gradually gaining in fluidity and duration. As the motifs of sustained and indirect motion become more frequent, the symbology denotes the decrease of perceptible spatial entities and the emerging of “dynamic colourings”. This durational shift – of form to colour in visual perception, of body designs to indirect effort quality in kinaesthetic perception – forms the beginning of a “becoming-night” trajectory that is nightfall’s duration made manifest in the movement of those that inhabit it.

This becoming-night trajectory can be better understood if discussed in relation to Merleau-Ponty’s notion of the relationship between colour and outline. In the extract above, it is important to note that it is the “becoming” of colour that appears to result in the “form’s forming”. Such a notion is similarly portrayed in Merleau-Ponty’s essay, *Cézanne’s Doubt*, when he suggests that in “giving colour priority over the outline” (Merleau-Ponty, 1964: 12), Cézanne was able to abandon himself to “the chaos of sensations” (ibid.: 13) and “depict matter as it takes on form” (ibid.: 13). For Merleau-Ponty, form follows colour: the removal of the outline does not compromise the presence of form, but rather enables the perception of its processual quality. To perform body designs at civil twilight is to experience this same removal of outline, both visually and kinaesthetically. The dancer’s “soft focus blurredly blur” is reflected in the emergence of dynamic colourings which do not replace the form but rather are revealed to be the forming of form, becoming the “sketches of themselves”. Through Merleau-Ponty’s analysis, then, it is possible to comprehend that within civil twilight – within the durational emergence of dynamic colourings – we perceive not the loss of form, but rather the *appearance of formation*. This process corresponds with choreologist Rosemary Brandt’s assertion that “energy creates the form” (Brandt, 2013) based on changing relationships between its qualitative structures, suggesting dynamics to not only precede shape but to be their forming force. Just as Cézanne’s work has “no outline to enclose the colour” (Merleau-Ponty, 1964: 12), so the spatial

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<sup>109</sup> See APPENDIX (5) for symbology relating to *The Dappling Score*.

body design of the dancer in civil twilight reveals the dynamic colourings that are its formation. It is, therefore, through the time-specific nature of this movement practice that it becomes possible to comprehend civil twilight to be not a durational dimming or a dulling, but rather a process by which different dynamic colourings come into appearance as night begins to descend.

## GOING AND ON-GOING

Whilst the beginning of *The Dappling Score* echoes the dancer's tendency to find stillness upon entering the wood, its simplicity also facilitates this tuning-in to the emergence of the wood's dynamic colourings, and enables the dancer to perceive themselves to be a part of it – “beginning within me” – discovering their stilling to be an un-stilling as nightfall begins. Yet this process by which we encounter the “appearance of formation” alters: as civil twilight progresses and merges into nautical twilight, the dynamic colourings which flourished during civil twilight are gradually condensed during nautical twilight, so that it is the emergence of silhouettes and contours that begin to take precedence<sup>110</sup>. It is this process that forms the second stage of *The Dappling Score* (fig. 27). As we shall see, this process is not a reversal of civil but rather this “becoming contour” is its continuation, as the dynamic colourings gain not form but direction – a spatial entity which, nevertheless, makes them perceptible as linear contours.

In my solo practice, nautical twilight became synonymous with the tracing of forms: as the contours and silhouettes of the wood's entangled branches above me came to the fore, my eyes and limbs and spine would frequently be drawn to engage with them, to trace out their fluctuating appearance and disappearance. During the workshops, I observed a similar tendency in the improvisation of the participants, their attention drawn upwards, their limbs carving out contours. In the dancers' writings, both this perception and tracing of contours is made evident. Comments such as “Looking upward could see branches like capillaries”, “I see shapes of branches that the darkness creates and trace with my eyes, my body”, “outlining different trees with my movement”, and “the alveoli of the uppermost twigs against

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<sup>110</sup> Robert MacFarlane (2010: 201) describes this process in detail – called “dark adaptation” - by which the eyes adjust to the twilight, and are then able to perceive, through greyscale, detailed outlines and forms.

the sky” – all evoke this shift towards tracing contours. These experiences meant my initial analysis aligned the contours of nautical twilight with the choreutic unit of spatial progressions – linear or curving pathways that progressively becomes visible in space (Preston-Dunlop, 2006: 133). Yet further enquiry into this process revealed that these movements formed by nightfall’s shift into nautical twilight were not progressive tracings of lines but rather a dynamically driven articulation of force, whereby the “dynamic colourings” of civil twilight become the “dynamic reachings” of nautical.

Essential to these movements was Sheets-Johnstone’s “spatialization of force” (Sheets-Johnstone, 1979: 57), articulated in the “projectional quality” that here emerged due to the distance that lies between (human) body and (tree) contour – a distance that is itself necessary to their perception. At nautical, the eyes and limbs and spine do not simply trace forms, they project them: what comes into appearance is a reaching-beyond, a spatialization which is the “where it wants to go” (ibid.: 93) of a dynamic line<sup>111</sup>. Spatial projections are lines that travel “from the body centre out into space” (Preston-Dunlop, 2006: 134). Unlike other choreutic units, spatial projections require the energy of carrying the line beyond the dancer’s form: an energy that manifests itself as either force or duration, and it is this that makes the projectional quality of the movement perceptible at nautical twilight. In performing spatial projections, I have always relied upon my focus to carry the virtual line beyond myself: as Sheets-Johnstone observes, “When a line “pre-exists”, it does so through the phenomenon of focus [...as] an intended but undrawn line” (1979: 121-2)<sup>112</sup>. Yet in that second stage of twilight, where the perception of detail is accentuated in outline by the smudging of surfaces, the detail of the dancer’s focus is lost so that the manifestation of the projectional quality of movement relies entirely upon its duration and articulation of force<sup>113</sup>. At nautical twilight, the virtual lines of

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<sup>111</sup> This description of “projectional quality” (Sheets-Johnstone, 1979) further qualifies Preston-Dunlop’s notion of a “spatial projection” as a “virtual line” that “continues on its journey” beyond the body (Preston-Dunlop, 2006: 134-5). Whilst one conceives of projections as temporal (and therefore as dynamic) and the other as spatial, this analysis demonstrates how the two are inextricably interwoven and how one qualifies the other.

<sup>112</sup> Here, Sheets-Johnstone is describing the “linear pattern” of movement which she discusses as a spatialization of force (1979: 121-2), whereas her notion of “projectional quality” is mostly articulated in relation to a temporalization of force. However, Sheets-Johnstone’s does suggest that projectional quality creates a “particular spatialization of force” (1979: 57) enabling the correlation of Sheets-Johnstone’s “projectional quality” with Preston-Dunlop’s “spatial projection”.

<sup>113</sup> Sheets-Johnstone describes this as “spatial textures” which are “similar to focus in that they can accentuate in one way or another aspects within the total spatialization of force, and are thereby integral parts of the imaginative space of dance” (Sheets-Johnstone, 1979: 127).

the dancer's spatial projections are made evident "according to the energy with which it is made" (Preston-Dunlop, 2006: 134), an energy which is the colouring of these dynamic reachings.

This notion can perhaps be better understood by addressing Tim Ingold's assertion that "every line has, or better is, colour, and every colour goes out along a line" (Ingold, 2015: 104). In this way, it is possible to comprehend the progression of civil's dynamic colourings into nautical's dynamic reachings to be not the materialization of lines but rather how colour, imbued with direction, becomes lines-in-formation. This process is compatible with Merleau-Ponty's concept of "contours" which he perceives as indicating a fullness and extension of presence (Merleau-Ponty, 1964: 14). Making a clear distinction between contours and mere outlines, he suggests:

If one outlines the shape of an apple with a continuous line, one makes an object of the shape, whereas the contour is rather the ideal limit toward which the sides of the apple recede in depth. (1964: 14-15)

In the same way that the contour comes into appearance at the "ideal limit" of the apple's dynamic form, so the extent of the dancer's spatial projection comes into formation at the "ideal limit" of the force with which it is executed. As these dynamic reachings come into formation at nautical twilight, it becomes possible to perceive the trees contours as a similar articulation of force: that the elongated arcs of the branches are themselves dynamic reachings, brought into formation through the temporal forces of the environment. These temporal forces – of which nightfall is one – can perhaps be better described as what Tim Ingold terms "the weather-world" (Ingold, 2012: 81), environmental and atmospheric forces that are made evident in the visual shaping of contours. It is, therefore, through movement, through a kinaesthetic perception of the wood during nightfall, that it becomes possible to not only perceive visually the contours as movement themselves but to kinaesthetically empathise with them<sup>114</sup>. Through the dancer's dynamic reachings, through the "going and on-going"<sup>115</sup> of her form, she perceives within the tree's contours the same becoming-night trajectory of which she herself is a part. To embody that same

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<sup>114</sup> This refers to Susan Foster's notion of kinaesthetic empathy (Foster, 2011) whereby the perception of movement provokes an empathetic resonance of the sensation of that movement. Foster applies the terms specifically to the perception of human movement, but here I suggest that kinaesthetic empathy is possible between human and more-than-humans, when the in-formation of each's movement is dependent upon the same temporal forces of an environment, such as nightfall.

<sup>115</sup> This is an instruction taken from the second section of *The Dappling Score*.

projectional quality which she perceives in the contour above is to comprehend night's durational fall not just as a force which shapes and alters the lines of (her) movement, but to be a phenomenon that is inseparable from that movement it creates. This kinaesthetic experience supports Donna Haraway's assertion that it is "out of the beings of previous such entanglements" (Haraway, 2016: 60) that things take form, so that they "do not precede their relatings; they make each other" (ibid.). In this way, this practice rejects any notion of more-than-human environments as simply "passive", or "a recalcitrant for human action" (Bennett, 2010: 111) and instead asserts an entangled, co-forming relatedness to exist<sup>116</sup>. In other words, as I engage with the spatial projections that *The Dappling Score* invites at nautical twilight – as my "skull follows eyes, spine follows skull" – I experience my movement to be articulated *by* nightfall and simultaneously experience my movement to be an articulation *of* nightfall. And gazing up, I perceive in the contours of the trees that same movement trajectory, the unavoidable ongoing-ness that characterizes our shared becoming-night.

## IN THE ALMOST-TOUCH

As the wood shifts into astronomical twilight, the clarity and detail of the contours that were once so prominent in nautical become gently enveloped into night's increasing darkness. Yet these still-darkening hues which cause the disappearance of the (relatively proximal) trees equally cause the scattered emergence of the far-off light of the stars. In my writings from my solo practice, I describe how "what is nearby, what is faraway, becomes redefined [...] proximity – the almost-ness of it – can no longer be seen, only felt"<sup>117</sup>. Whilst this decrease in visual perception of what is close-by is mirrored in an increase in visual perception of what is far-away, it also – as is suggested in my writing – causes an increase in the tactile perception of what is proximal. Essential to this is the processual duration of astronomical twilight. The alteration of the perception of distance – and alteration in the senses which perceive it – is gradual, so that there exists a merging and emerging, a shrinking and expanding of the perceptual nightscape as astronomical twilight unfolds. During

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<sup>116</sup> This notion of entanglement is intrinsic to this research and is further developed in the following sub-sections of this chapter.

<sup>117</sup> For text samples from on-site notebooks, see APPENDIX (3).

astronomical twilight – which inhabits a space that is the almost-night and simultaneously the not-yet night – there exists not a loss of distance but, as we shall see, a loss of differentiating things from one another through distance. This process forms the third and final stage of *The Dappling Score* (fig. 28).

As nautical twilight shifts into astronomical, what is prevalent throughout the workshops is a progressive clustering of the participants. Whereas the degree of darkness in civil and nautical rarely affects the proximity of group members to one another, there is a notable shift once the wood becomes dark enough for stars to be perceived. Whilst the working space of the group shrinks, their movement does not necessarily minimise: looking through the symbology scores from astronomical twilight<sup>118</sup>, evident in the symbology is a continuity of motion and state of flow – often at a sustained, slow pace<sup>119</sup> – along with fluctuating shifts of relatedness of towards and away<sup>120</sup>. However, the symbology of the towards and away – of distance – gradually shifts into ones of touch and almost-touch, a smattering of relatedness symbols that denote contact, transfer of weight, spatial tension. Evident in the symbology is a shift from distance-in-motion that is visually perceptible to one that is kinaesthetically felt. This is mirrored in my accompanying notes, in which I observe how one of the dancers: “disappears through increased proximity to the tree, so her approaching the tree is also her becoming-tree”, and also in the writings of the dancers who describe how at astronomical twilight “distance rendered gradual obscurity”, “changing long distance to short”<sup>121</sup>.

The tangibility of distance can be understood choreologically in terms of spatial tension. As Sheets-Johnstone describes, “as a quality of force, tension is visually apparent, yet from the dancer’s point of view it is kinesthetically apparent” (Sheets-Johnstone, 1979: 52). It is during the still-darkening hues of astronomical twilight that the “kinaesthetically apparent” tension of distance comes to the fore. Spatial tensions are not static but are formed through movement and are themselves in

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<sup>118</sup> See APPENDIX (5) for symbology relating to *The Dappling Score*.

<sup>119</sup> This is similarly observed by one of the participants, writing during astronomical twilight: “As we started to see less movements became slower”.

<sup>120</sup> This continuity of motion contrasts with the movement trajectory of Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker’s *En Attendant* (discussed in SECTION ONE: SIMMER-DIM) which, as discussed, progresses from fluid movement towards still, held forms. This suggests that the performance of *En Attendant* culminated during nautical twilight – a time when, as we have seen, the perception of contours is at its most defined.

<sup>121</sup> For text samples from on-site notebooks, see APPENDIX (3).

motion: they are how two surfaces “are placed to relate” (Preston-Dunlop, 2006: 135) and possess what Preston-Dunlop describes as a “directional value” (2006: 135). In order to purposefully explore spatial tension during astronomical twilight, I introduced it into *The Dappling Score*, formulating distance as a question through movement<sup>122</sup>: “how close is close”, “What distances do you hold”, “What is the texture of that distance” (fig. 28). The dancers’ written responses to these tasks evoke two distinct observations. On the one hand, responses such as “felt my senses alive acoustic of tread and touch of bark” or “I realised just how much interaction there was particularly chemically as my breath condensed around me and my nose got wet” evoke a heightened awareness of sensorial contact with their environment through movement. On the other, these written responses suggest a sense of encountering darkness as a tangible substance. For instance, they describe darkness as “earthy, wanting to curl up and be enclosed”, “thuddy darkness. Dark is thick”, or “holding different parts of the space”. These observations not only describe the dancer’s sensing of the dark as a tactile, more-than-visual engagement, but equally suggests an awareness of darkness as a substance to which they themselves are tangible – a substance which holds them as much as they hold it.

This tangibility of a “thuddy darkness” is compatible with Merleau-Ponty’s notion of “lines of force”, emerging within a world that:

is a mass without gaps, a system of colours across which the receding perspective, the outlines, angles, and curves are inscribed like lines of force; the spatial structure vibrates as it is formed. (1964: 15)

However, whereas Merleau-Ponty conveys this concept visually as a “system of colours [...] outlines, angles, and curves”, in astronomical twilight this “mass without gaps” is more-than-visual (but not other-than-visual), a felt notion of becoming-night. It is by exploring astronomical twilight through the kinaesthetic sensibility of movement that Merleau-Ponty’s notion of the world as “a mass without gaps” becomes tangible, becomes felt as a tensional field. Such an experience of night’s darkness is evident in the words of philosopher Don Handelman, describing how night:

presses in from all sides, so highly proximate, the so-called palpability of darkness, from which the person cannot separate. Darkness, one can say, is

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<sup>122</sup> The concept of using movement to ask questions and make statements is inspired by Sandra Reeve’s environmental movement practice, as experienced when participating in her *Ecological Movement* intensive, September 2017.

sticky, clinging continuously; or, perhaps its tactility flows around us like waters of the sea depth. (2005: 253-4)

If it is through a durational, night-time movement practice that we perceive the dynamic colourings of civil twilight to be not lost in the emergence of nautical twilight's contours, but rather that the contours themselves are dynamic colourings imbued with directional value – are the colourings “going out along a line”, becoming dynamic reachings – then the projectional qualities of these dynamic reachings are similarly not lost in night's transition from nautical into astronomical. Their force does not disappear as the visual perception of the contours fade, but rather form a tensional field, a “palpability” that is “a mass without gaps”. What both Handelman and Merleau-Ponty have in common is an evocation of a force which “flows around us” and shapes our own motion as a spatial structure which “vibrates as it is formed”. It is through a durational exploration of spatial tensions that nightfall is made tangible as such a force, as a “spatial texture” that is both encountered and created through movement (Sheets-Johnstone, 1979: 125). By sensing the texture of distance through movement, spatial tensions evoke a felt recognition of astronomical twilight as a darkness that is still in flux, still unsettled, so that to kinaesthetically perceive nightfall is to not only perceive night *in* motion but equally *as* motion. If, as Rudolf Laban observes, “all movement tends into space, both the space around us and the space within us” (Laban and Ullmann, 1984: 54), then the movement that is nightfall co-forms the dancers motion so that we are not – our bodies are not – simply structures which nightfall swirls around, but rather our movement is held, inhabited and altered by the “lines of force” which compose the nightfall of the places in which we dwell. During astronomical twilight, the fluxes and flows of this relationship between nightfall-as-motion and dancer-as-motion become not visually observable, but kinaesthetically felt.

### **SUMMARY: NIGHT-TIDE**

*The Dappling Score* emerged from an initial intention to trace the shift of dynamic energy in human movement over the course of nightfall. This dynamic energy, whilst observed and analysed as human movement, is nevertheless inseparable from – indeed, is formed from – the environment in which it is situated, dependent as it is upon the sensorial perception of that nightscape in which the movement occurs. The

purpose of *The Dappling Score* was to establish a score-based exploration of nightfall that moved beyond the clock: to form a means of following-time rather than keeping-time, one that flowed not according to a measured, metric system but rather according to the environmental shifts in which the score occurred. In doing so, what has arisen through the continued practising of the score is a recognition of nightfall to be as much a spatial entity as it is a temporal one – through the reiteration of the practice, it has become possible to comprehend a shifting-between twilights to be as much of a movement between *here* and *there*, as between *then* and *now*.

*There is a brightness here – the water, the light bark of the hazel trees, their thinness. Here, I am up high. There is so much light. Day has not left here yet, not really – there is not yet that sense of settling.*

Figure 31: : Extract from my on-site writings, during solo practice (13<sup>th</sup> May 2017, upper path)

*The density of the yews, their trunks are so densely black, it is as if they sap the light from the air [...] the deep furrow of the path means that sunset has already passed in this place [...] I felt rushed in my practice, like I was playing catch-up. The stilling that is the beginning of civil had already passed, this place was already tipping into nightfall. The speed at which night descends in this place is tangible, almost sudden.*

Figure 32: : Extract from my on-site writings, during solo practice (28<sup>th</sup> May 2017, lower path)

Observable within these extracts (fig. 31, fig. 32) are the ways in which the level of darkness and the speed of nightfall are created by characteristics of the environment itself. It is, of course, through the re-practising of the score – which is equally a re-visiting to the site – that a felt sense of twilight’s duration becomes observable. The contrast in the felt sense of nightfall’s commencement in the passages above – of “not yet that sense of settling” in comparison to feeling “rushed” by the accelerating darkness – demonstrates the site-specificity of a nightfall co-formed by its environment. This is echoed in writings done at the completion of the score: leaving the wood, I describe the movement transition out on to the open saltmarsh as “going back in time, astronomical is just beginning here, the edges of silhouettes still having their say”, whilst workshop participants describe exiting the wood as “allowing me to stand up taller, look around + interact with the wider horizon” and “the light leading my eyes [...] Remembering the branches of the trees and feeling different freer air.” If, as these statements suggest, the degree of twilight is determined by the environmental composition of the site, then it becomes possible to comprehend a moving-between twilights to be as spatial as it is temporal.

This process is made particularly tangible during nautical, where the site-specificity of nightfall creates a sort of layered effect. For example, one participant describes how “The periphery of my tree started to blur in the darkness so I took my focus higher where it was clearer against the sky. It even became blurred [in] the peripheries of my own body. So there became more playful hide and seek like qualities.” When we place this in relation to an extract from my own writings done at nautical twilight, certain observations come to the fore:

*It's early March, 2016. My palms are tracing the smooth, damp sinews of a yew tree. It's almost night, my eyes huge in their skull, trying to differentiate forms and shapes into recognition. I can just see the silhouettes of the yew's branches; my eyes follow its contours, drawing my skull back, feet treading and sinking. All the detail I cannot see becomes something other; I interpret instead of recognise. Forms gain movement in my perception, as I attempt to comprehend the boundaries of their shape. As vision fails, I resort once more to my palms for information; sodden bark is mistaken for scales, moss for hair. These mistakes are only initial, but as anyone who's wandered and wondered at night will know - the dark always suggests something more.*

Figure 33: Extract from my on-site writings, during solo practice (Nautical twilight, March 2016)

What both writings make evident is a spatiality of perception. The clarity of detail in the contours is gained only by looking above, whilst at eye level or below things are “blurred” and touch is used to navigate the immediate surroundings as the level of darkness shifts into one akin to astronomical, despite the clarity of the nautical hues above. This visual dissonance between above and below is created by the site, by the woodland’s density. The shift of the dancer’s focus – between levels, between senses – illustrates that duration is already perceptible as a spatial entity. At nightfall, duration is distance. In the participant’s reflection above, the emergence of contours from dynamic colourings and their eventual enveloping into night’s darkness is dependent upon not just duration as a passing of clock-time, but duration as a progression in both site and sight. This is further illustrated in my own writing, where the nautical twilight above me enables a visual negotiating of that space – “drawing my skull back” – yet in my immediate surroundings the body shifts into a tactile perception of place as here, the contours are already lost: it is already astronomical twilight. In this way, the stages of twilight are experienced less as a moment in time – as “now” – and more as a moment in place – as “here”. It is, perhaps, the in-betweenness of nautical twilight that makes felt the spatiality of its

duration: one in which the stages of nightfall can co-exist simultaneously, indicating nightfall to be a processual fluctuation that is as spatial as it is temporal.

The structure of *The Dappling Score* reflects this idea of nightfall as a spatial flux by offering the participants the opportunity to “Play in the score as if it were water, paddling or immersing” (fig. 27). This instruction not only recognises the possibility to shift between stages of nightfall by shifting between places within the site, but by treating the score “as if it were water” is to recognise the stages of nightfall to not simply sit alongside each other like a linear series of stepping stones, but to seep into one another, like movements in a sequence<sup>123</sup>. In shifting between the twilights – in shifting between different choreutic units – what came before is not lost and moved-on from, but rather continues and seeps into what follows, expressing the spatial-temporal duration of nightfall. As Sheets-Johnstone suggests, “one cannot speak of being at a temporal moment without speaking at the same time of being at a particular place at that moment. Space and time, whether objectively constituted or as lived, are never actually separate structures” (Sheets-Johnstone, 1979: 25-6). Through an exploration of nightfall’s duration, what comes to the fore is night-as-distance, a “night-space” within which its depth and flow are as tangible as its temporal continuity and duration.

This notion of night as a fluid, liquid space follows Don Handelman’s evocation of a night which “seeps”, one in which “tactility flows around us like waters of the sea depth” (2005: 253-4). The practising of *The Dappling Score* conceives of night’s fluidity not as a poetic or metaphorical notion but rather as a means of communicating the felt spatiality of nightfall. To conceive of nightfall as water opens up a vocabulary through which the experience of a “night-space” can be articulated: to speak of the twilights as having *depth* suggests a process of felt submergence upon encountering them; to speak of nightfall as a *current* recognises the darkness-in-motion that defines night’s spatial occurrence; and to suggest the process of nightfall to be *tidal* recognises the year-long ebb and flow of its depth and duration. Equally, the terms used in the title of this section and its score – *wading* and *dappling* – are suggestive of a spatial distribution of depth and shade, ones which fluctuate across

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<sup>123</sup> This notion of seeping is expanded upon later in this section, in CLUTERING, in relation to Donna Haraway’s notion of “composting” (Haraway, 2016).

site and time. They portray the changing and immersive quality of night's darkness, evoking nightfall as a dynamic entity that is co-formed by its dynamic inhabitants. It is through a practising of *The Dappling Score*, through a year-long experiencing of nightfall's duration that this concept of a fluid "night-space" became tangible and enabled me to perceive the nuances of this space to be comprehensible in such watery terms.

It is unsurprising that this notion of night as a fluid entity – and the possibility to adopt a vocabulary that more suitably articulates this – has come about through a practice which has made evident both the spatial-temporality and tactile tangibility of nightfall's processual darkening. This understanding has emerged through the application of a choreological practice which itself utilises a movement-oriented vocabulary to articulate a relatedness between spatial and temporal entities. In the same way that a choreological practice develops its understanding of a particular movement's spatial-temporal articulation by examining its relatedness to the choreography of which it is a part (Preston-Dunlop, 2013a: 29), a year-long practising of *The Dappling Score* enables not simply an understanding of nightfall's duration as a singular current (a singular event) but equally as a part of the larger night-tide<sup>124</sup> which fluxes and flows through seasons and weathers, geographies and environments.

In applying a choreological methodology to a time-specific practice, the analysis of movement becomes a lens – a vocabulary – through which to re-think and re-articulate the modes of perception and experience that nightfall's processual darkening makes possible. The practising of *The Dappling Score* provides a valuable structure through which it is possible to not only sensorially perceive the duration of nightfall but to embody the process of its unfolding, as both a spatial and temporal phenomenon. In doing so, *The Dappling Score* begins a process of attunement (one which will continue to be developed throughout this practice) through which it becomes possible to perceive each inhabitant of an environment to endure nightfall not as a happening-to, but as a processual doing-with that is both site -and time-specific.

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<sup>124</sup> See GLOSSARY OF TERMS.

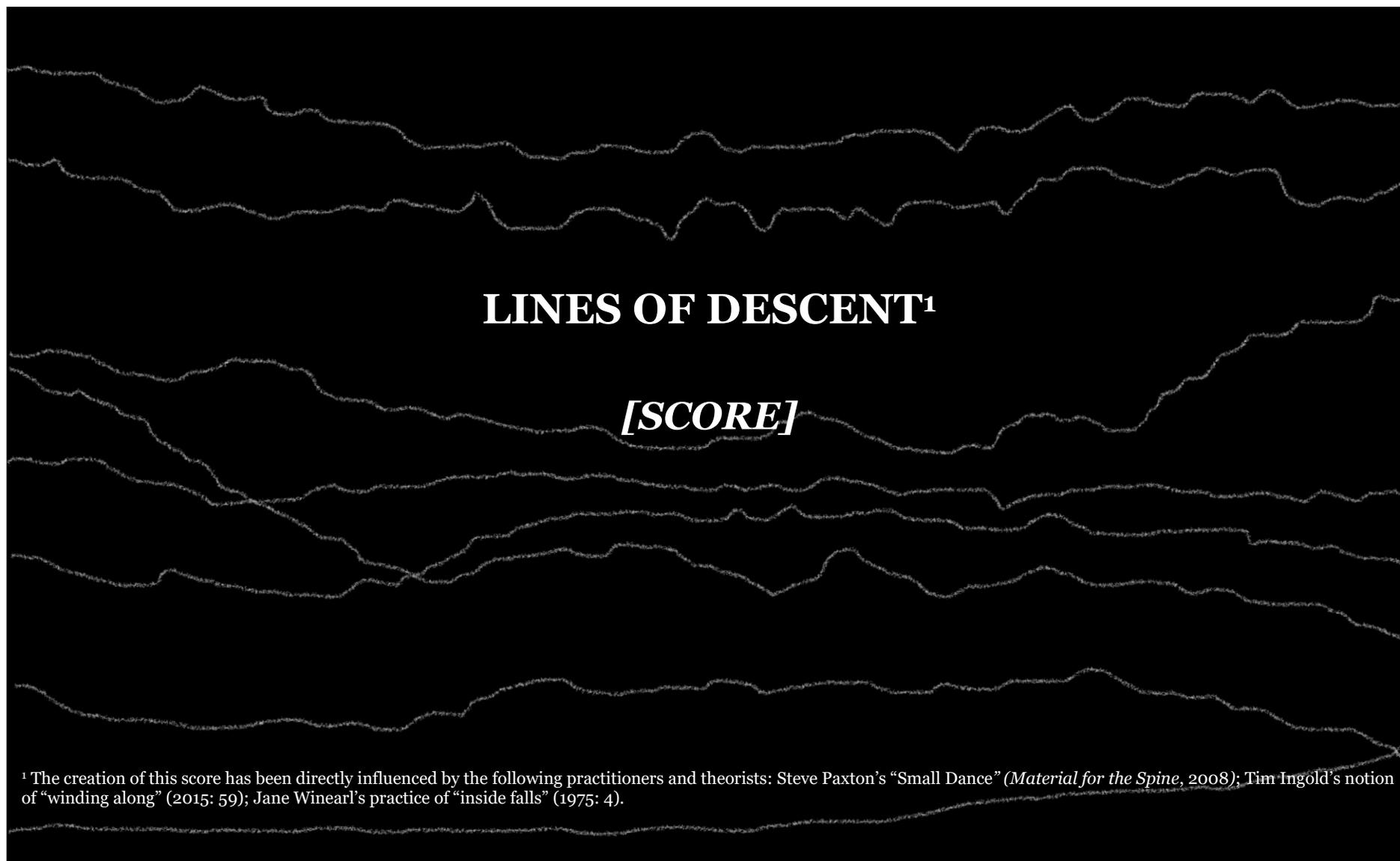


Figure 34: title page of *Lines of Descent* score.

## NIGHT-WANDERING

### TASK:

*[Civil Twilight. Starting on the lower path inside the wood.]*

We are setting out – “aimlessly, for the sake of the walk.”

We will use chalk and paper to trace our experiences of the walk, tracing the experiences of the pathway as felt through the feet, as felt through the texture of the ground.

Go at your own pace. Let the eyes wander through and with the site. Let the page take care of itself.

### PROVOCATIONS:

*“The primordial movement, the agent, is a point that sets itself in motion (genesis of form). A line comes into being... In all these examples the principle and active line develops freely. It goes out for a walk, so to speak, aimlessly for the sake of the walk.” – Paul Klee, 1921.*

How will you journey through this place, how will you encounter it?

What sets you in motion?

What unseen pathway do you follow?

Figure 35: stage one of *Lines of Descent* score.

## NIGHT-FOLLOWING

### TASK:

*[Nautical Twilight. Starting on any chosen path inside the wood.]*

Exchange line tracings within the group, so that you hold in your hands an unfamiliar meandering.

Choose a place within the wood in which to work.

Decide specifically upon the area, and its scale: it might be the whole of a pathway or a small section of tree trunk.

Keep within this place for the duration of the task.

Use the unfamiliar line tracings that you hold as a sort of map. Apply it to the place in any way you choose.

Perhaps you follow the lines or follow the gaps. Perhaps you follow it visually, or tactilely.

The task is simply to encounter the place through the page – to be led-through one, by the other.

### PROVOCATIONS:

*“To wander is to follow a course that is sinuous instead of straight. It is to wind along. What kind of trace, then, does it leave?” (Ingold, 2016: 59)*

What leads you?

How does your following come into being?

What do your feet tell you about this encounter?

Figure 36: stage two of *Lines of Descent* score.

