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Figure 1 Dancing Subjects

Abstract

This PhD by publication is a practice-led, critical commentary assemblage on a portfolio of five published works through a new materialist, posthuman, postqualitative (NMPHPQ) lens, developing a thematic focus on posthuman subjectivity. Postqualitative research is used in this re-turning as a departure from qualitative research methodologies that underpin the existing publications in my portfolio, following an NMPHPQ ontological and epistemological turn in my practice and research. This research inquiry explores the concept of posthuman subjectivity as it manifests in transdisciplinary practice embracing, firstly, dance as a participatory process, secondly, ecopsychology as a practice that locates the human subject within a wider ecology and, thirdly, critical disability studies as a portal to non-binary practice. These diffractive intersections unveil power-laden, ethical discourses that have subordinated matters of the body, privileging particular bodies over others. As this thesis unfolds, a knowledge symposium maps out the research assemblage, theorising the body as process, the environmentally contextualised human subject and the (dis)abled body, problematising notions of the human subject and reaching towards posthuman subjectivity. This practice-led, NMPHPQ inquiry employs diffractive analysis in challenging binary discourses, towards considering how the subordination of matters that have been made to matter less hold the potential for redefining how identities are organised and subjectivities are conceived and performed. This thesis moves transversally across disciplines and genres and is presented via text, photography and film in a trans-modal style, with an emphasis on transdisciplinarity. In moving towards the posthuman dancing subject, I consider the implications for practice in the field of psychotherapy, identifying the transdisciplinary

potential of diffracting across dance movement psychotherapy (DMP), ecopsychotherapy and critical disability studies, embedding the notion of the posthuman subject into practice in a way that is emancipatory and decolonising.

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Thesis Conventions

Ethical approval was received for all published works. All research participants are anonymised through the use of pseudonyms.

Pronouns: all subjects, human and more-than-human will be referred to by pronouns *she* or *he* (refraining from the pronoun *it*). Similarly, I use the pronoun *who* throughout (refraining from *that* and *which*) in relation to more-than-humans.

The five published works that are submitted as part of this PhD by publication can be accessed via online links in the appendix.

Throughout this thesis interruptions (lines of flight) are boxed and appear in italics. These interruptions include dreams, reflections and stories.

All references, quotations and citations refer to the published version of the texts that I have used.

The critical commentary assemblage includes films, that are accessed via the links provided to a YouTube channel.

List of Acronyms

BwO: Body without Organs

DLA: Disability Living Allowance

DMP: Dance movement psychotherapy

ERT: Embodied relational therapy

NMPHPQ: New materialist, posthumanist and postqualitative

IPA: Interpretative phenomenological analysis

NHS: National Health Service

N-HS: Non-Human subjects

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Entrance

‘...(b)eginnings, like endings, hover continuously in the psychic space...’
(Frizell 2017: 10).



Figure 2 Threshold¹

Do come in! I thought I recognised your voice through the intra-com.

And don't worry if you have forgotten your mask, I have some spares in the hallway cupboard. Who knows what is carried in this invisible air that we share.

¹ Figure 2 Threshold (pp. 15) is a photograph that I took at the Ecopsychology UK conference 2014, held at the Green and Away tented conference centre in Worcestershire. This structure was the entrance to the site.

Do remain at a safe distance. I hope that together we can navigate the tension between maintaining a distance and simultaneously becoming unreservedly entangled, recognising that ‘...separately determinate entities do not pre-exist their intra-action...’ (Barad 2007: 175). Intra-action is key to this inquiry into the transversal nature of posthuman subjectivity through differentiating, dancing material bodies. By subjectivity, I refer to this body that is engaged in an ongoing experience that is not *not* exclusively individual and, at the same time, it is not exclusively individual at all. I explain this further at the end of this chapter (see 1.4 A Note on Subjectivity, pp. 34).

The thesis moves beyond the limitations of a critical commentary of the identified published works, transforming into an assemblage and engaging with processes of diffraction that explores new pathways of possibility. The structure of this critical commentary assemblage’ is rhizomatic, challenging binary discourses and redefining the ways in which identities are organised and questioning how subjectivities are conceived and performed. As a process, it is grounded in ethico-onto-epistemologies that problematise notions of the human subject, challenging cultural norms, animating posthuman subjectivity as a ‘...*conceptual persona*...’ (52), rather than a concept. As a critical commentary assemblage, this research tracks and investigates the convergence of three disciplinary areas through a new materialist, posthuman, postqualitative (NMPHPQ) lens, developing a thematic focus on posthuman subjectivity. It is an act of entanglement, comprising practice-led, new materialist inquiry through text, photography and film, moving transversally across disciplines and genres to identify posthuman subjectivity as a particular embodied engagement in the world. This entanglement operates cartographically, tracking the transdisciplinary ideas within the content of the articles, locating these ideas within a

socio-cultural political context and employing post qualitative inquiry to move into those fertile liminal spaces from which a form of knowledge-ing arises.

At the heart of this research is the ontological imperative of radical immanence, that is ‘...the primacy of intelligent and self organising matter...’ (Braidotti 2019a: 31). With that in mind, the idea of a critical commentary assemblage navigates the ethico-onto-epistemological hair-pin bends of the inter, intra and trans-disciplinary meeting place(s) of dance, ecopsychotherapy and critical disability studies and itself becomes the very thing on which it is commenting. Braidotti (2019a) describes critical thinking as being about ‘...the creation of new concepts, or navigational tools to help us through the complexities of the *present*, with special focus on the project of *actualizing* the virtual...’ (37). This focus on the relationship between the present and the actualisation of the virtual is a dynamic meeting place of becoming, through which past and future, existing knowledge and knowledge that awaits discovery, diffract. This research diffracts into the margins to critique notions of human exceptionalism that become inscribed in practice and that shape perceptions of subjectivity. In the process of this new materialist, post-qualitative research, I challenge the way in which particular knowledge is privileged, decolonising processes that have entrapped more-than-verbal investigations in the margins, banished the otherwise enabled to a place of subordination and subjected the material world to a place of objectification. This critical commentary assemblage engages with embodied, embedded material-affective phenomena and follows the affective flows and intensities created in the meeting of material bodies moving and being moved. It is from those meeting places that I develop the idea of a posthuman subjectivity that offers a ‘...different relationality that disrupts the colonising binary logic of Western science and metaphysics...’ (Murriss 2021: 68).

The new materialist, posthuman, postqualitative (NMPHPQ) modes of inquiry employed in this critical commentary assemblage, diffract across the main areas of research in the five publications identified for this PhD by publication. These areas are dance movement psychotherapy (DMP), ecopsychotherapy and critical disability studies. The NMPHPQ modes of inquiry are explicated in Chapter 3 (see 3.1 Postqualitative Research, and 3.2 New Materialism and Posthumanism, pp. 68-71).

I wonder about your journey here. There is usually something that interrupts well-designed plans, disrupts best intentions and opens lines of flight in a process of deterritorialization (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). The journey of this thesis has been no exception and is peppered with interruptions that cut across trajectories of thought.

Do take a break at any time and please consider this thesis as a process of becoming, with which you might engage in a non-linear fashion. The process of constructing this thesis has been rhizomatic, and, as Deleuze and Guattari (1987) point out ‘...any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be...’ (7). This rhizomatic style combines academic text, personal stories, dreams and ponderings with photographs and short films that, together, weave a narrative around the portfolio of the five published works (for links to the publications, please see Appendices 1-5, pp. 162-163). In order to re-turn (to) my published research, this thesis has (been) created (from) an assemblage that turns towards the materiality of the world, locating the posthuman human subject amongst material

breathing and non-breathing subjects, such as trees, birds, creatures, beaches, buildings, rivers, cameras, technological equipment and more.

The writing of this thesis has offered a '...potential space...' (Winnicott 1971: 107) for the serious business of play. The writing style roams genres that combines academic, poetic and reminiscent, inviting you into entanglements of genre. This reflects my transversal identity as a practitioner and practice-led researcher.

Please enter. Did you say that you had your own mask?

And if you would not mind washing your hands, the bathroom is along the hallway. Don't mind the woodlouse in the corner, or rather do keep her in mind, as she appears later in the text and also serves as a reminder of our posthuman selves. Braidotti (1997) reminds us how the insect often features in literature as an abject, borderline '...generalized figure of liminality and inbetweenness...' (73). I refer to the woodlouse in the toilet as female, to emphasise the liminality and in betweenness of those othered by the oppression of binary thinking. *She* might be *he* or *they*.

Let us get going. Just a few things to remember.

Firstly, stay alert. Alert to the materiality of the moment. Alert to dreams and distractions that draw out emotional fragments emerging from the sense-making process of the alpha function (Bion 1962) within this assemblage. Stay alert to the dancer in you as you join this adventure. If you need to dance, then do. Stay alert also to your tentacular thinking, engaging your '...(m)ryriad tentacles...' (Haraway 2016: 31) to create your own lines of flight and moments of diffraction.

Secondly, do stay with the trouble (Haraway 2016) posed by voices (human and otherwise) who problematise the notion of '...knowledge-ing...' (Taylor 2021: 28) and

unsettle the perspectives of the Anthropocene. Donna Haraway (2016) explains the Anthropocene as a term coined by ecologist Eugene Stoermer referring to growing evidence of the significant impact of human activity on the earth.

And lastly, do protect the significance of N-HS (Non-Human Subjects) as a point of reference in relation to your own identity and the identity of all the material subjects who participate in this thesis.

Welcome to the front room. I notice that your eyes went to the bookshelves. On the right-hand side, third shelf down, are my own publications, five of which form the basis for this critical commentary assemblage research. There are three journal articles and a two book chapters. The threads that connect these writings are DMP, ecopsychotherapy and learning disability. Later in this chapter (see 1.3 Published Research, pp. 28-33) I will introduce these publications more fully, outlining the context in which they were written, locating the original research methodologies and explicating my departure into NMPHPQ research and practice. Each section of this thesis begins with a quotation from the portfolio of publications, as the threads of this critical commentary assemblage become entangled. Those publications sit alongside other significant texts, each of which has provided inspiration for this research.

On the middle shelf, you will also see books and journals that have informed my ideas about NMPHPQ research and practice. These texts will be contextualised in Chapter 2 (see Things that have Mattered, pp. 38-67), in which I present a knowledge symposium of matters that have shaped this research.

I see you looking at the photos on the piano. That one is of my three (now grown up) children and the picture behind is of me dancing at a Mayday celebration in about 1995. I am intrigued by the way in which this particular photograph catches me

in a place of transition, my body suspended as I transfer weight from one foot to another. The twist in my spine suggests an in-between-mo(ve)ment-of-potential, between two points of balance, that teeters on the edge of the past and the future, happening, as Braidotti (1997) says, ‘...always and already in between; it is relational, conjunctive and dynamic...’ (68). This is the place of becoming, as we hover in those in between places...

...and...

...but...

...if...

...for...

...so...

...however...

...those links between one thought and another, one intention and another, one action and another. There is always the potential of turning towards becoming differently; of re-imagining and reconfiguring norms. This thesis has remained open to turning places that await us in unexpected places.

Those paintings on the wall, one of flowers and one of Brighton marina, were painted by my late mother, who led me into the world of dance. Once she stopped dancing, her creativity shifted to painting. Her creativity has been both a starting point and a departure point for me.

Do come up to my office. The video camera is charging in the hallway ready for filming, so be careful not to trip. The agentic reality of this technology will be explained later in Chapter 4 (see 4.4 The Camera, pp. 94-96).

This office (that also serves as my younger daughter's bedroom when she returns), is where most of the writing and editing of the films happens. My desk looks out onto the wisteria's magnificent tendrils to the right (see Figure 3 Wisteria, pp. 22), the newly cut laurel across the back and the lilac tree to the left. Just the other side of the laurel, you will see the streetlamp. Last spring a pair of blue tits made their nest in there as I wrote. From the other window, you'll see the beautiful birch tree who appears in one of the films.



Figure 3 Wisteria

Further along, just through the gap in that hedge, is the greenhouse (see Figure 4 Greenhouse, pp. 23) and the vegetable garden, also an inspiration for this writing. On the shelf by the window is an array of notebooks where I scribble thoughts as they arrive and collect emergent dreams. These, too, have animated this thesis.

These things all contribute to this assemblage and through a diffractive inquiry I will explore the '...lines of force...' (Davies 2017: 267) that run through the component parts of this critical commentary assemblage'.



Figure 4 Greenhouse

I will map the diffractions in the meeting of phenomena:

‘...reading insights through one another in attending to and responding to the details and specificities of relations of difference and how they matter...’
(Barad 2007: 71).

Those relations of difference bring this thesis to life.

As I sit here, I see a computer, books, printed articles, a coffee cup, pens and pencils, reading glasses, a pot of hand cream, drawing paper, oil pastels, a mobile phone, a desk, a chair and a movement-space-cleared-behind-me. I have a corporeal connection with, and relational proximity to all these things who are involved in my immediate act of writing and filming. The phenomenological

philosopher, Merleau-Ponty (2004), reminded us that ‘...(t)he things of the world are not simply neutral objects which stand before us for our contemplation...’ (48), encouraging attention to the world of perception. More recently, post-phenomenological approaches widen that frame of reference about the participation of things in the world. Barad (2007) suggests an ‘...agential realism...’ (26) that provides an ‘...epistemological-ontological-ethical framework...’ (ibid) that is transdisciplinary, cutting across essentialist and dualistic thinking about matter. As I touch and am touched in this place of kinship, I shape and become shaped in mo(ve)ment(s), orienting towards becoming. Ahmed (2010) writes about the importance of orientations, particularly with regard to matter, suggesting that:

‘...(i)f matter is affected by orientations, by the ways in which bodies are directed towards things, it follows that matter is dynamic, unstable and contingent...’ (234).

Ahmed points out that an orientation towards writing involves a range of material things that enable that writing to happen. As I muse on how I am immediately situated, I become conscious of ‘...(t)hing power...’ (Bennett 2010: 20) through orientations that are both personal and political. In my grandmother’s day (she was born in 1897) the desk would have been something she cleaned to enable a man to write. I claim this desk to write as a political act (Ahmed 2010), and as I do so, I identify as parent-scholar-dancer-therapist-educator.

Hopefully you are gradually settling in. The next part of this introduction will outline the background to this PhD by publication, before introducing you in more detail to the selected published works.

1.2 Background

'...I locate myself ...as both a critical thinker and also first person subject entangled in, and impacted by this research...' (Frizell 2020a: 2).



Figure 5 Stag Tree

I become entangled in this research at a time of my life when the autumn leaves are falling and the vibrant colours of life's experience mellow into the deeper shades of russet brown and golden yellow. The sun is moving westwards².

The portfolio of published research has spanned the best part of a particular decade that sits within a dramatic socio-political and cultural context. In that decade, we have endured the impact of long-term austerity measures in the UK, along with

² The images of leaning into later life are held Figure 5 Stag Tree, pp.25 and Figure 6 Sunset in Cornwall, pp. 26

an escalation of neoliberal values. There has been a referendum for the UK to leave the European Union and a landslide victory for right-wing politics.

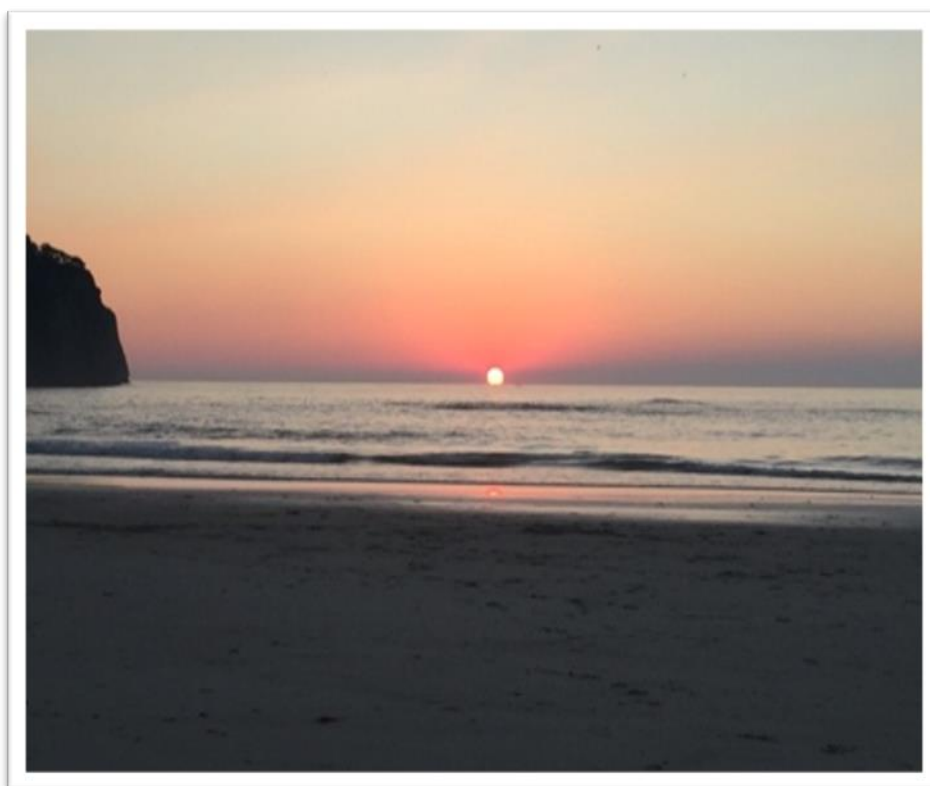


Figure 6 Sunset in Cornwall

Environmental consciousness regarding the ecological crisis has been catapulted into the mainstream arena. The scandalous acts of abuse by those in positions of power, such as Jimmy Saville, who remained unchallenged as he continued to abuse disabled young people. The #MeToo movement. The racial oppression unveiled with the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. As I began this thesis, the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic entered the global stage, threatening to bring progress and productivity to its knees. This turbulent context is an opportunity to orient our thinking differently about how identities are organised and subjectivities

performed, in order to re-orient ourselves towards a more embodied, compassionate and empathic presence with the world.

Ahmed (2010) suggests that the ‘...starting point for orientation is the point from which the world unfolds: the “here” of the body and the “where” of its dwelling...’ (236). This is where I begin. Public, political and academic discourses are moving towards a paradigm shift in response to rapid changes in the way we live our lives, culturally, technologically and psychologically. This thesis moves with that tide.

The publications that provide the basis of this thesis have arisen from my practice as researcher, educator, dance movement psychotherapist and supervisor. This practice is also underpinned by embedded, embodied lived experience, such as my roles as performer, community dance artist, disability activist, woman and mother to three now grown-up children of various abilities and disabilities. In addition, I have drawn on my own personal process, including a decade of intensive Jungian analysis that included working outside in ancient woodland. I joined the academic team at Goldsmiths as a research-active lecturer in DMP in 2007 and embarked on practice-led research. Through these diverse roles and perspectives, I have worked intensively within the intersections of dance as performance, as a community resource and as a modality in psychotherapy. I have woven ecopsychotherapy into my work, adhering to lifestyle principles, such as not flying, as statements of ethical intent. The birth of my own daughter with Down’s syndrome thirty-four years ago led me through an experiential, rhizomatic labyrinth towards critical disability studies as a scholarship that has underpinned my writing, research and practice.

In developing the thematic ideas in my portfolio of research, I have sought ontologies and epistemologies that support emancipatory notions of transversal

subjectivity. At the same time, this work moves towards transdisciplinary practice that brings together, and cuts across DMP, ecopsychotherapy and critical disability studies, all of which offer essential discourses that trouble the idea of what it means to be human.

1.3 Published Research

‘...I had a dream in which a horse had given birth to a very strange foal. All those who saw the foal were confused...having never seen one like it before. I awoke with a sense of curiosity, as well as sadness for this foal, for whom those around her had no place in their minds...’ (Frizell 2020a: 17).

The portfolio of published research comprises five peer reviewed articles and chapters based on qualitative research methodologies. These existing publications have made a unique interdisciplinary contribution to the knowledge base of discourses in the fields of DMP, ecopsychotherapy and critical disability studies. I have shaped and been shaped by a process in which ‘...(t)he writer writes and the labor of writing shapes the surface of the writer’s body...’ (Ahmed 2010: 235). Each publication has been a part of a process of finding a place in my perception for imagining the unfamiliar and welcoming the disruption of knowledge-ing.

As I re-searched and re-viewed these original texts, I have drawn on NMPHPQ research inquiry in order to develop the theme of posthuman subjectivity in (em)bodied practices. The intersectional and transversal meeting places of these publications are emancipatory, particularly regarding bodied engagements with the

world, learning disability as a marker of difference and the wider ecological dwelling place of all matter.

The five publications are situated in publication forums that include peer reviewed journals and anthologies, representing a diverse range of emancipatory discourses, including embodied research, environmental activism and critical disability studies. I will introduce each of these publications in the chronological order.

1.3.1 Publication 1: Embodiment and the Supervisory Task (Frizell 2012).

‘...words alone, as manifest expressions of ‘mind’ are insufficient in the quest to understand the full realm of psychic material...’ (Frizell 2012: 296).

