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ATTENDING TO PRESENCE -
AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE TRAINING OF SCENIC PRESENCE

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A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield
In partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree Master of Arts (By Research)

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Contents.

<u>Abstract</u>	3
<u>Acknowledgements</u>	3
<u>Copyright Statement</u>	4
<u>Introduction</u>	5
<u>Definitions</u>	7
<u>The Summer Training</u>	13
Sequence of Micro-movements	13
Solo Improvisation	18
Still Improvisation	22
Revelation through posture	24
At the end	25
Summary	26
<u>Performed Lecture</u>	28
‘Attending to Presence’	28
<u>Conclusion</u>	37
<u>Works Cited</u>	40
<u>Works Consulted</u>	41

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Abstract

"There exists a secret art of the performer. There exists recurring principles which determine the life of actors and dancers in various cultures and epochs. These are not recipes but points of departure which make it possible for an individual's qualities to become Scenic Presence and to be manifest as personalised and efficient expression in the context of the individual's own history" (Barba 1991: 268).

This quote professes to contain the secret to the performer's art, a fundamental hidden technique, and yet it invokes more questions than it answers; such as what is 'Scenic Presence' and how can the principles used in training help to develop it? This thesis interrogates those questions to find both an intellectual understanding of what Scenic Presence is and a practical grasp of how the principles used in training can help its development.

I have based my research on the theories of Eugenio Barba, Phillip Zarrilli and John Britton and compared their findings with my own explorations in the studio during and after the training I embarked on in the summer of 2011.

The principles I have worked with are the attitudinal principles drawn from the work of John Britton: "pursue your pleasure", "pay attention to the things you can do something about" and "have no opinion." These will be explored in relation to some of the technical, recurring features of the extra-daily body, identified but not invented by Eugenio Barba as "balance", "dynamic oppositions" and "posture".

While this report began as an investigation of Scenic Presence I have since discovered that Scenic Presence is a direct consequence of attention and therefore, towards the end, the focus of my report shifted to embrace this discovery.

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Thank you.

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How can the principles used in training help to develop Scenic Presence?

Introduction.

There exists a secret art of the performer. There exists recurring principles which determine the life of actors and dancers in various cultures and epochs. These are not recipes but points of departure which make it possible for an individual's qualities to become Scenic Presence and to be manifest as personalised and efficient expression in the context of the individual's own history (Barba 1991: 268).

So what is 'Presence' and more particularly what is 'Scenic Presence'? 'Scenic Presence' defines a precise form of Presence; that which is specifically to do with performance, but how can Scenic Presence be achieved? How can the precise elements of Scenic Presence be found, and how can they be developed into a tangible and malleable skill? This report charts my exploration, arising from my study of the works of Eugenio Barba, Phillip Zarrilli and John Britton, to discover and develop my capacity to achieve Scenic Presence.

The principles I have worked with in order to determine the answers to these questions are as Barba states "... nothing more than particularly good bits of advice" (Barba 1991: 8). These principles are the attitudinal principles drawn from the work of John Britton: "pursue your pleasure", "pay attention to the things you can do something about" and "have no opinion." These are combined with some of the technical, recurring features of the extra-daily body which are identified but not invented by Eugenio Barba as "balance", "dynamic oppositions" and "posture".

The training I undertook, during the summer of 2011 marked the beginning of my MA by research. It was an intensive period of skills development including 'core training' 'vocal training' and 'Orbit (rhythmical) training' which culminated in the performance 'Acts of Resistance'. The whole

experience was a psycho-physical process: it recognised the integration of physical practices with a mental process. It required complete commitment, deep personal reflection and informed my initial understanding of Scenic Presence and the process through which it can be achieved. The key moments which occurred during this initial training period and which are discussed in this report are: an exercise on micro-movements, my first solo performance, discoveries during a still improvisation, working with posture and the repercussions of these explorations. I then added to this report the insights I gained from my practical research and which formed the basis of my performed lecture - 'Attending to Presence'.

Due to the deep reflection required by this psychophysical process I wrote a blog. After every training session I described the events of the day and their effect on me. This enabled me to compare 'in-the-moment' reflection with hindsight and my reading of Barba, Zarrilli and Britton's theories.

My intention in this report is to compile the theoretical research I undertook and examine this in relation to the practical experiences I underwent in order to produce a well rounded and thorough exploration of Scenic Presence and how it can be achieved.

Definitions.

Firstly, it is important to precisely define the key principles used throughout this report. Having discussed finding my own definitions I will then describe other key terms including Britton's attitudinal principles and Barba's use of the extra daily body and its technical, recurring features.

Presence – In order to provide a thorough definition I have drawn not only from the Oxford English Dictionary, but also the Collins English Dictionary and the Chambers 21st Century Dictionary.

Concentrating on the elements relevant to my research they define Presence to be:

The state or fact of existing, occurring, or being present [...] a person or thing that exists or is present in a place but is not seen [...] the impressive manner or appearance of a person (The Oxford English Dictionary Online, no date).

The state or fact of being present [...] an imposing or dignified personality, an invisible spirit felt to be nearby (The Collins English Dictionary Online, no date).

The state or circumstance of being present, someone's company or nearness [...] physical bearing, especially if it is commanding or authoritative [...] a being felt to be close by, especially in a supernatural way [...] a situation or activity demonstrating influence or power in a place (The Chambers 21st Century Dictionary Online, no date).

It therefore seems to be that there are two strands of the word's conventional meaning. On the one hand Presence is a state of being with implications of impressiveness, power and authority, while on the other it shares associations with the invisible or supernatural. I then synthesised these descriptions to create a composite definition that straddles both these elements to come up with:
Presence - Generally considered to be a person's physical bearing or state of being which insinuates an imposing or dignified nature: an intangible concept.

Scenic Presence – A constructed and cultivated quality of the body that draws the eye of an observer during performance. For example, a dog can have Presence: if six dogs are moving in a space and

one pricks its ears and tenses the muscles in its body when it hears something it has Presence. But a dog cannot have Scenic Presence because it does not intend to express anything. It cannot construct its own energy as a performer can.

Performance – An activity a person undertakes with the intention of communicating to another.

