

**Case Study**  
**Jane Bacon**  
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**AP**

This is tape 1, it's 27<sup>th</sup> January 2004 and I'm here in Northampton with Jane Bacon to have a talk to her about practice as research before we, before I let you talk I'm just going to outline the key words that you sent to me for your questions and you sent the key words inter-disciplinary choreography, documentation, multi-media, installation, XXX and performance and the way we're going through the questions today will be organised as the work, contexts, aims and objectives, methodology and evaluation but before we get into the specific questions, I think you probably want to give us a bit of the background in a general context of what we'll be talking about today, so I'll hand it over to you.

**JB**

Thank you Angela. I think it's important to talk a little bit about the history of the work that I'm primarily talking about today because it's been a 3 year process of practice as research and it really symbolises my own development from someone who was making choreography primarily for other people sometimes for myself, who was making film work primarily for other companies and someone whose PHD is in Dance Ethnography so what I was aiming to do at the beginning was to bring all those pieces of a puzzle together rather than to have them separate and in that frame of bringing the video work with the choreographic work with the ethnographic work I was very interested to explore the notion of what might be called a self ethnography or auto ethnography or even a kind of narrative reflexive and so that's the sort of place that I put myself 3½ years ago to see what would happen if I brought all those elements together and that was my beginning.

**AP**

Ok. .... I'm just wondering which of the kind of work questions to deal with first. Perhaps if we start with how your positioning is as research and you can talk a little bit about what this actually is and how it is research?

**JB**

So in the bringing of those elements together with my kind of ethnographic hat on, one of, two aspects of that have been important to me, one is the problem of representation for an ethnographer, how do we know when we're studying groups of people that the way we write about them or the video that we make about them is, is the right thing, as good as it can be, works for them and there are obviously lots of XXX anthropological theories around that, lots of talk about where we are in the world reflexivity and what have you but that's something that's plagued me I think, all through my research as an ethnographer with other people, when I'm working on case studies and so that's, that problem came with me and the other side of that is a kind of artistic aspect to that, so was there something about this representation that becomes within an ethnographic framework not discussed as an artistic framework but seemed to me to impact absolutely on my artistic work and to

be guiding something about the way I was making work. So those two things come together in this work in a way to allow me to question the role of documentation because, obviously, as an ethnographer that what you do, you generate a document of some sort whether it's a video or whether it's a piece of writing or whatever it might be and so I've always been very interested, very much within my teaching practices with the role of documentation in relation to the thing itself both the process and the product so this was an opportunity to explore that in more detail and to problematise that a little bit. Generally I think the work would be, in terms of what you might call it, I suppose the key words that I gave, I hope give some indication that it's, it's sort of multi media it is inter disciplinary choreography in that you can label the elements and you can also take the elements away from each other so there is always a live element which has a dance vocabulary, very minimal, but a dance vocabulary spoken word and sung words and those are all devised through improvisation, there's also a video element, as you can see behind us, that also has those same elements in it as you have in a live and there's always a soundscape except when Oliver turns it off which is lovely and I think that XXX we'll have to XXX Oliver and see what's happened because he's turned it off which is really great and so it, there's always a sound element which has the same possibilities for the others so in that ..... then we play with the possibilities, cross all those different genres, with movement, with sound, with visual image, with spoken so we go from utterances to audible words to singing, we go from everyday movement to XXX vocabulary and the realm in-between.

**AP**

And are you seeing that of those 3 different elements as functioning as research in different ways?

**JB**

No, I think they work together. What I'm constantly trying to do is to see how they all can feed together under the umbrella of ethnography, so here they are, how do I make a representation of myself, maybe that's the question that when we come to will be problematic for me, but maybe that is a question, how do I make something kind of representation of myself if artistically I'm interested in these formal elements and not the story itself. What do I look like artistically? That's the kind of basis of it.

**AP**

Ok, and how does it relate to past and future practices, obviously talking about future practices as problematic?

**JB**

I think in terms of the question of PAR which is what we're trying to tease out because it's got this bringing together of the theoretical framework from XXX sociology with artistic practice has these questions happening which I might not question if I was making inter-disciplinary choreography or multi media work with the very same elements I've described, I might not have the same theoretical questions, it might be that I just look at the formal relationship between those elements and that might be PAR but for me it's not, it's this

other framework and so in relation to past practice, I don't know of anyone whose bringing those particular elements together but there are plenty of people, obviously, who are doing work with multi media and questioning and using the role of the personal within that but for me it's very particular because of the aesthetic outcome and this questioning of documentation within the demographic frame.

**AP**

I suppose I was thinking more about your own past and future practices and it leads on from this question of situating it as research and how it's positioned as research and do you see it within, I suppose, the trajectory of your own practices as research?

**JB**

In terms of past, as I said, to begin with what I'm trying to do is bring things together so maybe there's something about it kind of coming home, you know, you find out at certain points in your life all the things that you feel that you need at that point to work as an artist and maybe they haven't all been together, some people's lives, nice and straight, mine's not been like that, I do some of that for a while, then I do some of that and this has been a kind of trying to bring these together so bringing the video work together with the dance work. Trying to bring what was an ethnographic practice which was not about my artistic practice so it was something quite different, it was trying to bring that and marry those together and in terms of development of that the process of the 3 years of this work, for me has been really exciting because what's happening is that I'm starting to develop what feels like a much clearer methodological approach to both my artistic practice and when I do ethnographic work with other groups of people and it's changing that quite dramatically, it's working in both realms.

**AP**

We'll probably get on to those methods a little bit later but the other question in this section on work was 'Who do you see were the makers of the work?' in the specific context of what we're looking at today?

