Ecologies of Street Performance

Bodies, Affects, Politics

Paul Simpson

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86,710 words
Abstract

This thesis examines the complex geographies of street performance and the multitude of ways in which this practice is situated within, and therefore shaped by, the specific spaces in which it takes place. Emerging from, and contributing to, the turn to practice in human geography, and particularly developments in non-representational theory relating to a reinvigorated engagement with work in phenomenology in the articulation of a post-phenomenology, the thesis takes an ecological approach to practice. This approach pays attention to the complex relatedness of practices to the socio-cultural, political, material-built, and atmospheric environments in which they take place and the embodied subjectification that occurs in this relatedness. In light of this ecological approach and conceptual development, the thesis pursues two lines of enquiry relating to street performance. Firstly, the thesis recognizes that artistic performances can open up possibilities for something different to emerge in the everyday life of the city. As such, it examines how street performers produce a specific form of convivial space in the city, but also how their interventions may be guarded against through restrictions placed on the access to, and use of, public space. The thesis asks: ‘What happens when the street space is transformed into a performance place?’ Secondly, drawing on ethnographic experiences of performing and observing performances, and recognizing that an engagement with such performances is inescapably an engagement with the body, the thesis research examines the embodied experience of street performance by looking at what it is like to actually undertake and experience such a practice in such (legislated) spaces. The thesis asks: ‘How do the spatialities and materialities of the street, and the socialities that emerge therein, affect the embodied experience of performing?’ This is pursued in terms of both the performer and the urban communities watching those performances. Finally, the pursuit of these empirical questions is framed by the development of the post-phenomenology mentioned above, and particularly through asking: ‘How can the subject-centred nature of much of phenomenological thought be supplanted while still emphasizing the centrality of embodied experience, and the situatedness of the body, to understandings of practice?’
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Author declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

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Chapter 1

Introduction to an ecology of street performance

“Street performers – … only an ecological approach can provide the proper conceptual frame for the complete description and deep understanding of their art”

(Bouissac 1992: 10).

“[T]he intersection of audience, performer, and place uniquely construct ‘the doing’ of performance”

(Logan 2005: 288).

“To call something ecological is to draw attention to its necessary implication in a network of relations, to mark its persistent tendency to enter into a working system. That system however, can be more or less mobile, more or less transient, more or less conflictual”

(Bennett 2004: 365).

I. Preface

This thesis has its origins in a conversation that occurred in a bar in the West End of Glasgow that no longer exists. The bar, then named ‘Studio One’, was the central hub of Glasgow’s small blues music community and both hosted local and national bands on Monday nights and a weekly jam session on Sunday evenings. This jam functioned as a key meeting point for local musicians. I started frequenting Studio One from early 2002, shortly after having moved to Glasgow to attend University, and continued to do so until August 2005 when I moved to Bristol for postgraduate study. Initially I attended the jam and eventually, having got to know many of the musicians who played there, was invited to join a band which occasionally played in the Monday night slot. Within this period
(around May-October 2004), as a result of another pub conversation (this time with a geographer), I ended up studying this community for my undergraduate dissertation. Writing heavily under the influence of Becker’s (1997) work on jazz musicians, this examined the spatiality of performing in this (and one other) venue, the resultant interactions that occurred between musicians and non-musicians, and also the broader (marginal) societal situation of these musicians (Simpson 2004).

One evening, towards the end of this research, a musician told me about his attempts to make his sole income from music given the limited opportunities to get blues gigs in Glasgow. He, along with one other musician with similar motivations, had started busking. Although I can no longer remember the details, I am certain we talked about the experience of performing in that setting and how it differed from performing in Studio One, issues relating to the Glaswegian weather, playing for long periods of time and the impact that had had on his hands, feeling comfortable performing in the streetspaces, and if he needed permission to play in Glasgow. The later aspect of the conversation also led him to bring up some run-ins he’d had with the police following people complaining he was too loud. I was also dimly aware at the time of buskers having recently been licensed to perform on the London Underground. Performing in the street then seemed to pose a unique set of issues and experiences.

Around the time of the conversation I had been starting to try to think about potential doctoral research projects. Therefore, the pages that follow are a direct result of this conversation.

II. Introduction

Street performers have been an ever present aspect of the cultural life of cities since at least the Roman era. As such, those commonly known today in the UK as ‘buskers’ have ancestral relations in the historical figures of the Goliards, Troubadours, Jongleurs, Minstrels, Mountebanks, and so on (Cohen and Greenwood 1981). While the value of their presence is by no means agreed upon, street performers, like many forms of performance art (Pinder 2005a), unquestionably do something to the experience of the urban everyday. They may entertain people or annoy people, bring people together or drive people away. There is the potential that street performance can contribute to the production of convivial civic spaces (Sharp 2007). It is clear also that performing in the street presents a particular set of challenges to the performer which can again be both positive and negative. The lack of structure and ties can be liberating and invigorating,
but also put the performer in a precarious and unnerving position – there is no saying what will happen or when.

But what is a street performance? In using street performance, as suggested above, I am referring to what would commonly be called busking. The OED defines ‘busk’ as to “play music in the street in order to be given money by passers-by”. Key here is that performers are not paid a fee – they play for donations. However, this definition highlights ‘busk’ as having heavily musical overtones. I therefore use the more general term ‘street performance’ as I don’t want to exclude non-musical performers – those who juggle, mime etc. – and operate under the same sort of practical set up (performing in the street for donations). Therefore, in this thesis I am interested in those who undertake an artistic performance, be that musical or not, in the street in order to receive monetary donations from passersby. In the body of the thesis I will use busk at times to distinguish musical performers from non-musical performances, and use street performance to refer to non-musical performers and to both musical and non-musical performers collectively.

Street performance, both in its musical and non-musical sense, appears to be an almost untouched topic among geographers. A significant body of literature does exist within geography on the usage of streets and other public spaces for performances, but this has generally focused around parades and political protest movements, rather than street performance as I have defined it. This parade and political protest literature is also accompanied by a large body of work existing outwith geography on what Cohen-Cruz (1998) calls ‘radical street performance’. This literature focuses on the use of streets and other urban spaces for politically guided street theatre, theatre with a particular cause or message in mind, with any money collected being for the furtherance of that cause and so falls outside the interests of this thesis (Campbell 1981).

This lack of attention to street performance is also echoed across wider disciplines. As Harrison- Pepper (1990: xiv) notes:

“[i]n theatre histories, anthropology texts, or urban analyses, street performance is viewed as an event that is marginal, inconsequential,

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1 There are two exceptions to this. Firstly, Brayshay (2005) studies the mobility of 16th and 17th century itinerant musicians, and in particular, the scope, frequency, character, and profitability of their journeys. Secondly, Goss’s (1996) main focus is on Festival Marketplaces, but brief reference is made to street entertainers in privately owned shopping markets who are highly policed and coordinated, resulting in the exclusion of, what he deems, ‘real’ street performers.

2 For examples see Busteed (2005); Goheen (1990; 1993a; 1993b); Jackson (1988); and Woods (1999).

3 See for example Cohen-Cruz (1998); Elam Jr (2001); Martin (2004); Theatre de L’Epee de Bois (1969); Lebel (1969).
unworthy of documentation, even a threat to the image of the city, established structures of commercial theatre, or other businesses”.

Despite this, a small body of literature on street performance in the sense I have defined it does exist. Within this, there is a recurrent interest in the specific situation of this practice within the spaces of the street in a number of senses, and the implications this has for the playing out of performances.

For example, firstly, studies have focused on how various aspects of the performance space can affect performers and audiences both practically and experientially. As such, Mason’s (1992) study of street theatre within a European context discusses the practicalities of performing outdoors and how it deviates from the norms of performing in a theatrical environment. Mason (1992) particularly focuses on the functionality of the space and the impact of the architectures of performance spaces – having a backdrop, its visibility, acoustics, capacity, the separation of performer and audience etc. – on performing and the implications of the loosening of the usual constraints of the theatre, for example in timing and scripting. Further, Campbell’s (1981) work on street performance in America makes occasional reference to how performers feel when they perform in such a setting; how they feel or have a certain atmosphere when their (potential) audiences ignore them, or watch without donating, and conversely the joy when acts are received well. This is also discussed in relation to the specific sites where they perform and how they approach these environments – how architectural spaces can feel, or be made to feel, habitable, or how they can feel intimidating. Further, this literature has begun to think about how street performance is audienced given this situation of performances outside such formalisms of a stage or theatre environment. For example, Prato (1984) discusses the aesthetic experience of street music in Washington Square Park, New York in terms of the ‘distracted reception’ of performances given their situation outside of a theatre.

Emerging out of this, and second, this literature has also discussed the ways in which performers, both musical and non-musical, relate to their performance environment more generally. For example Harrison-Pepper (1990: xvi), in studying of non-musical street performers, and again focusing on Washington Square Park, justifies her exclusion of musical performers as, for her, “[s]treet music only happens to occur on an urban stage; the larger message is that the environment is mostly to be ignored…Street performers, by contrast, are more committed to the streets and more involved with their audiences”.

Further, and in contrast to this, Tanenbaum’s (1995) study of busking on the New York Underground is, in a sense, a response to Harrison-Pepper’s (1990) claim that non-
musical street performers have some kind of superior relation to their environments. Tanenbaum (1995) reclaims the significance of musical street performance from Harrison-Pepper (1990), arguing subway musicians are inherently bound up in and with their performance environments, especially regarding how the public experience those environments. It is not simply indoor performance undertaken outwith a venue.

With street performance being so thoroughly situated in the urban environment in a variety of ways, and finally, Harrison-Pepper (1990) also highlights the need to extensively catalogue and document the setting within which performances occur. She views these spaces as layered, as palimpsests. A significant aspect of this layering has included the examination of the persistent attempts to control street performance through legislative interventions, and how these interventions play a role in the ways in which the everyday life of the street plays out and affects the performer’s experience of performing. For example, Cohen and Greenwood (1981) trace this from the Roman era to the 1980s. While they present their work as being a study of ‘individualists’, their task being, “to trace a tradition of people who chose to defy class structure, and take their chances on the roads and streets” (1981: 11), they in fact consistently highlight the pervasive class positioning of street performers by governments and religious institutions, often being viewed as one-step above beggars. Street performers do not so much defy this class structure then, but, in their life on the roads and street, are continually subjected to it (also see Calaflin and Sheridan 1998; Picker 2003). In fact, as Harrison-Pepper (1990: 22) states, “[m]uch of the history of street performance…is found in the laws that prohibit it”.

Taking up these themes in this thesis, I am interested in the complex geographies of street performance and the ways in which this practice is embedded within, and so shaped by, the complex and layered spaces in which the performance takes place (see Wood, et al. 2007).

III. Geographies of Practice and Non-representational Theory

In addition to the biographical conception of this project discussed above and the themes of the previous work done on this practice, the specific nature and evolution of this thesis has arisen out of an encounter with a number of current trends in geographical writings which have held a related interest. Most notable here is the recent turn to practice in social and cultural geography (Cresswell 2003; Thrift and Dewsbury 2000) and the concurrent emergence of non-representational theory (Dewsbury, et al. 2002; Thrift 2007).
An interest in practice is not entirely new for geography given work in the 1970s and 1980s in time geography and humanistic geography (Cadman 2009; see Buttimer 1976; Hagerstrand 1976; Tuan 1977). Here there was interest in the ways in which people inhabited time-space and how this contributed to understandings of the processes through which society is reproduced and maintained (Latham 2003), and also in the “complex nature of human experience, which ranges from inchoate feeling to explicit conception” and through which “a person knows and constructs a reality” (Tuan 1977: v and 8). Further, during the 1990s (see Matless 1995; 1996; 1997) notions of practice were to varying degrees implicit within various strands of social and cultural geography, including geographies of landscape and the examination of the ways in which landscapes are lived in and moved through in terms of “a dialectical tension of eyes and bodies, the visceral and the cerebral” (Matless cited in Cresswell 2003: 280), animal geographies and understandings of nature-society hybridity (see Anderson 1997; Whatmore 1999; Wolch and Emel 1998), the geographies of music and understandings of the generative relations between music and place (see Cohen 1995; Kong 1995; Leyshon, et al. 1995; Valentine 1995), and also in discussions of the geographic production of subjectivity (see Cresswell 1996; Pile and Thrift 1995; Sibley 1995).

However, recently there has been a very evident shift in social and cultural geography to take everyday mundane practices seriously in such a way that “injects temporality and movement” into that which was previously rendered static, at the same time as paying attention to the ways that practices are “contextualized and given a frame” (Cresswell 2003: 280). Work here has engaged with an eclectic range of practices, including the geographies in/of: dance and the production of ‘proper’ conduct (Cresswell 2006); the performance of folk music (Revill 2004); camping (Crouch 2003); gardening (Hitchings 2003); being at home (Hetherington 2003); specific mundane everyday activities such as dog walking (Laurier, et al. 2006), going for a coffee (Laurier and Philo 2006a), talking on the phone (Laurier 2001), or eating (Browne 2007); and different mobile practices such as cycling (Spinney 2009), walking (Macpherson 2008), driving (Laurier 2005), and flying (Adey 2007).

Alongside, and at times in conversation with, these recent discussions of the geographies of practice, non-representational theory has come to be a prominent approach to thinking about practices, particularly in terms of focusing on their open-endedness, the centrality of the body to the experience of space and the production of subjectivity, and how much of our experience proceeds without our conscious reflection.
upon it (Thrift 2000a). Given its prominence, and relevance to the themes already outlined in the previous section, I will now outline in detail what non-representational theory is and from this suggest its impact upon the conception of this research project, which, as will be discussed in the next chapter in more detail, follows a post-phenomenological approach.

**Non-representational Theory**

Non-representational theory has emerged since the mid-1990s in a series of papers and book chapters written by Thrift (see Thrift 1996; 1997; 1999; 2000a; 2007) and has also evolved in the work of a range of his postgraduate students during that time (Dewsbury, et al. 2002; Dewsbury 2000; 2003; Harrison 2000; 2007a; 2008; McCormack 2002; 2003; 2005; Wylie 2002; 2005; 2006), and a few others (Anderson 2006; Laurier and Philo 2006b; Lorimer 2005). In its most recent articulation, for Thrift (2007: 2), non-representational theory represents, most simply, an interest in “the geography of what happens” and, “[i]n large part, it is therefore a work of description of the bare bones of actual occasions”. In a little more detail, Lorimer (2005: 84) suggests that its

“focus falls on how life takes shape and gains expression in shared experiences, everyday routines, fleeting encounters, embodied movements, precognitive triggers, practical skills, affective intensities, enduring urges, unexceptional interactions and sensuous dispositions…which escape from the established academic habit of striving to uncover meanings and values that apparently await our discovery, interpretation, judgment and ultimate representation”.

It is important to note though that non-representational theory is not in fact an actual theory, but something more like a style of thinking which values practice (Thrift 2000a). It is therefore also best thought in the plural as non-representational theories (Anderson cited in Lorimer 2008). In this plurality, theories of post-structuralists, phenomenologists, pragmatists, feminists, and a collection of social theorists, mix in varying concentrations. To provide a more specific and detailed account of this plural disposition, I will now draw on the various outlinings by Thrift and others mentioned above to articulate the main thematics of non-representational theory which are key to this thesis and its interests in the experience of everyday spaces and acts of embodied perception outlined in the previous section.

Firstly, non-representational theory tries to attend to the ‘onflow’ of everyday life (Thrift 2007). Drawing influence from vitalist philosophy and philosophies of becoming, this approach recognises the “processual register of experience” and that the world is “more excessive that we can theorise” (Dewsbury, et al. 2002: 437). From this, and the
related recognition that consciousness is in fact a narrow window of perception, and so positing the precognitive as “something more than an addendum to the cognitive” (Thrift 2007: 6), it is argued that “it is vain that we say what we see; what we see never resides in what we say” (Foucault 2002a: 10). Non-representational theory thus acts against “a curious vampirism, in which events are drained for the sake of the ‘orders, mechanisms, structures and processes’ posited by the analyst” (Dewsbury et al 2002: p437). Instead, more attention is given to the pre-cognitive aspects of embodied life, these “rolling mass[es] of nerve volleys [which] prepare the body for action in such a way that intentions or decisions are made before the conscious self is even aware of them” (Thrift 2007: 7).

Secondly, non-representational theory is “resolutely…pre-individual. It trades in modes of perception which are not subject-based” (Thrift 2007: 7). Instead, non-representational theory is concerned with ‘practices of subjectification’, not with subjects. This subjectification arises out of the world being “made up of all kinds of things brought into relation with one another by many and various spaces through a continuous and largely involuntary process of encounter” (Thrift 2007: 7). Given non-representational theory strictly goes against the “classical human subject which is transparent, rational and continuous” (Thrift 2007: 14), this has significant ethical implications (see Thrift 2003b); traditional ethical questions become more complicated. Asking ‘what have I done?’ or ‘what should I do?’ become infinitely more complex when the status of this ‘I’ asking the questions has been significantly undermined. From this, questions of ethics now mean “becoming critical of norms under which we are asked to act but which we cannot fully choose and taking responsibility…for the dilemmas that subsequently arise” (Thrift 2007: 14). This leave us with something like an ‘ethics of joy’ such as that to be found in the works of Spinoza (1996) and Deleuze (1988) whereby an ethical action is that which expands capacities to act, or in Thrift’s words, serves to “build new forms of life” by “boosting aliveness” (Thrift 2007: 14).

Third, and centrally to this thesis, non-representational theory is interested in the human body and its co-evolution with things (Thrift 2007). The work of Merleau-Ponty has proved a key influence here (see Thrift 1996; Wylie 2002; 2006). Here the body is not counted as separate from the world, but rather it is argued that the human body is as it is because of its “unparalleled ability to co-evolve with things, taking them in and adding them to different parts of the biological body to produce something which…resemble[s] a constantly evolving distribution of different hybrids with different reaches” (Thrift
2007: 10). Given that “bodies and things are not easily separated terms” (Thrift 1996: 13), non-representational theory aims to attend to the material relatedness of the body and world and its constantly emergent capacities to act and interact.

In this interest in the body’s co-evolution with non-human things, non-representational theory gives “equal weight” to both rather than viewing the non-human as “mere cladding” (Thrift 2007: 9). This means non-representational theory is concerned with ‘technologies of being’: “hybrid assemblages of knowledges, instruments, persons, systems of judgement, buildings and spaces, underpinned at the programmatic level by certain presuppositions about, and objectives for, human beings” (Rose cited in Thrift 1997: 130). This views the world as a multiplicity of heterogeneous networks and connections needing to be maintained, decentring the Cartesian notion of agency as belonging solely to the human and putting agency into matter (Thrift 1996; 2000a). In addition to the strong influence of the work of ANT on non-representational theory here (see Latour 2005), key for me is the recent emergence of Speculative Realist philosophy which seeks to pay attention to the existence and interaction of objects (or ‘things’) outside of the necessary presence of a human subject or access to this, and on the condition that any access would be incomplete (Harman 2005; also see Meillassoux 2008).

This emphasis on the material relatedness of the body is also closely connected to non-representational theory’s desire to “get in touch with the full range of registers of thought by stressing affect and sensation” (Thrift 2007: 12). Work on this topic has proliferated both in geography and in the social sciences recently (see Anderson 2006; Anderson and Harrison 2006; Bissell 2008; Clough 2007; Dewsbury 2000; Gumbrecht 2004; Massumi 2002; McCormack 2003; Stewart 2007; Thrift 2004). Affect does not refer to a personal feeling, but rather to a “pre-personal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implies an augmentation or diminution in that body’s capacity to act” (Massumi 2004: xvii). The subject, or what we used to understand by subject, is ‘affective’, and engages in and emerges from “affective dialogical practices…born in and out of joint action” (Thrift 1997: 128). Key here is that this is between; “[a]ffects are not about you or it, subject or object. They are relations that inspire the world” (Dewsbury, et al. 2002: 439 [my emphasis]).

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4 This aspect of Speculative Realism was also evident at the recent ‘Speculative Realism/Speculative Materialism’ conference, held at the University of the West of England, 24/04/09, which I attended.
Fourthly, and following on closely from this point, non-representational theory concentrates on practices, “mundane practices, that shape the conduct of human beings towards others and themselves in particular sites” (Thrift 1997: 127). Practices are understood as “material bodies of work or styles that have gained enough stability over time, through, for example, the establishment of corporeal routines and specialized devices, to reproduce themselves” (Thrift 2007: 8). Practices are then “productive concatenations that have been constructed out of all manner or resources and which provide the basic intelligibility of the world” (Thrift 2007: 8).

This interest in practices highlights an important point about non-representational theory. Non-representational theory is interested in representations, even if Thrift did appear to suggest otherwise in certain early moments of over-exuberance (see Thrift 1997). I will return to this in more detail shortly, but for the moment it is important to make clear that although the prefix ‘non’ may imply moving “away from a concern with representations and especially text” (Nash 2000: 655), “[n]on-representational theory takes representations seriously; representations not as a code to be broken or as an illusion to be dispelled rather representations are apprehended as performative in themselves; as doings” (Dewsbury, et al. 2002: 438). Therefore, it is ‘representationalism’, or representative ‘fixing and framing’ that non-representational theory finds problematic (Lorimer 2005).

Finally, non-representational theory aligns itself with a sort of experimentalism which does not shy away from providing an open-ended account of the world. Taking inspiration from the performing arts (Thrift 2003a), non-representational theory seeks to escape the “reading techniques on which the social sciences are founded” to “inject a note of wonder back into a social science which, too often, assumes that it must explain everything” (Thrift 2007: 12). In a somewhat Deleuzo-Nietzschean vein, non-representational theory is motivated by the sentiment: “Let us try it!” (Nietzsche 1974: 115) rather than ‘let us judge it’ (Deleuze 1997).

**Critiques of Non-representational Theory**

The reception of non-representational theory has been, to say the least, mixed. A number of critiques have been made and I want to spend a little time now highlighting two of these and suggest their impact on the way in which non-representational theory has been taken up in this thesis.

The first critique comes from the very name ‘non-representational theory’. It has been argued that non-representational theory conceives work which it calls
‘representational’ in an all too caricatured manner. It is understandable that such a contention could have arisen given the tone of some of the early criticisms made of such work. For example, it was argued that a “hardly problematised sphere of representation is allowed to take precedence over lived experience, usually as a series of images or texts which a theorist contemplatively deconstructs, thus implicitly degrading practices” (Thrift 1996: 4). This degrading of practice in ‘representationalism’, it was argued, has “framed, fixed, and rendered inert all that ought to be most lively” in its “deadening…tendency…to cleave towards a conservative, categorical politics of identity and textual meaning” (Lorimer 2005: 83-85).

In response to this, it has been sympathetically suggested that a more appropriate name might be ‘more-than-representational theory’, whereby the arguments of non-representational theory are taken as a modest supplement or “a background hum, asking questions of style, form, technique and methods, and ushering in experimental kinds of response” (Lorimer 2008: 556). This has been suggested to lose the negative connotations of the ‘non’ and, in so doing, maintaining a less antagonistic tone toward such work previously (and still) done, but at the same time to still suggest a shift in focus (Lorimer 2005).

While I found an initial attraction to such a ‘more-than’ representational understanding – the more positive and inclusive connotations being appealing – I do have a niggling concern with the ‘more-than’. I think there is a danger that it draws non-representational thinking into overly close proximity to representational modes of thought. It is possible that with the ‘more-than’ we risk “remaining inescapably caught up in the language and perspective proper to that tradition” (James 2006: 27). The ‘more-than’ is too close, for me at least, to suggesting that non-representational theory is representational theory plus, and so undermining the substantial shift in focus (at least some of) this work has enacted. Perhaps the negation of the ‘non’ is necessary in making a break from representational modes of thought. To echo a point suggested previously, this DOES NOT mean breaking with a concern with representations, rather a break with representationalism (Lorimer 2005).

The second critique follows quite closely from this. It has been argued that non-representational theory does not pay enough attention to the representational context of the practices it studies. While I have already suggested otherwise, it is important to spend a little more time on this here. This critique is made by Cresswell (2006) in his discussion of dance and revolves around the relative value given to representations and their ability
to produce ‘correct’ and ‘appropriate’ movement, and more broadly ‘codify’ and ‘regulate’. Cresswell (2006: 72-73) argues that, referring to McCormack’s (2003) account of dance, “[a]lthough codified rules are important to McCormack, they are not as important as the styles and modes of moving themselves” and that “[t]his notion lies at the heart of contemporary geographical discussion of non-representational theory and the idea of practice” (see Nash 2000; also see Revill 2004). While I do to some extent agree with the assertion that some discussions in non-representational theory have not paid sufficient attention to the context of the practices under study, I do also find Cresswell’s articulation of this problematic. I too want to be attentive to the “interface between the representational and the non-representational”, but in a very different sense to Cresswell in his desire to uncover the ways in which “representation is used to hijack the process of becoming” (Cresswell 2006: 73 [emphasis in original]). To me this suggests a view of representation which ascribes them far too much power and efficacy. I am unsure how becoming can be ‘hijacked’ when becoming is what there is; “[l]ife differs from itself, so we are confronted by divergent lines of evolution and, on each line, original process” (Deleuze 2004a: 40). I am therefore more interested in the roles which representations undoubtedly play – both enabling and constraining – in the becoming of the world through attending to the situated nature of practices within a specific context (Lorimer 2008) (in the case of this study, the street). Following Thrift (1996: 3), this context definitely does “not mean an impassive backdrop to situated human activity. Rather, I take context to be a necessary constitutive element of interaction, something active, differentially extensive and able to problematise and work on the bounds of subjectivity”.

**Non-representational Theory and Street Performance**

In this thesis, each of these tenets of non-representational theory play a significant part in directing the themes of the discussion. For example, I am interested in the sensuous and affective processes of subjectification a performer undergoes in their bodily relatedness to the environments in which they perform (Chapter 5) and the subjectification that occurs when members of the audience are affected by such performances (Chapters 6 and 7); I am interested in what discourses (or representations) do, alongside the more general patterns of the everyday life of the street, to how performances play out (Chapter 4), and how such factors affect the experience of performing (Chapter 6); I am interested in the ephemeral and fleeting space-times of communion that may or may not occur through the presence of performances (Chapter 4); I am interested in the broad range of
perceptual registers and senses through which audience members attend to performances, and how a sense of self and what is going on emerges from this (Chapters 6 and 7).

In pursuing these themes, the thesis develops a post-phenomenological line of thinking (Rose and Wylie 2006; Lea 2009, forthcoming) which, in light of the work in and around non-representational theory outlined earlier, refers to an approach whereby the subject-centred nature of previous phenomenological work is reconsidered in light of work in and around post-structuralism, and so conceives of experience in a more trans-humanly fashion (Lea 2009, forthcoming). This then provides a fruitful means for thinking about our complex and dynamic being in the world, or rather, being-with or of the world. I return to this in more detail in the next chapter.

**IV. Research Questions**

In light of these various literatures, theoretical influences, and personal motivations, it is now possible to articulate the main research questions of this thesis. These number three.

1) In light of the recognition that artistic performances can open up possibilities for something different to emerge in the everyday life of the city (Pinder 2005a), but also have this guarded against, the thesis asks:

   What happens when the street space is transformed into a performance place and how is this affected by both the performance’s everyday and legislative context?

2) In recognizing that an engagement with such modes of performance is inescapably an engagement with the body, and that this body is always situated within the everyday context mentioned above, the thesis asks:

   How do the spatialities of the street, and the socialities that emerge therein, affect the embodied experience of performing and the performance?

This is pursed both in terms of the performer and the urban audience attending to those performances.

3) At a more conceptual level, in answering the above two questions, the thesis asks:

   How can the subject-centred nature of much of phenomenological thought be supplanted while still emphasizing the centrality of embodied experience, and the situatedness of the body, to understandings of practice?

**V. Ecologies of Practice**

In addressing these empirical questions, and marking an initial contribution to the theoretical question just outlined, the thesis takes what can be characterized as an
‘ecological’ approach to the study of practices. The term ecology was originally coined by the German zoologist Ernst Haeckel in 1873 as ‘okologie’, from the Greek ‘oikos’, meaning ‘house’, ‘dwelling place’, or ‘habitation’, and ‘logia’, meaning ‘the study of’ (Kershaw 2007). As such, the study of ecology refers to the examination of the inter-relation of an organism with its environment (Hawley 1950). Despite these biological origins, the term has in fact been appropriated in a number of other disciplines, including the social sciences and humanities.

One prominent example of this is in the work of the ‘Chicago School of Sociology’ and its development of ‘human ecology’ (Bulmer 1984). In particular, Park et al’s (1925) ‘The City’ formally introduced human ecology as a research agenda for sociology and the study of American cities and focused on many of the social changes that had resulted from the rapid expansion of America’s urban areas at that time. They were influenced in the development of their ecological approach by the emerging fields of plant and animal ecology and, in fact, came to see the development of human ecology as an explicit extension of these fields (Grove and Burch 1997). The Chicago School then developed their human ecology in light of work in community ecology in three main ways (Grove and Burch 1997). Firstly, Park (1936) drew on a community ecology approach, and concepts such as ‘succession’ and ‘competition’, to examine the complexities of urban society in order to uncover “a set of regular social patterns and processes in the apparent confusion of the urban melting point” (Grove and Burch 1997: 260-261). Second, the Chicago School conceived the city as a closed, functioning system or community that could therefore be treated as an organism or ‘superorganism’. Finally, the School focused on the spatial and temporal dimensions of the city, examining the ongoing processes of ‘invasion’ and ‘accommodation’ which give communities well defined areas with their own specific selective and cultural characteristics (Grove and Burch 1997).

A further prominent example was the use of the term ecology in the title of Bateson’s ‘Steps of an Ecology of Mind’ (Bateson 2000), particularly in that it has led to a number of works in human geography (and the social sciences more generally) which have sought to outline ‘Steps to an ecology of...’ a number of phenomena/concepts (see Ingold 2000; Massumi 2009; Thrift 1999). A key development here is Bateson’s (2000) conception of the world as an ecological complex of interconnected ‘circuit structures’ which, in their variety in number and scale, are susceptible to change, change which will have contingent outcomes given this complexity. In particular, Bateson sought to
dismantle the opposition between mind and nature and so conceive of the mind as “immanent in the whole system of organism-environment relations in which we humans are necessarily enmeshed, rather than confined within our individual bodies as against a world of nature ‘out there’” and so conceiving the mind as “not limited by the skin” (Ingold 2000: 16).

Further, and along a similar line, a key figure in the development of ecological thinking was Gibson and his work on developing an ecological approach to visual perception (Gibson 1979). In this Gibson sought to go against idealist understandings of perception (whereby a subject is understood to perceive the environment through the production of representations of the world in their head), by thinking perception as “not the achievement of a mind in a body, but of the organism as a whole in its environment” (Ingold 2000: 3). For Gibson the mind is not ‘in the head’ but rather “it is immanent in the network of sensory pathways that are set up by virtue of the perceiver’s immersion in his or her environment” (Ingold 2000: 3). Central within this theory was Gibson’s understanding of affordances, the concept which “shows the reciprocity between organism and environment” (Hirose 2002: 289). Such affordances are “the opportunities for action that objects, events or places in the environment provide for an animal” and as such are “properties of the environment, specified relative to the animal, but not properties of the animal” (Hirose 2002: 290). The two are not thought apart, but as a relational whole.

Following Bateson’s and Gibson’s work, a number of theorists have developed ecological approaches to the study of social phenomena, particularly taking on this relational and distributed model of what it means to be human. For example, being influenced by Bateson, Guattari (2008) outlines his ecosophy which plays across three interrelated ecological registers – of the environment, of social relations, and of human subjectivity – and the analysis of all of which he argues is central to addressing the ‘ecological crisis’ which has emerged from ‘techno-scientific’ transformations, and so to developing ways of living in the world. More recently, Bateson’s ideas, along with those of Gibson, have been taken up in the work of Ingold (2000) in his development of an ‘ecology of life’. Here Ingold critiques Bateson’s articulation of the ecosystem as being two faced – one face of matter and energy, the other a field of pattern and information; the first “substance without form” and the latter “all form detached from substance” (Ingold 2000: 16). These then corresponded to two ecologies: an ecology of material and energy and exchanges and an ecology of ideas, what came to be Bateson’s ‘ecology of
Ingold departs from Bateson in that he seeks to not separate out these two ecologies, but to rethink our understanding of life not in terms of the ‘organism plus environment (as Bateson conceives it), but as the “whole-organism-in-its-environment”, so “not a compound of two things, but one indivisible totality…a developmental system” (Ingold 2000: 19).

Furthermore, the term ecology has cropped up in recent work in geography, often being used to invoke a broadly ‘relational materialist’ approach to the thematics under examination. For example, Thrift (1999: 306) outlines an ‘ecology of place’, by which he refers to an understanding of place that is grounded in an irreducible ontology whereby the world is seen as being “made up of billions of happy or unhappy encounters”, a situated epistemology whereby what we can know is limited by our situation in the world as embodied beings, and so an understanding of the world as a series of “self organizing assemblages” which are “completely connected, constantly changing, and contingent; always ‘these’, never just ‘this”’. Further, Jones (2005: 206) outlines a conception of an ‘ecology of emotion, memory, self and landscape’, by which he generally refers to the “transactions of body(ies), space(s), mind(s), feeling(s) in the unfolding of life-in-the-now”.

While taking inspiration from the work of Bateson and his followers (particularly, as should become clear, Ingold’s thinking of the ecology as an indivisibly relational developmental system), the specific initial inspiration for taking this approach comes from Harrison-Pepper’s (1990) study of street performance discussed earlier and the way in which she attends to the complex relatedness of the practice of street performing to the environments in which it takes place. As she states:

“It is nearly impossible…to separate street performance from the urban environment, for the city exerts a primary influence on both its perception and reception. The shape, texture, and uses of urban space determine behaviours and expectations, performance structures, and the theatrical frame. The width of the sidewalk or shade from a tree, the noise surrounding the performance space, the proximity of other performers, the social as well as the atmospheric climates, the civic regulations concerning performance activities – all are part of the performer’s daily, even minute-to-minute negotiations with a fluid and vital urban environment. The setting may even influence an audience’s contributions”

(Harrison-Pepper 1990: xv).

Bouissac (1992: 10) names this as an “ecological approach”, which, he argues, “only…can provide the proper conceptual frame for the complete description and deep understanding of their [the street performer’s] art”. While I am in broad agreement with
this statement and have hence adopted this approach in the thesis, I am sceptical that anything like a ‘complete description’ of street performance is possible. This comes down to the sheer expansiveness of the ecology in which street performers perform, both spatially and across time. This dynamic, always evolving system can only ever exceed our capacities as researchers to articulate the relations that take place within it.

In further developing this ecological approach, the thesis also takes inspiration from the work of Bennett, and, in particular, follows her assertion that:

“humans are always in composition with non-humanity, never outside of a sticky web of connections or an ecology…To call something ecological is to draw attention to its necessary implication in a network of relations, to mark its persistent tendency to enter into a working system. That system however, can be more or less mobile, more or less transient, more or less conflictual” (Bennett 2004: 365).

Here Bennett draws attention to the excessive, yet practical, nature of an ecology – there is a tendency towards working out. More specifically, we can break this down into a threefold movement. Firstly, an ecological approach pays attention to the performative. Suggesting an ecology is performative highlights the importance of how action is produced through, and cited off, already placed signified frameworks (Butler 1993; 1999). For example, these can relate to a broad range of discursive formations, such as the legislative controls placed on street performance discussed previously. Secondly, an ecological approach pays attention to performance. There are a number of ways in which performance can be understood (see Thrift and Dewsbury 2000), but here I am defining performance as something “subjunctive, liminal, dangerous, and duplicitous” (Schechner 2003: xix). Paying attention to performance highlights the importance of lived bodily investment and our actual taking place through or as our bodies. This suggests an attention to the live, the experiential, the intensive, and evental shifts or interventions. Finally, an ecological approach pays attention to practice. Paying attention to practice highlights how this all actually works out, or the practicability of the ecology’s continued functioning; how bodies, prescriptions, temporalities, and so on play out in the everyday, and thus how the ecology tends towards a working system.

Therefore, such an approach is attentive to both the evental sets of relations – those lines of connection that trace our little modifications, that “make detours…sketch[ing] our rises and falls” (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 93) – and the contextual sets of relations – those performative frameworks mentioned above, those segmentations that cut us up in multiple ways but nonetheless practically work out – present within practices. Alternatively, this can be thought in terms of notions of
equilibrium and disequilibrium (Guattari 2008). When something new enters into the ecology through such a line of connection, it is necessary that a new equilibrium be reached: “[t]his assemblage has to work in order to live, to processualise itself with the singularities that strike it. All this implies the idea of a necessary creative practice” (Guattari 1995: 94). This might happen through the auto-reproductive capacity of the ecology itself, or necessitate outside intervention. The necessity of this intervention, or its nature, is not however determinable in advance. Such interventions may seek to homogenize the ecology to ensure its continued functioning, but equally this could be sought through the proliferation of heterogeneity (Guattari 2008).

This ecological approach also responds to a further (internal/auto-) critique made of non-representational theory. Work in non-representational theory, particularly in its Deleuzian manifestations, has been criticized for wanting to go at the ever new, at an “unalloyed ‘bliss of action’” (Thrift 2007: 258 quoting Deleuze 1998: 28). Given the vitalist inheritance of some of the work undertaken under the banner of non-representational theory (this thesis included), it has been suggested that things have been a little too animated and lively; that everything is moving all the time under the “‘remorseless pressures’ of becoming” (Rose and Wylie 2006: 476; see Thrift 2007: 10; Harrison 2008). I want to make it clear – and somewhat echoing my response to Creswell’s (2006) critique of non-representational theory – that what I want to do here, in taking this ecological approach, is to pay attention to the contextual frameworks, to the performative and practical consistency of the world, whilst at the same time paying due attention to movement at varying speeds (both speeding up and slowing down), or as Thrift (2007: 8) states, to the fact that “actions presuppose practices and not visa versa”.

An ecology is then a ‘co-functioning’ transient happening, a pre-personal affective occurrence of varying duration and intensity (Deleuze and Parnet 2006), and can be understood at a variety of scales. There is as much a social ecology as there is a mental ecology or molecular ecology at the level of the body and its intensities (Guattari 2008). Not only are humans entered into a ‘sticky’ web of connections (Bennett 2004), but to be human is to be a sticky web of connections (Guattari 2008). We can think of the ecology at the level of the street and how it is produced through the complex interrelation of bodies, representations, and practices (Chapter 4), at the level of the body itself, both in its complex molecular affectivity and its relations to the environment it inhabits (Chapters 5 and 7), at the level of the inter-corporeal and the affective processes
of subjectivation that are ongoing in the encounter of human bodies (Chapters 4 and 5), but also between human and non-human bodies (Chapters 5, 6 and 7).

Finally, it is important to emphasize here that I am talking about an approach – I am not attempting to build something like an ecology theory to rival the likes of ANT (see Latour 2005), Assemblage Theory (see DeLanda 2006), or any other broadly relation-based theory. I am not going to develop anything like a range of key tenets or sub-theories of this ecological approach across the chapters of the thesis. Rather, I use it to highlight a consistency of approach and concern across the chapters of this thesis which is also present in the theorists drawn on throughout. Each of the thinkers drawn on variably share an ecological sensibility in their work; namely, an attention to the complex relatedness of the world and the ways in which this holds a consistency, but is also dynamic and open to change. This is to be found in Deleuze’s ethological and diagrammatic conception of affectivity and passivity (Deleuze 1988; 2004b), Guattari’s discussion of ecological complexes of subjectivation (Guattari 1995), Deleuze and Guattari’s machinic thought (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a; 2004b), Nancy’s thinking of being as being-with and presencing (Nancy 1993; 2000; 2008b), Nietzsche’s fragmentary metaphysics of the will to power (Nietzsche 1968), Lefebvre’s polyrhythmic production of space (Lefebvre 1991; 2004), and Merleau-Ponty’s emphasis on our bodily being-in-the-world (Merleau-Ponty 1968; 2002).

**VI. The Thesis**

Each of the main chapters of the thesis are intended to both fit into an empirical and theoretical narrative, and to stand alone as self contained units or investigations. The thesis is an ecology and each chapter a specific cut on that ecology; street performance is ecological and each chapter takes a different sub-ecology of this ecology as its focus. Certain themes circulate and are presented from different angles in every chapter. Each chapter is interested in subjectivity and the body, intersubjectivity and inter-corporeity, affect and feeling, materiality and immateriality, performance and performativity, space and performance.

More specifically, Chapter 4 takes the broadest cut on the ecology and so sets the stage for the subsequent chapters. In Chapter 4 I look at the interrelation between the

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5 I am also reticent to draw on ANT here given the unduly aggressive over-flattening of the world that it undertakes (Latour 2005). While in taking an ecological approach I want to consider the much more-than human nature of the world and the evident capacity of this to play a role in the playing out of practices, following Rose and Wylie (2006), I do also want to maintain something of a topographical structure to this world.
intervention street performers and buskers make and the legislative and everyday context from performances in the public space of the city; I uncover what happens in the performative transformation of the street space into a performance place and the sorts of momentary forms of sociality (between performer and audience, and within the audience) that emerge within this. As part of this discussion I develop a conceptual understanding of space-time through the work of Lefebvre on the production of space and rhythmanalysis and Deleuze's diagrammatics.

This is further developed in Chapter 5 where the focus shifts more explicitly onto the performer. In this chapter I focus on the embodied experience of performing in the spaces of the street rather than a more traditional theatre environment and the affective relations that emerge from this – between the performer, the performance space, members of the audience, and so on. This chapter does not forget the legislative context of Chapter 4 and pays attention to how this impacts upon and so affects the experience of performing.

Chapters 6 and 7 which, although running consecutively here, are more intended to run parallel, both empirically and in their conceptual development. These chapters both pay attention to the acts of audiencing that inhabitants of the urban environment undertake in relation to street performance given the loss of the traditional theatre environment. Chapter 6 thinks about the fleeting acts of attending that make up so much of our everyday perception experience. This is pursued through a detailed engagement with the work of Husserl around the affection of the object, and a critique of this in relation to the work of Deleuze. Chapter 7 thinks about the ways in which people listen to performers, taking this beyond the standard social scientific discourses around interpretation and meaning, and thinking about the resonant impact sound makes upon the body. This is pursued through a detailed engagement with the work of Nancy and both his ontology of being-with and his thinking of subjectivity, the body, and sense.

These chapters are all prefaced by a theoretical Prolegomena, and a discussion of the methodology employed by the thesis and some of the issues and challenges that have arisen in the undertaking of the research. The Prolegomena draws out the parallel theoretical development pursued in chapters 4-7. This development arises out of the work in non-representational theory outlined previously in terms of a re-invigorated engagement with phenomenology by geographers and the development of a post-phenomenology. This revolves around the understanding of the subject of these practices, the social-cultural-political situation of this subject/body, and also pays greater
attention to the sensuousness of such practices than certain subsets of phenomenology have done previously. The development of this approach is key to the arguments of this thesis given its aim of addressing the centrality of the body to understandings of experience, and particularly affective registers of such experience which lie prior to conscious reflection, but also to not forget that such a body and experience is always already situated with a specific context and so affected by that context. The development of this post-phenomenology is contextualized specifically in relation to the work of two central figures in the history of phenomenology: Husserl and Merleau-Ponty.

The thesis concludes by summarizing the substantive conclusions of the thesis in relation to street performance, re-articulating where it has got to in terms of its pursuit of a post-phenomenology and the related contributions to the agendas of non-representational theory, and finally by articulating the future research agendas that emerge from this.
Chapter 2

Prolegomena to a post-phenomenology of practice

“Phenomenology was never intended to begin and end with one man [sic]”
(Russell 2006: 55)

“If phenomenology has always consisted in heretical readings of Husserl, is the question of post-phenomenology superfluous?”
(Adams 2007: 3)

I. Introduction

Geographers for some time now have been interested in phenomenology – the school of thought which, described most simply, can be defined as an approach which “tries to give a direct description of our experience as it is, without taking account of its psychological origin and the causal explanations which the scientist, the historian or the sociologist may be able to provide” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: vii). Most evidently, this interest could be seen in the humanistic geographies of the 1970s and early 80s (for examples see Buttimer 1976; Ley 1977; Seamon 1980), critical engagements with this humanistic literature which argued for a more authentic phenomenological geography (Pickles 1985), but also more recently in discussions of practice where the work of the phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty has been prominent (Cresswell 2003; Paterson 2009, forthcoming).

Recently, and emerging from work inspired by the non-representational styles of thinking discussed in the previous chapter (Rose and Wylie 2006; Rose 2006; Wylie
2006), there has been a (re)turn to phenomenology in geography under the development of what has been called a ‘post-phenomenology’. As the title suggests, there is something distinct about this recent engagement with phenomenology compared to that undertaken previously. This distinction comes in that this work has re-read phenomenological texts and ideas through the lens of post-structural writers such as Deleuze, Derrida and Levinas, and, in so doing, has aimed to “extend the boundaries of the phenomenological focus upon the experiencing subject” (Lea 2009, forthcoming). As such, this engagement with phenomenology has been less embracing of phenomenological ideas than the previous engagements mentioned above, but also, more specifically, there has been a move away from the assumption of a subject which exists prior to experience towards an examination of the ways in which the subject comes to be in or through experience. While humanist geographies were interested in the experiencing subject and how felt experience is both constitutive of, and constituted by, place (Lea 2009, forthcoming), now post-phenomenological geographies are interested in the trans-human and thus the decentring of the experiencing subject. This refigures experience in terms of an experiencing with the world rather than an experiencing of the world (Wylie 2006).

This engagement and re-reading is something that this thesis also seeks to pursue as it provides a direct avenue into thinking about the embodied experience of performing and the material relatedness of practices more generally, and as such is attentive to the sort of ecological logic and non-representational style of thinking outlined in the previous chapter. It is attentive to this ecological logic in that this emphasis on experience as being-with the world highlights the ways in which the body is dynamically and intimately inter-twined with its environment in such a way that the two can not be easily separated out, and how, in this intertwining, the subject is a product of such relations, not an author of them.

Given that the body of work collected under the title ‘phenomenology’ is expansive and by no means homogenous or consistent (different phenomenologists took very different approaches but also many experienced ‘turns’ in their own thinking), and that there are a number of different points of engagement and re-reading through post-structuralism that can be undertaken (as suggested above), in this chapter I am going to

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6 A reinvigorated engagement with phenomenology is by no means confined to geography. There have been a number of recent attempts to move beyond phenomenology (to variable degrees) by engaging it. This can be seen in the development of ‘Christian Phenomenology’ (Henry 2003), certain strands of speculative realism (see Harman 2005) and also the development on an ‘objective phenomenology’ in the recent writings of Badiou (see Badiou 2009).
outline what the specific post-phenomenology being developed in this thesis is and what
the specific topics of conversation that this thesis will set up are. In doing so, in the next
section, I will further expand upon the initial definition of post-phenomenology given
above through a discussion of the work of Idhe who originally coined the phrase ‘post-
phenomenology’, and the connections and divergences of his work with related work
being done in geography. From there, in the next two sections, I will move on to discuss
the specific phenomenological works that this thesis will engage with and move beyond –
those of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty respectively. I engage with these two thinkers here
given Husserl’s development of a number of central phenomenological concepts (lived
experience, reduction, intentionality, intersubjectivity) which have come to be key points
in the critique of phenomenology, and given Merleau-Ponty’s re-reading of these
conceptions which provides an opening onto something like a post-phenomenology of
practice that is more attentive to our generative being-with the world. Finally, the chapter
closes with a discussion of the key points of critique of this work which the thesis seeks
to pursue.

II. Post-phenomenology

For the philosopher of science and technology Idhe (2003), post-phenomenology is an
attempt to escape the subject-centered nature of classical phenomenological thought,
and, specifically, the transcendental subject or ego found in Husserl (to be discussed
further shortly). As such, Idhe’s (2003: 11) “substitutes embodiment for subjectivity” and
so moves towards an existential, rather than transcendental, perspective. Alongside this
more existential focus, there is also a realization of the significance of the social or
socialized nature of this lived body. In engaging the lived body, Idhe posits, not
unproblematically, two bodies – one lived and one social – which are to be ‘combined’
rather than subsumed one into the other. Or, in Idhe’s (2003: 13) own words:

“first, I deny that body one [the lived] can be absorbed into the cultural, it is
the necessary condition for being a body and is describable along the lines of
corps vivant. But, equally, body one [the lived] is situated within and permeated
with body two [the social], the cultural significations which we all experience.
Embodiment is both actional-perceptual and culturally endowed”.

While this move is made in light of later work in phenomenology, particularly the
work of Merleau-Ponty and a critique of certain limitations of this, Idhe’s main post-
phenomenological move comes in the conversation he sets up between phenomenology
and pragmatist philosophy and work in technoscience. As Idhe has recently discussed
(see Idhe 2009), in connecting pragmatism and phenomenology, he employs
pragmatism’s emphasis on practice to counter the idealist tendencies of phenomenology in its emphasis on representation (as suggest above). This leads to a discussion of practices in terms of “an organism/environment model rather than a subject/object model” and so “a nonsubjectivist and interrelational phenomenology” (Idhe 2009: 10-11). However, he does maintain from phenomenology its more rigorous style of analysis through its discussions of variation analysis, embodiment, and the lifeworld. Further, from technoscience, Idhe (2009) folds in its interest in the role technology plays in social and cultural life and how particular technologies can mediate consciousness.

Therefore, the post-phenomenology developing in geography does share some commonalities with the post-phenomenology of Idhe (though a direct influence is by no means evident). This is specifically the case in terms of the development of a less subjectivistic phenomenology, but there is a distinction in the points of (more critical) conversation it sets up – post-structuralism is the chosen interlocutor rather than pragmatism. In this engagement and conversation with post-structuralism, one of the key targets of the post-phenomenology being developed in geography has been what Deleuze calls ‘vulgar phenomenology’, by which he means ‘intentionality’ (Deleuze 2006b: 89; see Wylie 2006). In its most simple sense, intentionality relates to the proposition that an experience is an experience of something – we are always looking at …, listening to …, thinking about …, and so on. It relates to a necessary ‘aboutness’. This aboutness implicates the presence in advance of experience of an intentional subject – for experience to be about something, there has to be an author of this aboutness and a point from which the directedness of the experience comes. This notion of intentionality is then closely tied to a particular idealist conception of the operations of subjectivity whereby the subject governs through “internal representational thought” (Rose 2006: 546) (I will return to this in more detail later both in relation to Husserl and Merleau-Ponty’s conceptions of intentionality). Therefore, the post-phenomenology being developed in geography and this thesis can be taken most simply to be the development of a phenomenology beyond intentionality (Moran 2000), that is, beyond the intentional subject.

This movement away from intentionality also highlights a divergence of the geographical post-phenomenology from the post-phenomenology of Idhe. While Idhe (2007) maintains a faith in the intentional correlate of experience, albeit re-conceptualized in terms of being interrelational, this is not maintained within the version of post-phenomenology developed in geography and in this thesis. Even if it is possible
for intentionality to be re-articulated as interrelational, there is still, for me at least, too much of a lingering directedness in this relation from the subject (as centre) to that which it is in relation to; for me, intentionality assumes too much of that which enters into a relation in advance of the actual taking place of the relation. This will be articulated in more detail later in Chapters 5 and 6 in relation to an attempt to enact “a transposition of the operations of subjectivity from the individual’s head to a particular relation between self and world” (Rose 2006: 546), and, in Chapter 7, as a move to understanding the subject as an “appearing-with” that arises in the body’s being-with other bodies (Critchley 1999: 58).

Diagram 1

Having provided this brief sketch as to what post-phenomenology has meant both within and outside of geography, and in this thesis, in the following sections I will outline a specific line of development and critique being traced across the history of phenomenology and onto the post-phenomenology of this thesis (see Diagram 1). This line originates in the work of Husserl and his initial conception of the phenomenological movement, and will be discussed in the next section. From there, in the following section, this line is traced through the work of Merleau-Ponty with his critique of Husserl’s idealism and his placing of the body at the centre of phenomenology. Finally, moving beyond Merleau-Ponty, this line of critique is furthered in the final section (and the rest of the thesis) in relation to three themes or trajectories that are intimately tied to
the ecological approach outlined in the previous chapter. Firstly, as suggested above, the thesis seeks to move beyond intentionality, and the implicit necessity of a pre-existent subject for this, towards an understanding of subjectivity as emerging in the creative interrelation of a body and world. Secondly, the thesis seeks to attend to the ways in which such a body is performatively interpolated into broader social, cultural and political framings or contexts, something which both Husserl and Merleau-Ponty do not adequately attend to (echoing my response to the critiques of non-representational theory outlined in the previous chapter). Finally, the thesis seeks to attend to the sensuousness of the body’s relatedness with the world, again something which is not adequately attended to by Merleau-Ponty and Husserl, but which is foregrounded in the non-representational context of this study and the related discussions of affect.

III. Origins of Phenomenology – Husserl

Whilst a number of geographers have held an interest in the work of Husserl in the past (see Buttimer 1976; Ley 1977; Pickles 1985), of late his work has garnered little attention; his more existential phenomenological heirs Heidegger, Levinas and Merleau-Ponty have surpassed Husserl as the most prominent phenomenological inspirations of geographical research and in the development of a post-phenomenology in geography (on Heidegger and Levinas see Harrison 2007b; on Levinas see Harrison 2008; Paterson 2004; on Merleau-Ponty see Wylie 2006). I want to engage Husserl here given his standing as the founder of the phenomenological movement, and, therefore, as it would appear appropriate to actually engage his work on some level in the development of a post-phenomenology, and also in that such an engagement with render more sharply the ‘post’ in post-phenomenology.

The Development of Phenomenology in Husserl

Although not the first to use the term, Husserl can be considered to be the founder of phenomenology – it was announced by him in 1901-02 as a radical new way of doing philosophy which was attentive to concrete lived experience rather than abstract metaphysical speculation (Moran 2000). Husserl’s initial conception of phenomenology drew significant inspiration from the work of Franz Bretano on descriptive psychology, although Husserl later distanced himself from this work (turning to Descartes and Kant),

7 While an engagement with Heidegger – Husserl’s one-time collaborator in the propagation of phenomenology – is less explicit in the thesis, it nonetheless provides the starting point for the post-phenomenological work of Nancy discussed in Chapter 7. A more substantial or explicit engagement with Heidegger is however for another thesis.
and his work inspired a number of significant names in the history of 20th century philosophy, most notably those mentioned above.

Over the course of his work, Husserl’s conception of phenomenology underwent significant revisions and developments. This development can be generally summarized into three broad periods (Moran 2000). Firstly, there are Husserl’s struggles with psychologism between 1887 and 1901. Here Husserl reacted against the dominance of psychologism, a school of thought which argued that thoughts, and the laws that governed them, were reducible to the psychical acts in which they subsist and the lawfulness of those acts (Zahavi 2003: 8). For psychologism the study of logic was to be the study of judgment and so it placed itself above both mathematics and philosophy as central in providing such disciplines with their ultimate explanation and ground (Russell 2006). In general, Husserl’s argument was that “psychologism deprives itself of the ability to explain the validity of logical laws and their ‘a priori’ status, and it consequently deprives itself of the ability to explain the logical unity that belongs to any body of knowledge” (Russell 2006: 11).

Secondly, there is the period of descriptive phenomenology between 1901 and 1913 whereby Husserl

“investigated the ‘acts of consciousness’ through which knowledge is achieved and theories are developed…He sought to explain through observation and detailed description of such ‘acts’ how…theories can be built up out of deductions and inferences, and how these in turn are grounded in simple propositions derived from evident acts of perception” (Russell 2006: 40-41).

Finally, there is Husserl’s mature period of transcendental phenomenology which ran from 1913 until 1938. During this, Husserl increasingly turned to Descartes and Kant in conceiving his phenomenology as needing to “explore not just the essential structures of all conscious experience and their intentional objects, but the rootedness of these essences and objects in a transcendental realm and in the transcendental ego as their ‘absolute source’” (Moran 2000: 125). Or, as argued in Husserl’s (2001a: 6) own words,

“only a transcendental science, that is, a science directed into the hidden depths of accomplishing cognitive life, and thereby a science that is clarified and justified – only this science can be the ultimate science; only a transcendental-phenomenologically clarified world can be a world that is ultimately intelligible, only a transcendental logic can be an ultimate theory of science, only it can be an ultimate, deepest, and most universal theory of principles and of norms of all sciences, and at the same time transform them into clarificatory and intelligible sciences”.
Given this variation in Husserl’s phenomenological project, and as its scope is too expansive for a simple summary here, I will now give a brief introduction to a number of central tenets of his project as they are variously significant to the post-phenomenology being developed here.

Lived Experience

Firstly, Husserl wanted his phenomenology to be attentive to actual lived experience. The rallying call for phenomenologists was: “we must go back to the things themselves” (Husserl 2001b: 168). Phenomenology was to be a practice rather than a system. By this practice

“[p]henomenology is best understood as a radical, anti-traditional style of philosophizing, which emphasizes the attempt to get to the truth of matters, to describe phenomena, in the broadest sense as whatever appears in the manner in which it appears, that is as it manifests itself to consciousness, to the experiencer”

(Morän 2000: 4).