'Pursue your pleasure' - This principle promotes engagement with the detail of each action in a way that gives the performer pleasure, even in the most difficult or confronting of moments. It also encourages that a performer takes responsibility for every second of their engagement with a task by accepting that they engage because they want to. Pleasure also offers a 'fall-back' position; if during an improvisation or a performance something is uncomfortable a performer may return to what it is they enjoyed. From this position the performer can choose to continue in something uncomfortable to see what could develop, in the knowledge that they can always return to a more pleasurable relationship to their task:

This does not imply that the trainee should avoid difficult or unpleasant tasks. Quite the reverse – it requires that they construct a positive, pleasure-based rationale for undertaking tasks they might otherwise seek to avoid ... that nugget of identifiable pleasure within a painful task can be the key to that performer being able to repeat their engagement with a thing they fear, or to engage with other weaknesses and vulnerabilities (Britton 2007c: 5).

Having 'no opinion' fosters a comfortable and forgiving working atmosphere that allows risk taking and the pushing of boundaries, in the knowledge that there is always a safe place to return to. Grotowski asserts "... an atmosphere must be created, a working system in which the actor feels that he can do absolutely anything, will be understood and accepted. It is often at the moment when the actor understands this that he reveals himself" (Grotowski 1991: 179).

'Have no opinion' - This principle is very important to Britton's training as "... in a moment of action, any 'opinion', be it of rightness and wrongness, beauty or ugliness, self-satisfaction or annoyance, obstructs a trainee from full engagement with the task – the precise reaction to impulse" (Britton 2010a: 52). This principle also helps to foster an element of ensemble and promotes working without blockages in an authentic communication between the participants. This is because it encourages the performers to take responsibility for their opinions and disregard them as unhelpful and detracting from thorough engagement with the task at hand.

This lack of opinion does not mean a lack of dedication or concern for the task by the performer. By having no opinion about a task the performer allows it to be what it is and to let the task stand alone without judgement. This gives a sense of freedom and helps to circumvent pre-conceived limitations. This principle allows the performer to go beyond what they, or others, expected their capabilities to be.

'Pay attention to things you can do something about' - This means a deep and specific attention to the task the performer is executing. Britton writes that:

If the trainee pays sufficient (and appropriate) attention to the details of the form – how to stand, how to shift from one position to another, the appropriate qualities of movement, how to quieten the mind – she or he will encounter her- or himself as the doer of the form (Britton 2007b: 4).

This encounter with the self, during training, allows the performer to appropriately attune their bodymind¹ to the task at hand.

While Britton is writing here specifically about how form training operates, and generally his training is non-form based he goes on to say that "... the necessary foundation of the activity is that the

¹ See definition on pg 11

trainee pay attention. It is through attention that self-encounter is made possible, the form serving as a vehicle for that self-encounter” (Britton 2007b: 4). The argument he is making is that the mechanisms of learning found in form based training can also be seen in improvisational training.

‘The extra-daily body’ - A term applied to the body during performance; when it is being used in a precise and concentrated manner whilst also paying close attention to the details of each movement. This means that the body is being utilised in a different way to that of everyday life.

Barba writes that:

“In an organized performance the performer’s physical and vocal presence is modelled according to principles which are different from those of daily life. This extra-daily use of the body-mind is called ‘technique’. The performer’s various techniques can be conscious and codified or unconscious but implicit in the use and repetition of a theatre practice” (Barba 2003: 9).

The ‘Cultivated’ body -

‘Pre-expressive techniques’ - These techniques occur before the body expresses an action - hence pre-expressive. They are the organisation of the extra-daily body in preparation for the next movement and include a tightening of the muscles, a shift in weight or a tension towards or away from an impulse. These pre-expressive techniques which Barba identifies, he believes, are universal to all performers:

Transcultural analysis shows that it is possible to single out recurring principles^[2] from among these techniques. These principles, when applied to certain physiological factors— weight, balance, the use of the spinal column and the eyes —produce physical, pre-expressive tensions. These new tensions generate an extra-daily energy quality which

² Barba’s use of the word ‘principle’ here refers to observable and trans-cultural ways of using the body as opposed to the ‘attitudinal principles’ I have applied from Britton’s work.

renders the body theatrically 'decided', 'alive', 'believable', thereby enabling the performer's 'presence' or scenic *bios* to attract the spectator's attention *before* any message is transmitted (Barba 2003: 9).

By paying attention to these 'pre-expressive techniques' the body can become dilated and captivate its' spectators attention.

Barba uses examples from a range of cultures, such as: Aztec dancers, European jesters in the middle ages, Balinese dancers, Japanese Kabuki actors, Indian Odissi dancers and finally classical ballet dancers, to show that many different cultures consciously use these factors as a basis for their performance technique. (Barba 1991: 8)

'Dilation' - This occurs when the body is actively engaged in extra-daily activities. It becomes 'alive' and the audience's attention is drawn to that performer. "Barba defines this as the basic technique which creates 'presence' on stage; a dilated and effective body which can hold and guide a spectator's attention" (Fowler in Barba 2003: ii). This dilation can be gained from the study and practice of pre-expressive techniques which Barba identifies.

'Dynamic oppositions' - The extension of the performer's body in opposing directions, in order to keep balance or to fully develop a movement. Dynamic oppositions help a person to stand, walk, run and fall, but they are also part of the extra-daily techniques that aids dilation if paid attention to and manipulated appropriately.

'Posture' - I use this term to refer to the way the body is held, rather than a technical pose. Since the training began I have begun to work with my posture and manipulating my back, spine and shoulders. This has had significant repercussions on my work, specifically towards the end of the training and rehearsal process.

'Micro-movements' - This refers to the breakdown of movements into smaller actions for example, paying attention to the beginning, development and decay of a movement. Within each of these actions is the possibility for further breaking down or development.

'Bodymind' - This is a term that describes the human organism in a way that recognises its integrated nature: using both the mind and the body together as opposed to two separate entities which sometimes excludes the actions of the brain. "The bodymind becomes singular when one engages fully ones awareness in what one is doing as it is done. One begins to discover a state of calm and repose, as well as a heightened sense of awareness of the body in action" (Zarrilli 2009: 31).

The Summer Training.

This report will now discuss the important events that occurred during the summer training. These moments or 'domains of discovery' were a sequence of micro-movements, a solo improvisation, a still improvisation and a revelation through posture. These deeply affected and informed my research into Scenic Presence.

Sequence of Micro-movements.

The first 'domain of discovery' relates directly to my discovery of Scenic Presence and my understanding of Barba's pre-expressive techniques. This was informed by Britton's principles and a task he set concerning micro-movements **near the beginning of our summer training**: Jo³ and I were to walk towards each other as if to greet the other, but then decide we had nothing to say and exit. This then developed into a tight sequence of physical actions. The blog entry for this day states:

Jo seemed to work really hard on the intricate whilst I needed to keep my own score simple so that a) I could remember it and b) when Britton asked us to expand on it later I would be able to. However when we began to walk across the room he asked us to engage with our whole bodies so the welcome should be felt in every part of us but when we started this he asked us to really concentrate and identify which part of our bodies was precisely where in each movement, to become aware of it all. It took us 15 minutes to work out the beginning movement and we soon came to identify that if we were to do the whole walk it would take us hours (Brown 2011).

