

FROM TREMOR TO MOVEMENT: A CHOREOGRAPHIC  
PROCESS WITH FITZMAURICE VOICEWORK

by

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the process of using Fitzmaurice Voicework (FV) in creating a choreographed dance. I hypothesized that using FV would generate a different choreographic process beyond habitual movement patterns, and investigated these questions: Through the breaking down of habitual technique patterns, can the deconstructing and tremoring process of FV access what is beyond trained, familiar bodily patterns? Can deconstructing and tremoring lead to new possibilities as a dancer and choreographer? And how is the effect of FV observable in other dancers' bodies? This thesis includes an explanation of my own investigative theory work with FV as well as a report of my choreographic research, creative process, and observations of the dancers. I observed different evolutions with FV between the dancers depending on their training backgrounds. I discovered that deconstructing, tremoring, and restructuring in FV on its own did not generate choreographic movement successfully, but movement was generated from a combination of FV practice along with Passive Sequencing, and dance improvisation. I believe that adding FV regularly to the normal practice of dance technique can result in a different and perhaps more available body and possibly lead to a deeper understanding in choreographing and performance.

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## PREFACE

My introductory session with Fitzmaurice Voicework, brought me to an uncomfortably unfamiliar place, but a craving for more self-transparency kept me following my curiosity. I had been doing some philosophical soul searching into my own movement improvisation, and choreographic process, and I sensed residual patterns from dance technique classes, and years of ballet training. This is not to say that I am negative about dance technique or ballet but I could feel these classroom patterns infiltrate my choreographic process. Too many times I thought that my movement improvisations were at best just variations on previously learned movement patterns. With this introduction to Fitzmaurice Voicework (FV), I thought that FV could be a new conduit for movement. I thought that I was self-editing and allowing self-inhibitors to hold me back from my own creativity and capabilities. This has been part of my own lifelong process of letting go of structures that I did not need anymore. I have found many of the self-imposed rules from religious structures, cultural beliefs, and other structures, unnecessary. I did not think that my training in ballet was a negative influence. It was how I was allowing myself to mimic what I had seen and been taught that was keeping the stagnation. The FV practice involves a process of “destructuring,” a word that will be discussed at great length later, which helped me develop a different sensitivity to my body, and a different bodily response to the use of breath. I used FV to create a different sort of artistic process than I had ever used before.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION TO FOREIGNNESS

#### Spaces in Between Known Points and the Music of Balinese Gamelan

My introduction to Balinese music pushed me into a new perspective that I had not yet encountered. I was raised in a family of musicians, and my extensive ballet training went hand in hand with playing Baroque and classical music with precision and perfection in rhythm and pitch on my viola and harp. When I was twenty years old and attending the University of Wyoming for my undergraduate degree in Theatre and Dance, I took a class called “Balinese Gamelan” for my non-Western perspective credits. In this class, we played music as a group on a 26-piece Gamelan set, and practiced voice Gamelan called *Kechak* under the guidance of Pak Made Lasmawan (pronounced “pahk mah-day”), a man born and raised in Bali but living in Colorado. The pitch of the Gamelan instruments sounded foreign to my Western ears. Like many others trained in Western Classical forms, I had grown used to a standardization of interval between pitches that make what are considered to be “notes” in the Western scale. The Gamelan instruments are tuned in pairs of mismatched pitch so when a bronze tone bar of the same “note” on a pair of instruments is struck with a wooden hammer, the resulting pitch hovers somewhere in spaces between my “familiar” notes. In Gamelan players this is called “shimmer.” At first I tried to understand this new foreignness by using ways that I had initially learned music, by studying the notation and practicing on my own.



The music, however, isn't written down in any sort of notation. In Gamelan class Pak Made wrinkled his brow if anyone even suggested writing down notes or numbers to remember the music. As I struggled to hear when the musical transitions would occur, I found that I could not understand the timing well enough to keep track of the music with counts to enter musically in a phrase. Finding the precise moment to enter into a new musical section was something sensed rather than counted. I still cannot really explain how we played music together.

The Gamelan instruments reference breath and breathing. These “waves” of paired tuning contain both a higher and a lower tone. “The higher instrument, known as the ‘inhaler’ (*pengisep*), and the lower, the ‘exhaler’ (*pengumbang*), create this pulsating effect” when played together, “metaphorically breathing and thus bringing the sound of the gamelan to life” (Gold, 2005, p. 33). The “breath” symbolically opens up the spaces in between the tones. Accessing foreign spaces has been a point of interest to me throughout this process.

This experience with Balinese music was over ten years ago but continues to reverberate in my consciousness. The permeable effect within the group of people while playing Gamelan music was like a trance, the trance of the shimmering tones. I had to release the control of the knowing when the next musical entrance was, and remain present in this unknowing state while playing. As I am fascinated by the “shimmering” effect within this music, I have wondered how this might be applicable to the body.

#### “Shimmer” to “Tremor”

I am intrigued by what I perceive as a philosophical dissonance between dance technique, and the choreographic process. In my own choreographic practice I wondered

if the techniques that I have engaged in are serving me, or if I am just a servant to these techniques? I sensed that my own familiar movement patterns were holding me back from creating new movement possibilities, and that I was hiding behind the familiarity of learned movement patterns or phrases that I had learned from others. I recognized my habits to revert back to technical skill and I yearned to find a movement experience akin to that trance-like state and “shimmer” between known territories from my experience with Balinese music. I could not seem to get there with my familiar learned technique.

A fellow graduate student in the Department of Modern Dance at the University of Utah, introduced me to a practice he called “Passive Sequencing.” While exploring Passive Sequencing, I had an experience where I sensed deep muscular spasms within the torso, pelvis, fingers, and eyelids. I allowed myself to follow the urges when normally I would quell urges to spasm if possible. These trembling sensations in the body were similar to the “shimmer” effect from Balinese music. The body confusion during this release was like the “shimmer” between slightly different pitches. Releasing control of the body to this tremor was liberating and also daunting. After this fascinating discovery about my own body, I knew that I wanted to search for more autonomic bodily reactions such as this one.

While discussing my discovery with this fellow graduate student, he related my experience to his experiences with FV. FV, developed by Catherine Fitzmaurice, is a comprehensive approach to vocal training primarily geared towards actors and singers, however, after my interest in FV ignited, I began exploring this method as a movement study and a conduit for choreographic exploration. I studied with a Fitzmaurice practitioner named Stacey Cole, and with Catherine Fitzmaurice herself at a workshop in New York. This method of releasing the body to these shimmers or tremors became

significant to me as a different process for myself, and a different way to choreograph. I attempted to find the “shimmer” effect in the body. This was a search for choreography that was more my own through another access point.