**JB**

Well, what happens in this work is that it's very difficult to make work like this on your own but the ideas are primarily mine and then I have a sonic artist who you've just met behind us in image of Oliver XXX who creates sound and works with my voice and the development of that and in the early stages of the work before I decided to take hold of the camera again before I've, kind of, gathered all the parts elements back together, Robert Daniels, who is also here, was doing a lot of the, kind of, video work and so in some of the images that we've got they're filmed by Robert but latterly they've mostly been my own work ..... and so, as far as who, I consider myself to be the maker but I know that in that consideration that I couldn't do it alone and that I rely very heavily on the support and encouragement artistically from other specialists like Oliver.

**AP**

And that brings us, I guess, back to that first question about positioning it as research. How are you negotiating those issues of ownership with this being research in other, in different kinds of context?

**JB**

Right. Do you mean ..... so how am I negotiating this as research in a cross context. Is that what you're meaning by that?

**AP**

Well I mean, if we're talking about this work being positioned very specifically within academic or institutional definition of what research is how do you, I suppose, represent those different levels, layers of ownership collaboration?

**JB**

That's an interesting question isn't it, because I don't know that it really comes up because the question of ownership is you know, ownership, the last word is, it's mine and so in terms of XXX submissions, that it's my submission, simple as that if there are spin offs and Oliver makes work, for example, from some of the sound work then we negotiate that personally and he might have his own outcome but historically it's been mine and labelled as mine and positioned as mine.

**AP**

OK. We're going to move onto the next section, I mean as we discussed before the interview, it's quite a formal process going through these questions and that's, it is intentionally so. so the first question is 'In what context is your practice devised and presented?' which actually follows quite nicely from the last question?

**JB**

In terms of context when we talk about the RAE, and this is, this work has been framed up within an institutional and academic framework as practice as research and so has been presented, for example, at PARIP National Conference when it can, does a circuit of institutions, either as performance or as discussion around performance but it's also framed up very much within an arts council and professional context because it's been the 3 years worth of PAR that have been actually have been, a lot has been funded through the arts council.

**AP**

Right, so already we're into those cross contexts, which is the second question in this context is about those XXX context so you can give a bit more detail about how it is funded and how that works together.

**JB**

Vida Midgelow, who is the other dance lecturer at the College of Northampton and I, 8 years ago we started a programme called the Choreographic Lab which has run each summer here at UCN allowing the 2 of us to develop over

a, kind of, intensive period of time our own work but also in, with funding being increased from the Arts Council, which it has done, has allowed other companies to come in too and develop their own practice and that's very much been about research, we've been very clear about work that had to be made out of those periods of time, that people who came to work in the Lab might make work later but it wasn't about 2 or 3 weeks worth of paid research time to make the work, it was time to explore and time for us within a relationship with each other to help each other to articulate what is was about our research processes and so it's very much within that, that this particular piece, the woman, has developed and has been funded through that process.

**AP**

And what about the resource context of actually making the work here?

**JB**

I think having said all that about getting funding from the Arts Council it has to be said that there's no way if I wasn't within an academic institution that I would make work like this because it's very expensive we use 2, 3, 4 cameras sometimes, microphones, computers video projectors, several, you know, XXX very, very resource intensive and we rely very heavily on in kind support and being able to use the space and the resources that the institution can provide, so they support us in that way.

**AP**

And how does the institution see that kind of support, in terms of, if you're getting, if you're making use of resources such as space and equipment, how do you have to negotiate that within the institution. Or is it straightforward?

**JB**

It's pretty straightforward and, I think, this institution has been very supportive and the approach has always been that they would rather see the space used, whatever the use was, than not and so we make the most of the summer times and what have you. So it's never really been a problem.

**AP**

And you say this couldn't have happened without being in an institutional context. I wonder if you could talk maybe a bit more specifically about how you feel those resource issues for you, have actually specifically impacted on the kind of work that you've made.

**JB**

Well I suppose one straightforward answer is that if I didn't have access to the equipment, I wouldn't, I wouldn't have been allowed to develop the work in this way. It just wouldn't be a possibility, maybe I wouldn't have even bothered to go down the road of exploring it but there's, I guess there's another side to that which is because we're in this institution and the resources are available and there isn't the pressure to make work for a professional environment it allows that slow development over time that research in other areas, outside practice, would expect and consider to be a given which is one of the tensions between a professional environment and a PAR environment, I think we have

that, an outcome pressure in a very different way than say when you have a RAE outcome pressure but it's a different kind of pressure because it's much more short term, you've got to make work, work that's going to be successful.

**AP**

And is there anything more generally within the institutional context because I think, because your work touches on a number of, uses a number of different practices, is there something about the academic environment which brings together arranged practices anyway that's fed into what you do?

**JB**

Well yes, because I think if that weren't the case I wouldn't, I wouldn't be in academia, you know, that on a personal level I feel that the work that I'm, the PAR work that I do is not just about professional practice it's about an investigation and I'm much more interested in the investigation, the what happens when this and that. The impact of reading Kirsten Hastrup, thinking about anthropological imagination and what's the impact creatively when you're making work and do I have the time to play with that in the studio rather than just making work for the public so ..... this allows me to do that.

**AP**

Ok, and actually touching on that is how then does the work deal with issues of professionalism and how does your practice engage with those kind of contexts?

**JB**

it's a tension, isn't it? (Laughs) I think for probably all of us who do PAR, it's a tension and it's an interesting tension because I'd say that most people that I know, and I would include myself in that, don't want to disassociate from that professional context because there's something about the validation that you get as artists in that environment so that tension sits there. For me, I show my work when I can, I don't tour it or push to tour it in massive ways and I, it sits well within the East Midlands because of the remit that dance for the National Dance Agency have because they are very committed to inter disciplinary work to very experimental dance work and so I have a real ally in them as a professional body which is really nice and gives support not just to my work but to the students who do work with me here as well, so that's a nice professional context which might not be somewhere, you know, you might not find it in other places it just happens to be that my work has a lot of relationships with the kinds of work they're committed to developing through dance form.

