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The Next Step: Eco–Somatics and Performance

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A proper ecological approach ... is one that would take, as its point of departure the whole organism-in-its-environment ...not a compound of two things, but one indivisible totality. The totality is in effect a developmental system (cf. Oyama 1985) and an ecology of life - in my terms- is one that would deal with the dynamics of such systems. (Ingold 2000:20)

How can we apply a new ecological paradigm to ways in which we somatically educate children, students, performers or clients? What skills in movement practice might be appropriate both in terms of the tools of practice and the context within which they are taught? How does the physical environment influence the learning process? How can practices of embodiment be applied in such a way that they support a move away from the mechanistic worldview which still informs the day to day life of most individuals as reality: separate beings, matter as basically inert and moved by spirit and that we exist independent of our context.

Initially I shall glance at various surfaces and leaves of the ecological debate within Western Europe and North America: new science paradigms, deep ecology, eco-psychology and eco-feminist discourses in order to formulate the kinds of practices of embodiment that might be necessary to achieve a fundamental shift in our perception and in our hearts/ minds. Harre et al rightly point out the danger that: *'western modes of greenspeak will become the dominant or only mode of talking about environmental matters.'* (Harre, Brockmeier and Muhlhausler 1999:159) and remind us that we need a global exchange of perspectives but for now I am intent on developing a somatic practice which *'incorporates'* current western ecological thinking.

...adopting a helpful distinction from Paul Connerton (1989:72-3), I regard embodiment as a movement of *incorporation* rather than inscriptions, not a transcribing of form onto material but movement wherein forms themselves are generated. (Ingold 1990:215).

This practice I am calling ***eco-somatics***.

Secondly how might an ecological view influence training for performers? What kinds of performances might emerge from a physical practice that consciously strives to place itself in the reality of quantum physics, relativity and chaos theories without abandoning itself to the attractive abstraction and potential disembodiment of cybernetics and systems theories? I shall offer examples and thoughts from my recent experience of co-directing '***Being in Between***', a movement-based durational piece created at Bristol Zoo (October 2005) with Baz Kershaw, which offered as a 'performance for the ecological era.'

New sciences and embodiment

In general Britain's psychology and behaviour is still firmly embedded in a worldview which is a combination of mechanistic science, technology, capitalism and psychodynamic psychology. Mechanistic science is a paradigm of closed systems with a belief in matter made up of particles and thus a world of separate parts and discrete sense data, the independence of knowledge from context, the reassurance of a natural order to the universe and a grasping towards the Baconian notion of nature as a machine, inert and there to be dominated (Merchant 1992:48). Change comes only from external forces, not from within. This world view is both compounded by and has contributed to the rise of the power of capitalism as we developed a greed for and according to La Chapelle (Roszak 1995:60) an addiction to non-renewable energy sources and the glint of gold. As we adventured to discover what lay beyond the horizons, to dominate

and to possess territory and rich resources, the brilliance of our inventive minds led to the growth of industrialisation and technology. Discoveries were applied without consideration for environmental, temporal or spatial contexts. In psychodynamic psychology the normally-functioning ego is still considered as

an isolated atom of self-regarding consciousness that has no relational continuity with the physical world around it. (Roszak 1995:10)

Value is given to the processes of separating out from the other and individuation is a sign of adulthood. Since overt rituals for the rites of passage have been abandoned, scant consideration is given as to where this isolated individual might be stepping out to. Even in Winnicott's object-relations approach, which pays attention to environment as part of the therapeutic process, the discourse prioritises the act of the child stepping away from the mother rather than perhaps celebrating the fact that the child is stepping into a new environment of broader and more complex relationships. (Barrows in Roszak 1995:109)

The patterns of isolation, superiority, dominance, greed, exploitation and order as a prerequisite for power arising from the inheritance and perpetuation of this kind of worldview are re-enacted on a daily basis in Britain to the extent that our planet – and therefore ourselves - may be dying of exhaustion.

In mechanism the primacy of process was superseded by the stability of structure (Merchant 1992:52).