## NIGHT-FALLING

### TASK:

*[Astronomical Twilight. Starting on the lower path inside the wood.]*

Find a place to stand, and to settle. Eyes open. Remembering the motion of your wandering, in your posture and in your bones. Begin by noticing the small shifts within the body that maintain that standing. Begin by noticing the small shifts within the environment that challenge that standing.

Standing, settling. Begin the fall, letting it emerge from this place. Let the fall be as slow as possible.

You can re-start at any moment, should you wish.

Keep falling, until the fall settles you.

### PROVOCATIONS:

*“And finally: a new fall, a fresh swerve, a different rate and sequence of decay and decline.”* (Bennett, 2010: 118-9)

Can you sense the ‘not yet’ of your standing-falling? When does the fall emerge from this place?

As you enter the fall, what do you follow, and what are you led by?

How are the small shifts of the environment felt within the body? How do they intersect?

Figure 37: stage three of *Lines of Descent* score.

# GROUNDING

## OVERVIEW

GROUNDING examines the relationship between a body's sense of lability<sup>125</sup> and an environment's increasing darkness over the progression of nightfall. Working with one of the four noctographic movement scores, *Lines of Descent* (fig. 34), GROUNDING draws upon choreological analysis to explore a nightscape's terrain as experienced through simple shifts of weight and acts of falling. In doing so, I ask what can be understood of "nightfall" when it is experienced as a physical, embodied action – whether a "falling at night" has the potential to be understood and experienced as a "falling-with night". Before beginning this analysis, I first need to introduce two key themes that are integral to this process: firstly, choreological notions of weight and action, and secondly, the *Lines of Descent* score.

In the simplest of choreological terms, "transfers of weight" and "falling" are two of eleven possible actions. These actions make up one "leaf" of the choreological structural model<sup>126</sup> (Preston-Dunlop, 2013a: 12). Actions "can never occur alone" (ibid.: 27): only on the page can they exist without the spatial and temporal elements which define their execution, characterising how they are seen and experienced within sequential movement. However, the element of weight in motion is analysed choreologically as more than a mere action, additionally appearing in two other sections of the structural model. Firstly, transfers of weight and falling feature as modes of relatedness, usually pre-empted by others: by proximity, touch, an exchange between surfaces. Secondly, "weight" features as one of the four motion factors in Laban's Effort Graph (Laban and Lawrence, 1947) where the use of weight in motion is defined on a scale ranging from "light" to "strong". Here, the recognition of the body as a force which shapes the dynamics of motion is essential to a noctographic practice in which shifts of weight and acts of falling can be viewed as

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<sup>125</sup> Lability is considered one of the eleven actions featured in the structural model: it is a mode of being off-balance without falling completely, often used in dance to enable a continuous flow of motion (Preston-Dunlop, 2006: 97).

<sup>126</sup> The choreological structural model comprises of five sections or "leaves": space, time, body, relatedness and action (Preston-Dunlop, 2013a: 12).

direct articulations of the body's relationship to ground and site. This leads into the second key theme of this section, the *Lines of Descent*<sup>127</sup> score.

In the wood at nightfall, uneven terrain and steep inclines combine with a darkening density of the trees so that “ground” becomes something that is felt rather than seen. Here, the simple action of transferring weight is made labile so that the “losing and re-gaining equilibrium” (Preston-Dunlop, 2006: 97) that is disguised within each step of a walk becomes heightened. During my solo practice, I explored how nightfall in the wood affected weight-in-motion through a sequencing of four choreological actions: falling, travelling, transfers of weight and lability<sup>128</sup>. From these preliminary explorations emerged *Lines of Descent (Lines)*, a sequence of basic movement tasks which were practised throughout the year within both the community workshops and professional dance workshops. *Lines* is divided into three sequential tasks, aligning with the three stages of twilight. The tasks are a means of focusing attention upon the ground, of sensing the wood through the feet, before eventually navigating shifts of weight between surfaces of the body as night descends. As the visibility of the wood's paths gradually shift and disappear over the course of nightfall, and direction and orientation in the wood become skewed, the movement tasks of *Lines* engage in a process of mapping and re-mapping the wood through the feet, re-configuring and adjusting over nightfall's duration.

In GROUNDING, I analyse the processes embodied within *Lines* using two sub-sections. In WALKING WITH KLEE, I address the first two movement tasks of the *Lines* score. These tasks are focused upon walking, drifting, wandering and tracing, and are described through written reflections and line drawings made by participants throughout the workshops. The sub-section that follows, FALLING WITH BENNETT, addresses the third movement task, which focuses more directly upon the actions of falling and falling-with. Here, the attention of the transfer of weight shifts from being between feet and ground to being between a multitude of surfaces, embodiments and materialities: spine, pelvis, skull meeting bark, moss, fern, mud. Effectively, each of the movement tasks that comprise *Lines* are acts of de-centring

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<sup>127</sup> This movement sequence takes its title from Tim Ingold's description of “a relation of correspondence between lines of descent” which “make it possible for the movement to keep on going” (Ingold, 2015: 56). This notion is discussed in further detail in the second sub-section FALLING WITH BENNETT.

<sup>128</sup> Drawings relating to this preliminary process can be found in APPENDIX (9).

and yielding, using simple transfers of weight to explore the new modes of relatedness that nightfall both demands and affords. A final sub-section – HORIZONTALIZING – summarises the findings and demonstrates how the embodiment of a noctographic movement practices enables new understandings of nightfall to emerge.

## WALKING WITH KLEE

The primordial movement, the agent, is a point that sets itself in motion (genesis of form). A line comes into being [...] In all these examples the principle and active line develops freely. It goes out for a walk, so to speak, aimlessly for the sake of the walk (Klee, 1921 in Manning and de Zegher, 2011: 1).

In commencing my exploration of the relation between nightfall and lability, I began by walking along the designated pathways of Grubbins Wood. As I tread, I set myself the task of familiarising my feet with the curves and undulations of these human-made furrows: of making-recognisable through tread what the wood's night-time darkening was making-unrecognisable. As I walked, I held pencil to paper, allowing the alterations and transfer of weight between my feet to feed upwards, tracing in thin pencil lines what my hand was told of the wood's crinkled ground. As Tim Ingold observes, the inscription of the hand "can appear as continuous lines" whereas the feet "*impress* the ground rather than inscribing it [...] each footfall makes a separate impression" (2015: 61). In this task, the hand traces not the tread of the foot but the flow of the motion, a flow which – whilst physically experienced through the tread of the feet – is determined by the relationship between the weight of the body and the texture of the ground. The feet become what environmental dance artist Helen Poynor would describe as the "area of exchange"<sup>129</sup>, the surfaces of contact between environment and body which enable a process of transition. In the wood's darkening, what becomes felt is not simply the "separate impression" created by Ingold's notion of treading, but rather the ground's shaping of the body's transfer of weight, which is then made evident in the hand's drawing of the line. Poynor's aptly named "area of exchange" recognises an equity within motion – the impression of body upon ground is equally an impression of ground upon body. As the former is seen and the latter felt, the "separate impression" of body to ground often takes precedence. However,

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<sup>129</sup> As explored during Poynor's *Move into Life* workshop intensive, September 2017, Devon.

this is altered during nightfall's processual darkening: the visibility of impressions upon surfaces are compromised and what comes to the fore is the felt tangibility of the exchange. If "the ground is not so much a coherent surface as a limit of illumination" (Ingold, 2015: 43), then this simple task seeks to recognise the body's encounter with ground to be one beyond visibility, and that the substances comprising body and ground exist beyond any "limit of illumination". The drawn line serves to chart the felt-ness of their exchange, documenting a beyond-ground, so to speak.

These jolting lines<sup>130</sup> that come into being on the page are neither straight nor direct – they record not a sense of direction or destination but rather, to borrow the words of Paul Klee, they seem to go out "aimlessly for the sake of the walk". During this simple practice that forms the first stage of the *Lines* score (fig. 35), the increasing darkness of the wood seemed to facilitate, and perhaps even ask for, a transition of walking into wandering. When sharing the task within the workshops, participants describe their movement as "having no end place", "naturally enhanced by gravity and stumbles", "sometimes carried sideways and back"<sup>131</sup>, whilst the symbology<sup>132</sup> similarly documents increasingly indirect pathways, continuous and sustained movement quality interspersed with small rhythmic accents and an emerging sense of flow<sup>133</sup>. If "every movement is a composite of stabilizing and mobilizing tendencies and, consequently, the act of balancing constantly exists" (Maletic, 1987: 198), then through a noctographic practice the sensing of Vera Maletic's "composite" is heightened as the body's centre of gravity meets, in motion, the darkening of the site and undulations of its ground, so that – to re-phrase Maletic – nightfall reveals that in movement an "act of *unbalancing*" constantly exists. To conceive of movement in this way is to suggest that the "act" of motion exists not in the body's attempts to maintain stability but – as I shall demonstrate – instead exists in the fluctuations of the more-than-human environment.

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<sup>130</sup> See APPENDIX (9) for documentation of this process.

<sup>131</sup> See APPENDIX (3) for documentation of participants writings.

<sup>132</sup> The use of symbology is of particular importance within this action-oriented task because, as Preston-Dunlop observes, "Actions are dancing structures" (2013a: 27). In other words, whilst in language we use the words 'fall', 'twist', 'walk' to evoke the movement, the actual movement that occurs can be better determined on the page where multiple symbols can occur alongside one another and more readily evoke the particularity of that action.

<sup>133</sup> See APPENDIX (6) for symbology of the *Lines of Descent* movement sequence.

Unlike Klee's point which "sets itself in motion", this act of unbalancing is inseparable from the ground within which a noctographic practice unfurls. Ingold's observation that, "like the dancer, the walker is *thinking on movement* [...] the complex surface of the ground is inextricably caught up in the very process of thinking and knowing" (Ingold, 2015: 49) is further articulated through a noctographic practice to assert that ground is not simply "caught up" within the movement-thinking of the dancer, but co-forms and co-creates. The un-balancing of the dancer's centre of gravity at nightfall is, therefore, equally an un-balancing of their (human) ownership over the movement that unfurls. Environmental dance artist Nigel Stewart similarly observes that, within a sequence of *Still Life* (2008), "far from merely imposing material onto the crag, the crag itself was imposing its condition upon me, claiming me, sculpting my material to its own peculiarities" (2010b: 223). Within a noctographic practice, the act of unbalancing produced by night's increasing darkness suggests it to be the dancer who is in fact "caught up" in the movement of the site, in the unfurling of its lines of descent as nightfall emerges. This is made evident in some of the participants written reflections, who describe how "movements naturally followed the features of the landscape" "the branches, tree trunks and fallen twigs defined my movements for me", "I felt my way with my feet in the steep rocky ground".

Using chalk on black card to document the flow of the motion<sup>134</sup> the participant's lines document nightfall's durational unbalancing, creating literal tracings of Preston-Dunlop's assertion that in lability "you lose the vertical line" (Preston-Dunlop, 2006: 97). The vertical line that is lost in lability is both a loss of direct weight placement – as in that of a centred stance – and equally the loss of a straight, direct pathway. For Ingold it is this loss that characterises the act of wandering. "To wander", he says, "is to follow a course that is sinuous instead of straight. It is to *wind along*. What kind of trace, then, does it leave?" (Ingold, 2015: 59). The labile meanderings that nightfall enables attest to Ingold's notion of "winding along", but as a more-than-human action: it is not the body's motion winding along the ground or page that is embodied in *Lines*, but rather it is the contours and alterations of ground winding along through the body's motion, shifting the weight and making

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<sup>134</sup> See APPENDIX (10) for documentation of this practice within the workshops. The use of chalk on black card prolonged the visibility of their tracings over the duration of nightfall.

itself felt through movement, so that the chalk tracings upon the black page document not simply the tread of the foot, but the “no end place” of a ground-in-motion.

The notion of wandering as a more-than-human dialogue is subtly alluded to by Ingold at the beginning of his earlier statement – “To wander is to follow.” In developing the practice of wandering in *Lines*, it is this that came to the fore in the wood’s darkening nightscape. During nautical twilight, the score of *Lines* invites participants to exchange their chalk tracings amongst each other, using them as a sort of map through which to re-approach the site (fig. 36). Open in terms of how the “map” is read (perhaps by following the line of the chalk, or the gaps left by the chalk) and how it is applied to the site (on what scale, to which area), the symbology of this task observed an increasingly indirect sense of lability in the wanderings, affecting the participant’s orientation as much as their direction. For Ingold, this destabilising is inherent to the act of following in which the “where” of the direction is decided by the path (ibid.: 131), so that to follow is equally to be led-by. The difference between these terms becomes tangible at nightfall, where the un-balancing of place-centre means that the initiation to enter into an act – or flow – of following comes from the environment rather than the dancer. Ingold’s assertion that path-following is “not so much intentional as *attentional*” (ibid.: 133) is made evident through a night-time practising of the *Lines* score, where the increasingly labile motion reduces the capacity for asserting movement and instead that which comes into being does so through an attention – and attunement – to the wood’s darkening environment.

In engaging with this task, many of the participants chose to initiate a point of contact with the wood, so that the lines on the page became tactilely followed with – and through – the site. This use of touch affected the speed and flow of the motion, frequently producing sustained and continuous motifs within the symbology. These motifs note the reduction of speed required by the tactile lines (which, in turn, are brought about by the wood’s darkening) and a continuity of motion which, for Ingold, is inherent in the act of following: “The path follower has no objective save to carry on, to keep on going” (ibid.: 132). This ongoing-ness that prevails in the labile

motion is not simply a matter of duration, but rather a matter of quality<sup>135</sup>. Through the dancer's necessary shifts that nightfall initiates – from visual lines to tactile, from a stable place-centre to labile, from intentional lines to attentional, and from following to being led-by – nightfall not only produces but *requires* the sustained, continuous quality that emerges from these shifts, qualities which continue to come to the fore as the wood's darkening endures.

In returning to the wood to continue the practice alone, it was possible to observe how this sustained, continuous and labile quality of motion is dependent upon the recognition of this shift of movement-ownership that prevails in the night-wander. The attention of this tactile wandering is toward the felt area-of-exchange which shapes and co-forms the flow of the movement, so that the aimless lines of the night-wander do not occur independently, but rather establish “a relation of correspondence” (Ingold, 2015: 56) with the other wandering lines – those of ground, root, furrow and path – that comprise the wood's nightfall. It is the entangled, inter-relation of these lines of human and more-than-human movement which comprise the nightscapes sinuous pathways. The practising of the first stages of *Lines* asserts that all movements are followings, and all lines are ongoing: they are a kinaesthetic embodiment of the increasing lability that the wood's darkening irrevocably brings. In the section that follows, the score's shift from wandering lines into falling lines is observed, articulating the increasing lability of wandering bodies as a potential falling-with in the more-than-human environment of the wood's ongoing nightscape.

## FALLING WITH BENNETT



Figure 38: Extract from a workshop participant's notebook, April 2018: astronomical twilight.

<sup>135</sup> To be clear: “continuous” quality is one of six choreological rhythms, the others being impulse, impact, swing, rebound and vibration (Preston-Dunlop, 2013a).

And finally: a new fall, a fresh swerve, a different rate and sequence of decay and decline. (Bennett, 2010: 119)

Taking place during astronomical twilight, the third phase in the *Lines of Descent* sequence (fig. 37) explores the action of falling to be potentially an action of “falling-with”. This task began as an exploration of what movement analyst Jane Winearls describes as “inside falls” – a fall that takes place within place-centre<sup>136</sup>, the body collapsing in on itself as it moves towards the ground on a directly vertical trajectory<sup>137</sup> (1975: 4). This notion of “inside falls” is hinted at in the verbal score of Steve Paxton’s *Small Dance* (2008), when he observes that from a place of standing “you could fall but – not yet”. As part of my solo research, I practised Paxton’s *Small Dance* in the wood at set intervals over the duration of nightfall<sup>138</sup>, and observed how the “not-yet” of the fall became increasingly tangible within my standing, an increasing lability with the wood’s increasing darkness. Despite the action of falling usually producing a fluctuation of speed and a direct acceleration (Winearls, 1975: 4), the motion in this task emerged from a night-time practising of Paxton’s *Small Dance* and therefore embodied the steadiness of Paxton’s tone, and the gentle attention to detail that constitutes his score.

In letting go of the *Small Dance* and entering the fall, I was struck by the unease of my motion: yielding to a motion of lability whilst walking (as in the earlier two movement tasks of this sequence) had enabled a continuity of motion and allowed a state of flow to emerge. In the slow fall I became aware not of the small adjustments the body makes to standing, as is the focus of Paxton’s *Small Dance*, but of the small adjustments the environment made to my falling. As Nigel Stewart observes, in moving outside we are experiencing a happening-to as much (if not more so) as the doing-to of our own movement (Stewart, 2010b: 224-5). This happening-to became tangible through the sustained quality of the fall yet simultaneously seemed to disrupt it. This experience is made evident in the written reflections of the participants, which evoke both a sense of yielding and the unpredictability of that motion: “Release into the earth, yield to gravity”; “Surfaces on a slant & uneven

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<sup>136</sup> Place centre is used in Laban notation to refer to the centre of the kinesphere when in a point of stability, usually where the dancer’s weight is centred (Preston-Dunlop, 2013a: 44).

<sup>137</sup> This way of falling can also be found in David Zambrano’s floorwork technique, *Flying Low*.

<sup>138</sup> How Paxton’s *Small Dance* affected experiences of duration and the formation of *The Dappling Score* are documented in SECTION TWO: WADING.

ground make it interesting & unpredictable where it would take you”; “it became smooth and flowing to fall”; “the trees & footing were unpredictable”. Yet what was also discernible in their written reflections, and in the symbology observing their movement, were actions of transfers of weight and sliding touch. Practising during astronomical twilight meant that the vertical trajectory of their falls merged with that of the trees, the contact becoming essential to their fall: “I began using a tree and fall and pushing & using my weight with it”; “falling in the dark the trees were the path down to the earth I didn’t need to see light became irrelevant”; “I didn’t hear I only felt. My body, the night, the tree, the ground”; “delighted in the feel of trunk when vision diminished.”

These writings tell of the transfers of weight and sliding points of contact notated in the symbology, so that the labile de-centring becomes a tactile sharing of centres as astronomical twilight slides towards night. Within the motion of the fall, place-centre becomes one which is shared between body and environment, so that the slow fall of the task becomes a falling-with, and a falling-amongst. This process can be further understood by referring back to the symbology where, amongst the frequent symbols of weight transfer, touch and lability, there are also numerous motifs referencing motions of twisting, turning and rolling. Indeed, some participants also refer to this in their own reflections, describing how “I naturally began to roll and was carefree in where I fell”, “Giving in to the softness of the earth”, “rolling over what I assume were roots”, “melting falling into different textures”, “loosen and yield into the mud.” Through the experience and observation of this task, what becomes evident is the relationship between lability and rotation; in the same way that during the night-wander the labile motion became indirect in orientation and direction, so too does the indirect-ness of the night-fall evolve, through the yield of the body’s weight, into an act of night-turning.

The rotation of the nightfall shapes the speed, trajectory, and place-centre of the fall, enabling an ongoing transfer of weight through different surfaces which is then continued through the action of rolling when the body meets the ground. It becomes, to borrow Ingold’s term, a coil (2015: 55). A coil is a spatially processual rotation, one that enables the alternation of “staring up, feeling down, looking up” that is described by a workshop participant in the opening passage of this section (fig. 38).

At night, the fall that emerges is one that begins to twist and rotate whilst nevertheless continuing upon the yielding trajectory of the fall's motion, becoming instead a spiralling, winding motion. These coils “cannot overlap, but they can wrap around one another: they can *interpenetrate* [...] in the medium of their environments and sentiments” (Ingold, 2015: 55) so that, as with the night-wander, such a motion does not evolve independently but rather is unavoidably entangled within the motion of the wood, as made evident in the participants' earlier observations that “falling in the dark the trees were the path down to the earth”, “delighted in the feel of the trunk”, “My body, the night, the tree, the ground”. This falling-with becomes not visually observable but tangibly sensed: a co-formed action, a falling-turning-coiling motion which the dancer does not produce alone but rather comes into being by following the felt, meandering, descending lines of the wood's nightfall.

In this way, falling-with nightfall articulates a particular process which I'm going to describe as “horizontalizing”<sup>139</sup>. Of course, any act of falling connotes a very literal horizontalizing as the body shifts from a vertical stance to a horizontal one, but here I use the term to describe the de-centring produced by falling at nightfall<sup>140</sup>. If falling at nightfall is always a falling-with, an action that occurs amongst (and is therefore shaped by) the forces and materials which compose the site's progressive darkening, then – just like the night-wander of the earlier task – the physicality of this action equally suggests a de-centring of the notion of who or what generates the movement. Theorist Jane Bennett observes that “to begin to *experience* the relationship between persons and other materialities more horizontally, is to take a step toward a more ecological sensibility” (2010: 10). I suggest that falling-with nightfall is one such experience, enabling a physical understanding of the ways in which the forces and materials within an environment – which Bennett terms the “actants” (ibid.: 98) – are equally shaping and shaped-by. During nightfall, the horizontalizing that occurs is not simply that of the body's stance but a horizontalizing of relatedness, an action

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<sup>139</sup> See GLOSSARY OF TERMS.

<sup>140</sup> In choreological studies, the horizontal dimension or plane is relative to the body: one can be standing but moving horizontally (i.e. around a vertical axis) just as one can be on the ground but move sagittally (i.e. around a horizontal axis). Here, the horizontal is discussed in relation to a labile centre, a shifting away from the vertical stance.

which “draws human attention sideways” (ibid.: 112), tangibly shifting the notion of who or what shapes the trajectory of the movement.

As I have already indicated, in discussing the relatedness of different materialities Bennett uses the term “fall” to signify “a different rate and sequence of decay and decline” (ibid.: 119), suggesting that in the merging of multiple materialities there also exist a merging of multiple temporalities. In the *Lines of Descent* movement tasks, the slowness of the fall is defined as such in terms of human movement. Yet if this action is a falling-with – shaped by and through the wood’s descent into night – then its temporality is equally defined by those other temporalities that exist within the wood. As Ingold observes, the action of falling comes into being over time:

in a world without time, rain could not fall: indeed, since rain is the falling of drops, there could be no such thing as rain at all; only drops suspended in mid-air (2015: 17).

Yet within a noctographic practice, there emerges not a singular ‘time’ in which to fall, but rather a multiplicity of temporalities which shape, affect and de-centre the fall. If Bennett observes a multiplicity of temporalities to exist within materiality – “This material vitality is me, it predates me, it exceeds me, it postdates me” (2010: 120) – then a noctographic practice equally asserts a multiplicity of temporalities within even a single action. This multiplicity of temporalities is not just a matter of how the duration of the movement is perceived in relation to other durations within the environment (such as that of other-than human movement or presence) but rather the temporality of the action beyond the materiality of the human body.

If the action of the fall is co-formed by the wood’s materialities, it is equally co-formed by the wood’s temporalities and, therefore, the temporality of the action is carried beyond the doing of the human body, into and along the wood’s weaving lines of descent. In this way, the action of night-falling expands upon Preston-Dunlop’s assertion that “Actions can never occur alone [...] in Dance they all occur together simultaneously dependent on each other for existence” (Preston-Dunlop, 2013a: 27). Whilst Preston-Dunlop is referring to actions being dependent upon other actions within a dancer’s sequential and concurrent movement – that is, the relatedness that exists within a human individual’s movement – through a noctographic practice it becomes possible to equally assert the interdependency of the temporalities of human and more-than-human actions. This is a relatedness that not only de-centres

the human individual from the formation of the action, but also de-centres human temporality from the duration of it. In this way, the practice exemplifies a mode of kinaesthetic perception through which it becomes possible to address “the swirling vitality of the world” (Bennett, 2010: 119).

### **SUMMARY: HORIZONTALIZING**

The title of this score, *Lines of Descent*, is a term usually used to describe series of relations, a “following-on” from others as in a family tree or evolution of a species. Within this practice, the “lines of descent” are ones of movement: their following-on involves the motion of humans and more-than-humans, things and bodies, surfaces and materialities. At nightfall, the actions of this practice emerge through a sharing of centres, attentional motion and a being led-by that is invited by the wood’s darkening. The state of ongoing-ness that characterise these lines of descent can be understood not just in terms of the quality of the movement that is perceived, but equally as a mode through which the co-formed action continues to resonate through the temporalities and materialities that compose the wood at nightfall.

In choreological studies, what is being analysed is always human movement, human action. Yet Preston-Dunlop does go some way towards recognising the co-formation of action when she states, “Guidance of actions by bits and surfaces makes a clinical action into a human endeavour, gives it meaning” (2013a: 32). Reading this within the context of a noctographic practice, it becomes possible to perceive that action only becomes meaningful when it emerges within and alongside the surfaces and materialities of others. But what is particularly significant in Preston-Dunlop’s words is the suggestion that it is precisely the co-emergence of action that makes it definitively human. Such a notion is paralleled by Ingold in his concept of “humaning”, through which we are defined not by our human materiality but by our doing – that to human is a verb (Ingold, 2015: 152). *Line of Descent* develops this notion further by investigating human action as a co-forming one, one which emerges through – and continues along – the multiple temporalities and materialities of the environment in which it occurs. Within such a practice, the “humaning” that transpires – as a fall, a wander – does so as an articulation of the “swirling vitality of the world” (Bennett, 2010: 119), the tangibility of which is

brought to the fore by the site's durational darkening. Here, the notion of "horizontalizing" that has arisen through the practising of *Lines* at nightfall resonates with these ideas that "human" is a doing rather than a being, and human action as always – and already – a form of co-action. But night's darkness enables an acknowledge of an entanglement that goes beyond human and more-than-human relationships. In describing dreamscapes, Don Handelman states that "The human body too falls with night, falls into the horizontal [...] into the sensuous trajectories of elsewhere, elsewhen" (2005: 247-8). This "elsewhere, elsewhen" that is made tangible at night suggests an entanglement not simply with the "more-than-human", but equally with the "more-than-here", the "more-than-now". It is this which my notion of horizontalizing, through its recognition of more-than-human temporalities, seeks to acknowledge and encompass.

Nightfall is, as Handelman observes, an event composed of shifting visual horizons (ibid.: 253). Yet a noctographic movement practice exposes in night's darkening the shifts in those horizons that are tangible and physical. The practising of *Lines* attests to the ways in which nightfall alters the horizons of what we perceive our bodies to be, and what we perceive our actions to be, and what we perceive here and now to be. As described above in *FALLING WITH BENNETT*, the recognition of more-than-human temporalities that emerges through the practising of falling-with nightfall demonstrates an inherent ongoing-ness to lie within the co-formation of action. The fall is ongoing both before and after the participation of human bodies, whose inevitable rotation in darkness is the literal "taking turn" of their participation in an action that involves a multiplicity of surfaces, materialities, bodies and things. Falling-with night, the human body rotates not only because it is led by the undulating, meandering lines that the wood's darkening brings but because in the co-formation of that action we coil with the more-than-human. We become entangled not simply within the wood's immediate nightfall, but in the elsewhere and elsewhen of nightfall's varied and processual darkening.

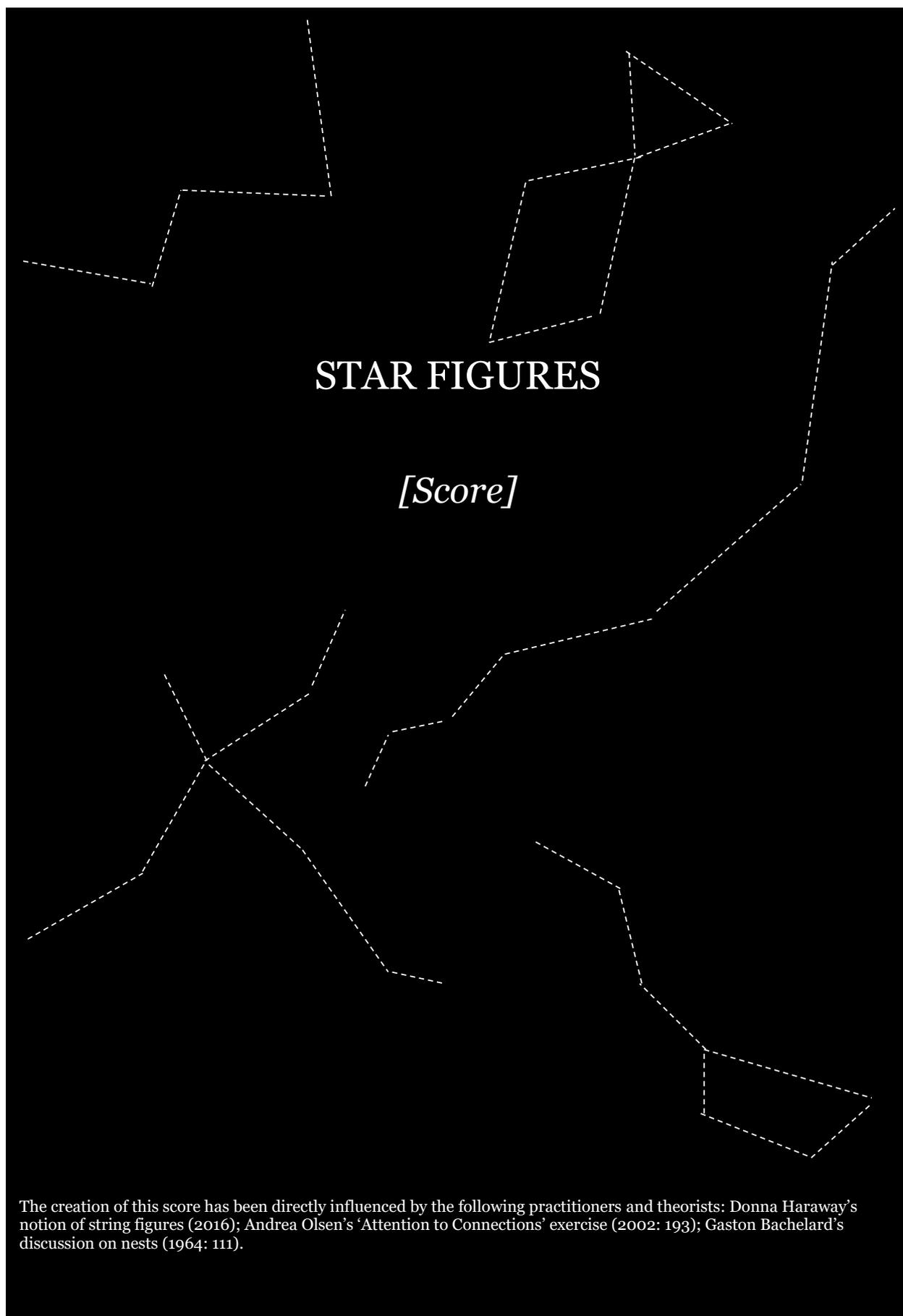


Figure 39: title page of *Star Figures* score.

## PLACE-MAKING

*Civil twilight.*

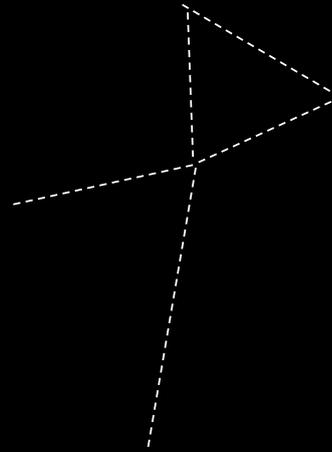
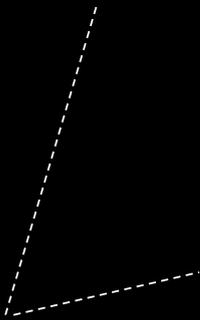
Bring to the wood an image of a constellation and a ball of string.