It is interesting to note the different approaches we both had to this exercise. Jo tried to incorporate everything whereas I wanted to really focus on a few simple movements so as not to be overwhelmed. Subsequently I have progressed to be able to pay simultaneous attention to more complex movements in my bodymind but at the time the process was new and difficult.

³ Jo Leishman is a Stage Manager from Australia who was a member of our ensemble and with whom I was partnered for this exercise.

During the task Jo constantly asked me where the tension was in my body, and I responded by saying "... it feels like I have a set of keys hanging from this finger" in order to remind me where my body was in space. It also helped me to become aware of more of my body at once. Even though the primary movement might be in my leg or foot I was becoming able to remember the rest of my body as a whole. By envisaging the slight weight of keys on a body part I seemed to be able to feel how the muscles moved in my body more precisely and to keep this in my mind as the rest of my body responded to the next impulse.

This was one of the moments when the possibility of paying attention to the precision of concentrated action seemed unlimited, and as though there would always be something more to pay attention to. It gave me pleasure to think that I was improving even though in reality I was only scratching the surface of what is possible. It also gave me pleasure to realise that I had not allowed opinions to cloud my judgement. I had not been frustrated by forgetting one part of my body, I only gently reminded myself to pay more attention.

From this exercise I gained a new insight into the feeling of the way my body moved, the expanse of what was available to pay attention to and the pleasure of not allowing opinions to cloud my judgement and interfere with the set task. This was a key point during the training because it helped me not to overlook the details of a task. I later discussed in my blog that during this experience:

I felt that I got the hang of it just as we were coming to the end. It really helped to have someone keep asking you where the tension was; where the movement started and ended and what was good/bad/different from the last time etc and I enjoyed doing the same thing for Jo it seemed to really help both of us (Brown 2011).

Barba offers an insight into a similar task whereby:

... engaging the whole body to light a cigarette, for example, as if the match were as heavy as a large stone [...] This process, which composes a small action as if it was much larger, conceals the energy and makes the performer's entire body come alive, even when immobile (Barba 2003: 29).

This concealing of energy and the revealing of the performer's body seemed to be very important because the reference kept resurfacing. For example "... to this end, they imagine that their body is the centre of a network of physical tensions and resistances [...] On the visible level it seems that they are expressing themselves, working on their body and voice. In fact, they are working on something invisible: energy" (Barba 1991: 81). It occurred to me, when comparing these quotes, that Scenic Presence and energy seemed to be intricately linked. Could it be that Scenic Presence is only a manipulation of this energy?

This idea fuelled the next stage of my research as it is implied by Barba when he observes that "... a body-in-life dilates the performer's presence [...] who attracts the attention of the spectator with an elementary energy which 'seduces' without mediation" (Barba 1991: 54). However, 'energy' is a difficult term to define and therefore it is difficult to discover precisely how energy and Scenic Presence are linked. When Barba uses the term 'elementary energy' it suggests to me the micro-movements I discussed earlier. This is because of the necessary breaking down into individual parts or 'elements': the beginning, development and decay of each movement. Barba himself writes that paying attention to these micro-movements is supremely beneficial as they "... are a kind of kernel which, hidden in the depths of the body's daily techniques, can be modelled and amplified in order to increase the power of the performer's Presence, thus becoming the basis of extra-daily techniques" (Barba 1991: 11). Therefore if we are to achieve this, if we are to 'seduce the audience without mediation' we must pay attention to these micro-movements.

It occurs to me that 'energy', in this case, is simply a form of paying deep and specific attention to the task that we are performing. The more attention that is paid to the depth and precision of these micro-movements the further the performer can proceed in the development of the extra-daily body. This attention to the task dilates the body and the performer is able to become more Scenically Present. So at the heart of my research is the need to develop detail within physical actions as a foundation from which Scenic presence can emerge.

Barba's precise choice of words 'seduce without mediation' is intriguing as it suggests a visceral response in the audience which resists rationalisation. It causes an effect which perhaps confuses and distracts the audience so that it is difficult to decipher what it is particularly that makes one performer more 'watchable' or present than another. Perhaps this is why presence is such an intangible concept.

I continued to work on pre-expressive techniques and took these ideas into the studio to explore them practically. In order to access the extra daily body and to dilate Scenic Presence, I have explored taking myself out of balance and controlling my body's movements; playing with different ways the body can react to the dynamic oppositions that are at work. For example, I have found that when balancing and feeling like I cannot hold the position for much longer, if I pay attention to stretching in opposing directions and holding these directions in my body, not only can I balance better but it changes the dynamic of my current movement and, in turn, the one that follows it. In this way the next movement cannot be pre-determined, as the precarious balance changes any intentionality may have inadvertently been attached to the movement. It seems to me that this deep and specific attention allows dilation and through this Scenic Presence to emerge.

The depth of this attention seems to me to be an everlasting journey. This is supported by Barba when he explains that as a performer's competency in working with the detail of micro-movements develops:

S/he becomes able to penetrate the multiplicity of the details and the more the performer reveals to the spectator a microcosm of actions and reactions, a complex dramatic interweaving which brings the Presence of her/his Scenic persona alive ... Upon it depends the precision and thus the quality of the Presence (Barba 2003: 126).

As a side note Barba warns that:

Thinking of Scenic Presence in terms of energy can suggest to performers that the more they are able to force the theatre space and the senses of the observer, the more effective they can be. Thus, instead of dancing with the spectator's attention, the performers bombard it and alienate it. They *have decided* to expand their own power, to work with all their energies, to mobilize them. It is precisely for this reason that they *are not decided* (Barba 2003: 51).

During my MA I have experienced both of these sensations; a heightened sense of awareness combined with a feeling of wellbeing and wanting to do well. So much so that I am unable to fully engage with my task because I am distracted by my fear of failure. This is when Britton's principle of 'have no opinion' comes into effect and helps the performer persevere in their work by disregarding this fear of failure as unhelpful and preventing a full engagement with the task at hand.

All things considered, these experiences support the idea that Scenic Presence and energy are intricately linked. If this is the case and we also accept that the quality of energy Barba talks about is generated by paying attention then Scenic Presence emerges from this deep and specific attention. If a performer, instead of trying too hard, can pay attention to the specific details of the task they are performing then they can dilate their body and become more Scenically Present.

Solo Improvisation.