A first step away from this embodied yet outdated worldview may be to educate ourselves in some basics of the more recent sciences and to be curious about whether these discoveries have in any way filtered through to our attitudes and behaviour, or if they remain on the fringe of actual relevance to modern life. Interestingly enough, one of the flaws in mechanistic science lay in the fact that the laws of motion did not conform to the expectation that it was possible to break something down into parts and analyse it mathematically.

the application of the laws of motion is difficult because each body is touched by several others at the same time ...the rules presuppose that bodies are perfectly hard and separable from all others and we do not observe this in the world. (Principia Philosophiae (1644) in Oeuvres ed. Adam and Tannery (Paris: Cerf 1897 -1913 principle 53) in Merchant 1992:51).

It is therefore perhaps to be expected that subsequent discoveries examined notions of structure, boundaries and movement and that correspondences were made between the discoveries in these new sciences and non- Western traditional spiritual and medical belief systems which prioritise process and therefore movement. Let us glance back at some of the basic stepping stones to a new picture of humans in the world.

Relativity theory began to admit mutual influence between fields of varying strengths moving in space but they were still considered external to and separate from each other. Quantum mechanics brings us the fact that motion occurs in leaps and is context dependent, thus introducing the notion of context dependency as a characteristic of matter. (Merchant 1992:93)

Bateson, biologist and Maturana, neuroscientist independently developed a new concept of mind in the 1960's. According to the theory of living systems, mind is not a thing but a process- the very process of life. The interactions of a living organism – plant animal or human with its environment are cognitive, or mental interactions. Life and cognition become inseparably connected. Mind – or more accurately mental process is immanent in matter at all levels of life. Bohm (1980) introduces a scientific approach based on the primacy of process. His premise that both living and inanimate things reproduce themselves constantly by enfoldment and unfoldment (Merchant 1992:93) heralds an attitude of non-differentiation in the fundamental existence of organisms and of the environment.

A new paradigm emerges developing away from physics to the life sciences. (Capra 1996:13). Aspects include the value of wholeness, process, inter-relationship, permeability, adaptability, inter-locking patterns and systems. In psychology we see the emergence of Gestalt psychology in the 1940's which sees *'the existence of irreducible wholes as a key aspect of*

perception (Capra 1996: 32) followed by the development of family therapy and systemic therapy which either no longer believe in or no longer prioritise the unconscious, but work from the situation as it presents itself. A teenager suffering from anorexia is not seen as having a personal problem but the view is taken that as a result of personal characteristics and tendencies, she/he is displaying a symptom which is the result of a failure in the dynamics of the system within her family or life situation. It is this that needs to be listened to and addressed.

Another influence within this new ecological paradigm is cybernetics, the study of the organisation of systems but as Berman so astutely observes not enough attention has been given to the shadow side of this holistic worldview within the modern day context. One aspect of this, as he sees it, is that the

somatic energy of holistic thinking becomes the conceptual structure of cybernetics or systems theory. Cybernetic holism will buy up the holistic worldview and energy, repackage it and then sell it back to the public in a sanitized form. (Berman 1989:306).

His fear is that systems analysis becomes the reigning ideology and real body consciousness a taboo subject. Within the field of dance analysis Albright expressed similar fears in terms of Butler's theories of performativity. Her sense was that finally Butler abandons a relationship with the actual body by ignoring that however much one may deconstruct in theory one's self, gender or sex as 'natural', in practice those conditionings will remain as part of one's body life for much longer and cannot be dismissed in the same time span. (Albright 1997:15) Changes in the body take practice and operate on a different time scale from theoretical changes: taking this seriously may be a key component of ecological somatic practice.

Eco-somatics.

What somatic experiences do we need to bring our perceptions and bodies closer to the reality of this ecological paradigm?

The individual mind is immanent but not only in the body. It is also immanent in pathways and messages outside the body; and there is a larger mind of which the individual mind is only a subsystem...

The most important task today is perhaps to learn to think in a new way. It is the attempt to separate intellect from emotion that is monstrous, and I suggest that it is equally monstrous-and dangerous-to attempt to separate the external mind from the internal. Or to separate mind from body. (Bateson 1972:467).

This analysis would imply that we need to develop a somatic education which supports us to experience ourselves as constantly changing and as part of an ever-evolving situation, in which we are self-in-relation to others and to the environment. This seems a good place to start, even if we are not yet quite ready to embrace Ingold's definition that *'that the process of embodiment is one and the same as the development of that organism in its environment'* (Ingold 2000:170).