Phenomenology thus seeks to avoid misconceiving experience as a result of presuppositions based on religious/cultural traditions, everyday common sense, or science and philosophy. Explanations are not to be imposed on phenomena in advance but rather, the phenomena is to be understood “from within” (Morän 2000: 4). The phenomenological investigation “should be guided by what is actually given, rather than by what we expect to find given our theoretical commitments…We should, in other words, not let preconceived theories form our experience, but let our experience determine our theories” (Zahavi 2003: 44-45). This ‘getting back to the things in-themselves’ was to be achieved by “sticking solely to what can be demonstrated with evidence. And this means vigilantly avoiding all metaphysical speculation and positing of concepts and faculties” (Russell 2006: 51). In Husserl’s own words, “genuine science, must neither make nor go on accepting any judgment as scientific that I have not derived from evidence, from ‘experiences’ in which the affairs and affairs-complexes in question are present to me as ‘they themselves’” (Husserl 1988: 13 [emphasis in original]). This is referred to as the ‘principle of principles’ and leads to the second main tenet of Husserl’s phenomenology: the reduction.

The Reduction

For Husserl, the practice of phenomenology required a radical shift in viewpoint akin to a suspension or ‘bracketing’ of such natural, everyday attitudes to the world, of all “‘world positing’ intentional acts which assume the existence of the world” (Morän 2000:
2). This was to lead the phenomenologist back to pure transcendental subjectivity, to allow them to “isolate the central essential features of the phenomena under investigation” (Moran 2000: 11). This is an attempt to be attentive to what Husserl called the phenomena’s ‘mode of givenness’, or the manner of their being given to us. One way we can understand this, as Russell (2006: 64-66) notes, is through an examination of doubt. When we doubt the existence of an object something is altered in the way that we relate to that entity. In the act of doubling our usual positing of that object, as found in our natural attitude towards the world, is suspended (Husserl 1988: 3). This alters our mode of relating to that object; it throws the object into greater relief. For Husserl the reduction was then to “individuate correctly the domain of pure consciousness and the domain of meaning-constitution” (Moran 2000: 78).

In line with Husserl’s critique of psychologism (see Husserl 2001b), while psychologism approaches consciousness as it is a real phenomenon, phenomenology, through the application and practice of the reduction, considers consciousness as a transcendental phenomenon, as the origin of objectivity (Russell 2006). This takes the emphasis away from particular lived experiences within a particular environment or ‘life-world’ (the worldly situation of a subject within a socio-cultural environment), towards a more impersonal and less located, universal source of experience (Lea 2009, forthcoming).

Overall, we can discern three theoretical reasons for Husserl’s introduction of the reduction: firstly, it allowed a detachment from all conventional opinion; secondly, it allowed the return to, and isolation of, the central structures of subjectivity; and finally, it prevented the transformation of hard-won eidetic (or essential) insights back into psychological insights (Moran 2000). In light of this it may seem that the reduction is something of a turning away from the world, but Husserl always argued that it was in fact the opposite. Husserl saw the reduction as “brining the richness of our intersection into the world to light in a new manner…To experience the reduction is to experience an enrichment of one’s subjective life – it opens infinitely before one” (Moran 2000: 79 & 147). The reduction, for Husserl, in fact acts as an expansion of the field of research (Zahavi 2003: 46).

The development of the reduction in Husserl led to two prominent consequences (Moran 2000). Firstly, it led Husserl in a Cartesian and Neo-Kantian direction towards

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8 This is different from Cartesian skepticism as it is not about arriving at ‘the last man standing’ (the cogito), but instead it puts all of experience in brackets so that we comport ourselves in a different way (Russell 2006).
the transcendental ego as the formal structure of all self-experience (Husserl 1988). At the same time, it led him towards the way in which consciousness is completely caught up in the world (Zahavi 2003: 51-52), wrapped up in it’s intentional correlate – the third key tenet of Husserl’s general oeuvre.

**Intentionality**

We can understand the intentional structure of consciousness to be a form of ‘aboutness’. For example, every act of loving is a loving of something, every act of seeing a seeing of something etc. (Husserl 1988: 33; Husserl 2001a: 20). The intentional structure of consciousness finds consciousness directed beyond itself to a vast array of objects (Russell 2006) – there is an ‘object-directedness’ (Zahavi 2003: 14). As Moran (2000: 16) notes, “[t]he point, for Husserl, is that disregarding whether or not the object of the act exists, it has meaning and a mode of being for consciousness, it is a meaningful correlate of the conscious act”. Intentionality is then the way in which “the flux of experience gets polarized into unities of sense, in virtue of which we are conscious of identifiable and reidentifiable objects” (Smith 2003: 108). This allowed Husserl to explore the domain of ‘meaning-correlates’ of conscious acts and their interconnections and binding laws. For Husserl, in our intentional experience – which we gain full access to in the reduction – we are always transcending consciousness towards the objective (Moran 2000). However, we can distinguish intentional consciousness around what Husserl calls ‘noetic’ and ‘neomatic’ analyses. The ‘noetic’ analysis examines the structure of the acts, while the ‘neomatic’ analysis looks at the structure of the object. In these terms, the ‘noetic’ is then concerned with the ‘mode of givenness’ of the object – with how conscious acts present the object (is it material, imagined etc.) – while the ‘neomatic’ analyzes the differences in the object presented; it analyzes the meaningfulness of the object. The first relates to the ‘how’, while the later relates to the core of the object itself. Through an analysis of both the how and the object itself, Husserl argues that transcendental phenomenology can get at the objective within the subjective (Russell 2006; Zahavi 2003).

This structure of intentionality, although often understood as an active pursuit, is not always so – it is not necessarily in fact part of a conscious activity on behalf of the subject. We can think of acts of perception which may be passive, such as listening – we can’t help but hear a sound.\(^9\) Relatedly, we can understand a non-intentional relation in

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\(^9\) This is something that will be returned to in the discussion of the active and passive synthesis in Chapter 6, but also in Chapter 7 – though not directly addressing Husserl – in the discussion of Nancy’s conception of listening.
terms of sensation. Husserl argued that not all aspects of our lived experience are intentional in the sense of presenting something to our attention. Sensations, for Husserl, are not intentional. Instead, they are a non-intentional real part of the act; they accompany the intentional act as experiences that are simply undergone (Waldenfels 2004). They are non-intentional “because they lack an intrinsic object-reference” (Zahavi 2003: 27). This said, there is still something of an intentionality in such passivity in that there is a latent intentionality, or a hidden intentionality there to be actualized (see Husserl 2001a: 21). We could perhaps say there is an ‘about-to-be aboutness’ (I will return to this in Chapter 6 in more detail). They are a part of every perceptual act but they are not what make that act an intentional act. For Husserl, the synthesis of sense in the initial act of interpretation is a non-conceptual act; it is distinct from the conception and naming of an object (Moran 2000; Russell 2006).

To summarise, we can understand Husserl’s conception of intentionality in the following manner:

“Husserl sees our mental processes as, normally speaking, object-directed acts. When directed at a material object, the act is always only a partial view of the object; nevertheless, it has the sense of grasping the object as it is. This sense of reaching to the object and grasping it as what it is is enabled by the sensuous given substratum, the non-intentional experience undergone, being grasped and shaped through an act of interpreting which yields up the ‘interpreting sense’. This sense in turn is acknowledged in one form or another by the act quality, be it a judgment, a wish, and so on” (Moran 2000: 118).

**Intersubjectivity**

Finally, the last central tenet I’m going to discuss here is Husserl’s conception of intersubjectivity, or intersubjective experience. Husserl came to see his understanding of intersubjective experience as central to his phenomenological project as “objects cannot be reduced to being merely my intentional correlates if they can be experienced by others as well” (Zahavi 2003: 115). Therefore, the ability to intersubjectively experience the object guarantees its real transcendence. This makes the knowledge of the presence of other minds essential as only “insofar as I experience that Others experience the same objects as myself do I really experience these objects as objective [opposed to subjectively] and real” (Zahavi 2003: 116). There has to be a “thereness-for-everyone” (Husserl 1988: 92). This confirms the validity of the phenomenological experience as “the very constitutive relation between intersubjectivity and objectivity is a prior in nature” (Zahavi 2003: 116).
In terms of the recognition of the presence of other minds, or the experience of intersubjectivity (Russell 2006), Husserl understood the consciousness of others in terms of a secondary act of constitution that followed and modified consciousness’s primary act of constitution (Sanders 2008). It was by this act of consciousness ‘overstepping itself’ that made possible experiences in which “not all my modes of consciousness are modes of my self-consciousness” (Husserl 1988: 135). Initially, Husserl employed the concept of empathy in relation to the experience of intersubjectivity and the ability of a subject to read other’s actions as analogous to expressions of their own inner states. Here empathy referred to a process whereby a primary experience of a bodily manifestation or state of an other – for example, a blushing face – allows for the assumption of, or reveals, a secondary manifestation that is not directly experienced – that there is a subject present in that body who is embarrassed. Here the body of the other is experienced as expressing inner psychical states (Moran 2000).

Later, Husserl radicalized this problem of the experience of the other so as to approach it not in terms of ‘how do I understand others?’ but rather ‘how is the other constituted for me?’ While the experience of the other, for Husserl, is “a natural and inextricable part of my consciousness”, this experience is not given in the same way that objects are given (Moran 2000: 176). Rather the other is given through ‘appresentation’ and ‘pairing’. As Sanders (2008: 143) notes, “[a]ppresentation explains the process whereby the direct perceptual presentation of one object mediates or makes possible the indirect perception of certain other aspects of that object that are themselves inaccessible to direct perception”. In terms of the experience of the other, the experience is unfulfillable by the subject, but something is indicated in it. Something akin to analogy occurs here in the form of a ‘pairing’. Again from Sanders (2008: 143), “[p]airing occurs when one object is regularly presented – thereby ‘associated’ – with another”. This interrelated process comes down to a process of recognition whereby the direct perceptual experience of another body involves the sense of perceiving another subject other than yourself. From this, a pairing occurs – when a similar body is experienced it is assumed a subject is also present in that body and which expresses itself through that body. The other body is experienced as a body like your own.

**Husserl’s Contributions**

On the basis of the development of these key concepts, there are a number of contributions Husserl made towards the understanding of practice. Firstly, and very simply, Husserl wanted to be attentive to actual lived experience, to what people did.
More specifically, and particularly given his conceptions of lived experience and the reduction, Husserl sought to provide a scientific account which was grounded in experience, and particularly experience prior to the colorings of the ideas, or presuppositions, of science and their unreflexive presentation of objectivity (Pickles 1985: 3). This contributed to his popularity in the humanist geographies of the 1970s as his ideas facilitated a description of “man’s geographical experiences as they are ‘actually’ experienced – as meaningful, value-laden experience prior to the abstractions of science” (then positivist spatial science)(Entrikin 1976: 629). Further, and related to this, this removed any notion of there being hidden explanatory mechanisms or a more significant realm of enquiry than such experience. Rather, for Husserl, “the drama of the world plays itself out within specific appearances, not behind or beneath them” (Harman 2005: 21).

However, there are also a number of problems with Husserl's phenomenology, many of which are related to his idealist conception of the subject, as was seen in his conception of the reduction and the belief that individual experience could be transcended and intersubjectively confirmed. It is questionable whether Husserl actually returned to ‘the things themselves’ and rather only to their presentation to human consciousness (Harman 2009: 151). Therefore, I will now move on to discuss the work of Merleau-Ponty, and particularly how he develops central aspects of Husserl’s phenomenology by foregrounding the central role the body plays within perceptual experience and so giving phenomenology a more existentialist slant. This will highlight key criticisms of the work of Husserl just discussed and so mark an initial move towards a post-phenomenology.

IV. Phenomenologies of the Body – Merleau-Ponty

Merleau-Ponty’s understanding of phenomenology was intimately related to his interpretation of the work of Husserl. Therefore, a detailed elaboration of a number of phenomenological concepts taken up from Husserl by Merleau-Ponty is warranted here as there are a number of different points of emphasis in these which open up the possibility for developing a number of post-phenomenological trajectories. Following an elaboration of these concepts, I will then go on to discuss in detail the central aspects of Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy of the body which further elucidates this more existential phenomenology and lays the grounds for this post-phenomenology.
Merleau-Ponty's Modification of Husserl

For Merleau-Ponty (2002: vii), phenomenology was a “style of thinking” that seeks an account of the world as we are actually involved in it. It is an account garnered through our actual experience. Rather than theorizing about the world, such an account was to come from actually living it (Matthews 2006). Merleau-Ponty (1964: 25) was attempting to develop a method “for getting closer to present and living reality”, or as he calls it, a ‘primordial’ level of experience. To do this, phenomenology “must set aside all scientific explanations of perception and the perceived in order to investigate the pre-scientific experience that such experience takes for granted” (Toadvine 2008: 22). While phenomenology is often thought of as an attempt to disclose essences (as was just seen in the work of Husserl), Merleau-Ponty gives this an existentialist slant, stating that phenomenology puts “essences back into existence” and therefore “does not expect to arrive at an understanding of man and the world from any starting point other than that of their facticity” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: vii). There are overtones of realism here (see Merleau-Ponty 1964: 31-32), but Merleau-Ponty was trying to guide a path between idealism and realism (Carman 2008). Merleau-Ponty (2002: xiv) wanted to lay emphasis on our ‘being-in-the-world’ which “does away with any kind of idealism”. This marks a significant initial move away from Husserl which gives greater weight to the world, and suggests something of an existence independent of our experience of it. The subject is decentred.

This account of the world was to proceed through the phenomenological reduction. For Merleau-Ponty, “[t]he point of the reduction is to get beyond our common-sense prejudices associated with the ‘natural attitude’ in which we unreflectively encounter the world” (Gutting 2001: 187). However, this was not to be a complete removal from the world (Matthews 2006). Merleau-Ponty, although taking the reduction from Husserl, read the reduction from an anti-idealist perspective. We need to withdraw from the world as we commonly think it, “we must break with our familiar acceptance of it”, and approach it with something like an attitude of “wonder in the face of the world”.

In this preface Merleau-Ponty (2002: ix-xii) states:

“The world is there before any possible analysis of mine, and it would be artificial to make it the outcome of a series of syntheses which link, in the first place sensations, then aspects of the object corresponding to different perspectives, when both are nothing but products of analysis, with no sort of prior reality”.

This suggests his realism. He also states however that “I am the absolute source”, suggesting an idealism. This is balanced with the middle road of there not being an “inner man, [rather] man is in the world, and only in the world does he know himself…[I am] a subject destined to the world”.

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(Merleau-Ponty 2002: xv). The reduction was to be a relaxing of our ties to the world so that its strangeness can become apparent. This relearning was to involve the ‘bracketing off’ of our ‘natural attitude’ to the world and a learning to not accept the theories about the world given to us by empirical science as suggested above (Matthews 2006).

Not only did Merleau-Ponty not advocate a complete reduction, he did not believe such completion to be possible. This would entail a withdrawal from our necessarily embodied perspective (see below). Merleau-Ponty’s reduction was not to be a “purification of consciousness of all empirical content”, but rather a “reflective effort to disclose our pre-reflective engagement in the world” (Toadvine 2008: 24). Therefore, we are not transcendental subjects and so Merleau-Ponty further distances himself from Husserl here. Rather,

“the withdrawal produces a more explicit awareness of the precise ways in which we are inextricably involved in the world...The phenomenological reduction [in Merleau-Ponty], therefore, is not the attainment of a new standpoint from which we view previously inaccessible philosophical truths but a means of sloughing off false conceptions due to, for example, the abstractions of science and ordinary language, and of returning to our original position in the midst of the world – a position that, in some sense, we have never entirely abandoned”

(Gutting 2001: 187 [emphasis added]).

The final main aspect of Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology is his adoption, and again re-interpretation, of Husserl’s conception of intentionality. This is again an anti-idealist interpretation of Husserl’s concept. For Merleau-Ponty, intentionality was not only that consciousness is consciousness of something, a directedness, which would suggest a prioritizing of the subject. Rather, for Merleau-Ponty, intentionality expresses “the inextricable unity of world and consciousness, with neither assimilated to the other” (Gutting 2001: 188). As just suggested, there is not here a subordination of the ‘phenomenological field’ to a transcendental subject. Rather, for Merleau-Ponty, the unity of the world is “lived as ready-made or already there” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: xix) – such unity is not a product of conscious judgment (Toadvine 2008).

In sum, phenomenology’s role, for Merleau-Ponty, is the disclosure of the world. This disclosure, however, is not to be understood as the expression of a pre-existing being. Rather, it is in fact “the laying down of being” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: xxii). This is ultimately tied to Merleau-Ponty’s conception of our necessarily embodied engagement with that world, something that moves away from Husserl’s more idealist conception of subjective lived experience and his subordination of the world to that subject, which I will outline in more detail now.
Phenomenology of Perception

In giving the body a central place in his phenomenology, Merleau-Ponty “rejects dualistic theories of the body and soul and takes as his task the articulation of the prediscursive structures of existence…[locating]…subjectivity not in the consciousness or in the mind, but in the body” (Longhurst 1997: 488). There is no ontological separation of the experiencing ‘I’ and the body: “[t]he union of soul and body is not an amalgamation between two mutually external terms” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 102). One is one’s body (Morris 2008). The body is primary. This primacy is not a primacy of a body in general, of the body, but the primacy of my body – it is “the standpoint from which I must perceive the world…the body cannot itself be understood in an objective, disengaged way” (Gutting 2001: 190).

Looking at Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of the body in more detail, I will focus on four key strands of this suggested by Thrift (1996) as each of these are central to this interest of this thesis in embodied experience and the relatedness of bodies to the spaces they occupy in the undertaking of a practice or performance. Firstly, “the human body is unique in playing a dual role as both the vehicle of perception [we see from and through the body] and the object perceived, as the body-in-the-world which ‘knows’ itself by virtue of its active relation to its world” (Thrift 1996: 13). The body is lived. Therefore, the body exceeds ontological categories of objectivity and subjectivity; it is not only a biological entity, nor just a vehicle for my subjectivity (Morris 2008). The body is that which we cannot leave behind in that it is a “‘necessary condition’ for perceiving things”, but equally “cannot be surveyed in the same way they can” (Hass 2008: 76-77). This is not to say that it is opposed to things. It is of the same ‘stuff’. Therefore,

“[m]y body is not lived as a thing, but as a vital power among the things, as a mobile, relatively stable, receptive creature that organizes the world as it goes. Contrary to Cartesianism, my body is closer to my ‘self’ than to objects, or perhaps better to say that my embodied self and the things of the world are closer together than Descartes’s dualistic thought can possibly imagine” (Hass 2008: 79).

Secondly, and following this, “the body is always active…it takes hold of the world” (Thrift 1996: 13); the body takes an active grip on the world (Thrift 1997). As Merleau-Ponty (2002: 94) states, “having a living body is…to be intervolved with a definite environment, to identify oneself with certain projects and to be continually committed to them”. In this taking hold of the world, “the body actively appropriates space through its intentional activity so that its experience of space becomes manifest within the body” (Allen 2004: 724). This is tied to Merleau-Ponty’s conception of
phenomenological intentionality as discussed previously and so arguably presents a well known problem of ‘classical phenomenology’. While Merleau-Ponty attempted to build a non-idealist conception of intentionality, he still reintroduced “the intentional subject that so much of post-structural theory has sought to disassemble” (Wylie 2006: 521). As Vasseleu (cited in Wylie 2006: 525) highlights, in the ‘Phenomenology of Perception’ Merleau-Ponty seems to “presuppose the perceiving subject and the perceivable object, rather than considering them as originating in a perceptual field”. This said, Merleau-Ponty’s later work does begin to revise this understanding – as will be discussed later – and is something which this chapter will seek to work through.

The third central aspect of Merleau-Ponty’s understanding of the body is its highlighting of how “the body is always located in time and space” (Thrift 1996: 13). However, as suggested previously, we do not exist in space like other objects:

“Our body is not in space like things; it inhabits or haunts space. It applies itself to space like a hand to an instrument, and when we wish to move about we do not move the body as we move an object. We transport it without instruments…since it is ours and because, through it, we have access to space”

(Merleau-Ponty 1964: 5).

Our body is not only located in time and space but in fact “I am conscious of the world through the medium of my body” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 94-95). Space and time themselves are “conceived through the body” (Thrift 1996: 13). Merleau-Ponty suggests we grasp external space (and time) through relations to our body:

“The word ‘here’ applied to my body does not refer to a determinate position in relation to other positions or to external coordinates, but the laying down of the first coordinates, the anchoring of the active body in an object, the situation of the body in the face of its tasks…

By considering the body in movement, we can see better how it inhabits space (and possibly time) because movement is not limited to submitting passively to space and time, it actively assumes them, it takes them up in their basic significance which is obscured in the commonplace of established situations”

(Merleau-Ponty 2002: 115 & 117).

As the body is our point of access to space, it is also the point of access to the ‘theatre of action’ that space provides. The body presents us with “the centre of potential action either towards the body itself or towards the object” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 125). It is not a matter of ‘I think’, but ‘I can’ (Morris 2008).

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11 We could also ask here, does the event of space not also grasp us? This is something I will return to as part of the post-phenomenological trajectories to be discussed shortly and in the discussion of the spatiality of street performing.
Finally, as a result of this locatedness in time and space, “bodies and things are not easily separated terms” (Thrift 1996: 13). The two become intimately related. We have a ‘corporeal schema’, a body image, but this image is not definite. As Merleau-Ponty (2002: 114) suggests, “the body image is dynamic”. It is possible for us to enact a “dilating [of] our being-in-the-world, or changing our existence by appropriating new instruments” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 116). There is an ontological openness of the body in its being-in-the-world (Morriss 2008). A number of examples can be used here, but the act of scratching an itch on one’s back provides clear illustration:

“It is not by means of access to a Cartesian abstract or geometrical space that one knows where to scratch in order to satisfy an itch on one’s back. This is true, even if one has to use an instrument like a stick. From this point, Merleau-Ponty claims, the stick is no longer an object for me but has been absorbed or incorporated into my perceptual faculties or body parts” (Grosz 1994: 91).

The stick becomes a “bodily auxiliary, an extension of the bodily synthesis” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 176); it enriches and recasts the body image. This highlights the ways in which our bodies are intimately enrolled in relations with the world around us and therefore not separable from that worldly ecology.

To these four central strands in Merleau-Ponty’s conception of the body I also want to add his discussion of bodily inter-subjectivity as “embodied subjectivity is also intersubjectivity: living bodies are involved with other living bodies from the start, and the perceptual field is social through and through” (Hass 2008: 98-99). Further, an understanding of intersubjectivity is also central to the substantive concerns of this thesis with the relations that occur between performer and audience in the undertaking of a performance, and the significance of this to the experience of performing.

Much of Merleau-Ponty’s discussion of intersubjectivity again comes from an engagement with, and re-reading of, the phenomenology of Husserl (see Husserl 1988). Merleau-Ponty took on board Husserl’s general frame, but focused less on Husserl’s emphasis on the subjective awareness of others, or the question of how they are constituted for me, towards an account of intersubjectivity that emphasizes their emergence from “the reciprocity of a shared corporeal existence” (Sanders 2008: 144). In doing so, Merleau-Ponty (2002) aims to avoid premising his understanding of intersubjectivity on the basis of a subject-object dualism, which, for him, will dissolve the problem of the question of the presence of other minds. Under such a dualism to see a body is only to see an object. Seeing a human body is the same as seeing a pen, a toaster, a computer monitor, and so on. A body is just an object or matter (Hass 2008).
However, given Merleau-Ponty does not see the living body as a mere object, but rather as a body-subject, this does not separate off the presence of other selves. Merleau-Ponty (2002: 409) asks: “If my consciousness has a body, why should other bodies not ‘have’ consciousnesses?”

This, however, does not entirely solve the problem. How are we to know which bodies ‘have’ consciousness? For Merleau-Ponty this comes down to behavior. I’m not just a body; I am a behaving body. This behaving body moves out into the world and projects itself into that world. Therefore, through our behaviors we become ‘paired’ (Hass 2008): “I see another subjectivity invested with equal rights appear, because the behavior of the other takes place within my perceptual field” (Merleau-Ponty 1964: 17-18). It needs to be made clear that this pairing does not occur as a reflective act of judgment. It is not the case that we look to our own behavior, then look at another’s behavior, and infer by analogy that another self is there. Rather, this pairing occurs at the level of the lived, not the predicate: “we literally find ourselves in an intersubjective world, …we have been ‘coupling’ with other selves long before we come to explicit self-consciousness” (Hass 2008: 108). Equally, given the perspectival nature of our embodied existence, and therefore of our encounter with the other, as suggested above, it is not possible that the other be known completely (Busch 1992). There is, however, a sense of reciprocity or sharing of existence: “[t]o be a consciousness or rather to be an experience is to hold inner communication with the world, the body and other people, to be with them instead of being beside them” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 111). This is illustrated in Merleau-Ponty’s (2002: 413) discussion of dialogue:

“In the experience of dialogue, there is constituted between the other person and myself a common ground; my thought and his [sic] are interwoven into a single fabric, my words and those of my interlocutor are called forth by the state of the discussion, and they are inserted into a shared operation of which neither of us is creator. We have here a dual being where the other is for me no longer a mere bit of behavior on my transcendental field, not I in his. We are collaborators in a consummate reciprocity. Our perspectives merge into each other, and we coexist through a common world. In the present dialogue, I am freed from myself, for the other person’s thoughts are certainly his; they are not of my own making, though I do grasp them the moment they come into being, or even anticipate them. And indeed, the objection which my interlocutor raises to what I say draws from me thoughts which I had no idea I possessed, so that at the same time that I lend him thoughts, he reciprocates by making me think too”.

This emphasis on sharing, reciprocity, and the establishment of a common ground, brings us into proximity to Merleau-Ponty’s later thought, and specifically to his writings
around the ‘flesh’, to which I will now turn in that it marks an even more significant departure from Husserl than that already discussed and so takes the potential post-phenomenology to be found in Merleau-Ponty further.

**The Visible and the Invisible**

The relationship between the body, things, and others was taken further in Merleau-Ponty’s last (uncompleted) work, ‘The Visible and the Invisible’, and specifically in his development of the notion of the ‘flesh’ (Merleau-Ponty 1968). Unfortunately, Merleau-Ponty died before completing the manuscript. While it is then not necessarily possible to complete a working ontology from these extant fragments (Moran 2000), they can at the very least be used to chart a trajectory from this work, what I am calling here a ‘post-phenomenological’ trajectory.12

In the existent materials, Merleau-Ponty “enables a significantly less intentionalist and less subject-centred phenomenology” (Wylie 2006: 522). The ‘flesh’ is “a single fabric which refers to both the flesh of the body and the flesh of the world” (Thrift 1996: 13) which fold back into each other. It is “a connective tissue of interior and exterior horizons” (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 131 [footnote]). The flesh, for Merleau-Ponty (1968: 139 [emphasis in original]), therefore refers not to a privileged animate category of being but is taken at a more elemental level:

“The flesh is not matter, is not mind, is not substance. To designate it, we should need the old term ‘element’, in the sense it was used to speak of water, air, earth, and fire, that is, in the sense of a general thing, midway between the spatio-temporal individual and the idea, a sort of incarnate principle that brings a style of being wherever there is a fragment of being. The flesh is in this sense an ‘element’ of Being.”

Therefore, in thinking of the flesh as elemental in this sense refers it to a “precommunicative domain out of which both subject and object, in their mutual interaction, develop…Subject and object, mind and body, the visible and the invisible, are intercalated” (Grosz 1994: 102-103). This understanding potentially presents a refiguring of Merleau-Ponty’s ontological openness of the body beyond subjective experience (Morris 2008).

In light of this, in relation to our corporeal schema, the body is “a system which is open to the world, and correlative with it” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 166 [footnote]):

“The subject and the object are inherently open to each other, for they are constituted in the one stroke dividing the flesh into its various modalities.

12 That said, it is important to note that there have been attempts to complete Merleau-Ponty’s late work. See Low (2008).
They are interlaced one with the other, not externally but through their reversibility and exchangeability, their similarity-in-difference and difference-in-similarity. Things solicit the flesh just as the flesh beckons to and as an object to things. Perception is the flesh’s reversibility, the flesh touching, seeing, perceiving itself, one fold (provisionally) catching the other in its own self-embrace”

(Grosz 1994: 103).

However, this reversibility and self-embrace is never complete, it is always open, “always imminent and never realized in fact...always on the verge...[but] never reach[ing] coincidence; the coincidence eclipses at the moment of realization” (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 147). This should therefore not be thought of as a symmetrical relation or as a negation of difference. Rather, although not opposed to me, that which is folded is separate from me and it is this separation that makes possible their perception: “[i]f there were no difference, everything would blur into monochrome and perception as we know it would vanish” (Hass 2008: 130). It is not a case of symmetrical exchange, but overlapping, or “overlapping through divergence” (Hass 2008: 134).13

We can return here for a moment to our previous discussion of intersubjectivity, and specifically a charge that has been levied at Merleau-Ponty by Levinas (see Busch 1992; Sanders 2008). The charge is that his account of intersubjectivity, especially when thought in terms of reversibility, reduces the other to the same. For Levinas, Merleau-Ponty’s account cannot account for the transcendence of the other (Sanders 2008). Given that the other has ontological status in Merleau-Ponty and is of the same ‘element’ of being, this does not let the other be ‘otherwise than being’ which, for Levinas, is necessary for the other not to be reduced to the same (see Levinas 1998). However, while Merleau-Ponty might not present the other as absolutely other as Levinas desires, as suggested above, this is not to say that he places the other in reciprocity or fusion. There is difference in the reversibility of the flesh; the reversibility of the flesh functions as an interval or rupture, and “[f]usion is impossible as lived experience never proceeds from a situation ‘where both known and unknown terms belong in advance to the same order’” (Merleau-Ponty cited in Sanders 2008: 148).

Returning to the problem of the intentional subject mentioned previously, in Merleau-Ponty’s shift between his earlier ‘Phenomenology of Perception’ and his later ‘The Visible and the Invisible’ he begins to address this. In his introduction of the flesh

13 See Wylie’s (2009: 283) discussion of absence here which, drawing on the work of Derrida (2005), suggests that Merleau-Ponty in fact does not present non-coincidence as a “constitutive absence” but rather presents coincidence always as a “possible-in-principle” and therefore “remains wedded to at least the promise of coincidence”.

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as “a general ‘element’ which designates both the body and the visible world”, we significantly soften the intentional subject; “the body-subject is now ‘of’ the world: body and world, subject and object, are conjoined as flesh” (Wylie 2006: 525). This shows “how both subject (the phenomenological tacit cogito) and its object (the world) derive from a common ‘stuff’…which sustains them as two distinct but inextricably entwined dimensions of being” (Gutting 2001: 209). We no longer just have an intentional subject acting and giving meaning to the world, but also a world that gives meaning to the subject – they exist as an ‘interworld’ (Moran 2000: 403). Therefore, this conception of the flesh is of great significance to the ecological logic outlined in the previous chapter given the ways in which it emphasizes the body’s complex relatedness with, and origins in, the environments in which it is placed.

V. Post-phenomenological Trajectories

From Merleau-Ponty’s later writings there is then a suggestion of a post-phenomenological trajectory in his work which moves away from an explicit focus on the intentional subject and therefore towards a more ecologically related understanding of the subject-body-world in practices. In this thesis I want to pursue this trajectory further, and also build on Merleau-Ponty’s work by adding a couple of other trajectories which his work (nor Husserl’s) arguably does not pursue enough. Therefore, I will conclude this chapter by outlining these three trajectories in some detail. I am calling these trajectories here as I do not see the lines of thought being traced in this thesis as either definitive or as holding the potential within them to be pursued to completion. Rather, they are a series of openings onto a topic to be further complicated in the future.

Firstly, in terms of this softening of intentionality, I want to take this further. While the subject and the body in Merleau-Ponty’s late writings become intercalated, this move is, like these writings, arguably not completed. There is a danger that Merleau-Ponty re-installs a human transcendence in his discussion of embodied subjectivity in his starting with the subject-object distinction (Hinchliffe 2003). The early Merleau-Ponty at least sets up this distinction in terms of an object existing only in terms of there being someone to perceive it and, in doing so, maintains the vocabulary of idealism inherited from Husserl (see Merleau-Ponty 1964: 16, 29 & 42). Further, there is still a danger of a lingering humanism in his notion of flesh. As Harman (2005: 173) notes, while “Merleau-Ponty brings humans and nature into reciprocal relation through the flesh of the world”, he runs into the problem that “the mutual duel only functions as long as humans are on the scene”. Deleuze and Guattari (1994) also see a matter of concern in the apparent
‘peity’ of Merleau-Ponty’s conception of the flesh. Deleuze and Guattari see the flesh as too ‘tender’. It is “too civilized” and “too close to the teleology of consciousness endorsed by the ‘Phenomenology of Perception’” (Alliez 2004: 73). As Rajchman (2000: 8-9) clarifies:

“Merleau-Ponty’s notion of the flesh still harbors a strange peity, tied with a dream of an originary experience or urdoxa … On the other hand the ‘being of sensation’ [to be found in Deleuze] that one extracts from common perceptions and personalized affects, or from the space of representation and the re-identification of objects, leads not to an intersubjective orientation in the world, but rather to a mad zone of indetermination and experimentation from which new connections may emerge”.

In Chapters 5-7, I aim to develop this post-humanist trajectory in maintaining no such subject-object distinction or lingering human transcendence or idealism, but rather address this tension through a shift in emphasis from intersubjectivity to intercorporeity (Csordas 2008) and a focus on the interrelation of more-than/non-human bodies. In Chapter 6 in particular, this is achieved in relation to a specific engagement with Husserl’s own writings and a specific point at which Husserl approaches, but fails to reach, this himself. My aim here is to develop and maintain the idea that, in light of such writings, “[s]ubjectivity may no longer be the basis or fount of intelligibility, but an account in which subject and object, self and world, devolve or precipitate from interrogative materialities may still be written” (Anderson and Wylie 2009: 323).

Secondly, one aspect of our embodied existence that Merleau-Ponty’s work arguably does not pay enough attention to is the way in which our bodies are socialized into a specific comportment (Hass 2008). While not wanting to fall into the position of a body “totally imprinted by history” or one that is strictly constituted by societal norms and practices (Foucault 2000: 376), Merleau-Ponty’s writings do not adequately account for the ways in which the body is performatively interpolated within broader societal framings. This returns to the critiques of work in non-representational theory outlined in the Introduction to the thesis and the ecological approach suggested in response. As Hass (2008: 93) suggests “Foucault’s thought is powerfully revealing of the coercive influence of cultural forces, systems, and norms on living bodies – and the orientation is simply not present in Merleau-Ponty’s thought. For Merleau-Ponty, the experiential field is a largely happy place”. While Merleau-Ponty does talk of the interrelation of the biological and the personal in terms of the formation of habit or the relation between the sedimented and spontaneous (see Merleau-Ponty 2002: 95), he has little or no recognition that “culture coerces our bodies in a political way…he is missing a ‘body
politics”” (Hass 2008: 94). Therefore, throughout the thesis as a whole, and especially in Chapters 4 and 5 through the work of Lefebvre and Deleuze, I want to be attentive to such performative matrices of power which circulate through (though not entirely constitute) the body and impact upon practices.

The third and final trajectory comes from Serres in his conversation with Latour (Serres 1995). Here Serres speaks of what he feels to be, in fact, the ‘bodilessness’ of Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology, and phenomenology more generally. Such work, for Serres, is ‘emaciated’ (Connor 1999). As Serres writes:

“When I was young, I laughed a lot at Merleau-Ponty’s ‘Phenomenology of Perception’. He opens it with these words: ‘At the outset of the study of perception, we find in language the notion of sensation…’ Isn’t this an exemplary introduction? A collection of examples in the same vein, so austere and meager, inspire the descriptions that follow. From his window the author sees some tree, always in bloom; he huddles over his desk; now and again a red blotch appears – it’s a quote. What you can decipher in this book is a nice ethnology of city dwellers, who are hypertecnicalized, intellectualized, chained to their library chairs, and tragically stripped of any tangible experience. Lots of phenomenology and no sensation – everything via language…All around us language replaces experience” (Serres 1995: 131-132).

In line with this critique, which is by no means widely agreed on (see Harman 2005: 46), in this thesis I want to emphasize the vitality of embodied experience as opposed to this body emaciated by language. I am going to pay specific attention to the affective relations the street performing body enters into – still a ‘city dweller’, but a city dweller ‘out there’ experiencing – and try to convey some of this in the descriptions of the events that unfolded in my experiences of performing. I want to attempt to develop a style of presentation – though perhaps not as extreme as that Serres desires – that reaches towards the corporeal sensibilities and somatic sensations present in these events (Paterson 2009, forthcoming). Again, this trajectory will be carried on throughout the thesis, but most specifically in Chapters 5-7.

While these three trajectories do mark a substantial departure from Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, in some sense this sentiment of moving beyond is fitting given that the history of phenomenology can be understood as a series of divergences from Husserl, or, as Ricoeur noted, “the history of phenomenology is a history of Husserlian heresies” (Moran 2000: 3). This approach then warrants the title post-phenomenology both in that it moves far enough beyond phenomenology (both in terms of a genealogical development and in terms of its movement on from certain limitations of Husserl’s project) to warrant
the addition of the ‘post’, but still deserves the reference to phenomenology (rather than calling it simply post-structural) as this move is made from and through phenomenology.
Chapter 3

Researching street performance

“In the place of the pursuit of certainty in generating representations of the world, there is recognition that the world is so textured as to exceed our capacity to understand it, and thus to accede social science methodologies and forms of knowing will be characterized as much by openness, reflexiviting and recursivity as by categorization, conclusion and closure” (Davies and Dwyer 2007: 258).

“We simply do not have the methodological resources and skills to undertake research that takes the sensuous, embodied, creativeness of social practice seriously” (Latham 2003: 1998).

“When there has been so much discussion about the significance of the body, how do we write meaningfully about those everyday embodied experiences of touching and feeling, conjunctions of sensation and emotion that cannot arise without the physicality of the body?” (Paterson 2009, forthcoming).

I. Introduction

Given the ongoing interest in geography in practices of late, it is evident that attention needs to be paid to the methodologies with which geographers study these practices (Latham 2003) and the modes with which they are written up (McCormack 2002; Paterson 2009, forthcoming; Wylie 2005). In light of changes in the conception of research and academic practice (Davies and Dwyer 2007), and a concurrent shift in focus to “what is done not what is represented” (Crang 2003: 499), it has been drawn into question whether the “conventional methods used within geography” can “capture the more expressive, non-verbal…and emotive, non-cognitive aspects of social practice and performance” (Morton 2005: 663). From this, it has been asked how the traditional
methodologies of human geography – in depth interviewing, focus groups, participant observation, and so on – can attend to the excessive and open-ended nature of such practices and the world more generally. The question is then: how can we, as geographers, do justice to such practices when they will always escape our abilities to know or “are too complex to write down, explain fully, chart or map” (Morton 2005: 664)? In response to these challenges, it has been suggested that “we should work through how we can imbue traditional research methodologies with a sense of the creative, the practical, and being with practice-ness”, and that if “[p]ushed in the right direction there is no reason why these methods cannot be made to dance a little” (Latham 2003: 2000). In this chapter I want to contribute to such moves by experimenting with researching through the body, employing time-lapse photography, and videoing, but also by working creatively with participant observation (or observant participation), photography, interviews, and documentary analysis.

Further, in terms of writing practices, geographers have begun to make attempts at engaging the challenges this presents. In response to “the seemingly irresolvable paradox of finding a means to articulate such experience without limiting it to mere representation, without establishing yet another lexicon nor…an honest form of Cartesian introspection” (Paterson 2009, forthcoming), geographers have begun to experiment with performative writing which seeks to “give a word to a wordless movement without stifling the life of that movement…which is often below the cognitive threshold of representational awareness that defines what is admissible into serious research” (McCormack 2002: 470) and creative writing which develops a poetic sensibility so as to evoke rather than describe the practice under consideration (Paterson 2009, forthcoming; see Wylie 2005). In this thesis, particularly in Chapters 4 and 5, I have attempted to deploy some of this creative sentiment in writing in a way which will evoke the experiences undergone, as well as describe them, experimenting with different forms of narrative, as well as by presenting visual materials which evoke something of the events that occurred.

Therefore, I will spend the majority of this chapter discussing the various methods employed in researching street performance, the rationale behind their choice, and the challenges that emerged in their playing out. The relationship of each method to the empirical research questions outlined in the Introduction and post-phenomenological trajectories outlined in Chapter 2 is outlined in Table 3.1. Reference will also be made to the writing/presentation strategies employed. As such, the chapter will unfold as follows.
Firstly, I will discuss the use of ‘observant participation’, focusing specifically on how this entailed ‘researching through the body’. Following this, I will turn to the use of visual methodologies in the research and discuss the use of digital video recording and photography (including time-lapse photography). Finally, I will discuss the use of interviews and the analysis of documentary materials. Throughout these discussions reference will be made to the ethical issues that had to be addressed in conducting the research.

**Table 3.1: Questions and Methods**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Question Sub-theme</th>
<th>Method/Materials</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Trajectory</th>
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<tr>
<td>1) What happens when the street space is transformed into a performance place and how is this affected by the performance’s everyday and legislative context?</td>
<td>a) Intervention/transformation</td>
<td>(Time-lapse) Photography, Video, Interviews (Audience and Formal), Documents, and Observant participation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Performative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Everyday context</td>
<td>(Time-lapse) Photography, Video, and Observant participation</td>
<td>4 &amp; 5</td>
<td>Performative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Legislative context</td>
<td>Documents, Interviews (Formal and Performer), Observant Participation</td>
<td>4 &amp; 5</td>
<td>Performative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) How do the spatialities of the street, and the socialities that emerge therein, affect the embodied experience of performing and the performance?</td>
<td>a) Embodied experience of performing</td>
<td>Observant participation and Video</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Subjectivity, Performative, &amp; Sensuousness</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Embodied experience of performance</td>
<td>Observant participation, Video, Photography, and Interviews (Audience)</td>
<td>4, 6 &amp; 7</td>
<td>Subjectivity &amp; Sensuousness</td>
</tr>
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**II. Observant Participation**

The main research method employed was observant participation (Thrift 2000b). I am following Thrift in calling this observant participation, rather than participant observation, as this emphasizes the serious empirical involvement entailed (Dewsbury 2009, forthcoming). This consisted of “talking, witnessing, sensing and listening, and involve[ment in] the more experiential and felt qualities” of performing and performances (Morton 2005: 668). I employed this method to examine the experience of performing in the street and the audience’s experience of such performances, but also to examine the everyday routines and how performers intervened into these (see Table 3.1).
Such methods have “often been derided for being somehow soft and ‘touchy-feely’ [but] have in fact been rather limited in touching and feeling” and while “geographers have of late been including the ‘body’ in their research topics…these ideas have had a muted impact in terms of thinking through qualitative research practice” (Crang 2003: 494 & 499). While work on the body has become prominent in geography (see Chapter 5), it has not yet become something through which research is often done (Crang 2002; 2005); “[t]he body quite often ends up providing a sort of inescapable positioning of the researcher…but less often is the instrument of research” (Crang 2003: 499). There are some notable exceptions to this (see Longhurst, et al. 2008; McCormack 2002), and this thesis seeks to build on such initial moves. My involvement in the practice under study, and the focus on embodied experience in this, highlights the embodied nature of the research undertaken here.

The observant participation undertaken can be sub-divided roughly into two strands: 1) street performing, and 2) being a member of street performers’ audiences and an occupant of the street more generally.

Prior to the actual commencement of this specific research project, I busked regularly in Glasgow between May and August 2005 (see 3.1). Here I busked with a partner – I played guitar and he sang – and we played what could be loosely grouped as classic ‘singer-songwriter’ music (songs by The Eagles, James Taylor, Don McLean, Simon and Garfunkel, and so on). At this time the money we received from busking was our sole income. During this time I kept a research diary – primarily describing specific encounters that occurred with members of the audience, how specific spaces felt to perform in, and how variations in levels of donations affected my mood – and reflections from this did play a part in the initial development of the research themes present here, and they are also drawn on, often implicitly, within the discussions of the thesis.

While the main empirical focus for much of the thesis is Bath (see Chapter 4), during the actual term of this project, I busked in Bristol and Bath (see 3.2). The rational for the dual location will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5, but this primarily related to me getting used to busking again given the significant gap in time between busking in Glasgow and doing this research, with Bristol being more familiar to these previous experiences than Bath. Here I busked from May to July 2008, busking on average 2-3 times a week most weeks and playing for around 3 hours on each occasion. In total I busked for around 60 hours (excluding travel time, waiting for pitches etc.). Here my act
3.1 Busking in Glasgow

![Photo by Alyn Griffiths](image1)

3.2 Busking in Bath and Bristol

![Photos by Louise Rutt](image2)

entailed me playing instrumental acoustic guitar (including traditional Irish folk songs, contemporary folk-jazz, and some original compositions). During the time performing a research diary was kept which recorded the experiences generated (Whatmore 2003), and, in particular, the felt aspects of performing. Without pre-determining specific themes in advance of performing (other than being interested specifically in my embodied experiences of performing), and rather letting themes emerge as they became apparent, my notes focused on my relations to the materiality of the street and its everyday spatio-temporal patterns, other performers, members of the public, and so on. I noted how interactions, or a lack thereof, with passersby made me feel, how the patterns of
movements of people in specific spaces at specific times affected my sense of that space, how specific donations affected my mood differently, and so on.

This focus necessitated a shift from “comprehension to apprehension” in the forms of knowing involved in the research (Davies and Dwyer 2007: 258) and thus entails an acknowledgment that “the way we represent the world [in texts such as this thesis] is hindsighted, past participated, [and quite literally here in the visual methods discussed later] stilled like frames in a film. The way we experience the world is processual, unfinished” (Denning cited in Dewsbury and Naylor 2002: 254). In light of this, and in an attempt to make this tension more apparent, significant aspects of this thesis (especially Chapter 5) take the approach of narrating the unfolding of the fieldwork and specific events that occurred within it rather than taking a more thematizing or schematizing approach (see Wylie 2005). In Chapter 5 in particular, I combine extracts from my field-diary with more academic reflections so as to give a sense of the experiences and encounters that occurred during my time performing. This, I hope, serves in some way to forestall the danger of the research being too artificially frozen or rigidified in its presentation in written form and so making present something of the experiences that took place.

The writing of the research-diary also presented a challenge. When busking there is no clear ‘back-stage area’ (Mason 1992) and so nowhere that I could obviously take notes covertly, especially if I wanted to do this shortly after the event being noted occurred. Therefore, short notes were sketched during the time busking occasionally between songs to act as memory aids. These were worked over and written out more fully either at times where I took substantial breaks (such as when waiting for a pitch or if it rained), while waiting at the train station, on the train home, or immediately after I had arrived home. This was always done as soon as possible after finishing busking.

In addition to this time busking, I also spend time observing performances in Bath. This ran throughout the time I busked there, and continued in a more concentrated fashion (again around 3 times a week for around 3-4 hours per visit) between July and September 2008. This produced around 100 hours of observation. Again, a diary was kept of the experiences which focused on my embodied experiences of the performances of others – I participated as part of their audience. My diary notes focused on what affected me about their performance, what drew my attention (or did not), how I interacted with other audience members during a performance and how this made me feel, and so on. The notes taken were generally written out shortly after observing an
event or performance, as here I did not face as much of an issue with finding space and
time to make notes – it was relatively easy to find a bench or somewhere to sit and write
in a relatively inconspicuous manner. This observation was also undertaken at a more
detached level of standing back and watching how performers and audiences interacted
with each other and their broader environment – what performers and audiences said to
each other and what reactions arose from this, what non-verbal interactions (such as
clapping or gestures) occurred, how performers used aspects of the space (such as
benches) in their shows, and so on – and was additionally facilitated by the use of visual
recording technologies which I will discuss in detail shortly.

In undertaking this observant participation a number of issues arose. Firstly, in
terms of actually performing, the positionality of myself as researcher poses significant
questions. While I am more interested in studying the practice of street performance than
the lives of street performers and street performing as a lifestyle per se, and hence my
reticence to use the term ‘ethnography’, it is important to recognise the situated
knowledges of those participating in the research, including myself as researcher, in that
“[w]e are all caught up in a web of contexts…that shape out capacity to tell [stories]”
(Ley and Mountz 2001: 235). Although such reflexivity can act “as a means of avoiding
the false neutrality and universality of so much of academic knowledge”, it is in fact “an
extraordinarily difficult thing to do” (Rose 1997b: 305-306). Attempting to produce a
‘transparent self’ is in fact an attempt at “turning extraordinarily complex power relations
into a visible and clearly ordered space that can be surveyed by the researcher” (Rose
1997b: 310). This is especially difficult, as the theoretical discussions of Chapters 5-7 will
show, as the researcher and researched do not remain un-changing throughout the
research process (Crang 2002; 2003); the research is constitutive of them. This should be
apparent in the auto-biographical tone of Chapter 5 and its focus on my unfolding sense
of self and disposition toward street performing throughout the term of the fieldwork. It
may then be more fruitful to look for a reflexivity with the aim of producing “non-
overgeneralizing knowledges” (Rose 1997b: 315); a reflexivity that “can acknowledge that
it may not be adequate since the risks of research are impossible to know” (Rose 1997b:
317) and so be an acknowledgement of uncertainty.

In relation to this, there are some initial points that can be drawn. Significantly
here, I have busked in the past for purposes that were not primarily research-based – I
was a full-time ‘busker’ in Glasgow in the summer of 2005 before starting as a
postgraduate and my sole income came from this. While I did maintain a diary from this
period, this was more of an aside than the main purpose of being there. Further, for the period of research, I was busking part-time, while spending the rest of my time as a student analysing the materials generated and writing from them. That said, while some of the buskers and street performers I encountered performed in the street full-time, a number of those I spoke to also only performed part-time, either to supplement their income, or, as one stated, simply to ‘get out of the house’ as he worked from home. There were also a number of performers who were also apparently students busking in their summer holidays (as I had done in Glasgow previously), making my seasonal presence not untypical. In terms of age, some buskers were older than me, but also some were younger than me. It became very clear early on in the research that there is no such thing as a representative or typical busker. The complex demographic of street performers makes situating myself in relation to them rather difficult.

Perhaps another way in which I can situate myself is in relation to the issue of donations. Potentially, I may have related differently to the money donated to me than ‘real’ buskers or buskers who in some way relied on these donations. While this may be true to an extent, in some ways it may not be entirely the case. It is true that if I did not receive any donations this may not have had the same effect on me as a busker who was living off such money – I could still pay my rent at the end of the day, no matter how much I received, while they may not necessarily be able to. This is evident in the difference between busking in Glasgow and in Bristol/Bath for me – there was a more general worry if things weren’t going well in Glasgow and wondering about the implications of a slow day, etc.. Also, as I was there for research, even if I received small amounts of donations, this would not stop me from busking given I needed to for the research – others may have given up if it had turned out to be less profitable than they had hoped.

However, and related to this, in terms of my relation to the donation as a means of showing appreciation for the performance, in many ways this was arguably of the same order as other buskers – if I didn’t receive any donations I felt unappreciated and de-motivated since people did not appear to be enjoying my performance; if I received many, it felt good that people were enjoying my performance. There was a singular relation to each donation that comes through a conjunction of a multitude of different factors (something I discuss more in the section on donations in Chapter 5). Therefore, it is the case that the added factor of being there for research played a part in these constellations, but did not definitely or necessarily determine them.
This discussion of donations does lead into some of the ethical aspects of the research. As just suggested, during the research I received donations from the public. Therefore, there was an ethical consideration to be made in what to do with these donations – I did not feel comfortable keeping them as I was being funded to do the research – although a definite ethical response is not entirely obvious. It is important to note that there does in fact have to be an element of ‘improvisation’ and creative thinking in the ethical undertaking of field work (Thrift 2003b). The eventual use actually arose during the research in encountering another occupant of the street and trying to develop an ethical response to this encounter (Popke 2003).

Early on in my time busking, on my second busk in Bristol, I was situated opposite the entrance to the Galleries where a Big Issue seller was trying to work (see 3.2). I was conscious that he was shouting rather loudly, and was feeling a little guilty that he had to do so more than usual to be heard over my playing. As his shouting continued, he began to sound more and more desperate. As I sat there, constantly hearing his requests, I couldn’t help but feel guilty and that it might be partly down to my presence that he was struggling to sell his remaining copies. While this may have been entirely irrational, the longer it went on, the more guilty I felt. Eventually I couldn’t take it any longer and so, taking money from my hat, went and bought a copy from him.

From this encounter, combined in part with others that I will return to later in the thesis, I decided that it would be appropriate to donate the monies received during the research to the Big Issue charity. As with the encounter above, this feels like an ethical use of the monies received.

In a more general sense, the main ethical issue that arose in my use of observant participation in the research relates to disclosure of the research to those I encountered in the ‘field’. While I will talk about this specifically in relation to the use of visual recording technologies shortly, it is important to note here that during my time participating in the street (both busking and observing), although the research was not always advertised, I was open about my status as a researcher. If anyone questioned what I was doing I gave them a verbal description of the research and its aims, which as will be discussed later, often led to a longer conversation about their opinions on the research’s themes.

III. Visual Methods

As part of the research I employed video recording and photography (including time-lapse photography) in observing the performances of others, the impact their
performances made, and the more general spatio-temporal patterns of the street (see Table 3.1). The production of visual materials in research is nothing new, with many geographers and other social scientists producing images in their research (Rose 2007). However, recently the use of video in cultural geographic research has become increasingly fashionable (see Spinney 2009). Rather than proclaiming video to be the methodological answer to studying practices (as some seem rather keen to do), here I want to think about the actual, mundane pragmatics of using video to study practice. With a small number of notable exception (see Laurier and Philo 2005; Laurier 2007), this appears to be something geographers have thus far been somewhat slow to do.

Returning to photography for the moment though, there are a number of different ways in which images are employed in this thesis. Firstly, for example in the discussion of donations in Chapter 5, I predominantly use the sequences of images to illustrate and help in the visualization of what I am discussing. Further, and taking a distinction from Rose (2007), I use images as both ‘subordinate’ and ‘supplemental’. Subordinate images are images that are treated as something to be analyzed and which offer some evidence in the answering of research questions. In contrast, supplemental images are images that are used because of their excessive nature in relation to the researcher’s interpretation. They say (or do) something more than the text that accompanies them (either as commentary or more generally) (see Latham and McCormack 2009, forthcoming). In this project, I do primarily use images as subordinate images which are commented upon. However, I do not think that the supplemental nature of images can be easily separated off, so at times (see the start of Chapter 6 and some of the images in Chapter 4), the supplemental nature of images and their ability to “convey the ‘feel’ of specific locations” is drawn on (Rose 2007: 247).

In terms of the use of time-lapse photography more specifically, this was undertaken as a combination of the general observation of specific spaces whereby a camera was set up with a wide angle next to two of the central pitches in Bath next to the Abbey (see Chapter 4), but also in terms of the recording of specific events or performances (see 4.10 to 4.24 in Chapter 4). The use of time-lapse photography in the thesis arose as an attempt to address a specific methodological question arising from the theory being drawn on in the examination of the patterns of organization in the everyday and the intervention street performers make into this (see Chapter 4). In particular, the reason for employing time-lapse photography was to respond, in disagreement, to the following statement made by Lefebvre in relation to his ‘rhythmanalysis’: 

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“Rhythms: the music of the City, a scene that listens to itself, an image in the present of a discontinuous sum. Rhythms perceived from the invisible window, pierced into the wall of the façade...No camera, no image or series of images can show these rhythms. It requires equally attentive eyes and ears, a head and a memory and a heart”

(Lefebvre 2004: 36).

Lefebvre was “frustratingly illusive...about the tools of such a practice...[and] there are no clear methods for rhythmanalysis, only the metaphors of receptivity and exteriority” (Amin and Thrift 2002: 19). Therefore, I wanted to experiment with time-lapse photography as a potential means for undertaking and presenting rhythmanalysis, in that such images may be useful in displaying “notions of density, accretion, duration, dispersal, and flow” which all relate to the rhythms of the everyday (Harrison-Pepper 1990: 131). Part of this response is also qualified by the fact that, in this research at least, the act of taking these photographs entailed the physical presence of the researcher, and so, rather than being a detached technological gaze, was also co-present with the eyes and ears, head, memory, and heart that Lefebvre desires. These were combined in the taking of diary notes about the events photographed, which focused on the felt experiences of these as discussed earlier.

In total, approximately 700 images were produced in the research. Around 400 of these came from the time-lapse photography and a further 300 from the standard photography. In general, the analysis of the images followed a pattern of looking through the images, noting significant aspects of certain images or sequences of images – such as the patterns and flows of movements of pedestrians in the spaces across a specific period of time – and then looking at them in more detail following this initial viewing, and writing them into the discussion.