The second 'domain of discovery' during the summer training was also directly related to paying attention. The aspect that I was concentrating on specifically was the hierarchy of elements within a given task due to the performer's expansion of attention.

The ensemble was asked to prepare a solo piece that involved a factor of challenge and improvisation. Just before performing, Britton told us that we could perform anywhere in the building. "As soon as I found my place [...] up on the balcony of studio 2, I felt great and I started to enjoy my performance" (Brown 2011). I remember this moment as a very happy one because I was 'pursuing my pleasure' and no longer felt afraid. Part of the reason for this was because my opinion no longer mattered. I was going to perform no matter whether I thought I was good or bad it was simply going to be what it was.

In hindsight, during my solo improvisation the hierarchy of tasks within the performance was subconsciously clear to me 1) I was concentrating on my every movement; 2) paying attention to my whole body; 3) the attention of my audience and 4) the thrilling setting of my surroundings. I was also playing with the pre-expressive techniques; balance, posture and dynamic oppositions in my body. These elements took up all of my attention and there was no room for extraneous thinking, but at the time I was not aware of these elements and this level of concentration on what I was doing. My aim was only to do my best, enjoy myself and perform what I had intended.

Barba writes that "When something inside (the subconscious) takes possession of us, we are not aware of what is happening [...] These are the best moments of our work" (Barba 2003: 139). Britton agreed as he told me that this was one of the best pieces I performed over the summer. It is now my belief that this was because my body had become dilated and I had become Scenically Present.

Zarrilli articulates this in a different way when he describes photographic evidence of a sequence of attacks and defences in the Indian martial art Kalaripayattu. The practitioner is required to:

... to simultaneously 1) maintain single-point focus through the opponent's eyes; 2) sustain open awareness of the entire environment; 3) engage and circulate breath/inner-energy throughout the bodymind [...] and 4) ensure that the inner-energy is 'grounded' through the soles of the feet as they maintain contact with the earth (Zarrilli 2009: 3).

Although this is a different hierarchy of tasks they are similar to the ones I used in that they take up all of the performer's attention. Of course the performer's hierarchy differs from performance to performance just as pleasure changes depending on what is required on a particular day. Sometimes a performer can take these nuances of looking, being open, breathing and standing for granted as 'daily' activities but these are all elements that if paid attention to can become 'extra daily'. Once this is cultivated the performer can begin to embody these actions and become Scenically Present.

Furthermore Britton writes that:

In pursuing pleasure, a trainee is constructing an appropriate focus, with innate feedback, to facilitate her initial engagement with an unfamiliar task. In doing so she can circumvent her expectations of what might happen, instead focusing attention on what actually does happen. Was she bored, anxious or in a state of flow? Thus begins the process of a trainee measuring herself against the requirements of each specific exercise (Barba 2010b: 40).

However, when Britton states 'an appropriate focus,' I believe that this is the same as paying appropriate attention. To paraphrase Csikzentmihalyi pleasure is a guide to identifying the central details of a task for the individual performing it. If the individual locates herself in relation to the task that yields genuine, deep and unforced pleasure, she will be in a place where the demands of the task are meeting her perception of her abilities and it is this that creates the source of flow.

(Csikszentmihalyi cited in Britton 2007b: 9) It is attention to pleasure then that allows the participant to be 'in the moment' and begin to perceive the realities of her abilities and to stop 'getting in her own way'. Britton asserts that:

In paying attention to the pragmatics of achieving pleasure, she is working, perhaps unknowingly at this point, with the process of balancing challenge and her perception of her capacity. She can start the process of moving from her preconceptions about her capacity – 'the exercises . . . seem quite impossible' (Barba 1986: 52) – to a more objective understanding of the extent and limitations of her skills. If the trainee is 'helped patiently' by someone with a better knowledge of the actual (rather than imagined) challenges of an exercise, Barba suggests, she can start breaking the 'idea' of training down into the pragmatics of confronting specific exercises. She begins to discover she can bring appropriate skills to bear on defined challenges (Britton 2010b: 41).

Britton is describing here what, I believe, happened during my experiences.

What Grotowski proposes is related to this idea. When he writes that if a performer allows themselves to be:

... distracted by the difficulties he is bound to encounter and the process of self-penetration will necessarily fail. If the actor is conscious of his body, he cannot penetrate and reveal himself. The body must be freed from all resistance. It must virtually cease to exist [...] One must give oneself totally, in one's deepest intimacy, with confidence, as when one gives oneself in love (Grotowski 1991: 36).

So, if a performer is distracted by difficulties and unable to pursue their pleasure or pay enough appropriate attention this means that the dilation of the body, and therefore Scenic Presence becomes less likely.

When Grotowski writes that 'the body must cease to exist' I do not believe that he meant for the performer to forget their body rather, by concentrating on the hierarchy of what s/he must pay attention to and how each movement is precisely carried out, the body is not in the forefront of the

performer's mind and the movements become embodied. The performer aims to "... develop the bodymind's perceptual awareness to a point in which one literally 'thinks with the body and acts with the mind.' This is the optimal state of 'no mind' where all intentionality disappears" (Zarrilli 2009: 76).

Britton also discusses this when he describes how the flow state can be achieved by quoting Csikszentmihalyi:

He [Csikszentmihalyi] catalogued a range of characteristics that reoccur in people's descriptions of flow states (Csikszentmihalyi 1996, pp. 111–113). Certain conditions are prerequisites for the state to occur and need to be intrinsic to the structuring of an activity:

- . There are clear goals at every moment of the activity.
- . There is immediate feedback to one's actions.
- . There is a balance between challenges and skills.
- . There is no worry of failure.

There are certain common shifts in perception that people describe when they recall being in a flow state:

- . Action and awareness are merged.
- . Distractions are excluded from consciousness.
- . Self-consciousness disappears.
- . The sense of time becomes distorted (Britton 2010b: 39).

Therefore the 'flow state' is the result of a moment-by-moment attention to the task at hand. This attention is of such a magnitude that it enables the performer to 'forget' her body through, as Csikszentmihalyi describes, a temporary loss of awareness of self and time and as Zarrilli articulates she "thinks with the body and acts with the mind" (Zarrilli 2009: 76).

Once a hierarchy within the tasks has been established and a score has been designed, rehearsed, monitored and the nuances polished, the performer, as Grotowski asserts, can eventually 'forget' the score and the micro-movements become one inexorable action that flows inevitably from one to

the next. The movements become 'embodied' and the performer can act 'without thinking'. However, this is not the same as a habitual movement, where the performer is unaware of what they are doing and becomes careless, because the performer can intervene at any moment and return to the specific details of the task at hand.