The practice of eco-somatics which I introduce as a foundation training in movement skills and awareness for performers and therapists begins with an investigation into the body structure in movement. We then sense how, as we embody a feeling, a thought or a physical sensation (whichever is foregrounded in our gestalt at that moment), we weave an intricate web of action and response in the environment around us. This kinaesthetic perception supports the attitude that we exist as part of a situation rather than as central to it.

Eco-somatics is a practice which encourages an equal alertness to both the inner reality of the participant and to their external environment. This implies a condition of shifting balance within the changing moment, without either digging inside for some essentialist idea of deeper authenticity or becoming totally conditioned by the external activity of the environment. This threshold shifts constantly according to circumstances e.g. cooking a meal, artistic performance, meditation.

The intelligence of the body-in-movement is a basic premise in eco-somatics. The body is not placed in duality with mind or seen as a medium for expressing psychological realities.

when you yell in anger, the yell **is** your anger, it is not a vehicle that carries your anger...the echoes of the yell are the reverberations or your own being as it pours forth into the environment. (Ingold 2000:24)

In relation to seeing and space, for example, we study overview, horizontal view, underview and point of view through movement, as a way of becoming aware of how these ways of looking may or may not support tendencies to dominate, to be transparent, to subvert or to focus in our actions within a situation. In order to re-appraise ourselves as organism-in-the-environment this type of research may be undertaken with all the senses. In relation to hearing and time we can investigate body rhythms within the rhythms of the environment as a way of constantly re-familiarising ourselves with the fact that the body has its own shifting time frame who's needs are frequently ignored in the speed of technology and organisation. If we want the body to speak its wisdom then we need to become familiar with the rhythms of the organism, like the rhythm of the seasons, to respect its information and to act accordingly. There are no short cuts.

Eco-somatics engages with a physical exploration of going and staying as two movement systems expressed through transitions and positions. Motivations, desires and perceptions of place change according to which system one is operating within and the different values can often lead to misunderstandings between people. At a broader level, these preferences connect with issues of colonialism, bioregionalism, emigration and immigration and may help us to perceive habitual attitudes in our own movement which we may not have challenged within ourselves. Culturally in Britain, for example, we may still need to deal with the embodied ancestral colonial values which we give so readily to the conquering hero(going). By becoming aware of how our behaviour and societal practices are still influenced by these patterns, we may eventually create the space to adapt and to be flexible enough to create a third possibility. This I see as a co-creation of a complex environment which values diversity and proportionate activity.

At a second stage of training, eco-somatics includes an approach to movement and communication which starts from the premise that we cannot *not* communicate, but that we can seek to be as aware as possible of the totality of our communication through physical sensations, thoughts and feelings in movement. We can also choose to highlight a particular strand of communication by attending to it specifically. This actually means that we are foregrounding that particular contact rather than breaking off from other relationships. Communication can be directly with the environment or with humans-in-the-environment.

there exists a state of pre-communication in which our intentions play across the body of the other'. (Merleau –Ponty in Berman1989:36)

Energy, dynamics and relationships are largely invisible processes but we all receive some of the passing results of these processes if we sensually engage ourselves in the moment. The fact that they are invisible does not mean that they do not exist.

The tools and skills outlined above are used in eco-somatics to stimulate processes which can develop perceptions and mechanisms to support us with a different perception and experience of ourselves- in- the- world. Movement is seen from the point of view of movement and change, rather than from a static position or stillness. It is, in fact, something that never stops, although there may be points of stillness along the way, rather than something that we can stop and start. When we move out of the studio to engage with the laws of change in nature, this fact becomes an embodied experience.

The ecological body

It seems to me that to consolidate the theoretical gains brought by the paradigm of embodiment, one final step has yet to be taken: that is, to recognise that the body is the human organism, and that the process of embodiment is one and the same as the development of that organism in its environment. (Ingold 2000:170).

According to eco-psychologists, ecology is the study of connectedness (Roszak1995: 3) and one of the sources of our cultural disembodiment is the removal of ourselves and our lives from a survival relationship with nature. This relationship gave us the recognition of mutual inter-dependency and therefore the appropriate restraints on destructive tendencies came into play.

We cannot feel ourselves as a part of what we are destroying and various studies are under way to explore the behaviours of addiction, self-harm and abuse in relation to our insistent denial and refusal to face the facts that we are running ourselves out of resources.