### A Brief Glossary of Terms

Included below are descriptions of several key words and phrases used in this thesis:

1. “Destructuring” is part of the FV practice. In brief, destructuring, is a process of allowing oneself to get rid of what is familiar and habitual. It is described as a “deep exploration into the autonomic nervous system functions” and “spontaneous, organic impulses” (Fitzmaurice, 1996, p. 2). “tremoring” is a part of the destructuring process.
2. “Tremoring” or the tremoring aspect of the destructuring process will be a focus. A “tremor” is an autonomic bodily response, revealed as visible shaking in the body. FV uses a series of physical positions that induce a state of “tremoring” in the body. These positions serve each body differently. No specific physical result is expected in finding a “tremor.” The tremor may be invisible to the outside eye or be dramatic and convulsive. Accessing this tremoring state and can lead to a different connection and relationship to the body and help a performer get beyond self-inhibitors.
3. “Restructuring” is connected to destructuring in FV. Restructuring involves managing and using the breath to support the voice. Catherine Fitzmaurice developed many of the restructuring exercises whereby some of the concepts are from classical vocal training. The destructuring process serves

restructuring to help create a different relationship and understanding in how the body and breath is used.

4. “Allowing” is a key concept involved in my process in general. One “allows” processes to happen rather than forcing. Allowing trembling to happen in FV is as important as allowing movement to happen in the choreography.
5. “Passive Sequencing” is a process that was used throughout my thesis choreography. The Passive Sequencing helped catalyze our process of allowing movement improvisation to happen.

The use of voice and breath are integral parts of the FV deconstructing and restructuring processes. These were also interests that I explored with FV. I used the voice, and the breath along with experimental movement. The relationship I had to my voice was similar to the relationship I had with my own movement. I was mimicking what I heard and saw more than knowing what my own voice sounded like. Learning how to use breath to connect both with the voice and my movement in this practice was another facet I was interested in developing for my own personal explorations and choreographic work.

Supporting movement with conscious use of breath was a concept I already found effective while studying Modern Dance with Bill Evans, whom I met around the same time that I discovered Balinese music. With Bill Evans I learned to use deep breath for greater use and ease of the body’s flexibility and range. I found his philosophies in Modern Dance technique similar to the practices in Balinese Gamelan. Evans’ focus on pathways, and connecting breath and thought to each movement, formed a new way of working in my body, which became similar to the developmental catalyst Balinese

Gamelan formed in me.

Evans encouraged students to avoid operating by “placing and bracing” which means, avoid placing yourself in physical shapes that you know and then bracing yourself in those known shapes to accomplish a movement task. He encouraged me to instead replace “place and brace” with “yield and push.” In his words, “yielding establishes an active give-and-take relationship with gravity, and a readiness to move. Pushing sends energy from the earth along open pathways of flow through the joint centers to the body’s core” (Evans, 2012). Catherine Fitzmaurice’s use of “intentional breath,” is similar. In FV the “thought or the musical phrase is the breath” (Fitzmaurice, 2014, lecture). Evans similarly said that by “allowing breath to happen freely” assists in “claiming power without sacrificing fluidity. When stabilizing ourselves by connecting to gravity and mobilizing ourselves by breathing fully and releasing unnecessary tension, we become integrated, and adaptable” (Evans, 2012). These are concepts I am still trying to instill in my own movement practices, and dance technique even now. I used FV to examine my relationship between my abilities in the technical realm with the core of movement philosophy and expression.

In this thesis I explored these main questions:

1. Through the breaking down of habitual technique patterns, can the deconstructing of the Fitzmaurice practice access what is beyond trained, familiar bodily patterns?
2. Can deconstructing and tremoring guide the body into foreign experiences that can then lead to new possibilities for me as a dancer and choreographer?
3. How does using FV affect other dancers’ bodies in this process? How can digging beneath trained patterns of dance affect movement and performance

relationships?

With FV there is no right or wrong, nor an intended outcome. My choreographic thesis work was an exploration in the philosophy and bodywork from FV as a conduit for movement generation and this process presented a unique challenge. I used FV as a practice and conduit whereas FV is normally applied to lyrics and melodies that are already learned, or stage movement that has already been blocked and memorized. For this thesis, I chose to derive a choreographic piece from the dancers' and my own experiences from the FV. By using the Fitzmaurice practice in this experimental nature, the dancers and I found new ways of investigating movement. In the rehearsal process we also developed movement from the process of combining FV, with Passive Sequencing, and movement improvisations.

The main limitation in this thesis project was time. I had worked with FV for five months before I began rehearsals with the dancers. Then the dancers had less than four months to access this different way of attuning the body. This may have been a very different project with different time constraints. The choreographic process derived from allowing movement to happen, could have been very different with more time.

This written thesis includes an explanation of my own investigative theory work with FV as well as a report of my choreographic research, creative process, and observations of my dancers. Chapter I discusses the need for this research and introduces key concepts used in this thesis. Chapter II is an overview of FV and the theories that support the practice. Chapter III discusses the FV process to trance dance another movement form that accesses a different state of being. Chapter III also discusses my own developmental process of using FV for movement improvisation and the methods formed through combining the FV practice with other practices such as Passive

Sequencing. Chapter IV is an overview of my creative process with five other dancers to create *Six Dancers in Search of an Author*, which was performed in December 2014 in the Graduate Thesis Concert in the Department of Modern Dance at the University of Utah. Chapter V offers a conclusionary statement on using FV to develop my choreographic work. Using FV as a choreographic work led to some new discoveries and discussion on the perceived effectiveness of the process for myself.

## CHAPTER II

### THEORIES AND PRACTICE OF FITZMAURICE VOICEWORK

#### Fitzmaurice Background

Catherine Fitzmaurice trained at the Central School for Speech and Drama, in England. “The story of Catherine Fitzmaurice’s rise to become one of the half-dozen most influential voice teachings in the theatre is well documented, and this introduction does not need to recount the roster of acclaimed directors who laud her work nor the famed venues in which it developed, nor the names of the actors who testify to the power of her work” (Meier, 2010, p. 38). When Catherine Fitzmaurice was teaching students early on, she stated “it was the lack of ability in most of my students to isolate, without undue tension.” She realized her own efficiencies of breathing that she was naturally predisposed to, which included “the vocally efficient rib swing and abdominal support” (Fitzmaurice, 1996, p. 3). She responded to this struggle by searching for a different approach.

Catherine Fitzmaurice stated that:

[This] caused me, not to give up the idea of technique as others have done in response to the perceived difficulty, but to look for methods of reducing body tension in faster and more radical ways than the voice work or the Alexander Technique which I had experienced at the Central School, so that the breathing isolations could become effortless and therefore economical, limber, and effective. (Fitzmaurice, 1996, p. 3)

Catherine Fitzmaurice was influenced by the psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich’s work, which she was introduced to while still living in London. Her interests in the practices of



Indian Yoga, and Japanese Shiatsu also helped shape FV.