The earliest publication of the body of work submitted for this PhD by Publication, entitled ‘Embodiment and the Supervisory Task’ (Frizell 2012), appears in the peer reviewed Taylor and Francis journal publication, ‘Body Movement and Dance in Psychotherapy, An International Journal for Theory, Research and Practice’. This journal has made an academically rigorous contribution to research in DMP, body psychotherapy and somatic psychology, supporting increasing interest in the role of the body in psychotherapeutic interventions.

My article is based on practice-led, qualitative research aiming at the ‘...production of *reflexive knowing*...’ (McLeod 2001: 3). The focus of the research concerns the relational possibilities between supervisor and supervisee in creating ways of knowing and understanding clinical material in the process of supervision. In addition, the writing draws on the application of embodied practice-led research from a post-Jungian perspective (Bacon 2010: 64). Many dance movement

psychotherapists have grounded their research and practice in the ideas of Jung (for example, Adler 1999, Bacon 2017, Chodorow 1999, Pallaro 1999, Starks Whitehouse 1999 and Stromsted 2015). Central to this research publication, was the Jungian concept of the transcendent function and the way in which active imagination can support the DMP supervision process, with the body in movement as an active agent in generating new knowledge and bringing about change.

This research traced an alchemical process through the supervision of DMP that ‘...transforms the unarticulated wisdom of embodied knowledge into a meaningful, conceptualised understanding of clinical material...’ (Frizell 2012: 302). This article foregrounds the educative and therapeutic potential of a Jungian approach in the process of DMP supervision. The findings of the research are illustrated by examples of how the creative process of embodied, active imagination enabled supervisees to access less-conscious processes that impact on attitudes to learning disability.

1.3.2 Publication 2: Discovering the Language of the Ecological Body. (Frizell 2014).

‘...Through the body we can engage with the language of the cosmos...’
(Frizell 2014: 15).

The second publication, entitled ‘Discovering the Language of the Ecological Body’ (Frizell 2014), is featured in a special themed symposium of ‘Self and Society: An International Journal for Humanistic Psychology’ guest edited by Nick Totton, the founder of Embodied Relational Therapy (ERT). The journal was founded by the Association of Humanistic Psychology in Britain in 1973, and it is at the leading-edge of thinking within the therapeutic professions and within psychology more generally,

offering critiques of contemporary theory and practice. This edition showcased leading eco-systemic therapists in the UK, highlighting the links between environmental issues and mental health and how these issues underpinned new discourses in psychotherapy. My article documents practice-led research, including auto-ethnography, exploring an eco-kinetic perspective on embodied practices, emphasising the entanglement of the human identity in the materiality of the world. Initially influenced by Jungian studies, and in particular the notion of the transcendent function, this article focuses on the ecological body (Reeve 2011), a concept derived from the term ecological self, originally coined by deep ecologist Arne Naess (1995). The notion of the ecological self is closely aligned to Jung's idea of the Self, which is a wider identification with a collective field in relation to the psyche. This concept is discussed further in Chapter 2 (see 2.4.1 The Ecological Self, pp. 50-52) and is aligned to the conceptualisation of the posthuman subject. This article develops the notion of the ecological body, linking DMP to earth honouring principles that de-privilege language and culture in the exploration of subjectivity, bringing to light the potential of recognising the relationality of the more-than-human world.

1.3.3 Publication 3: Dance Movement Psychotherapy and the Complexity of Beginnings with Learning Disabled Clients. (Frizell 2017).

'...Suddenly the room was empty, except for the woman and her husband. They stood staring at the open door. A shiny blue hospital floor led down an empty silent corridor. They stood in a deathly silence. The paediatrician's words echoed in the woman's mind '...you hadn't noticed?'. Why hadn't she noticed?...' (Frizell 2017: 13).

In 2017, I was invited to contribute a chapter to the book 'Dance Movement Psychotherapy with People with Learning Disabilities: Out of the Shadows, into the Light' (Unkovich et al 2017) published by Routledge. My chapter presents research exploring the significance of beginnings in working with learning disabled clients, particularly in relation to attitudes to learning disability. With a continued focus on embodied professional practice, this article considers the experience of learning-disability from the perspective of the social model of disability and how the process of othering manifests in the transference in clinical work. A vignette of a mother discovering that her baby has Down's syndrome leads the reader into an exploration of subjectivities that are inscribed within medical discourses and considers how this plays out in the therapeutic relationship through the transference. This book is the first publication of its kind, solely dedicated to DMP practice and learning disabled clients.

1.3.4 Publication 4: Reclaiming our Innate Vitality: Bringing Embodied Narratives to Life through Dance Movement Psychotherapy. (Frizell 2020).

'...the relational process of working therapeutically with dance, movement and kinaesthetic awareness provides an opportunity to excavate the embodied biographical narratives that define our lives...' (Frizell 2020: 20).

This research is a contributing chapter to the peer reviewed feminist anthology entitled 'Spiritual Herstories: Call of the Soul in Dance Research' (Williamson and Sellers-Young 2020) published by Intellect. The anthology brings together twenty-one women authors from a wide range of somatic movement and dance studies, problematising practice-led research methods and offering interdisciplinary, critical discourses that challenge cultural hegemonies.

This article builds on my previous qualitative, practice-led research and continues to problematise notions of the self, exploring inclusion, normalcy and kinship.

1.3.5 Publication 5: Learning Disability Imagined Differently: An Evaluation of Interviews with Parents about Discovering that their Child has Down's Syndrome. (Frizell 2020a).

'...It can be hard to find a language to speak about learning disability and the language available to us reflects a complicated history of how learning disability is perceived...' (Frizell 2020a: 1).

The second publication in 2020 (and the fifth publication submitted as part of this body of work) appears in the peer reviewed journal 'Disability and Society', published by Taylor and Francis. This international journal reaches an established well-informed audience, providing a focus for critical disability studies' discourses that includes issues of human rights, discrimination, policy and practices in relation to disability. The article develops ideas about learning disability through a research project using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, Flowers and Larkin 2012) involving parents of children with Down's syndrome. The research identifies the ways in which oppression and discrimination are subtly embedded in our post-industrial, less conscious cultural psyche. The work is underpinned by ideas from critical disability studies and draws on new materialist thinking in the data analysis in order to challenge the dualities that perpetuate ableism, with a view to thinking differently about learning disability.

1.4 A Note on Subjectivity

‘...Kim finds her spine curving forwards and sideways...attuning to the motion of the undulating waves far out in the ocean...’ (Frizell 2014: 17).

In my published texts, I have referred to notions of subjectivity that are embodied and emergent, with particular reference to Stern’s (1985, 2012) notion of intersubjectivity³. The NMPHPQ lens has shifted my perspective to one of intrasubjectivity that more closely aligns to an experience that is entangled and multiple in its relational and material potential. As explained earlier in this chapter it has occurred to me that the notion of subjectivity into which I am arriving might be best articulated within a double negative; that is, the bodied experience of being in the world is not exclusively *not* individual and pre-determined, and at the same time it materialises through intra-active encounters.

1.5 A Note on Language about Learning Disability

‘...the struggle with terminology is linked to a wider discomfort about the inconvenient truths of discrimination and oppression that this group of people experience...’ (Frizell 2020a: 2).

In my publications, I have shifted from using the term *people with learning disabilities* to *learning disabled people* in order to align myself to discourses about discrimination that locate the disabling factors in the context, rather than the individual.⁴ This naming of an oppressed group is problematic and I sense a discomfort in my body

³ See: Frizell 2012, 2014, 2017, 2020)

⁴ I explain this in more detail in my portfolio of published work; see Frizell 2017 and 2020a.

in relation to the power and the inadequacy of language, particularly in relation to a group of people for whom language itself is problematic. This is discussed in Chapter 2 (see 2.5.3 Thinking about (dis)Ability, pp. 63-64 and 2.5.5 Challenging Discrimination, pp. 64).

1.6 Turning Places

‘...As we tried to resume the conversation, the cat stood between us and nuzzled into my shoulder. It seemed that we were being reminded to think differently about the place of humans as just one species in a wider ecology of beings...’ (Frizell 2020a: 18).

Each of these publications has been a turning place. In the process of creating this critical commentary assemblage’, things bump up against each other in turning places, troubling each other from within, creating an always-in-process process of knowledge-ing, with a focus on:

‘...what things do, rather than what they ‘are’; towards processes and flows rather than structures and stable forms; to matters of power and resistance; and to interactions that draw small and large relations into assemblage...’ (Fox & Alldred 2015: 407).

In re-viewing these publications, the practice-led knowledge-ing is active, emergent and embodied, shifting between discourse and matter, honouring the capacity of all things to affect and be affected. Figure 7 Turning Place (pp. 36) illustrates a chance meeting with an actual turning place on a Sunday walk in Dartmouth.

I have been inspired by researchers and practitioners in the fields of dance, psychotherapy, DMP, critical disability studies and ecopsychotherapy. As I bring a

NMPHPQ lens to the portfolio of publications, I struggle to find a language that enables me to develop notions of a posthuman subjectivity within an intra-connected live experience, that decentres the position of human exceptionalism.



Figure 7 Turning Place

|

As we settle into this process, I will next outline the things that have mattered to the gathering of this research assemblage, before moving into the modes of inquiry employed. That will provide the ground to discuss how I have developed a critical commentary assemblage' of my original research, towards conceptualising the posthuman dancing subject as ethical and differentiating. But first, I invite you to join

me as I wander away from my desk and enter my studio, to situate myself in the materiality of this thesis (see: 1.7 Film: Studio pp. 37).

1.7 Film: Studio



Figure 8 Studio

Chapter 2: Things that have Mattered

‘...she balances on boulders, peering inquisitively through the giant, rounded stepping-stones. In spaces between the boulders, the smooth curves of smaller rocks lie on still smaller stones, which harbour glistening pebbles and spiralling shells, layer upon layer...’ (Frizell 2014: 17).

This chapter is a symposium of things that have mattered in the layers of this research assemblage. The chapter is akin to a literature review, drawing on personal, professional and material encounters, makeshift artworks, dreams and improvisational movement, widening the realm of what counts as knowledge. Donna Haraway (2016) reminds us that ‘...(i)t matters what thoughts think thoughts. It matters what knowledges know knowledges...’ (35). Practice-led, NMPHPQ inquiry offers a particular kind of thinking that has the potential to decentre the humanistic subject as it is conceptualised within White Euro-centric colonialist perspective (Taylor 2021). This chapter edges its way through rhizomatic systems of thought that become busy with critique, whilst simultaneously remain connected to the experience of being in the world as an ethical, intra-connected, posthuman subject.

2.1 Transdisciplinarity

‘...Kim entered a conversation which manifested as a poem that is both embodied and relational, and arises from a liminal space of playing between one life form and another...’ (Frizell 2014: 18).

This transdisciplinary symposium brings together three intersecting areas that have underpinned the research in the five publications. These three areas are (in no hierarchical order) dance as a vital art in therapy and life, with a focus on the ethics

of moving bodies, ecopsychotherapy, within the context of a climate urgency and our ethical responsibility to reconsider human relationships within a wider ecology, and learning disability, that throws light on the ethics of our performativity as transversal human subjects (Braidotti 2019). The experiential realm of the body has been the subordinated other to language, discourse and culture, the anthropocene subordinates all that is not human, and the notion of disability contravenes a classical perspective of what it means to be human. These subordinated others hold the potential for redefining subjectivity and Lather (2013) describes how new ways of thinking can materialise as we shift from binaries into multiplicities towards a ‘...transversal subjectivity...’ (Braidotti 2019: 161).⁵

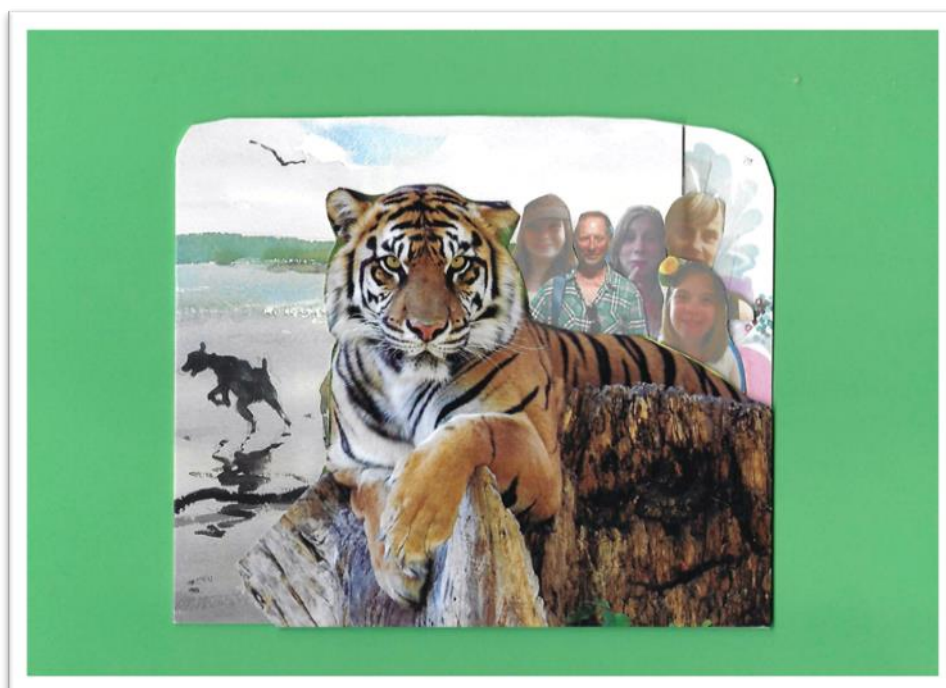


Figure 9 Transversal Subjectivity

⁵ Figure 9 Transversal Subjectivity, pp. 39 is a photograph that I took of a collage made early on in this research as I was exploring transversal intersections. The collage comprises birthday cards from different years and photos of family members taken at different times in the family history. I was struck by the juxtaposition of the material subjects diffracting across time, space, species and perspective, creating a new sense of ‘...spacetime mattering...’ (Barad 2014: 168).

2.2 Dance as Intra-active Participation.

'...I closed my eyes and rested my head on a ledge, wrapping my arms around the rock. I became acutely conscious of how I was placing my body in the space, against the solid surface...' (Frizell 2020: 218).

I refer to dance in this thesis as a process of embodied, intra-active participation in the world. Material bodies are created through movement and that creation-through-movement continues until our last breath. Dance, if it needs to be defined as a concept distinct from movement, is a conscious awareness of the movement that is already going on. Dance turns us towards the experiential, the immersive and the immanent, opening awareness to our entangled, intra-active becoming. Barad's (2007) concept of intra-action is helpful here in signifying '...the mutual constitution of entangled agencies...' (33). She suggests that '...distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through, their intra-action...' (ibid) and dance is a way of understanding this emergence.

Allegranti and Silas (2020) note how '... human brains are for movement...' (2) and refer to Manning's (2012) preferred term *bodying*, rather than *embodiment*. Manning (2012) describes how '...(i)nfants bathe in pure experience...' (10) through this *bodying*. Neimans (2019) similarly reminds us that we are primarily '...watery bodies in a watery world...' (65) and that this matter of our wateriness is a '...wellspring for new ontological and ethical paradigms...' (7). We bathe, literally and metaphorically, in the waters of experience through dance. Dance movement psychotherapist, Jill Hayes (2013) reminds us that the body is our '...prima materia, the raw material inside which we enter the world...' (94) and, as such, is the place of our subjectivity. A posthuman understanding of this subjectivity provides an

ontological shift towards a watery multiplicity and plurality within an ‘...ethics of the body...’ (Allegranti 2011:490).

My mother pushed me in the pram to her ballet classes and once I was on my feet, I was joining in. We conversed in a movement language with very particular stylistic aesthetic, embedded in a cultural modality in which the body is objectified as vehicle of expression. This language differs from the non-stylised movement language that signals our arrival into existence, as the sperm races towards the egg in a flurry of activity, the cells divide and become a foetus, participating in ‘...the process of becoming itself...’ (LaMothe 2015: 90).

2.2a Interruption

In my dream I approach the sink in the bathroom. I reach for the tap, noticing a small tortoise. Picking her up, I cradle her in the palms of my hands, wondering how she arrived. I know she will not survive in this sink, but I am not quite sure where she lives. How can I make her a home where she can become the tortoise that she needs to be? The sink certainly is not the place. But the sink is certainly a place; a place holding water that it releases into a labyrinth of pipes, back out into the river.

2.2.1 Kinetic Listening and Bodily Becoming

'...I softened my gaze on the world and awakened my receptivity to the vitality of life through all my senses, joining my colleague in a state of awareness that connected us to the voice of the land...' (Frizell 2020: 211).

How could I find a language with which to think about, listen to and respond to the tortoise's experience of finding herself in a sink? At this thought, my quest for knowing moves away from the inadequacy of wording. Lifting my face away from the screen, I catch the sun streaming through the window onto my skin and I move into my '...reptilian brain...' (Juhan 1998: 215). I close my eyes and allow my skin to sense the warmth through a ninety-three-million-mile distance between me and the sun. I enjoy the participatory connection.

LaMothe (2015, 2020) develops the idea of a philosophy of bodily becoming, in which she foregrounds dance as an ethical art form that is '...vital for our humanity...' (LaMothe 2015: 3). We evolve a way of knowing the world through our capacity for kinetic awareness, which LaMothe refers to as an '...ecokinetic...' (ibid: 8) knowledge. Hayes (2013) suggests that this knowledge arises from a place of sensing, feeling and being present on an embodied level, creating '...a knowing which is beyond words...' (128). This knowledge emanates from the immediate lived kinetic experience and can be thought about through improvisational movement (Sheets-Johnstone 2011). This process is evident throughout my portfolio of work, including case studies (Frizell 2012, 2014, 2017, 2020) and auto-ethnographic accounts (Frizell 2014, 2020). When I dance, I participate in the world. When I participate in the world, I dance. I turn down the chattering mind and allow myself to become conscious of encountering the world. Not so much in a search for truth, but more in a quest for the knowledge of what might be possible in my ever changing

‘...sensory-kinetic palette of possibilities...’ (LaMothe 2015: 57). And then I am more able to think. And then, of course, I need to dance again, as I spiral through the process. This is dance. This is life. This is the place of improvisation.

2.2.2 Movement Improvisation as Relationship

‘...I waited, sensing that it was the only option, and found myself sinking further down, to kneel against the granite surface...’ (Frizell 2020: 218).

Barbour (2018) suggests that ‘...somatic dance practices allow a return to the wonder of lived embodied experiences in the present moment...’ (242). This place of improvisation is the place where ‘...things draw apart, alternate, disintegrate, or assemble throughout a creative whole...’ (Frahleigh 2019: 65). In my publications (Frizell 2011, 2014, 2020) I articulate how dance comes alive ‘...in and with and as nature...’ (LaMothe 2020: 403), meeting intra-actively with the bodies of others and this resonates with the works of other dance practitioners, including dance movement psychotherapists, performance artists and community artists (for example, Burns, 2012, Frahleigh 2019, Hartley 2001, Hayes 2013, LaMothe 2015, 2020, Olsen 2014, Poynor 2018, 2019, Reeve 2011). Olsen (2014) locates the body in relation to the material world, attesting to the role of dance in ‘...rehabilitating human’s relationship with Earth...’ (ibid: xvii) and suggesting that our knowledge of ourselves and the world manifests in our experience of the body. This knowledge is underpinned by an ontology of movement that articulates dance ‘...as an authority for knowledge...’ (LaMothe 2020: 394) about human subjectivity.

Dance is arguably essential in fostering an ethical attitude that supports the health of the individual and the health of the wider ecological community (LaMothe 2018, Poynor 2019, Reeve 2011). Reeve (2011) identifies the concept of the ‘...ecological body...’ (2) as ‘...a changing system among other environmental systems...’ (2). This body is a relational participant in a wider ecology, that is a ‘...body-in-movement-in-a-changing-environment...’ (48). It is movement (rather than the material body) that is the key and as LaMothe (2015) reminds us ‘...(m)atter exists relative to a movement matrix from which it emerges and into which it disappears...’ (25).

In her inquiry into kinaesthetic empathy, Rova (2017) asserts that when we cut off from our bodily becoming, we can become desensitised to our affective participation. Rova (ibid) cites an example of working with a nursery nurse, called to respond to a patient’s violent behaviour. In a subsequent reflective practice session, the nurse is confronted by the somatic impact of this incident, noting ‘...how traumatic work experiences often caused her to disconnect from her body in order to “get through” her shift...’ (ibid: 171). This example of how we can disconnect from our inner experiences in order to get through the shift (aka life) poses broader ethical issues of becoming desensitised to a violence that becomes normalised, disconnecting us from within the intra-active field of kinship.

This disconnection from an elemental kinship, is a disconnection from our embedment in the material world. Burns (2012) explores this experiential embedment in a living world, bringing together ideas from somatic practices and ecopsychology, arguing for practices that foster an:

'...embodied experience of participatory knowing, the felt sense of reciprocity, the somatic resonance vibrating between, and networking connections between bodies...' (47).