In many of our leisure activities in the outdoors the action /the act (active) takes priority over the needs of the location (passive) : so we have the scars of skiing which now dominate so many mountain landscapes, or closer to home the chipping away of fossils on Charmouth beach after the storms.

It would therefore seem appropriate to initiate somatic education within the natural environment to counteract the all- human bias and, following in the tradition of the Tao, to allow ourselves once more to study the laws of nature as a guide to ecological life.

A proper ecological approach ... is one that would take, as its point of departure the whole organism-in-its-environment ...not a compound of two things, but one indivisible totality. The totality is in effect a developmental system (cf. Oyama 1985) and an ecology of life - in my terms- is one that would deal with the dynamics of such systems... If we are prepared to treat form as *emergent* within the life-process....we do not have to think of mind or consciousness as a layer of being over and above that of the life of organisms, in order to account for their creative involvement in the world. Rather, what we may call mind is the cutting edge of the life process itself...This totality is not a bounded entity but a *process* in real time: a process, that is, of growth or development. (Ingold 2000: 19-20).

Here Ingold takes us one step further than Bateson and his definition of practical ecology is the most satisfying that I have found to date. If I am to remain with

my task of altering the movement patterns which seem to be leading us into ecological turmoil I feel that it is necessary to devise somatic skills which refuse to ignore this ecological approach. An example of this in my own work is to develop environmental awareness through the moving body. By working with the elements/environment in different conditions and at different times of day, for example walking on sand, on the rocks, in the sea, through rock-pools I am required to investigate different qualities and types of movement and to adopt an attitude of adaptability and flexibility in order to dis-cover what is possible for this situation.

Ingold refers to skills as *'the capabilities of action and perception of the whole organic being situated in a richly structured environment.'* (Ingold 2000:5) I am interested in ecological performance skills. It is clear that the environment can give practice in the perception of dynamic relationships and in order to extend my argument to include how attention to the ecological body might effect performance skills training and the emergence of a devised performance piece, I shall introduce and then refer to examples in my recent co-creation of ***Being in Between***, an environment-specific durational performance at Bristol Zoo.

Being In Between

I regard embodiment as a movement of incorporation rather than inscriptions, not a transcribing of form onto material but a movement wherein forms themselves are generated. (Ingold 1990:215)

This definition of embodiment could describe the entire movement of creating ***Being in Between*** which we described as follows:

From the visitors' perspective, the performance will be embedded in the zoo as if part of the environment/habitat, interacting with its inhabitants – animals, keepers, visitors – in ways that seem sometimes 'natural', sometimes 'extra-ordinary. The performance will be more or less visible because of the ways in which it is produced: daily life activity, solo actions and dialogues, choreographed pieces, and because of how it will be 'framed' by

careful placement in space or timing during the day. (Kershaw and Reeve 2005).

For the purposes of this paper, I shall concentrate on how the ecological movement skills which I selected served to both re-educate us in an awareness of what I am calling our ecological body (*organism-in-its-environment Ingold 200:20*) and to affect the way in which we devised the piece, performing it as an intrinsic part of the zoo environment. I shall describe the creation of the score, (part fixed, part improvised) as I believe its complexity reflects ecological concerns, introduce the performers and the applied movement skills, and focus on one moment of the six hour performance.

Score

The two performers, Maya Cockburn and Alistair Ganley, moved through 5 modes during the durational performance: visitor, zoo keeper, primatologist (connected to the notion of fieldwork and research), feral human and bare human . We decided that each mode would take a different route through the zoo at four different times of day.

Orientation route: visitor: early morning.

Efficiency route: zookeeper: mid-morning.

Desire route: primatologist: end of the afternoon.

Invisible route: feral human: early afternoon.

Bare human was a mode which only emerged once during the performance and consisted of sitting still on the Gorilla Island, so perhaps the route for bare human was 'across the border', as the island was off limits for visitors.

These modes may be seen as offering the opportunity to explore the notion of impermanence, that there is no fixed self, no persistent subject of our varying experiences and to move as such within the transitory nature of the zoo environment.