**AP**

Right, and is there a working, is there that relationship then between the, that professional context and say the institution here, I mean is it something where you set up the work in this space and it becomes then a space that's open to the public in XXX specifically professional?

**JB**

We do, do that here and we also, beyond this work, the relationship with dance XXX is that companies that they have involved, there's more of a curriculum relationship so for my students there's a connection here that companies that come for dance XXX might work with my students but opening up this space ..... is something that we do on an ad-hoc basis, it isn't a formal relationship or a formal process of, you know, we always have performances at these times. It's very much more ad-hoc than that.

**AP**

And how is the work dealt with in those issues of teaching and pedagogy?

**JB**

That's difficult for me, that question's difficult and I suppose ..... this, one of the key things about this work is that it feeds very much into questions of pedagogy in terms of how do you deal with documentation within any kind of performing arts, performing studies or any other practice based degree, dance, drama, whatever it may be, so what's the role of documentation and I spend a lot of time with my students trying to tease that out in ways that we can develop what they think documentation is and because I primarily teach on a performance studies degree and partly on a dance degree, from a studies degree it's very much about interdisciplinary work and so my work feeds directly into my thinking about teaching The other connection is that one of the remits, not of this work, but the remit of the choreographic lab as a whole is that we are, have a commitment to developing resources, particularly for dance practitioners, dance teacher, dancers in academia for around, the business of making work that one of the things that we believe is missing, in a lot of cases, is any either written work or CD ROMs or DVD or whatever it might be that really deals with the work in processes of making so how do we create a resource base for students so that they can learn from people who are doing PAR, to get better for themselves, to understand what it is, to not make those mistakes, to try something different and so the lab has a real commitment to doing that so as the woman, this work is connected to that, then there is always that commitment and every time we make a performance, we make a DVD and we make a CD that can be just had on its own so it doesn't depend on being live for a lot of people.

**AP**

That's quite interesting, I think I want to come back to that in the documentation section. I think that's a really interesting issue about how you tie in documentation to teaching because, of course, the document itself is only teaching you about documented process as opposed to the XXX process. Let's come back to that. I want to move on to the aims and objectives section and so we come to the real meaty bits. What are the research questions?

**JB**

(Sharp intake of breath) Shall we put the other thing first, the other questions first, you know, what does it say, something like how useful are research questions. (Laughs) Research questions are things that I've struggled with throughout my time in academia, you always find questions, not that I don't

have questions but, you know, when, when someone says to you, you know, what's your question, what's the question, and I think, well no, lots, too many questions but I suppose it links back to the introduction in terms of what are the relationships formally and aesthetically between an extended range of dance, an extended range of vocal possibilities, video and digitally manipulated sound and what, this is aesthetically, what are the relationships within the frame of something that could be called narrative it could be called autobiographical work, it could be called narrative reflexivity, it could be called self ethnography or any of those words that I've already mentioned within that frame though it's very much that which holds the aesthetic and formal relationship of the parts, as it were.

## **AP**

And yes, I suppose the question then is how useful do you think this model of questions is and then we can talk a little bit about, although, I suppose, this question about how did you devise your question because you haven't devised specific questions around which to make the work in this specific instance but maybe if you could talk a little bit about how you devised those ideas unless you feel that we've already covered that.

## **JB**

Just before we kind of slip onto that I'm sort of realising as I'm saying that about that key thrust, as always, there's more than one question, isn't there? and the other question is this business about documentation and so there's, there's the kind of self ethnography and around it are all these questions about the formal elements that I have at my disposal and, you know, how much of this, how much of that goes to make the thing and then where does the material come from and that, for me, is both a question for the process of making so the lived experience but it's also a question for the documentation because it feeds back and forth so where does the material come from. The material comes from, and this is like, I suppose, a kind of subset underneath what would be, what is an auto ethnography. How do you articulate that in the way that I mean it, so, let's say, if you take someone like XXX who talks about personal anthropology or Joanne Hershfield who talks about doing a sort of self ethnography where you go into the field, you know, and your talking about anthropologists here who are asking the researcher to be reflective, to explore themselves within their context, to be clear about the role they will play when they go into the field. So that's something that holds me. When I go into the field, or come into the studio and it's me it's the space and it's whatever I can have in here, but it still doesn't really generate material so where has the material come from and I think on that level then it's really about a process that explores the felt sense which is developed from the work of Eugene Gendlin, who is a philosopher and a psychologist, it develops from, to a certain extent, process work that a lot of people are drawing views but a small amount and it develops from a released based dance technique and an extended vocal technique such as used by XXX so that's, that's the basis of the techniques that then I have access to in myself and I suppose it also develops in the work of a post XXX theory where I would use active imagination and dream work so those, that's what generates it, and now I'm lost. What was the question?



**AP**

Is that, now I mean it ties in because this is a question of how you devise research questions but if you get past the idea if research questions are not the way in which you frame what it is that you are doing, then how do these elements come together. Where are you generating the work and is that drawing on your network of citations you've made very transparent in this context. Is that a very conscious process of – I'm going to use post XXX?

