Dancing Contact Improvisation with Luce Irigaray: Intra-Action and *Elemental Passions*

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This article takes as its point of departure Luce Irigaray's Elemental Passions, *in which a woman-speaker tries to make her lover and the discipline of philosophy understand that she is not how they have imagined her to be; that she is not at all but that she keeps becoming through perpetual movement. The article investigates Irigaray's investment in a form of materialist difference feminism that offers conceptual links to the posthumanist work of Karen Barad's agential realism, especially her theorization of intra-action. The link between Irigaray and Barad is established via a diffractive reading that incorporates the dance/movement research practice of Contact Improvisation. Although expressed through written language,* Elemental Passions *creates the impression of the woman-speaker dancing, of encountering herself, her environment, and her lover through moved and moving contact, searching for a practice of moving-together, feeling-with, and feeling-between that can be experienced in an improvised dance duet. Exploring how touch and the sharing of weight in Contact Improvisation challenges boundaries and establishes ever-changing configurations and entanglements between dancers, the article proposes that Irigaray's woman-speaker envisions herself as a posthuman/ist woman and that improvised dancing offers a practice of intra-action through which she can encounter the world in her becoming.*

> Alone, I rediscover my mobility. Movement is my habitat. My only rest is motion. Whoever imposes a roof over my head, wears me out. Let me go where I have not yet arrived. —Luce Irigaray
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> The skin is no longer the boundary between the world and myself, but rather the sensing organ, which brings the world into my awareness.
> —Ann Cooper Albright

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Luce Irigaray's *Elemental Passions* is a poetic-philosophical engagement with Woman's agency and subjectivity.[1] Based on the experience of sexual difference, Irigaray seeks to find new ways of communicating that might foster mutual understanding between differently sexed and gendered bodies and minds and that might make possible new ways of relating and acting with and through one another. Irigaray's employment of poetic syntax, rhythm, allusion, metaphor, and metonymy counters the strictly propositional rationality of malestream philosophical discourse and enables readers to access planes of understanding that would otherwise remain inaccessible. Her prose lives in and draws life from the ongoing reconfiguration of philosophical concepts; as Hanneke Canters and Grace M. Jantzen write, "*Elemental Passions* has given us an insight into a new way of thinking, using images of fluidity which reconfigure sexual difference and thereby subvert the rigidity of the binary logic of traditional philosophy and psychoanalysis" (Canters and Jantzen 2005, 105). From the plethora of images in *Elemental Passions*, they focus on the lips, the flower, the abyss, the mirror, song, and virginity to elucidate Irigaray's emphasis on fluidity (106–22); my own point of departure and the inspiration for this article is the image of figurative movement, or what I am proposing to think of as the "dances" that take place between the female speaker and male addressee of *Elemental Passions*.[2] I argue that Irigaray's particular focus on sexual difference in *Elemental Passions* yields radical propositions for a kind of becoming (cf. 2002, 2003) that has been explicated by Karen Barad's posthumanist *agential realism*. *Agential realism* takes matter as seriously as language, discourse, and culture and points to the materiality of performativity. It puts forth a "*performative* understanding of discursive practices" (Barad 2007, 133) and configures subjectivity and agency as constituted only through their entanglement with others. Barad's emphasis of "how matter comes to matter" (Barad 2003) is instructive in understanding the figurative movements in *Elemental Passions* as necessarily grounded in and wired back into bodily actions. I show the conceptual entanglement of Barad and Irigaray by reading *Elemental Passions* diffractively[3] with Contact Improvisation (CI),[4] a form of improvised dancing that consists of bodily encounters through which dancers share and redistribute weight, use and create momentums, and explore new possibilities of moving in contact with their partners—all the while negotiating personal and sociocultural boundaries of what it means to touch and to be touched.[5] This perhaps unexpected approach enables me to open up possibilities for a radical redistribution and fluid reconfiguration of agency, moving with Irigaray away from self-contained subjects and toward immediate encounters.