Wilhelm Reich was a figure in early psychoanalytical research, preceding the work of the more well-known Sigmund Freud. Reich was different than those in psychological research before him. He believed that the body and mind were connected. Up until recently, his work was taboo. This was because his theories explored sexual repression, which he linked with human suffering. Reich also broke the mold of psychoanalysis by “touching the body, [and] the musculature of the patient.” Reich would do this by using simple massage grips on the patient and asking them to breath through the touch. He observed that patients were very impressionable through this touch and continued accessing the nervous system in this way (Dabelstein, 2009, film).

Catherine Fitzmaurice also used methods of similar design to Reichian bodywork by touching the body and opening up the sternum. A Fitzmaurice practitioner will often help a student’s experience by placing hands on the student’s ribs, chest, and sternum. This touch can assist the student to release muscular tension. This is just one of the many ways that Catherine Fitzmaurice’s interest in Reich’s work, has flowed over into Fitzmaurice practice.

Reich’s work is present in the first stage in FV, which is “destructuring.” Reich believed that there was an energy flow within the body. He thought that his methods were “releasing the dammed energy resulting in involuntary spasm and convulsions, like an orgasm” (Dabelstein, 2009, film). Like Reich, Catherine Fitzmaurice also believed in a released energy flow and in the FV practice refers to these spasms as “tremors.” Tremoring is an autonomic nervous system reaction that can manifest itself in physical shaking. Catherine Fitzmaurice views tremoring as,

. . . a naturally occurring reflex in the body, quite different from intentional

shaking. It happens when you are cold, angry, excited, injured, fatigued, [and] nervous. Neurologically it is based in the autonomic nervous system rather than the central nervous system. It is tremendously useful for the voice, because it directly reaches those aspects of oneself that are almost impossible to identify and shift. (Meier, 2010, p. 39)

The tremoring consists of a deep exploration into the spontaneous, organic impulses, which every actor aspires to incorporate into the acting process. The actor's voice is assisted by applying the tremor:

. . . initially through hyperextension of the body's extremities only, thus leaving the torso muscles free to respond with a heightened breathing pattern. At the same time a great deal of unaccustomed energy, waves of tremor, and, ultimately relaxation, flow throughout the body, sensitizing it to vibration, and increasing feeling and awareness. The introduction of sound into these positions allow the ensuing physical freedom to be reflected in the voice too, not just the body, because this freedom also naturally affects resonance and laryngeal use, so that pitch range and inflectional melody are improved, as are tone, timing and rhythm, and even listening and inter-relating. (Fitzmaurice, 1996, p. 2)

Reich believed that the body stores emotion in the form of muscle tension. This process of releasing was Reich's psychoanalytic philosophy. The patient released what was suppressed. In FV releasing the extraneous muscle tension is a piece of moving past our own self-inhibitors. Getting beyond self-regulating was one of the elements within FV that I found fascinating and applicable to my own artistic work.

Catherine Fitzmaurice's late husband, David Kozubei wrote extensively about "movements" that the body does while releasing the muscle tension as a result of suppression. "The original tightenings [of the muscles] suppress not only the memory of the tightening but suppress the inner feeling of the tightened muscles" (Kozubei, 1998). The key is "allowing" the body to release into the movement. This has also been the access point for myself in finding a more receptive body than the movement patterns that I was trained to do. My access point for FV was finding and allowing the "tremor" in the body. "Tremoring brings one back to an organic flow . . . The brain is following

reflexive impulses rather than trying to follow conscious instructions . . . It's not trying to be right. It settles into an organic easy way of production" (Meier, 2010, p. 39). Going into unknown spaces in our bodies is a daunting prospect. Whatever is foreign brings a sense of instability. It is our habit to "go for the solid and not the flowing. We go for certainty, but we never go for uncertainty" (Meier, 2010, p. 40). In my choreographic experiment, the foreign and unknown parts of myself were the primary focus. I attempted to lead myself and my dancers into uncertainty. As Catherine Fitzmaurice said, the deconstructing portion is "about getting rid of what is familiar, what is habitual, [and] what makes logical sense" (2010, p. 40).

#### Destructuring and Positions in Fitzmaurice Voicework

The tremoring positions and the process of deconstructing is integral to the experience of FV. Catherine Fitzmaurice said on the subject of deconstructing that:

Destructuring affects not only the vocal performance as well as the daily breathing (and vocal) habits of the actor, but can also radically alter muscle tone and body organization allowing sound vibrations to extend beyond the conventional resonators of chest and head throughout the body, adding harmonic range and natural volume to the voice. It encourages breathing (as power source and therefore, timing) and the body (as resonator and therefore tone) to respond organically to shifts in mood and idea, thus achieving variety and complexity of meaning and eliminating unintentionally dry, flat delivery. Since the physical and emotional aspects and the awareness levels of the actor can be deeply affected by this work, the resulting growth of the personality helps create a more mature artist, with increased potential for both sensitivity and pro-action. Through self-reflexive contact with the autonomic nervous system the actor acquires not only a more functional vocal instrument but also gains in autonomy, authenticity, and authority, which impact both personal and social behavior, as well as aesthetic choices . . . When the autonomic movements of the "destructured" muscles of respiration are less inhibited it becomes easy to "Restructure" by introducing the traditional European breathing techniques taught to actors. . The rib Swing and abdominal support actions are, in fact, what an uninhibited body does during speaking. (Fitzmaurice, 1996, p. 2)

The only equipment that a person may need for FV is perhaps a pillow to prop up

the body for a few of the positions, and a mat to lie or kneel comfortably. There is more than one way to experience FV. Some practitioners prefer to take things in a different order. In this work, there is no specific intended outcome. Vocalization with the breath throughout is encouraged but not mandatory. Worrying about looking or sounding a certain way is not the purpose.

Catherine Fitzmaurice developed many different tremoring positions, and not all tremor positions are useful to everyone. “People’s bodies are all different, which is why there is the variety of positions. Your body is also different everyday” (Fitzmaurice, 2014, lecture).

This is a description of two FV positions as an example of the FV practice. Catherine Fitzmaurice’s interest in yoga and shiatsu is more apparent in these bodily positions. A student practicing FV would begin by lying down on the back and drawing his or her attention to the breath. A student would tune into the difference between tension and release by a self-guided practice of purposefully applying tension, then releasing that tension. Pressing against the floor with different body parts and then releasing that pressure can accomplish this practice. A student could also use isometric contractions of the muscles in any body part and then release that contraction to acknowledge that experience of that difference. To begin one FV position, a leg tremor, a student remains on the back and using as little musculature as possible will draw the knees up to the ceiling so that eventually the soles of the feet are flat on the ground with the knees bent. While continuing to use very little muscle he or she will draw the knees up towards the chest until gravity assists in folding the leg and the knees naturally fall towards the chest. Many students find it is useful to slip a zafu cushion under the lower pelvis creating a posterior pelvic tilt. This posterior tilt will help the hip flexors remain

relaxed and folded while the knees fall towards the chest. The student will then slowly let the heels float up toward the ceiling with as little musculature as possible, as if a puppeteer had marionette strings attached to his or her heels and was pulling those strings slowly towards the ceiling. This action will gently unfold the knees and thighs. At a position where the knees are still bent but almost straight, a tremor may be experienced in the legs. The two contradictory sensations letting the muscles succumb to gravity while also stringing the heels up to the ceiling creates confusion in the body. This may feel like a shaking in the knee and thigh area. FV students often have to experiment with different heights of the heels and angles of the knees before they find a spot where the tremor occurs. It is unnecessary to do any of this exercise smoothly. Any spasms or bumps should be allowed rather than controlled. Throughout this process, a student will also take full deep breaths and allow soft vocalizations during the exhale. If vocalizations do not arise, forcing vocalization is not necessary.