In using video, the main technique I employed was what Laurier and Philo (2005) call ‘naturalistic’ video recording. This was used to “access the fine details of conduct” on the street, and “the emerging characteristics of those ecologies” (Heath and Hindmarsh 2002: 103).14

In the filming undertaken a digital video camera was set up on top of my amplifier when I busked. The camera was directed out towards the ‘audience’ with as wide a shot as possible and was left running for the duration of the performance. The primary motivation for this was that during the time I was performing I had to concentrate for the most part on what I was playing, and therefore may have missed or

14 The main reason no video is presented with the thesis lies primarily in the unwieldy nature of trying to include a DVD with the thesis and the need then for the thesis to be read in conjunction with this.
not noticed some events occurring in front of me or their detail. However, the video camera also provided more detail in general than I could possible note at the time in relation to what my audiences did (Lomax and Casey 1998). In addition to this mode of recording, I also recorded the performances of others, both with a static camera (on a tripod) and a hand held one.

3.3 Spotting the camera and resultant (lack of) affecting of behaviour

Tape time: 61 Mins 11

Man talks to homeless guy about me. Homeless guy points out camera.

Tape time: 61 Mins 13

Man looks to see camera and audibly comments ‘Oh, so there is’

There are a number of issues in doing ‘naturalistic’ video research. As Laurier and Philo (2005) suggest, the notion of obtaining ‘naturalistic’ video is itself problematic, and that it is inevitable people will react to the presence of the camera (Lomax and Casey
1998). On occasion, people did notice I was filming and when some were informed they did shy away or act awkwardly, asking ‘am I being filmed now?’ This is in fact ‘natural’ behaviour in itself.

There is also the chance of a more mundane affecting of the behaviour of those being filmed – people may have acted a little different in the camera’s presence even if this is not overtly manifest. For example, on one occasion when busking in Bath, a homeless man who had been sitting on a bench for a while informed the person sat next to him that I had a camera set up when the man had commented to him on my playing (see 3.3). He later got up and donated, and (as will be discussed more in Chapter 5) appeared to not behave in any obviously different way given his knowledge of the presence of the camera (other than potentially looking at the sign displayed below the camera, to be discussed shortly, as he approached to donate). However, it is not clear that he was definitely not affected just because this was not evidently manifest – he may have ‘actively’ tried to act normally, or been affected in some other, non-evidently manifest, way (Lomax and Casey 1998).

It is also important to note though that research findings and experiences are precisely a co-production between research and researched, and so not solely just the product of the presence of a video camera (Lomax and Casey 1998). The social world is not out-there waiting to be brought back in (Dewsbury 2009, forthcoming). This has meant that I have therefore had to build in an element of reflexivity into the analysis of the video (Pink 2001), and the empirical material drawn on more generally.

A further issue relating to the use of video, referring back to the non-representational context of this study, is that although video captures movement and sound, it still misses many of the aspects of the event – the sensuous, emotive, ephemeral nature of things (Laurier and Philo 2005). That said, I am interested in what the camera shows (the gestures, the sounds), not what it misses. It is emphatically not an attempt “to capture the ephemeral, the fleeting” (Davies and Dwyer 2007: 261). In general then, though the video does have limitations, I feel it presents “a certain empirical utility” (Rye 2003: 3).

As Heath and Hindmarsh (2002) suggest, there is no general orthography for the transcription of video data. However, for the majority of the video (see exceptions below), the transcription process followed their approach.\footnote{Also see \url{http://homepage.mac.com/eric.laurier/ordinary_life/page14/page14.html} and Laurier (2007).} Firstly, a provisional viewing was undertaken where I watched the video back in real time, making notes and marking
the times of possibly desired fragments/unwanted sequences – for example, when a donation occurred. The desired sections were then transcribed in more detail – sound, gestures, movements etc. were sketched on a timeline. Again in terms of a donation, I noted the different things people did when they donated, noted what they said and the tone they said it with, and tabulated this with the relevant point in my research diary. Stills from the relevant points in each timeline were then selected and inserted into the text for illustration, including some of the commentary from the transcript. I decided not to edit-out these sections into separate clips and then collate them in themes as I was concerned that this would blur their context within broader events which was often significant (for example see 5.3 in Chapter 5).

Due to the sheer volume of footage that would be generated, and the necessary time for analysis, I did not film for my entire time in Bath. Instead, I filmed for a total of 4 hours while busking, and a further 10 hours during observations. Further, the filming during my time performing was started some way into the fieldwork so as to allow myself time to acclimatize to performing in Bath.

The usage of these visual materials in this research does raise some ethical issues (Silverman 2001). These specifically relate to the need to gain informed consent from all research participants (Economic-and-Social-Research-Council 2006; University-of-Bristol 2005). However, taking photos and undertaking filming in a public space populated by hundreds of people makes obtaining written consent entirely impractical to operate on an opt-in system. Therefore, in the research undertaken here, and in line with previous work funded by the ESRC (such as in the ‘Cappuccino Community’ project run by Laurier and Philo), the filming and photography was done overtly with a poster being displayed near the camera which provided information on the aims of the research, an explicit statement on the option of not having photos/film used of them, and contact details of myself so they could ask further questions or request not to be included in the research (see 3.4). I was also always next to the camera and often expanded on the poster, again making clear the option not to be included. In terms of the presence of images of performers, it was not practical to approach each performer, interrupt their performance, and ask for their permission to take their picture. Reflexivity was then required in relation to what images or stills to include, when to blur faces, and when at times images may not be suitable.

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16 A slight variation of the poster shown here was used when photography was being undertaken.
YOU ARE BEING FILMED FOR RESEARCH

I am undertaking this filming today on digital video for a PhD research project I am undertaking at the University of Bristol, titled ‘Ecologies of Street Performance’. This filming is being undertaken to examine how people act and what they do when they watch street performers/buskers so please continue as you normally would.

If you do not wish to take part in this research (have still images or clips of you from the video used) please just say and I will happily ensure this. Alternatively, you can email me at the address below to let me know (Some details will need to be provided so I can ascertain who you are).

If you have any other questions about this research, you can contact me:
Paul Simpson, School of Geographical Sciences, University of Bristol, BS8 1SS
p.a.simpson.05@bristol.ac.uk

More information about the research project can be found at:
http://streetperformanceresearch.wordpress.com/

Or, again, please feel free to approach me.
Returning to the discussion of the difficulties faced in pursuing ‘naturalistic’ filming, especially in terms of the camera affecting the behaviour of people, this overt advertising of the research and the presence of the cameras does potentially aggravate this issue. On occasions, rather than do what they normally did, some people did stop and read the sign (see 3.5).

Therefore, while this produced behaviour which I was not necessarily interested in in terms of the research questions of the thesis, such responses were not so common that it made the use of filming redundant. Further, especially during the taking of time-lapse photography, the poster had a positive effect in that it helped to enlist interested members of the public into the research who, having read the poster, engaged in short conversations about the research (asking more about what I was doing, recounting their experiences of street performers and buskers, and gave their opinions about their presence in the everyday).

IV. Documents and Interviews

In being interested in the everyday context of street performance in public space and the ways in which street performers are (to varying degrees) accommodated (see Table 3.1), I
examined a series of documents relating to this. These primarily related to Bath and came
in the form of related Council Reports and minutes from Council meetings from the past
10 years, and also relevant articles from the local newspaper ‘The Bath Chronicle’ from
the same time period. The time period is significant in that an inter-related range of
attempts to change the way in which performances were controlled unfolded during this
period, and also as it is recent enough to have a bearing on the contemporary setting
(events from the late 1990s to the present did come up in my conversations with other
performers, showing their continued significance). Further, a broader contextual
knowledge was gained though the consultation of documentary materials produced
relating to other comparable sites. These included, for example, the substantial reports
produced by Oxford’s ‘Anti-Nuisance Busking Oxford’ group\(^{17}\), as well as the response
by the local Councils of Oxford, York, and Cambridge to the issue of busking and street
performance.\(^{18}\) These three sites are also particularly significant to the experience in Bath
given their comparable status as Heritage Cities and also in that they were mentioned and
compared in the interview with Bath’s City Centre Manager discussed shortly.

To supplement the analysis of these documentary materials, and fill in gaps in
their narrative, interviews were undertaken with members of Bath’s Environmental
Protection Team and Bath’s Public-Private partnership, ‘Future Bath Plus’. These
interviews were of a formal nature and interviewees were contacted via letter outlining a
summary of the project and the aims of the research. This was followed by a phone call
where a time and date was organized. Anonymity was not offered to all formal
interviewees as, given their positionality, this was not desired or practical. All these
interviewees were interviewed over the phone and so statements of their willingness to
participate, that they understood the nature of the interview, and if they were happy to
have the interview recorded, were recorded, and they were also offered summary findings
on completion of the research. These interviews were fully transcribed and coded (Crang
1997).

Something that is perhaps both surprising about the discussion of the research
methods presented in this chapter so far, and their general presence in the rest of the
thesis, is the lack of in-depth interviews with other performers. On the commencement


York: [http://www.york.gov.uk/business/Licences_and_street_trading/street_trading/Street_trading_licence/Bu
sking/](http://www.york.gov.uk/business/Licences_and_street_trading/street_trading/Street_trading_licence/Bu
sking/). For Cambridge: [http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/business/licensing-and-
permissions/street-performers-code-of-practice.en](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/business/licensing-and-
permissions/street-performers-code-of-practice.en).
of the research I was still unsure whether I would interview others who perform in Bath for a number of reasons. From my experiences of busking, I have found it to be a relatively individualistic pursuit – very rarely did I find myself talking to other street performers when I busked in Glasgow. This said, in researching street performance for my Master’s Dissertation in Covent Garden I did find that the presence of timetabling and the mechanisms under which this proceeded (meeting to draw names etc.) brought performers into some contact with each other. As meetings are meant to occur for the Abbey Courtyard in Bath, I thought there would be a chance that I may get to know some performers to the point that it would be possible to talk to them about my research and related issues, either formally or informally. However, this did not turn out to be the case as during my time busking in Bath no such meetings were taking place.

Therefore, the only interactions between myself and other performers came in the naturally occurring brief contact that arose in the change-over between slots. Here short conversations did take place, but the nature of many of these, and a number of rejections, did lead me to think that attempting anything more formal would not be successful – most were in a hurry to move on to perform elsewhere, were not especially chatty, and, also, any time they gave me would be time they would miss out on performing. This was also impeded by the fact that a small number of the performers I encountered were regularly potentially (or sometimes obviously) inebriated (either on alcohol or drugs), therefore making the ascertaining of informed consent impossible, but also bringing up issues of my own personal safety.¹⁹

In the informal conversations that did occur between myself and other performers my status as a researcher was not always disclosed. This came down to the length and nature of the conversation. If it was only a brief conversation I did not disclose this. If the conversation developed into something more substantial I did then disclose by status as a researcher, mainly as I had managed to steer the conversation in the direction of themes related to the research (often in relation to the controls placed on performers by the Council and the opinions the performers had on these – see Table 3.1). In total I spoke to around 12 buskers, with conversations with 5 of them developing into a more substantial discussion lasting from around 5 to 10 minutes or more.

Even if there had been more contact with other performers and I had enrolled them into the research more formally, this was likely only going to prove useful in

¹⁹ One other possible avenue for approaching performers was through the website www.bathbuskers.co.uk which includes a notice board on which I advertised the research. However, I received no responses to this request for participants.
addressing the questions relating to the control of street performance in Bath, rather than
the issues of the felt aspects of performing in the spaces of the street. I was, and still am,
sceptical of it having been possible for me to develop close enough inter-personal
relations in the time available for the research to discuss such matters in any depth or
with adequate freedom, or whether these issues are something that it is really possible to
have interviewees relate through a simple interview alone (Latham 2003; McCormack
2003). This would not only be down to a lack of strength in the inter-personal relations I
could have developed, but would have also been perpetuated by the likely environments
I would end up interviewing such performers in – on the street (Crang 2002; Elwood and
Martin 2000). Further, and as suggested previously, I also do not feel that the relatively
small input from interviews with performers to be entirely problematic due to the
emphasis of the research on the practice over the lives of those who undertake it. This
does, though, add to the reflexive burden already discussed.

In addition to these informal conversations with other performers, a large
number of informal conversations occurred with other members of the public relating to
their experiences of performances and opinions on the presence of street performers and
buskers. These informal interviewees were not contacted formally, but were rather
encountered during the ethnographic phase of the research (either when I was
performing or when taking photographs). During these conversations my position as a
researcher was made obvious by myself and a verbal description of the research was
provided. All these participants were automatically made anonymous given the lack of
formal agreement for inclusion.
Chapter 4

Street performance and the city

“Forgoing the sanctity of a walled theatre space, with darkened auditorium, fixed seating, prepared audiences, and reassuring reviews, the street performer instead engages and manipulates the urban environment, using its traffic, noise, and passersby as props for his [sic] show. Buses rumble by; helicopters hover overhead; heckles interrupt the rhythm of the performance; rain, cold, or police can defeat the performer entirely. The audience surrounds the street performer, restless, waiting, impatient. Yet the street performer succeeds in transforming urban space into theatre place.”

(Harrison-Pepper 1990: 140).

I. Preface

It was a hot sunny Sunday afternoon toward the end of July when I walked up Stall Street and came across a ‘living statue’ standing in the middle of the street (4.1). He was standing on a box with a metal money jug in front of him and was wearing a long leather coat and a wide-brimmed hat. A crowd had formed in a semi-circle to the width of the street. Some were young, some old; groups of young people, and families with children. All stood looking. I stopped and sat on a bench nearby to watch their reactions.

The statue drew a lot of attention, primarily due to the realistic nature of his costume – I had almost walked past him on a previous day. This area of the street was normally quite flowing – it is a transitory space between shops and attractions, and, other than a few benches and the seating of a couple of cafes, I had rarely seen many people hovering around here before.
4.1. Bronze statue on Stall Street

4.2. Moving on a pigeon

The statue made a big impact on the space. There was a dramatic shift in the patterns of flow and at times the crowd almost entirely blocked the street on both sides. This made it very difficult to pass – many struggled to make their way through the crowd. This was especially the case when the statue ‘did’ something. As can be seen in the second image above (4.1), at times pigeons landed on him. This drew shrieks of laughter from passing children and people rummaged for their cameras to capture this unusual moment. Also, if he had stepped down from his box (which he occasionally did) and a pigeon then landed on the box, the statue used this for comic effect by gently trying to wave the pigeon off, again to the laughter of the audience (see 4.2). Otherwise, when someone donated, he would give them a slow and mechanical ‘thumbs up’ or slowly bend down and shake their hand and pose for a photo. Reactions varied. Some ran away scared when he moved (making those standing watching laugh) and other
clowned around in front to try to get the statue’s attention and make him break character. I heard some say: ‘that’s amazing’, ‘how can he do that?’, ‘how can he stand so still?’.

Once the pigeon(s) flew off, or the other happenings died down and the statue return to being stationary, the crowd diminished. Rather than there being a set show, with start and end, there was a constant performance with the crowd ebbing and flowing, swelling and shrinking. More people would then arrive. More would be distracted from what they were doing. More would laugh and more would run away scared.

II. Introduction

It has been widely acknowledged that performance, “as a mode of embodied activity that transgresses, resists, or challenges social structures” (McKenzie 1998: 218), maintains within it the possibility of liminality. In this chapter I am interested in this liminality in terms of what street performers and buskers do to the everyday life of the city with their presence and the spatio-temporal intervention they make in these everyday patterns. I am also interested in the types of sociality this produces. As has been highlighted by the small literature on street performance, such interventions can take many forms. For example, Harrison-Pepper (1990: 127 & 131) shows how street performers intervene in the spatio-temporal organization of the space, with “[p]erformance [being] a dynamic, shifting, breathing event” which affected the space in terms of “density, accretion, durations, dispersal, and flow”. Further, Tanenbaum (1995: xi) argues that the music of performers can act as a “theme song for our public life, a wake-up call from the mindless rush of the…routine”, and also makes these spaces feel safer (though see Chapter 7 for a different take on this). Such music, for Tanenbaum (1995: 1-2), presents an “urban ritual that challenges the way we think about public space by promoting spontaneous, democratic, intimate encounters” in some of the city’s most “routinized and alienating environments”.

However, these interventions are not always so positively viewed. In fact, as Harrison-Pepper (1990: 22) highlights, “[m]uch of the history of street performance…is found in the laws that prohibit it” (see Cohen and Greenwood 1981). There have been a range of legislative responses to the presence of street performers and buskers in public spaces with varying degrees of severity. At the more liberal end of such responses, in the UK, Councils and local authorities have imposed codes of conduct for performers to adhere to, focusing on volume, the use of amplification, duration, spacing, and so on. This can be seen in Bath which will be the main empirical focus of this chapter. At the
strict end of the spectrum, performers have either to audition for licenses which allow them to perform, or have been banned completely. Examples of this include Covent Garden, London, where a detailed auditioning and licensing system operates (Simpson 2006; 2008), or Edinburgh where bag pipers were recently banned from performing on the Royal Mile. Therefore, while cities are “increasingly expected to have a ‘buzz’, to be creative, and to generally bring forth powers of invention and intuition”, there has also been a move to ensure an “affective engineering” of such space which produces a public space with a certain ‘buzz’, and a ‘buzz’ that street performers and buskers do not necessarily fit into (Thrift 2004: 58).

Therefore, in this chapter I am interested in examining this interrelation between the intervention street performers and buskers make and the legislative and everyday context for performance in the public spaces of the city, and so address the first research question outlined in the Introduction to the thesis. As such, this will also respond to the critiques of non-representational theory that argue that it does not pay enough attention to the social-cultural-political context of the practices it studies discussed in the Introduction (see Cresswell 2006; and also Nash 2000), and, in so doing, develop the second post-phenomenological trajectory outlined in Chapter 2. I want to note though that this is in fact the least overtly phenomenological chapter in the thesis. However, this comes, as Chapter 2 suggested, from the lack of attention within the phenomenology discussed in this thesis to themes relating to the ways in which a body is socialized. I am therefore interested here in how lived experience is always situated within a specific socio-cultural setting, but also how this setting is in turn actively shaped by our situatedness within a variety of discursive regimes which affect how such experience plays out, and so produce certain norms.

It is a question then of uncovering what happens in the performative transformation of the street space into a performance place (Harrison-Pepper 1990); how, through the citation and iteration of aspects of past performances, something different emerges within the everyday life of the city (Butler 1993; 1997), but also how this liminal intervention is accommodated and captured by both this everyday setting and the discursive regimes which circulate through it (McKenzie 1998). Before moving on to discuss this, I first was to clarify a couple of notions that are of significance to the narrative of this chapter and have been used in a rather assumed way in this introduction.

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20 See http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/edinburgh_and_east/7451328.stm
What do I mean by this ‘everyday life’ of the city? And, what do I mean by ‘public space’?

The phrase ‘everyday life’ is vague and potentially problematic (Highmore 2005). Referring to something as ‘everyday’ can act to normalize a particular view. As Highmore (2005: 1) states, “[e]laiming everyday life as self-evident and readily accessible becomes an operation for asserting the dominance of specific cultures and for particular understandings of such cultures”. However, in undertaking this operation, an appeal to the everyday can also implicate and be haunted by the extra-everyday, for example outsider groupings, abnormal behaviour, and so on. Therefore, the study of the everyday can also be enacted to recoup that which has been left out by such dominant narratives.

There is then a political potential in the everyday. We can draw out a distinction here between everyday life or daily life and the everyday or everydayness (Shields 1999). The former refers to the routine, habitual, uncatalogued nature of day-to-day living “which connects and coordinates diverse activities, movements, and actions” (Dempster 2008: 23), while the latter refers to the alienatedness of everyday life. Everyday life is the “ground of resistance and renewal” upon which alienation would become apparent (Shields 1999: 66). The study of the banality of everyday life is not necessarily banal in itself; everyday life “is compared to fertile soil” which holds within it the possibility for something different to emerge (Lefebvre 1992: 87).

The everyday life of the city can be related to the ecological perspective that was outlined in the introduction to this thesis. Everyday life can be related to a form of functionalism: it can be defined as “a set of functions which connect and join together systems that might appear to be distinct. Thus defined…everyday [life] is a product” (Lefebvre 1977: 9). The everyday life of the city refers to the relatively routine functioning of those spaces in the city, to those patterns and routines that performatively emerge from their regular usage. These routines do not simply spontaneously emerge, but are traversed and influenced by performative signified frameworks – the street is a palimpsest of laws, orders, codes, and so on (Harrison-Pepper 1990) – but which also contain within them the potential for little modifications through, for example, the entrance of something or someone different into such routines (such as the street performer of our opening event which affected the patterns of use of that space). It is this interrelation between context, routine, and modification that makes up the everyday life that I want to think about in this chapter.
Turning to the term ‘public space’, most simply, “public spaces have been where people interact with those outside their private circles...A space’s publicness can be seen as the extent to which people have access without permission, expressed or implied, and in which they can decide individually about how to conduct themselves” (Ehrenfeucht and Loukaitou-Sideris 2007: 106). Therefore, in public spaces “no one should be excluded because they are poor, or black, or female, or foreign, for example” (Massey and Rose 2003). However, the likelihood of an absolute public space is unlikely (Mitchell 1996). This is due to the fact that “[a]ll places have restrictions – physical, legal, social – on their access and use” (Ehrenfeucht and Loukaitou-Sideris 2007: 106-107), and so there is something more like degrees of publicness. As Mitchell (1996: 131) notes, “the construction of ‘public’ space is always the outcome of multifarious forces well beyond the control of any individual or social formation”. Therefore, one of the foci of this chapter will be to examine the interrelation and negotiation of these various forces which will be drawn out in an engagement with the work of Lefebvre, a thinker whose work has been prominent in the discussion of public space and provides a useful lens into the working of such themes.

Having made these clarifications, the chapter will unfold as follows. Firstly, I will provide a brief overview of the work that has been done thus far in geography around the understanding of public space and situate the focus of this chapter in relation to this in terms of a distinction between the political function public spaces can possess and their role in the production of social relations. Following this, I will turn to the work of Lefebvre to provide an understanding of the ways in which the everyday life of the city and its public spaces are produced, maintained, played out, and are potentially modified. In doing so, I will focus on his writings around the production of space and his recently translated works on ‘rhythmanalysis’, as, in combination, they provide a means through which to articulate the complex and dynamic spatio-temporal ordering of the everyday. Following a re-orientation of Lefebvre’s analytical project via the work of Deleuze, I will then turn to the empirical setting of the discussion: Bath. Having set this empirical scene, the chapter will then work through various ways in which street performers and buskers intervene in the everyday life of the public spaces of Bath and the kinds of socialities they produce therein.

III. Geographies of Public Space

There is now a substantial body of work in geography, and the social sciences more generally, which engages in various ways with the notion of public space (Fyfe 1998;
Goheen 1998; Mitchell 1996; 2003; Ruppert 2006). A diversity of topics have been covered here, ranging from the access to and use of specific spaces such as parks (Gumprecht 2007; Jackson 1988; Marne 2001; Mitchell 1992; 1995); the situation of specific ‘outsider’ or minority groupings in society (Kruse 2002; Mitchell 2003; Ruddick 1996; Stratford 2002; Valentine 1996); the presence of art in public spaces (Gibson and Davidson 2004; Massey and Rose 2003; Pinder 2004; 2005a; 2008; Sharp 2007); and CCTV, surveillance, and the control of conduct in specific spaces (Adey 2007; Allen 2006; Domosh 1998; Ehrenfeucht and Loukaitou-Sideris 2007; Fyfe and Bannister 1998; Goss 1996; Kneale 2001). Within this broad range of topics a range of different approaches and foci can be discerned. Therefore, in this section I want to draw out some of these distinctions and situate this chapter in relation to these so as to clarify the aims and objectives of the discussion that follows.

The first significant distinction to be made is between notions of public space and public sphere. The notion of public sphere is often drawn from or influenced by the conception put forward by Habermas (1989; see Gleeson 2006; Laurier and Philo 2007). The public sphere here is “the sphere of private people come together as a public” (Habermas 1989: 27), participating not because of positions of power held within society requiring them to be concerned with such matters, but that they elect to do so. Key here was the coffee house – the physical space in which the public sphere came to exist and play out. Habermas also outlines what he felt to be the loss of the public sphere from the late nineteenth-century onwards, with “a shift '[f]rom a culture-debating to a culture-consuming public’” (Habermas cited in Philo 2004: 11). For Habermas, we have come to passively consume our culture and politics rather than directly engaging with them.

Therefore, it is important to emphasize that (the lack of) access to the public sphere relates to an individual or a group’s ability to take part in political debates, and can often relate to that individual or group’s presence or exclusion from a specific public space. As Ruppert (2006: 275) states, “physical public space occupies an important role in the constitution of the public sphere by providing forums for the practices of political debate and opinion-formation”. A key example of this in the geographical literature on public space is the access to and use of parks for political demonstrations and gatherings (Marne 2001; Mitchell 1995).

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21 This was the case in England. For a discussion of the contemporary significance of coffee houses (and cafes) see Laurier and Philo (2006a).
This distinction between public sphere and public space has also highlighted a further distinction in focus within the literature on public space which is significant to the focus of this chapter. The focus on public space as constituting an arena in which public debate can take place highlights the role public space can play in provide a realm of politics and collective action. While the value of public space is not necessarily agreed upon (see Goheen 1998), public space can provide “an unstructured and informal sphere of discussion, debate, and expression that leads to collective action concerning public affairs” (Ruppert 2006: 272). There is however a different value of public space that has been suggested in the literature in that public space can provide a domain of sociability (Ruppert 2006). Here it is emphasized that “public spaces are the spaces of encounters between strangers, people outside the life of family and close friends and within the region of diverse, complex social groups…Here public space is the domain of interaction and the practices of sociability” (Ruppert 2006: 272). Such public spaces are about social relationality in which difference is negotiated through a whole spectrum of interactions (Massey and Rose 2003).

It is also possible to blur this distinction between politics and sociality given that it has been argued by some that the presence of different types of sociality can give rise to political potential for change. For example, Pinder (2005a: 385) suggests that the presence of performance art “can play a vital role in the development of critical approaches to the geographies of cities, where they may challenge norms about how urban space is framed and represented, and where they may help to open up other possibilities” (also see Pinder 2004; 2005b; 2008). While it is not the explicit intent of the performances covered in this chapter, I would also suggest that they do in some sense open up other possibilities of social relations in their presence and that there is then a political significance to the presence of these performances, especially given recent moves (which will be discussed shortly) towards regulating the presence of performers.

It is this perspective which focuses on sociality that aligns most closely with the concerns of this chapter. The focus here is going to fall on the various interactions that occur, and the socialities that emerge therein, when a performer takes to the street and how these encounters play out and are negotiated (Massey and Rose 2003). The chapter will focus on how street performers and buskers do (or do not) produce specific forms of convivial civic space in the city (see Sharp 2007). This is not to say however that this is free from the political – just because the performances I am concerned with here are not politically orientated towards addressing specific issues of common interest, or any issues
at all for that matter, does not divorce them from political considerations. This does implicate the various controls which are placed on conduct in the streets, both explicit and subtle (Allen 2006; Domosh 1998; Ehrenfeucht and Loukaitou-Sideris 2007), which contribute to the production of these sociable spaces in the city.

In the next section I will therefore articulate a conceptual means for understanding this interrelation between use, order, and how modifications to this order may emerge, through an examination of the work of Lefebvre.

**IV. Lefebvre and the Production of Space-Time**

*The Production of Space*

The name of Lefebvre will be now familiar to many in geography, particularly through his discussion of the production of space which has been prominent in the literature around public space discussed in the previous section (Lefebvre 1991; and see Elden 2001; Unwin 2000; Stewart 1995). I want to continue this engagement here and think about the relationship between street performers and buskers and the everyday life of the city, particularly in terms of the liminality they produce in the interventions they make (or don’t make) in the experience of the everyday, both positive and negative, and how this is contextualized by (and responded to with) various discursive frames (see Cresswell 2006). As with much of the previous literature, I am not so interested in Lefebvre’s substantial but flawed history of space which constitutes much of the content of his ‘Production of Space’, but rather with his trilectic of social space and its usefulness for thinking about how space is both produced and productive; it is a product of social relations but also affects how those social relations play out (Shields 1999).

Lefebvre’s focus on space comes as a reaction to the dominant status that time had been given in philosophical analysis. In response to this, Lefebvre argues that “space is the ultimate locus and medium of struggle, and is therefore a crucial political issue” (Elden 2004b: 183). More specifically, Lefebvre argues that “what is necessary…is an approach that seeks to understand the dialectical interaction between spatial arrangements and social organization itself” (Shields 1999: 157). Therefore, Lefebvre is particularly interested in space in terms of the socio-cultural production of space as a particular kind of space “through an intricate web of relationships that [are] continually

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22 Also prominent has been the work of de Certeau and his discussion of ‘The Practice of Everyday Life’. While this work is interesting, I am more interested in pursuing Lefebvre’s work as, following Crang (2000), there is a danger that de Certeau falls into the trap of unproblematically valorising tactics (also see Thrift 1997). For me, Lefebvre’s focus on the complex interrelational production of space-time does not risk this so much.
produced and reproduced” (Schmid 2008: 41). Rather than being an abstract container of experiences, space becomes a specific historically situated and lived construct. To uncover the specificity of this production, Lefebvre proposes a threefold dialectic, or ‘trilectic’, of social spatialization. This consists of: 1) representations of space; 2) spatial practices; and 3) spaces of representation.

Firstly, in outlining his conception of representations of space, Lefebvre refers to Cartesian and geometric notions of space in which “[t]he experience of space is removed, and replaced with…abstract, scientific quantification” (Elden 2004b: 187). Here space is conceived in terms of mapping dots on a grid and so is made calculable and therefore controllable (Elden 2004b). Representations of space produce an image and define a space (Schmid 2008). Lefebvre contrasts this with spatial practices or ‘lived’ space, something drawn from Heidegger. Here space is experienced not as a geometric grid, but in a “lived, experiential manner” (Elden 2004b: 188). Representations of space are “conceptualized spaces” (Lefebvre 1991: 38). They are the spaces of knowledge and logic and the ‘mental space’ of mathematicians and planners. Spatial practices are real spaces, “space that is generated and used” (Elden 2004b: 190). Such spatial practices are the unreflective “material routine of everyday life”, a space “not responsive to shifts in conceptions or lived experience” (Kruse 2002: 180). For example, we can think of spatial practices as something as simple as walking down a street on a pavement, following the directions of the traffic signals, and so on. There is a certain coherence and competence to this, but we do not think about this or reflect on it.

The third aspect of the trilectic is spaces of representation (see Elden 2004b: 206 [note 106]). This is “space as directly lived” (Lefebvre 1991: 39). By ‘directly’, Lefebvre is referring to his notion of ‘authenticity’. This is what sets spaces of representation apart from spatial practices. Spaces here are lived ‘authentically’ in “moments of presence” (Shields 1999: 161). While it is now common place to recognize the fundamentally constructed nature of almost everything following the arguments of much of contemporary continental thought, Lefebvre was a humanist who held a “complete, and even naïve faith in the primacy of authentic experience” (Shields 1999: 62). Here space is produced and modified over time and is “invested with symbolism and meaning” (Elden 2004b: 190). Therefore, spaces of representation do not refer to the spaces themselves, but to something beyond this: “a divine power, the logos, the state, masculine or feminine principle, and so on” (Schmid 2008: 37). “This”, for Lefebvre (1991: 39), “is the dominated – and hence passively experienced – space which the imagination seeks to
change and appropriate”, it is space “rather more felt than thought…[it] is the experiential realm that conceived and ordered space will try to intervene in, rationalize, and ultimately usurp” (Merrifield 2000: 174).

To further clarify the distinction of spaces of representation from spatial practices, such lived spaces emerge in the un-alienated moments of a ‘total person’ at one with their context (Shields 1999). An example that could be used here is of ‘autonomous spaces’ that are temporarily appropriated from the dominant/dominated spaces of the capitalist city. This could range from the scale of the body, for example the reclaiming of the body from various discursive construction of gender, age, sexuality and so on (see Longhurst 2000), to regions of cities such as parks that are appropriate for use for political protest (see Mitchell 1995). Spatial practices are, by contrast, the common-sense or ‘auto-pilot’ understandings of the taken for granted and are set within the context of the rationalized routes and networks that we pass through in our daily lives, but are not reflected upon. Such practices are alienated and are therefore not truly lived.

In effect, to summarize the role of these three conceptions, “Lefebvre tries to tell us that the system of space is not just spatial practice, in the sense of its social construction, but equally the representations of it and discourses about it, and it is also equally its reflexive effects, promoting here, limiting there” (Shields 1999: 154).

There is an evident utopianism in Lefebvre’s writings on space and at the basis his conception of this spatial trilectic (Shields 1999). While all three of the aspects of his spatial trilectic operate at the same time at various degrees of balance, and therefore at various degrees of repression or alienation (they are not separate spaces in themselves (Schmid 2008)), Lefebvre is clearly striving towards a decrease in such alienation through the proliferation of moments of presence which will arise in spaces of representation. Or, as Shields (1999: 183) states, there is a project of “escaping from a ‘mystified’ consciousness; decreasing alienation…so as to promote the possibility of people realising and empowering themselves as ‘total persons’”.

However, in this chapter I do not necessarily want to align myself with this utopianism in Lefebvre’s conception of the everyday life of cities. I will return to this in more detail shortly, but for now it should be made clear that I am less interested in the more grand revolutionary moments, or “instants of dramatic change and disruption to everyday routine[s]” which may arise from within the everyday playing out of life in the city (Elden 2004b: 170), and more with the constant micro-scale little affected modifications that permeate our everyday practices and routines (Deleuze and Parnet
This also comes from a desire to move away from the humanism of Lefebvre’s project and to move away from such a focus on unalienated ‘authenticity’. Therefore, I am drawing on Lefebvre here more for the concepts he creates than the politics he promotes. While some may find it problematic, my engagement with Lefebvre arises more as a result of shared concerns (with space, temporality, the body, the city, and so on) than from shared analyses or conclusions (Kipfer, et al. 2008).

However, before turning to this in more detail, I want to build on Lefebvre’s discussion of the production of space by adding to this his discussion of rhythmanalysis which “may be expected to put the finishing touches to the exposition of the production of space” (Lefebvre 1991: 405). While this may be less familiar to many than his work on space, recently, Lefebvre’s works on rhythmanalysis (Lefebvre 2004; Lefebvre and Regulier 2004a; 2004b) have become increasingly discussed by geographers and other social scientists (see Edendorf and Holloway 2008; Evans and Jones 2008; Latham and McCormack forthcoming). However, much of the engagement with Lefebvre’s rhythmanalysis has proceeded at a relatively abstracted level. Whilst many have called for or suggested the usefulness of rhythmanalysis in examining ‘the city’, little work has appeared in print which engages in detail in actual, specific, everyday practices and performances in these cities through the lens of the Rhythmanalyst.

Examples of this more abstracted work include Amin and Thrift (2002: 7) who approach rhythmanalysis with the remit of examining a number of metaphors highlighting “the importance in the organization and vitality of urban life” and, Simonsen’s (2004) discussion of rhythmanalysis as a possible starting point for an alternative understanding of the city to those expounding a view of metropolitan life as one of increasing mobility and speed. Further, Crang (2001: 187) highlights Lefebvre’s contribution to the understanding of “the intersection of live time, time as represented and urban space”, within the context of his discussion of a stable, yet evental everyday temporality. Expanding this engagement is worthwhile given that the significance of these ideas around rhythmanalysis lies in that “shifts in time were [for Lefebvre] as significant as shifts in spatiality” (Shields 1999: 95) – “Lefebvre did not privilege space at the expense of time, or vice versa” (Kipfer, et al. 2008: 9). Rhythmanalysis then may offer

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23 The line of critique pursued here and the resultant interpretation of rhythmanalysis has already appeared in my article ‘Chronic Everyday Life’ (Simpson 2008) where it is uncovered from and illustrated by different empirical material to that in this chapter.

24 Also, outside of geography, Borden’s (2001) work on Skateboarding does undertake a partial rhythmanalysis although he does not engage Lefebvre’s theories around the topic in great detail.
a way to think about the temporal choreography of a multitude of practices in the everyday, and the interventions and modifications certain practices make within this.

Rhythmanalysis

Lefebvre’s ideas on rhythm were not only outlined in his later works on rhythmanalysis (Lefebvre 2004; Lefebvre and Regulier 2004a; 2004b), but permeate, and have their origins in, his multi-volume work on the ‘Critique of Everyday Life’ (Lefebvre 1992; 2002; 2005; and also 1984) and his work on space discussed above (Lefebvre 1991). In this chapter I will be reading Lefebvre’s notion of rhythmanalysis within this context as I feel it sheds an important light on Lefebvre’s broader ‘Rhythmanalytical Project’ being a part of his project of critiquing everyday life. In this Lefebvre “uses rhythm as a mode of analysis – a tool of analysis rather than just an object of it” (Elden 2004a: xii). Lefebvre is therefore concerned with the usefulness of using notions of rhythm in the understanding of the small details of everyday life (Elden 2004b) – rhythms occupy space, but also indicate how space is occupied (Lefebvre 1991) – and the critique and resultant transformation that this understanding can facilitate (returning to the utopianism previously mentioned).

Lefebvre suggests that everyone thinks they know what the term ‘rhythm’ means, but that few actually do. Rhythm is often thought of in terms of speed, movement, sequence etc.. For Lefebvre this is inadequate and so he attempts a clearer definition. Provisionally, Lefebvre suggest two presuppositions around rhythm. Firstly, rhythm presupposes “[t]emporal elements that are thoroughly marked, accentuated, hence contrasting, even opposed like strong and weak time” (Lefebvre and Regulier 2004b: 78). Secondly, it presupposes “[a]n overall movement that takes with it all these elements” (Lefebvre and Regulier 2004b: 78). Given this dual aspect, rhythm, for Lefebvre, enters into a general composition of time and therefore the related issues of repetition and becoming – rhythm is not only a repetition of the same, but also the emergence of difference within that repetition. In other words “there is always something new and unforeseen that introduces itself into the repetitive: difference” (Lefebvre 2004: 6).

Centrally to rhythmanalysis (see Meyer 2008), Lefebvre contrasts “two very different modalities of the repetitive”: linear rhythms and cyclical rhythms (Lefebvre 2005: 11). Lefebvre characterizes linear rhythms as “monotonous and tiring” and cites them as having come to prominence in the modern era in “the daily grind, the routine” (Lefebvre 2004: 30). Cyclical rhythms are cast more favourably and are deemed to have held sway over human life for a long time. Generally, the linear can be aligned with the
social and the cyclical with the natural or lived (in the authentic sense outlined above) given that Lefebvre notes that the foundation of the cyclical lies in nature – “[t]he cyclical originates in the cosmic, in nature” – while the linear is a modern imposition and comes “from human activity” (Lefebvre 2004: 8). The negative connotation of the first and the positive of the latter is prominent: as he states, linear repetition is “exhausting and tedious, while the return of a cycle has the appearance of an event and an advent” (Lefebvre and Regulier 2004b: 73).

Lefebvre elaborates this adventive character of the cyclical in distinguishing between nature and the social on the level of creativity. For Lefebvre, “nature creates and does not produce” (Lefebvre 1991: 70). Here a creation is taken as something that “simply surges forth, simply appears…nature does not labour” (Lefebvre 1991: 70). The natural is spontaneously emergent, not staged. Conversely, a product is taken as something that can be reproduced exactly and is the result of repetitive acts and gestures by an active, calculating producer. Lefebvre positions nature in opposition to ‘anti-nature’ which is killing nature through “abstraction, by sign, and images, by discourse, as also by labour and its products” (Lefebvre 1991: 71). Here the same can be said for the relation between linear and cyclical rhythms for there has been a “progressive crushing of rhythms and cycles by linear repetition” (Lefebvre 2005: 130; see Lefebvre 2002: 49). For Lefebvre the ‘mastery’ of nature through such social abstractions not only seeks to master it, but tends towards destroying it.

Further elaborating this distinction between the linear and the cyclical, Lefebvre highlights the common conflation of rhythm with sequential movement, giving rhythm a “mechanical overtone, brushing aside the organic side of rhythmic movement…reducing them to the counting of beats”, and therefore excluding the cyclical, natural rhythms (Lefebvre 2004: 6). We can think of cyclical rhythms as the passing of days, the beating of a heart, breathing, hunger, going to the toilet, and so on, and the linear as the social imposition of other rhythms on top of this; the mechanization and timetabling of the working day, the grasping of time ‘chronometrically’, and the resultant disciplining of the natural functioning of the body (Elden 2004b). The body is central to rhythmanalysis, both in terms of the question of the body under capital, and in terms of the coexistence of biological and social rhythms, their point of intersection being the body (Elden 2004a). Lefebvre (2004: 67) argues: “[a]t no moment have the analysis of rhythm and the rhythmanalytical project lost sight of the body” – it is central to the undertaking of rhythmanalysis in its functioning as a metronome (Lefebvre 2004).
However, this view of the body does seem to be predominantly concerned with the society’s impact upon the body; as such the body itself, in a sense, appears secondary to his project. My problem here with Lefebvre’s discussion of the body therefore lies in the balance he places between his discussion of embodiment – the ways in which the body is acted upon through, for example, societal framings – and the body itself – the material, fleshy, organic ‘stuff’ of the body itself. For me, Lefebvre leans too much towards embodiment and resultantly neglects the body itself under his Rhythmanalytical Project. Therefore, while in this chapter I will be thinking in terms of embodiment and the ways in which linear rhythms choreograph the body, in the next chapter where I will discuss my experiences of busking, I will return to this and argue for an understanding of the body which pays attention to the ways in which such linear and cyclical rhythms are intercalated with and through a body and are felt therein (see Simonsen 2000).

Linear rhythms are therefore chronic. They are the rhythms of the ticking clock, the laying out and measuring of the time of work (and therefore leisure), and produce the almost ever-the-same at equal intervals. The cyclical relate to the cosmic, the vital and the biological, a returning or beginning again (Lefebvre and Regulier 2004a). It is important to emphasize these two conceptions do not stand apart: “[t]he bundle of natural rhythms wraps itself in rhythms of mental and social function” (Lefebvre 2004: 8), with “vital rhythms pre-existing organized social labour” (Lefebvre 2005: 129). The linear and the cyclical exist in a “dialectical relation (unity in opposition)” (Lefebvre 2004: 8), “their multiplicity interpenetrating one another” (Lefebvre 1991: 205). They can be measured both quantitatively in terms of frequency, intensity and energy expended, but also in terms of their qualitative interaction (Lefebvre 2005). There is however never a complete dominance of the linear over the cyclical – the rhetoric of Lefebvre’s nature/anti-nature distinction has already softened a little; the complete control, and resultant destruction, of nature has not been attained – and this is where, in a sense, Lefebvre builds on Foucault (1979). The rhythms of the body have not been totally suppressed by the rhythms of the timetable, although they are “broken into pieces and scattered” (Lefebvre 2002: 48).

Out of this interrelation of the linear and the cyclical, a hybrid ‘polyrhythmia’ is produced, an ecological multiplicity of interrelated rhythms functioning independently of one another, but influencing each other. If these rhythms are in harmonious (or as Lefebvre notes ‘normed’) relation, for example the various rhythms of the body (of the heart, of breathing etc), this produces a ‘eurhythmia’ (a working ecology), but if these
rhythms are out of sync – often as a result of their being ‘broken and scattered’ – a fatal ‘arrhythmia’ is produced.

So, what does rhythmanalysis add in thinking through the everyday life of the city and to the ideas of the production of space already outlined? Perhaps most evidently it highlights the organizational and choreographic rhythmizings taking place which expand on Lefebvre’s understanding of representations of spaces as outlined above. In the context of the street and street performance, these include the relations between performance timetables, holidays, shop opening times, etc. and the bodies of performers and audience members. It also highlights how our spatial practices are permeated by a multitude of complex assemblages of rhythms which, in their polyrhythmia, are variably eurhythmic and arrhythmic. However, as with Lefebvre’s discussion of space, there is a danger that too much attention falls on the alienating aspects of a number of the social-linear rhythms present, and that we start to lose sight of the productive, affective forces at play (see McCormack 2005).

**A Different Project**

Whilst I feel Lefebvre’s rhythmanalysis provides an interesting starting point for the examination of the complex temporalities of street performance and practices in public space more generally, I am left with a lingering concern. Is Lefebvre ‘idyllic’ in his conception of the linear and the cyclical? Is there an underlying nostalgia in his distinction between favourable natural rhythms and the mechanistic linear? Is Lefebvre yearning for a return to ‘nature’? (Mels 2004). This is explicitly tied to the discussion of Lefebvre’s humanism and utopianism in his work on space outlined previously. There is a strong suggestion of a striving towards an un-alienated foundation or ‘presence’ (Shields 1999) in both Lefebvre’s writings around rhythm and space.

In this chapter I want to argue that there are more complex relations between the linear and the cyclical than the “interference” Lefebvre admits (Lefebvre 2004: 15), and, in doing so, move away from this humanist utopianism. Lefebvre instills a generalized, negative qualitative value in the linear. At all times the linear is presented as being monotonous, boring, restrictive, controlling, commanding, regulating etc. Further, although Highmore (2005) suggests rhythmanalysis is not aligned to any particular political project, I think that it clearly is. My impression is that it is strongly influenced by Lefebvre’s notion of radical critique, particularly as characterized in his 2nd critique of everyday life – one of the first instances where Lefebvre clearly articulated
rhythmanalysis – and the general ‘ends’ of his broader examination of everyday life which constitute a particular Rhythmanalytical Project. For Lefebvre, “[i]t is a question of stating critically how people live or how badly they live, or how they do not live at all” and that this “[c]ritique implies possibilities” (Lefebvre 2002: 18). Radical critique is after all “aimed at attaining the radical metamorphosis of everyday life” (Lefebvre 2002: 23; see Debord 2005).

As a Rhythmanalytical Project:

“Critique of everyday life studies the persistence of rhythmic timescales within the linear time of modern industrial society. It studies the interactions between cyclic time (natural, and in a sense, irrational, and still concrete) and linear time (acquired, rational, and in a sense abstract and antinatural). It examines the defects and disquiet this as yet unknown and poorly understood interaction produces. Finally, it considers what metamorphoses are possible in the everyday as a result of this interaction” (Lefebvre 2002: 49).

It is possible that Lefebvre here is falling into the trap of maintaining, what Foucault (2002b; 2003) called, a ‘juridical’ conception of the linear – one in which power is repressive, it is “conceived of in terms of law, prohibition and sovereignty” (Davidson 2003: xxi). This “identifies power with a law that says no – power is taken, above all, as carrying the force of a prohibition...[when in fact]...It needs to be considered as a productive network...it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse” (Foucault 2002b: 120).

Lefebvre then seems to broadly ally his linear rhythms with a ‘juridical’ power or a power from above (Shields 1999: 156). He does however leave room for creative potential to emerge in the cyclical, but given that the linear is viewed in such negative, restrictive terms – as only producing a negative, repressed form of conduct – as a result I would argue Lefebvre is looking for a very narrowly defined notion of ‘potential’ and that there is a kind of potential in the linear that doesn’t necessarily lie in the ‘disquieting’ or

25 Although the relationship between Lefebvre and Foucault remains to be properly understood (see Elden 2001), Soja (1996) does provide some background on their encounters with each other. Soja (1996: 146) notes that although little has been written on their relationship, they were clearly aware of each other’s work. Lefebvre critiqued Foucault’s ‘ambiguous politics’ and his failure to bridge the gap between theory and practice. In general, this critique can be related to what Lefebvre saw as Foucault’s distance from the Marxist critique of capitalism. Lefebvre held to a Marxist critique of the state and criticized Foucault for ignoring the state in his work on confinement (Elden 2004b) and the lack of agency in his micro-scale account of power. It could be argued then that in Lefebvre’s more centralized conception of power and it’s emphasis on a Marxian critique of the state, Lefebvre’s conception of power is too concerned with the revolutionary as suggested above, and therefore risks the critique levied here of it’s juridical nature.
As Foucault (2002b: 120 [my emphasis]) states, “[w]hat makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that is doesn’t only weigh on us as a force that says no”. Precisely in the re-habitualization of street performance through a discursive linearization, its being reorganized or remade to fit with the everyday life of the city, the linear cannot be juridical or seen as solely negative; it cannot only be thought as a production of repression. It has to also be beneficially productive in some sense and not just prohibitive, or else it wouldn’t quietly slip back into the habitual, the everyday; the ecology wouldn’t keep on working.

The problem here therefore lies in the qualifications given to the linear and the cyclical by Lefebvre (monotonous, tiring and vital, adventive respectively). This manifests itself as overly reductive. It shuts down the excessive nature of these rhythms and therefore their analysis. In short, it has deadening effect (Thrift and Dewsbury 2000). Rather, I would argue we should diagram the affective relations between and within the linear and the cyclical in such ecologies, not just their interference. Much of the above could also be said of the representations of spaces discussed previously if we start to think about what these representations do slightly differently. Drawing on the work of Deleuze, I would argue that we need to start thinking of such representations of spaces, their temporal linearizations included, as diagrams. I feel such a diagrammatic perspective is a useful addition here as it acknowledges that different rhythms or spacing don’t just compete or interfere, but that they constitute affective ecologies that are as much about affecting as being affected (McCormack 2005). Breaking down such ecologies into their distinct rhythms and spacings then offers a way to grapple with the ways in which affects are potentially engineered.

Deleuze (2005: 71) suggests that the diagram is “the operative set of asignifying and nonrepresentative lines and zones” and that the “operation of the diagram, its function… is to be suggestive”. There is a “germ of order” in the diagram, but something also must emerge from it – it “acts as a relay” (Deleuze 2005: 72 & 96). The diagram is not a “invisible determinant” or “hidden blueprint” (McCormack 2005: 124). Rather, it is “a real organisation of forces through [which] it gives the relations between these forces a kind of spatiotemporal consistency” (McCormack 2005: 124).

The example of the diagram is Foucault’s (1979) discussion of the panopticon. The panopticon is not the expression of an ideological structure but rather a diagram that...
“by distributing in space, laying out and serializing in time, composing in space-time, and so on” organizes forces in a way that “imposes a particular conduct on a particular human multiplicity” (Deleuze 2006b: 29). However, no one diagram dominates in a society given that there are “as many diagrams as there are social fields” and every diagram is “intersocial and constantly evolving” (Deleuze 2006b: 30). Something significant which sets such an understanding of the diagram apart from Lefebvre’s conception of representations of space then is that “it would be wrong to think that the diagram functions solely as a repressive, alienating, or containing device. Instead, as Deleuze argues, ‘the diagram is profoundly unstable or fluid, never ceasing to churn up matter and functions in a way likely to create change’” (Deleuze cited in McCormack 2005: 124). As Deleuze (2006b: 37) states, “there is no diagram that does not also include, beside the points which it connects up, certain relatively free or unbound points, points of creativity, change and resistance, and it is perhaps with these that we ought to begin in order to understand the whole picture”.

Our units of understanding in thinking diagrammatically should then be the affects, in terms of degrees of speed and slowness, motion and rest, not their already-qualified interaction (Hurley 1988)(see Chapter 5). One of the central aspects of thinking in terms of affect is that affective relations are not causal or determined in advance. There is an openness to such relations. We should be concerned with the affects within polyrhythmic ecologies and their “unqualified intensity” rather than the qualified intensity which Lefebvre imposed (Massumi 2002: 28; McCormack 2003). This presents the linear and representations of spaces diagrammatically as “field[s] of potential”, not just as restrictions (Dewsbury, et al. 2002: 439). This should not however be mistaken for appearing as an apology for the legislation covering street performance here, simply that “we have many constituent relations, so that one and the same object can agree with us in one respect and disagree with us in another” (Deleuze 1988: 33).

With this in mind, in the next section I am going to start by setting the performance scene in Bath and expand upon the legislative context for street performers and buskers. This will articulate prominent aspects of the diagrammatic context for the following discussion of the impact street performers and buskers do (or don’t) make in the everyday life of the city. This will in turn be complicated in this discussion through the highlighting of various other routines that run through and given organization to the everyday life of Bath.
V. Street Performance and the Space-Times of the Everyday

Bath and its Performance Spaces

The City of Bath, situated approximately 13 miles south-east of Bristol, became a World Heritage Site in 1987 and is an international cultural and heritage tourist destination which hosts around 1 million staying visitors and 3.8 million day visitors on an annual basis. Many of these visitors come as a result its various theatres, art galleries, and museums (including the Roman Baths), the historic Bath Abbey, and recently re-opened Thermae Bath Spa, but also as a result of Bath’s 400 plus shops and around 100 restaurants.

Another less prominent attraction in Bath are the buskers and street performers spread throughout the centre of the city and who, in Bath and North East Somerset Council’s own words, “are part of the Bath ‘experience’, creating an enhanced atmosphere and providing pleasure to many people, both local residents and visitors” and “enhance the vitality of the City” (Bath and North East Somerset Council 2000b).

There are a number of different performance spaces in Bath, each with different layout and patterns of use. These can roughly be divided into two. Firstly, there are the spaces around the Abbey and outside the Roman Baths and the Pump Rooms (Map 4.1). Secondly, there are a number of shopping streets which most prominently include Stall Street, Union Street, Burton Street and Milson Street (Map 4.2).

Map 4.1 shows the three main pitches situated around the Abbey, Roman Baths and Pump Rooms. Pitch A is generally a non-musical pitch, while Pitches B and C are used primarily by buskers. While there is no official marking of these pitches (there are no markers embedded into the street etc.), it has become standard practice among the performers to operate in this way. Out of the two later pitches, pitch B, which is directly outside the entrance to the Roman Baths, tends to be more regularly performed. Pitch C, a square enclosed by benches on all sides and lying between the side of the Abbey and Baths, and also the Tourist Information Centre and an Ice Cream shop, acts to some extent as an overflow pitch from pitch B. From conversation with one regular busker, this comes primarily down to the more constant flow of people at pitch B and also that pitch C is quite large and therefore sometimes difficult to fill for unamplified acts.

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27 http://www.business-matters.biz/site.aspx?g=pg64
28 http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/BathNES/business/LicencesStreetTrading/busking.htm
Much of the flow through pitches A and B comes from people entering the Roman Baths, but also as there is a tour bus stop to the North of the Abbey and also people entering the area from the busy shopping streets, both to enter the Baths and look at the façade of the Abbey. While there is also a flow of people and tour groups past pitch C, particularly either heading toward or coming from the top left of the pitch by pitch B, this is not generally as constant and such flows tend to keep moving.

Map 4.2 shows the area of the main shopping street which are regularly used for performances. Of these, most regularly performed are the north end of Stall Street (visible at the bottom of the map) and various points on Union Street. While there are general patterns of location, buskers tend to perform in a variety of locations depending on where other buskers have set up and on the location of various other stalls, street vendors, and so on. Also regularly performed, and with more obvious regularly performed spots, are Burton Street (where buskers tend to set up at either end) and Milson Street (where street performers sometimes perform at its lower end where there is a large pavement area before the street turns into New Bond Street). These streets tend to have very high flows of people, both shopping, and also travelling between prominent tourist attractions – many move from the Abbey and Roman Baths off Stall Street, up Union Street and Milsom Street, toward The Circus, The Cresent, the Jane Austin Museum, and so on.
As I will return to later, these flows of pedestrians and tourists present a variety of linear rhythms which enter into relation with the rhythms of the performances, which in turn are affected by the linear rhythms of the buskers code which I will outline now.

**The Control of Street Performers in Bath**

All of the areas just discussed are covered by a voluntary code of conduct which performers are expected to adhere to and which was developed in consultation with performers (Box 4.1). This approach of having a code of conduct for street performance and busking is becoming increasingly common among cities and towns in the UK as a middle ground between no provisions and the need to gain formal permission or a license. As it currently stands, Cheltenham, Glasgow, Gloucester, Kingston Upon Thames, Peterborough, Salisbury, Sheffield, Solihull, and Winchester all operate codes relating to busking.\(^29\) The code in Bath has been in place since at least 1996, but possibly since the late 1980s (Interview with Bath Environment Protection Team; Bath and North East Somerset Council 2006a)\(^30\) and was implemented to gain “an element of control” over the performers and to “engender a measure of collective responsibility” (Bath and North East Somerset Council 2000b).

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29 [https://musicalbusker.co.uk/licences/](https://musicalbusker.co.uk/licences/)

30 It is not possible to give a more precise date for this as those interviewed during the research started working in Bath after this was agreed and no specific record of its inception could be found.
In addition to this code:

“Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 noise in the street from musical instruments may be a statutory nuisance and the Local Authority is able to take legal action to abate the nuisance and prohibit or restrict its recurrence; this may include the seizure of musical instruments and amplification equipment”.31

The code then presents a particular diagrammatic representation of the street space for performers. There is a geometric mapping of performances onto the space. While these are not fixed points and the council does not insist on individual pitches (Bath and North East Somerset Council 2000b), they are fixed relative to each other: performances are to be spaced at a certain distance (50 meters) and are to move to another relative point 50m from their original location after a set time. This movement is also dictated by a linear rhythmizing – performances are to last no longer than an hour, or even 30 minutes, before they make this move to another space. In addition, this linear rhythmizing extends to a control on what time in the circadian rhythm of the day performers are allowed to use – only between 10am and 8pm. Finally, in controlling the volume of the performance (both generally and through the restriction of particular technologies), this dictates a certain sonic spatial representation: the sound of the performance is mapped in a geometric manner to restrict it to a certain space.