Barad's agential realism radically rethinks subjectivity through what she calls *intra-action*. This posthumanist and "*performative* understanding of discursive practices… "challenges the representationalist belief in the power of words to represent preexisting things" (Barad 2003, 802, 807, emphasis in original). Barad's distrust of representationalism is grounded in Niels Bohr's interpretation of quantum mechanics; as Barad explains, "For Bohr, things do not have inherently determinate boundaries or properties," and the "inherent distinction between subject and object, and knower and known" is challenged by Bohr's "philosophy physics" (813; see also Barad 2007, ch. 3). The challenge to Newtonian physics and Cartesian epistemology that Barad

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finds in Bohr's work inspires her to elaborate on the onto-epistemological relationality between what has been known as "objects" in Newtonian physics. Bohr's interpretation of quantum mechanics suggests that objects obtain their properties only through being measured: "there aren't little things wandering aimlessly in the void that possess the complete set of properties that Newtonian physics assumes (for example, position and momentum); rather, there is something fundamental about the nature of measurement interactions such that, given a particular measuring apparatus, certain properties *become determinate*, while others are specifically excluded" (Barad 2007, 19, emphasis in original). It is the phenomena that objects exhibit in each encounter, rather than the "independent objects with inherent boundaries and properties," that Bohr considers to be "primary epistemological unit[s]" (Barad 2003, 815). But Bohr was not only rethinking the way we come to know the phenomena of objects; he was also challenging "the belief that the world is populated with individual things with their own independent sets of predetermined properties" (Barad 2007, 19).

Barad builds upon and elaborates Bohr's onto-epistemological challenge to develop her posthumanist critique of how philosophical agency comes into being (or, rather, how it comes into becoming). Agency is not built upon the action of existing subject-positions or agential actors; instead, it is created via performative actions with and through other entities. In this "agential realist" approach, "phenomena do not merely mark the epistemological inseparability of 'observer' and 'observed'; rather, *phenomena are the ontological inseparability of agentially intra-acting 'components.'* That is, phenomena are ontologically primitive relations—relations without preexisting relata" (Barad 2003, 815; emphasis in original). Rethinking the ontological status of phenomena, Barad proposes a "profound conceptual shift," arguing that it is "through specific agential intra-actions that the boundaries and properties of the 'components' of phenomena become determinate and that particular embodied concepts become meaningful" (815). For human and nonhuman bodies alike, this means that they "come to matter through the world's iterative intra-activity—its performativity. . . . Bodies are not objects with inherent boundaries and properties; they are *material-discursive phenomena*" (823; emphasis added). Bodies are not only entangled with one another; they are entangled in and with themselves; they are "constituted along with the world, or rather as 'part' of the world" (Barad 2007, 160). Importantly, Barad's concept of "intra-action" moves radically beyond the relational concept of interaction or intersubjective actions:

> The neologism "intra-action" signifies the mutual constitution of entangled agencies. That is, in contrast to the usual "interaction," which assumes that there are separate individual agencies that precede their interaction, the notion of intra-action recognizes that distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through, their intra-action. (33)

In CI, a similar phenomenon called the "third mind" is experienced by dancers when the relationship between leading and following, touching and being touched, "evolve [s] into such a fluid and subtle exchange that the categories of leader and follower

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lose their oppositional meanings" without collapsing all difference between the two (Albright 2013, 270). Barad reconfigures the onto-epistemology of agency; in CI, dancers develop dance by touching and sharing their weight; Irigaray's thought challenges the ways in which philosophy has solidified sexual difference. Putting Irigaray's poetical philosophy of sexual difference in contact with the dance practice of CI and Barad's rethinking of agency, I offer three entangled arguments: first, I point to Irigaray's embodied understanding of agency and associate her discourse with the improvised duets in CI; second, I understand Irigaray's desired conversations as a yearning for a posthumanist understanding of agency; and third, portraying CI as a movement practice that lets practitioners and philosophers feel in their bodies and minds what it means to intra-act and to be entangled in others' actions, I complicate the notion of empathy as "feeling-with."