**JB**

I'd like to be able to say that everything that I do in the studio, and I wouldn't use the word self conscious, I'd use the word reflect, that everything that I do is a reflect, a reflective choice clear about the intention and can both explore it subjectively but also be aware of the potential implications of that. Maybe of maybe not. (Laughs) But it sound great doesn't it – maybe or maybe not. But that's what I'd like to be able to say so the question's yes, they're there all the time so ok, let's say a moment for doing something. Let's say that I wanted to, with Oliver, come in the studio and we want to I say that I want to work with some material which is something that I've read where James Hillman talks about, in the same way that Clifford talks about twitches and nods and winks and all the subtleties of how we find out what something means and I want to work with that with myself but here I am on the inside and it's, only you can see these things and I also want to work with, through a process of active imagination, and so I might bring in a dream to work with, I might bring the text in and I'd certainly bring a camera in and a microphone in order to be able to get outside myself, as it were, so even in the moment of the live performance, the audience, even if I don't get access to it, the audience has that material because I'm projected live or there's pre-recorded material that can be projected in order to access that and Oliver will record my voice, talking about this dream, talking about the way I dance, whatever it might be and so, and that then becomes media as well so it gets fed back into the performance as well. That's very much what your research interests are on that, that process of what does it mean to get that XXX out. So in that sense those aren't, you know, it's not, still isn't a, going with this question, it's like I go in with this question, maybe more a problem or a potential or maybe it's just an idea.

**AP**

Because it's quite interesting, your interest in reflexivity and the possibility or impossibility of that because one of the critiques that a lot of people involved in practice as research make is that when I have hunches, I don't have the set questions, which, of course, you can counter that traditional archive-based research also operates on intuition, but with your specific interest in reflexivity, how you negotiate things, that gap between that knowledge and what happens between that and action?

**JB**

I think that's where it shifts into these formal elements, you know, so that it becomes then maybe quite pragmatic formal manipulation of the elements of sound, video, movement etc to see which of those elements can do that which

can help me to be outside myself, when can I just be in the moment because in the performance I tend not to the character of the woman tends to be introspective and inarticulate, she doesn't explain lots of things or talk or dance in a very expensive way, it's very much an introspective character. Purposely in order that the external is elsewhere so the whole notion of reflexivity needs you to both understand yourself quite clearly and the context you're in can only be accessed through the entirety of the elements, not just the character.

**AP**

Ok. (Laughs) I'm just thinking which of the next questions to go on to. .... I suppose, do you have a rationale for evaluating strategies of process and how, so it touches on this issue of self reflexivity. How then do you talk about that?

**JB**

Yeah, yeah, so really the question is when I've done the work, how do I evaluate and know when the work's the way I wanted it to be, (laughs) I find that, in, I can answer it sort of theoretically but in a, from a very personal point of view I think that the works never the way I want it to be (laughs) so I'm constantly evaluating, after every rehearsal, I evaluate, reassess and adjust slightly so in, every time we come in the studio there is a process of evaluation which comes by listening to the sound, watching the video, making notes about how I felt and comparing that to tasks I set myself for going into the studio and .... then .... and something very subjective, looking, listening and feeling – Did I like that? How was that? I don't know what it was and I don't know how it happened, it was a mistake, how did we get it like that? I don't know but I really like it. So there's always that too but sometimes it's not that it might be a very clear evaluation like you do when you're teaching, this is what I set out to do, these were my aims and this is what I've got, well it didn't do that and I still want to try and do this so let me reassess, set another task, try it a different way.

**AP**

Ok, and how then does that, this ties into the next question about research of epistemology, how does all of this then, how do you see it tying in more generally with the XXX research of epistemologies, which is really about how this is working as research?

**JB**

. .... it's very difficult to unpick this question, and the people who work at UCN who are involved in PAR are talking about whether we even need the word epistemology because if the epistemology is about the theory of knowledge .... and then it becomes about how is the knowledge constructed so this, it can fit in lots of ways, so it can fit in fragments of my understanding of ethnography, it can fit in fragments of a dance context, what's happening in the dance world in a sense of what we understand to be dance, lots of possibilities in there, and the same with all the other parts, and the same with the notion of what is interdisciplinary choreography, what is this or what is that and I suppose my feeling is that I just kind of do that, what I've done there, I

dot around those things but because I'm not say a theatre historian doing ..... reworkings of something, it feels a much more, I probably shouldn't say this cos they're going to disagree with me but it feels like a very difficult question. I think, the question is difficult and I have my own suspicions about the need and the problems with using terms like epistemology anyway, now, and I mean part of the process of case studies is to try and figure out what are the right questions to be asking. See for me I think the more important are questions of methodology but that's because I'm an ethnographer.

### **AP**

That's a good point to switch on to methodology (laughs) it's quite amazing how you've structured these, they do tend to flow. It's interesting because in each interview the questions flow in different kind of ways. So the first question under methodology, and we've kind of touched on this a bit when you were talking about how you generate the work, but what is your devising process and how does that relate to the broader context in which you work? So I guess for this piece, what was the devising process and how then does that relate more specifically to the other work you do in the choreographic lab?

### **JB**

Well historically in terms of the choreographic lab work has been so, for example, one year in the lab I was making a video for another company which was basically a dance video and for a good portion of the lab years I've been working on this process, this work so it's probably most important to talk about this and in terms of devising, well some of things we've talked about already so for what I do, I come in with these ideas and, and we try them out ..... in that, maybe it's more important to talk about the this kind of feeding back so there's a reason why I've got camera on my lap and there's a reason why when I'm talking to you it was important that I filmed Oliver or Robert and we cut to them because for me that's a very key part of the work that I do, so one element of the devising process is the exploration of, I guess you might call it feedback loop ..... so let's say it's shown let's say some of this material that's showing now, what happened in this material is that, this is material that's being filmed and then re-recorded and I do that as many times as I can to see how long the tape will last and how far does it degrade and it gives it this very light fuzzy kind of quality so I put the camera kind of where Caroline is now and if Robert does what he does because I'm not over there, I do these myself live both in process and performance ..... and so, and so we put the camera on and I record whatever I'm doing like Caroline is recording me and then ..... if we swap back and change the vision mixer back to the other material ..... then what I would do then is I take that material that I've recorded ..... play it back through the video projector ..... and film in front of it, so we'll just see if this works, so then there's me live, it won't play, so then there's what I've recorded, plus me live and I record that again and then I do it again and so, particularly in the material that's, that's quite XXX around the edges, then there's as many as three or four layers of doing that in that process ..... and that feedback loops creates a really very interesting because, because what I wear in the piece is a blue dress, you pick up the light from the camera and from the video projector, it picks up the intensity of the blue and it creates