Find a place along the lower path in which to work.

Using your string, re-create the constellation within this place.

*Your string-constellation might be elongated or skewed.*

*It might be fractured through the space, or partly complete.*



Take time to settle in.

To site, to string, to constellation.

*How is your constellation in motion?*

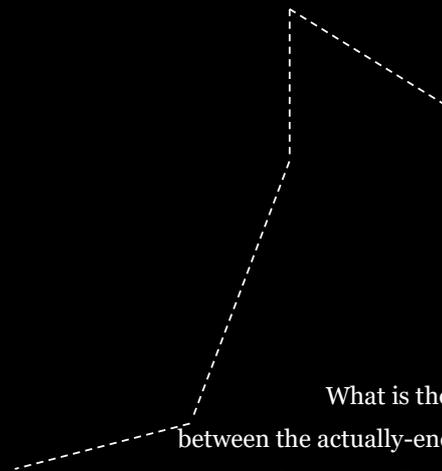
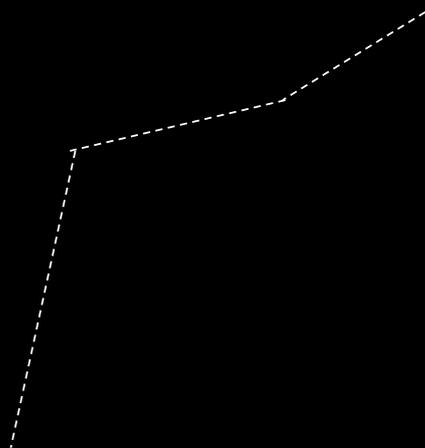
*How does this place move through space?*

Moving in one continuous direction

spatially map the constellation in this place

*How does your movement create points in space?*

*How do you journey between them?*



What is the dialogue

between the actually-encountered

and the spatially-imagined?

*What bodies/things/places do you encounter*

*through this movement-constellation?*

*What bodies/things/places do you imagine*

*through this movement-constellation?*

Figure 40: stage one of *Star Figures* score.

## PLACE-WEAVING

*Nautical twilight.*

Working with a partner.

Together, return to the place of either of your constellation-strings.

Take time

For one to re-find the motion, the relationships, the patternings  
of their constellation, their movement

Whilst the other observes.

*What is the dialogue*

*between the actually-encountered  
and the spatially-imagined?*

The observer slowly begins to ravel up the string  
of the constellation in which their partner is moving,  
taking time

to remove the framework.

*Notice how the ravelling*

*affects the movement*

*affects the site.*

*Just notice.*

The mover sustains the movement pattern  
despite the strings gradual ravelling  
allowing the movement to change and alter  
if necessary

*Where is the constellation?*

*What does it hold?*

*What is it held by?*

Once the string is ravelled

The observer continues their observing.

The mover continues their motion.

*Together, bring the task to a close*

*Walk to the constellation-string of the other  
and repeat the task.*

Figure 41: stage two of *Star Figures* score.

## PLACE-TAKING

*Astronomical twilight.*

Return to your own  
scale/constellation/site/motion  
Re-find the patterning

*What do you journey between?  
What moves towards  
and what moves away?*

What if  
the constellation takes flight  
What if  
it begins to travel through the space, along a trajectory

*How is place taken?  
What does the body hold of space?*

Take your time to shift  
To travel with your patterning  
along and away  
beyond and towards

*Where is the structure of the constellation?  
Where is the actuality of the constellation?*

Continue to journey through the night-site. Take your time.

Notice  
how the constellation is shifted  
by site, within site

*Is the trajectory along which your movement shifts  
a trajectory of site or a trajectory of night?  
Where does the movement of the constellation  
meet the movement of the night-site?*

Figure 42: stage three of *Star Figures* score.

## FIGURING

### OVERVIEW

FIGURING examines how spatial relatedness is altered by nightfall’s processual darkening. To do so, I discuss and analyse the noctographic movement score, *Star Figures* (fig. 39). In what follows, I will use the choreological principle of “trace forms” to analyse how fluctuations in the body’s sensing of space during nightfall inform a noctographic practising of movement. Before beginning this analysis, I will introduce two key themes that are integral to this process: firstly, choreological spatial analysis and its principle of “trace forms” and, secondly, the *Star Figures* score.

As Rudolf Laban aptly suggests, “all movement tends into space, both the space around us and the space within us” (Laban and Ullmann, 1984: 54). Within a choreological practice, the study of space – forming one “leaf” of the choreological structural model<sup>141</sup> (Preston-Dunlop, 2013a: 12) – enables an awareness of the forms, boundaries, and possibilities afforded by place. This section discusses, specifically, the use of one particular choreutic unit<sup>142</sup> – spatial progressions, also known as “trace forms”. These are the creation of linear or curving pathways that progressively becomes visible, the “temporal and transient unfolding of energies” in space (Laban and Ullmann, 1984: 3). Within a choreological practice, trace forms are often encountered alongside the study of movement scales – a specific sequencing of points in space, usually arranged in relation to the dancer’s kinesphere<sup>143</sup>. This sequencing of points is made visible by the body and its dynamic variations as it journeys between them, creating the trace form.

In practising trace forms at nightfall, the points in space of my own kinesphere soon became entangled with those of the wood’s nightscape. In the dark, the notion of “points in space” is immediately challenged to refer not simply to those points available to the body in the present moment, but equally those points in space which

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<sup>141</sup> See CONSTELLATION A: METHODOLOGY in the main introduction of this thesis for a description of the choreological model and each of the five leaves.

<sup>142</sup> There are four choreutic units in total – spatial projections, spatial tensions and body designs form the other three. The practice of these within the wood is discussed in SECTION TWO: WADING.

<sup>143</sup> For instance, in the Primary Scale and A Scale (Laban, 1966: 46-55).

will soon no longer be visible, and those that are not yet visible but nevertheless present. In astronomical twilight, the emergence of the stars introduced both a distance and a patterning to my nocturnal trace forms, one very different to those established in relation to the immediate surroundings that I encountered sensorially within the wood. As a result, I began to look for ways in which the patternings of the constellations could be used to engage the kinesphere in the more-than-human patternings of the wood's nightscape. I began to use trace forms to explore ways in which the constellations could be not simply gazed upon but inhabited – to use their configurations as a tool for forming relationships within that night-time environment which is immediate and tangible. In other words, I began to use the formation of the constellations as an alternative sort of movement scale, transcribing them into the kinesphere and the site, becoming a means of exploring the relatedness between the two.

It is through these explorations that the sequence of movement tasks that comprise the *Star Figures* score (fig. 39) became established. Working with these kinesphere-constellations within the wood at nightfall, these movement tasks sought to explore the ways in which trace forms have the potential to become a method of detailing and documenting the shifting motion of the human kinesphere within a more-than-human environment. As this section will demonstrate, my movement no longer formed the centre of the movement scale. Rather, its patterning began to encompass the more-than-human movement and kinespheric shifts that populated the wood's nocturnal hours. In what follows, I discuss the practising of *Star Figures* through two key sub-sections. The first, PLACE-MAKING, explores the creation of the constellation-scales within the wood in relation to Donna Haraway's concept of "string figures" (2016) and Gaston Bachelard's notion of "nests" (2014). The second, PLACE-TAKING, discusses what happens when these star figures are set in motion, carrying place through movement, engaging the star figures in dialogue with Haraway's notion of "becoming-with" (2016) and Bachelard's concept of the "daydream" (2014). A final sub-section, NIGHT-NEST, summarises the key findings of FIGURING and demonstrates how the embodiment of a noctographic movement practice enables new understandings of nightfall to emerge.

## PLACE-MAKING

String figures are like stories; they propose and enact patterns for participants to inhabit, somehow (Haraway, 2016: 10)

The sequence of tasks named *Star Figures* is concerned with an entangled night-tracing, one which is inspired – in part – by Donna Haraway’s notion of ‘String Figures’ (2016). Haraway describes these string figures as “patternings, risky comakings, speculative fabulations” (2016: 14), illustrated by artist Nasser Mufti’s drawing of a multi-species cat’s cradle<sup>144</sup>. This image, of a cat’s cradle held between species and beings, is suggestive of Haraway’s belief that “we become-with each other or not at all” (2016: 4). Whilst this task originally sought to kinaesthetically explore Haraway’s notion of inter-species entanglements, what this section describes is an engagement with more-than-human materialities. Whilst night’s darkening renders the identification of different species impossible, it instead opens up the possibilities for felt entanglements that engage imaginatively with a night-world comprised of materialities that shift and seem. In creating *Star Figures*, my intention was to use the “virtual form” (Preston-Dunlop, 2006: 133) of the spatial progression to trace the more-than-human encounters that form and inform the movement that occurs within the wood at nightfall. Effectively, the practising of *Star Figures* seeks to shift the focus of Haraway’s words by suggesting a process of becoming to be always a process in – and of – motion, instead asserting “we move-with each other or not at all”.

In commencing this practice within my solo research, I began by visualising the lines and points of a constellation within the space. I started with the 9-star constellation of Cygnus, frequently visible above Grubbins Wood from May to December. A movement scale, by definition, requires the fixture of points in space – either within the kinesphere or within the site – so that the relationship between these locations may become visible through movement (Brandt, 2015). During the site’s darkening, my visualisation of the constellation would shift and morph as the environment altered, no longer enabling the re-encountering with fixed points in space that a movement scale usually affords. In order to enable my movement to maintain the structure of the constellation-movement-scale during nightfall, I sought to create a

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<sup>144</sup> Mufti’s drawing, titled *Multi-species Cat’s Cradle* (2011) is featured within Haraway’s *Staying with the Trouble* (2016: 9).

skeleton of the pathway<sup>145</sup>. A skeleton that, by being both visual and tactile, would enable me to sense night's alterations of both site and movement by first establishing a structured movement scale, a patterning of the constellation within the site. To do so, I decided to take Haraway's string off the page, and into the three-dimensionality of the site.

Using string to create three-dimensional structures of the constellations enabled the emergence of a movement scale which remained fixed within the site throughout nightfall. Moving along and within the constellation's tangible structure, I began to establish points of relatedness within the site through movement, so that the string became a sort of "choreutic facility" (Preston-Dunlop, 2006: 135) through which the directions and pathways of my movement were determined. In this way, the presence of the string enabled a continuation of the experience of "being led-by", as established within *Lines of Descent*<sup>146</sup>, in which – as Ingold describes – "choice is not an issue" (2015: 132). Here, Ingold is referring to the experience of following a labyrinth, a pre-determined pathway: in *Star Figures*, it is the string of the constellation structures that enables the pathway of movement to endure, shifting from a visual labyrinth into a tactile one as nightfall takes place. This process forms the first stage of the *Star Figures* score (fig. 40).

Sharing this practice within the workshops, a common theme emerged in the participants writings: the string-constellations were frequently referred to as "home", as "nests"; "nest felt safe", "like in a home", "peaceful, calm enclosed", "a place like coming home, certainly in the dark. When I reached my nest I felt warm and full". Evident in these extracts are associations with feeling "safe", "enclosed"; more so than any other task, *Star Figures* generated reflections on feeling comfortable and calm within the dark. Gaston Bachelard observes such associations, noting that "a nest [...] is a precarious thing, and yet it sets us to *daydreaming of security*" (2014: 122). Certainly, it is the presence of the string and the semi-permanency of the constellation structures that evoked these experiences – ones unlikely to be formed by the "never there at any one moment" (Preston-Dunlop, 2006: 133) of the

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<sup>145</sup> This need for a visual and tactile skeleton of a pathway aligns with Rudolf Laban's early investigations into choreutics, which would take place using human-sized geometric forms, usually icosahedrons, within which to place the kinesphere and establish the movement scale (Doerr, 2008).

<sup>146</sup> See SECTION TWO: GROUNDING.

movement alone. By remaining present beyond the participants motion and creating a distinct place-ness within the dark, the string-constellations enable the movement scale to be not simply a journeying-out but equally a coming-back: as Bachelard observes, the nest becomes a “sign of *return*” (2014: 119), one that “combats all absence” (ibid.). It is this return that is imbued within the dancer’s motion, what one participant referred to as the “coming home” of their experience so that the anticipation of the place – the “dream of coming back to it” (ibid.) – is intertwined within the journey, within the encountering of the site. The movement scales of the constellations that are established continue along one trajectory without the invitation for retrograding, so that the return that occurs does so as a part of the scale’s ongoing-ness. In re-approaching a point on the scale – a place in space – the participant re-encounters not the sameness of that place but the difference produced by the darkening of the site. As one participant observes, carried into the darkness is not simply a sense of the place as it was encountered in the light, but equally a sense of the motion that was made in that place: “the memory is very strong of what is safe and what the decisions were in the light. I remember the thought process and choices on points in space.” It is this coming-back that the constellation-movement-scale conjures, enabling the points-in-space to be re-encountered over the duration of the site’s darkening. Night’s alterations are thereby recognised through – and within – the ongoing patterning of movement.

Intertwined within this patterning are the encounters with multiple textures and layers of the more-than-human. Workshop participants describe how through the doing of their trace forms they “explored its different textures & landscapes, where I fit into”; “felt like an established part of the surroundings [...] my connection to the earth, trees & stars” and “played with the little bits of glowing light, played with each of the trees”. Evident in these writings is an interweaving of their own materiality with that of others, using movement to instigate and explore the potentiality of their entangling. As one participant describes:

*I placed my hands on the earth, then my centre, then up to the air. Grateful to be here, stars, humans, earth all made up of same things. I imagined extending this gathered energy to link the two trees, with a pathway through the air, that turned into the twists of the constellation.*

Figure 43: Extract from a workshop participant’s notebook, November 2018: nautical twilight.

Here, where the wood's darkening asks for more-than-visual modes of encountering, what is palpable is how the more-than-human connections are explored instead through touch, movement and imagination. The dancer's sensation of being "all made up of the same things" (fig. 43) is described in the unfolding of her movement that draws her into contact – both real and imagined – with the site at nightfall. This description is akin to the "blurredly blur" (fig. 30) encountered in *The Dappling Score*, and similarly reveals the inhabitants of a site to be irrevocably entangled in the "becoming-night" of its darkening. What each of these descriptions of performing trace forms suggests, however, is the potential for kinaesthetic sensation to define and structure a patterning of movement in the dark – a potentiality that is built upon in the second part of the *Star Figures* score.

Through the practising of the *Star Figures* score the string-constellation functions within the site as an establishing of the structure and continuity of the movement scale – however, it does not function as a replacing of it. Having formed the patterning of the movement scale within the site (fig. 40), the *Star Figures* score then seeks to exchange the felt-ness of the string with the felt-ness of the movement (fig. 41). To be led not by the tangibility of the string but by the body's sensation of the motion is to attune to the site's night-time alterations by re-encountering place through movement. The continuation of the score therefore sees the gradual ravelling-up of the string-constellation by an observing participant whilst the mover continues to perform the motion of their scale. In doing so, a different sense of flow begins to emerge as the durational unfolding that characterises the spatial progression as "always en-route, being realised over time" (Preston-Dunlop, 2006: 133) slowly takes precedence. Participants described their movement during this task as "soft sweeping reaches"; "felt very definite"; "sparky and commanding pathway established" and "a natural rhythm of the Lynx's [constellation] pathway got into my head". These reflections correlate with the symbology<sup>147</sup>, in which an increased state of free-flow is observed as the string is removed, as if the quality of continuity described by the string's structure instead makes itself present within the dynamics of the motion. In this way, the impermanent "living nest" of the movement structure replaces the "actual nest" (Bachelard, 2014: 115) of the string, coming into being via

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<sup>147</sup> See APPENDIX (7) for symbology relating to *Star Figures*.

the “lines and curves made to appear over time” (Preston-Dunlop, 2006: 134) that denote the spatial progressions. Unlike an actual, physical nest which can be entered, inhabited and perched upon, the virtual “living nest” of the movement scale exists on a temporality similar to that of Haraway’s string figures, which come into being as “webs of processes that must somehow be engaged and repatterned” (Haraway, 2016: 35).

As the string is gradually removed, the re-patterning of the movement scale exists as a re-negotiating of the site as it shifts into darkness: “I used objects in the woods as marking points [...] joining the dots with movement (mainly arm gestures) with repetition, a flow began”; “I felt more free because my points were shifting as I moved [...] The movement vocabulary remained”; “I felt cradled in my trees” and “imagined it like a force field”. Evident in these writings are the ways in which the movement is both oriented by the site – “objects in the woods as marking points”, “cradled in my trees” – and simultaneously carries the site, “my points were shifting as I moved”, “imagined it like a force field”. In this, it becomes possible to conceive of the movement scales to be a patterning-by site as much as a patterning-of site, and to consider the bodies which create the movement to be, on Haraway’s terms, not “within” the movement scale, but “of” it. As Haraway suggests, “human and nonhuman beings, who are *of* the world as its storied and dynamic substance, not *in* the world as a container” (Haraway, 2016: 91). By existing always in a state of action, the nests of the movement scales are “not containers” (ibid.: 14), but rather are structures in-formation, “risky comakings” (ibid.) which shift with and within the site’s darkening. Considering the movement scale in this way – as a web of processes which bodies are “of”, rather than a container which bodies are “in” – enables the recognition of shift and alteration in both movement, body and site. As a result, the “function of inhabiting” (Bachelard, 2014: 119, 121) of the movement scale is not of materials alone – it is not an “actual nest” – but the *motion* of those materials, those bodies. The patterning and re-patterning, the “making a movement happen” (Preston-Dunlop, 2006: 133) that characterises the spatial progression in the moment of its formation, is always in-process, always a risky comaking.

Engaging with the first two stages of the *Star Figures* score during nightfall has so far demonstrated a kinaesthetic comprehension of a relation to the more-than-

human. Tracing forms with a site's processual darkening has challenged the choreological definition of spatial progressions as simply movements (or "units") within a sequence. Instead, a night-time practising of trace forms has revealed them to be temporal inhabitants of an environment, an intertwining-amongst that enables a becoming-with through movement. Additionally, *Star Figures* demonstrates the potentiality for movement scales to function as webs of processes, as patternings of movement that – through their motional entanglement with more-than-human materialities – are equally patternings of site, and patternings of nightfall. In this way, a noctographic practice can consider nightfall to be not a container within which movement takes place but rather to be the *motion of materialities* within a site. A patterning of relations which are consistently re-patterned and re-negotiated. In the section that follows, nightfall's patternings are further articulated through the constellation-movement scales as they journey out through the wood's nightscape, embarking on a motional taking-of-place.

## PLACE-TAKING

Playing games of string figures is about giving and receiving patterns, dropping threads and failing but sometimes finding something that works, something consequential and maybe even beautiful, that wasn't there before, of relaying connections that matter, of telling stories in hand upon hand, digit upon digit, attachment site upon attachment site, to craft conditions for finite flourishing on terra, on earth. (Haraway, 2016: 10)

This section will review the third task in the *Star Figures* score (fig. 42): no longer tethered to the place or the period of nightfall in which the trace form was first established, the movement-constellation<sup>148</sup> journeys out along the paths of the wood to literally "take place" over the duration of astronomical twilight. Through this journeying, the movement-constellation continues to explore Haraway's "becoming-with" as an indisputable "moving-with", a patterning of relations that relies upon kinaesthetic modes of engagement.

Whilst Haraway's notion of "string figures" are illustrated by visual patternings, they are formed through tactile enactment. Describing the formation of string figures such as cat's cradles, Haraway asserts that it is in the "passing patterns back and forth,

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<sup>148</sup> See GLOSSARY OF TERMS.

giving and receiving, patterning, holding the unasked-for pattern in one's hands, response-ability" (2016: 12) that patterns – of relationships, strings, stories – emerge. Therefore, if we set aside the visual images of string figures that prevail throughout Haraway's discourse, it becomes possible to recognise patterns to be not simply of material but of action, the string being a residue of the patterning that occurs between gesturing hands. In *Star Figures*, the travelling constellations that take place in the almost-dark of astronomical twilight are purposefully string-less. In an environment requiring more-than-visual modes of engagement, the third part of the score brings to the fore the doing – the “passing back and forth” – which defines the emergence and continuance of a pattern. However, the patterns that are enacted are informed not only by those encounters that are actual and felt, but – in the wood's darkening nightscape – they are equally informed by those encounters that are virtual and imagined.

In the almost-night of the wood's dark, the third task of *Star Figures* invites the participant to “travel with your patterning”; to continue to practice the established trace-form of the movement-constellation but allowing the points-in-space to shift so that the trace form can begin a “journey through the night-site” (fig. 42). In my own practising of the score, I describe how:

*I trace the familiar, tilted form of Cygnus with my eyes, fingers, left rib, letting the slope of the constellation tip my spine into motion, feet treading and tracing the conjoining lines of the swan-dive into the mulching ground of the wood. Here under the yews, the imagined reach of a celestial left wing is instead felt in the sliding of mud and the soft pressure of ferns against my calf. Here in the dark they feel feather-like, a swan's wing tip skimming past. It was as if my up had become my down and the dark of this sodden earth was instead the depths of the night-sea above.*

Figure 44: Extract from my on-site writings, during solo practice. December 2018: astronomical twilight.

In my experiencing of this task, the encounters between my moving body and the more-than-human surfaces of the wood are forged and shaped by the imagined form of the constellation. As a result, the trace-form is an entanglement of actual and imagined forms, surfaces and movements<sup>149</sup>. It is an entanglement that is night-specific, the imaginary brought into play with the wood's materialities “here in the

<sup>149</sup> Fox and Alldred (2019) recognise imagination to be included in the materialities that new materialism encompasses, due to its capacity to produce material effects – as *Star Figures* both demonstrates and implements.

dark” (fig. 44). To analyse such a process requires not just the choreological principle of trace forms, but additionally that of spatial imagination. In what follows, I define spatial imagination in choreological terms before describing how the third section of *Star Figures* challenges this definition and utilises a form of spatial imagination to engage with a motional “becoming-with” nightfall.

Choreology articulates spatial imagination predominantly in terms of visual forms and patterns. In describing it, Preston-Dunlop says “we need to see the patterns we make as we move (which disappear as soon as we have made them) [...] We need to see the design [...] They impinge more strongly on the spectator’s eye” (2006: 125). However, in the dark of astronomical twilight, the spatial imaginings that take place in the practising of *Star Figures* are, by necessity, more-than-visual ones. The writings of both myself and workshop participants reveal an increasing tactility to the spatial imaginings as the site darkens. Like the “feathery” touch of the ferns encountered in my practice, one participant notes that “I found the imagination became more abstract as it got darker & relied on things I could touch”, whilst another notes that pathways emerge by “imprinting”, and another describes how “I traced Lynx [constellation] on as many surfaces as possible – my legs, torso, tree trunk, arms, face, the air”. This tactility of the night-time spatial imaginings not only contrasts with Preston-Dunlop’s notion that patterns need to be seen, but also rejects the idea that they “disappear as soon as we have made them” (2006: 125). If the spatial imagining of a pathway has as much to do with tactile encounters as it does with abstract form, then the patternings of movement resonate far beyond the visual witnessing of a bodily articulation. Rather, these patternings – such as the travelling-constellations of *Star Figures* – are carried, felt, and encountered, their more-than-visual traces continuing to exist *of site* and *of body*. As I shall demonstrate, this practising of *Star Figures* creates an embodied exchange between materials, bodies and things, revealing a shared-ness in the process of spatial imagining.

In my earlier description, I reflect that at astronomical twilight “my up had become my down” (fig. 44). This inversion of sky and ground occurs through a spatial imagining of the constellation within the wood’s nightscape, and is one that is reiterated in the writings of workshop participants: “I mapped out the pathway of the constellation using points of the earth”; “tried to find the pattern of the constellation in the branches of the tree above my head”; “a tree leading onwards to the next point

in the constellation”. Evident in these reflections is a process of imagining-with-place: in the more-than-visual nightscape of the wood, the participants do not simply project an image of the constellation onto the site but instead seek out the constellation as they travel, finding its pathway within the qualities and things of a place. In this way, the movement scale is simultaneously an imagining-of form and encountering-with place. What is gathered in to the embodied movement is both that which is touched and felt in the almost-night, and that which is imagined and illusory, echoing Bachelard’s assertion that “space calls for action, and before action, the imagination is at work” (Bachelard, 2014: 34).

This imagining-with-place that occurs in night’s darkness is akin to Bachelard’s understanding of the intrinsic relationship between place and daydreaming. Suggesting that it is through place that daydreams are “particularized” and “acquired” (2014: 37), Bachelard equally asserts that it is through “dream values” that place continues to resonate beyond the actuality of encountering it: “the house we were born in becomes imbued with dream values which remain after the house is gone” (ibid.: 38). It is important to note that Bachelard uses these terms “dream value” and “daydreaming” to refer to an embodied processing: for Bachelard, place does not reverberate (only) through mental images and subconscious recollections, but rather it is “our bodies, which do not forget” which enable place to be “physically inscribed in us” (2014: 36). It is this embodied dreaming with(in) place that characterises the trace forms in the third task of *Star Figures*. In a more-than-visual nightscape, encounters with place are shaped by an imagining of form that alters and blurs with those encounters that are actual and felt. As a result, I have created the term “placial dreaming”<sup>150</sup> to describe a noctographic practising of choreology’s “spatial imagination”. Placial dreaming recognises the more-than-visual imaginings that emerge through night-time encounters, asserting them to be an “imagining-with” as much as the practice itself is a “moving-with”.

Within the travelling constellations of *Star Figures*, this “placial dreaming” emerges as a process of exchange, a “passing patterns back and forth” (Haraway, 2016: 12) that occurs between the bodies, materials and things that inhabit the almost-night,

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<sup>150</sup> See GLOSSARY OF TERMS.

forming and in-forming the movement that occurs. In the re-doing and re-patterning of their movement-constellations, participants describe a mobility of “energy” that is imagined/sensed between themselves and the night-site: “the constellation felt like a transient, mobile energy”; “suspended from one aloft point. Trees, it’s all about me hanging from the points like a child’s mobile”, and “a tumbling charged environment”. These reflections depict the kinaesthetic sensing of place that is vital to moving with(in) the wood’s nightscape and evidences that the patterning of movement that emerges is not simply *composed within* the site but *composed-with*<sup>151</sup>. As one participant observes, in the night’s increasing dark there is a shift of attention from the points-in-space of the constellation to the journeying in-between, “more interested in flow than the arrival points”. This aligns with my own increased sense of fluidity in motion, described in my earlier passage as “the dark of this sodden earth was instead the depths of the night-sea above”. Choreologically, this suggests that in the practising of *Star Figures* over the duration of nightfall, there is a shift from a spatial engagement with site to a dynamic one. This is equally reflected in the above descriptions in which energy is “mobile”, “transient”, “tumbling”, “charged”. Such a shift not only demonstrates the necessity for the notion of “placial dreaming” – one that encompasses a more-than spatial, more-than-visual mode of imagining through movement – but these writings equally attest to a “passing patterns back and forth” that is energetically and kinaesthetically sensed, one that is as valid in forming relationships between bodies and beings as any material exchange.

In journeying-out with(in) the last stage of nightfall, the “back and forth” exchanges between human and more-than-human relations are ones that are kinaesthetically sensed and placially dreamed. These ways of encountering a night-site do not act as a replacement of a visual or material exchange, but rather demonstrate that movement *is* the exchange, forming the fundamental mode of patterning itself. It is through a noctographic, more-than-visual practising of movement that this is realised. In the dark, Haraway’s “becoming-with” is recognised first and foremost as a practice of “moving-with”, through which the (actual and imagined) forms, figures and textures

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<sup>151</sup> This inter-changing of terms between “composing” and “becoming” is brought about by Haraway when she suggests ““Who and whatever we are, we need to make-with – become-with, compose-with – the earth-bound” (2016: 102).

of a nightscape are encountered. It is this that comprises the entangling, transforming, ongoing patterning of a nightfall in motion. In the section that follows, these findings that have arisen from a practising of *Star Figures* are gathered together, summarising the new understandings of nightfall that have so far emerged.

### **SUMMARY: NIGHT-NEST**

To close this section, I would like to momentarily return to Bachelard's notion of the "nest" which was discussed earlier in PLACE-MAKING. Bachelard's distinction between the "actual" and "living" nest (2014: 111-124) can be noctographically understood as the distinction between a patterning that is visually read and a patterning that is kinaesthetically felt. Bachelard suggests that the material "nest" of a home is shaped and imbued by the movements and qualities of the bodies that inhabit it (ibid.:121), giving the example of the rounded form of a bird's nest being shaped by the bird's rotating motion. However, by using string to create nest-like constellation structures at the beginning of nightfall, structures that are then unravelled up as the site darkens and carried in the motions of bodies towards the almost-night, the practising of *Star Figures* reveals a very different relationship between body and site.

Instead of the site carrying the traces of the body, *Star Figures* reveals the body's motional capacity to carry the traces of site and to be shaped by the ongoing shifts and transformations that it continues to encounter. In doing so, it asserts not only that it is the patterning of movement that creates the nests of our relatedness – our "becoming-with" more-than-human environments – but that the nest is nothing else *but* the patterning of movement. Movement that is the "webs of processes" (Haraway, 2016: 35) of the more-than-human entanglements that comprise a site. The "living nest", then, occurs in the doing of the movement, in the patterned exchange between beings and things. But as *Star Figures* asserts, it is also carried in the bodies and materials that forged those encounters, enabling the nests ongoingness to ensue. As a result, it is possible to assert nightfall to be a *motion of materialities* within a site: a phenomenon that is articulated by the composition of more-than-visual patterning of movement. Nightfall is a nest, a nest of nocturnal doings and placial dreamings. The practising of *Star Figures* has revealed it to be not

the container of nocturnal movement but the motional patterning of nocturnal relations between bodies, things, materials and surfaces. In this way, nightfall is a nest that is “never finished” (Bachelard, 2014: 124) but instead is ongoing in the re-doing, re-patterning and re-imagining of all those that its darkenings have encountered and entangled.

# THE SEEP-SEEM SCORE<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The creation of this score has been directly influenced by the following practitioners and theorists: Donna Haraway's notion of composting (2016); Tuija Kokkonen's exercise of 'performing with and performing for' (workshop, Helsinki 2013); Erin Manning's notion of seeming (2011).

Figure 45: title page of the *Seep-Seem* score.

**(E)MERGENCE**

*Civil Twilight.*

Begin by taking time to attune to the sounds and movements within the wood.

Let your attention settle upon one 'thing' within the site  
– tree, rock, root, cliff, pathway. The scale is up to you.

How are these peripheries sensed –  
seeing, touching, hearing, moving...

Peripheral play-time.  
Moving-with and thinking-with peripheries.

Notice what motifs are emerging. Refrain from judging – just notice.  
As they emerge, repeat them, find a familiarity within them.

Take your time – go slow.  
Let the motifs emerge into a short phrase.

Once the ditty is familiar, play with its retrograde.

*Maybe standing, maybe wandering.*

*where are the peripheries of the thing?  
where are the peripheries of 'you'?*

*what is the relationship between these peripheries?  
where are their shared seams?*

*where are the peripheries of your movement?  
where and how do they 'take place'?*

*The phrase is a sort of 'movement ditty'  
– a short and simple song.*

*moving up and down  
the ditty,  
like a scale.*

Figure 46: stage one of the *Seep-Seem* score.