Irigaray is usually categorized as a difference feminist, and *Elemental Passions* presupposes fully formed agencies, which need to find new ways of interacting and encountering one another. At first glance, then, Barad's agential realism and the "fluid and subtle exchange" of CI seem to be addressing a very different mode of becoming than Irigaray's difference feminism: on the one hand, Irigaray's critique targets the historical form of male*masculine subjectivity, which has assumed authority of definition over the female*feminine agential position, but she also accepts this configuration as a historical given. Barad's point of departure, on the other hand, acknowledges the history of Western subjectivity in order to formulate an onto-epistemological critique of this historical configuration, moving below history to the subatomic level to rethink subjectivity as such. However, by reading movement in *Elemental Passions*, Barad's agential realism, and the practice of CI diffractively, I show that Irigaray's woman-speaker is longing for intra-active relations, for movements and encounters like those that occur in CI. Irigaray's woman-speaker suggests as much when she tries to make her interlocutor understand that

> If, in affecting you I affect myself, the body–instrument opposition no longer holds. For the instrument which I am in order to affect you is itself affected as a body, just as your body, which I affect, is an instrument which affects me. In that exchange of affection the producer and the product become one, the organ and the body can no longer be divided, myself and yourself are no longer embodied as distinct and rival universes. (Irigaray 1982/1992, 58)

Here, Irigaray's woman-speaker is entangled in discourse, love, and movement, entangled in the sense that Barad describes in *Meeting the Universe Halfway*: "To be entangled is not simply to be intertwined with another, as in joining of separate entities, but to lack an independent, self-contained existence. Existence is not an individual affair. Individuals do not preexist their interactions; rather, individuals emerge through and as part of their entangled intra-relating" (Barad 2007, ix). Irigaray's woman-speaker does not "say that the irreducible no longer exists"—she takes pleasure in the difference that she feels between herself and her lover—but she posits that "Experiencing you, experiencing me, espousing you, espousing me, we are more

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than one. And two. The accounts overflow, calculation is lost" (Irigaray 1982/1992, 58). She understands that difference does not create separation; rather, in continuously affecting each other, the difference between herself and her lover establishes a bond, as feeling herself and feeling her partner—feeling-with, and sometimes maybe even feeling-for, her partner—become virtually the same during the multiple encounters of discursive and corporeal exchange.

Thinking about improvised dancing and Irigaray's meditation on the movements of and within sexed and gendered subjecthood leads me to contemplate questions of agency, matter, and meaning: moving bodies in improvised dancing, especially in CI, negotiate their own boundaries against those of others and those that are being created in direct encounter via impulse, shared weight, and friction between two or more bodies that rely upon and necessitate one another in their encounter. These practices yield as much potential as they hold risks as practitioners demonstrate strength as much as they make themselves and their dances vulnerable. The dancers thus emerge as subjects that are radically different from the observing liberal humanist subject. The dancers in CI rather negotiate their own bodily boundaries and give them the opportunity to blur; their bodies no longer have to end at the boundary of the skin: their bodies are "in the making" (Haraway, quoted in Barad 2007, 159). My diffractive reading of CI, Barad's agential realism, and Irigaray's *Elemental Passions* brings to the fore how much Irigaray's speaker desires her difference to enable a kind of material and discursive contact that would enable her and her lover to emerge as becoming posthumanist subjects. For this to happen, Irigaray's speaker calls for a form of empathy—a form of feeling-with—between two (lovers or dancers, for instance) that needs to be instantiated through matter and meaning, through corporeal and intellectual contact. In this contact, difference becomes not a difference that separates but a necessary difference through which contact is enabled. Reading *Elemental Passions* through the ever-present image of movement, this article explores how improvised dancing not only illustrates Irigaray's visceral meditation on sexual difference, (com)passion, and empathy, but also engages with it in a moved/moving and felt/feeling meditation on corporeal communication through touch and movement, through sharing weight and response-ability, and through negotiating boundaries.[6]

Dancing (through) *Elemental Passions*

First published in French in 1982, *Elemental Passions* continues Irigaray's ongoing project of opening Western philosophy up to the workings of movement and fluidity, of "passion, materiality and embodiment" (Canters and Jantzen 2005, 3), and, as I suggest in this essay, of an affective feeling-with created through corporeal and poetic contact between differently configured agents. This contact is fluid, open, infinite; always becoming and never complete. The woman-speaker (or woman-I) of Irigaray's text describes this process of eternal becoming as a "fluid expansion, never enclosed once and for all. Not even by projects or projections. . . . Without a limit, of whatever dimension or direction. A place where everything is still possible. Prior to any