Independently the performers discovered the kind of route they would take in each mode. Their subsequent scores provided the basic pathways for the walkabout sections of the day-long durational performance, which they travelled together. On each route the performers were invited to engage in one

'encounter' at an enclosure, and to work with at least one signpost, bench or dustbin. (see below). Although the orientation route was linked to visitor mode, and the performers had visitor's costumes, they could at any moment shift their movement vocabulary to one of two other modes, in this case zoo keeper or primatologist. This gave them the scope to work with stimuli in the moment and also offered a disjunction between the movement-based activity and the costume. The performers discovered that depending on which mode they were in, they perceived a completely different zoo.

if perception is a mode of action, then what we perceive must be a direct function of how we act. Depending upon the kind of activity in which we are engaged, we will be attuned to picking up certain kinds of information... In other words to perceive an object or an event is to perceive what it affords. (Ingold2000:166).

A signpost (transition), a bench (position) and a dustbin (re-cycling) would 'afford' something very different for each mode, providing a rich source of stimuli for devising material directly relevant to the multiple narratives which make up the zoo. Imagine a feral relationship to a dustbin on an invisible route, or a zoo keeper's relationship to a dustbin on an efficient route.

An 'encounter' was defined as taking place at an animal enclosure, where the performers would first work with an awareness of the animals and then spread their attention to include visitors and the botanical environment. The relationship with the total environment would once again differ according to the attitude of their mode at the time.

We had decided to work primarily with plants and primates. There were 5 main primate areas at the zoo. Each area had visitor viewing spaces, buffer zones between visitors and the animals enclosures and then behind, or inside animals' private spaces and enclosures, which only the zoo keepers had access to. The Gorilla Island and Twilight World seemed to provide two diametrically opposed primate sites for us to investigate in terms of movement-based performance. The Twilight World is a walk-through dark environment, with a taped soundtrack of nocturnal animals and smells pungent. It feels very

immersive and the animals are caged in glass enclosures, providing a disorientating play of reflections and shadows. We performed there for 45 minutes each morning. Gorilla Island spans an acre in size and has a moat around it. In good weather the gorillas are fed on the island with a talk for the visitors. Afterwards they go back into the glass enclosures in their house for the main feed. We decided to perform for thirty minutes in front of the glass enclosures at that time,

We had decided that we were interested in working along the continuum of almost invisible to highly visible movement-based performance, so that actions and events suddenly emerged from and disappeared into the flux of activities at the zoo. Having established modes, pathways and two focused areas of performance, based around the temporal, spatial, animal and human systems at the zoo it was time to develop the movement score.

As a deliberate choice, although they had never met before, both performers had worked with me for a number of years including my module in movement and communication. I knew that they both had the capacity to enjoy working very visibly, with humor and in full performance mode, as well as to engage with an exploration of subtle shifts in self- in- environmental dynamics through their movement dialogue. Both had cultivated their awareness through movement to dance on the threshold between their inner associative landscape, filled with memories and imagination and the external environment – in this instance an intensely complex and shifting dance of multiple systems. They remained kinaesthetically awake to the constant process of change both internally and externally. This choice of threshold supports the experience of being one part of an ever-changing environment. The belief that I am the centre of the world can come from losing touch with either the internal or external environment at any given moment. The performers were familiar with the concept that we are all in communication all of the time and had practised being aware of different levels of these dialogues through paying attention to flow, weight, time and space in their movement and in the movements around them.

I was able to swiftly introduce my movement research. I wanted to see how four particular areas of skill could inform the creation of a shared movement vocabulary which responded to the modes imagined specifically for this environment. These skills needed to offer a tangible way of educating the

sensual reality of being a co-participant in a complex environment including the animals. Although I have worked with environmental movement and performance for fifteen years, mainly in 'wilderness' environments, animals, specifically primates, were a new factor for me and for the performers.

The areas of skill are:

Active/passive

Proportions

Transition and position

Point line and angle (1)

I would like to name these 'etic' skills. Etic in anthropological literature refers to a '*wholly neutral, value-free description of the physical world*' as opposed to 'emic' which spells out the specific cultural meanings that people place upon the world. (Ingold 2000:14) These skills applied through non-stylised movement demand precision but they are immediately embedded within environment, as the dynamic principles of active/passive, proportions, transition/position and point line and angle are apparent everywhere in the life-cycles. They are movement skills but they can also be engaged with at a philosophical level, which does not come as a surprise if one no longer upholds the duality of mind and matter.