2.2.2a Interruption

It was 2006. I sat with the therapist side by side on the ground, our backs against the broad trunk of an oak tree. We were surrounded by trees, splaying their arms upwards to the sky. Birdsong echoed through this more-than-human atmosphere of becoming. I felt lost and struggled to articulate my internal state. I looked up, as if seeking inspiration in this glade, and an acorn dropped into my lap; a gift of hope and a reminder of my part in a wider story of becoming.

That acorn in my lap connected me to the bodied experience of empathic, kinetic connections within this material world in all its potential. The following collection of images (see Figure 10 Moving Movement, pp. 46) offers an assemblage of moving mo(ve)ments, inspired by the idea of kinship within a differentiating, posthuman onto-epistemology.



Figure 10 Moving Movement

2.2.2b Interruption

Whilst writing this thesis, I received an email inviting me to join 'Be-coming Tree', a grassroots showcase for artists to share arboreal entanglements via Zoom during the pandemic. This was part of a wider project initiated by artist Jatun Risba⁶. The invitation was a timely falling-into-my-lap-of-an-acorn. I knew the silver birch with which I wanted to be-come tree. It had stood in the garden long before our arrival. Simultaneous performances, located in UK, Slovenia, Germany, Finland, Seychelles, India, Belgium and Sri Lanka defied logics of time and space. In our far-flung corners of the earth, all in different time zones, we occupied the same-place-and-time-at-once on the screen, sharing a co-constructed reality for 60 minutes as online witnesses became virtually entangled in the performance.

⁶ The wider project by Jatun Risba explores the language and the nature of the human / more-than-human kinship, as inspired by thinkers such as David Abram, Karen Barad and Donna Haraway. see: <https://jatunrisba.com/about/>

2.3 Film: Silver Birch



Figure 11 Silver Birch⁷

2.4 Eco-psychotherapy: Ecological Intra-action

'...(a)s we befriend that not-yet-known phenomena inside ourselves and become open to connecting with otherness, we realise the relationship between each of us as an organism in the environment is connected to all living things through an ecological system...' (Frizell 2020: 210).

It is September as I write this. Earlier this season, I nurtured some pumpkins seeds (see Figure 12 Pumpkin, pp. 50). We dug a small vegetable patch and set up a scaffold of recycled spiral metal poles, bamboo sticks and a willow branch. Soon six pumpkin plants were budding orange-yellow male flowers that fast attracted

⁷ In preparation for becoming-tree, I made a short preparatory film, intending a collaboration in which the tree and I were equal subjects. I was aware of (and somewhat disturbed by) my own dominion in the films that I had been making, seeing the 'agonizingly relevant body of the performer.' (Phelan 1993) dominating the screen. The process of editing allowed me to 'cross dissolve' and 'blend' images in such a way that I could try to equalise the balance between me, as a human body, and beings around me. I can make myself disappear into the grass, become obscured by the mighty branches of a tree and conjure a perspective that reduces me to a Roald Dahl (1991) Minpin; a tiny person who lives in a miniature house within a hollow tree.

pollinating insects. We heaped grass cuttings over the earth, feeding with comfrey and nettles rotting in rainwater. We needed female and male buds to open at the same time. The blooms are short lived (a day or two at the most); the potential for life has a small window of opportunity. Before long, the bulbous female buds appeared and each time one opened, a male flower would also be ready on its long stem for bees and other insects to access. The process of fertilisation took on a rhythm. The male-female synchronisation was not always from the same plant and each morning I wandered into the garden to monitor this cooperative improvisation, wondering if this co-arising was co-incidence. I wondered about a wider way of knowing communicated amongst these plants. I ran my finger along the bookshelf, remembering Wall Kimmerer's (2013) account of the sophisticated systems of communication of trees and plants, as asserted by the Potawatomi elders. Mainstream science, once decrying this knowledge as un-evidenced, now acknowledges what these indigenous elders have known for eons. Communication is literally blown in the wind via pheromones, vibrating through the wings of a bee or rumbling underground in a subterranean network. The complex entanglements of life are sustained by this web of relationships. This story of intra-dependence is at the root of the emergent field of ecopsychology and weaves its stories throughout my published texts.



Figure 12 Pumpkin

2.4.1 The Ecological Self

'...The individual human body is an organism comprising numerous dynamic systems which constitute the collective that we call 'body', which itself is a living system, operating in relation to all systems that make up Earth...' (Frizell 2014: 17).

Ecopsychotherapy theoreticians (for example, Dodds 2013, Rust 2020, Totton 2011, Weintrobe 2013) subscribe to the concept of the ecological self as a dynamic conceptualisation of human subjectivity, embedded and entangled within a wider ecology. Bodies learn to be in the world through the '...kinetic invocations...' (Abram 2010: 239) of the other. An example of this at play is illustrated beautifully as Abram documents his learning from one of the medicine persons who he meets on his travels. Abram describes how he learns to '...dream himself into the wild physicality of that Other...' (ibid: 239), turning his attention to a raven. He finds his way into the experience of the bird and, at the same time, finds he is reclaiming a part of himself

(ibid 2010). Abram's attunement to the raven enabled an expanded sense of his own becoming through the kinaesthetic, empathic experience that he describes.

In the same way that the emergence of psychotherapy over the last century has created a language to talk about psychic inner worlds and *interpersonal* dynamics, so the emergent field of ecopsychotherapy is creating a language that embeds human subjectivity in a wider systemic web of life (Rust 2020). Fisher (2013) suggests that psychoanalysis itself was '...born only when the revolt of nature within the individual could no longer be ignored...' (159). The birth of psychoanalysis came as the Western world was reaching a significant point of disconnection and increasing neurosis towards '...massive psychic derangement...' (159) within an ideology of human exceptionalism, i.e. the privileging of human desire over the needs of the wider ecological community and, indeed, those humans who have not been included in that idea of *human*. Jungian analyst Bernstein (2005) suggests that the Western ego has been '...cleaved...' (33) from nature and developed as highly specialised, with a consciousness that is:

'...more comfortable with hearing than listening, more focused on the head (literally) than the body, primarily left-brain dominant; it is heroic and preferring abstraction to directness and metaphor, complexity to simplicity...' (33).

This idea that all beings are profoundly linked and dependent on each other underpins the concept of the '...ecological self...' (Naess 1995: 225), a term coined by Norwegian eco-philosopher Naess, providing a paradigm shift, away from:

'...the bounded, isolated self towards a vision of a self that is permeable, interconnected not only with other human selves but with a range of all living beings and processes...' (Barrows 1995:103).

The entanglement of human subjectivity within earth's life-scape calls the attention of a particular consciousness that challenges the representational thinking

that can disconnect us from the direct material experience of being in the world. The highly specialised ego, to which Bernstein refers, is fed by disavowal that allows us to hear alarming facts about environmental breakdown, whilst at the same time actively turning a blind eye and continuing with business as usual. Weintrobe (2013) identifies how disavowal operates at an unconscious level, distorting the truth and turning away from an unbearable reality. She explains how:

‘...the more reality is systemically avoided through making it insignificant or through distortion, the more anxiety builds up unconsciously, and the greater the need to defend with further disavowal...’ (7)

The process of disavowal shuts down thinking and feeling, obscuring the grave reality and enabling us to live out the Disney dream, but, at the same time, creating a less conscious anxiety that requires defending against. In my published research, I offer practice-led illustrations of this rekindling of our ecological subjectivity.

2.4.1a Interruption

When my children were young, we visited Paris Disney-Land (See Figure 13 The Disney Dream, pp. 53). We set foot on the neatly paved route to ‘Fantasyland’ accompanied by sing-a-long Disney songs and aromas of fast food. The entrance was surrounded by a moat. Regal flags billowed in the breeze. Disney princes rode on horseback. Bags attached to the horses’ hind quarters caught the excrement. We entered through a spiral stairway to sleeping beauty’s chamber obediently, following

a non-negotiable route. Those spontaneously changing direction were guided back to flow with the crowd.



Figure 13 The Disney Dream

A young woman with Down's syndrome sat on a mock stone wall. A large blue ear protruded from each side of her hat. She was staring ahead with an expressionless gaze. Excited visitors sporting Mini-Mouse ears shook hands with life-size Disney characters. Two boys took a selfie with Mr. Incredible. We were herded into carriages and whisked through one fantasy journey after another. Sleeping Beauty, and her capacity to think, continued to slumber.

2.4.2 Finding Kin(ship)

‘...In indigenous communities, the birth of a child might be a time for rituals which honour the bonding between the newborn child and the earth...’ (Frizell 2014: 18).

This Western Disney dream is emblematic of the human disconnect from the ecological web of life. In contrast, Wall Kimerrer (2013), writes of the indigenous creation story of Skywoman, through which children ‘...know in their bones the responsibility that flows between humans and the earth...’ (5). This story is of reciprocity, a pivotal concept in the world view of indigenous peoples that is maintained by a gift economy, rather than an economy of commodification. Wall Kimerrer notes how gifts create ongoing relationships, shifting us from the notion of private possession, to common wealth.

In order to re-connect with this wider self, we need to develop a language that reflects those relationships with others in a ‘...grammar of animacy...’ (55).

Embedded in the indigenous Potawatomi language, we find that:

‘...rocks are animate, as are mountains and water and fire and places. Beings that are imbued with spirit, our sacred medicines, our songs, drums and even stories, are all animate...’ (55-56).

The prolific use of verbs, rather than nouns, animates all beings as subjects (eg he/she) rather than objects (it). This language of animacy brings us into kinship with the other and the language we use can support a shift in consciousness away from the binaries inherent in our internalised Anthropocentrism. Through this language we are ‘...meeting once again with our kin in the earth community...’ (Berry 1988: 1). This is the language of the indigenous cultures that have been oppressed and colonised. Wall Kimerer (ibid) describes how, in her grandfather’s generation,

children were sent far away to school and prohibited from speaking their language ‘...long enough, they hoped, to make them forget who they were...’ (17).

Kelvin Hall (2012), a psychotherapist who includes equine-assisted therapy in his practice, refers to a language of ‘...breath awareness, body position, gesture, timing, and more...’ (83). He describes a woman who wishes to connect to a horse, yet the subtle messages of domination in her body miss the ‘...invisible threads...’ (84) of the language of the wild herd, and the horse shies away in alarm. Our embodied subjectivity is infused with our cultural hegemony. As such, ecopsychotherapy embeds the notion of human subjectivity within an intra-connected matrix of life on earth. This notion is central to my published research, as I inquire into the tension between the conscious and less conscious parts of ourselves that align to, or are oppressed by human dominion and those ‘...wild parts of ourselves that know instinctively how to speak with the earth...’ (Frizell 2014: 16).

2.4.3 Embedded, Embodied Intra-connection

‘...she smells the musty soil beneath her. An ant crawls on to her hand. She turns her head inquisitively, just as a butterfly alights...silent and weightless. This is the earth she knows and trusts...’ (Frizell 2014: 19).

It was 1985. I stood on a Tahitian beach; a twenty-seven year-old hopeful Westerner, surfing the waves of Thatcher’s economic revolution. I had flown to New Zealand to teach, taking the opportunity to stop off along the way. As someone who now has not flown for over twenty years due to the environmental crisis, I wonder why I did not question a long-haul flight, to engage in a task that could very easily have been accomplished by someone local.

I looked down at my toes in the sand and took a deep breath, absorbing the vivid blue of the Pacific Ocean. A wave of discomfort surged in me as I remembered that this paradise lay within the Polynesian nuclear test site, an environmental violation lurking invisibly in the materiality of the place. The waves rippled over the fine particles of golden sand glistening on my ankles.

Leaving the beach, I jumped on a bus heading out of town to Gauguin's house. Polynesian music blasted from a speaker. I held a handrail as the bus rattled along, rocking unevenly from side to side. A middle-aged Tahitian man with a brightly coloured shirt and well-worn, open-toed sandals offered me a welcoming smile, revealing two dazzling gold teeth. I averted my eyes, involuntarily, from this male gaze. He shrugged and struck up a conversation with another passenger. On adjacent seats, a group of women, each clutching a baby to her breast, engaged in animated conversation. I felt out of place as a white-skinned Western woman clinging to the handrail of the bus, with cropped hair and a blue cotton dress. Alone.

The road was lined with wild orchids, behind which a flush of emerald green swept upwards to the plantations on the mountainside. Dark clouds hovered menacingly at the mountain peaks.

I alighted at Gauguin's house, and inside found myself immersed in the vibrancy of the paintings. Leaving the house, I walked back to the road. In a moment, clouds swept over head and a torrent of rain soaked me to the skin, flattening my blue cotton dress to my body. Flashes of lightning lit the silver-black sky. Thunder roared and giant balls of rain ricocheted off the steaming ground in a cacophony of sound. I opened my arms, feeling alive, consumed and powerless in the face of this tropical storm.

More than a decade later, I sat opposite my new therapist in her consulting room in North London. Next to the glowing wood burner was a box of matches and on the front of the box was a small print of one of Gauguin's paintings that I had seen hanging in his Tahitian house. The picture took me back to my experience of that moment. I remembered feeling so out of place, the contradictions of a paradise that had been polluted by invisible radiation and my powerlessness and aliveness in the face of the storm.

I explored a dream in which I saw my brother standing on rocks on the island of Annet⁸, a range of tall, jagged rocks rising from the surging Atlantic sea, inhabited solely by birds. And there he was, his foothold unsteady, seemingly resigned to being swept out to sea by a rolling wave. The deep ravines between the rocks and the inaccessibility of the island were sobering symbols. I remembered the eleven-year-old big brother who bought fruit gums to share as we belted downhill with free abandon on our bikes. As a keen ornithologist and artist, he went on to study wildlife illustration. He then became swept away by the current of mental illness, living for decades in the storm of schizophrenia.

Such an illness might be considered an acute symptom of the massive psychic derangement to which Fisher (2013) refers, as the world edges its way towards ecological collapse, created by a dysfunctional system that is seriously out of balance. Ecopsychotherapy opens discourses about subjectivity that locate mental health in wider environmental, socio-cultural and political contexts.

⁸ Annet is one of the most westerly Isles of the Scilly archipelago, twenty-eight miles west of the coast of Cornwall.

2.5 The Diverse Body-Becoming: Critical (dis)Ability Studies

‘...(t)o imagine disability differently involves thinking differently about ability and disability and perceiving difference itself as an opportunity to discover new ways of participating in communities...’ (Frizell 2020a: 15).

My research and practice have involved clients who have been classed as the disabled *other*. The experience of disability is often of marginalisation, disenfranchisement and discrimination, in terms of social, cultural and political participation. My abrupt awakening to the othering of disability came over thirty years ago, when disability entered my life in an unexpected turning and I found myself waking up to a world of disability politics.

2.5.1 An Unexpected Turning

‘...Back then it was much more like...oh! She’d just arrived from the stars and here she was, this different little person...’ (Frizell 2020a: 5).

It was 1986. I sat in a carriage of a Piccadilly Line tube train on my way to Great Ormond Street Hospital, holding my baby swaddled to my chest. The infant was on regular doses of medication, fed by a tube and her heart was failing. Shortly after birth, there had been a catastrophic diagnosis. The arteries and veins to the heart were the wrong way around. The operation could not be carried out before she was three months to ensure sufficient weight. Without an operation, she would die. Statistically, the success rate of the operation was poor. It was probably for the best, they said; a blessing in disguise, given the learning disability. The baby was reaching three months and the appointment was to discuss the pending operation. I held her close and became aware of an attentive figure standing by me in the crowded train.

Looking up, I met with the eyes of a stranger. His skin was smooth. His jet black, cropped hair stood on end, framing a compassionate expression. I was on the verge of averting my eyes and he said,

‘Your baby is very ill.’

‘Yes.’ I said, defensively, taken aback by his comment. Feeling conspicuous, I glanced around the carriage. In my mind’s eye, I re-turned (to) the moment that the paediatrician had broken the news that the baby had Down’s syndrome by pointing out the characteristic features as if examining a medical specimen. The stranger’s silent attention compelled me to look back up. He was ready with a gentle smile.

‘I can heal your baby...’ he said. ‘...she has a bad heart. I can heal it...’

Without explanation, the stranger lifted his hands above me-with-baby-swaddled-to-my-chest and spoke in a soft, singing voice. I looked from the stranger to my baby and back again, suspended in a space-time-matter confusion. I glanced around the carriage, feeling exposed and humiliated, but thankfully finding that I remained insignificant to other passengers. I needed to stop this performance.

‘...I really think...’ I began, looking back towards the stranger...but he was not there. The train door was open and those getting on and off jostled for position. There was standing room only.

We arrived at the hospital. The tiny baby lay on the treatment bed. The consultant listened through his stethoscope, tilting his head. The consultant’s body was motionless. He turned to scrutinise his scans, as if desperately searching for something lost. I braced myself, anticipating more difficult news. This was the

consultant whose eyes had filled with tears when he first diagnosed the heart problem. He was a man full of love.

‘...this... seems... re...remarkable...’ he said hesitantly, stumbling over his words. ‘...the heart seems to have rectified itself...let me check again...’

In my mind’s eye, I flung open the doors of the tube train shouting for the stranger to return and explain his mischief. What kind of blessing was this? I was numb. I remember struggling with ambivalent feelings. We had convinced ourselves it was for the best that this baby only had a small chance of surviving. The paediatrician who diagnosed Down’s syndrome had suggested that we left the baby in the hospital, went home and started again.

2.5.2 Becoming Othered

‘...Parents found themselves caught in a place in which learning disability is an inconvenient truth that can be avoided by medical intervention...’ (Frizell 2020a: 6).

The process of othering of the disabled body in an ableist culture is pervasive. This moment of non-sense (there is no rational explanation for these a-causal happenings) was a moment of diffraction (Barad 2007) that reset the ‘...spacetimemattering...’ (169)⁹ of my worlding compass, highlighting the intra-active, inseparable relationship between space, time and matter and in which bodies are dynamic performers. The disabled body does not conform to ableist norms and

⁹ Spacetimemattering is a word created by Karen Barad (2007) that is descriptive of the entangled relationship between space, time and matter. Each is non-static and diffracts across, and enfolding into, the other in a continuously moving intra-active engagement.

inhabits a presence on the periphery (Mitchel and Snyder 2015) of a normalised ideal of what a body should be like. Disabled dancer David Toole defied ableist norms in the professional dance world¹⁰, challenging choreographers, dancers and audiences to reimagine the possibilities of dance performance. David's career was also a statement challenging the '...privileges of citizenship...' (Mitchel & Snyder 2015: 17).

Different bodies are differently empowered with different relationships to productivity. Mitchel & Snyder (2015) consider how the '...zones of bodily and affective imperfections...' (ibid: 39) are targeted by the commercial media, as our bodily insufficiencies '...multiply across every surface, crevice, and cavity of the personal interior and exterior spaces of embodiment...' (ibid). Normalised states of health become part of our bodily experience as we come to know ourselves in terms of what is missing, malfunctioning and deficient. Our bodies are colonised by the commercial media, locating problems individually, rather than systemically. Mitchel & Snyder (2015) state:

'...Neoliberal politics references all bodies as deficient and in the need of supplementations to treat the inbuilt inferiority within, a system of bodily referencing shorn of environmental causes...' (39-40).

Disability is everyone's concern, yet disabled people carry the weight of this concern.

I remember visiting the museum of terrors in Berlin, a place of remembrance on the site of the Nazi Party central command. I stood in front of a poster portraying a disabled man sitting on a chair with doctor standing behind him, resting his hands

¹⁰ See David Toole's obituary: (Hadoke 2020) <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2020/oct/28/david-toole-obituary>

paternally on both shoulders of the seated man, who looked confused, his legs tucked awkwardly under the chair, left shoulder raised and left arm twisted onto his lap. The doctor's gentle, paternal smile was directed at the camera. A wave of grief surged through me as I stood, transfixed, by this compelling image. The poster was advertising a magazine produced by the Nazi Party and the text identified the disabled man as the passive other, unproductive and financially burdensome. I was caught between a compulsion to confront this terrible image and the urge to flee.

The image of the man in that poster embodies the stigma, suffering and impairment that is projected onto disability: what Mitchel and Snyder refer to as '...the radical vulnerability of embodiment...' (ibid: 7). This nationalist image of ableism upholds a particular way of inhabiting the world that manifests in the body. This image of a '...scapegoated and incarcerated...' (Mitchel & Snyder 2015: 37) disabled body disrupts this ideal. The eugenics society, founded by Frances Dalton in 1907, developed ideas about improving the human race, justifying the sterilisation and segregation of those considered *feeble minded* on the grounds that they were a drain on society.

A NMPHPQ approach to thinking about, and embodying disability allows vulnerability and impairment to emerge as a bodied innovation through which we can experience and think about the world differently '...rather than merely as devalued social constructs of victims of oppression...' (Mitchel & Snyder 2015). The disabled man in that poster represents a devalued embodiment at risk of becoming '...excluded, abused, neglected, as well as socially and materially eviscerated...' (ibid: 36). The use of the word eviscerated is powerful, violent and provocative and it

is perhaps this gut-felt depth of feeling that trapped me between a rock and a hard place in the face of the unashamed othering in this poster.