A different FV position will induce a tremor in a different place in the body. For example the “happy cow” tremor is in the arms. If a FV student was to practice the “happy cow” tremor, he or she would begin in child’s pose from yoga. Child’s pose is a position on a mat on the knees and shins with torso draped over folded legs. The forehead palms are allowed to rest on the mat as a result of the relaxed torso. From this child’s pose a student would gently push the hands and shins into the floor to gently arrive on the hands and knees, the hands aligned under shoulders and knees under the hip sockets. This pose is inspired by the yoga cat and cow positions. A student in a “happy cow” tremor position will release the head and drape the spine like a hammock between the posts formed by the straightened arms and the femurs. Using the idea of experiencing the tension versus the release may help a student find the fullest drape of the spine. In this

position, s/he will imagine there is a hook between the shoulder blades that pulls the upper back towards the ceiling (like cat pose in yoga). By exhaling and releasing from the imaginary hook the spine will drop into the drape. I have found in my own practice of this position that repeating the release from the shoulder blade hook helps my spine hang in a deeper drape, than my first attempt at this position. Then to find the tremor the student (again with as little muscle as possible) will angle the elbows towards the feet and bend them ever so slightly. The tremor will typically start in the shoulders by and initiates by the slight bend in the elbows. It is important to breathe deeply, while continuing to let the head fall while trembling in “happy cow.”

There are many other positions that exist and induce tremors in different places, some of which were used during the choreographic process. During this process of deconstructing, it is important to allow oneself to do what the body is going to do and to feel whatever sensations may arise. The process of allowing the body to be present in the deconstructing experience is of primary interest to me for this thesis.

### Restructuring and Breathing With Fitzmaurice Voicework

Restructuring “is not only the introduction of the intercostal and abdominal breath management into the act of speaking, but is also the harmonizing of that pattern with the individual’s physical and/or emotional needs for oxygen moment to moment”

(Fitzmaurice, 1996, p. 4). Restructuring’s purpose is to “give the actor control over the timing and the variety of delivery choices [including] pitch, rate, volume, and tone. This control also allows [for] approximate repeatability without loss of either spontaneity or connection to impulse” (1996, p. 4). By isolating the supportive movement, which will assist in relaxing neck, shoulder, and chest muscles that are usually chronically tight, the

restructured breath attempts to use full capacity and vibration of the body in a holistic way.

In short, when inhaling, the ribs swing outward and the stomach releases outward and when exhaling, the stomach moves inward and the ribs drop down and inward. In more muscular detail, the intercostals contract to widen the ribs, the transverse abdominis, and the horizontal set of abdominal muscles, relaxes to expand the body and let more air in. The use of these muscles does not alter or constrict the shape of the spine allowing fuller expansion of the whole abdominal cavity. Movement of the other abdominal muscles such as the external and internal obliques or the rectus abdominis does alter the spine shape.

Catherine Fitzmaurice refers the rib swing as “expanding the wings” on the back. The lower ribs, when at ease, slightly drape towards the outside of the body. To inhale the ribs swing outward. One can put their hands on their lower ribs and feel this outward swing. This rib swing is preferred versus lifting the sternum to inhale. Lifting the sternum alters the relaxed spine shape and causes unnecessary tension in the places that people tend to hold most tension: the shoulders and upper chest. During an exhale, the transverse abdominis contracts, the ribs swing downward deflating the lung cavity, making the whole abdominal cavity more available.

There is one previously mentioned “prestructuring,” process that Catherine Fitzmaurice used after destructuring which I used with my dancers during the creation of the choreographic work. The exercise involved opening up the chest, which can further expand the abdomen. One way to do this is by lying on the back and placing a zafu cushion underneath the ribcage and letting the body drape open with the arms lying to the sides. While breathing deeply and opening the chest with each breath, one can allow

sound to come from that openness and breath. Using nonsensical babble or else stringing words in nonlogical, airy vocalizations and following impulsivity is used as a precursor to structured breathing. One can also use the breath and voice to tell a story that comes to mind or else use text that has already been memorized. After few minutes of this, one may roll off to one side into the fetal position to rest. As emphasized earlier, there is not an absolute right or wrong way to do this. One Fitzmaurice practitioner, Joey Bates, with whom I worked for one day, said he prefers to have his students restructure first and then destructure right before singing or performing. This can also be an interesting avenue to explore in FV.

One of my goals in using FV was to find and follow different movement impulses that were new to myself by using key elements from the practice. This is not usually emphasized in FV which is primarily geared towards actors and singers, but “FV is a very porous system in that it is accepting of other modalities and of the particular passions and interests and skills of each participant” (Fitzmaurice, 2014, lecture). Using this method for movement and choreography was, therefore, not out of line with the philosophy of FV.

Allowing myself to be in the tremoring state, made me care less about how I looked or how I perceived myself. For me it created more of a blank clearing in my body. The deconstructing process and the tremors were particularly useful to me in this way. The restructuring process helped me discover a larger capacity for breath. In a way, just like taking class from Bill Evans again, I am finding new ways of finding ease in my body.



## CHAPTER III

### DEVELOPING A PATH OF DANCE IMPROVISATION AND CHOREOGRAPHIC EXPLORATION USING FITZMAURICE VOICEWORK

My first encounter with Balinese music was frustrating as it defied my previous notions of musical logic. This initial reaction to the ears of Westerners is common, “even for sensitive and sympathetic listeners it is difficult to make much sense of the music . . .” (Tenzer, 1998, p. 57). As I learned more and more to go with the ensemble I realized the group effort and unity was essential to playing the Gamelan. Trance and spiritual ecstasy is a common cultural thread pervading throughout Balinese Gamelan music as well as Balinese dance. Balinese art is “cyclical or regenerative” in this way (p. 41). One of my goals with dance improvisation was to work outside my comfort zone. I have found it difficult in the past as a choreographer and performer to do things that I would not normally see myself doing. Naturally, trance with dance improvisation, is a subject that arises.

This chapter lays out my own explorations into the methodology that I developed by:

1. Using FV combined with movement improvisation,
2. Assisting the movement by using Passive Sequencing, to transcend my own self-inhibiting habits.

This combination arose from the time I developed my own practice and the work I did with a group of young dancers in a dance improvisation class that I taught the prior summer to my choreographic project.