Active/ passive gave us a way of analyzing and being comfortable with the extremes of doing and being that exist in the movement at the zoo as well as a continuum to engage with throughout devising the piece. The gorillas have a marked capacity for just sitting and being with minimal movement for long periods of time. When the performers went onto the Gorilla Island, the score required them not to imitate this quality in the gorilla, but having passed through 'imitation, absorption and dialogue' as a training score within the rehearsal process, to embody their own version of that kind of receptivity, supported by the gorilla's environment. They simply sat for 10 -15 minutes looking out from the island, in positions similar to the gorillas habitual feeding positions and yet their postures began to be informed and subtly changed by their own autobiographical associations, memories and perceptions. This interests me; how in performance we can simultaneously experience these different strands of

life in process, from the re-remembered intimate association through to a detailed awareness of the actual present moment. At the other end of the scale, some visitors have a marked capacity for constantly initiating, doing, moving on, and the performers were able to articulate this clearly in their bodies by consciously entering 'active' mode in their bodies, in their feelings and in their mental attitudes and by working with point, line and angle.

The zoo environment needs to encompass extremes of active and passive cycles of activities, with systems often operating in different rhythms. Twilight World for example (nocturnal animals) has been developed for the convenience of human viewing in our daylight hours

Proportions offered a kinesthetic sense of scale and appropriate level of action and energy as a reference for any particular moment. The performers explored proportions within their own body structure as well as environmental proportion: how much? how far? how long? A dynamic awareness of proportions in time, space, feelings and body structure enabled the performer to remain aware of the environmental constellation at any given moment and to modulate their own contribution according to changing priorities. This modulation could be created within active or passive mode. If, for example, the mongoose lemurs seemed to be getting over-excited by the performers movements, they could continue with the score but consciously work to find the right proportions necessary to maintain a carpet of communication (Suprpto) with the animals, without losing contact with the surrounding botanical environment or the visitors. They were constantly expanding and reducing their 'circles of attention' (Stanislavski 1980:81) *as well as* trying to be aware of what part they played within each other's and another's circle of attention.(2) In terms of the zoo, there are constantly issues of proportion in terms of conservation numbers and animal adaptation to a conservation situation.

Transition /position offers a way of exploring the difference between going and staying. Should I stay or should I go? Do I leave or do I put down roots? These two modes of movement have different priorities and different perceptions of the world and I was interested in making these differences articulate within our movement vocabulary. The performers practiced different pathways and rhythms of moving through the site and also finding positions and

places to stay. We worked with prepositions which also offered embodied ways of relating differently to the same environment e.g. in the café, through the café, opposite the café. As part of this process, the performers became aware of when they were arriving and when they were leaving (transitions) as well as when they were 'there' (position). This they applied later in their movement piece with the spider monkey when I suggested that having established a dialogue through movement they needed to find a way of leaving which did not just dump the monkey but which took care of the relationship in leaving. This attitude became embodied at the close of their movement piece and also allowed them to experience their own feelings as they left the quarantined monkey. The atmosphere they created through their attunement and this attitude of engaged relationship provided a marked contrast to the habitual attitude of consumption: this animal is here for me, for my pleasure, I have identified what 'it' is and so now I can move on.

We also looked at the site from the viewpoint of going and staying: the pathways and the enclosures; the cyclical rhythm of the day, filling and emptying with visitors; the fact that most of the animals had been imported into this foreign environment and climate. Import, export, genetic compatibility, movement patterns in the wild in relation to movement patterns in enclosures were all areas that we spoke about when practicing transition and position.

Point Line and Angle

I asked the performers to develop a movement vocabulary by paying attention to point, to line and to angle both in their movement and in the environment. I also suggested that they begin to use these ways of moving as lenses through which to view the primates' movement. The spider monkey seemed to swing through lines, the owl monkeys darted from point to point, and the gorillas' sense of volume, weight and stillness gave sense of shape/angle, despite their capacity for brisk agility. In order to explore potential communication with the primates we paid attention to three primary areas to promote attunement or a shared '*pattern of resonances*' (Ingold 2000:197): Laban's four efforts: flow, weight, space and time, Bainbridge-Cohen's analysis of child developmental movement so that the performers could be aware of 'the brachiation pattern of the primates...as an intermediate phase between the horizontal and vertical stance.' (Hartley 1989:80) in their encounters with primates and point, line and angle. By foregrounding

the relevant combination of movement skills with a particular primate, communication was soon established and developed over the rehearsal time. It became important to return at the same time(s) of day so that we became part of the routine, and the exchange between primates and performers became more dynamic and varied, if not mutually challenging as time went on. This exchange was clearest with the mongoose lemurs and the spider monkeys, where access to contact and visibility were relatively simple. Point, line and angle gave us an etic vocabulary within the zoo setting with which to move with each system we came across in whichever mode we chose and to allow thoughts, feelings and movement styles to take us by surprise and to arise out of that encounter itself.