31 http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/BathNES/business/LicencesStreetTrading/busking.htm
4.3. Communicating the busking code to new buskers

However, as suggested previously, while this timetable is a linear imposition, this does not mean it is of necessity a negative imposition. Many of the buskers I encountered throughout my time in Bath stated that it makes it fair as buskers get equal access to the most popular performance spaces. While it is generally meant to occur through a meeting at 10am where buskers draw for times, from my observation and experiences of performing, it was generally worked out less formally (I return to this in the next chapter). Further, the spatial organization of performances at 50m intervals avoids performances interfering with each other. These positive affects are often relayed in the way it is presented by buskers to other buskers as making things ‘fair’. This is
significant as it is the main actual means of its distribution (otherwise the code only appears online)(see 4.3). While having buskers move on every hour is intended on behalf of the Council to avoid businesses and residents getting annoyed by buskers playing for hours on end in the same space, there is a positive affect for the buskers in this also. It should also be noted that there are times when the linear rhythms of the timetable can be problematic for performances, and I will return to these in the next chapter in relation to reflecting on my own experiences of busking in Bath.

In addition to this code, there have also been a range of attempts in recent years to change the way in which busking is controlled in Bath. Firstly, between 1999 and 2003 there were attempts by the Council to develop and implement a busking bylaw as a result of a series of complaints from local residents and retailers (Bath and North East Somerset Council 1999). The new bylaw was to replace an outdated bylaw from 1904 which related to busking but the language of which was deemed “archaic”, and, due to a low level of fine (a maximum of only £5), thought “unlikely to prove a deterrent to offenders” (Bath and North East Somerset Council 2000a) (see Box 4.2).

Box 4.2. 1904 Byelaw

“No person shall sound or play upon any musical or noisy instrument, or sing in any street or public space within 100 yards of any dwelling-house or office to the annoyance of any inmate thereof, after being requested to desist by such inmate, either personally or through his servant, or through a constable; provided that this Bye-law shall not apply to properly conducted religious services, except when the request to desist is made on the grounds of the serious illness of any inmate of the house” (From Bath and North East Somerset Council 2000a).

Further problems perceived with this bylaw were that it did not mention amplification. Under the statutory authority of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 the Council could undertake action against nuisance caused by musical instruments and amplification, but not unamplified singing. Where such a nuisance caused by such equipment had been identified, the Council was to serve an abatement notice on the responsible person responsible and if the person failed to comply with this notice without “reasonable excuse”, then the person was liable upon conviction to a fine up to a maximum of £5000.

There was one very public occasion on which such an abatement notice was issued due to complaints about a busker’s use of amplification. This initially occurred in 1998 when a busker, ‘Grod Gloddler’ (stage name), was banned from using amplification
following complaints by local residents and workers who argued his amplified voice and
guitar interfered with their ability to conduct their business. While this busker appealed
against the ban, presented petitions suggesting he was supported by the public, local
businesses, and other buskers, it was upheld. It was also suggested at the time that this
case being used as an example to other buskers in that this “firm action may make
performers think more seriously about noise levels and amplifiers”.

Following this initial ban, over 1999 and 2000 a number of articles and letters
exchanged between Grod and those complaining appeared in the pages of the local
newspaper The Bath Chronicle. These variously circulated around how the issue was
not about the use of amplification, but noise levels, and how some buskers were being
allowed to use amps (either for backing tracks or to amplify instruments) while he, Grod,
was being unfairly singled out. Other issues, not necessarily directly related to Grod’s ban
on using an amp, such as the timing, variety, and quality of performances, were also
debated. By the end of the busking season of 2000, the issue was not resolved, but Grod
revised his act to perform unamplified (but louder than he in fact had with his amp
previously).

The new byelaw was desired so that Council Officers “can deal more effectively
with noise in the streets and other public places” (Bath and North East Somerset Council
2000a) – it would provide a more joined-up system – and was to be accompanied by a
£500 fine if breeched (Box 4.3).

While this new byelaw would not directly change the code of conduct in Bath, it
was stated at the time that the code would be reviewed if the byelaw was agreed. This
suggests a worrying pattern in terms of the regulation of Bath’s public spaces. Firstly, it
could have set in motion a trend towards a generally stricter control of busking and street
performing. Further, in increasing the fine, it would put buskers in a more vulnerable
position, both those amplified and not. As one busker stated at the time: “[j]t would

33 “The bare facts about busking’, The Bath Chronicle, 14/06/1999 and ‘Busker wins backing’, The Bath
Chronicle, 26/08/1999.
34 ‘Happy Graham is left out in the cold’, The Bath Chronicle, 11/12/1998.
35 See ‘The bare facts about busking’, The Bath Chronicle, 14/06/1999, ‘Buskers are just too loud’, The
busking’, The Bath Chronicle, 06/10/1999, ‘Busking is not the issue’, The Bath Chronicle, 14/10/1999,
‘Noise volume is problem, not amplifiers’, The Bath Chronicle, 03/11/1999, ‘Lift the ban on Grod
‘Banned busker broke the code’, The Bath Chronicle, 15/07/2000. The issue also appeared in
c wells. See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C865mnHlRtQ and

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allow anyone to stop a busker, otherwise they [would] be arrested and fined a flat £500. Could you perform with that hanging over your head? …none of us [buskers] want it and [it] poses a real threat to our livelihoods”\textsuperscript{37} The emphasis on the person complaining rather than the on rights of the person performing is then problematic. The byelaw states that following any person complaining the performer would have to stop and therefore makes no reference to the reasonable nature of this complaint and so leaves no rights for the performer to perform in those public spaces.

\begin{quote}
\textit{Box 4.3. Model Byelaw 2000}

“No person in a street or other public place shall, after being requested to desist by a constable, or by any other person annoyed or disturbed, or by any person acting on his behalf:
(a) by shouting or singing;
(b) by playing on a musical instrument; or
(c) by operating or permitting to be operated any radio, gramophone, amplifier, tape recorder or similar instrument;

cause or permit to be made any noise which is so loud or so continuous or repeated to give reasonable cause for annoyance to other persons in the neighbourhood

This byelaw shall not apply to properly conducted religious services or to any person holding or taking part in any entertainment held with the consent of the Council”

(From Bath and North East Somerset Council 2000a).
\end{quote}

The implementation of this byelaw was delayed due to need to revoke further byelaws to the 1904 byelaw quoted above (Bath and North East Somerset Council 2001). Further, revisions were made to the phrasing of the byelaw that turned out to be problematic.\textsuperscript{38} Subsequently, the byelaw was not pursued further (Interview with Bath Environment Protection Team).

Further to this attempt to change the way busking and street performance are regulated in Bath, changes were suggest in 2006 to provide “additional controls to deal with the minority that cause a nuisance to the public” (Bath and North East Somerset Council 2006a). It was hoped that such changes would allow for the introduction of “quality standards” to be achieved before permission to perform would be granted (Bath and North East Somerset Council 2006a). However, the Council also stated at the time

\textsuperscript{37} \url{http://www.geosites.com/leavealone7858/truthout.htm?20082}
\textsuperscript{38} The reference to “properly conducted religious services” was removed (Bath and North East Somerset Council 2003), but this caused concern in relation the Human Rights Act 1998.
that there had in fact “been a success in achieving self regulation amongst the majority of
buskers” through the code of conduct and that there had been “no significant change in
the level or nature of complaints in recent years” (Bath and North East Somerset
Council 2006a).

Interestingly, in their 2006 report on the subject, the Council note that while they
held no direct powers for dealing with non-musical performers, few complaints were
received. Where complaints were made, this often related to issues of decency or taste
and were therefore related to the Police (Bath and North East Somerset Council 2006a).

4.4. Skate Naked outside the Pump Rooms

From: http://www.skatenaked.co.uk/
One act that has been prominent in these complaints relating to decency, and who have performed in Bath since the early 1990s and were present in the debates discussed above, are the comedy acrobat duo ‘Skate Naked’ (4.4). As central aspect of Skate Naked’s act involves the duo stripping to wear nothing but thongs and includes them, amongst other things, blowing fire balls into the air (the rational for them not wearing clothes is that they could catch on fire), and doing a one handed handstands on raised platforms while holding lit sparklers between their bum cheeks (again necessitating the lack of clothing). The issue of decency really comes to a head in that this act is generally performed outside the Pump Rooms where people pay a premium to eat and drink there and where “clients glance through the window and see two virtually naked men mocking them”. During the debates around 1999-2003, there were suggestions that a flower stall be licensed on this pitch to stop such acts performing there, but, following protests by performers, this did not end up happening. Therefore, such acts still continue there.

Returning to the specifics of the 2006 discussions, five general options were suggested in relation to this desire for increased control of both buskers and street performers. Firstly, one option was to not make any changes, with the Environmental Protection Team continuing to deal with complaints which was “cost effective” and “generally work[ed] well” – the number of complaints received year on year was relatively constant and of a similar nature. Secondly, it was suggested a permit scheme be implemented on the Council land used by performers (pitch C from Map 4.1). However, there were concerns that this would simply move the issue to other areas. Thirdly, it was suggested that a permit scheme be implemented for busking on the highway, but this was not possible due to the lack of legal powers to permit or refuse buskers to use a public highway without a local byelaw (such as that previously discussed). The fourth option suggested was to implement a premises license under the Licensing Act 2003 which would allow the local authority to license the provision of regulated entertainment in public spaces. Finally, it was suggested that an agreement could be reached with Skate

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40 Skate Naked have also been contentious in the past, but that act has been deemed legal by Halifax police following complaints made about them at a busker festival (Daily Mail news clippings from http://www.skatenaked.co.uk/).
41 For recent clips of parts of their 45 minute act see: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z-mllpkism0 (where they can be seen potentially annoying people in the Pump Rooms by cooling a ‘burnt bum’ on the glass of one of its doors and joking ‘they must think we’re a bit of a pain in the arse in there, or lets have it right, actually, we’re an arse in their pain!’) and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZDpaby297g (where they insert sparklers between their bum cheeks and joke: “Welcome to Bath, a national heritage site, or in our case, a national hemeroid site”).
Naked around their act if it was them who were the main problem (Bath and North East Somerset Council 2006a).

In relation to the fourth option one of the advantages suggested was that it would allow the identification of specific areas to be set aside for busking that would not be likely to cause offence – it would allow performances to be mapped in more detail – and also that it would allow the licensing authority to control busking activities in terms of quality. Therefore, this option was suggested to be investigated further (Bath and North East Somerset Council 2006b), but was not implemented due to a range of issues relating to the funding and management of its operation.

We can see in this attempted move towards a stricter control of performances that not only would the performances be more spatially ordered and so easier to manage, but that it would enforce quality controls. This would in effect privatize the public spaces of the City in that performers would have to audition and receive permission to access and use them as they desired. There are dangers that this could homogenize the type of performances present in Bath (something that has happened in, for example, Covent Garden with their licensed musical performers). As one busker stated: “I am slightly wary about auditions as we don’t want every busker in Bath just playing Vivaldi. I’m sorry but Bath is very conservative. It is the variety I believe that makes Bath busking fairly special”.42 This would therefore also exclude more itinerant performers or performers who would decide to occasionally perform as they could not just turn up, find out from other performers how things worked, and then play (as currently happens).43

Problematic also is that this would tie performers to a particular pitch, and locality in general, removing a central aspect of street performing – the centrality of “spontaneity and surprise” in encountering performers not seen before or not expected in that space (Harrison-Pepper 1990: 9). It could however be argued that there could be positive affects of such fixing in that people may become regular patrons of specific performers they like and therefore would know where to find them, encounter them on their regular route through town, and so on (Tanenbaum 1995: 63). There is a danger though that everything would have to become more planned and potentially sterile in a move to a more regulated everyday life of the city.

42 http://www.bathbuskers.co.uk/opinions.php
43 Conversely though, it has been argued that much of the problems come from itinerant performers rather than those regular to Bath in that they either don’t know about the code’s statements around noise, timing, and so on, or just don’t bother following the code (‘Crackdown on noise’, The Bath Chronicle, 24/07/2000). It is not possible to ascertain though if this was really the case, or if it was an attempt to shift the blame off of Bath’s regular buskers who could be most affected by any changes.
Finally, there have been suggestions recently that the management of busking and street performers be revised following the appointment of a City Centre Manager in Bath under the public-private partnership ‘Future Bath Plus’. While no formal plans are currently in place, from speaking to Bath’s City Centre Manager, there are concerns about the current operation of the code of conduct in Bath in that it is seen to be not generally adhered to – buskers play for longer than the 1 hour slots stipulated and amplification is often used. Potential plans to alleviate this include trying to update the code so that buskers agree with it and therefore follow it – a strong emphasis is placed on working with buskers and street performers towards this – but also raise the standards of buskers. Part of this would be to find ways to discourage buskers who “haven’t really got anything to contribute and are basically verging on begging” as this “doesn’t do well for a heritage city” (Interview with Andrew Cooper) (Here we can see that there is a particular ‘buzz’ desired in Bath given its status as a Heritage city and therefore a need to engineer aspects of the everyday life of the city to fit with this (Thrift 2004).) Also, given that there is some level of inconsistency in the allowance of the use of amplification, there would need to be a more consistent approach, which might include the need to licence the use of amplification, and potentially the setting out specific busking pitches (Interview with Andrew Cooper).

Given that the current code is slanted primarily towards buskers, very little is stipulated in relation to non-musical street performers. Therefore, there are also plans to re-develop the code to include stipulations explicitly relating to non-musical street performers. This again might relate to decency, which, as mentioned above, is one of the key issues in relation to non-musical performers. There are also issues in terms of health and safety relating to the audiences of such acts blocking the highway and entrances to shops and other businesses which would need to be addressed (Interview with Andrew Cooper).

Some of these suggested avenues of change are again concerning, particularly in relation to quality control through auditions and the fixing of performances to specific spaces as discussed above. It would appear that there is a desire for an ordered urban space, even if not one that is entirely “quiet and empty”, rather than a view which

45 When interviewed, Andrew Cooper was in fact dealing with another complaint about Skate Naked, having received a letter that stated: “I've just had my breakfast in the Pump Rooms only to have a great view of some bare-arsed buffoons who presumably you have licensed [which we (the Council/Future Bath Plus) haven’t]. This is inappropriate and not acceptable, so I suggest you ask them to wear trousers or go away”.
emphasizes that these spaces “are more exciting, and, even, safer when public spaces are filled with people engaging in diverse activities” (Tanenbaum 1995: 25). That said, at the time of writing, there are not yet any formal plans to implement such changes to the current system of control through the code of conduct.

On one point at least though, it would appear that some changes are needed. Clarification over the use of amplification and the enforcement of this ban would appear necessary. This in not to say that licensing or something similar should have to be gain to allow its use, but rather that, from conversations with a number of buskers in Bath (and from the comments in the case of Grod Groddler discussed above), it is felt there is too much inconsistency with the enforcement of the code on this issue; some performers regularly use amplification without any complaints being made while others are instantly stopped from using it if they try even though they are not necessarily louder that other acts. As one performer stated: “Really it should be noise level (decibels) rather than amplification [that is at issue]. My acoustic guitar is simply not heard [unamplified]”. This is echoed by a resident who stated that: “Most of your captive audience [those who live and work next to busking areas] will turn a blind eye to the use of amplification if it is quite obviously used to give a bit of reinforcement to a delicate and nuanced delivery which would otherwise be inaudible (Mr Classical Guitarist, take a bow). Anything else is OTT”. It is therefore questionable if the code needs to ban amplification, but rather state simply that the Council will have rights to stop buskers if complaints are made under statutory nuisance regulations and to clarify what volume/distance of being audible is a nuisance.

Having outlined this layered legislative and everyday context for street performers and buskers in Bath (of contemporary provisions through codes, statutory nuisance legislation, and so on, the patterns of everyday usage of the spaces, and through the still relevant recent previous attempts to control performances differently given the continuity of the nature of recent complaints), and suggested some issues in its operation, I will now turn to some of the ways in which this plays out and how space is produced in Bath through the interrelation of these representations of space with the spatial practices of performers and their audience, and the spaces of representation, or

46 This is especially the case with a number of full bands (including up to five members) who occasionally set up on Union Street (both in the past and presently) and play fully amplified, with drums, and at a far louder volume than single amplified buskers. I have in fact on a number of occasions seen various Police Officers and Community Support Officers watch and smile at such bands.

47 http://www.bathbuskers.co.uk/opinions.php
48 http://www.bathbuskers.co.uk/opinions.php
rather spaces of affected modification, that emerge within these interrelations. I will focus specifically on the spatio-temporal interventions these performances make and the socialities that emerge as a result of them. This will be divided around two themes: 1) intervening in the everyday; and 2) not intervening in the everyday.

**Intervening in the Everyday**

Street performers do something to the everyday life of the city (Harrison-Pepper 1990). They affect how the spaces and people feel, how the spaces are used, what relations occur there, and inject some liminality into the everyday routines of these spaces and open them up to change (Schechner 2002). For example, in the event outlined at the start of this paper, the space was used differently, the usual order was suspended and people were made to laugh or looked on in awe. People took time out of their everyday activities to see what was going on. In this section I will therefore outline some of the ways in which these interventions play out in the performance spaces of Bath.

One way in which this liminality emerges is as a result of the reduction in distance between performer and audience that comes from performing in the street (Mason 1992). This is both in the architectural organization of the space – there is no obvious ‘stage’, and so on – but also in that there is a forced proximity in the often crowded nature of the spaces street performers and buskers perform in (Tanenbaum 1995). While I will return to this in the next chapter in relation to the affects of this for the performer in discussing my own experience of performing, here I want to highlight the significance of the reduction in distance to the everyday life of the city. This reduction in distance provides the potential for greater interaction between performer and audience and this “possibility of interaction has meant that improvising skills and the personality of the performer become more important” (Mason 1992: 11). There then has to be a greater fluidity in the performer’s ‘performance script’: “[h]elicopters, barking dogs, traffic, babies, hecklers – all become the stuff of outdoor performance, and the better a performer can transform these potential disruptions into entertaining diversions…the more successful he [sic] will be” (Harrison-Pepper 1990: 114).

While such fluidity and integration of distractions into the performance (such as with the performer’s interaction with the pigeons in the opening event) might more obviously be significant to street performers who more directly communicate to their audience (which I will discuss shortly), this can also be the case with buskers. An example of this can be seen in 4.5. Here, two buskers were playing on Stall Street by some pillars (at the bottom of Map 4.2). At the time the photo was taken though, they
had deviated from what their act usually consisted of given that a member of a school tour (black t-shirt and blue backpack behind the busker playing a guitar) had decided to join them and was juggling in time to their music. Rather than stop their song at its usual point, the buskers continued on playing the song instrumentally – the singer improvising around the song’s melody on a melodica. This created “new spatial possibilities” (Harrison-Pepper 1990: 125).

4.5. Reduction of distance

Initially, the other members of the school group had gathered round and were clapping in time to the music and cheering (those with matching blue backpacks in the image). This in turn drew a lot of attention to the performance and so a large group of other people not associated with the group also gathered and stopped to see what was happening. Quite quickly a large semi-circular audience formed, stretching half the width of the street. After around 5 minutes of playing together the juggler stopped, as did the buskers. The school tour cheered and applauded and moved on, some donating, and many of the others who had stopped donated to the buskers and went back to what they were doing.

This was quite an unusual event. Generally, at least in Bath, few buskers generate such substantial stationary audiences on the shopping streets (Eyers 2009). Here, a fortunate and unplanned interaction with a passerby, and an openness to engage such a chance encounter, benefited the buskers. In doing so it also enacted a significant alteration in the everyday patterns of use and spatial practices of that space. For the period of around 5 minutes the usual order of that space, both in terms of the absence of
performances but also in terms of their usual presence, was temporarily suspended and disrupted, with something unique taking place.

There are also other ways that buskers draw attention to themselves that do not rely on the sort of chance encounters just discussed. As can be seen in 4.6, performers will sometime build in something unique into their act. Rather than simply playing popular songs or displaying substantial musical talent to draw the attention of passersby, acts will draw attention via other means. The first example presented in 4.6 shows an innovative version of the traditional ‘one-man-band’ approach to busking – rather than play with other musicians, the fiddle player has constructed a machine that allows him to accompany himself with guitar chords (activated by pedals operated with his feet – the right foot pedal controls the speed while the left foot pedal changes chord). Often this draws attention before he even starts playing – people stop, look at the machine being set up, and ask questions about it. The second example shows a musician playing an unusual instrument and dressed as a character from ‘The Chronicles of Narnia’ (something that would be broadly known across various age groups given both the books and recent movie adaptations). While this was not necessarily the most interesting of musical acts (the instrument in effect sounded like a mellow recorder and played quite simple tunes), it did draw a substantial audience with people either laughing at his costume or looking on in bemusement – the costume set him apart from the other performers (Harrison-Pepper 1990).

4.6. Drawing attention

(Caption on left image reads: “I built this machine because of unreliable guitarists. It don’t smoke! It don’t drink! And it’s never late.”)
These changes in the way spaces are used that result from the presence of performers are not always entirely random and in some cases are planned in various ways so as to “not only attract an audience but also to control the potentially volatile gathering once it was created” (Harrison-Pepper 1990: 125). While this is necessary due to the lack of formalisms in the organization of the space as already discussed, this can also be necessary given the need for performers to have a certain amount of space to perform in (something that is especially the case with performances that use fire), and also so that they do not inadvertently block the spaces they perform in entirely – this is often one of the main issues that is articulated against street performers as discussed previously. This organizing of their intervention can sometimes be as simply as asking people to step forward or back. However, performers sometimes use other means.

4.7. Mapping out the performance space
In 4.7 it can be seen how one performer deliberately marked out his stage in chalk in the street at pitch A from Map 4.1 (often a rope is also used for this which leave less of a trace in the street after the show), overlaying a further diagram onto the space. Such a marking of the space serves to define the space as a theatrical one and to mark a “tangible boundary on the previously undefined space” (Harrison-Pepper 1990: 126), and so encourage specific behaviors. This was positioned so that it left enough space for him to perform in but also so that the crowd would be unlikely to block the entire passage way, and, importantly, not block the entrance to the Pump Rooms – the line was drawn so that even a crowd of 3 or 4 deep would not get in the way. The drawing out of this ‘stage’ also provides a spectacle which draws attention to the starting of a show. The act of drawing such lines (or laying ropes) stands out from the background of everyday activities and can provide material for the performer (joking about people walking through their ‘stage’) and creates an anticipation among passersby as to what the performer is going to do. This initial interest garnered, the crowd, with some input from the performer, is then organized around this drawn out shape and regularly asked to stick to its placement if people stand too far back or leave gaps etc..

Once such lines are drawn and crowds are built, a specific form of temporary social relation is built in the changed use of the space. Audiences are generally organized into a roughly semi-circular shape. Such an organization means that “shoulder-to-shoulder and across-the-space interaction” is encouraged, as well as producing a central focus of attention (Harrison-Pepper 1990: 126-127). A more specific standard mechanism that such sociality and interaction emerges though is by the enrolment of ‘assistants’ given the closer proximity and increased opportunity for interaction previously discussed. A passersby is selected from the crowd and asked if they want to take part. Some refuse, but most accept. They are always introduced to the crowd by name. Invariably the ‘assistants’ are made fun of by the performer – jokes are made about their nationalities or specific traits are drawn attention to (baldness being a regular one).

From the performance in 4.8, the performer joked about the masculinity of the assistants, asking ‘is this the first time you held the hand of a man in a pink tutu?’ and also joked with them saying ‘don’t look up’ as he climbed over their heads and hovered his crotch above them. People both laughed at the situation of these volunteers and the jokes being made of them. They also empathized with them, being glad they were not the ones to be selected. This kind of laughter and empathy would not necessarily normally
happen in such everyday spaces without the presence of such performers. There was no malice in this laughter – it brought the crowd together. These differences in behavior, nationality, physical appearance, and so on, are negotiated directly through humor and in doing so become less of a contentious issue and bring people together around collective laughter (see Massey and Rose 2003; and also Macpherson 2008 on laughter more generally).

4.8. Once drawn and returning to ‘everyday’ usage

Such sociality often occurs at varying degrees and the collectivity of the crowd is not necessarily homogenous. As Schechner (2003) usefully illustrates, there is a structure
to the intensity of this participation. Schechner (2003: 176) discusses the interrelation of performance and audience in terms of ‘eruptions’ where there is “a heated centre with involved spectators fading into a cool rim where people come, peer in, and move on”. Those in the front rows are most involved whereas those coming and going from the outer areas perhaps are only drawn in momentarily. That said, this variance in the collectivity of the crowd is different to that often highlighted in the discussion of audiences. Often this lack of unity is articulated in terms of socio-economic standing, leading Blau (1990: 84) to state that “[t]he audience is there as the aggregate of separation”. Traditional theatre environment separate out different classes – some seats are more expensive that others, and so on (Auslander 1999). However, here, in the street, there is not necessarily any such separation. Such performances are democratic in that they are “accessible to everyone, regardless of income, race, gender, or age” (Tanenbaum 1995: 19). While there may not be a case of some kind of fundamental or originary community (Blau 1990), people of various socio-economic backgrounds do come together and watch the performance, laugh with or at each other, relatively irrespective of such divisions.

In addition to this temporary collectivity that can be produced by the performer and their intentional enlisting of audience members into their act (Whyte 1988), this can also occur through the ways in which their acts affect passersby and members of their audience. (I will return to thinking about how performances affect their audience in Chapter 6 in terms of attention and becoming aware of their presence). This could be seen in the embodied reaction of a small child to the presence of a busker I witnessed. The busker, performing at the lower end of Milsom Street, was playing up beat folk music. Initially, the child looked on, and occasionally to his dad, apparently trying to make sense of the situation. As he stood, his head began to nod in time to the music. This became more and more pronounced. His dad noticed and smiled. Without looking around him – his gaze intent on the busker – the boy started to bounce in time to the music. This became more and more enthusiastic. The other people standing around began to notice and smiled – the father looked a little embarrassed, but smiled and shrugged his shoulders. The child continued to bounce, still staring intently. He then began to grin, and clapped in time to the music. He looked to his dad who crouched down, clapped (quietly) along also, and bounced in time with his son. The child grinned wider and laughed.
As this went on, more and more people gathered around and watched the little boy dance. Many smiled and laughed. Some made passing comments to the dad who smiled and chatted to the people. Eventually the busker stopped and the child stopped bouncing. His dad finished chatting to those who had approached him and gave his son some change to donate. The son rather nervously, and having to be accompanied by his dad, donated and they then walked off up Milson Street.

Events such as this produce a unique sort of sociality among strangers in public spaces (Degen, et al. 2008; Massey and Rose 2003; Ruppert 2006). If it had not been for the presence of the busker, the son’s father might not have ended up chatting to the people that approached to comment on his son. In addition to the evident entertainment provided by the busker to the young child, this provided the grounds for an interaction amongst strangers that might not have otherwise occurred. Therefore, these kinds of moments of ‘transitory community’ are of great significance and call attention to the value activities such as busking and street performing perform in facilitating moments of contact between strangers and therefore producing a convivial public space (Tanenbaum 1995).

This affectivity can also be significant on a more individual level, as was evident in a story that was recounted to me by a middle aged woman I spoke to outside the entrance to the Roman Baths (pitch B from Map 4.1). Having sat down next to me the lady asked me what I was doing and I explained my research to her. She then started to tell me about what she thought about buskers and some of the stories she’d read in the local papers about people complaining about them. Following this, she went on to tell me about one occasion on which she did something and didn’t quite know what made her do it. She had seen a duo performing on Union Street that she hadn’t seen before – a woman singing with a pianist accompanying her – and who were playing music from when she was younger and that she really liked. She stopped briefly to listen and really enjoyed it. However, as she was in a rush she couldn’t wait long. She went over and spoke to them briefly and was told how they were a couple travelling around busking. She then gave the singer a £10 note – more than she had ever given to a busker before – and walked on.

However, that was not the end of the encounter. She said that once she had done all she had to do in the centre she couldn’t help but still think about the buskers. She then, without really thinking it through or knowing why, went to her building society and withdrew some more money. She went back to find the buskers, gave them an envelope
with the money in, but on the condition that she took her £10 note back and that they
didn’t open it until she had left. After a little convincing the buskers accepted. The
woman did not disclose the amount of money to me, but said simply that it was more
than £10. This wasn’t the gesture of someone with lots of money – she told me that she
there were probably a lot of things she could have done with buying with that money
(listing practical household items, appliances, etc.), but just really wanted to give it to
those buskers; something made her want to do that that she couldn’t explain. Although
the buskers said they would be back in Bath the following year, the woman hadn’t seen
them since.

**Not Intervening in the Everyday**

So far I have focused on the intervention that street performers and buskers make in the
everyday life of the city and the social interactions such interventions can produce.
However, as will be returned to in terms of my own experiences in the next chapter also,
there are also times when performers struggle to make an intervention into the spatio-
temporal patterns of the everyday, or do not make any intervention at all. In light of this,
I want to focus on the challenges presented in having to intervene into the rhythms and
patterns of the everyday life of the city. Firstly, I will discuss trying to perform at the
bottom of Milson Street and struggling to intervene in that space/make this intervention
last, and, secondly, trying (and failing) to perform outside the Roman Baths of a Saturday
afternoon in July.

A pitch is often used at the bottom of Milson Street by street performers (see
Map 4.2). On a large pavement area where the street turns into New Bond Street,
performers generally set up in front of a bench which sets the back-limit of the
performance area. While there is a road nearby, this tends to have very slow moving
traffic and doesn’t present much noise or problems to performing. However, one issue
faced by performers here is that the space is prominently a transitional space. Pedestrians
tend to be moving from the tourist attractions such as the Abbey or Roman Baths, or
coming from the shopping streets of Union Street and Stall Street, and heading to further
attractions such as the Jane Austin Museum, The Circus, and The Royal Crescent (or the
reverse). From the images presented below (4.9-4.23), this means that there is a
continuous flow of people moving from right to left (or left to right) and often walking
very quickly. 49

49 This can be seen in the stride-length of some passersby, such as the woman at the front right of 4.16.
This means that it can be difficult to gather a crowd. In 4.9 the performer – a magician set up with a table and wearing a grey hat – struggles to get the attention of passersby. Although she speaks to passersby, she struggles to get them to stop – many walk past quickly and show little interest in breaking from their plans. While this is often the case with street magicians who don’t have the same spectacular props as other street performers (such as fire or tall giraffe unicycles\(^{50}\)), this went on for a long time with this magician. The magician started trying to gather a crowd at 11.48am. After 14 minutes of trying to get people to stop, no one had even broken stride or paid any attention at all. Every approach the magician made to anyone passing was brushed off quickly or was simply ignored. The magician became visibly frustrated – the affects of this were visibly manifest in her body language (Thrift 2004). She slumped forward over her table (4.10), and her requests for people to stop became almost pleading. The tone of her voice sounded more and more desperate.

However, her luck changed. She asked a group of teenagers if they wanted to see some magic and they stopped to watch (4.11). Unlike most of the passersby, the teenagers had been walking down quite slowly, joking about, and generally seemed to not be in a rush to get anywhere. With this group now watching, the magician proceeded to do some basic card tricks. With this initial crowd now present, a few others stopped to watch to see what was going on and what all the laughing was about. After 4 minutes a small crowd had formed and more and more people were looking over to see what was going on (4.12).

However, after 5 minutes of watching, this initial group left and the crowd dwindled (4.13). With this group leaving so did others. The crowd did not totally disappear though, and, with the magician becoming more and more animated in an attempt to keep the attention of those still watching, more people were attracted to watch (4.14). After another 5 minutes a large crowd had formed, partly made up of a large school tour group (standing at the left hand side of the crowd in 4.15). However, again this was not to last long – a whole section of the crowd left as the tour group walked on up Milsom Street (4.16). This left a big empty space at the side of the performance and started a trend. More and more of the audience started to walk off, again heading up Milsom Street (4.17). This left only around a quarter of the audience.

Again, however, the audience was re-built. The magician again had to shout to passersby to try to get them to join the audience (4.18). Within a couple of minutes a few

\(^{50}\) A giraffe unicycle is a tall unicycle which requires a chain to connect the pedals to the wheel.
more had been stopped by the magician’s shouts (4.19). Within a further 7 minutes or so a full audience had been attracted again. Two further minutes on and the audience reached its peak size so far as a result of another tour group stopping (4.20). However, the tour group again left within 4 minutes as a result of requests of those running it (4.21), and again cause a few others to leave with them (again all heading up Milsom Street). However, not so many left this time and the crowd rebuilt with the empty spaces being filled (4.22) in time of the act’s finale at 12.32pm. Within 2 minutes all the audience had left (some donating) and the magician was left chatting to someone (4.23), before starting the process over again.

One of the challenges presented by performing in such a space is that there are a multitude of other temporalities at play and into which the performance must intervene. (I will again return to this in terms of affective dispositions and the ways in which audience members become aware of performances in Chapters 6 and 7). Here, most evident were the rhythms of the various tour groups that passed by and stopped briefly. These tours would likely be organized to fit a specific linear timetable dictating where they would have to be and when, how long they had at each place, and so on (see Edensor and Holloway 2008). However given that “unexpected interruptions” such as the performance here do occur, such ordering is “liable to breakdown” as “this [ordering] can only provide a framework within which other elements intrude, aligning themselves or striking discord with the tour rhythms”, even if for a short time (Edensor and Holloway 2008: 487-488). This meant that, while the tour members could stop for a few minutes to look at the show, they did not have the time to watch until the end as “tourist rhythms are produced by spatio-temporal ordering that seeks to minimize [such] external intrusions” (Edensor and Holloway 2008: 487). This leaving would also draw other tourists with less formally organized plans for their visit to return to their plans – they would likely have a list of attractions they wanted to see, potentially have tickets for specific entry times, and so on, and, therefore, would also not want to fall behind on this linear timetabling. While they may have been distracted from their plans, a tour group leaving would bring it back into their mind. Further, those who were simply in Bath shopping would also likely have a plan for their day (a list of items they want to get, shops to go to, and so on). Seeing others not hang around would then bring to mind their own plans and could lead them to leave.
4.9. Struggling to get a crowd (11.50am)

4.10. Frustration of not getting a crowd (11.58am)
4.11. First group stop (12.02pm)

4.12. Audience grows (12.06pm)
4.13. First group leaves and audience dwindles (12.07pm)

4.14. Audience re-built (12.08)
4.15. Full sized audience (12.12pm)

4.16. Tour group at left leave (12.13pm)
4.17. More leave as tour group started a trend (12.14)

4.18. Audience re-built again (12.16pm)
4.19. Audience grown again (12.23pm)

4.20. Peak audience (12.25pm)
4.21. But another tour group leaves at instruction of leader (12.29pm)

4.22. But audience re-grows for finale (12.32pm)
4.23. The show ends and magician is left chatting to a patron (12.34pm)

Such variations in the attention span of the audience meant the magician had to work far harder than in spaces, such as outside the Pump Rooms, where people tend to linger more; such spaces are destinations in and of themselves. Further, while it was not too destructive for this show (a substantial crowd were there for the finale), the show the magician did before this which I caught the end of was left with a crowd of only 10-12 people at its close due to another very large tour group leaving seconds before the end of the performance, during the finale. Therefore, the intersection of these rhythms – of the performance, the tours, and so on – which make up the polyrhythmia of this space can be conflicting, and, in their arrhythmia, destructive for the performance.

Conversely though, this could be seen to have positive affects. While the earlier show did not succeed, the experience could have enhanced the skill of the magician in maintaining a crowd’s attention, or, if not, in re-building a crowd (which she did manage a number of times as discussed above). Performing in this challenging space could affect her positively. This is something that could be beneficial especially when performing in other less transitory spaces, such as the pitch outside the Pump Rooms already suggested (pitch A on Map 4.1).
Moving to the second event I want to discuss here, again from late July, it is evident that sometimes it is not possible for buskers to make an intervention into the everyday life of the city at all. The event occurred outside the entrance to the Roman Baths, next to Bath Abbey (pitch B on Map 4.1). Here, on a sunny Saturday afternoon, the space was very busy and it was very difficult to move through the space. Large groups of people were standing queuing to get into the Baths; others were standing looking at the Abbey’s façade. With this congestion of bodies in the space there was also a very high background level of noise.

4.24. Spot the buskers (1.22pm)

When I walked onto the space, initially I didn’t think anyone was performing. I couldn’t hear anyone when I stood by the Abbey, only 15 or 20 meters or so from the usual performance pitch, and definitely couldn’t see any performers. However, when I moved to a different angle, I spotted a violin duo that I had seen performing there regularly over the summer (4.24). It looked as though they were playing, but I still couldn’t hear anything. They were also completely obscured from the line of benches that often form the audience for this pitch, limiting their audience. They soon realized this and the futility of their attempts. By this time they could have only been playing for 20 minutes at most (I had passed through the middle of the space 20 minutes previously and there had definitely been no performers there). They stopped, packed up their equipment, and left the space looking frustrated and unhappy.
Once they left, the crowd of people closed in and the usual performance space was completely covered with people (4.25). There was no way anyone could perform in this space. There was literally not enough space to find a spot to stand, never mind be seen or heard over the crowd of people. While I did see a couple of other buskers try to perform there later in the day, none lasted for more than 15-20 minutes before they gave up and left the space.

4.25. Space without buskers (1.24pm)

This does suggest then that some rhythms and patterns of use of these spaces overpower performances and mean that they cannot proceed. Here, as it was a Saturday and in the height of the summer tourist season, and in the middle of the day, the space was at capacity and congested. While in the example above the magician did variably manage to draw people’s attention from their routine and plans, here it was not possible to do this. Too many people were intent on seeing the façade of the Abbey or entering the Roman Baths, and so the performance was squeezed out of the space. Here, such “external intrusions” to the tourist’s routines were minimized simply by the popularity of the tourist attractions and business of the space (Edensor and Holloway 2008: 487).

VI. Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined some of the ways in which street performers and buskers intervene in the everyday life of the city, and, in doing so, produce liminal spaces where specific forms of sociality can emerge. However, I have also examined the ways in which
any such intervention is always variously traversed by a layering of various discursive and practical framings – including performance legislation (both contemporary and past attempts to change this that were never realized), everyday patterns of use of spaces (including the various agendas and dispositions of passersby, the cycles of holiday seasons, and so on) – which affect, facilitate, and impede such performances and their interventions. This has been pursued by way of a response to the recent and ongoing critiques of non-representational theory which argue that, in its attention to practices, it does not pay sufficient attention to social, cultural, and political contexts (Cresswell 2006) and also in the development of the second post-phenomenological trajectory outlined in Chapter 2 around the socio-cultural and political situatedness of practices within a complex discursive frame.

Given that street performers and buskers do at least at times intervene in the everyday life of the city, this can make their presence contentious in various ways and therefore result in measures being taken to place limits on these interventions. This is especially evident in Bath with the various attempts in recent years to tighten the controls over street performers and buskers in light of relatively static issues (noise levels, timing, and quality/decent of act content). This does present a complex situation and to which there is no easy solution. It would appear that, as has been evident in the history of street performance and busking more generally (Cohen and Greenwood 1981; Harrison-Pepper 1990), such efforts to control will continue and therefore a balance needs to be struck so that the public spaces of the city remain public and so that buskers and street performers (both local and visiting, regular and occasional) can continue to perform and produce such moments of sociality. If such controls become too strict (particularly in terms of the imposition of auditions and licensing), the very contribution that street performers and buskers make to the vitality of the everyday life of the city could be stifled and sterilized; if left unchecked entirely though, these conflicts will likely continue.

In light of this discussion, in the next chapter I am going to shift the perspective and focus. Rather than think about street performance at the broad level of the street and the everyday life of the city, I am going to focus more on the embodied experience of performing in these streets and other spaces rather than on a stage or in a more formal staged performance environment. While in this chapter I have discussed the sort of sociality that can emerge in light of the presence of performers and the spatio-temporal interventions street performers and buskers make in the everyday life of the city, in the next chapter I want to think about how the interrelation of performer, audience, space,
and so on, affect the embodied experience of performing. This will not forget the broader context within which such relations occur. In discussing this I am also going to reflect on how performing in such a legislated and everyday space affects the embodied experience of performing; how the space’s complex assemblages of rhythms, representations of space, restrictions on conduct, and so on, affect the experience of performing.
Chapter 5

Street performing

“We have relearned to feel our body; we have found underneath the objective and detached knowledge of the body that other knowledge which we have of it in virtue of its always being with us and of the fact that we are our body”

(Merleau-Ponty 2002: 239).

“When we talk about the body we talk about something entirely opposed to the closed and the finite. With the body, we speak about something open and infinite, about the opening of closure itself, the infinite of the finite itself…the body is the open”

(Nancy 2008b: 122).

“There is no longer a subject, but only individuating affective states of anonymous force. Here the plan is concerned only with motions and rests, with dynamic affective charges”

(Deleuze 1988: 128).

I. Preface

May 1st. I arrived in Bath around 11.15am. Although the forecast wasn’t looking all that great, I thought I’d give it a go. I headed along Pierrepont Street and North Parade towards the Abbey and the shopping streets. I decided against the Square outside the Abbey or the area outside the Roman Baths as there was already someone playing there and I wasn’t too sure of how things worked yet – there’s meant to be a draw at 10am so I might have missed it. I headed to Burton Street and decided to set up against a blank wall opposite The Body Shop. Straight away I noticed a few suspicious looks from the staff in

51 All sections of text in italics in this chapter are taken from my research diary kept during the fieldwork undertaken.
there, but decided to stay. The looks continued throughout the time I played, but although unnerving, nothing appeared to come of it. The street was relatively quiet, but there was a constant flow of people. Although a little out of the way, I felt comfortable having the wall for a backdrop and nothing happening behind me. I probably set up a little too close in to the wall, but this felt better for now. I'm not sure how I'll get on with the areas down by the Abbey with sitting out in the open. Although the wall helped I did feel a little exposed for the first hour – it’s odd not having Martin there and does feel a lot lonelier even though there are a lot of people around. That combined with not really knowing how things work here did make me feel unsettled – I’ve read about Bath, looked around, read the guidelines, etc., but it doesn’t help to really know what it’s going to be like. My hands were shaking a bit and were sweating as I started.

Things didn’t start too well. Half a dozen songs in, no donations. Not really any acknowledgment at all other than a couple of glances. This was new territory for me – Glasgow had generally been successful. It was hard to know if I was loud enough. I wanted it to be that I was too quiet because if not it could be that I wasn’t very good. I was afraid to turn up much louder though given I wasn’t meant to be using an amp at all and the risk of the Body Shop people doing more than just looking at me suspiciously. The longer I went without donations, the more anxious I felt. I started to feel like I was looking for donations – looking hopefully at everyone and looking more and more desperate all the time. Every time someone fished in their bag for something as they passed I hoped for a donation, but felt resentment when they pulled out a phone or a shopping list. More annoying were the couple of men who walked by jiggling change in their pocket as they went – I felt like I was being taunted! It was the same with the people who hovered nearby. I thought they might be listening, but then someone would appear and they’d walk away. This really wasn’t going well.

Finally, after around 30 minutes of playing, someone donated. I had got so caught up in these negative feelings that I didn’t see it coming. I don’t know if he had been standing watching, or was just passing. He donated at the end of the song, and after I said thanks, he lingered and asked me about my guitar, specifically where I’d got it, what model it was etc.. The conversation only lasted for a minute or less but it made a big difference to how I felt. It was good to talk to someone and just to have my existence acknowledged more than anything else. I felt lifted and my mood changed. I felt more enthusiastic and like I could go on. However, this didn’t last long. It was another 20 minutes until the next donation. It felt like nothing happened in that time. My newly found enthusiasm dissipated. After an hour of playing, conscious of the guidelines, I decided to move on. Emptying my hat and finding £1 for that hour didn’t help my enthusiasm.
II. Introduction

In this chapter I am interested in the experience of street performing. I am interested in what it is like to actually go out into the street and undertake a performance. This returns to Chapter 2’s discussion of lived experience and the refiguring of this to be less interested in the experiencing subject and more with how a subject perpetually comes to be in or through embodied experience. I am interested in how the performing body is affected by the environments in which it performs, how it is affected by those that (don’t) engage with the performance, how the architecture of the space and the discursive formations and social routines discussed in the previous chapter affects the embodied experience of performing, and so on, and how through these experiences/relations a subject emerges and potentially finds consistency. Therefore, in this chapter I address the first half of the second research question outlined in the Introduction to the thesis in terms of how the spatiality of the street, and the socialities that emerge therein, affect the embodied experience of performing.

Being interested in this felt nature of experience means I am interested in street performance as an embodied practice – to talk about such themes means I will be talking about the body; the body entering into relation with objects, other bodies, and also the body enrolled in other affective, (im)material relations. In using this compound ‘(im)material’ I am evoking something like “a notion of the material that admits from the very start the presence and importance of the immaterial, not as something that is defined in opposition to the material, but as that which gives it an expressive life and liveliness independent of the human subject” (Latham and McCormack 2004: 703). Therefore, this undermines any ontological distinction between the material and the immaterial by taking seriously “the real force of the immaterial” (Latham and McCormack 2004: 704). As such, this opens up both a concern with the material implications of the symbolic, the discursive, and so on, but also a consideration of the material in terms of any state. I am interested in both the material affects of ‘immaterial’ discursive formations that circulate in and around performances, and the ways in which the immaterial ‘atmospheres’ of a space affect the playing-out of performances and the experience of performing. That is to say, I’m not taking the material here to refer to the concrete or some kind of grounded physicality, but rather as taking “place with the capacities and properties of any element…and/or any state” (Anderson and Wylie 2009: 319).
This, as suggested in the Introduction to this thesis, is to think about the body ecologically in that I will be thinking about the body in terms of its 'superorganismal' makeup (Thrift 2005: 464), or more specifically as defined “ecologically, by external movements which preside over its distributions within an exteriority” (Deleuze 2004b: 269). This becomes even more complicated in that

“the internal space is itself made up of multiple spaces which must be locally integrated and connected, and that this connection, which may be achieved in many ways, pushes the object or living being to its own limits, all in contact with the exterior; and that this relation to the exterior, and with other things and living beings, implies in turn connections and global integrations which differ in kind from the preceding”

(Deleuze 2004b: 269).

This chapter is then about examining the affective sensuous experiences of being a street performer. In doing so, the chapter will unfold as follows. Firstly, I will review work in geography that has been interested in the body, focusing specifically on debates that have arisen in relation to work within non-representational theory on affect. Following this, in further pursuit of the three post-phenomenological trajectories outlined in Chapter 2, I will narrate a range of my experiences of street performing and put these into conversation with other theorizations of the body (specifically by Deleuze, Nancy, and Nietzsche and their rethinking of the sensuous production of the body-subject). The chapter will conclude by looking forward to the next two chapters of the thesis and their further development of these post-phenomenological trajectories.

III. Geographies of the Body

As McCormack (2008b) suggests, the body has become part of geography’s conceptual and methodological core (see Callard 1998; Hansen and Philo 2007; Harvey 1998; Johnstone 1996; Longhurst 2005; McCormack 1999; Parr 2002; Simonsen 2000). However, in her 1995 review, Longhurst suggested that (until recently) a historical privileging of the purely conceptual over the corporeal had underlain the production of geographical knowledge. This can be related to the Cartesian legacy of the separation of the body from the mind and a more general predominance of dualistic thinking (Descartes 1912; see Hass 2008: 11-25). In general, as Johnston states: “Geography, like all of the social sciences, has been built upon a particular conception of the mind and the body which sees them as separate, apart and acting on each other” (cited in Longhurst 1997: 492). This ‘masculinist rationality’ “assumes a knower who believes he can separate himself from his body, emotions, values, past experiences and so on. This allows for him
and his thoughts (his mind) to be autonomous, transcendent and objective” (Longhurst 1995: 98). This in a sense has resulted in an ‘Othering’ of the body; the body had in fact become geography’s other (Johnstone 1996; Longhurst 1995).

Many geographers (among other social scientists) have, as Simonsen (2000) highlights, sought to transcend these dualisms and examine the power-filled construction of ‘other bodies’. In an attempt to attend to the ‘illusory nature of the body’ (Dewsbury 2000), there has been a move to make “the body…the very ‘stuff’ of subjectivity” (Grosz 1994: ix). This is particularly evident within (what would be broadly characterized as) feminist writings on the subject of the body. Within this there has been a growth in discussion of the sexualized body but also it has highlighted how, more generally, “the body is central to how dominant cultures designate certain groups (elderly, homosexual, obese, female, ethnic minorities, and so on) as ‘other’” (Simonsen 2000: 8). These subordinated groups have been defined by their bodies and according to norms that diminish and degrade them.

In addition to this focus on embodiment, the ways in which bodies are socially and culturally inscribed and constructed, there has also been a move toward discussing the body in terms of its visceral, fleshy, affective materiality. This had previously been lacking from the work discussed above which tended to focus on the body as “maps of meaning through which discursive power is inscribed and exercised” (McCormack 2003: 494). Therefore, more recent geographical literature has begun to address this lack of materiality in discussions of the body and examines “how bodies are made and *used*” (Simonsen 2000: 8 [emphasis added]). Alongside some quite specific attempt to bring the materiality of the body into geography (for example see work by Colls (2007) and Longhurst (2005) on ‘fat bodies’), there has been a more general turn in cultural geography to the discussion of embodied practices, being heavily influenced by non-representational theory as suggested in the Introduction to this thesis (though see Cresswell 2006; Nash 2000), and discussions of affect within this, something I will turn to now.

**Geographies of Affect**

As Thrift (2004: 59) notes, “there is no stable definition of affect”. The concept has been present in a number of different traditions and therefore has been understood in a

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52 The use of ‘the body’ has been problematized recently as it implies some kind of originary or transcendental referent and the use of a body, or bodies (Nancy 2008b). This said, for grammatical clarity I will continue to use ‘the body’, but I am not referring to any kind of definitive body.
number of senses. Very generally though, affect can be seen to refer to the process of transition through which a body goes; it is a “transpersonal capacity which a body has to be affected (through an affection) and to affect (as the result of modifications)” (Anderson 2006: 735). The emphasis here is on a “processual logic of transitions that take place during spatially and temporally distributed encounters in which ‘each transition is accompanied by a variation in the capacity…’” (Massumi cited in Anderson 2006: 735). Thinking through affect implies that “the world is made up of billions of happy or unhappy encounters, encounters which describe a ‘mindful connected physicalism’ consisting of multitudinous paths which intersect” (Thrift 1999: 302). Put simply, an affect “is a mixture of two bodies, one body which is said to act on another, and the other receives traces of the first” (Deleuze 1978).

From this a body here has two simultaneous definitions. First, it is defined kinetically as being a composition of an infinite number of particles being at varying degrees of motion and rest, speed and slowness (longitude). Second, a body is defined dynamically by its capacity of affecting and being affected (latitude). This constructs an ecological map of the body, an immanent plan(e) “which is always variable and is constantly being altered, composed and recomposed, by individuals and collectives” (Deleuze 1988: 128). Deleuze (1988) discusses the modification of the body as being conditioned by two fundamental affects: joy and sadness. Joy refers to a positive affection, a nutrition, an increased speed and motion, increasing our capacity to act. Sadness is a negative affection, a poisoning, a slowing down, that reduces our capacity to act. Affects are then becomings: “sometimes they weaken us in so far as they diminish our power to act and decompose our relationships (sadness), sometimes they make us stronger in so far as they increase our power and make us enter into a vast or superior individual (joy)” (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 45).

This understanding of affect can be both tied to, and distinguished from, feeling. Affects occur between objects or entities, and these interactions or affects are felt as intensities in the body, or find “corporeal expression in bodily feelings” (Anderson 2006: 736), and in so being are manifest in an alteration in a body’s capacity to act. We can understand affect as “a kind of vague but intense atmosphere” and feeling as “that atmosphere felt in the body” (McCormack 2008b: 6). Further, and again, these can both

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53 I am taking body here in its broadest sense to include mental or ideal bodies (Massumi 2004), as a ‘transhuman’ body (Thrift 2004).
be distinguished from emotions. Of significance here is the work of Massumi (2002: 28) who distinguishes emotion from affect in defining emotion as

“a subjective content, the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point onward described as personal. Emotion is qualified intensity, the conventional, consensual point of insertion of intensity into semantically and semiotically formed progressions, into narrativizable action-reaction circuits, into function and meaning. It is intensity owned and recognized”.

Emotion is therefore related to an “already established field of discursively constituted categories in relation to which the felt intensity of experience is articulated” and therefore “conceives experience as always already meaningful” (McCormack 2003: 495). This restricts the movement of affective intensities which exist prior to such fixing and framing by reducing them to such framings of meaning and significance.\(^{54}\)

This emphasis on the affective has produced a number of debates (see Lorimer 2008). Therefore, I will now address two of these given their significant relation to this chapter. These agendas relate to 1) how we understand affect, emotion, and power, and 2) to the ways in which the body is conceived as always active and agentive.

**Debating Affect**

This first set of debates just mentioned can be divided into two interrelated themes.\(^{55}\)

Firstly, it has been argued that certain aspects of the language through which affect has been talked about is suggestive of a distancing from the emotional and the personal and instead promotes a focus on the reasonable and the public (Thien 2005). However, I simply do not see how affect can be seen as public. Relational yes – it occurs in the in-between; it does not belong to a subject. But this does not make it *public*. In fact one of the immense problems posed by trying to study affective experience is finding means through which to convey something of this affective experience given that it occurs outside of the realm of subjective, reflective experience. This is something I hope to respond to in the pages of this chapter in the performative narration of some of my experiences of performing which tries to make present something of the intensive, felt nature of those experiences. In terms of affect being rational, again, this is simply not the case. Affect is precisely about the pre-rational. It comes before any rationalization. I could have pitched the experiences recounted in this chapter in terms of the emotions

\(^{54}\) It is important here to note that this is not a uni-directional or causal process as “the three modalities slide into and out of one another to disrupt their neat analytical distinction” and so “[d]iverse feedforward and feedback loops take place to create such hybrids as ‘affectively imbued thoughts’ and ‘thought imbued intensities’” (Connolly cited in Anderson 2006: 737).

\(^{55}\) Also see Anderson and Harrison (2006) and McCormack (2006) for responses to these critiques.
experienced, but I do feel that this appeals to a humanistic universalist logic that suggests that such emotional experiences mean the same thing to different people (Anderson and Harrison 2006; McCormack 2006). To me this would be more suggestive of a rationalization of experience than an approach that takes affect as its main focus.

Secondly, it has been argued that work on affect is inattentive to issues of power and that it is universalistic (Tolia-Kelly 2006). While I am sympathetic to the trajectory of Tolia-Kelly’s argument – the development of a non-universalizing understanding of affective capacities that pays attention to the ways in which such capacities are socialized – I cannot help but feel that there are flawed steps in her argument and that due to this it falls foul of the approach she wishes to sidestep. Tolia-Kelly picks up on Deleuze’s laying out of a ‘common plane of immanence’ and suggests that this ‘universalizing’ conception does not pay attention to the ways in which collectives are differently capable of affecting and being affected due to their access to geopolitical power, amongst other things. To an extent this is true, but in a very specific way. While this is a universal plane of immanence, it is only the same for everyone in that it is different for everyone. Therefore, this pays attention to the specificity of each encounter and does not introduce a universalistic principle.56

This means that Deleuze pays attention to the specificity of how each individual can affect and be affected. As such, Deleuze does not homogenize experience under the ‘collective’ capacities Tolia-Kelly suggests as this is reductive of the singularity of each specific manifestation of those collective categories. Deleuze then pays attention to a more radical difference; to a difference in itself which is not a difference between specific manifestations or collectives, but rather a singularity in itself (see Deleuze 2004b).

Therefore, in this chapter I will be emphasizing the singularity of the encounters which occurred during my time busking. This is also attempted through the narration of specific encounters rather than presenting something more schematic and, potentially, universalizing. This will be very much about specific encounters that arose within a specific socialization.

The second debate I will now discuss has arisen regarding the argued prominence of the auto-affective and overly agentive visions of the body and embodied experience that have emerged in recent work in non-representational theory, and the resultant call

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56 Further, while Deleuze may not talk about such issues of geopolitical power and the like in his little book on Spinoza, he does elsewhere explicitly discuss the ways in which a body is segmented in a multiplicity of ways – socially, culturally, politically, Oedipally – which affect its capacities to affect and be affected (see Deleuze 1978; 1995; 2006b; Deleuze and Guattari 2004a; 2004b; Deleuze and Parnet 2006).
for there to be more attention paid to the vulnerability and passivity of the body. As such, Harrison (2008: 423) is critical of the recent prominence of what he calls “the body in action” in recent accounts of embodied experience (also see Anderson 2004; Bissell 2008). Harrison (2008: 423) calls attention to the prominence of the body being apprehended as “practically and constitutively engaged in the disclosure of the world and in the creation and maintenance of meaning and signification”. While not wanting to underplay the significance and positive nature of such contributions, Harrison calls attention to the potential lack of consideration being given to the ways in which the body is susceptible and passive, and wants to think about embodiment in and through its vulnerability, and, more specifically, to challenge the predominant notion of such vulnerability as something which is negative and to be overcome. Instead Harrison (2008: 427) wants to think vulnerability in terms of describing “the inherent and continuous susceptibility of corporeal life to the unchosen and the unforeseen – its inherent openness to what exceeds its abilities to contain and absorb”.