I had noticed my own tendencies to preimagine and preplan during my movement improvisation. Retrospectively, I believe these movements were patterns from dance technique classes and classwork I had practiced for years. In a sense, I was hiding behind movement from others rather than allowing myself to really explore. Initially investigated FV because I was interested in the physical tremoring that I understood was part of the process. I had read about Catherine Fitzmaurice and theories about the autonomic nervous system. After my first experience with FV and reading Catherine Fitzmaurice's words about the autonomic nervous system, I decided to use FV as an attempt to get to something pure and unplanned in my movement improvisation. I used FV positions to find tremoring points in my own body in the hopes of somehow allowing these tremors to evolve into a larger movement that I was less in charge of: an alternate state of operating. The important piece of my explorations in FV became more about the state of mind in allowing oneself to tremor and less about the physical tremors themselves.

The change that allows the body to tremor could certainly be compared to trance or trance dancing. Trance is described as "a state of altered consciousness . . . in which one or several psychological and physiological changes occur," there is a similar type of altered state occurring in allowing oneself to tremor (Bourgignon, 2001, p. 98). However, there are also differences between my process and "possession trance" which involves the "discontinuity in the personal identity" while the body is temporarily inhabited by another entity (p. 99). Dissociation, which is also common with trance, has

been achieved by forcing a person to exhaustion or a state of unconsciousness with music, rhythm, and hyperventilation (p. 98). I think my FV process is similar with a “change in the feel of one’s own body, [and] sensations,” I do not think that any change in identity is part of it (pp. 98-99).

Exhaustion, dissociation, building up to a release was not how I operated in using FV. Instead of building up to a release, my release is initial as the deconstructed state happens. The allowance of an illogical process and chaos in the body by way of tremoring was the access point. However I had to experiment in the process of exhaustion before I discovered the process of allowing the tremoring state.

Early on in my explorations with Fitzmaurice I was trying out exhaustion methods by pushing my whole body to fatigue. I would do vigorous whole body dance combinations then lying down and find a tremoring state using a few of the FV positions. While the exhaustion aided in quickly finding tremors in my body after I stopped the large movements, I learned from other Fitzmaurice practitioners that physical exhaustion is unnecessary. I found ways in my own body to access the tremoring state without the exhaustion. With breathing, stillness, and thoughtfulness, tremors in my own body were still attainable. Relaxing while gently positioning the body could achieve the same result as physical exhaustion. The underlying philosophical idea of allowing the body to experience, rather than forcing the experience to happen thus became more important in my process.

The role of Passive Sequencing ended up being crucial to the process that I developed with FV. What I found was that just working with Fitzmaurice and tremors did not really help movement arise. For instance when I would work with another student in the studio and I used FV, my tendency was to just continue lying on the floor

rather than move. This is where Passive Sequencing helped.

Passive Sequencing in its simplest form, is done as an activity with two people where one person is the “receiver” of movement and one person is the “giver” of movement. The person in the “receiver” role allows himself or herself to be moved subtly by the “giver” who supplies the movement. The “receiver” releases the control of their body to the “giver” of the movement. This can be as simple as the “giver” moving the “receiver’s” hand, wrist, and fingers in any possible joint articulation. The “receiver’s” job during this movement is to physically do nothing, and to not help the “giver” at all. However, she or he may mentally track the sensation of the movement by the “giver.” These movements, depending on the amount of trust that the “giver” and “receiver” have between each other, may get larger and more full-bodied. At any given point after the movement relationship has been established and the “receiver” is fully relaxed, the “giver” and the “receiver” can agree to move to the another phase where the “receiver” can add their own small exertions to the movement whenever they feel they want to. Sometimes Passive Sequencing can remain in the first phase where the “receiver” does nothing. At some point the “giver” will leave the “receiver” on their own and the “receiver” can move as they wish to or else not move depending on the movement impulses that arise. The “receiver” should experience the movement rather than try to make movement happen.

I found the process of Passive Sequencing in tandem with FV the most effective for myself. I could sense a release from accessing tremoring state from FV but then from the kinesthetic experience of my body moving. This created a chain reaction to continue moving. After I knew this was effective with my own body, I tried this method on a group of young dancers that I taught dance improvisation to during the months after I

attended the FV workshop. These dancers were older teenagers with strong ballet backgrounds, attending a summer intensive workshop hosted by a ballet school. I wanted to find out if I could help them access a different movement vocabulary in themselves even during the eight classes we were together.

I tried using just FV in tandem with Passive Sequencing; I perceived that they had a similar experience to mine, for I observed more movement occurring by using both. This movement I tried varying the class and using just one method then the other, but I observed more restricted movement when I did not have the dancers use both Passive Sequencing and FV.

Although I did not use physical exhaustion as a conduit for the tremor process and the release, there was one class where the catalyst of exhaustion surfaced. This class was on a Friday afternoon, their last class of the day, and I noticed one of the student visibly tremoring more than she ever had during the FV portion of our class. I talked to her about it afterwards and she had noticed the same thing. I have concluded that physical exhaustion can lead to a different sense of what is or is not allowable in the body, in a similar way that exhaustion is used in trance dance. The next improvisation class was the following day, it was earlier in the schedule and everyone seemed to have plenty of energy. The student seemed to find the same noticeable tremoring state even though her activities before improvisation class were very different in vigor than the previous day. She found that she was able to reaccess that tremoring state this time without the exhaustion.

Over the course of the improvisation classes with this group, their improvisational movement in general surprised me. The movement I observed had little do to with ballet shapes and vocabulary. I was not expecting this because of my past experiences when I

had taught improvisation to groups with this much ballet training; I remembered the students doing things that I probably would have done at that stage, variations on shapes that I already knew. This experimental time with the ballet students was very helpful in deciding what to do next in creating a choreographic piece. I used these methodologies in my choreographic process later.

## CHAPTER IV

### *SIX DANCERS IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR*

Approaching the choreographic portion of my thesis I planned to use the processes of FV, Passive Sequencing, and movement improvisation. In my rehearsal process:

1. I discovered that each individual's body has different possibilities and I perceived different results in each dancer's body over the course of the creation of the dance. To me those results seemed to depend on the dancers' previous experiences in physical training. Overall, I saw a different mobility, and each dancer had a different attention in his or her body, but the amount of change from the beginning of the rehearsal process through the performance of the piece was different for each dancer. Each dancer also had a different relationship with the vocalizations in the piece, regarding comfort levels in speaking, as well as in speech dynamics.
2. I found that the tremoring experience was very different for every individual. Each dancer had his or her developmental story and own relationship with the aspect of tremoring during the rehearsal process into performance.
3. With the help of the dancers in the cast, I discovered something we collectively called "amplifying tremors." This was a new way for me to use FV in a choreographic or improvisational manner. This "amplifying" will be

described in depth later in this chapter.

4. I found it difficult at times to negotiate the challenges in creating a dance with FV. The experience of the dancer may not be perceived by an audience member. The nature of performance and experience of the movement became a discussion topic not only with the dancers in rehearsal but also with my thesis committee. Creating movement and choreography from FV was something that I had not experienced yet, nor I did find other choreographers that had taken this approach.