2.5.3 Thinking about (dis)Ability

‘...Learning disability brings the gift of diversity (Snow 1994), that challenges us with the creative potential of figuring out ...what it means to be human...’ (Frizell 2020a: 16).

Shakespeare (2013) describes the historical shift from a medical model of disability, to a social model¹¹, in which individuals are either included or excluded by external structures in relation to their given impairments. He identifies problems at political and conceptual levels in the binary thinking of medical versus social model, as an individual’s subjective experience is complex both medically *and* socially. Feely (2016) suggests that new materialist ontologies can offer an insight into disability from material, embodied perspectives that avoid essentialist dualities. Corporalities can be both vulnerable, constrained, whilst also being ‘...innovative embodied beings...’ (Mitchel and Snyder 2015: 7).

As I write this, I hear the radio newsreader state that the impact of this current pandemic is adversely affecting school children, some now behind in their reading, and pre-school children some of whom have not progressed, or have even regressed, in their toilet training. Many learning-disabled people are not literate and are also incontinent and this anxiety about those who are left behind tells a deeper story of a ‘...peripheral embodiment...’ (Mitchel and Snyder 2015: 7). In the same bulletin, there is a report on the disproportionate level of restraint used on learning

¹¹ The social model of disability was a concept coined by Mike Oliver (1983) to shift the emphasis from a medical model of fixing individual impairments towards a model that sought to provide accessible, facilitating environments that accommodate different impairments.

disabled people in NHS mental health hospitals. This is an appalling institutional failing to respond to difference and these news items illustrate deeply embedded discriminatory attitudes towards learning disability.

2.5.4 Presence and Diversity

‘...**All means All** was highlighted in bold print, striking at the heart of my struggles...’ Frizell 2020: 3).

A few years after that hospital appointment, I came across Judith Snow at an inclusive education conference. Snow, a disability activist and writer, asserted that there are two simple gifts which belong to all of us, these being *presence* and *diversity* (Snow 1994). The gift of *presence* offers a relational potential by virtue of our very existence; if we can breathe, we have a part to play and to be alive, in whatever way that might be, is to be present. The gift of *diversity* offers each unique difference as a portal to the creative potential of community. The greater the difference, the greater the potential. The powerful simplicity of these ethical principles have remained with me as a touchstone throughout my research and practice. The combined gifts of presence and diversity are rooted in a deep reverence for all life and create the opportunity for meaningful connection, as we come to find a way of caring for each other. As we meet with the differences in each other, we meet with opportunities to find new ways of being with each other, towards evolving a ‘...new ‘we’ that expresses the embedded, embodied, relational and affective forces...’ (Braidotti 2019: 164-165).

2.5.5 Challenging Discrimination

‘...The mother demonstrated resistance to the idea that the world would be a better place without her baby...’ (Frizell 2020a: 7).

In the 1990s Snow offered an optimistic message about the pursuit of rights, rather than charity, for disabled people. This led me to explore discourses around the moral imperative for emancipatory practices (Frizell 2017, 2020a). At around that time, the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) articulated disabled people's rights and the introduction of the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) gave disabled people increased independence. With the financial crisis in 2008, there followed over a decade of austerity measures that impacted dramatically on the lives of disabled people. This supported an ideology that shafted disabled people homogenously into a category of *the vulnerable*, perpetuating and damaging myth. Ryan (2019) reminds us that:

'...(d)isabled people....do not need to be vulnerable. Contrary to cultural myths surrounding disability, it is not inevitable for people with disabilities to be afraid, desperate or isolated. Vulnerability comes when politicians choose to pull the support disabled people need in order to live dignified, fulfilling, independent lives – knowing full well the misery it will cause.' (ibid: 8-9).

We are all vulnerable when we are denied essential support that enables us to participate fully in the world. Disability confronts us with the vulnerability of embodiment (Mitchel and Snyder 2015) that is an issue that belongs to us all. The ability / disability binary lends itself to othering, despite the fact that most people do not fit into one category or the other (Slorach 2016). We all have dependency needs.

Welfare reforms during an era of austerity brought about the abolishment of community care grants and crisis loans. Services for disabled people were either reduced or stopped (Ryan 2019). Woven into this narrative was the notion of disability benefit fraud and Ryan articulates how the message seeping subtly into the social arena was that the recession had been caused by a welfare bill inflated by

benefit scroungers pretending to be disabled, rather than a global economic crash. This idea fed the scapegoating of marginalised peoples through the gas lighting of ‘...a culture of suspicion...’ (ibid: 29) allowing the state simultaneously to cut support for marginalised groups, whilst claiming to target support on those who truly need it.

Ryan (2019) unveils some shocking truths about the oppression of disabled people in UK in the past decade, who find themselves the subject of a notion that ‘...still widely associates disability with tragedy and perpetuates an individual analysis for something that is fundamentally structural...’ (ibid: 8). Slorach (2016) argues that disability is a form of social oppression has been shaped by capitalism as:

‘...professions and industries classified, regulated and graded individual human capacities according to their relationship with production. The new world... justified and promoted discrimination against social groups identified as different or as a threat to new social norms...’ (92).

Art Therapist O’Farrell (2012) writes about Adam, a learning-disabled young man, and illustrates how this oppression manifests on a micro level as Adam expresses his anger about those around him making decisions about his needs. O’Farrell offers Adam a platform to tell us:

‘Well what I want to say is, when I was born I didn’t breath properly because I just didn’t breathe and, now I’m older, because I couldn’t breathe, I got a disability and I have people helping me but, when they help me or think they’re helping me or they say sorry or they help me do the house stuff or the shopping, it really doesn’t help me at all because they say sorry or I’m doing well but I’m still aggressive and I’m angry and it’s not I’m being cruel, the fact is, what they’re teaching me or think they’re teaching me is a load of crap.’ (ibid: 1).

I understand Adam’s very clear message to mean that we need to fine-tune our listening skills to different performativities, in order to enter into an empathic engagement with the matter of differently embodied subjectivities.

2.6 Moving Towards

‘...(t)his sensitivity and attunement to other ways of being offers us an...embodied language that connects us to our ecology...’ (Frizell 2014: 18).

This chapter has assembled the things that have mattered in identifying the central themes that have emerged from my portfolio of published research. This thesis investigates the transversal entanglements and intra-sections of dance, ecopsychotherapy and critical disability studies, all of which challenge the subordinated other that manifests in the material matter of the moving body, in a subordination of all that is not human and in the dis-abling of particular human bodies. The process of this research is embedded in the entangled nature of becoming, in a world in which the performativity of subjectivity unveils a hierarchy of mattering.

As I take you further into the inquiry animating this research, I will be referencing the onto-epistemological dimension of NMPHPQ approaches that locate knowledge-ing in materiality and subjectivity (Barrett 2013), decentring humans as exclusive makers of meaning. In this way, I will be identifying the thematic narrative that runs through the portfolio of my published works, exploring how the original findings might now be animated through a NMPHPQ lens.

Chapter 3: Modes of Inquiry

‘...I position myself within a research assemblage that includes the subject who researches and the individuals researched as ‘...entangled in multiplicities of matter, interconnecting, co-influencing, individuating and always becoming new...’ (Hargraves 2016: 541) ...’ (Frizell 2020: 2).

In order to develop a contextualised, coherent narrative and critical appraisal of the portfolio of my published works, I have engaged with postqualitative inquiry, referencing ideas from new materialism and posthumanism. St Pierre (2014) asserts that epistemology and ontology are integral to post-qualitative inquiry, challenging qualitative methodology that is ‘...grounded in Enlightenment humanism’s description of human being, of language, of the material, the empirical, the real, of knowledge, power, freedom...’. (5). This chapter sets out the modes of inquiry that have enabled me to engage in re-turning (to) my published works firstly, with a critical curiosity that shifts from representationalism to performativity in a process of knowledge-ing and secondly in a way that accommodates transversal relational entanglements.

3.1 Postqualitative Research

‘...she rights her balance, feet twisting to fit the rocks, knees yielding to the movement...’ (Frizell 2014: 17).

I have sought a mode of research inquiry that twists away from representation and interpretation, towards a curiosity about the significance and relational performativity of matter(s) (Springgay & Rotas 2015). Representation creates a separation from the often messy, contradictory, multiplicity of experience, in an attempt to represent the world:

‘...through the administration of good sense and common sense, dispensed by the autonomous, rational and well-intentioned individual, according to principles of truth and error...’ (ibid: 659).

This shift away from representationalism to performativity moves from ‘...questions of correspondence between descriptions and reality...to matters of

practices/doings/actions...' (Barad 2003: 802). The practice-led research articulated in my publications is grounded in practice, doing and action and the principles of NMPHPQ inquiry have enabled me to re-turn with new eyes (to) my published research, that was primarily grounded in qualitative research methods such as case study, auto-ethnography and Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). In my most recent publication (Frizell 2020a), I tentatively bring in a new materialist lens in my desire to disrupt the oppressive ability/disability binary entrapment. With hindsight, I now identify my lack of confidence in refusing the idea of the language of methodology, such as *data collection*, *data analysis* and *findings*, that is potentially infused with latent positivist language. In this thesis, I (cautiously) step outside that realm, encouraged by St Pierre (2021) who states that the goal of postqualitative inquiry:

'...is not to find and represent something that exists in the empirical world of human lived experience but to re-orient thought to experiment and create new forms of thought and life...' (163).

This inquiry seeks to find new thoughts with which to think, enabling me to question the attachments that '...keep us from thinking and living differently...' (Lather & St. Pierre 2013: 631). St. Pierre (2014) states that if methodology is separated from epistemology and ontology, it is in danger of becoming formulaic, with a tendency towards mechanized techniques. Lather (2013) also problematises methodological inquiry and asserts that new ways of thinking can materialise as we shift from binaries into multiplicities within NMPHPQ onto-epistemologies. This thesis has drawn on NMPHPQ modes of inquiry that open up ideas, bringing attention to '...entanglements of humans with other entities...' (Schadler 2019: 222). NMPHPQ perspectives have opened up a new space of wondering about my portfolio of published work.

3.2 New Materialism and Posthumanism

'...New materialist frameworks were helpful in challenging and disrupting binary thinking...' (Frizell 2020a: 5).

New materialism evolved as a term in the late 1990s, initiated by Braidotti and DeLanda (van der Tuin and Dolphijn 2010). Braidotti (2013, 2019) subsequently developed the idea of the posthuman subject. New materialism makes room for material relational bodies within a research assemblage that is emergent, entangled and processual (Davies 2021, Fox and Alldred 2017, 2018, van der Tuin and Dolphijn 2010). This approach offers an ethical dimension that inherently challenges the injustices perpetuated through binary thinking, fostering the potential of transversal kinship. Haraway (2016) states:

'...If there is to be multispecies ecojustice, which can also embrace diverse human people, it is high time that feminists exercise leadership in imagination, theory, and action to unravel the ties of both genealogy and kin, and kin and species...' (102).

I seek to optimise the potential of how kinship might be imagined and performed within a climate of equality and justice. NMPHPQ principles can support us to animate subjectivities differently, with particular reference in this thesis to the posthuman subject and ethical issues that arise when embodied practice, environmental awareness and learning disability find transversal meeting points of power and resistance.

3.3 Creating a Research Assemblage

‘...(w)e sat in quiet contemplation, watching the woodlouse crawl slowly and steadily along the wooden floor of the gym...’ (Frizell 2020: 213).

The idea of a research assemblage is central to much postqualitative inquiry, as a relational gathering of material-discursive matters. Assemblages are dynamic and processual by nature bringing a focus to potential, that is ‘...of becoming rather than being...’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 275). Within assemblages there are stabilising flows of territorialisation and de-territorialising flows that are de-stabilising, leading to constituent lines of flight (Deleuze & Guattari: 1987). The component parts of the assemblage bump up against each other, affecting each other from within, creating an always-in-process production of knowledge that employs an ‘...affect economy...’ (Fox & Alldred 2015: 405), with an orientation towards:

‘... processes and flows rather than structures and stable forms; to matters of power and resistance; and to interactions that draw small and large relations into assemblage...’ (ibid: 407).

These dynamic process of assemblages are characterised by permeability, plurality and multiplicity with blurred, rather than definitive, boundaries between phenomena. Bennett (2010) describes assemblages as ‘...ad hoc groupings of diverse elements, of vibrant materials of all sorts...’ (ibid: 23) and as:

‘...living, throbbing confederations that are able to function despite the persistent presence of energies that confound them from within....’ (ibid: 23).

All parts of an assemblage are capable of affecting and being affected by each other in a rhizomatic configuration. In creating an assemblage for re-viewing and re-turning (to) my existing published works, I have included filmed performances

alongside the text that bring forth a form of knowledge-ing to be received in terms of what it is doing, rather than the meaning it is creating (Lamothe 2015, Markula 2006).

3.4 Diffractive Analysis

‘...(h)er characteristically fluid flow transformed into a percussive punctuated rhythm in linear, vertical movements. Kate stopped abruptly...looking startled...’ (Frizell 2012: 298).

The diffractive meeting places of the components parts of this assemblage create ‘...intra-active interferences that Deleuze calls Being and Barad calls the world and its possibilities of becoming...’ (Davies 2014: 740). Barad (2007, 2014) describes diffractive methodology as a process of:

‘...reading insights through one another in attending and responding to the details and specificities of relations of difference and how they matter...’ (71).

Diffraction is about convergence, divergence and the multiple possibilities of becoming that are created in the collision of things; that is a ‘...cutting together-apart...’ (Barad 2014). In the process of crafting this thesis, I have struggled with the meeting places of improvised movement, abstract concepts, theoretical perspectives, dreams and material things, as I seek a performative realisation of the possibilities of the posthuman subject that emerge from my published works. This process has unveiled blurred and often unclear delineations, sometimes contradictory and inconsistent, characterised by multiplicities and pluralities within an assemblage that just will not stay still.

Lenz Taguchi and Palmer (2013) describe diffractive analysis as:

‘...an enactment of flows of differences, where differences get made in the process of reading data into each other and identifying what diffractive patterns emerge in these readings...’ (ibid: 676).

In this research enactment that enters the flows of differences, there have been rare moments that I seem to have clarity, but then a contradiction appears that sends the phantom cat amongst the previously contented pigeons. Davies (2021) reminds us of the unpredictable nature of NMPHPQ diffractive research processes, that can be both confronting and unsettling, but that are at the same time exciting and effective in stimulating new ways of thinking.

3.5 Exteriority Within and Agential Reality

‘...I am part of the body of the earth...’ (2020a: 212).

In order to discover new ways of thinking, I take my place as researcher within the ebb and flow of an intra-acting assemblage, remaining ‘...responsible and responsive to the world’s patternings and murmurings....’ (Barad 2012: 207). Barad (2007) challenges interior / exterior binaries, suggesting that exteriority and interiority are not determined and inseparable phenomena. The notion of an ‘...exteriority within...’ (177) extends the possibility of affective agency to all matter and widens the research perspectives into a place in which all matter matters whilst, at the same time, narrows the focus to the specificities of particular diffractive intra-actions. The researcher’s gaze, then, is intricately entangled with the subject (rather than object) of that gaze, situating ‘...all bodies, human and nonhuman, in relations of matter and mattering....’ (MacDonald & Wiens 2019: 366). In generating new ways of thinking,

practice as research has the potential to embrace the ‘...multiplicity, ambiguity and indeterminacy...’ (Barrett 2013: 63) of an onto-epistemological shift.

3.6 Practice-Led Research

‘...(t)his is an embodied knowing, which connects simultaneously to different levels of awareness, open to the subtle and eclectic nature of our experience...’ (Frizell 2014: 17).

Working with improvised movement, live performance and filmed performance engages ‘...materially creative thinking *within and through* the practices of dance making...’ (Middelw 2021:112). This experientially immersive thinking is open to the surprises of the unknown. Barad (2003) suggests that:

‘...(l)anguage has been granted too much power. The linguistic turn, the semiotic turn, the interpretative turn, the cultural turn: it seems that at every turn lately every “thing”—even materiality—is turned into a matter of language or some other form of cultural representation...’ (Barad, 2003: 801).

Improvisational dance as research provides an opportunity to turn towards the dynamic, unstable, contingent nature of being a body, which is always in the process of becoming. Bacon (2010, 2020) emphasises the processual nature of practice as research and advocates finding a methodology that ‘...allows for working with Selves rather than just physical bodies...’ (Bacon 2010: 64). Bacon cites examples of research that is grounded in Authentic Movement, Focusing and Jungian dreamwork (2010) and later, a methodological post-feminist approach informed by the goddess myth (2020), suggesting that ‘...practice-as-research in dance and performance is still young and exists primarily within the patriarchal values of the academy...’ (71). Dance improvisation as a modality to generate knowledge, however, is well

documented (for example, Ashley 2016, 2019, Bacon 2010, 2017, 2019, Barbour 2018, Blockmans et al 2020, Chodorow 1999, Frizell 2012, 2014, 2017, 2020, Hayes 2013, Kramer 2012, 2015, LaMothe 2015, 2018, 2020, Manning 2012, Markula 2006, McDowall 2019, Midgelow 2021, Phelan 1993, Rova 2017, Sheets-Johnstone 2011, Stromsted 2015, Trimmingham 2002). Hayes (2013) considers that the kinaesthetic empathy of practice is itself an emergent research method, enabling the researcher to connect to the intra-subjective space of existence. This makes visible multiple entangled encounters that are experienced through movement in any one moment, calling upon ‘...spontaneity, resilience, presence, adaption, readiness, responsiveness, risk, and willingness...’ (Fraleigh 2019, 67) in order to explore those entanglements. These encounters are illustrated in the filmed improvisations that are component parts of this thesis.

This tending toward the bodily self (Ahmed 2010, Manning 2012) is a place of encounter. Bodies are matter and Allegranti and Silas (2020) refer to the ‘...kin-aesthetics of knowing...’ (4), a concept that includes proprioception, intra-and extra-ception, aesthetics, and an ethical, relational kinship that is creative and multidimensional. Trimmingham (2002) reminds us of the non-linear disorderly nature of this creative process. Creativity exists in the relational affective flows between phenomena and NMPHPQ perspectives can disrupt the notion that creativity belongs to particular individuals, leaning towards creativity as ‘...an affective flow between assembled bodies, things and ideas...’ (Fox and Alldred 2017: 86).

Pisters (2018) argues that the Deleuzian concept of the Body without Organs (BwO) opens the potential of subjectivity within a NMPHPQ corporeality. This concept of BwO is an attempt to become liberated from the social, cultural and

political inscriptions that become infused into our subjectivity at a visceral level. Markula (2006) makes reference to the '...Dancing Body without Organs...' (3), that attempts to move away from hierarchies that are embedded in our embodied subjectivity, towards performance that is significant through what it does, for example through '...form, shape, energy, flow, initiation...' (3), rather than what it means. There is a tension between how we simultaneously create and are created by improvisational movement as our subjectivity is inseparable from socio-cultural and political constructs.

Barbour (2018) demonstrates how movement is epistemologically central to discovering and making sense of the world. She describes how '...(e)mbodied knowledge arises in the intimate weaving of passion, experience, and varied knowledges...' (241) and emphasises the layered dimensions of the term body. (Em)bodied ways of knowing also arise through improvisation, play, and experimentation, moving into gaps and articulating new connections between ideas and experience. Thus, embodied ways of knowing foreground *knowing* as living in the world creatively. (ibid).

The filmed improvisation included in this thesis as part of the research process has a history in dance-based, practice-led research. The postmodern dance artists in the 1960s and 1970s challenged the nature of dance performance and its conception, opening up new ontological possibilities and the 1990s brought the (still expanding) possibilities of digital technologies as part of the dance research process, setting '...the conditions of possibility for new templates of artistic expression in terms of composition, aesthetic, agency and spectatorship...' (Davidson 2016: 26). Davidson (2016) refers to contemporary post-phenomenological approaches, that

widen the frame of reference of the (em)bodied subject to include technological phenomena (24). She goes on to note how posthumanism embraces the technological world as part of human subjectivity. Allegranti and Wyatt (2014) employ Barad's concept of diffraction in research involving movement, photography and film that evidences experiences of loss, grounding their work in new materialist concepts that reflect the entangled nature of the research assemblage, including technology. Davidson (2016) cites examples of interdisciplinary research processes that bring together dance and technology to provide alternative conceptual frameworks to dance creation. The inclusion of digital technologies in practice-led research enables new realities to come into being, situating the human body differently. Ashley notes how:

‘...(t)echnology places a tangible other in the artistic process through which the experience of the body can be reflected upon, integrated into new systems of organization, and newly understood...’ (Ashley 2016: 5).

Davidson (2016) suggests that bringing technology into performance troubles embodied identities in the process of research, thus opening opportunities for new knowledge, revealing:

‘... new dimensions of aesthetic reception, modes of performativity and expressions of corporeal presence, which emerge with/ through the mediated body...’ (22).