## SEEPING

*Nautical Twilight.*

Choose a pathway within the wood:

Perhaps it's a single line, in a single direction.  
Perhaps it's a loop, ongoing and circular.  
Perhaps it's a fold, a going and a returning.

How does it take place?

Is your doing/re-doing  
a performing with the wood  
or a performing for the wood?

Stay attentive with the movement.  
Stay attentional to the movement.

Can the retrograde be a continuing  
– rather than a reversing?  
What if the retrograde were a folding  
– with what does it fold?

What does your movement carry  
– and what does it know of what it carries?

*travelling ditty. travelling retrograde.*

*travel with your movement utterance.*

*What is your doing? What is your re-doing?*

*What is it to move  
between these two things?  
What changes?*

*Is the movement yours?  
Is the movement otherwise?*

*how do you carry place?  
how does place carry you?*

*With what does your movement move?  
What can it tell of with what it moves?*

Figure 47: stage two of the *Seep-Seem* score.

*Astronomical Twilight.*

## SEEMING

Continue with your travelling ditty.

Settle in

to the place of your movement.

*Settling-in to motion.*

*Settling-in through motion.*

Being-with the wood.

Being-with the architecture of the wood.

*Merging in (the wood)*

*emerging with (the wood).*

Are you interrupting?

*Are you interrupted?*

What does your movement carry

– and what does it know of what it carries?

*With what does your movement move?*

*What can it tell of with what it moves?*

What does this ditty

compost, what does it turn over?

*What is it mulching?*

*What does it compost-with?*

What does this ditty

fold, into the retrograde?

*Continue with your travelling ditty.*

Figure 48: stage three of the *Seep-Seem* score.

# CLUSTERING

## OVERVIEW

CLUSTERING seeks to analyse the relationship between the experience of flow-in-motion and an environment's increasing darkness over the progression of nightfall. Opening with the *Seep-Seem* score (fig. 45), this section draws upon the choreological principles of peripheral movement and retrograding to explore the alterations in flow caused by a nightscape's darkening hues. Before beginning this analysis, I will therefore introduce two key themes that are integral to this process: firstly, the choreological understanding of flow, and secondly, the *Seep-Seem* score.

Within choreological practice, flow is often articulated as a degree of tension or energy (Preston-Dunlop, 2006; Hutchinson-Guest, 1985), the extremes of which are “bound flow” and “free flow” (Preston-Dunlop, 2006: 102), the former denoted as “restricted [...] knotted with containment, the flow completely interrupted” (2013a: 60) and the latter an “unrestrained [...] gorgeously abandoned, the flow is uninterrupted” (ibid.). It is these two states of flow that feature within Laban's Effort Graph, in which flow is represented as one of four motion factors (Laban and Lawrence 1947). Of course, within the Effort Graph each motion factor appears as a scale along which the movement quality transitions. The notions of “free” and “bound” do not, therefore, represent singular states of flow but rather feature as extremes between which “the control of the Flow” (Laban and Lawrence, 1947: 4) is articulated. This articulation occurs as a gaining or losing of tension in movement (Preston-Dunlop, 2006: 102). The analysis of flow within movement can be extensive – this chapter focuses upon the alteration of flow specifically in peripheral movement and retrograding. They are two key movement principles which became intrinsic to this noctographic practice. Both are most often considered according to their choreutic (i.e. spatial) significance, however – as this chapter will demonstrate – it is their articulation of flow that comes to the fore in a practice that engages with the durational darkening of nightfall.

The *Seep-Seem* score begins with the peripheries. It uses a structured improvisation to draw attention towards the peripheries of things, surfaces and materials

(including the human body) in the site in order to consider how these peripheries are sensed (fig. 46). The movement motifs that emerge from this improvisation begin to form a sequence through their repetition, a sequence which is referred to in the score as a “ditty” (fig. 47). This “ditty” is so-called for its connotations of simplicity, repeatability, and a more-than-visual resonance. Once this ditty is established, the score invites an exploration of retrograding by drawing attention to what the movement carries of the nightscape – such as what might “fold into” the movement and what is “mulching” in the movement on its re-turning (fig. 48). The *Seep-Seem* score explores an accumulating familiarity with the wood at nightfall and is intended to be performed over three consecutive evenings. In this way, it explores the notion of retrograde both within the movement phrase but also in the body’s returning to the wood at – and within – the return of nightfall itself.

In what follows, I discuss the practising of the *Seep-Seem* score through two key subsections. Firstly, THE MORE-THAN considers the relationship between the peripheries of the kinesphere and the peripheries of the night-site. Placing Tim Ingold’s concept of meshwork (Ingold, 2015) in dialogue with Erin Manning’s notion of the “excess” (Manning, 2011; 2013; 2014b) the peripheries of nightfall are explored as a means of forming more-than-human kinespheric clusters<sup>152</sup>. Secondly, THE RETURN considers how the act of returning – to both the site and time of nightfall – plays a part in the formation of these clusters. Drawing upon notions of kinship (Haraway, 2016; Ingold, 2015) and composting (Haraway, 2016), retrograding is here explored as a method for re-visiting and re-encountering nightfall. A final subsection, NIGHT-KIN, summarises the key findings of CLUSTERING and demonstrates how the embodiment of a noctographic movement practice enables new understandings of nightfall to emerge.

## THE MORE-THAN

*skirting the outside of a trees energy, the outside of my kinesphere and where those two points collide.*

Figure 49: Extract from a workshop participant’s notebook, January 2019: civil twilight.

<sup>152</sup> See GLOSSARY OF TERMS.

The phenomena of nightfall is the phenomena of the peripheral. The terms “nightfall” and “twilight” essentially refer to the edgelands of night, to the very cusp of earth’s shadow-space. As a site enters this peripheral space of the almost-night, the peripheries of things, bodies and movements within that site are, in turn, altered. The smudging of their edges echo – on a much smaller scale – the blurring and merging occurring at night’s periphery, that of nightfall itself. The first stage of the *Seep-Seem* score (fig. 46) provides a way of engaging directly with these altering peripheries of nightfall. It facilitates a choreological analysis of the relevance of peripheral movement to the intimate relationship between site and kinesphere that emerges at nightfall. In the wood, nightfall is responsible for “changing long distance to short”, and the “seemingly no limitation” of the site<sup>153</sup>. In the process of the wood’s darkening, what lies on the periphery becomes immediate rather than distant: to borrow Rebecca Solnit’s terms, the faraway becomes nearby (Solnit, 2013). This merging of distances that nightfall brings produces a sense of immersion in which the blurring of peripheries is felt as much as it is seen.

During the initial stages of the score, participants are invited to take their focus towards the peripheries of things, bodies and movement. What becomes evident is that an exploration of the edges of things is, at nightfall, always an investigation of the shifting, seeping capacity of such edges. Participants describe how “rolling happened as the periphery shifted. I couldn’t get to the periphery, it’s a horizon”, “how close my periphery could get [to] the skin of the tree [...] I never get there”. Here, the peripheries seem to be always in motion, always beyond in some way: even the “skin of the tree” is made elsewhere by nightfall’s smudging. That nightfall endows peripheries with motion is consistent to a choreological analysis because – as Laban scholar, Ann Hutchinson-Guest, asserts – peripheral movement determines a particular state of flow. If, “in the flow of energy we are concerned mainly with the physical direction of the flow” (1985: 7), Hutchinson-Guest suggests this “physical direction” to consist of either central or peripheral pathways. Notably, whilst Hutchinson-Guest discusses these pathways in terms of their “spatial” and “physical” properties, she does so always in reference to a (human) bodily structure. Choreologically, central pathways are defined as passing through the gravitational

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<sup>153</sup> These are observations made by workshop participants in tasks previous to the formation of the *Seep-Seem* score, demonstrating the felt-significance of the shifts in peripheries that occur during nightfall.

centre of the body and its kinesphere, its “near space”, whereas peripheral pathways are defined as using the “extremities of the body”, or the “periphery of the kinesphere” (1985: 6-7). In this way, Hutchinson-Guest defines peripheral and central pathways solely through a human bodily structure, suggesting the “flow of movement” to be akin to the “flow of energy in the body”. Whilst a noctographic practice acknowledges – indeed, brings to the fore – the relatedness between peripheral pathways and states of flow, it does so only by acknowledging the flow of movement to be one informed and created by spatial structures within the site as much as (more-than-human) bodily structures. This is not simply an aim or ideal of the noctographic practice but rather is unavoidably brought about by the darkening of the site.

This is made evident in observations made during the practising of the *Seep-Seem* score, in which participants relate the flow of their movement to be informed by other-than-human structures, so that what arises is an entangling of peripheries through motion: “skirting the outside of a tree’s energy, the outside of my kinesphere and where those two points collide” (fig. 49), “allowed the tree to move around me”, “little branches on lips”, “Play between [dancer] and the trees became smaller”. This last observation in particular highlights the ways in which night’s smudging shifts the peripheral outlines, so that distances between bodies appear reduced. Essentially, a seeping occurs between things so that neither is wholly distinct from the other. Whilst this seeping appears to be visually perceived, this noctographic practice makes evident that this seeping is experienced kinaesthetically. Documented in the writings is a seeping of movement – the collision between “a trees energy” and “my kinesphere” or the trees which “move around me”. Here, the peripheries that are made tangible at nightfall are not just the physical, tactile peripheries of bodies, but rather exist beyond them, in the “excess of the seeable” (Manning and de Zegher, 2011: 5) that is the felt-ness of motion.

If dance scholar Erin Manning suggests that movement is an excess that spills out of a body’s doings (Manning, 2013: 14), then a noctographic practice affirms that it equally spills into. In the *Seep-Seem* score, the peripheries become a place for dialogue where movement forms a means of transferring information between human and more-than-human bodies. In my own practising of the score, I describe

that I experience my “senses to be a reaching out or rather in a surface of exchange that is beyond the periphery of your own body”. This “reaching out” suggests that a de-centred flow of motion exists as a dialogue between body and site and is sensed beyond the body, in an in-between that exists “beyond the periphery”. Meanwhile, participants describe using movement to “map out the periphery of this suspended place”; “shifting roles of being the edge and playing with the edge”; “Things change so quickly, there’s more information with moving”; “Enjoyed slotting in to the peripheries of dark spaces like nestling in” and “feel like I was existing on the periphery/horizon for some time”. These observations reflect a sense of dialogue through motion, a dialogue in which the movement is saturated with the changings of their surroundings, mimicking the motion and transformation of darkness itself. Such a process suggests that it is through the seeping flow of movement’s excess that forms are informed by the environments through which they move, so that that which is encountered is, unavoidably, always more-than-human movement.

As the site darkens and visual outlines merge and alter, the peripheries – of bodies, things, night – are felt to be in constant motion, constantly shifting and oscillating. Observing the workshop participants, I discerned them to be “like a Rothko painting [...] a slow revealing”, as though the night’s darkening reveals the potential blurring between things that the light otherwise conceals. These fluctuating peripheries of the wood inhabit the flow of motion, so that what is notated is a state of free flow that is sustained throughout the darkening of the environment<sup>154</sup>. According to Laban, a state of free flow is synonymous with peripheral movement due to the de-centred nature of the motion. He suggests that when movement “enters the peripheral path” a “labile transition occurs” so that “a greater movement intensity is here experienced” (Laban, 1966: 203). Here, the term “labile transition”<sup>155</sup> and the “greater movement intensity” that is experienced, denote the increased state of flow that peripheral movement promotes. If in peripheral vision the actual becomes seeming and the indeterminable reigns as the potential (Pallasmaa, 1996: 46), then in peripheral movement the stable becomes labile as the centre of gravity tips into free movement and becomes immersed in an unbound state of flow. In the periphery, be it vision or movement, we encounter a loss of sharpness and clarity – a process

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<sup>154</sup> See APPENDIX (8).

<sup>155</sup> An off-balance, pre-fall state of motion, as discussed in SECTION TWO: GROUNDING.

that is (unsurprisingly) directly akin to that of nightfall, it being a phenomenon of the peripheral in itself. But what is gained in the periphery that is nightfall, is an encounter that has the potential to be in excess. Where clarity is lost, the potential to be other-than, and more-than, is gained. If – as a practising of the *Seep-Seem* score suggests – nightfall draws attention to the peripheries of motion as the means by which bodies form and in-form one another, then what occurs on the peripheries can be described choreologically as what I will term a “kinespheric cluster”.

To consider peripheral movement as a kinespheric cluster is to consider it to be not a property of one kinesphere or another but rather a condition of relatedness which is constituted both within and between the environments of which it is a part<sup>156</sup>. In his analysis of the kinesphere, Laban asserts that movement “clusters” do not pass through the centre of the kinesphere but rather are connected to one another along the “scaffolding” of peripheral lines that form the edges of a kinesphere (Laban, 1966: 68-77). These notions of “scaffolding” and “clusters” draw parallels with Tim Ingold’s notion of meshworks in which “everything tangles with everything else”, built from the premise that “every living being is a line or better, a bundle of lines” (Ingold, 2015: 3). Here, Ingold’s “bundle of lines” refers not to an anatomical body but rather to the lines of movements and pathways that are the composition of that being, thereby recognising the entangled formation of things by – and with – each other.

Like Laban’s clusters and scaffolding, Ingold’s meshwork is an entanglement of motion, “lines of movement and growth” (ibid.: 82). Yet whereas Laban’s structures are derived specifically from an individual (human) kinesphere, Ingold’s meshwork – a “dense tangle of trails [...] laid down by animate beings” (ibid.: 82) – acknowledges such movement to be already a more-than-human entanglement. If, for Laban, peripheral movement has the potential to form clusters at the edge of an individual’s kinesphere, a noctographic practice asserts that these clusters of peripheral motion are akin to Ingold’s meshwork in their function as entanglements of more-than-human movement. Whilst these structures of entanglement (meshworks, clusters,

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<sup>156</sup> Notably, the term “cluster” is used choreologically by Laban to describe points in space that are proximate to one another (1966: 68-70) and by Preston-Dunlop to describe a relationship between choreutic units (1983: 85-86). Whilst these describe relationships within human movement, this noctographic uses the notion of a “cluster” to describe the inter-kinespheric relationships between human and more-than-human movement.

scaffolds) appear to exist largely as spatially imagined constructs that extend beyond and between the parameters of physical bodies, at nightfall the in-betweenness that such structures afford is made tangible<sup>157</sup>. What Manning and de Zegher refer to as the “tendings”, which are “the movements between the lines” (2011: 6), are brought to the fore during nightfall through the motional blurring of peripheries. In making felt these tendings – that afford a “sensing-with” to occur (Manning, 2013: 2) – nightfall enables a recognition of movement-beyond-form, as observed in detections of “a tree’s energy”, “the outside of my kinesphere”, and descriptions of movement as “soaring above the point of touch”, exploring “the periphery of this suspended place”. This last observation hints at a temporality and elasticity of place<sup>158</sup> appropriate to the notion of kinespheric clusters<sup>159</sup>, which are changed and altered by the things, movements and bodies that in-form them. In this way, kinespheric clusters embody Manning’s assertion that “beyond the human, beyond the sense of touch or vision, beyond the object, what emerges is relation” (Manning, 2013: 12).

If peripheral movement enables kinespheric clusters to form and, in doing so, becomes a condition of relatedness between things and bodies, then in a noctographic practice these peripheral movements enact – on a miniature scale – the function of nightfall itself. As the periphery of earth’s shadow-space, nightfall forms the conditions of relatedness in which these movements in-between arise, so that what occurs are peripheries in-forming along peripheries. And all of them in motion. For Manning and de Zegher, dance is:

less about movements held within a dancing form than it is about the movement of lines, abstract lines, that alter and retrace the dimensions of linear space-time, lines that place, lines that make felt how form is never quite what it seems. (2011: 1)

By discussing dance in terms such as these – as movements of lines, clusters, meshworks and scaffolds – it becomes possible to encompass in this notion of the dancing form the things, bodies and movements that compose a darkening site. In

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<sup>157</sup> It is worth noting here Karen Barad’s notion of “apparatus” which, like Ingold’s meshwork, affords “dynamic (re)configurings of the world” (Barad, 2003: 816) between bodies and things, irrespective of species. However, Barad’s apparatus disallows for the seeping inbetween, the “tendings” that are essential to nightfall, occurring instead as events “through which exclusionary boundaries are enacted” (ibid.). In contrast, Ingold recognises that meshwork offers a structure through which “everything tangles with everything else” (Ingold, 2015: 3).

<sup>158</sup> See GLOSSARY OF TERMS.

<sup>159</sup> Laban’s term of ‘clusters’ is here preferred to Ingold’s term of ‘meshwork’ in order to more adequately refer to a three-dimensional interaction of movement. Ingold’s meshwork, whilst relevant in terms of the more-than-human entanglements it denotes, is described as a “textile”, a “surface” and “laid down”, suggesting a too flattened structure to be utilised kinaesthetically and three-dimensionally (Ingold, 2015: 43, 82).

doing so, it becomes possible to view a dancer's movement as not simply tracing the relatedness that develops within a site at nightfall, but rather to view that movement as traced *by* the nightfall in which it arises. This, perhaps, is essential to the role of peripheral movement in a noctographic practice: the notion of kinespheric clusters not only enables the recognition of co-formed movement but essentially destabilises the notion of a human-centric kinesphere in which movement is informed and expressed only by the physicality of the body. If, as Manning and de Zegher assert, movement exists as “lines that make felt how form is never quite what it seems” (ibid.), then the dance is not a thing “in the midst of things”, but rather *is* the midst in which things are met and lines are forged. In a noctographic practice, the kinespheric clusters of movement make felt the peripherality that defines nightfall as a space-in-motion, a merging and blurring of edges in which form is revealed to be *more-than* what it seems. In what follows, the continuation of the *Seep-Seem* score further explores the “midst” of movement in which things are met by engaging with a cumulative re-turning, re-visiting to the wood's site-specific nightfall.

## THE RE-TURN

*I am building a forest around me, like a carpet trail of tall verdant structure. It stands, then wanes.*

Figure 50: Extract from a workshop participant's notebook, January 2019: astronomical twilight.

As I have asserted so far in this section, a noctographic practice makes felt how movement has the capacity to be “the midst” in which things are met. This term is a reference towards Tim Ingold's notion of kinship, and his suggestion that the lines of kinship “far from articulating end-to-end, join in the middle, in the midst of things” (Ingold, 2015: 154). This “in the midst of things” attributes both a vagueness and a mobility to the formation of kinship: Ingold presents a concept of kinship that is almost weather-like, a substance that is shifting, temporal and fluid. This notion of kinship is mirrored by Donna Haraway, who emphasises that it is not a species-specific construct but rather “all earthlings are kin in the deepest sense, and it is past time to practice better care of kin-as-assemblages (not species one at a time). Kin is an assembling sort of word” (Haraway, 2016: 103). In this context, kinship is presented as a bringing together, as a clustering: a bridging of both actual and conceptual distances to bring a relatedness into being. On these terms, it might be

possible to assert that peripheral movement and the formation of kinespheric clusters within a noctographic practice act as examples of forging kinship. However, as we shall see, this would be an incomplete practising of kinship, lacking a key element of development: kinship, on Haraway's terms, is not simply about the *existence* of relatedness but rather the *sustaining* of it.

Haraway describes kinship as a sort of "situated worlding", a sustaining of the "meaningful lived connections" (Haraway, 2016: 91) upon which the ongoing-ness of any living thing depends. Kinship, then, this sustaining of a felt between-ness, requires a doing: it is something that is made and re-made, so that each action of making-kin is equally a defining-kin. It must therefore be inevitable that if something become defined as kin through the making of kin, then to forge kinship with that which we do not currently recognise as kin, requires that we, in Haraway's words, "stretch the imagination" and "change the story" (Haraway, 2016: 103). I therefore introduce the term "night-kin"<sup>160</sup> within this section to refer specifically to the kinship forged through a noctographic practice. It is a term which perhaps initially brings to mind the idea of night-time creatures, of numerous nocturnal species, precisely because we pre-suppose what *might* be kin to be based upon that which we already consider to *be* kin. Usually we assume that the term "kin" refers to bodily beings, in particular visible bodily beings, yet, as dance scholar Bojana Cvejić suggests, "the shadow is also another body" (in Bauer et al., 2011: 5). To consider night-as-kin is to stretch the imagination – it is to consider the shadow-space of nightfall and the blurring, more-than bodily peripheries that nightfall brings to the fore to be recognised as kin equal to those of bodies and beings. Essentially, making night-kin requires visibility to no longer be the sole indicator of what is present, and what is viable as kin.

What Haraway makes clear is that making-kin cannot simply be achieved through the extent of intention, or thought, or notion alone: making-kin is an active doing, a re-patterning of relations that requires time on a more-than-human scale (Haraway, 2016). Making night-kin therefore requires not just a durational practising of movement but a sustaining of that movement. It requires a continually re-turning<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> See GLOSSARY OF TERMS.

<sup>161</sup> See GLOSSARY OF TERMS.

and re-making of patterns, a concept which is articulated choreologically as a retrograde. In the *Seep-Seem* score, movement ditties are retrograded over the two-hour period of nightfall (fig. 47, fig. 48), becoming in-formed and co-formed by weather, trees, textures, the seen and the almost-seen, the felt and the imagined. Elements of repetition and return are already embedded within the year-long structure of this noctographic practice by necessity – in order to analyse movement across different twilights and different seasons. But what the nightly retrogrades of the *Seep-Seem* score revealed was that a sustaining of relatedness through movement during nightfall did not enact a becoming-familiar, but an unfamiliar-becoming. To continue with an analysis of the practising of the *Seep-Seem* score requires a brief overview of a choreological understanding of retrograding. Retrograding is not a reversing but rather a “moving up and down a given scale” (Brandt, 2015). Retrograding is a double-sided coin: on the one hand, the return may occur in “general space”<sup>162</sup> and therefore be perceived clearly as a return to specific points in space, affording the impression of reversal or repetition. On the other hand, the return may occur in the kinesphere alone: in which case, the points to which the motion returns relate to a bodily orientation rather than a spatial one, enabling the return (or “retrograde”) to be enacted whilst continuing to travel along spatial pathways. During nightfall, there occurs a merging of these two forms of retrograde. In the darkening of the site, the return that occurs is neither wholly spatially orientated (fixed within general space) nor wholly bodily orientated (fixed within the kinesphere) but rather occurs at the point of mergence between the two. In what follows, the intricacies of this process are described, drawing upon the on-site writings of workshop participants to evoke an embodied sense of night-specific retrograding.

In the doing and re-doing of the retrograde over the course of nightfall, the participants describe not a re-encountering with the site’s sameness but a re-encountering with nightfall’s differencing: “the material had to be lived every time as if I was performing it for the first time [...] Is it because the landscape is slowly changing that I want to keep it new every time?”; “never quite the same, always changing in its similarities” and “I notice the passing changing landscape as I

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<sup>162</sup> A term used in choreological practice to refer to the space beyond the kinesphere – the studio, the stage, etc. – which has a fixed structure and therefore shared points of reference, i.e. the walls, doors, etc.

progress”. However, in this “changing landscape” of nightfall, participants also reflected how the ditty itself forms a point of focus with which to “ground myself” and “feel safe in this darkness”. In this way, it becomes possible to suggest that nightfall’s doing – a making unfamiliar – is tentatively addressed through the retrograde by offering a counterpoint of familiarity through which to notice and attune to night’s alterations. In this way, the retrograding movement itself becomes a point to which to return, forming a nest of kinaesthetic familiarity through which to observe nightfall’s differencing. It enables – as we shall see – an observation of the entanglement of the more-than-human movement that constitutes the retrograding ditty.

Travelling along the wood’s darkening paths, the ditties of peripheral motifs are carried and retrograded within the kinesphere. However, as nightfall progresses, this retrograde becomes slightly unfixated<sup>163</sup> and begins to orient less to bodily orientation and once more to general space, commencing a dialogue between the two. This shift is subtly documented in the participant’s writings, who increasingly reference their relationship to the environment in terms of an exchange, interaction or conversation: “the phrase felt different as I moved along the path from the different surroundings and different patterns the trees made so altered small aspects of my phrase”; “there was always new information” and “bliss – so beautiful having a conversation with the interlacing stars & silhouettes of trees, that left my movement speechless”. What emerges from this exploration of the *Seep-Seem* score are the ways in which the alterations of nightfall are kinaesthetically felt within the retrograde, altering its movement pattern whilst it nevertheless continues to provide a place from which to notice and attune to the darkening environment within which it evolves. In this way, the retrograde builds upon the fragile meshwork of the kinespheric clusters to form the “situated worlding” (Haraway, 2016: 91) of kinship. Yet, by forging acts of return that do not necessarily seek familiarity with species or place but rather seeks an attunement to nightfall’s ongoing alterations, the kinship forged through the score’s retrograding is one that is night-specific. Through its enactment, the retrograde recognises the significance of Cvejić’s earlier assertion that “the shadow is also another body” (in Bauer et al., 2011: 5). It does so through acts of return that occur

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<sup>163</sup> See APPENDIX (8), in which the symbology from the workshops observes the choreutic shifts (spatial forms) within the kinesphere’s retrograde.

not just over the course of one evening but unfold over three consecutive nightfalls. In doing so, the retrograde is not simply re-enacted within the wood but rather is re-altered and re-placed by each processual nightfall. It is itself, as we shall see, turned over or “re-turned” in a manner much the same as material within a compost.

The concept of compost is perhaps most predominantly addressed by Haraway, who asserts that “human beings are not in a separate compost pile [...] we are compost, not posthuman” (2016: 55). However, it is the poet Gary Snyder who addresses compost as movement – as more than simply a layering of materials but as a seeping, a turning and re-turning, an ongoing dialogue between substances<sup>164</sup>. In Snyder’s poem *On Top* (2005), there is no finished product but rather a list of continuous activity that details the materials constant doing. In the practising of the *Seep-Seem* score, the movement that forms is a compost of nightly doings. Each retrograde acts as a re-turning of the movement material so that it seeps and sifts not just with the immediate, darkening environment of the wood, but also with each shadow-body of the night before, the season before, the year before.

This layering and seeping of an accumulating night-motion is particularly felt on the third evening of practising the *Seep-Seem* score. Participants describe: “holding the energy of the trees in my movement. Feeling like I was at one with the trees and a part of the environment rather than in it”; “I feel like an island of growth” and “on the repetitions I am building a forest around me, like a carpet trail of tall verdant structure”. Through its nightly recurrence, the practice becomes a “game of follow the movement”<sup>165</sup>, so that the seeping of its layers – the residue of what was, informing what is – becomes felt in the more-than-visual environment of night’s processual darkening. Effectively, a cumulative night-time practising of the *Seep-Seem* score demonstrates that a composting of doings occurs in motion. If, as I have previously asserted, the retrograde forms a sort of “place”, a nest of kinaesthetic familiarity, it does so through a composting of relations – relations that exist between movements and night’s shadow as much as they do between bodies and things. In this way, what Ingold (after Borbein) refers to as “the art of joinings” (2015: 19) between one line and another can here be understood as an “art of re-

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<sup>164</sup> See Snyder’s poem “On Top” (Snyder, 1983: 11).

<sup>165</sup> Quotation taken from a workshop participant’s writings during practisings of the *Seep-Seem* score.

turnings” in which the kinship that is forged is not simply a coming together or clustering but rather entails a durational practising of this clustering to enable the seeping, sifting process of a compost. In moving at night, in re-turning at night, we encounter and inhabit that same ongoing-ness that defines the flow of nightfall: re-turning yet irreversible, uninterrupted yet fluctuating. It is here, in the liquidity of night’s tactility<sup>166</sup> that night-kin is formed, so that the re-turning of the movement material is both a composting and a sprouting in which new, nightly forms of relatedness and attunement<sup>167</sup> come to the fore. As a result, the process of making night-kin is an act of re-turn through which an understanding of the “becoming-unfamiliar” that is night’s darkening is formed.

### **SUMMARY: NIGHT-KIN**

If according to a choreological practice peripheral movement enables a state of free flow to emerge, then nightfall – that definitively peripheral space on the cusp of earth’s shadow – enables an ongoing sustaining of the “unrestrained”, “uninterrupted” (Preston-Dunlop, 2013a: 60) qualities that define the free-flow as such. As a result, by retrograding at nightfall free-flow becomes a means of experiencing acts of re-turn not as a reversing, as an interruption of flow’s direction, but rather as a folding back that is a continuation of what came before. The free-flow that arises in a noctographic movement practice is therefore somewhat removed from the choreological understanding of flow as a degree of tension (ibid.) and instead aligns itself with the ongoing-ness that defines nightfall’s processual darkening. The choreological tools of peripheral movement and retrograde are well-placed to enable such a shift – from a flow of undulating (human) tension to a flow of seeping, seeming encounters with the peripheries of nightfall. Practisings of the *Seep-Seem* score suggest that such encounters enable a recognition of the motion that arises to be more-than-human movement – to be an entanglement that de-centres the human body from the centre of the kinesphere. It is here, in the more-than-visual environment of night’s darkening, that the formation of kinespheric clusters of more-than-human movement come to the fore.

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<sup>166</sup> See Handelman (2005: 253-4) for further discussion on night’s liquidity.

<sup>167</sup> The term “attunement” here refers to Sheets-Johnstone’s use of the term (Sheets-Johnstone, 2009: 144) as discussed in WADING.

Through the free-flowing retrograde that nightfall enables, a noctographic practice asserts that the forging of night-kin is made possible specifically through retrograde, this re-visiting and re-forming of more-than-human kinespheric clusters. Whilst kinship is discussed by both Ingold and Haraway as lines and connections, and “those particular interests that lie *between* others and the self” (Ingold, 2015: 154), a noctographic practice asserts that the sustaining of it is articulated in the folding back of those lines, so that it is in a movement of re-turning that a knotting between body and environment occurs. Each returning motion became a compost of the one before, echoing Haraway’s insistence that there is no “start[ing] from scratch” (2016: 138), but instead recognises the ongoingness, the human and more-than-human layering in which we are at once caught up and co-producing, and co-carrying in our bodies and our actions. During nightfall, it is not the re-encountering of a place or form that forges the kinship, but rather it is the “making unfamiliar” that occurs in the journeying in-between, in which the shadow-body of nightfall is kinaesthetically felt.

The *Seep-Seem* score functions as an embodiment of night’s facility to draw attention to the edges and blurring of things. It does so through a processual de-centring of the notion of a human-centric kinesphere, enabling the feltness of more-than-human movement to evolve. By enacting the motion of night’s darkening, a noctographic movement practice makes central those peripheries that blur and merge, as the places where the entangled doings of the more-than and excess reside. Significantly, a noctographic practice does not claim that it is only through nightfall that these processes – of composting, of more-than-human movement, of making-kin through motion – arise, but rather that it is through a practising of movement at nightfall that these processes are made felt and brought to the fore by making evident the presence of the more-than, the excess.

## CONCLUSION

In closing this section, I offer an overview of the key elements that have emerged from this noctographic practice. The intention of this conclusion is to bring together those findings that have directly shaped the ways in which I have devised and formulated a night-specific performance, which will be discussed in the following

section. As a result, this section highlights those new understandings of nightfall and time-specific movement that have emerged. A more detailed discussion of the impacts of this practice – in particular those that relate to phenomenology, new materialism and choreology – takes place in the overall conclusion of this thesis.