Still Improvisation.

The third 'domain of discovery' occurred during the summer training when I was performing a solo improvisation which was then followed by a group improvisation. I worked with the ideas and principles that I had begun to read about in Barba's work. This was at the point where I was beginning to marry what I was researching and reading about to what I was experiencing during training. I wrote in my blog that:

I decided to work on some things that I have been thinking and reading about. First I worked on pre-expressive universality (being off-balance playing with posture and stretching my body to its limits before allowing it to return momentarily to some comfort). I worked on my toes and played with going on and off the flats of my feet and how it affected me. I liked the feel of the switching between toes and flat feet on the floor.

During the second improvisation which was part of a larger group I did not move at all but opened myself up to the room. At first I had no idea what I would do but there was a stillness before anyone started that seemed to last a long time I just chose to prolong this further. It was amazing being able to see everything, the performers, the audience and trying to feel everything in my body. I also (somehow) tried to draw the audience's gaze to me, I am not sure if this worked or not but it was certainly a fascinating experience. Rico⁴ said to me that I was just very present and aware of everything and seemingly ready to react at a single moment. I was very relaxed in my body. He thought I was very grand, huge and stretching myself to that place after impulse just before reaction. I was pleased with this initial feedback and feel encouraged that this is a good place to start (Brown 2011).

This is directly related to my development of Scenic Presence because this was the first improvisation in which I knowingly paid attention to Barba's principles in conjunction with Britton's whilst also paying attention to my body's impulses and reactions.

⁴ Rico Wu is an actor, director and trainer from Hong Kong who was a member of our ensemble.

In this improvisation I paid attention to the atmosphere in the room and the ensemble and then prolonged the silence and stillness that was, at first, uncomfortable. In other words I remained still while the ensemble, which started in stillness, began to move around me. I was able to do this because of the sense of acceptance within the ensemble engendered by the principle of 'have no opinion'. I trusted that they would accept me as I was, and this allowed me to have no opinion myself. Even though I did not allow my body to move I still maintained a fixed attention on the impulses in my body. I chose not to respond to those impulses and this seemed to make them more pronounced. By not allowing them to manifest I prioritised a different hierarchy: being open to the room first and foremost, paying attention to my ensemble second, then the impulses in my body, which I negated before allowing them to emerge, and finally my audience.

The choices I made in this improvisation, through my growing understanding of what contributes to Scenic Presence, enabled the 'watchability' that Rico noted. I was paying a detailed and specific attention to the score that developed during the improvisation and this enabled my body to become dilated and Scenically Present.

Barba recounts a similar experience to the one I encountered when he writes of boarding a tram. "I certainly did not 'express' anything, yet some people withdrew to make room for me, while others withdrew to keep me at a distance. People simply reacted to my presence, which communicated neither aggression nor sympathy, neither desire for fraternization nor challenge" (Barba 2003: 4). This moment is significant because without expressing anything Barba communicated something that caused a reaction from those around him. If a performer is able to do so without expressing anything then the possibilities of what s/he is capable of expressing when they are performing becomes infinitely broader. Schechner and Wolford seem to agree when they discuss the matter of

Cieslak's⁵ Presence. "It is not that Cieslak vanishes into don Fernando, but that Cieslak creates such an intense focus on his physical being as to channel attention to an ideal compounded of emotions & intents" (Schechner and Wolford 2001: 128).

Revelation through posture.

The last 'domain of discovery' was encountered during a task set by Britton as part of the summer training. He asked me to:

... pay attention to rising up, not to do anything but to feel the energy pulling me up ... I should also pay attention to the air between my bones, between my vertebrae, between my shoulder blades between every joint because without that space, without that air we would not be able to move. I have been working on this all day and while it is difficult to remember it is not so hard to do but after lunch my shoulder was really painful [...] it's not a bad pain it's just getting used to being in the right place again. He [Britton] said that my muscles are actually a lot more relaxed than previously. I am going to continue to do this [...] and hopefully it will become second nature (I will leave this training with a good posture!)

As a consequence of this the ball game was extremely weird, I couldn't seem to catch anything, then I would notice a ball right next to my face and all the balls I could see a mile off went to somebody else. Apparently this is a great change to my perception, I must allow myself to get worse before I can get better and I am looking forward to sometimes not knowing what is going on again (Brown 2011).

Barba writes that posture, balance and the way the spine is placed in the body as key to pre-expressivity (Barba 1991: 34). This was vital to my exploration and in hindsight visualising sending my energy up caused me to physically lengthen through my spine and consequently improved my posture in that I slouched less and was less hunched over. This had a big impact on the adjustments that soon followed, not only in my body but also in my engagement with set tasks. One such example of this is when I wrote in my blog:

⁵ Ryszard Cieslak was a leading actor in Grotowski's "Polish Laboratory Theatre"

It was the ball game as I have never seen, felt or experienced it. At first I started with just react when you have to and only to those things you can do something about but gradually as more and more balls entered the circle time slowed down, I could see everything! Everything! I could see the whole world, all the balls all the time, I had no muddy thoughts that have plagued me these past few days [...] I can't describe it, it was like a whole new way of seeing. Today was the first time we have played with more balls than people! Britton said that this was not in fact the slowing down of time as I perceived it but a clearing away of unnecessary thinking which allows space within the flow of attention ... I want to go on and on and on having these feelings but tomorrow - right back down to the bottom of the mountain (Brown 2011).

The effortlessness that I had felt before returned with new intensity because my perceptions had changed and because my body was now in a better position to facilitate the tasks asked of me. 'Paying attention to the things I could do something about', in this case **paying attention to lengthening through my spine**, allowed for a new focus and prevented the over thinking of other tasks. It has since become clear to me that I was not doing more by correcting my posture but in fact less. This is an example of clearing away of unnecessary thinking and focusing on the necessary. I stopped giving attention away to pushing myself downwards and hunching my shoulders which enabled a more proactive attention to other tasks asked of me. Zarrilli describes a similar experience when he says:

Engaging the whole body means working with a fully awakened energy coursing through one's bodymind. One's awareness is so fully open that one is totally focused within a specific action. Space-time unfolds through ones engagement in the actions that constitute ones relationship to the immediate environment in the moment of their performance (Zarrilli 2009: 4).

This heightened sense of awareness and a new feeling of effortlessness that I felt bordered on overwhelming.