I adapted the title of my piece, from the play, *Six Characters in Search of an Author* by Luigi Pirandello (1921). I was interested in the dramatic implications left to the imagination by the title as I was always searching for an author for my own movement. The six dancers in the piece would all be searching for their own individual authors in a sense. These six collectively were like characters in that they were diverse people with different movement backgrounds and very different body types. I was interested in working with these five other individuals for their diversity.

The dancers' individual names from *Six Dancers in Search of an Author* will not be used to protect their privacy. Their identities will be referred to in the following manner: Dancer A, Dancer B, Dancer C, Dancer D, and Dancer E.

Dancer A was the dancer with the most experience in years. Dancer A had a background in hip-hop, breakdancing, and modern dance, and obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Theatre and Dance. I thought that Dancer A had a quality that was exact and precise. Dancer B was younger and studying for a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Modern Dance. I had noticed this dancer's heavy yet slippery movement improvisation before. The way Dancer B utilized her upper body I found interesting, as it seemed to be



constantly in movement. Dancer C was another younger dancer that was in the process of obtaining a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Modern Dance. Dancer C was relatively new to dancing. This dancer began his college career in another academic major but took a Modern Dance for a Nonmajors' class and a year later decided to change his major. I was interested in Dancer C because he seemed verbally thoughtful and articulate, and very "green," but with a lot of drive, as a dancer. Dancer D was a former gymnast with a lot of muscular, athletic ability coupled with flexible limbs. Dancer E was a dancer from a very strong ballet background having received a B.F.A. in Ballet Performance. Dancer E had spent a year in a contemporary ballet company before beginning graduate school in Modern Dance. I was interested in Dancer E because her background was similar to my own. I was interested to watch another dancer with similar training respond to the work and choreographic process.

I formed the sixth dancer of *Six Dancers in Search of an Author*. I decided to use my own voice, as well as play the accordion, which was a skill I had been working on for the past seven years. One reason for using my own voice and singing was the obvious symbolism of finding your own voice. Out of the instruments that I can play, I chose the accordion because of its relationship to air and breath. The bellows of the accordion expand and take air, just as the human ribs widen to take in air. I had been fixated on the idea of the breath as it is used in FV.

#### Creating *Six Dancers in Search of an Author*

On the first day of rehearsals I made sure to include long introductions of all the dancers to each other. Two of the dancers had never met any of the others. Building up trust and communication was one of my goals and reasons for spending time in this way.

The first rehearsal also included an introduction to the FV ideas, along with an overview of the theories, learning and experiencing some of the tremoring positions, as well as exploring the methods of reconstruction. As I suspected, I observed certain positions worked for some dancers while not others. Not all of the dancers found tremors in the first rehearsal. I guided them through several positions and then introduced the idea of Passive Sequencing. We only used Passive Sequencing in its initial phase, where there is a “giver” of movement and a “receiver” of movement.

To close that first rehearsal day, I also had them try an activity that I had learned on my first day with FV. I had the dancers lie on their backs on a cushion (a zafu cushion or rolled up yoga mat, many of the objects we had in the studio for every rehearsal). Placing the high point of the cushion midthoracic under the rib cage, I asked the dancers to lie prone, stretching their upper torsos over the cushion, breathing deeply. The purpose of this exercise is to allow more room for breathing by relaxing the muscles between the ribs and in the front of the shoulders. With some of the dancers I placed a secondary lower cushion under the head so that their necks were not in a position that could cause pain. When I participated in this exercise myself, with actors and singers in the FV workshop in New York, the practitioner told the students to keep their arms lower than a 90-degree angle from their sides. I also experienced this position with a Fitzmaurice practitioner whom I took a private lesson from, and I was told that if my shoulders had the flexibility, I could raise the arms higher. In response to her instruction, I raised my arms up higher than she was expecting, because she asked about how that made my shoulder joint feel (S. Cole, personal communication, April 8, 2014). As I conducted this exercise myself, I noticed the dancers sneaking up their arms higher and higher. Although I had wanted to observe and let the dancers experience the activity, I

decided interrupt their experience to tell them that if they felt comfortable they could let their arms rest in a high “V” or anywhere in between. Most chose to raise their arms up. One dancer mentioned that this gave more of a feeling to the stretch. This was one of many times that it was apparent that dancers’ bodies are often different than a typical student of FV. It is not unusual that the range and flexibility of the body is much greater in dancers. Modifying FV positioning is not incorrectly using the practice (S. Cole, personal communication, April 8, 2014).

During the course of the first few rehearsals, Dancer A asked an interesting question about intention of force to get a tremor. Dancer A mentioned that she could tremor by intentionally shaking slightly. This discussion about tremors, and what is voluntary versus what is involuntary, is presently a quandary for myself. From my own experience, I would also say the difference between forcing and allowing is sometimes difficult to distinguish. I find that the philosophy of Passive Sequencing also is a part of this discussion. If I was taking the role of the “receiver,” I was at times unsure whether I was assisting the “giver” with the movement. However, as the “receiver” in this process and if I was working with a particularly attuned “giver” of movement, the “giver” would observe if they were getting assistance in the movement. The “giver” could gently move the “receiver’s” limb up and down, or dangle a limb in mid-air to make sure the full weight of the “receiver’s” limb was being allowed. Physical reminders such as this can help a “receiver” to realize when they are not fully allowing the “giver” to be in charge of the movement. I decided that repeating the Passive Sequencing with the cast might help clarify this distinction in the voluntary versus involuntary discussion. My hope was to transfer the distinction to the tremoring process in FV.

I reiterated with my cast of dancers that performing the act of tremoring was not

what I was interested in per se, at least not at this time. I felt that it was important for the tremors to come from a place of allowance and not force. I trusted that the more we worked with the physical material, the tremoring sensation in FV could possibly be accessible to the dancers in a way that was not forced.

Dancer A's sharing of this experience helped me understand others' processes on a different level than just observation. Other dancers who shared their own personal observations about the tremors were Dancer D and Dancer C; they expressed that they thought they were feeling the tremor affect their bodies. Dancer D also shared an experience outside of rehearsals, where he was waiting on an outside train platform and began to shiver in the chilly autumn breeze. Instead of trying to suppress this autonomic reaction to being cold, he said he just allowed himself to shiver. Dancer D said that he was surprised by the violence of the resulting shivering; it was much more visceral than he had expected, but from this personal experiment, Dancer D said he realized he had a different attunement to his body's experience. I found Dancer D's story fascinating for I also had become more observant of subtle feelings in my body after spending time with FV. In this particular experience in Dancer D, I would say that the type of tremoring, (shivering) was a slightly different experience, as it was brought on by an external stimulus that made the body react; this is similar to the tremors from exhaustion. However, this experience is still of interest as it relates back to the discussion of tremors from exhaustion and muscle fatigue versus tremors from FV. However, I have noticed some crossover in certain tremoring positions.