The use of film in the process of dance research creates an alternative encounter with the audience. Wolfe (2017) states that ‘...(t)he creation of a sensory dialogue, as a movement with the participant and the virtual audience is specifically the utility of filmic research. The filmic data are virtually co-created with the viewer...’ (431). de Freitas (2016) suggests that video research, and its particular use of time and space, has an affinity with feminist new materialism, challenging:

'...classical notions of bodies and matter, particles and waves, observation and participation, and subjectivity and objectivity...' (33).

The process of filming can bring the body in movement into a new light, expanding our sense of what a body can become. The use of film as part of this critical commentary assemblage', privileges non-linguistic phenomena and creates an alternative encounter with the subject, cutting across material discursive approaches to knowledge production.

3.7 Transversal Mo(ve)ments

'...Leila was not standing 'as if' she were a mountain...she was the mountain...' Frizell 2020a: 211).

NMPHPQ approaches are central to this practice-led research methodology, with particular reference to the concepts of *diffraction* as critical analysis and *exteriority within* (Barad 2007), as well as to concepts such as assemblage, rhizome and Bodies-without Organs (BwO) (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). The posthuman subject dances relationally and intra-actively and each encounter orients living subjects to new possibilities of (intra)subjectivity. Improvisational movement and the use of digital technology have the capacity to shift our experience of ourselves as (in and with) the material world and this research is grounded in '...the material discursive body...' (Allegranti 2013: 397). The research cuts transversally across the material-discursive participants of this assemblage, locating the differentiating moving human body within a network of post-phenomenological subjects, with a focus on the diffractive meeting points.

The next chapter will explore how I applied NMPHPQ modes of inquiry to the create a narrative around the prevalent themes in my publications. But before entering that chapter, please do take a look at the film 'Diffraction at Sunrise.'

3.8 Film: Diffraction at Sunrise



Figure 14 Diffraction at Sunrise

Chapter 4: Assembling and Diffracting

‘...Metal hoses hissed like giant anacondas and steaming droplets of water cascaded onto the leaves of banana trees...in the simulated, tropical atmosphere. A bulging droplet fell from a leaf as if in slow motion. The leaf rebounded with a shudder. She felt the shudder in her spine...’ (Frizell 2017: 11).

In this chapter I will explicate the process of gathering this research assemblage, using the principles of NMPHPQ inquiry and flowing through interruptions in the non-linear process of this research. This inquiry has re-turned (to) my published work, animating the intersections and transversal meeting places of dance practice as an ethical therapeutic process, the eco-psychotherapeutic practice of being in a world now threatened by a climate emergency and critical disability studies, with a focus on the performativity of learning disability. The assemblage creates a collage of things that rebound and resonate, and through which knowledge shudders.

4.1 Gathering a Research Assemblage

‘...One particular moment...stayed with me. It didn’t seem to fit with the emergent themes, yet it hovered persistently in my orbit of awareness...’ (Frizell 2020a: 17).

Practice as research has enabled me to engage with the affective flows between the constituent parts of this assemblage (see Figure 15 Research Assemblage, pp. 81), performing the research itself as processual event (Bacon 2020, Fox and Allred 2017). This processual focus remains responsive to diffractive meeting points and this complexity might effectively be expressed by MacDonald & Wiens’ (2019) evocative term ‘...multimangle...’ (ibid: 371). I, the researcher, find myself mangled

intra-actively with values, bodies, matter and literature. This chapter invites you into the process of that transversal multimangle, animating my engagement with the content of my published portfolio in which ‘...subjects and objects become different in the encounters through which they emerge and go on emerging differently...’ (Davies 2014: 738). My own exteriority within is crucial to the intra-active explorations that follow, as I re-turn (to) the published texts through research inquiry that cuts across material-discursive processes of language, culture, environment and aesthetics.

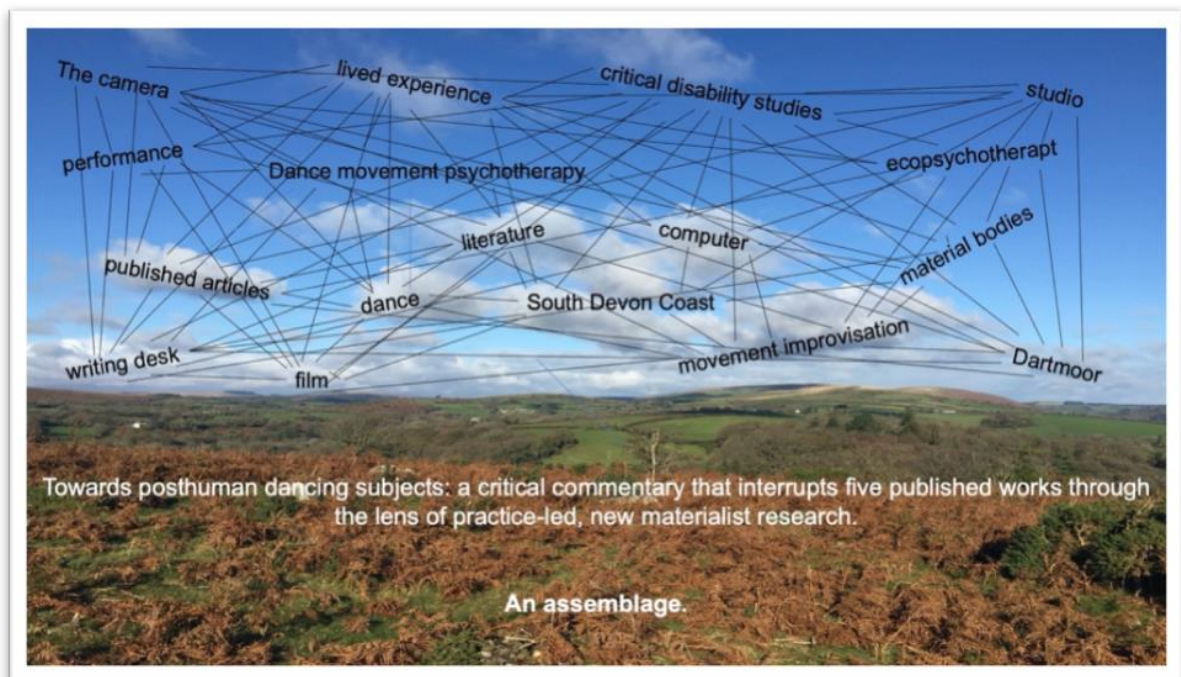


Figure 15 Research Assemblage

In gathering this assemblage, I lean into the wilderness, peering along paths that divide and divide again, to catch shafts of light that open lines of flight (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) obliquely through those wild places that are just the spots for

dreaming and I'm reminded that '...to dream is to live. To imagine is to know more...' (Bacon 2020:79). This NMPHPQ inquiry '...allows matter its due as an active participant in the world's becoming...' (Barad 2003: 803), animating the world differently. In this wild place, thorns and thistles know no bounds and wild orchids flourish. Towering trees spill upwards into an expansive sky, as their roots sink into the underground world of meandering rhizomes, generating inspiration for a Deleuze-Guattarian (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) philosophical metaphor. Shadows throw light on the blurred boundaries of an exteriority within (Barad 2007) and as researcher, I move as just one actor within this vibrant matter (Bennett 2010).

4.1a Interruption

Life dances as a butterfly in the sunlight and creeps in darkness as a mole beneath the earth. Lengthening days beckon emergent green shoots. Pink blossoms pepper the trees. Birds fill the summer solstice with song. The swollen fruits of autumn herald a mellowing of the year, before trees shed their robes and stand naked in the shadows of the low-slung winter sun. The rhythm is always going on.

My entangled agency as researcher has been situated in my capacity to make '...onto-epistemological, ethical mappings, in which something new might emerge...' (Davies 2014: 734), creating open ended assemblages and remaining receptive to diffractive possibilities. In this re-turning (of and) to my existing published research, I have enacted '...agential cuts...' (Barad 2014: 168) that are simultaneously

convergent and divergent, cutting ‘...together-apart...’ (ibid). I position myself as ‘...just one nodal point among many and not the most important...’ (Lather 2013: 640). There is no big bang; this inquiry is more of a heightening of awareness and a bringing to consciousness of something that is already going on, ‘...embedded in the immanence of doing...’ (Lather 2013: 635).

4.2 Diffraction in Action

‘...(h)er right arm bends and moves slowly upwards towards her face until her finger-tips land tentatively on her cheeks. She gasps at the intensity of the connection...’ (Frizell 2014: 19).

The interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary nature of this assemblage invites diffraction across discourse(s) and matter(s). Through diffractive analysis I investigate ‘...patterns of interference...’ (Davies 2014: 740) within encounters, finding flows of differences and reading and moving data through each other, noticing the diffractions that occur (Lenz Taguchi and Palmer 2013). This process shifts away from pre-existing entities that have a clear demarcation of boundaries, to phenomena characterised by ‘...emergent enactment...’ (Davies 2017: 267). I draw on Barad’s (2007) concepts of intra-action and agential realism, explored in Chapter 3 (see 3.5 Exteriority Within and Agential Reality, pp. 73-74), softening my gaze on my published texts, easing my way into the experiential texture of the writing.

This inquiry has been immersed in practice as research (Bacon 2020, Midglow 2019, Kramer 2015) whilst welcoming the agency of more-than-human and material collaborators, organic, non-organic and technological. In the process of this

research, I have become surprised by the affective capacity of things that have come to matter; a phenomenon that Bennett (2010) describes as ‘...(t)hing-power...’ (20).

This *thing power* was initially brought to my attention when moving from the family home in North London, leaving a community that we had come to value as our three daughters grew up. I had anticipated missing the neighbours, the local park, the nearby café, the garden, the frog spawn in the pond and the hedgehog who snuffled across the lawn by the light of the moon. My youngest daughter brought my attention to small details in the house, to which she had an attachment. A small chip in the skirting board that resembled a fish. The slightly battered metal Edwardian bedroom doorknob. The green plastic crocodile that had been stuck down the back of the bathroom radiator during a sibling squabble. The tessellated tiles on the hallway floor. The Christmas card written in French, trapped between two floorboards under the carpet. In a ritual of re-membering, she took photos of material details that had been part of her becoming (see Figure 15 Material Things, pp. 85), foregrounding the thing-power that Bennett (2010) suggests is ‘...a good starting point for thinking beyond the life-matter binary, the dominant organizational principle of adult experience...’ (20). I now re-member seeing the wonder in small things through the eyes of a child, listening out for small things as knowledge-ing messengers in the re-reading of my published texts.

I perused the articles and chapters, finding myself drawn to the text that spoke *from* the experiential knowledge-ing of moving bodies and still bodies. I needed to dance in order to develop this thinking.



Figure 16 Material Things

I also needed step back in order to free up some space in my mind. In that stepping back, the idea of a live performance as research to explore the diffractive meeting places was born unintentionally from a walk on the most westerly coast of Cornwall. In fact, I'd gone there for a break.

4.3 Performance:

'...(a)nother wave heaves against the force of gravity, rises and then plunges against the weathered stone. Thud...' (Frizell 2020: 212).

Just after the winter solstice of 2019 a spontaneous instinct took me to the tin mines at Botallick, on the West Coast of Cornwall. I followed the rugged coast from Zennor to St Ives and on arriving at St Ives came across an exhibition that resonated

thematically with the research for this thesis. I realised that in my attempt to take a break (perhaps a line of flight) from this research, I had, in fact, walked further into it! I began to conceptualise a walk as participatory-performance-as-research within this assemblage. As the planning was underway, the pandemic struck, interrupting my intentions of creating a performance, or even of travelling alone in order to create a film. However, I then realised that this performance had already happened. The spontaneous, improvisational walk *was and had been* the performance, within this context of uncertainty.

The unplanned performance 'Cliff Moves' brought together the human body and the landscape, along with the social, cultural and political history held in this land, emerging as an expression of '...the relationships between humans, lived spaces, and creative media...' (MacDonald & Wiens 2019: 366).

4.3.1 Cliff Moves: Becoming a Performance

'...I feel as though I have entered the Earth's theatre of becoming...' (Frizell 2020: 212).

On the wild tin coast at Botallack, disused mineshafts remind visitors of the 22,465 tons of copper, 14,888 tons of tin and 1525 tons of arsenic produced between 1815 and 1914. Human and more-than-human lives were lost and the scars of this plundering are etched into the rock. I peered into the entrance of a mineshaft to see broken train tracks disappearing into a silent abyss of darkness. Further along the coast, a green metallic glow on the rocks alluded to the precious metals in the

earth. The easterly wind was fierce, blowing a discarded packet of crisps into the sea.

The following day, I parked at Zennor, ready for a coastal walk to St Ives (see Figure 17 From Zennor to St Ives, pp. 89). Smartly dressed members of the congregation bowed their heads against the wind, making their way to St Senara's Sunday service. The church bells rang. The belfry towered against a blue sky. I remembered the 600-year-old oak chair in the church, bearing a mermaid carving to depict the legend of a church warden's choir boy son, Matthew Trehwella. The story goes, that a mermaid sat on a rock below Zennor, mesmerised by the boy's singing. She ventured closer and one Sunday enticed the boy down to the sea. Neither was seen again. The materiality of the chair remained in my mind from my last visit, one of the '...multiple forms of bodies, creatively collaborating...' (Harris et al 2019: 4) in an emergent process; the oak chair, in its '...active, earthy, not-quite-human capaciousness...' (Bennett: 2010: 3). I noted the fear in this story of a part-human, female seductress luring the choir boy from his innocence. Beware of the female other(ing).

The arduous walk along the coast to St Ives was exhilarating. I clambered over rocks, ascended and descended the sometimes water-logged, sometimes steep and often winding path. I was danced by, and as part of an elemental vitality amongst families of seals, diving gannets and the vast seascape. The wind leaned into my back and hurried the clouds across the sky. The sun threw shadows across rolling waves, shifting the blueness from dark to light and all shades in between:

'...(I)ike the diffraction patterns illuminating the indefinite nature of boundaries - displaying shadows in "light" regions and bright spots in "dark" regions...' (Barad 2003: 803).

Arriving at St Ives, I came across an exhibition entitled 'From where I stand' (Nkanga 2019) by performance artist Otobong Nkanga at the Tate St Ives gallery. Nkanga's work brings together ideas about the body, the landscape and the multiple ways of being here together. The tapestries, photos, paintings and objects investigate human compulsive consumption of the earth's natural resources. An enormous tapestry entitled 'The weight of scars' (ibid) combined textiles and photography illustrating (headless) figures grasping ropes that connected to more ropes, pipelines and pictures of abandoned mineshafts. The pushing and pulling of multiple arms inflicting a violence on the earth.

Data was glowing from unexpected places and a potential performance seemed to be welcoming '...(t)he 'disorderliness' of the creative process...' (Trimingham 2002: 56) into the inquiry. The prospect of a wild walk performance continued to tap on the window. Glancing through the glass pane of my imagination, I saw a long-eared animal racing across the field towards the horizon, silhouetted against the late afternoon moon.

The hare!

Of course!

The creature of the moon and the night. The symbol of fertility and creativity.

The shapeshifter.



Figure 17 From Zennor to St Ives

This hare-brained idea was calling to be born, bringing together bodies that were creating a narrative, ‘...affecting one another and generating intensities...’ (Stewart 2007: 128). Breathing bodies, bodies without lungs, bodies of discourse, bodies of thinking, elemental bodies, Bodies without Organs (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:150).¹²

My intention of a live performance became disrupted by the uncertainty of how the pandemic would unfold. Perhaps a film would be more feasible. Unsure that

¹² Deleuze and Guattari (1987) suggest that: ‘The BwO is what remains when you take everything away. What you take away is precisely the phantasy, and significances and subjectifications as a whole.’ (151).

restrictions would allow me to revisit the walk, I began to explore the idea of filming movement, within the reality of geographical restrictions. But if I was going to make a film, then I would need a camera.

4.4 The Camera

'...(t)he dance comes and goes, lingering as an invisible trace that is absorbed into the unwritten history of the material world...' (Frizell 2014:20).

I ordered a camcorder and tripod online. The doorbell rang. The equipment arrived. Charging the battery took time. Once charged, I set up the camera. It looked back at me. The screen said '...insert memory card...'. I had not realised that I needed to purchase this separately. I ordered the memory card and before it arrived, watched the camera standing on its tripod without a memory, looking back at me with its unseeing lens (see Figure 18 Camera 1, pp. 91 and Figure 19 Camera 2, pp. 92). I reflected on its potential to allow '...the private to become public...' (Skaife et al 2020: 56).

The objectifying lens of the camera might be considered nothing more than technical apparatus however, already it was bringing an agency of its own. I wondered who I would become in this assemblage on screen; a body amongst bodies that can be seen, repeatedly. I glanced at the still unseeing lens of my newly acquired camera, wondering how its memory, currently *ex situ*, would disrupt this research.



Figure 18 Camera 1

I anticipated that, along with the filming apparatus and the array of subjects that meet with the camera's gaze, I will be part of an assemblage that challenges my identity and my sense of place, that exists '...in the interval between body and landscape...' (McNamara 2018: 142). I moved towards holding this camera thing, attaching it to a tripod, angling the lens and stepping into the frame, like Alice into the looking glass. In my mind's eye, I navigated the materiality of this place of '...research as practice in performance...' (Hagell & Allegranti 2002: 158).



Figure 19 Camera 2

Barad (2007) reminded me that:

‘...(m)eaning is not a property of individual words or groups of words but an ongoing performance of the world in its differential dance of intelligibility and unintelligibility...’ (149).

I wondered what meaning would arise from my intra-action with this technology in relation to the ongoing performance of the world. The camera stood on its tripod and I became familiar with its statuesque form.

The memory card arrived. I installed it and entered the garden with camera and tripod to become newly entangled in the world’s performance. I was preparing to be seen (see Figure 20 Newly Entangled and Figure 21 Preparing to be Seen, pp. 93).



Figure 20 Newly Entangled



Figure 21 Preparing to be Seen

4.4a Interruption

I drive to the top of North street, disorientated by lockdown, now at 11 weeks. Turning left, I slow down. A learning disabled man is crossing. He smiles at me, raising a hand. I return the smile, wondering if he has been conjured from my thoughts. I turn on the radio. The woman talking is learning disabled. I can tell by her phrasing of words and her thoughtfulness. I catch her voice mid-sentence:

'...and er... I think I think we need to stop the attitudes. People hadn't got a voice back then, but now, everything is changing...'

I reflect on my recent research revealing the impact of parents discovering that their child has Down's syndrome (Frizell 2020a) that unveiled deeply embedded attitudes about whose lives have come to matter less than others. The programme is about a newly published book, 'Made Possible: stories of success by people with learning disabilities – in their own words' (Salman 2020). Sarah Gordy, who has Down's syndrome, engages publicly in the '...radical politics of immanence...' (Braidotti 2019:162) in her struggle for visibility and her demands to have a place on the map. Gordy's voice on the radio is like clear water in a spring pool. I flick the indicator to turn left and put pressure on the brake to pull up at red traffic lights. I cannot see the green light, so I rely on the other cars for my cue to accelerate. I arrive at Branscombe¹³, park the car and pay at the ticket machine, with the least possible physical contact with the metal. Coronavirus lurks invisibly. Once paid up, I walk past some splendid beach huts and even more splendid holiday homes, to see my

¹³ The original meaning of Branscombe is the Valley of the Raven.

colleague sitting on a rock in pink hat and pink shirt. The waves lap gently against the shore. Red rocks fallen from the cliffs are drizzled with ripples of quartz. I wade through uncomfortable feelings evoked by the idea performance. I sit between a tall rock to my right and a smaller rock to my left. The outer layer of the rocks crumble in my hands. Matter that is solid and matter that crumbles. I sit between the gaze of paternal judgement on my right and maternal expectations on my left, caught between a rock and a hard place. A potentially diffractive space between two worlds emerges. I wriggle out of the binary that holds me down. Once I begin to move, I know what to do; my body knows how to become present to the emergent, improvisational dance that has become embedded in my practice-led research. Finding my feet, I move (into) the idea of short films that animate this research.

4.4.1 Stepping into the Eye of the Camera

‘...she listens to an impulse which leads her to unfurl her right arm towards the sunlight...’ (Frizell 2014: 19).

I wonder about those experiential mo(ve)ments that are documented throughout my published research. With my feet on the ground, I inhabit my body on this Dartmoor tor (see Figure 22 Yar Tor, Dartmoor, pp. 97). I meet with the wind as it blows across the rocks and leans into me. Crevasses in the rocks invite me to shelter. Sheep graze.

I am aware of the silence through which birds sing. I pause. This stillness is a mo(ve)ment of diffraction. In this a kinetic encounter, creativity has a chance to

incubate (Biondo 2019) and differences have a chance to meet and thread through each other. I listen to the tension and aliveness in this stillness.

My professional dance training hovers in my awareness and bubbles to the surface in a compulsion to produce movement through moving. Stillness becomes a ‘...mute currency in an economy of movement...’ (Gray 2012: 203). I quieten the oppressive voice that seeks to colonise my becoming and I welcome this stillness as an act of resistance, pushing back against a culture of doing and producing.

