Guided Practices in Facing Danger:

Experiences of Teaching Risk

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Abstract

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The central problem of this thesis is how a teacher may engage with risk. I offer a reconsideration of the term and suggest that risk is individual, perceptual and experientially driven. I use a Heideggerian (1962) frame when I suggest that, when taking a risk, a person is potentially encountering existential death. Using my own practice as a trapeze artist, I reveal how risk is manifested for the students I teach - how it can profoundly challenge and unsettle them- and how I as a teacher am charged with ensuring that they are empowered rather than stultified or domesticated by the risk. I call this enacted skill 'pedagogic tact'.

By combining Jacques Rancière's notion of Universal Education (1991) with Martin Heidegger's ontological appreciation of being-towards-death (1962), I propose that what teachers awaken within students is knowledge of the possibility of death and of not-death within certain pedagogic encounters. I cannot know, measure or prove whether this knowledge has been achieved. However, I can document and describe the students' relationship with the teacher within these moments. This document therefore becomes a description of student-teacher encounters when the teacher attends towards the emancipation of the student. The combination of reflective research methods from David Tripp (1993), Max Van Manen (1990), Della Pollock (Pollock in Phelan and Lane, 1998) and Jonathan Smith *et al* (2009) provides a means for phenomenological hermeneutic analysis. I have reflected upon my work with five students over the course of five days of trapeze training, extracted what Tripp would call 'critical incidents' between teacher and student and considered their meaning (1993:3). This research is a documentation of engaged pedagogy. It is a performative thesis that ruminates upon how I teach aerial work.

There are many findings that seem apparent at the time of writing up. I repetitively circulate around the notion of death, failure, rupture, domestication, entrapment, sacrifice, vulnerability, sobriety and pain as significant elements that describe my work with risk. These concepts are balanced with words such as poetry, liberation, love, strength, glory, resolution and joy. There appears to be a second paradox of teaching that sits alongside and dialogues with the Kantian 'freedom through coercion' (1960:699); it is summed up by aerialist and teacher Matilda Leyser in her

description of aerial work as 'strength through vulnerability' (2007). In order to enable the students' strength to be challenged, witnessed and supported, there needs to be vulnerability from them, from their carers, from the teacher and from the institution. This vulnerability is not imposed, or bestowed, but is 'owned' by the student and teacher in their anxiety and in their choice to, in a Heideggerian sense, comport themselves to that which matters most (Heidegger, 1962). In these moments, anxiety reminds the student that they might die; it also reminds them that they can be strong in the face of possible death. This paradox of vulnerability and strength is synthesised or 'held' by the teacher's tact. The new knowledge that I assert, therefore, is a description and mapping of pedagogic tact. Through this new knowledge, I explore the possibility of becoming a better teacher.

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Foreword

In 1996 I began my training as a secondary school teacher of English and Drama. The choice to become a teacher was a deeply conflicted one for me. I passionately believed in the ability of art to transform young people and I struggled to reconcile the often contradictory ways that my schooling impacted on my understanding of myself: as a failure and as a success; as weak and strong; as 'feminine' and clumsy; as clever and low achieving; as a naughty girl, constantly in trouble who always intended to do the right thing. Teaching antagonised the pre-existing concerns I had about pedagogy because I was able to witness these tensions accreting and dissolving in the students that I taught.

In a secondary school environment I uncovered the first research questions that inspired this PhD. I began by noticing the way that young people were expected to be 'risky' with their ideas and yet were not allowed to cross the road without consent forms from parents. It was similar thinking that disabled me from hugging a child in distress, which ran counter to my instinct. I noticed the way that children who had been labelled as 'naughty' by certain teachers were able to flourish in drama and in sport whereas students who were considered 'brainy' were discouraged from taking the same subjects because they were a waste of time. I wanted to understand how some teachers were able to work against the tensions of the environment to focus on and enable the equality of each student.

It was an encounter with circus training in 2000 that began to reconcile the warring factions within my own identity. When on a trapeze I did not have to perform a social self to comply with others' expectations of me; in truth, I could not because I was focussed on my breath, my balance, my alignment and on my relationship with gravity. I was strong and I was free but never had I been closer to death. This realisation changed my life. It enabled me to relinquish some of the labels that had been placed on me at school. I began to see how physical engagement and rational engagement are inseparable - how I am an intersubjective, interdisciplinary being who is resolute in the face of failure and risk. My trapeze teachers were people who knew I could be strong, who expected me to be strong and who laughed with me when I fell, lost my balance or tore my skin. Learning to fly was typified by joy rather than fear.

I wanted to know what circus might do for young people: how it might enable them to see themselves as equal to others or to a task, how this may be perceived philosophically and theoretically and how consideration of what circus *is* may enable me to be a better teacher. What follows is pedagogy. It is the description and performance of my engagement as a teacher. In it I antagonise the influences and formative notions that fuel my passion to teach whilst expressing a commitment to learn more and be better in the future.

Introduction

This thesis is a critical and descriptive document charting a five year PhD research enquiry that investigates the practice of pedagogy. It is a practice-as-research project, submitted through a written thesis.

Early conversations with young people resulted in pilot projects in conjunction with Surrey County Arts *Stageworks* youth theatre and with The Circus Space. This confirmed the impression that risk was an ill-defined and over-used term and that young people are drawn towards visceral physical challenges, particularly during adolescence. I was able to study these issues in depth when working in conjunction with Central School of Speech and Drama; I wanted to understand more about teaching which focuses on emancipating each student by teaching a specific practice: static trapeze. A consideration of static trapeze and the possible death that the practice held led me to ruminate not only upon acts of emancipatory pedagogy but also upon social and philosophical discourses concerning risk, culture and performance theory. The foundation for this document is a five day project involving five students that they titled *Hello Fatty*, and some of the findings I have extracted from that project are discussed herein.

The research method is an intertwined process of critical reflection on practices and practice-driven theoretical work, made clear by the use of varied and numerous examples from the much larger generic field of pedagogy, philosophy, sociology and performance. Scholars in these disciplines may find relevance in a method of researching lived moments, a paradigm of mapped 'tact' as a way of describing teaching, and a personal account of this tact. It can be read therefore as a performative document which reveals the nature of pedagogy through a discussion of it. In this introductory section, I stage and summarise the argument that is gently formed through the thesis in a more circulatory way. I make a case for a contribution to new knowledge. I introduce key terms and theorists and provide a rationale for bringing the voices together, giving a sense of how the theorists Heidegger, Rancière and Freire address specific aspects of the enquiry. I acknowledge that the work is interdisciplinary and reflect upon my original contribution to knowledge, given that I am straddling a number of different disciplinary fields.

For a teacher, this document reads as a personal account of pedagogy which may provide a way of viewing the everyday choices a teacher faces in the classroom. Through the mapping of my practice, it became clear how the desire to emancipate students is an ongoing project in the practice of equality which will never be complete. I recognise that, in the momentary, any act by a teacher may be used to domesticate students to a certain way of thinking or may be used to free them to understanding themselves anew. I acknowledge the ongoing struggle to situate the student within the social and personal context of their learning, engage their will to learn and to know themselves through the doing of risky work. The practice of trapeze work can stand in for any learning activity because the student places themself at risk of failure every time they learn something new. I argue that the teacher writes and rewrites a 'map' of possibilities in each teaching encounter with each student and, moreover, that this map enables them to recognise many possible right answers in a single moment when there is no singular perfect way forward. I state that a certain *something* drives the engaged teacher forward, though it be exhausting and repetitive, so that their students are seen and verified.

The philosophical context of this study has its roots within a practicing of Heideggerian phenomenology. I pay particular attention to Heidegger's notion of 'anticipatory resolution'[1] (1962:357) and discuss how a teacher may work towards it for and through moments with young people. I argue for an active and engaged hermeneutic practice that is learnt and challenged in the *doing* of trapeze. This is praxis. In particular, this document reads as an exercise in Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis as discussed by Jonathan Smith, Paul Flowers and Michael Larkin (2009) and phenomenological writing as typified by Max Van Manen (1993). So a philosopher may read this document for an engagement with praxical phenomenology and an example of phenomenological analysis.

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[1] Heidegger's definition of resolution, as it is used here, forces *Dasein* to acknowledge the possibility of death. It is essentially futural: 'anticipatory resoluteness is not a way of escape, fabricated for the 'overcoming' of death; it is rather that understanding which follows the call of conscience and which frees for death the possibility of acquiring *power* over Dasein's *existence* and of basically dispersing all self-concealments' (1962:310). Use of the term in this context, therefore, acknowledges the developmental potential and possibility of each student. It is about bringing the experiences learnt from the 'now', a momentary relationship with risk and death, into a projected possibility of the future. This future is unknown and unknowable.

Sociologists may be interested in my exploration of risk as framed by Rancière's term the 'police order' (1999: 31).[2] I argue that the structures in which the students are situated, which include the media, Government, the school environment and their understanding of themselves, frame notions of risk positively and negatively in each different encounter. I suggest that these positive and negative discourses impact upon the way that the students learn - repelling and enticing them to take risks. I have discussed the different social structures as a part of the study to see how the macro level impacts upon the micro level of a student's and teacher's behaviour and understanding. It is a part of the pedagogic map the teacher develops through their career.

For a theatre and/or performance researcher, this document raises questions about how circus may be viewed. Although my practice and research does not focus directly upon the creation of circus 'acts', there is a generalised appreciation that performance is the goal of any trapeze student. In Chapters 3 and 4 this is most specifically articulated. I suggest that the performance of circus is transgressive and that the metaphor of circus is a helpful evocation of Heideggerian death and anxiety. I use the circus artists, teachers and academics John-Paul Zaccarini and Matilda Leyser to dialogue with existential questions from their pedagogic experience. This brings depth to what would otherwise have been a very personal account of teaching. So this thesis may be read as an analysis of circus as politically engaged praxis.

Throughout the document I question how fragmentation, binary thinking and what may be called neoliberalist sensibilities may disable teachers from engaging with emancipatory practices in a classroom. Through the following chapters I will explore the roots of these sensibilities and state that the primary locus is fear- fear of death, fear of failure and fear of accountability. I contend that fear can be used positively and creatively by an engaged pedagogue to work against the social conditions under which the fear has been generated and I continuously circulate around the premise that any and every emancipatory encounter has the capacity to domesticate and disable the teacher and the student. I argue that, by risking death through circus, the

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[2] I unpack this term fully on pages 20-21. For now it is important to note that, for Rancière, the police order is not a negative concept - it 'can produce all sorts of good' (1999:31). It is his term for the way that things are done by the codes conducts and values played out in the everyday. As Bingham and Biesta state, 'One way to read this definition of police is to think of it as an order that is all inclusive in that everyone has a particular place, role or position in it; there is an identity for everyone' (2012:34).

student or child may know themselves as momentarily resilient. I have summarised how risking death manifests itself within my practice and have begun to unravel some of the complex scenarios under which resilience may be momentarily mapped and challenged by a deliberate 'act' of risk.

In this opening section I identify the original impulse of the research. The main thrust has been my own pedagogic development and the daily practice through which I have been inscribed and challenged- a practice that accretes over time and accumulates in my body. Whereas the driving force of the study has been the personal, I strive for an understanding of pedagogies other than my own and the potential common ground between past and present accounts of risk-taking by, and from, students, teachers and performers. The result has been the possibility of a pedagogic map and a description of the pedagogic tact needed to navigate this map in the momentary. To that end, the personal has lent me the focus necessary to scrutinise the cultural territory and my legacy as a radical part of the teaching profession.

0.1 Chapter Summaries

In Chapter 1, I define my research methods. I introduce the 5 day project and detail how it was designed to give insights into my practice. I detail the ethical implications of the work and highlight the practical concerns of placing children on trapezes. I account for the selection and representation of the adolescents involved. I make a case for momentary consent; by this I mean that consent is not a part of a paper-process but an enacted vigilance to the needs of the student. I consider the sureties the teacher is charged with when working in this way and articulate that any emancipatory practice has the power to domesticate as well as liberate the students within it. I offer a model of phenomenological analysis derived from Van Manen (1990) David Tripp (1993) and Jonathan Smith *et al* (2009) as a mode of reflective practice that I utilise throughout the thesis.

In Chapter 2, I propose that danger and risk are intertwined and yet divisible terms in contemporary discourse, with the tacit presumption that danger is unmanageable and risk is manageable. I build an argument that risk is perceptual, individual and

temporally dependent and that attempts to manage it may result in risk-aversion. I contend that the very idea of risk-aversion is effaced by a neoliberalist discourse that cannot take the personal into account, which has implications for children regarding their agency. I argue that notions of danger are associated with fear and that this fear is the fear of Heideggerian (existential) death. I establish that this fear is located within the body and more particularly within the bodies of children: children perceive themselves to be vulnerable because they are treated as such.

In Chapter 3, I take forward the premise that fear is located within the bodies of children and examine this in reference to a moment from my practice entitled 'The Gazelle'. I consider the strategies that I was taught to deal with touching a child. I suggest that they magnify the child's body and disable her from feeling resolute in the face of perceived danger. I move the argument forward at this juncture through a consideration of critical pedagogy as a possible counter to these risk-averse elements. By considering the contradictions therein, I recognise the complexity of educative practices that run counter to cultural influence and counter to determinism. I suggest that it is only through acts of ongoing dissensus that young people are able to learn about, and therefore begin to reconcile, the way that touch is or has been mediated by a teacher. I recognise that these acts of dissensus are potent and could be used to domesticate as well as liberate students. I state that that only with an attention to equality and ethics in every moment can a teacher ensure the *possibility* of emancipation.

In Chapter 4, I consider circus and in particular the pedagogic and performance practices of Matilda Leyser, John-Paul Zaccarini and myself. This is a personal account of encounters with fear, in particular fear of and for the body. I describe how a circus performer may embody that fear for an audience. This chapter argues that circus is a political act because of its ability to transgress the social normative and that the aerial student performs a 'leap of faith' through their trust of the teacher when they are resolved to perform the transgression.

In Chapter 5, I expand upon this notion of leaps of faith by addressing the phenomenological elements that are 'owned' by the student in the act of leaping. I use Peta Tait's evocation of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's body phenomenology to

articulate that that the act of leaping is 'active, momentary and glorified' (2005: 150). These elements attend to the totality of a student's body as technical/biological, as meaningful for the student and, finally, as being seen as more than the two elements by others in the act of performance. This chapter serves as a rumination upon the complexities of self that the student and teacher perform/embody/do/are for each other within their pedagogic relationship.

In Chapter 6, I describe five critical incidents from *Hello Fatty* and reflect back upon the social, pedagogic, phenomenological and trust-filled discourses of the previous chapters. I use phenomenological description to unravel some of the discourses at play within the moment a risk is taken. I map these encounters, aware that my perception of them has changed over time.

In Chapter 7, I conclude by offering nine learning points or themes that appear to me. I close by saying that teaching is an act of faith on the part of both teacher and student. I demonstrate at the end of the research where the next stage of the research may be by recognising the limitations of the study and proposing that the research is an unending project in a pedagogic career.

0.2   Contributions to New Knowledge

My approach is primarily pedagogic though it also contributes to performance/circus studies, philosophy and sociology. This is because these areas are not distinct elements; they intertwine within the practices detailed so that an act of teaching becomes an act of performance and an act of sociological analysis. Like all teachers, I am an interdisciplinary researcher.

I clarify the term 'risk'. An interrogation of the literary and cultural discourses pertaining to the notion of risk and risk-taking revealed that the term is infused and indivisible from discourses that communicate fear. I argue that this fear is a fear of Heideggerian death, that it is drawn towards fear in the body and, in particular, the bodies of children. New knowledge has been formed in the critique of the socially and politically determined definition of the term 'risk'.

I appropriate and antagonise the proposition that any emancipatory discourse has the potential to domesticate. In his appreciation of the work of Paulo Freire, Paul Taylor states that critics focus upon a number of factors with which to interrogate Freire's methods:

> They point to the contorted manner of his writing; his lack of human experience; his circular logic and confusing repetitiveness. He is too obscurantist, too mystifying, too abstract, too psychological, too utopian. His method requires a high level of social manipulation and can be used equally to domesticate as to liberate. (1993:2)

This tension has mobilised my research. I circulate around many of these criticisms in and through my thesis. The reader will see how I attend to the manner of writing, circular logic and repetitiveness as a practice in mapping pedagogic tact. Most vital within this whole work is the question of domestication and liberation. From an ethical imperative of practised equality, I am continuously vigilant about how my practice may manipulate, domesticate or emancipate. It is this attention that is a prime focus for the work.

This thesis is the expression of my ongoing commitment to guidance and danger through circus and acts of risk-taking pedagogy. In discussing how an engagement with the transgressive performance discipline of circus can destabilise the social normative, I am intentioning myself towards emancipation. I recognise, however, that I may domesticate the students into thinking my way. Biesta reminds us that:

> The ingenuity of Rancière's work lies first and foremost in the fact that he is able to show that what is done in the name of equality, democracy, and emancipation often results in its opposite in that it reproduces inequality and keeps people in their place. What matters, therefore, is not *that* we are committed to equality, democracy and emancipation, but *how* we are committed to these concepts and *how* we express and articulate this commitment. (Italics in original 2010:57)

Students in my work may have acquiesced to a different performative mode rather than recognised their possible resilience within the taking of a risk. This document knowingly courts the possibility of domestication in its commitment to radical

equality. This document is an expression of that commitment alongside my encounters with students.

I have engaged in critical pedagogy in physical situations. Up to now, critical pedagogy (as typified by Freire 1970 and Rancière 1991) has confined itself to the theme of literacy. In my practice, the written word is not the fabric that mobilises emancipation: the body is. The subject of my practice is circus. It is, therefore, doubly transgressive, in that it enacts questions of risk specifically towards the locations that hold the most fear, the human body, and the bodies of children. I suggest that this is where the battle lines are drawn with young people, and so, therefore, this is where the learning must be located. This is an act of dissensus which I feel would be embraced by Freire and Rancière, who acknowledge the limitations of their practices. It is a project that was borne out of my personal encounter with aerial work, and the acute opportunities that it afforded me, to challenge my social and fear-driven understanding of risk.

I advance the importance of description and lived experience in pedagogy through phenomenological practice. Through this thesis, there is a tension between the deterministic and analytical frames used to measure and prevent risks, and the personal, adumbrated and perceptive influences that are used in each individual case to expose and engage with danger. By adding lived experience to the discourse, I am balancing the view that sees children as 'statistically vulnerable'; I offer a poetic evocation of tactful practice and state the importance of the students' and teachers' understanding of themselves in the face of risk. I model descriptive refection, which can and should only be viewed in dialogue with scientific analysis.

I present circus training as an example of critical and resistant political praxis. I identify the technical aspects of circus that constitute risk-taking and expand upon them to notice the other elements that appear to be transgressive to the social normative. Aside from the fear of death, there is also the complexity of gender, of being outside the social norm, of working from passion rather than reason, and of exposing your vulnerability to others. Circus works against the social and political norm. Consequently, it is a potent agent for dissensus against it. To perform circus, is

to appear as transgressive, and it is, therefore, a political act. This in itself is not new; the newness arises from the perspective of socially resistant pedagogy. It is the application of circus into pedagogic theory that brings forth new knowledge.

I articulate the notion that teacher and student engagement is fluid, mobile, temporal and ambiguous. I have gently worn away at the perceived social possibilities of being a teacher. In this way, I have come to a more nuanced understanding of what that means in a moment of practice. My proposition that teaching is dependent upon tact is new. The proposition is that my experience accretes, is sacrificed and develops through each encounter. Each teaching moment decomposes and recomposes the understandings of both teacher and students about their relationship and their equality. It demands a concerned attention from the teacher that contains the 'right kind' of objective relation, characterised by curiosity, will, consideration and forbearance (Heidegger, 1962 and Rancière, 1991).

0.3   Critical Context - Fear Discourses and Death

There are four primary theoretical voices in this thesis: Paul Slovic, Martin Heidegger, Paulo Freire and Jacques Rancière. Each addresses a specific aspect of the enquiry and each provides different ways of thinking that provided insights for the work undergone. I use three key terms that I will explain in this section too: curiosity, tact and trust.

0.3.1 Paul Slovic

Paul Slovic is the principle academic involved in articulating the complexities of risk perception. His research provides the founding premises for the whole thesis,=- that, because risk is perceptual and individual, it is impossible to quantify (2000). In Chapter 2, I discuss the inherent tensions of risk assessment because risk is a contingent concept. Uses of the term 'risk' have at their heart a bifurcation of meaning: one enables the taker to encounter the possibility of death and the other enables the taker to encounter the possibility of failure. The word 'risk' is used with equivocation for both. The purpose of this discussion is to lay the foundations for a practice where there is 'no right answer' but there may be many wrong ones (Tripp, 1993:3). In the practice of trapeze teaching, these wrong answers could result in

'harm' befalling the young people in my care. What constitutes harm is also under discussion in Chapter 2 where I argue that there are many territories of 'risk' that might be at play within any encounter between a teacher and student, the most potent of these is the risk of death. Slovic's research is formative as a consideration of the prevailing concerns of teachers who risk-assess the material and the form of their teaching.

0.3.2 Martin Heidegger

So, if risk is ephemeral and perceptual, a methodology that focuses on experience is necessary. Descriptions of life as it is lived are the philosophical premise at the heart of phenomenology. The second theoretical voice within this work is therefore phenomenologist, Martin Heidegger. I selected him from all the phenomenologists because his philosophy focuses on the ultimate risk within trapeze teaching: Death. Heideggerian thought mobilises my thesis in three ways. Firstly, it opens up the debate about death, the nature of life in relation to death,= and the everyday evasion of death. This is critical when considering taking risks and, in my case, when engaging in practices with students that could result in a student's death. Secondly, Heidegger's existential interpretation of death, which is not to be conflated with the fact of physical dying or mere demise, explains how one of the most potent aspects of the work, for the student, lies in the growing awareness that failure, or social death, is a real possibility that cannot be evaded and which must be owned. So in Heidegger's thought, whether the student risks failure or indeed physical death, the risk is experienced in the same manner: as existential anxiety. Risk brings students closer to understanding the often precarious nature of the relationship between the self as experienced from the first personal perspective and the social self that is lived with and in relation to others. For my work, it is important to articulate that the risk of failure and the risk of death are experienced in an identical fashion despite a prevailing view that sees them differently.

A Heideggerian emphasis upon care demonstrates the ethical and tactful practices that the teacher and student rehearse through circus work. Understanding that

Heidegger sees care as the 'primordial state of Being' belonging to *Dasein*[3] (1962:230) allows me to understand that, although both teacher and student may be distracted by the social frames imposed upon the work, ultimately the overriding concern for both is towards finding the intersubjective meanings of the event for themselves and for one another. Care is an absolute; humans always have a care-driven attitude to living, even if that attitude is care-less. In order to be careless, one must be primordially constituted towards care. Throughout this thesis, a consideration of these three elements - literal death, social death and care - as the essential determination of the being of *Dasein*, will form the critical basis for engaging with the social and personal impact of risks and the conceptualisation of the tactful practice needed to fully engage with them.

Another essential element of Heidegger's ontology is the notion of being-with-others (*Mitsein)*. He proposes that lives are lived both in attendance to and evasion of others. This is a vital theme for my work in two ways. The first is within the notion of how a student might be distracted from what they are doing by the 'idle talk' of the they-self (1962: 253). By this I mean that a student is drawn towards and inseparable from the way that they think or know that others are understanding or restricting what they do: the student's understanding is formed in their relationship to what others do and say.

A second way that Heideggerian *Mitsein* reveals a theme in my research is in the notion of 'leaping' that I discuss in detail in Chapter 5. It relates to the question of liberation and domination very specifically. In a discussion of alterity, Heidegger proposes that two types of 'concern' are possible. The first is one that 'leaps in' for the other and domesticates them (1962:158). The second is a 'leaping ahead' of them, thereby liberating or, in Heidegger's terms, 'freeing' them to understand the work for themselves (1962: 159). The first forces the student to step 'back so that afterwards, when the matter has been attended to, he can either take it over as something

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[3] In *Being and Time*, the term '*Dasein'* is used to denote two interconnected concepts: 1) being, as in existence as experienced by humans and 2) the human who has this being and whose manner of being is to exist. It is, therefore, both referential in terms of individual persons (individual *Daseins*), and to the mode of human existence, understood in general. It is both singular and plural in that it refers to an individual being as well as to the determination of the kind of existence that characterises human understanding. *Dasein* is always 'mine', but is not me, because it does not appear as 'present-to-hand' for me.

finished and at his disposal or he can disburden himself of it completely' (1962:158). The second way, however, 'pertains to authentic care – that is, to the existence of the other, not to a *"what"* with which he is concerned*;* it helps the other to become transparent to himself *in* his care and to become *free* of it' (emphasis in the original, 1962:159). By considering Heidegger's position on being with others, I am able to reinforce the contention that any act of emancipation can domesticate as well as liberate.

Further to this, I borrow from Heidegger the term 'anticipatory resolution' to discuss what it is that the child, student or aerialist develops in relation to their own experience of death and inauthenticity. It stands in for the notion of agency and defines it as a state of knowing oneself in relation to a possible future. For Heidegger, anticipatory resolution is:

> not a way of escape, fabricated for the 'overcoming' of death; it is rather that understanding, which follows the call of conscience and which frees from death the possibility of acquiring power over Dasein's existence and of basically dispersing all fugitive self concealments. (1962: 357)

Inwood expands upon this by recognising that resolution is an attention to (or comportment towards) 'intense deliberations, forceful actions and "recollection"' (1999:187). For Heidegger, resolution is an act of attention in the momentary, recognition of potential in the future and re-inscription of the learning from the past. Therefore, rather than the student having what some teachers would call 'agency', which is a set state, by using the term 'anticipatory resolution', I employ a more temporally distinct and fluid appreciation of the student's ability to know themselves in relation to the risk at hand.

My pedagogic and performance practice exists, therefore, in a theoretical and ideological tension between and towards the risk of success, failure and (Heideggerian) death. It draws out an already-antagonistic relationship between reason, science or form (the facts of my existence as given culturally or politically) and experience or description of that existence (which I can communicate only through poetry) which become a part of my method and methodology of praxis detailed in Section 0.3.

0.3.3 Paulo Friere

My theoretical framework broadly falls within the category of 'radical pedagogy', defined by Timothy McGettigan as 'an analysis of the deeply politicized aspects of educational institutions, policies and practices' which is aimed towards inspiring 'radical social change' (1999:1). It is typified by academics and practitioners such as Paulo Freire (1970, 1997), Henry Giroux (1997), Peter McLaren, (1998) and Ira Shor (1992). Radical pedagogy concerns knowledge and education and how they can (or should) change to best serve the purposes of both educators and the educated. In Chapter 2, some of the central tenets of radical pedagogy are examined with a view to understanding how it has evolved, and what critiques are inherent within it or have been directed towards it. These critiques,[4] as already discussed in the previous section, recognise that, rather than radicalise students, such methods have the potential to re-inscribe modes of domination. This examination allows me to question how a pedagogic relationship can also be a political act, that is one that acts towards challenging cultural taken-for-granted concerns and, crucially, how this political act can be embodied and performed within my teaching.

The work of the radical pedagogue Paulo Freire is formative in my struggle to identify what it means to be a teacher. From reading *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* I learnt three clear lessons: that a teacher can be a humaniser, that prevailing social discourses can prevent humans from understanding and realising their full potential and that teaching is a political act (1970). This knowledge gave authority to the hunches I articulated in the foreword to this PhD. Through his writing, I began to understand pedagogic praxis; before I had been engaged in teaching practice. In Chapter 2, I dialogue with Freire. I interrogate and unsettle some of the instinctive allegiances I felt when first reading his work. I carry forward a single word 'love' (1970: 41) that I repeat and contradict in my writing. The word 'love' metaphorically houses the tension and investment that typifies pedagogic tact for me. My contention with Freire's theories creates a key question in my practice: how do I engage with emancipation and risk domestication?

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[4] Gibson suggests that '[i]n the world of theory, addressing merely the appearances of domination and oppression does not get to the sources in exploitation and authoritarianism' (2010:23).

0.3.4 Jacques Rancière

I have turned to Rancière's emancipatory proposition in order to open up the fissures exposed within the critiques of radical pedagogy. He proposes that:

> We can thus dream of a society of the emancipated that would be a society of artists. Such a society would repudiate the division between those who know and those who don't, between those who possess the property of intelligence. It would only know minds in action: people who do, who speak about what they are doing, and who thus transform all their work into ways of demonstrating that is in them as in everyone. (1991:71)

The community of equals is a proposition for a specific praxis in which a student's ability to reason and will to learn are challenged through a process of learning rhetoric and poetry in order to emancipate understanding and develop artistry. Rancière suggests that, by teaching students as equals, rather than through Socratic Method or exposition (both of which reinforce a dynamic of power and subordination which result in stultification of the student), the teacher can enable the student to find clarity as that of an artist or writer rather than that of a schoolchild. The notion of stultification is complex: Rancière uses the term '*abrutir*', a direct translation into English of which is 'to render stupid', or 'to treat like a brute'. There is no direct translation that approximates this meaning. Kristin Ross, the translator of Rancière's work, therefore uses the term 'stultification' to articulate the idea of 'deadness and numbing' that the French term implies (1991:7). What Rancière is proposing within his use of the term is that, through acts of equality, emancipation is enacted whereas in any given circumstance a student can be stultified by inequality. He clarifies this in his later essay *On Ignorant Schoolmasters* by saying that 'stultification can and does happen in all kinds of active and modern ways'. Emancipation, therefore, 'is a matter of relating what one ignores to what one knows; a matter of observing and comparing, of speaking and verifying' and universal education 'concerns the relation between equality and inequality' (Rancière in Bingham and Biesta, 2010:6). Stultification closes down the potential of the student to recognise the possibilities that learning discloses about experience.

Rancière advances the notion that emancipation is enacted by attending to reason above all. I contend that reason is only half of the motor towards emancipation. Propounding this split between reason and passion again pre-empts the bifurcatory discourses I will discuss through Chapter 2, where risk is seen only in statistical rather than experiential terms. The suppression of the emotional or passion-based thinking that Rancière disavows is entirely formative when considering pedagogic tact. If Rancière limits emancipation to reason, suggesting that 'everything is done by passions, I know; but everything, even follies, would be much better done by reason' (1991:95), he reinforces the dynamic of power and binary opposition imposed by a mind-body split or academic and metaphoric dialogue, undermining his intention towards equality. For me, therefore, teaching inhabits a dynamic tension between passion and reason, quality and quantity, good and bad, literal and metaphoric-dialectics that are crucial to explore when working towards engaged encounters with Heideggerian death.

When exploring Rancière's position through the thesis, I will be using some of his key terminology such as politics, dissensus and police order:

> Politics is generally seen as the set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved, the organisation of powers, the distribution of places and roles, the systems for legitimising this position. I propose to give this system of distribution another name. I propose to call it the police. (1999:28)

Rancière is proposing that, by naming the governing framework as the police, he exposes the mechanisms of power at play within any society or institution. Todd May's overview of Rancière's thinking posits that the traits of passivity and apathy are those that result from a police order (2010:3-5). An equalising project is, therefore, one which commits to an active engagement in challenge and dissent against the police order. Dissent gives the participants or students means to recognise themselves within this system. Rancière clarifies that dissensus is 'a gap in the very configuration of sensible concepts, a dissociation introduced into the correspondence between ways of being and ways of doing, seeing and speaking' (2010:15). Dissensus mobilises a recognition of the self, in relation to what is said and done, by disrupting the everyday order to 'not lose sight of the paradoxes that give [existence or education] meaning' (Rancière in Bingham and Biesta, 2010:16).

Through the learning of trapeze work, the student acts in dissensus to the social norm or police order of fearing and, therefore, fleeing from risky situations.

May's appreciation of Rancière's politics is useful because it takes the discussion outside of a pure philosophical recognition of the rhetorical structures at play within police orders and places them into practical situations of dissensus. He argues that a permanent state of radicalisation demands constant evaluation and rigour. This is what I suggest throughout and, most specifically, in Chapter 5 when I suggest that pedagogic tact is borne out of an engagement with curiosity and it makes demands of the temporal nature of both authentic engagement (Heidegger) and will (Rancière).

0.3.5 Inherent Tensions between Heidegger and Rancière

The placing of Rancière and Heidegger in close proximity might suggest a theoretical deadlock in terms of their views on equality. One of the central problematics of this thesis is the complexity of defining and practising equality. Heidegger and Rancière propose very different ways of being, doing and seeing equality between peoples.

The kind of equality that Rancière is concerned with, which is political equality, is not what is at stake in Heidegger. There are, however, points of compatibility. For instance, seen in formal terms, or 'existentially', the very idea of *Dasein* shows that, fundamentally, there is nothing essential in *Dasein* to differentiate one from the other: equality is implied by the term *Dasein* in this section of *Being and Time*:

> By "Others" we do not mean everyone else but me - those over against whom the "I" stands out. They are rather those from whom, for the most part, one does not distinguish oneself - those among whom one is too... The "too" means a *sameness* of being as circumspect overly concernful Being-in-the-world... By reason of this with-like Being-in-the-world, the world is always the one I *share* with others... Being-in is Being-with-others (Italics added for emphasis 1962:154-157).

Heidegger is not a political thinker, unlike Rancière. Notwithstanding his Catholic conservative leanings, and later dalliance with the Nazis, there are radical implications in Heidegger's thought that perhaps even he was not aware of. If Heidegger does not speak of political equality and emancipation, it is because he does not belong to the tradition of thought that is basically French, running from

Rousseau to Rancière. So there are cultural philosophical traditions separating them too. This does not mean that Heidegger has nothing to contribute to an understanding of equality grasped at a fundamental human level of pre-political association. I engage with Heidegger's notion of *Mitsein* or being-with in Chapter 5. Regardless of ideological differences, the two philosophers speak in various and different ways to the radical equality that I wish to adopt in my pedagogy.

As reading and practice came together in the process of writing, it became clear that what was most interesting to me in Heidegger's work was that which was closest to Rancière's theory: the shared proposition of a *possibility* through the methodological excavation of will. The possibility of authenticity and the possibility of equality enacted through routines of doing, being and seeing. The proposition that is made by Rancière, similar to Heideggerian authenticity, is that equality is not an absolute state or final outcome of learning. It is enacted in the moments of engagement in which one is communicated with in an equalising way. Rancière suggests that the possibility of ongoing equality is, therefore, impossible. It must be constantly verified through acts of dissensus and emancipation. Universal teaching is his method for equalising only in the moment of its practice.

I recognise that both theorists place import upon the poetic and descriptive ambiguities of life as lived through doing, being, seeing and speaking. In my work specifically, this means that I engaged with the phenomenological description of seven moments that activated my awareness of the tact needed to encounter risk and that engaged with notions of equality. I recognise and interrogate the seemingly deterministic elements that are part of the encounter such as the social pressure to conform or the mathematical formula for risk assessment. I map the distinct elements which are experienced as a whole and, in so doing, recognise that experience for me and for the students involved cannot be easily captured.

0.4 Terminology

0.4.1 Tact

Tact is defined by dancer Erin Manning as:

> the "ready and delicate sense of what is fitting and proper in dealing with others... a skill or judgment when dealing with people or negotiating difficult situations; the faculty of saying or doing the right thing at the right time"... tact keeps me in the realm of almost-known, the anticipated-in-advance. (2007:134/5)

Tact, therefore, is a skill of prediction, judgment, social understanding, trust, moral and ethical propriety which is negotiated in the momentary. It is dependent upon knowledge of the past and intention towards the future. The term is useful because it attests to the complexity of teaching. It recognises that a moment is lived, experienced, witnessed, judged and analysed through the cultural frames that it also exposes and which I discuss in the next chapters. Each moment of teaching is filtered through the moral heuristics of the teacher and student involved. The outcome of taking a risk by touching a student or teaching a dangerous movement cannot be predicted but the task of teaching demands that a prediction is made and that the risk will engage the student towards self-knowledge.

The term 'tact' is useful in terms of describing pedagogy as temporal and spatial as well as emphasising the practical demands made upon the teacher to expose the physical interactions at play within the room. In Van Manen's words, tact emphasises 'a heedful, mindful wondering about the project of life, of living and what it means to live a life' (1990:12). Through a discussion of pedagogic tact, I can thoughtfully attend to life and the process of living and how this is given meaning within my pedagogy. The fact that the term 'tact' is etymologically linked with the term 'touch', which is one of the taboo discourses at play within my practice, means I am aware of how touch and touching others can be seen as a lens through which to observe all negotiations of curiosity and trust within any pedagogic or dialogic relationship.

Tact can be viewed as consideration of the ethical structures at play within a scenario that permits students and teacher to touch each other as well as taking it beyond this to the awareness that touch mobilises trust and challenges a 'police order' that forbids it (Rancière 1991). Manning suggests that tact 'abides within the conditions of *possibility* of touch' (2007:135). Tactful rumination correlates directly with the notion of Heidegger's anticipatory resolution as an articulation of the possibility for self-exposure and self-concealment through encounters. The student is free to choose whether to fear being touched and touching others or embrace the possibility of touch as a vibrant part of the work. The notion of the possibility of touch is opened

within the first example given in the second chapter of this thesis: The Slap. It is an ethically loaded and culturally dangerous example because demands are made upon those who are charged to 'hold' the frame under which The Slap is enacted.

Social context holds and constitutes the definition of trust. This encompasses the notions of a mutual assurance within the dialogue and the strata of ensurance and vulnerability that are alive/embodied discourses within the room. The issue of a temporality that demands that I have known when and how to touch recognises the ecstatic engagement I discuss in Chapter 5, where Heidegger claims 'only an entity which is equiprimordially in the process of having been... can take over its thrownness' (1964: 437). Only if I have a memory of our tactile relation can I use touch in such a way as not to throw you back to a fear-like state but I can also engage it in such a way that we are able to 'dance' (in Manning's practice) or learn (in my practice) together. Manning's[5] suggestion that, '[t]act embodies this injunction that challenges me in advance to have known how and when I should or should not touch' (2007:134), reinforces the need for permission, negotiation and temporality. Tact, in this instance, defines the complex web of tensions held by the teacher in a moment of practice.

The student is assured by the teacher's tactful response to their work in the rehearsal and training room and the engagement of the student's will is ensured through the mobilising element of 'concern' that is the manner of the teacher's enactment of the pedagogic relation (Heidegger, 1962: 158). A constant attentiveness to the two elements of curiosity and tact ensures that the teacher is aware of the mobility and

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[5] It is important to note that Manning works from the framework of Deleuze and Guattari's 'Body without Organs' paradigm:

> The body without organs is an egg: it is crisscrossed with axes and thresholds, with latitudes and longitudes and geodesic lines, traversed by gradients marking the transitions and the becomings, the destinations of the subject developing along these particular vectors. (1972:13)

I take this as a reinforcement of Heideggerian principles in the general sense although this is an unorthodox position due to Deleuze and Guattari's scepticism of the phenomenological tradition. It does, however, not only play into the hands of a phenomenological description of a poetic scenario but also engages with the 'body' of the student and teacher as one that performs and flows under political conditions, and is defined and contained within them (*Ibid*:146). Deleuze and Guattari's proposition is that the body is a site upon which culture resides in an act of looking without seeing the whole, the strata that I mention in Chapter 4, that it is impossible to stop or fragment because the experience is perceived in a totality. This can be seen as complementary to the Heideggerian 'fall towards the everyday', where the potential for one's own death (and, therefore, humanity) is lost within the idle chatter of the everyday. Because I see myself in a totality, unconscious of the social constraints imposed upon the act of touching, I 'fall towards the everyday' until I am touched. Touch, therefore, ruptures the injunction that I may be lost in the everyday concerns; it forces me to confront the notion of you and I in communal engagement. Tact is the element that ensures that this touch is made 'in common' with the other.

fragility of the element of trust, without which the practice is hindered. The need for trust calls for a concern towards the student; it demands that the student is 'seen' by the teacher and that this seeing is used to attend to their development as both a learner and a person.

0.4.2 Curiosity

I suggest that how a teacher is 'concerned' relates to 'seeing' the student in the first instance and being curious towards them in the second (Heidegger, 9162: 158). This notion of seeing is fundamental to the debate. For Heidegger, the action of seeing or having sight is a method that takes the see-er beyond the notion of seeing with the eyes towards a sense of seeing with the whole body. He notes that it is common to say 'I see a concert' rather than 'I hear' one, despite the fact that the concert impacts upon all our senses beyond only the eyes (1962: 149). Heidegger develops an argument that to see is to know. He articulates that quotidian concern suggests that knowledge is only related to that which can be beholden through the eyes and cautions that this form of sight limits the potential to see in fullness (1962: 154). When I use the term 'see' in relation to the nature of the pedagogic relationship, I am recognising this tension between superficially viewing the student and knowing them in full rich depth through the eyes of my embodied understanding. I am creating a dialectical relation between observation and full knowledge. This dialectic encapsulates all the levels of knowledge that are the 'truth' of the student's being, which are impossible to know, and sets it against the quotidian concerns for normative codes of assessment.

I recognise that my intention to view the student in fullness is the mobilising force of the dialectic and also suggest that a curious concern ahead of the student enables me to engage in the momentary, rather than 'leaping in' and leading the student or myself towards a specific 'reading' that limits our possibilities (1962: 158). This part of my thesis is where I diverge from the Heideggerian frame most specifically. Heidegger is wary of the term 'curiosity', which he warns can lead towards 'lust of the eyes' whereby the sight is lured by unseen motives due to pleasure and also by 'not tarrying', which could be seen as distractedness and, therefore, part of the everyday idle chatter that categorises inauthentic *Dasein*. Heidegger's suggestion is that, by its

very nature, curiosity can consequently fall away from authentic looking and openness towards lust and distraction (1962:216).

It is the very character of curiosity which makes it a fundamental part of the framework I use within the classroom. I am attentive to newness, which means that I am open to receiving information on a number of levels as it comes to view. A change in breathing pattern by a student, or a memory that provokes me to offer an anecdote rather than a technical solution to the struggling student, are brought to consciousness and either attended or rejected by the teacher. These are all deviations from a set route from one place to another within my teaching, but curiosity enables me to see the individual within the frame. I am thereby able to attend to the needs of the six people in the room: my needs and the needs of the five students in my care. This does not mean that all the entities that are brought to my view serve to distract me from my purpose and intention. They are symbolic of a process of openness that demonstrates the fluidity and responsiveness needed to appreciate the tacit environmental, temporal, individual and spatial factors that are alive in the moment of practice. I reconcile the notion of intention here in Heideggerian terms as an enacted choice to work in common with the student.

Heidegger elucidates that:

> [i]dle talk and curiosity take care in their ambiguity to ensure that what is genuinely and newly created is out of date as soon as it emerges before the public. Such a new creation can become free in its positive possibilities only if the idle talk which covers it up has become ineffective, and if the 'common' interest has died away. (1962:218)

He notes that ambiguity creates and closes down opportunities for an authentic relationship to being in the moment and cautions that, by being curious, you open yourself up to a greater quotidian pull or more demonstrative fall towards the inauthentic. He cautions against curiosity because of its draw towards ambiguity, and takes a punitive tone with it rather than suggesting the benefits that it can have if the negative consequences are regarded in the moment.

Heidegger is talking about free curiosity, which is one which is severed from concern and thereby 'concerns itself with seeing not in order to understand what is seen… but just in order to see' (1962:216). This type of free curiosity is not what I am advocating. Heidegger, however, does not offer a template for concerned curiosity so

I am rehearsing one through the journey of this thesis. Concerned curiosity champions a search for a holistic seeing of the student, recognises the dialectical position of knowledge as seeing and holds firm to the intention to richness rather than superficiality. This type of curiosity is, by its nature, doomed to failure due to the impossibility of its task but at the same time carries the possibility of depth. This brings us back to anticipatory resolution as one that houses the 'possibility of acquiring *power* over Dasein's *existence* and of basically dispersing all fugitive self-concealments'(1964: 358). It is characterised by joy and sobriety. This joy and sobriety, as well as exhaustion, will be articulated through the course of Chapter 6 as a poetic strata of emotional rumination upon the nature of pedagogic tact and how it was experienced by me through the work.

Curiosity is impossible to sustain. Like all the attention factors open for discussion within this thesis, its ability to respond to newness within an intended concern creates exhaustion within the teacher as it does within performers. So it is necessary for the teacher to be mindful of her needs within this fluid process, mindful of the factors that are at play within the student's being, and attentive to her own embodied experience as a student and concerned (and, therefore, intended) teacher. I want to emphasise that concerned curiosity is attentive to personal as well as external concerns and how they are felt or seen within the moment. The teacher is embroiled within the dynamic of seeing, inextricably bound to the action and resolution of the student in the moment. She is responsible, distant, reflexive, embodied, intentioned and attentive.

0.4.3 Trust

The process of building trust is one that develops through every interaction with a student. It is never a finalised end-point but is a journey of negotiations, honesty and tact. Although tact and curiosity form a distinct section within this part of the chapter, they all serve to intertwine, reinforce and underpin each other. Without tact there is no trust, without trust there is no curiosity, without curiosity there can be no tact. My intention is towards the articulation of the teacher 'holding' a framework that allows the tactful negotiations to be fluid, mobile and, perhaps most importantly, discursive.

Trust, therefore, evades definition in the strictest sense. It reflects the shared intention to be safe within the work, and the shared ongoing journey towards self-discovery. It encompasses the various notions of ensurance, assurance and insurance that I elucidate upon in the next section and declares that all these are subject to interrogation at any point in the process. Trust is impossible to objectify. For Rancière, trust is defined by the 'struggle for equality which can never be merely a demand upon the other, nor a pressure put upon him, but always simultaneously a proof given to oneself' (1990:43). The proof given to oneself is key to my identification of trust as an interlocutor as well as foundation for the work. The dialogic exchanges all need to come in the form of an equalising dialogue in order to act beyond a simple demand. Trust is the fabric of the relationship. It could be said that, from Rancière's perspective, the demands placed upon me for insurance from the institution could have destabilised the equalising process and, therefore, the trust within the work is doomed to fail. However, from my perspective, beyond the insurance demands themselves was an appreciation and interrogation of the demands through dialogue. In such a way, I am engaging with the police order that Rancière warns against. This police order sits within the context of the work and is a potent discourse within it. How it is challenged, extended, inverted or reinstated within the pedagogic process is a tactful negotiation that the teacher is faced with in each encounter with the students.

0.4.4 Mapping

Throughout this thesis I have used the language of cartography as both a metaphor for tactful praxis and a methodological approach to documenting that praxis. The metaphorical analogy describes the rigorous and attentive thoughtfulness that a teacher engages when working closely with the student. This process takes into consideration the social context, past experiences and future intentions of all involved within the moments of risk-taking, and it is never finished. Each teacher will map the teacher-student relationship differently. Adam Cohen, the flying trapeze teacher whom I interviewed when at the Circus Space, consciously observes the actions of each student from the minute they arrive in the room. I observe and listen in a similar manner, noting the incongruities between what a student says and what

they do. I am attempting to make each student present to myself in order to tactfully negotiate where the risks are for them and how I can then challenge the student safely.

The map is temporal, spatial and an unending project, because the students' needs and associations change from moment to moment and in different spaces or social contexts; they are never set in their ways. My embodied map documents every encounter from the past, my awareness of the space and social hierarchy the student is in and my attention to them in the present. The map is therefore fluid and responsive rather than set and prescriptive. This thesis represents a part of the tangible documentation of my mapping of pedagogic praxis. The other part is lived, and is consequently composed and recomposed through its creation and use.

I map the ephemeral territories of the work as it appears for me in full awareness that I am on unstable ground. The territory changes moment by moment. In discussing and allegorising this map, I am inviting a performative encounter between the reader and myself. Chris Perkins suggests that 'a performative approach sees mapping as not only taking place in time and space, but also capable of constituting both. New worlds are made every time a map is deployed... [it] is always being made and consumed' (2004:2). The map that I have created over the course of my teaching career, through my interviews with John Paul Zaccarini and Matilda Leyser, through my experience as a trapeze artist, and through my pedagogic practice on *Hello Fatty* has been remade through the drafting process of this document and is consumed within the document itself. It constitutes the meaning of the practice in time and space and is also the memory of it.

Chapter 1.0

Research Methods

My research is practice-led. I utilise the medium of writing to interweave multiple strands of reflection upon teaching in order to become a better teacher. The writing became a practice in itself. Through it I rehearse a form of phenomenological analysis which invites the reader to engage with the problematic of risk and pedagogy through the act of reading.

In this chapter, I rationalise my research method and provide a summary of the multi-layered hermeneutic and heuristic methods that I used to capture the themes of the work. I detail the ethical considerations of the work and outline some of the 'sureties' that I navigated. I will describe the five day project, its purpose and how the project design offered opportunities for reflection.

The project began by engaging with the practical implications of working with adolescents on trapezes. I surveyed the paperwork processes of risk assessment, rigging assessment, Criminal Records Bureau and ethical consent in order to comply with the Central School of Speech and Drama *Good Practice in Research* policy. I realised immediately that these forms are a vital part of the research practice. They are integral to the *doing* of trapeze. Moreover, reflection upon this *doing* reveals many strata of information that the teacher negotiates. Filling in forms and answering questions highlighted many of the philosophical questions that motivated the research: what is risk? What is safety? What is harm? What is acceptable harm? What is consent? How can a student consent to potential harm? Because of the importance and significance of this process, I began to document it in a personal journal. This is a heuristic research project: I learn from trial and error, and unpack each 'critical incident' in minute detail (Tripp, 1993:3).

I designed and reflected upon a five day project with five young people, which gave opportunity for me to explore the practices under debate. This section describes the research methods I employed through the project, the design of the workshops, the interviews I conducted with teachers, the hermeneutic conversations I had with my assistant and the reflections I made in my journal. It outlines a clear mode of

dialogical, iterative and progressive investigation that resulted in the performative and discursive style of the thesis.

The questions posed in this thesis concern the nature of pedagogy as it appears to me within moments of teaching risk. It is therefore a phenomenological study in as much as it concerns a particular interest 'in what life is *like... especially in terms of the things that matter to us*' (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009:11). As I noted in my foreword, this research fuses my desire to be a better teacher with the desire to emancipate students through encounters with risk. It is more than a distant research project, it is a momentary celebration and recognition of what matters most for me. It has elements of hermeneutics because it is primarily an interpretation of the lived moments of my practice and uses hermeneutic circles as a way of clarifying interpretations through discussions and interviews. It is also ideographic because it is concerned with the particular and. most specifically, with the minute details of an event 'which leads to a re-evaluation of the importance of a single case-study' (Smith *et al,* 2009:32). So, in this way, I have created a project which has all the features of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis as defined by Jonathan Smith, Paul Flowers and Michael Larkin (2009). Where my method diverges from this is that Smith *et al* consider research done into what participants think and feel conducted mainly from interviews whereas the focus of my study is upon my own understanding as it is mapped through the work and in the work. Interviews form a part of, but not the whole research form; the rest is phenomenological analysis and description of critical incidents within the work. It therefore follows Van Manen's 'systematic, explicit, self-critical and intersubjective study of... our lived experience' (1990:11) in as much as it is framed through the lens of my journey to understand my practice through interview, practice and reflection.

The five day workshop was structured to engage my observation of the relationship between myself and the students in a number of ways. One of the problems when researching lived-experience is the matter of data collection and discussion. In my teaching practice I do many things- some planned in advance and some not - with many young people over a large amount of time. This is impossible to fully document. David Tripp proposes that the real art of teaching lies within developing professional judgment in situations where there is no 'right answer' (1993:3). He espouses a method of reflection whereby a teacher considers aspects of their practice

and begins to unpack all the discourses and possibilities it may hold. He suggests that this reflective practice cultivates good teaching practise. The method that he offers involves the selection of 'critical' incidents from a teacher's experience and a systematic discussion of those incidents. '[C]ritical incidents are not 'things' which exist independently of the observed and are awaiting discovery... [they] are produced by the way we look at a situation... an interpretation of the significance of an event' (1993:8). By applying Tripp's concept to my practice I am able to identify some critical incidents that appear to exemplify my whole practice. Within the single moments, I begin to see the themes that may appear through the whole of my teaching work.

The project was designed so that I could teach the seemingly dangerous practice of static trapeze and to provide an opportunity for me to witness myself doing this teaching. Because the students and I were together for six hours a day, I was able to observe the development and progression of each student over an intense period. This added depth to the way I was in contact with the students. Simple exercises that were repeated offered new insights through repetition over the five days. I was able to notice the impact and importance of working with only four other students in terms of their perception of risks and their ability to reflect upon their own development. In this way, the size of the sample added an intimacy to the relationships and, I feel, offered greater opportunities for the development of trust. As you will see on reading, it provided too many insights to be considered fully within this document. On reflection, I have selected eight key incidents that as if they represented the key moments of learning through the five days. The sample size recognises the importance I place upon knowing the student, listening to them as an individual and challenging them at their own level. In Chapter 3, I unpack some of the contentions within emancipatory discourse and demonstrate the complexity of individuisation on a grand scale.

1.1 The Practice – *Hello Fatty*

I invited the students to learn trapeze with me for five days. The research project itself began before this invitation - with a conversation with the Central School of Speech and Drama about what should be in place prior to the project, the results of

which can be seen within Chapter 2. I observed and noted in my journal the students' and carers' responses to the invitation and reflected upon the insights from the conversations. This achieved a preliminary layer of understanding about the concerns that surrounded these individual children and individual carers about the project.

The students were introduced to circus training through an induction at The Circus Space in Hoxton, London. This induction was designed to achieve a number of things. Firstly, it introduced the intense physicality of the work in a highly structured manner, in a specialist environment. This specialist environment distanced the students from their association of the project with me and reinforced the safety practices that I would implement through the further days of the project. It introduced the good practices of warm-up and cool-down and some of the terminology, whilst heightening the status of the project by offering the 'glamorous' practice of flying trapeze which I could not offer at the Central School of Speech and Drama. It also afforded me the distance to observe each student and their response to the aerial practice. This observation became a part of my tactful practice when working with them over the following days.

A full account of the precise scheme of work I used is available in Appendix B. This is because I am not attempting to model a way of teaching risk. Instead I hope to describe how risk manifests itself within the practice. So I created a structure for the sessions that was typical of my practice in classrooms and workshops. I warmed the group up, attending to their particular physical presence; we engaged in some conditioning exercises to prepare them to be in the air and then we worked on the equipment. Usually this means that a couple of the students would be working with me at the static trapeze and the others would be climbing the rope. My assistant, Dave, and I would be supporting the students and engaging them with doing it in a more effective manner. Each of the students would propose a move to me or to Dave and we would teach them that move. The details of how certain moves were taught is exemplified within the critical incidents discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. After the students had learnt movements, they spent some time in 'free play' with the equipment - working together and singly to see what they could do. At the end of this playtime, we cooled the group down, stretched our bodies and had lunch. This structure follows the familiar pattern of creative workshop sessions throughout the

world. Following that existing pattern, typical of my practice, allowed me insight into how the general experience impacted upon the individual attention I could give to each student. Each element of the project design, and session structure pointed my observant attention back to equality, the founding premise of this work.

Each day I spent about 20 minutes giving individual attention to each student on either the trapeze or the rope. I did this to provide opportunities for me to 'see' them, and attend to what I saw. The work was designed to give opportunity for me to observe the student and teacher relationship and to reflect upon it.

The afternoon consisted of a two-hour devising session which I call provocations. In this, the students tested their understanding of themselves as actors and people in relation to philosophical questions. These afternoon sessions are less intensively documented through this thesis, apart from the examples of The Slap used at the beginning of Chapter 2 and The Game used in Chapter 6. The reason for this is that I made another discovery through the work: that the aerial sessions enabled me to magnify the pedagogic process in a way that the devising sessions did not. The aerial work, therefore, became the locus of the whole study.[6] However, these ground-based sessions were fundamental to the intensity and ephemeral dynamics at play within the process. The students would not have been able to sustain a full day of aerial training, due to exhaustion. However, in the afternoon, this exhaustion led to honest, 'risky' and open devising between the students which fed-back directly into the aerial elements of the work.

Detail of the specific games and exercises taught can be found in Appendix B. They provide the context of the work for a reader who is interested in learning how I taught. However, they do not evidence the problematics of the research. This is not a thesis upon how to teach students to take risks. It is a description of a relationship between teacher and student in which the notion of risk is itself challenged. My thesis should not be read as a handbook on how to teach but as a reflection upon the way that risk appeared for me in the work and a description of the tact that I needed to be able to notice and or engage with it.

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[6] Before that point, I had taken a more inclusive view on risk-taking in that I had considered the risks taken by actors and the risk of failure associated with clowning. These became supporting elements to the enquiry rather than specific chapters, as I had first intended.

1.2 Critical Reflection

My research practice and method evolved as the project progressed. That is a benefit of phenomenological research: it seeks to honour momentary revelation. I was surprised by the insights that being at the Circus Space brought to the research. Consequently, I responded by interviewing Adam Cohen, the trapeze teacher who introduced the students to flying. His thoughts and practices deepen my understanding of teaching trapeze and form a part of the ruminations herein.