In WADING, practisings of *The Dappling Score* demonstrate that nightfall's duration is a phenomenon that can be kinaesthetically sensed and articulated. It uses choreological and phenomenological analysis to evidence that a relationship exists between that which is visually perceived during nightfall – the blurring, the emergence of silhouettes and contours, the alterations of distance – and that which is kinaesthetically felt. In doing so, it demonstrates how *The Dappling Score* functions as an embodied articulation of nightfall's durational transitions. WADING demonstrates how an attunement to site through movement enables an understanding of nightfall's duration as a place-specific phenomena to emerge: through a noctographic practice that utilises a choreological methodology, it becomes possible to recognise not only that the spatiality of nightfall is as important as its temporality, but that the two are inextricably interwoven. By articulating nightfall as a "tide", WADING therefore creates a liquid vocabulary that enables the articulation of a nightspace whose quality of darkness is understood to be produced by and through the environmental facets of that site.

Through GROUNDING, nightfall is revealed to be an act of unbalancing: one which de-centres human movement and dismantles hierarchies. By focusing upon how a body's relationship with ground is altered by the darkening nightscape, different practisings of *Lines of Descent* create an understanding of movement as not being "owned" by any single body but rather co-formed and co-articulated by the environment in which it occurs. In the more-than-visual nightscape, it becomes possible to comprehend that ground is not simply "caught up" in the movement that occurs, but rather through the unbalancing that nightfall's darkening produces, it is the dancer who is "caught up" in the movement of the site. As a result, using choreology to comprehend acts of falling-with night in which human movement is not at the centre, GROUNDING sees the creation of "horizontalizing": a concept which describes both the unbalancing caused by nightfall and the equalising of human and more-than-human relationships through movement.

FIGURING gives rise to an understanding of nightfall as a “nest”: a nest that is not a container which holds movement, but rather is itself the motion of materialities. Through a night-time practising of trace forms in *Star Figures*, it becomes possible to recognise sequential movement to be patternings of relations. Ones that – through their motional entanglement with more-than-human materialities – are equally patternings of site, and patternings of nightfall. These patternings comprise the “nest” of nightfall, which FIGURING reveals to be an entanglement not just of movements but of imaginings too. Using choreological analysis to comprehend how nightfall alters spatial structures, FIGURING sees the creation of “placial dreaming”, a more-than-visual imagining-with place. Through its practising, *Star Figures* reveals the capacity of the moving body to carry the traces of site – both actual and imagined – and to be shaped by the ongoing shifts and transformations that it continues to encounter.

Finally, CLUSTERING’s concept of “night-kin” asserts visibility to no longer be the sole indicator of what is present, and what is viable as kin. The introduction of the term “kinespheric clusters” articulates the possibility of shared, de-centred kinespheres as a means of making-kin through movement. Through an analysis of the *Seep-Seem* score, retrograded movement emerges as a method for moving-with the unfamiliarity of nightfall’s darkening. Retrograding is here developed into “re-turning” in which the kinaesthetic understanding of a site is turned over in its re-encountering, becoming a means of sustaining the more-than-human, more-than-visual kinship that is forged through movement. CLUSTERING therefore demonstrates that it is through the durational darkening of nightfall that the concepts of making-kin and composting are made felt as lived processes of engagement. A noctographic practice makes evident that these processes exist in the excess of the visual, and are fundamentally kinaesthetic articulations of more-than-human relatedness.

The findings of this practice articulate a kinaesthetic understanding of nightfall. They forge new frameworks, concepts and practices that can be utilised in the development of a night-specific performance. The following section articulates such a process, demonstrating how the findings from a noctographic practice can be

articulated choreographically and, in doing so, made to resonate with a participating audience.

## SECTION THREE

### ON THE PATTERNS WE GAZE: CREATING A NIGHT-SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE



Figure 51: Grubbins Wood. Astronomical twilight on the lower path. Image: Jonny Randall

## INTRODUCTION

Drawing on examples from my choreographic work, *On The Patterns We Gaze* (2019)<sup>168</sup>, this third section of my thesis will address how the kinaesthetic experiences of the workshops can be made tangible to a participating audience through a night-specific performance. This thesis has so far analysed the noctographic movement scores individually: crucially, however, in the making of *Patterns* the findings of these scores came together to shape the choreographic process. As a result, this section seeks to not only describe the work as a whole but also demonstrate how the findings of the scores can correlate in the structuring and creation of a time-specific performance work. In shifting from the improvised, score-based approach of the workshops to the choreographed performance of *Patterns*, this research draws upon the kinaesthetic experiences within the workshops to generate a structured patterning of movement that correlates with the duration of nightfall within the wood. This approach enables *Patterns* to function in two ways: firstly, as a choreography that makes palpable a kinaesthetic encounter with nightfall to the participating audience, and secondly as a continuation and development of the noctographic practice, offering the performers a movement structure – not unlike the scores of the workshop – through which to encounter and re-encounter the wood at nightfall, performing both with and for its more-than-human inhabitants. The choreography of *Patterns* therefore created a composition through which the particular duration of the wood’s nightfall is encountered, with the time-specific precision of each section working to draw attention to particular shifts in the perception of distance, sounds, forms and ground (an approach which a looser, more improvised structure would be less likely to enable). To approach how *Patterns* achieves this, this section is divided into three short sections which each address the application of an aspect of the noctographic practice to the creation and performance of *Patterns*. NIGHT’S SPATIALITY observes how the performance structure of *Patterns* evoked night as a liquid, spatial entity. NIGHT’S HORIZONTALITY discerns how the work encouraged a recognition of the more-than-human nightscape. Finally, NIGHT’S RE-TURNING observes how the seeping, seeming capacity of night is made felt to the participating audience. The ideas and key

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<sup>168</sup> The work will here on be referred to as “*Patterns*”.

elements that emerge from this discussion are then gathered in a short summary that closes this section.

To support the reading of this analysis, this section opens with two evocations of the performance. The first is a hand-drawn map (fig. 52) that illustrates the audiences' journey through the wood. The map shows the circular pathway, seating, and choreographic structures. Second is a written description of the performance (fig. 53) which gives further information on the unfolding of the choreography and evokes a sense of the more-than-human encounters taking place in the wood at twilight. Additionally, a short film of the work accompanies this written thesis and can be referred to for the reading of this section<sup>169</sup>.

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<sup>169</sup> At the time of writing, this film can be accessed online through the following link: <https://vimeo.com/352720897/6088154a1c>.

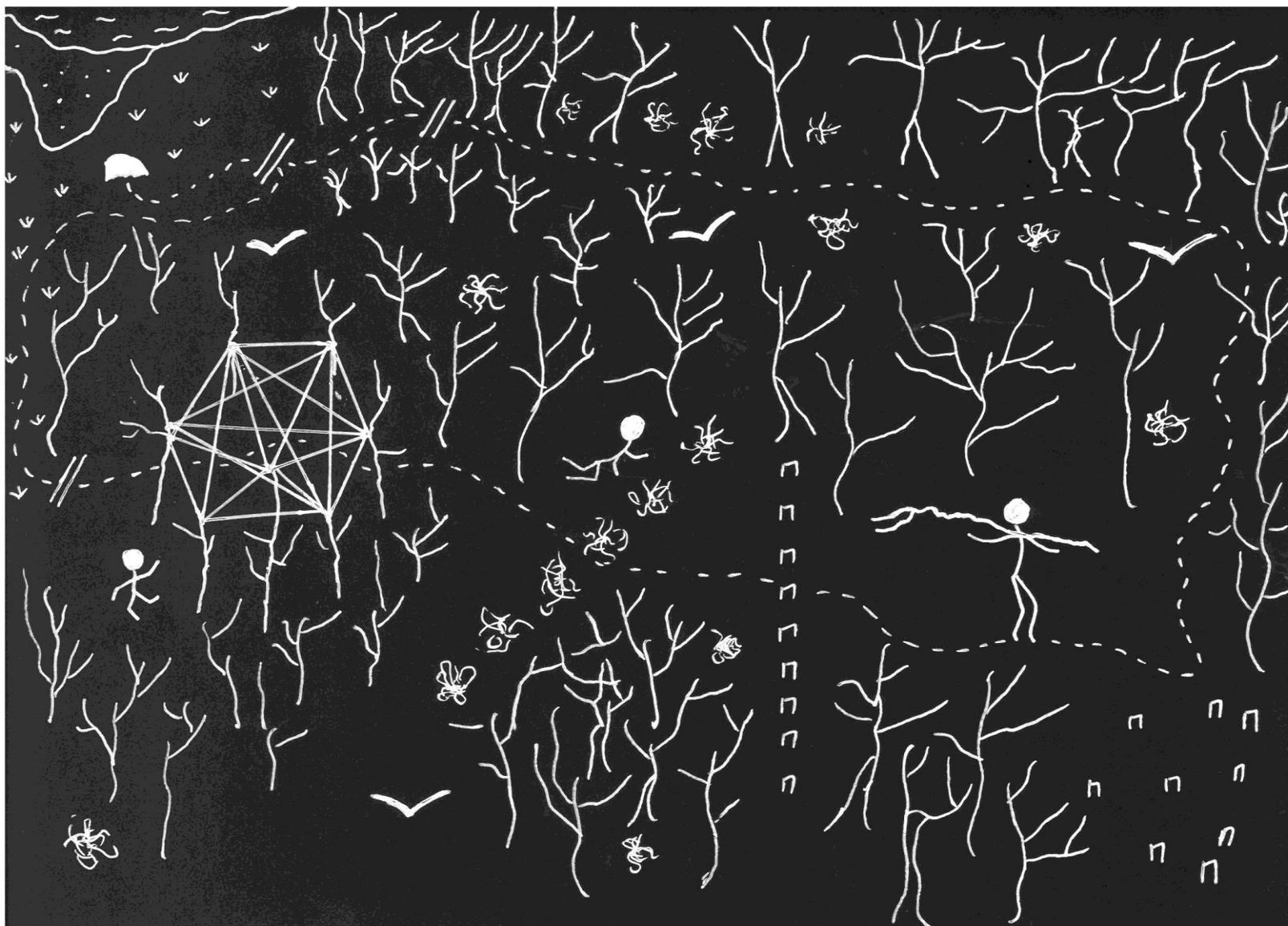


Figure 52: Hand-drawn map of Grubbins Wood, showing the looping pathway of the audience's journey and the choreographic structures of *On the Patterns we Gaze* (2019).

We gather together on the saltmarsh  
 It is early evening, the sun not yet set  
 I talk a while. I ask that we do not use artificial light  
 A large rock marks the beginning of our journey  
 We pass through a gate  
 We are soon immersed within the trees  
 We pass through a second gate. We gather and pause  
 The not-yet twilight we have left on the saltmarsh  
 As I speak, the birds speak too  
 We follow the path's meandering as it journeys between the trees  
 We walk slowly, pacing the length of the wood  
 The path becomes a steep descent, joining the lower path  
 We come to rest on mossy rocks and logs at the side of the path  
 The first section of choreography has already begun  
 A solo dancer (Aimee Williamson) dressed in white  
 Her movement is a turning-wandering  
 Bearing the weight of the branch, she lowers to the ground  
 The branch appears to be still  
 Aimee adjusts one limb at a time, her human frame  
 The birds are still speaking, telling us something  
 Aimee stands, branch balancing, and together  
 They repeat their lowering duet once more, this time  
 I hear the scrape of Aimee's feet against the earth  
 Again they stand, again they wander. Slowly  
 We sit a while with the wood, before continuing  
 The lower path curves, then reaches ahead of us  
 A row of sliced tree trunks cut across the path  
 Six clusters of branches  
 The furthest barely perceptible in the wood's darkening  
 Unseen, dancer Lucy Starkey leans  
 Her fall becomes a coil  
 She meets a nest  
 She repeats the movement six times, six nests  
 As she rolls, the earth muddies, the earth  
 Eventually she stands, beginning a sequence  
 slowly, slowly approaching the human audience  
 She arrives again at the first nest  
 She begins again her tumbling  
 We listen  
 In the distance, Aimee and the branch re-appear  
 Their turning-wandering passes through the line of audience  
 In the far, far distance, a third dancer is in motion  
 We pass around Lucy, encompassing her movement with our own  
 The third dancer, Jenny Reeves, is performing  
 She weaves in and around a small circle of trees. Above, a meshwork  
 Jenny's eyes follow the string above  
 We move to stand amongst the trees, her movement taking her  
 The string and her all-white costume glows  
 making visible patterns  
 Jenny's movement is a sustained state of flow  
 We stay a while. Then we pull away  
 The yews are dense and the dark of their canopy far-reaching  
 We pass through a gate, out into the lighter hues of the field  
 We gather once again by the large rock, marking the end of our journey

*a long horizon, looking out over the Kent estuary  
 noisy seabirds feeding in the shallows of the water  
 I ask that we do not speak  
 we set off, walking. A slow and gentle pace  
 we follow a thin, meandering path into the wood  
 the yews are prominent, dense in the spring-bareness  
 I speak of the twilights in the wood  
 and the already-twilight that endarkens the wood  
 we listen, we walk, we follow the middle path  
 we pass clusters of branches, fallen trunks  
 the birds are speaking  
 deep-set in the ridges of the wood's earth  
 we sit and we listen  
 unseen  
 balancing a long branch across one shoulder  
 slowly approaching the seated audience  
 arriving together in a horizontal position  
 but un-still  
 mirroring the branch in how it touches the ground  
 high up and far away, of the wood's distances  
 they continue their turning-wandering journey  
 closer to the audience  
 her eyes tracing the curve of the branch  
 they leave our sight  
 our journey  
 a long straight trajectory  
 little seats on which we rest  
 overgrown nests lie across the path on a diagonal line  
 it is much quieter here  
 against the solid trunk of a yew tree  
 tumbling down the sloping ridge that lines the path  
 she pauses, stands, turns, back up the hill  
 with each tumble she recedes, and blurs  
 dulls her once all-white costume  
 choreography that weaves between the nests  
 keeping pace with the wood's darkening  
 she pauses, stands, turns, back up the hill  
 disappearing from sight after the fourth nest  
 a soft rolling impact with the earth  
 moving closer  
 the branch skimming above them  
 we continue our journey, moving towards  
 slowly, we move towards a clearing  
 a retrograding ditty  
 string connecting each tree to each other  
 her feet the ground below  
 towards and away, through and around  
 in the wood's almost-dark  
 of more-than-human entanglements  
 continuing through astronomical twilight  
 moving slowly along the path  
 the birds are silent now  
 and the saltmarsh beyond  
 night continues to fall, going and ongoing*

Fig. 53: Description of *On the Patterns We Gaze*, taking place in Grubbins Wood, March 2019.

## NIGHT'S SPATIALITY

Working with the concept of “night-tide” that arose through a practising of *The Dappling Score*, the journey taken through Grubbins Wood was structured by considering the site’s darkness as a spatial encounter: one comprising of varying depths and densities into which it is possible to gently wade and become submerged. Journeying from the lightness of the estuary into the dark of the wood (fig. 52; fig. 53), the audience are submerged into the density of a yew-darkened twilight as they follow the choreography along the lowest path in the wood, before emerging into the shallow light of the estuary once more<sup>170</sup>. The audiences’ reflections on their experiences<sup>171</sup> are evocative of the night-tide that arose in my practice, describing feelings of “flow”, “expanse” and “abandonment” whilst observing the “light-dark-grey-black-swirling-twirling” of the nightscape, and “the dancers emerging from the depths of the dark”<sup>172</sup> (fig. 54).



Figure 54: “the dancers emerging from the depths of the dark”.  
Dancer: Jenny Reeves. Image: Rebecca Richards

<sup>170</sup> By taking the audience on a journey through the site that lasts the duration of nightfall, *Patterns* shares an immersive experience of nightfall through which darkness is experienced as spatial as much as temporal. This differs from Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker’s *En Atendant* (2010) and *Cesena* (2011) where the seated audience experience the gradual darkening of nightfall as a durational adjustment rather than a spatial one.

<sup>171</sup> See APPENDIX (11) for examples of audiences’ on-site written reflections.

<sup>172</sup> This description of a visual emerging from darkness makes the work comparable to the Nocturnes of Whistler and Rothko, as discussed in SECTION ONE: SIMMER-DIM, in which the details of the works gradually reveal themselves to the adjusting eye.

These fluid, ongoing qualities of the night-tide were also embodied through the co-current seeping of one choreographic section into one another, mimicking the process of twilight itself. To do so, the choreography of *Patterns* flowed through the kinaesthetic articulation of nightfall established in *The Dappling Score*, embodying the dynamic colourings, reachings and “lines of force” (Merleau-Ponty, 1964: 15) made tangible through the wood’s darkening. Like nightfall, the choreography began before the audience could visually perceive it and continued long after they had left the site, creating a motional night-nest that is “never finished” (Bachelard, 2014: 124) and mirroring twilight’s own leaking into night. In this way, *Patterns* makes felt the “sensuous trajectories” (Handelman, 2005: 248) of night’s darkness, one whose “tactility flows around us like waters of the sea depth” (ibid.: 254). As a result, the choreography of *Patterns* accentuates that the coming of the wood’s dark is not a sudden, noticeable difference<sup>173</sup> but rather a shifting, sliding towards night. In addressing the darkening of the site as an ongoing “night-tide”, *Patterns* demonstrates how an alternative understanding of night’s darkness enables a new choreographic approach to time-specific performance to arise: one which recognises the site-specificity of what has otherwise been generally perceived as a purely time-based phenomena.

## NIGHT’S HORIZONTALIZING

Whilst the journey through the site is structured according to the “night-tide” of *Dappling*, the audiences experience of each section is additionally shaped by the “horizontalizing” that arose in the *Lines of Descent* score. Within each section, the audience’s viewing point – either seated or standing – is structured in relation to the more-than-human environment. By being seated off the path and in the foliage of the wood, or stood interspersed amongst a circle of trees, the human performers do not remain in the centre of the audience’s vision. Instead they move in and out, passing by and moving away, so that the audience – in losing the visual sight of the human performer – are able to transfer their attentions instead to more-than-visual senses, and more-than-human movement. Essentially, *Patterns* embraces Bennett’s

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<sup>173</sup> In this way, the work contrasts to Rosemary Lee’s *Circadian* (2019), as discussed in SECTION ONE: SIMMER-DIM. It, too, makes felt night’s passing but depends upon a clock-timed structure throughout the night, the forty-five-minute break between each re-iteration of the choreography making tangible the altered level of darkness between one performance and the next.

assertion that “to begin to *experience* the relationship between persons and other materialities more horizontally, is to take a step toward a more ecological sensibility” (2010: 10). *Patterns* is specifically structured to enable such a sensibility to arise: the first half of the audience’s journey through the wood involves no human performers (fig. 52; fig. 53) and, whilst each choreographic section is ongoing, it does not always occur in the same time or space as the audience. As a result, *Patterns* gives space for the audience’s attunement to the more-than-human doings at nightfall: audience members describe the “fox bark”, “owl hoot”, “rustling of leaves”, “wild garlic”, “twigs snapping” – just a few of the many observations of the more-than-human that scatter their descriptions of the performance. They attest to how this structure of horizontalizing “draws human attention sideways” (ibid.: 112), encouraging the audience to experience the performance as being “caught up” (Ingold, 2015: 49) with the wood, just one part of the larger event of its nightfall.

In turn, their own observations are entangled amongst the multitudes of height, depth and scale that comprise the more-than-human perspectives of the darkening wood – as one audience member describes, “I never want to speak again. There are so many other voices.” In embodying the concept of horizontalizing, it was essential that *Patterns* gave space to these more-than-human perspectives: to be as non-hierarchical in who it moves *for*, as it is non-hierarchical in who it moves *with*<sup>174</sup>. To enable this to happen, *Patterns* gave four consecutive performances, with a human audience invited to attend only the second and fourth. The structure and choreographic iteration of the work remained the same, but by absenting a human audience completely from half of the performances, *Patterns* acknowledged the continuing presence and witnessing of a more-than-human audience in each of its re-doings. The dancers described these performances for the more-than-human as “intense” experiences for an “infinite” audience, “giving all that I have and became all that I am for the wood”. In this way, *Patterns* not only attended to the wood’s more-than-human capacity for perception, but equally sought to make-felt the “so many other voices” that perceive and speak of our doings in more-than-human ways<sup>175</sup>.

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<sup>174</sup> This approach is attuned to Tuija Kokkonen’s recognition of the performative role of the more-than-human, as discussed in footnote 93, SECTION ONE: SIMMER-DIM.

<sup>175</sup> It is significant to note that whereas Simon Whitehead’s work uses a participatory approach to make felt the more-than-human night-time presence (as discussed in SECTION ONE: SIMMER-DIM), it can be argued that such an approach nevertheless places human experience at the centre of the work. By considering ways of performing *with* and *for* the more-than-human – by considering the capacity for a more-than-human observation and

## NIGHT'S RE-TURNING

If horizontalizing is used to draw attention to the more-than-human, the motion of “re-turning” is utilised to make felt nightfall’s capacity to seep and to seem. Embodying the notion that arose in *Lines* that a falling-with night is also a turning-with night, each dancer is engaged in rotation – in motions of “spirals”, “slow turning” and “rolling”<sup>176</sup>. These coiling motions enable a continual re-encountering to take place between the bodies, surfaces and materialities of the wood. Working with the findings from the scores, *Patterns* uses the notion of the re-turn to create a structure through which the dancers are able to continue with a practice of sustaining night-kin. Each section is structured as a continuous loop so that – as with the workshops – the dancers re-encounter through their movement nightfall’s differencing over the course of one evening, one week, one month. It therefore becomes possible to view each dancer’s passing rotation as an echo – on a miniature scale – of the re-encountering experienced in their nightly re-turns to the wood<sup>177</sup>.



Figure 55: The long, spiralling pathway of civil twilight.  
Dancer: Aimee Williamson. Image: Rebecca Richards

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awareness of movement – *Patterns* develops a trajectory of night-time choreography in which human perception and motion are de-centred, and hierarchies are dismantled.

<sup>176</sup> As described by an audience member in their written reflection.

<sup>177</sup> Essentially, the performances of *Patterns* act as continuations of the noctographic practice begun in the workshops, involving a continual returning to the wood at dusk to move throughout the period of nightfall for a series of consecutive evenings.

Each of the dancers' rotations travel along looping, continuing pathways that intersect with the audiences' own circular trajectory. As a result, both dancers and audience are engaged in a motion of moving "towards, away and around"<sup>178</sup> each other, causing an almost continual shift in distance that, at nightfall, becomes a continual shift in perception. As the site darkens, the dancers' alteration of distance becomes a means of suggesting and negating presence, making felt to the audience the "blurredly blur"<sup>179</sup> of nightfall and attesting to that which exists in the "excess of the seeable" (Manning and de Zegher, 2011: 5). To emphasise this, the shifts in distance between dancer and audience are choreographed according to the site's gradual darkening, so that the length of the dancer's pathways reflect the perception of distance available: the looping of the first dancer's movement takes half of the wood (fig. 55), the second the length of the path, the third just a cluster of trees. By structuring the performance according to nightfall's shifting perceptions, the experiences of "distance rendered gradual obscurity", "changing long distance to short", that were encountered in the workshops are here made tangible to the observing audience through the shifting distances of the dancer's motion. As a result, the audience perceive figures that are seeming in their presence – "like ghosts", "eerie", "ethereal shapes" – but also, in the darkening, they perceive that which is more-than actual – "was the dancer in the distance real?"; "the light playing tricks"; "I wasn't sure whether I could see a dancer or whether my mind was 'filling' the gaps". Effectively, the dancers' motion corresponds with nightfall's darkening to "make felt how form is never quite what it seems" (Manning and de Zegher, 2011: 1). In the towards and away of their rotating motion, the seeping-seeming capacity of nightfall that is kinaesthetically felt by the dancers is hereby made perceptible – and tangible – to the observing audience<sup>180</sup>.

Finally, the use of costume is also significant in how *Patterns* addressed the seeping qualities of nightfall. In the wood, the deep furrows of the path meant that the dancer's form was rarely silhouetted at human eye level – instead, nightfall's darkening sees their figures blur and merge into the thick density of earth and trees.

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<sup>178</sup> As described by an audience member in their written reflection.

<sup>179</sup> As described by a workshop participant, as featured in SECTION TWO: WADING.

<sup>180</sup> In contrast, the rotating motions in Rosemary Lee's *Circadian* (2019) take place mostly on the spot, and in a marked staging area with the audience seated around, so that the dancer's motion never seeps into the night or becomes perceptually altered by changes in distance.

Using all-white costumes, *Patterns* prolongs and choreographs this process, again making visually perceptible the seeping and merging that the dancers kinaesthetically experience<sup>181</sup>. As a result, the re-encounterings with the materialities, surfaces and textures of the wood seep and spill into the dancers' movement and is here relayed visually through the gradual muddying and smudging of their costumes (fig. 56). This process suggests a dialogue to exist between the dancer and the wood by which they “compose and decompose each other” (Haraway, 2016: 97) through movement. In the wood's darkening, their “mudpainted limbs”<sup>182</sup> describe a motional becoming-with nightfall, telling something of the traces they carry.



Figure 56: the gradual muddying and smudging of their costumes.  
Dancer: Lucy Starkey. Image: Rebecca Richards.

<sup>181</sup> This approach is comparable to De Keersmaeker's *En Atendant* (2010) where, as discussed in SECTION ONE: SIMMER-DIM, the naked white skin of the dancer's prolongs their visibility as night darkens.

<sup>182</sup> As described by an audience member in their written reflection.

## SUMMARY



Figure 57: Extract from audience member's post-performance reflective writings, March 2019.

This section has demonstrated how concepts that arose within the noctographic movement practice can be used to structure and choreograph a night-specific performance work. In doing so, these concepts create an alternative experience of nightfall. As this section has evidenced, through the application of these concepts choreographically the audience can become attuned to some of those experiences of nightfall that arose during the workshops. For instance: structuring the performance as if the site were a night tide has enabled experiences of flow and a recognition of night's spatiality to emerge. Meanwhile, the use of horizontalizing to give space and time to the more-than-human presence in the performance enabled the audience to both enjoy and give attention to that presence whilst considering their own entangled relationship to the site. Finally, the use of the re-turn not only enabled – as intended – the performers to continue with their practice of sustaining night-kin, but through the fluctuation of distance and proximity made perceptible nightfall's capacity to seep, to seem, and to hint towards the material and kinaesthetic exchange that takes place between moving bodies.

By engaging with these concepts that arose in the noctographic practice, it was possible to structure *Patterns* in such a way that was not only attuned to the place-specific possibilities of the darkening site but also moved the audience in such a way that made it possible for them to share in something of the experiences that had arisen in the practice. For instance, some reflected that it seemed as if the dancers' motion was the "bringing" of twilight – "turns bringing twilight down around us"; "I think they live in the wood, they must be here every night bringing in the darkness" – whilst others reflected that the slowness of the choreography enabled a tuning-in to the wood's darkening environment: "heightening our senses as the night wore on";

“perfectly paced to bring the audience in tune with the rhythms of the wood and its animals and trees”, “time felt like it was stretched, elongated”. These reflections illustrate how the choreography of *Patterns* kinaesthetically made-felt the passing of nightfall. By responding and attuning to the place-specificity of its darkening, the performance afforded the opportunity for the live audience to also attune to – and notice – the place-specific qualities of the nightfall in which they were a part.

Essentially, utilising these concepts choreographically enabled the audience to perceive correlations to the dancer’s kinaesthetic experiences of nightfall. In this way, *Patterns* demonstrates how concepts that have arisen from a choreological analysis of the practice can then be employed as noctographic “tools” in the creation of a night-specific choreographic work. These tools combine to make felt the motional quality of nightfall: the “beautiful hardship” by which we are “slowed into knowing” of “movement patterns outside of my reach”, and beyond our visual perception<sup>183</sup>. The employment of these tools evidences the capacity for moving-with nightfall as a means of becoming-with nightfall to be made tangible to those that sensorially engage with nightfall’s darkening by means of wandering, watching and wondering. They, too, are entangled within the noctographic: their movement is a part of the patterning that is both the choreographed performance and the larger event of the motional quality of the wood’s nightfall.

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<sup>183</sup> Audience member’s written reflection, quoted in full at the beginning of this sub-section.

# CONCLUSION

## OVERVIEW

The aim of this closing section is to examine the new understandings of nightfall and movement that have arisen through this artistic research. This section will examine what these new understandings contribute in terms of practice, methodology and theory. In responding directly to the aims and trajectories outlined at the beginning of this thesis<sup>184</sup>, this conclusion mirrors the structure of the introduction and is divided into three sections. The first section, **CONSTELLATIONS**, examines the entanglement of the methodological, theoretical and practice-based contributions to knowledge of this artistic research. It draws upon a diagram – or “constellation” – to illustrate the new understandings and structures that it describes. This is followed by **RESEARCH OUTCOMES** which summarises the new findings and potential impacts of the whole research project. Finally, **A NOCTOGRAPHIC PRACTICE**, describes future developments of the practice and the potential structure they will take.

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<sup>184</sup> See **RESEARCH QUESTIONS** in the main **INTRODUCTION**.

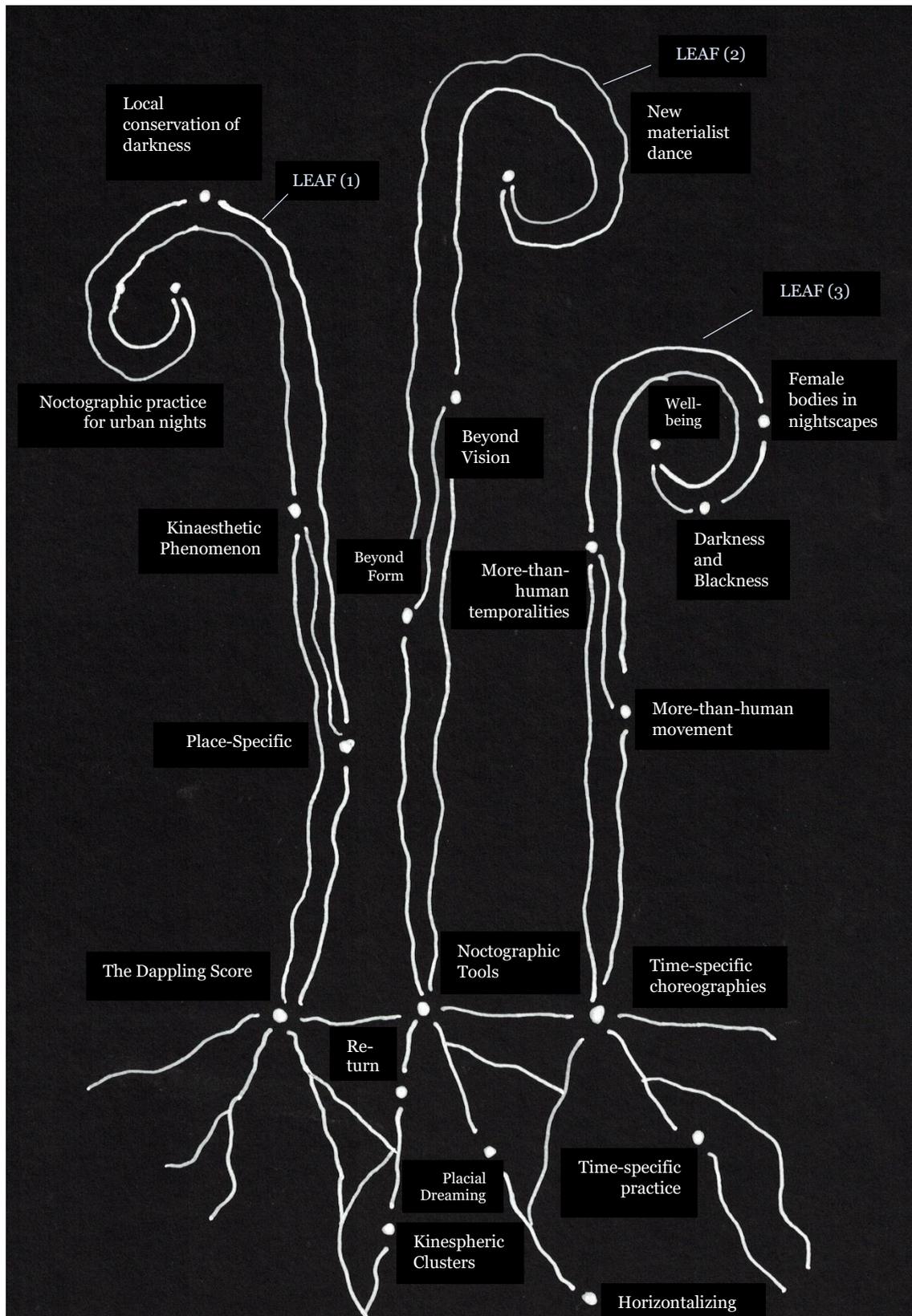


Figure 58: "Constellation C" in the shape of Hart's-Tongue Fern. Hand-drawn diagram mapping the outcomes of this artistic research. In reading the diagram, it is possible to view each leaf as a trajectory: the "roots" outline new elements of practice, the "stems" outline new concepts and understandings that have arisen through the practice, and the "curls" outline potential future developments of this artistic research.