the blue so the blue material isn't a, isn't an editing effect it's just generated live and then we do the same process with the sound so I wear a radio controlled mic and we do this, this isn't just live in terms of the performance this is the process, this is what we do in the process. I wear a radio controlled mic, I tell a story ..... Oliver records it and that's what we do and there you can hear what Oliver does, he's done it much better than I've managed to do with the camera today and that's what we do so you have constantly these echoes and that's what we're working with in terms of the process of how do we do that and how do we create material in all those formats that works well and then we improvise so we don't set, we don't set, ok this is what's going to happen now and actually this is an interesting point for us because we're both thinking now we have all this material over three years worth of working, you know, would we actually like to stop and see if we set things, but one of the things we've really enjoyed is, is the chance occurrences as material comes back again and we don't know it and so I'll talk about a story and he's already captured it on the computer and I'll go off and talk about something else and I'll be dancing and there's a story that goes with the dancing and I'll talk about the dancing and then he brings this story back which makes me think of something else, he triggers something in me and I go somewhere else or they might happen at the same time and those lovely chance occurrences where the character of the woman becomes so fragmented and yet so whole through the entirety of the mediums because she starts a story live but she finishes it through the speakers, she starts the movement live and it's finished or she dances with the movement that's in the image, so all those things are happening, so that's the, that's the kind of key, when we're working together that's the key to what we're doing. When I'm on my own in terms of devising my own material, that's when I'm working with these things like the XXX sense with active imagination to try and generate material about, they're not really stories about me, they're stories about a woman and I draw from all the things that I'm reading or have read both theoretical and fictional, you know, and, and those, I allow those stories to come in and become characterised and then I bring that material to us when we have all the media XXX together.

**AP**

What's quite interesting, that sense of do we chose an end point or do we keep going the layering and, of course, that's when you start to bring in this issue of documentation.

**JB**

Absolutely.

**AP**

Because once you have an end point and it's fixed it becomes something that you seek to represent and I wondered if you'd probably want to talk a bit about that tension of documentation because, obviously, your work is all about the creative use of documentation but then where is the document of what happens.

**JB**

Yes. For me that's an unresolved area at the moment because there are documents, as we've said, there are videos, there are DVDs, there are CDs, there's sound, there's image, there's text on how the paper's written, you know, there are those things but they are never this thing, obviously, and so .... it's sort of modular I guess maybe in that sense, in that you can have some of the elements of it but you can't have the whole of it unless you come to the performance and you experience the whole of it because the whole of it, so far, in it's history has never been the same, you know, each time it's performed it's very, very different and I don't know where that's going to go because I don't, because of a personal interest in enjoying that, I like that, I like what it does, the excitement of the way the work shifts potential and I guess I have a fear that if I fix it I'll become disinterested in it. Something very different happens to me as a performer when it's fixed that is not about ..... it's not about presence then, you know, I can't, I can't be truly present in the moment because I know what's coming so I can, I can be ultimately self reflexive in that I can lift myself out and survey the whole and just do the thing that needs doing which doesn't feel actually like the right thing to be doing because the task is that all the technology helps me to be self reflexive in a kind of performative way, it isn't a personal thing about being self reflexive it's just the symbol of that for everyone else, yeah, so fixing it feels difficult so I don't know what the answer is long term, but I'm starting, this piece at the moment is going to be, we're going to draw a line under it and I'm going to start again, I've got some new arts council funding and I'm going to start using this process of making but on another piece which is called Myths & Stories by Her and maybe in that then there will be, coz that's going to be very much about making our work, making our piece rather than the process of making, so maybe I'll have an answer then. (Laughs).

**AP**

Because I mean, it's obvious that you know about and that's one of the things that you play with, the impossibility of the document and that's part of what you're doing. But it's quite interesting that the particular process that you've chosen for this piece really refuses that liberty, it refuses the, anyone's desire to say there can be a document that can tell us what this piece is about.

**JB**

Yes, which, you know, currently for the RAE, it's really interesting isn't it? It doesn't mean I can't jump through the hoops though, as it were. Am I allowed to say that?

**AP**

Yes, yes.

**JB**

Because there are the elements there I can problematise it. I can say to you there's a huge problem conceptually, theoretically, artistically and I don't think it's possible unless you're here and you experience that moment, then you can't have it, I can say that but I also know that when it comes to the next RAE submission that I have to be able to, I will have to be able to have something and I have it, coz we have DVDs, CDs and I have things that are

written so there are all the elements as well, so you know, it's, then it becomes a question of context again, isn't it, what's right for that context, I have the material that's right for that particular XXX.

**AP**

And on the CDs, what are on the CDs, are they the individual visual, audio XXX of the pieces or are they videos of specific performances of the piece?

**JB**

All.

**AP**

All. Right.

**JB**

So there are, like this is the one you're watching today is in both CD, DVD and DV format and there are CDs of single sounds and we also have then DV tapes of the performance in a very different angle but also we've used those tapes of a performance and put them back into a more high edited variation so there are all those possibilities.

**AP**

So it sounds as though, would it be fair to say that you deal with the issue of documentation in terms of excess?

**JB**

Laughs

**AP**

Because it sounds as if (laughter) but I think it fits quite interestingly with the layering with the work that you do in that sense of not being XXX of never reaching an end point there's always more.