I employed a research assistant, Dave, to work with me on the project. This was for practical purposes to document the work, be a supportive pair of hands with the equipment, lead some of the warm-ups so that I could observe and as a hermeneutic device for reflection. The extra person in the room achieved the possibility of being inside and outside the work. I chose a researcher familiar with phenomenology and hermeneutics, familiar with aerial work (he was a trapeze student) and familiar with teaching (he teaches clowning). He was someone whose insights I trusted and whose playfulness, I felt, complemented my own presence in the room. I also chose a man for this role. The purpose of this was to gain insight into how gender might become part of the discourse at key moments.

I have written in two ways: phenomenological writing, as described by Van Manen (1993) and performance writing as advanced by Pollack (1998). I use phenomenological writing to capture eight incidents from my teaching where critical insight was gained or gleaned by me. These critical incidents, as argued by Tripp,

> are mostly straightforward accounts of very commonplace events that occur in routine professional practice which are critical in the rather different sense that they are indicative of underlying trends, motives and structures... they are rendered critical through analysis. (1993:25)

Through the course of the workshops, I took note of many incidents in which I made pedagogic judgments. Where I took decisions to stop, challenge, evade or reveal social and momentary discourses with the students. Incidents such as these happen many times in a single hour in any classroom. In analysis, they provide the personal and experiential narrative that brings a teacher's pedagogic tact to the fore.

The critical incidents are edited and refined as an elucidation from my journals. They are not verbatim transcripts, or reflective accounts of the event written at the time.

They are accounts filtered through the many layers of hermeneutic analysis. They are therefore not referenced. I wrote them in a different tone from the sections that precede and follow them; therefore they are in a different font. There are however, citations from my journal which are fully referenced. These perform a different function from the critical incidents, they articulate the immediate questions and meanings that resounded from the work for me. They perform two functions, firstly, by declaring my immediate voice as relevant, and second, as a performance of vigilance and reflection.

The process of drafting and redrafting my reflective journal is a form of phenomenological analysis. What I do is embody the problematic of risk through writing. This problematic manifests itself within intense reflection and experimentation: I think, I do and I write to think and do. This is where my research diverges from Jonathan Smith, Paul Flowers and Michael Larkin's *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis* most specifically (2009). They provide a framework under which the researcher engages a participant in cycles of hermeneutic or interpretative reflection in order to extract meaning. What I do is work through cycles of reflection myself in order to deepen the understanding of my actions in the moments of practice. So, the process followed phenomenological analysis through the following hermeneutic cycles:

1) In the moment I become aware that something interesting is happening or has happened.

2) I follow a process of reflection upon this in the moment. This is what Smith *et al.* call 'intuitive, undirected reflection' because it is not formed into a specific learning point, but moments are witnessed as being important (2009:189).

3) These intuitive moments are vocalised in a conversation between me and my research assistant. This is an attentive, although discursive, reflection where moments are considered as significant and noted as such.

4) At the end of the day, the moments discussed are engaged with as critical incidents in my journal. According to Tripp, critical incidents become such because of the attention given to them (1993).

5) The critical incidents are written and rewritten over the course of the research, sometimes six or seven times. This is the first layer of written reflection.

6) I isolate key strata from each critical incident from which I begin the second weave of multilayered writing. This way of viewing the incident, reveals the nature of the risks being taken. It is the mapping of the perception of the moment.

7) The third level of reflective writing brings the professional, pedagogic and philosophical theory into play.

Moments of practice are reflected upon in seven modes, and through multiple lenses. Each level of reflection brings more depth and in turn embodies the tact needed to be a teacher. This research method reveals and articulates the rigour I take when attending towards the students in my care. This thesis therefore performs the reflective cycle undergone through 5 years of study. Pedagogue and phenomenologist Max Van Manen suggests that writing empowers us with embodied knowledge:

> Writing involves a textural reflection in the sense of separating and confronting ourselves with what we know, distancing ourselves from the [immediacy], decontextualizing our thoughtful preoccupations from immediate action, abstracting and objectifying our lived understandings from concrete involvements, and all this for the sake of now reuniting us with what we know, drawing us more closely to living relations and situations, turning thought to a more tactful praxis, and concretizing and subjectifying our deepened understanding in practical action... my writing as a practice prepared me for an insightful praxis in the world. (1990:128/9)

So the process of writing has manifested and accreted new understandings upon the nature of tactful pedagogy because it distances me, draws me towards and performs my primary concern: the equality of the students. In the moment I become aware of an incident, in discussion I begin to reflect upon it; when I write in my journal I begin to engage with the possibilities the incident might hold for new ways of understanding teaching. I write and rewrite, iterating and exploring the possibilities of the incident/encounter and this thesis is a part of that iterative cycle. It discloses the vigilance required by the teacher, and performs tactful praxis.

1.3 Interviews

The practical experiment part of the research began as soon as I invited the students to participate. The invitation itself forms a layer within the reflective processes of the work, and the students' responses to the invitation have impacted upon the way I view the matter of the work itself. Working with children means that there is a secondary layer of discourse that involves the children's carers and deals with

informed consent. I discuss this in detail in section 1.4. My conversations with carers feature within the material used to add texture within the writing. Although I do not formally interview the carers, their voices are heard as a potent part of the discussion because of the weight they carry within the meaning-making of the young people. Van Manen suggests that in hermeneutic practice conversation and interview perform two interconnected functions 1) they serve as a gathering exercise for developing and enriching the researcher's reflections and 2) they are a means of establishing dialogue and conveying trust (1990:66). What he iterates is that conversations and anecdotes enable the researcher to develop a keen sense of what the phenomena being researched is like. He emphasises that what you are doing in conversation is refining the point you are considering, and also repeating and replaying the significance of dialogue.

I conducted formal interviews with a number of people whose teaching has impacted upon my own understanding of pedagogy and the practices of risk-taking: aerialists and teachers, Matilda Leyser, John Paul Zaccarini and Adam Cohen. The interviews served to explicitly locate and reflect upon the I/researcher by acknowledging the impact of the professional expectations and codes and of the individual voices of my peers within it. In such a way, I am better able to witness the lens through which I practice my methodology in the first instance and it has added perspective and depth to the practice itself.

> The point of phenomenological research is to "borrow" other people's experiences and their reflections on their experiences in order to better be able to come to an understanding of the deeper meaning or significance of human experience within the context of the whole of human experience (Van Manen, 1990:62)

By utilising the experiences of professional aerial teachers, quoting them directly and witnessing the threads of meaning they articulate when considering their practice. I place my pedagogy into dialogue with others. It brings new insights into my work, gives me new language through which to explore it, and insights into the contentious way I may have viewed a critical incident. These interviews provide balance and depth to this, very personal, account of teaching.

1. 4 Thesis Structure

This thesis exists as a momentary pause and reflection into the nature of pedagogy, risk and tact. In it, the struggle to unravel the meaning and the instincts within the practice, the tension between doing, being and saying, becomes apparent. It therefore follows an untraditional thesis structure. I have rejected the traditional teleological form in favour of something that dialogues with it and through it, in the way that life is lived. The rationale for this is that it speaks to, of and through my experiences of teaching in order to uncover the nature of teaching as a performed act that is needfully fluid. By this I mean that teaching is often mobilised by an intense feeling that cannot be explained or described directly, that may slowly become clearer through iterative and emerging reflections. This section makes the case for writing that works in parallel with scientific analysis and critically describes the experience of teaching. The form of the thesis maps the encounter through the process of being, doing and seeing the practice.

The thesis begins with a practical question. What do I need to do in order to safely teach static trapeze to young people at the Central School of Speech and Drama? This simple question led me down two paths, the practical and existential. My practical journey began with a conversation with the Technical Manager of the school about risk, and the filling in of a risk assessment form. Therefore the thesis begins with that question. What is risk? How is it measured? How is it defined, manifested, rehearsed and contained within education? These questions resulted in a risk assessment being made by a professional circus rigger, who acknowledged the possibility of the highest level of risk: multiple deaths. My reading at this point led me to recognise that risk is not something objectively measured, but fundamentally, something we experience, and which can profoundly unsettle and challenge because of its association with existential death. Each chapter therefore works as a dialogue between the practical and existential frames used to insure, ensure and assure the students safety during the work. No element carries more weight. Without insurance, the students, their family and mine are vulnerable to financial ruin should the worst possible accident happen. Without consideration of the experiential and existential elements I may place the students at greater risk of accident.

The form of the thesis performs, reveals and uncovers some of the experience of being a teacher and practicing static trapeze. As Pollack suggests, performance writing is evocative, metonymic, subjective, nervous, citational and consequential, it

> simultaneously slips the choke hold of conventional (scientific, rational) scholarly discourses and their enabling structures. It moves *with,* operates alongside, sometimes through, rather than above or beyond, the fluid, contingent, unpredictable, discontinuous rush of (performed) experience – and *against* the assumption that (scholarly) writing must or should do otherwise. (1998:81)

I argue in Chapter 1 that risk is experiential, that any attempt to measure, calculate and therefore manage it is impossible unless experiential, subjective experience is taken into account. It becomes necessary to consider the lived experience of teacher and participants within the teaching encounter. Therefore, it would be erroneous to attempt to capture experience through traditional scholarly writing alone. Scholarly writing dialogues with the more performative aspects, and it is this dialogue that is the practice of pedagogy for me: iterative, circulatory, poetic and at times, contradictory.

The descriptive part of my research and reflection follows a modified version of a phenomenological method of qualitative research as discussed by Max Van Manen. Van Manen advocates a method of 'systematic, explicit, self-critical, and intersubjective study of its subject matter, our lived experience' (1990: 11). This systematic method of documentation is revealed more fully within Chapters 1, 2, 4 and 6 of this thesis where I describe my practice and identify the territories of risk that are tactfully negotiated within pertinent moments of practice as they appear to me. These are what Van Manen (1990) calls the 'themes' that resonate through the work. The themes form the basis for my learning points and conclusions about the nature of pedagogic tact in action at the end of Chapter 6.

My research deals with the relationship between student and teacher when attempting 'risky' work. A phenomenological approach to the research orientates my qualitative findings towards the existential experiences gained by students and teachers within the moments of the pedagogic relationship. It does not seek to analyse, or empirically prove a hypothesis surrounding risky experiences, so a teleological approach to writing would be unsound. I will not bring statistical finding or positivist outcomes. For phenomenology is what Maurice Merleau-Ponty calls a

'poetizing project'; it aims to create a dialogic understanding between the researcher and the reader (1962:4). In other words, phenomenological description is collected from lived experience and evokes lived experience, through rigorous attention to and orientation with the life experiences of the participants. It is validated by lived experience and it validates lived experience. This existential approach to philosophy, which recognises the situatedness of 'being in the world and of the world' is the overarching philosophical perspective of my methodology due to the complex intertwining dialogues of passion and reason that the study of risk evokes (Heidegger, 1962). Through an expression of the lived moment, the moment exists and is experienced. Drafting and redrafting the moment through seven levels of hermeneutic analysis for purposes of documentation is a part of the method of remembering and identifying the event phenomenologically: I clarify the experience of the situation as it appears to me. Themes begin to emerge through each critical incident. Notions of death, failure, pain, rupture, stultification, consent, touch, circus, risk and violence reveal themselves in the momentary, they regress, 'repeat, revise, replay and remand' through the chapters in the way that they do in my mapped encounters with the students that I teach (Pollack in Phelan 1998:76).

Pollack articulates the contiguous relationship between the reader and the writer (Pollack in Phelan 1998:86). Echoing Rancière's notion that the text is the 'third thing' that mobilises understanding and emancipation between teacher and student, the text itself, by being performative, by evoking and embodying the research methodology, creates equality through the open spaces that it leaves for the reader to place their own subjective understanding. Thereby it closes the gaps:

> in the name of mobilizing praxis... towards materializing possibility in and through a kind of writing that is distinctly performative: writing that recognizes its delays and displacements while proceeding as writing toward engaged, embodied material ends. (Pollack in Phelan, 1998:96)

The writing herein will therefore perform the research undergone. It evokes the problematic nature of perception that is often ephemeral and intuitive, the fragmentation of meaning that happen when experiences are progressive and the false stops and repetitions that occur when rigorous attention is given to those experiences. The way this may be captured in the written form is through hermeneutic, iterative, descriptive, phenomenological performative writing.

1.5   Ethics

There is a singular ethical imperative that drives my work. It therefore underpins the research design and the composition, representation and selection of the students I have used within the study: that all people are equal.

The practice of a pedagogy which is committed to equality demands an ongoing and open-ended conversation about the choices faced by teachers and the ethical issues that are involved in making them. My practice explores the relationship between circus, pedagogy, best-practice and ethics. My research was designed to interrogate the ethical issues that arise from working with children within situations of risk whilst adhering to the Central School of Speech and Drama's best-practice guidelines. Within the research method, I am supported by an institutional policy which is designed to ensure that students' safety is of primary concern. However, the practice of radical equality motivates an interrogation of these policies. I propose in Chapters 2 and 3 that, within the framework provided, it is possible to act in dissensus to a social normative without placing a student 'at risk' because what constitutes a risk is different for each individual student. I raise the question of harm as a central problematic of this thesis. I do not seek to judge or question the procedures laid out to keep students safe; what I do is enact an attention to their definition in the momentary. What follows is a meditation upon the possibility or impossibility of emancipation and I wish to provoke conversations about the complex nature of ethical 'best-practice' when working with adolescents.

The Code of Good Conduct in Research Policy for Central School of Speech and Drama reads:

> It is CSSD's requirement that all research undertaken within the institution by staff and students should accord with the school's equal opportunities policy, data protection legislation and general standards of good practice in the treatment of others (including non-humans). Because the school encourages all staff and students to engage in a process of critical self-reflection in relation to intellectual work and practice, it is expected that attention to social and ethical issues in research will be at the forefront of academic endeavour. Staff and students engaged in research are expected to foster good practice and intellectual integrity in all professional circumstances. (http://www.cssd.ac.uk/research/good-conduct-research-policy)

It should be noted from this that the concept of professional integrity and critical self-reflection is key. My research is a process of critical self-reflection and an exploration of ethics. I constantly attend and accord with this policy through praxical engagement at each stage. Taken in isolation, the practice of placing children on trapezes may be deemed to be ethically problematic. When taken in association with a practice in pedagogic tact, a focus on equality and an attention to the mobility of consent, I am able to argue that my work adheres to best-practice. It is my responsibility to apply a diligent focus upon the voice of the students in my care, which makes this ethical practice momentary; it is the complexity of attempting this in practice which forms a foundation and reason for the research. Moreover, this document reveals the complexity of professional integrity itself by offering different ways of being according to different scenarios with different students.

Academic in Education, Priscilla Alterton, states that a discussion about ethics within research practices that involve children is often about finding a balance between extremes. She suggests that 'modern standards of research ethics may depend on modern transparent research methods and... respectful relationships between researchers and children' (Alderton in Fraser *et al* 2004: 97). A commitment to transparency and building relations between me as teacher/researcher and the students in my care is a major theme of this work. From the eight critical incidents of practice discussed in this document, and from the conversations mobilised by the Informed Consent Letter (Appendix A), I build a model for minute by minute consent. By that I mean that the students and carers are given a) a written summary of the risks involved. b) a conversation about this and the opportunity to ask any questions at any point in the process, c) a verbal commitment to and ongoing practice of transparency. d) the recognition that the trust they place in me may be taken away at any point and e) the ability to retract consent at any point in the process. A relationship with students and carers is therefore established from vigilance to the notion of consent.

Consent is a problematic element to define. It is contingent upon whether a student is competent to sign a form to say they are happy to do trapeze. Consent demands that they understand the implications of saying yes in terms of the physical implications and in terms of the publication implications. 'Although children are not fully equal to adults, their status only raises when the strength and good sense of

many children is respected... [because] ethical research includes sensitive methods for discovering children's own views and meanings' (Alderton in Fraser *et al* 2004:103/4). The recognition of the voices and opinions of the young people I work with is vital. Best practice when working with children generally hinges on the notion of voice. It questions how the researcher engages, listens to, empowers and respects the voice of the young people being researched. I recognise that not only are the words spoken by the children important, but so are the meanings and tacit communications they ascribe to the work. As previously articulated in section 0.4 and as I will go on to explore in Chapters 5 and 6, there are multiple voices being attended to within this work. They pull the diligent researcher in divergent and sometimes contradictory directions. However, what my ethical stance and the guidance from The Central School of Speech and Drama remind me, is that the young people's voices have higher status than any other.

The Central School of Speech and Drama document continues:

> Particular principles that should be emphasized by researchers at all levels are: care and avoidance of harm; honesty and openness; accountability and appropriate documentation; confidentiality; informed consent; avoidance of conflicts of interest; compliance with the law and relevant codes of conduct; and due acknowledgement of collaborators, informants, participants or others contributors. Researchers should also be aware of best professional conduct in relation to animal and child welfare. (CSSD ND)

The salient point articulated here is the importance of having an awareness and practice of professional conduct. There is a checklist for ethical approval in research at Central School of Speech and Drama, which I have attached as Appendix E. Each of the statements is covered by the Informed Consent Letter given to the participants and their carers (Appendix A). What is not covered directly is the avoidance of conflicts of interest. There is an ethical dimension to the selection of students for the research project. All were previously known to me, all have been taught by me and consequently have more complex understandings of what 'the research' is, means and might entail.

The student sample was selected using the best-practice solution for *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis*, what researchers Smith *et al* call 'opportunity' (2009:49). The situation under investigation is the nature of my teaching so students I teach would be the effective sample to use. Smith indicates that the

questions 'how easily can they be contacted?' and '[h]ow much variation can be contained within an analysis of this phenomenon?' can drive the selection process (2009:49). My preliminary research in the five years resulted in possible sample sizes as large as 98 students, with age ranges from 7-25 years. This was because these were the classes I was teaching and the breadth of students I was working with. I discovered that this level of variety resulted in excessive interview transcripts, hours of video footage, very limited contact with the wider community of the students and a superficial analysis of the material. The richness of the material became apparent as I reflected upon my relationship with each individual student over a sustained period. This was impossible for the vast number of students I taught and so I selected a much smaller sample size. As Smith *et al* state, 'The issue is quality, not quantity, and given the complexity of most human phenomena, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis studies usually benefit from a concentrated focus on a small number of cases' (2009:51). I discovered through other preliminary studies that, in order for me to consider the students as individuals, the sample size needed to be lower than seven. This was because a group of seven or above students started to behave like a group, rather than as individuals. Consequently, five students were chosen to provide concentrated opportunities for reflection through intense practical engagement with me.

I acknowledge that the intensity of this relationship is of ethical concern. It could be suggested that I used past experience as a teacher/director to coerce the young people into working with me and also to skew the results towards a specific end-point that I had in mind. As discussed in Chapters 2, 5 and 6,that contention is a central problematic of this thesis and provides the formative argument that any emancipatory dialogue has the potential to liberate or domesticate participants. You will see from the examples given in my work that I do not have a specific end-point in mind. In Example 2, The Gazelle, I recognise the domesticating potential of my practice and the rigorous attention demanded from both teacher and student to challenge and declare the power structures at work. I suggest that this practice, as articulated by Rancière and Freire, is impossible with large groups, and with groups

that are unfamiliar to the pedagogue. It is the accretion of an ongoing relationship that fuels and creates the possibility of trust.[7]

The selection of participants is also of ethical concern. I selected a group based on their ability to represent 'typical' students, but also considered the practical aspects of the work, including their ability to easily get to the venues. I therefore ended up with a group of three girls and three[8] boys, taken from two different areas of my professional work: youth theatre directing and secondary school teaching. Three students were performers I had directed and three were pupils I had taught. The fact that I had only taught in a single-sex school in London meant that I was limited to girls only if I chose ex-pupils. Although, as I will demonstrate, gender is a vital part of this thesis, I was keen not to limit the research in that capacity because that is not typical of my practice. Therefore, adding student performers from productions I had directed for a youth theatre meant that I was able to balance the group with equal amounts of boys and girls. Alderton emphasises the practical problems concerned with ensuring 'that samples of children are selected fairly, to include ethnic minority groups and children of both genders and from a range of abilities, ethnicities, social backgrounds or languages' (Alderton in Fraser *et al* 2004, 105). The range of ages of the students was between 15 and 18. For practical reasons, the students needed to be older than 15 in order to participate in the Circus Space induction at the start of the research. I was therefore limited to this age range because of that stipulation and because I wanted to focus on adolescents. I will define adolescents in Chapter 2 but, for purposes of this study, I am particularly interested in those young people of school age. So, the young people were aged 15, 16, 17 and 18 (two were 17). They were also representative of the 'typical' racial and social demographics of students I teach. A chart of the demographic of the final sample group is as follows:

Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Religion	Free School

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[7] Further research with different groups of young people, who are not already known to me, is explored and proposed in the Conclusion.

[8] It should be pointed out at this point that although six students were selected for the project, only five managed to stay the course. Effectively, one student withdrew consent by absenting himself on the first day of the research. As you can see from the consent letter, I made it clear that they had responsibility to attend fully. I decided that his unreliability was detrimental to the group and therefore to the research so his participation was withdrawn. Hereafter I will refer to the six participants.

				Meals
15	M	White-British	Jewish	No
16	F	Mixed – Black/Asian (Pakistani)	Muslim	No
17	M	Mixed – White/Asian	Catholic	Yes
17	F	Black British – African	None	No
18	F	Mixed – White-Black (Caribbean)	Rastafarian	Yes

Although I made an attempt to adhere to Alderton's 'fair' selection of students, what I want to emphasise is the lack of import I place upon any of the factors within the chart above. My commitment to equality demands that I pay no heed to any factors other than the individual students and their individual needs. The demography of the students is important only to highlight the variety a 'typical' student might represent.

Alan France discusses the notion of risk when researching with young people. He suggests that 'harm reduction is a critical component of any research practice'. He quotes the British Sociological Association Guidelines when he says that we have 'a responsibility to ensure that the physical, social and psychological well-being of our research participants is not adversely affected by the research' (France in Fraser *et.al* 2004: 184). The question of what constitutes adverse effects upon young people is therefore raised. I devote the entire second chapter of this thesis to the negative impacts trapeze work may have on the students involved; I detail seven territories of risk and exemplify them through a moment of practice. I invoke another premise from Central School of Speech and Drama's Code of Conduct to justify exposing the students to any risk at all:

> These principles do not conflict with academic freedom, which allows individual researchers to pursue projects that may be unfashionable, provocative or unpopular, or which may include elements that open difficult ethical questions.

I suggest that all work with young people raises ethical questions: mine does so explicitly. Work with touch, risk and transgression is designed to open difficult and provocative themes

in order to enquire about the very nature of what those things may mean in the world of education.

I make a strong case for dialogue through this thesis. It is a commitment to transparency, and also to the furthering of my own understanding of ethics in the *doing*. I created the project in collaboration with my supervisory team and with the Ethics Committee at Central School of Speech and Drama. It adhered to a 'common' understanding of best-practice by following the mechanisms laid out. More than that, it recognised that these mechanisms in isolation were not ethics but that ethics are practiced in the *doing* of the work. The consent form is not where consent lies: consent resides in a moment of transparency and trust, as articulated by O'Neill in the Reith Lectures for the Human Genetics Advisory Commission:

> Informed consent presupposes and expresses trust... we ultimately have to judge for ourselves where to place our trust. To do this we need to find trustworthy information. This can be dauntingly hard in a world of one-way communication (O'Neill in Fraser et.al 2004: 22).

My attention to two-way communication does two things. Firstly, it mobilises the trust and therefore is the foundation for consent. Secondly, it practises the equality that is the ethical imperative of my research. I recognise that communication about the event or practice is not the event itself. So, ultimately, consent is given based on a commitment from the teacher to be vigilant and attentive to the equality of the student in the moments of practice. I engage with this fully on pages 10 and 11 in the Introduction where I conclude that consent is an element of trust between teacher and student and that it is therefore mobile and momentary. Although I 'hold' the room for the students to work within, they are the ones ultimately in charge of whether they participate, take risks, offer research data or do not. I articulate the impossibility of the student and myself understanding the full implications of our involvement in the project but that we are learning together about what that might mean for us.

1.5.1 Surety

In this section, I consider the strata of 'sureties' that the teacher 'holds' for the work in order to comply with legal, ethical and practical concerns. These sureties impact upon the working moments of the practice by communicating the tensions detailed in Chapter 2. They are the practical and ideological hurdles that were cleared before I

could practice safely with the young people. An excavation of these tensions generates an all too familiar discourse through the practice - that these systems can stultify or bind students and teachers before the work even begins if they are not enacted, lived and practised through dialogue. An acknowledgment of the rational discourses at play offers the emancipatory teacher the opportunity to practise her tact. This tact acts as a challenge to the possible stultificatory discourses at play and works towards developing resolution in the student.

The mechanisms that ensured the safety of participants were complex and hierarchical. I will now detail the practical concerns of rigging and consent that I followed to ensure, insure and assure the safety of the participants during the workshops. These are the practical technical structures which confine and contain the teacher's concerns. They present the first layer within a stratified and complex web of safety factors that form the foundation for my practical research. These mechanisms are important because they exemplify the contradictory issues discussed in Chapter 1, where I suggest that the ambivalent attitude of Government and parents towards risk and risk-taking both entices and repels adolescents and perpetuates a cycle of vulnerability if they are taken as a purely box-ticking exercise.

One of my concerns was that they were covered by insurance for the work done in the spaces and through this paper process they were assured that they were financially insured for the possible injuries caused by the work. Discussion with the Ethics Committee and technical team ensured that I placed the insurance procedures as a vital part of the much wider safety mechanisms I needed to employ, namely the vigilant attention to the student. The need to be insured resulted in a full rigging certification and risk assessment of 'The Webber Douglas Studio'. The second procedural level that I passed through was to ensure that the work was ethically sound. This led to conversations with the research management team about the work to be undertaken. I recognise all the social tensions I am 'holding' in the room to ensure that I am primarily concerned for and in common with the student. The insurance and assurance processes were at all times dialogic, mobile and momentary. I was supported by the insurance mechanisms and by the staff who engaged with the practice of my practice.

In order to insure a building for aerial work, a structural test of the building needs to take place. This test rates the building as either fit or unfit for load bearing and details where the load can be hung. The load test can either be for a dynamic weight, or a static weight. CSSD hired a team to provide a dynamic weight load rating for 'The Webber Douglas Studio' in September 2008. After the dynamic weight load assessment was passed, I was permitted to rig a static trapeze and corde lisse. The rigging certification assesses whether the fabric of the building can withstand the load placed upon it when hanging from points in the gantry or roof of the space. This first level of certification insured Central School of Speech and Drama from the possibility of the roof falling due to the dynamics of the load - the students on trapeze or corde lisse placed within it. My role was to ensure that the insurance was valid for the work by reviewing the licensing for weight agreement.

A risk assessment for circus work which covered my practice was done by a Level 3 Industrial Rope Access Trade Association qualified rigger, who first put the trapeze and corde lisse up (rigged) in the space. The risk assessment formally ensured that: a) the equipment was safe to use for this purpose, b) it was hung in the correct manner, c) there were no external forces that could be encountered which would add risks to the already risky pursuit of trapeze work and d) all bases had been covered for insurance purposes in the rare case of a participant being injured whilst working in this way.

This level of certification met the needs set by the insurance company that a named person took complete responsibility for the risks being taken. It also led me to an important discovery about circus rigging and its failings. The certification is fitted to the needs of an industrial context, oil rigs etc (details of which can be found in Appendix E). Therefore, the equipment covered in the training is tailored to that working environment and purpose. Circus equipment is similar but the materials used and the purpose of it are different. It is, therefore, not covered by Industrial Rope Access Trade Association training. An investigation of circus riggers revealed that few of them were trained to Level 1 status, let alone Level 3. The chief rigger at The Circus Space clarified that 'it costs a great deal of money to train and be certified in something that is not fit for purpose' (Jamie Oglivie 5th August 2009, personal communication).

Circus equipment is specialised because it needs to comply with creative as well as safety needs. Therefore, for an effective and all-encompassing risk assessment to take place, my knowledge of the nature of circus equipment and its use becomes a fundamental part of the safety conversation. Circus equipment falls outside of the remit of Industrial Rope Access Trade Association and circus rigging specialists do not feel the need to comply with this certification. Only one rigger in the country is qualified at the right level and experienced with circus equipment; he works at 'Circomedia' in Bristol and was brought to Central School of Speech and Drama to rig the trapeze, and fill out a risk assessment.

The paper-driven risk assessment process demonstrates a fissure between the needs of the academy, professional practice and insurance mechanisms. In order to comply with the needs of the insurers, I could have compromised the specialised nature of circus rigging and practical experience. In order to satisfy the needs of the specialist equipment, I would have had to compromise the needs of the insurance company, who failed to understand the equipment being hung and the valuable experience of the rigger doing the hanging. My own experience of trapeze rigging, owning my own equipment and placing my life in the balance when I rig in outdoor and alternative venues for my own performances, does not figure within the conversation with insurers. I satisfied requirements above and beyond the remit of the work in a professional context (i.e. those undergone in professional circus venues). This was due, not simply because I was working with young people, although that was a factor but, for the main, this mechanism was put in place to appease the insurance company. The tension is justified because insurance is there to provide for the child or carers of the child in the worst-case scenario. Compliance with insurance mechanisms is both productive and vital. However, it is not helpful if it is divorced from knowledge, experience and, most importantly, from dialogue between the institution, the practitioner and the students in their care.

This understanding has enabled me to ruminate upon the complex nature of the overarching frameworks under which we work in education institutions. I unpick this further in Chapter 3, where I articulate my personal experiences of 'safe' practice and how that impacts upon my embodied knowledge and, therefore, upon the students' relationship to risk. In this instance, an adherence to code before common sense and personal knowledge could have compromised the safety of the situation to hand. An

adherence to structure rather than openness can bind not only the student but also the teacher, who may judge herself to be inexpert in this context because she is treated as such. Moreover, this lack of expertise may be communicated to the students in such a way as to create barriers to the process of building trust and equality.

Sociologists Frank Furedi and Jennie Bristow (2010) propose that a reliance on paper proof above common sense, with respect to children, does a number of things. It normalises mistrust between adults, children and institutions. It creates disconnection between people and it enables people to avoid taking responsibility within the community by putting barriers in the way of those who are tempted to work in this way. It creates false discourses, they argue, which make people feel safer momentarily but do not actually give the assurance needed. Moreover, this procedural necessity perpetuates an enduring cycle of social mistrust (2010:46).

This cycle exemplifies Heidegger's notion of the deceptive nature of idle talk, where attention to the quotidian concerns of socially agreed procedure masquerades as 'knowing' (1964: 222). For Heidegger, the role of concern in instances such as these is actually hidden by the very thing that seeks to support it. By solely focussing on the insurance of the work, for example, I would have perpetuated an evasion of attention to assurance and ensurance, the ephemeral qualities that create trust between individuals.

The risk assessment that was generated by the circus rigger details the risks associated with circus as well as performance work. They are:

- The risk of falling from the equipment.
- The risk of injury due to not warming-up or not working safely.
- The risk of falling over safety mats.
- The risk of trips and falls in the space.

In Chapter 2, I outlined how risk is 'calculated'. In my practice, the risk of falling from the equipment is rated as quite a high probability due to the fact that the students are novices. The potential for injury prior to safety mechanisms being in place is also rated very highly; in fact it is rated at the highest possible level, that of 'multiple deaths' (see Appendix D, the Generic Risk assessment Form). This is due to the possibility that one student might fall on top of another student. However, once

the safety mechanisms are in place, the risk of death is severely diminished, in fact almost completely eradicated. Yet the risk of injury is still moderate and the risk of slight injury is quite high. This leads me to question the safety mechanisms and dialogues within my practice.

1.5.2 Dialogue

The question of whether it is ever ethically appropriate to place a young person in a context where they are at risk of injury is a complex and nuanced one. It hinges upon two inextricably linked factors, the first of which is informed consent and the second of which is linked to outcome. If we reconsider the literature by Slovic (2000), it is clear that, in this context, the students want to do the work: they volunteer so this places them at a lesser risk than if they had been forced to do it.

Voluntariness or consent is a shifting territory because power operates through the social mechanisms at play within any situation, and communicates using joy as well as domination. It could be argued that my existing relationship with the young people prior to the *Hello Fatty* project was a powerful disabler of the students' consent. The fact that I had worked, in the first instance, as the children's director and, in the second, as their teacher and examiner meant that the dynamics of pedagogic power were clearly already alive within the relationship. They were socially conditioned to say 'yes' to my requests. But that still does not mean that they did not want to voluntarily develop their aerial and performance skills within my practice. It is far more complicated than saying that, because I offer enjoyable experiences and have worked in imbalanced power situations before, that the students can only say 'yes' to me.

The students I work with are highly attuned and sensitive to the domesticating practices of their schools and home situations. Therefore, their enjoyment of the work that I do orients their attention powerfully towards working with and pleasing me. Attempting to individuate and activate their learning by provoking and questioning creates a discourse that could be as easily used to manipulate and domesticate the students as it could to work in common. It is a central problematic of this work. But I contend that this is the case if a teacher is set towards an explicatory or specific outcome for the student rather than the more open possibility of

awareness and attention to will that Rancière advocates. I know that I have the power to domesticate but I seek to work against it. An awareness of this power and an attention to equalising dialogue focuses my practice towards challenging the individual students and makes me more able to work in 'common' with them. I am aware that the social influences are compelling and I cannot hope to dispel all of them. Yet I hope to declare and challenge them.

The idea of an ongoing radicalised practice that asserts the need for constant destabilisation is one that Todd May suggests is impossible. He proposes, after Rancière, that radicalisation - and by that I mean an action 'which acts from within a situation of dissensus as a challenge to those who uphold a particular police order' - exists because it inherently sits 'outside' of tradition (May 2010: 21). The police order mechanisms that are manifest within my practice are the social and institutional concerns of neoliberalism: accountability, competition and privatisation that manifest in paper processes. These concerns are a constant dialectical tension within this thesis because they privilege quantity over quality and analysis over description. Radical education theories promote the practice of scepticism through a constantly renegotiated attention to the student's learning. Rancière's notion of radical pedagogy shares, in common with Freire, a limitation in that it only works in fleeting moments and in opposition to mainstream methods. It could be argued, therefore, that an ongoing radicalising project is unsustainable because it demands that attention is paid to newness and challenge by the teacher at all times, and that the social order is just too strong to constantly act against.

This, therefore, poses the question of sustainability. Work inside the workshop, class or rehearsal room is often unsustainable once the student moves back to the 'outside' world. Pre-existing codes may call them back to a less aware frame and threats of violence mean that radicalisation is a dangerous state for young people to adopt. I contest these notions with a consideration of Heidegger's 'conscience as the call of care'. According to Heidegger, the call of conscience says nothing and appears to come from nowhere yet it insistently attends to the need of *Dasein* to work towards authenticity: 'If the Caller is asked about its name, status, origin or repute, it not only refuses to answer, but does not even leave the slightest possibility of one's making it into something with which one can be familiar' (1962:319). The call to conscience distances the student from what they have known; things that had been taken for

granted before are now seen differently and may not matter. It could therefore be suggested that the value of a sustaining radicalised process is not within the reflections or clarifications in the moment, room or practice but within the student's ability to recognise conscience's call at a later date.

The simple model given by a radicalised pedagogy is not of a sustained authenticity, which is impossible, but within a focussed attention to the call. The call to conscience places demand on *Dasein* to hold firm to a project that matters to it. This is not measurable so cannot be clarified as 'proof' for a funding application that the work was a success. But where the sustainability comes from is within the memory of the student. The student has heard the call of conscience and known themselves in answer to it. They can either hold firm to a project that matters or not but they have knowledge, experience and, therefore, agency in that choice.

Heidegger's discussion of anticipatory resoluteness is useful as a way of uncovering my appreciation of the agency created through immersive and temporary practices. He argues that, rather than a 'solution', resolution is a sober attention and joyful understanding of possibility. The locus of his concept of resolution concerns possibility enacted through an awareness of choice. Heidegger proposes that this possibility mobilises the student or person to be soberly aware of anxiety and presupposition, which they are then able to 'unfold with more penetration' (1962: 358). Anticipatory resolution is, therefore, defined by temporality and seen through an attention to what has gone before in relation to understanding. It opens the student up to possibility rather than closing them down to quotidian concern. The resolution is not a coping strategy, or mechanism that is employed arbitrarily, but a fluid and ambiguous potential to take action. To resolve is to choose and, for Heidegger, it is to choose on an ability-to-be, to make the choice in oneself and for oneself.

To return to the issue of insurance, once the work had been sanctioned by the institution, I then approached the carers and students for their permission. Appendix A is a copy of the release form which the carers and students signed before undertaking the work. This informed consent document declared the following: the possibility of injury, the probability of publication, the likelihood of intimate touching as a mode of support and the students' responsibility for safe working

practices and for the care of other participants. Each consent document was discussed with the carers and with the young people involved, who all had opportunity to question me about the nature of the risks being taken. The form was a mechanism that provoked dialogue with the students and parents.

In the conversation with carers and students and in signing the form, I emphasised the seriousness of my responsibility and openness with which I would receive questions about the work. In discussing the activities with carers and students, as I did with the institution, I opened up a dialogue about trust and responsibility. This is part of the assurance I used to build-up trust with the carers and students alike. It was not simply a paperwork exercise that resonated with the hierarchical formalities of an irrelevant system. It became a textual graph of pedagogic tact by recognising that ethical practice, trust and safety are not end-points; they are fluid processes that began when I first encountered the students and will end when my relationship with them stops. Informed consent is not a piece of paperwork, it is a communicated assurance although the need to provide paperwork to prove my position and provide insurance may frame the discussions.

Furedi and Bristow (2010) recognise this need to get safety 'signed off' as one that creates false senses of security within institutions. Their work in schools led them to discover that, in particular, Criminal Records Bureau checking[9] led to a less rigorous process of consultation with students and parents. They propose that, when it comes to safety, the paperwork has overtaken common sense, 'fuelling suspicion between adults about each other' (2010: xxxix). The fact that it is a lawful requirement to have 'proof' that you are safe to work with children erodes the nature of communal responsibility and trust, institutionalising mistrust between children, carers and professionals. A piece of paper is no replacement for enacted diligence.

My intentions for the students became institutionally bound by the paperwork required to insure and assure my ethical position and by my desire to undertake a 'study' of the work. My privately 'owned' purpose for the individual students was given through conversation. This was brought out in CSSD's *Policy for Good Conduct in Research* and this institutional best practice brought about discussions of, for,

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[9] Criminal Records Bureau checking was brought in as legislative procedure in 2002 following the abduction and murder of two children by their school caretaker in Soham, Cambridgeshire. It lawfully requires anyone who works with children, in any capacity, to have undergone a centrally administered vetting process which checks to see if there have been any criminal charges brought against them relating to children.

with and through the young people. It was an equalising discussion based, not on an explicatory end-point, but upon the student's and carer's individual responses to the document at hand. It enabled all participants and carers to see the human surety - the assurance - rather than the paper process that may communicate fear. This enabled me to focus on positive assurance which is typified by personal experience and ephemeral markers such as laughter and tact; it is dialectically bound with the paperwork. It is this dialectical synthesis that I assert is a necessary condition for the enactment of dissensus against neoliberal concerns. Dissensus equalises the relationship between the fear-driven discourses which potentially stultify and the individual, creative experiences that emancipate. In conversation, the human qualities are privileged over the paperwork but the role of insurance is not played down or evaded. Insurance mobilised assurance, the two are bound together.

The discussions I had at Central School of Speech and Drama about the ethics of my practice raised questions regarding power dynamics and the discourses that are at work in a conversation. The question of who is the work for is posed. I need to acknowledge that the person who appears to have the most to gain from this praxis is me. My PhD thesis is a huge motivation and I may, therefore, be accused of having greater ethical ambiguity and, consequently, having and exerting power over the vulnerable young people. My power becomes institutionally bound by my desire to work at the school and my need of their safety mechanisms. I work inside a hierarchical structure despite my attentiveness to the individual concerns of the students. I argue that, in order to sustain the provocative and radical practices that I have begun with the students whilst undertaking the research, I would have to unharness myself from the institution, from any financial remuneration for the work undergone and from any sort of *telos* or outcome. It could be seen that my intention to radicalise the students must also be released in order not to re-inscribe cycles of vulnerability so that I do not advance a specific radical outcome. This is especially pertinent because of the joy that I, as well as the students, experience from the work that we do.

That is why I am not seeking to prove that my work develops resolution, authenticity, agency or autonomy within the student, but I am seeking to ruminate upon the conditions under which that situation might happen. Therefore, I am rejecting the notion that I can measure student's responses to the work undergone and why, in

Chapter 6, I offer five simple moments where pedagogic tact is negotiated and the student is 'seen'. The practice takes a provocative stance in order to magnify the moment of pedagogic tact and its associated conditions. It gives no surety of a specific safe or dangerous outcome, neither does it offer an indication of what developmental learning the student may take from the work.

I suggest that, by offering no guaranteed outcome beyond the specific actions of encountering a trapeze, working in a group, and learning new skills, I leave myself and the students open to what the process may bring. In terms of the paperwork required, I recognise that neither a student nor carer can sign their lives into the hands of a third party. If a student were to be injured, the insurance provides financial support. I am at risk because I have much at stake, the students are at risk and the institution is at risk. The conversations that informed consent produced are the surety that these risks are the primary concern of the teacher beyond an attempt to prove that 'trapeze is good for you' in some way.

Slovic proposes that many factors enhance or restrict the perceptions of risk by participants or 'observers' according to intention and experience: 'Perhaps the most important message from this research is that there is wisdom as well as error in public attitudes and perceptions' (2000:231). Slovic recognises that, without personal and dialogical relations with the risks being taken, the success of risk management programmes is moot. 'Each side, expert and public has something valid to contribute, each side must respect the insights and intelligence of the other' (2000:231). By engaging in a conversation with the institution, the riggers, the young people and their carers, I opened up a discussion about danger and responsibility. I was able to emphasise my concern according to the questions posed by the carers.

When for example, one parent expressed their concern about the chance of their child falling, I offered the statistical likelihood of falling in relation to similar training programmes like The Circus Space, who have had only one major injury in the past five years. This provided assurance that I knew the field in which I was working and had investigated similar programmes. Another parent expressed her desire that her child was really challenged: 'We can't keep up with him anymore, it will be great to see him fail at something' (Parental conversation, July 14th 2009). To this I responded that I would see this as a personal and fun challenge. However, it was the

glint in my eye and immediate smile that embodied the response that gave this parent my assurance and enabled her to trust me with her child. These minute dialogical assurances were needed to express my human investment in the work - beyond the statistical analysis, practical framework, embodied knowledge and personal experience - for the people involved in risk-taking.

These conversations are a manifestation of the quotidian anxieties experienced when encountering risk. It is through negotiating these concerns in practice that I am made pertinently aware of the discourses of fear that infiltrate pedagogic relationships. My responses to these issues form an important layer of experience within my mapped understanding of the practice and reinforce my theory that trust is fluid and mobile and given in the momentary rather than taken for granted. It is through dialogue that pedagogic tact is rehearsed and clarified.

I regard the carers and parents to be taking risks when placing the teenagers in my care. I iterated that they had my phone number and that they could call at any point to discuss the work. One parent did this after a young person experienced severe muscle pain as a result of The Circus Space induction. In this instance, I was able to share my own experiences of the first time I tried flying trapeze and talk them through the different types of pain the young person might encounter from the work. I emphasised what questions they needed to ask about the student's pain to work out whether it needed medical attention. This dialogue ensured that the parent trusted me as a concerned and anatomically knowledgeable mentor for her child. I called the following day to follow up the conversation and see how the pain had progressed. This again demonstrated a commitment to dialogue and a Heideggerian considered and forbearant attitude to the anxiety of the parents as well as those of the students (1962: 159). This example enabled me to see how my biological knowledge was an important layer within my pedagogic map. Important because it enabled me to be distant from empathising with the student, aware of their journey through the pain as well as resolute to, and unapologetic for, the fact that the student experienced pain as part of the process. I was aware that the carer's fear was mobilising the dialogue and I could carefully attune her to a more attentive concern ahead of the student rather than a fear for them.

The role of the wider community was vital to the success of my work. One of the proposals within Chapter 7 is a study of the influence of parents upon risk-taking and young people. I am aware that the teacher's role impacts on the wider community in an important way. I argue that an act of dissensus with a young person is also an act of dissensus within a wider frame, that anticipatory resolution enables those outside the practice to be aware of their choices; it can open the frame to others who witness the choices being made from the outside.

The journey through paperwork and personal politics allowed me to recognise essential themes for my work: the possible mistrust that could be brought about by tick-box systems that I needed to be vigilant to, the anxiety that parents and the students had surrounding the unfamiliar equipment and safety mechanisms for circus work, which necessitated an interrogation of personal procedure. The fact that there is no professionally recognised certification for circus rigging in the UK was recognised as a potential stumbling block for the possible work Finally, a review of past trapeze/aerial related deaths was taken, which listed the fact that all the deaths in the world, in the past four years, had been related to equipment failure and that no deaths or serious injuries had happened in situations managed by teachers at my standard.

These safety procedures assured the institution and carers so that they were less afraid to let me practice. Interwoven with this was a personal narrative that ensures that the human context of the work is valued: my personal expertise, my embodied memory and my concerned intention towards the staff, parents and young people brought a new appreciation of the layers of safety procedure involved and a strength in my own ability to do the work. A common sense approach to risk in pedagogy is not as simple as working against the popular media myth of 'health and safety gone mad!' that is thrown at risk assessors and safety watchdogs in common parlance. For me, common sense comes from the knowledge and experience that a child's agency can either be effaced and ignored or empowered by the social systems that purport to have their best interests at heart. This agency, or resolution to choose, places emphasis upon the active choices of participants, rather than asserting their *a priori* powerlessness within a social structure that treats them as though they are vulnerable and emphasises an attention to dialogue over paperwork.

These first hurdles to the practice were instrumental in establishing the cultural context for the work and raised questions about ethics, insurance and consequence that are alive throughout all of the praxis in many different forms. By foregrounding risk assessment, risk management and ethics, I expose conversations and conflicts with the wider social context. The mechanisms were revealed in order to understand who and which procedures were being observed to ensure and insure that the young people were safe from injury and to create a live discourse on the mechanisms of power at play when taking a risk.

Chapter 2

Risk, Fear and Death

Critical Incident 1: The Slap

It is Day 1 and we are playing a 'warm-up and getting to know you' game. The game involves saying someone's name or touching someone in response to them saying your name. It was introduced very quickly by my assistant, Dave as: 'when someone says your name you must slap someone else, when someone slaps you, you must say someone's name. You cannot slap the person who says your name, but you can say the name of the person who slaps you.' We all laughed when he told us the rules, but I was conflicted from the start. The word 'SLAP' brings connotations of violence and impropriety. I was torn between understanding how the game could elicit riskiness and playfulness from the students and the fact that I knew, in my position as teacher, I should not encourage violence between the students. I was aware, however, that the students knew that Dave meant the 'slap' to be a provocation, rather than permission to physically beat each other, but this was an unspoken agreement and, therefore, 'risky'.

It was Dave who first transgressed the unspoken 'rules' of the game when he delivered a surprisingly hard slap on the forehead a student, which shocked and surprised the group. He did this because he was aware of the provocative nature of the work I was about to do, and because he wanted to challenge us all socially and physically by adding an element of violence and pain to the game. Enchanted and emboldened by this provocation, the students tested the boundaries of their social relations by slapping each other, Dave and especially me, less politely. When one student appeared to take it too far, and left a mark on another student's skin, the other students took it as an invitation to 'put her in her place' and the game became, 'let's all take turns in slapping one student fairly hard'. The student said afterwards that she felt both rewarded and punished by this turn of events.

This game and Dave's response to playing it became a theme for the whole practice. The students were unafraid to challenge the tacit social boundaries that were present in the room, especially those that impacted upon their bodies. They became braver, more critical, more responsive and more playful with the dangers they were experiencing. These changes transferred into the aerial work where they were less fearful and trusted

the other students to lift them when they were struggling, grab them if they were falling and 'slap' them if they were not going far enough.

Within this chapter, I open up the tacit values that risk discourses communicate culturally, socially and momentarily through my practice as a teacher of circus, as exemplified in the description above. I posit that rather than encountering risk, the students in my care are encountering sociological fear, and that this fear can limit their understanding of themselves. As teachers Heather Piper and Ian Stronach suggest, the fear of taking risks with young people 'permeate[s] our lives in numerous seemingly incidental ways, and in some instances 'no touch' develops into 'don't speak' or even 'don't be" (2008:2). Fear of doing the right thing can stop people, and especially teachers, from making any choices at all. I locate this fear alongside the Heideggerian concept of death and suggest that death, as well as risk and fear, is communicated in a fragmented and, therefore, punitive manner. I contend that this fear is located in the body, and in particular within the bodies of those labelled as vulnerable, such as children. This chapter argues that an intersubjective, dialogic and poetic encounter with risk, fear and death is needed to begin emancipatory dialogues with young people.

Is it ever appropriate to place a child at risk? And what does it mean to do so? In my work as a pedagogue and static trapeze[10] teacher, I am in constant practical dialogue with these ethical questions as articulated in my introduction. I work with adolescents aged thirteen to sixteen years old, in a practice that enables them to encounter Heideggerian death through pain and failure. I encourage them towards acts of 'will' in the Rancièrean sense, which means that I place them in situations where they are able to work towards developing a skill that brings with it fear, personal anxiety and possible injury. This skill uses intimacy as a safety mechanism and encourages touching across gender and cultural differences. The students risk falling, twisting, scraping and injuring their bodies and they risk failure if they are unable to master the discipline. I, as their teacher, also run risks. These risks are associated with death or injury, and also with accountability and responsibility for the young people in my care. They include the risk of insurance claims[11] should a

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[10] A full list of circus terminology can be found in Appendix C of this document.

[11] It should be noted that although I use the phrase 'risk of insurance claims' I am not making an attempt to vilify insurance that would ensure a child is supported financially should they be injured or worse. I recognise within this frame that there is a tension between reasonable regulations put in place, and between

student fall and the risk of accusations of impropriety if I touch them regularly because 'we now inhabit a climate where... supportive touch is interpreted as extraordinary and potentially abusive' (Piper and Stronach, 2008:4). The young people and their parents have consented to all these risks as discussed in the previous chapter, and a copy of the consent form can be found in Appendix A. I have been transparent about the potential for serious injury or death when discussing the project, along with the details of the possibility of physical contact between participants. Parents, carers and students signed forms to say that their lives were placed in my hands with full awareness of the risks they were taking: the risk of an uncertain outcome. This uncertainty is mediated through the lens of my pedagogic knowledge, experience and instinct which I call pedagogic tact.

2.1 A Definition of Risk.

This first section opens the debate on the nature of risk in contemporary society in relation to notions of value and the complexity of discourse surrounding 'risky' activity. It considers the methods for assessing risk and the conflicting evidence that is taken into consideration when a risk is encountered and a decision has to be made regarding whether the risk is worth taking. This section also considers the notions of fear and culture as interwoven within discussions of risk, introducing the idea of the 'risk society' (Furedi, 2006) and the 'police order' (Rancière, 1991). I raise the notion of risk and fear as expressions of existential anxiety (Heidegger) which can only be personally, as opposed to culturally, experienced because existential anxiety can only be 'mine'. In this chapter, I distinguish between fear and anxiety in the Heideggerian sense. For Heidegger, anxiety raises the awareness of the possibilities in my future, whereas, fear results in an avoidance or closing down of those possibilities. Risk mobilises both responses, and my suggestion is that circus practice awakens anxiety in participants, which leads to development and resolution. It, however, also awakens fear, which brings with it boundaries, resistance, stultification and ignorance, and this may close down the resolution of participants and the teachers charged with their safety.

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unreasonable claims that may be made. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss the philosophical and practical changes that have happened in the insurance industry. However, what is up for discussion is how insurance may constitute a part of the Police Order that pertains to the work. I discuss this in detail on pages 179-182 of this thesis.

The term 'risk' is value-laden within society and tacitly loaded with overtones of fear. It is used regularly within education and Government discussions to suggest recklessness, gambling and chance. Indeed, writers and thinkers tend to use the term 'risk' as a taken-for-granted concept that needs little elucidation (Furedi 2004). Words such as hazard, danger, uncertainty or threat are often used interchangeably, although some writers have made sharp distinctions between them (Schafer, 1978, Benner, 1983). The studies in risk are rich and varied. The term is used, in the context of risk assessment, to suggest that there is a mathematical, rational or scientific formula for the evaluation of likelihood that an incident or accident may occur. It can, therefore, be presumed to gauge the possible severity of the incident it would cause. This is problematic on two counts: firstly, sociologist Frank Furedi claims that in the media it is rare to have the statistical likelihood pertaining to the risks, alongside articles claiming that risks are posed. Therefore, risks are reported without recognition of the impact they would have upon everyday life; those that are considered by insurers as '*at minima*' or having a statistical likelihood of less than 1 in a 1,000, are treated in the same way as those having a statistical likelihood of 1 in 2. Furedi suggests that this style of reporting contributes to a climate of fear (2004). The term 'risk' strongly communicates a probability or chance of injury, severe or otherwise without necessarily communicating the detail of it. Therefore, it communicates only fear of the possibility of death. Secondly, risk analysis is taken to be a scientific measure of probability. This, however, is not the case and I propose that within risk analysis biases and moral judgment form a part of the decision-making process, these are culturally and personally dependent and, therefore, skew the analysis in favour of risk-aversion.

Risk is a term that communicates both fear and security depending upon the risks in question. It typifies reckless behaviour when used in association with young people in the form of 'risk-taking' and is a term for safety precautions when used in the form of risk analysis. In the context of work with children, the term 'at risk' is used to suggest that a child's personal circumstances are such that an ambiguous form of harm may befall them at some point in the future. A 2010 report on risk and resilience conducted by researchers at the Institute of Education determined a number of factors that denoted whether a child was within this 'at risk' category. These were: sufferance of an exceptionally stressful event; household income falling

into the lowest 25% economic range; mother having depression or other mental illness or alcoholism; child being diagnosed as having special educational needs (Gutman *et al.* 2010: 7). They also identified that parental support played a large part in the mediation of these risk factors and within the build-up of the child's resilience in the face of them. What becomes apparent is that within the definition of risk, in this instance, is 'worst case scenario' thinking, a negative outcome is attended to and proposed, whereas the reality is that the risk does not sit in isolation from the factors that minimise it. The child 'at risk' is perceived as a victim of circumstance rather than a potential success. This communicates very strongly that written into these assessments of risk are threats of failure.

There were two Government funded reports on risk in education published in 2010; the Llakes Research 3 Report and the National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts (NESTA) (Rolfe, 2010) report. The Llakes *Research 3 Report* (Evans, Schoon and Weale*,* 2010) defines risk as experiences that will inhibit or disinhibit learning, particularly during adolescence, and consequently something that will impact upon the socioeconomic potential of a workforce. The report contextualises the work within what they call 'reflexive modernism' which is defined as a contemporary move of young people's expectations towards shaping their own destiny. This modernism rests upon the agency of the workers (or students) within it to take charge of their future potential as employees and as economically stable members of the community and that this is dependent upon their understanding of their role within the society.

The report builds its argument upon the research of psychologist Karen Evans (2002, 2007) who discovered that in hierarchical and structural communities built on blame and supplication the resultant psychological profile of the students/workers, which she calls 'bounded agency', negates the capacity and productivity of reflexive modernism itself; the workers become disabled through the framework that purports to free them. Evans found these structures within the British and German Education systems and within both societies as a whole. The idea of supplication and blame is pertinent as it recognises that there is a paradox within the assessment and definition of risk. Building from the previous point that risk assessments look for a negative outcome, this research suggests that both the measurement of risks and the approbation of accountability for failure become mobilising elements that bind the

students to 'safe' options, therefore, limiting them from understanding their role within the institutional frame, and within the context of the risk posed.

The NESTA report *Learning to Take Risks, Learning to Succeed* (2010) was similarly inclined. It discussed risk in relation to innovation in the work place. What the two reports have in common is their focus on economic development and individual success, and their glaring omission of corporeality and community. This is a particularly salient point for my research. The implication that vulnerability and passivity is a state that is imposed arbitrarily upon a group of individuals is one territory within the complex discourses surrounding young people, that ties and limits them to notions of 'bounded agency' as articulated by Evans (2007) or 'stultification' as described by Rancière (1991). Passivity may be magnified within education institutions where teachers and managers are charged to 'know better' than students, alongside the teacher's own passivity in the face of Government 'knowing better'. This suggests that within any learning situation all students and teachers may become passive receivers of the responsibility for success within a limited economic frame, and bear the brunt of the blame if or when this success is not met. The evasion of community and corporeity from the analysis means that each participant is seen as the same as any other, and subject to hazards as any other, despite research that points to the contrary. What my research recognises therefore is the need for a case-by-case analysis of each student, in each pedagogic situation with each teacher; bearing in mind, as I have stated that each situation has the power to liberate and to domesticate students at all times.