4.4.1a Interruption

I dream that I attempt to descend a staircase in a wheelchair. Another wheelchair user is ahead of me. I struggle with the precarious decent. I begin to fall, seemingly out of control and grab the rail next to the staircase. The wheelchair falls from beneath me, clattering downstairs. I cling to the rail, disabled by the loss of the wheelchair.

Disabled by the loss.

Disabled.

This improvisation-in-stillness brings me into a meeting place with this ageing rock that has been weathered by the wind over millennia. I too improvise my way into later life as dancer, academic, therapist, mother, mother-activist, researcher, wife, daughter, sister, colleague and friend. I attempt to mute the preconceptions that

have arrived with me as a performer. My polyattentive body, converses with ‘...ambiguity, uncertainty, potentiality, and choice...’ (McDowall 2019: 185), becoming immersed in embodied, tacit knowledge; keeping alive a practice-as-research that grows as a ‘...tender new shoot in an otherwise well-established forest...’ (Bacon 2020: 72), so easily trampled under the hob-nailed boots of the academic cannon.



Figure 22 Yar Tor, Dartmoor

I quieten the doubting mind, engaging in a ‘...language of embodied fluency...’ (Fraleigh 2019: 85), becoming conscious of breathing and transforming this air that is a shared resource. I step into an already happening ‘...enquiry that begins with the

self...’ (Ashley 2019: 598) in the spirit of practice-led-and-as-research. As I offer my personal myth to the universe this processual methodology is actioned (Bacon 2020). Not a camera in sight. Yet.

Because first I need to immerse myself in listening and connecting, in asking for permission to return with a camera in this ‘...posthuman convergence...’ (Braidotti 2019: 153) of subjects.

I stand next to this rock in a climate emergency, finding myself immersed in an intra-subjective, continuous dialogue with the material world, in which I exist as just one form of matter; animal, vegetable, mineral and other; seeking a narrative for a process of becoming as I ‘...align, transform, and begin, again and again...’ (Ashley 2019: 608). This practice deepens my sensitivity to the land, fostering an ethical relationship with the earth’s ecology, dancing within the liminality of diffractive encounters between bodies in the landscape.

I stand on the contours of the earth’s body, inside the vibrant and entangled matter that is earth, as part of the agentic and performative matter within the entanglements of reciprocity and mutuality. I reflect on how my previous writing would subtly slip into the very body/mind binary from which I wanted to depart. I wonder about the sentence ‘...(t)he body brings us into relationship with the environment and grounds the mind in an existential reality...’ (Frizell 2021: 297). This bodied and minded experience is not *not* exclusively mine and, at the same time, it is not exclusively mine at all. Where is mind in all that matter(s)? I turn towards knowledge-ing as it arises from the wind, following the threads of multiplicity and ambiguity, finding that I breathe and make a space for the secretion of meaning through a rhizomatic network of tacit knowledge.

The distinction between the *me* and the *not me* (Winnicott 1971) becomes increasingly unclear and at the same time, the world begins to make more sense. I lean towards the granite rock, feeling its warmth as the palm of my right hand comes into contact with it. This touch brings me into relationship, confirming that I am here. This touch is a currency; an exchange, connecting me directly to this place and also to myself (Olsen 2002). Touch brings me to the edges of, and into my experience. Barad (2012) suggests that

‘...touching the Other is touching all Others, including the ‘self’, and touching the ‘self’ entails touching the strangers within...’ (Barad 2012:214).

I become immersed in the touch of the wind, the rock, the grass, the heat of the sun and the damp rain, intuitively sensing those strangers within as the camera of my mind’s eye locates my human figure in partnership with this landscape. I need to seek an anonymity that I know, at times, evades my grasp as my ego fights for existence. The human form is well practised at dominating the landscape.

Antony Gormley’s installation ‘Another Place’¹⁴ on Crosby Beach in Liverpool has become part of the Merseyside landscape. One hundred male figures stand in the face of the moving tide, the shifting weather, the humans and other species who ebb and flow, to and from that place. The artwork explores the relationship of the human body to space and asks where we stand in relation to nature and the cosmos. Yet at the same time, this human male form dominates the landscape in its enduring iron

¹⁴ Another Place is an artwork by Anthony Gormley consisting of 100 cast-iron, life-size figures made from casts of the artist’s own body.

material. The passive pose of the replicated iron hu-*Man* forms in their nakedness confronts me with both vulnerability and dominion.

I am wary of that dominion in the frame of the camera, in this land. I seek to engage with my body as a ‘...kinetic energy...’ (LaMothe 2018: 128), relational, empathic and dynamic, dancing my entanglement in the world in which movement is the ‘...the great law of life...’ (Mary Starks Whitehouse 1999: 41). LaMothe (2018) suggests that we learn to become conscious of, and sensitive to this kinetic energy through dance to support an ‘...ongoing bodily becoming...’ (129). A pony steps out from behind the rock and we surprise each other.

I return to this place with camera and tripod. I move tentatively towards the eye of the camera, as if towards a cliff edge. As I step into the cinematic frame, I step into an autoethnographic ‘...fictive tradition...’ (Denshire 2014: 836) of a blurring of boundaries between the real and the imagined stories that constitute the narrative of who I am (becoming). Today, that is.

Sense falls into place from non-sense. I become immersed in the improvisation that is already going on. I glance at this camera’s lens looking back at me and wonder how it will remember these improvised scores performed in a ‘...deeply site-sensitive, time-sensitive, and person-sensitive process...’ (Ashley 2019: 595) connecting me to this place through ‘...specific microrelations...’ (ibid). I am entangled in these microrelations, moving rhizomatically amongst iterative processes that enable me to open a space for practice-led knowledge-ing to be generated. These images memorised by the camera are ‘...very explicitly made, not taken...’ (Reason 2012: 239).

I disappear into the shadow of a rock.

Phelan (1993) suggests that when performance moves out of the immediacy and transience of the live moment, it belies its own ontology as a subjective, lived experience. The subjective experience of bringing the gaze of the camera into the performance troubles this notion, as the camera itself participates as one of ‘...the performative agents...’ (Allegranti and Wyatt, J 2014: 534). This technical object that looks at me straddles the divide between the organic and inorganic ‘...being made from inorganic matter by organic beings...’ (Develennes and Dillet 2018: 14). I bring myself into the frame by moving my hand, slowly towards the rock, immersed in the meeting of hand and granite, sensing the rock, as the rock senses me back.

I replay the film, which is not as I imagined it to be. I am reminded of an article by Peggy Phelan entitled ‘On the Difference between Time and History’ (Phelan 2014). The article is not the one she had intended to submit as, after writing the initial article, she had inadvertently deleted it, causing her to reflect on the complex interplay between time and history. She notes how:

‘...something within live performance resists the keeping of accounts and the smooth chronicling of its history...’ (119).

I realise that I cannot recreate, nor represent the experience of moving in the eye of the camera. In creating a film, I am engaging with a process of diffraction that is creating something new.

4.5 Entanglement

‘...The question of belonging rang in the silver song of the skylark as he hovered above us with quivering wings. The shrill song of that airborne pilgrim ascended and descended effortlessly...’ (Frizell 2020: 216).

As I move into this research practice, I find that I am ‘...always already becoming in (this) entanglement...’ (Lather & St. Pierre 2013: 630), responding to a plethora of emergent possibilities. This wild place is a place of dreaming through:

‘...(t)he force of imagination (that) puts us in touch with the possibilities for sensing the insensible, the indeterminate...’ (Barad 2012: 216).

I re-turn (to) my published texts, re-memembering an entangled clinical process, in which Kate works with improvisational movement to think about her client, in a way that moves beyond language, to less conscious knowing (Frizell 2012). Conflicting tensions disrupt a desire for linearity and certainty. This is one of many examples in my published research that explores the ways in which we can find a posthuman kinship through the always entangled, dancing body.

Barad (2014) states that:

‘...(e)ntanglements are not unities. They do not erase differences; on the contrary, entanglings entail differentiatings, differentiatings entail entanglings...’ (176).

This chapter has traced the entanglements and differentiatings of creating the research assemblage for this inquiry as I have explored my portfolio of published research through practice-as-performance-and-cinematic-collaboration.

I wander into the garden, camera and tripod underarm, with a new understanding of ‘...the challenges of trans-corporeal entanglements...’ (Braidotti 2019 169). We are in this differently together (see 4.6 Film: We arE iN THis DifFerEntly tOGethEr pp. 103).

[4.6 Film: We arE iN THis DifFerEntly tOGethEr](#)

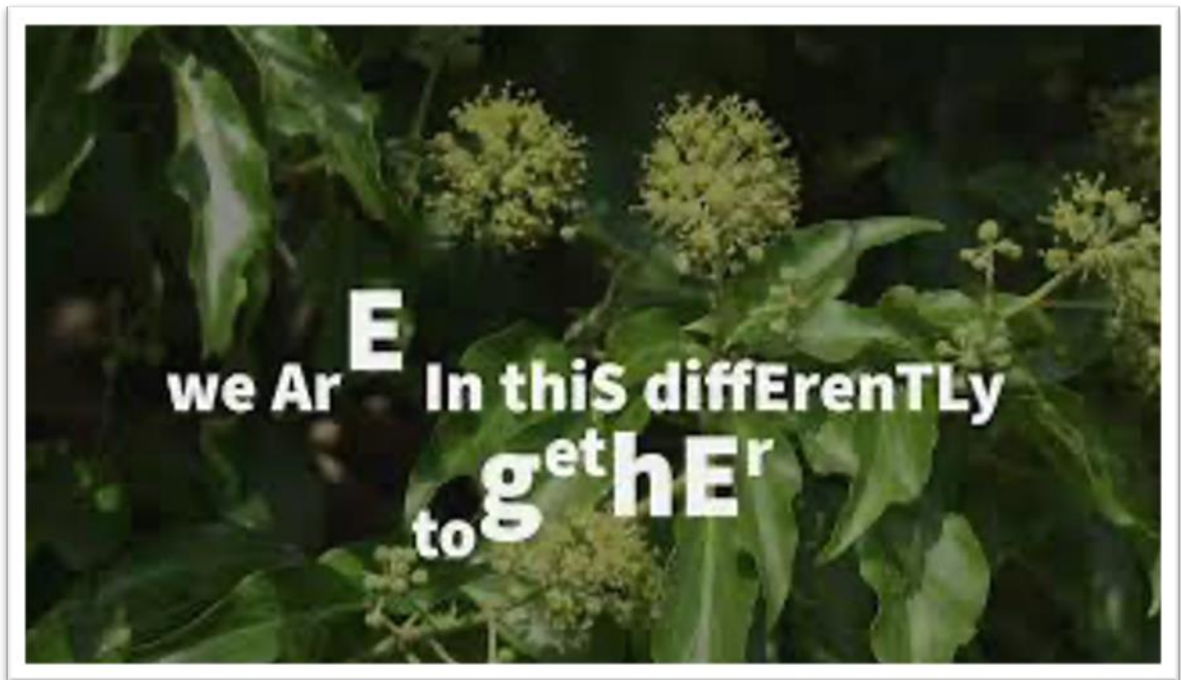


Figure 23 We arE iN THis DifFerEntly tOGethEr

Chapter 5 Discussion

'...I remember that her older sister was really into horses at the time and she asked 'do horses have Down's syndrome?'...' (Frizell 2020a: 17).

My portfolio of published research challenges binaries through which particular bodies are perceived and (de)privileged. Re-turning (to) these texts through a NMPHPQ lens has enabled me to theorise further the de-centring of humans as exclusive makers of meaning and to animate the thematic threads of my existing research as a form of '...knowledge-ing...(as)...a performative enactment...' (Taylor 2021: 39). This discussion evaluates that performative enactment from the inside of this rhizomatic assemblage. As this discussion develops, I will demonstrate how key NMPHPQ concepts, such as intra-action, agential realism, exteriority within, and spacetime-mattering, have served as catalysts to explore transversal, fluid notions of (intra)subjectivity that arise from the texts. In creating a coherent critical commentary assemblage' for this portfolio of published research, I have engaged with Barad's (2007) concept of diffraction, that moves within the permeable boundaries of phenomena (including the researcher), assuming an entangled exteriority within. The shadows are always changing, depending on the light (see Figure 24 Shadows, pp. 105).

The portfolio of research was published within the context of a particular decade (2012-2020), outlined in Chapter 1, (see 1.2 Background pp. 2) This decade itself nestles within the professional context of my career of over four decades, including community dance practitioner, DMP and educator, as well as parent activist. In 1990 I co-founded an inclusive arts charity, whilst being involved in voluntary sector initiatives and parents' support groups, campaigning for equal opportunities for

learning disabled children and young people. Additionally, my work has been influenced by a decade of intensive Jungian analysis as a client, working outside in ancient woodland, along with my involvement in developing an annual ecopsychology UK conference in a tented conference centre in Worcestershire. These practice-based experiences have been crucial elements of the rhizomatic assemblage of knowledge-ing that has shaped this thesis towards posthuman subjectivity as an ethical, emancipatory process. Within these contexts, the diffractive inquiry of my portfolio of research, folds into the specificities, the differentials and the transdisciplinarity of DMP, ecopsychology and critical disability studies. This research, then, has fermented slowly over time, evolving through material-discursive engagement(s) in the world, underpinned by a ‘...Slow Ontology...’ that is ‘...*differently productive...*’ (Ulmer 2017: 201), resisting (as far as has been possible) an imperative to produce rapid research outputs in academia.

In this discussion, I will consider the way in which key NMPHPQ concepts of this rhizomatic assemblage have contributed to the knowledge-ing of transdisciplinary practice(s) that traverse(s) my portfolio of research.



Figure 24 Shadows

5a Interruption

The Phone Rings; 'Hello?'

'Hello Mum. How are you?'

'Ah! Hello Anna. I'm good thanks. How's it going?'

'I got my vaccination and my arm hurts.'

'Oh dear. I'm sorry your arm hurts. But good that you had the vaccination.'

'Yes. Then I had chocolate cake.'

'Chocolate cake?'

'Yes; just a small bit.' ... (pause) ... '...Mum...? ...I had my vaccination and then I had chocolate cake.'

'Yes; as you said; you had your vaccination and then chocolate cake.'

'Yes; but mum, my arm hurts. (pause) ... Mum....? have you had a vaccination?'

'Not yet. But I'm getting some chocolate cake ready. That sounds like a good idea.'

'Why are you going to get chocolate cake ready?'

'So that if my arm hurts when I have my vaccination, I can have some chocolate cake.'

5.1 Posthuman Mattering

'...(t)he previously unwelcome thoughts and feelings which were being defended against...emerged through the synchronistic co-arising of the dreams, allowing us to tolerate the intensity and to think together...' (Frizell 2012: 301).

This research has occurred during the Covid-19 global pandemic with coronavirus entering the global stage early in the process of this research, highlighting and troubling binaries such as macro/micro, human/non-human, individual/society and private/public (Murriss 2021), problematising notions of kinship and magnifying existing inequalities. The 'Hands, Face, Space' slogan, along with calls to ventilate rooms and stay away from unnecessary contact, has highlighted our entangled intra-dependency, troubling neoliberal ideas about humans as autonomous, separate individuals. Notions of independence and absolute interiority and exteriority have become exposed as cultural myths. Structural discrimination has surfaced, as, for example, we discover that learning disabled adults are thirty times more likely to die from Covid-19 than the general population and, in addition, will be served with *do not resuscitate* orders for no other reason than being learning disabled (Editorial, The Guardian 2021). These realities illustrate how learning disabled bodies manifest within deeply embedded inscriptional spaces (Butler 2011).

In my portfolio of research, I inquire into the relationship between inscriptional spaces and structural discrimination, as binary oppositional forces separate, divide and individualise bodies, privileging particular bodies over others (Frizell 2012, 2014, 2017, 2020, 2020a). For example, my case study research into the task of supervision (Frizell 2012) reveals the unconscious fear of dependency and the desire for human homogeneity lurking in two synchronistic dreams shared by supervisor and supervisee. The dreams reveal a terror of life-long dependency that

troubles the myth that humans are the independent authors of their materialisation. Further research demonstrates how parents find themselves faced with the shadow of the humanistic *we* when confronted with the birth of a child with Down's syndrome (Frizell 2017, 2020a), troubling what it is that makes a (human) life worth living and finding their entitlement to belong disrupted. This othering of groups of peoples is ontologically and epistemologically embedded within subtle cultural folds and my existing research demonstrates how hard it is to find an emancipatory language with which to speak about learning disability (Frizell 2020a) in the struggle against pervasive normative forces that create, and are created by, the language available to us. In the process of the interviews with the parents of children with Down's syndrome, this struggle was acutely apparent. This research challenges universalist claims about homogenised notions of particular groups of humans and, indeed, how we define the concept human at all. Braidotti (2019) states that the term humanity itself is not neutral, rather, it '...indexes access to specific powers, values and norms, privileges and entitlements, rights and visibility...' (159) and social categories, such as class, race, gender, age and (dis)ability become markers of difference.

5.2 Spacetime mattering and Affective Flows

'...(t)ime yawned, stretched and turned towards the wind. The gently sloping moorland drew my gaze to a road, where ponies gathered in clusters with shaggy mains billowing in the wind. A small foal picked up her hooves and crossed one spindly leg across the other...' (Frizell 2020: 217).

My research resists binary, oppositional forces that privilege particular agentic bodies over others, bringing to light the agentic capacity of all matter, as well as

refusing absolute interiority and exteriority. Barad (2007) asserts that ‘...agency is a matter of intra-acting; it is an enactment, not something that someone or something has...’ (178). This perspective nudges me into a multiply-mangled, differentiating world in which:

‘...(w)e are not merely differently situated in the world; “each of us” is part of the intra-active ongoing articulation of the world in its differential mattering...’ (Barad 2008 in Davies 2021: 6).

This ‘...ethical-onto-epistemological...’ (ibid) shift around which identities are organised and subjectivities performed troubles a position that locates the human body as a central agential subject within a passive material world. In chapter 2 of this thesis (see 2.4.1 The Ecological Self, pp. 50) I cite Abram (1996) who argues that the logic of species exceptionalism, that objectifies all that is non-human, is also used to categorise some humans as ‘...not fully human...’ (48), subordinating groups of peoples within a species hierarchy. Mitchel and Snyder (2015) refer to disability as a subordinated experience of peripheral embodiment and Braidotti (2019) refers to subordinated others as missing peoples. There is a binary edge that divides an idea of *us* from an idea of *them*.

In one of my publications (Frizell 2020), I present the story of Eric and the Woodlouse. This is the story of a learning disabled boy, with whom I worked as a DMP. Eric was a ‘...troubled child, who never seemed to fit in...’ (212). I recount one session when a woodlouse entered the therapeutic space, triggering Eric’s projection of his unwanted feelings of vulnerability and helplessness onto the insect, who became a target for Eric’s rage. This rage then shifted to curiosity in an inexplicable intra-active moment of insight, when Eric began to identify with the defenseless

woodlouse, who he subsequently invited into his playhouse. A process of de-territorialisation was in operation as Eric dis-identified with an anthropocentric dominion and became open to the talismanic power of the woodlouse in a ‘...post-human interconnectedness...’ (Braidotti 1997: 71). Eric connected to an expanded sense of himself as a human subject (his ecological self), extending an empathic kinship to a member of the insect world. Braidotti (1997) refers to the ‘...destabilizing posthuman speed...’ (74) of the impressively rapid transformative and adaptive capacities of insects that, she says, serves as an inspiration to the potentiality of becoming. Like the tortoise in the sink (see 2.2a Interruption pp. 45) the challenge is to find ways to listen these unfamiliar capacities of others. The story of Eric’s meeting with the woodlouse is one of several encounters that I present throughout my published works and through which the world becomes animated differently, embracing all matter ‘...as an active participant in the world’s becoming...’ (Barad 2003: 803). Such encounters (re)position human subjects as embedded, embodied and nomadic, living in (and among and as) *spacetime matter*¹⁵. The affective, relational flows of matter-in-the-becoming is a place of intra-action, of simultaneously being created by the experience that we are creating.

The posthuman subject as embedded, embodied, nomadic and differentiating is an ethical issue that concerns the mattering of all entangled material-discursive phenomena. As the woodlouse enters the space of mattering, the potential of Eric’s (intra)subjectivity is expanded. Such unexpected interruptions that glow hold the potential for new knowledge-ing, such as when, in my research evaluating the experience of parents discovering their child has Down’s syndrome (Frizell 2020a), I

¹⁵ Spacetime mattering is a concept described in chapter 2: section 2.5.2: note 6 pp. 60 as the entangled relationship between space, time and matter, all of which are non-static.

recount a sequence of events in which I dreamt of the birth of a foal that troubled the notion of being a foal. The next day, I interviewed a mother, who recalled her daughter asking if horses could have Down's syndrome, at which point the cat jumped onto the table, demanding attention and disrupting the dialogue. This sequence of events helped me to think about '...emergent possibilities of differentiation...' (Frizell 2020a: 18) that trouble static notions of space, time and matter. The birth of a baby with Down's syndrome itself disrupts ethico-onto-epistemological certainties about be(com)ing (in) the world as well as certainties of who we are.