## CONSTELLATIONS

This sub-section examines the relationship between the methodological, theoretical and practice-based contributions to knowledge that this artistic research has generated. In doing so, it draws upon the above hand-drawn diagram, “Constellation C” (fig. 58)<sup>185</sup>. Essentially, this section responds to the approaches outlined in its sister section, the “CONSTELLATIONS” of the introduction, and considers what has emerged and altered through the course of the research. Whereas the introduction analysed methodology and theoretical frameworks separately, here they are brought together to articulate how they have facilitated the emergence of a new, noctographic movement practice, and new understandings of movement and nightfall. Therefore, in analysing the contents of “Constellation C”, this section is divided according to the three “leaves” of the diagram, which each span elements of theory, methodology and practice. LEAF (1) evidences how the phenomenological approach of *The Dappling Score* led to this research’s understanding of nightfall as a place-specific, kinaesthetic phenomena. This is followed by LEAF (2) which evidences how the combination of choreological studies and new materialism led to the development of “noctographic tools”, which enable this research to articulate an understanding of both nightfall and movement as being beyond-form and beyond-vision<sup>186</sup>. Finally, LEAF (3) evidences this research’s understanding of movement as “more-than-human” through the emergence of a time-specific practice that engages with more-than-human temporalities. Each section closes by considering the potential future impacts of these findings.

### CONSTELLATION C: LEAF (1)

In the introduction to this thesis, I outlined the emergence of this noctographic practice as (i) a site-specific engagement with nightfall that (ii) began with the premise of the three-stages of twilight. This section details how this particular approach has enabled new understandings of the relationship between nightfall and movement to emerge.

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<sup>185</sup> “Constellation C” takes the form of Hart’s-Tongue Fern, and therefore follows the constellations featured in the INTRODUCTION in taking the shape of a species that is prevalent within Grubbins Wood.

<sup>186</sup> See GLOSSARY OF TERMS for definitions of the terms “beyond-form” and “beyond-vision”.

This noctographic practice has generated movement scores which effectively chronicle nightfall's darkening through an immersive, kinaesthetic process. They offer an embodied understanding of nightfall's duration, a moving-with that recognises the place-specific fluctuations of its darkening. In doing so, these scores evidence a kinaesthetic understanding of nightfall that recognises the quality and duration of its darkening to be far more complex than the three-stage model of twilight would otherwise suggest. Whereas the latter is usually portrayed as a diagram (Bikos and Kher, 2020) which communicates – visually and immediately – a simplified understanding of nightfall's twilights, this noctographic movement practice requires a durational, lived engagement which produces an embodied knowledge not of a generalised nightfall but of the place-specific fluctuations that comprise it. It is through the lived, bodily encounter of moving-with nightfall that this practice encourages a sustained relationship with nightfall that is predicated upon a valuing of night-time darkness as place-specific. In doing so, this research demonstrates a movement-based practice to be not only a valid method of enquiry into nightfall, but a necessary one.

Through its application of choreological analysis this research demonstrates a kinaesthetic entanglement to exist between nightfall's place-specific darkening and human bodies in motion, making it possible to comprehend nightfall as a kinaesthetic phenomenon. A kinaesthetic phenomenon whose processual darkening is articulated as – and through – movement. This new understanding of nightfall is made particularly evident through the analysis of *The Dappling Score* in WADING. Through an analysis of choreutic units (spatial projections, tensions and designs) and their manner of materialisation, it becomes possible to generate an embodied awareness of the shifting quality of nightfall and its place-specific duration. In doing so, this practice articulates nightfall as a kinaesthetic process, one that is made tangible through embodied, haptic and kinaesthetic encounters.

However, it is also through a phenomenological approach that this particular understanding of nightfall is reached: WADING draws upon Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological analysis of Cezanne's artwork (1964) to articulate perceptual shifts, and Don Handelman's notion of liquid darkness (2005) to articulate nightfall

as a “tide”, a spatial, place-specific encounter. Therefore, whilst – undoubtedly – the new knowledge that emerges through the practising of other movement scores also contributes to an understanding of nightfall as a place-specific, kinaesthetic phenomenon (such as GROUNDING’s notion of the dancer’s movement being “caught up” in the movement of the darkening site, and FIGURING’s concept of nightfall as a “motion of materialities”), the phenomenological, choreutic analysis of *The Dappling Score* in WADING lays the foundation for this practice by establishing a kinaesthetic understanding of nightfall’s duration. In this way, a phenomenological approach has informed this research to a greater degree than first anticipated. The INTRODUCTION of this thesis describes the theoretical framework as “shifting” from a phenomenological perspective towards one of new materialism, whereas – as LEAF (1) illustrates in “Constellation C” (fig. 58) – phenomenology has not simply formed a point of departure for this research but has been essential in generating new understandings of nightfall. This research, therefore, demonstrates how working with new materialist structures does not necessarily dismiss the embodied, haptic knowledge generated through a phenomenological approach but can instead explore – and forge – the kinaesthetic relations between the two theoretical frameworks, and carry phenomenological encounters into new, more-than-human forms of relatedness<sup>187</sup>.

Before closing this section, it is necessary to consider the potential impact of these findings and what they contribute to a potential re-valuing of night-time darkness (Dunn, 2020). Firstly, in taking into account the place-specific kinaesthetic understandings of nightfall that this practice has generated, this research asserts the imperative for a localised valuing of night-time darkness, one that scatters beyond the Dark Sky Parks<sup>188</sup> to enable not only the possibility of a regular encountering of darkness (for both humans and more-than-humans) but a recognition of the place-specific qualities that makes the darkness of all night-places worth conserving. Through its place-specific approach, this noctographic practice asserts that “Dark

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<sup>187</sup> Notably, in their recent publication (*Re)Positioning Site Dance* (2019), Barbour, Hunter and Kloetzel cite the importance of both phenomenology and new materialism in exploring ecological, embodied practices (ibid.: 11-12), and the works included in this publication similarly span both phenomenological and new materialist approaches to dance. In performance scenography, Joslin McKinney (2015) also spans the two fields, employing the ideas of Bennett, Merleau-Ponty and Ingold, whilst Sondra Fraleigh’s work “cross-pollinates” strands of phenomenology with dance and ecology (Fraleigh and Bingham, 2018: 7). This research is, therefore, reflective of current dialogues and developments in this area.

<sup>188</sup> For more information, see the International Dark Sky Association, [www.darksky.org/](http://www.darksky.org/).

skies have value” (Dunn, 2020) by cultivating a local environmentalism whereby it is not simply the general – or abstract – notion of night that is cared for and protected but a local, place-specific darkness that is accessible to the human and more-than-human communities of that place. Through its place-specific valuing of night-time darkness, future developments of this practice therefore have the potential to shift towards more urban environments to develop a local valuing of night. Doing so would enable this practice to align more closely with work exploring encounters with urban darkness, such as that of Nick Dunn (2016; 2020) and Tim Edensor (2017; 2020), and the artworks and performance works examined in OVERSPILL (SECTION ONE of this thesis). In this way, there is the potential to build upon the findings of this research to further establish a noctographic practice that kinaesthetically articulates the difference between the going-dark of rural nightfall and the growing-haze of urban edgelands.

Intrinsic to this understanding of a place-specific conservation of night is this research practice’s understanding of darkness as a substance: as a phenomenon that seems liquid in its seeping, fluid capacity. To regard night in this way enables comparisons of its accessibility and its pollution to those of air and water (Watts, 2020): substances whose quality is measured and sought to be improved as a necessity to the (human) habitability of a place. Treating darkness as such would support an increased and frequent access to night and the more-than-visual encounters it enables. In this way, a place-specific acknowledgement of nightfall is intrinsic to making darkness accessible to both human and more-than-human beings – regardless of whether their moving-with darkness is a nocturnal-living or simply a nocturnal-doing. By encouraging a place-specific care of night’s darkness, this practice contributes not only to the preservation but to the flourishing of those more-than-human nocturnal worlds that exist not only in the national parks or wildernesses but in the nocturnal edgelands of human habitation.

#### CONSTELLATION C: LEAF (2)

This section examines this research’s understanding of an entangled relationship between nightfall and movement whereby each evidences the other as being both beyond-form and beyond-vision. Intrinsic to the emergence of these understandings

are the ways in which this research has challenged and developed choreological studies through a new materialist framework.

Through their application within this artistic research, choreological movement principles have been removed to an outdoor, night-time environment and utilised to understand movement as a more-than-human and more-than-visual phenomenon. Doing so has directly challenged choreology's approach which places the human body at the centre of the movement it analyses (Laban, 1966: 19) and which relies predominantly on visual perception in the process of that analysis. By shifting choreology in this way, this practice has demonstrated how choreology can be facilitated to produce the new movement structures that are necessary to the development of a night-specific practice. However, it is by aligning choreological movement principles with new materialist thought that this artistic research has made such a development possible. SECTION TWO of this thesis chronicles the development of "noctographic tools"<sup>189</sup>, ones that are choreological in their structure, noctographic in their application and new materialist in their approach. Here, I outline those tools that have arisen in the practice and detail how they challenge choreology using a new materialist approach.

Firstly, "horizontalizing" draws upon Bennett's dismantling of hierarchies (Bennett, 2010) to acknowledge how more-than-human bodies and surfaces shape the movement that is (co-)created. Whereas Laban attributes movement of the human body to "the inner impulse of a mysterious autonomic will" (1966: 18) and places the human body in the centre of his movement structures (ibid.: 19)<sup>190</sup>, horizontalizing de-centres the notion of who or what generates the movement of the human body. Likewise, the notion of "kinespheric clusters" that this research has produced shifts the structure of the kinesphere to encompass not only – and not, necessarily, entirely – the human body, but instead creates a shared spatial structure of relatedness between human and more-than-human bodies and surfaces. This relatedness is not predicated on touch or proximity (as it is in choreology)<sup>191</sup> but rather, as a noctographic tool, acknowledges a more-than-visual entanglement and exchange to

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<sup>189</sup> See GLOSSARY OF TERMS.

<sup>190</sup> This exploration of geometric structure through the central placement of the (male) human body makes Laban's approach comparable to Leonardo Da Vinci's *Vetruvian Man* (1490) (see Laban, 1966: 19).

<sup>191</sup> For Laban, cross-overs between kinespheres can only occur through touch or proximity (Laban, 1966).

exist in the spaces in-between. Similarly, the noctographic tool “placial dreaming” that has emerged through this practice builds upon the choreological principle of spatial imagination to assert a more-than-visual “imagining-with” that is predicated upon an embodied exchange through – and with – place. Finally, a noctographic exploration of the choreological principle of retrograding has led to the development of the notion of “re-turning”: through the new materialist understanding of “composting” (Haraway, 2016) re-turning acknowledges how movement carries the experiences of encounters, and mulches those encounters together with new ones through its re-iteration. The re-turn of a noctographic practice does not endeavour to fix movement patterns in place (as a choreological retrograde in general-space does)<sup>192</sup> but rather to move-with the unfamiliarity of nightfall’s darkening.

These noctographic tools asserts movement to be beyond-form in its capacity to be co-formed by (and entangled with) the more-than-human night-time environment with which the human body moves, and beyond-vision in their recognition of nightfall as a kinaesthetic entanglement of motion that is not only – and not always – seen, but is necessitated by the dark to be felt, imagined and sensorially encountered. Through an embodied engagement with nightfall’s darkening, more-than-visual entanglements are made tangible, redefining “human movement” as being always – and already – more-than-human movement. These noctographic tools are supported in their findings by other concepts that have emerged through this research, such as WADING’s articulation of moving-with nightfall as the “blurredly blur” by which forms “become sketches of themselves”, and CLUSTERING’s application of Manning’s “excess” and “more-than” to the shadow-body of nightfall<sup>193</sup>. Of course, the more-than-visual entanglements and more-than-human relations that this practice reveals to constitute place are not specific to night: rather, it is by moving-with a night-time darkness that they become encounterable, imaginable, perceivable and felt. Therefore, it is not simply that in losing night-time darkness to light pollution (Bogard, 2014; Koslofsky, 2011; Melbin, 1978) that we lose our capacity to understand it; rather, by losing night-time darkness we lose the more-than-visual

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<sup>192</sup> A discussion of how the choreological retrograde is altered by a noctographic movement practice is detailed in SECTION TWO: CLUSTERING.

<sup>193</sup> See SECTION TWO: CONCLUSION for further detail of the outcomes of this noctographic practice.

ways of understanding the more-than-human world, ways that are valid beyond the dark but which are intangible without it.

Before closing this section, it is essential to note how the development of these noctographic tools demonstrates the potential for choreology to be compatible with a new materialist approach to movement: to engage with concepts such as meshworks, string figures, and making-kin. In taking new materialism off the page, dance offers new forms of knowledge that are rooted precisely in the motional exchange that new materialism seeks to articulate<sup>194</sup>. This artistic research demonstrates how choreology, in particular, offers emerging dance practices that engage with new materialism the possibility to move beyond simply validating the new materialist structures that already exist, and to instead formulate their own terms and structures that are grounded in the temporal-spatial kinaesthesia that defines them. Whilst examples of this exist within this practice in the new terms and movement tools it has developed – such as “kinespheric clusters”, “placial dreaming” – they also exist in the methodology of this research, in the structure of its “constellation” diagrams. This artistic research has used these constellation-diagrams to not only detail the entangled relationship of theory, practice and methodology that forms its structure, but also to chart how they shift through the emergence of the new knowledge that this research generates. In this way, the constellations themselves score the process of the research: in this, they are not dissimilar to the Structural Model and Effort Graph in that they articulate how different aspects of the research relate to one another and converge in unexpected ways. Such tools and structures – such as those that this noctographic practice has developed – are valid contributions to the growing vocabulary of new materialism<sup>195</sup> and demonstrates the capacity for movement practices to establish themselves as intrinsic to this field of theory through the embodied, kinaesthetic knowledges that they produce. Notably, it is through the porous structure of the field of artistic research that such a process has been made possible: rather than requiring a pre-determined methodology, the field

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<sup>194</sup> This research therefore contributes to an emerging field of new materialist dance, which includes works such as Vanessa Grasse’s *MESH* (2017) and Lisa May-Thomas’ *Figuring* (2018), as well as the writings and performance work of Paula Kramer, whose exploration of “attending to materiality” through dance engages directly with new materialism (Kramer, 2015: i) as does the performances and writings of Minty Donald (2015; 2016) and Annette Arlander (2019). Additionally, Victoria Hunter combines new materialism with site-specific dance performance in *Re-Positioning Site Dance* (2019: 133-156).

<sup>195</sup> This constantly evolving vocabulary can be viewed – and contributed to – on [www.newmaterialism.eu/](http://www.newmaterialism.eu/).

of artistic research gives permission to engage with a varied and processual approach that prioritises the emergence of artistic practice. In establishing a noctographic practice, such an approach has been necessary and valuable: it has enabled a shift between constellations of theoretical frameworks and movement practices, enabling the development of a kinaesthetic approach to nightfall where no previous known methodologies exist.

### CONSTELLATION C: LEAF(3)

This section focuses upon the time-specific movement practices – and choreographies – generated by this research, and how these contribute to the field of environmental movement practices. As addressed in the introduction to this thesis, this noctographic practice initially aligned itself with the environmental movement practices of Helen Poynor, Sandra Reeve and Simon Whitehead. As with their practices, the structure of this research prioritised a deep investigation of place by working within a single site over a sustained period, establishing a seasonal, year-long structure of workshops that stretched over several days and enabled the formation of an accumulative experience of place. Yet it also went beyond this, establishing a timescale that fluctuated with the durational shifts of nightfall: like the onset of darkness itself, the timing of this noctographic practice shifted with each night-cycle, determined by the seasons and geography of that place. In allowing itself to be governed according to the shifting cycles of a more-than-human phenomena, this practice engaged in a non-hierarchical approach to place, entangling itself with(in) the multitude of temporalities that comprise a site, thus enabling a kinaesthetic understanding of the temporalities of the site's trees, weathers, constellations, sounds, and darkenings. This noctographic practice therefore offers to environmental movement practices not simply an observation of the existence of such temporalities<sup>196</sup> but the potentiality for the structure of such practices to be led by more-than-human durations.

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<sup>196</sup> Kinaesthetic observations of more-than-human temporalities are recorded in the shared practice of Nigel Stewart and Jennifer Monson (Stewart, 2010a) and were tangible in the environmental movement practices of Sandra Reeve's *Ecological Movement* workshop (2017) and Helen Poynor's *Embodied Landscape* workshop (2017).

This approach is exemplified in both the workshops and choreographies of this artistic research. For the human participants of this noctographic practice, their arrival in the site, their movement, and the duration of their presence in that place are defined by its more-than-human temporalities: their on-site writings articulate embodied experiences through which their relationship to the more-than-human environment is transformed through the practice. As a result, by inviting both community participants and professional dancers into its practice, this research demonstrates how – for both individuals and communities – a kinaesthetic engagement with the darkening of nightfall alters both our sense of a place and how we move with(in) it. Meanwhile, *On the Patterns We Gaze* (2019) demonstrates how time-specific choreographic works can be led-by the more-than-human temporalities that comprise a site<sup>197</sup>. For instance, *Patterns* was performed four times – twice for an invited human audience, and twice for the happenstantial more-than-human audience of the wood – a decision that arose out of a practice that directly engaged with Bennett’s non-hierarchical approach (Bennett, 2010), Ingold’s concept of humaning as a verb, a “doing”, (Ingold, 2015) and Haraway’s notion of becoming-with (Haraway, 2016).

*On the Patterns We Gaze* exemplifies how engaging with these new materialist concepts through practice can enable a monumental shift in the purpose and focus of choreographic works. By performing for a more-than-human audience, this time-specific choreography embodies a non-hierarchical relationship with the wood and re-purposes the act of its performance by giving weight not to the human perception of the work but to its “humaning”: to its *doing-with* the wood that is an intrinsic, entangled part of the wood’s nightfall. *On the Patterns We Gaze* opens up the possibility for other choreographic works to make a similar shift: to be more-than the human perception of their event and instead to be valued upon their doing, on their patterning and embodying of more-than-human relationships and temporalities<sup>198</sup>. It

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<sup>197</sup> In doing so, *Patterns* joins the time-specific choreographies of Rosemary Lee (*Circadian*, 2019; *Passage for Par*; 2018) and Simon Whitehead (*En Darken*, 2018) which similarly depend upon the more-than-human durations of light, tide and darkness.

<sup>198</sup> Whilst this concept of performing-for and performing-with the environment is also present in the application of Authentic Movement (Pallaro, 1999; 2007), in the practices of Sandra Reeve (2008; 2017), Nigel Stewart and Jennifer Monson (Stewart, 2010a) and Simon Whitehead (2017) and in the performance works of Annette Arlander (*Animal Days and Nights* series, 2003-14), and Tuija Kokkonen (*A Performance with an Ocean View (and a Dog for a Dog) - II Memo of Time*, 2008) amongst others, *Patterns* is particular in its dual-performance structure through which its performing-with the wood absences human audiences from half of the performances.

is, therefore, by engaging with the darkening of a rural site through movement that more-than-human relatedness has been not simply understood as non-hierarchical but kinaesthetically articulated as such. In this way, the more-than-human, more-than-visual encounters facilitated through this noctographic practice have made possible the emergence of a time-specific choreography that not only makes felt such encounters but is co-formed by them, enabling a becoming-with nightfall that is a kinaesthetic entangling.

To summarise: this artistic research has developed a time-specific approach to movement practices and choreographies that not only attune to the more-than-human temporalities of a site but are led-by these place-specific durations with which it engages. It uniquely combines this with a non-hierarchical approach to performing with – and for – the more-than-human inhabitants of the site, developing a valuable and necessary embodied approach that de-centres human temporalities from a kinaesthetic engagement with place. Whilst the time-specific nature of other art forms and the impact of such an approach – in particular, sculptural and multi-media works – is well documented (Karlholm and Moxey, 2018; Bretkelly-Chalmers, 2019; Ross 2012), it is an approach less acknowledged in the fields of dance and performance where “site-specific” tends to usurp notions of “time-specific” (Kloetzel and Pavlik, 2009; Hunter, 2015; Pearson, 2010). Through its kinaesthetic engagement with the phenomena of nightfall, this practice advocates for the emergence of time-specific movement practices and choreographies that have the potential to further articulate an embodied alignment with more-than-human temporalities. Shifts in weather, species migration, tidal flow, the formation and recession of ice-sheets<sup>199</sup>, are some such examples of durational phenomena with which such practices might engage time-specifically, enabling kinaesthetic understandings and articulations of more-than-human temporalities to arise – understandings that are, in an age of ecological crisis, both valuable and necessary<sup>200</sup>.

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<sup>199</sup> Of course, there exists site-specific choreographic works that already engage with these phenomena – such as Birgitte Bauer-Nilsen’s *Melting Ice* (2018) and Rosemary Lee’s *Passage for Par* (2018) - but not necessarily as time-specific choreographies that are led-by these more-than-human durations.

<sup>200</sup> Ecological crisis is, of course, a prominent discourse in environmental dance: the journal “Choreographic Practices” published a special edition (Vol. 9.1, 2018) specifically addressing this relationship, whilst the ongoing work and writings of Sandra Reeve (2015; 2018), Malaika Sarco-Thomas (2010; 2015) and Nigel Stewart (2010a; 2015) address how immersive practices and performances cultivate environmental awareness. Additionally, Barbour et al. (2020) explore the relationship (and responsibility) between dance, ethics and environmental

In closing this section, it is crucial to note that since the purpose of this noctographic practice is to research non-anthropocentric ways of moving-with and relating-to night's darkening, it has not sought to address the sociological issues that might otherwise impact upon an embodied engagement with nightfall. Nevertheless, the emergence of this noctographic practice has the potential to impact upon areas of research that do centre upon human experience. Firstly, the felt connections to the more-than-human night-world facilitated through the participatory workshops demonstrate the potential significance of this practice to the ever-expanding field of wellbeing: as the deep connections between the arts and wellbeing become increasingly recognised in medical research (Brindle et al., 2020; Clift and Camic, 2016), practices such as this offer methods for improving wellbeing and a sense of connection for individuals to both human and more-than-human communities. Secondly, the emergence of this noctographic practice has the potential to impact upon how female bodies, in particular, experience night-time spaces. In establishing the participatory workshops of this research, many female participants spoke informally of how enjoyable it was to be able to move freely in the dark as the presence of the group provided a feeling of safety. Others spoke of feeling afraid at the beginning of the practice, but much less so after an evening, a week or a year of participating. As fear of the dark continues to be a feminist issue (Solnit, 2001), practices that enable a freedom of movement for female bodies are essential in addressing the social inequality of the night-spaces. There is, therefore, both the potential and necessity for a development of this research that addresses, specifically, the relationship between the female body and nightscapes through an embodied, immersive practice<sup>201</sup>. Thirdly, as this research does not address nightfall through the lens of body culture studies (DeMello, 2013; Richardson and Locks, 2014), this thesis has only briefly addressed the correlation between representations of darkness and blackness as merely absences of lightness and whiteness<sup>202</sup>. However, in its

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activism, whilst the work and writings of Paula Kramer (2012; 2015; 2018) and Tuija Kokkonen (2011a; 2011b) address the need for an altered perspective on environmental engagement by shifting perspectives of performing-with the more-than-human. This research, therefore, aligns with such developments in this field.

<sup>201</sup> It is necessary to note that many of the books on night-walking are written by male authors (Dickens, Dunn, Edensor, Wills, Yates, etc.): Rebecca Solnit offers a female perspective of night-walking and acknowledges these issues of fear and violence (2001) whilst Tiffany Francis (2019) discusses the dark sky in different contexts. Additionally, the "Reclaim the Night" movement, as organised by the London Feminist Network, holds annual nightwalks for women that protest against the targeted violence against women at night and the fear this propagates.

<sup>202</sup> See SECTION ONE: UN-VOID.

researching of the mattering of darkness as a presence and substance, this noctographic practice supports future research that utilises embodied experience to further investigate this correlation and challenge such representations of absence.

## **RESEARCH OUTCOMES**

This sub-section responds to the research questions outlined in the introduction of this thesis. It draws upon the previous sub-section, “CONSTELLATIONS”, to provide a brief overview of the new understandings that have emerged through this artistic research practice.

Primarily, through the emergence of its noctographic movement practice, this research has revealed the notion of “becoming-with” nightfall to be a process of movement in which both human and more-than-humans are inextricably entangled. It has achieved this by choreologically analysing the relationship between the motion of dance and the processual darkening of nightfall, reaching a unique understanding of the entanglement of the two in being both at once “beyond-vision” and “beyond-form”. In establishing a noctographic movement practice, this research has generated its own vocabulary of terms that describe the new ideas and movement concepts that have emerged<sup>203</sup>. These are not only applicable to the practice itself but also demonstrate how a night-time practice enables – and requires – an expanded understanding of current terms in use. For instance, through its time-specific engagement, this practice has generated the concept of “the elasticity of place” which recognises the shifting identity of a place in relation to temporality, duration and perception. Likewise, the concept of “night-kin”<sup>204</sup> that this research has generated, enables an expansion of the term “more-than-human” to encompass that which is seeming, and undefined: such as the darkness and shadow-bodies of the night-world.

By expanding choreological movement principles to form noctographic “tools”, this practice has utilised choreology to establish a score-based noctographic practice that is accessible to both professional-level and amateur-level dancers. Through their

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<sup>203</sup> See GLOSSARY OF TERMS.

<sup>204</sup> For further information on the use of both of these terms, see CLUSTERING in SECTION TWO of this thesis, as well as GLOSSARY OF TERMS.

cumulative and seasonal structure, the participatory workshops of this research have generated – and shared – a kinaesthetic comprehension of nightfall’s more-than-visual, more-than-human entanglements. Doing so has enabled this research to assert the movement of human bodies to be always an articulation of more-than-human relatedness, and thus de-centres the human individual from who – or what – generates movement. Effectively, this research therefore displaces the human subject in choreological studies by acknowledging movement to be an expression of more-than-human relatedness. It has achieved this by analysing this practice through a framework that encompasses both a phenomenological approach and one of new materialism.

On the one hand, this framework has enabled the research to discover the compatibility of choreological movement principles with new materialist structures, and how a fusion of the two can generate tools through which it is possible to comprehend and analyse movement as more-than-visual, more-than-human action. On the other, this research has not only demonstrated how dance phenomenology can be utilised to forge such a relationship between choreology and new materialism, but has also drawn upon dance phenomenology to generate a new understanding of nightfall as a kinaesthetic phenomenon: one through which it is possible to comprehend movement to be articulated *by* nightfall whilst simultaneously be an articulation *of* nightfall. Furthermore, the combining of a phenomenological approach with new materialist structures has been essential in enabling this research to generate – and articulate – a kinaesthetic understanding of the spatial-temporal duration of nightfall using score-based workshops and time-specific choreographies. This approach has enabled this research to implicate the presence of more-than-human temporalities within its practice, shifting beyond the clock-based measurements of twilight and towards a kinaesthetic perception of nightfall’s duration. Doing so has led this research towards a new understanding of nightfall as a place-specific phenomenon.

Therefore, this research contributes to the emerging field of environmental movement practices not simply through a time-specific approach to place but additionally by exploring ways of moving-with a site on more-than-human timescales. It is also this unique comprehension of nightfall as a place-specific

phenomenon that this research contributes to the growing field of night-time performance works (which this thesis has comprehensively examined and reviewed in SECTION ONE). As a result, this research has proposed and enacted new ways of responding to nightfall through performance: firstly, through time-specific choreographies that kinaesthetically articulate the particular, place-specific darkening of a site; and, secondly, by attending to the more-than-human presence and perception that co-forms that environment and which is equally altered and transformed by that nightfall's darkening.