Philosophers Charles Bingham and Gert Biesta propose that the power structures currently ordering all relationships with young people are built on neoliberalist[12] premises. This is complementary to the idea of reflexive modernism proposed by Evans above. An economic model for educational improvement within the neoliberalist frame is advocated in the following lines:

> [A]ccountability, competition and privatisation have been touted as solutions [to student underachievement] over these two decades. The result has been more high-stakes testing of students, greater media scrutiny of how one school... compares to another. (Bingham and Biesta, 2010:19)

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[12] Steger and Roy define neoliberalism as 'the compelling narrative of inevitable market globalization [which] convinces people that the liberalization of trade and minimally regulated markets will result in high economic growth and dramatic improvement in living conditions worldwide' (2010:119).

Their assertion is that by placing economic values into institutionalised education three negative themes emerge. First, that trust between teachers and students is eroded, second, that it assails the autonomy and expertise of teachers and thirdly, that teachers begin to teach to standardised tests rather than working towards the individual development of each child. They suggest that a reconsideration of the imperatives that drive the education process based more fully on equality and individuation could result in a better appreciation of the factors that bind and stultify students, teachers and communities. I suggest that it is through observation of the discourses surrounding risk, and in particular risk involving children, that we can identify some of the disempowering processes which may subjugate adolescents in their search for equality, empowerment and resolution. The argument above is corroborated by philosopher Niklas Luhmann who writes that despite the regularity of its use 'the concept of risk is, however, unclear even today' (1996:4).

2.1.1 Risk perception.

The leading research into risk perception has been carried out by psychologist Paul Slovic, who suggests that:

> [t]he ability to sense and avoid harmful environmental conditions is necessary for the survival of all living organisms. Survival is also aided by an ability to codify and learn from past experience. Humans have the additional capacity that allows them to alter their environment as well as respond to it. This capacity both creates and reduces risks. (2000:220)

Slovic states that risk perception is linked to survival and leads to management of the environment. Developing from this point, accountability, competition and privatisation all impact upon the ability of an individual to perceive and, therefore, manage risk. Slovic further emphasises that many factors enhance or restrict the perceptions of risk according to intention and experience, 'perhaps the most important message from this research is that there is wisdom as well as error in public attitudes and perceptions' (2000:231). Slovic recognises that without personal and dialogical relations with the risks being taken or analysed, the success of risk management programmes is doubtful. 'Each side, expert and public has something valid to contribute, each side must respect the insights and intelligence of the other' (2000: 231). What is needed is a dialogical relationship between statistical analysis and personal experience for the people involved in risk-taking.

Luhmann proposes that 'the term [risk is] itself... a neologism that came into use with the transition from traditional to modern society' (1996:3). This suggestion reinforces a theory espoused by sociologist Ulrich Beck (1992) who charts the decline towards 'agent primacy' from the communal structures for living within traditional societies, echoing the reflexive modernism suggested by Evans and the neoliberalist attitudes considered by Bingham and Biesta. The term 'risk' has been instated due to the need for a specific term to replace those of fortune and prudence, which had religious connotations, in order to align itself with the scientific language appropriate for an enlightened age. Luhmann extends the argument to emphasise the fact that the term has been developed to incorporate the concrete problems of individual decision-making and accountability within an emerging commercial society. It is this relationship to decision-making that holds the key, for Luhmann, to defining what the term 'risk' has become within modern society: a marker for asserting that economic value has greater significance than personal experience. The way that risk is framed by the mechanisms that 'manage' it, constructs a misapprehension that risk is both measurable and containable, and moreover, that personal experience is irrelevant. It assigns the risk-taker to a passive and vulnerable position. This evasion of the personal and the focus on the scientific reinforces two premises, firstly, that dangers, in the form of risk, can be 'managed' by the structures in place meaning we should be 'safe' at all times, and secondly, that the general populous is unable to manage their own safety appropriately. This perpetuates a cycle of fear, blame and passivity, rather than empowerment and resilience. What is also evident however, is that this is not true at all times, in all schools with all teachers. What the theoretical engagement seems to articulate is the potential for every situation to stultify or empower individuals.

The agreed formula for risk estimation is:

$$\text{probability of hazard} \times \text{severity of outcome} = \text{Risk}$$

This formula is generally credited to mathematician David Van Danzig in 1953 and has been used in the assessment and management of risks since that point (Tversky and Kahneman, 1982; Slovic, 2000). Any calculation of risk is, therefore, a construction of the risk assessor who estimates the ranges of possible outcome and possible harm according to his or her perception of the risks concerned. The

observer, risk assessor or participant uses this equation, consciously or unconsciously, to attribute strengths and weaknesses relating to the decision to be made. The decision is, however, not as simple as calculating whether something is good or bad, dangerous or safe, it requires a consideration of value with which to guide, or to use Luhmann's terminology, to 'frame' the observation. These values are mobile, subjective and contingent:

> Terms like risk or danger are not indications of ontological facts about which one can have only true or false opinions. The binary logic does not apply. Risk evaluation is not simply a problem of avoiding error. The question is: who uses which frame to guide his observations; and then, who observes how others handle causal distinctions and how they discriminate external and internal attribution depending upon whether they themselves or others make the decisions. (1996:6)

He develops his point still further by suggesting:

> If risk perception is observer dependent we are able to recognize situations in which risky decisions of one system become a danger for other systems... The whole problem thereby becomes an internal problem of modern society. (1996:6)

The value placed upon success or failure, participation or non participation, strength or weakness of a risk to be taken is entirely a subjective judgment placed upon the observer according to the context that they have used. Consequently, risk assessment becomes a complex exercise, contingent upon the allegiances or value systems of the assessor according to the perceived value of both the activity being assessed and of the possible outcomes. It then becomes constitutive of and contained by the wider social and cultural perception, the analysis is 'written' into the system in which it is played, perpetuating prejudices and assumptions. It calls into question the nature of the relationship between the assessor, the society and the people at risk.

The notions of contextual contingency and social value are exemplified through a consideration of my trapeze teaching experience and practice. The work is impacted by many value perceptions. The young people place a large value upon performance skills; this is part of the decision-making process that leads them to work with me voluntarily. The students have all worked with me before, some in a traditional school environment, and others in a County Council run scheme. These historical experiences impact upon the way my ideas are received and judged by the students and by their carers. The duration of association with me, between two and seven

years, again, impacts upon their decision of whether to work with me on the trapeze. Tacitly, they do a risk/benefit analysis. Transforming the information I have given covertly and overtly (through working together), and weighing up the value offered in terms of enjoyment, skills development and opportunity. This is tempered and mobilised by the trust they have in my ability to care for them and to keep them 'safe' from harm. That trust could outweigh the perceived possibility of injury. As each experience and perception is different, each student's or carer's interpretation and appreciation of the risks involved is unique. Therefore each of the students give their consent based on a different frame of reference, different values and different experiences. The notion of consent is therefore individual, as recognised in the ethics section of Chapter 1. It is worth repeating that in thesis, consent is defined as mobile and dialogical; it can be given or retracted in the moment or interaction between a teacher and student.

I have a great deal at stake from working with the young people in this way, not least the furtherance of my pedagogic and academic career. This puts me in a difficult position; attempting to objectively measure the risks associated with the work, and offering an unbiased opinion upon it for the young people and their carers. The problem is one of 'outcome'. Within my practice I embody the complex criticisms aimed at radical pedagogues. Paul Taylor articulates these criticisms as a combination of utopianism and the possibility of 'domesticating' practices (1993:2). This has been appropriated as a formative question for this thesis, emphasised through every chapter. Each pedagogic moment has the ability to domesticate students. Biesta summarises these contraditions in terms of emancipation as being something 'done *to* somebody... whose consciousness is subjected to the workings of power' (2010: 44). These criticisms suggest that I am biased by my experience, world view, possible personal rewards obtained by the work and by the knowledge I have about trapeze and risk. My relationship to that knowledge and how it can be encountered by the young people in my care is a potent discourse that could either empower or 'bind' them. Moreover, I am also held accountable, by the institution that I work in and by the students and their carers for the risks taken within this environment. This accountability is a force that impacts upon the work undergone.

Accountability and outcome in dialogue with my association with radical pedagogy and its utopian ideal of emancipation (which I discuss in Chapter 3) all come

together within my perception and communication of the risks involved within my practice. They form a part of the system in which the risk is taken, and, therefore, a part of the tacit discourses about risk-taking with young people. I need to be aware of this in order to make the risks clear for the students, carers and institution to facilitate their own individual risk assessments, and also within my own risk analysis. I am subject to moral and judgmental biases that affect the tactful decisions I make in the strategic and momentary.

2.1.2 Heuristics and judgment.

Biases, experience and references are used to judge whether a decision should or should not be made to take a risk. The term 'heuristic' is used within psychology to define the cultural considerations that are made when making a personal risk-related decision.

> People rely on a limited number of heuristic principles which reduce the complex tasks of assessing possibilities and predicting values to simpler judgmental operations. In general these heuristics are quite useful, but sometimes they lead to severe and systematic errors. (Tversky and Khanerman 1982)

Contrasting methods of calculation can be used to quantify the relation between risk and heuristics, including the benefit/risk ratio used mainly in medicine, and the Risk Cost-Benefit Analysis (RCBA) method which uses money as a way of assessing value (Lewens, 2007). These methods vary widely according to the motivation of the observer, decision maker and the nature of the decision to be made. The ethical ramifications of decisions and their application are subject to discourse and debate.

For my work, it is important to focus upon the personal decision-making processes in terms of the young people involved in this 'risky' activity, whilst maintaining a wider perspective of the cultural and institutional challenges that pertain to a dialogue with fear and with the context of the work. The two are in a dialectical relationship, the personal and individual with the public and institutional. It is impossible to divide them. This whole document performatively a reveals the heuristics involved in a small pedagogic situation. Each piece of information is built into the frame of my pedagogic experience, and becomes a part of the way I manage risk in my work.

Heuristics can be based on three distinct categories, 'availability', 'moral judgment' and 'representative' of concepts that are more easily grasped (Slovic, 2002: 218). The

availability heuristic relates to the way media coverage or cultural discourse impact to make people grossly over-estimate the likelihood of accidents occurring. There was no trapeze artist, including me, who failed to check their equipment more rigorously, and warm up more effectively, immediately after the death of Roberto Valenzuela in 2007. There was little media coverage, but the circus community was shocked and stunned. The duration of two years without a trapeze artist death, and my knowledge of the fact that most deaths are caused by equipment failure at a great height, skew my availability heuristic in the moment of an analysis for my students, but the impact of the death of a member of my community also impacts upon my perception. This availability heuristic is related to fear. In 2011, as I write, the media is covering two stories that raise awareness of the vulnerability of children within extra-curricular activities; the 50 year anniversary of a Croydon air crash that killed 34 young boys on a school trip to Norway and the story of a student from Eton being mauled to death by a polar bear in Spitzbergen. Both these occurrences are what we would call *at minima* risks, risks that are so unlikely that it would be almost impossible to prevent them. However, wide media coverage makes them 'available' to anyone concerned with the safety of children. Slovic's point is that the availability of this information impacts upon similar risk-decisions, increasing the likelihood that the assessor will exaggerate the possibility of accident in their calculation due to their awareness of these incidents. These anomalies are taken into account by the assessor as if they were frequent occurrences, rather than very rare accidents.

Legal theorist Cass Sunstein (in Lewens 2007) proposes that we also use a second moral heuristic when making risk-related decisions, but that our moral compass may be inaccurate. He suggests that a moral heuristic is one that reflects a cultural judgment that may lack logic. For my work, the moral heuristics are represented by the cultural context discussed within the next section, mediated by and filtered through a pervasive climate of fear surrounding the vulnerability of children. Moral judgment influences the discourses directly by emphasising the negative implications of placing a child in a 'risky' situation on a trapeze where they could fall and be hurt for example, or more ambiguously, by emphasising the moral tensions revealed by allowing a sixteen year old man to support a seventeen year old woman by lifting her onto a trapeze. These moral heuristics are once again culturally and historically

contingent and form a tacit layer of meaning which can impact upon the student in many ways.

A representative heuristic, the third type, involves an assessment based upon existing knowledge and by drawing an analogy between the possible risk and something that we know more about. A fall from a trapeze for example, resulting from equipment failure, might be representative, to me, of equipment failure in parachute jumping. The two are similar due to the nature of falling and the rigorous checking processes that are made by the artist or jumper prior to engagement in the activity. This representative heuristic places risk perception into an imaginative and analogous realm. A consideration of this third heuristic reminds us how dependent this 'risk assessment' process is upon the personal experiences and imagination of the assessor. What appears to be a rational judgment can be seen as glorified and imaginative guesswork.

These heuristics impact upon the decision-making process for me, for my students and for the institution that I work within. They form a conscious and unconscious dialogue through the work, and, as will be shown within Chapters 5 and 6, offer significant insights into the way my role, as a guide for the students, is in a dynamic relationship with the perceptions of the students and their ability to exercise judgment about what they are doing, and what they think about what they are doing. An important conclusion here is that any appreciation of what denotes risky activity is complex. It includes personal, individual, institutional and social perceptions which are elusive, contradictory and contextually biased. These appreciations are distorted further by cultural discourses that surround the body and most specifically the bodies of young people.

The assignment of the students to a passive role within the risk assessment mechanism also impacts upon the taking of the risk itself. Slovic (2000) emphasises that the most compelling factor to impact upon risk-taking, is whether the taker has knowledge and experience of the risk, and whether they are taking the risk voluntarily. It is impossible to generalise about how experienced or willing a group of students are or will be (the risk assessment is done in advance of the work) when faced with trapeze work, so the teacher is forced to take a 'worst case scenario' outlook that plans for resistance, passivity and inexperience, again, writing

vulnerability into the estimation of risk prior to the event. However, risk assessment is for me, not a paper process done in advance; it is a constant attention and vigilance towards the student and their safety. If at any point I feel that the student has stopped knowingly consenting, or gone beyond their ability to engage with the activities, I re-assess and may stop or change the activity.

2.1.3 Risk-taking.

The terms 'risk-taking' and 'risky' are used to define certain types of behaviour within contemporary culture. Risk-taking behaviours in relation to adolescents are those personal choices which place the decision-maker's health or welfare in danger, for example the choice to misuse alcohol or non prescription drugs. German psychologist Rüdiger Trimpop defines risk-taking to be:

> [a]ny consciously or non-consciously controlled behaviour with a perceived uncertainty about its outcome, and/or about its possible benefits or costs for the physical, economic or psycho-social well-being of oneself or others. (1994:9)

What is pertinent here is the association with voluntary or involuntary decision-making processes, based on an uncertain evaluation of the possible outcome of a project. Studies repeatedly demonstrate that 'not every person deals with risk in the same way, even in identical situations' (Yates, 1992: 323, see also Politser, 1987). Risk-taking behaviours are difficult to predict, as well as difficult to measure. Studies suggest that adolescents are more likely to pursue risk-taking behaviours due to their desire to develop their own identity, values and opinions (Miller, 1989). So the individual's perception and skill within any risk-taking scenario will impact upon the risk. The fact that the students I work with are adolescents impacts upon the risk. Their age makes them more likely to volunteer, and, therefore, more likely to manage the risk successfully. This is in contrast with Evan's (2007) perception of educational bias to assign students to a passive role within the institution, reinforcing the notion that the agency of participants is 'bound' when their identity, values and opinions remain suppressed.

The term 'risky' is much harder to define. It is both synonymous with risk-taking when discussing behaviour and when used within critical pedagogic discourse

suggests ethically problematic or contentious material used to challenge students, which would typically involve discussions of cultural or gender transgression (hooks, 1994:198). The impact that this appreciation of 'riskiness' has within education is to reinforce the notion that certain materials are 'dangerous' and should, therefore, be filtered by 'people who know better'. There is guidance on the use of this type of material, but the fact that the risk is less easily assessed, in numerical or monetary terms, means that teachers are 'bound' by tacit rather than prescribed boundaries. Consequently, fear of blame may force the teacher to be less 'risky' in their use of material. It would be easy to assign work fear-driven practices to all teachers because the sociology theory seems to attribute it in this way. This forced binary thinking is unhelpful to my thesis. I argue for an individuation of teaching and of students. Therefore, it must be emphasised that despite the literature containing a bifurcation of good/bad practices, I am attempting a more nuanced approach.

What becomes increasingly apparent within a desire to define risk, risk-taking and risky behaviour is that the phrases are intertwined, signalling a subjective relationship to fear of an event rather than a rational, statistical probability assessment. Risk is not something objectively measured, but fundamentally, something we experience, and which can profoundly unsettle and challenge. The associations with 'risky' work can be related to acts of apparent cultural transgression which are critical for engaging the students in a dialogue with danger and notions of vulnerability. The fear of blame, however, may bind a teacher to a 'safer' path.

2.1.4 Being 'at risk'.

The phrase 'at risk' is used as a signal of vulnerability, either in reference to those who are less able to look after themselves i.e. the elderly, mentally ill or very young, or in combination with a raised likelihood of hazardous or dangerous circumstances. People who are 'at risk' are more susceptible to poverty, abuse or disease:

> Children at risk do not form a self-contained, easily defined group. Many children and young people can be vulnerable to risk factors such as poor parenting, disability and poverty at some point in their development. Without the support of preventative and appropriately targeted services, these risk factors can lead to crisis and in some cases lasting effects which perpetuate the cycle of deprivation, social exclusion and poverty. (HM Treasury, 2009: 28.1)

Some young people are placed within the Government's Child Protection Plan[13] by social services each year to signal that they need extra contact with social workers and that there is concern for their welfare. The notion of 'at risk' is complex. As articulated, all these factors taken out of the context of parental and pedagogic support mean nothing. A child is able to build resilience and move out of cycles of poverty and deprivation if they are given the means to do so or are made aware of their own capacity to do so. What becomes apparent within much literature concerning risk is unhelpful and potentially divisive binary thinking.

Furedi proposes that a discourse surrounding notions of 'at risk' is typified by a cultural construction of children as vulnerable.

> The emergence of this 'at risk' category ruptures the traditional relationship between individual action and the probability of a hazard... Through these ideas about vulnerability, a sense of fear starts to be seen as a normal state of being. The flipside of this definition is the inflation of the threat that external forces pose to the individual self. (2007: 6-8)

This vulnerability is perpetuated by the fact that many groups of individuals are considered to be continuously 'at risk' of hazard, in particular, Furedi suggests, children. Moreover, that the notion 'at risk' itself, by taking away the individual's relationship to risk and safety communicates passivity and stultification onto the groups involved. The autonomisation of fear is associated with two factors: the imperatives of a neoliberalist age that makes specific adults accountable and, therefore, fearful of litigation or blame, and the moral and availability heuristics that magnify the child's body as a site to be fearful for. Both signal the child as intrinsically vulnerable, and it is assumed to be an 'essential property of individuals, as something which is intrinsic to children's identity and personhoods, and which is recognisable through their beliefs and actions, or indeed through just their appearance' (Frankenberg, Robinson and Delahooke in Furedi 2004: 588). This suggestion that children are culturally essentialised as 'vulnerable' or 'at risk' places them in an immovable position where they are lacking in autonomy or awareness of their power to change their circumstances. 'The concept of being at risk reverses the previous relationship between human beings and experience. To be at risk assigns to

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[13] There were 37,900 children who became the subject of a plan in Britain in 2009; this compares to 34,000 in 2008. 13% of these had previously been the subject of a plan one percentage point less than in 2008. During the year ending 31st March 2009, 32,800 children ceased to be the subject of a plan; this compares to 32,600 in 2008.

the person a passive and dependent role' (Furedi, 2004:130). The nomination of the term 'at risk' to all children results in a societal perception that young people are not able to take responsibility for their own risk management and that adults 'know better' about how to keep them safe. This brings us back to the issues discussed about my role (and bias) within a risk analysis and its communication to the young people. Assigning the role of vulnerable to young people may have the effect of constituting those young people into a passive role: thereby, stripping them of the resolution to determine or make decisions for themselves. Assigning young people into roles where they can make choices to be strong or to consent to managing their own risk may, conversely, build resilience.

As discussed earlier, there are three types of heuristic which people use to determine how much risk they are happy to take. Consequently, when it comes to children and assessment of vulnerability, an educator may decide that any risk is too much to take due to tacit moral values being ascribed to that risk. This means that the young person's development of identity and autonomy is undermined by the cultural perception that assigns them to a vulnerable position. If we take Piper and Stronoch's view the relationship between risk and agency is built around the fear of repercussion, the fear of doing something wrong rather than a judicial or balanced relationship with risk-taking. I propose that, through certain educational situations, exemplified by my work, young people become aware of both the social discourses and fear surrounding their vulnerability and moreover, that they are given the means to act in dissensus to it by taking risks and being responsible for their own safety. Alongside this, there are particularly compelling narratives being communicated to young people about their physical body, and the bodies of others, in relation to risk, riskiness and risk-taking.

Piper and Stronach argue that 'the whole body of the child or young person is identified as a risk arena' because 'it seems that every contact with a child is a potential occasion for abuse' (2010:15). They determine that this is due to two components, the fear of litigation if a child suffers from a physical injury, and the fact that 'abuse', in the context of a child, is often conflated with the notion of sexual abuse. The fear of being seen as abusive, and most importantly, as abusive to a child, is 'the worst of all crimes' (2010: 13). It perpetuates a dynamic where the bodies of children and young people are potent signifiers of taboo. They quote the research of

Tobin (1997), Phelan (1997) and Leavitt and Power (1997) when they suggest that there is an enforced binary spit between body and mind when engaging with children, which disempowers both teachers and students from 'normal' developmental engagement with embodiment, touch and risk. The idea that every adult poses a potential threat to every child 'ruptures the traditional relationship between individual action and the probability of a hazard,' thereby, taking the factors of voluntariness and ethical principle out of the equation (Furedi, 2007: 8).

Teachers, and in particular teachers of physical education, are subjected to intense scrutiny as to their motives for working with children. This can victimise and binds both teacher and child from establishing authentic relationships through encounters with risk. My practice, and the practices of many teachers, act in dissensus to this social framework by engaging and challenging the tacit assumptions and fears. I contend that although Piper and Stronach recognise a strong and seemingly unbreakable social bias of forbidding, they ignore the fact that an imperceptible *something* enables some teachers and many students to fight against the structures that bind them, the resolution to act. I liken this *something* to Heidegger's 'call to conscience' and Rancière's notion of 'will', inasmuch as it represents both anxiety in the face of stricture, and offers the resolution to challenge it in practice. As I demonstrate through the all the chapters there were strong and compelling ethical and practical concerns I engaged with in order to allow me to teach a 14 year old to climb a rope or swing from a trapeze. The risks to the young people, myself and the institution form a complex and compelling part of the terrain that I negotiate. I am not alone in this determination to enable students to explore new aspects of their identity and values; this is true of many teachers who negotiate risks with young people through every encounter with them. The fact that the child's body is such a site for risk-aversion and suspicion, and that the child's body is the site for my practice, enables me to expose and explore these risks extensively.

Any exploration of risk, therefore, raises questions of political climate, Governmental control and the communication of tacit information about the status of knowledge and knowledge-givers. Through the next section, I unravel and criticise these discourses in order to advance the notion that fear and risk-aversion proliferate discussions involving young people.

2.2 Risk and Risk-Aversion in Contemporary Britain

Risk is an entirely perceptive phenomenon and this perception is contingent upon and constituted by contemporary values and norms. In this section, I reveal a paradoxical tension between the fear of physical demise and the fear of discussing death. This tension is located within the physical body and communicated tacitly from the 'police order' which privileges rational and statistical analysis over personal experience (Rancière, 2010). I elucidate upon the implications of teaching in Britain in 2011, recognising the impact of the fear discourses upon the everyday teaching of children against which many of us work to empower young people

A definition of risk prompts a consideration of risk-aversion. In 2005, at a speech given at University College London, the then British Prime Minister, Tony Blair said:

> I want to talk today about a particular problem my experience has led me to identify. It is an issue that seems more of a talking point than an issue of policy; that has many facets to it; that is little discussed in the way I'm going to discuss it; but which, on the basis of my experience, if it goes wrong, has the capacity to do serious damage to our country.
>
> It is a sensible debate about risk in public policy-making. In my view, we are in danger of having a wholly disproportionate attitude to the risks we should expect to run as a normal part of life. This is putting pressure on policy-making, not just in Government but in regulatory bodies, on local government, public services, in Europe and across parts of the private sector – to act to eliminate risk in a way that is out of all proportion to the potential damage. (2005: n.p)

Blair's suggestion to open up a debate concerning the nature of risk and risk perception in order to release the pressure it places upon many areas of public and private life is also a discussion of public perceptions and fear. He suggests that risk aversion has repercussions for the strength of the people, the country and the economy because Governmental policy is cautious. It is reasonable to suggest that measures are put in place to eliminate dangers that are avoidable and look for ways to make the population as safe as possible. It is not, however, reasonable (or possible) to attempt to eliminate all possible danger or hazard from life as we live it. This imperative to eliminate all risks and to make decisions based upon fear seems to be at the heart of debate about, not only risk, but also contemporary education:

> The ethic of ensuring the nonoccurence of disaster is so generalized that it can be imposed upon, and morally expected of, everyone. And the moral aspect is strengthened by the fact that, after all, one is not

thinking about oneself but about others, perhaps even about those yet to be born. This can be countered by arguing that this behaviour, too, involved confronting unknown and perhaps more immediate risks. But – arguing from a moral point of view – this amounts to renouncing all willingness to communicate. (Luhmann 1993:3)

Luhmann's proposition is that a premise driven from a fear of danger rather than a willingness to communicate eliminates the value and practice of individual intelligence. Measures to eliminate obvious dangers are based upon a solid ethical foundation, where the elimination of avoidable disaster is paramount. The elimination of surprise occurrences of unforeseen dangers, however, is impossible. I am morally and ethically impelled to put in place measures to protect against avoidable or predictable hazard, but I am also ethically committed to ensuring that those very constraints do not suppress all possibility of freedom for the participants in my work. The proposition can be advanced further by the suggestion that without a comprehensive dialogical relationship between fear, risk perception and risk management (which attempts to eliminate risk), freedom, equality and resolution are repressed. In this thesis, I present an argument that is based on a moral and ethical proposal for a proportional attitude to risk-taking. This proposition demands that the experience of the individual taking the risks is privileged.

2.2.1 Risk-aversion, fear and the subjugation of the adolescent.

Furedi (2007) suggests that the notion of fear is what drives people in relation to risk, rather than a rational examination of scientific evidence. He considers that the impact of fear is determined as a product of 'social construction', due to a negative attitude to risk that has not always been the case (2007:24). He quotes Parkin's (1986) essay in his suggestion that 'as late as the nineteenth century the sentiment of fear was linked to respect, reverence [and] veneration' (2007:3). This transformation into a fear-based society is echoed by Beck who argues that we have become a 'risk society' through the globalisation and individualisation of modernity. This is a cultural tension: the more people are aware of risks, the more heuristics come into play - impacting upon individuals' ability to estimate these risks accurately. The more I am treated as if I have the same relationship to risk as others by taking away my right to choose, the less autonomous I may feel in relation to those risks, thus developing my fear and weakening my resilience. Children and young people, for

example, are often treated as potential victims rather than autonomous agents for their own development.

The process of individuation for Beck and Furedi, typifies the move from communal social experience to one where personal experience is privileged. In particular, the personalisation of vulnerability and fear, that has been assigned to children and adolescents by an increasingly therapeutic culture, and the break-up of communities and old forms of solidarity. Furedi recognises that 'today even the private sphere has become the target of suspicion and relations of dependence are culturally reviled... enhanc[ing] the sense of vulnerability' (2004:132). It would appear that, paradoxically, the advances of science and technology, which Government and institutions use to predict and assuage danger, may only serve to reinforce feelings of vulnerability and fear by eroding the sense of communal responsibility and individual agency.

This notion is, however, contentious, as well as pessimistic. Beck's suggestion that

> someone who is poking around in the fog of his or her own self is no longer capable of noticing that this isolation, this "solitary confinement of the ego", is a mass sentence, that millions of people, in all the highly industrialised countries, are also pacing the prison cell of the self (1995:40)

brings with it a hopeless projection of isolation and imprisonment for the future, echoing the warning of Evans that agency of students and workers become 'bound' by hierarchical structures of blame and supplication (2007). It is a suggestion that we are trapped in a cycle of fear-driven discourse and that we are becoming increasingly risk-averse. As we saw earlier, however, young people who are considered to be 'at risk' are driven back into cycles of poverty or depravation only if they are not taught resilience or made aware of the means to escape it through the community (parents or teachers). With knowledge of their own agency, they can develop resilience and the capacity to rise above their situation. This analysis, building from my point in the last section about the *something* that compels teachers and students to take action, suggests that fear is not a 'life-sentence' in the way that Beck advances. It is a call to recognise that although each constraint has the potential to stultify people, on an individual basis, each person has the ability to understand their situation and become emancipated from it. A consideration of this proposition through a Heideggerian philosophical lens, suggests that although *Dasein* is seduced into

falling towards the inauthentic 'idle talk' of the everyday (or the everyday heuristics that contextualise our judgment of risk), it is also called back into authenticity by a call to conscience (1962:174). In this way, Heidegger declares that humanity is mobilised into recognition of its state by and through anxiety. He suggests that it is anxiety itself which reveals the state of our fragility and, moreover, our possible resolution. Hence, these elements reveal a paradoxical tension inherent within risk analysis. The anxiety, which reveals our humanity through a relation to death, can build either resilience against it, or stultify agency. The risk inherent in any risk assessment is not simply the risk of death. It is the risk of being risk-averse and, therefore, of closing down possibilities, or the risk of being under-zealous in the estimations which could result in one being accountable for the accident of another. It is the risk that the teacher may liberate students or domesticate them within every single teaching encounter.

The research of child development expert Tim Gill propounds the notion that we are living in a risk-averse society. He gives examples from the press that reinforce the findings that activities and experiences which previous generations may have enjoyed without a second thought, are being increasingly branded as irresponsible, troubling or dangerous. Gill emphasises that 'adult anxieties typically focus on children's vulnerability' (2007: 11). This awareness of the underlying meaning ascribed to childhood experience is a central problematic of this thesis. Children may become vulnerable and vilified in relation to risks;they are seen to be needing protection by adults who know better. What is revealed through these explorations is that risk is a phenomenon beneath which there are a host of other forces and fears at work, some of which are financially driven, some ideological, some psychological. What engenders this fear is similarly complex, and how this constitutes and is constitutive of dominating practices that may stultify young people rests upon a simple question. If risk is perceptual, how can it be managed? In the next section, I argue that the answer is that risk cannot be managed, not in the general sense, unless the identity and experience of the individual risk-taker is considered.

2.2.2 Cultural context or police order.

After Blair's demand that Britain needed to start a 'debate about the nature of risk in policy-making' (2005:17) a study was commissioned and a subsequently a document was published by the Select Committee on Economic Affairs entitled *Government Policy on the Management of Risks*. The objective of the inquiry was 'to examine the scale of the problems highlighted by [Blair] and, particularly, to assess whether Government policy deals with risk in an informed, balanced and consistent manner' (2005:1). This document considered the nature of public perceptions of risk as well as recommendations for policy relating to risk through two case studies, those of transportation and passive smoking. In respect to public opinion the document stated that:

> [m]ost of the relevant evidence we received was sceptical about whether it is possible to measure public perceptions about risk in any general way, or to pass judgements on whether public opinion can be regarded as excessively risk-averse.
>
> We have been unable to find any significant evidence to support the widely-held view that Britain has become an increasingly risk-averse society. We are also sceptical about whether general risk aversion can be measured in a way that would allow such a view to be substantiated. (2005:12)

The position occupied by the committee was one of scepticism that they were able to measure perceptions of risk in any way that could be effective, rather than an opinion upon whether the public were more risk-averse. The committee consulted with four eminent risk management specialists; Kay, Bender, Fairman and Lofstedt, who all agreed that risk perception was difficult to measure. However, they did not consult with specialists in risk perception or consider the wider nature of the term 'risk', which as I have already argued, is difficult to define. The resulting conclusions reinforced the materialist imperatives in the assessment of risk and risk aversion, once again dismissing any consideration of the individual freedom perspective in this context. Hence, they forward the suggestion that because risk aversion is personal, there is no such thing as general risk aversion. The personal does not exist because it cannot be estimated, measured or substantiated for statistical analysis.

The complexity of this issue is one of perception and management of that perception in response to a perception. It is a paradoxical state. The risk-aversion is perceptual, but because of an inability to scientifically measure this perception, the risk

management specialists were unable to say whether the nation is more risk-averse. Therefore, the Government concludes that this lack of evidence proves that there is no risk-aversion. It is interesting to note that it was decided that this did not warrant further study. The nature of physical experience is a descriptive and, therefore, phenomenological state. However, the Government are looking for measurable data with which to make decisions. They sought to derive a decision (prescription) on the basis of a descriptive (qualitative) and not hard (quantitative) study. Then, lacking hard evidence, they assumed the experiential evidence presented was irrelevant, and so dismissed the problem totally. The relationship between the prescriptive and the descriptive is one that continues to return in contemporary discourse, and evolves from a prejudice which rejects experiential evidence. This dominant thinking privileges the rational and scientific and in so doing dismisses the experiential and descriptive. I argue that this again perpetuates a binary split within the social discourses surrounding work with young people that I will expand through all subsequent chapters of this thesis; it is a cultural privilege placed upon the rational to the detriment of the experiential. This split engenders scepticism of the descriptive or anecdotal evidence and evades the individual agency of each person who may take risks. I am not looking to privilege the phenomenological aspects over the measurable, that would also be to the detriment of the study, what I advocate is a holistic engagement with the qualitative elements in combination with the qualitative aspects, because both constitute experience for me, and for the young people in my care.

Psychologist Kurt Lewens developed the notion of rational prejudice through his work with force field analysis, where he articulated the aspects that frame and connote developmental factors in children:

> Risks do not just 'exist' as free floating entities, they are taken, run or imposed. Risk taking and risk imposition involve problems of agency and interpersonal relationships that cannot be adequately expressed in a framework that operates exclusively with the probabilities and severity of outcomes. In order to appraise an action we need to know who performs the action and with what intentions... Therefore traditional quantitative analysis of risk needs to be supplemented with a systematic characterization of ethical aspects of risk, including those of voluntariness, consent, intent and justice. (Lewens 2007: 27)

The complex nature of existence means that we live both rationally and experientially. The two states are inseparable; the likelihood of a risk affecting me is heightened by my relationship to it. If I am forced to take the risk, there is a greater likelihood that I will fall or fail than if I have voluntarily placed myself in an encounter with it. My intention through taking the risk forms a part of my resilience and safety within it, as does my ethical or ideological relationship to the material of the risk. A qualitative analysis is indivisible from the quantitative appreciation of what that risk is. When taking a risk, we encounter it wholly, by which I mean that it becomes a powerful, open-ended, indeterminate process that unfolds and creates new situations and actions. The risk unfolds experientially in the momentary, from the time it is identified. This unfolding, changing and unquantifiable relationship 'maps' the risk for me until (and often after) the encounter. My perception changes, temporally, in relation to my experience. Risk cannot be simply measured, or even simply expressed. One way of viewing it cannot be divided from other ways.

Through my work in circus and pedagogy, I open up a dialogue between these complex areas of contemporary existence through practice and reflection; which constitutes a mapping of the territories of risk encountered. Whereby critical aspects of the work are written and ruminated about so they form a vital part of my pedagogic experience. This approach necessitates an embracing of the statistical data as well as experiential description. Through this combination I am able to reveal a more open-ended appreciation of life as it is lived through encounters with risk.

> Complexity guarantees contingency, which is to say, creates meaning – the difference between potentiality and actuality. We can observe the selections that are made; others can observe ours and we can observe theirs; we can even use schemas like truth/opinion, correctness/error or affirmation/critique to observe others' schemas. But we can never prevent others from observing selections otherwise – unless, of course, we operate by way of a "dialectic of betrayal and avenging force" and prevent those who differ, who observe otherwise, from communicatively participating in society. (Rasch 2000: 33)

Georg Rasch's work with psychometry and quantative analysis of personality reinforces the premise that risks are recognised, judgments are made, and then risks are taken and witnessed according to paradigms of social and cultural concern. Working with young people magnifies the social perception of these risks as deeply problematic, without necessarily considering the way they may be tackled or the

benefits that may be gained from taking them. Although for my work, I am mapping the nature of the pedagogic encounter between teacher and student in risky situations, I still need to recognise that outcome and intention play a large part within the mapped encounter. Although all intentions, outcomes, heuristics and social mechanisms cannot possibly be mapped through a single moment, the complexities of the moment communicate widely beyond the risk-event or the encounter itself. It is through the taking of risks that a person knows how a risk can be negotiated, managed and overcome. It is entirely personal. The student or risk-taker is in dialogue with the risk itself, through their past and future experience, and within this dialogue there is a recognition that there is the potential to succeed or fail in the face of it. They are aware of both possibilities at once through the act of doing. The outcome cannot be predicted.

The notion of risk and risk-taking is constantly evolving, from the simple assessment of fortune and prudence of the 17th century to the intensive risk management policies of 2011 (Slovic 2000). As contemporary culture evolves, so the concept of risk and risk perception evolves:

> [w]e still have only a rudimentary understanding of the ways in which *bounded rationality* manifests itself. We know much about certain types of deficiencies and biases, but not know the full extent of their generality across tasks and across individuals of varying expertise... we know little about perceived risk, the determinants of societal response to threat, modes of communicating information about risk, or the role of justifications in decision processes. (Italic are mine, used for emphasis, 2000:49)

So we are brought back to the main problem with risk, that it is impossible to predict and bound within a bias of rational privilege. This impossibility is due to subjective relationships between the risk-decision and the risk-taker, their experiences, biases, heuristics and their cultural frame. If risk is measured in purely economic and statistical terms, and these terms fragment intersubjective discourses that 'bind' the resilience of young people, then an intervention that focuses on bringing together reason and experience, through risk, may present a solution for engendering resolution and resilience within young people. The financial imperatives of the Government, which deny the experiential associations with risk, are potent conveyors of meaning within society. They are definitive of a Rancièrean police order because they concern 'the organisation of powers, the distribution of places and

roles, the systems for legitimising this position' which result in passivity and apathy (1999:28). It can, therefore, be said that the measures taken to defend against risks, place us in more risk.

The ability for risks to clarify cultural contexts and, therefore, transform the discourses associated with them is the foundation for the next and final section of this chapter. It advances the notions posited in this section, that a risk contains the possibility of agency, as well as the possibility of stultification or passivity. It depends upon how this risk is measured, communicated and mediated for the person taking it. Appreciation of risk is also contingent upon the relationship between the risk-taker, risk assessor (possibly the same person) and the political, ideological, judicial or cultural heuristics they employ. This is particularly pertinent in the field of education and pedagogy.

2.3 Risk in Education

This final section discusses the psychological and sociological research into child development and risk-taking. It proposes that risk-taking behaviours develop the skills of 'autonomy, mastery and intimacy' (Irwin and Millstein, 1991:3). I introduce the notions of developing anticipatory resolution (Heidegger, 1962:219) through 'guided practices in facing danger'. These guided practices lead on towards the extensive study of radical and freedom-based pedagogy within Chapter 2, which outlines the nature of ethics, intention and the notion of 'knowing better' that proliferate this risk discourse. This section surveys the literature on adolescence and risk-taking in relation to notions of resolution and resilience as opened up earlier in this chapter. It leads to the section that considers death and how the fear of death impacts upon the development of resolution. Taking the proposition from Heidegger that self-knowledge is created through doing, being and seeing *Dasein* in relation to death, I unravel the notion of risk as a physical action, a concept to be encountered through absence and as an intended (rather than experienced) act.

The literature on adolescence is generally from the 1960s onwards where the first acknowledgement that there was a distinct psychological impact when young people transition from childhood to adulthood was recognised. According to psychoanalyst and child development specialist Peter Blos, who first articulated the need for

teenagers to break from their parents and gain independence '[t]he term "adolescence" is used to denote the psychological processes of adaptation to the condition of pubescence'(1962:2). Pubescence refers to the development of primary and secondary sexual characteristics. Therefore, for this thesis, I will be recognising that adolescence is the time when the individual is learning to cope with the new sexual and physical responses from the body. The duration of adolescence is individual, and dependent upon the individual's capacity to learn or cope with conflicting intersubjective information. Adolescence is the period from puberty until full adult status has been attained, although what constitutes adult status is unclear within Blos' thinking. In Britain in 2011, adult status is an ambiguous term. It could be considered to be 16 years of age, when students are able to legally consent to take risks without the mediation of a guardian or carer. It could also be 18 years of age, when the individual is able to purchase alcohol or firearms, which are signifiers of responsibility. The legal age of majority in Britain (with the exception of Scotland) is also 18. This is the age that young people are allowed to vote. However, other legal permissions are lower; such as the age of sexual consent and the age that you can sign up to the military services (16 years of age) and the age at which you are allowed to drive a car (17 years of age). It would appear that age, although useful for denoting legal status, sends confusing messages to adolescents about the way that they are perceived . From a child developmental perspective, different attributes, such as self-awareness are considered to be more accurate markers of adult status. The confusion caused by the mixed messages communicated during adolescence to children and young people are heightened when the discourses are considered 'risky'.

According to psychologist and educator G. Stanley Hall, adolescence ends comparatively late, between the twenty-second and twenty-fifth years. Hall described adolescence as a period of *Sturm und Drang*, "Storm and Stress" (1916:17). In German Literature, the *Sturm und Drang* movement includes, among others, the work of Schiller and the early writings of Goethe. It is a literary movement full of idealism, commitment to a goal, revolution against the old, expression of personal feelings, passion, and suffering.[14] This bears a strong correlation to my experiences

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[14] Although, as emphasised in the introduction, I do not subscribe to the political foundations of German Idealism, I can usefully employ some of the philosophical frameworks to interrogate and complement my phenomenological and metaphysical description. Hall saw a correlation between the objectives of this group of writers, at the turn of the eighteenth century, and the characteristics of adolescence. The work of Schiller is particularly pertinent, in his *Letters towards the Aesthetic Education of Man,* he suggests that an appreciation of

with young people, and in particular, with the young people involved in this research who are actively engaged within the process of seeking a new path for themselves. They are asserting their need to try new things and form opinions, in particular in response to notions of pain and personal suffering.

The description of The Slap used at the opening of this chapter exemplifies the need for self-knowledge; the teenagers were compelled to test their understanding of the tacit social boundaries normally imposed upon children and violence, and were rewarded and punished by the others in their peer group for doing so. They experienced pain, and inflicted pain on the others in the group, they experienced surprise at the lack of social constraint upon their actions and they regulated the activity through a complex application of 'justice' in the form of punishment. In such a way, they revolted against the old way of doing things, experienced pain, and built a new set of rules in appreciation of the experience that they had. Hall's application of the term '*Sturm und Drang*', therefore, describes pertinently what I would identify as the traits associated with adolescence as they strive for adult status, a relation to passion, pain and personal expression, which the nominal legal marker of the age of 18 does not allow for.

Adolescence is in this context, therefore, categorised according to behaviour rather than biological development or legal status. It starts with the process of genital maturity and finishes when the student has learnt to cope with the sensorial messages being sent and received. It is a time of identity formation in response to the biological and legal transition from child to adult status.

Gerald Adams, Professor of Family Relations and Human Development (1992) and Rolf Muuss, Child Development theorist (1964) suggest similar ways of looking at the idea of adult status in relation to the formation of identity. They emphasise the need to distinguish the self from notions of the self as lived with others. Adams suggests that 'identity is conceptualized as an organised, self regulatory psychic structure that requires the developmental distinction between the inner self and the

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art is foundational within the transformation of man away from the 'savagery and lethargy' that is their unconscious state (1910:8). He usefully considers the antagonism that I have expressed throughout this chapter, between a need for quantitative substantiation for accountability purposes, which is privileged above personal and individual qualitative experience. He suggests that 'where the enlightenment had failed was not in the education of the mind and in the increase of knowledge but in the cultivation of the heart, or sensibility. The way to the head must be opened through the heart' (Schiller in Sharp, 1991:151).

outer world' (1992:2). The idea of self regulation supports my premise that adolescence is a time when resilience and resolution can be built up through associations with risks and risk-taking. Muus proposes that identity formation is typified by the need to identify certain social markers which include:

- The need to find a place in a valued group that provides a sense of belonging.
- The need to identify tasks that are generally recognized in the group as having adaptive value and that can, thereby, earn respect when skill is acquired for coping with these tasks.
- The need to feel a sense of worth as a person.
- The need for reliable and predictable relationships with other people, especially a few relatively close relationships – or at least one. (1964:6)

For these theorists, therefore, adolescence becomes a time of reconciliation between being and being with others. This runs parallel with my application of Heideggerian phenomenology as a lens through which to see my work. Heidegger's assertion that *Dasein* is lived in the isolation of the individual nature of being, and interdependent upon the notion of *Mitsein*, which is the self as lived with others, serves to highlight that identity formation is dependent upon, and distinct from, social construction (1962). What is relevant here is how aware the adolescent is of their need to define their social position, and how aware they are of the impact that the wider social discourses of fear and risk aversion have upon their understanding or resolution towards identity formation.

Adolescence is the process of experiencing this complexity of physical and emotional signals and attempting to identify a place within society. The gestalt psychotherapist Mark McConville further emphasises the notion that beyond the need to find a social identity, there is also the need, within the adolescent, to be different from others; '[a]dolescents present complementary sets of developmental needs that derive from the fundamental nature of contact – needs for connectedness and needs for differentiation' (1998:2). These behaviours can be seen as representative of the young person separating themselves from roles, identities and situations under which they had once been placed, in order to adjust their understanding of themselves as physical entities within the world, and advancing the proposition that one is able to transform through risk-taking activities and to know themselves in relation to others.

The academic research from various different fields into risk-taking and adolescence can be summarised simply by saying that young people need personal experience in order to reconcile and understand themselves in relation to others and the general social mien. Three studies into risk prevention are useful in this context. Psychologist Laurence Steinberg (2007), Charles Irwin and Susan Millstein, who developed the biopsychosocial model of risk taking, (1964) and the work of sociologists Mary Rolison and Avraham Scherman (2002) all recognise that although cultural factors, personal experience, neurological differences and economic factors all play a part in the adolescent's decision to take a risk, what is compelling is that the experience of the risk somehow mobilises self development. Denial of opportunities to take risks returns the argument to the notion of 'bounded agency' and stultification developed within the earlier sections of this chapter.

> Risk taking behaviours fulfil many developmental needs such as autonomy, mastery and intimacy. Thus, it is simplistic to take the position that all risk-taking behaviours in adolescence should be eliminated. Interventions that attempt to meet the developmental needs, delay the age of onset of specific risky behaviours, and minimize their most negative consequences are not only more realistic, they are preferable for the development of the necessary social, psychological, and physiological skills in adolescence. (Irwin and Millstein in Blos 1962:349)

It is this relationship between risk aversion and risk prevention in contextual dialogue, with the admission that risky behaviour serves a tangible developmental necessity for young people, which is the crux of my thesis. The idea of 'autonomy, mastery and intimacy' (1962:349*)* being created through risky activities; that an adolescent needs to test themselves within the police order, in order to know themselves within it, is vital for understanding the nature of the trapeze work undergone. Unsafe behaviours such as drug taking or unprotected sexual activity, and themes of sex and violence are being conflated with the risk-taking behaviours that may engender resilience and resolution. Consequently, a risk-averse society breeds a discursive mistrust of any situation that appears to advocate the rehearsal of risk-taking with young people, despite compelling evidence that a considered approach to encountering danger would develop traits of agency, responsibility and maturity.

2.3.1 Risk and death.

Ultimately, if risk is conflated with fear, then what is it that we are afraid of? This section proposes that is the idea of death. I take a number of sociological and historical perspectives to articulate how death may be considered in this context. Sociologist Tony Walter suggests that death is theorised through four different frames: the practical, the biomedical, the lay and the semi-psychiatric (1993:38). My literature search revealed a convergent division in terms of teaching about death. I discovered texts which discuss teaching what death means biologically, looking at the impact that dying has on family and friends, and showing how to support a bereaved child. I am interested that much of the literature focuses on approaches to the terminally ill, to the bereaved, and establishes, that death is trauma, unexpected, irreconcilable.

I found no literature on raising the subject of one's own death with young people directly, although there are many curriculum texts which explore death poetically and thematically. Historian Philippe Aries (1974) argues that death (along with sex) is taboo because it is one of the times that nature threatens culture, and, moreover, that it is only post the Victorian era that we have been able to afford to get close to our children; the possibility of their death is now untenable where previously it was common. This avoidance of possibility is perpetuated, according to Walter, by the media, whose approach is to 'interpret' death for us as ultimately romantic or fearful (1993).

My proposition is that a distant, narrative, fragmented and, ultimately, fearful relationship with death is constitutive of a social boundary because it diminishes the ability to appreciate one's life, self and potential. If this is linked with a system of blame and supplication, then students within this system are being trained to think of themselves compartmentally; their appreciation is 'scattered and dispersed' (Heidegger, 1962:297); they are taught to blame others when things go wrong rather than build a resolute appreciation of the situation. Moreover, they are taught that there is a binary split between rationalism and experience, where the *knowledge* of an act is given more value than the experience of *doing* it.

It could also be argued that this cultural evasion of death is seductive. By this I mean that the absence of a reasonable dialogue with death creates a compelling attraction

to it by making the subject of death a taboo. In creating an absent or indeed forbidden relation to death, we are drawing adolescents more pertinently towards it because they are determined to test themselves against a police order that forbids it. So, risk aversion not only has the ability to bind the agency of adolescents, it also has the ability to draw them towards risky activities outside the institutional framework, where they cannot be so easily contained.

This aversion is constituted and communicated through the discourses of the fear society. Educationalist Ken Robinson (2010) notes that educational experiences that embrace the cycles of life and death for students allow students to fully engage with the concept of death and dying and, therefore, not fear it. He uses the example of a care home for the elderly which invited a primary school to make its base within the heart of the building. The children, aged between six and eleven years old, interacted with the elderly people and, thereby, came to know the cycles of life and death. Robinson suggests that such enrichment leads to a more fully realised sense of identity in relation to the real existential project of life, which is that we will all die. As Heidegger acknowledges, a potent marker of our humanity is that we all live with this knowledge that life is finite but we rarely engage with what it means to be mortal (1992:297).

To eliminate the risk of death would be to find the elixir of life. The very thing which makes us alive is also the thing that places us at risk: our biology. Hearts fail, bones break and skin tears, rips and ruptures. What makes us human, Heidegger proposes, is that we are able to live in the knowledge of our own ability to die. We cannot escape the fact that our physical existence defines and contains intersubjective experience. Furedi proposes that 'the taking of risks in order to *transform* ourselves is one of our most distinct human qualities' (Italics in original, 2005: 168). To be at risk physically, and to decide how, and when, to place ourselves at more risk, are qualities that define human existence. The awareness of the risk-taker's ability to transform, and build of resolution, resilience and an awareness of heuristics and biases, through experiences of existential death in response to risk, is what is often negated within risk discourse.

Jungian Psychoanalyst Richard Frankel suggests that '[o]ne must know death in order to become a powerful and responsible adult' (1998: 77). The point Frankel is

making is not one of observation, it is one of embodied learning. I suggest that 'to know death' is about understanding, physically, how you are charged, every day, with not dying. He continues:

> The uncertain adolescent experiments in order to master his uncertainty. By exposing himself to a boundary-disruptive situation that is fairly mild and that he can leave whenever he wants to do so and proving to himself that he can adapt to and even enjoy it, he builds up confidence in himself as an independent entity. (1998:33)

Knowledge of death is, therefore, constitutive and transformative within human consciousness for Frankel. It builds resilience and resolution in the face of it. Death is also a familiar and historic theme for those considering transformational or pedagogic discourse. The theme may be traced from Plato, whose suggestion was to train students to know courage through 'guided practices in facing danger' and is the method purposely borrowed for the title of this thesis (Robertson 1999:9), to Hegel, who suggested that 'it is only through risking one's life that freedom is won' (1807, 1977:114). It appears that in contemporary society, contact with death is evaded through the risk-averse constraints of Police Order policy and practice, due to moral and availability heuristics and cultural fear. People become more risk-averse, more vulnerable and, therefore, demand more 'policing' of decisions concerning risk. The people therefore create the demand for the things that bind their resolution.

I offer students opportunities to encounter death, through learning the dangerous skill of trapeze work. This works to compliment the institutional factors that are the ultimate surety to prevent students from coming to undue harm, through best-practice guidance and insurance. In my sessions the students learn, not only how to move through the air, a process that offers a corporeal engagement with fear and anxiety, but they also learn that the risk is perceptual rather than actual. The students also learn how to support or spot[15] each other safely, thereby taking responsibility for the life of another student; a skill that is valued within the group and which offers a very visceral one-to-one relationship with another person. I discuss the paradoxical associations of working with the trapeze within Chapter 3: the pleasures and pains; the dependence and independence; the strength and vulnerability; life and death. All of these are metaphorical and tangible essences when working in the air; they engage the rational and institutional elements of risk

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[15] See Appendix C for a full glossary of circus terminology.

with the perceptual and experiential. Introducing students to the trapeze enables them to locate themselves within, and reflect upon, these tensions in their lives. It is an experience of the descriptive and imaginative constructs that are intertwined with the cultural and statistical formulations generally associated with taking risks.

Artistic creativity intimately involves the body, not only in the sense that a creative act can only find expression in some muscular, motoric output, but also in terms of the role played by body sensations in motivating and infusing what we call creativity. Performing on a trapeze offers students the opportunity to play with the notion of death. The circus offers a safe place where students can try on identities and encounter death in the spirit of 'play'; according to anthropologist Victor Turner '[p]lay is a liminal or liminoid mode... in its own oxymoronic style, it has a dangerous harmlessness, for it has no fear. Its lightness and fleetingness protect it. It has the powers of the weak, an infantile audacity in the face of the strong' (1983: 27). Circus can be 'dangerous harmlessness', it can give students an opportunity for anarchy, rebellion and emotional exploration, but at the same time, challenge them to face fears and risk exposure. It can enable a person to experience the capabilities of their body through encounters with pain and suffering, in order to rehearse resilience and agency in a given situation. It presents choices rather than absolutes because it deals with the practice of human behaviour. It can, if handled correctly, offer students a route to exploring and rehearsing resilience and resolution towards authentic engagement with their own identity within the pre-existing mechanisms that are designed to keep children and young people safe.

Teachers are caught between the need to develop skills and a desire to protect students. This can arguably be conflated with the desire to protect the teacher from allegations of impropriety or litigation that are at the heart of an economically and accountability driven education system. Piper and Stronach's study recognises that legal and tacit information presented to teachers is at times 'confused, contradictory, based on staff rather than child protection, contrary to known best practice regarding child development, increasingly contested and not required by legislation' (2008:1). They also suggested that 'this fear constitutes and propounds a feeling of mistrust between students, parents and teachers which hinders the student's creativity and exploration' (2008:2). It would appear that the very nature of education, to take risks and innovate, is perceived to be in conflict with societal and Governmental

regulations. This dichotomy is pervasive within contemporary education research, but because of difficulties with quantification, it is evaded by Government. I argue that if handled ethically and sensitively by teachers, work on, with and through risk, can compliment and reinforce the existing best-practice in schools, and provide opportunities for students to know themselves as resilient.

At the heart of the debate is the nature of ontology, epistemology and methodology in contemporary culture with regard to risk and children. This debate is constituted by, and constitutive of, the fear discourses that surround bodies, and particularly the bodies of children in relation to moral heuristics. It is particularly reflected in the fear of discussions pertaining to death, where an absence of discussions that value experiential relationships with death and risk result in fear. This fear runs through all discourses and attracts, as well as repels, adolescents who are striving to find their individual way through the social context of their lives. I argue that what is needed is a dialogical relationship to death and risk. Adolescents are at the heart of this paradox because they are compelled to take more risks and their bodies are the focus for potent discourses that are taboo. Heidegger posits that self-knowledge is created through doing, being and seeing of *Dasein* in relation to death (1962). Risk is, therefore, conceived as a physical action, and death is a concept to be encountered through absence and as a single possible outcome through the taking of a risk.

Risk is a culturally bound concept which currently communicates fear of both surprise and danger; this fear pertains to the human body and the possibility of death. The bodies of children are particularly objectified by these fear-driven discourses due to the societal perception of their vulnerability; and evidence proves that fear perpetuates vulnerability and stultification, whereas encounters with risk and death build a young person's resilience and autonomy within the face of them. These are the premises from which I will be building an argument about the role of education in empowerment through the course of the next chapter. What is called into question is how best these risks are mobilised by the teacher, bearing in mind her, (my), ideological and cultural position. How can a practice situated within a risk-averse context hope to counter this risk aversion? And how can I/a teacher inhabit the paradox of knowledge that Immanuel Kant recognised as: 'cultivat[ing] freedom through coercion?' (1960:699).