There is a tremor position that I find accesses more of the muscle fatigue element than others. I had Dancer E try this next tremoring position. Dancer E (the dancer who had strong ballet training) had expressed frustration and concern with not doing the

process correctly. I guided Dancer E through another position that I had experienced during the FV workshop in New York. This one is like a wall-sit that one might do in gym class to strengthen the thighs. By holding a sitting position and pressing the back against a wall, by shifting the focus to the feet, one lifts the heels only an inch or so off the floor, it is possible to find a tremor in the ankles and up the legs. This trembling position is not a stretch for the feet, nor is it intended to exhaust the muscles, for it is likely that a tremor will arise in this position by just lifting the heels a small amount, and over the course of a few seconds. Dancer E said she certainly experienced a tremor happen with this position. I mentioned this experience to one of my faculty committee members who is also a Fitzmaurice practitioner. He also suggested that this particular dancer, having such a pliable body with as much dance training as she had, might have difficulty finding tremors initially with many of the typical FV positions. My committee member also suggested having the dancers try another position called lotus tremor, as it could be useful for their bodies to experience. The lotus tremor, its name borrowed from yoga practice, is done lying on the back, knees bent, which are allowed to fall open with the bottoms of the feet together, so that the legs make a diamond shape. He suggested that the dancers then very slowly, over the course of two minutes or so, draw the bent knees together from the fully open position, so ultimately, the feet become flat on the floor again. I had the dancers try this during our Fitzmaurice portion of the next rehearsal, encouraging them as with other FV positions, to use as little muscle as possible, while continuing with relaxed breath. I observed a much more dramatic tremor from all the dancers with this position. In fact, Dancer C who had seemed to be accessing tremors quite easily, said that this one was a bit strong for him, and he took some time out to sit still and wait for it to subside. Aside from Dancer C the others

expressed that they might come back to the lotus tremor position more often because it seemed to break into a more vigorous kind of tremor. Dancer E, who had been expressing frustration, found that the lotus tremor worked for her body in a different way than any of the other tremor positions. There is a possibility that with these trained dancers' bodies, tremor positions such as the wall-sit-tremor and the lotus tremor are more effective at getting an initial sense of tremors with FV. Dancers inherently use their bodies in a different way and do so on a daily basis.

Physical pliability and control of dancers was not the only difference that I observed between using FV, in comparison to the actors and singers with whom I took the FV workshop. In the rehearsal process, I used movement improvisation to generate choreographic material, assisted by FV and Passive Sequencing. In the FV portion of our work, I was also asking the dancers to incorporate their voices into movement improvisation. In the destructured state with FV, where vocalization is encouraged, should it arise, the dancers rarely were able to let vocalizations arise to generate any sound. Using the voice for them seemed to be a larger hurdle than I had expected. When in the destructuring work of FV, vocalization can help the body resonate. Allowing vocal sounds while using trembling positions is encouraged but forcing vocalizations just like forcing tremors is not necessary. These vocalizations can be words, or nonsensical babble. When I have been in FV sessions with actors and singers, who typically are more comfortable with their voices, this use of the voice in the destructuring process seemed to arise naturally, and readily for them. This was not the case in working with FV and dancers. I sensed tension in their voices with the first few attempts to connect to the voice. I tried a few different methods in an attempt to get the dancers vocally involved with this process.

In an attempt to access movement along with vocalizations I asked the dancers to use their newly restructured breath, to allow movement and vocal sounds and words, whatever words that might arise. I was hoping that by integrating Catherine Fitzmaurice's philosophy "the breath is the thought," would lead to some discoveries. But I observed that it still added tension to the dancers. Movement from the breath was happening in a reasonably comfortable process; but not as free or in clear trajectories as I had seen from them when we had used FV and Passive Sequencing in a previous rehearsal, and the voices sounded tense and uneasy.

I remembered a prestructuring process that I thought might be useful to them that I had learned at the FV workshop. The FV teachers called it the "prestructuring gallery." The dancers and I divided into two groups; one group would be the "gallery display" and the other group would observe. The dancers on "display" lie on their backs, eyes closed, propped up on a cushion under the spine, with the rib cage and abdomen spread wide open. In this "display" each person lying on their backs is encouraged to take full, slow breaths and tell a story, as slowly as they like, and whatever comes to mind. This story or whatever the person chooses to say does not have to make sense (nor in this exercise does it even have to be actual words, but this group of dancers seemed to be more comfortable in using words they knew for the time being). The observing group of dancers could walk around and listen to the different stories and sounds floating around the room. After a few minutes, the groups exchanged roles. In this rehearsal, we did this for a few rounds, my objective being to help the dancers get more comfortable with using the voice and breathing and letting the breath be the next thought. The dancers did get more used to using their voice and hearing their own voices. Although it was initially easier for them when the noises of the others on "display" overshadowed their own voices, I noticed

vocal tension arise in a dancer when a lull in noise happened, and for a moment, one dancer's voice was the only sound. The lone voice would shrink in embarrassment. I think that by repeating this exercise, they began to become more comfortable with their own voices as they heard their voices and became more experienced in observing the breath and voice of others.

As the comfort level built, I attempted the process of riding the breath with vocal sound and movement. Some dancers expressed that they felt blocked because could not think of anything to say. That day I had a book copy of *Six Characters in Search of an Author* with me. I handed them a short passage directly from the play to use as words. I used the conventional method of FV to get somewhere with riding on the breath for some of them. Some dancers chose to stick with their own stories that they were telling themselves while others chose to use the words handed to them. This was how the opening image of the choreographic piece was formed, with sound and movement tumbling forward.

#### Amplifying: A Way of Improvising and Creating

As the rehearsal process continued we worked more on movement improvisation with assistance of the tremoring state. Just as I had learned that it is important to be comfortable with the voice in the destructured state, I conjectured that this also might be true of movement. We improvised with movement while attempting to stay in a destructured state quite a bit in rehearsals. I asked the dancers to experiment with the thought of letting the tremors shoot into different trajectories into space, as our own sort of restructuring process with movement and breath. Finding a way into trajectory that didn't feel forced though was difficult. I was hoping for an allowed trajectory instead of



a forced one. After trying this process in several different ways and observing each other just as was done in the “Prestructuring Gallery” and Passive Sequencing activity, we also tried being in the destructured state in partners. Then Dancer A voiced an observation about herself. She said that it seemed like the trajectory potential was in her body but she was just behind enough that she could not respond without it feeling forced, but she might be able to borrow the tremors from her partner that she was observing and “amplify” the movement she could sense coming from her partner. We all had previously discussed that you get the sensations of trembling in your own body when you observe someone trembling. This experiential sensation from observing previously experienced movement has scientific validity in the mirror neuron effect or kinesthetic empathy. “The phenomenon of mirror neurons occur when we see in a human body movement that we experience vicariously in our nerves and muscles; the movement evokes associations we would have had if the original movement had been ours” (Hanna, 2015, p. 20). Furthermore, “an individual’s personal motor repertoire is relevant in the strength of mirror neuron firing.” There are “stronger activations” when people see “movements they themselves could perform compared to movements which they had not attempted” (20). This effect was apparent when a colleague that had experience with FV came to watch rehearsals. He said he could feel a kinesthetic sensation from watching the others in the trembling state. He said that he sensed entering the destructured trembling state with the dancers while he watched. Capitalizing on kinesthetic empathetic responses, the dancers could then amplify the tremors they sensed in each other and react. This process of amplifying tremors lead to a lot of movement material, and this was a process that, without the limitations of time in this thesis, I would have liked to explore longer.