In light of this, though pursuing a more Deleuzian thread than the Levinasian one Harrison does57, in this thesis I emphasize that affects are as much about slowing down as they are about speeding up. This is to say that there will always be a variance in my capacity to act. While Harrison calls attention to what he deems to be the “remorseless pressure of immanence and the proliferation of becoming” in the writing of Deleuze, there are affects that slow us down as well as affects that speed us up. There is joy and there is sadness. The coherence of bodies is threatened as well as potentially being expanded upon. There are ‘decompositions’ as much as ‘compositions’ (see Deleuze 1988: 19).58 This is to suggest that there is vulnerability included within this, but that it is not given a central position – it is not the aspect of our embodied existence, but an aspect. There is always a relative movement – a becoming-faster and a becoming-slower. As Thrift (2007: 10 [emphasis added]) states

“not everything is focused intensity. Embodiment includes tripping, falling over, and a whole host of other such mistakes. It includes vulnerability, passivity, suffering, even simple hunger. It includes episodes of insomnia, weariness and exhaustion, a sense of insignificance and even sheer indifference to the world. In other words, bodies can and do become overwhelmed”.

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57 As Calarco (2008: 70) suggests, for me, “[a]n ethical interruption could proceed from an encounter with the Other’s kindness or vitality as much as from his or her destitution or finitude”.

58 This is perhaps something that the geographical literature has not emphasized enough so far.
While there is an *ethics* of speeding up and a call for what Deleuze calls a “bliss of action” (Deleuze 1988: 28), this is an *ethical* imperative and not a more general statement about corporeal existence which is about composition and decomposition, joy and sadness.

Therefore in this chapter, in light of this second debate, I want to think about the ways in which the experience of street performing is traversed by a multitude of positive and negative affective relations (as was suggested in the opening extract) – relations between myself as a performer and other performers, relations between the performer and the space/environment, relations between performer and objects (such as coins), and so on.

Having outlined this understanding of affect and the debates that have arisen from them, I will now turn to my experience of street performing and attempt to draw out some of the subjectifying affective experiences that occurred across these. In so doing, this will continue the pursuit of the three post-phenomenological trajectories outlined in Chapter 2. This will be focused around the challenges of getting used to performing in the street, the experiences of the spatio-temporal patterns and routines of such spaces, the material implications of performing outdoors, the affective experience of receiving donations, the interactions between performer and audience, and the relations that occur with other performers.

**IV. Experience of Street Performing**

*Of Lines*

May 1st. I walked down to Union Street to set up there. I noticed the sky was a little more clouded over, but I decided to keep going. I set up a little way down from a few stalls selling flowers and other things, between Clarks and Wallace and opposite Next. I picked an area clear of windows and displays, and again, kept close to the wall. There was a bench opposite so I thought this might provide a space for a potential audience. It felt busier here and I was more hopeful.

As I set up I noticed a few chuggers\(^{59}\) hovering around the area. As soon as one spotted me she took out her phone and made a call. This was a little unsettling. I wasn’t sure if they had a license to use this space or how that worked; I’d only checked up on this for busking. Again, nothing came of it. I think I was just a little nervous which made me paranoid. I wasn’t used to performing under these sort of guidelines and wasn’t sure how strictly they’d be enforced. This space was better though in terms of being

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\(^{59}\)‘Chugger’ refers to a paid street fundraiser who acts in an overly aggressive manner in the pursuit of signing-up donators. The term chugger is derived from ‘charity’ and ‘mugger’.
able to turn up a bit – it felt more like Glasgow’s Buchanan Street did with being a lot wider. I felt less like I was intruding into the shops opposite.

The move proved to be fruitful. Shortly after starting two people donated. As the first went in the sun came out – I couldn’t help smiling. This again lifted my mood. I felt that I’d possibly found a better space and that it could work better here. Shortly after these donations a school group passed. While a few taunted, shouting ‘sing us a song, sing us a song’ amongst other things, one threw in a chocolate coin. A couple of other donations arrived, mostly from older people who hovered for a moment or two, and said ‘good luck, son’ or similar things as they donated. I felt a little more comfortable now, as though I was settling in.

5.1: Busking on Union Street

Quite soon it started to spit with rain but it didn’t come to much. However, the rain soon started again, heavier this time. I packed up my things, sheltered under my umbrella, and had something to eat. After about 10 minutes it hadn’t stopped. From where I was standing the small strip of sky that I could see was filled with dark grey clouds so I decided to give up and head to the station.

As I walked up to the entrance to the train station the rain stopped. I looked back to see blue skies spreading over the town centre. I almost doubled back but I didn’t. I think, if it had gone better I
would have, but I just told myself that it would probably be showers on and off for the rest of the day and so it wouldn’t be worth going back.

It didn’t rain again. I really wish I’d gone back. Although my fingers were tired, I probably could have done at least another hour or 2. I just didn’t want to go back. I just don’t think I’m in the right mind set yet. We used to stop for rain regularly in Glasgow, but not give up unless it was really bad. We’d even shelter in a doorway, put an umbrella over the amp, and keep playing if it wasn’t too heavy. I’m too used to my warm office and comfortable chair.

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I am trying to explain that things, people, are made up of very varied lines, and they do not necessarily know which line they are on or where they should make the line which they are tracing pass; in short, there is a whole geography in people, with rigid lines, supple lines, lines of flight, etc.”

(Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 8).

On my first busk, I was tense, nervous, outside of what was comfortable to me. The street and performing there presented a different plane of organization to that which I had become accustomed to. Continuing the diagrammatic logic discussed in the previous chapter, Deleuze suggests that our bodies are segmented and striated, traversed by a multiplicity of lines dividing up the body and organizing it. This organization can be both spatial and social (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b). In particular, Deleuze outlines three lines: the segmentary (cut), the supple (crack) and the line of flight (rupture). These lines, each of which are many, are immanent and caught up in one another.60 The first line, the segmentary, operates as a molar, rigid line, for example: Family—School—Army—Factory—Retirement, or Job—Holiday. We are told of our progression along the line: ‘Now you’re a boy, a teenager, a student, an adult, a pensioner’ – “all kinds of clearly defined segments” (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 93). There are three main characteristics of this line. First, it operates as a binary machine: class, sex, age, race, subjectivations (ours, not ours) etc.. These binaries cut across each other and collide. Also, they operate diachronically: if you are not A or B, therefore you are C. Second, they act as devices of power, “fixing the code and the territory of the corresponding segment” (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 96). Third, they act as a plane of organization which “concerns both forms and their development, subjects and their formation” (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 97). These lines mark out a series of sedimented, habitual comportments that affect the unfolding of our everyday behavior and actions.

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60 Also see Deleuze (1995); and Deleuze and Guattari (2004b).
The second line is also segmentary, but more supple, or ‘molecular’: “[t]hey trace out little modifications, they make detours, they sketch out rises and falls” (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 93). These lines constitute the crossings of thresholds, but not necessarily of the first line – they are micro-becomings. Here habits shift, practices vary, and incremental change occurs in the playing out of the everyday.

Finally, the third line

“is even more strange: as if something carries us away, across our segments, but also across our thresholds, towards a destination which is unknown, not foreseeable, not pre-existent. This line is simple, abstract, and yet is the most complex of all, the most tortuous…the line of flight”

(Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 94).

This ‘geoanalysis’, or ‘cartography’ (Guattari 1995), asks us then, for example, to “watch someone walking down the street and see what little inventions he [sic] introduces into it, if he is not too caught up in his rigid segmentarity, what little inventions he puts there” (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 96). More specifically, it calls for us to ask: 1) What are your rigid lines? 2) What are your supple lines? 3) What are your lines of flight?

As was suggested in Chapter 2 in discussing the three post-phenomenological trajectories of this thesis, our bodies are socialized into a specific comportment, both inadvertently and coercively. On my first busk in Bath discussed above (and in section I), and throughout my time busking, I became aware of a number of aspects of my quite rigid segmented comportment, both in relation to my everyday life at the time, but also in terms of my previous experiences of busking elsewhere. I did not so much have to ask what my rigid lines, supple lines, or lines of flight were, but rather they became distinctly evident to me in my felt experiences of performing. Simply in being there and moving in a slightly different setting, these lines became apparent.

On my first busk I was separated off from the usual rigid lines that make up my everyday, of being a postgraduate: working in my office at my desk—taking breaks at roughly similar times in line with what others do—going to cafés and drinking hot chocolate while reading—taking most weekends off—working roughly ‘office hours’, or, more distantly (but directly relevant), the venues I used to perform in Glasgow and their ‘staged’ organization, or the partner I used to go busking with in Glasgow and the patterns that emerged there-in. Here, by myself in Bath, I didn’t feel at ease. This was manifest in my body in my slumped shoulders and in the expression of my face (Thrift 2004). There was a different intensity to this experience, one that did not sit well with me. I was being affected in a way that slowed me down, that negatively affected me –
being out busking in these spaces, and receiving the (lack of) reaction that I did, decomposed my capacities as a performer (Deleuze 1988). I became paranoid about whether people would complain about me given the, what I thought were, suspicious looks that I received. Also, I wasn’t used to receiving so little attention or donations given that when I had busked in the past it had been quite profitable. At this point I was not able to embrace this experience. I was finding it hard open myself to being affected differently and allow a little more suppleness into my routine. I was caught up in my usual routines and comforts — so much of the experience jarred with me. At the first chance, I left. I didn’t hold out for the weather to improve or play around the weather. I wanted to get back to the comfort of the familiar.

This becoming aware of these segments did not occur in an intentional way, but more retrospectively. It was a case of ‘ah, so that’s what it was, so that’s why I didn’t want to go on’ (see Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 19). It wasn’t until I got on the train, took out my notebook, and began to write that I started to realize what had been going on and potentially why I had felt and reacted the way I did.

But I need to pause a moment. ‘I’ need to pause? Who is this ‘I’ that is writing and I am writing about? But why do ‘I’ ask? “‘What is more indubitable than the givenness of the ‘I’?” (Heidegger cited in Glendinning 1998: 45).

I would like to follow Nietzsche (2000c: 481) in arguing that “there is no ‘being’ behind doing, effecting, becoming; ‘the doer’ is merely a fiction added to the deed — the deed is everything” (see Butler 1993; 1999). In narrating and discussing the experiences present in this chapter, while they are often predicated on a reflective ‘I’ that comments on its experiences or what it was feeling, we need to take this as a product of a grammatical implication. The ‘I’ is not a subject as the legislator of experience, but something decentred or fractured — it is something other than a subject as traditionally understood (Nancy 1991). The ‘I’ here was a product of those experiences or those feelings. As Nietzsche (1968: 268) states, “that when there is thought there has to be something ‘that thinks’ is simply a formulation of our grammatical custom that adds a doer to every deed”. Rather, again from Nietzsche (1985: 62), “your body and its intelligence…does not say ‘I’ but performs ‘I’”. As Safranski (2003: 28) succinctly summarized, “[likewise every predicate, the predicate ‘think’ requires a subject, which misleads readers into concluding that because ‘I’ is the subject, it is in fact the agent. Quite the opposite applies: the act of thinking gives rise to the consciousness of an ‘I’” (see Nietzsche 2000a: 214). Therefore, while it may feel counter-intuitive, the ‘I’ that is
spoken of throughout this chapter is not the traditional self-positing egocentric ‘I’ present within much of the philosophical and geographical traditions, particular traditional phenomenology. Rather it is this product of ‘the body and its intelligences’ – it is “an outcome, not a presupposition” (Wylie 2005: 245). The use of ‘I’ is maintained for the moment in the extracts out of grammatical habit and in the body of the chapter for consistency and clarify of discussion.  

Trying to answer this question returns us to the movement away from intentionality suggested in Chapter 2. It was a case of understanding my subjectivity as not intentional, but something more retroactive; the various dispositions that make up my rigid comportment are not something that I came to the performance with in any knowing way, but were rather there at a pre-personal level. I came to see this aspect of my (then) subjectivity as ‘residuum’ alongside my affective experience of performing in that space. The street and the performance were central and I was alongside them, not the other way round (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 21-22). Rather than me, the ‘I’ of the experience, being given in advance as a point of view on it, such “a subject will be what comes to the point of view, or rather what remains in the point of view” (Deleuze 2006a: 21).

While these segments proved too rigid for my initial busk, some element of suppleness did begin to emerge throughout my time busking. As I kept going back – partly because I had to for research (I was told ‘this is when I’m meant to do my fieldwork’), but also because I wanted to redeem myself given the poor start – I started to get used to the way things work and to the different routines that busking entailed. Part of this was achieved by busking a little in Bristol which provided a setting more similar to what I had experienced in the past and there were also generally fewer buskers around. It provided an incremental step through which I could introduce a little more suppleness into my routine. Much of this adjustment came down to getting used to the spatio-temporal nature of street performing.

**Space-Times of Street Performing**

May 16. On my first busking trip in Bristol I went to Broadmead (the central shopping area). I set up outside Tesco/opposite the entrance to the Galleries. Straight away I felt good in the space. The wall

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61 This said, in the following chapters this ‘I’ will gradually be eradicated in favour of a move toward a resonant being-with.

62 This changed in the following summer after the research was undertaken with the introduction of a stricter system of legislation to that present in Bath, entailing permits, more formally assigned pitches, and so on, following the opening of Cabot Circus.
behind me was plain and I wasn’t obstructing anything. Also, the street was wide so I didn’t have to worry about disturbing people if I turned my amp up a bit. In fact, there were very few entrances nearby and there were some benches and other street furniture by which people could hover to listen should they wish. As I set up I realized there were actually quite a few resemblances between this space and my favorite busking spot in Glasgow. The pace of the street was also more like that which I had experienced in the past in Glasgow – people seemed to linger more given the extra space, and, as there was the entrance to the shopping centre, people weren’t only walking straight up and down the street like they had been in Bath. The space just felt better.

5.2: Busking in Broadmead

As I started to play, I turned my amp up to the volume I used to use in Glasgow which meant that I’d both be more generally audible, but also that I could use a little more dynamic range and subtlety in my playing. I never felt I could do this in Bath – the narrow streets and risk from the guidelines stopped me short of trying it. I was too conscious of the potential problems that could arise, and were also more likely to arise.

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Performing outdoors deviates from the norms of performing in a theatre or other specifically designed performance space in a number of ways beyond the fact that it occurs without a roof over it (Mason 1992). The removal of the standardized aspects of such environments can cause problems (as will be returned to later in relation to the interaction of performers and audiences), but as Mason (1992) highlights, the key to
street performance is adapting to, and even embracing, these challenges. We can see how the relation between the performance and the space it takes place in is one of “both constraint and inherent unpredictability” (Grosz 2001: 50).

In highlighting the different situation street performance presents, Mason (1992) outlines key factors to be considered in assessing the suitability of a pitch. For example, as suggested above, there is an advantage to having a plain backdrop (preferably a wall) as this reflects sound, provides somewhere to store props, and avoids distractions behind the performer. Further, the physical features of the area chosen are significant – it helps to be visible to a broad audience and in a space which will both frame the performance and allow for the creation of a relatively intimate relation with the audience. However, Mason (1992) says little about the feelings of the performer in these spaces, and the significance, for example, of a back wall in providing a place that feels secure to perform in as suggested above. This is something that is integral to the understanding of such practices as was highlighted in Chapter 2 in relation to the work of Merleau-Ponty and how our body is the medium through which we have access to space, but also, in being such a medium, is intimately intertwined with those spaces. The city’s spaces can almost be seen as a kind of ‘body-prosthesis’ (Grosz 2001: 49). The body is not so much ‘in-the-world’, but always already ‘of-the-world’, or ‘for-the-world’. As Deleuze (2006a: 28) states, “[t]he world must be placed in the subject in order that the subject can be for the world. This is the torsion that constitutes the fold of the world and of the soul”, to return to (and somewhat radicalize) the ‘interworld’ from Merleau-Ponty discussed in Chapter 2. While Mason (1992) focuses on the practicalities of the space for a performance – something relevant to my experiences given the option of performing more loudly in Bristol and therefore facilitating more nuance in my playing, or the framing that the wall I situated myself next to provided – we also have to remember that to undertake a performance is to engage in an embodied practice. We can then start to think about the felt relationship in the folding of the performer’s body and the spaces inhabited in performing.

The relative familiarity of the organization of the space in Bristol presented a specific affective atmosphere which affected my embodied experience of performing. This atmosphere was “something distributed yet palpable” and was registered in and through my sensing body “while also remaining diffused, in the air, ethereal” (McCormack 2008a: 413). Being in the wider street with the slower moving audience made me feel more at ease – I didn’t have the same tension in my body or the range of
negative (paranoid) thoughts running through my head as I had experienced in Bath. This showed in my performance – my fingers felt freer, and, feeling like I had less to worry about, I could concentrate more on my performance. I started to get a little lost in my playing and didn’t spend my time sitting tensely looking for donations from those who passed by. I felt like my body and its comportment, posture, and the expressions on my face conveyed this greater ease (Thrift 2004). And I received more donations. This could have been down to the different space, but I can’t help but think my more relaxed bodily state did contribute to the way my performance came across.

After a couple of weeks of regularly busking in Bristol, I decided it was time I should go back and try Bath. Perhaps I’d busked a little too long in Bristol, or I was still being affected by my previous unsuccessful attempts to busk in Bath, but I was quite nervous – the negative affects of the past held a durability and so coexisted in the actualization of the (then) present encounter (Deleuze 1991a).

* June 8th. I arrived into Bath around 12.20pm and headed up toward the centre. The sun was beating down and it looked as though it was going to be a perfect day for tourists, and should be the perfect day for busking. This made me a little nervous – I was worried that there would be buskers everywhere and that I wouldn’t get a space. I hoped I was early enough as, from what I’d read online, people normally started later on Sundays. My worry was unfounded. As I approached the Square next to the Abbey I heard no noise. There were no buskers around at all. I was a little shocked – surely this was prime time for busking given the weather? I decided that this was my opportunity to try out the Square, but a few nerves remained given I still wasn’t sure if there was a timetable for this and that someone would appear to claim the spot from me…

…I set up in the middle of the Square, facing diagonally across it to the corner where the Roman Baths and the Abbey met. I did this as I’d seen another guitarist do the same, but also because there would be a relatively constant stream of people coming from that direction, and also because it would mean that the sun wasn’t beating down on my face (instead it would be on my neck). I felt a little awkward initially as I set up – I could feel people’s eyes watching me and I did feel a little like I’d turned up for an audition to the awaiting panel of judges.

As I started to play I realized that the space actually felt quite relaxed – there wasn’t the same sort of bustle that you get with people passing by on the streets that I’d experienced before (both in Bath and elsewhere). Instead, people were sitting having lunch or relaxing in the sun. The space did seem to be where people came to get a break from it all. There was still a flow of people through the space, but this was nowhere near as constant. I found myself playing in a more relaxed way – I was pausing between
songs a little more, glancing around, or having a drink. My actual playing was more relaxed also – I sometimes find the tempo I play at is quicker when I’m tense, so here, I was playing at a more laid back pace. Generally, given I actually had an ‘audience’, it felt more like I could perform.

There was also a steady transition of the people on the benches, though it became hard to remember who had been there a long time and who only briefly. This did make me wonder occasionally about repeating songs – I had about 30 minutes of material that I was looping through – although I didn’t worry too much as if they heard the same song twice, it might make them make the move to donating rather than sitting for longer than that.

To me, the Square by the Abbey presents an interesting space to perform in. The first notable aspect of the space is that it is, in fact, a square. There is no obvious direction to perform to as there is a roughly equal sized audience on all sides which is seated on an arrangement on benches (7 on the long side and 6 on the shorter sides). Also, there isn’t really the option of performing from one side to the other three given the size of the square – it would be easy to be lost in the background in that case. This leaves the option of setting up roughly in the middle of the space, which most performers, including myself, opt for. While this does literally make the performer the centre of attention, there is equally the problem highlighted previously of not having the security of a back wall, not having somewhere to stash equipment, bags, cases etc., and, generally just feeling quite exposed. That said, while at times it is easy to get surprised when someone walks up behind, or to sit and wonder what is going on behind if people look in that direction, in general, I didn’t find it to be too intrusive to the performance. Eventually, I got used to having people walk up from behind me and, a lot of the time, partly forgot that there were an equal number of people often sitting out of my view as were in it.

Perhaps what marks the space as most distinct from either performing on the shopping streets of Bath or at Broadmead in Bristol is that there is a relatively ready-made, stationary audience in the Square. This made a huge difference to how I felt when I performed there. It felt so much better to simply see that there were people sitting there obviously paying some attention to me, even if I wasn’t the main reason they were there. This produced a eurhythmic relation between the rhythms of my body, my performance, and the space which was manifest in the performance, and the more even tempo of my playing, both within songs and across them (Lefebvre 2004).
After nearly an hour’s playing, I started to wonder if any other buskers would appear. I really hoped they wouldn’t as I was really enjoying myself—the weather was perfect, I seemed to be being well received, and I was enjoying playing in the space. I did wonder whether I should stop anyway given the guidelines aren’t just for buskers, but also to stop people who live and work near buskers having to listen to the same performers all day long, but I just really didn’t want to.

I decided to play on, even if for just a little over an hour. About 10 minutes later, another busker arrived and sat on one of the benches in front of me. I started to feel a little nervy at this point as I wasn’t quite sure how things worked—was I meant to step aside (assuming he knew I’d done an hour) or would he approach me? After a couple of songs he did come over. He was very friendly. I asked if he wanted to take over from me and he said it was ok, people normally did an hour. I said I’d actually done that, so didn’t mind letting him have a go. He said he was actually hoping to meet another musician he knew to busk with them, but that he’d come back in 20 minutes if he didn’t want to just kick me off. We introduced ourselves, and he headed off.

By the time he appeared back, about 15 minutes after he’d initially left, I was really starting to feel the heat—there was no shade and very little breeze in the Square. I was actually quite glad to see him arrive back as I thought it was time for a break, a cold drink, and some time in the shade. After another song, I gestured to him if he wanted to take over but he declined, and just sat and listened, occasionally checking his phone. I did feel a little nervous though with him sitting watching me, though I’m not sure why. Perhaps it was just because he obviously knew how things worked there and I didn’t want to do anything out of place.

After another couple of songs I really did want to stop—I could feel my neck, and upper-right arm burning, and I’d run out of anything to drink. Although the sun had been uplifting earlier, it was now quickly sapping any energy I had left. This time he accepted and came over.

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As was discussed in Chapter 4, another difference in performing in Bath, and particularly on the pitches by the Abbey, is the presence of a timetable, or rather, a general timetabling of performances. This is in part maintained through the ‘imposed structure’ (Lefebvre 2004: 9) of the resonance of the Abbey’s bells ringing every 15 minutes and so providing a constant reminder of the progression of each slot and the fragmentation of the continuous circularity of time (Lefebvre 2002: 48). While it turned out from conversations with a couple of buskers that it was rare for them to actually meet at 10am to draw up a timetable for the day (as was meant to happen) and that no physical written timetable was maintained, the division of the day into hourly slots was still (roughly)
This tended to be worked out as the day went along. If you arrived at the space and no one was there it was yours to perform. If other buskers turned up during your hour they would ask to follow you. If more than one busker appeared it seemed to be worked out either by the toss of a coin or by who had asked first. I quite quickly learned that this was how things worked which relieved some of my earlier nerves.

There were times earlier in the summer when I started to perform on these pitches that the timetable proved to be a frustration. However, this was both when things had been going well and things had been going not so well. When I was enjoying performing, such as in my opening attempt on the Square from the previous extract, I wanted to play for more than an hour – the cut off of the hour slot produced arrhythmic feelings in relation with the rhythms of my body; the linear nature of the timetable did not sit well with the more cyclical nature of my bodily rhythms (Lefebvre 2004). When I wasn’t enjoying performing, for example on occasion when I received few donations, there was always the memory of previous good times on that pitch and the hope that things could pick up, or that things did pick up just as I had to stop. The mechanisms of the timetable limited this potential for change and it really did feel like an imposition. There was something too routine about it that didn’t pay attention to what was actually going on. Continually stopping, moving, finding another pitch, and then starting again presented a frustrating routine. It felt too mechanical and put more strain on my body than I felt was necessary, especially when there were no other buskers to follow me. The timetable was sometimes at odds with the unfolding of the day and the way the performance and the audience would organically unfold. Also, on a practical level, often it would take a bit of time to settle into a pitch, get comfortable, and then have people listen long enough to want to donate – more often than not it was a few songs in before I received any donations. Again on donations, there were occasions on which a few people donated to me and then sat down to listen just before my slot was about to end. This made me want to play for them but, as the timetable said I had to stop, I couldn’t. This was especially awkward considering that I wouldn’t always be followed straight away by another busker, making my reason for leaving less obvious.

This isn’t to say that I think it is ok for people to play for hours and hours on end in the same spot, but just that there could be a little more flexibility in this aspect of the spaces organizing lines than the system allows.

This need to find a different spot meant I tried to busk on the pitch outside the Roman Bath – the ‘No 1 pitch’, as a couple of buskers described it to me.
June 12th. I started playing around 1.35pm. I deliberately turned my amp down a little as the space was a little tighter and as there were more obvious people that might respond if it was too loud (the doormen at the Roman Baths and the staff at the café opposite). This did linger in the back of my mind for a time – was I too loud or was I loud enough? I think if I didn’t have the amp I wouldn’t worry about this so much.

It did start rather slowly on here. In the first few songs I only received 1 donation from a woman who commented ‘very nice and relaxing’, which was nice. I was worried a little that things were going to be the same here as on the shopping streets and whether I should just stick to the Square nearby as much as possible.

5.3: Queuing for the Roman Baths behind buskers

After a little while a large school group appeared and queued to enter the Roman Baths. This meant they were queued right behind me. They were really noisy so I turned my amp up a little and played with more attack to try to make myself heard. As they queued for quite a while I was tempted to stop, but, given there were quite a few people who had sat on the benches in front of me who appeared to be listening, I persevered. The tour group queued for around 10 long minutes.

While they queued and shouted at each other and generally chattered, the rest of the space was rather cramped – I felt in the way, especially when a man walked past and banged his motorcycle helmet into the edge of my guitar.

Eventually the school group went into the Baths and the space went back to being a little quieter and a little more relaxed. Things also began to pick up. I received quite a few donations from people who sat on the benches for a time. In fact, the vast majority of donations came from the benches – very few
people donated in passing. I still didn’t like this space as much as the Square, but it was far, far better than the shopping streets!

*

The main thing I didn’t like so much about the pitch outside the Roman Baths were the regular queues of people going into the Baths. It really did make me feel like I was in the way, but at the same time, partly invisible (see 5.3). Having people bump into me, shout over the top of what I was playing, and generally detract from what I was doing was very frustrating, but there was nothing I could do about it other than stick it out and wait for them to leave. Normally this wouldn’t be too bad a thing but with only an hour slot, having a queue behind me for 10 to 15 minutes of it wasn’t a positive prospect.

Initially, I couldn’t really understand why this pitch would be the considered as the ‘number 1’ pitch. The space really did present a less appealing pitch to me – there was less of a seated audience, it was a bit noisier, and it definitely felt more exposed being there as there were far more people walking behind me than on the Square. The space did seem to be a lot busier though and did have a greater footfall making it more practical when the area was quieter – it was always generally busy. Although not an issue to me, the possibility of being closer to the row of benches meant a lot of the unamplified acts or singers would be more easily heard and mean there was a lot less strain on their voice in not needing to project quite as much. As I busked here again and again, I began to realize that there was a much more consistent crowd on this pitch and also across the day. The Square was good when there were a good number of people around, but could feel a little empty and cavernous when there weren’t. The space outside the Baths almost always had a group of people sitting on the benches.

Given the popularity of this pitch, and the timetabling for the pitches by the Abbey, this meant that it was not always possible to be performing on either of these key pitches. While many of the other buskers appeared not to do this, I tried to go back to the streets while waiting to get back onto the other pitches, in the hope that I would be more successful than my initial attempts at busking on them.

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June 11th. Having finished on the Courtyard, I headed up to the pitch outside the Roman Baths. The busker who had passed me earlier was still playing there. Given he had at least another half hour of playing there (I roughly estimated), I decided to head out to the shopping streets to try there again. I was a little reticent given how unsuccessful my previous attempts there had been. I went to the stop on Union
Street I’d played in before and set up. Having spent effectively the last 2 hours and 40 minutes playing on the Square by the Abbey [combining that day with the previous], it was a shock being on the street again. I didn’t like it. I felt too much like I was out of the way and was being ignored. The street was too busy and bustling – everyone was running around and it felt unlikely that I could catch their attention. The only way really to get their attention would have been to turn up my amp, but this could cause problems with other buskers or the people working in the shops nearby. My act just didn’t suit playing here. I was tempted to stop barely after I started – it just felt like there was no point me being here. Then, a seagull did a huge shit a few feet in front of me causing people to scatter. I couldn’t have summarized the previous 30 minutes better myself. I decided to stop.

* I had always thought that one of the keys to busking was finding a space with a high footfall – by playing to as many people as possible it gave the greatest possibility for donations. This really wasn’t the case in Bath in my time busking there. Although when I played by the Abbey there were far fewer people passing I still received many more donations and people generally paid more attention to me. On the shopping streets like Union Street, for me at least, there was too much background noise for my act to be received well and people were rushing about. This appears to be the case with many other buskers – there was a general division between buskers who played by the Abbey and buskers who played on the shopping streets. There were only a few who swapped back and forward between the two. In general the acts that did swap back and forward were ones which would draw greater attention to themselves through a degree of spectacle in their act, or the acts that mainly played on the streets were louder in nature, such as group acts which would be naturally louder.

As was mentioned previously, the streets around Bath are relatively narrow and therefore become quite busy. I never felt especially relaxed on them as there always seemed to be crowds of people trying to get up or down the streets. This was especially the case the couple of times I attempted to play on Stall Street, just south of Cheap Street. While people did busk there, for me the combination of stalls selling various items, and the noise from their generators, the potential competition from the more spectacular street performers outside the Pump Rooms, plus the generally cramped and crowded conditions, made it a horrible place to play. The pitches by the Abbey were just so much more relaxed. The rhythms of the Abbey pitches and their crowds sat in a more ‘eurhythmic’ relation with the rhythms of my body and the music that I played. These rhythms complemented each other more or, as Lefebvre (2004: 16) would say, “unite[d]
with one another in the state of health”, and so drew a better performance from me. Also, and again suggested in the previous chapter, many of these streets act as direct routes for tourists towards other attractions and therefore trying to distract them from their itinerary is not always easy. They are far more like transitional spaces than spaces where people want to linger, spend some time, and relax, as people do by the Abbey.

Another frustration of trying to move between the Abbey pitches and the street was the variations in the temporality in performances. While by the Abbey performers generally followed a linear timetable for performances which produces something of a mechanical unfolding, measuring out the time for performers to ‘work’ (Lefebvre and Regulier 2004a), on the street this was a little looser and more ‘organic’ (Lefebvre 2004: 6). Given there were only two specified pitches by the Abbey which were in high demand, on the streets things were a little less refined and organized, both in terms of spacing and timing. Performers set up in various locations and tended to perform for longer – sometimes in the same space for hours on end. This provided another difficulty in moving between spaces and the main reason why I stopped performing on the shopping streets other than to pass time until I could get back onto the Abbey pitches.

**Come Rain, Come Shine**

While there is more to performing outdoors than the performance not having a roof over it, as was highlighted at the start of the chapter, being without a roof can also affect the experience of performing. This can be as a literal interruption of a performance through the onset of rain, or through the fatigue induced in the body by the weather being very hot – while the sun, at times, positively affected me while performing, there were also times, such as on the Abbey Square mentioned above, when it decomposed my capacity to perform (Deleuze 1988); my skin was burning, I was dehydrated, and just generally was overheating. Conversely, there were a number of occasions when the temperature was not quite warm enough for it to be comfortable for me to perform. When the temperature was below around 16 degrees centigrade I found that my fingers would get cold which would mean it hurt when I pressed down the cold, sharp strings, but also that my hand would stiffen up meaning my fingers could not move swiftly enough, or missed their desired placing on the guitar’s fretboard. The ‘animate agency’ of atmospheric conditions was very evident here (McCormack 2008a: 415).

We can return here to the discussion of Merleau-Ponty from Chapter 2 and particularly his understanding of the corporeal schema. Merleau-Ponty suggests we have a body-image which can be extended by the appropriation of object which can be
subsumed into the body and later drawn on unthinkingly. This ‘dilates’ our bodily being in the world (Merleau-Ponty 2002). However, returning to the third post-phenomenological trajectory outlined in Chapter 2, Merleau-Ponty says less about the intensive relations that occur in this dilation. What about the sensations that radiate through and between in the inter-relation with such objects? In Merleau-Ponty this all appears to proceed a little too smoothly and at a rather disembodied or de-sensitized level. As suggested above, when I took up my guitar and placed my hands on the strings this was not a simple enrollment of the guitar into my corporeal schema. Yes, I did often play unthinkingly and moved my hand over the guitar’s neck without having to think much about it. However, in this relation, especially at times when it began to fall apart such as when the weather was too cold for me to play, I was strongly aware that this was a sensate relation. My fingers would sting from the impression of the string on my fingers when it was cold. Here the guitar became less of a ‘bodily-auxiliary’ (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 177) and more of an obstacle to performing.

“This morning my left hand is still tensed and aching. My wrist and forearm are also tense and occasionally spasm. Although it’s a nice day today, there’s no way I can go busking. My hand just isn’t up to it. 3 and 1/2 hours of playing yesterday has just ruined my hand and forearm. My finger tips are still tingling as well, although I’m starting to form quite impressive calluses on them. I think I’m going to have to take at least a day off until I’ve recovered…”

We can suggest an alternative interpretation of such an inter-relation of the body and objects of the world through the work of Deleuze and Guattari and their discussion of ‘machines’ (see Deleuze and Guattari 2004a; 2004b). Rather than thinking of the body as a given totality or unity understood by or belonging to a subject, we can think of it as an assemblage of machines. The machines that form “the parts of an assemblage do not form a seamless whole” (DeLanda 2006: 4). They do not belong to an organic unity or given subject. Rather, it is in their connection, channeling of intensive flows, and
uncoupling that they produce a sense of subjectivity. For example, from the discussion above, the finger-machine can connect with the string-machine on the fretboard-machine. In making these connections these machines channel flows which constitute the “experience of intensive states of the resultant psychic body” (Patton 2000: 72). These channelings are affective. Again, taking the example above of me playing guitar in the cold air, the flow channeled was consumed as one of sharp pain. From the consumption of this pain a sense of the body and its machinic connections is produced – I came to myself in this connection as being in pain and as a “point of accumulation” of these flows (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 243). This being in pain decomposed my capacity to perform. Such a logic provides a way of thinking about the material relatedness of the body, and its enrolment into relations with the world of objects, which pays attention to the sensuousness of such experiences, but does so outside of any thinking of a unified bodily being present at the outset of such relations, or one predicated on the presence of an intentional subject, posited in advance, which enters into those relations. Here there is not an experience of the body, but rather, “the body itself is experience” (Nancy 2008b: 101); there is not a subject who experiences their body or through their body, but a subject who emerges from bodily experience.

Further, and returning to a more explicit focus on the weather, the outdoor setting of performances affects the opportunity to actually get out and perform. During the time I was busking (and undertaking observations of buskers) I spent a large amount of time on the Met Office website looking at weather forecasts and trying to plan when I might be able to busk, and also judging when it would be worth the risk of it potentially raining. We can return to the discussion of lines here and think about how my constant concern with the weather came down to my usual approach to working. In doing my PhD I am used to having to plan out my time a lot – when I will write, read, go to seminars, attend reading groups, read for these reading groups, go to meetings, and so on. Some of this I am told to do and some of it is done by choice or out of habit. I’m used to compartmentalizing my time and working within this. As was highlighted in the previous chapter, linear timetablings are not necessarily negative and do not necessarily cause disquiets in their interaction with cyclical rhythms (see Lefebvre 2002). There can be comfort in such routine (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b). This said, conversely, wanting to have some kind of forward planning with regard to going busking was not always practical – the weather did not always fit with the plans for the rest of the week, nor did it always follow what was forecast. Here there very much were cases when “the
persistence of rhythmic timescales within the linear time of modern industrial society” produced “defects and disquiet” (Lefebvre 2002: 49).

**Donations**

As has been implicit throughout the previous discussions, the central way in which a street performer or a busker can gauge the way in which their performance is received is through donations from the audience. If they are not good enough, they don’t receive donations or only receive very small ones. If they are good and people want to show their appreciation, they receive a lot of donations or larger donations. In fact, the receipt of a donation is one of the most affectively charged aspects of street performing.

This said, while donations show a positive reception of the performance and therefore may act to positively affect the performer, the case is not always so simple. As Serres (1995: 132) suggests, “the sound of the coin is not worth the coin”. There is in fact a relative indeterminacy to the coins donated. We can think of this in terms of affect. As mentioned previously, in developing his understanding of affect Deleuze (1988) did not define a human being by its forms or functions, but rather, in realizing that a thing is never separable from its world, defines it by its capacities to affect and be affected (see Spinoza 1996). This suggests that we do not know what such a body can do in advance (Deleuze 1992). As Deleuze (1988: 125) states “you do not know beforehand what good or bad you are capable of; you do not know beforehand what a body can do, in a given encounter, a given arrangement, a given combination”. Significant here is that we cannot know in advance what the outcome of a specific encounter or combination will be as “we have many constituent relations, so that one and the same object can agree with us in one respect and disagree with us in another” (Deleuze 1988: 33). Each and every donation, any composition or ecology of performer, donation, donator, and so on, can produce a different affect; there is no direct causal link between donation and affect. Donations can produce a positive affect, lifting the performer and enhancing their capacity to perform (as has been mentioned previously), but also, importantly, donations can also produce other affects which potentially negatively affect the performer, drawing them away from that capacity.

This singularity can be drawn out along a number of more generic oppositions and there are a number of ways in which this can be illustrated from my experiences of

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63 Sometimes people clap, but for most of the time this is unusual (at least for buskers). Also, if it does occur, I’ve always found the sound of one or two people clapping to be more awkward and even a little embarrassing rather than positive.
busking and the receipt of donations during this. Firstly, we can draw a distinction between the receipt of a large donation and the receipt of a small donation. Commonsense here might suggest that the large donation would produce a more positive affect than the small donation. In some cases this was true. An example of this comes from my time busking in Glasgow. One day, following my busking partner and I playing a song by Gordon Lightfoot, a man came over, shook my busking partner’s hand and, in doing so, transferred a ten pound note into it. As he did this he said: ‘that’s for the Gordon Lightfoot’. We were both shocked by this, but it felt amazing that someone had enjoyed something we’d played so much so as to give that size of donation. There were also a number of similar occasions where people thanked us and gave us a five pound note. Here the donation really seemed to relate quite closely to the level of appreciation people wanted to show, and this increasing level of appreciation reflected in the ways in which the donations affected us.

However, receiving such substantial donations does not always produce this affect. During my time in Bath the largest donation I received was a one pound coin, but there were occasions on which the receipt of a pound coin did not produce a comparable positive affect. For example, on one occasion a man dressed in a suit and tie donated a pound coin as I busked on Union Street. While this was the only pound coin I received in my time on that pitch on that day – the day in general did not go well in terms of donations – and therefore stood out quite strongly, it did not produce an especially positive affect. This came down to the way in which it was donated – the man threw it into my hat in passing without stopping to pay any attention, and also was walking so quickly that he had passed before I had the chance to thank him. This donation didn’t produce a feeling of appreciation or anything similar to that. It felt like I had been given it because I was there, rather than because of what I had done. This donation was, at best, indifferent or, at worst, negatively affected me in drawing attention to the small amount of attention that people were paying attention to me at that time in that space.

Conversely, thinking about small donations, there were occasions on which receiving a small donation produced a relatively negligible affect or even a negative affect which drew me away from my capacity to perform. For example, there was one occasion when I was again playing on Union Street when someone donated eleven pence. This hit me hard. I couldn’t help wondering: ‘was that all I was worth?’. I did rationalize it by wondering if it was all he had on him, but still, it really did bring me down. There was another occasion on the Square by the Abbey when a couple donated what appeared to
be all the coppers they had on them. This probably amounted to twenty or thirty pence, but it felt like they were trying to lighten their pockets rather than really wanting to show any appreciation of what I was doing. The donation was also accompanied by a somewhat sarcastic ‘every little helps’. On the other hand, there were occasions on which small donations did have a positive affect. Most notably, there was an occasion on which the first donation I received was just a handful of coppers, but given I had been having a poor day and had been playing for around 30 minutes without donation, receiving any donation at that point, no matter how small, was better than not receiving a donation. The donation helped me to go on that day and wait for more, hopefully larger, donations to arrive.

There is also another way that the relative size of the donation can be differentiated – in terms of its size in relation to the person giving the donation. In the main, it clearly appeared that the majority of people donating could easily afford to give what they did. The majority I encountered were either tourists or people out shopping who will spend far more on other things that day.\footnote{This is a line often employed by street performers to ‘suggest’ the size of donation people might give: ‘a cup of coffee is what, £2? I think you’ve enjoyed me at least as much as you’d enjoy a cup of coffee…?’} Therefore, in most cases, the financial standing of the person donating did not come into it. However, there were occasions where this really did affect how the donation made me feel.

This was most evident on an occasion where I received a donation from a Big Issue seller. He came over, said what I was playing was ‘nice and mellow’, donated, and said sorry he couldn’t give more as he was a Big Issue seller. I said ‘no, thank you’, as he walked off. I didn’t quite know how to feel about it. He wouldn’t have given if he really couldn’t afford it, but he still really needed the money more than me. Equally, I didn’t want to refuse the money as this could be taken as patronizing or rude. I was going to buy a Big Issue from him when I stopped (I couldn’t walk over and leave my stuff as he headed a little up the road), but when I did he was gone.\footnote{This donation contributed to my decision to donate all money received during the research to the Big Issue Charity as discussed in Chapter 3.} Therefore, it is not only the size of the donation that is received that affected how the donation affected me, but also the circumstances in which it was donated, who it was donated by, and also the way in which it was donated – the singularity of each donation becomes apparent as these factors become multiplied and folded together. This can be drawn out and further complicated in relation to the frequency of donations.
On the occasions when donations were sparse, each occasional donation drew more attention and, in doing so, affected me more strongly. We can return to the distinction in experience that I drew earlier between performing on the shopping streets in Bath and my later busks around the Abbey. In the earlier busks, at the end of the day I could actually state the number of donations that I received given this rarely made it into double figures. In fact, on one occasion, in one 30 minute busk on Stall Street by the Pump Rooms, I received only one donation. However, when the donations were more frequent when I performed by the Abbey – for example, from a one hour video-clip taken on the Abbey Square I counted sixteen donations – it was easy to start to lose track of each donation; donations would come in flurries of four or five within a minute or two, or just take place regularly meaning I stopped noticing each donation as much. In the times where donations were spare and few, I developed far more of an affected relation to each specific donation – each one carried a particular quality and affect. In the times where donations were frequent and plentiful, I developed a more general relation to the time period as a whole – a less fragmented affective relation was drawn from the constancy and totality of donations.

Another way we can think about the affectivity of donations and how this varied is in relation to what people said when they donated. As suggested above, some people donated without saying anything at all. However, many of the donations were accompanied by a ‘thank you’, or ‘I enjoyed that’, or ‘we really enjoyed listening to that while we had our sandwiches, thank you’. This was often the case when I played on spaces where people lingered, so their donation was often attached to their having been sitting watching for a time. These accompaniments often heightened the affect of the donation – the words that accompanied the donation made clear the sentiment with which the donation was made and therefore made me feel more appreciated. Again however, there were times when the accompanying comment affected me differently. One such event is outlined in 5.4 which illustrates the specific unfolding of the donation and the activities of the donor prior to and after the donation.

66 This was even more the case when I busked in Glasgow. There was rarely a song that went by without a donation or multiple donations and we could make upwards of £40 or £50 per hour. This said, this presented a different unit of affective significance. Rather than being affected by each donation or the donations received in one outing in total, we began to be affected by the reception of each song and the sum of donations received during each song. We were affected negatively when a song appeared to not go down especially well, but equally, were affected positively when one received a lot of donations. This was also affected by what we thought about the quality of our own performance and the relative level of donation. I will however return to this below.
5.4: Sincere donation

On this occasion, a woman arrived sat on a bench (at the bottom right of the images) and listened. After around 14 minutes of listening, during which time I had received no donations, the woman stood up, walked toward me, and donated. As she donated, she said ‘That’s lovely, thank you’. This felt good and gave me a (very momentary) lift. As I had received few donations to this point, receiving this donation and the message of thanks made me feel a little better. However, having gone to walk away, she quickly followed this by saying (in a somewhat overly sincere manner) ‘Very relaxing, thank you very much’. It was this later comment that stuck with me. It was just a little too sincere and a little too pointed. It drew attention to the fact that I hadn’t been doing well and perhaps that this woman had noticed. I am certain she only meant well in saying it, but I was left with a lingering feeling that things weren’t going well. This therefore made me a little self-conscious, a little nervous about how things were going.

Another specific aspect of the comments that accompanied a donation was the recognition of what I was playing. This had a more pronounced affect when I played in Bath and Bristol than when I played in Glasgow, given that the songs I was playing in Bath and Bristol were far less well known. In Glasgow, we regularly got comments along the lines of ‘I’ve not heard that in ages’, or ‘I saw the Eagles play that in Glasgow in
197…’, and so on. This meant that it was likely that people would have to pay far more attention to notice what the song I was playing was in Bath and Bristol, but also that there was generally a far lesser likelihood of someone recognizing the song. One example of this is illustrated in 5.5, again taken from a video clip on the Square by the Abbey.

5.5: Recognition of song and clapping

Tape time: 45 Mins 22

Man arrives and sits on bench at right of shot

Tape time: 45 Mins 31

Man takes out lunch
Tape time: 50 Mins 21

Man briefly claps at end of song

Tape time: 60 Mins 52

Man packs up his lunch

Tape time: 62 Mins 15

Man walks toward me.
Here, a man wearing light colored trousers and a burgundy colored jumper and sunglasses arrived at the bench at the bottom right of the image and took out his lunch. Around 5 minutes later, he clapped at the end of a song – he was the only one to clap and only gave two or three individual claps. I noticed this and nodded to him in acknowledgment, somewhat awkwardly. Around 12 minutes later, having collected up his lunch rubbish, he walked over and donated saying ‘I really enjoyed your O’Carrolan, thank you’. This affected me quite strongly. I had only recently started playing more traditional music before going out busking for the research and so being complemented on playing a specific song lifted me and increased my confidence in playing that type of music.

In thinking about the affectivity of donations it is important to note the affects of not receiving donations. As has been illustrated by the extracts taken from my research diaries earlier in the chapter, as each minute passed when I didn’t receive a donation, I became more and more de-motivated. As this de-motivation proceeded, I could feel it being manifest in my body. I could feel my posture change, I was looking to people for donations, and, generally felt like I was giving off an air of discomfort through the expressions I assumed though did not deliberately choose. I had a sense that this affective disposition was being communicated through this bodily comportment to those who were passing by (Thrift 2004), and, in doing so, potentially putting them off donating to me and lifting me out of this slump.

In addition to this non-receipt of donations, there were many occasions of what I could call non-donations – people rummaging in their bags or pockets as they passed, or people who stopped and hovered around, apparently listening, but then walking off as
they had been waiting on some one (see 5.6 for an example). These non-donations provisionally produced a positive affect – they would lift my spirits in the sense that I thought someone might donate, that someone was listening, or that someone was about to donate. However, when this didn’t materialize, the resultant slowing down in the negative affect was more pronounced.

5.6: Taunting donation

It is important to mention something here though that might have strongly impacted on my relationship to the donations that I received during the course of busking for this research in Bath and Bristol (my busking in Glasgow is a somewhat different case). As suggested in Chapter 3, given that I was busking for research the donations I received very likely affected me differently than if I was busking for a living or with the aim of financial gain. It is very likely that the receipt of donation, for me, was very different to a number of the other buskers who busked in Bath and Bristol given their different circumstances and motivations. I should note though, importantly, that each busker’s relation to their donations is also likely to differ from every other busker, with each having different circumstances or motivations to busk. I am reticent to generalize here given I encountered buskers who were full time, part time, did it for fun,
to ‘get out of the house’, and so on. I do not want to universalize here given the previous discussion of the debates on affect. It is possible that I was affected more in terms of the reception of what I played and how that affected the quality of my performance rather than on the basis of the financial gain made. It was perhaps my artistic pride that was being affected rather than other important factors such as being able to pay my rent, and so on. That said, during the time I busked in Glasgow when I was living off busking, once I was certain that we were making ‘enough’ (something that was never really an issue for us other than being put at risk by not getting to play due to the weather), it did, in part, come down to artistic pride.

**Engaging Others**

In Chapter 4 I discussed how, in street performing, there is a reduction in distance between the performer and the audience. This occurs both on a material level – there is not the same architectural separation of performer and audience – but also on a more symbolic level – street performers are not generally given the same sort of status as a performer who performs in a more formal environment. This means, in street performing, regular proximal engagements occur between performers and their audience. There are numerous occasions on which I have encountered and been engaged by members of my ‘audience’. Sometimes, as has already been suggested, this is a largely positive occurrence. People simply say ‘thank you’, or something similar, comment on the song you're playing or your abilities, say something about how you've made a difference to their day. Sometimes this extends to a short conversation. People ask if you do this professionally, ask if you play elsewhere (in venues), and so on. However, while the majority of interactions are of this positive vein, sometimes interactions occur of a nature that is not so desirable.

Often work on performer-audience relations has been focused on the notion of community. For example, Herbert Blau (1990) questions the ‘mythos of community’ present in many discussions of theatre which suggests that theatre emerged organically from collectives rites and rituals. In response to this Blau suggests that the theatre “originates from difference” (Auslander 1992: 411). Blau then goes against understandings of theatre and its audience which focus too much on the notion of theatre’s aim as being to “bridge the fissure between observer and observed” (Kosidowski 2003: 83). In contrast, Blau (1990: 10) suggests there is an “original splitting”, rather than a community, as “there is no theatre without separation”. As Auslander (1999: 56) notes, “the dynamic of performance…is predicated on the distinction between performers and
spectators. Indeed, the effort to eliminate that distinction destroys the very possibility of performance” (see Auslander 1997).

Taking this out of the theatre and into the street, such difference and original splitting is perhaps even more evident in those negative encounters that I suggested above. In street performing, the performer, in a sense, is actively inviting their audience to come and engage them, given this is something relatively normal in the conduct of everyday spaces.

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May 20th. I arrived in Broadmead around 1.10pm to find the place was very busy. A lot of people were evidently in a rush to get lunch before heading back to work. I set up at the same place as before (outside Tesco) and, for the first 30 minutes or so, little happened – people just rushed about and didn’t really pay much attention to me. Once the rush started to recede things became a little mellower. People started to pay me a little more attention and it went back to being more like the previous days there. Again people were nice and friendly and some stopped to chat to me.

However, around about 2pm, things took a rather odd and unsettling turn. I spotted a man who looked rather worse for wear. He was wearing shabby clothing, a large ill-kept full beard, a large cut over one eye that couldn’t have been more than a couple of days old, and generally looked as though he’d been sleeping rough and drinking – he had that look of blood-shot skin around his cheeks and nose. He stopped dead, looked in my direction, and walked, somewhat staggeringly, straight toward me as I played ‘Signe’ (a bossa nova by Eric Clapton). Just as I finished he lent forward to put money in my hat. I instantly felt guilty – he looked like he needed the money more than me. However, rather than walk away or step back, he looked up, and without warning, looked me in the eye and said ‘I love you’.

*  

In the essay ‘Shattered Love’, Nancy (1991: 92) suggests that “[n]othing leads us more surely back to ourselves than love” but that an I does not return to itself from love and something of this I is lost or dislocated. While said in a very different context, namely as part of a discussion of the impossibility of naming or ‘attaining’ love or of freeing the self from it due to its lack of completion, this statement is still poignant here. As was established earlier in the questioning of the ‘I’, like Nancy, I want to question the status of the self as something that we can be led back to, and especially as something we can be present to in advance of an encounter. To put this in terms of the encounter outlined above, the statement ‘I love you’ both brought me to myself, but at the same time did not bring me to full self-presence – I was placed outside of myself in trying to make
sense of the event that had just occurred; this ‘I’ was fractured and unsettled. While, as just suggested, interactions between performer and audience are quite common in street performing, as should become clear, something set this encounter apart; there was a quite visceral sense of liminality here.

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‘I love you?’ This left me speechless. However, he then explained he didn’t want to cause offense to me, but that he loved what I was doing ‘like you would love a rainbow or a sunset’. This made it a little less weird, but I still did not exactly feel comfortable. I nodded. He then proceeded to tell me a large part of his life story – the context of which I eventually figured out was that he had lived in Spain (the song sounded a little Spanish), that he spoke numerous languages, and other points about his past. I wasn’t too worried at this point given previous experiences of busking and playing in pub venues in general – I’d had drunk people doing similar things before. I simply nodded, didn’t really offer much conversation, and hoped soon he would get bored and move on. This had worked in the past.

However, he started to repeat himself. Each repetition started with the refrain: ‘Africa now is like when the Romans left Europe’, and with each repetition of this, and his life story, he added material that made me increasingly uncomfortable. He kept swearing, calling a selection of people cunts, but straight after apologizing for his language and saying: ‘I don’t mean to cause offense’. This was to become another familiar refrain. The main thing that concerned me about this was that he was speaking rather loudly and I had spotted a number of disapproving looks from people walking by.

He then moved on to discuss racism (within the context of his life experiences of living in ‘Rhodesia’), and although not advocating racist views per se, did repeatedly use offensive language in that vein. I was now really wondering how to get away from him or to get him away from me. I couldn’t think what to do. I could smell alcohol and, given the cut above his eye, I was concerned that if I did something rude to do so, he might be aggravated – he’d clearly recently been in a fight. This wasn’t helped when he dropped in that he’d been in the army and that they’d wanted him to ‘shoot at those Caffer Cunts’ but deliberately missed – he didn’t like racism.

At this point he was standing right in front of me and I couldn’t really see people passing. I was hoping to catch the eye of someone or to see a Community Support officer but I couldn’t. I really wished I was back in the bars I used to play in in Glasgow where there were bar staff and bouncers to deal with this kind of thing, or with my old busking partner who was substantially larger than me so could more easily dissuade such people from hanging around by physical presence alone, or by mutual ignoring of them.

His cycling narration of his life story turned to making odd remarks about religion (again back to Spain and his experiences of Catholicism there), saying he liked African regions with many Gods, but
didn’t like atheists. He also didn’t like judging people based on this, but DID appear to be doing so. I was now trying to make it clear I wanted to stop the conversation – I deliberately made my responses even more stunted and began to play my guitar a little to give him the (too) subtle hint that I wanted to play again rather than talk to him.

He continued his cycling story, but now blurted: ‘The thing is, everyone should masturbate, I mean you think they don’t? You think the Queen doesn’t? Sorry, I don’t mean to cause offense’.

A central theme and tension in discussions of intersubjectivity, as highlighted in relation to Merleau-Ponty in Chapter 2, is the relationship between being in common with the other and the other’s otherness of distance. For example, to return to Merleau-Ponty’s (2002) account of dialogue, Merleau-Ponty suggests that a common ground is constituted between the self and the other, their words being entered into a shared operation of which neither were creator. Here, a dialogue is a collaboration: there is an emphasis on sharing, being in common, and reciprocity. There are echoes of the mythos of community suggested by Blau (1990). This could not be further from the truth in the encounter with my ‘other’ I have been outlining. There was nothing like a collaboration or a feeling of sharing of reciprocity. This was an encounter of rupture, with the only thing being shared being a lack of sharing or being in common.

I previously stated that I did not come to my self in our initial encounter. Neither did I come to the self of the other in his declaration of love. In that moment he was absolutely alien to me – I in no way knew this other but rather was traversed by him and this proclamation. As the extract above continues to show, nor did I in the further unfolding of our encounter – at no point did I feel like I had come to an understanding or knowing of this other person that faced me, and my sense of self was rattled.