**JB**

Yeah, because I'm documenting in every moment, you know, I'm documenting now so I film some things here on this camera, Caroline's filming, Oliver's recording, so I'm documenting this material will probably be in my work so it's always, because that, that's the work, you know, we're making more work for me now, you've helped (laughs), so yes, it might be documentation in excess, you've discovered my obsession (laughs).

**AP**

Do all these go into the large box for the RAE?

**JB**

Ah well now that would be great wouldn't it, you know, although I suspect that probably be good and water it down and give, you know, one DVD and one piece of writing rather than a whole box although it's a nice idea, maybe I'd give them the whole box coz it's getting quite big.

**AP**

Well because different, different researchers would do that differently within our own department there are different approaches and you do get boxes full of things of artifacts

**AP**

This is tape 2 on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2004, we've just been talking about documentation and if we can shift into talking about dissemination because you were talking about RAE and what to do with the boxes and where to draw the line and those sort of things so how have you conceptualised issues around dissemination and this work?

**JB**

Specifically for the RAE, what's happened for a previous one and I don't know about the next because who knows when I've been very clear about doing what I said which is making a choice about making some sort of, some sort of product and attaching to that the A4 so there's that evidence, as it were, then there are also papers that talk about the work, or think about theoretical issues that might be published and there is the possibility, hopefully, that the work can be explored in DVD format and certainly the new piece that I'm making is going to have CD, DVD, whatever kind of format because it seems to me that, you know, because I'm in the realms of questioning documentation and playing with documentation that to not have a document might be interesting but doesn't allow other people access to some of the questions and the ways of working so for me in order to, kind of, develop the discussion, to have discussions with other people about using these particular strategies, I think it's important to create something and to have that disenable and whilst life performance is one possibility it's also really difficult, it seems to me, this institutional, professional context issue comes up. I can show a piece in a professional environment but I can't have any discussions really about the work, about the process of PAR or I can have discussions with people about the work but it's quite difficult, we don't yet have a circuit which is one of the things through PARIP that I hope we're gonna, certainly in the Midlands, going to really push to develop that. There are arenas for showing the work and also discussing the work. I think it's really important that we get better at discussing the work, staying with the work to see what the work is rather than stuff around.

**AP**

Because when I asked the question about dissemination you focused on video artefacts and paper artefacts and XXX then also about access to some of the questions, maybe we can unpick that notion of being able to access some of the questions of the work within it's artefacts so that question of does dissemination have to be within the artefact document, what kind of access can people get to the research via the document?

**JB**

Well ..... I think, or would like to think that there, it is possible through the artistic strategies that we use to allow yourself as an audience member to question what the work is and thereby, in the process of questioning raise

some of the very questions that I'm working with. Equally I think you can probably just watch it as an installation, you know, be happy to do that, and certainly some of the discussions that we've had within the choreographic lab in showings has done just that so through some of the strategies to enhance the notion of a, sort of, a reflective approach and the sort of fragmentation of the character has generated just those kind of questions because I guess what I'm trying to do with the product is to reveal the process somehow so, you know, typical post modern trick, but to not make it a trick because for me it is much more complex for everyone but, you know, how do you do that, how do you bring process into the moment, and we've talked about all the strategies that I use to do that so I hope that you can access the research through the live performance and then it wouldn't just have to be either a writing or a document of some other description. But it is a problem.

**AP**

Yes, because obviously when we have discussed that issue of peer review in the moment, which is great but that sense of revelation from the document I think is a really thorny and a quite difficult issue of how because, obviously, if we're talking about personal XXX how can a text whether there is written text or you're talking about some kind of visual language how does that reveal?

**JB**

Yeah, and, you know, for me they become strategies ..... so, for example, if I', just trying to dream into this for a bit, if we had the possibility of peer review and this work was peer review, what they would have access to would be ..... my musings and reflections both live and recorded on my theoretical approach because that's in the work, I don't just dance, I don't just talk about when I was a kid, I talk about the problems of documentation in the work, I talk about, about reflexivity in the work, you know, and it might be that I'm muttering or it might be that I'm chatting to Oliver so the access is there, so it seems to be me that if we are in an environment like that, that the frame is set, it seems to me, and that's what we should be doing if we want our work to be seen in a particular way it's up to us to make that available in whatever way, you know, we can't, for me it feels hard to say we're going to have peer review or whatever that would be or we don't want peer review because actually how could anybody assess it because it's my work and it's in the work, everything's in the work feels like cheating because we are enacting it, it is, we are saying it's research, so I think we have a responsibility to be able to articulate that in as many forms as we possibly can, whether that's through speaking, whether that's through written text, videos or live performance. We have a responsibility to do that and if something about being in academia is about developing knowledge ..... then in, in all ways across the spectrum, you know, we're not saying it's in language or here or here, it's everywhere but let's be articulate about it. I can articulate from my body just as well as I can in writing.

**AP**

That's quite interesting because it's coming back again to that multiplicity. There's different kinds of expressions to speak alongside of each other and



seeing them in some sense of totality in order to understand their accurate research position.

**JB**

Yeah, yes and I suppose it comes back to me as an ethnographer with a very clear commitment to the notion of representation and it just happens that I translate that to a, sort of, artistic environment and I guess they, sort of, they idealised commitment to it translates to believing that it's important for us to be able to do this. I don't want to just say, just watch the work, I'm happy to say we can talk about it too. We could do other things as well, we could try lots of different ways to find the best for this work and lots of different things for somebody else to find the best for them to represent their work and to articulate what it is that's happening, what the work is.

**AP**

And moving on from that, how do you conceive of possible modes of assessments of these various expressions, translations, representations?