Chapter 3.0

Violent Care - Towards a Dialectical Appreciation of Risk

> Touch refuses a simplified condensation of the encounter between you and me, refuses to speak only to the point of departure and the point of return. Touch grapples with the impossibility of fusion in the movement of desire that is directed towards you and reciprocally toward myself... The violence exists in the reaching out toward that which will remain unknowable. (Manning, 2007:52/3)

Risk and the risks associated with teaching aerial work to adolescents form the first problematics of my thesis. I am motivated by a desire to explore the possibility of a critically attentive relationship between teachers and students that could rupture the fear-driven discourses that were articulated in the previous chapter. I wish to explore the violence and care that typify any relationship that involves learning in order to unravel the territories of risk inherent within this very specific human interaction. Use of the Erin Manning quote above emphasises the need to excavate the complex narratives and tacit notions that proliferate my practice. Manning's work in dance theory supports the notion that physical contact between people invites a new level of communication, and new possibilities for risk. As discussed in the previous chapter, I regularly touch the young people in my care and, more than that, the teaching of aerial work extends beyond distant pedagogic methods because the corporeal relation between teacher and student is formative to the student's learning regardless of the physical contact between them. The practice touches the student's physical identity, both literally and metaphorically.

Manning suggests that touch is inherently violent, not in its outcome but in its interpretation. Touch impacts upon both teacher and student because it refuses simple classification as 'I give' or 'I receive'; it is a proposition to give or receive something unspecific. This is true of dialogical teaching that focuses on the body. The lack of specificity within a touch means that it is open to layers, or strata, of cultural, interpersonal and moral meaning; new heuristics come in to play. Touch is an act of rupture and intercession. Through this chapter, I use an example of touch between teacher and student to open up the numerous meanings implicated within the act of touching. In the example used, I describe the nature of teaching as one of tactful negotiation through intersubjective dialogue.

A proposal for an intersubjective, dialogical approach to education which I apply to my practice of aerial work is one possible counterbalance to the problems of rational prejudice and bounded agency discussed in Chapter 1. The approach is located within the site of most fear - the adolescent's body - and, therefore, requires careful negotiation of the territories of risk at play within the pedagogic dynamic. My approach proposes that intelligence, will and possibility are all potent discourses with which to redress the balance between the prescriptive (rather than descriptive) thinking of enlightenment and the perceptual experiences of the individual. This approach to pedagogic philosophy is not new; it starts with Platonism. Plato, and later Heidegger,[16] championed a metaphysical definition of knowledge as an act of uncovering or *aletheia*. This notion is in opposition to a pragmatic construction of a totalised known, the resulting reconciliation of 'knowing' which David Pugh, in his discussion of the work of Plato refers to as a 'dialectic of love' (1996:33). He does so because it ascertains an individualised, mobile and emotionally connected relationship between the knower and the object of knowledge. According to Heidegger, only a way of thinking that goes right back to the Greeks will be able to disentangle itself from ways of being that are inherently nihilistic (1998: 45); the annihilating[17] influences, discussed in Chapter 1, are those of a fear-driven and rationally privileged approach to education.

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[16] For more information on Heidegger and Aletheia, see Hyland (2004), Richardson (1974), Magnus, (1970) and Inwood (1999). The general consensus is that Heidegger reviews Plato's understanding of Aletheia and suggests that this original and formative view of the nature of truth as 'uncoveredness' has been changed by contemporary viewings, however, Inwood declares that for Heidegger:

> 1. Truth is not confined to explicit assertions and discrete mental, primarily theoretical, attitudes such as judgements, beliefs and representations. The world as a whole, not just entities within it, is unhidden - unhidden as much by moods as by understanding. 2. Truth is primarily a feature of reality - beings, being and world - not of thoughts and utterances. Beings, etc. are, of course, unhidden to us, and we disclose them. Heidegger later coins entbergen; Entbergung; Entborgenheit, 'to unconceal; -ing; -ment', since unlike unverborgen, they can have an active sense: 'aléthes means: 1. unconcealed [entborgen], said of beings, 2. grasping the unconcealed as such, i.e. being unconcealing' (XXXI, 91). But beings, etc. are genuinely unconcealed; they do not just agree with an assertion or representation. 3. Truth explicitly presupposes concealment or hiddenness. DASEIN is in 'untruth [Unwahrheit]' as well as truth. In BT (222, 256f.) this means that falling Dasein misinterprets things. 'Untruth' is not plain 'falsity', nor is it 'hiddenness': it is 'disguisedness [Verstelltheit]' of the truth (XXXI, 91). Later, 'untruth' is still not 'falsity', but 'hiding, concealing [Verbergung]' (LXV, 362). (Heidegger in Inwood, 1999:14)

Truth therefore, for Heidegger, resides within the fact that it is evasive and remains concealed.

[17] For more information on Heidegger and nihilism, see Heidegger's work on Nietzsche (1961, 1979) and Hemming *et al* who summarise it neatly for us:

> Heidegger reads Nietzsche's breathtaking vision of this movement as the common ground of all the radical attempts to define the *polis* in the last century. At the dawn of the twenty-first century, when these ideologies seem to have been brought to an end by six decades of peace (and when a final form of political organization, 'democracy', seems to have been reached, at least as a stated goal of the nations at the forefront of political decision-making and organization) –

Through the course of this chapter, I excavate some of the historical precedents for transformational and risk-embracing pedagogy. I recognise that, for each historical landmark discussed, there are five more that I leave untouched. What links the theorists and philosophers that I am using - Freire, Rancière and Heidegger - is their desire to uncover the dialogical influences of power and emotion that are played out in human interactions; they question the relationship between knowledge and the knower. This interrogation is at the heart of a pedagogy which encourages risk and the inspiration for what I am terming (after Heidegger) 'anticipatory resolution[18]' within the student. I argue that this is a phenomenological pedagogic method due to the intersubjective nature of risk as experienced by both teacher and student. I have proposed that phenomenology is the only appropriate methodology for observing risk-taking because physically engaging with *doing* encourages students to inhabit the tensions inherent within a paradoxical state of being - to be both vulnerable and safe within the learning experience. The teacher enables both vulnerability and safety and is thereby inhabiting the paradoxical state in their attempt to free the student through coercive means (Kant, 1960) - to care through violence. It is, therefore, dialectical as well as dialogical. A dialectic is the result of synthesising two seemingly incompatible or oppositional forces in a dynamic interaction. This synthesis, although temporal and spatial, is the location for a momentary appreciation of the resolution or will of the student. In this chapter, I consider the propositions of Rancière and Heidegger that, through an intersubjective appreciation of one's situation in the momentary, a student is able to counter some of the negative effects of instrumentalisation (as in neoliberalism or reflexive modernism) such as bounded agency and fear. I propose that, along with the individual attention, as posited in the previous chapter, a reflexive and dialectical dynamic of rupture and care mobilises the dialectic and exposes the cultural tensions therein.

This chapter is a study of the practical, pedagogical and philosophical connotations of working with risk. It is separated, rather unnaturally, into two parts - the practice

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> Heidegger confronts us with the question: who are we, we who stand within the present movement of nihilism? (2011:2)

[18] As discussed in the Introduction. Heidegger's definition of resolution, as it is used here, forces *Dasein* to acknowledge the possibility of death. It is essentially futural: 'anticipatory resoluteness is not a way of escape, fabricated for the 'overcoming' of death; it is rather that understanding which follows the call of conscience and which frees for death the possibility of acquiring *power* over Dasein's *existence* and of basically dispersing all self-concealments' (1962:310). Use of the term in this context, therefore, acknowledges the developmental potential and possibility of the student. It is about bringing the experiences learnt from the 'now', a momentary relationship with risk and death, into a projected possibility of the future. This future is unknown and unknowable.

and the theory; however, I assert that within praxis the two parts are intertwined and inseparable. This divisive form is a structural device I am employing in order to ensure clarity. Nevertheless, the reader will see that the two discussions overlap. I metaphorically explore the ground before I map the territories.

The first section of this chapter will explore the key considerations that invigorate my pedagogic praxis and provide the foundation for the second section which considers the pedagogic philosophy in relation to the territories discovered in the rehearsal room. Within the first section of the chapter, I will outline some of the critical thinking that is central to the application of risk-taking methodologies. I isolate some of the areas that are particularly pertinent when working with young people. In order to do this, I discuss a particularly informative critical incident from Day 2 of the project *Hello Fatty*. This moment is used to highlight the territories of risk that I am exploring and will introduce the key themes of rupture and dislocation, dialectics of love[19] and a discussion of individuation that forms the basis for the theoretical framework of this chapter.

The second part of this chapter covers the contradictory philosophical arguments that proliferate when notions of humanity and authenticity are considered. I will clarify my pedagogic position in relation to Rancière's approach by critiquing his proposition that acts of dissensus offer a way to rupture students from stultifying patterns of education. Dissensus, in this case, is defined as 'not primarily a quarrel, but… a gap in the very configuration of sensible concepts, a dissociation introduced into the correspondence between ways of being and ways of doing, seeing and speaking' (Rancière in Bingham and Biesta, 2010:15). This act of introducing new ways of doing, seeing and speaking, according to Rancière, begins the journey towards agency and equality for the student.

I argue that it is through dislocation from, or rupture with, a known world that true open-ended learning can take place. This is a risky proposition. A cycle that is categorised by Freire as 'conscientisation' (bringing to consciousness), perception and volition (1970:43). Moreover, it is a technique that is grounded in an

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[19] This term is used by four of the theorists used in this thesis. David Pugh uses it to describe Plato's pedagogic strategy (1996). Paulo Friere also utilises this phrase when discussing a dialogic learning situation that intends to empower students (1970). Merleau-Ponty uses it to describe the way that a viewer knows themselves when looking at another (1968); and this is further appropriated by Peta Tait in her description of the observation of trapeze performance (2005).

appreciation of poetry, which opens meaning up to an equalising dialogue. He and I argue that poetry is one way that risk can be encountered without the student and teacher being annihilated by fear. I question how I can negotiate and practice a poetic teaching and research method within and supporting the often fear-driven discourses that I defined in Chapter 1. I will highlight the problematic paradoxical role the practitioner/teacher inhabits when they attempt to enable the autonomy of students to be challenged safely. If the dialectical relation within this pedagogic praxis is between violence and care, then this needs to be synthesised by a third, new intercession - tact.

3.1   Territories of Risk

This first section of the chapter focuses on the practical and experiential elements within the rehearsal room relating to a teacher and student relationship. I begin with the practice because it enables the reader to see how this is an ephemeral and complex discourse that speaks of the experience and for the experience in a lived moment. Taking a moment from the practice, I address the key concerns that arise from one simple moment of rupture. I use the term 'rupture' to signify a confrontation or fissure within understanding and within the student's experience.

Within the philosophical discourses of Heidegger and Freire, the notion of rupture signifies a linguistic proposition of abrupt violence to the self. For Freire, this is clear with his polemical rally cries for fighting to recover a stolen humanity. He sees the awakening of students as a painful process for both teacher and student, that it is a fight against the '"fear of freedom" which afflicts the oppressed' (1970:28). He further suggests that this transformation is a form of midwifery[20] for the student's childbirth. This is an image which invokes pain, struggle and violence for a happy goal. He further admonishes the role of the oppressors (or bad teachers) as perverted and sadistic, due to their resolve to transform humans into objects (1970:41). This is

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[20] The use of the term 'midwifery' has a long history within pedagogic philosophy. The works of Plato and Socrates are discussed by Mintz (2007), who acknowledges a deeply entrenched perception of education as a relational birthing process dependent upon clear knowledge and intention.

> As one scholar has put it: "This means that the maieutic art [midwifery] is not something one can just learn through so-called 'education' courses. It is not one more method one can add to one's repertory." Socratic education is not merely a method of questioning but also, I contend, the reality of being face to face with another human being with whom one must desire to spend time. (2007: 97)

drawn into a discussion of death and the human relation towards it: 'Sadistic love is a perverted love – a love of death, not of life' (1970: 41). In this way, Freire emphasises that deterministic teaching murders the humanity of students.

For Heidegger, the term 'rupture' is situated within the notions of 'breaking-up' and 'clearing away', the process whereby *Dasein* is able to 'discover the world in its own way and bring it close' (1962:167). In the example below, the student and I broke away from the cultural structures that would normally limit the encounter in order to find our own way through the work. Again this is situated alongside notions of death in as much as it is the essential condition of humanity that is evaded by the structures of the everyday. It brings us closer to death, not in the way that Freire espouses by drawing students together into a relation that restricts and, therefore, kills potential, but by exposing the tension and conflict in order to 'bring it close' and reveal the potential (for life and death) that it contains.

Critical Incident 2: The Gazelle

> It is Day 2. The trapeze is five feet from the ground. The student expresses a desire to learn a gazelle.[21]
> 'Sit sideways with your legs straight and ensure that your bottom is either side of the bar.'
> She sits sideways with her bottom either side of the bar.
> 'Now, raise the leg that is furthest away from the rope, draw your foot up your body so that the leg is bent, bringing your knee as high as you can, close to your arm-pit, but on the other side of the rope.'
> She attempts to do this. It is a complex instruction. The movement is not natural and needs 'translating' from the words. It feels wrong and unbalanced. Left and right are confused. She has no idea where the rope is or whether she will fall. I touch her right ankle.
> 'This leg, draw it up the other, bent and place it by the rope.'
> Touching her ankle makes it clear. She raises it straight towards her head and wobbles.
> 'I am going to fall,' she cries. The trapeze swings as she throws her leg back into position, still leaning backwards towards the floor.
> 'I'm here. It's fine.' I stand with my hands on her shoulder blades; her neck is close to mine. 'Rotate your body back to where we started, sit sideways and try again, with your leg bent.' She sits up straight and starts

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[21] See Appendix C for a full glossary of trapeze terms.

the process again, sitting sideways and drawing her right leg up her body.
She is leaning backwards into me again and I can feel that she is off
balance as more of her weight impacts upon my body. 'Nearly, that's
great, sit up again.' She sits.
'I can't, I don't know what you mean.'
I reach out for her inner thigh and am about to touch it to show her where
to put it. I stop. I remember that she is my student. I remember that she is
sixteen and I remember that it is a sensitive place to touch her. My instinct
is interrupted by my training. I take a 'stepped' approach.
'Can I move your thigh into position?'
'Yes.' She breathes tensely and she closes down from the experience as I
reach her thigh and pull it towards the position it needs to be in. She
shakes her head, her muscles are resistant and I remove my hand. 'OK,
let's get you down.' She descends to the floor and raises her voice.
'Why did you ask me that? I was OK until you asked me that.'

This moment represents a rupture in pedagogic tact, a rupture between the
teacher/student's instinctive and open relationship up to this point in the work,
between the student's desire to get the movement right and her physical
understanding of herself in the moment of the work, between my physical impulse
and my reasoned cultural knowledge. This rupture is a moment of cultural and
practical learning about risk for both the teacher and the student. By investigating
this moment, I can acknowledge the territories of risk at play within this complex
dialogue. I use the term 'territory' purposefully to denote a boundary that surrounds
an area or location that is 'policed' politically by the regulations discussed in Chapter
1. The term denotes an artificial line within the right and wrong ways of *doing*
prevalent in the moment described. I am aware that no clear line is drawn other than
that of imaginary significance. These artificial territories form a thematic map
through which I am able to make explicit what is involved implicitly in my practice.
In the moment of practice there is a transgression, thereby enabling the boundaries
to be recognised and challenged. It is a moment of disclosure for us both; the
conventions of touch are questioned and understanding is 'brought close' to us
through anxiety (Heidegger, 1962: 254).

Primarily, the student is at risk of falling from the trapeze. This risk reveals itself
within the tension in the student's body. It is the risk of pain and injury because the
trapeze is dangerous. This somatic tension embodies and reveals other less

transparent and interconnected territories at play within the interaction. The fact that the student may fall to the ground if the communication is ineffective between student and teacher makes this dialogue pertinent, visceral and loaded. The student has to place herself at the risk of failure, which 'places her in a situation where she risks the possibility of ridicule of others. Failure in this instance, despite my presence to stop or catch her, may result in ridicule and also in a fall. The possibility of ridicule by others is, however, only one layer of this particular risk. There is also the possibility of a shifted sense of the student's identity to 'one who has failed' in relation to the equipment, the practice, my teaching and her own potential. The risk is, therefore, that the social failure can entrap the student into a sense of identity diminished by the encounter rather than opened up to a possible future resolution of it. So student failure becomes the second territory of risk.

The third is the territory of 'touch' and the risk of inappropriate touching between two people, one of whom is seen as having power over the other. The teacher/adult has power over the vulnerable student/adolescent. The dynamics of role and authority form a constant dialectical relation between the student and the teacher. Intertwined with this risk is the perception of the teacher's role, authority and intention and how it relates to the dynamics of power within the teacher/student relationship, which is at the heart of the ethical dilemma that I articulate in Chapter 1. These nuances of power are revealed when I consider the communication and miscommunications of the moment. The student's verbal acquiescence to the touch and physical rejection of the activity through physical resistance is contradictory; the student said 'yes', but communicated 'no'. The teacher heard the 'yes' and acted upon it only until she was aware of the embodied 'no', and then acted upon the 'no' to make the student safe. The consent of the student and her ability to give consent is therefore a territory of risk within the work.

It is also significant to state that, within this territory and power dynamic, gender is a concurrent and connected discourse. My gender impacts upon the teacher/student dynamic and is fortified by the societal perception of femininity as a safer 'container' for this type of risky activity. I transgressed a social boundary by touching a female student on the inner thigh but the transgression would have possibly been wider had I been a man. This offers a fourth territory of risk for us to unravel - that of gender, sex and the sexualisation of bodies. This territory is constituted by the complex

pervasive view that touch is immediately associated with the sexual and is, therefore, taboo when given or received by children. This situation is one identified by Piper and Stronach as conditions under which moral panic and misunderstanding in schools is perpetuated (2008).[22]

Buried deep within the discourses that arise from this moment is the risk posed by transformational pedagogy and learning. Educator and gender theorist, bell hooks articulates this as 'some degree of pain involved in giving up old ways of thinking and knowing and learning new approaches' (hooks 1994:43). The pain of transformational practice synthesises the physical pain experienced within the aerial training, the pain of the hands on ropes and the sensations of a metal bar impacting upon the flesh of the student, combined with the potential for a physical impact or blow should the student fall. This draws the student toward a painful physical encounter with their identity, which is violent, significant and potentially transformative.

3.1.1 Failure.

This section considers the significance of failure in the risk provocation and, through the example above, its relationship to falling, the risk of inappropriate touching and the significance of power relations because the relationship involves young people. Failure holds within it the risk of miscommunication and misinterpretation within a dialogical relationship, the risks associated with an exposure of gender and, finally, the risk of pain involved in transformative education. I will consider these risks phenomenologically through a description of how they appear to me in combination with the theoretical paradigm of Rancière's universal teaching and Heidegger's authenticity.

Failure is a contentious issue within educative discussions. Without failure, there would be no learning. However, it is argued that fear of failure inhibits adolescents from taking the risks needed to engender an appreciation of their being towards the

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[22] For more detailed analysis of the debates concerning sex, sexualisation and the absence of permissible discussions on intimacy and desire with children, see Phelan. Her discussions demonstrate a 'concern for order that belies a fear of the erotic' (1997:82). Smith (2000) recognises that young people are educated away from using their bodies so as to avoid this confusion of messages for teachers. Crossley (1995) adds that the negation of the erotic in children is a distancing strategy, based upon fear, which inhibits child development.

possibilities of autonomy, agency and resilience in anticipatory resolution. Education theorists Allan Collins, Susan Newman and John Brown (1987) developed a model for cognitive learning patterns, called cognitive apprenticeships. They articulate that errors are essential to the creation of mental strategies in problem-solving. Kurt Van Lehn and Panayiotis Gheoriou's work to understand the learning of speech (2008) shows that real learning only occurs at an impasse or rupture during a problem-solving episode. These two studies exemplify the key theory in the field of learning. Without a stopping point, the student is unable to understand themselves as learners. Learning, therefore, involves being consciously engaged within a process of trial and error and from these errors a student then creates strategies from which to solve problems or negotiate life. Janet Collins, Joe Harkin and Melanie Nind summarise contemporary pedagogic models Although not mentioning failure directly, they declare that the 'fear of doing something wrong' can isolate students from participating within educative experiences (2002:3).[23] In the context of my work, failure becomes a potent and dominating discourse that reinforces the instrumentalist police order discussed within the first chapter. Failure is highly educative and yet to be perceived as a failure is potentially damaging. The difference is the need to specify a personal investment that mobilises learning in the first instance: I want to succeed and that carries the potential to fail. The ability to separate the act of failing as distinct from personal identity in the second: to fail is not to be a failure.

Sociologist Dan Gardner (2009) suggests that the conscious act of dialectical engagement between the immediate (or momentary experience) alongside the overarching (or contextual) is a possible counter to the problems of being socially dehumanized by failure. He argues, similarly to Freire, that praxical engagement enables the student to transcend the pertinent perception of failure and recognise its strategic place within learning for life. Any dialectic must be mobilised by a third element, the cornerstone of my thesis, which is the tact of the teacher. A discourse of trust and mutual respect from the teacher towards the learning of the student reinforces the human aspects of learning on an individualised basis and thereby

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[23] See also Reay and William (1991) who discuss failure in relation to National Curriculum targets and Bruner (1996) who discusses failure in relation to perceptions of the school environment. Both these studies show that the perception of failure in relation to these areas permeates into a greater failure to reach targets.

reveals the relevance of a single act of failure as a positive movement towards possible agency.

The idea of resolution being uncovered through a moment of failure is demonstrated by exploration of the moments after the example of The Gazelle. After the student berated me for asking if I could touch her, I laughed, looked her in the eye and said 'I know, I'm sorry, I'm an idiot! I have been taught that you should ask a student before you touch them and, when I realised I was going to touch your thigh, I panicked a little (still laughing). I know that you know why I touch you when we work together.' At this point the student laughed too, which broke the tension. I repeated 'Sorry', and she playfully hit my arm calling me an 'Idiot!' At that point, we went back to the trapeze and the student and I worked on successfully managing the movement through touch and response rather than language.

The student's association to failure was shifted by my commitment to trust and mutual respect within the relationship. I acknowledged my failure within the dynamic and I also acknowledged the social context of the work - fear of her body. I recognised the overarching political narrative that had been a dynamic although unexpressed force within our relationship through the politicization of touch. I gave the responsibility for managing it to the student, letting her choose rather than presuming I know better than she does about how to keep her safe. In Rancière's terms, I equalised her.

3.1.2 Touch.

The pertinence of physical touch is another contentious issue for philosophers, educators and academics. Piper and Stronach (2008) outline a comprehensive social and ideological framework for reviewing the 'no touch policies' that contain behaviour within schools and nurseries. Primarily, they argue that the essentialisation of touch, divided from corporeal and discursive practices, renders it incomprehensible and unmanageable (2008:144). By using the term 'essentialisation' in this context, they instil the notion that, for those who police and regulate education policy, touch communicates only in one way - that all touch is somehow illicit and, therefore, should be erased from classroom behaviour. This makes touch impossible to negotiate in educational practice. Moreover they argue

that those teachers or authorities who subscribe to a best practice notion of avoidance, fetishise touch to an extent that they inadvertently communicate abusive behaviours. As I iterate throughout this thesis, I feel that to treat teachers as a homogenised group is problematic. I know from experience that many teachers physically engage with their pupils in schools across the country. It is impossible to generalise. I do not set myself against institutionalised teaching or imply that my work is somehow of higher value. What I intend, from using Piper and Stronach's research as a foundation, is to look at possible solutions within my practice.

Within the example above, it is clear that the spectre of abusive behaviour entered the discourse as soon as I broke my instinctive reaction to touch the student, that is when I followed the prescribed safety method I had been taught as best practice - the 'stepped' approach. This sustained the discourse that the student's body is taboo, driven by my fear of being perceived as abusive. It perpetuated my own fear and placed the student back into the cycle of vulnerability as discussed in Chapter 2. The suggestion that touch always impacts negatively upon the student and so must be restricted and regulated negates the possible positive outcomes from the encounter. I am not saying that an intimate touch is always good: a different student might have been made deeply uncomfortable by the act of touching and this is definitely something a teacher should avoid. However, to ascribe all touch as forbidden would reduce all student/teacher tactile encounters to ones that are closed from the possibility of agency for the student within them. It is the teacher's responsibility to extract meaning from the tactile encounter; her skill to tactfully negotiate the encounter with the student enables her to know when to touch and when not to touch. Fear of touching only reinforces a sense of the illicit nature of touch and the tacit vulnerability of the student.

Since a moment of non or tentative touch conveys the notion of abuse, the pedagogic moment that uses touch has the potential to engender a more truly dialogical relation between teacher and student if equality is enacted in the interaction. It provides the opportunity for touch to be seen as positive. This is because both teacher and student are implicated in the act of *doing* so that it 'give[s] not the key to knowledge but the consciousness of what an intelligence can do when it considers itself equal to any other and considers any other equal to itself' (Rancière, 1991:39). One person is not the active toucher and the other the passive receiver of the touch; the touch is loaded

with a careful attention to the equality of the student and brings the theme of trust to the surface.

The attentive teacher will move in such a way that frees the student from falling or from failure and challenges the discourses of abuse within the interaction. Consequently, the act of touching is similar to that of an intimate tactful duet. It demands the full attention of the practitioner/teacher and an acknowledgement of the internal and external conditions of the encounter within the momentary. Tact mobilises the relationship between teacher and student. The Gazelle example demonstrates the potential for communication and miscommunication of attentiveness and of humanity from the teacher to the student. The touch becomes a potent mobilising agent for the development towards intimacy, equality and autonomy for both.

3.1.3 Gender.

Intimacy and autonomy is also communicated in relation to the gender of the touching pair. My femininity connects with the femininity or masculinity of the student. Both aerial teachers, John Paul Zaccarini and Matilda Leyser, articulate in the next chapter a gender bias within their descriptions of the teachers that inspired them. They appear to favour the 'feminine' as a signifier of care and they expose a bias within their use of typically gendered terminology. Their use of the metaphor container or vessel, which the teacher inhabits, is an image that favours the feminine within a caring dynamic. This is reinforced with the reminder of Freire's use of the term 'midwife', also a potent metaphor used to describe teachers by Plato and Socrates. Teachers seen in this way are essentially feminised within the encounter.

There have been many studies upon the need for a touch centred dynamic during infancy that suggest that consistent touching can reduce various stress related diseases in later life (Meany, 2004; Field, 1995). Michael Meany (an epi-geneticist working in Canada) has investigated how a mother's touch can alter the DNA of infants (2004). This study is considered by many to recognise an exciting relationship between touching and physical well-being. However, by focussing on the role of mothers within this dynamic, he ignores the potential for a discussion based on a unified, corporeal relation rather than simply a gendered one. It is interesting to

note also that the gender bias was built into the study because fathers were absent from the research.

In this way it can be seen that it is through acts of absence that the masculine is seen as less impactful when considering touch. Manning suggests that '[i]n the moment of touching an other (with or across space and time), my body re-engenders itself, causing a potential fissure in the national body-politic' (2007:109). This notion of re-engendering is complex and idealised for the body remains as it was, ruptured only by the intimacy and attention of the touching pair. What changes is the self in relation to the self as touched, the re-engendering being a changed perspective of the student's understanding of touch. What is significant within the moment of touch is the development of authentic understanding of the self generated by this intimate rupture. Touch liberates something hitherto expressed about the self. This authentic relation may cause a resignification for both the teacher and student based on political notions of gender that question the cultural norm.

This notion of gender is significant within the aerial and acrobatic practice of the work too. The traditional strong male and graceful female roles can disrupt traditional notions of gender. Circus theorist, Paul Bouissac, suggests that circus acts 'communicate as a visual language that encompasses balance and disturbance' of culture (1976b: 107). In this instance, the transformation is the cultural identity of the traditional masculine and feminine roles as representations of strength and grace. Circus and gender researcher, Peta Tait (2005), recognises that the graceful masculine is not problematic within aerial work because it is matched with a technical understanding and strength which surpasses the feminine. However, she notes what she calls a 'double gendering' of the body as a representation of a third gender which is permissible only because it appears to transcend the everyday in its ability to do 'unnatural' acts. It is my suggestion that a double rupture occurs for male and female students in their appreciation of me as a strong woman who possesses the strength to keep them safe from falling. This is brought to focus because of the corporeal relation with their own experience in the application of aerial skills themselves, which disrupts the cultural or social expectations of gender. The use of circus as a practice through which to rehearse equality by its nature disrupts perceived cultural norms and engenders a dialectic based on tact and

dissensus which, in turn, disrupts the traditional notions of gender difference and cultural normativity.

3.1.4 Role and authority.

The exploration of my role as a teacher who encounters risk is the purpose of this thesis. Educationalist Helen Nicholson (2002) suggests that the role of the teacher is to build the trust of the students through a dialogical relation and that this negotiation is politically significant for the students' understanding of themselves, the learning community and the wider social context. The teacher's ability to influence the wider social context is one that I suggest is a resulting influence of transformational education and, therefore, works against the emancipatory intentions of this thesis. However, the impact and codification of the teacher's role is pertinent to explore in terms of dialogical ethics and notions of rupture. Transformational education suggests that, rather than a teacher's role being an instigator of individual learning, students 'can learn for themselves and without a master explicator when one wanted to, propelled by one's own will' (Rancière 1991:12). This is perceived from the other end of the spectrum too where a teacher can be seen as a manager of the education of young people A full interrogation of these methods is not necessary at this time. However, because I am not setting myself in opposition or judgment of them. I iterate that every educational situation has the ability to domesticate or liberate the students within it, especially if that situation intends towards emancipation.

The impact that freedom and authority bring within dialogue has long been recognised by educators who articulate that attentive relationships built upon authority can engender self-esteem and security in the student which then enables them to 'master' new skills. I return to the contention that a language of authority encapsulated within the term 'mastery' is in opposition to a more open-ended understanding of knowledge. This contention upholds Rancière's proposition that the language of domination perpetuates a non-discursive acquiescence to a prescribed order that 'shapes' learning back towards domination itself, as all educative practices have the ability to do. A consideration of authority as attentive, mobile and turned towards the individualised student, like a partner in a duet,

positions the student in an act of becoming, rather than one of closure. In Rancière's vision for universal teaching, the teacher is attentive not only to the student's care needs, but also to their need to be challenged; the teacher is there in order to verify that the student has learnt. The student's ability to reflect upon and express this lived moment is opened by the teacher and linked to their ability to respond in a manner that best ensures an open-ended educational experience for them, rather than one that engenders the fear-driven and determinising possibilities of a neoliberalist society. The teacher in universal teaching, therefore, is 'ignorant' in as much as they do not need to have mastered the skill that they are teaching the student to know what can be learnt. Their skill is to ensure that the will of the student is engaged.

The idea of a teacher being a master is an interesting part of the pedagogic paradox. What is it that they are supposed to have 'mastered'? For Rancière, the term presents two options, the first being that the teacher is a master explicator and this 'mastery' closes down the possibilities for the student. By this he means that the teacher is in possession of a secret, 'to know how to recognise the distance between the taught material and the person being instructed, the distance between learning and understanding' (1991:5). Therefore, the teacher is the master of knowing what should be known by the student and how to enable the student to learn this predetermined knowledge.

The second definition of 'master' comes in his juxtaposition with the term 'ignorant' in the book's title *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*. By juxtaposing the term 'master' with the term 'ignorant', Rancière makes the tension between knowledge and learning apparent. In this second way, mastery is an open concept, one conceived as an attentive engagement of will (the teacher's) with will (the student's). The mastery, in this instance, is a method rather than a statement of status or place. It requires constant attention to the act of engaging and informing the will of the student through his or her learning. This, for Rancière, is where rupture comes into play because universal teaching creates a 'rupture with the logic of all pedagogies' (1991: 13). Rupture, therefore, is part of the process of creating tactful educational experiences because it forces the teacher to be aware of the social predisposition to control and give knowledge to the student. Rupturing from this predetermined frame frees the teacher to recognise the will and need of the student within the learning experience and enables the teacher to work for that. Therefore, the possibility to

engage the will of the student is latent within each pedagogic encounter with each child. This is possible within schools, within parental relationships and within friendships. Although I nuance this later in the chapter, I recognise that Rancière's strive towards universality can be engaged in and through every situation.

3.1.5 Violence and care

Educative experiences which are positioned towards the students' authentic resolution involve an act of rupture from the known world and transformation into a new sense of identity as a more individual position. The nature of transformational education as a dialectic is one hooks describes as painful. She continues with 'I respect that pain' (1994:43). In this declaration, hooks confirms an attentive and supportive orientation towards an apparent contradiction - that, although she is taking students to a new position, there is no responsibility for her to take the pain away or stop the pain from happening. This is where the concept of care is drawn back into the discussion.

Care is particularly relevant when considering the critical pedagogies of Rancière and Freire. For both, rupture is the result of a realised dissensus with the traditional ways of doing things. It is unavoidable if the ontological intention of the teacher is concerned with challenging the assertions the student has previously learnt and enabling the student to find their own (authentic) relation to themselves and to the world. Freire uses the term 'armed love' to articulate a relation between the need to care and the need to rupture:

> It is indeed necessary, however, that this love be an "armed love", the fighting love of those convinced of the right and the duty to fight, to denounce, and to announce. It is this form of love that is indispensable to the progressive educator and that we must all learn. (Freire 1998: 74)

The contentions inherent within Freire's espousal are that, within his practice, he seeks to orchestrate a specific annunciation - that of a Marxist ideological excavation of power. I, like Rancière, seek for students to engage only their intelligence and will in order to find their own way through the material.

The term 'love' is also contentious.[24] Each reader will attach varying qualities to this word dependent upon their own pedagogic philosophy and experience. Through his use of emotional language, Freire attempts to locate the discourse within the realm of the individual teacher and their individual practice, mediated by their professional attention to the students within their care. 'It is not possible to be a teacher without loving one's students, even realising that love alone is not enough. It is not possible to be a teacher without loving teaching' (1998: 28). So instead of 'care', Freire offers love. I translate Freire's use of the word 'love' to mean the vocational imperative that drives us to be teachers, even if it is not something that resonates within my own understanding of the nature of care. It is comparable with the *something* that I describe in Chapter 1, this *something* that enables many teachers and many students to fight against the structures that bind them, providing the resolution to act. I liken this *something* to Heidegger's 'call to conscience' and Rancière's notion of 'will' in as much as it represents both anxiety in the face of stricture and offers the resolution to challenge it in practice.

Rancière also uses the term 'love' in his clarification of the notion of a society of equals. He says that 'it is this [ignition of humanity] that is the just measure of similarity, igniting that gentle penchant of the heart that leads us to help each other and love each other' (1991:72). He suggests that it is not love that equalises us but that a focus on equality enables us to help and, therefore, love each other. For Rancière, acts of emancipation create the conditions under which love for one another can flourish. Love, therefore, becomes a description, for Freire, of the state of caring for the student in moments of rupture. For Rancière, love is one of the possibilities awoken from the method of equalising through acts of will and rupture.

My own experience as a trapeze novice is useful as a way of emphasising some of the themes of will and rupture in relation to the care of the teacher. I strove for a year to build the strength in my feet needed to climb a rope, each time breaking the skin and bruising the flesh as I worked towards understanding myself as an aerial being. The pain diminished as I learnt the technique needed to keep me safe and, although the wounds have subsequently healed, my feet are permanently scarred. Similarly, my

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[24] The term 'love' holds many layers beyond those discussed in this chapter. These layers include the spiritual and social constructs of romantic and sacred love. The reader may bring these associations phenomenologically to the use of the term. I do not. I am, therefore, not using the term to describe the nature of pedagogic tactical experience.

identity was transformed painfully through the work in a less easily expressible way. I moved from being someone who was fearful of movement and falling from a height towards one who had a better critical understanding of my ability to remain safe. My teacher also recognised the pain as a process through which I needed to travel in order to develop the strength required for the next phase of training; she was attentive to the tearing and bruising of my flesh but she did not try to stop it from happening. She recognised that this was part of learning the trapeze. This places the teacher working with young people in a double-bind - that of pain and care. The teacher is aware of pain and safety but she is also aware that these are individual locations with different boundaries for each student, who may either be mobilised or disempowered by the pain. The ethics of enabling a student to be harmed are discussed in detail in Chapter 1 where I state that harm is a mobile and individual aspect of the work. One student may be empowered by pain, another may be stultified by it. I use an example in Chapter 6 of The Game to interrogate this notion more fully and ruminate about the pedagogic choices held therein.

3.1.6 Physical pain

The metaphorical pain associated with a transformational discourse is synthesised and linked to the pain of the physical impact that trapeze training has on the body. It is a discomfort caused by a ruptured understanding of identity in the first instance and by the body being exposed to a new way of being. Thinking intersubjectively, the one is the same as the other; both imaginative and corporeal pain brings a new understanding of possibility, social relation and agency for the student. Senior Lecture in performance and research at Falmouth University, Joanne Whalley (2010) suggests that the skin represents the boundary between safe and unsafe places for the student/learner. She proposes that the teacher recognises this place as a fixed point and boundary. Manning enhances this suggestion with a discussion for, when 'we reach toward to touch, we reach toward that which is in-formation and trans-formation' (2007:85). She suggests that the skin holds the threshold between the self and the Other and that touch fuses the two.

Performance artist, lecturer and theorist Dominic Johnson (2010), however, suggests that, for him, it is only by breaching the skin that new fusions and transformations

are made in his performance practice. He declares his position as a teacher to be hypocritical because he considers his role as an educator, along with its safety responsibilities, to be one that disallows this same transformational understanding to be experienced by the students in his care. This places him in conflict as a practitioner that models transformation and as a teacher that is unable to allow students to practise it. My suggestion is that the breaching of the skin is a possible consequence of trapeze work but it is not its primary intention. The skin, body, and moment are an intertwined experience within the learning of the student. The boundary that is breached is an imaginary social and personal boundary rather than a real one even though blood may be drawn (and was in other instances).

The experiences of the student in The Gazelle example above were not an investigation or a rupture within the student's skin in the literal sense but were about piercing the unconscious understanding of the self. The duet that she and I performed was insensitively handled by me: the rupture engendered a miscommunication rather than a passage towards understanding. I took away her will to act by taking away her equality.

The territories of risk explored within my work appear to intersect within an idea of ruptured understanding, through dialogical communication, supported by a relationship of mutual trust and respect (tact) towards the anticipatory resolution of the student by the teacher. This dialogue can be described as a 'dialectic of love', which is a Frierean ideal and pedagogic symbol. This terminology does not describe my experiences in the rehearsal room. I prefer to describe it as a dialectic of violent care. This description, for me, holds the notion of death as potential violence into the possibility of existence and re-inscribes Manning's appreciation that touching between people is a violent act. I propose that the tact of the teacher mobilises this dialectical engagement. The next section examines this notion of tact further by considering critical and radical pedagogy as a starting point for interrogating pedagogic dialogue.

3.2   Critical Pedagogy

The relevance of the educational practitioner and philosopher, Paulo Freire, cannot be ignored when working with radical and critical pedagogy for transformative social change. The impact of his writing and teaching is significant for Western educational practices; his thinking is still placed at the heart of the global political education debate (McLaren & Leonard, 1993). Freire's basic premise that the learner is emancipated through dialogic praxical learning has become a key discussion in contemporary education practice and training. Freire's proposition is that through radical pedagogy, the oppressed subject becomes critically conscious of their oppression and, through the dialogical teaching of literacy, the learner is able to free themselves from dominant socially and politically dehumanising forces. Indeed, Freire's ontological imperative of humanisation was a starting point for the praxical reflections within my own thesis.

Through the course of this section, I will explore the principles of Freirean pedagogy and argue two points. The first point is a declaration that Freire's premise that true dialogical education cannot come from positions of domination is problematic. The second argument is with Miedema's cognate claim that truly dialogical relationships cannot be practised within asymmetrical situations, for example one that involves children. I argue that consideration of children, and in particular adolescents, in this way perpetuates the cycles of vulnerability discussed in Chapter 1 (Furedi, 2004). I consider the social implications of generalised conscientisation and place it next to the practice of intimate tactful dialogues that proliferate within my pedagogy. This antagonism will allow me to explore the contradictions inherent for the practitioner when working dialogically with adolescents in this way. I conclude this section with a consideration of the terms 'will' and 'authentic resolution' and their relationship to the 'autonomy, mastery and intimacy' discussed within the previous chapter (Irwin and Millstein 1991: 3).

The question has been posed as to the relevance of Freire's ideologies within a Western society (Freire *et al.* 1998; Lankshear & McLaren 1993; Shor 1986; Shor & Freire 1992). Philosopher Richard Gibson argues that Freire's work is taken by academics and used in any way to fit with the point that they are trying to make: '[i]gnoring the transcendent human struggle for freedom from necessity' which is the overreaching location and intention for Freire's work 'to the point where each person

became a personification of their own separate tiny little capital, with each element of the processes of capital embodied in them' (1999:3). He adds that this personification helped 'create an atmosphere in academia where students learned one idea is as good as the next since all is sheer perspective and discourse, social practice discounted as a source of truth-finding' (1999: 3). Gibson's persuasive article claims that Freire's work is both over-used and under-explored. He emphasises, however, that it can offer insight into how questions can 'deepen insight into egalitarian social practices' (1999: 1).

The general criticisms of Freire's work, which include its ability to bend to the whim of the teacher and that it led to a diminishing of the quality of learning, articulate the need, which is reinforced by Freire himself, to adapt his techniques to each learning situation: he 'ask[s] them to rewrite and recreate [his] ideas' (Freire,1996: x). Moreover, it should be recognised that a Freirean approach to teaching is a constantly dialectical and destabilising activity for the teacher who orientates around the temporal, spatial, cultural and individual situation of the student at all times. Broadly, Freirean pedagogy is not a framework or method for a radicalising curriculum but an attitude towards disturbing anything that is taken for granted, especially the work of the teacher.

By disturbing the taken for granted, it could be said that Freire is proposing an act of Rancièrean dissensus. However, Rancière denounces transformational or radical pedagogy as one which reinforces the neoliberalist concerns of accountability, competition and privatisation because it is about learning a specific knowledge which will end up being only the knowledge of a schoolchild. Freire's knowledge transmission is primarily that of literacy: acts of dialogue between teacher and students create a word list that is then taught to the students in the traditional manner. It is arguably motivated by the cultural and historical conditions of the learning.

Rancière's exemplary practitioner, Jacotot, teaches not that which is known and understood by him but that which is not. He is ignorant of the gap between his knowledge and those of his learners and takes no steps to fill it. Rancière's proposition is that Jacotot offers equality to his students through acts of will. The act of dissensus is not the act of learning something specific, as it is for Freire, but of the

student learning to write like an individual artist. The student is, therefore, opened by the encounter of wills rather than closed by the encounter with his or her own ignorance.

With this heritage of criticism and warning, it is with caution that I use a broadly Rancièrean approach to radical pedagogy. I am attending to two of the five general principles that underpin Freirean pedagogy, viewed through the lens of Rancière's emancipatory ideology. Freire's five general principles are:

> 1) the strategic advantages of dialogue as a "problem-posing" method in teaching; 2) the question of domination in dialogical settings orientated towards mutual respect and a loving relationship; 3) the dialectic of authority and freedom that underlines learning; 4) the social semiotic aspect of "codification" and "decodification" as a strategy for nondogmatic cultural criticism; and 5) the need to connect language and experience. (Morrow & Torres, 2002:130)

By considering each principle in relation to my work, it is clear that there are thematic similarities and differences between the work of Rancière and Freire. The first principle is the most divisive in terms of Rancièrean ideology, both in its terminology (the use of the word 'strategic') and in thinking of problems as a way through the pedagogic encounter. For Rancière and myself, teaching is not a strategy to be applied within any given context. If it were, I could be seen as the 'master explicator' that Rancière disavows. The problem posed within my practice is not simply the trapeze 'move' that the student wishes to learn, it is the problem of the self in relation to the trapeze that is encountered. The motivation for the teaching moment is the students' autonomy within a new corporeal location and the awareness of self it uncovers within them of which I can have no knowledge or predetermined outcome in mind.

The second principle is again problematic within the Rancièrean proposition. For Freire, the issues of domination, love and respect are raised by him in the act of teaching. However, as Biesta points out, 'In order to achieve emancipation [in a Freirean manner] *someone else* whose consciousness is not subjected to the workings of power needs to provide us with an account of our own objective condition' (2010:44). This, thereby, fortifies the perception that the student is ignorant in the face of the knowledgeable 'master' who tells us what to think of our cultural situation.

The third principle is key within the whole of Rancière's thinking and is at the heart of this thesis itself: the role of authority in learning. This dialectical balancing act between knowledge and coercion is powerful within Rancière's thinking. He suggests that a proposition of equality does not mean that all intelligences are equal, because some people have more knowledge than others, or that one's intellectual capacity is identical to another's, but that 'there is only one intelligence at work in all intellectual training' (Rancière in Bingham and Biesta, 2010: 7). It is learning itself that is the authority.

Principle four articulates two main points - firstly, that a teacher can enable students to be aware of their social condition and, secondly, that this condition is evasive. As you can see from my opening chapter, I have articulated the evasive and constitutive nature of the police order within both the classroom and society. The fact that Freire attempts to classify and codify this for students is problematic because, once again, it emphasises the idea that you can simplify this relation between the self and society for all students within one paradigm. I, like Rancière, contest the decodification of culture in this way because it annihilates the individuality of the students involved.

Finally, and most importantly, Freire's fifth principle links language and experience. This is also true of Rancière, who discusses it in two ways. The first point is his suggestion that language is overused by the master explicator and he recognises that there is a paradoxical relation between power and language: 'How can we understand this paradoxical privilege of speech over writing, hearing over sight?' (1991:5) In this instance, Rancière ascribes language, and spoken language in particular, as being the explicator's primary tool, used in favour of the student's own being, doing and seeing.

The second point is Freire's focus on poetic language, which is created by the master writer and is able to equalise the relation between people rather than stultifying one individual in relation to another: 'Someone has addressed words to them that they want to recognise and respond to, not as students or as learned men, but as people... under the sign of equality' (1991:11). Therefore, for Rancière, there is a difference between telling and saying, explicating and describing. The first closes down the possibility of the student finding their own way and the second opens it out to be an equalising process of recognition and response. For me, too, the need to do, rather

than talk about, is paramount. In The Gazelle example above, the student was stultified by the intersession of explicatory language into the encounter and was freed only through the enactment of a genuine response and rejection of it.

These five tenets of radical pedagogy, seen through a Rancièrean lens, expand my understanding of my practice. They reinforce my commitment to active curiosity from the teacher, me, towards the student, to ensure that he or she is the mobilising force at the heart of the project. The challenges given are, therefore, individuated according to the volition and skill of each student rather than a predetermined outcome on my part. The students risk failure and falling within the work. Failure and the chance of ridicule as well as risk of falling are significantly reduced by what Slovic (2000) calls 'voluntariness', which I discussed in Chapter 2. The impact of any risk-taking decision is diminished by the act of the students' engaged will through the doing of it. Heidegger makes a similar point, that within the act of expression, the experience is not retold or remembered but is experienced pertinently through the revelation of the said and the unsaid: 'only when there is a language is there a world' (1971:3). These suggestions reveal the complex and overlapping impact that language has on experience and that experience has on language; the two are indivisible.

The risk of miscommunication and interpretation within this dialogical relationship is perhaps the most significant of principles to consider within Freirean pedagogy. The "codification" and "decodification" of speech may be considered as a hermeneutic (or interpretive) phenomenological way of seeing. It is pertinent to note that interpretation represents another contradiction within Freire's work. He advocates a praxical, intersubjective dialogue between teacher and student but then uses a literary communicative model to teach (Morrow & Torres, 2002). The contradiction, for Freire and for my own practice, is the question of deterministic language being used within classrooms and the proposition that with this the dynamic of institutional or political dominance may be rehearsed and reinforced. If this police order is reinforced, it nullifies the social impact of the freedom-based discourse. My project, as many radical pedagogic modes do, locates the learning for the student as a corporeal provocation, enabling the teacher to begin a more individualised and interpersonal dialogue which involves touch and silence in combination with speech-driven communication, thereby rehearsing interaction towards intersubjective understanding and equality.

The significance of power relations within this discussion, particularly in a relationship that involves young people, resides within the paradox of pedagogy - the dialectical relationship between authority and learning. Freire states that '[f]reedom needs authority in order to be free' (Shor & Freire, 1987:91) whereas, for Rancière, authority does not mean an act of telling but an act of will towards the student's equality. The teacher does not tell students what to think, they tell him or her that they can think and learn as they did when they were a child learning to talk. He goes on to say that '[h]e will learn what he wants, nothing maybe. He will know he can learn because the same intelligence is at work in all the productions of the human mind, and a man can always understand another man's words' (1991:18). In the same way, the students in my care may choose to learn nothing from their encounter with the trapeze except for the knowledge that they are equal to the task of learning, developing and progressing in the face of the risks the trapeze represents.

The complexity of authority and authoritarianism is within the nature of the pedagogic relation and its intention towards anticipatory resolution. Freire is using the language of domination to define and thereby confine his thinking about freedom. Can freedom be shaped? And if it is up to the educator to shape the liberty of the students, then what power has the teacher been given? The role of the educator in my work is to inspire the liberties of my students rather than shape them. As you will see in Chapter 4, Zaccarini and Leyser talk about the teacher as a 'container' for the safety and learning of their students. This language reflects the idea of shaping, restricting as well as inspiring the work of the students.

There is a proposition that it is impossible to talk about the teacher's role as one that is anything other than dominant and restrictive. If this is the case, then the very possibility of radical pedagogy for transformative change is questioned. Rancière's thinking addresses this contention. By placing the emphasis away from an outcome of specific transformation to an act of equality through the method of teaching, it is in the act, not the outcome, that equality is rehearsed. In the *doing*. It is the student's awareness that equality is a possibility that creates an anticipatory resolution because, as I suggest in the Introduction, it recognises 'a more temporally distinct and fluid appreciation of the student's ability to know themselves in relation to the risk at hand' (2011:12).

Freire's pedagogy demands a subject-to-subject dialogical relationship between student and teacher. This is identical to Rancière's notion of the teacher using their intelligence to work with the intelligence of the student. Freire's practice involved working with adults and there is a suggestion that the asymmetrical relation between children and teacher means that Freire's ideology is irreconcilable with working with children. Professor in Educational Foundations and Religious Education, Siebren Miedema, questions the possibility of an asymmetrical relationship between children and adults within the pedagogic process and notes that true dialogue is impossible within an institutional setting (1994: 198). To investigate this further, it is pertinent to return to Marx as a way of viewing Freire's heritage and ideological location:

> The materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and upbringing forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that it is essential to educate the educator himself. This doctrine must, therefore, *divide society into two parts*, one of which is superior to society. (Marx 1969:13)

Freire's practice cannot be divorced from the Marxist premise that society is divided into two parts, one of which is superior to the other, and that this superior knowledge is a position from where revolutionary practice is provoked. The teacher in this instance is superior. This is the asymmetrical relation of which Miedema writes. My contention is that, despite an asymmetrical relationship, dialogue is possible in terms of knowledge because there is no superiority of will or inequality between the student and the teacher. Both are able to critically engage with their situations and meet each other as subject and subject, will to will, if there is an intention towards the learning of the student through mutual trust. Biesta advances this notion by attending to the fact that Rancière uses the term 'distrust' in relation to anyone who 'assumes inequalities and proposes to reduce it' and states that they, thereby, set up a 'hierarchy of inequalities... and will produce inequality ad infinitum' (2010:53).

It is pertinent to note that Freire agreed that schools were no place for dialogical education, not because he recognised that dialogue with children was impossible but because he felt that a culture of dominance was antagonistic to an educative dialogue for social change and that cultures of dominance pervade institutional settings. He states that '[t]he ideal is to fight against the system taking the two fronts, the one internal to the schooling system and the one external' (Freire, 1990:202). My work is practised outside of the traditional schooling system; it needs to be so in order to

negotiate the complex health and safety concerns raised by 'dangerous' pedagogy. The work does, however, sit within another institutional frame - that of the University at which I am studying and the historical relations I have with the students from their secondary schools. This, I suggest, is a potent conveyor of empowerment discourse by enabling the young people to step outside their understanding of education as boundaried and target-driven and inspire them to inhabit the complexities of understanding and identity as spatial and temporal. The two are in dynamic relation. This is rehearsed through the removal of the student from a possible culture of domination into a new space where different modes of behaviour are expected. The work raises the stakes in terms of the asymmetrical dialogical relationship. I argued in Chapter 1 that potent discourses within education are based on fear and vulnerability and that a possible counter to this is challenge and responsibility through aerial work. Within this proposition, the student, despite being legally designated as a child and who would in other situations be considered 'lesser' in status to me, the teacher, is empowered through their relationship to risk and death. The dialogue is borne from trust and responsibility rather than traditional authoritarian structures that may communicate dominance.

There is another apparent paradox that fuels Freire's argument for a dialectical relationship within the education process: the paradox of objectification. Freire's suggestion is that the student needs to objectify, scientifically, the self in order to recognise the self as objectified.[25] This scientific objectivity relates to Marx's (1970) critique of subjectivism and psychologism that results from human interaction as a constant and evolving social interaction rather than disparate act.

> The separation of objectivity from subjectivity, the denial of the latter when analyzing reality or acting upon it, is objectivism. On the one hand, the denial of objectivity in analysis or action, resulting in a subjectivism which leads to solipsistic positions, denies action itself by denying objective reality. Neither objectivism nor subjectivism, nor yet psychologism is propounded here, but rather subjectivity and objectivity in constant dialectical relationship. (1970:32)

Here the dialectical location of intersubjective understanding becomes a moment of tension between my work and that of Freire. My intention is not to objectify the students that I work with or to enable them to see their objectification within the

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[25] See also Willis(1981) for a British example of this type of objectification in action, he given the example of working class boys who became inculcated into a system as objects to be uncritical Objects.

wider police order. To me, the object of the interaction is to enable potential ruptures of identity to manifest themselves through the skills learnt on the trapeze rather than through a possibly conflicting series of 'conscientisation' processes that are advocated by Freire. I support a process that has no less potential for a rupturing of understanding but that does not teleologically bring the student to a Marxist perspective on objectification. The student encounters their physical ability through risk and their identity through success and failure. They do it voluntarily, following a Rancièrean proposition that they will 'learn what [they] want, nothing maybe' (1991:18). This concept of teaching is very close to what Heidegger would call unconcealing. Educational philosopher Ilan Gur-Ze'ev elucidates this by saying unconcealing 'opens free relations between the human and beings in their openness... since this kind of teacher in not instrumental and does not transmit information' (Gur-Ze'ev in Peters 2002: 76). Gur-Ze'ev's view recognises that for both Rancière and Heidegger the learning takes place within the student regardless of the teacher's knowledge, '[the teacher's] conduct, therefore, often produces the impression that we learn nothing from him' (Heidegger in Peters, 2002:76). By offering the trapeze as a provocation towards possibility, I, the teacher, open certain potential futures for the student but I let them learn what they will from it, perhaps nothing. The possibility for intersubjective understanding should not be overlooked or denied but I argue that a process centred on mutual equality can impact pertinently without the need for discussions that objectify the student. The student is left open to the discoveries they make for and of themselves.

The problem that occurs for the educator is one of location, both inside and outside of the critical encounter with the student in order to shape the educational event. Freire takes a distant position that cultural critic Henry Giroux calls 'border crossing':

> Teachers become border-crossers through their ability to not only make different narratives available to themselves and other students but also by legitimating difference as a basic condition for understanding the limits of one's own voice. (1992: 170)

This vantage point offers Freire the position of anthropologist in the worlds of his students and he admits to his own limited knowledge of the students' culture. It enables him to be curious about the structures through which his students live and work. For him it is essential that this figurative distance from the culture of his

students is retained in order to present a critical encounter that challenges rather than reinforces dominant ideology. It is by maintaining this distance from the personal experiences of his students that Freire retains his own autonomy as a conduit for their learning.

Giroux suggests that this method reasserts a dominant discourse through the language of difference, as opposed to similarity, and he proposes that educators reconsider their position 'outside the geography of rationality and reason' (1992:178). Rancière takes Giroux's point even further by declaring that the distance seen by the educator is, in fact what makes the relationship problematic. This is not an ignorant person conveying meaningless 'poorly disguised' knowledge or a malignant character; on the contrary, it is a person who is in touch with his or her enlightenment. Therefore, their ability to stultify is 'more efficacious, because [they are] knowledgeable, enlightened and of good faith' (1991:7). The distance seen by the educator, in this instance, becomes a tool for determinism and stultification rather than equality because it asserts that 'I am not like you, I know better'.