However, this is not to say that I could have known this other. It is not only a question of who is this ‘I’ that would know this other, as I have already suggested, but also of who is this other ‘I’. If there is no self to be present to or there is no ‘I’ given prior to an encounter, this asks serious questions about how we can understand intersubjective relations when we have to conceive this in the absence of any pre-given subject to be relating from or in relation to. It asks the question: how can intersubjectivity occur or be recognized when both ‘I’ and the ‘other I’ are perpetually unfolding and, therefore, are in our ‘selves’ other to any ‘I’ that I would have or the other would have? What happens when “[t]here never remains anything of the subject, since he is to be created on each occasion” (Deleuze 2006b: 87)? Or as Grosz (2001: 91) asks:
“What does it mean to reflect upon a position, a relation, a place [here the ‘I’] related to other places but with no place of its own: the position of the in-between?”. All we are really left with is the ‘inter’ of the intersubjective.

To move on from this potential impasse of thinking about intersubjectivity and the relation between performer and audience, as Nancy (2008b: 31) states, “I'll always know others as bodies. *An other is a body* because only *a body is an other*. It has this nose, that skin color, this texture, that size, this fold”. It is important though to emphasize that this is distinct from the traditional way phenomenology, particularly in its Husserlian variants, has understood the subject’s relation to its body and the body of the other – it is not a case here of a subject governing a body, bestowing sense upon its body, and also recognizing the other’s subjectivity empathically through a bestowal of sense upon their body (as discussed in Chapter 2); it is not a presentification of the other by a subject. Here bodies are always with other bodies and such “bodies never stop selving” (Nancy 2008b: 113). It is more about a circulation of sense in such encounters, a transimmanent sense as Nancy calls it, which is neither transcendental and given in advance of the experience, nor immanent and present within that which is experienced (see Chapter 7 for more on this).

Therefore, returning to this corporeal nature of such an encounter, we can return to the machinic logic outlined previously. As the account I have provided suggests, the encounter was initially an affective bodily connection of eye, clothing, beard, skin, wound, nose, breath, and so on. This bodily connection resulted in the consummation and resonance of the intensities channeled and out of which a sense of myself emerged in being discomforted and unnerved. At the same time a sense of this other emerged, as a person who was likely sleeping rough and was drunk, through this consummation and resonance. There is then “a becoming otherwise of each of the terms thus bounded” in this greater emphasis on creative inter-relation and the ‘in-between’ (Grosz 2001: 65). A sense of this whole other, a whole not given or final, came from the relation to these body parts, rather than my empathic recognition of him as a pre-existent behaving other (as was previously suggested in the discussion of Merleau-Ponty’s account of intersubjectivity).

While it could be argued that this does leave open the question of the knowledge of the presence of other subjects that has been so central to understandings of intersubjectivity and so troubled Husserl, it does in fact infinitely defer the question – the
subject will always be coming, but yet to come; “the coming never ends, it goes as it comes, it’s a coming-and-going” (Nancy 2008b: 65).

*At this point I’d come to the end of my tether and WAS going to just leave. I had come to realize I had a man standing in front of me who 1) loved me 2) was using racist and offensive language 3) was making religious generalizations and judgments, and 4) was now talking about masturbation. I simply, and plainly, said ‘Right’ and looked away. He again repeated: ‘I don’t mean to cause offense’, and quickly said he was going to the pasty shop just down the road and did I want anything. I declined politely, but he continued, and after a minute or so he gave up on that, but offered me a coffee. Again, I said no politely and he accepted. I now saw my way out. When he was in the pasty shop I was going to pack up and effectively ‘leg it’. Before leaving he said ‘you won’t mind if I sit there (beside me) and listen will you?’, but I didn’t get the chance to answer. It hopefully wasn’t going to be an issue. As he left, however, a woman I’d seen listening earlier came over, put money in my hat, asked if I was a student and started (SLOWLY) trying to remember what her son had studied.

As she muttered to her self ‘was it Maths or Physics, no, maybe it was Chemistry’, I could see the man coming back.

He came over and stood to the side of me and the lady said to him: ‘I hope you’re going to put something in his hat and be responded saying he bad and that we’d been chatting/ were friends. I wasn’t his friend! She gave a rather suspicious and disapproving look, and left. Rather than play on or talk more I simply said: ‘Sorry, I’ve just realized the time – I need to go meet someone’. I thought this was the best approach. I wasn’t going to give any more or less detail or change from this line. I didn’t want to stay there any longer, even if he did sit there quietly. I just wouldn’t feel comfortable and he would, in all likelihood, try to chat more. As I packed up I could feel my heart pounding. I was trying to pack as quickly as possible but not look as though I was. My hands shook a little and I fumbled to put things away. As I did he made mumbled comments about ‘everything having its place, sorry, I don’t mean any offense’. I then said bye and he said ‘nice talking to you friend’ and put out his hand. I really didn’t want to shake it, but I did - possibly the shortest and loosest hand shake of my life. I then walked off quickly out of Broadmead, deliberately not looking back. I stopped a little up the road, out of sight, to compose myself a little more, and sort my things a bit. I was still really unnerved; my hands still shook a little.

*I don’t think at any point I really felt in danger, or was in danger, during this encounter. However, given the presence of alcohol and the nature of the conversation, I didn’t want to risk him turning on me in any way. Further, beyond the danger of any violence or
confrontation, there was the very real, very material impact that the encounter had on my bodily being. My palms were sweating, my heart pounding. I was struggling to form a plan to get away, my thoughts felt like they were running at 100mph. Time seemed to move so slowly. I think the encounter lasted around 10 to 15 minutes, but it could easily have only been 5. The inter-corporeal encounter with this man, though not one of physical contact, had direct material implications for my body.

While this might be an extreme example of the kind of interactions that can occur between street performers and their audience, it was by no means the only such extremely unnerving interaction I encountered during my time busking for this research. I also had a woman older than my mother try to kiss me the day after this event and, a couple of days before this, had a woman accuse me of ‘putting myself on display’ and suggesting ‘I bet you’ve not even lost your virginity yet’ – I can only assume that she was implying I was ‘whoring’ myself in playing on the streets based on her other ramblings. Also, in the past, my previous busking partner was ‘felt up’ by a middle aged woman in Glasgow as she tried to dance with him and I had a Calvinist minister try to enrol me in his preaching, but when I refused, very vocally renounce me as a sinner (for around 15 minutes). Nonetheless, I think these sorts of events show something about the ways in which intersubjective relations occur in such spaces and the momentary forms of community, or rather, lack of communion, that may occur.

As Blau (1990: 10) states, in thinking about the relation between performer and audience “[w]e are trying to understand…the possible grounds for community in a reality of fractures of which that originary splitting is the open fissure”. Or, in Nancy’s (1991: 28) terms, “community means…that there is no singular being without another singular being, and that there is, therefore, what might be called, in a rather inappropriate idiom, an originary or ontological ‘sociality’”. This sociality is of bodies. Bodies with bodies; an intercorporeity rather than intersubjectivity (Csordas 2008). However, this originary sociality does not mean that there is a shared origin or unity in community as there is no origin, or ground, to be shared. Rather, community can only be a being in common or sharing of the impossibility of any common being – the fissure Blau talks of. Any communion is therefore always to come: “[i]ncompletion is its ‘principle,’ taking the term ‘incompletion’ in an active sense, however, as designating not insufficiency or lack, but the activity of sharing, the dynamic, if you will, of an uninterrupted passage through singular ruptures” (Nancy 1991: 35). The ‘I’ is constituted in this communion, and so does not form the basis of it. However, the ‘I’ is constituted broken in being “exposed to
arrival and departure, the singular being is traversed by the alterity of the other, which
does not stop or fix itself anywhere, neither in ‘him’, nor in ‘me’, because it is nothing
other than the coming-and-going” (Nancy 1991: 98).

Being Territorial
May 21st. I arrived into Broadmead to find someone playing in the spot I’d played in previously. The first
thing that entered my mind was: ‘He’s in my spot’. He was sitting in the exact same spot I had been
playing in previously. It wasn’t my spot, but I just felt this attachment given I had enjoyed playing there
previously. Given the road works around Broadmead67, there wasn’t anywhere else to set up. I was
irritated, though really had no good reason to be. I think what really got to me was, in my mind, he
didn’t need the space – he was un-amped, and really barely audible on the other side of the street. There
were loads of narrower bits further up the road he could have played in. He could have easily found
another spot but I might not.

I headed up the road – I thought I could try playing outside the Arcade. However, there was
someone there too. I kept on up the road, my frustration building.

Having had a final look around, there wasn’t going to be anywhere else worth playing – I was
either going to be drowned out by generators, cars, buses, or just not have enough space due to all the road
works. I headed back the way I had come. I thought it might be worth asking the other buskers if they
were going to stop any time soon. I went to the violinist outside the arcade and he was very friendly. He
said he had just started and planned to play until around 4pm.

I headed back up toward the other busker. He too was friendly, but said he was going to play
until he made £20, but had only made £10 so far. He suggested other places he’d tried recently, so I
headed off to try to find somewhere to play.

* It is easy to become attached to certain pitches in which a performance ‘works’. When I
busked in Glasgow, we rarely played anywhere but a select two or three spots which we
liked and felt comfortable in and in which our act went down well. I found the same
happening in the short time I busked in Bristol.

Returning to the previously discussed ‘three lines’, we can make sense of this
territoriality. As mentioned earlier, when I started busking I was dominated by more rigid
lines. In going out busking, I managed to develop some suppleness – I varied my routine.
However, in developing an attachment to specific pitches, to specific territories, these

67 At the time substantial renovations to the Broadmead area were being undertaken preceding the
opening of the Cabot Circus area. This meant that substantial areas were fenced off so the road surface
could be replaced.
newly supple lines started to rigidify. In trying to stick to the same pitches, it became evident that “the segments which run through us and through which we pass are…marked by a rigidity which reassures us” (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 103) and “[t]he more rigid the segmentarity, the more reassuring it is for us” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 251). I wanted to play on the pitch outside Tesco in Bristol because I knew that I would be relatively happy there and that I was likely to do relatively well. This was the same with specific pitches in Bath – initially the top of Union Street and later the pitches by the Abbey. However, in this reassurance, it turns us into “creatures which are the most fearful, but also the most pitiless and bitter” (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 103). As the above diary extract shows, I felt bitter that someone else had managed to get ‘my’ pitch. I was worried about where else I could get to perform and how this would go. I felt an irrational dislike for the busker in ‘my’ pitch simply because he was ‘in my pitch’.

This was not only the case for me, but something I came across with select other buskers also. For example, one such occasion of territoriality occurred when I was busking on Union Street in Bath. I had initially played for an hour at the top of the Street in the space opposite Next pictured previously (5.1). After this hour I headed down to the other end, at least the 50m the guidelines suggest, to busk outside Curry’s. However, only a couple of songs in, another busker approached me rather aggressively. I recognized him as being a regular in Bath. He came up to me and said in an aggressive tone: ‘This is my spot, I’ve been waiting more than an hour for you to move, I play here everyday’. I said that I’d only been here 10 minutes, but he said ‘No you’ve not, I’ve been waiting an hour, this is where I always play’. At this point I didn’t want to get into any sort of fight and, it being early on in my fieldwork, I didn’t want to make things difficult for the future. Therefore I said, ‘well ok then, but I’ve not been here an hour’. He just stuck to the same line until I’d packed up. Once I’d relented and decided to move on he did become a little less hostile, but I think this was mainly down to the fact I’d given in.

This in a sense leads us full circle to my opening experience of busking and the need to open myself up to some suppleness and be less stuck in the comfort of my routine. Perhaps buskers aren’t necessarily the wandering ‘troubadours’ that they are often romantically portrayed to be. Rather, they have their own routines and patterns, but these don’t fit in with what others usually understand to be the routine, or ‘daily grind’ (Lefebvre 2004).
V. Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed some of the varied affective relations that take place in the undertaking of street performance, between performer, space, material objects, other people, the environment, and so on. In doing so, I have further pursued the three post-phenomenological trajectories outlined in Chapter 2. These have related to the movement away from an overly subject-centred understanding of embodied experience to one where the subject is something de-centred, existing as a product alongside the experiences the body undergoes. Further, I have laid more emphasis on the ways in which a body is socialized and therefore operates within and under a certain plan, or plane, of organization that draws out and influences (though does not dictate) what it does or tends towards doing. Finally, I have paid more attention to the felt nature of these experiences, emphasizing that our embodied experiences are intimately tied to our feeling of what happens and our being enrolled in affective relations with the environment we inhabit, both positive and negative.

In the remaining two main chapters of this thesis I will take these themes further. I will render sharper, and further develop, the post-phenomenological trajectories outlined previously through engagements with the works of Husserl and Deleuze, and Nancy, respectively. This engagement will proceed at a relatively more theoretical level, enabling me to make more explicit the conceptions of the subject and the feeling-body that have been operating within the discussion of the empirical material of this chapter. More substantively, this development will proceed through a thinking of the acts of attending that occur in relation to street performance and so addressing the second half of the second research question outlined in the Introduction to the thesis in terms of how the spatialities of the street affect the embodied experience of the performance (something already touched on in Chapter 4). Firstly, this will be thought in terms of how people become aware of street performers and their performances. This is integral to the audiencing of street performance given its situation outside the traditional set up of theatres/stages as outlined in this chapter and given that so much of our everyday perceptual life is made up of a multitude of fleeting acts of attending (Casey 2007). Secondly, it will be thought in terms of the ways in which people listen given this setting and the potential lack of concentrated, interpretative listening given this fleeting engagement.
Chapter 6

Audiencing street performance

“[A] performance…takes place only in action, interaction and relation. Performance isn’t ‘in’ anything, but ‘between’”


“The first moment of noticing is indispensable; without this, nothing will happen, nothing will endure”

(Casey 2001: 2).

I. Preface

Throughout my time busking I became increasingly struck by how little attention people paid to me and the small proportion of people who paid any attention at all. I was worried this was down to me, that it was something to do with my act – that I wasn’t very interesting, or very good – but from walking around, watching others perform, I kept seeing the same pattern; people didn’t pay attention. So many people did little more than alter their gait or hover briefly, turn their head as they pass, or just keep on walking…
Tape time: 19 Mins 55
Man enters shot and looks over

Tape time: 20 Mins 03
Man wanders to bench, looking over as he goes, and pauses

Tape time: 20 Mins 06
Man hovers behind bench and continues to look over

Tape time: 20 Mins 14
Man walks off
II. Introduction

Given the increase in attention given to performance within geography of late (see Thrift and Dewsbury 2000; Dewsbury, et al. 2002; Latham and Conradson 2003), there has been a conspicuous absence within this literature of discussions of audiences. Geographers have tended to focus more on the performers themselves (often a geographer undertaking an ethnography), and have, as a result, neglected the audiences of those performances (see McCormack 2002; McCormack 2005; Smith 2000). Given that a substantial amount of the inspiration for this interest in performance has come from Performance Studies itself (see Thrift and Dewsbury 2000; Thrift 2003a), it is surprising that this more substantive focus has not also translated. Within Performance Studies there has been a substantial treatment of the audience (and as I will go on to discuss later, ‘audiencing’) (see Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998; Auslander 1999; Blau 1990; Copeland 1990; Lee-Brown 2002; Logan 2005; Park-Fuller 2003). As the epigraph from Schechner (2002) suggests, performance is something between, it is a relation; the audience is of significant importance. Therefore, the remaining two chapters of this thesis will be devoted to the study of audiences and specifically their practices of audiencing in terms of how the spatiality of the street affects the experience of those performances, and so addressing the second aspect of the second research question outlined in the Introduction to this thesis.

I ended the last chapter by highlighting a shift in focus from the more empirically oriented discussions of Chapters 4 and 5 to a more explicit theoretical emphasis of this one and the next. I am making this shift so as to more precisely articulate the engagement of the thesis with the post-phenomenological trajectories outlined in Chapter 2, particularly the first and third of these. To reiterate, the first of these trajectories pursues a critique of the phenomenological-intentional subject and so develops a more ecologically distributed conception of subjectivity. In this chapter and the next I am therefore interested in the ways in which acts of perception occur in such an interrelational manner rather than as occurring through the initiatory act of a preexisting subject. Further, the third trajectory pursues an increased emphasis on the vitality of embodied experiences. In this chapter and the next I want to focus on the centrality of affective registers of experiences and the allure or resonance that occurs in

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68 I am not focusing so much on the second trajectory around the socialization of embodied experience here as this was already engaged in some detail in Chapter 4 in relation to the works of Lefebvre and Deleuze, and in the previous chapter. That said, the discussions presented in this chapter and the next do still further contribute to this trajectory in relation to habit (this chapter) and disposition (Chapter 7).
and between the body/bodies and the multi-sensory environments they are situated within. I want to emphasize though that this is definitely not to say that this chapter and the next will be abstracted from the theses interest in street performance. As I just mentioned, they will think through two specific aspects of the acts of audiencing members of the public undertake in relation to street performance – becoming aware and listening.

The chapter at hand will be concerned with an examination of becoming aware – something, following the last chapter, I will argue is central to the audiencing of street performances given the setting of the performance in the street. This chapter will therefore unfold as follows. Firstly I discuss recent work from Performance Studies and elsewhere, specifically in relation to audiencing, and make connections to work undertaken in geography. I then refract this through recent work on ‘visualicity’ and the gaze/glance, and tie this to recent work in geography around the development of a post-phenomenology in the continued development of the post-phenomenological trajectories just mentioned. Given this scene setting, I go on to examine one potential understanding of how we become aware via a reading of Husserl’s discussion of the passive and active synthesis and specifically within this his discussion of the affection of the object. I turn to Husserl here as his philosophy provides one of the most substantial philosophical accounts of how attention is lived through (Steinbock 2004b). However, this account is problematic in a number of ways. Therefore, in a post-phenomenological move, Husserl's account is critiqued in light of Deleuze's understanding of the relationship between the passive and the active and his more general philosophies of the subject, affect and representation.

III. Audiencing, Observation, and Spectatorship

Within Performance Studies and cognate disciplines there have been numerous studies of audiences. Within these, attention is often paid to specific performances and the roles that the audience play within them. For example, Park-Fuller (2003) discusses specific ‘Playback Theatre’ performances which blur the role of the performer and audience through the literal participation of the audience within the performance and visa versa. Further, Logan (2005) discusses the ways in the intersection of performer, place, context, and audience generate different dynamic in three differently located performances of ‘Menopause and Desire’.

Within such discussions, the term ‘audiencing’ has increasingly emerged “as an alternative to words such as ‘viewing’ or ‘spectating’ that are commonly used to indicate audience members’ role in the performance
process...many consider the later terms to be one-dimensional, connoting passivity. ‘Audiencing’, by contrast, suggests multi-sensory, volitional actions such as ‘empathizing’, ‘encouraging’, or ‘resisting’ in addition to simple acts of perceiving, and thus aiding our understanding of audience members as active subjects”

(Park-Fuller 2003: 307; also see Rose 2007: 22).

While I find Park-Fuller’s (2003) outlining of the emergence of the use of audiencing useful, I wish to question her assertion that acts of perception are simple. While agreeing with the understanding of the audience as influential on the performance/performer (as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5), I want to begin to question this notion of passivity, and the related implication of an active form of audiencing, in relation to such acts of perception. I am therefore playing more on the processual sense of the term audiencing, suggesting that it is something that comes about through the perpetual interrelation of audience member, performance, performer, space etc., and a particular focus will emerge here on how such an interrelation initially comes about. I will be focusing on this given the lack of formalism in timing and other aspects of street performance, and so the audience has to become aware of the performance as it is happening, rather than necessarily waiting in advance, and by paying attention to it rather than something else.

Thinking more about this understanding of passivity/activity in audiencing, we can turn to the work of Crary (1992) who examines some of the common terms used in relation to audiencing. Specifically, Crary (1992) discusses the term ‘spectator’ which comes from the Latin route ‘spectare’, literally meaning ‘to look at’ and carries the connotation of a passive onlooker looking at a spectacle (such as a performance). Further, Crary (1992) highlights the lack of attention the term ‘spectator’ pays to the situatedness of the individual audiencing. Crary (1992) therefore opts for the term ‘observer’ given its relation to the observation of rules or codes of practice. Beyond this, Crary (1992: 6) goes on to suggest that ‘observer’ pays attention to the fact that any specific notion of the observer is “an effect of an irreducibly heterogeneous system of discursive, social, technological, and institutional relations. There is no observing subject prior to this continually shifting field”. Such a notion of the observer to me is then sympathetic to the ecological approach being taken to street performance in this thesis and the second post-phenomenological trajectory outlined in Chapter 2. However, I will take a less disciplinary notion here by focusing more on the heterogeneous stimuli that also circulate around those discursive, social, technological and institutional relations. I will be attempting to approach an understanding of audiencing as not necessarily intentionally active or initiated, but nonetheless not as solely passive reception, and so as a
form of ecologically related practice of observation, not spectatorship. To me, there is a lot more going on in the apparently passive that might first meet the eye.

Moving to work undertaken in geography, there has been a longstanding interest in visuality among geographers (Rose 2007). Initially, much of this followed a broadly representational image of thought and so related to the development of the understanding of the discursive, symbolic, and imaginative dimensions of visuality (see Cosgrove 2008; for a review see Bissell 2009). More recently, and often in light of the work in non-representational theory outlined in the Introduction, there has been a move to a more practice-based understanding of visuality, whereby the focus has fallen upon how ‘everyday practices of seeing and showing’ (Mitchell 2002) consist of a complex mix of performative, relational, and multi-modal elements and so are highly varied and complex (Degen, et al. 2008). Here there is a move from an understanding of the observer as detached and disembodied to one that is inescapably in the world and sees with the world (Wylie 2006; also see Latham 1999).

Within this recent work there has been a strong interest in the influence of technologies upon practices of visuality and the way in which acts of attending are affected by the design of spaces and mediated by specific technologies of seeing (Bissell 2009). For example, work has been undertaken on spaces of consumption, drawing on Debord’s (2005) notion of the spectacle (see Crewe 2000; Gregson, et al. 2002; Williams, et al. 2001). However, returning to the critique of the language of the spectator discussed above, such understandings have been critiqued for the ways they present the observer as something of a passive dope dazzled by the spectacle; there is very little sense of the activity that observers engage in (Degen, et al. 2008). Further, there have been numerous publications around observation (in terms of surveillance), particularly drawing on Foucault’s (1979) discussion of disciplinary technologies (see Philo 1989), but also, inverting Foucault somewhat, in with the control of the observation itself and how technologies discipline spectatorship by impacting upon the way people look (Adey 2007).

As suggested above, I am not explicitly interested here in the technological means through which street performers gain and hold the attention of the public (for example through the use of amplification). I would suggest again that there is a danger that the view of the ‘controlled spectator’ again presents the spectator in a somewhat docile

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69 I have discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 the discursive means through which performers are controlled, and, as a result, the ways in which the audience are relatedly controlled in their observation of performances, and also, the material influence of the performance space in the organization of audiences.
manner. Rather, I am interested in the more phenomenological process of becoming aware of a performance within the multi-sensory stimulation of the city street (which will include technological elements). I am less interested in the observer observing, than with the perceptual ways in which that observer comes to be an observer.

One work which discusses the ways in which we become observers is Sheilds’ (2003) recent work on what he calls ‘visualicity’ – a concern for the relation between the visible and the invisible or the seen and the un/not-yet-seen. Of particular interest here is Sheilds’ conception of the glance. Shields (2003: 9) discusses the glance as a means through which we may become aware of something, but also as potentially “draw[ing] the future into the present scenario, scanning and sampling it for not only trends but affordances and other virtualities which may come to be actualized in the next moment…[a glance] attempts to anticipate what is ‘about to be’”. I find this understanding problematic, and particularly the notion of the glance as almost looking for the ‘virtual’, as being in search of it. I find this problematic both in its interpretation of the virtual as something that can in fact be looked to, and in the intentional inscription it presents in the subject glancing, or rather the glance itself – there is, for me, too much emphasis on a subject acting toward the world and not enough focus on the subject being called forth by the world in their interrelation. I am trying to approach the glance, or rather a becoming aware more generally, as something lying between the subject and the object in their presence in an ecology, but ultimately belonging to neither. I am interested in, in Henry’s (2003) terms, an appearing of the phenomena or world which is other than the showing of intentionality.

In an attempt to get away from this lingering intentionality, and again returning to the first of the post-phenomenological trajectories outlined in Chapter 2, I will be

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70 In making this criticism I am invoking Deleuze’s understanding of the virtual as distinguished from the possible: “[t]he possible is opposed to the real; the process undergone by the possible is therefore a realization” (Deleuze 2004b: 263). Sheilds’ outlining here of a ‘looking to’ the virtual to me envokes something possible. Deleuze goes on: “[b]y contrast, the virtual is not opposed to the real; it posses a full reality by itself. The process it undergoes is that of actualization” (Deleuze 2004b: 263; also see Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 112-115).

71 Although I get the impression the Shields is not deliberately suggesting such an understanding of the glance as intentional, especially in that he explicitly counter-poses it to an intentional gaze, I can’t help but feel that the way he presents this conception is suggestive of a lingering intentional subject in its ‘scanning the horizon’ within the structure of time-consciousness.

72 I am reticent to pitch this solely in terms of a glance given that the processes of becoming aware that I am interested in this chapter may be both visual and aural. It could be said though that a sound may solicit a glance – in hearing something we look to see what it is that we are hearing, or rather, there may be a process of aural glancing – a more metaphorical type of glance whereby there is a switch in auditory attention toward a different aural stimuli (Idhe 2007). Any potential bias towards the visual will also be balanced and complemented in the next chapter’s attention to practices of listening.
building explicitly on Wylie’s (2006) post-phenomenology of the gazing subject. I will be building on it in that, while Wylie’s subject is one that has come to a place in the world, stopped, and is giving its full attention to the world, I will be focusing on how that subject may have come to be gazing, or, for that matter, not come to be gazing (Latham 1999). I will be interested in what Wylie (2006: 519) calls the ‘you’ve-been-moving-but-now-you’ve-stopped-to-look’ which much of social scientific research perhaps too hastily passes by given that the “[g]aze and the glance might be understood as twin gestures of vision” (Shields 2003: 5). I will be undertaking a post-phenomenology of becoming aware that may in turn lead to a gazing subject. This interest in the complex ‘microdynamics’ of visual practices (Bissell 2009) also brings the discussion into proximity to recent work in affect and the multiplicity of affective relations present in our everyday experiencing of the urban (Thrift 2004; Thrift 2007), given that affects can be understood as “contingent processes through which attention takes place” (McCormack 2007: 365).

There is then a two fold movement in this chapter. Firstly, in response to Shields’ (2003) call for a greater attention to ‘visualicity’ – and with the critiques of his conception of it laid out above in mind – and also as an attempt to develop a post-phenomenology – and specifically Wylie’s (2006) work on the gaze – I will now turn to the work of Husserl and specifically his work on the passive and active synthesis and the affection of the object. However, given that I want to get away from the intentional subject, as Chapter 2 made evident, this may seem as an odd move. There is only so far I can then get with Husserl, as will become clear. Therefore, the post-phenomenological move will come in a re-turn to the work of Deleuze and an outlining of his alternative understanding of the passive and active syntheses and their interrelation, and a more specific critique of Husserl’s understanding around the themes of representation, subjectivity, and affect. This is done in an attempt to present a non-intentional and non-subject centred understanding of becoming aware. The second movement is more empirical in nature. It revolves around an effort to understand the ways in which people attend to street performers and buskers within the context of the everyday, and specifically in terms of

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73 For an extensive discussion of this see Casey (2007) and his discussion of the lack of attention previously paid to the work that glancing does in relation to perception (also see Craig 2008 for a summary of this; and Casey 2004 for a related discussion).

74 It should be made very clear that, unlike Wylie’s (2006) aim of connecting and reconciling Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze’s work, I am not attempting such a reconciliation between the work of Husserl and Deleuze here. I simply do not think that would be possible.
their having to become aware of those performances. The chapter then revolves around the following event – an event of becoming aware:

‘A figure walks down a street. Amongst the constant stream of people, sounds, colours, lights etc. something is happening up ahead that catches that figures attention. The figure glances over, sees nothing of interest, and walks on. Another figure walks down the same street, amid the same multitude of sensory stimuli. They glance. Perhaps their attention is held. They stand and watch a while…’

IV. Passive and Active Synthesis – Husserl

Keeping in mind the general introduction to Husserl’s phenomenological project outlined in Chapter 2, in this chapter I approach a singular point in his writings: his ‘Analysis of Passive and Active Synthesis’, and more specifically his discussion of the affection of the object within this (Husserl 2001a).75 This work, or rather course, having first taken place in 1920-21, can be seen as Husserl’s phenomenological investigation into the origin of truth, and can be situated within his broader development outlined in Chapter 2 as following his transcendental turn. Part of the significance of this text lies in that:

“[w]hat we are privy to here are extremely intricate analysis of phenomenological matters that pertain to the structure of intentionality, evidence, and types of modalization as they are integrated into a genetic phenomenology of association, and as they unfold both in both passive and active spheres of experience”

(Steinbock 2001: xxxvii).

Further significance lies in the fact that, as Zahavi (2003: 142-143) suggests, it is possible to discern a somewhat different Husserl to the one often recognized from his main

75 The ideas taken up in these lectures were also returned to in the 4th meditation of his ‘Cartesian Meditations’ so this will also be drawn on in the discussion here.
published works in works such as this one. It is this ‘different’ Husserl, and specifically his thinking of passivity, who I think may offer some potential for thinking through how we become aware.

Husserl’s analysis of passive synthesis arises out of his interest in the study of time-consciousness (see Zahavi 2003: 80-97). Furthermore, this interest in time-consciousness, in the “temporal styles of givenness of impression, retention, and protention”, led to the more concrete investigation into affection and affective forces (Steinbock 2004a: 23). Steinbock (2004a) delineates several meanings of passivity within Husserl’s work. Firstly, passivity can be seen to indicate “a lawful-fundamental regularity in the way sense is constituted, particularly as a mode of sense-genesis” (Steinbock 2004a: 23 [my emphasis]). Given that active syntheses are also generative, Husserl equally refers to this as ‘primordial genesis’ or ‘primordial constitution’. Secondly, passivity relates to a sphere of experience in which the ‘ego’ is not active, where it does not creatively participate in the constitution of sense. Therefore, this does not mean that there is no ego present, rather, that such an ego is not yet actively participating (I will return to this assumption of the presence of the ego later). Following from this, and thirdly, the passive sphere can be understood as pre-reflective, and hence already delimited by activity. The passive “suggests a realm of bodily habits that were once actively acquired but subsequently have become sedimented into a style of comportment, and yet are accessible pre-reflectively” (Steinbock 2001: xli). Fourthly, passivity relates to a sphere of “pre-givenness in distinction to givenness, and the level of experience in which object-like formations (not objects as such) are constituted” (Steinbock 2004a: 23). Finally, as I will discuss in more detail now, passivity is the basis for activity; it makes the active levels of experience possible: “anything built by activity necessarily presupposes, as the lowest level, a passivity that gives something beforehand; and, when we trace anything built actively, we run into constitution by passive genesis” (Husserl 1988: 78).

In terms of the general relationship between the passive and the active synthesis, Husserl’s lectures show a stepping back from the active to the passive:

“[t]he basic theme of this book, how higher-order achievements, e.g., propositions about the world that are found in higher-order achievements themselves may be traced back to elemental achievements of primal

76 I mention this since it gives continuity given that the work of Deleuze to be discussed shortly also arises in relation to time-consciousness (Deleuze 2004b: 90-163).
77 I am drawing significantly on Steinbock’s (2004a) in this chapter given its concise presentation of a set of ideas presented in what is a substantial and meandering text, and more generally, given Steinbock’s role as translator of the text.
impression’s process or the ‘heart’ and its affections, is a theory of the coming to be of apperceptions”

(Hart 2004: 143).

This leads to a conception of the passive as a foundation for logic and active synthesis – the passive is a ‘seed bed’ for sense formation (Hart 2004: 137) – and as a result, a conception of perception as culminating in the active, in judgments etc.. There is a switch from passive to active that equates to a switch from pre-egoic experience to egoic modes of experience (Steinbock 2001). Husserl is attempting to provide an account of the genesis of meaning through ascending modes of attention.78 We can say here, and this will be to anticipate what will be the fundamental critique levied against Husserl later in light of the work of Deleuze, that the active is something that is built, or erected, upon a foundation of passive syntheses.

Generally, Husserl provides three conceptions of genetic experience in terms of passive and active syntheses. Firstly, at base, there is ‘primordial constitution’ as a phenomenology of passive experience, including apperception, motivation, affection and association. Secondly, there is genesis between the active and passive spheres of experience, where one traces the origins of activity in passivity. Here there is something like a turning-towards of the ego in the transition from passivity to activity, a type of proto-activity, a bridge. This could be understood as a submission of a pre-existent ego to the affective allure. Finally, there is genesis within the purely active sphere of experience where the ego functions in rational acts. Here we have acts such as examination, explication, judgement, and ultimately, the phenomenological reductions.

It is already possible to suggest that the main point of interest here is the genesis between the passive and active spheres of experience: I am interested in the way in which “passivity is that realm in which, through fundamental laws of association, affective forces spur an egoic attentiveness to objects, enabling acts of remembering and expectation to constitute objects as such” (Steinbock 2001: xxxviii). This, for me, is the point in Husserl’s at which a becoming aware would occur. Within this, an understanding of affection is key.

Within the relation of the passive and the active, Husserl is particularly interested “the roles of affection and attention for the constitution of sense” (Steinbock 2001: xxv).

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78 This can be linked to Degen et al’s (2008: 1910) discussion of the distinction and movement between ‘thin’ or unfocused looking whereby objects “exist as part of a scene to be passed through, blurred together into indistinct background with very little sense of form and detail” and a “thicker’, more engaged look…when…our eyes zoom in [on] a desired object…pulled out from the stream of material stimuli”.

181
By affection, Husserl understands “the allure given to consciousness, the peculiar pull that an object given to consciousness exercises on the ego” (Husserl 2001a: 196; see Smith 2003: 127). We can understand this allure as ‘affective rays’ sent to the ego. This is not to be mistaken for a causal stimulus, but rather “an enticement to be on the part of the ‘object’, a motivational (not causal) solicitation or pull to attentiveness” which is sensed (i.e. smelled, seen, heard etc.) (Steinbock 2004a: 24). The affection, in a sense, is the ‘prelude’ to the intentional turning towards of the ego given the affections awakening of interest (Hart 2004). This pull is “relaxed when the ego turns toward it attentively, and progresses from here, striving towards self-giving intuition, disclosing more and more of the self of the object” (Husserl 2001a: 196). From this the ego therefore strives “toward an acquisition of knowledge, toward a more precise view of the object” (Husserl 2001a: 196). In fact, as Husserl (2001a: 221) states, any “actual formation of unity [or sense] always presupposes affective forces or affective differentiation”. It is important to highlight then that, echoing Chapter 5’s discussions of affect, affection should not be equated to emotion; emotion is in fact a higher order constitution or genesis while affection is passive (Hart 2004).

Thinking through this more concretely, Steinbock (2004a) outlines a number significant features of the role of affection. Firstly, given its centrality in sense-constitution, affection brings a more radical structure of intentionality to prominence. It suggests that intentionality is not entirely one-sided, stemming from consciousness, and instead highlights a more bilateral nature: “the object itself…elicits an orientation and pattern of constitution from the subject, beckoning the subject to peruse it more closely and participate in the formation of its sense” (Steinbock 2004a: 24; see Husserl 2001a: 41, 43, 52, 58). It is instead “a dynamic co-operative structure, a ‘constitutive duet’” (Steinbock 2001: l ii). As suggested above, this ‘beckoning’ can be understood as an ‘affective allure’ which is sensed due to the ‘affective rays’ radiating from it. For example, the sound of the guitar the busker plays, its tonality or timbre may hold an affective allure.

79 I do still however get the sense that this is a humanistic formulation with such a beckoning being ‘for’ the subject. This is something I will return to later and critiqued in relation to the work of Deleuze.

80 It is important to note a number of divergences of this understanding of allure from that recently discussed by Thrift (2008). These number at least three. Firstly, there is less of an emphasis on the design of allure here. Secondly, there is less of a contention to aesthetic objects – it is related to objects in general. Finally, and most significantly, Husserl’s conception is far more humanist in nature in its emphasis that the affective allure is for us.
Secondly, prominence in Husserl’s account is always already an affective prominence – something can only be prominent against a less affective background. Anything coming into relief is always in an affectively charged relief. There is always an “inexhaustible and never fully thematizable ‘world-horizon’” (Zahavi 2003: 97). Therefore, the source of all affections, “[t]he primordial source…lies and can only lie in the primordial impression and its own greater or lesser affectivity” (Husserl 2001a: 217). This suggests three things. Firstly, there is never a pure nothing of affection, only gradations of affection. Second, even if we do not explicitly notice something being affective, there can still be an affective pull being exerted. Just because we do not attend to a busker in the street doesn’t mean that the music they play doesn’t hold an affective force; there is a broader affective ecology present. Finally, just because the present affective force is no longer at its peak and therefore not intuitively available, it doesn’t mean that there is a zero of affective force. Just because we have walked past the busker and they are barely or even no longer in ear-shot doesn’t mean that the experience of the busker doesn’t retain/maintain an affective force. It is possible that even if “the affection may be slight, it can still reunite with a present sense and be reconstituted so as to exert a new force on the perceiver” (Steinbock 2004a: 25).

6.1: The Abbey façade holds a stronger allure than the busker

Third, and coming out of this, in the present, there is not just one single ray of affective force. Instead, there are many things exerting a force at the same time, rivaling for attention (see 6.1). These may varyingly be in affective resonance\textsuperscript{81}, either with the subject or other affections (Steinbock 2001). The rattling exhaust of a car going by might grab our attention, then the music from a shop once the car has passed, then the

\textsuperscript{81} For a more detailed examination of the notion of resonance, through the work of Nancy, see the following chapter.
colourful coat of the person who walks across in front, and so on. Again, the everyday presents an ecology of affections.

Fourth, in experiencing this stream of varying affection, the subject holds a prereflective preferential directedness that is selective. Some affections will be more or less significant than others, and such rivalry can occur within the same sense or across senses. We can think here again about a person walking down the street. Depending on certain factors, such as how much of a rush the person is in, if they are hungry and on a lunch break, or perhaps given their previous experiences of buskers and resultant opinions they have acquired\(^{82}\), and so on, certain sensations will hold an allure. Some things may stand out a lot – the smell from a bakery if they are hungry – and others very little or not at all – a person handing out fliers or a busker if they are in a rush (see 6.2). This emergence of an affective horizon is not totally understood by the subject – it emerges throughout the process of navigating their way through the street. As they move, the perceptual and affective field is re-cast. This is all only understood and the affections ascertained upon reflection.

6.2: A busker vying for attention during the lunch-time rush

Finally, an entirely undifferentiated field of affective forces is only possible following it having been present in the living present. A zero of affective force can only take place in the retentional past that has become entirely undifferentiated – “everything

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\(^{82}\) An example of this occurred on one occasion when I was busking in Broadmead in Bristol. A woman donated to me, and commented that she didn’t normally give to buskers because she was never sure what reason they were there, and from their appearance she couldn’t always tell if they were ‘druggies or something’. She then very quickly asked, slightly joking, slightly seriously: ‘You’re not a druggie are you?’. This then show how such prior conception played a part in her conception of her present.
runs together as one, all retentional ebbs and flows form one unity into it through multifarious particular lines of unity, but in such a way that no affective pull proceeds from this unity” (Husserl 2001a: 220). This undifferentiation, and therefore dormancy, of affective force corresponds to the zero-point of awakening, a kind of phenomenological unconscious (Steinbock 2004a). We could perhaps think here of a point where a person has seen the same busker so many times, that following these collective experiences and without further encounter, no further affective force is felt.\(^{83}\)

Having outlined these aspects of the nature of affection in Husserl, we can, as Steinbock (2001; 2004a) outlines, understand a number of ways of becoming attentive given an affection from Husserl’s writings on the passive and active, expanding on the three basic points outlined previously. Given the aim of this chapter I will focus on four of these: two passive, the third being transition from active to passive, and the fourth active.\(^{84}\)

For Husserl, an affection is fundamental for something to become prominent in our perceptual field, whether we in fact become attentive to it or not (Steinbock 2004a). This said, it is important to note that, although there is a level of attentiveness that culminates in a transition from passive to active spheres of experience, there are within those spheres varying degrees of relation between affection and attention. Active modes of attentiveness, such as explication, are only special cases of attentiveness. Therefore, we also have to be clear on the point that in discussing passive modes of attentiveness, it is important to realize that a slightly different conception of attention and attentiveness is being put into play. It is not about making the implicit explicit etc.. Here there may be no turning towards a theme in an active sense, but there is still an attentiveness to an affective force that isn’t nothing (Steinbock 2004a).

Firstly, from Husserl, Steinbock (2004a) suggest a level of attentiveness called \textit{dispositional orientation}. Dispositional orientation relates to the subject’s comportment in relation to or by the affection. As Steinbock (2004a: 28) states:

\begin{quote}
“there is an affective emergence of the perceptual field that takes on a particular configuration only in relation to a perceiver who is solicited due to
\end{quote}

\(^{83}\) This is not however to suggest that an affection in the present always yields more force than one in retention.

\(^{84}\) I have not covered all of Steinbock’s modes here and at times run different ones together based on the interests of this chapter already outlined. I therefore spend a more significant amount of time on the passive levels and the transition from passive level to active, keeping Steinbock’s initial three modes in tact, but then collect together his ideas on the active under one heading given their more obvious discreteness and less central interest to the chapter. It is however important to emphasize the significance Husserl saw in the active, but I will return to this.
his or her presence and style of comportment, and whose contribution is to be oriented to the affective field by virtue of implicit preferential structures”.

In this sense, this constitutes the affective formation of ‘sense-unities’ in the passive awakening of being in relation to me and an awakening of me in relation to it (Steinbock 2004a). As Husserl (2001a: 201) states, “[w]e are quite comfortable in characterizing such cases of unawakened awakening as awakenings, if we characterize them as the zero-point of awakenings, similar to the way in which the arithmetician counts zero, the negation of number, among numbers”. These can emerge as prominent in a number of different ways, in terms of the present (uniformity), retroactivity and protentionally. In terms of the present, we can think of this in terms of walking down a street. In walking down this street we are faced with an expanse of paving slabs of a grayish hew. Up ahead, suddenly, an especially clean, almost white slab distinguishes itself in its brightness. We want to step on it. It then becomes especially affective for itself – its prominence emerges as an affective significance. However, in so doing, the slab also pairs itself with other clean/white slabs, and then, many slabs of varying cleanliness/whiteness; they form a kind of co-present whole (Husserl 2001a: 178-179). This opens out a potential path way through the expanse of slabs – the path way is now affectively articulated whereas before, it was affectively unarticulated. This pathway may not emerge in the same way for another pedestrian – they may pay no attention to the clean/white slab, rather being affected by the lines of cracks running between slabs and not stepping on them given a common superstition.85 Secondly, thinking through this in terms of retroactive passive awakening, we can take an example directly from Husserl (2001a: 203) that bears a strong relation to street performance:

“[a] melody sounds without exercising any considerable affective force…We are occupied with something else, and the melody does not affect us for instance as a ‘disturbance’. Now comes an especially mellifluous sound, a phrase that especially arouses sensible pleasure or even displeasure. This particularity does not merely become affective for itself in a living manner; rather, the entire melody is accentuated in one stroke to the extent that it is still living within the field of the present; thus, the affection radiates back into the retentional phases; it is initially at work by accentuating [the

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85 There is of course the danger that such a dispositional orientation can become pathological in an ascendance or amplification into more active spheres and therefore become manifest in terms of an obsessive-compulsive disorder. There is however not space to go into this here, but see Spitzer and Sigmund (1997) for a discussion of this from a phenomenological perspective.

86 Retention in Husserl does not equate to memory if memory is taken as referring to acts of recollection, remembering, or re-staging. Rather it is the retaining in the mind as “a component of the originary presentation of a completed act of perception” (Russell 2006: 135). Retention is then seen as a primary form of memory and recollection secondary. Retention is passive and recollection is active, or enacted at will (see Russell 2006: 135-136).
retentional phases] in a unitary manner, and at the same time it has an effect on the special matters that are prominent, on the particular sounds, fostering special affections. With this, the motivational causality is not completely and immediately evident. The particularity of the sound has made me attentive. And through this I became attentive to the entire melody, and understandably, the particularities thus became alive to me”.

We could think here again of a person walking down a street. While walking a busker is heard up ahead but what they play holds no considerable affective allure on them – they are busy thinking of an upcoming engagement. However, the song being played reaches its chorus and with this the pedestrian recognizes it as a song they like (or for that matter dislike). With this the previously unaffective verse comes to be re-animated with the awakening radiating back. As with Husserl’s example, the pedestrian comes to be attentive to the entire song and its particularities retrospectively. Finally, thinking in terms of protentional\(^\text{87}\) (or expectational) awakening, or the “passive propagation of affection in the protentional future” (Steinbock 2004a: 30), we can understand that the motivation for a specific ‘futural present’ is prefigured by the present in that when something is given, possibilities conforming to a style hinted by it are already sketched out – for example, the rest of the melody/song. The future does not fashion the unities of experience in an original sense, but presupposes them and therefore allowing something similar to be expected.

Secondly, Steinbock (2004a) suggests a level of attentiveness called passive discernment. This is intimately related to dispositional orientation, but is distinguished by a slightly higher awareness of affective forces. It is more than a being orientated towards or by, and rather a distinctive discernment. We can take the example of hearing a cover version of a song. We instantly know something is different – this operates on the passive level. This is clearly the case given that when we try to actively articulate the difference – the guitar part’s different, or they’ve added a piano – when in fact the vocal harmonies have changed. In this instance, there is clearly an affective detection as a level of attention to the whole scene (in this case the song) elicited by the matter itself, but passively. There can also be variable levels within this (Steinbock 2004a). We can think for example of someone standing listening to a busker on a street, perhaps playing the aforementioned cover version. The listener becomes irritated. They do not yet know why, but put up with the annoyance until it reaches a critical point. They cannot concentrate on the music anymore. They realize that another busker has set up a little up

\(^{87}\) Similarly to retention, protention is not the same as expectation in the usual sense of a discrete act, but relates more to a “sheer, continuous openness to the new…a living-towards” (Smith 2003: 89).
the road and their music is in ear shot and therefore interfering with what they are trying to listen to.

However, “this can only happen at a certain point when it is made an explicit theme by turning toward it attentively. Prior to this acknowledging attention, however, this kind of grasping is not in play, and we remain in this passive, but powerfully efficacious mode of discernment” (Steinbock 2004a: 31). Nonetheless, this can still be thought of in terms of the structure of intentionality; there can in some sense be an intentionality in passivity. In the case above, there is an intentionality, an aboutness, of an object that is as yet indeterminate. Husserl did in fact talk of such moods as involving an “intentional relatedness to an indeterminate object” (Smith 2003: 74); there is a type of ‘intentional groping’ rather than intentional directedness. Moods then denote for Husserl a type of attunement to one’s environment – a mood can be taken as an intentional directedness to the world as a whole (Smith 2003).

Thirdly, we reach the point of turning-towards. Attentive turning towards for Husserl represents the transition from passivity to activity. As suggested previously, the turning towards is in fact a form of proto-activity, it sits between the passive and the active as a bridge (Husserl 2001a: 168), given that intrinsic to the awakening is a submission at the basis of an initiating egoic turning; there is a submission of the ego to the affective field. In the turning to the ego complies with the affection in directing itself towards it, or, the intention is awakened and the affection is fulfilled (see Husserl 2001a: 177, 198, 276). Central to this turning-toward is Husserl’s notion of ‘receptivity’. Receptivity for Husserl is not a cognitive interest, but can motivate such an interest; although receptivity is the receipt of an already given sense it is still regarded as the lowest level of activity as it is a “kind of actively self-giving intuition” (Steinbock 2004a: 32). It is at this level of attentiveness that we can start to understand attention as the process of making the marginal thematic; the turning toward is also the turning to grasp more.

Finally, we arrive at examination, explication and judgment. Having turned toward the object of affection, the subject takes cognitive interest in it, an active interest. This is often shaped initially by examination: ‘what is it?’. This further spurs the process of explication through delving into its content and extending beyond it to other objects.

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88 As already highlighted above, I will not go on to discuss Steinbock’s (2004a) further form of attention, philosophical attentiveness, given the aims of this chapter. However, it can be noted that such an attentiveness bears a strong relation and imperative to the phenomenological reduction outlined previously in Chapter 2.
With these connections an interest is guided and expanded into the unity of overarching interests. As Steinbock (2001) suggests, examination is a special cognitive process whereby several things are called to our attention in a unity where one explicates a subject in its properties. However, this passing from object to object is not active but passive; they are excitations for possible determinations but not yet the activity of a determinative synthesis, a judging. Judgment is the determining process that actively relates one theme to another. This lays the foundation for other determinative judgments, be that the relation of whole and parts, the combination of parts and their connections, and so on; judgment is the “proper place for knowledge” (Zahavi 2003: 33).

In the judgment, for Husserl, there is an enrichment of sense giving occasion to turn to activities of determination that form relations. This new sense acts as an allure on the ego and in turn the ego reacts to the allure in the attempt to realize it (Steinbock 2001). As Husserl states “[t]he most privileged case here is where affection results in attentiveness, grasping, the acquisition of knowledge, explication” (Husserl 2001a).

Although I have only given brief treatment to the active forms of synthesis, it is important to emphasize the significance Husserl saw in them. Husserl argues that if we were to only live passively, we would be “intellectually blind to the true being of this sphere [of norms and laws]” (Husserl 2001a: 262); that the I before awakening “the pre-I that is not yet living, has already a world in its own way…: [but this is] its inactual world ‘in’ which it is unliving, and for which it is not awake” (Husserl cited in Smith 2003: 123).

For Husserl, we do in fact need the active, to be active, or else there will be no possibility for a properly eidetic phenomenology (Smith 2003).

So, at this point we can return to our figure walking down a street and think through this in light of the theory of affection and attention Husserl presents.

A figure walks down a street…This street presents a multitude of affective rays vying for that figure’s attention. This figure however holds a prereflective preferential directedness – it is lunch time and they are hungry. Therefore the smell from the Bakers holds a strong affective allure than any other stimuli. However, the prereflective attention to the allure also draws attention to the sight of the tables at the side of the street where people are eating lunch. Perhaps the figure will get lunch there. No, the Baker’s holds a stronger allure. However, something isn’t right, but the figure doesn’t instantly discern what. The façade of the café has been repainted – it looked better before. Having bought lunch the figure walks back down the road, their prereflective directedness now changed. Something is happening up head next to the café – it must have been happening before but it went unnoticed, at least at the egoic level. A busker is playing. The figure continues to walk. Suddenly, the figure recognizes the song as it reaches the chorus – it’s their favourite song. It’s normally played on piano so they did
not recognize it straight away, only once they heard the vocal refrain. The figure turns towards the busker – either literally (physically) or perceptually (mentally). Finally, the figure then stands in the street gazing at the busker, actively and intentionally examining the performance at hand – thinking about the song’s meaning, the life of the busker playing, judging their skill and performance. But then they must go back to the office. While this happens a stream of other figures pass by – some stop, some glance, some pay no attention at all…

We have therefore come again to the problem of intentionality and the related presence in advance of experience of the ego or subject. Although in the passive level it appears that there is a subject not necessarily acting intentionally toward that which presents an affective allure, there is still a subject and a latent intentionality present which will definitely arise following the turning to the object affecting. Here, in Husserl, the ego is something that is always already there, lying dormant to be switched on in the active attending to the phenomenon at hand or to submit to the affective allure. Therefore, there is a problem in the relation between the passive and the active, or rather, there is a problem that is retroactively visible when we get to the point of activity.\(^9\) Perhaps this problem lies in the way that the two are presented as hierarchically related: we ascend from the dark basement of passivity to the clear light of activity.

While finding an initial potential in Husserl’s characterization of the passive for developing an understanding of becoming aware, an understanding which departs from many of the commonly held interpretations of Husserl’s work it its being based on work distinct from his most commonly read texts (Zahavi 2003: 142-143), the latent intentionality and necessary ego for this present, the idea of the passive as a pre-egoic/pre-intentional stage, is problematic. In getting away from such a subject centred understanding, it will therefore be necessary to attempt to provide an understanding of the passive and the active as not hierarchically related in this way. In approaching this I will now turn to the work of Deleuze and outline his alternative understanding of the passive and the active, and their interrelation. I do this, as, for me, Deleuze provides one of the most thoroughgoing analyses of passive syntheses which, while remaining ‘worldly’ (Buchanan 2008), does not suffer from the problem of an implicit intentional

\(^9\) Given that my problem with Husserl becomes evident and retroactively arises at this point, it is not necessary to carry on to the ‘end game’ of Husserl’s understanding of phenomenology, namely its eidetic transcendental nature as a philosophy of essences. I will not explicitly critique this here given the shear expansiveness of that debate, but I will return to it from the specific angle of presenting it with the challenge of immanence in the conclusion.
subject and valorisation of activity that Husserl’s conception does. Deleuze presents an understanding of *passivity in itself*.

**V. Rethinking the Passive and Active – Deleuze**

In turning to Deleuze I am undertaking a post-phenomenological critique relating to the first trajectory outlined in Chapter 2. In his account the passive and active, although there appear certain points of confluence (for example Deleuze’s discussion also arises as a critique of psychologism (Deleuze 1991b: 87)), Deleuze presents a way to re-think the relationship between the passive and the active that it not founded on an understanding of the intentional subject and intentional correlate of experience, something that, as I have shown above, is central to Husserl’s account.

Deleuze’s discussion of passivity and activity arises in the context of his tripartite understanding of the syntheses of time and is further developed in his work with Guattari (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a). As presented, in ‘Difference and Repetition’, the first synthesis is “that of a living present as a contraction of moments within a passing present (in Husserlian terms, the present as rentention of the past and protention of the future” (Bogue 1989: 65)). This synthesis can be generally understood as the ‘founding of time’. The second synthesis relates to the virtual past (taken form Bergson), and is the ‘foundation’ of time. Finally, there is the third synthesis of the eternal return. This is oriented towards the future and the ‘un-founding’ of time; a synthesis that complicates time (Bogue 1989). It is important to emphasize here before examining the synthesis in more detail that Deleuze emphasizes that these are all passive synthesis – none are to be confused with an active sense.

Firstly, Deleuze’s discussion of the passive synthesis of the living present is focused around the idea of expectation, and grounded specifically in Hume’s discussion

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90 An alternative thinker to whose work on passivity I could have turned here is Levinas. Particularly in his work ‘Otherwise than Being’, Levinas (1998: 14 & 110) discusses subjectivity repeatedly as “passivity more passive than all passivity” and (equally opaquely), as “more passive still than the passivity of things”. In his exposition, passivity, for Levinas (1998: 79), does not begin in consciousness, but as a “pure undergoing”. Levinas’s (1998: 110) passivity is an “absolute passivity, beneath the level of activity and passivity”; it is an ‘immemorial’ passivity which “inspires, holds, and binds the subject in relations which it does not and did not choose and which lie before and beyond and of its abilities to comprehend, conceptualize, or represent” (Harrison 2008: 430). This is often also related to a patience that is not assumed actively (Levinas 2000: 23, 139, 141). I am turning to Deleuze rather than Levinas here, however, both because Deleuze engages the relation between the passive and active in more depth and in a more rigorous manner (making his work more obviously suitable for a direct comparison/critique), and also because Levinas’s understanding of passivity is somewhat elusive, as the outline given above would suggest. This is not to say though that it would not be interesting to examine more closely the relation of Levinas’s understanding of passivity to that of Husserl, or equally Deleuze (especially in terms of the relation of Levinas’s ‘absolute passivity’ to Deleuze’s notion of the ‘neutral’ (see Deleuze 2004c: 243-244)). This would, however, be beyond the scope of this thesis.
of the repetition of couples of events (AB AB AB A…) where we come to expect B to follow A (e.g. ‘tick-tock’), and in Bergson’s discussion of clock chimes (AAAA) where we expect the fourth to follow the third at 4 o’clock. This discussion is presented specifically within Deleuze’s exposition of his notion of repetition. Significantly here, there is a relation between expectancy and repetition – repetition is not a property of the repeated given that there is not causal relation between the members of the series. Therefore repetition is something in the experiencer. There is a contraction, a passive (i.e. we do not have to think about it) contraction of the previous occurrence in the later creating an expectancy (see Deleuze 1991a: 51-52). Expectancy is then “the property of passively acquiring an unconscious relation to the future” (Williams 2003: 87). This contraction is a synthesis – the past is synthesized (contracted) in the present as a behavior that is orientated towards the future; it gives a directionality to time, or as Deleuze (2004b: 91) states: “[p]assive synthesis or contraction is essentially symmetrical: it goes from the past to the future in the present, thus, from the particular to the general, thereby imparting direction to the arrow of time”. This is then not to place the past and the future as distinct from the present, but “rather the dimensions of the present itself in so far as it is a contraction of instants. The present does not have to go outside itself in order to pass from past to future” (Deleuze 2004b: 91).