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difference or distinction. Nothing determinable. The foundation of all giving" (Irigaray 1982/1992, 89). Her radically open notion of infinity stands in stark contrast to the implied male interlocutor of *Elemental Passions*, who fills the position of both her lover and the Western discourses of philosophy and psychoanalysis, and who had assumed the right to define the female speaker as the radical and always lacking other. This interlocutor defines infinity as a "closed totality: a solid, empty membrane which would gather and contain all possibilities" (89). For him, there is "The absolute of self-identity—in which you were, will be, could be" (89). But this closed totality "freezes the mobility of relations between. It produces discontinuity. Peaks, pikes, fissures" (90). As an effect, "Energy no longer circulates. Is hoarded in forms that create closure" (90). Finitude robs the woman-speaker of *Elemental Passions* of her body; it disallows her body to flow, to leak, to become what it is and what it is not yet; it depredates the spaces in which she can meet herself and others and in which she can experience herself as whole and as abject, as self and as other. The lover/philosopher's determination forecloses the possibility of her becoming a posthuman/ist-woman, a woman who has not been conceptualized through the logics of humanist thought.[7] His infinity does not leave room for endless and fluid configurations, for contact, or for corporeal and intellectual empathy.

Elemental Passions targets "the fixity and lethal inertia of conceptual thinking" (Braidotti 2002, 2); literally and conceptually, *Elemental Passions* is full of movement, of negotiating passivity, activity, and action, and of finding ways to open up the rigidity of her interlocutor's world, the "closed totality" which for him "contain[s] all possibilities" (Irigaray 1982/1992, 89). I see the woman-speaker of *Elemental Passions* dancing and improvising: with her poetic and allusive language, the rhythms and flows that her prose creates, Irigaray's woman-I swirls and falls, rolls and crawls, glides and slides through her conversation like a dancer moving through a choreographed duet. Maybe this is because traditionally choreographed duets (like the pas de deux in classical ballet) so often show a woman and a man loving and/or fighting; maybe this is because duets so often exhibit women as vulnerable in these acts;[8] and maybe this is because I see the woman-I seeking for the kind of improvised partnering work that is a fluid form of becoming-dance in which bodies not only act, react, and interact but intra-act through space and time, creating a spiral of movement in an intimate encounter. I can see her clearly; I can feel her, too, because Irigaray's writing elicits quasi-kinesthetic empathy, transmitting the way in which the speaker feels her skin, her flesh, her blood, her bones; the way she feels her fascia, her tendons, and her ligaments; the way she feels herself against the floor; against the air that separates her from and yet connects her to the floor and to her partner; the way she feels herself against her partner, who has once been trained to lead her and is now himself also learning how to be led in dance and in thought. I can see and feel her crumble and fall, caress the floor, and push herself back up to meet her partner again with new strength and with rejoicing movements to continue the dance. Throughout *Elemental Passions*, Irigaray's woman-I identifies movement as the force that is continually generated by her fluidity: "My body is fluid and ever mobile," she writes. "Alone, I discover my mobility. Movement is my habitat. My only rest is motion. Whoever

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imposes a roof over my head, wears me out. Let me go where I have not yet arrived" (Irigaray 1982/1992, 25). We, as readers, become witnesses to the dance, part of the space in which she dances; we become involved.

Although the woman-I rebels against the fixed ascriptions of Western philosophy and psychoanalysis, which circumvent her potential by cutting her off from the flow and tying her to the stillness of fixity and permanence, she seeks dialogue with the male-you "as she goes in search of her identity in love" (Irigaray 1982/1992, 4). She dares her partner to listen to her, to feel her, to think and move with her beyond the strictures that delimit her subjectivity, body, and movement. But the love she seeks is as fluid and continually moving as she feels herself to be. This process is continuous movement—spatial, temporal, corporeal, and spiritual; equally material and social, reconfiguring itself and its participants, who bump into one another; who mold, destroy, and rebuild one another; who trigger and reconfigure one another; who touch and feel one another; who move with and into one another. This trope of movement ties the book's fifteen sections together not only as readers move through them but also as the woman-speaker ventures through her body, mind, and spirit to emerge as a continuous and fluid whole who is and will never be complete. She can surface as the "I-woman" because she relates her objectified body to those who objectify her (the "*he* and *He*") and her newly gained subjectivity to her peers (the "*she* and *She*") (cf. Irigaray 1982/1992, 4). It is through feeling her self and her limits, which touch others and move with others, that she emerges and surfaces as infinite becoming.