At the end

Later, towards the end of the **summer training** process, the ensemble returned to focusing on individual movements for 'Acts of Resistance' - the performance we were to stage **as a culmination to what we had learned during our summer training**. Just before we were due to perform I noted in my blog that:

We need to go back to that place of precise organisation of our bodies. It seems so long ago that I first did that exercise of knowing where the move originated from and discovering the beginning, middle and end of a movement with Jo but that is where we are to return to. I want to remember that we are moving art and to treat these movements in the same way that I might treat a dance, with a certain 'dynamism' ('immanent force or energy') (Brown 2011).

I would now argue that what I meant was that the performer should approach the pre-arranged score with a precise attention. This is done by paying attention to the hierarchy of tasks such as the precision of a movement, the way the body is held, the inter-relationships a performer has with the ensemble and each member within it and the reaction and attention of the audience moment by moment. Moreover, the performer must trust that each movement leads inevitably to the next creating a flow in the performance, rather than attempting to take control by 'remembering' the score. Put simply, the performer must pay attention.

Summary

To summarise, during the summer training I experienced four important 'domains of discovery'. The first was a sequence of micro-movements that drew my awareness to the importance of attention to detail in a given action or task. It helped me to understand more fully Barba's concept of dilating the extra-daily body through pre-expressive techniques. It also began my enquiry into whether Scenic Presence is simply a manipulation of energy through paying deep and specific attention to the task at hand. The second domain, my solo improvisation, helped me to understand the need for a specific

hierarchy of attention in each set task. The hierarchy must include or lend itself to the principles that the performer is working with. The third, my still improvisation, was the beginning of my practical research whereby I was consciously exploring the technical, recurring features of Barba's pre-expressive techniques and incorporating these with Britton's attitudinal principles. And finally my revelation through posture, from which I learnt that the way the spine is placed in the body is key to pre-expressivity and by doing less and not wasting attention on pushing my body down, I was clearing away unnecessary thinking and allowing more attention to be paid to what was relevant and necessary in the task.

These 'domains of discovery' gave me a further appreciation of the attitudinal principles of Britton and the technical, recurring features of the extra-daily body supplied by Barba. Furthermore, I had begun to understand how to research these practically.

Performed Lecture

This report will now discuss the events that occurred during the rehearsal process of my performed lecture. My performed lecture can be seen as a result of my research question. I wanted to ensure that I researched practically as well as theoretically as it was important to me to continue to understand physically those elements that I was reading about. My performed lecture can be seen in the form of the DVD provided. These moments deepened my growing understanding of Scenic Presence and how it can be developed and maintained through paying a deep and specific attention to the details of the performer's task.

'Attending to Presence.'

At the beginning of the rehearsal process I struggled with the absence of my ensemble. Consequently I paid attention to working physically with Barba's technical, recurring features of pre-expressivity in order to have something else to concentrate on. I was moving away from a predominantly theoretical understanding of these theories and was beginning to combine them with Britton's principles that were already well established in my practical work. I set myself specific scores or tasks to work with during each session, whilst paying attention to my pleasure on that day.

I found as my personal practice progressed that I began to develop the ability to know things that I hadn't been able to previously for example, when an improvisation had ended. But I was also frustrated by the feeling of doubt that pervaded my rehearsals due to the lack of immediate feedback, originally provided by the ensemble. From this I had to learn to trust my instincts and as Britton states in his own performed lecture 'Starting from Now':

I really hope that you like what I like. I really hope that you will find the same things funny and sad and beautiful. But I cannot really tell what you will like and if I spend too much time worrying and trying to guess what you like, then I'll no longer be here and now with you [...] If not, then I am not your artist and you are not my audience. And I hope we'll go our separate ways with mutual respect (Britton 2011).

This comforted me and helped me to concentrate on the scores I set myself during my rehearsals and eventually in my performed lecture.

The tasks I set were initially based on Barba's pre-expressive techniques: shifting weight, working with balance, the use of the spine, dynamic oppositions in my body, and gradually grew to include Britton's principles and new elements that I discovered were beneficial to pay attention to. This included, sending attention to specific places in the body or the rehearsal space, paying attention to how a movement starts, develops and ends and most of all, what gave me pleasure. As a result of this careful placing of attention in specific places or on specific tasks I really felt a development in my improvisations. As Zarrilli observes:

The bodymind becomes singular when one engages fully one's awareness in what one is doing as it is done. One begins to discover a state of calm and repose as well as a heightened sense of awareness of the body in action [...] what is needed is that within them every moment be accompanied by an internal state of awareness particular to the movement being done (Zarrilli 2009: 31).

I experienced this state of calm and well being when fully engaged with the task at hand and not distracted by what went before or after. Everything was taken up with simply paying attention. Furthermore this is what I tried to achieve during my performed lecture.

Gradually I grew able to pay attention to my whole body rather than just one part. I also tried to pay attention to the parts of my body that are easily forgotten, for example: ears, eyelashes, eyebrows, the tops of my feet. In addition to this I also tried to maintain awareness of the principles, the

technical, recurring features of the extra-daily body, the elements of the room and imagining what it would be like to have an audience. Gradually I was expanding my awareness and attention further and further outwards while still maintaining the detail of my actions. I felt that this was key to the development of Scenic Presence. As Lendra writes:

The brain is occupied with monitoring the minute details of the physical action, thus freeing the inner mind, the subtler consciousness, to 'come out' and merge with the environment. The inner consciousness can only do this when the brain is engaged in some directed thinking and so does not interfere. But the purpose of the physical precision of movements is not just to keep the brain busy. When the movements are performed as designed, they help the body to generate an innate physical power. If the brain fails to watch the body, fails to observe the thoughts and reacts emotionally to what is seen by the eyes and heard by the ears, the inner energy will not manifest itself [...] I become highly aware of my body; it absorbs what I see and hear. The surroundings become one with my body, and I feel as if my body is hollow and being lifted. The more I see and hear the more I sense my body. Especially in the Motions I feel the vibration of my energy throughout my body and I feel the pulse of my heart in my feet (Lendra 1991 cited in Zarrilli 2006: 161).

I interpret this as the brain being busy carrying out the details of a physical action and so the part of the brain that isn't dealing with minute physical detail can expand and explore the space I am performing in. My body is able to react without thinking and reacts instinctively to what it experiences in the space around it because my brain is too busy carrying out what the body is doing in a precise and concentrated manor.

This is what I have experienced during my practical work. For example by following Britton's directions of 'pay attention to rising up' this allowed me to move more in accordance with how my body is designed and I distorted myself less.