**JB**

Well, I know there's a lot of, in terms of within the institution there is a lot of different feelings about things like peer review, but I really do feel that it would be a fantastic thing to have. Someone said at one of our regional Parip meetings being a good ethnographer I need to remember who it is because they'll need credit, it was XXX, XXX XXX (person's name) and what she said was 'There are lots of different journals, academic journals, referee journals that the RAE use as a kind of standard for their peer review but there is one journal, there's a lot of journals and you submit your work to the group of peers, the journal, that you feel is appropriate to the work that you've written but we don't have that in PAR, we don't have lots of journals, visual, virtual, theatres, spaces, journals whatever they may be with those set peers in groups who could assess the work' but why not, it seems to me that that's, you know, that if we really want to value the work, that's a way forward and to do that we need to get better at talking about the work, articulating what it is we think we're doing in order that we can help peers to review our work, help them to understand so people say, you know, they only do this bit and that bit but I say nobody as far as I know is doing, is into disciplining choreography with this kind of ethnographic umbrella on it, but I don't think that that means no-one could review it but my job would be to help them to do that in the same way as good writing does that but everyone who reviews my article is not going to have the same expertise as I have.

**AP**

And how do you see those multiple outcomes as, I suppose, relating to that as helping someone to see through the work?

**JB**

And do you mean that in a particular context.

**AP**

Well I suppose if we're talking about assessment and we're talking about peer review and you're saying that it's not necessary that a reviewer would need to have intimate knowledge of ethnography and dance practices in order to say something meaningful about the work. What then are the roles of various kinds of artefacts that you produce in that relationship. Do you see those different kinds of outcomes produce as feeding into that process?

**JB**

Yes, I think in, in that process they've got to have the box haven't they? (laughs), they can't have the one piece of paper, they've got to have the box and they've got to have the live performance which becomes quite cumbersome they may not have to have the whole box but maybe they have to have, I need to be clear what are the elements of the box so, and, and one trace of each and the whole so a video documentation, a live performance, writing about it and separate elements of sound, video, whathaveyou because the issue of assessment is not just within the RAE context, this is where we're getting to the wider environment of how we actually validate this that we're doing before the XXX.

**AP**

I suppose that takes us to the, sort of, final section on evaluation and ..... how appropriate do you feel the institutional demand for research questions is with regard to talking about all of this?

**JB**

Just because I find research questions difficult doesn't mean that I don't think they are important and appropriate and I guess that links back to this kind of ideal view of the world. I believe that why I'm in academia is something about being able to articulate this and being able to have it accessible within a wider academic framework ..... Does that begin where we need to go with that?

**AP**

Well I suppose what ties in with that is, what can extend that question really is towards the end of this process. What do you feel are the contributions to knowledge that you have made? I mean we've talked about research impulses and we've talked about it from that end but how, how have you seen this as contributing?

**JB**

Ok, what I think is happening and it always feels really difficult to talk about these things because any notion of being self effacing when you try and answer these questions is lost because you say how grand you are, which I don't think at all, what I'd like to think is happening and could happen is that by ..... problematising what is dance, for a start, I mean I often get questions about where does the dance vocabulary come from, it's not a very extended dance vocabulary, the same with the character, she's not, you can't harass her, she's not a theatrical character in the sense that she's not presented to you so, so I'm, so those little areas I'm problematising but also I'd like to think that I'm trying to think about what something like interdisciplinary choreography could be and that that will have an effect not only on me but on

other people working in this area both inside institutions, academic institutions, and in the professional world and because, this is when it starts to feel grandiose, because I spend a lot of time thinking about it and trying to articulate it and because I have a commitment to being able to do that the same applies, I would hope then that the articulation of that, the processes of making work like that and experimenting with work like that means that other people have access to that thought process, experiments, thinking and that, that shifts the playing field too, so it isn't just the work that shifts other work the whole context it's the articulation of it. That's in an ideal world, that's what I think ought to happen yeah.

**AP**

Right, and how, I suppose if were looking at specific contexts of practice as research per say how are you seeing this work fitting in with that and contributing towards its, I suppose, increased institutionalisation? And I mean that in a positive way.

**JB**

Yeah, yeah well that's when, I suppose, you know, some of the questions you've been trying to unpick through Parip about documentation, for me, are really important so I hope that the process of making work like this and playing with documentation as a creative tool in some way pushes that argument on because it, it always feels to me that there are two few people doing documentation and that feels, and I don't know if it's a reality, but it feels as though because people feel like it is a tag on and that is a boring thing to do and, and I'd love the world not to think that. I'd love people to think that it was an artistic tool and it really generates lots of exciting possibilities and shifts where you are and can really shift you creatively from where you think you are so I think in terms of the bigger PAR debates, there's something about documentation that I think I'm offering and that's probably the biggest, yeah, my biggest agenda.

**AP**

But by dealing with it creatively. It is a sense of people trying to refuse it but, of course, if you deal, if you engage with it, the processes of documentation in a creative way then you can fulfil both that issue of the document as different from real but also be able to be accepted by the institutional demands for the object.

**JB**

That's right, yeah.

**AP**

Ok, I want to move on now

**JB**

Sorry, there's just one other thing that I wanted to say in terms of, kind of, what else it's shifting and that is a personal thing which I don't know if it'll make a difference in the very early stages but I said at the beginning that this process of doing this has also developed and pushed on my ethnographic

work and I'm just in the process of finishing a chapter for a book for XXX the book's called Research Methodology and that's about what I've called Performance Ethnography and so it's tried to take that idea that the ethnographic process is an artistic one and try and encourage the reader/researcher to take on a process which is much more artistic when looking at performance environments in order to engage with the same kind of processes that their subject of study might be going through to see what new language might be generated, to see what else, so it's back to my question about what's the right kind of representation and how do we engage in that in the field appropriately so, and that, that feels like, feels really important to me because it's about this question of representation but also feels important because it ties in with PAR in terms of, you know, for me Caroline shouldn't be allowed to sit over there with a camera (laughs), you know, that to be engaged in the same process as us, it's only then that she can really start to understand what it might be and to be able to have the conversation on the same level to be able to make a decision about how to film and what to do with the relic, you know, the artefact, I mean, clearly we're not, it doesn't matter does it? Because, you know, we've got other things, constraints of finances but in an ideal world that would be what we should.