Irigaray's Political Bodies in/of Text

Irigaray's theorization of becoming-woman, woman's subjectivity, sexual difference, empathy between radical o/Others, philosophical subjectivity, and ethical agency is inherently political.[9] The text that addresses democratic politics most explicitly is *Democracy Begins between Two*, in which Irigaray proposes democratic practices in which both men and women are no longer "under the civic power of others" (Irigaray 1994/2000, 44). Deeply rooted in Irigaray's conviction that sexual difference governs (access to) political participation, *Democracy Begins Between Two* calls for "a step forward in human becoming" (4), one through which "we change the context in which we live and, more radically, the framework of our identity" (5). For Irigaray, the primary obstacle on the road to political equality is the fact that the "Western subject . . . has come to be limited and defined by an other which is irreducible to it: the other gender" (6). Against the impulse and desire to take possession of the other (cf. 7), she proposes a reformation of "the model of subjectivity" that would "abandon the model of a single and singular subject altogether" (6). Irigaray's goal is to establish difference as "an everyday concern in every encounter between two individuals" (13), so that difference "is not only a question of the right to be different-from . . . but of the right and the duty to be diverse between. Thus not: "I'm different from you," but: "*we differ amongst ourselves*," which implies a continual give-and-take in

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the establishing of boundaries and relationships, without the one having greater authority over the other" (14; emphasis added). When the woman-speaker of *Elemental Passions* demands of her partner and of philosophy to listen to her movement, *Democracy Begins Between Two* transports her call for agency onto the political plane. In both cases, she circumscribes a kind of differing within and among agents that resembles Barad's posthumanist agential realist subject.

Irigaray's work treats sexual difference as both materially given and as socially constructed, idiosyncratically operating on both sides of the alleged dividing line between materialist and poststructuralist feminisms. As a result, her work has provoked polarized responses, many of which target her (strategic) essentialism. Diana Fuss's *Essentially Speaking*, published in 1989, summarizes these early responses to Irigaray's work. Christine Fauré "objects to a general trend in French feminist theory, epitomized by Irigaray's search for a female imaginary, which marks 'a retreat into aesthetics where the thrust of feminist struggle is masked by the old naturalistic ideal draped in the trappings of supposedly "feminine" lyricism'" (Fauré quoted in Fuss 1989, 56); Carolyn Burke "wonders whether Irigaray's work escapes the very idealism which her deconstruction of selected philosophical and psychoanalytical texts so rigorously and persistently displace" (56). Toril Moi charges Irigaray with "metaphysical idealism" as well as "ahistoricism and apoliticism" (56, 57) and Monique Plaza "accuse[s] Irigaray of positivism, empiricism, and negativism" (57).[10] But, from early on, her style and thought was also defended by theorists including Jane Gallop and Margaret Whitford. Gallop, according to Fuss, reads "Irigaray's essenialism … within a larger constructionist project of re-creating, re-metaphorizing the body" (57) and Whitford "concludes that while Irigaray does sometimes blur the distinctions between the social and the biological "this is obviously a strategy adopted within a particular historical and cultural situation'" (Whitford quoted in Fuss 1989, 57).[11] Fuss's own assessment is that Irigaray's essentialism is clearly strategic: instead of reinforcing a metaphysical idealism (as Moi argues), Irigaray turns Aristotelian metaphysics and its tradition around and against itself, demonstrating that the very use of "essence" as a marker for philosophical and political subjecthood is built on a flawed argument.[12]