The notion of good faith also warrants consideration and will be expanded more fully within the next chapter in relation to faith as a mobilising element of pedagogic tact. As I discussed through the Introduction and first chapter, the intention of anyone engaged in teaching is towards the transformation of a student in the momentary. This intention is subject and constitutive of the will of the teacher and their awareness of the needs, discourses surrounding and individuality of the student. Any act of will enacted by the teacher is, therefore, one that contains different knowledge from that of the student. I cannot know what the student *is* or what the interaction will mean to and for them. However, a consideration of Heideggerian thinking may elucidate this seemingly insurmountable bind. Gur-Ze'ev usefully demonstrates that radical education misses the fact that the self as lived with others 'constitutes the human's eternal companion' (2002: 73). He continues:

> Counter-education can find in Heidegger's philosophy a different kind of concept of transcendence. In it transcendence is conditioned by overcoming authority, any authority especially that of the one who "knows" or sets standards, quests or telos. Here it is impossible to differentiate between self overcoming as 'let learn' and unconcealment as let-things-be what they already are in their essence. (2002:77)

Gur-Ze'ev emphasises that, although a commitment to non-determinising education may be the intention of the radically committed teacher, *Dasein* will always be determined by the others around its person. The impossibility of a truly emancipatory dialogue between teacher and student is limited by how far the teacher is aware of their ability to determine the knowledge and, therefore, confine it to inauthenticity. It is the knowledge that the student is defined by his or her relation to others that frees the teacher to work against it. The teacher is resolute to liberate rather than domesticate.

My position is to locate myself curiously into the pedagogic situation in a more fluid way. Tact is, therefore, borne out of a teacher or practitioner's position towards the development of the student as a critical agent. It is physical as well as linguistic, working integratedly. The appropriateness of fluidity is driven by the need for an attentive and involved presence within the student's work and an avoidance of rationalisation. This position is neither involved, nor removed. It is dialogical. This dialogical position is defined by its location as practical, intersubjective and reflective in the first instance and the ability to be curiously orientated toward the Other within the relationship, rather than within a personal appreciation of the discourse as an opportunity to show my knowledge

A desire to equalise the student is practised instinctively rather than analytically as such, suggests Rancière; it is more naturally associated with parenting than teaching. Through the course of his writing, he repeatedly considers the engagement needed from teacher to student to be an attentive engagement of wills. He proposes that universal teaching cannot be 'instituted' but 'they can apply it to teaching their children' (1991:106). Instituting ignorance as a 'framework' under which all teachers could work with all students fails because it demands an invested and situated relationship. It involves the teacher being able to intuit the will of the student in relation to the teacher's own learning and, therefore, offer appropriate motivation to the student for them to engage their own will for themselves. He does so by 'knowing himself... by examining the intellectual acts of which he is subject... and recognising and challenging them in his son' (1991*:* 36-37). By constantly placing this dialogue within a familial context, Rancière implies that this type of learning demands a high level of investment and attention from the teacher. I suggest that this is the level of engagement that I bring within the aerial sessions that I teach. The attention is

beyond a 'faith' in my knowledge, my experience or my instinct but is situated in constant reflection and engagement with equality.

Freire would argue that his praxical engagement is also located towards the student. However, it is the fact that his ideology is enacted through deterministic or explicatory means that I find blocks the intersubjective nature of the encounter. As he says '[f]or dialogue to be a method of true knowledge, the knowing subjects must approach reality scientifically in order to seek the dialectical connections which explain the form of reality' (1970:32). This reiteration of rational discourses alienates the student from their individual position within the encounter. In the dialogical moment of the encounter within my work, the student is corporeally engaged in an encounter with risk. The rationalisation of this moment through scientific language or active reflection reinforces dominant fear-driven discourses. This is exemplified in the first section of this chapter, where a fear-driven police order narrative ruptured the mutual trust generated by the teacher's attentive orientation towards the student when learning The Gazelle.

This is a position that Van Manen calls 'orienting to the phenomenon' It arises out of the ability to question the nature of the encounter and recognise the lessons that it has to teach us about our methodology, our experience or the experiences of the students (1990:43) - the 'know yourself' or Rancière's thesis (1991:36). The process of writing about an event or phenomena enables the teacher to 'discover what lies at the ontological core of our being. So that in words, or perhaps better, in spite of words, we find "memories" that paradoxically we never thought or felt before' (Van Manen 1990:13). I am neither removed from, nor incorporated within, the cultural system. The process of writing takes me away from the immediacy of the teaching event but allows me to remember with a more thoughtful character: 'a heedful, mindful wondering about the project of life, of living of what it means to live a life' (1990:12). The poetic nature of phenomenological writing enables me to communicate the nature of an event for my reader. This final act of communication is one that I hope to share with Rancière in order to reveal along with a single moment of practice, moments that describe the nature of the pedagogic experience as it appears to me.

3.2.1 Authenticity and the struggle to become critically autonomous, 'masterful' and intimate.

Within radical pedagogy, the role of the educator is to enable the student to be 'more fully human' (Freire, 1970). Freire repeats this phrase fourteen times in his opening chapter of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. His proposition is that people who are oppressed are dehumanised and that this dehumanisation can be countered once the student is aware of their situation, objectifies him or herself as dehumanised and acts to free this self. This idea of full humanity is problematic for can we be anything other than fully human within all acts?

My contention is not that people have experienced dehumanising oppression but that this state is somehow 'outside' the realm of what constitutes humanity. I suggest that a dialectical appreciation of the self as in a constant state of becoming authentic is the critical awareness that students are taught through my work. This is derived from a Heideggerian proposition, which in turn leads me towards Rancière's insistence that equalising practice is a method of constant verification towards emancipation. If, for Heidegger, *Dasein* is constantly falling towards the inauthentic talk of the everyday in avoidance of death and authenticity is the opposite of this, and is an impossible state (1962: 174), then what encounters with death through risk provide are opportunities towards authenticity and equality.

When investigating risk-taking in adolescence, as discussed in the last chapter, Irwin and Millstein suggest that '[r]isk taking behaviours fulfil many developmental needs such as autonomy, mastery and intimacy'. They propose that 'it is simplistic to take the position that all risk-taking behaviours in adolescence should be eliminated' (1991:26). They acknowledge that there is a need for young people and adolescents to seek out opportunities to rehearse 'autonomy, mastery and intimacy' as an ideal state of being. For Freire, this is captured within the idea of 'critical literacy' and the suggestion that, through an awareness of their illiteracy, the oppressed are freed - but only when they begin the project of becoming literate. Moreover, he suggests that this act of engaged learning can enable the oppressed to begin to fight their way out of oppression. Rather like Freire, Irwin and Millstein's proposition is that

adolescents should engage in activities that attempt to meet the developmental needs of the students because they 'are not only more realistic' than interventions aimed at limiting risky activities, 'they are preferable for the development of the necessary social, psychological, and physiological skills in adolescence' (1991:28).

The tension between the two ways of viewing emancipation is that of conscious engagement. For Freire, the oppressed student recognises and objectifies their dehumanised state and works towards an idealised state of humanity. For Irwin and Millstein, the drive to take risks is considered an unconscious but entirely human condition that rehearses a social presentation of autonomy. For Rancière, and to some extent Heidegger, this resultant self-knowledge is orientated towards, rather than situated within, humanity. The act is one of verification within the encounter, which needs to be practised through every opportunity as an act of 'will' (for Rancière) and 'resolution' (for Heidegger). If will or resolution is engaged then the student will be liberated; if not, they may be domesticated.

Heidegger proposes that the notion of a totalised, united and autonomous self is an impossibility. He argues this for two reasons: firstly, that a striving towards unity in experience, which is spatial and temporal, fails to recognise the constitutional variations within the spaces and times occupied, and the unity of this nature would be an inappropriate 'full stop' to an inchoate or emergent understanding that is transformed by circumstance. Secondly, Heidegger denounces the notions of preceding philosophers by concluding that their belief that selfrealisation is reconceived through existence and action within expression is yet another false relation to the transitory nature of existence. He defines the self in terms of 'running ahead of itself in care' (1962: 220), which suggests that *Dasein* is fundamentally oriented toward the future. For Heidegger, expression, like unity, is a marker on the road towards authenticity. He suggests that the expressive act is a move toward a mobile authenticity of self and that the desire for a fully autonomous self is a futile project. Consequently, within my proposition for a commitment to 'anticipatory resolution', I am invoking a Heideggerian phenomenological intention towards a momentary dialectical recognition of the self in potential and I am seeking equilibrium for the student within this unbalanced or disruptive experience.

My proposition is that, rather than a movement towards being 'more fully human' through critical literacy, the adolescents that I work with are striving towards 'anticipatory resolution' through acts of will. I have broken down the three states - autonomy, mastery and intimacy - in order to reveal the tensions that I find within them. Although the idealised state of individualised resolution is mobile, and continues to be mobile, mastery is something tangible, rather like literacy. Although it develops with rigour and hard work, mastery seems to be an objectively targeted proposition. To master an act, one has full awareness of it and how to achieve an ultimate practice of it. Although this ultimate practice is still an ideal proposition, it is grounded in a scientifically measurable question - can I do this? - with a simple answer - yes or no. Mastery is the suggestion of a full stop rather than an open or freedom-based proposition. Heidegger pushes this point further:

> What we usually call 'knowing' is being acquainted with something and its qualities. In virtue of these cognitions we 'master' things. This mastering 'knowledge' is given over to a being at hand, to its structure and its usefulness. Such 'knowledge' seizes the being, 'dominates' it, and thereby goes beyond it and constantly surpasses it. (1962:3)

He asserts that the terminology of the word 'mastery' is instrumental within the nullification of an open awareness of language itself. The term 'mastery', when used in either context, closes down the situation to a rational, scientific or end-driven discourse. However, it could also be seen that mastery is a proposition for ongoing development. For Rancière, the notion is bifurcated into the ability to stultify if taken from the Heideggerian perspective above and to emancipate if taken in combination with the attitude 'know yourself' (1991:36); within the term 'mastery' itself, resides the educational paradox.

The proposition that intimacy is a developmental ideal for those taking risks is poetic rather than tangible and offers the implication of a life lived in relation to others. In response to Rancière, it is my awareness of myself, in relation to others, that provides the possibility for intimacy within my work. A pertinent awareness of the possibility of failure is magnified when it is put in relationship to failure in front of an Other or Others, and the provocation of trust and mutual respect is mobilised by the territories of risk, as defined in the previous chapter, and when considered alongside Heidegger's proposition that life is consciously lived with and for others [*Mitsein*].

At the heart of this discussion on pedagogy is a desire to reconcile the paradoxes of existence so that the student can reach moments towards ontological resolution. The paradoxes of existence are manifest, for me, within some simple tenets:

- I am a being shaped by my own relation to death, through living. This is what Heidegger calls 'the impossible possibility of life' (1962).

- This relation to death is mobilised by my anxiety (rather than fear) in the face of it.

- That I am defined by an individualised self, which cannot be understood with another self - my student/my teacher/my friend. The paradox of alterity, which makes me both distant and equalised.

- That expression of an act is both the act and an evocation of the act for another; there is both communication and silence in the evocation. In the act of communicating, I invoke, being, doing and seeing.

Heidegger's proposition is that paradoxes are irreconcilable for any duration, that the conscious engagement with them through expression will be cultural, spatial and temporally dependent. This is a dialectical[26] appreciation, with the synthesis as a struggle towards a momentary understanding that is authentic, rather than towards a utopian or idealistic specific of what constitutes autonomy.

For Freire, this autonomous being is manifest through praxical engagement with the intersubjective nature of understanding. He uses scientific language, and the scientific propositions of Marx, to unpick subjectivism as a negative project of a dualistic ideology. His suggestion is that subjectivism, or solipsism, is the state of uncritical awareness of one's situation. This is similar to Heidegger's proposition that, to live authentically, one must have a genuine and critical appreciation of the possible impossibility of death and, moreover, similar to Irwin and Millstein's proposition, that it is through the taking of risks that adolescents learn autonomy. They agree that authenticity is borne from a conscious act of realisation of, communion with or knowing about the situation presented at that moment, in that space.

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[26] Again, as discussed in the Introduction, Heidegger's disavowel and 'embarassment' at dialectics are usefully articulated within the work of Gonzalez (2002). I acknowledge the tension by attributing this method to Heideggerian form.

My suggestion is that anticipatory resolution, through contact with risk, resides in a constant dialectical relationship between the self as intersubjective and between the teacher and the student as separate, but 'united' towards a mutual goal (the teacher is defined by the student and *vice versa*). This notion of anticipatory resolution carries with it the understanding that existence is about authentic relation to a possible future rather than a desire to remain fixed within a rationalised discourse. The fluidity of this state of resolution is one that is recognised by those who study risk and those who teach aerial work. Through the course of the next chapter, I place my personal teaching experiences alongside those of two expert teachers. I consider the notion of anticipatory resolution and being with others in this light.

Chapter 4.0

Know Yourself: Mapping the Risk Encounter

The preceding chapters have interrogated the implications of risk and teaching within the context of contemporary risk-averse culture. I have argued that dialogical, equality-based educational methods which encourage risk-taking are one possible way to counter the 'stultification' that overregulation and fear may generate, which stops students from reaching their full potential (Rancière, 1991:1). These critical foundations prepare the ground for my argument that an educative environment, outside of the traditional schooling system, which provides an opportunity to experience and rehearse risk-taking, is one way of providing for the development towards authenticity and anticipatory resolution within the student. This way has the power to liberate or domesticate students, and the attentive teacher circulates around this tension through their work. This chapter questions the conditions under which liberation and domestication, emancipation and stultification may take place.

I consider the work of two aerial practitioners, teachers and academics, Matilda Leyser and John Paul Zaccarini. I critically engage their experiences with my own practice. The purpose of this chapter is to unravel some of the personal experiences that impact upon my pedagogic practice and touch upon some of the common themes that map the experience of being a teacher who engages with risk, pain, paradox and metaphor. This more descriptive chapter acknowledges the intrinsic, deeply instinctive and anecdotal material that proliferates and defines educative experience for Leyser, Zaccarini and myself. I conducted interviews with both teachers and also rely on their academic articles, presentations at conferences as well as. in Zaccarini's case, an interview conducted by Tom Ellingsworth for *Circus Magazine* (2009).

Through the chapter, I interrogate the idea of mapping as a method through which aerial teaching and its relation to pedagogic tact may be described. I repeatedly return to this cartographic metaphor in order to illustrate that experience is a journey that declares the existing tension between actions done in a specific time, dependent upon the specific place in which they are enacted. Chris Perkins usefully explores the emerging use of maps in order to capture the embodied practices of performance-making. He emphasises the appropriateness of the cartographic

analogy by saying that 'meaning is constituted in the actions that mapping processes call into being. So the performative and embodied mapping … is both dynamic and enacted' (2004:1). My application of this way of viewing pedagogic practice is representative of a desire to engage with the act of momentary meaning-making, and to capture its enactment and documentation in relation to the cultural and personal territories or boundaries within the work.

More than this, however, is the idea that the teacher retains a sense of the journey undergone in her memory, collected notes or documentation of each pedagogic encounter, positive and negative. This map of the relational journey between teacher and student establishes a new terrain under which potential future pedagogic encounters are viewed and re-mapped. It is the mapping of the encounter that is both a foundation and mobilising force for the tact needed to commit to ongoing risky encounters with students. The map is, therefore, a means of describing the attentive and committed process of noticing the student, attending to the various pedagogic perspectives within the practice, the gathering of different materials to use in support of the work and also refers to the documentation of that moment through note-taking and writing. The examples used throughout the thesis are a part of the map, as is my contact with Zaccarini and Leyser, but they cannot be fully understood without the formative structures through which to view and align them. They are the strata of an attentive consideration of liberation and domestication.

In Chapter 3, I unpacked the territories of risk that an encounter with death can offer for students and the complex interrelation between these territories and the intentions of the teacher. In Perkins' terms, 'the death becomes alive' when a 'map is called into being to meet particular human needs, flowing from action instead of being grounded in power' (2004: 7). What is made apparent to me through this conscious and committed mapping of my practice are the tactful negotiations practised by any pedagogue who works with risk and, in particular, the tact needed to encompass the flow of different impulses that need to be met within the work, which are the human (the student and teacher) and the institutional. These factors impact upon the specific choices that are made by teachers in relation to their embodied knowledge and observation of the student. Tact is needed to reconcile (momentarily) the paradoxes exposed through the work, without leading the student towards a predetermined, domesticated outcome (or destination).

Interestingly, Rancière employs a cartographic analogy in his discussion of explicatory teaching, declaring that:

> [P]edagogic logic appears as the act that lifts a veil off the obscurity of things. Its topography is that of top to bottom, of surface to depth. The explicator is the one who brings obscure depth to the clear surface, and who, conversely, brings the false appearance of the surface back to the secret depths of reason. (Rancière in Bingham and Biesta, 2010:4)

He is cautioning the emancipatory teacher against the bringing of false truths to the surface, which have the 'appearance' of clarity, as well as advocating engaged enquiry, which creates the possibility of clarity. He recognises that there are two types of knowledge at play within the bringing of knowledge to the surface: that which is known and privileged by pedagogic logic and that which is discovered by the student. The first is immobile, fixed in time and space; it is the same for each student and each teacher in each learning situation and offers only re-conscription of quotidian concern. The second is unique, subject to the individual creativity and learning of the student and changes through time and space.

Rancière warns the teacher not to observe the superficial difference between the student's knowledge and what determinising education would see as the 'right' way of rationalising the world. He continues to say that giving depth to the superficial can bring about the false consciousness (of the domestic) exposed in the last chapter. His warning is a reminder to every teacher to focus on equalising the communication between herself and the student rather than interpreting the student's 'ignorance' as demonstrative of something specific that needs to be countered. Whilst mapping, the themes that come forth from my journey through practice, I acknowledge that I am in a dual position: first, I am the student who is made aware of her own knowledge through the practice of pedagogic tact and, second, I am the teacher who recognises that this knowledge is individual, situated, constituted and fluid. My discoveries are not an explication of universal knowledge but are a personal chart of my experiential landscape.

The following discussion exposes the similarities and divergences between traditional teaching and equality-based teaching alongside the circus and clown training experienced by myself, Leyser and Zaccarini. In particular, the territories of a teacher's interpretation, manner and faith are of interest. These areas hold tensions that enable me to question how meaning is extracted or made during and after an

encounter with a student and, therefore, how I can apply this meaning, challenge it or develop it within the next encounter with the student. It leads me towards recognising that meaning is impacted by what I do and how I do it. Meaning is inscribed and reinscribed through teaching that intends to emancipate.

The idea of faith becomes apparent when articulated alongside the phrase 'leaps of faith' used by both Leyser and Zaccarini to describe the moment when a student takes a risk. The cultivation of faith from the student becomes a fundamental principle for them within the development of their pedagogic tact. It can be linked with the idea of will, resolution and commitment, as espoused in the previous chapters, because it attends to a decision made by the student to take responsibility and to act in full knowledge of the pain, social consequences or death that may be incurred as a result.

In dialogue with Zaccarini and Leyser's thinking, I map the experiences they have had teaching, containing, challenging or performing risk. This prompts the discovery that traditional training technique, interpretation and exposition is, for us, less important than the momentary understanding and trust felt by the teacher and the student. This is a 'hunch' felt by the practitioners and recognised by Rancière as 'the community of equals' because it attends to the will (or faith) of the student and is mobilised by an attentive attitude from the teacher to ignite that will (1991:71). Looking back at Chapter 3, it could be said that this instinctual response by the teacher comes from 'knowing themselves' in relation to the discourses that they are subject to and are constituted within. Therefore, the act of mapping itself ascribes and challenges the meaning taken from an encounter, so taking us further towards an authentic, tactful relation with the student.

4.1   Mapping: The Complexity of 'Being'

As Heidegger suggests, 'Understanding appropriates understandingly that which is understood by it. In interpretation, understanding does not become something different. It becomes itself' (1962: 189). He proposes that, as soon as something is understood by the teacher or the practitioner, it becomes the thing itself. Meaning is made, not from the momentary experience itself, but from the understanding taken from it and the language used to evoke it. For him, understanding is an interpretative

activity. He continues, 'Nor is interpretation the acquiring of information about which is understood: it is the working out of possibilities in understanding' (1962: 189). Therefore, it can be argued that the meaning made is an interpretation of the possibilities of the practitioners interviewed and they are become a working description of the understanding of these teachers at the moment of talking. The talking creates the meaning in the momentary through interpretation by me, the writer, and by you, the reader. I acknowledge that the meanings taken by Leyser, Zaccarini and myself will differ in the moment, communication and reception of the material.

I begin by introducing the two artists that I interviewed as a way of drawing together and separating their experiences. Matilda Leyser calls herself a 'performer... [with a] physical bias' and a writer (Leyser, 2009: np). She struggles with the term 'aerialist' because she feels that it does not truly represent the complexity of her work, especially now she is 'in transit' from being a performer based in the air to a performer based on the ground. As a performer, Leyser has developed an international reputation for fragility and poetry, combining circus skills with physical theatre and dance. She explores gravity, using it to 'highlight our weighty existence and our relationship to the earth by hovering just above it' ("Matilda Leyser", n.d. para 1). She aims to reveal within the 'tricks' of her art, a human rather than a superhuman presence.

Leyser's work synthesises the poetics of writing with the ability to appear to defy gravity. Her paper, *The Paradoxes of the Aerialist*, proposed that being seen as strong in her performances is in dialectical relationship with her own fragility whilst she performs (Leyser, 2007). She claims to exist and be seen in a paradoxical relation to death whilst metaphorically personifying life and living. For Leyser, to work as an aerialist is to live life in relation to this paradox: liberation through entrapment.

John Paul Zaccarini calls himself 'a physical actor' (Zaccarini 2009:1). Like Leyser, he struggles to fix a specific label or genre onto the work that he does. During our conversation, it became apparent that the word 'circus' held a particular tension for him. 'I'd rather not use it, I have to use it because I have to relate to people... there isn't really any name for what it is but I use circus techniques in what I do' (2009:np). He has a reputation for creating work that is a 'political, passionate

theatrical polemic' (John Paul Zaccarini n.d: para 4). He blends this practice with a teaching career and his research into 'circoanalysis', which he defines as an attempt to 'reveal the person who does circus and why they do circus within a circus act' (Ellingsworth, 2009: np). The purpose of this, he continues, relates to an understanding of truth and authenticity, and he, like Leyser, acknowledges that this is about recognising a human connection in the work 'so that we can connect to other human beings, as opposed to trying to be superhuman' (Ellingsworth, 2009: np).

Zaccarini and Leyser are investigating circus as a way of uncovering the authentic self, meaning that they strive towards finding an honesty within their performances that exposes a part of their humanity. This is framed in different ways - through writing for Leyser and through Lacanian psychoanalysis for Zaccarini. They talk about the self in relation to death and in relation to metaphor and paradox. The physical technique employed in order to perform 'tricks' is something that they have both rejected in their performance practices and in their criticism of some training methods where 'process is not taught. Just get to the trick. Do what you do to get to the trick; ignore the process' (Zaccarini in Ellingsworth, 2009).

In circus, commercial value lies within the performance of the 'big trick' and the ability to repeat it in order to make the audience gasp. What Leyser and Zaccarini are looking for instead, however, is where the identity of the performer is placed within this commoditised business. They recognise that circus performers can be seen as superhuman and that this perhaps engenders and perpetuates a striving for superhumanity from the performers themselves. This superhuman drive feeds back into the identity of the performer, constituting and thereby fragmenting experience away from a universal humanity into an idealised one. It domesticates and stultifies the performer rather than freeing them to be an individual artist. This, they argue, perpetuates a cycle that closes down the performer, and Leyser and Zaccarini's educative work serves to open them back up to their potential as students and performers in the face of commercial and quotidian concerns.

Through their teaching, Leyser and Zaccarini hope to challenge some of the notions associated with circus as a performance discipline. They recognise that this will be rehearsed and repeated by students through their encounter with some teachers and then through their identity as performers within the circus industry. They both offer

students the opportunity to go beyond the obvious, to perform acts of 'dissensus' that appear to rupture the cultural fears of the police order in which they are situated. In Zaccarini's work at the University of Stockholm, for example, he challenged the 'pure' form of circus by encouraging an acrobatic student never to hold a handstand in his final showcase performance piece, something that the student had dedicated his life to perfecting. Thereby Zaccarini offered the possibility of dissensus to the student in order to fully interrogate what he was in relation to the act of standing on his hands and the artistic or career death associated with the student's failure to hold a perfect form. In this way, the handstand itself becomes an opening up of opportunities for the student to see themselves anew. Emancipated from the handstand and what it represented, the student was able to create an act that questioned the fragility of the human form. Dissensus is also performed through Zaccarini and Leyser's acts of questioning, in terms of naming themselves as performers rather than aerialists. They interrogate the normative associations that circus holds for audiences and performers to find a more considered appreciation of themselves as potentially deadened or enlivened through circus performance.

This theme of dissensus corresponds with my antagonism to the determinism relating to a specific domesticated outcome for the student in relation to an assessment of success or failure. Determinism negates the complex nature of the work in practice. Zaccarini suggests that it has to do with ambivalence and, when talking about 'traditional circus', he scathingly attacks the drive for superficiality and artifice:

> What it tries to pin down is the jolly or the superhuman or the lovely or whatever. It tries to pin that down and says this is what it is and it leaves out the *ambivalence* of it [which] fucking hurts and it's really dangerous and we're playing with death or failure. Showing just the bright side of it. Ambivalence is a more mature attitude rather than a split—good, bad. (emphasis in original, Ellingsworth, 2009)

He recognises that to approach practice with ambivalence is a 'mature' attitude to take. This pursuit of maturity can be seen as similar to the emancipation discussed in Chapter 3 and forms the nexus of a particular research problem. If maturity is the state of agency within and through which the paradoxes of existence are encapsulated, it could be said that maturity is, therefore, aligned with the notion of anticipatory resolution in relation to taking a risk. This premise is that a student or

artist may become aware of their strength in a moment and that this strength can enhance their ability to see themselves within a relation to death in a possible future. It links back to the child development theories already discussed in Chapter 2, where Blos (1962) articulates that adolescence ends when adult status is attained and the adolescent strives towards knowing themself to be adult through taking risks.

An attention to maturity places Zaccarini and Leyser's work into the context of calling the student's conscience, through circus work, towards a more resolute understanding of the student's own potential to succeed or fail, live or die, in the act of performing (Heidegger, 1962). Zaccarini and Leyser are concerned with the potential of the student to surpass the one dimensional end-point that is given to them through contemporary education or the aesthetic of traditions of circus and commerce. They want students to engage critically and creatively with their own identity through each encounter with circus and in their performance of identity through circus.

A maturing process suggests that the notion of the self in relation to ambivalence is something encountered by everyone in the everyday, which is magnified by the act of doing circus. Circus, therefore, mobilises the student's ability to see themself, both in relation to death and in relation to the inevitability of death in the future. The specific corporeal intensity of aerial or circus training makes certain cultural issues manifest in the *doing*. As discussed in the opening chapter, discourses that specifically revolve around the body in relation to death are forbidden, or taboo. A negation of the corporeal possibility (or in Zaccarini's terms, ambiguity) of circus performance, performs and rehearses an evasion of the body or embodied experience. This constitutes the body as absent. The very thing that could give students potent access to cultural discourses surrounding the body is the thing that disables the discussion. What Zaccarini, Leyser and I advocate, therefore, is a direct and realistic attention to the body for the student through the pain of learning circus.

It also becomes apparent that, through circus, the teacher is placed in a position relative to the pain of the student as they encounter themselves within the complex dialogue of good and bad experience. This encounter can be seen as two interconnected dialogues relating to pedagogic understanding. The first part relates to the student, and their experience of what Heidegger argues is an 'authentic'

relationship away from the dominant, self-conscious, and one related to 'being-towards-death' (1962: 253). For the student, an encounter with the self through circus brings a confrontation with the reality of experience as well as the metaphors of death and superhumanity.

Circus is an encounter between the real and the imagined because it contains within it both a visceral encounter with the action and an encounter with a projected image. To draw on the Heideggerian principle, it is brought pertinently home to the aerialist, that they are alone in that moment because they are the only ones encountering the possibility of death. The death, risk or action is essentially 'mine' (1962). This act throws the student back upon the self rather than towards the act as seen by others, or as preconceived by themselves. They are thrown by the action itself but also, if considered in relation to the metaphors attributable to the action (superhumanity), they can see the personal and tangible experience within the socially constructed image. This bifurcation is drawn out more fully within Chapter 5 where I use a moment from my practice to consider the notion of the self as being both fragile and superhuman through a momentary action.

The second part of the dialogue associated with pain relates to the labelling of the teacher as a teacher within this contemporary education. As discussed, the naming of the profession can delimit an understanding of the actuality of the role in practice. Within this naming, a practitioner is objectified by others: 'lurking in the idle-talk of the "they"' (Heidegger, 1962:253). Heidegger suggests that *Dasein* is subject to a superficial understanding that people exist as we do and die as we do. The teacher or aerialist is subject to the 'fugitive' appreciation of their 'being' within the work, as one removed from the authenticity of experience of the student (1962:254). I proposed, in the last chapter that this can be categorised by Freire and Giroux as a distant position or can be seen as seeking to eradicate distance, as advanced by Rancière. It is not simply an appreciation of one as removed from another that impacts upon the moment but the inauthentic state that alterity is, for Heidegger, 'fugitive': running and hiding from the other (1962: 254).

Knowledge that the teacher/self is always inclined towards a distant and fugitive relation to the student/other reinforces my premise that pedagogy is an act of will; teaching demands constant attention to the equalising dialogue to free the student

from a possibly domesticating context of their everyday social existence, as one that is defined by others. This tacit definition of any relationship is, therefore, one of withdrawal and distance, implying that the generalised perception of others is not an attested witnessing of their identity but a desire to hide from, or evade, the humanity experienced by the other. It takes an act of commitment and will from both the teacher and student to break this possibly stultifying cycle.

The cultural context of the work ensures I easily fit into a quotidian understanding of my practice through the term or label 'teacher'. It is a term that limits any appreciation of what I do whilst bestowing me with a culturally significant role. To be a teacher is to be one following a tradition imbued with wisdom on the one hand and control on the other. With this label, I inhabit the Kantian paradox of freedom through coercion. As Rancière suggests:

> [a] professor is a thing, less easily handled than a book, undoubtedly, but he can be learned: he can be observed, imitated, dissected, put back together; his person available for observation can be tested… A professor is neither more nor less intelligent than another man, and he generally presents a great deal of facts for the researcher's observation. (1991:102)

This supports the ambiguities that Zaccarini, Leyser and I recognise to be powerful cultural dynamics relating to the meaning of the work that a teacher does, how that communicates meaning to the students and, in turn, our understanding of ourselves as teachers. I become a teacher not by what I do but by the fact that I am called one by society. Moreover, because I am a teacher, I am also associated with intelligence, good judgment, subject knowledge and an ability to manage students' learning and assess their progress or achievement in accordance with Governmental and institutional guidelines. Awareness of these social constructions acknowledges the dynamic pulls of my position towards holding the knowledge and the control of the students in my care, away from witnessing, engaging and containing the knowledge and self-control of the students. This neatly draws the discussion back to the issues raised in Chapter 1 in relation to cycles of vulnerability and discloses the full extent of the bind that the teacher is in.

To be a teacher is to be an object for others which communicates a specific meaning, regardless of the teacher's own appreciation of the role. This objectification is elucidated by Rancière:

> *Man* and *citizen* [or in this instance teacher or student] do not designate
> collections of individuals. Man and citizen are political subjects. Political
> subjects are not definitive collectivities. They are surplus names, names
> that set out to question or to dispute about who is included in their count.
> (1999: 303)

The meaning carried within the designation of a person as a teacher carries with it a consideration of those who are teachers and those who are not. It could be argued that we all teach each other at different points through our life experience. However, this does not make us teachers. So the idea here is that the act of teaching is distinct from the subjective appreciation of the role of being a teacher. I would argue that contemporary use of the term 'teacher' can, unless the teacher is resilient and vigilant, be designated within the realm of 'manager', as discussed within the previous chapter, and with its notions of accountability for the management of the learning of others. Rancière continues:

> Correspondingly, *freedom* and *equality* are not predicates belonging to
> definite subjects. Political predicates are open predicates: they open up a
> dispute about what they exactly entail and whom they concern in which
> cases. (1999*:* 303)

For Rancière, politics is not the process of democracy or of Government and governance, as it is within contemporary culture; it is defined by the act of dissensus. So, in this state, it is not the culture itself that disputes the notion of freedom and equality as absolute constructs, but the acts of dissensus that destabilise social meaning in the momentary acts of teaching. By questioning the terms 'teacher', 'aerialist' and 'circus', Leyser, Zaccarini and I engage with the notions of predicated and constituted meaning against which we struggle in order to resist a singular, domestic, predetermined appreciation of meaning. We are aware that it is not through the designation of the title 'teacher' but through the act of emancipation that for us, is where the meaning of our role resides. We do not wish to be managers of education or determiners of a set path for the students in our care. We wish to verify the abilities of our students to learn by activating their understanding of the possibilities that risk-taking offers. Therefore, as in the notion of authenticity, the mapping of the teaching territory is defined by artificial borders within the everyday and the territory is overwritten through every act that reinforces it. However, it is within the acts of dissensus to these borders that the true pedagogic attentiveness resides - within each single specific moment that attends to and questions the

authenticity or resolution of the students towards their own verification. We must be aware, however, that this has the potential to stultify as well as emancipate. Zaccarini proposes the term 'circoanalysis' through which to consider his questioning role - 'why do circus *for me*' (Emphasis in the original Ellingsworth, 2009). Leyser has come to the conclusion that she is someone who makes metaphors manifest through her performance and teaching work. I engage within the practice of pedagogic tact as a form of emancipatory praxis.

4.2   Interpretation: How do I talk about this thing that I do?

> Insofar as man speaks, does he think, and not vice versa. (Heidegger, 1971:16)

The practitioners interviewed both utilised paradox and metaphor in the way they articulated their practice. A recognition of the paradoxical nature of practice resonates with the Heideggerian treatise that meaning is made in the communication for another rather than in solipsistic isolation and that this meaning is generative and socially constrained. Therefore, the possibility of language expressing or clarifying truth is raised. As discussed in the Introduction, Heidegger's disavowal of dialectic stems from his commitment to phenomenology as an engaged exercise of experience and expression. This commitment forces him to question how meaning comes from experience. For Plato, this comes to light through a process of reason (or logos) (Plato in Gonzalez, 2009. Heidegger suggests that there is a possibility for greater clarity, a type of 'pure' seeing that surpasses the dialectical ambiguities of reason, as espoused by Plato (Gonzalez, 2009). I suggest that this ideal of 'pure' sight is as impossible as the possibility of sustained authenticity. Like Gonzales, I propose that this is a crucial element within Heidegger's thinking - that language and expression do not speak clearly enough of true experience and constitute the thinking through of experience. Gonzales clarifies that 'it is not consistent or coherent... if he means that dialectic can never attain a completely pure seeing beyond logos [reason], then he is requiring of dialectic something that he himself recognises to be impossible' (2009:378). Heidegger's thinking exemplifies the contradictions and criticisms that dialectic and metaphor are permeated with, that they do not clarify truth of experience within expression. Therefore, Heidegger reveals the impossibility

of finding a universal or true appreciation of meaning through language despite language's attempt at revealing or clarifying the experience further.

It can be argued that, through the poetics of metaphor used by myself, Zaccarini and Leyser, a precise meaning is drawn upon the map for the reader which articulates beyond the specific words spoken. This is channelled into a dialectical relation with the identities of those writing and those reading or between those speaking and those listening. The performance of metaphor, for Leyser, is a proposition of universal similarity which enables the audience to recognise themselves within the work. Metaphor no longer evokes the 'fugitive' elements of the Heideggerian 'they', where one person is seen as distant from an other, but the ambiguity of metaphor precipitates a drawing together of people in recognition of the different meanings evoked descriptively (1962: 253).

Mobile meanings are questioned and challenged through the course of the speaking by both the speaker and listener. For Rancière, poetry offers emancipatory opportunities for the listener, student or other with whom you are communicating because it does not explicate. He states that speech, by attending to personal experience, 'decomposes and recomposes' notions of reality and produces a 'fresh sphere of visibility for further demonstrations' (1999:42). The language of metaphor can, therefore, make a number of things visible: the culture within which the speaking is happening, the relation that the speaker has to the material being discussed and the cultural and ideological presumptions (or heuristic judgments) of the listener in the hearing of it.

Leyser discusses metaphor in terms of its ability to evoke the emotions stirred, not only within aerial performance but also within her personal embodied experience. She states that '[m]etaphors, we use to describe our falling, struggling... the metaphors that we have encrypted in our language to describe our experience, come from physical experience in the first place' (Leyser, 2009:2). Falling, struggling, restriction and flight are metaphors for communicating experience and understanding that brings it pertinently back to the physical body. Within metaphor we may find individual and authentic understanding as well as obfuscation and misunderstanding.

In the field of cognitive linguistics, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson research and articulate the significance of metaphor for communication. They agree that metaphor is part of extraordinary language beyond the traditionally characteristic view of thoughts as words. They discovered that an attempt to eradicate metaphor from speech was impossible due to its embeddedness in thought because '[o]ur ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature' (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980:3). Metaphor is more than a rhetorical device used to add emphasis, create art or score a linguistic point. It is indeed the very fabric upon which language is built. In later work, Johnson pushes this point further by suggesting that metaphor is the only effective way of subverting the dualist language split between body and mind. For him, meaning is embodied in metaphor: 'The power of conceptual metaphor is that it permits us to use the semantics and inferential structure of our bodily experience as a primary way of making sense of abstract entities, relations and events' (Johnson, 2007:280). The suggestion is that, through metaphor, an individuated understanding is engendered. Johnson further suggests that a more literal or quantified meaning-making system can be seen as dangerous: 'It follows on from this that literalism, which claims that all our meaningful concepts can be spelt out literally, is false, misleading, and very dangerous' (Johnson, 2007:280). As Zaccarini suggests, ambiguity is a more mature way of viewing life as experienced.

The possible problems of literal meaning is one of the key questions of this thesis. I contend that, without a constant attitude of dissensus within pedagogic encounters, meaning can become literal and, therefore, deterministic. This determinism is exemplified by my argument in Chapter 1 in relation to the word 'risk' and its new association with fear when once it was used to invoke issues of prudence or courage. The way that the term is used in common cultural parlance is deterministic but an engagement with the full impact of the experience of risk-taking can emancipate the student from possible determinism. The expression needs to be synthesised through experience and not divorced from it. The words speak of and for the *doing*. What metaphor does, therefore, is to enable the talker or writer to engage with, and describe, the meaning that an embodied experience is for them. Metaphorical description reaches out and interrupts the normative, reasoned and fully articulated understanding demanded by people in society who seem to privilege accountability

and rationality and also evades description and corporeity. To speak in metaphor attests to intersubjective understanding and reveals the *doing* in the telling.

Literal and quantifiable rationalisation is formative and constitutive within a moment of experience due to an overdependence upon scientific or enlightenment thinking that dominates certain aspects of society. This formative drive, which reinforces the body-mind binary and privileges the rational over the 'irrational' experience, is pertinent to this thesis because it is seems to be intrinsic to education. Consequently, a singularly antagonistic approach is both deeply problematic and, because of many teachers' will to act in dissent, unnecessary. I propose a dialectical relation between metaphor and rationality. This means that practically I engage with the sureties needed to account for my practice (which I will unpick fully in the next chapter) and I place them into dialectical relation with the anecdotal and metaphorical elements that describe my practice as it appears to me. I suggest that the mobilisation for this dialectic is within my tactful appreciation of how both science and metaphor expose elements that contain and free the practice of taking risks.

A consideration of the dialogue between metaphor and literalism within communication regarding pedagogy is, therefore, a discussion of the building blocks of communicated identity. It becomes increasingly clear to me when I examine a moment from my own learning. My aerial teacher was attempting to teach me how to perform a back balance. The physics and mathematics of the balance and the physiological impact of it on my body was clear in my mind but it was not until another classmate offered me the metaphor of 'water, gushing out of your feet in a large arc' and another suggested that, for her, it was 'a reverse crucifixion' that I began to imaginatively engage with the movement. The technique of keeping the abdominal and core muscles strong, minor adjustments with the arms and enacting a full commitment to the move hindered my ability to feel what it meant for me in the *doing*. The metaphors enabled me to know, on a tangible level, what it is to be in a back balance. Knowing the technique- the literal, the disembodied and the rational - engendered only a fragmented understanding of the movement whereas, when this was taken in combination with the metaphorical, I gained clarity. Moreover, there was no need for anyone to interpret the metaphors in any way - to intellectualise or define them - for me for the meaning to impact upon my embodied understanding.

Metaphor became the meaning that I felt rather than expressed or extraverted through communication. I was, you could say, emancipated by the equalising language of the two students who described their experience of the back balance to me whereas I had been confused or stultified by the technical and physiological descriptions of the ideal trapeze body given to me by my teacher.

4.2.1 Interpretation as an act of challenge

The role of interpretation is another interesting theme or territory raised within the interviews. Ellingsworth suggests that the communication of multiple meanings, dependent upon the audience's own experience, is the strength of Zaccarini's current research. Leyser takes this a step further with her suggestion that 'the highest form of human intelligence [is] the ability to observe without interpreting - mostly our educational system', she continues, 'is geared towards the opposite notion - that the clever bit is the interpretation, whereas just doing the job demonstrates very little' (Leyser, 2009). She is ruminating upon the illuminating moments in her own learning where she was given the space to simply do the work without the need to talk about it.

This is placed in sharp relief against her experience as a student of English, taught to 'interpret' a text and clarify its meaning. She expresses a contradiction between what she feels is the role of the teacher and most teachers' methods. She wants the teacher to 'see' the student rather than to 'judge' them; I want to 'be seen without interpretation for a moment - no more and no less than who I am, being seen in fact without any notion of 'more or less' in the picture. I don't mean being praised, just as much as I don't mean being criticised' (Leyser, 2009). Leyser articulates how interpretation can lead the student into stultification. She uses the term 'interpretation' to elucidate on two themes: the first is the symbolic distance noticed by the teacher between what she knows and what teachers think she ought to know - the assessment of her intelligence or expertise as a student. The second use is the skill of knowing how to write about, or think about, the material of a class in the same way as the teacher or theorist, which is the interpretation of the text - 'the clever bit' (2009). She articulates that both these forms, to be seen only in relation to her intelligence as measured by the teacher and to be heard as a parrot of some

predicated notion, are damaging to her will to learn. The notion of measuring, seeing and listening in this context places the student in relation to authenticity and inauthenticity with the teacher. In acts of emancipatory practice there is no pressure on the teacher to 'judge' the moment, assess it and articulate a response to it, in the same way that the student is equally under no pressure to articulate a specific response to the moment either. The moment just is and it resonates as such.

In my experience, few opportunities have afforded me as clear a moment of un-interpreted 'seeing' as my experience with flying trapeze training. I felt no pressure to extrapolate every learning point, connection or theory I was learning through the practice. I simply swung, backwards and forwards, whilst my teacher, Adam Cohen, spoke the rhythm of the swing for me to recognise it. He enabled me to know the swing so that I could navigate it successfully. He saw me fly and we worked 'in common' to enable me to fly higher (Heidegger, 1962: 174). I did not feel judged because I was not measured against some predicated notion of success. I was simply allowed to fly and feel and be. Cohen engaged my will to do so by articulating only the swing.

As I elucidated in the last chapter, the importance of this moment is that it had the ability to rupture the notions that I may have had of myself in relation to death and in relation to some perception of successful flying. The role of the teacher was to sit back and let the moment 'teach' me what it will about my potential. Cohen's tact and skill was to say and teach nothing specific, similar to Heidegger and Rancière's proposition that the student is the one who learns in the act, rather than the teacher telling them what to do or think. All three are aware that the student learns what they will, perhaps nothing, if they are left to simply do and be engaged in the learning moment.

This is not to negate the importance of the literal, however. The different approaches to practice afford the teacher the ability to work between the two because they are not in opposition but are inseparable. Meaning-making is constitutive and formative within any pedagogic encounter. The student brings a deterministic expectation against which they may wish to measure themselves. The process of stultification may, therefore, be internally, rather than externally, mobilised. However, a tact-driven teacher may notice these personally constructed boundaries and attest to their

presence, enabling the student to dissent against them as true markers of identity. The teacher may use them as a means through which to listen effectively to the student as a supplement to a less deterministic way of working. She may also choose to work alongside the determinism, without judgment. The two are in constant dialogue. The tact of the teacher is to negotiate both measurement and non-judgment so as not to ignore the student's place, will and identity within the *doing*.

The opening up of a student's experience is vital in order to engender the risk-taking that we all make possible in practice. For Zaccarini and Leyser, risk-taking is related to challenging assumptions and patterns as well as the 'idle' perception of risking death (Heidegger, 1962: 264). For teachers, the assumption of a primary identity as one who 'cares' can disguise the fact that risk is present within more than the obvious signs of it in the room. I may be aware that a student could fall from the equipment but not notice that they express discomfort when I touch the small of their back in order to stop them from falling, for example. The fact that I am designated to be a person who cares can leave me blind to all the different levels of risk that the student is taking.

This is applicable to all the practitioners who work in this way: on a practical level for the aerialist it may resonate in the question 'when do I take the student off the lunge?' On a personal level, it may reside in the question 'when do I stop accepting a superficial performance from the student?' These questions typify the intuitive moves that are made within the risk-taking relationship. They are based upon the landscape that has already been mapped into the teacher's experience through contact with other students, other bodies, culture, etc. They are also representative of the intense relationship that the student forms with the teacher when working with risk. This relationship is one that, for Rancière, is based on veracity, which is 'at the heart of the emancipation experience' because it is 'the moral foundation of the power to know' (1991:57). Experience and the will to seek knowledge of a situation free the teacher to really engage with the learning of the student. Decisions, therefore, are made consciously and subconsciously by the teacher intuitively and instinctively, dependent upon the needs of the individual student in order to engender an authentic decision from the student to take a 'leap of faith', trusting that the teacher/practitioner will support them.

4.3   Leaps of Faith

This section maps the idea of a 'leap of faith' that the student takes in response to the manner and concern of the teacher. In it, I recognise the dialectical relationships between academic achievement and personal understanding, between commerce and process and between literal definition and metaphorical concept. I argue that these territories are contained and mobilised by the trust that the student has in the teacher and the faith that the teacher has in their experience of teaching and of performance. Captured within these dialectical negotiations is the fragile, mobile and complex proposition that the teacher is a guide through the dangers inherent within the work. This is perhaps the most evasive section of my entire thesis, dependent as it is upon interpretation, anecdote, hunch and 'faith'. Such adumbrations do not diminish the pertinence of the material but serve to reinforce its humanness through ambiguity and paradox.

The concept of faith is difficult to map as it implies that there is an unknown and unknowable element suffusing and constituting the encounter. It is less direct than the notion of cultural context, which I addressed in the first chapter, and less qualifiable than the theoretical frameworks of Chapter 2. The idea of a 'leap of faith' suggests that the topography of the teacher's map wanders into the spiritual realms of hope, trust and love, which describe the emotional cartography of a student's relationship with the teacher. They are the texture of the encounter as it appears to us in the moment of teaching.

Zaccarini describes the tensions encapsulated within teaching through an example taken from his own training:

> I did injure myself consistently during acrobatics and you have to take those risks, you do have to take that *leap of faith* and you really only get injured if you've been taught badly... I think I was taught too quickly and I was probably quite good at it because I was a dancer unlike other people who were a bit more stiff and a bit more uncoordinated so I was *pushed* a little bit too fast and my injuries weren't *contained*, they weren't dealt with, which perhaps reflect upon the teachers need for *results*, either within the school or within themselves, for their own self-respect or self-satisfaction. (Italics added for emphasis, Zaccarini 2009:np)

The difficulty with a teacher getting it wrong is that the practice may damage the student. As Zaccarini suggests, a 'leap of faith' is necessary in order to progress and this 'leap of faith' cannot be done in isolation - it must be contained by the teacher. It is therefore clear that, for Zaccarini, the idea of the teacher is someone who is strong in their ability to know intuitively what is best for the student and move towards that whilst still remaining flexible enough to work with what the student presents. Moreover, to go back to the point above, it must be done without the teacher being invested in a manner that destroys the faith placed upon them. Zaccarini suggests that a teacher's investment in a 'result', either for the academy or for their personal satisfaction, inhibits the process the student, was as going through and may result in injury.

It is interesting to note that, despite the risks of being ignored or 'uncontained' by the teacher, Zaccarini still took the 'leap of faith'. In doing so, he was able to reconcile his own understanding of the embodied movement in relation to the pain he received in the process. Zaccarini learnt potently that he was alone within the practice despite the designation of the teacher to be in support of him. His understanding of pedagogy, of physicality and authenticity, thereby moved towards clarity. He suggests that this was done, however, not at the time; at the time he was tempted to leave the profession of circus completely because he was stultified and ignored by it. The knowledge came about at a later date through the attentive focus of a Lacanian therapist. It is possible to develop resolution after or during the *doing* despite the teacher's determinism or inability to have the right attention to care for the student.

Taking a Heideggerian perspective upon caring of this nature, we can see how the container can restrict as well as free the student - domesticate or liberate. In a discussion of alterity, Heidegger proposes that two types of concern are possible. The first is one that leaps in for the other. The second is a leaping ahead of them. The first ensures that the student 'steps back so that afterwards, when the matter has been attended to, he can either take it over as something finished and at his disposal or he can disburden himself of it completely' (1962:158). The second way, however, 'pertains to authentic care – that is, to the existence of the Other, not to a *"what"* with which he is concerned; it helps the other to become transparent to himself *in* his care and to become *free* of it' (1962:159). So it could be argued that, within a 'leap of faith', the student can either be freed to think or 'disburden' themselves of the

anxiety that mobilised the leap or they will be stultified because the teacher closed down the option of fully engaging with the act of leaping: both possibilities reside within the encounter.

The idea of a student stepping back from what they needed articulates the tension that is lived by diligent teachers within academic, institutionalised education towards different kinds of learning - between the subjective and the objective or between the private and the public. It is the problem of domestication and liberation. This conflict sets up the dialectical relation necessary to engage in work of a risky nature. Arguably, the academy, with its intention towards specific results, drives the student towards the "*what*" and the teacher towards leaping in for them, driving the student back from an authentic encounter with the experience. The need for the student and the teacher to be recognised as successful is present within most teaching and learning experiences. However, it should not be the dominant focus. The student must be allowed to 'leap' or immerse themself in the messiness of the practice without fear of judgment or damage so that they may become transparent to themselves within the encounter. And, as I articulated within Chapter 2, a certain *something* mobilises many teachers to act in dissensus to purely technical concerns.

Leyser moves the discussion into new territory by declaring a conflict between taught technique and instinctive knowing. She recognises that, within physical education, an understanding of predetermined technique is necessary in order to keep the student safe but this can work against the need to leap in and be messy. 'In theory, technique is there to keep you safe, but it becomes an aesthetic in itself, and it becomes detached from that very functional nature of [how to move your body]. I think that when that detachment happens it stops being useful' (Leyser, 2009). Leyser is expressing the disjuncture between purity of form for form's sake and self-expression. I turn to Rancière's discussion of the political nature of aesthetics for a moment in order to unravel this notion further. He claims that aesthetics can be seen:

> [a]s the system of a priori forms determining what presents itself to sense experience. It is a delimitation of spaces and times, of the invisible and visible, of speech and noise,that simultaneously determines the place and the stakes of politics as a form of experience. Politics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see

and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time. (2004:13)

Therefore, an aesthetic or technical assessment of *a priori* determinates by the teacher towards the student is imbued with the stultifying qualities expounded by Rancière. This is because it privileges certain ways of seeing as the only way and certain people's perception of the encounter as the correct way to see it. It could be said that, to talk of the form a movement takes according to some prior condition, is an explicatory and therefore stultifying act. An emancipatory one would be to critique this form and expose it to scrutiny so that the student may be free to see themselves within their relation to it. Even if, at that point, the form is adopted by the student, the aesthetic form is an act of dissensus because it is accepted in knowing relation to the constitutive, cultural elements in which the act resides.

There is no question that an understanding of technique is a valuable foundation from which to work safely. However, what Leyser is arguing is that technique is not an end in itself. It has to be synthesised with something else in order to enable the student to feel attached, located within it and 'seen'. She uses the example taken from her attempts to learn to perform on a cloud swing and describes how the focus on technique amplified her fear:

> I... worked with a teacher who was a technician really, so her focus was very much on what I was doing wrong technically, and I became more and more scared and I was on the lunge permanently, and I was still terrified. She was a fantastic teacher, rated very highly in London anyway as the top teacher, but I just got really scared.

She places this in contrast with a different teacher:

> A man in France, who I went and trained with for just two weeks, who was in his 50s and still got up there and demonstrated, he talked about the figure of eights; it got all very philosophical. The infinity of the swing, which really appealed to me, and it was that, and the quality of his presence [which enabled me to really engage]. That's true of all the positive training experiences I have had, where the teaching role is able to both hold the risk, but at the same time have complete faith in themselves and in you at that moment. They hold the paradox in some way. This is risky ... there is a level where they have no doubt. There is utmost trust, in his teaching, which meant that I did stuff off the lunge that I have never done since. (Leyser, 2009)

The theme that emerges from these examples and which forms a part of my mapped understanding of aerial teaching is that, combined with the ability of a teacher to

contain the student's learning and have a clear appreciation of form and technique, is a third element. This third element mobilises and synthesises the tension between the paradoxical objective and subjective relation and between personal and public identity so that the student is not crippled by fear, stultified, domesticated or damaged by being pushed too hard. It also allows her to put aside a desire for academic, technical, aesthetic or, as Zaccarini discusses, commercial success and can feel open to fail, fall or flounder without being told, or feeling herself, that it is wrong. The contentious suggestion is that this mobilising third element is faith.

Faith is articulated by the practitioners I have interviewed in different ways. The example from Leyser's training recalls a teacher who has the 'utmost trust' and 'no doubt' so that he was able to enable her to do things that she has never done since. A discussion of the metaphorical elements that the cloud swing represents seems to have been the most pertinent influence for Leyser in her teacher's method. This metaphor of the infinity of the swing enabled her to place herself into an imaginative relation with the equipment and the teacher to go beyond her expectations. Her faith in his ability to contain the learning synthesised with his philosophical metaphors, freeing her will to engage with her own learning and artistry.

For Zaccarini, faith is articulated indirectly and is manifest in a deep concern for the furtherance of the students and an antagonism towards superficiality. He places faith not only in the Lacanian analytical framework he uses to 'listen' to his students but also a faith in the student themselves. The Lacanian method is the theoretical frame from which he works, similar to my attention to Freire and Rancière's critically engaged pedagogy. This psychoanalytic method is interpretative in a way that my method is not. It enables Zaccarini to view the student through a therapeutic frame. According to psychotherapist Alice Pitt, psychoanalysis offers education 'not just a rereading of the immediate textual past (although it is that), but also a reading with, an openness to exploring with an oft-times eclectic spirit, what psychoanalysis and education have to offer one another' (1998: 2) . Working in this way, however, entails:

> moving beyond the 'what' of knowledge and beyond the disciplines that structure such knowledge within the academy—for the very modes of intelligibility and certainty that disciplines offer are, of course, precisely what a reading of psychoanalysis with education undermines. (1998 :3)

This approach resonates fully with Rancière's appreciation of an act of dissensus because it is a methodical undermining of the certainty of knowledge offered in the academy. The Lacanian method emphasises the need for a praxical engagement between knowledge and *doing* so that an interpretation that is borne out of experience can be sought by the student. It could be seen that this notion of interpretation differs from the Rancièrean perspective. However, the emphasis is not upon the teacher or therapist to interpret for the student but upon the student to interpret their experience for themselves. In this instance, it brings the student back to self-knowledge as an authentic recognition of the situated and constituted nature of being.

This faith in the student's ability to interpret for themselves, therefore, brings us back to Freire and Rancière, whose desire to enable and place faith in the student's will once enabled reflects a philosophical desire to live authentically. For both Freire and Rancière, the student's situated understanding of themself is what is challenged within the act of dissensus (Rancière) or conscientisation (Freire); so a Lacanian perspective that privileges the student's voice aligns itself firmly with radical pedagogy. The notion of interpretation however, could arguably be aligned with the rational privilege of determinism, as discussed in the previous section. A counter to this suggestion is that, when Zaccarini's students interpret their situatedness, they do it through movement rather than some arbitrary expression of social convention. The student is drawn back to an isolated self and, therefore, meaning is made in the expression of understanding for them, through *doing* circus.

Following on from the themes raised in the previous chapters and drawing back to Rancière's notions of stultification and will, I can see clear correlations between the experiences of the practitioners and the wider philosophical frameworks that Heidegger, Rancière, Freire and Lacan propose. These frameworks state that it is by privileging the student's encounter with themselves that emancipatory learning is rehearsed, performed and intended towards the authentic or anticipatory resolution for the student. The aggravation caused by the singular pursuit of technique, literalism or form is recognised both by Freire in his terminology 'banking concept' (Freire 1971) and by Rancière's antagonism towards explication (Rancière 1991).