It is important to emphasize that this contraction is not a matter of reflection and, although it is constitutive, it is not actively constituted: “[i]t is not carried out by the mind, but occurs in the mind which contemplates, prior to all memory and all reflection. Time is subjective, but in relation to the subjectivity of a passive subject” (Deleuze 2004b: 91). The passive differs from the active in that, under active remembering the past becomes “the reflexive past of representation, of reflected and reproduced particularity. Correlatively, [under active remembering] the future also ceases to be the immediate future of anticipation in order to become the reflexive future of prediction, the reflected generality of the understanding” (Deleuze 2004b: 92). To put it in the terms of Deleuze’s broader examination of repetition, the passive constitutes the ‘for-itself’ of repetition while the active constitutes the ‘for-us’ of repetition, or, the ‘reflected representation’ of repetition.

We can think of this in terms of habit as, “[i]n essence, habit is a contraction” (Deleuze 2004b: 94). Habit is a passive synthesis for:

“it constitutes our habit of living, our expectation that ‘it’ will continue, that one of the two elements [AB] will appear after the other, thereby assuring the perpetuation of our case. When we say that habit is a contraction we are
speaking not of an instantaneous action which combines with another to form an element of repetition, but rather the fusion of that repetition is the contemplating mind”

(Deleuze 2004b: 94-95).

We are composed of thousands of habits, thousands of little ‘contemplations’ and “[t]hese thousands of habits of which we are composed…thus form the basic domain of passive synthesis” (Deleuze 2004b: 100). Following from this, “passive syntheses constitutes the systems of the self, under conditions yet to be determined, but it is the system of a dissolved sense…The self does not undergo modifications, it is itself a modification” (Deleuze 2004b: 100). In arguing for the ‘subject-as-modification’ Deleuze dispels any illusion of understanding the subject as a conscious actor basing actions on representations and the illusion of self-identity (Williams 2003). Instead there is a passive self, or rather, a system of passive selves. We can return to Husserl here and draw out a distinction. While in Husserl habits were thought to be actively acquired and subsequently sedimented into a style of comportment, for Deleuze habits are acquired passively through contraction in repetition.

Secondly, Deleuze (2004b) discusses the passive synthesis of the virtual past and remembering. This synthesis presents potential dangers for Deleuze’s affirmation of the passive – is not remembering predicated on the active memory of a subject? Here the active synthesis of memory may be understood as the principle of representation: a reproduction of the former present (actively) and a reflection of the present present. However, as Deleuze (2004b: 103) suggest, “the active synthesis of memory may well be founded upon the (empirical) passive synthesis of habit, but on the other hand it can be ground by another (transcendental) passive synthesis which is peculiar to memory itself”. To avoid this potential contradiction, Deleuze further explicates his understanding of passivity in relation to a virtual past. The virtual, or pure, past is where all events, even those that have passed without leaving trace, are stored and remembered independent of human activity (Williams 2003). (There are less personal potential parallels here to Husserl’s understanding of the phenomenological unconscious discussed above.)

Drawing on Bergson, this revolves around three understandings of passing into memory: contemporaneity, coexistence and preexistence. Firstly, in terms of contemporaneity, this gives us the reason for the passing of the present – “[e]very present passes, in favour of a new present, because the past is contemporaneous with itself as present” (Deleuze 2004b: 103). By this we can understand that for any present moment to pass away, it must already have a past aspect to it or be already past (Williams
Secondly, in terms of coexistence, “[i]f each past is contemporaneous with the present that it was, then all of the past coexists with the new present in relation to which it is now past. The past is no more ‘in’ this second present than it is ‘after’ the first” (Deleuze 2004b: 103). We therefore reach the point where each present present is the entire past in its most contracted state. The past is then the synthesis of all time and of which the present and the future are only dimensions. Therefore nothing can no-longer exist, but instead it insists or consists.

Finally, in terms of preexistence, given that the present could not become past unless there was something past in the present and given that every present is related to every other present as something that passes away, “the passing into archive of the present presupposes the synthesis of all the past as the time of past elements each present, past or future” (Williams 2003: 95). This means that the passive synthesis of the past is an a priori condition for the present to pass away; it preexists. The pure or virtual past preexists the present – it is the condition for there being experience of the past rather than being constituted through such an experience (Williams 2003). Returning to understanding this in terms of passivity and activity:

“[t]he transcendental passive synthesis bears upon this pure past from the triple point of view of contemporaneity, coexistence and preexistence. By contrast, the active synthesis is the representation of the present under the dual aspect of the reproduction of the former and the reflection of the new. The latter synthesis is founded upon the former, and if the new present is always endowed with a supplementary dimension, this is because it is reflected in the element of the pure past in general, whereas it is only through this element that we focus upon the former present as a particular” (Deleuze 2004b: 104).

At this point we can reflect on the relation between these first two syntheses. In both cases, as Deleuze (2004b: 104) notes, the present appears as a result of a contraction. However, in the first synthesis “the present is the most contracted state of successive elements or instants which are in themselves independent of one another”. In the second, “the present designates the most contracted degree of the entire past, which is itself like a coexisting totality”. This means further that the relation of the lived present to each is also different. As projection into the future “the lived present only presupposes a local contraction” but, as passing away, “presupposes a synthesis of the past that itself brings together all past contractions” (Williams 2003: 96). We do in a sense then come to a further, temporal, development of the ecological approach being outlined here: “[e]ach present, each life, is connected to all others but to greater and lesser degrees of contraction” (Williams 2003: 97). We are no longer talking of a present
material relatedness, but also an infinite temporal relatedness and connection; “there will necessarily be connections at the level of the pure past” (Williams 2003: 98).

Finally, Deleuze discusses the passive synthesis of the eternal return and the future.\(^9\) For Deleuze (2006c: 23), “[r]eturn is the being of that which becomes. Return is the becoming of being itself, the being which is affirmed in becoming”. For Deleuze (2006c: 45) the eternal return must be thought of as a synthesis, “a synthesis of becoming and the being which is affirmed in becoming, a synthesis of double affirmation”. Unlike in the common interpretations of the eternal return as an ethical principle, the eternal return should not be thought as the return of being or the same for “[i]t is not being that returns but rather the returning itself that constitutes being insofar as it is affirmed of becoming and of that which passes. It is not some one thing which returns but rather returning itself is the one thing which is affirmed of diversity or multiplicity” (Deleuze 2006c: 45). The only thing that is the same is the returning; the ‘I’ would only return if it was different. In the eternal return there is no assignable origin, or rather, the origin is difference itself; it is then the consequence of “a difference which is originary, pure, synthetic and in-itself” (Deleuze 2004b: 153).

As Bogue (1989: 66) notes, Deleuze approaches this third synthesis through Kant’s reflections on Descartes’ formulation of the Cogito whereby Kant uncovers two ‘I’s’: “the thinking self (Cogito) is self-present as the thought of itself, but the self that it knows, the object of its thought (ego sum), can only be known as an object within this form of time”. Deleuze labels this critique the revelation of the ‘fractured-I’ and the “pure and empty form of time” (Deleuze 2004b: 108).\(^9\) In terms of the third synthesis, this can be thought of as ‘time out of joint’, for

“time out of joint means demented time or time outside the curve which gave it a god, liberated from its overly simple circular figure, freed from the events which made up its content, its relation to movement overturned; in short, time presenting itself as an empty and pure form”

(Deleuze 2004b: 111).

Time itself then unfolds instead of things unfolding within it and in turn all identity of self and world disintegrates. The third synthesis, as eternal return, “is the time of ideas,

\(^9\) Deleuze initially outlined his own specific understanding of the eternal return in his book on Nietzsche (Deleuze 2006c), an understanding that runs in distinct contrast to many of the common place interpretations of it as an ethical principle and centering (see Ansell Pearson 2005; Kaufmann 1974; but also see Deleuze 2006c: 63-66).

\(^9\) Also see Deleuze’s (2004c: 186-192) discussion of Aion as the time of pure becoming and “the eternal truth of time: pure empty form of time, which has freed itself if its present corporeal content and has thereby unwound it own circle, stretched itself out in a straight line” (2004c: 189) compared to Chronos, “the regulated movement of vast and profound presents” (2004c: 187).
the virtual time of coexisting, perplicated problems, of differences without origin...which continually repeats itself in the dimension of actual intensities” (Bogue 1989: 66). This presents an openness to the future. Deleuze’s (and Nietzsche’s) model for this is the dice-throw where there is no weighing-up of possibilities, only an affirmation of becoming (Deleuze 2006c).

We can further understand the third synthesis in terms of three key characteristics. Firstly, this drive towards the new presupposes that there be a cut in time that orders it in a non-circular way; the present cuts off from the past and projects into a completely different future. Secondly, this cut assembles times in that given all the events of the past are cut off from all the events of the future – a feeling that nothing will again be the same presupposes that the past, how things were, will not return in any way. Thirdly, there are two series of time given this cut. First there are forms that cannot return given they have been cut and are therefore consigned to the past forever and second there are forms that return with the cut and are relived with it; there are moments that are not ready for the cut and moment that are up to it. The third synthesis then cuts, assembles and orders (Williams 2003).

Relatedly, and thinking more explicitly about the understanding of becoming aware being developed here, we can return to Husserl and in so doing mark a substantial departure from him. This discussion here becomes less about an affective awakening which presupposes the presence of a Subject to be woken, and more about a calling into being of a subject, or rather a perpetual process of subjectification in the encountering of affective stimuli. Rather than becoming aware, we are perpetually becoming aware.

Further, in terms of the second synthesis particularly, while in Husserl passive memory related to retention whereby a component of the original presentation was held in the mind of the individual (Russell 2006), there is a more radical sense of a less personal memory in Deleuze’s account of the virtual past which contains events which left no such trace.

On the basis of this quite abstract logic of passive and active syntheses, we can turn (as suggested previously) to the more concrete discussion of passive synthesis in Deleuze’s work with Felix Guattari and extrapolate from this the actual processes through which a becoming aware, or becoming as aware, occurs. Again here Deleuze and Guattari (2004a) present three passive syntheses (also see Buchanan 2008; Holland 1999: 26-35): the connective synthesis of production; the disjunctive synthesis of recording; and the conjunctive synthesis of consummation. There are also active modes
of these syntheses, but these are deemed ‘illegitimate’ and are overcoded onto the legitimate passive syntheses.

In the connective synthesis, a ‘machine’ enters into connection with other machines and channels their flows – the productive synthesis is the “‘production of production’, the production of an individual as if from scratch” (Massumi 1992: 49). Deleuze and Guattari (2004a) use the example of the baby’s mouth (mouth-machine) and its mother’s breast (breast-machine): the baby’s mouth attaches to the mother’s breast, channelling the flow of milk, and blocking other possible flows/connections of those machines. It is important to note that connections are made between, what Melanie Klein called, ‘part-objects’. These are not whole persons or organs understood as belonging to whole persons – the mother’s breast is not understood as belonging to a whole object known as ‘mother’, the face which the baby’s eyes scan are not connected as being part of the same entity as the breast (Holland 1999). Further, these connections are heterogeneous, hence Deleuze and Guattari’s use of ‘and…and then…’ – they are not to become exclusive in their connection, but inclusive: a machine connects with another, and then another; the baby’s mouth and the mother’s breast channelling milk, and then to air, and then to a finger and then…, and so on. As Buchanan (2008: 59) states, “the synthesis of connection snaps…organs together in a new arrangement of its own making and its own design”.

The illegitimate use looks at part-objects as part of a pre-Oedipal stage which will be succeeded in the realisation of ‘global’ or ‘whole-objects’. Rather, Deleuze and Guattari (2004a) view partial-objects as being an-Oedipal – unified subjectivity only exists as a product of, and alongside, the process of desiring production (as will be seen shortly in the conjunctive synthesis). In addition, another illegitimate use is to privilege one particular partial-object over all others, turning it into a special, ‘complete-object’, in relation to which all other partial-objects and experiences are to be understood, specifically the ‘phallus’ (Holland 1999).

Moving back to the legitimate use of this synthesis, connections can become fixed, and “[d]esiring-machines only work when they break down, and by continually breaking down” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 9), which is where the next synthesis enters.

Very generally, the disjunctive synthesis acts as a process of ‘anti-production’, breaking the connections made in the connective synthesis, and recording the connections made. The initial connections of the connective synthesis (‘and…and
then…’) are replaced by the desire’s schizophrenic nature (‘either…or…or’). This can be related to the openness to the future of the third synthesis of time discussed previously. These connections are recorded on what Deleuze and Guattari call the Body without Organs (BwO). The BwO, sometimes also referred to as the ‘plane of consistency’, is “an imaginary body-surface on which the various elementary bodies and energies are recorded, but on which they may also be desexualised and reconnected in different configurations. As such it embodies the creative or ‘schizophrenic’ potential of desire” (Patton 2000: 72). The BwO presents a ‘chicken-and-egg’ scenario – “the BwO does not exist before or prior to the organism, but it is adjacent to it and continually in the process of constructing itself” (Message 2005: 34). The BwO acts as a force or continual becoming, but the recordings on its surface stop desire from breaking away entirely. These ‘stratifications’ will be influential over future connections.\footnote{Importantly, the body without organs does not refer to a body-\textit{sans}-organs, but in fact should be thought of as a ‘body-without-organ-\textit{ization}’—a body undergoing a continual process of becoming. I will return to this in the next chapter in more detail.} (We can think back to Deleuze’s discussion of the pure past with the stratifications of greatest strength being those of a most contracted state and those fainter ones being at a lesser degree of contraction). The processes of connection and disjunction therefore overlap in a cyclical manner. However, the illegitimate (Oedipal) use of this synthesis moves away from the open-ended ‘either…or…or’, the nuclear family restricts the possibilities to Mommy and Daddy, imposing an exclusive choice between the two (‘either/or’), you must be like one or the other, and no one else (Holland 1999). This creates a ‘double-bind’, “either you will accept the imposed differentiations, or you will fall back into the abyss of an undifferentiated…collapse into madness and chaos” (Goodchild 1996: 87). This does not then pay attention to difference in itself (Deleuze 2004b).

Moving to the final synthesis, there is the conjunctive synthesis of consumption—“a phase of consumption involving the experience of intensive states of the resultant psychic body” (Patton 2000: 72). This consumption of the states of intensity on the BwO produces “something on the order of a subject…It is a strange subject, however, with no fixed identity, wandering about over the BwO, but always remaining peripheral to the desiring-machines” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 17). Key here is that the subject is \textit{produced}, “it emerges only as an after-effect…not as the agent of selection” (Holland 1999: 33). The subject is not active in the process of desiring-production initially (it acts as a passive synthesis), but following the process acts in an active manner, consuming what it previously found pleasurable/painful. Used illegitimately (or ‘exclusively’) however, the
conjunctive synthesis produces a static subject – it can be used to segregate one set of subjectivities from all others, and restrict an otherwise nomadic subjectivity to only identify with one set: White vs. Black; Christian vs. Jew; or in the case of Oedipus, Mommy vs. Daddy.

We can think back to our figure walking down a street in these terms. Machinic connections occur in traversing the street. For example, the figure’s eye (eye-machine) connects with the juggler’s flaming club (club-machine) and channels the intensity of this connection. The figure has not seen this before and as a result this (potentially, although not necessarily) constitutes an intense experience, drawing their attention. This connection is recorded. The next time the same connection is made, the flow channelled, but perhaps this presents a lesser degree of intensity. But also, perhaps not. Perhaps the figure becomes fixated with this connection, stopping to watch every time they see the flaming club – they walk past other performers in the hope of seeing that specific juggler with the flaming clubs. However, the connection may be redirected – in their search, their ear connects with music coming from a shop which (music machine), in the channelling and consummation of that flow, reminds them they had come here to buy a CD. I will however return to this in the next section in more detail.

VI. Deleuze Against Husserl

Having outlined Deleuze’s alternative understanding of passive and active syntheses and connected this to understandings of perception, I will now outline more explicitly the specific points of critique being levied at Husserl. These number three. Firstly, I will critique Husserl’s understanding of the relation of the passive and the active, grounding this specifically in Deleuze’s understanding of representation. Secondly, I outline an alternative conception of the subject to that of Husserl, one not based on the transcendental ego (as just suggested above). Finally, and coming out of this, I critique the humanism of Husserl’s affection with Deleuze’s Nietzschean understanding of affect.

First, thinking generally, while there are active syntheses in Deleuze’s accounts, such syntheses are “superimposed upon and supported by passive synthesis” (Deleuze 2004b: 92). Although something similar is said by Husserl – the passive being the foundation for the active – there is much more of an affirmation of the passive in Deleuze than in Husserl with the active having the status of an imposition. This differing starting point will prove to have significant consequences in that “any action presupposes physical passive synthesis or habits; and action presupposes the synthesis of the whole of
the past” and “the present creative activity is part of that which is left behind” (Williams 2003: 104-105). Or, as Deleuze (2004b: 117) states,

“the third synthesis…present[s]…no more than an actor, an author, an agent destined to be effaced…The synthesis of time here constitutes a future which affirms at once both the unconditioned character of the product in relation to the conditions of its production, and the independence of the work in relation to its author or actor”.

This is not to say that there is an out and out denial of activity which is to be replaced by passive inactivity. Rather, for Deleuze, priority is to be given to passivity over activity in that any action must take into account the passivity it presupposes (Williams 2003); “[t]he passive syntheses are the very force of life, the given itself” (Colebrook 2001: 20). There is then again a greater affirmation of the passive; a starting with the passive which Husserl is not capable of given the architecture of activity and intentionality which permeates, and is so central to, his work.

**Representation**

We can think through this in relation to the many instances where Deleuze relates or equates activity to representation. In fact, Deleuze (2004b: 174) suggests that the ‘I think’, the central principal of the active subject, “is the most general principle of representation” (see Williams 2008: 10). Deleuze suggests representational thought is “a particularly restricted form of thinking and acting, working according to fixed norms, and…is unable to acknowledge difference ‘in itself’” (Marks 2005: 227). As Deleuze (2004b: 67) states, “[r]epresentation fails to capture the affirmed world of difference…It…mobilizes and moves nothing”. In response, Deleuze draws on Plato’s simulacra in undermining a representationalist framework. For Deleuze (2004b: 347) “[s]ystems in which different relates to different through difference itself are systems of simulacra”, and therefore

“[t]o assert the primacy of simulacra is to affirm a world in which difference rather than sameness in the primary relation. In such a world, there are no ultimate foundations or original identities; everything assumes the status of a simulacrum. Things are constituted by virtue of the differential relations that they enter into, both internally and in relation to other things”


In this sense we could understand the active subject as nothing but a simulacrum; any notion of a completed, acting subject is nothing other than the manifestation of the differential relations proceeding passively. Such an active subject, in its status as representation, is therefore nothing other than mediation, and for Deleuze (2004b: 9) “it
is a question of affecting the mind outside of all representation...of substituting direct
signs for mediate representations” and such a direct sign is the process of passive
synthesis outlined above (see Marks 1998: 13-15). Put differently, Deleuze is less
interested in the theatre of representation populated by acting subjects and more
interested in a factory of production populated by differential machines (see Deleuze and
Guattari 2004a). However, in Husserl, “[t]he I is coextensive with representation”
(Deleuze 2004c: 122).94

**The Subject**

This leads us back to thinking more specifically about the subject. As Deleuze (2004b:
96) states

> “[u]nderneath the self which acts are little selves which contemplate and
> which render possible both the action and the active subject. We speak of
> our ‘self’ only in virtue of these thousands of little witnesses which
> contemplate within us: it is always a third party that says ‘me’”.

There is something of a switch here from the passive as pre-intentional and active as
intentionally active in Husserl, to an understanding of the passive as an-intentional and
the active as a residuum of passive synthesis in Deleuze. In a sense, Husserl puts the cart
before the horse; the subject is the *a priori* transcendental ego (see Deleuze 2004c: 133).

Therefore, we cannot define a self in terms of simple receptivity, of *letting* something affect it. As Deleuze (2004b: 100) states, the self is rather defined “by virtue
of the contractile contemplation which constitutes the organism itself before it
constitutes the sensations”. In the world of passive synthesis there is a world of ‘selves’; a
dissolves self or larval selves. This self does not undergo modifications – as though it
preexists such modification – but *is* itself a modification (Deleuze 2004b: 100). In
Deleuze, as perhaps most evident in his discussion of the process of desiring-production,
there is more of a retro-active understanding of the subject as suggested in the previous
section (and Chapter 5). The subject is a product not a pre-existing actor waiting to be
switched on (as with Husserl); the subject, or rather subjectivity, arises in the
consummation of intensive states upon the body without organs as a “residual subject of
the machine” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 23). It is more a case of a perpetual self-

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94 A similar critique of Husserl’s understanding of the subject and intentionality is made by Levinas.
Levinas (2006) argues that Husserl privileges representation and that Husserl bases his understanding of
intentionality on representation. He in fact states that representation, for Husserl, “is at the basis of all life”
(Levinas 2000: 212). In response Levinas argues for a nonintentional consciousness which is passive from
the start (Levinas 1998: 53; Levinas 2006: 105-113; also see Moran 2000: 328-329). Levinas in fact does
discuss what he calls an “affectivity without intentionality” in relation to a nonintentional, non-thematizing
consciousness (Levinas 2000: 17).
realization: ‘ah, so that’s what that was!’; rather than an ‘aboutness’: ‘oo, what’s that?’. Or put differently in the terms of ‘Difference and Repetition’:

“the spontaneity of which I am conscious in the ‘I think’ cannot be understood as the attribute of a substantial and spontaneous being, but only as an affection of a passive self which experiences its own thought – its own intelligence, that by which it can say I – being exercised in it and upon it but not by it”.95

(Deleuze 2004b: 108).96

The lingering intentional subject uncovered above has in effect been cleared out; here modes of attending become non-intentionally constituted through the passive syntheses of time and desiring production.

If we were to take this to the extreme, we can turn to Deleuze’s account of the singularities and events in his ‘Logic of Sense’. Already, in his conclusion to ‘Difference and Repetition’, Deleuze (2004b: 346) states that “the self in the form of a passive self is only an event which takes place in pre-existing fields of individuation”. However, in the ‘Logic of Sense’ we leave behind entirely the language of the passive and the active, and the affirmation of one over the other, and come to surface effects and the event as neutral. As Deleuze (2004c: 243) states, “[a]lthough the ego may appear…as acting, as undergoing an action, or as a third observing party, it is neither active or passive and does not allow itself at any moment to be fixed in place, even if this place were reversible”. Being neither active or passive, “[t]hat which is beyond the active and the passive is not pronominal, but the result – the result of actions and passions, the surface effect or the event” (Deleuze 2004c: 244). Events and surface effects, as singularities, are indifferent to subjects or objects; they are neutral. Here “neutral means pre-individual and impersonal, but does not qualify the state of an energy which would come to join a bottomless abyss…it refers to the singularities liberated from the ego through the narcissistic wound” (Deleuze 2004c: 244). Therefore, “the individuality of the ego merges with the event…even if that which the event represents…is understood as another individual, or rather, as a series of other individuals through which the dissolved ego passes” (Deleuze 2004c: 244).97

95 Or, as Colebrook (2001: 20) suggests “[t]he subject in the effect of a perception: a relation between an absent point of view and a body that responds”.

96 Also see Deleuze (1991b: 26)

97 On being neither active nor passive/this being a false alternative also see Deleuze (1991b: 112-113).
Finally, this critique can also be pursued in relation to the humanism of Husserl’s affection compared to the anti-humanism of Deleuze’s affect (see Dewsbury, et al. 2002: 439). While it was highlighted earlier that Husserl’s understanding of affection uncovers a more radical understanding of intentionality in terms of a more bilateral nature than is commonly understood, there is still a sense that the affection in the end belongs to a subject; the word affection itself maintains this hangover and in Husserl account little appears to happen back to that radiating affective rays. Thinking of this in terms of affect, rather than affection, presents the relation in an anti-humanist tone; it is not longer the relation of a subject to(ward) object but a relation that always sits between, belonging to neither: “[t]he affect goes beyond affections” as a more radical becoming (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 173) This move from affection to affect pushes beyond the phenomenological subject (Wylie 2006). Or, as Deleuze states with Guattari:

“[p]erception will no longer reside in the relation between a subject and an object, but rather in the movement serving as the limit of that relation, in the period associated with the subject and object. Perception will confront its own limit; it will be in the middle of things, throughout its own proximity, as the presence of one hacceity in another, the prehension of one by the other or the passage from one to the other: look only at movements”

(Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 311 [emphasis added]).

We can then understand affect as not something that turns on consciousness, or something that turns on the ego as Husserl suggests, but rather as the cause of consciousness itself:

“consciousness appears as the continual awareness of [the] passage from greater to lesser [perfection], or from lesser to greater [perfection], as a witness of the variations and determinations of the conatus [degrees of power] functioning in relation to other bodies or other ideas”

(Deleuze 1988: 21).

Perceptual experience doesn’t then lie “in the opposition of subject and object, or experiencer and experienced, but in a coming together that requires neither subjective nor objective identity” (Williams 2003: 77). This can be better explained by looking to Deleuze’s conception of affect specifically as it is put forward in relation to Nietzsche’s ‘will to power’ (something that is generally passed over in favor of his engagement with Spinoza (see Deleuze 1988)). The anti-humanist nature of the ‘will to power’ should
amplify the anti-humanist understanding of affect that I have already discussed in Chapter 5 in relation to Deleuze’s work on Spinoza.  

Firstly, as Bogue (1989: 20) notes, it is important to note that the use of ‘will’ in ‘will to power’ does not refer to a “conscious agency of decision separable from the actions that motivates” (it is not in any way active) given Nietzsche’s condemnation of such a grammatical imposition of an active subject (see Chapter 5). Equally, it should not be understood as a desire for power as this is a weak and negative desire; for Nietzsche the strong exercise power and affirm it, they do not desire it (Bogue 1989). Defining it more positively, “[t]he will to power involves a struggle to survive, to grow, to overcome itself on the level of cells, tissues, organs, where the lower-order bodily functions are subordinated to and harnessed by higher-order bodily processes and activities (the brain being the highest)” (Grosz 1994: 122). Although the brain is given priority here, there is not any kind of lingering Cartesianism – the body is made-up of a multiplicity of ‘microwills’ that fight among themselves for dominance. There are only (many) ‘will points’ “that are constantly increasing or losing their power” (Nietzsche 1968: 381). Therefore, from this, Nature is construed as a multiplicity of such interrelated forces – an ecology of forces.

The will to power, as an ecology of forces, can be envisioned as the driving force — as “a vision of an agonistic, dynamic plurality at the basis of Being” (Safranski 2003: 289-290) and a celebration of “the affirmative and creative powers of life” (Foucault 2000: 389). (We can make a somewhat awkward distinction here given the competing nature of the interrelation of forces that Grosz (1994) outlines above. Within Nietzsche’s will to power there are both active and reactive forces. Rather than active synthesis being equated to active force, in general the opposite is in fact the case. Active forces are passive synthesis and reactive forces are active synthesis given that “[c]onsciousness inevitably views the body from its reactive perspective and misunderstands the nature of active forces” (Bogue 1989: 20).)

Given this outline of the will to power, we can start to think it in terms of affect. As Bogue (1989) notes, Deleuze acknowledges that the will to power is manifested as a power of affectivity, as “a capacity for being affected” (Deleuze 2006c: 58). A body’s force then is, as in Spinoza’s conception, a function of the ways in which it can be affected, and in turn, a body’s capacity to be affected is an expression of its power

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98 This is of course not to say that Deleuze’s Spinozist discussion of affect is in any way humanist – it is by far the opposite. Rather, I feel that this anti-humanist stance will be further expanded upon and amplified through an examination of Deleuze’s reading of Nietzsche’s ‘will to power’.
This power should here be distinguished from any notion of pleasure as power doesn’t require conscious discernment (Kaufmann 1974); there is a parallel to the previous discussions of the relation of affect to emotion here. This said, we can understand a joy in the possession of power, but this is a reactive form of power; there should not be a confusion between the possession of power (manifest in a joyfulness) and the active form of power (the affirmation and exercise of power which constitutes an expansion in capacity to act). An active force “is one that goes to the limit of its consequences” (Deleuze 2006c: 61) and reactive forces “decompose; they separate active forces from what it can do; they take away a part or almost all of its power” (Deleuze 2006c: 53). (There are echoes again of Spinoza’s interest in finding out ‘what a body can do’.) Reactive forces therefore cannot become active, rather, they make active forces reactive. Put differently, we can understand an affectivity of force which is the manifestation of the will to power, and, the more affirmative the will to power – the greater its self overcoming (Kaufmann 1974: 261) – the greater the power of being affected manifest in force. Therefore, there is a feeling of power and all affectivity derives from this (Bogue 1989).

We can view these Nietzschean active forces in a similar way to Spinoza’s joyous affects and, and equally, reactive forces are like sad affects. It is important to emphasize though that a reactive force which decomposes a body’s active forces – Deleuze uses the example of illness – may also uncover previously unknown affects which open new possibilities for action; it can be considered from different points of view (see Deleuze 1988: 33). While a reactive form “condemns me to a diminished milieu to which I can do no more than adapt myself”, from another perspective, “at the same time they give us another power, ‘dangerous’ and ‘interesting’. They bring us new feelings and teach us new ways of being affected.” There is something admirable in the becoming-reactive of forces, admirable and dangerous” (Deleuze 2006c: 61-62). A point where this Nietzschean understanding of the will to power (employed to think through affect) differs from a Spinozist understanding of affect then is in its emphasis on the competitive nature of forces in their relations and the differing perspectives on the active and reactive nature of forces.

In the notes that make up the ‘Will to Power’ Nietzsche provides an outline of the competitive inter-relation of forces (Nietzsche 1968: 332-341). As Nietzsche (1968: 340) states,

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99 Deleuze also suggest this in his work on Spinoza in terms of illness (Deleuze 1988: 33)
“[m]y idea is that every specific body strives to become master over all space and to extend its force (– its will to power) and to thrust back all that resists its extension. But it continually encounters similar efforts on the part of other bodies and ends by coming to an arrangement (‘union’) with those of them that are sufficiently related to it: thus they then conspire together for power. And the process goes on–”.

This again is not an intentional striving in terms of consciousness but a pre-person will or vital force. Within this striving and struggling “the factions in struggle emerge with different quanta of power” (Nietzsche 1968: 337) and in this

“no things remain but only dynamic quanta, in relation of tension to all other dynamic quanta: their essence lies in their relation to all other quanta, in their affect upon the same. The will to power not a being, not a becoming, but a pathos [occasion, event] – the most elemental fact from which a becoming and affecting first emerge”

(Nietzsche 1968: 339 [translation modified]).

We therefore have a somewhat different picture from Spinoza’s conception of affect with its ethics of joy. Although there is an affirmation of an increase in power, this power potentially comes at a cost – the detriment of other powers. This comes down to a struggle: “[s]truggle outside oneself, toward other bodies, but also within as the unstoppable conflict among its organic components. Before being in itself, the body is always against, even with respect to itself…This is because in its continual instability the body is nothing but the always provisional result of the conflict of forces that constitute it” (Esposito 2008: 84 [emphasis in original]). In a positive affect – in an increase in power – there may be a related negative affect elsewhere; there is perhaps a greater acknowledgement of negative affects. Capacities to affect and be affected are potentially not equal; some affects can over-power others – the body is a material site of conflict (Esposito 2008: 84). Further, while active forces are affirmed, there is also a suggestion of the expansive potential of reactive, apparently negative, reactive forces. There is then a movement from an ethics of joy to an ethics of power and force. This therefore suggests another way to understand the affective differentiation that Husserl discussed above in terms of competition.

Returning to our figure walking down a street, the above holds significant consequences. Most generally, the way in which the relation of the passive and active is understood is substantially different. There is a movement from a subject which pre-exists experience

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100 The translation has been modified in line with an alternate translation offered by Kaufmann whereby ‘effecting’ was replaced with ‘affecting’ (see Kaufmann 1974: 264).
to one which emerges in the midst of things; a subject does not submit or turn-to that which presents an affective allure (either conceived literally as a turning of the head, or a switching of attention from one object to another), rather, a subject emerges in the consummation of affective intensity, and specifically, out of a range of competing affective forces. Intentionality, the about-ness of experience, is decentered. The visual is no longer subordinated to this; it is “free of any intentional gaze” (Deleuze 2006b: 90). In its place, the complex affective nature of everyday experience is foregrounded, which present the subject in a more retroactive light; a subject individuated in the encounter with a multitude of things as aware.

VII. Conclusion

In short, the critique of Husserl here is that while uncovering the passive as a sphere of activity not dominated by an intentional aboutness – a positive movement away from overly intentional accounts of experience and one which is in contrast to many of the commonly held conceptions of Husserl’s work – the intentional subject sneaks back into his account. We can perhaps say with Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 46) that the “mole of the transcendent is present within immanence itself” (see Agamben 1999), and is present as a result of starting with the active and working back to the passive. Husserl cannot adequately conceive passivity given this trajectory. Even though Zahavi (2003: 142-143) suggests Husserl’s work was not dominated solely by an interest in active subjectivity, Husserl was not capable of getting outside of that intention correlate or of conceiving passivity on the basis of passivity itself. Passivity in Husserl is not pure passivity, a passivity from the start, but passivity as a correlate of action (Levinas 2006: 110-111). Husserl’s phenomenology then holds an “incapacity to think intensive becomings” (Guattari 1995: 64). This was not however the case for Deleuze. Deleuze conceives passivity in itself, as pure passivity, and was not hampered by such a central understanding of activity or of passivity as a correlate of action.

The differing relation of passive to active in each of Husserl and Deleuze’s work then comes from the general trajectory of each of their philosophical projects. While Husserl’s project of articulating a transcendental phenomenology – an ascending from the depths of the passive to the clear and eidetic heights of phenomenological activity/active consciousness (see Wylie 2002); an uncovering of essences – for Deleuze it is a matter of geological excavation in a world where any ascending proceeds by illusory ladders grounded on nothing but illusions themselves – simulacra laid upon simulacra. For Deleuze, rather, “the task of thought is that of extending back from any
of its given terms and oppositions to the pre-active genesis that ‘contracts’ what it contemplates from a multiplicity” (Colebrook 2001: 26). We can almost see them standing back to back.

Therefore, we can venture the point that while in Husserl the passive self is ‘not yet living’, passivity in Deleuze is in fact life itself (Colebrook 2001). Or this could be taken even further. Returning to the indifference of his ‘Logic of Sense’ that lies beyond the passive and active, Deleuze distinguishes between organic life and nonorganic life (also see Deleuze 2005: 31-33). This is a distinction between a personal or organismal life and something more indeterminate – a life. For Deleuze, as he discusses in ‘Immanence: a Life’, “[t]he life of the individual has given way to an impersonal and yet singular life… A life is everywhere, in every moment which a living subject traverses and which is measured by the objects that have been experienced, an immanent life carrying along the events or singularities that are merely actualized in subjects and objects” (Deleuze 2006d: 386-387).

This is then about Deleuze’s empiricism, or as he calls it, ‘transcendental empiricism’ and relatedly, the two thinkers’ differing relation to Kant (see Agamben 1999; Mullarkey 2006). As suggested in Chapter 2, especially in his later work, Husserl was strongly influenced by Kant and appeals to the transcendental realm of essences and the transcendental ego as their ‘absolute source’ (Moran 2000). For Deleuze, this appeal to a realm outside of immanence was precisely Kant’s mistake (see Deleuze 2006d). In contrast, Deleuze’s empiricism is founded on searching for the real conditions of actual experience rather than a search for the abstract conditions of possible experience (Baugh 1992; 2005). Husserl repeats this mistake (Russell 2006: 25; see Husserl 1983: 14-15). Putting this in terms of representation, it is not about possible experience as ‘capable of representation’, but real experience as ‘subrepresentative’ (Bogue 1989). Rather than an uncovering of the a priori conditions for knowledge such as the transcendentalism found in Kant which presupposes the subject as that which synthesizes and unifies diverse experience, Deleuze’s empiricism in transcendental in that it is an attempt to deduce the conditions of the possibility of conscious experience without conceiving such conditions in terms of abstract a priori’s. Instead, such conditions are conceived as “contingent

101 Although Deleuze wrote a book on Kant (see Deleuze 1984), this book was different from his other works in the history of philosophy. As he saw Kant as an ‘enemy’, it was intended to show the workings of Kant’s system, and did not constitute an appreciation, or an act of philosophical ‘buggery’, as Deleuze’s other monographs are (Deleuze 1995).

102 It is important to note there are differences between Kant and Husserl. As Russell (Russell 2006: 49) notes, Husserl’s phenomenology echoes Kant and his “conception of subjectivity as a synthesizing activity
tendencies beyond the reach of empirical consciousness” (Stagoll 2005: 283). Deleuze affirms the a posteriori; he affirms that the empirical is prior to the conceptual (Baugh 1992; see Dewsbury 2000: 489) so as to not subordinate ‘nomadic distributions’ to categories and representation (Deleuze 2004b: 356). For Deleuze (2006d: 385) then “[t]he transcendent is not the transcendental”. The transcendental is a-subjective and pre-reflexive; it does not refer to any object nor belong to a subject and is therefore distinguished from experience. It does not however constitute an outside; the transcendental field is a place of pure immanence, and not immanent to anything other than itself (Deleuze 2006d).

As Williams (2008) notes, this comes down to the status of certain prepositions in the work on Kant and Deleuze – Deleuze wants to distance himself from Kant’s reference of the transcendental ‘to’ transcendence, and instead think in terms of all things being ‘in’ the transcendental, a thinking of immanence.

Deleuze therefore does not presuppose a subject who experiences. Instead, as suggested already, “Deleuze finds that the ‘I’ only ever refers to contingent effects of interactions between events, responses, memory functions, social forces, chance happenings, belief systems, economic systems, and so on that together make up a life” (Stagoll 2005: 283). Deleuze (1991b), in the terms of his work on Hume, wants to uncover how the mind constructs itself from the flux of the ‘given’ (Marks 1998), or, how something like a subject may be individuated (Boundas 2005a; Deleuze 2004b: 307-308). This is to affirm the exteriority of relations (Deleuze 1991b: 66); relations are not thought of as internal, as related to something essential within that which is related, but rather as “effects of the activities of individuals who are different yet nevertheless interacting” (Hayden 1995: 286). In this, experience is immanent to itself and not to an individualized subject and in that way transcendent. As Mullarkey (2006: 14) states, returning again to the discussion of lived experience in Chapter 2, the question is not “how the subject gains its experience but how experience gives us a subject”. This presents a ‘superior empiricism’, a “philosophical experimentalism”, which would install a plane of pure immanence as the transcendental field (Deleuze 2006d: 384-389); a field without fixed, and investigates the specific kinds of synthetic acts that occur in perception, judgement, imagination, remembrance, inference, encountering other people, and so on.” However, what Husserl preserves from Kant “is not so much the interest in the putative ‘knowledge’ that the subject is said to possess in advance concerning nature…as the interest in the acts of objective experience that Kant began to thematize”. Husserl then has even grander ambitions than Kant. While “Kant had discovered in transcendental subjectivity the a priori form of the world…Husserl locates in it the origins of the world in its fullest sense” (Russell 2006: 55).

There are parallel’s to the work of Jean Luc Nancy here and his discussion of ‘trans-immanence’ (see Nancy 1997; 2003). These will be discussed in the next chapter.
transcendental elements and which “would not be immanent to anything prior, either subjective or objective” (Rajchman 2000: 17). It is rather impersonal and pre-individual (Bogue 1989) and within which we are always already in (Williams 2008).

Returning to Husserl, taking Deleuze’s empiricism as a post-phenomenological critique, transcendental empiricism is:

“not concerned with determining the essence and intrinsic relation of each thing [as in transcendental phenomenology], but with describing how new relations can be actively created between things in order to produce change in and between the wholes these relationships form. Relations are to be thought of in accordance with what Deleuze refers to as the ‘fundamental principle of empiricism’, the principle of difference, instead of a transcendental principle of essential and absolute identity” (Hayden 1995: 287-288).

Or, to put it another way, “[t]he concern of transcendental empiricism is not with objects or creatures, but with creatings” (Hallward 2006: 75); it is about discovering the conditions under which something new might be produced (Marks 1998; see Dewsbury 2000: 490). Or again in terms of phenomenology, we’ve arrived at the point where, as Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 7) state, “Universals explain nothing but must themselves be explained” (see Marks 1998: 20-22) as “Deleuze does not seek universal phenomena through a process of reduction – he seeks universal conditions on the ground of the sensations of individuals (Williams 2003: 110). This is then a more worldly understanding focused on the particularity of experience rather than the universal forms of all experience as being based in the transcendental ego and from which experiences are personalized (Lea 2009, forthcoming).

Finally, given this reading of Husserl and Deleuze, we can return to our figure audiencing and understand thus:

A figure walks down a street…This street presents a multitude of affective relations that lie between figure and street. The figure holds a pre-reflexive comportment arising from contractile contemplations constituting thousands of tiny habits – their gate for example. The affects lying between figure and street are also accompanied by an ecology of intensive affects operating intensively at the molecular level and out of this interplay a subject is individuated as feeling hungry. This in turn means the smell from the Baker holds a stronger quanta of force than the other affective relations present. Having bought lunch and eaten it – an affective relations which (literally) nourishes and increases the figures power – the figure comes to itself as subject that enjoyed the pasty. However, this nourishment, again at the molecular level, also affects a lethargy – the figure again comes to itself as a subject that is tired and doesn’t want to go to work. This iterative process continues in the perpetual consummation of the intensive forces of these affective relations. In its lethargic walk back to the office the figure notices
something up ahead through the minutiae of unconscious, passive, perceptions present in that ecology – entering into differential relation, these are passively synthesized as the experience of a busker on the street. The busker positively affects the figure, again acting as a nourishment; the figure again comes to itself as subject in the liking of the song. There is perhaps also an affective remembrance that occurs here in the passive recollection of a previous encounter with that song, or that performer that holds a bearing on the present encounter. However, this nourishment equally negatively affects the figure in their realization, again as subject of this affect, that they still do not want to go to work. Nonetheless, the walk back to the office…While this happens, a stream of other figures walk by – each figures affective relations occur as a singularity given the multiplicity of affective relations present in the ecology of the street.
Chapter 7

‘Falling on Deaf Ears’

“Is it even possible to listen better?”

(Nietzsche 2000b: 613).

“[I]t is imperative to listen to music, because music makes the strings of our inner life resonate. Even if the result is not complete self-realization, at least we can still feel our essence in the ‘resonance’”

(Safranski 2003: 40).

I. Preface

(Note: In this chapter I am going to leave Bath and Bristol, for quite a while at least. After all, aren’t buskers meant to wander? For this final chapter I am going to move further a field, to Washington.)

At 7.51am on the 12th of January 2007 the Washington Post undertook an experiment in L’Enfant Plaza Metro Station, Washington. The experiment entailed “one of the finest classical musicians in the world, playing some of the most elegant music every written on one of the most valuable violins ever made” (a Stradivarius worth approximately £2 million). The Post’s experiment was focused on context, perception, and priorities in everyday life, and undertaken in an attempt to address the question: “In a banal setting at an inconvenient time, would beauty transcend?”.

104 See ‘Pearls Before Breakfast’ by Gene Weingarten at http://www.washingtonpost.com. The article also contains video footage of the experiment from which the still below are taken.
Dressed in an understated T-shirt, jeans and a baseball cap, Joshua Bell was the ‘busker’ in question. In the Metro Station, Bell situated himself at the top of the escalators; nearby were a shoeshine stand and a busy kiosk selling newspapers, magazines and lottery tickets. He played six classical pieces, over 43 minutes, with 1097 people passing by; the majority were on their way to their government jobs. Bell started with Bach’s ‘Chaconne’. It is generally considered as one of the most difficult violin pieces to master. Three minutes in and 63 people had passed. None stopped. Then, shortly after, one turned their head to look as they passed. Another donated (see 7.1).

7.1: First donation

6. minutes in a man stopped and leant against the wall to listen – he was the first to do so (see 7.2). The paper later found out that this lone listener was on the final leg of
his commute to work. He heard Bell as he ascended the escalator, the journey taking over
a minute. As he was three minutes early for work, and had an uninteresting schedule for
that day, he stopped to listen. This listener wasn’t a classical music fan; he later told the
paper that he prefers classic rock. Nonetheless, something resonated in him.
Interestingly, in musicological terms, he arrived at a point where the piece being played
shifts from a darker sounding minor key into an exalting major one. However, this
listener stated he doesn’t understand music theory, major or minor keys, but that the
sound being played made him ‘feel at peace’. For the first time in his life he stopped to
listen to a street musician and donated.

In the time Bell played, seven people stopped to listen for at least a minute and
twenty-seven people donated earning Bell $32. It would appear then that things didn’t go
too well for Bell – his usual fee is around 200 times that hourly rate. It would appear that
his music fell on around 1000 pairs of ‘deaf ears’. This has lead one commentator –
Richard Morrison at The Times\textsuperscript{105} – to suggest that this was a telling experiment. For
him, the results suggest “that most people have no recognition factor whatsoever”,
something further hindered by many passers-by’s “lug’oles” being “wired to ipods”.
Morrison goes further, suggesting that western civilization is now “so dumbed down”
that only around 20 people in 1000 have “the perception to recognise that a sublime
musical experience is being performed brilliantly in front of their noses”. For Morrison,
those traversing the Metro Station just didn’t understand.

In this chapter I want to think this event differently as I believe it sheds light on
the ways in which we traditionally think about the experience of music and more
specifically on a trend in recent accounts of music in geography. I therefore want to take
this event, and particularly the first person who stopped to listen discussed above, as a
lens into a thinking about practices of listening; I want this event to circulate in the
background of the chapter and occasionally become explicitly manifest.

\textbf{II. Introduction}

In this chapter I am going to continue the previous chapter’s discussion the embodied
acts of audiencing members of the public undertake in relation to street performance
given its situation in the spatialities of the street by thinking about practices of listening.
While in the last dozen years or so there has been an increasing interest in music in

\textsuperscript{105} Morrison’s article is available at www.timesonline.co.uk with the little ‘Virtuoso violin recital falls on
within this little has been written specifically on listening, or rather, on the practice of listening. Music has obviously been listened to but this has been masked by a focus on other themes. There are a few exceptions to this. For example, Smith (2000) discusses a number of conceptions of listening: listening as passive reception, but also, through the work of Barthes (1986) as an act of decipherment; listening as a performance in itself that partially gives meaning to the music. Further, Back (2003: 274) discusses what he calls “deep listening”, which involves “practices of dialogue and procedures for investigation, transposition and interpretation”. The focus of these discussions has tended toward a cultural politics of interpretation and meaning. Here I am taking interpretation to refer to those acts of conscious thought, and, more specifically, deliberate reflection or decipherment that construct an understanding of their object (Schusterman 2000). One way we can draw out this distinction is through the work of Nancy. Nancy (2007b) distinguishes between ‘hearing’ and ‘listening’. Hearing, from the French ‘entendre’, denotes understanding, and is distinguished from listening, the French ‘écoute’, which does not hold such connotations of understanding/comprehension. Listening is then not necessarily tied to interpretation. It therefore appears geographers have been more interested in hearing than listening.

Given this starting point, I want to de-centre the role of interpretation in recent academic accounts of listening and in doing so approach an understanding of listening that is not predicated on the pursuit of meaning or the act of interpretation. This is not to devalue this work that has already been done on ‘hearing’. Rather, I would suggest that there are also other important approaches to be taken – I want to ask if the starting point for such a discussion is not given in advance and may in fact be optional (Calarco 2005). To echo Schusterman (2000), I want to suggest that we can have a sense of an experience without necessarily having to think about it at all and definitely without having to intentionally interpret that experience. This would “certainly not mean that we would abandon meaning, signification, and interpretation”, but rather, entails an attempt to develop an understanding that would allow us “to relate to the world in a way that is more complex than interpretation alone” (Gumbrecht 2004: 54 [emphasis added]). This is especially pertinent in the context of this thesis, as was highlighted in the discussion of the previous chapter and Chapter 5, given the distracted environments in which listening

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106 Geographers have rather focused their discussions on music’s role in identity construction (see Busteed 1998; Cohen 1995; Gibson 1998; Kong 1996; Valentine 1995), globalisation and the music industry (see Gibson and Connell 2003; Gibson and Davidson 2004; Leyshon 2001; Power and Hallencreutz 2002), and the performance of music (see Anderson 2005; Morton 2005; Smith 2000; Wood, et al. 2007).
takes place. We can return to the epigraph from Nietzsche (2000b) – perhaps it is not a case of asking if we can listen better, but rather of asking ‘is it even possible for us to listen at all?’

In approaching listening, rather than hearing, this chapter develops the understanding of the non-representational processes present in practices of listening. As suggested in previous chapters, within non-representational theory understandings of affect are central. As was suggested in Chapter 4, the centrality of affect comes, at least in part, from its attention to the not-already-qualified registers of experience present within everyday practices; that action is not pre-judged (Massumi 2002; McCormack 2003). One geographer who has perhaps approached listening in terms of the non-representational is Ben Anderson (2005) in his work on practices of judgement of recorded music in everyday life. Rather than focusing on interpretation and the implication of meaning, Anderson (2005) discusses the feeling of a judgement through an affective, visceral understanding of the spontaneous judgements made of music, always being a bodily occurrence entangle in a network of affective imperatives. While he moves in the right direction, for me, Anderson (2005) doesn’t go far enough. Starting with this visceral relation between listener and music, I want to think about the subjectification occurring in this relation rather than the acts of judgment that proceed from it – I want to linger a while at this point of contact between sound and a body listening. In pursuit of this, following Rajchman (2000: 75-76), this chapter proposes the substitution of the figure of the judge (or a concern with practices of judgement) with “that of an experimenter who starts to move in a world and in relation to a self that are never given or ‘conditioned’ but are rather in the making”.

The focus here will fall on the body listening to music, but also, more so, on the sound itself. Work in geography has begun to attend to the sound of music. For example Revill (2000) has discussed the ways in which the sonic properties of music inform moral geographies of landscape, nations and citizenship. However, Revill’s (2000) work is tied to a cultural politics of identity similar to that of Smith (2000) and Back (2003). This means sound is at times reduced to the discursive and, in this reduction, the materiality of sound is not fully attended to – music/sound is viewed too much as a form of representation to be interpreted. Similarly, Wood et al. (2007), in focusing on how identities are made and how music is understood in their attention to the practices of listening and ‘musicking’, do not attend to the subjectifying material relations present in such encounters with sound. As will be explained later through Nancy (2007b), the
sound itself is precisely sound’s materiality, its body, is timbre and about the resonance these produce. I am then less interested in the judgements made of the sound of music, with it being good or bad, suitable or unsuitable, or with the ways in which identities are made in practices of listening, but rather want to thinking about the ways in which the subject listening is constituted in its relations to, or with (for reasons that will become clear), this materiality of the sound itself.

This non-representational account of practise of listening (not hearing) suggests a different understanding of the interrelation of music and the subject. I want to approach a finite thinking of the subjectification occurring through sound when a body listens; a thinking that consists in “a labour of thinking singularly about singular beings” and “resists the urge to think in terms of generalities or universals that reduce the plurality of singular ones to a common ground” (Hutchings 2005: 167). This then contributes to the development of the first post-phenomenological trajectory around intentionality and the subject outlined in Chapter 2. Previously, a small amount of work has been done in phenomenology around sound and listening. Prominent here is Idhe’s (2007) discussion of listening and voice. Much of this discussion based on the notion of intentionality as Husserl discussed (see Chapters 2 and 6) – for Idhe (2007: 23) listening is always a “listening to…”. In distinction to this I want to develop the understanding of a ‘perception-with’107 (Rose and Wylie 2006). For Rose and Wylie (2006: 478 [emphasis removed]) ‘perception-with’ refers to the “creative tension of self and world” and pays attention to “the materialities and sensibilities with which we see”. In this chapter I explore the aural nature of such a ‘perception-with’ in attending to the ‘materialities and sensibilities’ with which we listen, through an attention to Nancy’s ontology of being-with and his finite thinking of the singular plural. This places such a tension of self and world at the heart of being; any idea of an existential analytic of presence becomes a co-existential analytic of coming to presence, of the “presenting present” (Nancy 2000: 96). An attention to this ‘perception-with’, as singular occurrence, de-centres the intentional correlate of experience present within much of phenomenological work, including that discussed above. In response, it calls for a more radical conception of difference as the basis for subjectivity to that which has permeated certain discussions of affective relations. We can return to the other epigraph from Safranski (2003) – it is not so much about feeling ‘our

107 While an appeal to this understanding of ‘perception-with’ may appear precisely as an appeal to a ‘common ground’, this is not the case given any ‘perception-with’, in terms of Nancy’s ontology, is a singular occurrence, or rather a singularly-plural occurrence. This logic will be return to in section 2 in discussing Nancy’s ontology of being-with.
essence’ in the resonance, as feeling something like ‘a self’. Further, and in relation to the opening event, this also suggests a turning away from an understanding of music as holding some kind of transcendent value – a value that is held outside of experience. Instead, it pushes us away from discussions of value; it pays attention to the singularity of sound itself by looking at what sound does each time it is encountered.

In pursuit of these aims, I will work through and advocate Nancy’s recent discussion of listening and his broader overtly post-phenomenological project of thinking being as being-with. Firstly, I outline Nancy’s thinking of ontology as being-with. Following this, I outline and critically engage Nancy’s recent discussion of listening. In doing so, I pay particular attention to three central themes from Nancy’s broader philosophical oeuvre which are of significance to geographical understanding of practice: sense, the subject and the body. In concluding I argue, returning to the lens of the opening event, for an understanding of listening based on resonance rather than meaning which is both founded on a non-representational sensibility and affirmation of the singularly multiple, and on a post-phenomenological understanding of the ecological relatedness of the body-subject as resonant and to come.

III. The Being-with of Being-there

Nancy’s work has only recently started to become popular among geographers with his work on community being the most prominent point of interest (Nancy 1991; also see Popke 2003; Rose 1997a; Welch and Panelli 2007). That said, his reflections on ontology as being-with have also recently been taken up by Bingham (2006). Before turning to his work on the subject of listening, it is necessary to provide a brief discussion of Nancy’s ontological thinking as this sets the scene for his discussion of listening, which will in turn further explicate his ontology.

Central to Nancy’s project is his thinking of ontology as singular-plural coexistence. As Nancy’s (2000: xv) project is nothing less than an attempt to redo “the whole of ‘first philosophy’ by giving the ‘singular plural’ of Being as its proper foundation”. In this, Nancy is undertaking a substantial re-reading of Heidegger’s ‘Being and Time’ (Heidegger 1962), and in particular, his positing of dasien (being-there) as primary in relation to mitsein (being-with) (also see Nancy 2008a). Nancy (2000: 27) criticizes Heidegger for placing dasien in advance of mitsein on the grounds that “Dasien has already revealed itself as being-with and reveals itself as such before any other explication”. Although Heidegger does introduce mitsein as co-originary with dasien, this comes after his extensive elaboration of dasien. Nancy asks why Heidegger took so long
to elaborate the ‘with’, suggesting it is only an adjustment of *dasein* (Devisch 2000). Nancy reverses Heidegger’s “order of ontological exposition” (Nancy 2000: 31), placing the ‘with’ back into the heart of being. For Nancy (2000: 4) there is no being which is not already being-with: “Existence *is with*: otherwise nothing exists”; this is the “minimal ontological premise” (Nancy 2000: 27). As such, being *there* is always already a necessary being *with* as there is no isolated, given ‘I’ that is without others. This makes Nancy’s ontology into a social ontology (Nancy 1991: 28; Devisch 2000).

It is important to note that Nancy’s refiguring of ontology as being-with is not suggestive of an essential pre-existing essence of Being. When Nancy talks about Being, he is talking of a spacing, an opening of a world, not a thinking of Being as gathering or oneness such as that to be found in Heidegger. Rather for Nancy, existence is to be thought in terms of ek-sistence, as always outside of itself, as a dispersal (James 2006). This moves away from an affirmation of subject-political identity toward a more radical being-outside of oneself; it affirms “the impossibility of any subject that would maintain itself within an intimacy or immanence with itself, people, nation, polis, and so forth” (James 2006: 102). This is not to say that people do not cohere in the experience of worlding, but rather affirms that this worlding does not constitute a *stable ground* upon which people can rest-assured in safe belonging or cling to one’s own understanding of a self or people and so on.

In this spacing,

> “the singular-plural constitutes the essence of Being, a constitution that undoes or dislocates every single substantial essence of Being itself. This is not just a way of speaking, because there is no prior substance that would be dissolved. Being does not pre-exist its singular plural. To be more precise, Being absolutely does not pre-exist; nothing pre-exists; only what exists exists”


Following from this conception of the world as “endless passage” (Devisch 2002: 388), as always worlding, Being cannot be pre-supposed. Existence is rather only the being of what exists; it is not an existence that has a previous or subjacent existence by which it exists. There is no outside of being (Nancy 2007a). Nancy rejects any onto-theological notion of there being (an)other world(s) wherein God amounts to another world placed next to this world and is therefore outside of the world. Therefore, for Nancy, *this* world is always *the* world, *the only world* (Raffoul and Pettigrew 2007). As it is always plural, Being cannot be assumed to be the singular that the name suggests. Therefore, it follows “that not only must being-with-one-another not be understood from the presupposition of
being-one, but on the contrary, being-one (Being as such, complete Being…) can only be understood by starting from being-with-one-another” (Nancy 2000: 56).