This human body is part of the world's differential performative affect economy and the areas of research in my publications, have onto-epistemological implications about how we theorise embodiment and move towards intra-active posthuman, dancing subjects. Barad (2007) suggests that:

'...(t)he spacetime manifold does not sit still while bodies are made and remade. The relationship between space, time and matter is much more intimate. Spacetime itself is iteratively reconfigured through the ongoing intra-activity of the world...and bodies are among the differential performances of the world's dynamic intra-activity...' (376).

This intimate and dynamic relationship between space time and matter moves towards differentiated, dancing material bodies of all kin(ds) and towards possibilities of posthuman subjectivities.

5.2a Interruption

I step away from my desk and stand, symmetrical, feet apart, arms dropped by my side. The soles of my feet converse with the roughly textured, yet also soft carpet. A car alarm begins outside in a kind of relentless repetition that triggers my anxiety. It stops. My left hand lifts slowly towards my face and I feel cold fingers against my skin. My right arm reaches side-ways and I stretch towards it, curving my spine and shifting my weight between my feet to steady myself. I begin to sink towards the floor, but find myself, at the same time reaching upwards. A blackbird sings outside the window and my movement becomes fluid as I twist towards that song, finding an energy that meets with each moment before it disappears.

5.3 Embedded, Embodied, Nomadic Subjects

'...Kim explores ways to straddle the personal, cultural and ecological contradictions inherent in her desire to live ethically and peacefully with the earth and her inadvertent complicity in the hubris of the human species...' (2014: 15).

My published research introduces *Kim* (Frizell 2014), illustrating how she was able to explore the tensions between a desire to live ethically as a subject of the world and a less conscious complicity with the socio-political, cultural inscriptions of human exceptionalism. Kim uses improvisational movement as part of the landscape to decentre the notion of the human protagonist and to become '...open to the sentient expression of the non-human...' (Frizell 2014: 18) as she participates in the animacy of a kinetic, material ecology. The agentic reality of Kim's dance creates a beyond-human we of intra-acting subjects. Similarly, the case study of Hassan

(Frizell 2020) Illustrates how an empathic, intra-connection with the earth can be rekindled within the therapeutic process, towards both personal and planetary healing. Hassan¹⁶ accesses a deeply (intra)subjective, embodied connection with the image of the tree and through this, he is able to regulate his over-active nervous system.

These examples contribute to an inquiry into the process of identifying with the agentic substance of more-than-human matter through improvisational movement. The embodied, embedded, nomadic subject is animated through ‘...discovering a deep attunement with the earth through the fleshy substance of the body...’ (Frizell 2014: 19), through entering the ‘...(e)arth’s theatre of becoming...’ (Frizell 2020: 212) and through troubling the ‘...embodied biographical narratives that define our lives...’ (ibid: 207).

This embedment of human subjectivity is evident in ecological movement practices and is aligned to NMPHPQ thinking. I have developed the idea of the ecological body throughout my work¹⁷ with ecopsychotherapy as a guiding principle. As explicated in Chapter 2 (see 2.4 Ecopsychotherapy: Ecological Intra-action. pp 48-57), ecopsychotherapy is philosophically underpinned by a concern about the environmental crisis and is aligned to deep ecology¹⁸ and environmental activism¹⁹. Ecopsychotherapy challenges an essentialist concept of subjectivity, recognising that

¹⁶ See Frizell 2020 in which I present the story of Hassan, a Dance Movement Psychotherapy client.

¹⁷ see specifically Frizell 2014 and 2020.

¹⁸ See, for example, Sessions, G. (ed) (1995)

¹⁹ See, for example, Macey and Young Brown (1998) and Macy (1991)

as embedded, embodied, nomadic subjects, what we do to the earth, we do to ourselves.

In my article 'The Language of the Ecological Body' (Frizell 2014) I remember a young girl on the autistic spectrum who struggles to manage formal, language-based environments such as the classroom, yet steps into her own becoming in an outdoor environment. This story straddles the diffractive, relational meeting points of the material-discursive processes that characterise the rhizomatic assemblage of this research. As the practice-led researcher, I attempt to make sense of the experience of this client, traversing theoretical notions of subjectivity that help me to facilitate a therapeutic relationship, whilst connecting to the kinetic experience that '...knows instinctively how to speak with the earth...' (ibid: 16). As I have gathered this rhizomatic research assemblage, I notice how the affective relationships between discourse and matter lean towards posthuman becomings that emerge from potent diffractive meeting places. It reminds me that, like the parent I was of a learning disabled child, who occupied '...a liminal space, betwixt and between 'proper' motherhood and 'proper' disability activism...' (Runswick-Cole & Ryan 2019:1126), I now occupy those differential, intra-active spaces of this research assemblage. In creating this thesis as a critical commentary assemblage on these texts, the diffractive analysis has included filmed improvisational movement, as an inquiry into the human body moving as and of the landscape, consciously embracing an '...exteriority within...' (Barad 2008:122).

5.4 A Dishuman Perspective

'...Kemi was able....to think about the place where the 'handicapping process is begun' (Sinason 1992, p. 81); when the unbearable communication of difference and dependency cannot be received by the significant other and the disabled person learns to smile to protect the world from the pain of disappointed desire...' (Frizell 2012: 301).²⁰

As demonstrated in this thesis, theories of embodiment are differentiating, rather than universalizing and in my writing (Frizell 2017) I demonstrate how the baby born with Down's syndrome finds that the matter of her very particular characteristics attracts an inscribed gaze, that leans heavily on matters of identity and subjectivity. In my later research, evaluating interviews with parents about discovering that their child has Down's syndrome, (Frizell 2020a), I note how the identifying physical features of Down's syndrome trigger a medical objectification of the individual's subjectivity and parents are confronted with '...the dissonant and frighteningly unknown phenomenon of disability...' (Watermeyer 2009, 93). Gordy (2020), an actor, states:

'...I am a woman and an actor first. I have Down's syndrome, but that's not all I am. There is so much more to me than my disability...' (55).

Gordy (ibid) recalls the numerous occasions when she has had to assuage the anxiety of television directors as she realises their lack of confidence in her capacity to fulfil her role as an actor, finding herself positioned in a very particular way due to having Down's syndrome. Language around disability reflects the reality that some human bodies have come to matter within an ableist culture that subordinates

²⁰ The reference here, ie. Sinason 1995, is an earlier edition of the book referenced in this thesis, ie. Sinason 2010.

disability as *other*. Disability itself is not a neutral term and derogatory language in relation to learning disability can be found in the common vernacular, as illustrated by insults that reference cognitive, physical, sensory or mental health impairments. Furthermore, problematic stereotypes reside in language that projects tragedy and vulnerability onto disability, as well as that which idealizes the achievements of disabled people as courageous and/or inspirational. Derogatory and stereotypical language constitute a form of othering that sets disabled people apart (Andrews et al 2019). Ziegler (2020) notes how ‘...stigmatizing language used to label and describe individuals with disabilities has historically emphasized inferiority and otherness...’ (1186). The language we use to speak about disability is charged with this legacy of diagnosis, medicalisation and discrimination.

My published research critiques the notion of disability as a marker of difference (Frizell 2012, 2014, 2017, 2020, 2020a). For example, the parents who I interviewed in my most recent research, speak about the process of pre-natal screening, finding themselves ‘...caught in a place in which learning disability is an inconvenient truth that can be avoided by medical intervention...’ (Frizell 2020: 6). Implicit in this pre-natal screening process ‘...is the idea that some lives are more desirable than others...’ (ibid: 6). Medical discourses, then, are bound into the subjectivity of learning disability on a cellular level. Hickey-Moody (2009) notes how learning-disabled people are subject to particular social coding through these medical discourses. She says:

‘Social codings of people with intellectual disability are products of despotic, authoritarian assemblages of power. Medical discourses construct social faces of people with intellectual disability through attributing particular significances to their physical features and arguing these are signs of a specific kind of subjectivity.’ (13).

The social model of disability (see Chapter 2, 2.5.3 Thinking about (dis)Ability, pp. 63-64) is challenged by NMPHPQ ideas (Braidotti 2019, Liddiard et al 2019, Shakespeare 2013) creating a wider potential to consider the multiplicity of embodied experience that is about an interplay between individual subjectivity and the environment. Liddiard et al (2019) argue for a dishuman perspective for thinking about disability that challenges the Humanism that is ‘...associated with the birth of a citizenry deemed able to speak and write with eloquence and clarity’... (1475). The posthumanities question what it is we mean by the very term ‘human’ and a dishuman perspective resists the homogenisation of subjectivities.

My research asserts that the ethics of the posthuman dancing body, that is both differentiating and decolonising, are no simple matter, particularly when it comes to the othering of disability. The posthuman dancing body resists the hierarchical ranking of bodies through medical, political, social, educational and cultural discourses, re-turning ‘...the ethics and politics of bodies relating and what we understand bodies to be...’ (Allegranti and Silas 2020: 1).

5.5 The Posthuman Dancing Subject

‘...I softened my gaze on the world and awakened my receptivity to the vitality of life through all my senses...’ (Frizell 2020: 211).

In my body of work, I foreground dance as a kinetic, relational and participatory mode of becoming, as explicated in Chapter 2 of this thesis (see 2.2 Dance as Intra-active Participation, pp. 40-47). Throughout these publications, I explore the potential

of dance as it offers the ‘...possibility of transcending the cultural constructs of the Cartesian body–mind split and the illusory divisions between self and other, humans and universe....’ (Frizell 2014: 16). Posthuman bodies are affective flows within assemblages that include the ‘...human and non-human, animate and inanimate, material and abstract...’ (Davies 2014: 406) and this perspective can throw new light onto ways of being in the world. Notions of the body as biological matter become entangled with notions of the body as a manifestation of ideological, social, political and cultural constructs, to such a degree that the possibility of unconstructed materiality comes into question (Butler 2011). This is a sticky web of meeting places. We are entangled in a ‘...material complexity of the embedded and embodied nomadic subject...’ (Braidotti 1997: 68) and our understanding of this subjectivity is unfixed and dynamic. I assert that this embodied embedment *is* the dance and my research highlights the moving body as manifest in ecopsychotherapeutic practices (Frizell 2014, 2020a) as well as in the differentiated perspective of critical disability studies (Frizell 2012, 2014, 2017, 2020a, 2020b).

In my article ‘Embodiment and the Supervisory Task’ (Frizell 2012) I consider the role of the body within a psychodynamic supervisory context. I refer to dance therapist Joan Chodorow’s citation of Jung, who considers movement to be a ‘...primal means of expression and communication...’, asserting that ‘...the symbols of the self arise in the depths of the body...’ (Jung cited in Chodorow, 1999: 256). However, with the hindsight of eight further years of professional practice and academia, I wonder about this *self*, that manifests as symbols in somatic experience, as an inscribed self, that inhabits a material-discursive scenography. This ongoing voyage of discovery that involves ‘...the body as an adaptive organism, which serves as a radar for unconscious communication...’ (Frizell 2012: 297) brings us into a

relational, material reality, whilst also providing a channel to less-conscious phenomena. The psychodynamic thinking that has informed my practice has historically located the body within an intersubjective space, however, the *intersubjective* suggests pre-existing separate entities. A NMPHPQ perspective shifts this space towards *intrasubjectivity*, whereby relational bodies are emergent, entangled and processual, within multi-dimensional assemblages. Differences ‘... are formed through intra-activity, in the making of ‘this’ and ‘that’ within the phenomenon that is constituted in their inseparability (entanglement)...’ (Barad 2014: 173).

As previously noted in this discussion, I have engaged with autoethnographic data and case study material that is grounded in this nomadic language of what the relational body in movement does within an intra-active relational space, rather than what it means and/or represents in movement. The relational body in performance evades possession and control as it is characterised by its instant material demise. It is processual and becoming. Peggy Phelan (1993) reminds us that:

‘...p)erformance’s only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representation of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance. To the degree that performance attempts to enter the economy of reproduction, it betrays and lessens the promise of its own ontology. Performance’s being, like the ontology of subjectivity proposed here, becomes itself through disappearance...’ (Phelan 1993: 146).

Improvisational dance, like the live enactment of performance, evades the representation of language, that immediately re-turns the experience. The improvising body is nomadic and processual, inhabiting (and being inhabited by) the unpredictability and conjunctive nature of what might (be)come next in a radical form of immanence that requires a ‘...destabilization of the self...’ (Braidotti 1997: 68).

5.6 Implications for Practice: Professional Mattering

'...(w)hen we finished working together he brought a feather that he'd found under the tree, offering it to me as a symbol of our work...' (Frizell 2020: 215).²¹



Figure 25 Feather

This unfolding discussion tracks my insights on NMPHPQ mattering as it manifests in the posthuman embodied, embedded dancing-subject, from a dishuman perspective. The new materialist posthumanities critique the materialisation of subjectivity as it arises within inscriptional spaces that emerge over time through the internalisation of iterative processes '...of enacting specific norms...' (Murriss 2021: 64). The performativity of (intra)subjectivity is central to this thesis, as I ground the concept in NMPHPQ notions of intra-action, agential realism, exteriority within, and spacetime mattering, amongst others. Re-turning (to) the portfolio of my existing research through a NMPHPQ lens has re-turned my thoughts about

²¹ See Figure 25 Feather, pp.118.

(intra)subjectivity and problematised ideas underpinning professional practice(s).

This section brings a focus to professional mattering.

DMP and ecopsychotherapy are, by nature, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary, both arising through the convergences of more than one practice. Both practices are grounded in psychotherapeutic paradigms, which, for DMP converges with dance, movement and somatic practices and for ecopsychotherapy converges with deep ecology. My particular practice tra(ns)verses these transdisciplinary practices in its own unique assemblage, that is also informed by critical disability studies. As a professional practitioner, I create the practice by which I am being created through assemblages of transdisciplinary, material-discursive processes.

DMP practitioners follow in the footsteps of Marion Chase, who, in the 1940s initiated the use of dance to facilitate a therapeutic process with psychiatric patients (Sandel and Chaiklin 1993). Since that time, DMP has borrowed from psychotherapeutic paradigms to find its rhizomatic becoming, for example, in humanistic (Fisher 2017), gestalt (Feldman 2016) psychoanalytic (Siegal 1984, Bloom 2006), Jungian (Goldhahn 2015, Pallaro 1999) post-Jungian (Bacon 2020) and transpersonal (Hayes 2013). In an arts therapies survey, Zubala and Karkou (2015) identified that prevalent approaches of dance movement psychotherapists include humanistic and object relations reference points and in particular attachment and Winnicottian theories. This hybrid critter at times has seemed to lose its way in a desire to define a pre-existing entity (Eberhard-Kaechele 2017, Meekums 2014, Lemon Williams 2019, Vulcan 2013). Ecopsychotherapy has taken a similar trajectory in establishing a professional identity (Dodds 2013, Rust 2020) as

ecopsychotherapeutic practices borrow from, and synthesise philosophical and ethical ideas from deep ecology, outdoor practices and psychotherapeutic paradigms, for example, ecotherapy (Jordon and Hinds 2016), ecopsychotherapy (Rust 2020), wild therapy (Totton 2011) equine psychotherapy (Hall 2012) and nature therapy (Berger and Tiry 2012).

This re-tuning of (and to) my existing research has been an opportunity to critique the psychotherapeutic concepts that underpin practice. Theoretical models express the actualisation of the self in metaphors and concepts that imply the self as a separate, pre-existing entity. These include metaphors such as peeling off the layers of the onion (Rogers 1961), ideas about the differentiation of the me from the not me (Winnicott 1971), exploring the *inter*-subjective field (Stern 1985, 2010) and in the emotional attachment of one individual human to another (Bowlby 1968). Winnicott (1984) suggested that there is no such thing as an infant, referring to the inseparable interdependence between the baby and carer. This thought is conceptualised within an object relations tradition that works largely with representational language within a human-centric relational world view, in which language and thinking are central to humanity. Sinason (2010) challenged the limitations of humanity as a generic term in psychoanalytic practice in her work with learning disabled clients, many of whom had no words and opened possibilities about the relational human subject.

In addition, the revered reflexivity of the practitioner arguably serves as a process that reflects back on itself, rather than creating something new. As such, the process of reflexivity is in danger of simply reinforcing the existing subjectivity of the therapist, rather than challenging the performativity of identity and the invisible power relations at play, determining the matter(s) that matter(s). Linnell (2006) suggest that:

‘...(a)t the limits of reflexivity I do not so much turn as become the turn itself, that which is always forming through turning towards the Other, losing myself at the moment of self-consciousness, finding myself only in that which I must strive to, but cannot, know.’ (105).

This distinction between turning and becoming the turn is the place of indeterminacy and vulnerability that intra-acts within the very thing that is trying to be thought about. Davies (2010) reminds us that the:

‘...individualised subject-of-will...is not... the beginning, or even the end-point of itself, but the potential sticking point, the place where thought can get stuck inside the already known...’ (58).

The process of reflexivity, then, is in danger of getting stuck in the reproduction of what is already known, whereas NMPHPQ subjectivity operates within an affective economy that aligns to Braidotti’s (2019) posthuman ‘...affirmative ethics...’ (172), recasting subjectivity in order to activate:

‘...the capacity of transversal subjects to detach themselves from the historically sedimented determinations of power...releasing transversal lines of resistance and not integral lines of power...’ (ibid).

However, I am cautious of stepping into a reflexivity/diffraction binary, in which one is exclusive of the other (Serra Undurruga 2021). Working for many years from psychodynamic, reflexive reference points, I am not about to throw the baby out with the bath water (an idiom that itself is troubled by posthuman subjectivity, in its privileging of baby, dispensability of water and the ontological inference that they are separate entities!). As a transversal line of resistance, I return here to the idea of holding an onto-epistemological contradiction with a double negative, that is that diffraction is not entirely not compatible with reflexivity and at the same time the compatibility is troubled.

The potential for practitioners, organisations and policy makers to work with transversal lines of resistance, rather than integral lines of power opens up opportunities to reimagine and re-language practice and wider services through a NMPHPQ lens.

5.7 Inside Out and Outside in

‘...In a classroom setting she might be found sitting alone, avoiding eye contact or becoming distressed...(y)et, in the school garden I might find her covered in soil as she rolls in the earth at the base of her favourite bush, before delicately tracing the winding patterns of the roots entering the earth...’ (Frizell 2014: 16).

As I look back on the dog-eared notebooks of my own personal therapy journal, I am reminded of the emancipatory power of a psychotherapy that followed the call of the woodpeckers, into the shade of the ancient woodland (see Figure 26 Woodland Floor, pp. 125). Dogs sniffing around and racing out of sight. Squirrels stopping to stare. Wood anemones spreading their roots underground. Butterflies dancing in the sun and spiders spinning fragile webs between the shoulders of client and therapist. Russet brown leaves rocking gently to the ground as the air chills and the rooks cry across the stark silhouettes of winter. We had shifted from an indoor therapy space, to an ancient woodland and the shifting seasons became an integral part of the diverse terrain of our encounter, amplifying the intra-active entanglement of client, therapist and environment in, and as, the fluctuating tides of the vitality of all matter. Rust (2007) notes how taking the psychotherapeutic relationship outdoors, beyond the boundaries of the enclosed indoor space, initially seemed like ‘...a huge leap into the unknown...’ (8) into a therapeutic space in which:

‘...the community of trees around us and all our relations who inhabit the forest...were now present in the session...’ (10).

Historically, psychotherapy has taken place within the physical boundaries of a room, reminding me of Alaimo's (2016) description of how we create the bounded spaces that we call homes that exist '...to keep outdoors, out-doors, defining the human as that which is protected within...' (20). Taking therapy outside becomes a radical statement of ethical intent; a form of '...place-based activism...' (ibid: 20), that locates the corporeal human subject within an embedded encounter with the landscape. When three-year-old Leila (Frizell 2020) claimed '...I am the mountain...' (211), she is standing firm in her corporeal identity that recognises an ethically embodied, embedded identification with a wider material world. This elemental kinship with the material world manifests in the dance that is already going on. This embodied embedded identification is explored in 5.8 Film: Emergence (pp. 126).