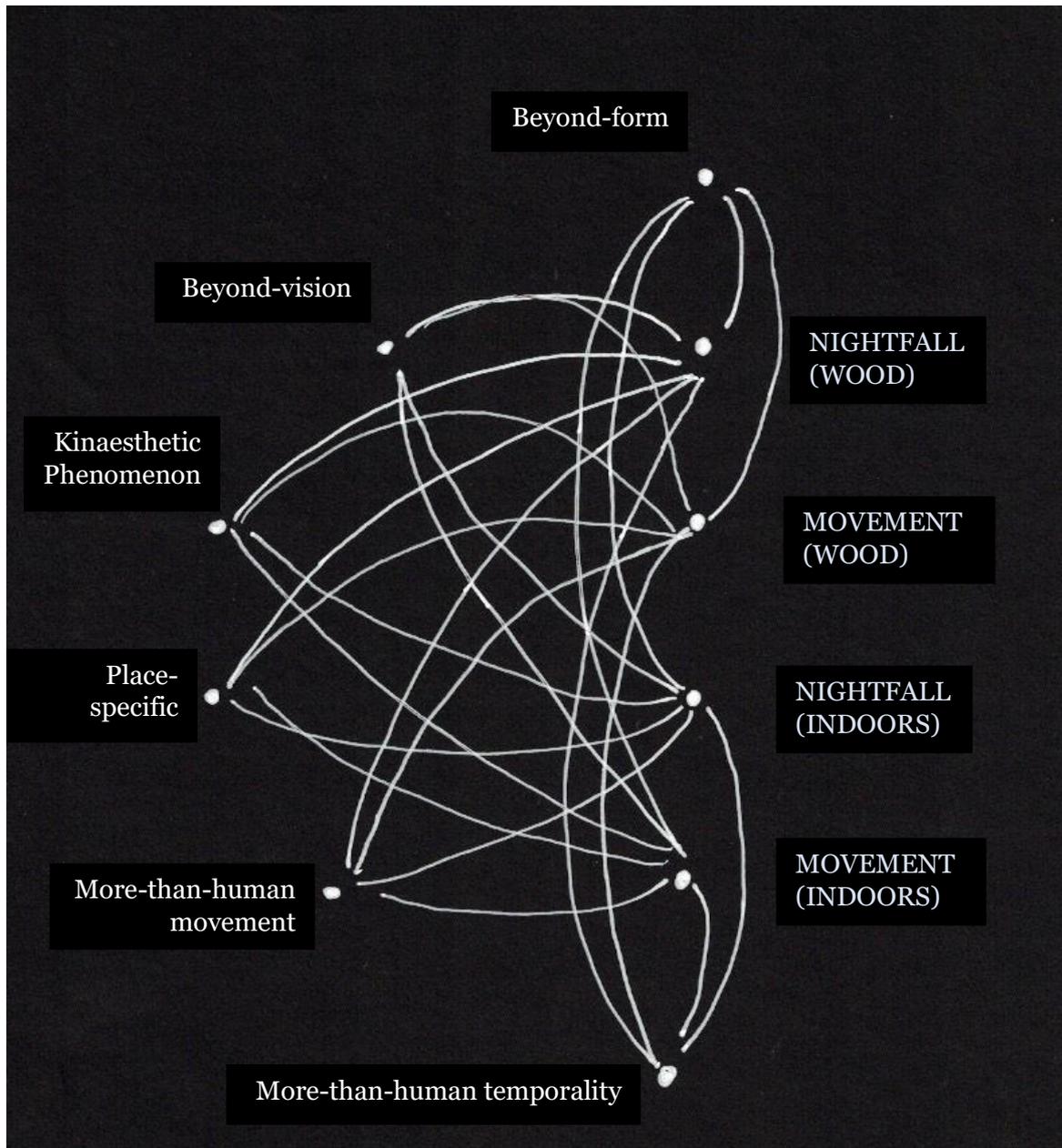


Figure 59: “Constellation D”, in the shape of a half-moon. A hand-drawn diagram outlining the creative process and transitions for *On the Traces we Carry* (2021), a time-specific choreography further developing the noctographic practice of this artistic research.

## A NOCTOGRAPHIC PRACTICE

Whereas the previous sub-sections of this conclusion have articulated the new understandings generated by this research, this sub-section will consider how these findings can contribute towards the continued development of the research in the form of a second time-specific choreography, *On the Traces we Carry* (2021), which will once again take place at nightfall, but be performed indoors<sup>205</sup>.

In this conclusion, I have asserted how the kinaesthetic understandings of nightfall that this practice has produced are valid beyond the dark but are also intangible without it. *Traces* will seek to explore how a kinaesthetic knowledge of a place-specific nightfall is carried through movement: to explore how kinaesthetic encounters with the dark seep beyond themselves, continuing to resonate in the re-doing of the movement patterns they co-form. Like the *Seep-Seem* score, *Traces* will ask “what changes?” by developing a noctographic practice that is not only beyond-vision and beyond-form, but also beyond-place<sup>206</sup>. It is from the *Seep-Seem* score that the creative process of *Traces* will commence, beginning with the notion of “returning”, an exploration of how movement “turns over” its encounters with nightfall – with place – so that an accumulative practice forms a sort of motional compost<sup>207</sup>. The *Seep-Seem* score asks a series of questions, such as “what is your doing? what is your re-doing? What is it to move between these two things? What changes?” and “how do you carry place? how does place carry you?”. Whereas *Patterns* travelled with these questions within the wood, *Traces* will travel with these questions beyond the wood: it will explore the potential for a practice of moving-with to be a practice of moving-beyond.

Essentially, *Traces* will explore a literal taking of place: the possibility of embedding and transporting place through movement, in which “place” constitutes nightfall in Grubbins Wood, and “movement” is that which is co-formed and co-created by place. It is, then, *how* movement takes place that forms the development of this noctographic practice. Drawing upon the new findings generated by this research,

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<sup>205</sup> A brief description and analysis of *On the Traces we Carry* has been inserted into this thesis, post-examination, and can be found in APPENDIX (12).

<sup>206</sup> See “elasticity of place” in GLOSSARY OF TERMS.

<sup>207</sup> As described in SECTION TWO: CLUSTERING.

*Traces* commences from a sketch of a constellation – “Constellation D”<sup>208</sup> (fig. 59) – which proposes a structure through which this noctographic practice might explore the “how” of taking place through movement. Constellation D comprises of six facets of nightfall and movement that have emerged from this research so far: beyond-vision, beyond-form, place-specific, kinaesthetic phenomenon, and more-than-human movement and temporalities. These exist in the constellation as points of exchange – or, to borrow Ingold’s term, “joinings” (2015: 19) – between movements and places, between patterns and nightfalls. The lines of the constellation echo the physical process from which *Traces* will emerge: a back and forth between the wood and indoor space, carrying the traces of a place-specific nightfall between them. Constellation D can therefore be considered as a sort of half-moon string-figure, which proposes ways in which movement “passes patterns back and forth” (2016: 12) through the knowledge generated by this research to form new patterns of relatedness between nightfalls. In this way, *Traces* will be a time-specific choreography exploring whether movement that is co-formed with the wood’s darkening can be carried beyond it. It endeavours to make felt how nightfall alters movement, and movement carries nightfall. Embarking on *Traces* is, therefore, not unlike the gesture of passing on a cat’s cradle: string suspended between fingers, holding the tension of the pattern, waiting for the shift.

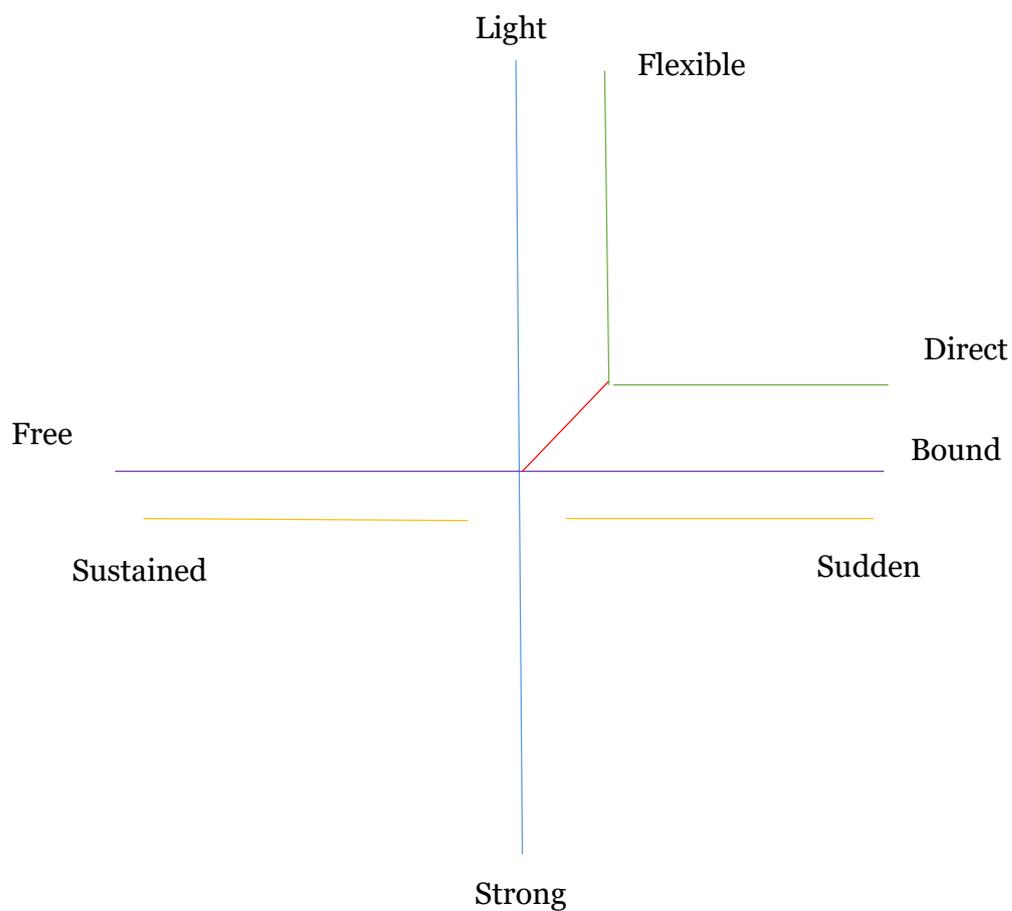
The conclusion of this thesis is, therefore, the continuation of its practice. This research has demonstrated that to comprehend the kinaesthetic forms of knowledge that nightfall makes tangible requires a new (noctographic) form of engagement. This noctographic practice has not sought to establish nightfall as a fixed or knowable phenomena, but rather to engage with the ways in which nightfall transforms movement, sensations, perceptions and relations to become unfamiliar, to become unrecognisable: to become “more-than”. Both thesis and practice have sought to embody these qualities of nightfall, to move-with its complexities. By engaging with nightfall in ways that are its own ways, this research has led not simply towards an understanding of nightfall through movement, but also the possibility of understanding movement through nightfall. It is through its kinaesthetic

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<sup>208</sup> Rather than taking the shape of a species prevalent in Grubbins Wood – as the other diagrams do – “Constellation D” takes the form of a half-moon, a more-than-human presence that shifts beyond the wood, spanning other nightfalls, other places.

engagement with nightfall's seeping, seeming darkening, and the more-than-human entanglements that this makes felt, that this noctographic practice has revealed how movement holds within itself the potentiality to be beyond-form, as much as the dark is beyond-vision. In other words, this research has discovered how we have within dance a practice of engaging with nightfall's excess of form, of enacting through movement "the ubiquitous unravelling" (Manning and de Zegher, 2011: 5) of its darkening. *Traces* will be concerned with how, in all of its momentary temporality, its fluctuation of form, its shifting and sifting ways, dance embodies the complexities that define the motional phenomena of nightfall. In the transitory motion that is both dance and nightfall, the un-seen, the un-held, the un-done and the un-known are not less-than, are not absent: they are more-than, they are beyond, they are an excess of form made felt in the motional tumult of dancing with night's darkness.

## **APPENDIX**



Key to Motion Factors:

Time

Space

Weight

Flow

| DAY/CP   | BODY  | ACTION   | TIME  | SPACE   | RELATEDNESS  |
|--|---|--|---|---|--|
| <b>APRIL<br/>18<br/>DAY<br/>ONE</b><br><br><b>PROFS<br/>NB</b> | fingers entwine like<br>branches through moonlight<br>[P/A18D1NB2]<br>explored a lot with my feet,<br>feel like as my eyesight is<br>diminishing I'm feeling &<br>exploring more through my<br>feet. [P/A18D1NB4] |  | steady like a tree grows<br>[P/A18D1NB2]  | angles – muscular and joints<br>shapes – solid and earthy [P/A18D1NB2]<br>echo shape of tree // folds in different textures<br>– leaves, branches<br>solid folds in roots<br>flimsy folds in twigs [P/A18D1NB2]<br>Low to the ground felt many folds<br>[P/A18D1NB2]<br>roots & tracing folds and crevasses in trees I<br>became obsessed [P/A18D1NB4]  | folds come from touch, minimal sight.<br>Trust touch and shape. [P/A18D1NB2]<br>liked exploring through touch<br>[P/A18D1NB4]<br>Dancers were part<br>of nature<br>morphing from tress & each other<br>Distance was beautiful to behold<br>Fear of <u>unknown</u><br>my sight gives me trust without outer<br>(?) body [P/A18D1NB5]  |
| <b>APRIL<br/>18<br/>DAY<br/>TWO</b><br><br><b>PROFS<br/>NB</b> |   | TWISTING<br>MANIPULATING<br>THROUGH<br>SUPPORT<br>STILL<br>STILL AND SEE<br>[P/A18D2NB4]<br>EMPTY SPACE<br>TWISTS<br>TURNS<br>STILLNESS<br>A LIGHT THAT<br>EXPOSES<br>THE DARK<br>[P/A18D2NB4] | A's movement felt<br>urgent and playful<br>simultaneously!<br>[P/A18D2NB3]<br>- with string I had<br>strong sure footing<br>& movement<br>- without I was uncertain<br>& lost<br>Empty [P/A18D2NB5] | Shapes everywhere and<br>every movement has such<br>a strong sense of purpose<br>I kept getting carried away<br>by different traces of thought<br>and every movement led<br>me to another idea which<br>took me to the next<br>the fading light gave<br>anticipation and I got<br>carried off into a different<br>world. [P/A18D2NB3]<br>Developed &<br>discovered form<br>in the form &<br>structure of<br>nature [P/A18D2NB5]<br>Retracing back I could remember the thoughts<br>that were with me at each stage of the path I'd<br>created. Some places I didn't want to go back to<br>so had to summon light in me to get through<br>dark [P/A18D2NB2]<br>When the string was taken away it felt urgent to<br>explore what yet hadn't been explored. I felt<br>more interested in the spaces and shapes<br>inbetween than the thread itself. I like how it<br>created a visible line in the dark [P/A18D2NB3] | interaction with the<br>shape & pressure of the tree<br>Using tree & branches/ trunk to<br>interpret how my body feels today –<br>how I want to move with it?<br>[P/A18D2NB2]<br>wrapping creates a stronger bond<br>intracacies are more interesting than<br>wide spaces<br>what is there?<br>where are the gaps?<br>create a cobweb to create something<br>articulate and interesting<br>not one thing<br>is in straight<br>lines.<br>intertwine to create strength<br>[P/A18D2NB4]<br>Daunting prospect to<br>follow into the unknown<br>Shapes of Z in distance<br>literally following her into gloom<br>anticipation of going<br>Hansel & Gretel [P/A18D2NB5] |

APPENDIX (2): Example of using Preston-Dunlop's "structural model" (2013a [1979]) to create a table which organises on-site writings according to the choreological analysis of their descriptions. The use of such tables is discussed in the main INTRODUCTION to this thesis.

Shapes everywhere and every movement has such a strong sense of purpose

I kept getting carried away by different traces of thought

and every movement led me to another idea which

took me to the next

The fading light gave

different textures in light coming through different thickness of branch

felt exposed but emboldened

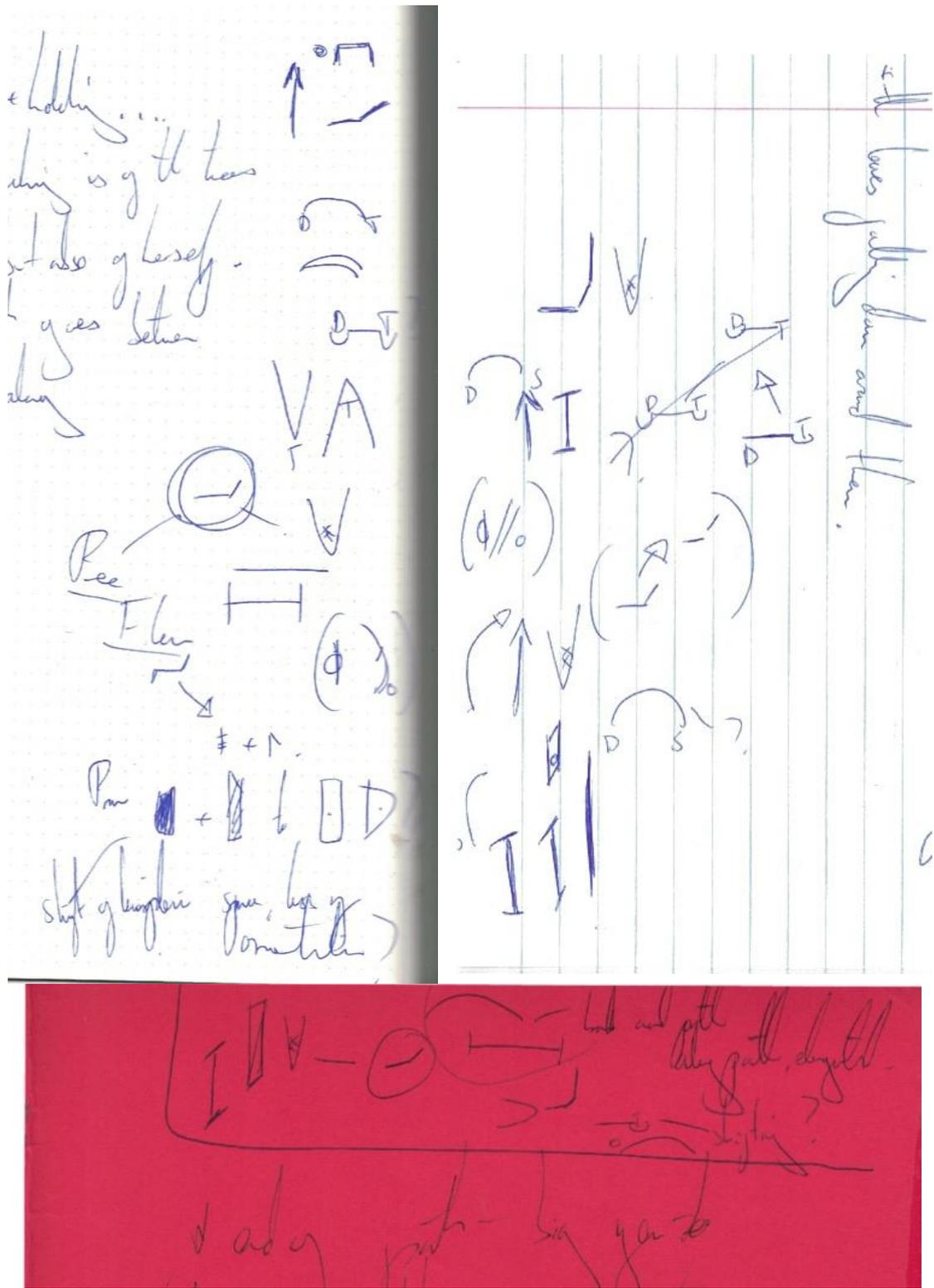
- lived exploring through touch
- roots & tracing folds and creases in trees
- I became obsessed
- exposed alot with my feet, feel like as my eyesight is diminishing Im feeling & exploring more through my feet.

MOVING FEELING INTO DIFFERENT TEXTURES

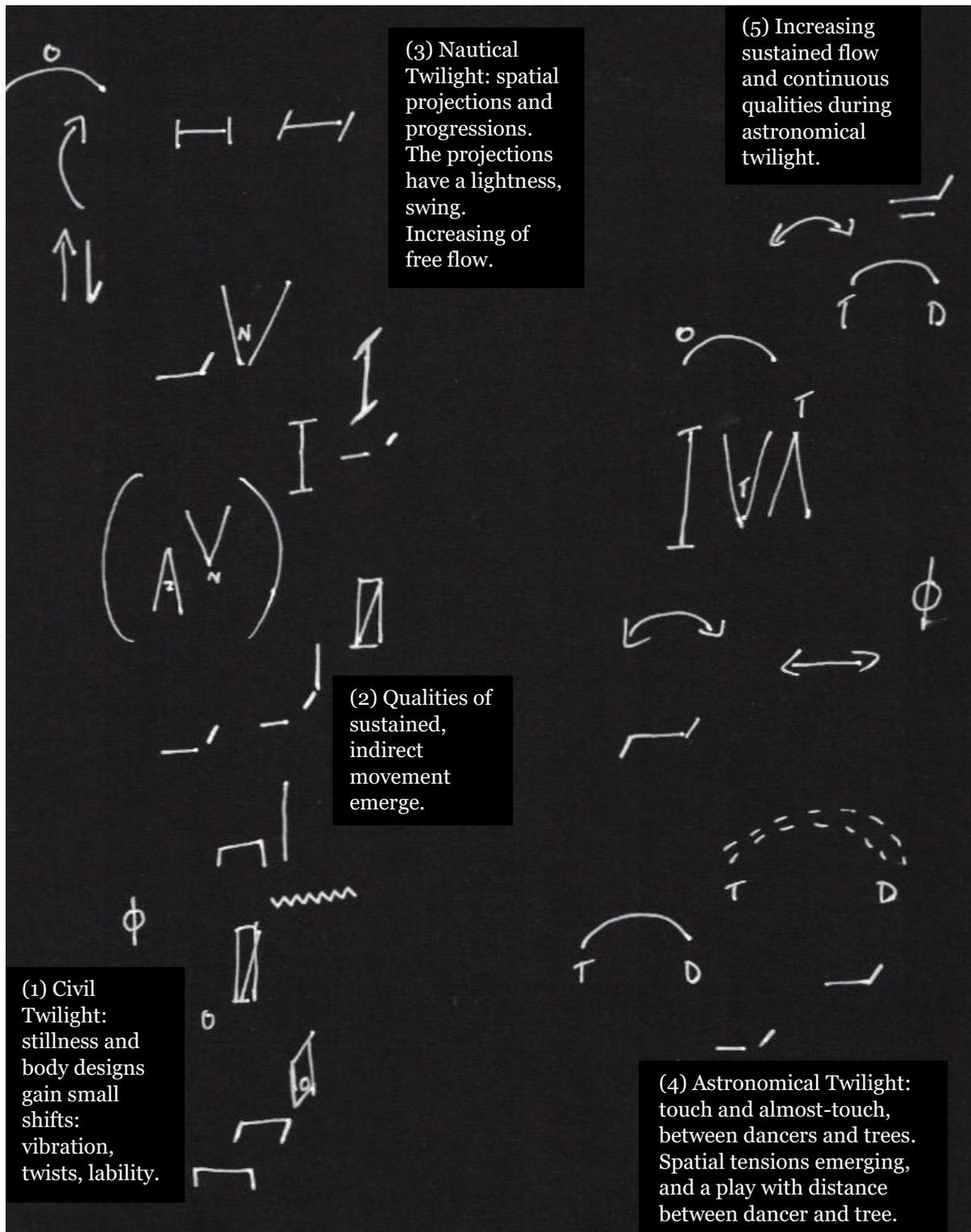
SUPPORT OF A WALL AND HOW IT LOOSEN AND GO INTO THE MIND

THE TEXTURE OF THE MIND HOLDS THE HOW OF RELAXING

DIFFERENT SUPPORT AND DIFFERENT FEELINGS  
SENSE OF NOTHINGNESS

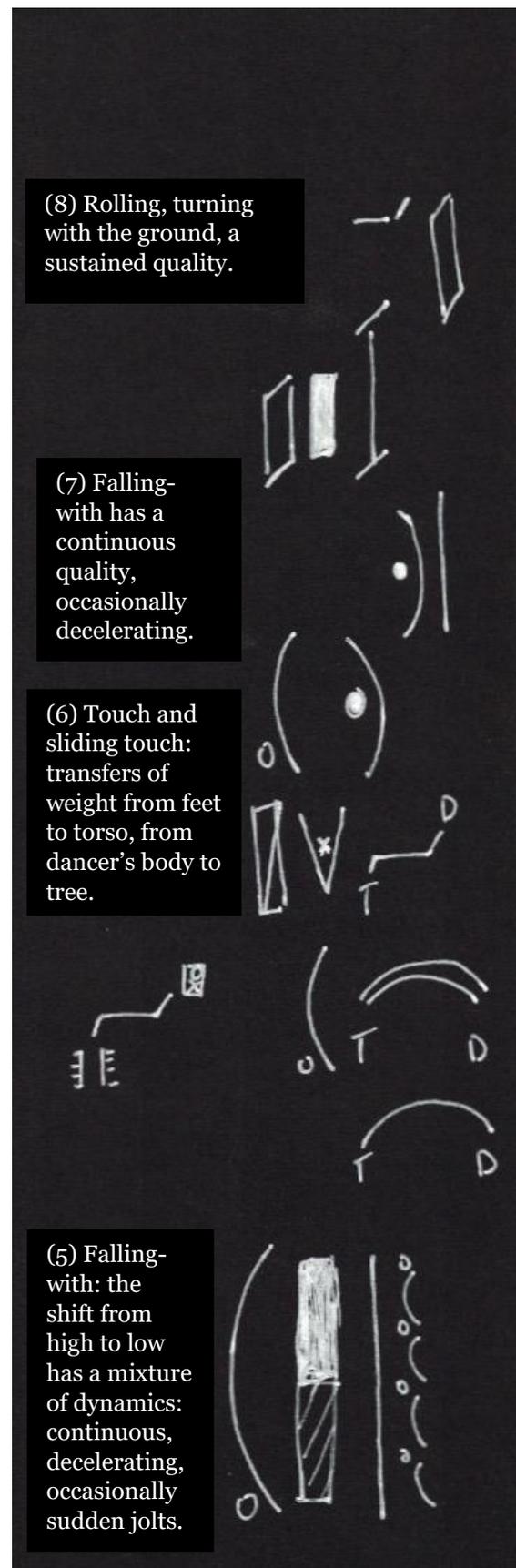
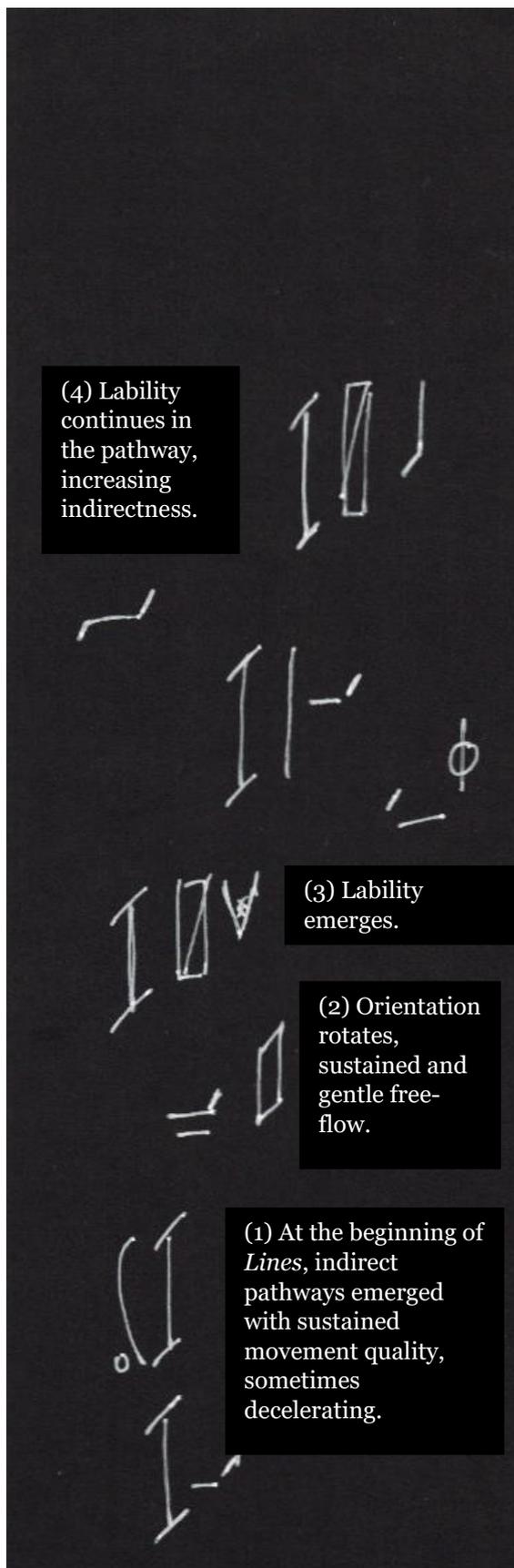


APPENDIX (4): Examples of on-site symbology. Notations such as there were made by myself whilst observing movement patterns in both participatory workshops and solo investigations. APPENDIX (5-8) provides full, clean transcripts of those symbologies relating to the practicings of the movement scores developed in this thesis.



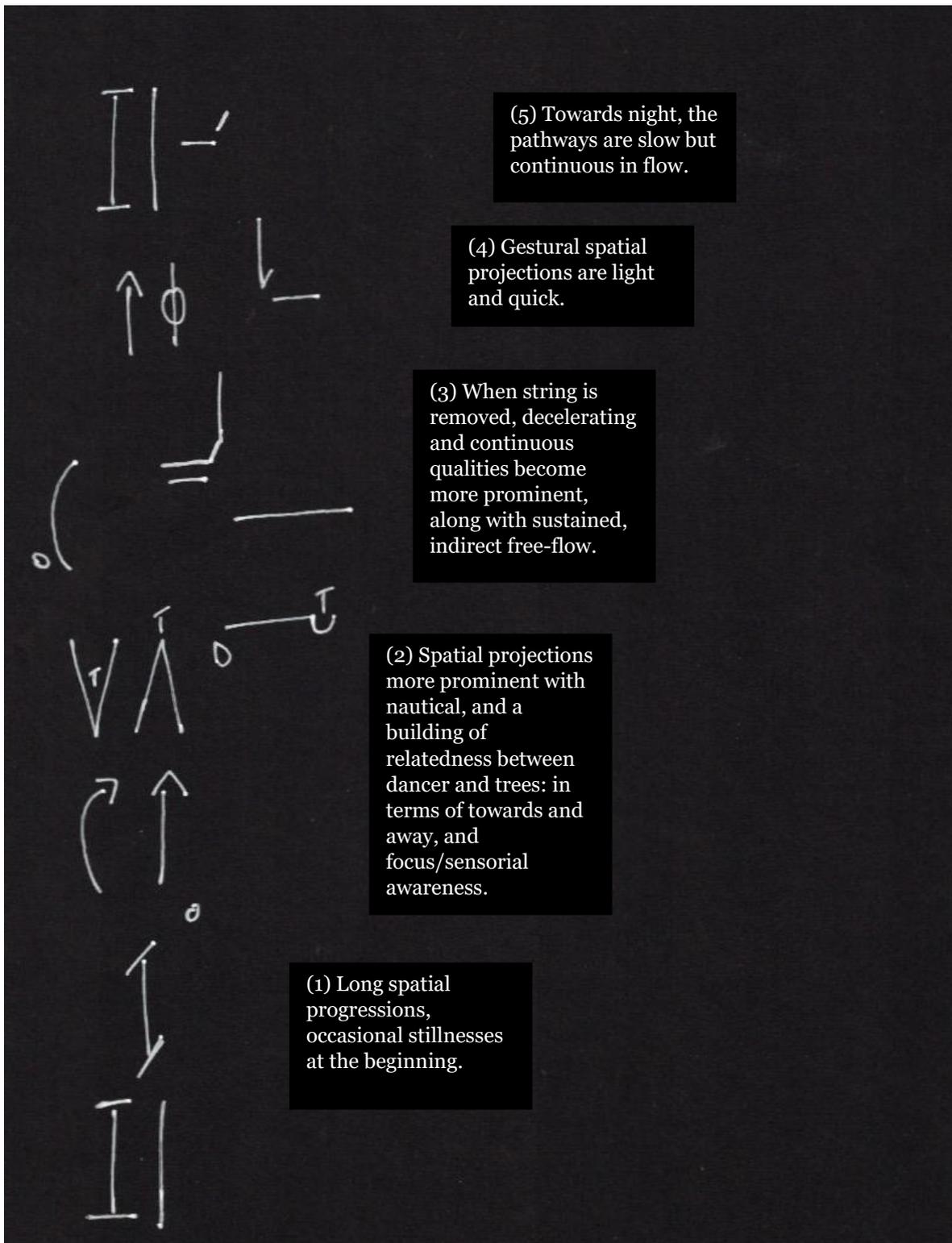
APPENDIX (5): Transcript of symbology relating to practisings of *The Dappling Score*, featured in WADING.

This transcript offers a clean recording of those motifs and symbols notated in the relevant stages of this noctographic practice, and their translation. The symbology is read bottom to top: left side of the page first.