This rethinking of ontology already has a number of significant implications. Nancy suggests three; what is at stake in light of this is no longer thinking:

- beginning from the one, or from the other,
- beginning from their togetherness, understood now as the One, now as the Other,
- but thinking, absolutely and without reserve, beginning from the “with”,

\[\textit{as proper existence of one whose Being is nothing other than with-one-another}\]

(Nancy 2000: 34).

Thinking ontology as singular-plural entails that the world has no origin other than this singular multiplicity of origins; it always appears according to local turns of events (Nancy 2000: 9). The unity of the world then, “its uniqueness, its totality consists in a combination of this reticulated multiplicity, which produces no result” (Nancy 2000: 9).

**IV. Listening: Sense, Subject, Body**

Having provided an introduction to Nancy’s ontological thinking, I want to now focus specifically on what he has to say around the topic of listening. Nancy’s work on listening circulates around six themes: three relate to his broader philosophical project in general, and the remaining three are relatively specific to listening. These are: sense, the subject, and the body (which structure the sub-sections of this chapter), and, resonance, timbre, and rhythm (which permeate throughout) respectively.

Nancy’s work on listening is guided by the question: “Is listening something of which philosophy is capable?” and the related suggestion, returning to the distinction between listening and hearing, that “hasn’t philosophy superimposed upon listening, beforehand and of necessity, or else substituted for listening, something else that might be more on the order of understanding?” (Nancy 2007b: 1). Nancy suggests that the philosopher hears (understands) but doesn’t listen. One such philosopher, it could be argued, is Roland Barthes (Barthes 1986). In his short writings around music and listening – already briefly discussed previously in the context of Susan Smith’s (2000) work – Barthes works with an inversion of Nancy’s distinction between listening and hearing.\(^{108}\) For Barthes, hearing (Nancy’s listening) is a physiological phenomena and...
listening (Nancy’s hearing) is a psychological act. Barthes in fact devalues the significance of hearing, the physiological, suggesting it is something shared with animals, something primitive, whereas listening, the interpretation of a sign, is what makes us human and does not function so simply. It is a form of hermeneutics, a decoding, aiming at making “available to consciousness the ‘underside’ of meaning” (Barthes 1986: 249). Beyond this hermeneutics, listening is also active; it speaks. Meaning within this type of listening circulates and is non-directional from source to receiver. Therefore, Barthes underplays the significance of the physiological form of hearing (Nancy’s listening), as a bodily experience, and also the sound itself that the body listens to, focusing rather on the interpretative role of the subject and the circulating meanings of the sound it hears. Barthes is too representational.

I am turning to Nancy’s philosophy here then as, for me, it poses significant questions for social science in terms of how it approaches the study of listening, particularly in terms of the way we understand the subject that listens and especially the sound itself that is listened to, in a way that is attentive to the sorts of listening that occurs in relation to street performance such as that suggested in the opening event. This in turn contributes both to the theses attempts to re-conceive the experiencing subject, specifically in terms of a decentring, and further to emphasize the sensuousness and vitality of embodied experience across a range of senses.

Non-representationally, Nancy is asking the question of the possibility of being able to listen without necessarily trying to understand; listening rather than interpreting or finding meaning. This suggests a different understanding of music and listening to that taken in much of the geographical-social scientific literature; it lays more emphasis on sensation rather than signification. We can return to the snobbery of Morrison here and already argue that what is important in music is not only the cultural value or capital that is deemed to be held within it and by those who perform it, but also that the significance of music lies in what it does to us. This in a sense justifies my interest in street performance and busking – while it is often deemed as a low form/level of art, it nonetheless holds an affective potency.\textsuperscript{109} This decentring of meaning suggests a being attentive to the sound itself which “outweighs form…enlarges it; gives it an amplitude, a

\textsuperscript{109} Albeit admittedly not necessarily for positive affects, although, as suggested in the last chapter, this may not necessarily be a bad thing.

Nonetheless, I have stuck with the usage and valuation of the terms given by both above, even though this may make thing a little confusing for the reader.
density, and a vibration or an undulation\textsuperscript{110} whose outline never does anything but approach” (Nancy 2007b: 2). This could be put another way connected to the previous chapters’ engagement with Deleuze. Nancy is in effect arguing for an engagement with the molecular matter of sound over its molar functional structure (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 49-50), or as Nancy (1997: 10) states, with “that which is not for it a ‘content’ but its \textit{body}”. Nancy is in a sense trying to lay out a plane of consistency which music will inhabit at varying speeds and intensities, rather than a plane of organization that will structure and organize the music.

This suggests an analysis of music and sound, and a listening more generally, that would not take traditional musicological themes as its focus but rather focus on the material relations present in our encounters with sound. In not being constrained by musicological endeavours such as approaching music-as-text, this listening does not contain the experience in any restrictive, organizing way. Rather, it disposes a self to be open to being affected in various ways. This is not to say that people will not, or worse, should not, interpret or find meaning, but rather that this is not always necessarily the case – there are times when we refrain from interpretation and it is therefore not a necessity (Schusterman 2000) – and that there is something of significance in such un-interpreted experiences.

In this attentiveness to the sound itself, there is also an attention to the pre-individual, pre-personal experience of sound when we listen; Nancy is less concerned with constituted subjects than with selves that are perpetually differing and to come. Nancy lays greater emphasis on the material, resonant, relations present when a body listens and the sensuousness of such a relation between body and sound through which a self may emerge.

\textit{Being ‘all ears’ and Sense}

Nancy wants us to be ‘all ears’, to be listening with all our being, immersed entirely in listening, \textit{formed} by it in our being-with sound; an \textit{ontological aurality}, akin to the ontological sociality suggested by Nancy in his discussion of community (see Nancy 1991: 28). This asks, what is at stake when we truly listen, when we try to capture sonority rather than

\textsuperscript{110} We could suggest a parallel here between this understanding of ‘undulation’ and Deleuze’s discussion of the ‘body without organs’ with it’s ‘waves of variable amplitude’ defining particular organizations of such a body in his work on Francis Bacon (see Deleuze 2005: 34) and also Deleuze’s discussion of surface mixtures in ‘The Logic of Sense’ whereby surfaces forms both in terms of forming a minimum surface area with maximum volume, or conversely, as an expansive surface through processes of stretching, fragmenting, crushing etc. (see Deleuze 2004c: 141-143); Nancy is still talking about a surface here, but one that is not necessarily smooth. This becomes clearer in Nancy’s (1997) understanding of sense as ‘trans-immanent’ which will be discussed shortly.
the message? Nancy (2007b) distinguishes between listening to someone giving a speech we want to understand and listening to music. In the first case (not thinking about notions of timbre, the tone of the voice, and so on), there is a listener that “strains towards a present sense beyond sound” (Nancy 2007b: 6). It is a hearing which understands sense and therefore strains towards a possible meaning. In the second case, listening to music, “it is from sound itself that sense is offered” (Nancy 2007b: 6). Here sense is the “rebound of sound, a rebound that is coextensive with the whole folding/unfolding of presence and the present that makes or opens the presence as such” (Nancy 2007b: 30). We could ask questions about the lyrical content of such music here, but I would suggest that there is also a sense in the sound of those lyrics, in their tone, timbre, and so on, which can be made sense of without them being interpreted. Such an understanding of sense is significant to geography, and warrants further exposition, in that it suggests that there is a sense before sense is articulated or voiced; bodies make sense before we make sense in words in the folding/unfolding of their presence with other bodies. The passage of sense is embodied; it is “constituted in the materiality of corporeal existence” (James 2006: 106).

Nancy has written at length on ‘sense’. Very generally, sense for Nancy “depends on relating to itself as to another or to some other. To have sense, or to make sense, to be sensed, is to be to oneself insofar as the other affects this ipseity [selfhood] in such a way that this affection is neither reduced to nor retained in the ipseity itself. On the contrary, if the affection of sense is reabsorbed, sense itself also disappears” (Nancy 2003: 6).

This understanding of sense, the sense of sense here, is that it is in fact always this sense. It is not a universal sense, not an essential sense, but a singular multiplicity of sense (Devisch 2000); a sense each time. There is in some sense a performativity to sense. As Nancy (2003: 93) states, “sense, essentially, has to repeat itself”. This is not the direct repetition of an identical, “but by opening in itself (as itself) the possibility of relating to itself in the ‘referral of one sign to another’” (Nancy 2003: 93). It is in this referral that sense is recognized as sense. As Nancy (2003: 9) states, it is “not sense ‘in general’, therefore, nor is it sense once and for all”; there is no outside referent for sense to be transcendent. Sense is the “relation as such, and nothing else” (Nancy 1997: 118). As suggest above, this relation is a material relation: “[t]he passage of sense…is the opening of a spatial world as meaningful or intelligible, but is also the contact or touch of something concrete and material” (James 2006: 106).
Nancy (1997) talks of this relation in terms of a ‘being-toward’ (see James 2006: 103). It is important that it be made clear here that this ‘toward’ should not be understood as a directionality of the subject, as a lingering phenomenological intentionality, for this would contradict Nancy’s understanding of the subject and being as being-with (I will return to this). Rather, the ‘toward’ should be understood in terms of its temporal sense – we are always moving toward, or are in approach to, sense. Sense is not to be understood as “an accomplished work, finished, closed, absolved of all rapport” (Nancy 1997: 28). Rather, sense is “the property of finitude qua existence of the essence. Sense is: “that existence should be without essence, that is should be toward that which it essentially is not, its own existence” (Nancy 1997: 32). It is “the movement of being-toward, or being as a coming into presence or again as transivity, as passage to presence – and therewith as passage of presence” (Nancy 1997: 12); “that ungraspable excess…‘the excess of being in relation to being itself’” (Nancy cited in James 2007: 74). The coming of sense is infinite, “it does not get finished with coming” but it is also finite in that “it is offered up in the instant” (Nancy 1997: 35).

In sense’s incessant arrival and finitude, for Nancy:

“There is nothing but a world lacking exteriority, a world through which sense circulates in the exposure of singular beings. Sense is neither transcendent (an exterior reserve pregnant with meaning) nor immanent (a pregnant reserve of meaning within the world), but ‘transimmanent’, that is, coextensive with the world in its plural singularities”

(Hutchings 2005: 168; see Nancy 1997: 54).

Hutchings (2005: 168) goes on: “Roughly speaking [as ‘transimmanent’], sense passes along without issuing from within it or from outside it; it slides through social relations without substantializing them. It makes them meaning full without giving them a reducible meaning.” From this, “the meaning of the world does not occur as a reference to something external to the world” (Nancy 2007a: 43; see Nancy 1997: 8; Raffoul and Pettigrew 2007: 6), but we can distinguish sense from meaning in that sense is not the message or the signified, but “it is that something like the transmission of a ‘message’ should be possible” (Nancy 1997: 118 [emphasis removed]).

Sense therefore arises as an event of sense – there is always a coming to be of sense, a coming that is always in the ‘with’ of Being. This notion of sense as an event of sense cannot but highlight the proximity of Nancy’s thought here to that of Deleuze. Deleuze talks of sense as event, where “The event is sense itself, insofar as it is disengaged or distinguished from the states of affairs which produce it and in which it is actualized” (Deleuze 2004c: 242).
Reflecting in more detail on the relation of Nancy’s conception of sense to Deleuze’s, there appears to be a certain similarity in exposition. Deleuze (2004c) suggests an understanding of sense as something that does not exist outside of the proposition which expresses it. Therefore, “we cannot say that sense exists, but rather that it inheres or subsists” (Deleuze 2004c: 24). Deleuze (2004c: 25 [emphasis in original]) goes on to suggest:

“Sense is both the expressible or the expressed of the proposition, and the attribute of the state of affairs. It turns one side toward things and one side toward propositions. But it does not merge with the proposition which expresses it any more than with the state of affairs or the quality which the proposition denotes. It is exactly the boundary between propositions and things. It is this aliquid at once extra-Being and inherence, that is, this minimum of being which befits inherence. It is in this sense that it is an ‘event’: on the condition that the event is not confused with its spatio-temporal realization in a state of affairs…the event is sense itself”.

Nancy’s understanding of sense as transimmanent appears rather similar to Deleuze’s exposition as suggested in the above. Further, Nancy (1997: 180 (note 35)) indeed directly engages Deleuze’s account of sense, suggesting that a Deleuzian sense of sense could be articulated in his terms. There is a resonance in their re-articulation of sense as the being-toward of being itself and the insistence of its perpetual differentiation and appearance in this temporal unfolding.

This connection aside, returning to his work on listening, Nancy suggests that sense must resound for his project revolves “around…a fundamental resonance, even…a resonance as a foundation, as a first or last profundity of ‘sense’ itself (or of truth)” (Nancy 2007b: 6). Listening therefore aims at, or is aroused by, a mixing together and resonance of sense and sound, each with the other or through the other. Meaning is therefore resonant; its sense is found in resonance. This listening-to sonority is always on the edge of meaning. “Meaning”, for Nancy (2007a: 54), “is always in praxis”; it is never established as a given but has to be enacted (see Nancy 1997: 9; Raffoul and Pettigrew 2007: 10). More than this, “the world is a space in which a certain tonality resonates”; our sharing of a world comes in the sharing of resonance (Nancy 2007a: 42).

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111 We could perhaps think of Serres’ discussion of ‘Noise’ in ‘Genesis’ here and his understanding of noise as multiplicity and a lack of sense; as non-sense in distinction to an ordered sense, as unitary. Further, again echoing Nancy’s transimmanent sense, Serres (1995: 109-110) discusses turbulence which “mixes and associates the one and the multiple, systematic gathering together and distribution. System appears there is distribution, and disappears there, distribution appears there in the system and disappears there…Turbulence is a mix of foreseeable regions and chaotic regions, a mix of concepts in the classical, unitary sense of the term, and of pure multiplicity.”
This is not just the resonance of sound, but a resonance of sense itself – it is a ‘being familiar with’ that is the access to and sharing of a world. Nancy (2007a) gives examples of the ‘hospital world’ or ‘Debussy’s world’, but we could equally think of Bacon’s world (see Deleuze 2005), or various sub-cultural worlds that access to comes in a sharing of sense/resonance.

**The Subject of Listening**

What then does this logic do in terms of an understanding of a subject that listens? Listening is not only always on the edge of meaning, but always on the edge of, or in approach to, a self. Nancy (2007b) that in speaking we are always already listening to ourselves; that in making ourselves audible we are always already returning to ourselves as an echo. The outside is then already in me and visa versa; we are opened from without and within; folded. We can think of the baby who is born with its first cry, its subjectivity being:

“the sudden expansion of an echo chamber, a vault where what tears him [sic] away and what summons him resound at once, setting in vibration a column of air, of flesh, which sounds at its apertures…Someone who comes to himself [sic] by hearing himself [sic] cry”


Sound resounds in an external space in its actual sounding. Returning to our ontological aurality – our ‘originary’ immersion in sound and from which there is no outside; there is no singular being without, or rather outwith, sound – this resounding returns to the self sounding and places itself, the sounding self, outside itself (see Devisch 2000: 248-249). There is a doubling, a return, a folding of sound and self, echoing somewhat the work of Merleau-Ponty discussed in Chapter 2 (see Merleau-Ponty 1968).

Here we can return to Nancy’s re-reading of Heidegger and the argument for the prioritization of *mitsein* over *dasein* mentioned above. If “Being cannot be anything but being-with-one-another, circulating in the with and as the with of this singular plural coexistence” (Nancy 2000: 3), then this suggests a coexistence of sound and self. This should not be mistaken for a static, given self; listening is always a being to, but to an always becoming:

“To be listening is thus to enter into tension and to be on the look out for a relation to self: not, it should be emphasized, a relationship to ‘me’ (the supposedly given subject), or to the ‘self’ of the other (the speaker, the musician, also supposedly given, with his subjectivity), but to the relationship in *self*, so to speak, as it forms a ‘self’ or a ‘to itself’ in general, and if something like that ever does reach the end of its formation”

(Nancy 2007b: 12).
We can think of this constitution of the self as rhythmic. Rhythm for Nancy is the “time of time…the stroke of a present that presents it by separating it from itself” and in this it “folds and unfolds a ‘self’” (Nancy 2007b: 17). This leads to a notion of the self as formed in the “rhythmic deployment/deployment of an enveloping between inside and outside…forming a hollow”; the body as echo chamber (Nancy 2007b: 38). In turn, this also leads us to a conception of rhythm not only as scansion – the imposition of form onto the continuously unfolding – but also as an impulse – the continued revival of the pursuit.

This presents a novel conception of the subject, the self being ‘the resonance of a return’ (Nancy 2007b: 12). This ties in generally with Nancy’s various writing’s around ‘the subject’ in which Nancy rejects Heidegger’s notion of a self-sufficient subject, a notion in which the individual is precisely that: a single undivided entity whose relations to others or to a community are secondary). Instead, Nancy argues that, given now that \textit{mitsein} is the being of \textit{dasein}, “the self is constituted only within relations to other and the surrounding world” (Devisch 2000: 241).

This rhythmic relation could also be thought of as \textit{syncopated}, with syncopation describing “a movement of presentation and withdrawal…a syncopated beat in which consciousness, the ‘I think’ of transcendental unity of apperception, occurs only in the rupturing of self-identity” (James 2006: 46). Therefore, the subject is not to be seen as a stable ground, but as a temporal unfolding – it differs from itself; differentiates itself from itself (Nancy 1993). This means the self is something to which we cannot be present; it is not a presence to a present being, but a present being that is coming and passing, extending and penetrating. This is not a present as an instant, but a present as “waves on a swell…it is a time that opens up, that is hollowed out, that is enlarged or ramified, that envelops or separates, that becomes or is turned into a loop, that stretches out or contracts, and so on” (Nancy 2007b: 13). We can understand the subject as becoming more evident in those intensive waves of sensation; that we become more aware of our self in such experiences, although this is never fully realized – like a wave

\footnote{For a further discussion of this rhythmic constitution of the subject see Abraham (1995) whom Nancy (2007b) also draws upon.}

\footnote{This can be related to the Deleuzian understanding of the subject in the previous chapter whereby the subject was nothing but a differential modification perpetually emerging in the unfolding of experience.}

\footnote{It should be clear here then that Nancy’s examination of listening and its attention to the processes of subjectification present in our being-with sound should not be understood as a process of excavation – it is resolutely not an attempt to ‘get at’ the subject or ‘capture’ the subject. Given Nancy’s understanding of the subject, any excavation is bound to fail in advance – the subject would be gone (if it was every really there!) before we ever managed to excavate the groundless ground which it never fully inhabited.}
on a beach, it breaks as it reaches anything like its full formation; it is in a perpetual process of formation and dissolution.

Given this understanding of the subject as always presencing – as coming to and moving from presence – it is not necessarily clear how Nancy accounts for the ways in which a subject is already disposed to experience in a certain sense. How does resonance vary depending on the state of the situation? Thinking these states in terms of our listener discussed in the prelude, it could be argued that he was in some sense disposed to listen, to resonate. Given that he had three spare minutes (something not all the commuters would have had) and the prospect of an uninteresting day at work – something holding a weaker affective allure or a lower level of affective force – the resonance produced with the music Bell played was able to dilate his body or affect him more strongly.

Looking to Nancy’s broader corpus, it is perhaps possible to discern a Nancian understanding of such a disposition. Given Nancy’s understanding of the world as in praxis, as not being in any way essential or given prior to the with (Nancy 2007a), this suggests that there is no ‘natural’ or originary disposition which therefore implies a variously constituted disposition arising potentially from our being as being-with-one another. As we are always already with, a with that is singularly multiple, or rather, a with that is at once singular, but one among many singular relations, we will always already be disposed in a certain sense (Nancy 2000). Or, as James (2006: 106) states “[t]he suggestion is that our embodied existence implies an orientation of the body that, prior to any assumption of subjectivity or inscription within the symbolic dimension of language, presupposes sense and articulates the passage of sense as the spacing of space and the disclosure of a shared meaningful world” (2006 page 106). Nancy’s thinking of the singular plural and being as being-with does suggest an ecological logic in which we are always already enrolled in a multiplicity of relations. However, the necessity for a finite thinking within this logic of ecological disposition should not be forgotten – such dispositions will always occur as singular occurrences and therefore need to be thought, and re-thought, each time. Such a disposition should not be taken as a starting point for the description of an encounter but as that which the description moves towards.

**Sonorous Presence, the Body, and Resonant Subjects**

The subject of listening in Nancy is then a product of the ‘sonorous present’:

“The sonorous present in the result of space-time: it spreads through space, or rather it opens a space that is its own, the very spreading out of its resonance, it expansion and its reverberation. This space is immediately
omni-dimensional and transversate through all spaces: the expansion of sound through obstacles, its property of penetration and ubiquity, has always been noted”

(Nancy 2007b: 13).

Nancy’s understanding of listening here as both spatial and temporal is significant. As Idhe (2007: 57-71) notes, previously there has been a tendency to lay far stronger emphasis on the perceptual significance of sound in terms of temporality rather than its significance in spatial perception – spatial significance was previously only really attributed to the function of echoes or ‘echolation’, and their use by bats in the perception of their spatial surroundings. In suggesting that sound ‘opens a space’, Nancy is, in a sense, re-inscribing this spatio-perceptual significance. In listening the self takes place in the sonorous present. Listening enters into that spatiality, and at the same time is penetrated – it opens up a self, both from in the self and around the self: “it opens me inside me as well as outside, and it is through such a double, quadruple, or sextuple opening that a ‘self’ can take place” (Nancy 2007b: 14). Or, as Nancy (2007a: 99-100) notes, the “self cannot be given prior to this relation itself, since it is the relation that makes the self (self means relation to self [and sound/the sonorous present] and there is no case in which there is a subject of self”). This is then

“nothing other than a form or function of referral: a self is made of a relationship to self, or a presence to self, which is nothing other than the mutual referral between a perceptible individuation and an intelligible identity (not just the individual in the current sense of the word, but in him the singular occurrence of a state, a tension, or precisely, a ‘sense’)”

(Nancy 2007b: 8).

Nancy wants to emphasize the ‘re’ of ‘resonance’ given the referral in this relation is infinite in its redeployment and occurs prior to any logic of a subject (James 2006).

To be listening is then always to be doubled, folded, a return; to be outside and inside, opened from without and from within. But from without and within what? A body. From without and within a body. For Nancy, the body is the “pivot of the world, and existence cannot be thought outside of, or in abstraction from, bodily finitude” (James 2006: 131); “the body itself is experience” (Nancy 1993: 200) and “One could say the finitude of sense.” (Nancy 1993: 204). Specifically, as noted by James (2006), Nancy wants to be attentive to the point of contact between the limit of sense and signification on one hand, and the actual fleshy materiality of the body on the other through his rethinking of existential phenomenology and fundamental ontology. Such an understanding of the body of the body is significant for geography in its emphasis of the
singularity of experience – that any coming to presence is at the same time a passing
from presence.

The body for Nancy isn’t the body. Rather, it is about bodies. Bodies with bodies.
Transhuman bodies with bodies. As Nancy states:

“The ontology of being-with is an ontology of bodies, of everybody, whether
they be inanimate, animate, sentient, speaking, thinking, having weight, and
so on. Above all else, ‘body’ really means what is outside, insofar as it is
outside, next to, against, nearby, with a(n) (other) body, from body to body,
in the dis-position. Not only does a body go from one ‘self’ to an ‘other’, it is
as itself from the very first; it goes from itself to itself; whether made of stone,
wood, plastic, or flesh, a body is the sharing of a departure from self, the
departure towards self, the nearby-to-self without which the ‘self’ would not
even be ‘on its own’”

(Nancy 2000: 84).

The body of sound is folded through the body of listening, and we can only ever be
listening: “…animal bodies, in general – the human body, in particular – are not
constructed to interrupt at their leisure the sonorous arrival…” The ears don’t have
eyelids’ [even if they do have ipods]” (Nancy 2007b: 14). As Idhe (2007) notes, the air
that surrounds and permeates us finds its life in sound, and that even the ‘silent realms’
which we cannot register are in fact realms of sound and noise. It is interesting here that
in this Nancy is suggesting a rather different notion of relation than that which often
permeates geographical accounts. Rather than a topological understanding of discrete
unites relating to one another (here the source of sound and the body listening), Nancy
pays attention to the middle of this relation – to the materiality of the (immaterial)
sonorous that lies between and within us (see Irigaray 1999).

Given this immersion in the sonorous, questions arise about the broader space-
times of listening. Returning to the lens of the opening event, we could argue that
although many didn’t stop, this is not to say that they did not listen. Rather, they
resonated in different ways which did not exert a strong enough allure or force to make
them stop (see Chapter 6), or that they simply were disposed differently (given, for
example, being late for work, stressed about a meeting, and so on), to make them stop, as
already discussed. We can ask: is stopping to listen is so crucial? I think Nancy’s writings
on sonorous presence and ‘bodies’ being-with ‘bodies’ suggest not. As Nancy (2008b:
124) states, “the body consists in being exposed”. Therefore, there is significance in the
traces of resonance of those encounters that may be left in the body both in terms of
those who stopped and those who didn’t. Stopping is not the only mode of showing that
a body has been affected. As discussed in the prelude, during the experiment, one of the
first things to ‘happen’ was that someone altered their gait and turned their head – does this mean they listened? Further, a number of children strained to stop as their parents rushed them through the metro station – were they listening? Those who queued at the kiosk didn’t look or pay attention – but were they then listening? To each I would answer yes. Not coming to self-presence in this engagement does not mean there has not been an affect as any “substantial presence can be only a negation of presence as of the self, of presence in itself as to itself” (Nancy 2008b: 140). In entering that space they were immersed in the sonorous present of that space, in addition to being enrolled in a multiplicity of other relations with other bodies, and therefore in some way will have resonated even if that resonance was indifferent, or not pronounced enough to draw them in, or only affected them later. Ultimately, this questions whether this event truly did fall on a thousand pairs of deaf ears, or, whether it rather resonated with a thousand bodies in a plurality of singular ways.

In this taking place of the self in listening, a self always listening and therefore always perpetually taking place, resonance again is key. The sense of the self in bound in the resonance of sound and a body. A body is a ‘resonance chamber’ housing the subject resonating, before any distinction of functions is made (Nancy 2007b); before a body is organized. It is therefore a “body-potency, not a body-instrument” (Nancy 2007b: 78 [note 10]; also see Deleuze and Guattari 2004a). We listen with our whole bodies, not just out ears; the ear is at best the ‘focal organ’ of listening. As Idhe (2007: 45) notes “Sound permeates and penetrates my bodily being” (see Serres 1995: 7; Connor 1999). There are strong echoes here of what I have earlier discussed as ‘affect’. Nancy does in fact talk of the interwoven nature of the non-musical codification of affects (love, desire, passion, joy, and so on) and an order of musical mimesis (the sonorous emission as such) in his work on listening (see Nancy 2007b: 38). Nancy’s understanding of resonance in particular could perhaps be understood in terms of affect. We can then ask “Isn’t the space of the listening body…just…a hollow column over which a skin is stretched, but also from which the opening of a mouth can resume and revive resonance? A blow from outside, clamour from within, this sonorous, sonorized body undertakes a simultaneous listening to a ‘self’ and to a ‘world’ that are both in resonance. It becomes distressed (tightens) and it

115 Also see Ingold (2000: 251).
116 This does bear significance for an understanding of the experience of those with hearing difficulties – while the ear, the ‘focal organ’ may not function fully, this is not to say that they do not in some sense listening – they can feel the resonance of bass frequencies in their stomachs etc. (see Idhe 2007: 44-45). As Serres (1995: 60) states “No one is deaf, in a strict sense; at least intropathetic noise is perceived nonstop, my body burns enough to give it off at all times. Hearing is an open receiver that does not go to sleep”. For a broader discussion of deafness as bodily listening see Ingold (2000: 274-276).
rejoices (dilates). It listens to itself becoming distressed and rejoicing. It enjoys and is distressed at this very listening where the distant resounds in the closest”

(Nancy 2007b: 42-43).

The tightening and dilation of the body can be directly understood in Deleuzian terms of sad and joyful affects (see Chapter 5) – a sound that tightens (distresses) negatively affects us and a sound that dilates (rejoices) positively affects us (see Deleuze 1988), though the outcome of such affects remains to be seen. The emphasis laid here on resonance is at the same time then an emphasis of the Deleuzian intensive; of those intensive pre-individual forces that constitute or individuate the ‘self’ as an extended being (Boundas 2005b; Colebrook 2002: 38-39; Deleuze 2004b: 307). Deleuze (2005: 39) suggests that music “strips bodies of…the materiality of their presence: it disembodies bodies”. However, this disembodiment is at the same time a realization and coming to our-selves as embodied beings as “music traverses our bodies in profound ways” (Deleuze 2005: 39). This in turn is echoed by Nancy, as already suggested, in his discussion of ek-stasis – in sounding and consequently listening to ourselves we come to our selves and bodies in being outside of ourselves in extension; in listening we become embodied, we become aware of ourselves as being a body, in the resonance of sound and body.

Further, here we can think of timbre as perhaps the most significant affective element of sound. The OED defines timbre as “the quality of a musical sound or voice as distinct from its pitch or intensity” and as a “distinct quality or character”. When Nancy talks of timbre, he is referring to the “very resonance of the sonorous” it is the “reality of music” or “sonorous matter” that spreads and resounds in space (Nancy 2007b: 40). Therefore, timbre is the resonance of sound; the sound itself. It then forms sonorous sense as sense comes in resonance. This ‘lively’ understanding of the sonic is

117 Or as Serres (cited in Connor 1999) echos:

“At the beginning, the whole body or organism raises up a sculpture or statue of tense skin, vibrating amid voluminous sound, open-closed like a box (or drum), capturing that by which it is captured. We hear by means of the skin and feet. We hear with the cranial box, the abdomen and the thorax. We hear by means of the muscles, nerves and tendons. Our body-box, stretched with strings, veils itself within a global tympanum. We live amid sounds and cries, amid waves rather than spaces the organism moulds and indents itself. I am a house of sound, hearing and voice at once, black box and sounding-board, hammer and anvil, a grotto of echoes, a musicassette, the ear’s pavilion, a question mark, wandering in the space of messages filled or stripped of sense…I am the resonance and the tone, I am together the mingling of the tone and its resonance”.

118 For a discussion of the dilation of surfaces in general see Deleuze (2004c: 141-143). For a discussion of dilation and contraction in terms of affect, sensation and forces exerted on the body in particular, see Deleuze (2005: 28-29 & 41-42).
in contrast to other discussions which present sound as lively. While Nancy suggest an understanding of sound, through such conceptions of timbre and resonance, as having a sensuous liveliness – sound does things to bodies at a visceral level – discussions such as Idhe (2007) present sound in a less affective fashion. Though Idhe (2007) does acknowledge the significance of sound in it showing liveliness – through its ability to show movement etc. – to me he does not give the same sense of the felt dimensions of sound in this discussion of liveliness; the sound does appear to become a little sterile. Sound shows movement and penetrates bodies, but it doesn’t seem to do much to these bodies.

There is no intentionality here for it is before any relation to object that listening opens up in timbre; timbre resounds in it rather than for it. In this, timbre also in a sense acts as the communication of the incommunicable in that timbre is communication itself: it is “that things by which a subject makes an echo” (Nancy 2007b: 41). Here Nancy is not thinking about communication as a transmission, but instead as a sharing. Timbre is non-representational in that it is “above all the unity of a diversity that its unity does not reabsorb. That is also why it does not yield to measurement or notion as do other music values” (Nancy 2007b: 41). Timbre, unlike pitch, intensity, and other musical terms, is not directly measurable. Such a quality presents “a block of becoming at the level of expression…that continually escape[s] from the coordinates or punctual systems functioning as musical codes at a given moment” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 329). Instead it is referred to qualitatively through metaphor; through colour, touch, or even smell. Timbre then resounds with all perceptible registers while outweighing them.

Such a body-subject for Nancy is not to be confused with the intentional, phenomenological subject though as just suggested. It is instead a question of “going back from the phenomenological subject, an intentional line of sight, to a resonant subject, an intensive spacing of a rebound that does not end in any return to self without immediately re-launching, as an echo, a call to that same self. While the subject of the target is always already given, posed in itself to its point of view, the subject of listening is always still yet to come, spaced, transversed, and called by itself, sounded by itself”

(Nancy 2007b: 21).

119 Although parallels could perhaps be drawn here between Nancy’s understanding of timbre and Barthes’ of the ‘grain of the voice’, Barthes himself suggest that the grain, is for him, something different from timbre: “The ‘grain’ of the voice is not – or not only – its timbre; the signifying it affords cannot be better defined than by the friction between music and something else, which is the language (and not the message at all)” (Barthes 1986: 273).
This suggests a disagreement with Idhe’s (2007: 22) phenomenological work on listening and sound. Listening is not always a ‘listening to’, but rather a ‘listening with’. This post-phenomenology of the subject perhaps even evacuates the subject entirely, given there is no subject at all except as that place of resonance in infinite tension and redeployment. There is an absence of ground and only “resonance without reason” (Nancy 2007a: 47) where “Souls and individuals resonate with another but cannot know each other” (Williams 2003: 208). Nancy’s work on listening then is less about the phenomenological examination of sound in terms of a ‘getting to the sound itself’, to its essence, but about realizing the excessive experiential potential of sound and examining the intensive processes that occur in such experience. Like Deleuze’s transcendental empiricism (as discussed in the previous chapter), it is less about transcendence and more about the creative processes present in such encounters; not what it is, but how it (perpetually) comes to be, and the challenge of a finite thinking this presents

V. Conclusion

So, in light of this discussion of Nancy’s philosophy, and returning to Washington, what can we then say about our lone stationary listener and his experience of Joshua Bell? Firstly, we can perhaps start to re-inscribe the significance of the proper name ‘Joshua Bell’. The proper names under which we define and capture music (classical, rock, jazz; virtuoso, amateur etc.) are not then of sole importance – they are decentred – and what is also important is how the actual ‘sound molecules’ themselves resonate in the body of the listener. The performer is still obviously important; they generate the music – it is their flesh on the key, the string etc. and it is their breath that dictates the precise phrasing. We should not also underestimate the affective power the connection of their name to that sound holds; it is not to install a tabula rasa. However, this is not the be all and end all. No matter how much we are told it is good, spectacular, beautiful, it should not be forgotten that it is our resonance with this sound that counts. The cultural snobbery at play in the commentary of Richard Morrison is key here. The discussion presented here takes our attention away from thinking in terms of objective beauty or value. However, this is not to suggest that all music should be given the same value. Rather it poses questions around listening on different terms. It instead asks questions around what music will do to us. This is a question we cannot know the answer to in advance and we should therefore not foreclose this potential. It is an affirmation of singularity, of “unique conjunctions of forces”, in each (multiple) occurrence (Baugh 1992: 144). We need to ask “whether they [here music and sound] agree or disagree with
us, that is, whether they bring forces to us [a dilation], or whether they return us to...the poverty of organization [a contraction]” (Deleuze 1997: 135).

There is then, in a parallel movement, a necessary unmaking of the musicologist here, as Nancy (2007b: 63) suggests:

‘If someone listens to music without knowing anything about it – as we say of those who have no knowledge of musicology – without being capable of interpreting it, is it actually possible that he is actually listening to it, rather than being reduced to hearing [entendre] it?’.

In short, it is not necessarily about what we can read in the music, what meaning we can discern, but about the sound of the music itself (see Bogue 2003: 13). It is about listening to it; to its materiality, rhythm and timbre, and how this resonates in us and perpetually makes and un-makes us. This is in a sense exemplified in our listener who didn’t know music theory, didn’t know who Joshua Bell was, didn’t really like classical music, but none the less found himself briefly in his resonance with the notes being played in his listening within the spatialities of the underground. This listening may make us ‘feel at peace’ like our lone listener, but it may equally disturb or unsettle us; it may make us feel like dancing or it may make us feel like falling asleep. Further, as with many of the listeners to the opening event, it may have little noticeable impact at all. I feel Nancy offers a particularly insightful route into, and conceptual means with which we can begin to sketch, such events of listening and therefore a means to do geographies of music (see Wood, et al. 2007).

More generally, what does this imply for the study of listening in geography? Most specifically, this discussion aims to develop the understanding of the non-representational processes present in practices of listening through Nancy’s project of a finite thinking of the singular plural. In an attempt to expand on geography’s engagement with practices of listening, I am arguing, through Nancy, for an engagement with the ongoing processes of subjectification that are perpetually occurring in our being-with sound, which itself is an argument for an engagement with that sound itself. Given this is an engagement with the non-representational, as just suggested, this is likely to be little more than sketchy. This said, are not such processes and subjects little more than “silhouettes that are both imprecise and singularized...sketches of affects” (Nancy 2000: 7)? As Nancy (2003: 5) states, a finite thinking is a “thinking that...is only ever able to think to the extent that it also touches on its own limit and its own singularity”. Thinking back to the opening event, it is about tracing the plurality relations present in such an event of listening, a plurality that is foregrounded in that listerings situation outwith the
traditional environments or circumstances in which listening might occur. Tracing the relations between the listener’s body and the sound encountered and the dilations or contractions produced therein. Between those bodies and other aspects of their environment such as its ‘feel’ or architecture, and so on. This will, however, always exceed our enumeration. For me, the challenge of the non-representational is precisely a call for such a finite thinking. This therefore contributes to work being done around the understanding of the non-representational in its decentring of the role of interpretation and focus on the practical aspects of listening and more so in its affirmation of the singularly multiple over the general. It is at this point, one

“becomes most aware of the essence of singularity…it is, each time, the punctuality of a ‘with’ that establishes a certain origin of meaning and connects it to an infinity of other possible origins. Therefore, it is, at one and the same time, infra-/intraindividual and transindividual, always the two together. The individual is an intersection of singularities, the discrete exposition of their simultaneity, an exposition that is both discrete and transitory”

(Nancy 2000: 85).

To conclude, this returns us to the post-phenomenological and particularly the first trajectory from Chapter 2. Nancy’s critical engagement with phenomenology offers an original understanding of the subject distinct from the humanist subject of traditional identity politics and the intentional correlate of experience present in much of phenomenological work. In their place, Nancy suggests a post-humanist subject that is always already implicated in the ‘with’ of its being, and in this, perpetually spaced and to come; an always emergent subject. It is a subject that is found, and re-found, in bodily resonance with ambient environments; in affective relations – on difference and the pre-individual. The post-humanism of this understanding highlights the significance of our coexistence in material relations, specifically with sound as discussed here. Nancy (2007a: 42) then pays attention to the singular-plurality of our being-with sound by which we have a world, or rather, by which worlding occurs given that “a world is a space in which a certain tonality resonates”. The subject here is the relation itself – it is the being-with. This relatedness is ecological and so material – it a subject that is with rather than for or to the world.
I. Introduction

In this thesis I set out to examine the complex geographies of street performance and particularly the multitude of ways in which this practice is embedded within, and therefore shaped by, the specific spaces in which it takes place. This has been pursued at a variety of scales, from the broad scale of the everyday life of the city to the specific embodied experiences of the performer and audience members, but at all times through an ecological approach which pays attention to this complex relatedness. Such relatedness has been shown to occur both within and across these various scales and so, for example, the discourses organizing the everyday life of the city can be felt in and between the bodies of the performer and audience members and so affect their actions, and equally a fleeting gesture or passing comment can affect a variety of unforeseen changes in the organization of the everyday life of a space.

More specifically, in the introduction to this thesis I set out three interrelated questions. These were:

1) What happens when the street space is transformed into a performance place and how is this affected by both the performance’s everyday and legislative context?

2) How do the spatialities of the street, and the socialities that emerge therein, affect the embodied experience of performing and the performance?
3) How can the subject-centred nature of much of phenomenological thought be supplanted while still emphasizing the centrality of embodied experience, and the situatedness of the body, to understandings of practice?

In concluding this thesis I will return to each of these in turn now and summarize where the thesis has got to with each. From this, I will also outline specific limitations of the research presented here and how it could be augmented, both by research relating to street performance but also by research within other empirical contexts.

II. From Street Space to Performance Place

In relation to the first research question, the thesis has shown that street performance holds the potential to produce both convivial and conflictual socialities in the transformation of the everyday spaces of the city into performances places. This is achieved both in bringing people together in fleeting collective encounters, and through the transgression of boundaries and social norms. Equally, at times this doesn’t happen, or is impeded by the spatio-temporal patterns of the street. As a result, street performance appears to elicit attempts to harness this potential for commercial ends, but also to guard against the disruption of this and broader social routines, through the engineering of the affects of performance via the impositions placed on the nature of performances and their spatio-temporal situation (see Thrift 2004).

More specifically, in Chapter 4 it was shown how, in Bath, performances are traversed by a complex (im)material ecology of discourses and routines which impact upon the playing out of performances in the context of the everyday, both positively and negatively. The palimpsest nature of this setting was drawn out through an engagement with, and a diagrammatic refiguring of, the work of Lefebvre (1991; 2004) on how the space-times of the city are produced through, and affected by, a complex and dynamic interaction of representations, routines, and interventions, which, in response to critiques of recent discussion of practices in geography (Cresswell 2006), attends to the situatedness of practices within a specific context. This was particularly foregrounded by the ecological approach taken in this thesis which pays attention to both the material relatedness of the body in practice, and also to the immaterial aspects that traverse such spaces and experiences.

It is clear from this discussion that the status of street performance within the everyday life of the city is complex and by no means secure. This is especially evident in Bath given regular attempts in the recent past to tighten the ways in which street performances are controlled, and also in the current plans to review this, the tones of
which appear to be leaning towards a tighter form of control and the discouraging of certain practices and performers. There is then a delicate balance to be maintained to allow performances to continue, but without it becoming more of a form of commissioned performance. While I don’t want to suggest something like a notion of ‘real’ street performance (see Goss 1996), it is clear that if performances are strictly controlled through, for example, licensing, timetabling, and other means which fix the space-time of the performance and tie the performer to a specific locality (and so excluding other itinerant performers), something of the variety and informality of the performance is lost and so is the potential for such performances to produce fleeting liminal spaces of sociality or conviviality in the everyday. It is arguable whether spaces such as Covent Garden actually constitute spaces of street performance, and rather simply present a form of commissioned performance employed to attract more people to the area. As one Convent Garden performer told me in the past, ‘if you want to see real street performers [in London], go to the South Bank’ (where there is no legislation) (Simpson 2006). However, the specific point at which this line is crossed is by no means clear.

On the basis of this, there are a number of areas in which this research could be pursued further. Firstly, as was acknowledged in Chapter 3, there has been a relatively small input from other performers in this study. Therefore, in terms of further examining the affects the legislative and everyday context of performance has on these performances, it would be potentially fruitful to pursue this further in discussion with performers. However, given the disparate nature of this grouping of performers it is not easy to undertake such enrollment. Both in this study, and in my past experience of studying street performers for my Masters dissertation, I found it difficult to enroll performers into the study and talk to them in any length or depth. This is partly caused by the difficulty in soliciting participants as an overt research other than by approaching them in the street after a performance, and so when they are still busy and may be looking to move onto a further performance. Also, if pursued more as a participant, such as in this thesis, the lack of conversation that occurs between performers on a day-to-day basis made it very difficult to build any kind of interpersonal relation from which further and more detailed conversations could occur.

In addition, while this study has been set primarily in Bath, it is clear that issues relating to the control of performances by local councils and, more generally, the nature of the overall performance scene and its spaces, will vary from location to location.
During the time of this study prominent examples of this have emerged, including the banning of bag pipers on the Royal Mile in Edinburgh, and a series of debates around the use of the centre of Oxford by buskers and the argued need for a stricter policing of this. Therefore, research into this variance could further uncover the ways in which the street spaces of the city are transformed into performance places, and particularly examine the ways in which this is affected by the performance’s everyday and legislative context given that many of these sites explicitly draw on precedents set in others in terms of how they respond to street performers and in determining the sort of performance places that they want to actively encourage or engineer.

Beyond studying street performance specifically, and highlighting their broader significance, the thematics discussed here could be pursued in relation to a research project related to the impact artistic performance has upon the everyday life of the city more generally (Pinder 2005a), and specifically how it is possible that such performances enact a form of critique of this. It is possible that the examination of the performances of a variety of street theatre groups would throw this into sharper relief. Again intersecting with the work of Lefebvre and his ‘Critique of Everyday Life’ (Lefebvre 1992; 2002; 2005), I believe it could prove productive to examine the actual interventions such theatre groups make (through ethnographic observation and participation), but also what the explicit rationale of these interventions are (even if these are not aimed towards specific causes or articulated political projects), to show the ways in which these groups open up possibilities for something different to emerge in the everyday life of the city and how they potentially make people ask questions of what they routinely do.

**III. Experiencing (in) the Street**

In relation to the second research question, the thesis has shown that the experience of street performing and of street performances is significantly affected by the practice’s situation in the street and the spatio-temporal implications of this. This is the case in relation to the performer, but also for the audience and the ways in which they attend to the performance. For example, given this situation in the street, there is no obvious demarcation of a stage and so the performer can be quite exposed – the audience may be present on more than one side and so they can approach the performer as they like with little impediment to this. Further, performances are not necessarily defined temporally in advance, though there may be some restrictions placed on this in terms of duration, and therefore the audience may not be aware of the performance in advance of its actual taking place.
More specifically, in Chapter 5 it was shown how the socialities of the street, and the experience of performing therein, emerge from and are traversed by a multitude of singular affective relations between the performer, the (im)materiality of the street space, members of the audience, donations, the broader environmental conditions, and so on. Although not always registered consciously in the performer’s body, such affects produce singular modes of association specific to each encounter. Importantly, and responding to critiques of work focusing on affect (Harrison 2008), these relations were both positive and negative – they both increased my, the performer’s, capacity to act, but equally, at times, diminished them. There was a relative movement of speeding up and slowing down (Deleuze 1988). Given the ecological approach taken, it was also shown how these affects do not occur in some kind of a-social or blank space, but rather occur as part of a complex of variably rigid, variably flexible dispositions or comportments whereby the affects of body are organized into a particular cartography, again further attending to the situatedness of practices without reducing the practice to this situation (see Cresswell 2006).

Further, in Chapter 6 the significance of fleeting acts of attending, understood here as singular affective relations, were discussed given that street performance occurs outside of the traditional formalisms of a staged theatre environment in that both the timing and situation of performances is not necessarily worked out in advance. Inhabitants of the city – tourists, commuters, shoppers, and so on – have to therefore become part of the audience through a complex affective process of becoming aware, which takes place within the context of their daily routine, pre-planned activities, and so on. As was also touched on in Chapters 4 and 5, this becoming aware often doesn’t necessarily occur, with street performance acting in competition with the other spatial routines and patterns of the city – affects competing with affects.

Finally, in Chapter 7 this situation outside of the more traditional staged theatre environment, and the resultant limited amount of attention that is paid to street performance, was thought about in terms of the sound the performance produces and the acts of listening urban inhabitants undertake. Rather than the more commonly assumed acts of attentive listening, or rather hearing, that are often focused on in terms of the attending to musical performance, this chapter outlined an understanding of a more bodily form of listening that related to the urban inhabitant’s singular subjectifying being-with sound and the resonant affectivity occurring in this. The spatiality of listening here is defined by a body’s immersion in associations of affective resonance and so
socialities emerge in the perpetual coming to presence and moving from presence of such a body immersed in sound. This was again foregrounded by the ecological approach taken and its attention to the material implications of the immaterial constituent aspects of the body’s embeddedness within an ecology of relations.

There are a few areas where this research could be expanded upon. Firstly, given the time constraints of the study, the period of ethnography here was related to one summer. Therefore there are a number of ways in which the embodied experience of performing may vary over a longer duration – the nature of the affective relations discussed in this thesis may change, for example in terms of the relation to the performance spaces, the impact members of the audience have on the performer, the affects of donations, and so on. Also, the actual street setting for the performance may change over time – as was the case, following the completion of this research, in Broadmead in Bristol with the implementation of permits, guidelines and specific ‘busking spots’ – as could the make-up of performers performing there, so that the dynamism of the experience of that space would be further highlighted. Further, and as was mentioned above, this thesis has focused on my own experiences of performing in the street and has not drawn on the experiences of other performers in examining this. This may be facilitated by a longer duration of ethnographic participation, but I am still sceptical that this would be a fruitful approach to uncovering such themes given the issues already discussed above.

Also, in further pursuit of an understanding of practices of audiencing and listening, given the necessary conceptual development undertaken here, it would be interesting to pursue this more through explicitly empirical research. One means of doing this would echo the example discussed in Chapter 7 whereby the video recording of the events that occurred was complemented with the later discussions with those experiencing the performance on what they felt, or, importantly, did not feel in their encounter with that performance.\textsuperscript{120} The video could be explicitly used in these conversations to elicit responses.

In addition, and again moving the discussion beyond a specific interest in street performance, while Chapter 5 discussed the undertaking of artistic performances and the experience of this, little has been said about the ways in which the skills necessary for undertaking such performances are acquired and how this can be conceptualized. This is

\textsuperscript{120} This was not logistically possibly in this study given the necessary number of research staff to pursue such an approach – one person to perform (or a volunteer performer), one person to film, and a number of people stopping passersby to try to talk to them.
something geography more generally has neglected (although see Lea 2009). Studying the acquisition of artistic skills may also prove to move the emphasis on the training of the body more generally away from notions of disciplining and docility that have emerged from the influence of the work of Michel Foucault in geography (Foucault 1979; Philo 1989), and focus more on the excessive and expressive nature of bodies. Therefore, one potential research project which will stick with certain thematics of this thesis lies in a collaborative research project with circus skills trainers and practitioners at a number of circus schools in the UK, specifically ‘Circomedia’ in Bristol and ‘The Circus Space’ in London. It is possible that the examination of how people are trained to ‘clown’, for example, will insert a liveliness into the docile trained bodies which have previously populated geographical texts.

IV. Post-phenomenology – a Sketch

In relation to the final research question, this thesis has begun to sketch the outline of one specific post-phenomenological geography by way of a line traced from the work of Husserl (2001a; 2001b) to the work of Merleau-Ponty (1968; 2002), and beyond both of these in light of various post-structural writers. This has been pursued along three specific trajectories relating to the way we understand subjectivity, the social-cultural-political situatedness of the body, and also in terms of the sensuousness of bodily relations. These trajectories have also been framed by an ecological approach to the study of practices which guides these post-phenomenological trajectories and emphasizes the complex relatedness of the body in practices and the context of these practices.

More specifically, in relation to the first trajectory which sought to move beyond certain notions of subjectivity whereby the subject is taken as present in advance of experience and therefore as that which governs experience through “internal representational thought” (Rose 2006: 546), Chapter 5 pursued an understanding of the subject on the basis of “a transposition of the operations of subjectivity from the individual’s head to a particular relation between self and world” (Rose 2006: 546). Here, in light of Nietzsche’s (1985; 2000a; 2000c) questioning of the status of the ‘I’ as simply a grammatical imposition, the subject, or rather, subjectivity, was understood as being a product of an ongoing and multiple process of subjection and therefore as individuated in the intensive experience the body undergoes in its engagement with the world (Guattari 1995).

This was further pursued in Chapters 6 and 7. Firstly, in Chapter 6, and through an explicit engagement with the work of Husserl (2001a) and his understanding of
passive and active synthesis, the thesis proposed an understanding of the subject as not something lying dormant and waiting to be awoken in its encountering of ‘affective rays’ emanating from an object or stimuli, but rather as a system of ‘larval selves’ and therefore not as that which undergoes modifications through the receipt of such affective rays, but as that which *is* a modification – a residual subject emergent in the consummation of pre-individual affective intensities (Deleuze 2004b; Deleuze and Guattari 2004a). In Chapter 7, this was further developed in terms of Nancy’s (2007b) conception of the subject as a resonant presencing, as that which rather than intending the experience of sound, is always already with sound in its bodily being-with. In this presencing the subject is not there in advance of experience, nor in fact does it ever come to be ‘there’, rather it is an “incessant coming-and-going” (Nancy 1991: 98), and therefore in a perpetual process of formation and dissolution.

In collectively articulating the discussions of Chapters 5-7 in terms of their intensive understanding of the production of subjectivity and the significance of the co-existent nature of being, it becomes clear how complex the subject really is – it is produced at the molecular level both through auto-affective intensive process and through the encountering of that which is other than itself. This then highlights the necessity of an ecological conception of subjectivity rather than one in which the subject is situated as independent from the world it exists in, and, therefore, instead of taking its place in advance of experience, the subject appears as an “event in a dissipative process of production” (Tuinen 2007: 290).

In relation to the second trajectory, on the basis of the general outlining of the performance scene in Chapter 4 and the summary of this given above, Chapter 5 focused both on the situation of the performer within the performance space, but also in the ways in which the body is socialized into a specific comportment through the impact of specific discursive formations which dictate what the body does – when it performs, what it performs with, etc. – but also through the routine playing out of the everyday. Developing the diagrammatic understanding of the production of space-time outlined in Chapter 4, Chapter 5 outlined the complex cartographies which striate the performing body and the variable degrees to which these are rigid, or open to some movement. This allows for an understanding of the experiential field as not simply “a largely happy place” but rather as a socially, culturally, and politically situated field (Hass 2008: 93), but equally not one where behaviour is entirely dictated by this field. Further, Chapters 6 and 7 attended to this in both discussing the ways in which affective experience is always
already situated within a specific disposition or comportment, although not one intentionally assumed, which is affected by the body’s always already having entered into a variety of affective relations.

This was in turn attended to in light of the ecological perspective outlined in the Introduction to the thesis and its focusing on both the material and immaterial elements of the ecology, the immaterial here being such discursive formations which have material impacts upon the performing body and the playing out of performances, and also in the way that the ecology also works temporally, extending to the past relations the body has entered into.

Finally, in relation to the third trajectory, Chapter 5 approached an understanding of embodied experience as inherently affective, with the body being an intensive ecology of singular affective relations. This was again further pursued in Chapters 6 and 7. Chapter 6 discussed a move from affection to affect, whereby the discussion became less about the subject that receives the affective experience and the affection as being for that subject, and rather about the affect lying between the body and that which it enters into relation with. There is here more a coming together than a one for the other. Further, Chapter 7 developed an understanding of the affectivity of sound and the resonance it produces in its relation with the body listening, drawing out an understanding of timbre as being the resonance of the sonorous. Again, this was facilitated by the ecological approach and its attention to the intensive, and therefore to the visceral ecology that is affected in the undertaking of practices.

There are a number of directions in which these theoretical developments can be pursued further. Firstly, and most evidently, the thesis has focused on one particular phenomenological lineage tracing from Husserl through to Merleau-Ponty. While the works of Heidegger and Levinas did appear in passing, as other work developing a post-phenomenology in geography has shown (Harrison 2007b; Harrison 2008; Paterson 2004; Popke 2003), their works offer a variety of lines to explore which will both contribute to the trajectories of this thesis, but also open up others. That said, the works of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty have by no means been exhausted here. For example, while understandings of intersubjectivity were approached in Chapter 5, this was by no means exhaustive, especially given Husserl wrote three volumes on the topic which still

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121 I should note here that while this thesis has primarily being interested in the way in which affects are felt in an organic body – it that of the performer or the audience – such affects do not need such an organic body for their playing out. I would argue inorganic bodies can affect and be affected by other bodies, both organic and non-organic, without the necessary presence of an organic (especially human) body (see Harman 2005; Meillassoux 2008).
remain untranslated into English (see Zahavi 2003). A substantial post-phenomenology of intersubjectivity still remains to be written.

In addition, there are also a number of more contemporary phenomenologists whose work geography has yet to attend to. For example, the works of the Christian phenomenologist Jean-Luc Marion around saturated phenomena and the ability of their givenness to exceed intentionality, and also of Michel Henry around affect and the creation of a purely immanent phenomenology without intentionality, open up potential ways for thinking about embodiment, the body, and subjectivity differently (see Henry 2003; Mullarkey 2006). Even more so, the work of Nancy discussed here in terms of sound and listening, for me, more broadly holds the potential to move substantially beyond the subject-centered nature of previous phenomenological thought and lead to a radical conception of experience in terms of our being-with the world and others, through his rethinking of phenomenology’s existential analytic in terms of a co-existential analytic of coming to presence. Therefore, I will give the last word to Nancy and his call for

“an ontology of the ‘between’, of the swerve or exposition by which something like a ‘subject’ can emerge. A subject that would henceforth have two fundamental characteristics: that of not being substance and that of being exposed to other subjects…A world of subjects can only be a world of internal expansion along this double line of ex-position, and thus a common and insubstantial world, common by virtue of its insubstantiality – in other words common by the ontological impossibility of a common substance (no more common to all subjects than common to the subject and to itself). This impossibility alone opens the possibility, the chance, and the risk of being in the world”

(Nancy 2008b: 143-144),

that

“man [sic] begins again by passing infinitely beyond man [sic]”

(Nancy 2008b: 170),

and how

“[e]ven in solitude, I am made of the whole world as it takes with ‘me’ or as ‘me’ a new singular point of sensitivity”

(Nancy 2009).


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