The more I worked with the principles and the things I had learnt during the summer training, the more I found that everything revolved around paying deep and specific attention to the task at hand. From my first revelations during the micro-movement task through to the very last moment of my performed lecture and beyond, attention has been key. This importance is reiterated when Zarrilli

asserts "... learning to attend with the bodymind creates an additional mode and quality of self-presencing within the relationship between oneself and what is being attended to" (Zarrilli 2009: 97-8) Once I started consciously working with attention during my practical research sessions the theories I had been reading about began to manifest in my body and I could begin to understand their implications. They began to manifest because not only did I understand what was meant by them theoretically, but I also paid deep and specific attention to them practically, I applied the principles and began to become Scenically Present.

One incident where I was specifically encouraged by my theoretical research occurred when I read Zarrilli's account of performing Reader in Beckett's *Ohio Impromptu*. I was amazed when he wrote of "letting my awareness open" "my attention shifts" and "my sensory awareness and attention are not singular, but multiple" (Zarrilli 2009: 43) because I had felt these sensations myself. Sometimes I too noted, as Zarrilli does, that "the first line of the text unexpectedly comes out of my mouth" (Zarrilli 2009: 44). I had felt as if I was following a score that seemed to be pre-ordained or laid out for me over which I had no influence, everything felt easy, calm and as if all I had to do was follow. I also felt a sense of anticipation, but I did not realise this until I entered a state that was perhaps 'flow'. I just let my body follow what was already there.

I was encouraged that my theoretical and practical research was concurrent and I continued to develop the depth of my attention. As I progressed I began to feel when I was Scenically Present and when I was 'pretending'. Sometimes I found that it was worth 'pretending' so that I could find Scenic Presence.

During studio sessions from this point on I was given a lot to think about by my tutor. In a particular rehearsal we focused on a specific part of my lecture which involved exemplifying how the extra daily body can be engaged and we discussed how this can be achieved through attention to micro-

movements. This then led on to a dialogue about the fact that dynamic oppositions already exist in the body before we express anything. By this I mean the pull of gravity acting against the body at all times or the minute shifting of our weight backwards and forwards in order to stay upright when we stand. But sometimes these dynamic oppositions do not need to manifest physically in order to dilate the body. For example, while not physically moving a performer can tense her muscles so that everything in her body recoils away from a certain point or draws towards it. This shift in pre-expressive tensions dilates the body and makes it come scenically alive to a spectator. This is what I was attempting to do, unintentionally, when I negated the impulses I received during my still improvisation. I was trying to draw the audience's gaze by focusing my attention on the parts of my body which were exposed to the audience, negating impulses that I received from the rest of the ensemble and unconsciously playing with Barba's pre-expressive techniques. Zarrilli expresses a similar experience of his own when he writes:

“I was able to enter a state of heightened awareness of and sensitivity to my bodymind and breath in action within, and simultaneously keep my awareness and energy open to the intermediate environment. I was beginning to discover how not to stand still, while standing still” (Zarrilli 2009: 24).

Part of this 'not standing still while standing still' is defined by when “The actor here learns how to do nothing. One inhabits the space between with 'no mind' – a concentrated, full-attentive bodymind” (Zarrilli 2009: 90). I realised that this was another element that I needed to fully develop. Zarrilli states that “... the full embodiment of each state is realised as the actor specifically directs his external gaze while delivering hand and facial gestures, and simultaneously engages his inner eye (attention, or perceiving consciousness in-the-moment) as well as breath/energy (prana-vayu) in what he is doing” (Zarrilli 2009: 78). My aim was to become fully embodied in order to become Scenically Present and therefore, to paraphrase Zarrilli, a performer must direct the external gaze, deliver the task, pay attention and breathe. Only then does “... 'the body becomes all eyes' – the

actor's perceptual/sensory awareness is so attuned that one is able to respond, animal-like, to the (theatrical) environment" (Zarrilli 2009: 60).

In my next studio session I planned to explore dynamic oppositions and the pre-expressive techniques that are not always seen by an audience, as well as not losing what I had gained by paying attention to the multiple hierarchies I had given myself. It seems to me that Zarrilli refers to this when he observes "... the primary point of focus/awareness in the gaze directed ahead through the space [...] ones wider awareness is never closed down [...] focused upon and performing a specific action - while simultaneously staying open with secondary awareness to the theatrical environment, including the audience" (Zarrilli 2009: 91). This is precisely what I was trying to achieve: a broad external awareness without losing contact with the specific details of the tasks I had set myself.

Just before I was about to perform I invited some of the Postgraduate students I had worked closely with along to a rehearsal, in order to get some feedback. The feedback I received confirmed that my main message was clear but I was made aware of certain habitual movements that I had not been able to recognise myself. Being in the studio alone for so long without feedback meant that I had started to move in ways that were similar throughout my improvisations. For example, I had a tendency to always be sideways on to my audience and to start an improvisation from my right hand. This is something I needed to bear in mind during my final rehearsals by changing the initial impulses without forcing them. This meant being more aware of my impulses and negating the ones that had become habitual in order to challenge myself and not premeditate any movements. I used this discovery to develop my lecture and make a new point about the habit of starting in my right hand; I then deliberately started my improvisation from somewhere new.

I tried to incorporate these observations into my improvisations during the lecture and thought of them as new elements within my hierarchy of tasks to pay attention to. The last run through before my performances Britton attended and gave me some last minute changes such as to further explain a quote or a demonstration and to be confident and proud of what I had already achieved. His own feedback was that I needed to own the space more, really open myself up to the audience and alter the rhythms of my movement in order to avoid the habitual and commit to either movement or stillness in my score. He encouraged me to relax into the feedback as just another aspect of my performance and to finally, return my attention to the principles I began with: 'pay attention to the things you can do something about', 'have no opinion' and 'pursue your pleasure'.

When I came to perform 'Attending to Presence' I tried to concentrate on what Britton had said about opening up to the room and really giving myself to the audience. During the performed lecture I felt that there were parts that I really enjoyed, and parts that flew. It was over sooner than I had anticipated and I knew I had done my best. I hoped that I had been successful in engaging my body in such a way that:

When an actor throws a stone, each part of his body should throw the stone, and no part should do anything else. The action should be allowed to complete itself before it is terminated and it should terminate either in stillness or in the incipience of the next action (Hollis and Sears cited in Zarrilli 2006: 146).

There were moments in the first performance where I shared a joke with the audience and was enjoying the use of my body but this was often overcome by thinking 'I need to concentrate' or 'they are watching me' or 'are they watching me?' Despite this I felt focused and driven. Perhaps this was because the audience was larger on this night than the next and there was the added pressure of being assessed.