Figure 26 Woodland Floor

5.8 Film: Emergence

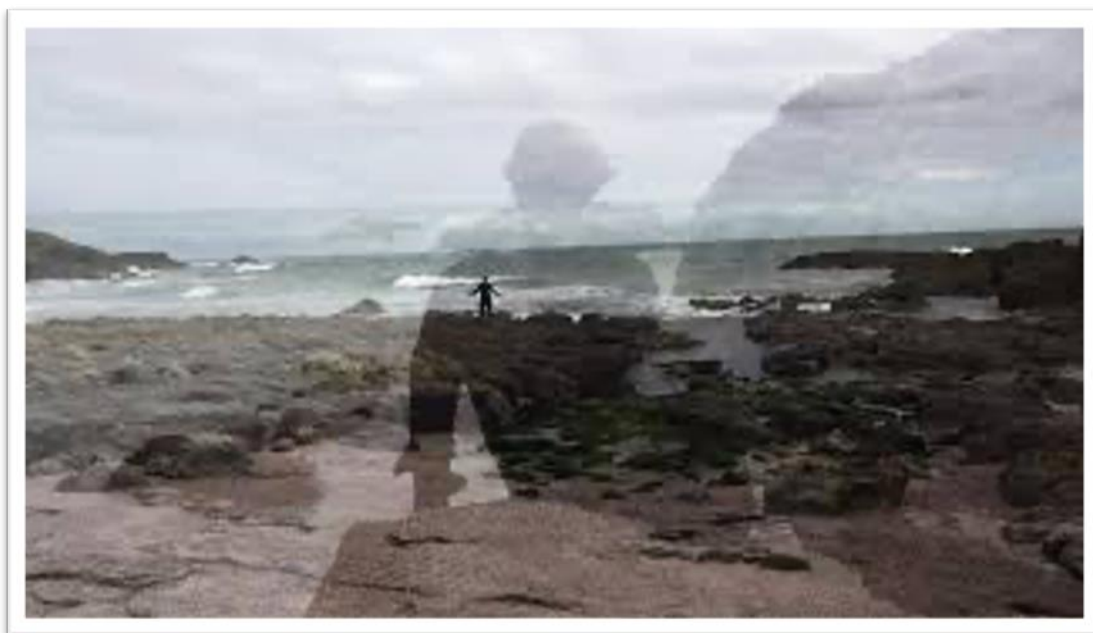


Figure 27 Emergence

Chapter 6: (in)Conclusion

'...It seemed that I had reached a place from which the dance could begin, yet strangely I felt it had come to an end...' (Frizell 2020: 218).

This thesis diffracts across the central areas of research and practice articulated in my portfolio of publications, namely dance (as an ethical, participatory practice) ecopsychotherapy (as an imperative in an era of climate catastrophe) and critical disability studies (as it challenges binary divisions that homogenise groups of peoples). In reaching this final chapter I remain rigorously watery, indeterminate and uncertain. This (in)conclusion is itself a place of diffraction in which the differentiating, (em)bodied, (em)bedded (intra)subjectivity of this research inquiry,

resists representation through academic discourse, whilst also celebrates that discourse as part of a wider material-discursive assemblage. The provisionality that is centrally embedded in this practice-led inquiry ‘...draws upon trial, upon doubt and flux as positive and valuable qualities within knowledge...’ (Reason 2012: 244), and implicitly opens to the possibility of becoming, rather than the certainty of arrival. This research is a contribution to the rigour of practice-led, postqualitative inquiry that resists an imperative to produce rapid research outputs in academia and locates the process of research within an ethical framework of care. It is underpinned by a ‘...Slow Ontology...’ that is ‘...*differently productive*...’ (Ulmer 2017: 201) through a rhizomatic assemblage.

This research has been an opportunity to become immersed in thinking, practising and knowledge-ing (intra)subjectivity from a NMPHPQ perspective, animating the ways in which identities are organised and subjectivities performed. The inquiry has employed diffractive analysis as a central process, enabling me to re-turn (to) my published research, in the sense of revisiting the texts and in the sense of turning the research over again

‘... iteratively intra-acting, re-diffracting, diffracting anew, in the making of new temporalities (spacetimematterings), new diffraction patterns...’ (Barad 2014: 168).

The unique constellation of DMP, ecopsychotherapy and critical disability studies generates a particular transdisciplinary posthuman knowledge-ing. This diffractive meeting place emancipates that which has been pushed to the margins of belonging, ie. dance in the world of academic research and psychotherapy in which discourse and language are privileged, the learning-disabled person in the matter of desirable human attributes and the more-than-human in the hierarchy of worldly mattering.

This critical research is a retrospective practice that moves into the tide of ‘...a new ontological framework of becoming-subjects...’ (Braidotti 2019a: 33).

This point of transdisciplinary convergence troubles notions of subjectivity that underpin theory, practice and research, as well as problematising pervasive questions of privilege and power that have become inscribed in human exceptionalism. The idea of posthuman subjectivity offers a ‘...different relationality that disrupts the colonising binary logic of Western science and metaphysics...’ (Murriss 2021: 68). Critiques of the development of Western thinking over centuries, expose how human exceptionalism as a phenomenon has placed nature, along with ‘...women, people of color, indigenous people, and the disabled...’ (Alaimo 2016: 19) in opposition to a particular definition of the exceptional, entitled human. Weintrobe (2021) identifies how a neoliberal agenda has colonised the individual and collective mind with a deregulation of care that serves the interests of exceptionalism and notions of ‘...superior entitlement...’ (86). This research brings some of the missing peoples (Braidotti 2019, 2019a), that is, the otherwise abled and the more-than-human, into the centre of the arena, whilst, at the same time shining a light on the affective movement of material bodies in relationship. Braidotti (2019a) describes this struggle for visibility of those who (people and things) have historically been missing from dominant discourses as the drivers of the ‘...radical politics of immanence...’ (51). In this way this critical commentary assemblage finds a language for emancipatory practice that, in turn, liberates theoretical positions from the colonisation of Western ideologies. The ‘...frameworks of care...’ (Weintrobe 2021: 83) that have been eroded by neoliberal agendas are essential for the wellbeing of this earth community. Providing a framework of care that embeds compassion, kindness and inclusion at its heart, has ethical implications for

professional practice, service provision and policy making as an act of resistance in the face of an ideological neoliberal colonisation of mind. *We* are only OK if there is a framework of care that nurtures the whole community. This critical commentary assemblage has highlighted how scrutinising the intra-sections of DMP, ecopsychotherapy and critical disability studies moves slowly and care-fully into practice that is embodied, embedded and differentiating. As framework of care for theory, practice and research, this work develops the ways in which the convergence of three disciplines troubles the neoliberal deregulation of the caring mind. The phenomenon of human exceptionalism, champions values of the rational, specifically-abled, economically productive Man as a measure of all things, generating a binary process of the dominion and the subordination of particular values. Classical Western thought has colonised the idea of human as ‘...a normative category that indexes accesses to privileges and entitlements...’ (Braidotti 2019a: 35). Dominant and subordinate categories of things that matter become normalised against this benchmark of perceived human personhood. The convergence of the three areas of this research demands ethical, ontological and epistemological shifts that challenge and circumvent the binaries that have infested and colonised language, discourse and experience. Murriss (2021) describes decolonisation as being about ‘...inhabiting a particular non-exploitative relationship to other earth dwellers, knowledge and truth...’ (68). This research moves towards posthuman subjective processes, through embodied embedment as praxis, with an awareness of missing peoples through the otherwise enabled and environmental justice in the mattering of all that is beyond human.

Dance movement psychotherapists have historically worked with those who Braidotti (2019) describes as ‘...missing peoples...’ (161); for example, acute

psychiatry (Stanton-Jones 1992), people who have refugee and migrant status (Aranda, Hills de Zárata and Panhofer 2020, Rova, Burrell and Cohen 2020, Singer 2017), Learning disabled people (Unkovich, Buttee and Butler 2017, Frizell 2012, 2014, 2017, 2020), prisons and medium secure units (Batcup 2013) and many more. This thesis calls for a theoretical re-turning through a material-discursive intra-active responsiveness to those lines of resistance that disrupt ideas about what and who matter, generating and reinforcing a culture of care. The potential for practitioners, organisations and policy makers to work with transversal lines of resistance, rather than integral lines of power opens up opportunities to reimagine and re-language practice and wider services through the ethico-onto-epistemological lens' of posthumanism and new materialism. This shift takes us away from defining who we are in relation to each other (integral lines of power) towards a diffractive process of wondering what is being created in the space between and working with affective processes (transversal lines of resistance) within a framework of care in which all matter matters. This response-ability is dependent on a capacity for embodied listening, so as not to miss the incidental woodlouse, so as to realise the potency of Leila becoming the materiality of the mountain and so as to activate sustainable systems '...in the acknowledgement of of the immanent, interconnection of multiple ecologies that constitute all living systems...' (Braidotti 2019: 169).

The transdisciplinary nature of this inquiry foregrounds posthuman subjectivity and its '...trans-corporeal entanglements...' (ibid) through onto-epistemologies that resist the binaries inherent (particularly) in discourses that critique the human subject as collection of homogenised groups and as a homogenised species in itself. Who on earth are/is (and what on earth do we mean by) we? Or I? This critical commentary assemblage aligns with Alaimo's (2016) concept of the '...ethics of

inhabiting...’ (18) and Haraway’s 2016) concept of ‘...making kin...’ (99). I have taken inspiration from the feminist philosophies of, for example, Alaimo (e.g. 2016), Barad (e.g.2003, 2007, 2012, 2014), Braidotti (e.g. 2014, 2019, 2019a), Butler (2011) and Haraway (eg. 2004, 2016), to theorise an affective economy of living bodies in the process of creating knowledge, i.e. that ‘... moving bodies are generative of creative possibilities for knowing otherwise...’ (Fullager 2021: 118). This research has been a space of wondering that provides fertile ground to generate new ways of thinking in a shift from binaries into multiplicities towards a ‘...*transversal subjectivity*...’ (Braidotti 2019: 161), that privileges the intensity of moving material bodies that carry the indefinite article (**a** body). A notion of transversal subjectivity emanates from this indefinite article, locating subjective processes within wider matrices of spacetimemattering, and shifting within BwO as a practice, of ‘...fusional multiplicity...’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 154). The processual intensities of moving bodies, generate new ways of becoming in the world. This place of immanence is ‘...not internal to the self, but neither does it come from an external self...’ (ibid 156); it transverses time, space and matter, inhabiting both private and public, both individual and collective, ‘...swinging between the surfaces that stratify it and the plane that sets it free...’ (ibid 161). Deleuze and Guattari (1987) claim that ‘...the BwO is never yours or mine. It is always a body...’ (164). As practitioners in DMP and ecopsychotherapy, our own immanence is entangled with the clients’ processes of becoming that we are attempting to facilitate. This critical commentary assemblage provides a portal to theorising subjectivity transversally through the lens of posthumanism within what Braidotti describes as a ‘...zoe-centred framework...’ (Braidotti 2019: 43) that resists the primacy of human exceptionalism. For the psychotherapist in practice, this ethico-onto-epistemological

potential for embodied, relational possibilities within the transitional space, invites a redefinition of the ways identities are organised and subjectivities conceived and performed. The dance of that therapeutic relationship *is* the movement that ‘...trembles with potential...’ (Manning 2014: 167), turning us towards relational, entangled bodies within the world’s differential performative affect economy. In my existing published work, I assert that embodied embedment as differentiating, rather than universalising, is central to theorising subjectivity. This retrospective critical commentary assemblage contributes to further theorising of the centrality of bodied participation.

6a Interruption

I lift my hands from the keyboard and gaze through the window at the misty morning light. Spring approaches, the garden is full of daffodils. I place my fingertips on the wooden desk, noticing the uneven grain and I wonder about the time when this desk was a tree. I straighten my spine and a sequential ripple opens my chest. My elbows push gently sideways, lifting my wrists. Only the tips of my middle fingers are in contact with the wood. I sit back into the chair and watch the movement ripple towards my hands, as all my fingertips re-connect to the wood. My body re-turns towards the computer and the computer meets me back. This moment holds my her-storical becomings, meeting in the performativity of this encounter.

I have chosen postqualitative research as a departure from the qualitative methodologies employed in my existing published research, that includes case study, auto-ethnography and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). This departure from qualitative methodology to postqualitative inquiry has been an attempt to move towards research that is active and performative, tra(ns)versing material-discursive phenomena and processes. Diffracting across the diversity of the contributing actors of this rhizomatic research assemblage has provided fertile ground for the multi-modal, multi-directional unfolding of this thesis as a coherent critical commentary assemblage.

I have employed writing genres that tra(ns)verse the academic, the poetic and the reminiscent, along with site-specific dance improvisation that is animated through performative film making and photography. Interruptions interrupt the flow. The writing is conceptualised through critical encounters with literature, personal experiences, professional encounters and dreams, in the struggle to create a thesis with a ‘...language that allows the approach its full worth...’ (Bacon 2020: 69). The filmed site-specific improvisations align to environmental, practice-led dance research that finds ways to deepen and widen the possibilities of conceptualising (intra)subjectivity (Kramer 2012, LaMothe 2018, 2020, Poynor 2014, 2018, Reeve 2011). This involves discovering ‘...a kinetic language of its own depth, dimension and perspective...’ (Frizell 2014: 16) in order to navigate the material terrain through sensory, perceptive and tacit vocabulary. This practice-led research has generated active, emergent and embodied knowledge, weaving webs between discourse and matter. In the process of authoring this research, I have performed the posthuman subject(ivity) of this research. Through that performance, I claim a contribution to the knowledge-ing of (intra)subjectivity and its significant implications in professional

practice for therapists, supervisors, educators and dancers-participating-in-the-world. This posthuman subjectivity provides ethical foundations for differentiating, embodied relationships and enhanced capacities to listen to the spaces where matter(s) meet(s). NMPHPQ perspectives have enabled me to broaden the possibilities of subjectivity as (an) experiential, fluid process(es) that pose(s) questions about how matter comes to matter and about the matter of privileging particular matters over others. The research emphasises the potential of transdisciplinarity as the hybrid creatures of dance (movement) (and) (eco) psychotherapy provide emancipatory spaces for practice that are rigorous in responding to notions of subjectivity that are differentiating, (em)bodied and (em)bedded.

This thesis calls for practitioners, service providers and researchers to consider the ethics of our practice through posthuman subjective processes as they are embedded, embodied, nomadic and differentiating and as they compel us (those providing a professional service) to consider the mattering of all entangled material-discursive phenomena. A posthuman dancing body performs affective flows within assemblages that include the ‘...human and non-human, animate and inanimate, material and abstract...’ (Davies 2014: 406) and this perspective can throw new light onto ways of being in the world.

A NMPHPQ perspective has generated in me an alertness to those glimmers of knowledge-ing that hover in the interruptions and disruptions to the world that I have created in my mind’s (body’s) eye and through which I am created. I’m re-minded (or perhaps re-bodied) of camping in northern Spain on a steep slope stretching down to the sea. One night, I was on my way down to the tent, just as darkness had fallen, and a flickering light caught my eye on the grassy verge. It was a handful of tiny green glow worms. Time stood still as I became present to this silent interruption. As

I watched, a wondering was ignited in me about that unfamiliar subjectivity on the grassy verge and I found myself listening to the world in a new light. As I bring that re-minding into the present, I re-member MacLures's (2010) concept of data that glow as:

'...some detail ... starts to glimmer, gathering our attention. Things both slow down and speed up...' (ibid: 282).

I glance briefly over my shoulder, not quite sure how I got here. I seem to be falling forever into my next step. A chilly breeze picks up, causing me to catch my breath before continuing on my way.

Psychodynamic psychotherapy has historically located the body within an intersubjective space (for example, Stern 1985, Winnicott 1971), however, the *intersubjective* suggests pre-existing separate entities. This research shifts that emphasis on intersubjectivity into a place *intra*-subjectivity, whereby relational bodies are emergent, entangled and processual, within multi-dimensional assemblages. Differences '... are formed through intra-activity, in the making of 'this' and 'that' within the phenomenon that is constituted in their inseparability (entanglement)...' (Barad 2014: 173).

DMP and Ecopsychotherapy struggle with an alternative professional identity, fuelled by a drive to determine an approach, in order to gain professional recognition. Practitioners rightly seek to earn a living from their valuable work and do so within turbulent and competitive professional waters within a paradoxical context of, on the one hand, regulation and hyper-rationality (Dalal 2018) and on the other hand, the deregulation of care (Weintrobe 2021). The temptation to become aligned to powerful and dominant discourses is alluring. This reflects the very theme of this

thesis, that challenges binaries that create the dominion and subordination of things that matter, developed a discourse around the transdisciplinarity of these areas to discover the birthing of a unique form of ‘...extra-disciplinary offspring...’ (Braidotti 2019a: 38). The inherent transdisciplinarity of DMP and ecopsychotherapy and the intra-sections of both with critical disability studies, develops a significant ethico-onto-epistemological to inform theory and practice. This transdisciplinarity nature of these disciplines, itself serves as an opportunity to problematise the creature that practitioners are trying to create and, at the same time, by which practitioners are created. The professional *we* is thus troubled in the quest to find this identity.

Re-turning (to) my portfolio of published research through a NMPHPQ lens, has re-turned my thoughts about (intra)subjectivity and problematised ideas underpinning professional practice(s) as I lean towards, and into, the posthuman subject that operates within a contingent, fluid affect economy. As practitioners, an immersion in a posthuman, new materialism ethico-onto-epistemology alerts us to unexpected interruptions that glow and that in turn hold the potential for new knowledge-ing, decentering language as an exclusive maker of meaning and questioning the prominence of meaning over doing.

NMPHPQ modes of inquiry have enabled a heightened wondering about the potential intra-subjective spaces between the you(s) and me(s). This wondering offers us a collective task of ‘...constructing new subjects of knowledge, through immanent assemblages or transversal alliances between multiple actors...’ (Braidotti 2019a: 36). As the curator of those multiple actors who have arrived together to improvise with me in this research assemblage, I step into the movement space.

I am pacing. I am p(l)acing (with) a foot, placing an arm and (p)lacing the mo(ve)ment before sinking to the floor. I discover myself buried under the sand. Sand above me, below me and beside me. As I shift my position different parts of me appear above the sand. And disappear. Sand hoppers appear and disappear around me. I shift my movement with, and as, the sand. Lifting and revealing parts of my body and shifting back into my sand creature self. Finding my orientation in the world through tiny (grains of) sand (creatures). Disappearing and then coming into (my) existence. My movement is fluid and sequential and although it is increasingly slow, it doesn't stop. There is life running through the currents of my slowing movement and the texture of the air changes. It thickens. It thins. It becomes infused with other ways of being. And the floor speaks to me. The floor pushes me from one place to the other. I contact the floor and it contacts me back and directs my movement.

Slowly I begin to rise. Evolving upwards, first on four legs, lifting my body slightly off the ground. Then curving and crawling before lifting my weight onto two legs. And then the straightening of the spine brings me into a human (well, a certain kind of human) who experiences verticality on two feet.

A word comes...

...SO...

...and others...

...even...

...though...

...is it?..



Figure 28 A Human of Sorts

...can it?...

...I (don't) know...

...hold this (a) moment...

Between the words, the movement flows through me, from one side to another and into a spiral. I am reaching (out) into (from) the outside-inside world. I pull the outside world (towards me). I try to hold on (to it), balancing on one leg, arms curving around. Moving slowly, unaware of the breath that is always going on. More words erupt...

...even though...

...but...

...perhaps...

The words burst (out) into the space of their own volition, as conjunctions that hold an interest between one thought and another. Words that fill a space of wordlessness in the dance. I find myself moving to one edge of the room to look in from the outside, with my back against the wall (is that the inside?) as if pretending to objectify the world as a thing. But this wall tells me that there is something excluded from this space on the other side of the wall behind me. With my back against the wall, I look into this (in)conclusion. Into this end. Into this disappearance²². And in that disappearance is my subjectivity. I lean back into the wall. Rising on my toes, I balance, now steadied by the back of my head pushing against the wall as my spine is released. I am suspended until my elbow replaces that point of contact. Then the tip of my finger on the wall steadies my balance before I step forwards, into this (in)conclusion, that is the end.

'That's it.', I say.

'It's time.'

I am and it is (never) finished. I re-turn to Yar Tor (see 6.1 Film: Yar Tor pp. 140), a very particular place that meets me each time as if for the first time. The rocks, who have been there for eons, serve as a reminder of human transience that is part of a greater material wisdom.

²² This improvisation manifest as I was beginning this research process in autumn 2019. With hindsight, I realise that in looking into the beginning, I was looking towards this (in)conclusion. The illustration, Figure 28 A Human of Sorts, pp. 138 was a response to the movement improvisation.

6.1 Film: Yar Tor



Figure 29 Yar Tor

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Article: Frizell, C. (2020a) Learning disability imagined differently: an evaluation of interviews with parents about discovering that their child has Down's Syndrome. *Disability and Society*. IN PRESS

See: <http://research.gold.ac.uk/id/eprint/27944/>

Appendix 2: Chapter: Frizell, C. (2020) Reclaiming our innate vitality: bringing embodied narratives to life through Dance Movement Psychotherapy.

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Appendix 3: Chapter: Frizell, C. (2017) Entering the world: dance movement psychotherapy and the complexity of beginnings with learning disabled clients.

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Appendix 4: Article: Frizell, C. (2014) Discovering the Language of the Ecological Body. *Self and Society: An International Journal for Humanistic Psychology* 41

(4) pp. 15-21. See: <http://research.gold.ac.uk/id/eprint/10646/>

Appendix 5: Article: Frizell, C. (2012) Embodiment and the Supervisory Task: the supervision of dance movement psychotherapists in training. *Body, Movement and Dance in Psychotherapy: An International Journal for Theory, Research and Practice*, 7(4), pp. 293-304. See: <http://research.gold.ac.uk/id/eprint/11635/>