Discussing Irigaray's influence on current developments in new materialist feminism, Kathrin Thiele argues that "the theoretico-political tension between claims of equality and difference still troubles feminist discussions"; and Thiele offers "a new materialist/posthuman(ist) framework" in order to establish a "'different difference,'" which is inspired by the work of both Gilles Deleuze and Elisabeth Grosz and which "no longer focuses on a 'differing from,' but shows 'difference differing' or difference in itself" (Thiele 2014, 11). Although Thiele acknowledges that sexual difference "always was—and still remains—perhaps the only 'universal' there is" in Irigaray's work, she also suggests that this "is no simplistic essentialism on Irigaray's part" (13). Instead, Thiele claims that Irigaray's "work argues for an understanding of sexual difference as a(n) (ethical) project, in which ontology itself becomes transformed within the parameters of sexual difference thinking": "Sexual difference with Irigaray suggests a different ontology, one in which differentiality—the more than o/One—is primary and, by being primary, is prior precisely to the divisiveness of separate entities (for

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example, man/woman)" (13). She further finds *Sharing the World*, Irigaray's most recent book, productive for "a new materialist/posthumanist intervention," arguing that Irigaray's "sexual difference thinking stresses the need to envision another mode of *relating to the other*—one that no longer emerges from a monosubjective culture, but from the acknowledgment that there are 'at least' two (if not more) possibilities for everything" (15; emphasis in original).

What I am suggesting here is that Irigaray's earlier work in *Elemental Passions* formulates a yearning for what Thiele calls "*worlding-with-others*," a new materialist/posthumanist approach toward living together, "which starts from immanent relatedness and thus is able to undo the humanism of the transcendental self/other … relation" (Thiele 2014, 20). This yearning recapitulates a history of thought and searches for a language that is capable of communicating Irigaray's position and projecting intra-active movements of becoming. It is because her words defy the structure of propositional language that she can think as much through her body as through her mind. In order to illuminate the ways in which new materialist and posthumanist potential can be found not only in Irigaray's language but in the perpetual negotiation of movements that her woman-speaker undertakes with her interlocutor, I turn now to the practice of contact improvisation.

Improvised Dancing: On the Politics of Selfhood and Difference Within and Without

Irigaray's text improvises and negotiates subject-positions poetically by creating a driving and enveloping rhythmic flow that continues over each full stop and into the following clause. Her writing pushes the rules of grammar as well as the genre of prose; it enables its linguistic units to come into contact with themselves and others, mirroring the exchange that the woman-speaker envisions for herself and her lover. Although pinned down in typescript on paper, Irigaray's text moves and performs the openness that she identifies when "Two lips [are] kissing two lips" and "Openness permits exchange, ensures movement, prevents saturation in possession or consumption" (Irigaray 1982/1992, 63). But, as she goes on, "openness dwells in oblivion … because it cannot be represented, nor made into an object, nor reproduced in some position or proposition" (63–64; ellipsis in original). Openness thrives in improvisation and movement, in which action and reaction, touching and being touched, active and passive become one (even when these oppositions are not the same). In this sense, Irigaray's words and phrases move like dancers in CI.

CI, which was "invented(?) discovered(?) recovered(?) uncovered(?) delivered(?)" in the US in the 1970s by Steve Paxton, Nancy Stark Smith, and others (Horwitz 1998/2008, 56), is a form of dancing in which dancers improvise by staying in direct bodily contact with one another. Impulses that lead to further movement are corporeally communicated as they are being developed:

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> . . . the dancers remain in physical touch, mutually supportive, meditating upon the laws relating to their masses: gravity, momentum, inertia, and friction. They do not strive to achieve results, but rather, to meet the constantly changing physical reality with appropriate placement and energy. (Paxton 1979, 26)

In this basic definition, Paxton focuses on the athletic side of CI, on the ways in which movement is produced physically, and on the ways in which bodies react toward one another when impulses are exchanged. But whenever human bodies come into contact, vulnerabilities materialize, the meaning and matter of touch unfold on the individual, cultural, and political level, and dancers have to weigh the costs of contact, determine the limits of comfort, and negotiate with themselves whether and how far they can or want to transgress their individual or their culture's limits.[13]