Both Rancière and Freire are united in their disdain for mechanical repetition of nouns, verbsand adjectives in the teaching of language although, once dialogue has been established, Freire's pedagogic technique is traditionally conducted. Therefore, according to Rancière, it stultifies by appropriating the logic of pedagogy that states: I know and you currently do not know. Rancière suggests that instruction of this kind is not unnecessary or irrelevant but that, without this being balanced by emancipatory discourse, the student is placed in an inferior position which stultifies them. He proposes that 'what an emancipated person can do is be an emancipator: to give, not the key to knowledge, but the *consciousness of what an intelligence can do* when it considers itself equal to any other and considers any other equal to itself' (1991: 39).

From my conversations with Leyser and Zaccarini, it becomes apparent that this equality of perception, combined with a faith in their own ability to equal that of their teachers (both spiritual and tangible), constitutes and reconstitutes - 'composes and recomposes' - the momentary equality of both the teacher and the student within the relationship (Heidegger 1962:159). Both student and teacher are, therefore, aware of the potential to be free, or to be authentic, rather than striving towards a specific rational or aesthetic outcome which may close them both down, domesticate them. The role of the teacher is to contain, carefully, the potential 'can do' of both herself and the student. It is a fragile relationship born out of the teacher's ability to care, to have faith and in dialectical relation with damage and pain, fuelled by the student's will to take a leap of faith.

4.4 Failure and Pain

The practitioners interviewed describe a strong relationship between failure, pain and damage and their role as, or experience of, being a teacher. By pushing through the pain that failure bestows, the students are enabled to understand their own potential within failure. The teacher has gathered strength in their own equality through an attentive and authentic relationship with their own 'known' failure, which can enable them to communicate potential rather than judgment to the student.

Through my life, I have been constantly attentive to what it means to fail. For me, failure brings associations with guilt, embarrassment and shame. It is situated in my experiences as a dyslexic student in Cornwall in the 1980s, when dyslexia was not acknowledged as a condition by the Cornish schooling system. I was labelled a failure because I could not articulate on paper that which I could express in the spoken word. I was branded lazy because my handwriting, spelling and presentation were haphazard. I can remember distinctly 'stepping back' from institutional learning because of this contact with failure. I 'mitched off' my A level classes and sat in the refectory talking to other students. I chose to fail my A Levels because I felt I had no place within the system. However, as a teacher, I view this violent and painful experience as positive and formative because it enables me to view the possible topography that a student experiences in the face of an encounter with failure. I know myself within the memory of 'mitching' and shame but I am also empowered through it by an understanding of the possibility of success that I experienced whilst being taught by some emancipatory teachers at a later stage. Learning in this way was experientially driven and it is now theoretically underpinned. I reveal my relationship to the experiences and make the lack of care that I received during my A Level education transparent.

Leyser and Zaccarini's experience of failure relates to a form of clown training which the three of us again share. It is a provocative method, where the clown teacher asks each student to perform and then belittles them in order to provoke a reaction and make them learn. In this training method, failure to make the teacher laugh, Zaccarini articulates, was formative of his understanding of performance and failure: 'to face the most demanding audience and not to feel a kid. It does lessen the impact a little bit when you do fail if you've been trained in this way. It does help you to deal

with it a bit better' (Zaccarini, 2009). He defines it as bullying by the 'silent father' figure, who you want to please but who will not tell you how to please him. This training enabled Zaccarini to find resilience within his ability as a performer and to seek alternative methods as a teacher. This formative experience did not end his cycle of challenging pedagogic relationships.

Zaccarini's experience, like my own, would have stultified him as a learner had it not been for the Lacanian psychoanalytical therapy he experienced, in another time and space, which enabled him to see himself in relation to the lack of care given by the 'bullying' teacher. He articulates that many of his performing experiences have involved deterministic encounters with teachers and directors. He talks lucidly about working for a particular director who:

> wants us to take risks, really big risks, really, really, really big risks, but not in a safe environment. He doesn't hold it. He puts the entire responsibility onto you [the performer]. I helped with auditions and it made me really sad seeing these young dancers bending over backwards to please him. I had to give them a rope workshop because rope was part of the show and I put them in catchers[27] on the rope. That [position] in itself the first time you do it, even if you are a dancer, the pain is improbable, but they [the auditioning actors] went up and made not a sound, not a peep. Then they would base someone, take someone's full weight, and not make a sound... that's not natural and that made me really sad. (Zaccarini, 2009)

Here, Zaccarini is witnessing the teacher/director not only provoking the student so that they are prepared to take risks but also not taking responsibility for containing the risk on an equal footing with the student/performer. He suggests that through this exposure, the student is shut down from the experience. In this scenario, the status of the director/teacher is oppressive and status hinges upon the teacher's objectification or dehumanisation of the student in order to objectify them. The student permits the teacher, due to their status, to mould them into a commodity. The student is complicit in the inequality displayed by their silence when performing the painful act of 'basing' another student.

The notion of the absent performer's voice is present within Zaccarini's example in that the performer does not acknowledge the pain that they are in to the teacher; they make 'not a sound, not a peep' to demonstrate the fact that they are living,

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[27] For a full glossary of trapeze terms, see Appendix C.

breathing, feeling, corporeal beings. This lack of voice is notable because it constitutes the personal experience in performance and reinforces the fact that experience has less status than a pure aesthetic or performance for the director/teacher. As I articulated in my ethics section, the voice of the student is fundamental within ethical practice and research. It becomes apparent from Zaccarini's account that he questions the practice of this particular director and he signals the concern by describing the absent voices. This returns us to the proposition that, even within corporeal encounters, the subjected student or performer can be identified by their relation to a Heideggerian 'what' rather than a transparency of the 'now'. The desire of the director is placed above the experience of the performer; the silence and distant actions of the performer mask the reality of the pain they are in. They are, therefore, objectified, not by the act they perform, but by the politics surrounding it, which defines 'who has the ability to see and the talent to speak' (Rancière 2004:13).

The objectification of the artist has long been debated in performance theory, in particular in relationship to dance. Zaccarini has presented papers on the subject that recognise the constitutive relationship between mechanistic training methods and the circus industry. Leyser recognises that her bruises and scars are remnants of an abusive practice through which she found a genuine relationship to her body and the guilt that was located there. She discusses the control and discipline needed to perform as an aerialist alongside an autobiographical account of her anorexia (2007). The two constitute each other, separate discourses of punishment which are performed within the same time and space. She recognises that she made herself fragile through not eating whilst she performed fragility for an audience. In the same way, she created strength through rituals involving food, a strong resolution against hunger, married to the strength in her muscles from training and the strength seen by the audience in her evasion of death. The notion of pain is inseparable from the act of performing with aerial equipment and the pain of the act is inseparable from the identity of the performer.

Ballet dancer and dance theorist, Emilyn Claid, explores notions of the sacrifice of the real for the illusory in traditional ballet. She acknowledges how 'the ideals of perfection failed my body' and she opens the discussion out that it is not only the performing industries but Western culture itself that affects this dynamic of

objectification: 'All are challenged on a daily basis by the contradictions between their real bodies and performed illusions' (Claid, 2006:32). Claid articulates that a competitive drive and the pursuit of aesthetic perfection through a method of correct/incorrect movement tuition perpetuated the objectification of her as a performer. She acknowledges that this objectification abuses the student's desire to be 'seen' or, as she describes it, to be 'loved'.

This directly links with Leyser's suggestion that 'when there are judgements, especially implicit rather than explicit ones, flying around, I can feel myself zip up inside, withdraw and stay within known limits' (Leyser, 2009). There is the descriptive mapping here of a terrain in which judgment closes off the humanity of the performer from the event: a boundary is drawn. This boundary compels the artist to become mechanistic and drives them to consider themselves inferior, not only to the teacher, but also in relation to the performance discipline or aesthetic. They may take a 'leap of faith' but are unaware of the discourses that constitute the act that they are performing because their individual role or 'will' is effaced within the method of teaching. They are not enabled to be transparent within the culture that constitutes them (Heidegger) and they are not able to use their voice in relation to the aesthetic police order at play within their silent acquiescence to it (Rancière 1991). The un-emancipated or 'unseen' artist does not leap towards resolution or creativity but leaps instead towards their own stultification; it is an unknowing self-sacrifice.

A generalised appropriation of Michael Foucault's use of the term 'docile bodies' is helpful when viewing the idea of pain and identity because it embeds the argument within the body as a site for engaging with the discourses that objectify it (1977:138). The movement from intellectual domestication, which is reviewed through the work of Freire and Rancière as a proposition for revolutionary practice, is enhanced when considered alongside the physical body and pain. Foucault suggests that the body is a site for suppression beyond the intellectual, which constructs and carries the political signification of power:

> [a] '[P]olitical autonomy' which was also a 'mechanics of power' was being born; it defined how one may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies. (Foucault 1977:138)

Foucault is interrogating the discipline structures within society as a means of describing the way that bodies may be viewed as sites for restriction in all aspects of normative behaviour. The distinction within this thinking is that a technique of training, which he would call a discipline structure, focuses on a correct/incorrect or good/bad aesthetic precision. This structure effaces the possible authenticity and equality of the student and creates a 'docile' student or performer. The student is complicit within this domesticating practice due to their desire for attention, recognition or love from the teacher or system that imposes it. Modes of education consequently perpetuate not only the deterministic dynamic discussed in Chapter 2 but also sacrifice the site for meaning-making and knowledge- the body. The performance discipline and training enact determinism through use of a mechanism of social power and desire which is grounded in the corporeality of pain.

Part of the experience of being a circus performer, particularly when you are a new student to aerial work, is that of encountering pain. Zaccarini and Leyser emphasise that pain is constitutive of the experience of being a circus performer: 'pain and pleasure for us I would say are not so much... we have a different relationship to pain from what 'normal' people have. I think that most of us consider that pain and pleasure are just a sensation on a continuum' (Zaccarini 2009). Pain is a useful and moulding part of circus practice for Zaccarini and, moreover, it is only through pain that he has engendered a more transparent relation to the cultural context in which his performances sit.

If the 'normal' response to pain lies in avoidance, then Zaccarini and other aerialists are placing themselves in opposition to the predetermined normative. Working with pain becomes an act of dissensus against the fear-driven discourses of contemporary society in which danger is avoided at any cost. Recognition of the constitutive and fugitive elements of pain within aerial work is developed in Chapter 5. I argue that the teacher is charged to enable the painful encounter whilst containing and limiting it. A dialogue with how each individual student engages with and understands pain is, therefore, necessary.

Circus work requires the pain of physical repetition which damages the body and rewrites it to the aesthetic form of the art. Aerial performance may be an act of dissensus against the cultural norms in response to pain but it is also an act of

reconstitution when examined in terms of aesthetics. The act of dissensus is effaced by the re-performance of a specific form or technique. Through repetition, the performer reconstitutes the dominance of superficial aesthetics over the individual dissensus. Claid articulates this as

> the pain that occurred when my body transformed itself from one shape to another, when it learnt to articulate a language through a codified technique that was alien to its pedestrian everyday existence. I am speaking about the pain involved when learning and practicing an externally driven physical pursuit, challenging my body to enact extreme physical feats. I am speaking about an intense activity, repeatedly practiced on or by my body where the language learnt required engagement a physical discipline at the level of painful somatic sensation in order to achieve its expression. (Claid, 2006:38)

Zaccarini, Leyser and Claid articulate an addictive quality that mobilises the dynamic relation to the technique enacted and to the pleasure/pain relation between the art, the learning and the teacher. They recognise that the element of control which necessitates an act of extreme performance is rehearsed in the painful act of the doing as well as any dominance and objectification by the teacher - that it is the dynamic of pleasure and pain which keeps them domesticated. For, as Foucault suggests:

> If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't weigh on us as a force that says no, not that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge and produces discourse. (1981:94)

The pleasure experienced within the power dynamic is, for the student, the mobilising factor within the acquiescence to objectification of themselves by the teacher. An attention to technique, form and the literal by the teacher, or asked for by the student, has the potential to negate the humanity of that student. The same is true for a deterministic social mechanism (neoliberalism, for example) which rewards the academic proof of success through grades or commerce. Zaccarini suggests that the impact of monetary gain on the student, through rewarding 'tricks', further reinforces the system of power. He again uses the example of the student who performs handstands. The student rehearses the movement for years in order for the 'trick' to conform to the technical requirements of his teachers; the student uses this skill to busk and earn money to pay his way through circus school. In the final

showcase, he is set up to commoditise his 'trick' and sell it, and himself, to a circus company. This is where the school achieves its reputation and proves its worth. However, by Zaccarini challenging the student not to do a handstand perfectly in the final showcase, he acts in dissensus to both the student's expectation and the school's marketing objectives. The student really struggled to find himself in this new location but the result was a performance that worked beyond the mechanistic trick of a handstand and revealed and described the student's momentary relation and resolution towards the truth of the act. He was creatively engaged with the material of his handstand in a mature way so as to become more than a schoolchild: he became an artist (Rancière 1991).

This narrative can be driven one step farther in Zaccarini and Leyser's argument that circus performance holds within it the encountering of death for the performer and for the audience. However, it is often not an authentic relationship due to the performer's rehearsal process that evades their possible death. The student does not nearly die although they may be seen as doing so by an audience. The rehearsal process ensures that the performer is safe but it also negates the true experience of facing death. As Zaccarini suggests, ambivalence is a more mature way of considering one's relationship to life and to living through artistic work. The striving to bring oneself into relation to death alone is not enough to mobilise an individual relationship and anticipatory resolution; it must be considered in relation with an appreciation of life as lived. It is not enough to represent superhumanity; you must also challenge yourself in relation to the concept of superhumanity.

Faith of, and in, the teacher, which can be developed through the teacher's own relationship to failure, pain or damage, is one possible mobilising agent for equalising the learning of the student. This learning, rather than engendering an adherence to the objectification of the student, frees the teacher from it, thereby allowing her to experience anticipatory resolution too. This is a form of emancipatory understanding which, in turn, according to Rancière, can emancipate others. Through the course of the next chapter, I begin to map the strata of meanings experienced by the student and teacher through a moment of risk-taking practice. The descriptions articulate the depth that the experience of corporeal engagement, metaphor, interpretation and aesthetic focus can have for the student in the moment of *doing* circus. It is a description that builds upon the mapped territories within this

chapter and takes us forward towards their reintegration in association with the desire to reveal the nature of pedagogic containment, holding or tact.

Chapter 5.0

Taking a Leap: Action, Moment, Glory and Fragmentation

This chapter considers what it is that the student 'owns' in that moment of 'leaping' in the doing, being and seeing of risk-taking and circus in performance. I develop the description of a depth of knowledge that the teacher has about herself and is able to map in relation to the student. An excavation of ownership, therefore, begins to uncover what it is that the teacher 'contains' (to use Leyser's terms) for the student (although they cannot be a substitute for them) when supporting the leap. This gives a preliminary indication of what is at stake within the idea of the leap. I ruminate on the different meanings associated with aerial work that are lived in the *doing* of it and, in that way, I circulate around ways of viewing this in association with domestication or stultification, liberation or emancipation. I appropriate and develop Peta Tait's (after Merleau-Ponty's) three different ways of considering the aerial body to create the structure for this chapter - the body in action, the momentary body and the glorified body:

> An *aerial body in action* is seen through the bodily fleshing of a '*glorified body*' and viscerally with the '*momentary body*', but reversibly, so that the observing body becomes glorified momentarily in aerial action. The visible is inhabited by the invisible and experienced bodily and expressly and potentially operates in a 'dialectic of love'. ([italics my own, used to emphasise the three strata] Tait, 2005:150)

The three aerial bodies intertwine within the moment of performance action as a movement that is biologically lived, 'witnessed/seen' and performed for an other. This is what the student owns in embodied performance - it is their being. The body in action can be seen as the mechanical and biological body; it is what the student physically does. This body is discussed in relation to the anatomical language which I usually use to describe it and in relation to how language can limit the student's understanding of the physical action. The momentary body is discussed here in reference to being with others - the student who is seen or witnessed by the teacher and other students - in relation to fear, anxiety and the cultural context in which it sits. It is the body that reaches out and expresses something within a social context,

as discussed in Chapter 2. The final body is glorified. By this, Tait articulates that the body is seen as something more than what it is by the others who witness it; they bestow it with certain significance in the moment of watching.

The superhumanity discussed by Leyser and Zaccarini, for example, describes the feeling experienced by an unfamiliar audience that an aerial body in action is something more powerful than the normal body. In this chapter, I investigate the glorified body in relation to the transgressive nature of circus, how this conscribes meaning for the student performing and brings them to understand themselves anew. Through an appropriation of Tait's terminology, I build a framework which I will use to discuss practical moments in Chapter 6. I consider the implications that a fragmented understanding of aerial performance can have, in terms of anticipatory resolution, by drawing the ideas back to discussions of risk, resilience and emancipation taken from Chapter 3.

These three descriptions of the body in aerial performance- active, momentary and glorified - taken from Maurice Merleau-Ponty's discussions of alterity in *The Visible and the Invisible* and advanced by Tait, offer a useful frame through which I view the deep strata of experience that trapeze work can have for the student by doing, observing and attributing meaning. Throughout my thesis, I have continuously placed my personal experience of pedagogy in service of a new perspective upon the term 'risk-taking'. This chapter is no different. It explores the concepts of the body and alterity through a single moment of teaching. I place my experience alongside that of the theories and practices of other teachers and researchers in order to ruminate upon the cultural and social impact of enabling others to take risks. Through this methodology, I explore the performance of risk and consider a single moment of practice, documented in Figure 1: the teaching of a movement called an Eagle. The student performed the Eagle within the rehearsal process and became an active, momentary and glorified body through doing so. It is not a fragmented experience but one that is known through the *doing* in its totality. The teacher is the locus for making the three bodily knowledges transparent to the student, not by explication but by an act of solicitude in the *doing*. She may, as I did, reference the scientific and biological but also instinctively capture and leap ahead of the student's experience of pain and surprise in order to contain it for him without diminishing his

possession of it. She is in this moment the witness to the student's glorified body and champion of his potential being towards authentic understanding.

The teacher is both orchestrator and audience of this moment, responsible for it and yet distanced from it. In Heideggerian terms, by devoting ourselves to the same project 'in common', we the student and the teacher - 'thus become authentically bound together, and this makes possible the right kind of objectivity, which frees the other [the student] in his freedom for himself' (1962:159). It is this notion of the right kind of objectivity that I navigate within the relationship as one caring for the student. The right kind of objectivity is one that declares the 'mine-ness' of the student's relationship to their own body, to movement, to death, to risk and to authenticity, whilst I, the teacher, map the encounter, sustaining and attesting to the student's ability to encounter it. As discussed in Chapter 2, this is a complex proposition for the teacher, which can disable as well as enable the student's awareness of their own possibility.
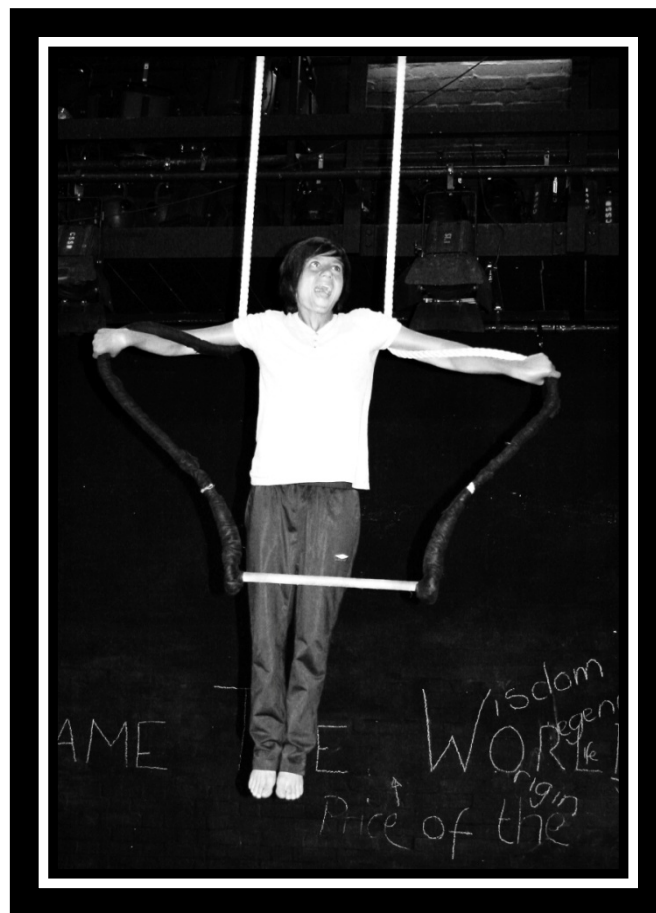

Figure 1. *The Eagle.*

5.1 Action

The critical incident performed in this instance by the student is the action of a static trapeze move called an Eagle. The performer begins by standing on his toes on the trapeze bar with his hands loosely placed on the ropes. He then slides his hands down the rope so that they lie parallel to the body. During this slide, the student wraps his arms once around the rope so that the rope runs from the back of the shoulder joint (behind his body), through the arm-pit, down the bicep (in front of his body) and forearm (behind his body) to culminate in the palm of the hand (see Figure 1.). The move demands that the performer's upper arms are secured firmly in the ropes before his arms are lifted to a 90° angle away from the body in the shape of a cross. As his arms move to this perpendicular position, the performer lifts his knees through his quadriceps and removes his toes from the bar to release the trapeze from the weight of his body. Once the bar is free of weight, the performer is able to complete the movement by taking his toes behind the bar as he straightens his legs. It is important that the body is held strongly and the chest is raised in order to keep the vulnerable shoulder joint safe within the move. The action of the movement is delivered as a mechanistic proposition in terms of the student's physiology and muscularity but it is taught through multiple ways of expressing- linguistic, poetic, embodied, symbolic and representative.

Throughout my praxis, I use anatomical terminology to discuss the body of the student. This type of language is one that I argue can limit and fragment the student's body as something to be categorised or stratified when not taken in dialogue with other more ambiguous choreographic, embodied and/or linguistic means. Building from the argument about technique and aesthetics that I opened in the previous chapter, I recognise that anatomical language can domesticate and liberate the teacher who uses it and the student who hears it. This layer of discourse enables a specificity of communication within the telling relating to movement. It is useful as a structure through which to articulate the deep level to which the teacher is conversant with the body. The biological language contains and secures the safety for the student within a linguistic frame. The student trusts that the teacher knows what

they are talking about. However, it limits the discourse when considered in relation to possibility, performance and performativity for which a more poetic and therefore ambiguous language structure may be used.

The way that a pedagogic instruction is received when delivered with anatomical specificity ensures that the student, and in this case the reader, knows not only where in the body the movement is enacted but also the intrinsic 'wholeness' achieved by a body in transition and interrelation. Tait references Foucault (1979) in her assurance that 'an aerial performer is not separate from his or her mechanical equipment, a body is a body-tool, part of a 'body machine complex'' (2005:7). I knowingly used deterministic and biologically specific language when teaching the Eagle, but it was used in combination with an attention to the body as ephemeral as well as tangible.

When I talk to students using biological terms, I am aware of the 'technologies of power' that permeate the discourse surrounding the fear or absence of bodies and, in particular, in relation to the bodies of children. However, I retain a clear focus on ambiguity and resist the temptation to diagnose the student as if they were purely a mechanical body. This excavation of the biological strata of the perceived body is purely that - an excavation of fluid and mutable strata, complete only when seen in totality. The transformation of students into biological bodies entails an act of derivation and abstraction and could be seen as a form of objectification, which is irreconcilable with my emancipatory and phenomenological imperative. I talk in these terms in order to recognise the cultural situatedness of the act and to offer specificity to the student and to the reader. However, I reiterate that this is only one layer of the teaching discourse to which I am attentive. Biological language is a part of the act, but it does not define, describe or contain it wholly.

By recognising the different strata of linguistic possibilities within the act of teaching, I pass through what Van Manen calls an 'interpretative cycle' whereby the researcher orients around a specific question and interprets experience by questioning the specificity of the language or expression that is used (1990: 151). Through this chapter, I orientate myself towards the strata of meaning conveyed by the seemingly derivative or abstracted notions I use, understanding that they work as a whole to communicate to the student at all times.

The action for the student is one of doing the movements that achieve the Eagle and then performing its completion for a few seconds. In this first section, I am investigating both the act of doing by the student and the act of enabling it from the teacher (which communicates both power and empowerment to the student). I begin by uncovering the temporal and spatial nature of the moment of action.

5.1.1   Trust, temporality and space

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, trust bred from tact and faith are the mobilising elements within the pedagogic relationship that enables true risk-taking to be encountered. This trust is temporary and spatially dependent and is defined as a process to be uncovered and worked with. It cannot be perceived as a fixed end point; the pedagogic relationship is one of tactful negotiation of the boundaries of trust. Manning's definition of tact is that it 'embodies this injunction that challenges me in advance to have known' the conditions under which I have agreed to work (2007:134). Trust is an act that unites participants temporarily in agreement. This temporary agreement is fluid and mutable within the teaching relationship; it emerges as a presence that mobilises the pedagogic dialogue whereby the Eagle is taught. But it is momentary and, as we saw in the example of The Gazelle in Chapter 3, can disappear if the teacher is distracted by cultural concerns. The teacher cannot jump in for the student. The student must enact the movement for themselves and risk the 'fall' that will be failure should the teacher's exposition and support not enable them to know how to encounter and move towards mastering the movement. The student, therefore, takes the 'leap of faith' articulated in the last chapter and they trust the teacher to catch them.

The move, the Eagle, is not one typically tackled by the novice trapeze artist because it demands a reasonable standard of core strength and balance. It is also extremely painful, leaving bruises and/or tears to the skin on the first attempt. Consequently, the teacher needs to be sure that the student is both strong enough in terms of muscularity and in terms of tolerance to pain. I needed to judge the value of this move as one that would challenge the student in the right way at this time. It is a decision made in the moment to provoke and engage his will and artistry without

overloading or disempowering him and thereby stultifying his learning. The decision was instinctive and reflective due to my knowledge of this move as a powerful symbol of masculinity. Tait suggests that certain aerial movements perform as gender representation. Gender in this instance is performed as a symbol of the 'masculine'. This is due to the socially acceptable muscularity it places in view for the Eagle highlights the shoulders, biceps and pectoral muscles of the student (2005:89).

My decision was also informed by my appreciation of the student's individual learning needs in response to what was going on in the room at that time. An understanding of temporality, therefore, recognises that the challenge given to the student resides in a decision taken in the momentary, which proposes an intention towards a possible future. The decision to teach the Eagle reflected the student's desire to be pushed beyond the level he had previously worked at and to try something unique to his personality and physical type. I was also attentive to his need to regain some status having failed to grasp a move that another student could do. I saw it to be a moment for him to compete with others, extend his repertoire and confirm his ability.

This is not an objective decision, if we take objectivity to mean a rational calculation of a possible outcome. I do not objectify or diagnose the student at the moment of 'seeing', I attempt to humanise him. Heidegger uses the terms 'considerateness' and 'forbearance' to define the attributes necessary within an authentic and common pursuit (1962: 159). Etymologically, Heidegger emphasises the proposition that 'considerateness' and 'forbearance' are both resonant with the notion of 'seeing' rather than judging and that to see is to know beyond the visible. This is not to be confused with empathy, which is a self-involved interrelation: leaping in for the student rather than ahead of him conflates one's own understanding with the student's. The teacher does not see herself through and in the student; she attends to the student in the moment from her own experiential, historical map. The decision is, therefore, temporally dependent. For now, it is important to emphasise that the teacher, through whatever means, judges the appropriate move to teach the student at that time. The mode of this judgment is made through an appreciation of the self having experienced the movement for itself and an acknowledgement of the mechanisms at play within the movement for the student that need to be managed within the teaching of it. My past experience and my understanding of the student

are elements of the tactful observation I use to decide whether to propose the Eagle to him. My memory and embodied 'knowing' of the movement are bound temporally within the decision to teach and onwards within the mode of teaching the action.

The spatial nature of the decision-making process also merits consideration at this time. The term 'space', in this instance, is used to denote a place which is inscribed with the cultural and historical resonances of what people have done there, the way that the room has been used. The space was one in which the student had worked with me on a semi-regular basis over the preceding two years. He had performed there as well as rehearsed there. Over the previous days, all the students had written on the walls in chalk, which you can see in the picture. They had claimed ownership of the space. In this instance, the space carried with it Helen Nicholson's notion of an utopian 'empty space' which is 'designed to liberate the soul and the imagination by isolating actors and audience [in this case students] from the restrictions of history, the regulation of place and the materiality of everyday life' (2002:125).

The space impacted upon the moment of action with the student to communicate social and cultural value to the student for the work undergone. The Webber Douglas Studio, where we worked, communicates the institution in which it is situated in London as well as offering opportunities to 'liberate' by being a metaphorical empty space. I would suggest that the notion of a truly empty space is impossible. However, a space can be inhabited by and created by the dissent and transgression enacted therein - those opportunities to rupture (through acts of risk-taking) the student's known relation to the social or cultural determinates in which they are normally situated. To that end, an appreciation of the nature of the space as one that envelops and impacts the student is integral to the notion of tactful trust. Trust is temporal, spatial and processual. If conditions are not met, then trust is broken and the student is prone to falling, to failure, to stultification and to inauthenticity. My observation of the student is, therefore, spatially dependent, and the space forms an integral part of the tactful knowledge I have.

5.1.2 The fall or drop

Circus performance is encapsulated within the vision of a body falling and flying through space to thrill an audience. In Tait's words, 'The suspension of the body

seems to heighten its aesthetic qualities and beauty' (2005:1). It is as if, in the performance (which is also reality) of possible death, the audience is able to view the body with clarity as well as imagination. The fall is the means to make the audience thrilled and invigorated, it is the factor that places the artists at risk and it is the action that could bring death into the room.

The Eagle is a movement that enables the student to momentarily resist gravity and restrain himself from falling to the ground. An investigation of what could be considered the phenomenology of the fall reveals the tensions inherent for the student and teacher. Falling is defined in relation to dropping or descending, under the force of gravity, to a lower place through loss or lack of support. Falling is, therefore, what the student materially encounters both in the act of aerial work and within the pedagogic relationship. Falling can be enacted in three modes: the self in relation to gravity, the self in relation to failure and, finally, the self in relation to the other, where the other in this instance is both the teacher and the audience. The momentary action of the Eagle is a resistance to falling because, in the action, the body is suspended to look as if it defies gravity but gravity is constantly acting upon it, as shown in the photograph above. Falling is also a philosophical and metaphorical proposition that imparts meaning onto the action, which I will discuss later in this chapter in relation to moment and glory.

The action needed to successfully perform an Eagle is to wrap and hold the arms correctly in order not to fall. The teacher instigates the wrapping and holding to ensure the movement is completed carefully. The student is entangled in the ropes of the trapeze and lifted by their trapezius muscles to momentarily give the illusion of weightlessness. In actuality, the forces of gravity are both enabling the illusion and disabling the fall. Gravity draws down the ropes so that, once wrapped, the downward pull stops the student from falling. It is gravity which enables the ropes to secure the arms of the student. However, once the arms are tied in, gravity's enactment on the core body is such that the arms are pulled away from the shoulders, which are restrained upwards. The artist/student engages the trapezius muscles to lower the shoulder and carry the full weight of the body through a combination of muscles, rather than solely through the tendons in the shoulder joint.

As you can see in the image above, the student's shoulders are lowered and his chest is lifted. This results from engagement of the pectoris major and minor from the front of the body, and the sub-scapularis deep within the body, to retract or draw in the scapula, which would ordinarily protract or extend if hanging with 'dead' weight. By retracting the scapular and lifting the chest, the student is able to stabilise the shoulder joint, ensuring that, not only does he not fall, but that his entanglement does not rip the humerus away from the shoulder's glenohumeral socket and damage the stabilising semicirculare humeri ligaments therein. The student engages these key muscle groups in order to support the vulnerable shoulder joint. He may not be able to rationalise that he is doing so in these terms. He simply knows to keep himself safe.

Without this strength within these key muscle groups, the performer risks severe injury to the shoulder. A slight miscalculation can result in the student dropping through the chest and dislocating the shoulder, tearing his muscles and skin and falling through the air whilst still attached to the trapeze. The student is vulnerable to the force of gravity yet his power is demonstrated through a 'tonic' or fluid and balanced engagement of the shoulder stabilising muscles. This tonic is an active, engaged use of the key muscles in order to provide an active rather than dead weight for the shoulder socket to manage. It is this tonic engagement of muscles which consolidates the illusion of weightlessness that I will discuss in the next section.

The anatomical language that I use sits within my body and is useful as the foundational strata of knowledge of what it is to be an aerialist and, therefore, what it means to teach aerial work. My role is to keep the student safe. I do not need to articulate all of the anatomical resonances within the teaching of the Eagle. In fact, I do not, for fear of projecting a hierarchical and value-laden objectivity towards the student's body that may, in Foucauldian terms (and as discussed in the last chapter), turn him into a docile body (1977:138). Anatomical knowledge is inscribed within my pedagogic body in the moment of teaching. I communicate it through simple instructions and physical prompts. Rather like a complex choreography, I transcribe my physical understanding into the texture of the student's performance of the Eagle. The movement is uniquely his but it holds a trace of my understanding, as my own movement holds the traces of the movement and the knowledge of my teachers.

The tact that I employ to negotiate the move with him is one that is rehearsed and explored throughout every contact with every student. This tactful negotiation places the student at the heart of the concern and is underpinned by the teacher's embodied knowledge. Throughout this thesis, I express and inhabit the tensions between the descriptive and prescriptive modes of discourse. The scientific is a part of my embodied knowledge, a knowledge that is synthesised in my physical memory of what it is to be in the moment of performing an Eagle. In an attempt to map this terrain, I am drawn away from description into analysis. I do this knowingly because of the dominance of this type of discourse within physical training and pedagogy and because the scientific informs my understanding. However, this does not mean that analytical thinking is privileged above the embodied; the two are indivisible layers of discourse that impact upon the student. It would be inappropriate of me to ignore the scientific in favour of the descriptive.

In The Eagle, gravity restrains the student and he resists its downward force through a tonic engagement of his entire body and through the ropes of the trapeze. The student has tethered himself within the ropes and resists the downward pull through his shoulders, chest and back. Viscerally, he experiences pain as the ropes bite his flesh and the weight of his body rests within the joints of his shoulders and back. He is entrapped by gravity, by the ropes and by his very body. He actively, knowingly, resists the fall.

In Heideggerian terms, the fall represents the essential human condition to evade death. '*Dasein* has first of all always already fallen away from itself as authentic ability-to-be-itself and fallen into the "world"' (1962: 175). Heidegger's suggestion is that, in the everyday, the self is inherently drawn away as if drawn by gravity, from acknowledging the possibility of death; it has no choice, as the student has no choice, but to work in opposition to the forces of gravity. Taylor Carman's (2003) appraisal of the Heideggerian fall is that it is distinct from alternate ways of seeing the world because it 'does not mean falling from a prior authentic self-understanding into inauthenticity. Instead, it means being always already embroiled and entangled in the world of quotidian concerns' (2003:309). The falling, in Heidegger's case, is not a loss of stability, it is the stability against which being or *Dasein* is able to be destabilised through anxiety. This specificity of the term 'fall' is useful as it recognises the mobile tension between the self and self with others as well as the pull

between authentic and everyday that is both a neutral state of possibility and impossibility. It is, however, the opposite of the action of the student for whom the potential fall is the destabilising key.

The fall associated with The Eagle is similar to Heidegger's notion of a 'call to conscience' and calls *Dasein* away from the everyday evasion of death in authenticity of existence (1962:254). The fall for Heidegger is normal, as it is for the aerialist, but what they are falling towards is the opposite. The aerial student falls towards possible death and knowledge of himself in relation to death whilst the Heideggerian premise suggests a fall towards inauthenticity and evasion of death. The call to conscience mobilises the self not to fall in Heideggerian terms whereas *doing* The Eagle enables the student to 'hold' firm against literal falling and understand the fragility of existence (1962:254).

If the student were to accidentally fall, to lose control, their response would turn from anxiety to what Heidegger calls 'fear'. The relationship between fear and anxiety is complex and almost imperceptible; fear is grounded in the world and has the ability to make us flee to inauthenticity in the face of it whereas anxiety is not rooted in the world and, therefore, brings us to authenticity (1962: 230). Following on from discussions in Chapter 1, we can see that fear is a condition that is socially constituted within acts of risk-taking; it takes the student away from their personal relation to the act of possible success and places them in relation to vulnerability. Fear stultifies the student whereas anxiety is something less specific. It brings the student in contact with their experience and it makes the experience vital in recognition of possible failure or pain. The student is emancipated by the fact that anxiety reveals the risk for him in the moment of practice. The potential fall is therefore considered in terms of anxiety as opposed to fear.

Heidegger develops the notion of *Dasein* as being one already fallen by suggesting that anxiety is the only thing that stops *Dasein* from constantly falling towards inauthenticity. 'The turning away of falling is grounded... in anxiety'. In this he declares that something unspecific, in this case the potential fall, enables the student to find authenticity (1962: 230). Anxiety is a grounding attention and concern, the basic affective way *Dasein* is experienced in the world. It is *Dasein* confronted with its own finite possibility and the demand that stems from itself to be what it must be

by choosing a possibility of being. In the practical sense, by deciding to take a 'leap of faith' and try The Eagle, the student overcomes fear and finds a resolute understanding of death through his anxiety whereas the specific - in this case an actual fall from the equipment - would lead instead to fear:

> Anxiety does not 'see' any definite 'here' or 'yonder' from which it comes. That in the face of which one has anxiety is characterized by the fact that what threatens it is nowhere. Anxiety 'does not know' what that in the face of which it is anxious is... it is so close that it is oppressive and stifles one's breath, and yet it is nowhere. (1962: 231)

In the case of The Eagle, it is not a genuine contactable and tangible understanding of the fragility of muscles that makes the student anxious but the unknowable possibility of what might happen which stifles his breath. If the student were to contemplate the possibility of tearing, rupturing and hitting the ground, the emotion felt would be a Heideggerian fear which would paralyse him. Instead, anxiety for some unknown future exists. Anxiety mobilises the action towards authenticity, therefore developing the self towards anticipatory resolution.

So if anxiety is what stops *Dasein* momentarily from falling in Heideggerian terms, then it can also be what keeps the student safe as a circus performer. Anxiety is useful in terms of self-preservation from falling but, again like Heidegger, it does not translate to an abject fear because the teacher's role is to ensure against that possibility. The teacher keeps the student in contact with authenticity and falling and with the possibility and impossibility of their situation, engendering resolution through a relation to positive and negative outcome. The teacher is the container and 'holder' of the anxiety and is the one who stops the student's fear of falling from taking over and disabling the moment. In Rancière's terms, the teacher is able to mobilise the will of the student towards defining their own outcome and deriving their own meaning from it. Therefore, the student is opened up to the possibility of their own death through an engagement with it but they are not taught what to think about it.

5.1.3 The catch

One of my trapeze teachers refused to use the terms 'drop' or 'fall'. Instead she insisted that the student, I, thought and spoke of the movement as a catch, thus

turning the linguistic proposition from passivity - I fall - into activity - I catch. This simple repositioning enabled me to recognise the agency and choice I had within trapeze work, and to see that the difference between falling and not falling was a simple mechanical skill: the catch. It became more than a semantic point that the teacher underlined; it became the locus of an embodied activity and a moment that clarified my conceptual understanding of my potential. I do not propose that a reclassification of a drop as a catch brings the student a more authentic or indeed more positive appreciation of the movement. It does not do so but it shifts the dynamic 'provided that its assertions are to make a claim to conceptual understanding' (Heidegger, 1962:224). What the teacher had done was reveal the conceptual structure that was informing my relation to the movement in a similar way to the metaphors discussed in the previous chapter. In revealing the concept, she spoke to me beyond my physical being into a realm of intention and possibility. I saw myself as potential towards catch, rather than towards fall.

Within the agency of the catch, I, as a student, developed and inhabited an authentic relationship that took me away from being annihilated by the notion of the fall as a fear response. It repositioned me in relation to my fear of gravity and enabled me to know myself in relation to the notion of falling. I knew myself to be in the presence of a possible fall to my death but in possession of the simple mechanical stopping point against it: the catch. A consideration of the traditional language of trapeze training, where moves are called 'drops' and 'falls', pulls the conversation interestingly back to Heidegger's consideration of the self in relation to the everyday. He reflects upon how the self can become tranquilised, entangled, alienated and tempted by the everyday, which has the essential characteristics of a 'downward plunge' towards inauthenticity. Moreover, tranquilisation and entanglement serve to conceal the fact that we are living inauthentically. Heidegger writes:

> Dasein plunges out of itself, into the groundlessness and nullity of inauthentic everydayness. But this plunge remains hidden from Dasein by the way things have been publicly interpreted, so much so, indeed, that it gets interpreted as a way of 'ascending' and 'living correctly'. (1962:223)

In this, Heidegger proposes that the interpretation or conceptual framing of the self in relation to the self is authentic but it becomes distorted by the structures used to define it. According to my proposition in earlier chapters, these are the influences of

a neoliberalist education system, deterministic or technical language and the discourses that perpetuate fear of the child's body. For example, a trapeze move can be categorized as a fall, which signifies it as negative due to the factors above, or it can be seen as a catch which signifies it as positive in relation to ownership. Trapeze training mirrors the metaphorical downward plunge of the Heideggerian fall. Through a tangible, corporeal engagement with the reality of falling, the student faces the plunge that remains hidden from students not engaged in risky pursuits. I argue that a corollary of both the action and the conceptual framing of the catch is a movement towards authenticity. Although a complete authentic understanding is momentary, fragmented and incomplete, encapsulated within both the concept and the action of the catch it brings knowledge of the self as both possible and impossible in relation to death. In Heideggerian terms, as in my teacher's emphasis, the student 'catches' him or herself. They are not limited by the notion of the self as disempowered or subject to the fall. They are the catch that stops the inevitable accident that would occur if the movement relinquished itself to gravity. They are the catch that stops them being tranquilised by fear. They are the catch that stops the physical body being wounded by falling to the ground. They know themselves as potentially resilient and equal to the task within the *doing* of circus.

The catch is also a description of the trust needed to mobilise the encounter between the teacher and the student. The student trusts that I will catch him should he fall from the equipment. This is both literal and figurative, I may not be strong enough to literally catch the falling student, but I am able to leap ahead, through my observation of his encounter with the equipment to spot or rebalance a move before he is subjected to the fall. We perform the catch together as the student leaps into The Eagle, we are responsible for his safety in common with each other.

5.1.4 The wound.

It is essential for the teacher to understand the biological forces that are acting on the action of the student in the moment of doing because of the wounds that can be inflicted through aerial work. I do this in order to leap ahead of the student in terms of anticipated common understanding. The teacher brings her memory of the movement and knows that the student will presently have an experience of the

trapeze in common with her. To teach a single position, I must know the technique of the movement, which muscles need to be engaged in order to keep the student safe, what it feels like to 'be' in the movement as a novice: the pain of the contact between the bar or ropes and the flesh of the student, the surprise when the bar swings and feels unstable and what happens when the body experiences fear and how this can impact upon the action and response of the student.

In the practice of The Eagle, I guided the student through three things: how to wrap his arms within the ropes to make them safe, how to move his arms and body in unison to achieve the position and how to safely return his toes to the bar to complete the movement. These are a set of simple instructions that enable the student to own a movement. Further to that, on his descent, we discussed the movement and he showed me the bruises he received when performing it.

The student engages his core muscles in order to present a picture that has the appearance of ethereality and weightlessness. In actuality, the student here creates tension in the ropes through strength in his arms and then uses his own body weight and its relation to gravity in order to appear to defy it (gravity). The student is highly conscious of his physical body through the friction caused by the cotton ropes on the arms, by the need to maintain a fluid, 'tonic' position and by the need to bring his arms parallel to the ground in order to create a satisfactory aesthetic. In the performance of The Eagle, the student was wounded by the elements of the 'catch' - the rope burnt his flesh. He was bruised by the mechanisms that kept him safe from death. The rope ruptured the student's skin, biting into his flesh and marking him in a way that left visible scars.

In terms of the whole practical process, the bruises experienced by this particular student when performing The Eagle were the most severe injury, in medical terms, that we suffered during the course of the practical sessions. The student, however, was completely unconcerned. In fact, he was very proud of the way that his bravery and skill had been marked upon his skin. His lack of concern and veritable gloating about his injury encapsulated many of the tensions experienced when working in this way. The students go through a process of risk assessment and risk management training and dialogue in order to comply with the Central School of Speech and Drama's *Good Practice in Research*. They are made aware of the possibility of slight,

moderate or severe injury as well as the probability of it. They anticipate that they are more than likely to get bruised or have torn flesh from the work.

In this instance, the student articulated his pride at 'being a real aerialist now' after he had bruised his flesh. This meant that it was the process of injury, he felt, which defined his contact with the work rather than his ability to perform The Eagle. The wound in this instance 'marked' him as one who could. It changed his perception of himself in relation to aerial work and his understanding of himself. It was as if the marks on his body physically inscribed his transformation. He carried the trace of this wounding within his identity from that moment. This is the physiological manifestation of the wound experienced in relation to death.

The student has the wound in common with the teacher too. Both have been scarred by the contact with trapeze equipment. I did not let the student know that this was a painful move that would leave bruises but anticipated that it would impact upon his movement and performance. It was one of the pedagogic choices I faced, prior to teaching the move, not to speak of the possible damage he might incur but to let him discover them for himself. I knew that this student might be afraid if I explicated the possibility beforehand and anticipated that he would be reconciled to the pain within the movement itself. I knew he had the confidence and strength to stop if the pain was too great. I offered the move to the student as a challenge to his identity in all respects. I did not explicate what that might mean for fear of stultifying his response to it.

It is useful to bring the notion of woundedness back into a discussion of performance theory - what the performer is and presents through an act of extreme physical performance. The act of performing, in Adrian Heathfield's conceptual terms, 'articulate[s] a certain wounding in the nature of sexual (and social) relation' (2006:189). In the instance of trapeze performance, the wound is inscribed upon the performer's body in a way that may leave permanent scars. The articulation of social wounding is transformed into the scars carried by the aerialist's body. In light of the pain and wound inflicted, Heathfield contends that I am awakened from the tranquilisation of the everydayness of my existence which stops me from living in a way that enables me to encounter death by taking risks. The scarring makes me

aware of the entanglement of my identity and embodiment within a societal construct that has the potential to disable me.

In The Eagle example, the young man may be experiencing himself through three different social constructs. A first self in relation to the vulnerability he experiences through a teacher thinking for, rather than of, him (as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4); a second self constituted within a social structure that has a taboo relation to the self regarding his (child's) body, his possible death and to injury (as discussed in Chapter 1) and, thirdly, his experience could be framed as one that exists only as a medical wound to be tended. These frames are indivisible from a fourth narrative frame: the student's own experience of himself as strong, of having the will to attempt the movement and of being marked by the attempt. The wound empowers him to a different understanding of himself in newness, ambiguity and power.

Heathfield's wound is a leitmotif of physical theatre and it is created by the dualistic 'interdependence of presence and absence, masculinity and femininity, sex and death, attainment and loss' (2006:189). His suggestion is that, through the performance of a wound, the artist embodies the possibilities of both life and death. It is the identical paradox that Leyser exposes in the last chapter. The performer is inside and outside the paradox at the same moment in the performance, unable to move away from the impact of gravity without rupturing the fabric of the material and socially constructed self.

Tait claims that aerial performers are compelled to complete an action despite the physical repercussions that action might have upon their body (2005: 119). In her perception, this is enhanced on the one hand by normative notions of gender inscribed onto the performer in the act of performance which are confined within the social construct of male muscularity or fragile femininity and, on the other hand, by the responsiveness of an audience, who are in ignorance of the strata of anatomical corporeality within the action: 'a performer's aches and pains, the physical effort of difficult tricks, remain unseen and accentuated by a cultural perception of lightness' (2005: 119). Pain is a part of the aerial process that is lived and known by the student learning The Eagle. It is remembered by the teacher, who is holding the student's learning and is also suppressed in the act of the performance. The suppression of the genuine pain is written into the text of the work to conscribe masculinity and

superhumanity. The student is a performer-construct that hides rather than reveals his authentic relation to his body.

This brings us back to the paradoxical state of between life and death described by Leysar and Zaccarini, where the act of aerial circus appears to embody the paradoxical positions of life and death, fragility and strength. The job of an aerialist is to present lightness through an act that contains weight. This is what the student learns through their painful contact with the equipment - that no teacher can leap in and take pain or death in their stead. Moreover, the student discovers that the very act that marks his skin and inscribes his fragility is the one that will have him seen as powerful. The notion of power is both inscribed and described within the act of performance through the fact that it is seen as such by others.

5.2 Moment

If the active body of the student and teacher are magnified within the pedagogic moment of teaching The Eagle, in terms of the self in relation to gravity and falling, then the momentary body of the performer is that which reaches out and attests to the bodies of others in performance. In Tait's words, the body is 'visceral' and 'fleshed' in order to glorify it or to bestow it with a significance that is more than a normal appreciation of the body (2005:150). This section considers the way that the aerial body may be received by others, such as the teacher, co-performers and audience, in the moment of performance. For Heidegger, *Dasein* is constituted within and for its relation to others and this can be considered fundamental to recognising how the student's understanding of their identity is resolved within the moment of the action.

The aerialist's body is a site for meaning-making and spectacle; the aerialist appears to exchange their own safety for the entertainment and experience of others. When observing the performance of The Eagle, the audience responds in two ways: with the fear response provoked by observing a body in peril and with a release response after the move has been completed. This move is then layered with complex symbolic references that the artist/student has no control over and may be glorified or seen as representative of the 'ideal' by an audience. The idealised masculine, via the notion of superhumanity, is represented in the description expressed by Zaccarini, for example and the idealised feminine trait of fragility within the examples given by Leyser in the

previous chapter. In the momentary action of the Eagle, the observer is locked into a reversibility that Tait calls 'a dialectic of love' (2005:150). The observer sees themselves within the movement; moreover, the observer feels the jeopardy of the performer, physically, within their own body. Interestingly, the notion of a 'dialectic of love' is one that I have already detailed as a Platonic pedagogic ideal in the Introduction and Chapter 3, where I emphasise that this is an individualised, mobile and emotionally connected relationship between the knower and the object of knowledge that resides within the notion of *aletheia* or uncoveredness. What is uncovered within Tait's suggestion is the reversible relation between bodies- those observed and observing. What is revealed in *aletheia* for Plato and Heidegger is the relation between knowledge and the known. So, within a trapeze act, knowledge is dialectically exchanged between audience and artist-- between observer and observed. The dialectic of love therefore has all the categories of Heideggerian 'right kind of concern' because it has both 'joy and sobriety' (1962: 358).

Enjoyment comes to the audience from the release of endorphins caused by experiencing the jeopardy of the aerialist within their bodies, through a primal engagement of the autonomic nervous system. When observing a body in peril, the body of the audience responds by signalling the amygdala within the brain. The amygdala responds by signalling the body to perform the fight or flight mechanisms of the autonomic nervous system. The heart beats faster, pumping more blood around the body to prepare for quick responses, the lungs breathe faster and more shallowly, the muscles tense ready to receive a physical blow or engage in running away, the stomach decreases digestion to send energy to the key fight or flight areas and sweat glands increase perspiration in order to cool the body in readiness for attack. The audience responds physically, as if the performer were in danger.

The response is to what they have seen as dangerous and, therefore, the response develops as the danger accretes. This response relates to both physical memory and risk assessment by the observer and is commonly known as the cortical pathway for it passes from the eye to the thalamus, through the visual cortex to the amygdala. This pathway is used to assess the situation after the initial rapid response. It allows a body to consider how to respond. In the case of the observer witnessing the danger of the aerialist, the danger appears genuine. The height of the equipment is assessed rapidly by the spectator as is the motion of the equipment. The performer

manipulates this response within the observer to perform calculated 'catches' with which to surprise them. These are to sustain the response for the audience, who would otherwise begin to relax when their assessment of danger had proved unfounded.

This experience, however, belongs to the audience and not to the aerialist who is consciously engaged with the equipment, their body, the momentum of the equipment and gravity. The performer's trained body responds to the minute changes needed to perfect a movement or successfully articulate the manoeuvre. They strive to provoke the response in the audience that they do not feel within themselves. For the novice aerialist, the sympathetic nervous system is activated by the new contact with a dangerous situation; sweaty palms and tension in the hands result in painful and dangerous contact with the equipment; the exertions of climbing a rope are impacted by shallow breathing and increased heart rate. The beginner expends a great deal of energy 'fighting' the equipment in order to feel control over it and the danger it presents. Greater exposure to the situation and developed competence over the equipment mean that the sympathetic nervous system is not engaged although the danger is present; it is assessed in the cortex and disregarded. However, should the performer become too relaxed, mistime a movement or provoke excess swing on the equipment, the direct pathway is provoked in order to keep the aerialist safe: the body fights to retain control, the senses are sharpened and the reflexes honed. The body acts reflexively. This is however, rare. The aerialist does not 'nearly die' every show, seven shows a week; they are not anxious in the way the novice or the spectator is anxious. They provoke feelings of anxiety within the audience as either a corollary to, or intention of, the piece.

The teacher is neither an innocent spectator to the action nor a passive observer of it. The specialist understanding that I have of myself in aerial contexts makes me conversant with the tricks used and, therefore, when watching a professional aerialist, it does not provoke an autonomic response within my body because I understand the danger. However, when working with a student, my body responds in a different way, through attentiveness and memory. I remember the novice's response as my own response to the equipment of my past and seek to contain the anxiety that they may have when they encounter it. This takes me back to

Heidegger's considerateness and forbearance. Solicitude, he contends, is borne out of knowing yourself in relation to being with others. Therefore, solicitude stands in for the fact that *Dasein* is always intended towards itself within the communit, and always, therefore, subject to the 'idle talk' of the everyday (1962: 224).

To combine the term 'solicitude' with notions of consideration and forbearance is to suggest that *Dasein* can be both aware and unaware of itself in relation to others. It is in authentic relation to others only when it has consideration of the impact those others have in relation to the self and then forbears the effects or impacts this community performs upon it. The example given by Zaccarini in the last chapter helps to clarify the terminology. The handstand student who was unaware of the determinative (and, therefore, stultifying) nature of his performance discipline in relation to culture, through solicitude with Zaccarini, understood his situation. He then needed to consider and forbear the effects of the community in order to discover his authentic relation to handstands. I suggest that equality in this pedagogic relationship 'helps the other to become transparent to himself in his care and to become free for it' (Heidegger, 1962: 159).

In The Eagle example, the act of care from the teacher towards the student is one that must not leap in and stultify them. If I were too attentive to the position of the hands or to stopping the bar from swinging, the student would not be able to have a genuine encounter with the movement; I would be doing the move for him. Considerateness is the right kind of objectivity. In this case, it is an attentive observation of the student, their breathing primarily, so that I am aware of their autonomic response and their level of focus. When teaching the Eagle, I stood in close enough proximity to be aware of the student's breath but distanced myself so that I did not impact on the his field of vision. I used my voice to make contact with him, to reach out towards and impact upon the anxiety that he felt, especially when taking his toes away from the bar. This vocal contact does two things: it reminds the student that I am present and considerate of him as well as 'holding' the instructions that he may have forgotten when he first felt the pain of the ropes biting into his flesh. The student is reminded of the performance elements and the importance of breathing by the teacher's own breath and by her positive comments 'well done' or 'breathe' or 'smile'.

After The Eagle is completed, the student tends to rush themselves out of it. In this instance, the student wanted to quickly get back to the bar to stop the pain. This is the moment of forbearance for me. Forbearance is what stops me from rushing in to 'solve' the issue of returning his toes to the bar. The faster the student attempts to get back to the bar, the more reckless their attempt, the more prone to failure they become and the likelihood of falling increases. In this example, the student attempted to simply reach his legs to the bar without lowering his arms. This places huge strain on the core and biceps which is almost impossible to maintain. If I had wanted to, I could have stepped in and raised the bar to meet his toes. Forbearance reminds me that the movement is owned by the student. I am there to support only; I cannot leap in and do it for him. I needed to trust that my judgment of appropriateness was secure and that the student had the strength needed to get himself out of trouble. By standing back, supporting him with my voice by saying 'breathe, you know how to do this, lower your arms and then you can reach the bar', having the movement in common with the student and working in common with the student, I applied considerateness and forbore my anxiety in order to maintain the 'right kind' of objective care. We performed the momentary action together, unified and in common. To put it in phenomenological terms, I do not see myself as performing in that moment; I am distant and yet 'deeply concerned' with the student's movement and action (Heidegger, 1962: 158). In my commitment to equality, I emancipate the student to discover the potential of the movement for himself.