**AP**

That's quite interesting, because I think, to refer to Caroline again, part of our thinking around devising this set up was a very self reflexive, formal, how do we do the formal interview structure and, in fact, we thought let's see what we can do actually within that formal structure and, so it was very XXX in that very self conscious move to adopt what might be seen as quite a traditional strategy and see what comes (inaudible – talking over each other). But I want to talk about your work. I suppose nearing the end of these three years of what you've been working on what can you say about the problems you've encountered through the process of research and what kind of ideas you have about doing things differently?

(Long Pause)

**AP**

Is that a question you can answer?

**JB**

possibly. When I started I don't think I had clearly in mind the fragmentation that has occurred, now on reflection, I can see that I, there was a part of me that was interested in this idea that no one element would be allowed to take precedence so, you know, when you use, when you do multi media stuff it's really difficult because you put this huge image back here and it's going to be in this video sort of against everything that I really want there's this big image live and there you are as an audience looking at it and it's all encompassing and you watch that and here you are small on the screen and you can ignore us and now I can see as I was working through the process I didn't want that, I never wanted that to be the case and so artistic choices all along the way have become clearer and clearer about how do all these elements become equal in that, so that we get this kind of multiplicity through the elements of

the one character so she's nowhere you can't find her, you can't locate her really because she shifts audibly around the space, she moves around the space, I move into shadow and the light, the video takes over or vice versa and I didn't know that I wanted that but I feel quite clear now with that, I'm very committed to that so in terms of developing that will make the process more straightforward, I'm sure something different will come from it and new problems and I didn't, what I didn't do in this, is I set out to do and it's come back because I've set this up in the new project that I'm working on is, that there is something about story and narrative that in the pushing out into all the elements has been interestingly lost in that you can never quite get the story, never quite get it and that keeps coming back so what's the balance between the form, so it's like a form of XXX, what's the balance between the formal elements and how you set them against each other and the meanings being made and that for me is, it's not a problem but it's still there to push at and work with.

**AP**

Ok and what has your experience been of having to represent or you obviously didn't represent this practice as research at the last RAE but what has been your experience of having to represent this work as practice as research in different contexts?

**JB**

I don't know that there have been any really significant problems or issues, it's just a case of changing hats ..... so, and I think people who are funded by different bodies get good at that, you know, you just change what you're talking about, you're over there, you reframe it over here and I, it doesn't feel like a problem and I haven't had any real issues or problems in framing this work. In this institution they've been quietly supportive of, of all of us who do PAR here, and in terms of showing the work to other people, I suppose it's not a problem framing it like that, the problems I have are still about how all of us as a community talk about the work. I don't just mean my work but everybody's work how do we, how do we do that, how do we feel that that's ok to do without people feeling it's too personal, it's too difficult or whatever happens, different things happen for different people.

**AP**

Which leads us on to what has been the last question but through the process of these case studies and I'm now tagging on a final question which I'll come to. But how close is the relationship between your own practice as research, I suppose, and the context of having to talk about it within this very formal set up?

**JB**

Well, I think that's probably been clear throughout the interview, hasn't it, that actually it fits happily for me, it fits well in that I want to be able to talk about it, I think it's right to talk about it and not only are we documenting something of it but we're also generating new material for me, for the work so it's doing what I do (laughs).

**AP**

But are there any questions that I should be asking you, I mean what have I not been able to touch on through these questions? And that's, that's specifically XXX to the ad hoc questions that I'm adding to the mix.

**JB**

..... It's interesting because when you, when we, when I looked at the questions and I arranged them into the headings I thought Oh, there's going to be lots of stuff that we can't talk about through these questions, I'm not, I don't know if it's going to be ok. Going through my mind, you know, I want to be able to talk about ethnography and I feel like I have. It would be nice to talk about it more but I always feel that. I always feel that it would be nice to talk about the artistic imperative of ethnography we've talked about documentation. We haven't talked about the how beyond in the work, you know, how it might be outside and beyond the work and how you might reframe it differently, how you take the elements and make it something different but we've eluded to it and we haven't talked a lot about individual elements but, again, we've eluded to them and we didn't talk a lot about say the dance technique that I use and what I do with it to generate material or the vocal techniques that I use and what I do to generate material but we've eluded to them and that feels enough for me so I think it's ok.

**AP**

Because what I've become increasingly aware of, you're the fourth case study, is that we don't talk about the work and that, I mean, that's a conscious thing because the purpose of the case studies is not to talk very specifically about the work but what I find particularly interesting and rings really loudly in my ears is that absence and I'm just wondering if that's possibly a useful thing to have that sense of absence at the end of these in order to move on or whether you want to fill that absence.

**JB**

Well I, you see, you know, yes, no, because I feel like I have, because I feel like I do, so, so in the process of reading the questions and thinking about what would happen I made some artistic choices and brought the camera and they might only be small, you know, I put the video, Oliver's been patiently recording every moment and playing it back in a way that we hope, you know, those traces and echoes are available and so for me the work isn't gone and we may not have talked about those particular techniques but we're doing them.

**AP**

Ok. Well thank you very much Jane. That's it for today. Thank you.

**JB**

Thank you very much. Thank you Caroline, thank you Oliver, thank you Robert.