At the end when I thanked everyone for coming I was surprised when they all started clapping and smiling as enthusiastically as they did and I burst into tears. Later, I reflected on the reason for the smiling that had really struck me. It suggests to me that the audience had an emotional response to my lecture and that it was this that surprised me. I had been expecting a more intellectual engagement. This is not to say that an intellectual engagement did not occur, only that they wanted to be in my company and were happy to have been spectators to the event that I performed. As I said in my lecture:

“We all know what Presence is in the everyday sense, it is when a person has a sort of energy about them which makes us want to have some kind of contact with them, whether that is to watch them from across the room or go and have a conversation with that person, we want some kind of relationship with them” (Brown 2011).

The fact is that both these events occurred, people did watch me from across a room and then some of them chose to come and have a conversation with me afterwards. Perhaps they saw that I was Scenically Present.

The second night of my performed lecture I felt rushed and not as concentrated and a bit loose without the overriding ‘nervous-excited’ emotion to focus me. But as Britton suggested I tried to work from there and I performed none the less. It was difficult as I soon noticed that the audience was a small group of six men. While I knew gender made no difference to my performance and shouldn’t matter, I tried to have ‘no opinion’ about it, but I was certainly made more self-conscious of my body than during the previous performance. I felt distracted by this realisation and couldn’t seem to put it aside. There were times that I felt that I was losing my place and although I tried to pay attention to ‘pursuing my pleasure’ I did not enjoy it as much as the first performance.

Britton suggested afterwards that perhaps I was paying attention to the idea of being present rather than embodying it. I was demonstrating. Lendra writes of how the "... performative arts have the potential to generate higher awareness ... However; the awakening of higher awareness cannot be fully accomplished only through the mastery of techniques" (Lendra 1991 cited in Zarrilli 2006: 151). This is something that I need to continue to develop - how to ensure that I embody what I set out to do and am not merely demonstrating the idea of an action or task. This is to be done by moving beyond a knowledge of 'techniques' and continue to work towards a personal engagement with my work in the moment that I am doing it.

Both of these responses to my experiences were as a direct result of fear. In the first performance the fear made me available, vulnerable and more open, which was a genuine response to the reality I found myself in – on my own in a space confronted with an audience. However the second experience of fear was a result of things which did not really exist and I placed them as a barrier between my intention and the execution of my actions, between myself and my audience. Derrah notes that:

Wilson's concepts of tension and relaxation had a lot to do with anxiety: 'The easiest solution is not to forget to breathe ... You can forget (to breathe) because you're remembering where this hand goes [...] and trying not to be a robot, so that you forget the most basic things that keep it alive (Derrah 1992 cited by Halperin-Royer in Zarrilli 2006: 327).

The fact is that in performance a performer should not be remembering where this hand goes or trying to remember to pay attention they should just be paying attention. This is similar to what Derrah is articulating. I should allow things to be just what they are and not try to make them what they are. This is where my first and second performances differed.

Conclusion.

So what is 'Presence' and more particularly what is 'Scenic Presence'? Presence is generally considered to be a person's physical bearing or state of being which insinuates an imposing or dignified nature. For example, a dog can have Presence. If six dogs are all milling around and one hears something, pricks its ears and tenses the muscles in its body it has Presence by paying attention to its surroundings. But 'Scenic Presence' is a constructed and cultivated quality of the body that draws the eye of an observer. A dog cannot have Scenic Presence because it does not intend to be present or expressive. It cannot construct its own energy as a performer can. The dog is simply altering the nature of its attention.

As performers we cannot know if we are Scenically Present or not but we can facilitate becoming so by doing all that is necessary to dilate the body by cultivating a precise and appropriate attention to our task. We are Attending to Presence.

This report aimed to draw together key moments of my experiences during the summer training of 2011 with the rehearsal process of 'Attending to Presence'. I have drawn from the technical, recurring features of the extra-daily body, provided by Eugenio Barba, the attitudinal principles of John Britton and combined these with the experiences of Phillip Zarrilli.

These principles and theories have been vital to the development of my Scenic Presence: In summary 'pursue your pleasure' signifies that a performer can choose to continue in something uncomfortable to see what could develop, rather than breaking concentration and attention. 'Paying attention to the things you can do something about' entails a deep and specific attention to the physical task at hand without distracting one's self by extraneous thinking. But if a performer can 'have no opinion' this avoids obstruction from a full engagement with the task. By applying these

principles to 'pre-expressive techniques', which occur before the body expresses an action and which underpins all performance, the 'extra-daily body' can become engaged. This is when the body is used in a precise and concentrated manner, paying close attention to the details of each movement in a different way to that of everyday life. This aids 'dilation' which occurs when the body becomes actively engaged in these 'extra-daily' activities. It becomes 'alive' and the audience's attention is drawn to that performer. I have demonstrated this in my performed lecture by paying close attention to: 'dynamic oppositions' by extending my body in opposing directions, 'micro-movements' or the breaking of movements down into smaller actions and finally, 'posture' by which I mean facilitating my body in the correct way, rather than holding a technical pose.

I have enjoyed working through the difficulties and challenges that this process and performance has given me. I look forward to working towards a deeper attention to detail and furthering my understanding of this subject in the future. As Lendra writes:

The work effected my perceptions on many levels simultaneously. There was a change of consciousness and awareness, a change of physical impulses and behaviour, and an intensity that developed throughout the work. Generally I felt my body awake even though I was working long hours almost every day (Lendra 1991 cited in Zarrilli 2006: 150).

I have found that Scenic Presence can be cultivated by paying appropriate attention to the minute details of what is required by the performer at a specific time. This is the way to enable an embodied action through a fully dilated extra-daily body. The more attention that is paid to the depth and precision of an action the further the performer can proceed in the detail of it. This attention dilates the body and the performer is able to become Scenically Present. Schechner and Wolford describe that:

Every gesture must be composed. A short series of motions is a micro-pantomime which must illuminate the character. There can be no complication for its own sake. The actor must

be able to shift the spectator's attention from the visual to the auditory, from the auditory to the visual, from one part of the body to the other, etc. This is the skill of magicians (Schechner and Wolford 2001, 80).

It is difficult for a performer to hold all these elements in their bodymind at once, hence Scenic Presence being, like ensemble, in a constant state of flux:

It is continuous mutation, growth taking place before our very eyes. It is the body-in-life. The flow of energies which characterise our daily behaviour has been re-routed. The tensions which secretly govern our normal way of being physically present come to the surface and the performer become visible, unexpectedly (Barba 1991: 54).

This report started out with the intention of investigating Presence and has become an inquiry into how to pay attention. This is our job as performers - to learn how to pay attention and I have found that Scenic Presence is a direct consequence of this deep and specific attention.

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