Phenomenology identifies that, within performance, the self and the other are linked. They are both within and without the encounter; the observation is a part of the experience. It is a contentious area and one that a Heideggerian appreciation fails to reveal entirely. He proposes that 'everyday Being-with-one-another maintains itself between the two extremes of positive solicitude' which are leaping in for, and leaping ahead of the other and that 'it brings numerous mixed forms to maturity; to describe these and classify them takes us beyond the limits of this investigation' (1962:159). Carman proposes that Heidegger's focus is upon the individual, with constant reference to intention, and that intention rests in the being-with-others-ness (*mitsein*) of the everyday (2003:42). Intention is significant because it is suggests purpose and that purpose is sometimes confused by others. Heidegger sees *Dasein* as

solely driven by and attendant to its intention. He rejects the idea of intentionality as being 'conceptual'. Therefore, he uses the term 'comportment' rather than intention.

The intention of the teacher within The Eagle is to enable the student to encounter the equipment honestly, safely and for themselves. Therefore, the individual location of the self in relation to the other is constitutive of comportment 'so any understanding of being will necessarily be an account of our understanding of our comportment *toward* entities' (Carman, 2003:43). Carman develops this in a discussion of the self's ability to get 'lost' within the intentionality of the other as a kind of 'depersonalised social anonymity', which recognises that intentionality is fluid and mutable in its interdependence with others (2003*:* 140). What complicates the matter is that, in a moment of performance, the otherness of the performer for the audience is also discursive in that it communicates directly with the audience, who then take meaning from it.

I am turning, as Tait does, to Merleau-Ponty's poetic notion of 'fleshed' worlds for the development of the idea of self in relation to loss and alterity. Merleau-Ponty writes that:

> the body is lost outside of the world and its goals, fascinated by the unique occupation of its inside and outside. And henceforth movement, touch, vision, applying themselves to the other and to themselves, return toward the source and, in the patient and silent labour of desire, begin the paradox of expression. (1968:144)

When watching the Eagle, the audience experience the act through a visceral and corporeal relation to the body of the aerialist, as if they themselves were in peril and as if they themselves had 'caught' the rope. When operating in this dialogue with the performer, attention toward the self and the other is given so the physical reality of both bodies is recognised. Moreover, the watcher responds to the others within the audience. Losing themselves in the sharing of this, being intentioned towards the body of the performer, they are both towards the performer and towards the other audience members. The loss of goals and appreciation of them, the inside and the outside, the individual and the communal, all form a whole within the paradoxical relations between self and other: the paradox of expression as Merleau-Ponty calls it.

When Merleau-Ponty talks about the momentary glorification in a dialectic of love (advanced by Tait, 2005:150), he exposes a paradoxical physical connection between

the bodies of people. In this example, the connection is between the bodies of the audience and those of the performers. When watching someone move through space, he suggests, I am able to project myself into a dialogue with the physical body of the other. As I observe, I merge (or in Merleau-Ponty's terms 'flesh') the visual information with a physical knowing of my own embodied experience. Because I am and always have been a body, I know what it is to be one. This embodied knowing is proof that the observed body is the same as mine. It responds to danger and pain as mine does. Merleau-Ponty's assertion is that, within this 'dialectic of love' between the observer and the observed, both bodies are momentarily bound or 'fleshed' towards mutual revelation and knowledge (1964: 504). It is a visceral embodiment of Platonic *aletheia*.

The knowledge gained by the audience is a dialectical relation between performer and audience, not a response or rationalisation of observation. As Merleau-Ponty suggests, 'this dilemma, which is given as part of the human lot, is not one for me as pure consciousness; it is still I who makes another for me and makes each of us be as human beings' (1964: 505-6). The aerial act is momentary and we experience it as such. However, our communication and understanding of it is developed through this articulation. He quotes Antoine de Saint-Exupery when he continues, 'Your abode is the act itself. The act is you... You give yourself in exchange... Your significance shows itself, effulgent. It is your duty, your hatred, your love, your steadfastness, your ingenuity' (1964: 530). Merleau-Ponty recognises that the meaning of the act is shown in relation to others and in relation to understanding, which is both removed from the act itself and an expression of it in relation to culture, experience and memory. For the aerialist, the pure moment is the drop or somersault which they perform for an audience, who then attribute their own meaning to it.

This awareness enables communication from a position of shared knowledge that Merleau-Ponty calls 'reversibility':

> Meaning is not layered on the phrase like butter on bread, like a second layer of "psychic reality" spread over the [experience]: it is the totality of what is said, the integral of all the differentiations of the verbal chain; it is given with words for those who have ears to hear... there is no dialectical reversal from one of these views to the other; we do not have

to reassemble them into a synthesis: they are two aspects of the reversibility which is the ultimate truth. (1964:155)

Merleau-Ponty's description of a reversible body-to-body phenomenology, whereby the observer is lost in the momentary action of the performer, finds an affinity with the Heideggerian self-limited appreciation. Carman suggests that Heidegger was 'right to insist on the irreducibility of the first person', which underpins his writings on alterity: 'he was wrong to ignore those aspects of sociality that inevitably mingle and complicate' them (2003:168). I would suggest that Carman is forgetting the ambiguity and openness that is within Heidegger's writing on this matter. Despite Heidegger's response to the mature forms that are attributable to being with others, he recognises that loss of the self as an individual is an essential element within the everyday. He suggests that 'being with another which arises from one's doing the same thing as someone else' can, in authentic relation, 'free the other in his freedom for himself' (1962:159). This proposition of possibility declares that Heidegger is fully aware of the complication that the self with others proposes to the notion of an authentic, isolated first person self. Where Heidegger fails to fully develop the notion of self with others is within the nature of what the otherness means to the self. This notion is more fully developed within Merleau-Ponty's thinking.

Heidegger could easily be seen to leave an opening that Merleau-Ponty's poetic excavation serves to articulate within momentary, fragmented understanding, an opening which invites the suggestion that we are able to 'know' the body of another when we see it move, that our understanding of ourselves is magnified in the momentary reflection through the body of another. In Merleau-Ponty's words:

> This concentration of the visible... this bursting forth of the mass of the body toward the things, which makes me follow with my eyes the movements and contours of the things themselves, this magical relation, this pact between them and me according to which I lend them my body in order that they inscribe upon it and give me their resemblance. (1964:146)

Paradoxically, the aerialist is both mover and observer of the moving, which Merleau-Ponty calls a 'being in latency' (1964:136). He recognises that this latent potential intertwines with active potential. For Heidegger, this being in latency is *Dasein*, in that it is comported to, as well as potential in, the moment. *Dasein* is paradoxically both lost and found within the momentary because of its association with others and with death.

When the aerialist performs, they present their fearlessness and grace, falling and wound, in the face of seeming danger. When the audience watches this fearlessness and grace, they lose their individualised being to both the performer and the other audience members. They give themselves wholly over to the momentary body, the body that is perceptually caught within the aerialist's fall. The teacher also suffers a loss within the relationship: she loses the ownership of the movement and 'comports' her attention towards, with 'considerateness and forbearance' (Heidegger 1962: 254), the 'will' of the student (Rancière, 1991). The student's momentary body is captured within the photograph of The Eagle. But in the capturing of this momentary body, it is transformed and glorified with the meanings that are layered on top of it.

5.3. Glory

The 'glorified' body, in this instance, is that of the student performing The Eagle (Merleau-Ponty, 1968: 148). He becomes such because he is not an 'ontological void', according to Ponty: he makes meaning for and with others (1968:148). The student performs The Eagle with and for the teacher and for the other participants. He then performs it for his parents in a small 'showing' at the end of the course, where this photograph was taken. The student has followed mechanical and choreographic instructions, he becomes momentary in that he is observed performing the movement and then a meaning is applied to what is seen in the moment of performance. This meaning is a complex part of the movement, a layer of understanding that resonates with the performer to take him beyond the notion of an intentioned self. He is seen *as* something. The perspective shifts here from the body as lived, to the body as viewed. However, this is experienced in a reversible totality.

5.3.1 Circus and meaning.

There have been many different readings of circus that consider the semiotic or metaphorical implications of it as a text in the moment of performance. Paul Bouissac suggests that 'a circus act is the performance of a set of rhetorically ordered 'actions' which, like a language, can be performative because they accomplish what they refer to' (1976a:107). The notion of performativity is pertinent in this instance, because it is suggestive of a trained body, one that has been inscribed with the cultural and political codes of culture that are repeated in the moment of performance. In the moment of the action, a performative code is inscribed upon the

performer's body to reveal it to an audience. It is not a demonstration of the action because, in circus, the action is real and tangible. For Bouissac, the performer and the act are mutually indistinguishable. The performer is invisible; he becomes the action. I contest this assertion that the performer's sole accomplishment is to reveal an action. The act of circus performance is one that disrupts normative codes of behaviour. It therefore speaks beyond action and attests to the social and corporeal limitations of the everyday. It reaches out to the audience members, who recognise both themselves and the performer as fragile bodies in the world.

Performance theorist, Yoram Carmeli, writes that circus performance is a cultural representation of other that disenfranchises it from a bourgeois audience. He claims that a performer fulfils a role as a 'tamed, fully alienated and... idealised other' (2006:214). Carmeli continues that this is a 'precarious and nostalgic' view of both the cultural tradition of circus and of the practical observation of the technical skill employed by performers. His assertion is that a traditional framework of culturally prescribed 'viewing' has been used by the masses to disenfranchise the circus arts as ones not worthy of either critique or praise because they stand outside the realm of generalised understanding or mainstream. Carmeli refers to the ideological construct of the notion of 'circus' but does not deal with the notion of bodies at risk encountered in space. He argues that circus is a 'romantic' notion and ignores the fact that it is a transgressive performance discipline that phenomenologically resonates within the bodies of the audience members. His suggestion that circus represents 'contractual enchantment, erotic pleasure and illicit desire' (1990:4) is developed in his 2001 essay on circus talk, where he states that:

> [t]hrough the dissociation and exclusion of a player who is totally played, an illusionary totality is conjured for the circus spectators, a totality for which the spectators in the fragmentary, industrial order nostalgically yearn. This totality is also sustained... in the circus talk itself. (2001:1)

In this he proposes that the rhetorical application of the metaphor 'circus' within society is a stand in for simplicity, chaos and excitement and that the circus performer is 'used' by the audience as a mechanism for social determinism - 'they are real, yet constantly objectified through their play' (2004:276). The performers are, to Carmeli's thinking, existentially isolated by the act of repetition that distances them and yet entices the audience. This is a salient point with which to return to what

circus offers to an audience in way of recognising the self in the other in a phenomenological way. If we consider the aerial act as one that embodies alterity, then it could be seen as alienating from an audience perspective. If the intention is to perform a representation of masculine strength and frailty, then this leaves it open for the audience to see themselves within it. My suggestion is that a simple binary opposition does not work here. Greater recognition of ambiguity is needed to attend to what is shared in the moment of aerial performance. The artist is both superhuman and vulnerable, other and self. They inhabit this 'paradox of expression' of which Merleau-Ponty writes (1968:144).

Journalist and theatre critic Kevin Little's discussion of the circus and spectacle ensemble *Archaos* demonstrates an acknowledgment that the nature of circus is viscerally transgressive (1995: 16). The contemporary rupture that *Archaos* provokes can reveal a political moment of Foucauldian hierarchy. *Archaos's* work combines the traditional circus skills of aerial, juggling, acrobatics and contortion with 'dangerous' looking props i.e. chainsaws, axle grinders, motor-bikes and spikes. They have been credited with inspiring the move towards a new view of circus in Britain[28] (1995*:* 14). When visiting Toronto, the company and performance were treated as if they were a 'danger' to the public, and Little suggests that this demonstrates the impact their work has within communities.

Like Carmeli's appreciation of 'traditional' circus in pre-war Britain, *Archaos* can be viewed as living 'outside' the realms of hegemonic understanding 'positioned literally and figuratively on the periphery' (Little 1995: 19). The inscription of circus as transgressive marginalises and limits the discourses that surround the action, in as much as it engenders a social distancing between the performing bodies and those of the people watching. Little's assertion is that, by creating distance in this way, circus draws an audience towards it. This brings me back to the discussion in Chapter 1

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28 Joseph Seelig writes that:

> Archaos claimed to reject all tradition, but Bidon's genius was as a moderniser of tradition. His Mad Max gang of artists juggled chainsaws, not hoops or Indian clubs; rode motorbikes, not horses; flew from forklift trucks and cranes; survived freak "accidents"; and set themselves on fire. But behind all the trappings of punk and clashing metal, Archaos expressed their ideas with good old feats of physical skill. Bidon himself was an old-style, larger-than-life showman, unrolling a heavily hyped, "shock-horror circus crazies come to town" media campaign in advance of their shows. (2010: NP)

about death, risk and taboo. I return to the suggestion that a structuring of 'safe and unsafe' practices whereby certain elements are hidden, policed or censored from young people in particular is instead a potent draw for them. It is the fear of transgression that entices the audience to observe *Archaos* in action. *Archaos* knowingly represent risk in all its forms in society through failure, disease and perversion and, as such, act as both an enticement and repellent to socially determined communities.

Little extends Carmeli's argument in his suggestion that, by inhabiting a repellent and enticing form, circus- and in particular *Archaos* - offer the opportunity for the individual audience member to find a very personal relationship to the acts seen. It is not possible in Little's mind to suggest that circus is merely a signifier and site of cultural transgression: '[I]n the [ambiguous] process, the observer becomes the observed and the surveilling eye, confronted with a return gaze of circus artists, finds its mastery and completeness compromised' (1995: 24). Little's argument implicates the audience in a dialogue about the impossibility of existence and the fragility of social constructs that mask humanity. This supports my point that circus offers an authentic engagement for the student but also for the teacher and for the audience, through the notion of individualisation. Ambiguity, in this case caused by transgression, enables the audience to 'find memories' of themselves that they never 'thought or felt before' (Van Manen 1990:13).

Hubert Montagner's (2001) writing seems to consolidate this view of circus as something that reaches out and attests to the fragility of being. He makes several claims as to why circus is able to construct and reform the identity of the solitary or dormant child, both through the watching and from the doing. This is due to what he calls the vertiginous moments, where the child is able to form and reform their sense of self in time and space as one who is growing, journeying and vulnerable. Vertiginous moments are those where you become disorientated, dizzy and pertinently aware of your intersubjective and vulnerable self. Usefully, Heidegger works to underpin this thesis by suggesting that death brings us closer to that which is solely 'mine' although we can never be fully or completely aware (1962). The act of observing can make the audience member vertiginous and respond with a phenomenological delight in the act of being disorientated.

It would be pertinent at this juncture to reflect upon gender and the performance of gender in circus. I am taking a reflective (and by that I mean a non-essentialised) view on gender as attributed to Butler (1990), Phelan (1993) and Foucault (1997). I subscribe to the idea that gender is performed according to the social constructs that limit it, and is, therefore, a potent vehicle for cultural value to be attributed within performance disciplines. Moreover, the contact with risk and danger provides a magnifying aperture to the performance possibilities of gender according to Tait, who suggests that aerial action can transgress assurances that 'female bodies have things done for them for beautification and that bodily action brings about male muscles and thus masculine social power' (2005:7). I would add that, because circus performance and gender performance are both opportunities for transgression of the social normative, they can also be potent vehicles for repetition and absorption of popular cultural dynamics and values. In opening up the discursive power of gendered bodies, it is also possible to re-inscribe binary oppositions.

The move, The Eagle, differs in many ways from the 'usual' static trapeze moves that demand flexibility as well as core strength from the performer. This move only demands core and upper body strength. It presents the body to magnify the chest and upper arms, a position that mimics the stances taken by Strongmen and, therefore, attributes the 'body genre involving sweat, muscles, shows of strength' that typify the romantic understanding of the masculine (Hunt 1993:66). The Eagle is a potent masculine stance, according to these codes, because it signifies strength rather than fragility in the face of falling.

Tait's circus research addresses gender in terms of a disruption to the binary offered within our socially perceived and value-laden cultural reception of normativity. She focuses on the way that the female performer is permitted to transgress the normative values of fragility. She uses *Circus Oz's* performances as an example of this. Although there is scope for further investigation of the way circus can be used to disrupt cultural assumptions, it is not in the trajectory of my thesis to focus on it at this time. The female students in my care did experience a shifting sense of their own femininity (relating to strength) during the course of the work. They articulated it in relation to expectations of themselves and within the competitive status play discussed in the next chapter. However, although I am attentive to the potency of aerial work to forefront a learning point about gender, I am attempting to focus on

the nature of risk and risk-taking rather than push a specific predetermined political agenda onto the young people. Aerial work may reveal these debates and they are vital and pertinent to the students' understanding of themselves through the act of performance. However, the meaning that is specifically derived from the encounter is the student's alone; it resides in his or her self-knowledge rather than some predetermined social outcome or meaning explicated by me.

5.3.2 Phenomenological glorification.

If the momentary body reaches out in a primal act of body-to-body phenomenology that extends into the response of an audience, the glorified body is one that is symbolic of more than just the act and the moment. The glorified body of the moment of The Eagle is that which acts as a potent symbol for the other, or for audience, as they are watching the performer or student. It reveals a complex map of cultural and performative watching that codifies the act of performance in the eyes of the audience. I suggest that The Eagle has cultural implications in terms of its relation to gravity, falling and transcendence, to gender, to failure, all in an ambiguous relation to paradox and binary opposition. An excavation of this glorified moment, which seems to convey more than it is, cannot hope to capture all the complex personal and global significations within the movement. Each moment is incomplete, ephemeral and unique in the eyes of the audience. It is an art form which is akin to physical theatre in that it, in Heathfield's words, 'epitomises transience and thus perturbs the cultural mechanisms and economies that seek to name, place and capitalise it' (2006:188). Heathfield is referring to dance theatre and, most specifically, to the work of Pina Bausch in his article *After the Fall*. I am purposefully borrowing his appreciation of dance to align it with circus, due to their shared ability to reflect and magnify cultural traces inscribed upon and through the bodies of performers. Moreover, the discipline of circus pushes the phenomenological impact of the artist's potential death in its magnification of the moments of risk and in provoking the physiological response of an audience.

Heathfield describes falling in terms of its relation to European theatre-making as an inscription of failure: 'The fall contained an imperative like all sacrifices for the social body (the audience): the imperative to recognise, remember, repair' (2006:189). His

analysis is easily transferred to circus performance because circus mobilises the physical body-to-body, remembering that is provoked by a knowing of fragility in response to gravity, and also fragility in response to cultural codes and mores. In a sense, circus, by provoking the fight or flight systems discussed previously, is of greater service to cultural memory and sacrifice.

Where circus diverges from Heathfield's analysis, however, is within the catch. He recognises that the fall in dance-theatre is categorised as violent, in terms of the audience's disregard for the other, in that they do not catch the fall of the performers, who again and again emblematically sacrifice themselves. In aerial performance, the artistry lies within the three parts - the social sacrifice, the paradoxical act of falling and/or flying and, finally, within the catch. This, I argue, is where the redemptive and glorified elements of aerial performance lie: within the fact that the aerialists are able to repeat the death defying fall and redeem both themselves and the audience with the audacious catch. This holds true for solo performance, as with The Eagle, but also with collective acts where one performer may hold and/or catch the fall of another artist. The audience, although implicated within the fall, also bears witnesses to itself being 'saved' by the audacious catch.

This draws the discussion back to the moment of The Eagle within time and space for the teacher and for the student. They are, for a moment, suspended from the impact that a neoliberal or police order culture has on their actions - how that might se or speak of what is happening. This is due to the space, the trusting relation within the space, the action in the doing and the action in the momentary observation. All these interconnected and contingent forces intertwine in the moment of glorification, to transport the student into an authentic moment, a moment without fear that is rooted in his relation to his own death. It also has the capacity to do this for the audience, who are, in Carmeli's terms, 'yearning' to feel the possibility of social redemption within the catch of the aerialist (2006:276). The notion that a linear, progressive accumulative time as suspended in the moment is interesting too. It states that the performer is able to take the audience away from the system that contains them whilst also referencing it.

In the previous chapter, I discussed the binary oppositions known through circus by Leysar and Zaccarini, how these paradoxes were inscribed upon the aerial body

through the wounds inflicted and through repetition in performance, as well as through their ability to free the body from its inscription. The aspect of timelessness is fundamental to the notion of paradoxical encounter in phenomenological thinking. For it is only when aspects of the world are distanced that, in Heideggerian terms, the self is released from its historical everyday and from the possibility of an intentional future:

> *Only an entity which, in its being is essentially **futural** so that it is free for its death can let itself be thrown back upon its factical "there" by shattering itself against death – that is to say, only an entity which, as futural, is equiprimordially in the process of **having been**, can, by handing down to itself the possibility it has inherited, take over its thrownness and be in the **moment of vision** for 'its time.'* (Italics and bold in the original, 1962:437)

Heidegger asserts that a moment of vision is almost impossible within the 'idle talk' of the everyday, which forces the intentionality of existence to be towards the future (1962: 174). Moments are rarely attended for themselves but always in relation to what is to be done next. He suggests that 'shattering itself against death', not just witnessing it or attesting to it, but shattering against it, can bring being back to its time. This shattering ruptures the fabric of the moment as being towards future and locates being within the 'now', which he equates with a moment of vision. Vision is suggestive of clarity, seeing, attesting as if for the first time. This 'now' is also a possibility for death in the future; it is simultaneously looking forwards and marking the now in its immediate circumstance.

I suggest that a phenomenological view of aerial performance is that it reaches out from time, culture and space within the moments of performance. At the same time it draws the audience or performer towards death, towards the possibility of death and into an understanding of the self as both fragile and superhuman. This ambiguity mobilises the glorification of the performers and the audience's bodies, 'in a reversible body-to-bodies phenomenology' (Merleau-Ponty 1964:149). Alongside this, the aerialist draws attention to the social constructs and constraints of contemporary society, the aerialist and the audience are implicated in a fall, and then the superhuman catcher saves them. The audience are awed and thrown by the transcendental nature of the picture provided whilst the aerialist retains the permanent scars, bruising from the ropes and aches within muscles that are the reality of the metaphorical catch.

5.4   Fragmentation

To conclude this chapter, I would like to move the discourse away from what the student owns in the moment of performance and turn the discussion back to what the teacher is charged to do 'in common' with them (Heidegger, 1962: 159). This suggestion draws my thesis towards Chapters 6 and 7, where I reference my practical work as a teacher of students who take risks and I unravel what is at stake for the teacher within the encounter.

The locus of this chapter has been primarily within ambiguity and meaning. In it I have opened up many ways of describing circus performance as a power discourse and phenomenological event. By drawing upon Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, I have described the complexity, not only of the student's being, but of the social and performative implications of being seen and being seen 'as' something; experience is effaced by the nature of this interpretation. I have captured some of the territories at play within these discourses that may emancipate, domesticate, stultify or free the studentand which, I argue, resonate within the *doing* of circus as they appear to me. They are the strata of knowledge which are the doing of it and, reversibly, the meaning of it.

The trifocal influences of Rancière, Foucault (as formative to Merleau-Ponty) and Heidegger promote a tendency towards openness, dialogue and 'ignorance'. However, fragmentation of experience to single elements of being and the inability to see the student in their totality create problems for the student's resolution. For Rancière, fragmentation becomes an opportunity for the teacher to verify their own knowledge rather than uncover the knowledge of the student because it requires that the teacher 'sees' the student in a certain way. For Foucault, fragmentation results in the distribution of value and power within certain modes of discourse, particularly the medical or scientific, for example. Borrowing from Heidegger, fragmentation results within both the attitude of the teacher as one who 'leaps in' for the student, engendering domination and dependence, and within the notion that 'sight' is not something which comes from having seen everything but is nuanced to denote

meaningfulness rather than knowledge of the sensory.[29] Therefore, it must be emphasised that, throughout the encounter with the student, the teacher needs to be constantly attentive to the totality of the student's experience, to counter the possible negative effects of fragmentation.

The notion of bounded agency, emancipation and anticipatory resolution are ones to which I return throughout this thesis. Risk-taking can offer oppositional experiences for young people that either ascribes them as beings that are capable or beings that fail in the face of risk. Evans's (2002) discussions of the way that a child or worker becomes dominated, domesticated and disempowered by the hierarchical structures in which they work serves to reinforce the notion that a truly freedom-based dialogue with young people is utopian. I argue, however, that it is by revealing some of these technical, cultural and meaningful structures to the young people in my care that I can engender a mobilised concern and awareness of their ability to become independent learners, unstultified in the face of risk. Through fragmentation the student learns how they are fragmented by others and exist in dialectical synthesis with their own totality.

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[29] Proveti clarifies this in reference to Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty in his suggestion that:

> The order that places this first is not innocent – the sight of the corporeal-sensible vision: second "sight" in a different sense, that is, as a metaphor for existential understanding: third, "sense" as the direction in which that metaphor transmits sense – the direction in which it shifts meaning between the sensible and meaningful realms. (1998: 211)

Chapter 6.0

Hello Fatty: Experiences of Teaching Risk.

> Equality is fundamental and absent, timely and untimely, always up to the initiative of individuals and groups who... take the risk of verifying their equality, of inventing individual and collective forms for its verification. (Rancière in Bingham and Biesta 2010: 14)

Rancière's assertion is that a practice founded on equality must be unique. It is, therefore, mobile, intangible and impossible to capture. As soon as the form is captured and set, it becomes subject to, and derivative from, the forms of an institution or the Government order that it once sought to undermine. This chapter uncovers the nature of my practice in relation to socially constructed and experienced risk and how I can attend to the way it has accreted, unravelled and accumulated over the course of one piece of practical research: *Hello Fatty*. The five scenarios presented within this case-specific chapter offer a tiny snapshot into the tensions and possibilities inherent within such an ephemeral and dynamic practice.

I recognise that there have been more stages to the practical development of my knowledge, which have taken me from the traditional drama classroom in 1997 to the Conservatoire in 2011. These stages, although not actively documented in this chapter, form the basis for it and are active strata within the map of my teaching experience. I began the research for this thesis by exploring creativity and theatre, circus as an art form and possible accredited qualification as well as the therapeutic responsibility that befalls a care-driven pedagogue. I now pause to reflect upon the single moments below in response to Rancière's ideology, death and an investigation of pedagogic tact. This is a verification of an enacted pedagogy that intends to challenge and to provoke in order to assert that 'equality is not given, nor is it claimed; it is practiced, it is *verified*' (2003:xxvi).

Each of the five moments presented will be placed in relation to the four different arguments within this thesis - pedagogic, social, fear-driven and descriptive. The first moment (Fear of Flying) will be as a practical excavation of emancipatory pedagogic practices as they appear within the moment. The second moment (The Game) articulates the social pressures and constraints that are recognised within the encounter discussed. The third moment (The Chalk) acknowledges how death is

brought to the student through the playing of games and to the teacher in memory. The fourth moment (The Planche) and, finally, the fifth moment (My Body) draw a more poetic line by documenting how an equalising practice may be 'held' by the teacher in the moments of practice. I thereby uncover what it is that a teacher did within the moments of a dialogic teaching encounter and question how it may be possible that they are able to 'hold' the anxiety of the student. I am phenomenologically describing the momentary, fleeting and fragmented perceptions I had in order to outline the nature of pedagogic holding.

6.1   Critical Incident 4: Fear of Flying

It is the very first day of the practice. The students are at the 'Circus Space' being coached by Adam Cohen on the trapeze. This particular student is the last one to attempt to leave the flying platform for the first time. She has been standing, very nervously, watching as others step from the platform and swing. She places a hand on the trapeze as requested by Adam.

'Now, place your other hand on the bar,' he calls. She does so. 'And when I say three, simply step off the platform and hold on.' She nods. 'One, two, three.' The toes of her right foot are poised as if about to step off but she does not. 'One, two, three, and step off,' Adam repeats. Still no response. 'One two, three and step,' he suggests for a third time. And she hesitates again.

At this point, the other students, in an attempt to be helpful, are encouraging her with calls of 'it's ok', 'just jump, it's easy' and 'come on, you can do it'. But, Adam realises that this is not helping. It appears to be putting additional stress on the student. He uses her name for the first time.

'It's alright ***, listen to my voice, and only my voice. I've done this a thousand times and never dropped anyone. Focus on my voice. One, two, three and step off.' At this point, the student steps from the platform and swings. There is a huge smile on her face.

Two hours later, when asked what she experienced most clearly from the session, the student replied that 'Adam reminded me that I could stop listening to all the voices in my head telling me not to do something I wanted to do. He reminded me that I could just let go and trust him to catch me.' She added, 'I wasn't scared of falling, I was scared of looking silly, and I knew he wasn't going to let me fall.'

This example demonstrates a rupture in understanding for the student, a moment of dialogic communication between her and the teacher, and also demonstrates the attention needed by the teacher. Cohen's skills are practical and perceptual: those needed to enact his promise not to drop her, his skill as a handler of the lunge rope around her waist and those more subtle and tactful, supporting her to take a 'leap of faith'. He recognised that the student was impacted by the voices of her friends in a negative way and gave her a simple route to blocking them out. He was unaware that the student had too many 'voices in [her] head', as well as the ones from the ground, stopping her from stepping from the platform. His open suggestion to listen only to his voice proposed more to the student than he understood at that moment. These voices needed to be muted before she was able to take the step. Cohen shut them down for her and enabled her to just be with her physical focus and with the equipment. He engaged her will to choose to step off the platform and take a 'leap of faith'.

The social pressures that the student and teacher encounter in the moment resonate with perceptions and constructions of failure. The student questions what it will mean to fail and look silly and she also encounters the possible failure of not attempting the move in front of her friends. This is not a moment where she appears to fear for her physical health. She is not scared of dying or hurting herself; she does not feel vulnerable in that sense. She is exposed, however, to possible failure. This is the 'idle talk' towards which the student is drawn (Heidegger, 1962:224). I am mindful too that this idle talk is manifest most pertinently by, in her words, the voices in her head. It seems that this student has learnt that her behaviour has been determined by powerful forces of social dialogue that she acknowledges are flawed. The voices in her head are telling her not to jump but also not to fail. They conflict. What she needs to do is take the 'leap of faith' into Cohen's care in order to rise against and challenge the social pressures that she experiences.

Cohen's skill is to enable the student to encounter the risk with surety - not to tell her what to do, how to think or to 'bestow' the experience upon her but to drive her will in relation to her motivation. He enabled the student to see herself within the problem needing to be solved. This instance demonstrates an equalisation of the relation between the teacher and the student in a number of ways. To view this

instance from a critical pedagogy framework, we could say that Cohen made the student aware of the power relations within the experience and, thereby, she was able to encounter them and reposition herself in relation to those power relations in such a way as to escape their oppression. She was able to recognise that there was a personal, cultural or social pull on her to perform or behave in a certain way - to avoid stepping from the platform - and that she had the choice of whether to conform to these social pressures by refusing to step or to free herself from them by stepping off.

I would suggest that this is a naive and teleological viewing of this incident which, in forcing the notion of cultural politics into the frame, is neither helpful nor empowering for the student in the long run, as I discussed in Chapter 2. From Rancière's perspective, Cohen simply activated the student's will to choose in the moment of the practice in a way that acknowledged her equality with him as a potential flying trapeze artist. It was this activation of equality that enabled the student to step from the trapeze platform rather than a momentary political radicalisation that consolidated the encounter for her.

What Cohen did was leave space for the student to hear her own perspective 'as though the other can always understand arguments' through the 'acceptance of separate worlds' (Rancière, 1995:50). He gave a proposition, the trapeze, and allowed her to find a way through it with his guidance, rather than direction. The simple instruction 'focus on my voice' was direct enough to be clear but left spaces for the individuality of the student to remain present. It allowed her to take meaning as she needed it rather than bringing a direct intervention of cultural politics into the moment. In such a way, the student brings to the encounter a simple attentive and focussed will and takes from it a changed perspective of herself as a flying trapeze artist. It may be that a corollary of this encounter with an authentic moment, that the student sees herself in relation to the politics of power more clearly. However, this is neither the point of the action nor is it a realisation 'bestowed' upon her by the teacher.

Gert Biesta (2010) emphasises that, for Rancière, although emancipation entails a rupture within the order of things and is, therefore, understood as a process of

subjectification, it is very different from identification. Biesta states that 'identification [for Rancière] is about taking up an existing identity, that is, a way of being and speaking of being identifiable and visible that is already possible within the existing order' (2010:47). It positions the student within a teleological relation to cultural politics. By this, he clarifies that identification reinforces a domestication of the student within a given social order. Subjectification, however, which is felt when the student is ruptured from a given social order without being told how to think or feel about it, 'decomposes and recomposes the relationships between the ways of *doing,* or *being* and of *saying* that define the perceptible organization of the community' (Rancière, 1995:40). In this moment of practice, Cohen proposes that the student focuses solely on his voice, not in order for her to learn from his words or for him to 'tell' her what to think or to feel but in order for her to *do* and *be* within the moment of rupture precisely, free of any existing order. He is able to free her from the voices of her friends, the voices in her head and from any social pressure other than 'when I say three, you step from the platform'. This demonstrates an equalising practice. He ignites her will to leap.

I also felt it was important to uncover the nature of the experience Cohen has of teaching in this way. When invited to discuss the moment and explain why he said what he did, he is a little uncertain. 'I guess... I guess... it's just an instinct really'. He begins:

> I watch each of the students from the moment they enter the space, checking to see who is looking nervous - who is presenting as bold or courageous. I observe them when they warm-up to see how flexible they are, how strong, how good their stamina is. All the time I am taking in the subtle cues they are giving off with each other and when left alone.

> When they come to the flying platform, I have direct contact with them. I can see how their body image impacts upon their relationship to the equipment by the way they put on the lunge belt. Many women approach the larger belts, presuming that they will be too big for the small one, despite me giving the correct size to them. In this instance, this student did that too. She went for the larger belt so I could see that already there was a possibility that she was feeling physically out of place/shape.

> I observe how they climb the ladder. Again, this student did it very tentatively but with an alternating smile and frown. I could see that she was both nervous and excited by the prospect of flying. She interacted well with the other student on the platform, calmly and clearly supporting

them to take the leap. She seemed excited when the other student was swinging, but her mouth tightened up when the student descended and she realised that it was her turn.

I could see that there was a conflict going on between the idea of flying and the actual doing of it. When the other students distracted her from her focus, I just brought her back to it.

It is a common occurrence, and I guess I just felt I could make her relax by focussing on my voice. (Cohen 2009)

There are many areas that Cohen is curious about and consciously mapping in response to each student he will be working with. Like me, he is building from a foundation of physical, anatomical knowledge in attending to the student's physical ability. This is not a judgment of skill or an appreciation of the student as different from other trapeze artists, but is a concerned curiosity about how the student is. Cohen takes his own trapeze training into account as he distinctly notices each student. There appears to be no desire to change or transform the student or to see them as a problematic that needs to be 'fixed' in some way. He makes no judgment about courage or shyness being good or bad states for the student to be in. He simply sees them in order to encounter them as fellow trapeze artists fully within the shared act of flying. He notices them in this way, purely to know how best to support them.

Tact, as discussed in Chapter 1, is a skill of prediction, judgment, social understanding, trust, moral and ethical propriety which is negotiated in the momentary. It is dependent upon knowledge of the past and intention towards the future. Cohen uses his experience in order to be curious and attentive to the student, and thereby engage her will towards a shared outcome with him. His ability to balance his knowledge towards the student rather than some teleological end-point is a perfect example of tact and concerned curiosity in action.

The discussion about the harnesses presents an interesting social comment - that some women see themselves as larger than the lunge belt that they are given. Again, in his discussion of the particular student, there is no attempt to intervene or change the student's appreciation of her size and no comment is made to the contrary. He simply gives her the correct belt and notices that this will impact upon the way she behaves as a trapeze artist. These cues offer the student to the teacher, not as a problematic that needs to be 'solved' but as a set of circumstances that he uses to

'map' the encounter and present it back to the student. In this way, the encounter is revealed gradually and progressively through the cues and signals that are given by both - the 'coming into presence' that Biesta, after Rancière, defines as 'true subjectification' (2010).

So it can be said that the first part of the pedagogic encounter is defined by the teacher's curiosity, allowing the student to 'come into presence' for them in a shared goal. The presence, for Cohen, is a visceral appreciation of the cues taken in consciously and unconsciously each time he teaches. He sees the student in terms of their potential, not as a judgment of their being but as an embodied response to the action they are about to encounter together. The goal is defined by *doing* and *being* in an activity together without judgment or prescribed social or political meaning. Although meaning or subjectification may be a corollary of the encounter, they are not the motivation for it.

6.2   Critical Incident 5: The Game

The second moment from the three-days of practice reinforced the idea of 'coming into presence', non-judgment and corollaric subjectification experienced by the student in response to injury and pain.

> It is Day 2 of the practice and we are playing a warm-up game that involved making contact with the others in the group. One student was preoccupied during the game because she had broken a nail during the physical warm-up section of the day. So, distracted by the pain and irritation of a broken nail, she began the game focussed on the nail and speaking very quietly. She was playing the game by the rules but was not playing the game with a playful attitude. Rather than address this, the group continued playing and included her manner, stance and imitation of her quiet voice into the game. It became her way of playing and we played with her in that manner. This recognition of her distracted state and acceptance of it within the group dynamic reinforced her place within the hierarchy of the group so that we could get on with playing. This acceptance allowed her to be drawn into the game fully and her identity was written into the new rules of the game.

> The following day, during the warm-up, she pointed out, with a smile, that she had cut all her nails short. The other students appeared very

surprised. at this saying. 'You only just got them done,' to which she simply smiled.

The ruptures represented within this moment are many. They recognise the communal nature of the pedagogic act as well as the individual learning of a single student. It could be seen that the student had experienced a visceral relationship to the act of trapeze training that stopped her from fully participating within the next few hours of the work. By tearing a nail, she had the marks of the training inscribed upon her body and it took her time to adjust to the subjectification of the moment. She encountered a new moment through pain and by having a part of her identity questioned within the practice. Again, this was a corollary of the work, not an objective for it.

The nail presents an interesting social discourse about the student's body. In tearing the nail, the student is taken away from her normal physical presence. We can see that this impacts upon her by her distractedness and can infer from the other students' surprise the following day that she had challenged her own identity by cutting her nails. The social discourses that pertain to an acceptable adolescent female's physical presentation appear to be extremely deterministic for this young woman. She adheres tightly to them until her will to challenge them is engaged by her choice to abandon perfect nails in favour of the trapeze.

The student's distractedness was a challenge for me as a teacher to engage with, and for the other students who were collectively working to explore the game. By not addressing the student's behaviour directly, we did not revert to the structures of discipline commonly employed by contemporary institutional education. We treated the student as an equal who had a valid response which we recognised and attended to within the group. By mirroring her behaviour in such a way as to make it a part of the game, the student felt supported and respected as an equal rather than 'trained' to think about her injury as humorous, irrelevant or counter to the culture of the group. Her relationship to her torn nail and the way it changed her behaviour was playfully explored by the group and welcomed as another experience for us all to *do, be* and, in this instance, also *say.*

How does this moment relate to death? Death is neither the biological final point, nor dying in the literal sense, but the death of possibilities within being: 'To say that Dasein is always dying is to say that you can be dying, even dead precisely when you are in perfectly good health' (Carman, 2003:284). Failure is constitutive of a rupture within a symbolic understanding of our self with others. For Heidegger, this rupture, typified by anxiety, allows us to see more clearly what he calls the evasiveness of the everyday. The student breaking a nail brings a perspective upon failure through an encounter with it. In both, the student projects herself into a future which, in Carman's words, 'is defined by possibility and impossibility'.

Carman suggests that 'Dasein's self understanding can either be scattered and dispersed or focused and unified' through an encounter with the impossible (2003:282). It could be said that the student in this instance experienced an immediate scattering and dispersal of her understanding of herself in relation to the pain, the destruction of an important part of her identity (the manicured nail) and in relation to how this was perceived by the group. Mindful of how this relates to the notion of rupture in Rancière's work on subjectification, it could be argued that the student encountered the momentary possibility that her identity could 'die'. Moreover, this was declared and celebrated by the others within the game in a way that attacked and verified the student's behaviour. It was a 'decomposition' (1995:40) of the relationship between doing, being and saying. This decomposition of the 'normal' social dynamic left a space open for her to make her own meaning of the event and allow for the possibility that she could 'be' without her nails for the duration of the work and that this transformation was 'seen' and attended to by the group, bringing the group together in quite a powerful way.

This momentary encounter allowed for a number of social and power relations to come into my view. The first clear stratification within the map of my pedagogic identity is the traditional, institutional frame within which I worked within secondary school education for many years, namely that of my training and experience of the 'correct' way of 'managing' behaviour within a secondary school classroom. This training would have had me step in and 'correct' the student through a number of direct or indirect means. Directly, through addressing the behaviour as inappropriate and applying consequences if the correct modification was not made by the student, for instance by asking the student to 'play properly or not play at all,

please'. This response is almost second nature to me as it is the way I was taught as a child, the way it was modelled to me in my PGCE training and the way I rehearsed/performed through my time as a secondary school teacher.

This method, however, runs counter to my desire for the students to be equal participants within the practice. It meant that I had to know myself and drive myself towards my primary intention, rather than fall back towards the possible stultifying practices of my own education. It initially required a conscious act of will to stop myself from framing the encounter in a negative way. This conscious engagement thereby ruptured my own relationship to discipline through a conscious engagement with Rancière's notion of the police order in combination with Heidegger's appreciation of the 'idle talk' that keeps *Dasein* falling towards inauthenticity (1962: 224).

The police order is defined by Rancière as 'an order of bodies that defines the allocation of ways of doing, ways of being, and ways of saying, and that sees that those bodies are assigned by name to a particular place and task' (1999:29). The police order does not allow for multiple ways or modes for involvement from students and teachers within a given environment, i.e. that of a learning situation. Although in this instance we are discussing discipline directly, it is not strictly within disciplining environments that the police order comes into force; it is 'a rule governing their appearance, a configuration of the *occupations* and the properties of the spaces where these occupations are distributed' (1999*:* 29). My initial cultural response to the given situation was both spatially and occupationally dependent, in the same way that the student's policing of her 'injury' could be seen as a part of this police order too for instance, she behaves according to set rules of behaviour in this space. I must ensure that all students participate fully. The student must ensure that she is both safe from harm and appropriately dressed (with attractive nails) when in this particular space. The police order is made visible and, therefore, is able to be mapped for us both through the student's encounter with the pain.

Other aspects are brought into view for me as the teacher within this event. The community of students was brought together through a single encounter with pain. Without exception, all of the students were interested in the young woman's 'injury' and wanted to play with the change in her identity. This curiosity enabled the group

to reinforce their relationship and will towards the act of doing the trapeze. There was some small celebration within the curiosity expressed by the other students, and the young woman was given status as one who had been injured/marked by the work. She attained status as one who had the courage to take risks.

A further example of this celebration/appreciation of the injuries suffered happened on Day 4 of the practice. It is also the next stage of the example taken from Chapter 4 of this thesis: The Eagle.

> Following successful achievement of the move, the student is emboldened to take it to the next level by doing a transition that involves sliding down the ropes. He is warned that there is no way he will achieve this without getting rope burns on his arms. This appears to excite the entire group, himself in particular. He dresses himself in a long-sleeved top in preparation for the encounter and is talked through the movement before he tries it. With a little hesitation, he rehearses pulling his arms towards his body and loosening his grip on the ropes before he tries it without his feet on the bar. The others encourage him and ask if it hurts. This seems to spur him forwards with it.
>
> After a fast descent, it is clear that he has injured his upper arms and this is greeted with great delight from everyone except me. The students crowd around him to see his arms as he takes the long-sleeved top off. They are scraped raw across his biceps. His response, after an almost forensic observation of his wound, is 'Brilliant, now I'm a proper aerialist.'

The pedagogic realisation within this moment is very simple: that the encounter with pain offers something very specific to the student if done voluntarily. The student engaged with the action in full knowledge of the pain that it could cause. It is a corporeal and visceral engagement of *doing* and *being* that is enacted without the need to speak or frame the action in words for the others in the group. The bruises or markings offer what Rancière would call a 'poetic' invitation that the social order can be divided. The students recognise how he is socially conditioned to see pain as a bad thing when, in reality, an encounter with pain has enabled him to learn something. This something is still unspecific or 'open', and he has his own space to make individual and subjective meanings within the encounter.

Two points emerge from these examples of injury. First is that the strata of knowledge that forms the map of the teacher's sureties in the classroom can work against, as well as for, the emancipation of the students. This tension between my educative inheritance and ideology is pertinently felt within many pedagogic encounters. The emancipatory teacher 'holds' this tension, but can never be fully free of the police order which she is often falling towards or against. I question whether a teacher can ever be wholly emancipatory or radical in their approach to the work, especially when the 'safety' of the students is at stake. I challenge the notion that equalising practices such as these are ever complete or finished.

This experience is one of constant vigilance and attentive focus towards the act of emancipatory practice however, fully engaged equalising practices are almost impossible within Western education. They are, in Rancière's sense, 'political' because they are 'determined action antagonistic to policing' that 'breaks with the tangible configuration, whereby parties and parts or lack of them are defined by a presupposition that, by definition, has no place in that configuration' (2003: 29-30). It is the 'concern to test this equality' which I am engaged in (2003:30). I question how this is manifest within the work, and whether it is possible within the institutions and spaces configured in this way. I acknowledge that an intention towards equality could be to the detriment of the students during the practice because it would mean a negation of the vigilance and distance needed to engage in true dialogue. It could be said that, if emancipatory practice is concerned with dissensus, that it is the teacher who feels the dissensus most pertinently within the struggle I have discussed.

Secondly, Rancière himself suggests that 'no party or Government, no army, or school, or institution will ever emancipate a single person' because universal teaching can only 'be directed to individuals, never to societies' (1991:105). It could, therefore, be argued that the teacher 'holds' the tension between the individual and the institution within the risk-taking encounter. Again, I am responsible for holding and focussing the *doing* and *being* of the individuals associated with the practice, not the institution.

6.3   Critical Incident 6: The Chalk

It is Day 3 of the practice and a new game breaks out between the students. They throw the chalk at one another. This begins as a way of relieving tension from attempting to climb the corde lisse and becomes a status game between the students. I do not discourage or encourage the activity because I am mindful that they are using it as a strategy to pause and reflect upon the practice as well as to bond with each other. However, when the chalk is thrown to me, I feel tension. To be truly equal, I would play. However, it feels as if it is not my place to play in the same way because I need to keep the space/rehearsal room 'safe' for all participants. Rather than attempt to control the game, I play ignorant, as if I was unaware of the game. I thank them for passing the chalk back.

The throwing of chalk is a tension reliever. The students use it to bond with each other and to physically release the hold that their attempts at climbing the rope has on them. Chalk is used to blot sweat and enable grip to be enhanced. For the beginner who feels that they will never be strong enough to hold on long enough or tight enough, chalk can be a 'crutch' and placebo that makes them feel safer. That night, I reflected in my journal upon what the process of interacting with the chalk gives to the trapeze learning:

I had forgotten until today, the importance chalk has when you are either learning or are particularly challenged by a movement. To place chalk on your hands is to feel safe. To place chalk on the hands is a moment of pause, a moment to recognise the importance of the hands, a moment to cherish that contact with your skin. It is a moment to walk away from the intensity of the trapeze and process the act of trapezing. (Not necessarily through thought!!) It is comforting. (Hartley, 2009:np)

My own relationship with chalk is a part of the map of experience brought into the room. The reflection above enabled me to remember a time when I had a different relationship to chalk from the simple practice of chalking hands or ankles when needed. For me, the role that chalk plays within my own trapeze practice has shifted from something that I used regularly as a beginner, but didn't really need, to something that I use rarely or sparingly when I am attempting something that will really challenge my purchase on the trapeze (such as a toe or heel hang). The memory of this relationship brings me a different appreciation of the students' behaviour and allows me to invest my curiosity into the game that they play in recognition of the developmental processes that they are going through.

This recognition of the levels of involvement that are being played by the students also distances me from the process. This distance is problematic as it has associations with Socratic method, as discussed in Chapter 2. By recognising what the students are doing, how they need to interact with the chalk and with each other, it could be said that I am distancing myself from the act of seeing them as equals in intelligence to me. It tells of the 'mastery' that Rancière was hoping to avoid:

> The master's secret is to know how to recognize the distance between the taught material and the person being instructed, the distance also between learning and understanding. The explicator sets up and abolishes this distance – deploys it and reabsorbs it in the fullness of his speech. (1991:5)

The difference is that I am not using this distance to explicate for the students upon their knowledge of the acts or upon their role within it. I am not ignorant of the reasons for the game, nor should I pretend to be, in order to enable their learning through risk. By ignoring the game, I am enabling the students to find their own path within it. In a sense, I brought the possibility of the game to them by bringing the chalk to the space. It could also be said that, had I played the game in full knowledge of the role that it played in relaxation and in status, I would have been modelling dissensus from the normal institutional frame. However, this felt counteractive to the fact that the students' relationship should be based within trust. I wrote:

> But is it my role to play? What should I have done? Block the game, reminding them of my different relation to the game from them? Play along and break the tensions? Within the act of blocking the 'play' the tensions of my position are exposed. I need to keep them safe from the relaxation or inattention that could cause a fall. (Hartley, 2009: np)

Although I make the students responsible for each other directly within the physical activities, I also make the decisions about how the day is run or time-tabled and how the space is 'organised'. This is part of the tacit and explicit contract that I have with them to keep them safe. In the same way that I check the floor for nails before I ask them to take their shoes off, I am also mindful of when a playful dynamic needs to be calmed or cautioned in order to retain focus. Again, this is rarely done directly; it is a layer of the vigilance and tact discussed in the previous section. The tension here is clear and one that Kant expressed in the formulation of his educational paradox: 'How do I cultivate education through coercion?' (1960:711).

The fact that I have more experience and am engaged with the pedagogy of the scenario in an attentive manner makes my 'knowledge' different. The imbalance in

status marks me out as a constantly identifiable reminder of the police order. This instance with the chalk was insoluble. There was no perfect right answer because safety was my guiding and primary concern, before equality, before risk: it was, if you like, my base imperative. The pertinent point here is that a permanent state of emancipatory dialogue is impossible within the scenario presented. So, in a sense, I walked away from the dialogue and let the moment of rupture and play impact upon the students directly. My intervention was unnecessary. It was necessary for me to feign ignorance of the game in order for the rupture to be present. I needed to know when to walk away from anything other than my role as a 'safety' mechanism and trust that the students' experiences would be open enough for them to find the way through by the acts of being and doing in dissensus. The students colluded with my pretence at ignorance; they understood the tensions of my role and were happy to playfully engage with breaking social codes.

Again I am mindful of the different type of knowledge that I am holding, in relation to the students each moment that I am engaged with them in the room. As Biestra states:

> The idea of the equality of intelligences does not mean "that all the actions of all intelligences are the same" but rather highlights "that there is only one intelligence at work in all intellectual training." Explanation, on the other hand, operates on the assumption that students themselves are not (yet) capable of what the teacher is capable of, and therefore are in need of explanation. Emancipatory schoolmasters do nothing more (but nothing less) than demand that their students make use of their intelligence. They forbid "the supposed ignorant one the satisfaction… of admitting that one is incapable of knowing more." (Rancière in Bingham and Biesta, 2010:54)

The tension I feel when I recognise the distance between my experience and the experience of the students offers me the realisation that there is always something more to know about every learning situation. If my role is to demand that the students make use of their intelligence, then the question becomes could I have engaged the students in the circle of knowledge regarding the game that they were playing? This brings me back once again to the point that I made within the first section of the chapter: that, by not discussing the learning situation specifically according to 'pedagogic logic', I am leaving little space for the students to engage with the action as an action for itself in the *doing* of the action, rather than within the reflection upon it. The student learns something unspecific rather than being guided

towards a predicated 'known' that I have assessed and extraverted as a developmental point. By omitting reflection from the game, the student is able to find meaning that is individuated rather than telegraphed or determined by me. The question, therefore, becomes, how do I mobilise the will of the student in a Rancièrean sense?

The action of throwing chalk at one another is 'risky' because it opens up the opportunity for students to rupture their sense of a) space and what is permitted within it, b) identity in relation to the game being played, and c) the status of the other participants. This presents an opportunity for the group to test themselves in relation to Heideggerian death. They are severing themselves from the idle talk of institutional behaviour by acting in dissensus to the normative expectations that you do not throw things at other students in a classroom. In such a way, they open themselves up to being towards a more authentic relation in the moment - because it brings anxiety as well as joy in the activity. Anticipatory resolution houses the 'possibility of acquiring *power* over Dasein's *existence* and of basically dispersing all fugitive self-concealments'(1962: 358). It is characterised by joy and sobriety.

They are rupturing themselves from the sense of themselves in relation to the corde lisse and the emotional impact that the challenge of climbing it holds. It could be argued that the students are re-socialising themselves, reasserting the given social norms by playing a game that does not challenge their sense of failure – but the anarchic nature of the game works both to stabilise and destabilise the students' identity within the moment of doing. I notice that the students' eyes light up and that they laugh (see Figure 3), meaning that there is satisfaction as well as focus generated in the activity presented by the chalk.

Figure 2. *Chalk Fight*

Play is a potent force for dissensus towards, and re-conscription of, the perceived status quo. Brian Sutton-Smith (1997) recognizes that, in the playing of games, certain communicative structures such as ambiguity and oppositions are revealed. I may insult you playfully, for example, and it is both an insult and a game. I can mark you with the chalk when it hits you and it is both an attack and a badge of honour you are marked and included, you have failed and succeeded. The playing of games allows people to explore these paradoxical positions. This game was generated by the students' need to relieve tensions and, as such, it functions as a commentary upon society but could also be seen as a conveyor of socially prescribed norms. It does this because the students are 'acting themselves' in relation to their perceived status within the group. Sutton-Smith quotes Neitzsche to frame his discussion:

> Innocence is the child, and forgetfulness, a new beginning, a game, a first moment… the game of creating which is at the same time a game of destroying… creation and destruction each time anew, without remorse, in blissful self-forgetfulness. (Neitzsche in Sutton-Smith, 1997: 113)

The young people destroy and create the social context of their experience through this means. They step outside of the structure that I have created for them and create

their own. They are heedless of the social constraints of safety or acceptable behaviour, which is my responsibility alone at this time. The students remind me that my anxiety is unfounded. Sutton-Smith suggests that play is a potent conveyor of meaning and dissensus within the playing He uses the term 'cruel play' (1997*: 56)* to re-inscribe the act of game-playing with the tensions that it inhabits. For the player, the game is safe, but also unsafe, because it can bring a greater appreciation of the self within the doing. This discussion on the ambiguous nature of play in relation to dissensus, disobedience and disorder brings the conversation back to the notion of death. Sutton-Smith suggests that play of this nature, unstructured, selfdetermining, heedless and joyful, disperses the self away from everyday concerns. He refutes the Heideggerian and phenomenological project in general by questioning the possibility of play being a to and fro hermeneutic development of the self (1997*: 184). I contend that this is exactly what was happening in the moment described above. Metaphorically, for the students, the to and fro of the chalk mimics the creation and destruction of selves. The reckless abandonment and passion communicated in the throwing suggests that the throw is a direct challenge.

The expressions of both joy and sobriety (characteristics of Heideggerian resolution) when the chalk comes in their direction can be seen as a paradox in itself - the chalk is a welcomed danger. It represents inclusion and exclusion. As such, it could be said that this anxiety expresses the student's understanding of themselves as fluid in relation to the death of a possible future. They choose to engage with possibility and impossibility, within the context of playing the game. The possibilities of success and failure, high and low status, exposure and hiding, social acceptance or social rejection are all encapsulated within the game. They are brought in close proximity to an identity as solely theirs, and death too as such, by inhabiting these paradoxes. They risk Heideggerian death. If Heideggerian death reveals what matters, what is seriously at stake in any choice or commitment, it could be argued that the game is not serious because it doesnot really matter. However, I contest this and I propose that the game reveals exactly what does matter to the students and that, through the playing of it, they are able to know themselves in relation to the evasive police order that is normally hidden.

As noted in the beginning of this section, watching this game unfold within the safe space that I have created for the young people brings tensions to the fore for me as a

teacher. This, therefore, enables me to really interrogate my role as the teacher and holder of the anxiety felt by the students. In this instance, the holding appears to be terribly fragile and is strengthened momentarily by an act of playful ignorance. By that I mean that, when the chalk is thrown at me, I pretend to be ignorant of the game rather than a conversant player. This, I felt, served to allow me the role of tension breaker without specifically addressing it. I recognise that there is a profound gap between my traditional teaching past, which would have seen me directly address and dismiss the game, and with my desire to really engage with the individualised learning that is about death, rupture and dissensus for the young people involved.