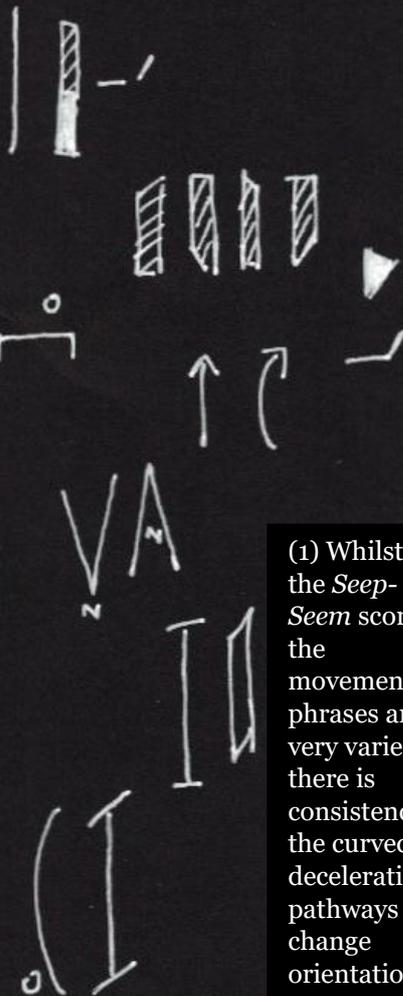
APPENDIX (6): Transcript of symbology relating to practisings of *Lines of Descent*, featured in *GROUNDING*.

This transcript offers a clean recording of those motifs and symbols notated in the relevant stages of this noctographic practice, and their translation. The symbology is read bottom to top: left side of the page first.



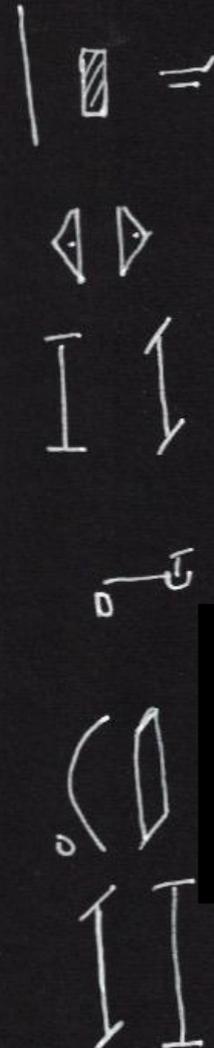
APPENDIX (7): Transcript of symbology relating to practisings of *Star Figures*, featured in FIGURING. This transcript offers a clean recording of those motifs and symbols notated in the relevant stages of this noctographic practice, and their translation. The symbology is read bottom to top: left side of the page first.

(2) Strong use of high diagonals in exploration of peripheries. Free flow and sustained qualities are present, occasional stillnesses and pauses.



(1) Whilst in the *Seep-Seem* score the movement phrases are very varied, there is consistency in the curved, decelerating pathways that change orientation.

(4) Spatial locations shift, diagonals become flatter, and shift of choreutic units from projections to progressions – focus is increasing towards flow.

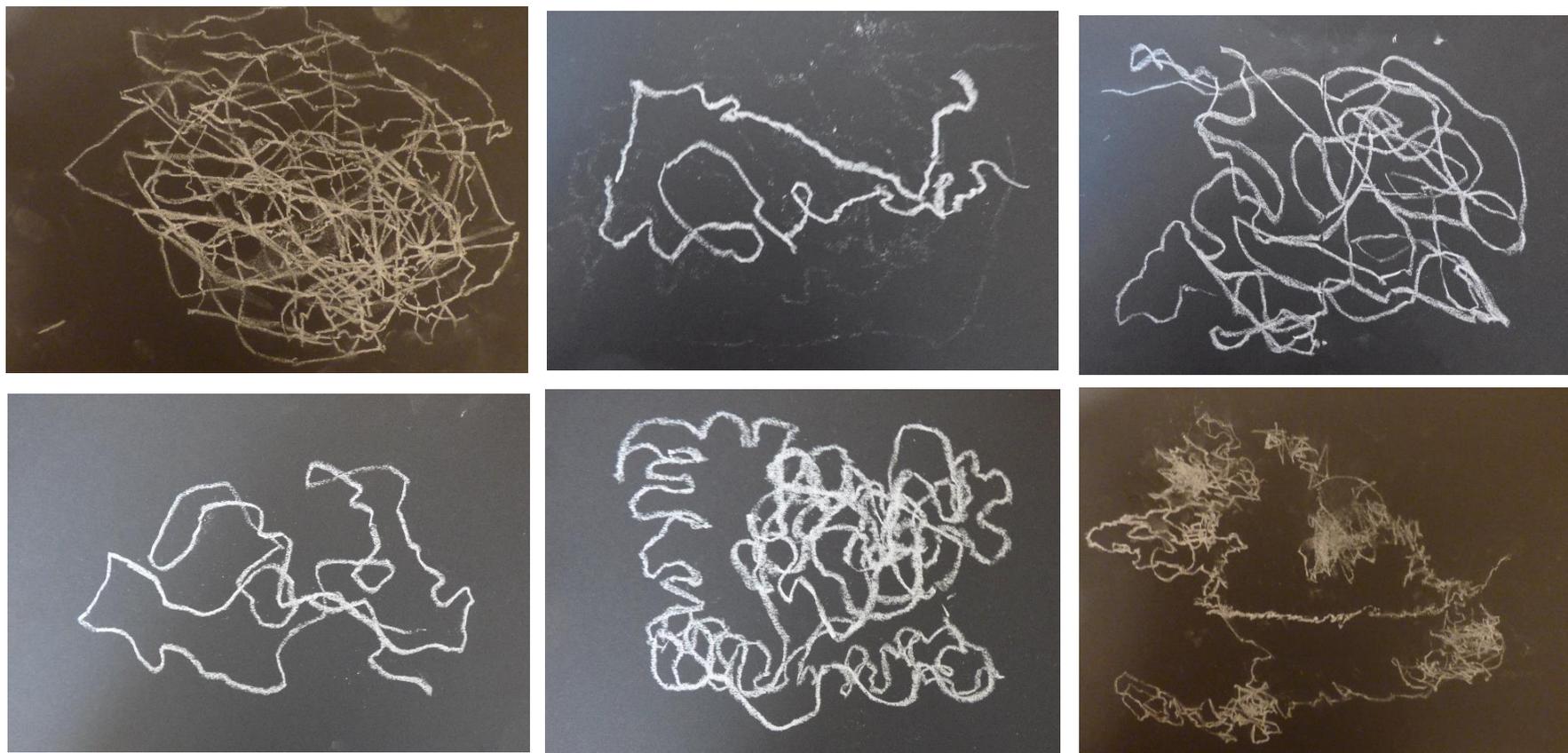


(3) In the retrograde, pathways are increasingly sustained and free flowing. Focus is towards environment.

APPENDIX (8): Transcript of symbology relating to practisings of The *Seem-Seem* Score, featured in CLUSTERING. This transcript offers a clean recording of those motifs and symbols notated in the relevant stages of this noctographic practice, and their translation. The symbology is read bottom to top: left side of the page first.



APPENDIX (9): Example of line drawings from the preliminary investigations of my solo practice, which then developed into the *Lines of Descent* score.

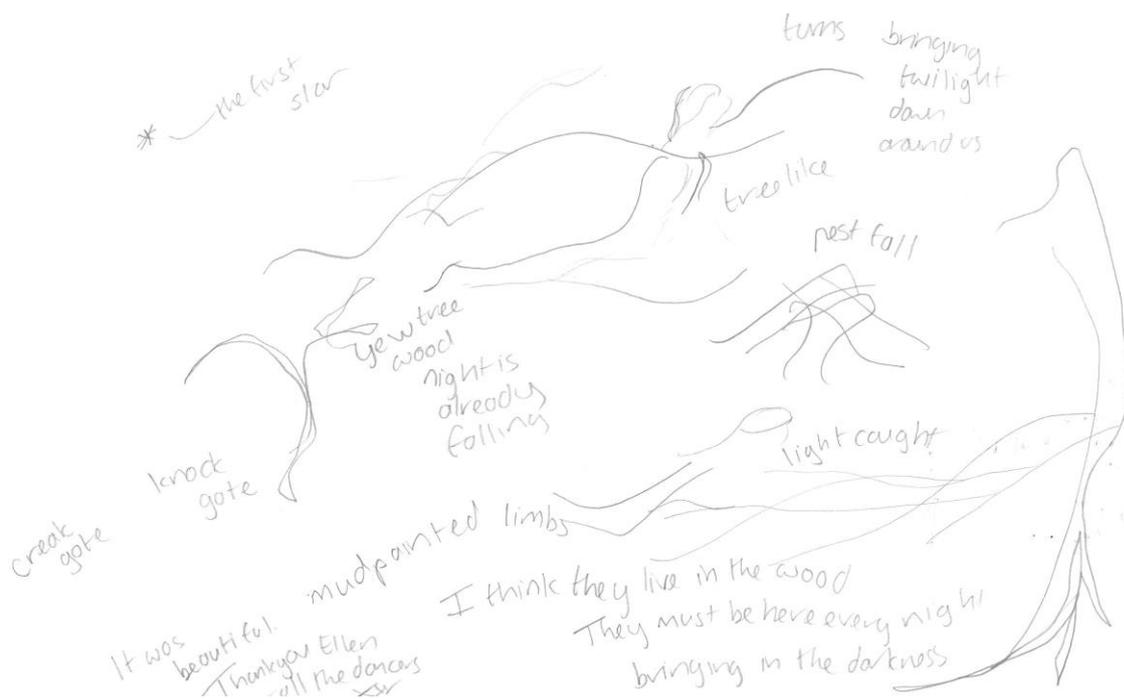


APPENDIX (10): Example of chalk line drawings done by workshop participants as part of the *Lines of Descent* score [Further examples available on request].

I never want to speak again. There are so many other voices



Cobweb above us  
could see figures a long way away  
like ghosts,



APPENDIX (11): Examples of on-site, post-performance written reflections by audience members of *On the Patterns we Gaze* (March 2019) [full transcripts available on request].

## **APPENDIX (12): “ON THE TRACES WE CARRY”**

*On the Traces We Carry*<sup>209</sup> formed the second piece of time-specific choreography to emerge from this research practice. As the piece was created and performed after the submission of this thesis, this appendix offers an opportunity to reflect upon how this noctographic practice has been further developed by the creation of *Traces*, and how the unforeseen circumstances of the work have enabled new understandings of nightfall to emerge.

*Traces* was a site -and time- specific choreography taking place at 9 Clarence Street, Lancaster. Initially intended as a live performance in a gallery space, due to the COVID-19 pandemic the work instead took the form of a pre-recorded performance that was made available to view online between 12th-16th April 2021. However, it remained integral to the research for this work to remain time-specific: as a result, *Traces* emerged as an online performance work designed to be viewed indoors over the duration of nightfall, commencing at sunset – the same time that the recording of the performance began. The performance was bookended by two participatory movement scores (shared via email) in which the viewing audience were invited to participate. These two small movement scores were designed to take place outside where possible: on a doorstep, in a yard, in a garden, on a street. The audience were invited to do “THE BEFORE-SCORE” immediately before viewing the performance (and therefore before sunset) and “THE AFTER-SCORE” immediately after. The audience were invited to engage with the scores in whichever way they might choose - standing, sitting, walking, dancing – and for a minimum of five minutes per score.

As described earlier in this thesis, *Traces* sought to develop the movement research taking place at nightfall in Grubbins Wood by exploring how it might be possible to “carry” a sense of that night-place into a different night-place, an indoor night-place. As CONSTELLATION D suggests<sup>210</sup>, the creative process for *Traces* set up a choreographic dialogue between the two sites – between the wood at nightfall and the room at nightfall. I began in the room, creating short choreographic phrases that were generated through an embodied remembering/imagining of moving in the wood at nightfall, yet were simultaneously (and unavoidably) informed by what movement the room enabled and allowed. I would then take these phrases to the wood itself, where I would perform them in – and for – its more-than-human environment over the course of nightfall, and write down how the movement shifted

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<sup>209</sup> The work will from here on be referred to as “*Traces*”. Full documentation of this work can be viewed online through the following link: [vimeo.com/535227668/9b54a4e280](https://vimeo.com/535227668/9b54a4e280)

<sup>210</sup> See CONCLUSION in the main thesis.

choreologically. This process enabled me to be acutely aware, on a kinaesthetic and embodied level, not only of how the movement shifted between the sites (i.e. how each night-site altered the movement) but also, what of the site the movement might carry choreologically: what it might hold on to when shifting into the other site. For instance, dancing in the wood at nightfall (as this thesis has described) often lent a projectional, expansive quality to the movement, one that emerged in response to the immensity of the space, the contours of the branches and the deep dark of the wood's nights. Using choreological analysis, it was possible to observe how the choreographic phrases would slow and expand in the wood's nightfall, and I could then choose how – and if – to carry this movement quality into the indoor room.

### **THE BEFORE-SCORE**

*A score to do outside and before sunset, before the viewing of ON THE TRACES WE CARRY.*

Notice  
 the small shifts  
 of your body  
 of other bodies  
 Shifts that can be  
 seen, heard, felt.

Notice  
 the just-blurring of things  
 the still unstilling  
 the not-yet  
 darkening

### **THE AFTER-SCORE**

*A score to do outside and after sunset, after the viewing of ON THE TRACES WE CARRY.*

Let the eyes follow  
 the lines, the edges  
 of this place.

Let the gaze-journey, the gaze-wander.  
 Invite the fingers-feet-skull-spine to join, to follow

The lines that are actual  
 and almost-actual  
 going and on-going

The two participatory scores, shared via email prior to the performance of *On the Traces We Carry* (2021)

Another key shift was the relationship with ground. The flat, wooden floor of the room enabled the choreographic phrases to have speed and rhythmic footwork, whereas the soft, muddy surface of the path in the wood gave a slower, labile quality to the movement<sup>211</sup>. When I returned to the indoor room, I carried with me those dynamic qualities of the wood. However, instead of using them to affect the relationship between the body's weight and the ground, I explored what the spatial structure of the room offered choreographically by instead exploring how these dynamics of the wood might resonate in the relationship between the body's weight and the wall over the course of nightfall. This enabled the creative process to exist as a dialogue between the two night-spaces: those choreological observations that arose did so due to relationships and differences between their place-specific nightfalls, so that the choreography that formed was essentially describing the choreological relatedness between them.



Film still taken from the recording of *On the Traces We Carry* (2021)

Following these explorations over the duration of nightfall, *Traces* took a similar three-stage form to *Patterns* with each stage corresponding to one of the three stages of twilight: civil, nautical, and astronomical. The beginning of each stage was marked by a reading, a sort of story describing – on a particular evening, in a particular season – the experience of moving in the wood at nightfall. This relationship between spoken-word narrative and abstract movement resonates with Haraway's advocacy for the need for new ways “of relaying connections that matter, of telling stories” (Haraway, 2016: 10). In the same way that stories can carry and evoke a sense of a place that is different to the one in which those stories are shared, *Traces* explored whether movement has the capacity to relate embodied experiences of place (specifically, night-places) in non-anthropocentric ways. Whereas the spoken-word

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<sup>211</sup> See GROUNDING in SECTION TWO of the main thesis.

communicates a sense of place specifically to human ears, movement and choreography have the potential to offer non-hierarchical modes of engagement, opening up the possibilities of performing for – and with – more-than-human others. However, the processes of creating, recording and performing *Traces* necessitated a shift in this practice's relationship between the human and more-than-human, in new and unforeseen ways.



Film still taken from the recording of *On the Traces We Carry* (2021)

Firstly, the more-than-human presence of the wood was referenced through three large tree branches, which accumulated in the performance space over the course of the performance – one being added at the beginning of each of the three sections. The presence of the branches enabled the creation of *Traces* to exist as a continuation of my noctographic practice in which performing with – and for – the more-than-human inhabitants of the wood was an intrinsic part. The branches not only gave a tangible presence and focus to this practice but additionally, by sharing the room's gradual darkening with their forms, they enabled an exploration of the ways in which the nightfall of an interior space might alter the perception of both human and more-than-human forms. Whereas the expanse of the wood enabled the choreographic structure of *Patterns* to play with how the distance at which forms blurred in the wood gradually shifted closer over the duration of nightfall<sup>212</sup>, the small and enclosed space of the interior room meant that night's darkening was predominantly tangible as a durational (rather than spatial) shift, one that gradually altered and blurred the perception of forms as the room edged towards night-time darkness.

However, the branches were not the only more-than-human presence in the performance: Clarence Street is in an urban environment, a circumstance that became more apparent as

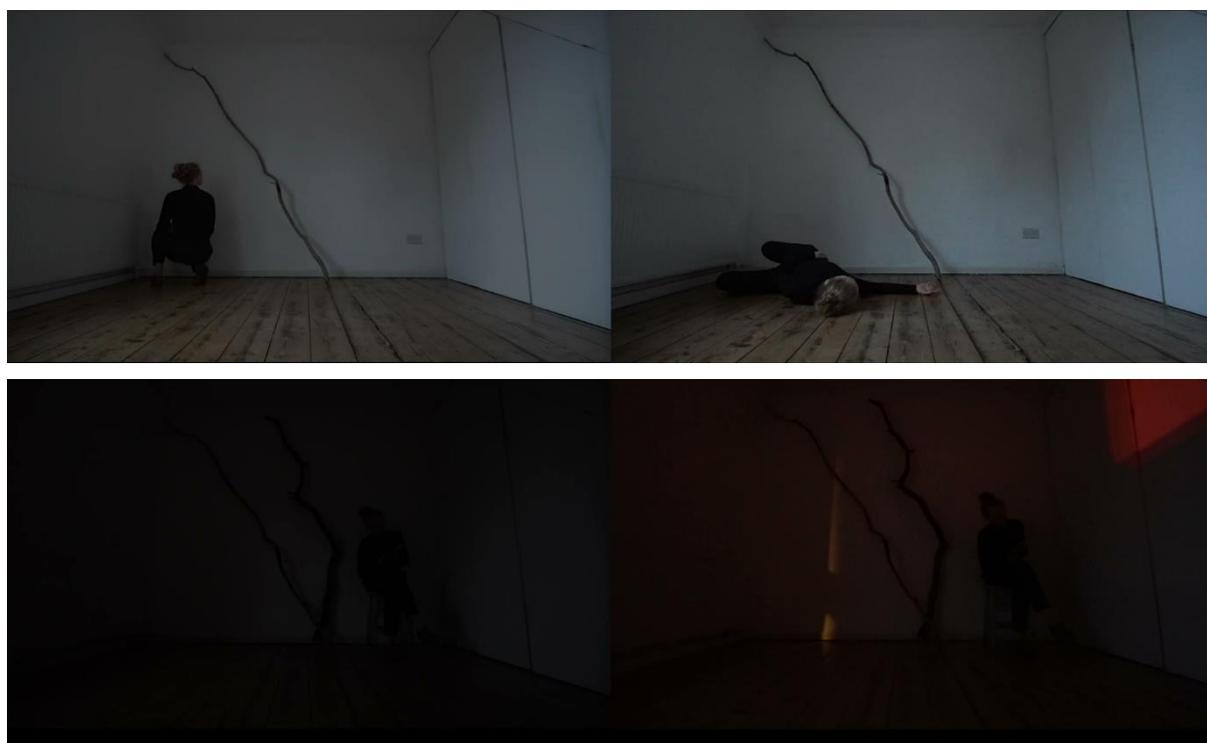
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<sup>212</sup> See SECTION THREE of this thesis.

nightfall fell. As the room darkened, sounds of traffic became more pronounced and shafts of light appeared and disappeared upon the walls: the yellow glow of the streetlight, a panning of a car's red break-lights. Their presence in the performance made manifest Bennett's notion of "commingling", which acknowledges all things – including what otherwise might be considered to be the detritus of human activity – to be "actants more than objects" (Bennet, 2010: 115). Indeed, their presence defined the end of nightfall in the room: whereas in the wood nightfall would last on average 90-120 minutes (and longer in summer), the room would reach a stable level of darkness – its own interior night – around 30 minutes after sunset. This was due to the streetlamp outside offering a gentle illumination to the space, preventing it from darkening further and resisting the ongoing nightfall that continued to inhabit the spaces beyond its glow.

However, the streetlight outside was not the only more-than-human presence to affect and shape the duration of nightfall in the room: it is of significance to *Traces* that Bennett specifically includes "technologies" in her commingling of actants, as it is to the more-than-human eye of the camera that this choreography was performed, and it is through screens and headphones that it was encountered. Whereas the presence of the streetlight directly affected the duration of nightfall's darkening within the room, it is the perception of that darkening that the technology shaped. The processual darkening that I perceived live in the room was speeded up by the camera, so that the performance on screen reached a static level of darkness – a technological night – much earlier than was perceived in the room. In the same way that *Patterns* was choreographed in relation to the place-specific darkening of the wood, *Traces* was choreographed in relation to both the room's urban duration of nightfall and the technologically filtered perception of that nightfall. However, whilst the use of technology affected the perception of nightfall within the room, it nevertheless enabled new and exciting ways of perceiving the time-specific facet of the work. This manifested through a sort of layering of nightfalls, which occurred in two different ways. Firstly, to prioritise a time-specific engagement with nightfall's duration, the format in which *Traces* was shared meant that *Traces* effectively occurred across two nightfalls: the one in which it was performed and the one in which it was viewed. The time-specific commencement of the performance enabled the processual darkening of each nightfall to be contiguous with the other, forming a layering of durations through which the dissonances and correlations between them might become apparent. This layering was not only enabled through the use of technology, but also accentuated by it: one audience member shared images of their computer screen upon which the nightfall of *Traces* merged with the reflection of the sunset taking place behind them, enabling a visual seeping of nightfalls to occur. This layering was also made tangible in another way: as I accumulated recordings of the performance taking

place on different evenings, I experimented with playing these films alongside one another. Whilst this did not form a part of the examined submission of this research, this layering shifted the focus away from a single night-time choreography and towards an observation of the nuanced differences in the quality of darkness and movement within the multiple nightfalls of a single site. The recordings made palpable the time-specific uniqueness of each nightfall's processual darkening and the choreography it co-formed, as the images alongside one another synced and deviated, following their own particular descent towards night. Through the use of technology, *Traces* was able to prioritise a shared experience of nightfall's duration. Doing so made felt both the multiplicity of nightfall through the layering of durations, and the unique nuances that form each nightly occurrence: it is this which ultimately forged the time-specificity of the work.



Still images from a split-screen recording of *On the Traces We Carry* (2021). The images demonstrate the dissonance between the choreography, darkness and more-than-human actants of each nightfall.

The online performance of *Traces* has therefore contributed significantly to the development of this research practice. It has expanded its application of choreological analysis to observe the ways in which nightfall in different sites becomes manifest in movement: it has explored how those observations might be used choreographically to “carry” the quality of one night-space into another, or else rupture the relatedness that has been observed. Additionally, it has commenced the process of developing this noctographic practice in relation to urban sites. In doing so, it has broadened its ways of engaging with – and responding to – the more-than-human facets of a nightfall. Lastly, the ways in which *Traces* has engaged with technology has enabled this practice to explore new ways of working time-specifically, enabling an essential broadening of my own understanding and application of the term.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The process of establishing a night-time movement practice has necessitated the generation of a number of new terms to suitably describe and articulate the new findings that have emerged through this research. The terms I use are often metaphorical and evoke poetic images to help communicate particularly aspects of the practice and, in particular, to help evoke for the reader/practitioner an embodied, kinaesthetic experience of sensorially engaging with nightfall. The use of poetic terms and imagery aligns this practice with each of the strands of its methodology and theoretical framework. For instance, both choreologist Valerie Preston-Dunlop (2006) and phenomenologist Maxine Sheets-Johnstone (1979) generate new, often poetic terms that draw two words together to describe the new movement principles they have formulated in their respective fields: “body design”, “spatial tension” (Preston-Dunlop, 2006: 134), “projectional quality”, “form-in-the-making” (Sheets-Johnstone, 1979: 57). These terms help to evoke specific qualities or structures of movement, making their meaning more tangible and therefore more accessible to embody. A similar approach is taken through this research through its creation of “noctographic tools”, a selection of movement principles that are applicable to a night-time practising of movement.

Likewise, new materialism uses structures to evoke modes of relatedness, such as Tim Ingold’s meshwork (2015) and Donna Haraway’s string figures and composting (2016). Haraway in particular frequently creates hyphenated words – “become-with”, “making-with” (ibid.: 4-5) – to evoke processes of relatedness in a poetic yet palpable way. This research takes a similar approach, generating terms such as “moving-with” and “becoming-night” to attempt to articulate complex experiences of perception and relatedness at nightfall. Finally, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, in his essay *Cezanne’s Doubt* (1964), upon which this research practice draws, uses the features of a painting – contours, colour, and so forth – as metaphors for the process of perception. Similarly, through reference to Merleau-Ponty’s essay, this research uses tidal movement metaphorically to articulate a kinaesthetic perception of the processual darkening of nightfall. In doing so, a new perspective of nightfall’s duration as place-specific emerges. By generating a glossary of new terms, this research practice not only seeks to articulate the embodied experiences of this practice, but also – and, essentially – to enable future engagements with this work to be both possible and accessible.

**becoming-night:** A durational, participatory and kinaesthetic experience of a site-specific nightfall: staying with a site for the duration of nightfall and engaging with its processual darkening through movement.

**beyond-form:** This term refers to how movement, through a noctographic practice, can be understood to exist in excess of a fixed form/body, and instead is co-formed by (and entangled with) the more-than-human night-time environment with which the human body moves. It draws upon Erin Manning's assertion that "movement exceeds the body" (2011: 5) and is applied alongside the noctographic term "beyond vision" (see below) to articulate the particular relationship between nightfall and movement, whereby nightfall creates a more-than-visual environment through which movement is revealed to exist in excess of a fixed form/body.

**beyond-vision:** I use this term to recognise how the visual perception of human beings shifts during nightfall, resulting not in a loss of vision but (a) a capacity to perceive the blurring and merging of things in darkness, and (b) a recognition of nightfall as a kinaesthetic entanglement of motion that is not only – and not always – seen, but is necessitated by the dark to be felt, imagined and sensorially encountered.

**elasticity of place:** The shifting identity of a place as a result of, and in relation to, temporality, duration and perception, a concept made particularly tangible by nightfall.

**horizontalizing:** This concept describes both the unbalancing caused by nightfall and the equalising of human and more-than-human relationships through movement. It has developed from the practice of "falling-with" nightfall, in which the body shifts from a stable centre to fall durationally from a vertical stance to a horizontal one. However, during nightfall, the horizontalizing that occurs is not simply that of the body's stance but a horizontalizing of relatedness, an action which "draws human attention sideways" (Bennett, 2010: 112), tangibly shifting the notion of who or what shapes the trajectory of the movement. Horizontalizing forms one of the "noctographic tools" of this practice (see below).

**kinespheric clusters:** This term shifts the structure of the kinesphere to encompass not only – and not, necessarily, entirely – the human body, but instead creates a shared spatial structure of relatedness between human and more-than-human bodies and surfaces. This relatedness is not predicated on touch or proximity (as it is in choreology) but rather acknowledges a more-than-visual entanglement and exchange to exist in the spaces in-

between. The notion of kinespheric clusters forms one of the “noctographic tools” of this practice (see below).

**movement-constellation:** Developed from the movement scales of a choreological practice, whereby points in space are fixed into a particular pattern or order. Whereas movement scales are structured around the form of the human body and are often symmetrical, using the structure of Rudolf Laban’s kinesphere (Laban, 1966), movement-constellations instead use the non-symmetric forms of the constellations to explore a site at nightfall. Additionally, whereas movement scales are fixed in space, the night-time practising of movement constellations means that they shift through the site as night’s darkening alters and challenges modes of perception.

**moving-with:** This term refers to a patterning of relations that relies upon kinaesthetic modes of engagement. It acts as a development of Donna Haraway’s notion of “becoming-with” (2016) to suggest that, in the dark, it is through a kinaesthetic engagement with place that relatedness with (actual and imagined) forms, figures and textures of a nightscape are formed.

**night-kin:** This term is used in this research to refer specifically to the kinship forged through a noctographic practice. It considers the shadow-space of nightfall and the blurring, more-than bodily peripheries that nightfall brings to the fore to be recognised as kin equal to those of bodies and beings. Essentially, making night-kin requires visibility to no longer be the sole indicator of what is present, and what is viable as kin.

**night-tide:** This term is utilised in this practice to describe a kinaesthetic experience of nightfall’s duration, one which considers the fluid, liquid and spatial aspects of night’s darkening. It articulates the phenomenon of nightfall as a “tide” which ebbs and flows through seasons and weathers, geographies and environments.

**noctographic**<sup>213</sup>: Throughout this thesis I describe my practice as “noctographic”<sup>214</sup>. I use this term to indicate the night-specific engagement that this practice both prioritises and is shaped by<sup>215</sup>. The word is formed from “*nocto-*”, from the Latin “*nocturnalis*”, meaning “of or

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<sup>213</sup> The definition and information for this term is also provided within the main INTRODUCTION of this thesis.

<sup>214</sup> At the time of writing, the term is in little use. It is occasionally employed by night-time photographers to describe their work, whilst the term “noctograph” describes a 19<sup>th</sup> century writing tool used by partially-sighted writers and could also be employed for writing in the dark (as described in Gardiner, 1969, and Wertheimer, 1999).

<sup>215</sup> The term “noctographic practice” does not specify the form of the practice, enabling it to be equally applied to night-time practices that utilise film, writing, sculpture, and so forth, enabling a cross-disciplinary exchange, should other such practices emerge.

relating to the night; done, held, or occurring at night”, and “-*graphic*”, from the Greek “*graphia*”, meaning “that writes, delineates or describes”<sup>216</sup>.

**noctographic tools:** These are practice-based concepts that have emerged from this research, and which can be physically explored through a night-time movement practice. Listed in this glossary, these noctographic tools are developments of choreological movement principles through their application to night-time environments and engagement with new materialist theory.

**placial dreaming:** This term builds upon the choreological principle of spatial imagination to assert a more-than-visual “imagining-with” that is predicated upon an embodied exchange through – and with – place. Placial dreaming forms one of the “noctographic tools” of this practice (see above).

**re-turn:** This term builds upon the choreological principle of retrograding: using a particular pathway, which changes and shifts with nightfall’s darkening, the re-turning aligns with a new materialist understanding of “composting” (Haraway, 2016) to acknowledge how movement carries the experiences of encounters, and mulches those encounters together with new ones through its re-iteration. Therefore, the re-turning of a noctographic practice does not endeavour to fix movement patterns in place (as a choreological retrograde in general-space does) but rather to move-with the unfamiliarity of nightfall’s darkening. The re-turn forms one of the “noctographic tools” of this practice (see above).

**time-specific:** This term refers to practices and choreographies that engage with the durational and temporal qualities of a place. In doing so, they might attune to the more-than-human temporalities of a site or be led-by place-specific durations: for instance, shifts in weather, species migration, tidal flow, the formation and recession of ice-sheets, are some such examples of durational phenomena with which such practices might engage. The term “time-specific” acknowledges a site to be a transient, changing environment, comprised of multiple more-than-human time-scales. Working time-specifically enables a durational relationality to emerge.

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<sup>216</sup> Definitions according to the Oxford English Dictionary (2020).

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