As the piece structure formed I decided to leave the actual tremoring positions in the choreography. I thought it had been formative in the choreographic process and leaving that process in the piece was what I decided to do. The dancers brought up a new difficulty, which was how to allow the tremor to arise when it is part of the choreography. The performing of a tremor while also allowing the tremor arise caused cognitive dissonance. This was later in the choreographic process and closer to the performance opening. Dancer E, who had been attaining some successes by this point in accessing a tremoring state was concerned that visually, her tremors were less noticeable than the other dancers. She asked if she should fake her tremor so she would appear similar to the other dancers. This question forced me to fully decide that this piece was about the process of “allowing.” And if certain aspects of the dance did not appear as typical choreography with unity, unison phrases, I had to let that go and allow the dance to be itself. There would have been more cognitive dissonance to my process if Dancer E placed someone else’s tremor on herself. As we structured choreographic sequences it became apparent that we as a cast had to take time with FV to warm up. In order to allow a tremor on stage, the dancers had to already be on the cusp of that tremoring state before the piece began.

In the last rehearsal before our spacing on stage, Dancer D expressed that it seemed to him that during the course of the dance he could feel a difference in his movement by the end. He said that the movements towards the end of the dance seemed clearer to him than other movement, as if out of the chaos of the tremoring positions in the beginning of the dance, clarity of movement emerges. I could see in him what he was describing and I had this same sensation in myself at the end of the piece. This observation by Dancer D was important to many thoughts I have had about the dance.

By allowing the chaos the clear trajectories emerge.

Dancer B so aptly wrote after the choreographic process and performance that the Fitzmaurice tremor positions have left a mark on her body, and that she noticed sensations and changes in her body that she might not have noticed before. I also feel an indelible mark on my body just like Dancer B.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Using FV in choreography ultimately has been rewarding for myself, while leading to more questions for me to explore. I wanted to find if I could work choreographically beyond trained movement patterns from my experiences in dance technique. Using FV affected my work in two interrelated ways: the sensory changes in my body as a dancer and my own evolution in choreographic choices. My choreographic evolution aligned with some of the expectations in this project. At the same time, certain aspects that I predicted would be conduits for movement were not as useful. Going into this project I was fully aware that I was using FV differently than how the method is normally used. Initiating and creating a performance piece with FV rather than applying FV to a performance piece that already exists was the key difference.

#### Findings From the Process

My thoughts as a result of this project were as follows:

1. Each dancer's individual experience with FV was unique. My observations were that those dancers who had more technical training in dancing initially had the most difficulty accessing the tremoring state. Although, these same dancers, by the end of the process, showed the most change. I perceived that these dancers allowed themselves more and more to be in the process of deconstructing; I noticed differences in how they operated. I observed more

fluidity in their spines, and a different connection to breath. One of the dancers in whom I observed these traits, wrote after the project that:

My experience of moving after using Fitzmaurice [Voicework] was usually very loose. For me, it was the best way to embody a released movement aesthetic without consciously aiming for it. I had gotten all the shakes (tremors) out of the way, so moving was very fluid, but not bound. I also felt uncomfortably out of touch with my sense of proprioception. Released movement kind of just tumbled out of me after being catalyzed by the Fitzmaurice practice. (Dancer B)

2. The tremoring aspect was not effective on its own as a movement conduit. I had to use tremors differently than I had anticipated in the deconstructing process in FV. I had thought that this would be the key to movement as tremoring is a small form of movement. As the physical manifestation of tremoring was a very different experience for each dancer, each had their own processes to find a tremoring state in various deconstructing positions. Tremor itself, however, ended up not being the movement catalyst. The dancers and I collectively had to devise ways to make the tremoring state usable for movement creation. As discussed in Chapter IV, the use of Passive Sequencing helped the motion start and continue, as did the process of “amplifying” tremors observed in other dancers. Applying another practice with the deconstructing and tremors was needed, for using this process on its own seemed to halt movement, metaphorically like Isaac Newton’s first law: an object at rest tends to stay at rest. Starting a motion as was done with Passive Sequencing and “amplifying” tremors tended to expand the movement more than just the tremors themselves. Receiving movement whether physically, in the case of Passive Sequencing, or visually in the case of “amplifying” tremors seemed to assist a person already in the tremoring state

to a movement trajectory. This was not the only challenge in finding movement from this process.

3. My other interest was my own evolution with choreographic choices. There were some choices I made, such as singing for the piece as well as using the dancers' voices that I question whether I would have made had it not been for my experience with FV. I also wondered if I would have been so lenient in allowing differences of movement between dancers as I did. I had to expect nothing but present state from the dancers and whatever happened beyond that, I had to let go of my expectations in timing or directions. The dancers' state of being became more important to me. Each dancer had their own significant journey with the FV material. As a dancer, I, having had six extra months to explore the movement material, had a different relationship with the FV material than the other dancers.

### Reevaluations of Limitations

Presenting choreography from the process was a unique challenge, with the time limitation. A different time frame may have resulted in a very different choreographic piece. The effect of FV on the each dancer's movement and approach to movement improvisation each took a separate arc. These different arcs were the basis of the choreographic piece. I believe that by increasing the time, not the hours in the week of rehearsal, but prolonging the process for additional weeks or even months would have had a different effect on the dancers' embodiment of the material as well as the piece structurally. As the FV practice settled during the rehearsal process more and more new ideas emerged. Revisiting the FV process with the group at a later date could have a very

different effect.

### Final Thoughts and Implications

I believe that FV, and the deconstructing process, and the intimate connection to breathing in the restructuring process leads to a different relationship with the body. This different relationship has led me to other questions that I have about dance technique:

1. Aside from continuing lineage what is technique's purpose?
2. Can dance technique structure an available body, rather than a shaped body?

What I personally hope to get from these larger questions about dance technique is a body that is more available to many types of movement. This is very much in line with what Catherine Fitzmaurice stated about her method as she strives for "spontaneous organic impulses which every actor aspires to incorporate into the acting process" just as dancers hope "to respond organically to shifts in mood and idea, thus achieving variety and complexity of meaning" (Fitzmaurice, 1996, p. 2-3). In using FV, I observed intriguing changes in the more trained dancers. I believe that adding FV regularly to the normal practice of dance technique can result in a different and perhaps more available body.

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