Much of the behaviour that I describe, and the emotional and physical impetuses for it, is the result of varying levels of engagement with the actions of teaching the trapeze. Therefore, the negotiation of these levels of engagement can be seen to be inscribed upon my teaching map during the course of these four days of contact with the students. At the time that the game began, I was primarily focused on the teaching of another student. This meant that I was engaged within the act of negotiating their anxiety, challenging at the right level, and I was attentive to all the cues that the student was giving me as to their state within the learning. The chalk game only came into my focus when it interrupted the small range of attention under which I was needfully working with this other student. We watched the game for a while and brought our small session to an end prior to the lunch break. It was at that point that the chalk was thrown at me and I made the decision to pretend I did not understand the game and move on. My fake pretence enabled the students to collude with me and permitted me not to reinstate a police order.

It is not unusual for a moment within the teaching to linger within my reflection through the course of a few days and this incident, as you can see from my reflective journal, was no different. The tension I inhabited caused me to compose and recompose myself in relation to my own identity, in the memory of the encounter. Through writing I articulate, but do not hope to resolve, all the apparent conflicts. I recognise that emancipatory education is an attentive concern in the momentary and to how the momentary, therefore, rewrites the possible future. It is a part of my teaching project to be engaged towards the student long after the encounter has ended as well as long before it has begun. The emancipatory teacher's tact, therefore,

lingers and accretes beyond the direct encounter into other encounters in time and space.

The teacher's attention towards creating, forming and attending to the student's individual challenges and engaging with acts of dissensus happens inside and outside of the class/workshop room. Although many of the actions could be said to be 'instinctive' or 'momentary' responses, they are also the result of engaged consideration and, in some cases, discussion outside of the teaching dialogue. Responses or problems are rehearsed by the teacher in order to ensure that the correct level of challenge, involvement and rigour is applied within the sessions. This type of teaching is immersive for the teacher; it consumes me. I reflect upon the work in many spare hours after the fact, curious as to what I might remember or consider on reflection. It is a phenomenological project because within it I 'find memories that paradoxically, I have never felt or thought before' (Van Manen, 1990:13).

This reflection mainly happens when I am particularly made aware of the many different ways of approaching a situation. I do it by talking to my assistant, by writing in a journal - as I did to unravel my thoughts about the chalk - or, in most instances, by thinking it through. The act of teaching in this way demands a full and attentive investment in the young people that is time-consuming. Therefore it is, in economic terms, difficult to manage on a large scale. It is also exhausting, joyful and sober and, therefore, characteristic of my own anticipatory resolution.

Manning's proposition about tact is that it demands investment in the past, present and future. It demands that you have known, and will know, within the present moment of action. This notion of past, present and future clarifies the necessity for the teacher to be invested across the time frame of the student's working relationship with me – and beyond into their future presence as a 'do-er'.

Projection into the future presents problems for Rancière, who believes that it is by projecting into the future that emancipative practices re-inscribe themselves into the inequalities of the past. The difference that I am proposing within this recognition of futurity is that a) it is individuated and consequently makes no pressure upon some communally prescriptive future, and b) that it is the recognition of a possibility, a potential action of dissensus, that is manifest in the projection from a momentary doing and does not have a target-driven outcome. As such, it returns to Heideggerian

eksasis, which underpins the temporality of resolution because:

> *only an entity which is essentially **futural**, is equiprimordially in the process of **having-been**, can, by handing itself down to itself the possibility it has inherited, take over its thrownness and be **in the moment of vision** for 'its time.'* (emphasis in the original 1962:437)

The teacher is charged with holding the metaphorical potential for action for the student within this type of teaching. Although the potential belongs necessarily to the student, the teacher, by dint of her awareness of the potential for closing-down and opening-up caused by situations of dissensus, holds the student's strata within her map: she holds their potential towards future action. The teacher's and student's intentions are mutually intentioned towards futural action.

6.4   Critical Incident 7: The Planche

> It is Day 2 of the practice, our first visit to Central, and I am working with a student who is very familiar with the trapeze. He is the student whose mother asked me to 'really challenge him' [quoted in Chapter 5 of this thesis]. In an attempt to challenge in this manner, I choose to proffer the move of a front Planche to the student. This is one of the hardest moves in trapeze because it involves holding a horizontal position through the core stomach muscles (see Figure 4). The student is unable to achieve this move on the first attempt. I talk him through the movement of lowering himself to horizontal from the fairly simple vertical 'needle' position. As the student moves towards the horizontal position, the change in weight causes him to drop through the shoulders to the floor (see Figure 5).

> Over the course of the four days, the student develops the strength to lower himself further towards the horizontal and hold it for mere fractions of a second longer each time. It is a minute progression, compared with his usual ability to 'master' the moves the first time that he tries them. There is a tremendous sense of satisfaction generated in his determination and will to succeed.

> He showed the move to his mother on the final day of practice and her joy was demonstrated within the phrase, 'Look at the way his body is trembling, he's really having to try hard, that is outstanding.'

This moment, or spread of moments from the practice, highlights the developmental possibilities that result from a student having demands placed upon their ability, intelligence and will through the doing of an action. Following on from the last section, when I began to unpack the notion of futurity, this moment rests upon the

notion of a futural and progressive outcome over a long period of time and is represented by a momentary rupture for the student in the first and through each encounter. It is an act of shared will. This is the story of repeated failure and the way that the teacher and student reconcile or open this possibility within the dialogic act:

> [T]he ignorant schoolmaster [in this instance particularly] exercises no relation of intelligence to intelligence. He or she is only an authority, only a will that sets the ignorant person down a path, that is to say to instigate a capacity already possessed. (Rancière in Bingham, 2010: 3)

The authority that I, as the teacher, possess within the action of the student attempting a Planche is that of an appreciator of the complexity and strength needed to perform certain trapeze moves. I have the knowledge of attempting this move myself and the voices of my teachers who attempted to support my performance of it. I also have the memory of repeated failure to achieve the movement. Consequently, I have the authority embedded within the *doing* of the movement, the *being* of the movement and the failure that the movement represents for me. I have a subjective knowledge of it. I am a master in as much as I know this movement in my experience, not that I would be able to tell the student how to successfully achieve it or, in fact, that I would be able to explicate to him the way that the movement *is*.

It is as if, like Rancière's Ignorant Schoolmaster, Jacotot, I am presenting something that I do not fully understand to a student for him to enact his intelligence upon. I am not teaching something which is unknown to me *per se*. I am teaching something that is unsayable by me - something of which my knowledge is inexplicable and, consequently, I cannot become the master explicator of it. I am not transmitting the knowledge of the movement - the *doing* of the movement enacts that. The student develops an individuated understanding, learnt from his own struggle with failure in relation to it.

Even if I proffer the suggestion that this is a difficult movement for all aerialists, it does not transmit the knowledge to the student because the truth of that is un-sayable directly, the move itself enacting its own complexity. My focus is towards the ability, intelligence and will of the student as an equal potential in relation to the movement, in full personal knowledge of the impact it had upon me (my memory of frustration and joy) and knowledge of the potential that the move could have upon him. My knowledge is embodied and it remains unexpressed. I am aware that I am

setting the student up for potential failure and, therefore, potential dissensus, rupture and authentic understanding. But I do not suggest what that could mean in actuality for him.

I use biological language in combination with physical touch and metaphor to teach the student the movement. I talk about engagement of the core muscles, the point of the toes, the straightening of the legs, in combination with physically touching him. At times I hold the student's leg in place in order for him to see where the movement is placed in his body. The biological and anatomical understanding is not explicated as a knowledge transfer; it is done in combination with the student's enactment of the movement. It accretes through the doing rather than through a superficial 'knowing'.

Rancière recognises that part of the explicatory teacher's authority, or mastery, is within the knowledge of the processual development needed to learn specific material: 'This topology itself implies a certain temporality' (Rancière in Bingham and Biesta, 2010:4). The teacher understands that there are small steps towards any important knowledge development and talks the student through each of the stages. '[T]he veil is lifted progressively, according to the ability attributed to the infantile mind... in other words progress goes hand in hand with a certain regress' (2010: 4). This process of taking the student through in progressive steps could be seen as describing what I did in the example above. However, the move was presented to the student in its entirety. It was presented as a full challenge, not a stepped process towards a final move that he was not aware of. Therefore, the explicatory stultification is negated. The development is not designed by the teacher to be processual, but process is demanded by the student's ability, thereby enabling the student to have a more attuned sense of what the move is to and for him in the doing. There is no 'happy ending' to this moment, no perfect example of the student mastering the move. However, this is not the success I sought from introducing the movement. I only sought to offer the student something towards which he really needed to enact his will. In that way, I succeeded.

This moment of practice opened up a further stratum of learning within the rehearsal room - that of the other students witnessing this student in failure. It gave them the opportunity to equalise with him through acts of support and celebration of that

failure, similar to the ones discussed in relation to physical pain in Section 6.2. The other students acknowledged the will and determination needed to keep attempting the movement. They goaded him to try again and were there to look at the marks on his hands and count the number of seconds that he held the pose for at each attempt. Although no other student was able to attempt the movement (a couple of them tried and one collapsed in fits of giggles in his attempt to get into the first 'needle' position required), they recognised a shared sense that the trapeze challenged them all at their individual level. It was an equalising proposition. The marks gained on his hands were similar to the marks gained on their hands in attempting different moves. In a sense they had all experienced the same 'marking' and adjustment of their physical selves in relation to the trapeze. It was just the subtle difference of the physical level required to impact upon the individual student's physicality that made them different. The choice to activate their will towards learning the trapeze was identical. It was not the specific act that bonded the students but the shared sense of struggle, purpose and will within each individual moment of the work. Age, ability, gender and race were equalised by the fact that their hands were torn in the same places and their shoulder muscles ached in the same way through the successes and failures with the equipment. In observation of this student's failure and struggle, equality was enacted on the wider social community of the group.

This is possibly the simplest of the examples through which to discuss the relation to death. It involves two overlapping dialogues upon failure. The first is with a failure to sustain the student's expectations of himself as highly competent at the first attempt with movements upon the trapeze. The second, and no less complex failure, is the moment of rupture within the movement itself. As the student lowers himself down towards the horizontal, there is a moment of hiatus, or pause, before the weight of his legs becomes too much to bear. At this point, there is a relaxation of the key muscles as he submits to gravity and he drops through the shoulders to the floor. He falls. As you can see from Figure 5, he doesn't fall particularly far - less than a metre. But this falling is defined by the act of failure rather than the possibility of injury. The fall is the fall towards dissensus of the perceived social context. The fall is towards an authentic relation between the self and death for the student. Moreover, it also represents a rupture in the understanding of the teacher, who is expecting him not to fall and, consequently, the two have a momentary shared understanding of

themselves, entwined within this being-towards-death.

This interrelation between the student and myself is interesting to notice and reflect upon for the moment. The shared investment of two people within a single person's experience is one that I unpicked in Chapter 5, in relation to the aerial act, as one that opens the space for investment of the self from the audience. In this instance, the investment does not come from a performance of union. I do not see myself within the movement of the student. It is more than that - I am attentively focussed, unified with him within the act, *for* him. My attention to his performance is such that there is a union between us that extends beyond a desire for success. The student's failure and fall, in this instance, is my own fall, but I am attentive to his experience of it. The repetition of this act transforms the student so the action also accretes within my mapped experience for my use in the future and for me to experience in the present. It becomes a part of the tactful engagement I present for other students and is intertwined within the relationship that I have with this student. As you can see from the pictures, it is also categorised by sobriety and joy. I understand my own resolution through an engagement with the student.
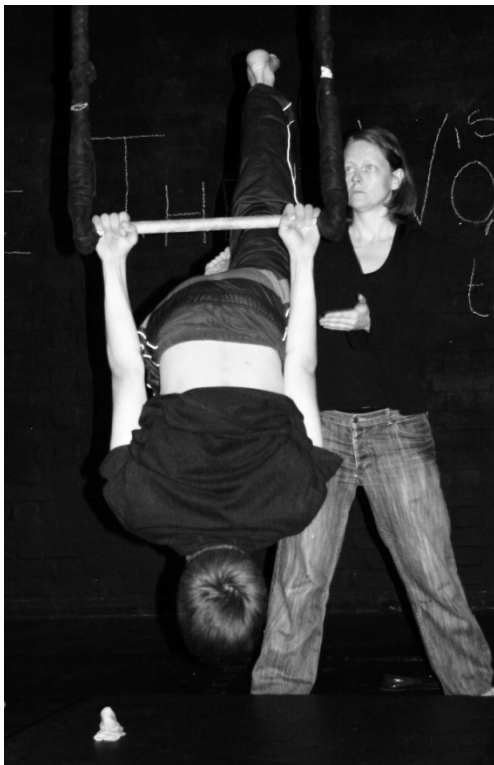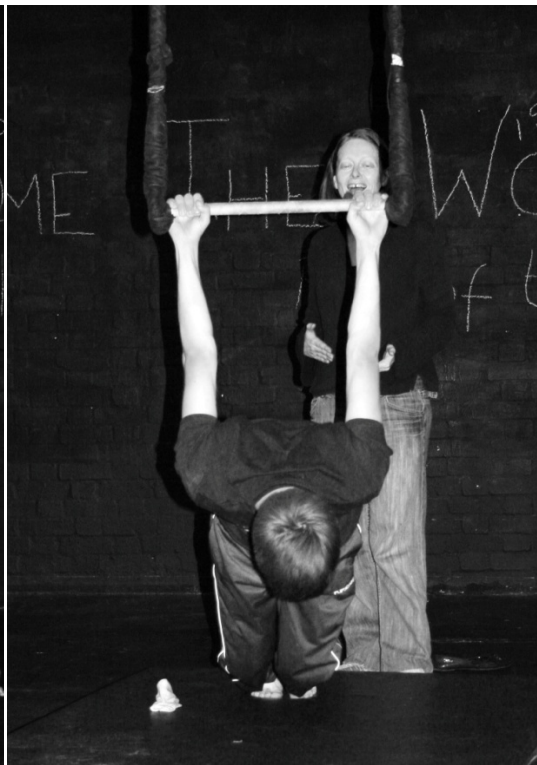

Figure 3. *The Planche Attempt*   **Figure 4.** *The Planche Fail*

6.5   Critical Incident 8: My Body

Throughout the course of the sessions, I had to cope with an altered physical ability that challenged my relationship to the equipment and to the movements I was teaching the students. Four days prior to the Circus Space Induction, I had gone into hospital for routine and minor surgery but had ended up losing a great deal of blood and needing transfusions. This left me anaemic, very tired and unable to practice the trapeze for the foreseeable future. Consequently, I was unable to model many of the movements I would ordinarily have done for the students. Instead, I created propositions, questions and provocations for them to encounter the equipment as individuals, rather than in mimesis of my own practice:

> I wonder whether I should cancel the sessions? If I cannot effectively do the things that I am asking the students to do, then maybe I should not be working with them. Would I impact upon them negatively if I presented myself as fragile and incapable? How would this incapacity read to them?... If I do cancel the sessions, I risk the possibility of breaching the young people's faith and trust in me. On the one hand, I would explain that it is for their own safety, and on the other hand it would take away an opportunity that they have been looking forward to.... the issue of safety is important, but having Dave in the room will ensure that all students are spotted effectively. It is purely the act of modelling or demonstrating that I would not be able to do. Is there another way? (Hartley, 2009:np).

This unexpected and surprising element ruptured the historical relationship that I had to trapeze teaching and to teaching in general. I experienced a dynamic relationship to physical death and to existential death as detailed by Heidegger. My weakened physical state made me challenge the preconceptions of my role in a number of ways: 1) I told the students that I was not allowed to get on the trapeze and that I must take breaks often and they should tell me if they thought I should sit down; 2) I devolved some of the pedagogic responsibility to the students themselves, rather than taking it upon myself to lead each situation; 3) following on from (2), I also made the students more responsible for engaging with the safety of each other in terms of spotting the movements; 4) my normal, highly energetic teaching mode became naturally softer and more thoughtful, quieter generally, which enabled me to be more attentive to the quieter elements in the room.

This enforced rupture from my established norm, provided opportunities for

dissensus. Each of the students, at different points in the week, suggested that I should sit down during a warm-up, drink some water or pushed themselves forward to take over from me when they saw that I was weary. It was as if I had given permission or a Rancière based opportunity for them to assert their equality with me in terms of knowledge. I articulated that, in this instance, they were able to 'see' or 'notice' me more clearly than I was able to see myself. It also intensified their ability to notice each other and, therefore, clarify the different modes of care or challenge that they could metre out to each other whilst teaching, spotting or playing.

This is perhaps the largest and most important of my learning points discovered over the course of the work. It plays against the presumption that the teacher has more authority than the vulnerable students. The authority that I took, in the instance, was to give permission for pedagogy itself to be engaged with by the students. I stopped teaching as I had understood it to that point.

Throughout the final chapter of *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, Rancière asserts the nature of universal teaching as familial. This has been ignored by the critics, Bingham and Biesta, but conveys to me two propositions from Rancière that go beyond thinking about equality as a methodology doomed to fail if institutionalised and moved towards a more poetic excavation of the intimacy required to risk this type of teaching. He states that '[i]t must therefore be announced to princes, ministers and the powerful: they cannot *institute* universal teaching, but they can apply it to teaching their children' (1995:106). This dynamic shift in attention, from the typical master-student relation into one of parent-child, proposes that the teacher's investment goes beyond simple knowledge transfer. It speaks of care, of expectation, of determination and the contentious issue of love.

It could be said that what I did during the practice was enact a 'leap of faith' of my own. I placed my safety into the hands of the young people with whom I was working. I trusted that they would catch me and of course they did. I risked the possibility that the students would let me die and I knew that this was a possibility prior to the event. I became attuned to my own open-ended future within the project due to my embodiment and to the social pressures at play within the room. This death was held by the students. It enabled them to see how the responsibilities changed when I was ill. It changed their understanding of themselves in relation to

this insurance and, for the first time, enabled them to see themselves as powerful, rather than vulnerable within it. They became a part of the dialectic, because I could synthesise it for them no longer.

Chapter 7.0

Guided Practices in Facing Danger

I have looked particularly at the dialogue between emancipation and stultification within the practice of teaching through risk. I drew from key conceptual thinking around experience and knowledge from Paulo Freire, Jacques Rancière and Martin Heidegger. I used the term 'pedagogic tact' to describe and delineate a nature of facilitation in eight critical instances of risk towards a deeper understanding of pedagogical practice. I described this pedagogic tact as a version of 'violent care' (Freire, 1971), which appears to develop 'anticipatory resolution' (Heidegger 1962) within the student within a 'police order' (Rancière 1991) that might assign them as vulnerable. Moreover, I have argued that the act of rumination upon these terms, which I perform through my writing, itself exemplifies pedagogic tact. I propose that pedagogic tact is a joyful, sober, poetic, violent and unsustainable pursuit enacted through concerned curiosity by the teacher towards the equality of the student.

Through this thesis, many themes have emerged and been ruminated upon. This final chapter ties together the mapped themes that I described through the course of the previous chapters. In this way, I orient my descriptions back towards the phenomena of pedagogy and how the teacher is able to guide students through territories of risk and danger. Over the course of the preceding chapters, I have mapped what these dangers are, and how they are typified by ambiguity and paradox. I have detailed how the attentive teacher is subject to the plays of this ambiguity and can, therefore, never assert towards future guidance, only guidance within the momentary. I continuously circulate around the proposition that any practice that seeks to emancipate students runs the risk of domesticating or stultifying them. The purpose of this section is to mark a brief pause in my mapping of pedagogy and attempt to isolate some of the key learning points that this practice has brought to light for me through the doing, being and seeing of the work. The points below work as phenomenological themes which reveal how I see myself, in the momentary, in relation to emancipator pedagogy which engages with risk. Through these points, I reveal where the territories of risk are and how they were managed through tactful practice.

The teacher ignites the will of the young person to choose. That is the primary goal of the work. Above all others, the teacher guides the student towards their own activated will and enables them to see the choices that are presented within encounters with risk, rather than simply the dangers that are held therein. In such a way, the student sees him or herself within the term 'risk'. They are able to understand what risk and danger are by *doing* risky activities safely.

Each student's will may be engaged or stultified by the teacher; all are different and demand different kinds of attention. This point reminds the teacher that her attendant focus is to be curious about each student and the different dangers they face. She questions how the student is challenged and attends to risk in that manner. This is not a judgment of ability, intelligence or potential. It is an act of constant vigilance to the student as they appear, not an attention towards what they would or could become. The teacher has no end-point in mind except an authentic encounter with risk, be it on a trapeze or with the idea of a trapeze. Therefore, the teacher is able to set individuated challenges for the student based on the known possibilities each opportunity gives to each student as they appear to her. Moreover, in attending to the equality of will needed within the pedagogic process, the students notice their similarities rather than their different abilities. They are equalised.

The teacher needs to know themself. The teacher's experience of, and through, education is carried with her through the course of any educational encounter. She is an embodiment of her history, experience and potential within the moment of the risky encounter. She is subject to the social discourses that concern education and to the subject that she is teaching. Knowing this, attending to it, articulating it, challenging it and reforming her relation to it, form an integral part of the teacher's ability to act in dissensus to her own concerns and focus on the student. So the reflective process of teaching is focussed both within the teacher's attention to the student and within their attention to themselves; it is an enactment of Heidegger's 'right kind of objectivity' characterised by considerateness and forbearance (1962:159). Knowing how the police order impacts on me within my momentary appreciation of fear enables me to intention myself against it or towards it (Rancière, 1999: 31). Knowing that there are social discourses that conflate risk with fear, and

recognising this in a moment when I may feel afraid, enables me to conduct myself within it. Knowing the impact that technical or biological language and aesthetic convention can have upon the student's ability to take a leap of faith makes me attentive to metaphor, physical gesture and individuality in the moment. Knowing that I have the potential to domesticate a student makes me strive against it. Confronting these challenges takes an extreme act of will, consideration and forbearance from the teacher.

Emancipatory practice is an act of will. The moments that I have described relate to a specific pedagogic intention over the past five years. The guidance given to the students is the result of this sustained engagement within their individual development as individuals, students and aerialists. Emancipatory teaching is, therefore, a reflexive, reflective and engaged project. It demands that the teacher attends to the students' and her own understanding beyond the momentary, and acknowledges her and their potential towards development, or even dispute, in the future. The teacher acts in dissensus to herself above all. It is a sober, joyful and exhausting pursuit that is held within the paradox of violent care. The role of the teacher is to contain, carefully, the potential 'can do' of both herself and the student. It is a fragile relationship born out of the teacher's ability to care, to have faith in the student and in dialectical relation with damage and pain.

Acts of dissensus are enacted through the doing. In order to leave the student free within the practice to extract unique meaning, the acts of dissensus come from the practice and not as a contrived layer placed upon it. They are not bestowed by the teacher but are allowed to 'come into presence' for the student (Heidegger, 1962: 258). An awareness of societal power dynamics at play within the emancipatory work is, therefore, a possible corollary but not the motivating factor of the pedagogic practice. This is not explicated although it may be revealed. Emancipatory teaching is, therefore, a political act because it enables every choice and every action to be questioned through the doing of the work.

In addition to this, emancipatory guidance of this nature has an open end-point. Its outcome cannot and should not be measured as something tangible against pre-determined markers of success or failure. Each student will succeed and fail according to their own understanding of the terms and, therefore, they are subject to

personal rather than imposed ruptures in their identity formation. This enables them to work against stultification and to form an authentic resolution towards death.

Know when to walk away. One of the most surprising elements that I discovered through the course of this work was the knowledge that there are times when the teacher does not need to be present within an activity. The individual learning of the students happens in and around the guidance of the teacher. It happens in the discussions during break and at home with their carers. It happens in enactments with their siblings and within the games that are created between the participants in the room. The chalk incident taught me that there is no need to be a part of all of this learning. It is transformative but the teacher has no role within it. It is, therefore, important that the teacher enables this space to be given when working in this way.

The teacher knows that the guidance is temporally bound. More than simply recognising that the student is only with them for a short moment, this theme recognises that the contact with death and the equalising practices engaged with are also temporary. It is impossible to sustain attentive focus on a student's learning beyond the momentary or the week or the practice. Consequently, I make no claim that aerial work develops self-esteem or engenders intimacy; it may have done in the momentary because it may not in the future. That is not to say that these changes cannot or do not take place but just that they are not the projected outcome of the practice.

The student is able to know the self momentarily within the act of doing something dangerous: to be afraid, or strong, or fragile, or superhuman or all of these things. This is a momentary realisation. What changes, however, is the student's ability to momentarily reconcile their unique self in the face of possible danger through having known and, therefore, 'owned' it.

Pedagogic tact is accumulated and accreted temporally. The emancipatory teacher's tact is experienced, reflected upon, known, destabilised, engaged with, not known, shattered, enjoyed and cherished through the process of encounters with students. It, therefore, lingers and accretes, beyond the direct encounter, into other encounters in time and space. It is a dialectical relation between the possibility of knowing the self to be emancipatory and knowing that there is a possibility of stultification within each guided practice. Each new experience should rupture and

shatter the teacher's knowledge of her own possibility. Tact is exhausting and unsustainable; it is joyful, violent and emancipating.

Guided practices in facing danger demand an act of faith from the teacher. This final point holds the strongest resonance with me because it is the simplest and perhaps the most clichéd. Engaged emancipatory pedagogy demands that the teacher learns from the student. More than that, it demands that the teacher is decomposed and recomposed through engagement with the students as equals. It is only through this act of faith that the student really encounters risk and, therefore, resolution.

7.1 Limitations of the Study

There are, of course, limitations. This study in its intertwining of theory and practice which both explicates, and is explicated by, the phenomenological method used. Measurement and evaluation are done through self-reflexive analysis and are intentioned towards the descriptions of the life as lived and meaning as it comes to clarity for me through the work. This written document performs the tactful engagement of my teaching. But, while this thesis does not propose a model of quantifying pedagogy, it does model ways of making and doing for pedagogic practice. It reinstates risk as an important discourse within the practice of pedagogy and worthy of theoretical consideration; because risk is perceptual and individual, it demands that a qualitative approach be taken. This thesis attempts to balance description with analysis.

I am mindful that this project can be seen as idealistic. Rancière himself would suggest that passion, in this instance, takes me away from the project to free others, because an 'attentive will can always do so much – and more - than what the passions do… everything is done by the passions, I know; but everything, even follies would be much better done by reason' (1991:95). Passion is, however, what keeps me focussed on this project and enables me to attend to my will to emancipate, even when I am exhausted by it. I contend that the preceding poetic evocation of education, as it appears to me, serves to reinforce the more theoretical elements of this thesis because, as shown, the rational and analytical elements traditionally

favoured do not capture the vital personal dynamics within the discourse. Each risk experienced, or danger encountered, presents itself differently to each person. They therefore require different mechanisms under which it can be encountered, avoided or embraced. It is not as simple as to say that we should avoid all risk because life is a project in the face of death. To guide students through dangerous or risky pursuits is an enacted resolution towards encountering death for the teacher and for the students.

I am mindful that within this thesis there are contradictions, Biesta reminds us that:

> the ingenuity of Rancière's work lies first and foremost in the fact that he is able to show that what is done in the name of equality, democracy, and emancipation often results in its opposite in that it reproduces inequality and keeps people in their place. What matters, therefore, is not *that* we are committed to equality, democracy and emancipation, but *how* we are committed to these concepts and *how* we express and articulate this commitment. (Italics in original 2010:57)

This thesis is the expression of my ongoing commitment to guidance and danger through circus and acts of risk-taking in pedagogy. In discussing how an engagement with the transgressive performance discipline of circus can destabilise the social normative, I am intending towards emancipation. I recognise, however, that I may simply have domesticated the students into thinking my way. They may simply have acquiesced to a different performative mode rather than recognised their possible resilience within the momentary.

My embracing of phenomenological theory, performative writing and tactful practice aligns my research as an act of dissensus against a normative framework for education and for academic writing at PhD level. Whilst there is no intention to critique the form itself, I acknowledge that this new way of describing and articulating teaching is itself a new mode of presenting Practice as Research.

7.2 Into the Future

This momentary pause to reflect upon the praxis of risk has enabled me to embrace the poetic and paradoxical elements that describe and develop my understanding of ways I might become a better teacher. It is, however, an unending pursuit.

For each of the eight critical incidents that I discussed, there are five more that I learnt as much from. I could have written a whole chapter on the young woman who was reluctant to step from the flying trapeze platform. Her relationship with risk was formative in my section 'Know when to walk away'; she would not attempt the static trapeze at all until the third day, when I left the room momentarily and she got her friend to support her. My relationship with this young woman had been part of the 'voices' in her head that stopped her from trying. She wanted to please me so much that she wanted to do it all on her own. The expression of total happiness on her face when I walked in and 'discovered' her sitting on the trapeze was captivating: she radiated joy. A full analysis of this incident falls outside the time constraints of this work, and I am still ruminating upon what that moment is and was in my understanding of pedagogic tact. I have questions. If I am charged to keep the student safe, what happens to that charge when I leave the room? How am I present in the encounter when I am physically absent? How can I reconcile the expectation that I should be a physical presence? I leave this phase of the research with better questions about the nature of pedagogic tact in full knowledge that what I offered the student was the potential to do it for herself.

If I were to start the research again, I would wish to conduct more formal interviews throughout the process in order to create a dialogue with the people who represent the police order in which the students and I am situated: the Technical Manager of Central School of Speech and Drama, the rigger who put up the equipment, the Dean of the School. Because my work is about dialogue and tact, then the conversations that I had informally for the first two years of the PhD, which built the trust between myself and the institution, are a practice in tact too. I feel that these conversations were formative in my understanding of the sympathetic relationship between tick-box systems and the people within them. These conversations are repetitive, adversarial and supportive: they are the fabric of a practice in risk.

Alongside these interviews, I would like to explore further the wider consequences of the work with the young people's parents and carers. Ongoing formal interviews with the wider community would enable me to see how the practice had been experienced by others; it would give me greater scope to understand the impacts that it had (if any) upon the young people. I would be interested to see the way that risk was dealt with in the home environment. The contradiction here is that, within my typical educative environment, I have very little contact with the wider social community of the students except for a ten minute formal meeting on Parents Evening in a school setting - or even less when directing a performance. So, although I feel that surveying the wider circle would provide excellent insight into the specific students I worked with, it would also pull me away from my intention to be a better teacher in every pedagogic circumstance.

The next stage theoretically and academically would be a survey of the international literature on the educative value of circus. There have been many books and articles published in France, most notably *La Fonction Éducative Du Cirque* (The Educative function of circus) and *Un Cirque pour L'Éducation* (circus for education) by Hugues Hotier (2001, 2003), a translation of which falls outside the purview of this research (and the talents of the author) at this time. Hotier analyses the use of circus as an educative tool for working with young people who have learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural problems. He looks at the way that circus can construct and form the identities of young people in order to reconcile some of the issues they experience in their educational lives. As I have articulated throughout, this thesis does not seek to prove that 'circus is good for you' in some way although that had been my premise when I began the research. An investigation of how circus is conceived internationally would invigorate my pedagogic praxis and take this work on a new journey.

The cartographic metaphor has been very useful as a rhetorical device for describing what I do through every encounter with students. As I learn more about the new developments in neuroscience, and especially in neurophenomenology, I have learnt that mind 'mapping' is the mode experts use to describe the way the brain sends, receives and stores information. Having read *The Philosophical Baby* by Alison Gopnik (2004), I have learnt that a child's brain is created, formed and shaped by

their engagement with *doing*: the brain is a map of their intersubjective understanding. There is scope for a further layer of phenomenological analysis to be mined in addition to the existential, pedagogic and personal. I would like to see how each critical incident might be explained from a neurophenomenological perspective.

This work is already complex, contradictory, impossible to manage and extensive. There are many areas that I would like to expand upon as I practise tact through my teaching career. I suppose that the simplest articulation of my place within the work is to say that I will continue to teach individual, equal students in different places and to learn from them how to become a better teacher.

7.3 On Courage and Guidance

The purpose of this thesis was to take inspiration from Plato's assertion that courage could be taught to young people through guided practices in facing danger. I have questioned what constitutes danger, courage and guidance through the course of this thesis. And I have offered a model for the tactful engagement of a single teacher. Tact is a drawing together and enactment of equality between student and teacher. This can be done through the voice, in a subversion of Rancière's proposition that '[t]he explicator sets up and abolishes this distance – deploys it and reabsorbs it in the fullness of speech' (1992:5) and, most specifically, through the body, our site for meaning-making, risk-taking and our site for death.

This final section articulates a momentary closure, in the full knowledge that political engagement through emancipation is an infinite project. In doing so, I return to a ninth critical incident from the young people with whom I worked and describe their evaluation of the work undergone, because their voice is significant, to elucidate upon trust and tact.

> It is a few weeks after the practical elements of the work are over. I have invited the students back to hear me talk about the work undergone in an academic forum and to answer questions about the work from an invited audience of teachers and academics. The youngsters are excited and nervous about what I am going to say. They have brought school friends and relatives to the presentation.

They particularly engage with the photographs and film of the workshops that are displayed around the room. They seem to enjoy the notion that they are performers within a performing arts school and, therefore, have status. They appear to value being seen in this way.

At the end of the presentation they are asked a myriad of questions. The Deputy Headmaster of one of the schools the children attend asks, 'Do you feel more confident having worked with Jess in this way? Could you say how much more confident?' This elicits a nervous laugh from the young people and one of his students responds by looking at me. 'Was this project about making us more confident, Jess?' I responded with, 'I don't know, what do you think?' Another student leaps in: 'I was pretty confident before I started' and another says, 'Yeah, lots of different things make you confident. I don't think that question is relevant and I certainly couldn't measure it.'

After the formal questions are over, a parent asks the students, 'Why did you call the project *Hello Fatty*?' There is silence before one of them launches into a lengthy account of the insult game they played in response to my provocation 'The young people love and hurt each other'. They laugh at the fact that the parents appear to be shocked. There is a short silence before another student says, 'It's about enjoying and understanding the purpose of the pain we all experienced. Like this' - and she turns around and slaps me on the forehead. It is a shock and I gasp, and I blush and then I laugh. We laugh together.

Appendix A

Consent Letter

9th June 2009

Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the guided practices project 2009. This letter takes you through the implications of working on the project and, once signed, constitutes informed consent for yourself or, if under 16, your child, to participate in the work. I appreciate your time and consideration of the implications this has to you or your child, and hope that you feel free to ask any questions that arise before, during and after the workshop period. Please sign one copy and return it to me in the envelope provided as soon as possible.

The Project: There are three phases to the project:

18th July – 10am -1pm – Induction at The Circus Space, Hoxton London – Students try their hand at; flying trapeze, static trapeze, diabolic and acro-balancing.

23rd – 25th July – 10am-5pm – three days of workshops, challenges and improvisation based on circus skills, clowning skills and philosophical challenges.

4pm 25th July – Process showing – All friends and family welcome

21st Sept – 3rd Oct – Festival of Emergent Arts – The documentation of the work will be shown in the festival over the two weeks. One evening TBA – lecture demonstration of the work.

What is the purpose of this project? The participants will be challenged physically and emotionally in order to develop the performance skills . The work will provoke them to think about their identity and this may bring enhanced creativity and confidence. They will learn new performance skills and learn from professional actors/performers. It will, however, not be easy, that is the point. Each student will be taken on an individual journey, so that they feel supported and challenged to their own unique level.

The research investigates the nature of provocation and safety within the student/teacher relationship. I will be actively reflecting upon the role of listening, observing, challenging and supporting the students within this relationship. So it is not the participant under examination, but the means of communication.

What are the risks involved? There are risks involved in any physically demanding pursuit. These risks are multiplied when the student is engaged with circus equipment. The risks will be minimised by many factors; the teachers are trained professionals; the students will wear harnesses; there is constantly a teacher present to support the student; there are crash mats and safety equipment to limit the impact of any falls.

Nothing can be done to erase all risks from the process. Participants may strain muscles or tear their hands from the new discipline; they may fall to a crash-mat and shock themselves.

Inattention or carelessness by the student constitutes the greatest risk, this could result in serious injury. Participants will need to take responsibility for concentration, listening to instruction and observing others. The student also takes responsibility for saying yes or no to attempting everything, I will never expect people to try things that they are overly scared of or are not physically strong enough to enact. If done with discipline and carefulness, circus training is safe and very enjoyable.

I have read and understood the risks involved with this sort of work and <u>agree / disagree</u> that I/<u>my child</u> can (delete as applicable) participate.

Signed   ....   Name (printed) .... Date.......

Publication: Names, photographs and film footage of the participants will be used after the workshops; for publication at the Central School of Speech and Drama, Festival of Emergent Arts and for inclusion within the PhD thesis of Jessica Hartley (CSSD). A copy of any material used will be offered for your approval prior to publication, and any further use of the material will be subject to your agreement at a later stage.

I have read and understood that <u>I/my child</u> will be filmed and photographed and <u>agree/disagree</u> to this being used for research purposes.

Signed.. Name... Date....................

Responsibilities: By agreeing to participate the student MUST agree to the following responsibilities. Failure to adhere to these jeopardises their safety, the future of the project and their place within it.

- To be on time – Participants should aim to get to the rehearsal or workshop half an hour before it is due to start.
- To wear suitable clothes or bring suitable clothing; sports kit or clothes that you can move freely in – no jeans please, they are unsafe for aerial work.
- To treat the other participants with respect
- To be honest about what they are thinking or feeling, there is no need to put on a 'strong' face; your safety may rely on it.

I, the participant, have read and understood my responsibilities within the project and <u>agree/disagree</u> to adhere to them.

Signed... Name.. Date..........................

Expenses: CSSD will pay for all travel to and from the work. Please bring copies of receipts or tickets and you will be reimbursed in full. Unfortunately, you will not be without a receipt.

The Induction at Circus Space will be paid for by CSSD, however, should you not attend you will expected to reimburse them for the £50 fee.

Talking: The young people involved on this project will be challenged in new and exciting ways. They will return from rehearsals with sore muscles and tired minds. If there is ANYTHING that you feel you wish to discuss with me or feel has impact on the work, at any stage, please ring or email me (details above). I have the care and safety of the participants as my prime concern along with an active interest in how this work may have affected them in ways they are unaware of.

I agree/disagree to my child's participation in this project. I have been offered opportunity to ask any questions and understand the implications of the work.

Signed...

Name of Student ....

Address..

Emergency Contact Number...

Are the participants taking any medication? Y/N   Details ....

Are there any health/physical implications or illnesses that would impact on the work?

 Y/N   Details...

Please keep a copy of this letter for your information; I look forward to working with everyone on the project, and sharing the research findings with you in September.

Yours sincerely

Jessica Hartley

Research Student – Central School of Speech and Drama.

Appendix B

The Practice

Aerial training.

Warm-up.

Aerial training occurred on each of the three mornings at CSSD. Each morning, we worked with the static trapeze and corde lisse equipment. I spent half an hour warming-up the students. This involved cardio vascular activity which raises the heart rate and sends blood pumping through the body. This cardiovascular activity not only generates blood flow, but also starts the process of focus for the group. The first thing that they want to do on arriving is have a long chat, this is a literal manifestation of Heidegger's falling towards the idle chatter of the everyday, which recognises that the social circumstances of being together is an essential element of being and, as such, it can obscure newness. I observed that the students kept chatting and socialising whilst they began to jog around the room, but then when other modes of jogging are introduced (knees up at the front, heels to the back, backwards, side swings etc.), the talking began to fade. This transitional phase, took the students from an attentive focus on themselves being for each other, socially as they arrive, to being for themselves whilst they begin to attend to their movement. After the talking had stopped, and I could see a relaxation within the limbs of all the students (the time for this varied according to the temperature, the work we did the previous day and the individual student's physical ability) I then moved on to stretching. They were still working with each other, but in a different way.

Stretching.

The stretching is done to bring synovial fluid to the joints, in order to keep them safe during the impact of the work on the equipment. It is also done to lengthen the muscles, in order to prepare them for the rigours of the work. The stretches are both to ensure safety of muscles and joints and also to begin the conditioning needed for the trapeze work. Aerial practice demands many things, core and upper body strength, flexibility, kinaesthetic and proprioceptive awareness (the awareness of the

body in space), as well as creativity and stamina. At this point, I started by asking whether anyone fancied stretching a particular part of the body, first in response to the work undergone the day before, or to simply reflect how they were feeling. By asking these questions, I begin to focus the young people on the task of engaging with the feelings alive in their physical sphere. This generated an attentive focus, where the students become attuned to the physical needs of their body. Recognising that the student is an agent within the process of stretching enables them to see the choices available and they can resolve themselves to attending to these feelings and concerns. It enables them to see how attention can mobilise an awareness of self, and the choices that their unique embodiment provides.

Conditioning.

At this point, the students took it in turns to climb the rope. This is done to focus the students on their body in vertical space and as something that works in combination with its environment. It is also done to get the entire shoulder structure mobilised to the possibility of taking body weight. They all climbed the rope according to their differing ability. For two students, the first conditioning session developed technique and position which resulted in them hanging from the rope and attempting to get their feet into the correct position. Their relationship to the rope changed over the three days to the point where each of them completed a whole climb to the gantry successfully. Another student was able to do rope climbs before he arrived. In this instance, I created complex physical challenges for him, to climb with different feet, to climb without feet, to climb without feet in a straddle position and finally, to attempt a knee climb. This enabled me to playfully test the limits of his physical capacity, the nature of this testing I will explore, in greater detail, in the following chapter, through the example of the Planche.

Further conditioning exercises followed that enabled the students to feel comfortable with the equipment and to build an appreciation of the movement needed to successfully complete positions or phrases upon it. At this point, I was attentive to the students' need for challenge and for care. Each conditioning exercise was introduced with an explanation of purpose, but similar to the Eagle discussion from Chapter 4, I was attentive to personal temporal and spatial elements in the room. I

was keen that conditioning was useful rather than stultifying. For the student, it carried meaning, rather than was seen as a chore. The rhythm of the students' attention was a textural layer for the way I saw them. By observing in this way, I was able to offer support, challenge, diversion or reinforcement when needed.

Movements.

At this point the students worked at their own pace towards the different moves or trapeze balances that they would like to achieve. This section and the following 'play' section are interchangeable. It does not matter which goes first, the one informs the other, and taken together they enable a personalised engagement with the equipment. New moves were introduced in this section to present personal challenges for the students who expressed a desire for unique involvement with the trapeze. I was attentive to their need for individuated 'signature moves'. Much like the Eagle of the previous chapter and the Gazelle of Chapter 2, each student became the performer for a move that they felt challenged and defined their identity. They were free to choose from a repertoire of moves that I demonstrated to them, or they were free to make a move up, through playful engagement with the trapeze.

Play.

At this point, all attention to technique was abandoned. The students proposed different contact with the equipment together, in pairs or in isolation. They worked to see what the trapeze could be for them. Elements of playful engagement with the equipment were mobilised by my attention to the personalities of the student, communally and individually. This resulted in some very risky activities, such as students standing on each other's shoulders on the trapeze, as well as some joyful recognitions of possibility, such as swinging the trapeze so high that the student's feet touched the ceiling. These elements of the aerial training were focussed on the students' discovery and ability to test things. There were moments of recklessness and rupture, as the young people tested their resolution despite, and because of, their anxiety.

Devising provocations.

Prior to the discovery that circus/aerial provocation was most useful in the realm of revealing the discourses at play within pedagogic relationship, I devised a series of philosophical provocations as starting points for devising work in the afternoons. I isolated three themes which recognise the complexities of being, and fore-grounded my desire to introduce students and myself to dangerous interactions. My intention was to unsettle the young people, to bring about the painful process of disembedding conceptions, in order to free students' attachments to the cultural or social contexts in which we were working. I outline them now because, although not directly referenced within the next section, they contributed to the whole experience of the three days for us all. Through these playful provocations, which resided outside and alongside the physical intensity of the aerial elements, connections were made and rehearsed, as I demonstrated in my first example in Chapter 1. The theme that I can extract or map from this part of the practice, is that one of the mobilising elements of pedagogic tact, for me, was that time spent with the students without the aerial provocations, enabled me to map their normal everyday attitude to play, against the way that they attended to the physical provocations. This gave me a clearer insight into their individual needs when being directly challenged. I was able to observe their differing modes of behaviour in a different context.

The support mechanisms developed in the morning sessions were rehearsed and extended during this ground-based devising work, the students were able to move from being responsible for each other's safety, through spotting and basing each other aerially, to attending to their creative support in the afternoon sessions. Physical engagement and tiredness ruptured the cultural or social boundaries that would have otherwise been more evident through the work.

The provocations I used as a stimulus for the devising work reflected the key themes that resonate through this thesis: agency, death and taboo. As espoused in Chapter 1, an investigation of agency and resolution are indivisible from recognition of the possibility of death.

Provocation 1: The teenagers name the world.

Provocation 1 serves as an opportunity for the pedagogue to witness the students' interrogation of their philosophical or ideological place with the world. It is important that the teenagers are prompted to consider, not just their immediate

relation to the world, but the meaning they ascribe to their being in it. On a practical level, this first provocation inspired the students to think about the space or environment that they are in, namely a studio theatre in a drama school, with a corde lisse and trapeze hanging from the gantry. It enabled them to explore their genuine physical relationship and emotional response to the space and the opportunities it offers for exploration and performance. The objective of this 'naming' is more than a metaphorical act of ascribing a word to denote a space within an environment; it was an opportunity to explore a personal physical experience of that space. The students were able to claim it in such a way as to create a place where trust and risk could happen, it became a space for possibilities.

An example of this is the way that they wrote all over the walls. Not content with physically exploring every nook of the room, from the gantry to the doors, they took the chalk that I had used in a previous exercise and wrote words and phrases on the walls and floor. They wrote Cynthia, boo-boo, MINE and my world in different places as if to name and claim it for themselves. Within this action, the students creatively responded to a metaphorical proposition by challenging aspects of ownership and responsibility. In marking the walls they acted in dissensus to commonly held notions of acceptable behaviour, although they colluded with one another about who would do the writing and what would be written. The black walls were a challenge that could be filled through the act of naming.

Through this act the group also became more communicative and playful with each other. Roles were given to each other that were either cognisant of the physical hierarchy discovered in the morning, or worked to destabilise it. In this exercise, different qualities such as wit and amiableness were given higher status than the physical prowess demonstrated or experienced within the trapeze work. The physically 'weaker' students felt that they had an opportunity to compete or collaborate with the physically 'stronger' students. The physically stronger students were given the opportunity to demonstrate that they were 'more than mere muscle'. In this devising scenario, the group were able to balance the perceptions of success or failure that they may have felt limited by in the aerial work.

Provocation 2: The teenager is hanging.

On a practical level, the student is invited in this provocation, to engage with the dangerous pursuit of 'hanging'. Their engagement with hanging as a metaphor may result in ground-based performance because the student dictates their own level of physical engagement. This provocation serves as a physical challenge, but also a philosophical one on the nature of the word 'hanging' and an artistic challenge for the student to convey the nature of hanging to an audience.

One of my intentions within this provocation is to interrogate the nature of death; this is in recognition of its pertinence within the philosophical framework of this research and in society at large. I further recognise that artistic and ethical considerations are raised by the representation of the death of a child or children in this manner, which I articulated in Chapter 2. I felt that this would provide exciting and dangerous material with which to engender ruminations about pedagogic tact.

This provocation enabled the students to create three different narratives about how they might die. One was by their own hand, one was by accident, and one was at the hands of another. It is interesting to note that the death in each instance was parenthesised by a dramatic response to the notion of death. The students performed dramatic scenes of grief and funerals. The material elicited a performance of cultural expectation that appeared superficial. Their encounter with death, in this instance, was only superficially articulated. In this example, I recognise that some of the social constraints imposed within Chapter 1 distance young people from engaging with the material of their possibility towards death. They performed what they understood as a socially acceptable relationship to the death of a loved one.

The way that the deaths were staged however, was more revealing pedagogically. The group auditioned each other to see who could create the most interesting and daring death sequence. Using the equipment, they challenged each other to be surprising, witty and shocking. This resulted in some very real risks being taken in terms of physicality, but also in terms of social acceptability. They performed both audacity and cowardice, which suggests that they were aware of the dialectical relation between the binary conceptions of self as either, but how both can lead to the same possibility: death.

This provocation enabled me to see the students struggling with their identity in terms of failure and success, bravery and cowardice, and life and death. I could see

that these powerful themes released creativity, joy and passion within the students. It also balanced the superficial re-conscription of quotidian concerns within the face of the idea of death. In one way, the students were emancipated by the material, and in another way, they were stultified by it.

Provocation 3: The teenagers love and hurt each other.

This provocation offered opportunities for the young people to engage with the notion of love and pain, which is a constant dynamic within the action, moment and glory of the aerial and ground-based performance work. It is an opportunity for them to explore two of the prevailing problematic discourses within education in Britain today, those of sex and of death. It is important for my pedagogy to engage with a dialogic appreciation of the location of the teenage performers with regard to these two immense philosophical and ideological questions. The provocation to work physically with these themes offered an opportunity for engagement with the physical expressions of love and pain, and enabled the students to transgress the superficial and totalising engagement with these themes that they are subjected to by a risk-averse society. Tim Gill's suggestion that risk-aversion focuses on the vulnerability of children, rather than the strengths gained through exposure to discourse and attention to risk-taking opportunities, reminds us that denial of children's strength or understanding is formative within our aversion to risk in society.

This provocation seemed to enable the students to respond more critically than my direct provocation towards death did in the previous section. For example, they played at finding the worst insult they could find for each other. This game created the title of the work for them: 'Hello Fatty'. They articulated that this was an important name because it both invited and objectified the insulted person. In the insult 'fat', the insulted person is judged harshly in terms of *a priori* physical acceptability. They noticed that the insult is designed to make the insulted person hate their materiality, and, therefore, hate themselves. The students suggested that this title was appropriate for the whole experience of the workshops because they were allowed to question their bodies in relation to culture the whole way through.

Appendix C

Circus Terminology

Acrobalance : is the art of two or more people lifting each other acrobatically.

Basing: is where someone is hanging from you on the equipment. The 'base' is the strong solid ground from which another person 'flies'. You base another when they swing or hang from you.

Back balance: is where the artist drapes their body over the bar backwards. The bar is at the base of the spine, the legs are raise in a straight line and the back is arched with the arms outstretched.

Beat or beating: is when the trapeze artist swings a part of the body in order to gain momentum and speed. You can beat from handing, by holding your body tonically and raising your toes in an arc, above the bar and behind it. You can beat from hocks position by arching your back raising your arms and again, proscribing an arc with your body.

Catcher: is the name for the part of a trapeze duo who bases another aerialist, often when the aerialist is projected towards them from another trapeze.

Catchers: is a position where your legs are wrapped into the rope so that people can hang from you safely.

Catcher's cradle: is the rigid a rigid structure with an inbuilt steel bar from which the catcher can hang. The flyer is either projected to the catcher from a flying trapeze or throws themselves into the arms of the catcher from the cradle itself.

Chalk: or resin is used by the aerialist to take moisture away from the body that might cause the artist to slip.

Cloud swing: is a rope swing attached at both end to the rig (or ceiling), so that the rope transcribes an arc for the aerialist to move in. It is a swing made of rope, that artists can move, wrap and hang from.

Corde Lisse: is the cotton rope used to ascend and descent from the static trapeze. It can also be used as a piece of performance equipment in itself. The performer in this instance wraps themselves into the rope, and cleverly creates drops and dynamic movement by manipulating the rope around the body.

Diablo: is a piece of floor based circus equipment which consists of a projectile, similar to a large yo-yo, shaped with two externally open cups which the artist 'whips' with a string tied to two sticks to project it through the air.

Eagle: is a static trapeze move where the body is hung suspended within the trapeze ropes in the shape of a crucifix. (As demonstrated in Figure. 1. *The Eagle* on Page 134).

Flying Trapeze: is a steel bar (covered in fabric) that is hung from steel wires. It is suspended from a framework opposite another trapeze or catcher's cradle. The purpose of it is to move from one trapeze to the arms of the catcher in the other.

Gazelle: is a static trapeze move where the body is draped over the bar sideways, and legs (one bent, one straight) are used to brace against the ropes.

Hocks: is a static hang from the trapeze, where the performer is inverted and the bar rests behind the knees.

Knee climb: is a way of climbing the rope through constant inversion. The student hangs upside down on the rope in a straddle position, places their hocks on the rope and throws their body up high to reposition their hands above the knee and then repeats the movement. It demands a great deal of strength, stamina and proprioceptive awareness.

Lunge or lunging rein: is the set of rope harnesses that are looped around a lunge belt for the aerialist to wear. These ropes are drawn through a pulley system to the rigger or teacher below. This person can then control the speed with which a student or aerialist falls if they miss the equipment. A lunge severely diminishes the severity of any fall.

Needle position: is a trapeze movement that sees the aerialist holding the bar from below and directing their toes and legs vertically towards the ceiling, their head is towards the floor. This position requires a good amount of core strength.

Pike or pike position: is when the aerialist is tucked under the bar with their nose to their knees and legs straight.

Planche or planche position: involves the aerialist extending the legs vertically, so that the body forms a horizontal line. This can be performed from the back or from the front, depending upon whether the body faces the bar or away from it. The example used in this thesis is of a front planche, the aerialist has his back to the bar and face towards the ground (see Figure 4. *The Planche Attempt*: Page 232)

Silk or tissue: is a long vertical length of fabric made of reinforced lycra, doubled, in which the aerialist wraps and drops in the same way as a corde lisse is used.

Spotting: is a generic sports term used to define the act of supporting another. When attempting to lift or balance heavy weight (their own body in many instances from my practice) another person 'spots' the weight by placing their hand lightly on the weight being lifted. In that way, should the weight begin to drop, the spotter can add their support in lifting it to safety. In trapeze work for example, I place my hand on the small of the back when a student is in a pike position, it is there to ensure that

the student doesn't overbalance and therefore fall from the equipment. This form of spotting does not require strength, it is intended to support the strength of the aerialist, so that they don't panic.

Rig: when used as a noun, the rig or rigging is the infrastructure from which aerial equipment is hung. It can also be a verb, to rig is the act of putting the equipment needed into the structure to support it. A rigger therefore is the name of a person who put the equipment up safely, but it can also denote a person who is attached to an aerialist via a lunge or lunge reign, who is charged with keeping the aerialist safe.

Static Trapeze: A static trapeze is a horizontal steel bar with two vertical ropes at each end, padded at the joints (see fig.). It is suspended from two parallel rigging points.

Tonic engagement: relates to the specific contraction of muscles in relation to the move engaged with. It relates to knowing exactly which muscles to use, and how much to apply them. It is a combination of strength and fluidity, so that the mover is not under or over exerting themselves.

Toe-hang : is a balance on the trapeze where the bar is placed on the top of the foot, where the foot and leg meet, close to the ankle joint. The feet are flexed and the body is held. Heel- hang is very similar except that the bar is placed between the heel and the leg, with foot pointed and the knees bent.

Appendix D: CSSD Generic Risk Assessment Form

The Central School of Speech and Drama	**HEALTH & SAFETY** **Risk Assessment**		**Dept:**
Activity			

Description of operation

Who is affected by this operation?

Employees		Clients		Public		Young people		Pregnant Women	

Description of hazards / risks	**Likelihood**	**Severity**	**Risk Factor**	**Risk (before precautions have been taken)**

Recommended precautions

Description of hazards / risks	Likelihood	Severity	Risk Factor	Risk (after precautions have been taken)

Details of further action required

Assessed by		Position		Signed		Date	

Likelihood	1 Very unlikely	2 Unlikely	3 May occur	4 Likely	5 Very likely	6 Will occur
Severity	1 Very minor injury	2 Minor injury	3 Lost time to injury	4 Major injury	5 Single fatality	6 Multiple fatality

Risk Factor 0-6 Low Risk factor above 6	Risk Factor 7-17 Medium Risk factor above 12	Risk Factor 18-36 High Immediate

Multiply Probability x Severity to obtain Risk Factor

Appendix E

IRATA Certification Levels.

Level 1 rope access technician

A level 1 rope access technician shall be capable of performing a limited range of rope access tasks required by his or her employers, under the supervision of an IRATA level 3 rope access technician. He/she is:

- responsible for inspections of all his/her own personal rope access equipment;

- able to assist in rigging and non-standard operations, under the guidance of a higher grade;

- able to undertake a rescue involving descent by him/herself and have a knowledge of hauling systems.

NOTE   A level 1 rope access technician is not allowed to supervise others

Level 2 rope access technician

A level 2 rope access technician shall be capable of rigging working ropes, undertaking rescues and performing rope access tasks (under the supervision of an IRATA level 3 rope access technician). He/she should have some knowledge of legislation, safety requirements and quality assurance procedures relating to rope access.

Level 3 rope access technician

A level 3 rope access technician shall:

- be capable of site supervision for rope access work projects;

- be conversant with relevant work techniques and legislation;

- be able to demonstrate all the skills and knowledge required of levels 1 and 2;

- have a comprehensive knowledge of advanced rescue techniques;

- hold an appropriate current first aid certificate, to show that suitable emergency first aid training has been undertaken;

- have knowledge of the IRATA certification scheme;

- have knowledge of the IRATA General requirements;

- be familiar with the contents of the IRATA Guidelines.

http://www.irata.org/training_syllabus.php - 21/07/13

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