Wild Card System

After two weeks we were the 'wild card' of the zoo, the 'performer system', the gardeners nodded hello at the beginning of the day, keepers recognized us and smiled, we had been given permission to pass over the border onto Gorilla Island, we appeared and disappeared throughout the day, we maintained an attitude of transparency even when we were invisible to avoid manipulating dynamics. We provoked laughter, delight, astonishment, scorn, anger, embarrassment, we became another exhibit to be labeled. The state of heightened energy and movement awareness manifest through the score which the performers developed in practice and through working within a seven hour durational piece often seemed to interrupt and reflect back habitual attitudes and behaviours at the zoo and to open up possibilities of other ways of seeing, hearing, feeling and moving as part of the environment.

Ingold refers to 'taskscape' as embodied activities more related to function (active) and 'landscape' as embodied activities more related to form. He draws a parallel with the difference between organism and body. (Ingold 2000:196) In his sense, this relates directly to my quest for embodiment as both a formal and functional process which is fundamentally embedded in and constantly co-creating the environment.

Spider Monkey Moment.

This form originally emerged in rehearsal out of an encounter moment during one of the routes. The Czech spider monkey was in quarantine, alone in a large glass enclosure, with ropes and ladders and vegetation. In front of the enclosure was a large open square of ground. The performers worked to establish communication with the monkey through non-stylised movement, initially in the mode of primatologist.

In the final performance there were around fifteen people consciously there as audience. Oblivious visitors walked into the zoo without noticing the dancers and went to the glass front of the enclosure to look at the spider monkey. When they became aware of the dancers, either through the spider monkey's activities, the reflections of the dancers in the glass or the suspended atmosphere of incredulity, they found that they had placed themselves in a network of interactions. Reactions to this ranged from slight indignation or embarrassment to an interest in what was happening. A little boy stood up and joined the performers, imitating their movements. He was consciously included in the dance. Front of house staff slipped out to watch and zookeepers appeared – word had got around that there was a magic moment when the performers and the spider monkey danced together. As people perceived the indisputable *relationship* between the humans and the animals through movement, and witnessed the change of role as the humans danced for the monkey, the dance began to make sense in a different way and comments changed from 'oh look they are pretending to be monkeys' to 'oh look they are dancing with the monkey!' In those moments, awareness and meaning shifted stimulated by the 'incorporated' movement of the performers, I could suddenly hear the sound of the wind in the leaves of the large beech tree and see the expression of delighted amazement on my father's face. Those present became part of a shared moment which could only have been there and then.

Our actions do not transform the world, they are part and parcel of the world's transforming itself. And that is just another way of saying that they belong to time. (Ingold 2000:200)

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(1) My practice is based on a variety of sources in psychophysical training which are in a constant state of dialogue with each other. Most recently I completed an intensive training in Amerta Movement with Suprpto Suryodarmo at the Padepokan Lemah Putih, Solo, Java.

Amerta is a Javanese word which we might translate as 'nectar' or 'elixir of life'. This practice is based on the basic movements of daily life: walking, sitting, standing, crawling and lying down and the transitions between them, beginning with the observation of children playing. It is also based on moving in nature

and an embodied study of movement from the elements in motion and the laws of nature. The world is seen from the source of movement.

These 'areas of skill' are drawn directly from my studies with Suprpto Suryodarmo (1988-1998), a movement artist and teacher from Central Java, Indonesia and from his map of movement practice. My work continues to be inspired by Amerta Movement and guided by my understanding of these dynamic skills, amongst others, which he introduced to us. However, my understanding and application could be very different from Suprpto's reading of these dynamics and his own practice. Amerta Movement has no fixed form, so I am obliged to recognise, develop and create from my own particular background and to be able to dialogue with the specificity of Amerta Movement from that position. How I choose to apply and develop the work is embodied by me in my changing situation and the movement training programme which I have developed from these influences is ongoing and is called Move into Life.

(2) Thanks to Alistair Ganley for using this term at that time.