Paxton describes CI as "an improvisational state of mind partially determined by another's improvisational state of mind; the contact is not a state of mind but a physical exterior event. The two blend like double circles of ripples seen when two stones are dropped in a pond" (quoted in Curtis 1995/2008, 54). Paxton here likens the physical event of CI, an event that happens in conjunction with and cannot be separated from a state of mind, to the physical phenomenon of diffraction, which is "marked by the patterns of difference" (Barad 2007, 71). In feminist theory, diffraction has played a significant role in Donna Haraway's project "to figure difference as a 'critical difference within,' and not as special taxonomic marks grounding difference as apartheid" (Haraway quoted in Barad 2007, 72). Diffraction is a useful concept in this context, as Haraway explains, because it "does not produce 'the same' displaced, as reflection and refraction do. Diffraction is a mapping of interference, not of replication, reflection, or reproduction" (quoted in Barad 2003, 803, n. 3). For Barad, this metaphorical dimension of diffraction matters as much as its physical properties, which quantum physics has brought to the fore: not only do "diffraction apparatuses measure the effects of difference, even more profoundly they highlight, exhibit, and make evident the entangled structure of the changing and contingent ontology of the world, including the ontology of knowing" (Barad 2007, 73). Diffraction becomes an apt metaphor and material model for the ways in which dancers relate to one another in CI and for the ways in which audiences perceive their dancing: not as reflecting one another's movements but as "mapping interference" onto the dance floor, into themselves, and onto one another, making visible the ripples caused by each dancer's movements. Although difference marks the beginning of an encounter in CI, the dancers eventually move as one within difference.

In CI, the participants do not "strive to achieve results" (Paxton 1979, 26)—this is crucial, because through this rejection of finished products CI withdraws itself from the capitalist logic of supply and demand, production and productivity. Improvised dancing is an explorative practice of a perpetual process of becoming-dance, as opposed to the product-driven optimization of an ideal choreography. Discussing the socio-philosophical aspects of improvised dancing, Ann Cooper Albright draws attention to how improvised dancing suspends "the self as we have come to think of the

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self/ego in contemporary Western society" (Albright 2003, 259) by instantiating what CI pioneer Nancy Stark Smith calls "the gap": "Where you are when you don't know where you are is one of the most precious spots offered by improvisation. It is a place from which more directions are possible than anywhere else" (quoted in Albright 2003, 258). Albright adds that "This 'gap' or moment of possibility is an existential state, a suspension of reference points in which new experiences become possible" (258), and in which the self is all by itself even when it is suspended in fluid possibility. But this fluid possibility—what I call *fluid materiality* or *fluid positionality*—does not dissolve the material corporeality of the dancers' bodies. Quite to the contrary, as Paxton explains, contact improvisers "are trying to describe the corporeal" (and not the "ineffable"), which is "getting more difficult" because now the "corporeal seems to be a complexity of social, physical, geometric, glandular, political, intimate, and personal information that is not easily renderable" (Paxton 2003, 175). CI adds to the general focus on becoming that characterizes improvisation, emphasizing the materiality involved in a dance that comes into becoming through physical contact between dancers.

Scholars of improvised dancing have repeatedly addressed the ways in which improvisation practices embody mind and en-mind the body. Thus, David Gere posits in his introduction to *Taken by Surprise* that

> if the Cartesian dualism of body as separate from mind is ever to be surmounted … dance improvisation provides the perfect paradigm. For it is while improvising that the body's intelligence manifests itself most ineluctably, and that the fast-moving, agile mind becomes a necessity. The body thinks. The mind dances. Thought and movement, words and momentum, spiral about one another. (Gere 2003, xiv)

Similarly, Susan Leigh Foster points to the contemporaneity and co-locality of body and mind and complains that the idea that improvisation is the "process of letting go of the mind's thinking so that the body can do its moving in its own unpredictable way" is "an obfuscation, as unhelpful as inaccurate" (Foster 2003, 6). She explicitly states that improvisation does not "entail a silencing of the mind in order for the body 'to speak.'" Rather, "improvisation pivots both mind and body into a new apprehension of relationalities" (7). Foster argues that improvisation works like verbs in the "middle tense," in which the "subject does not act nor is the subject acted upon" (7). This concept "challenges hegemonic cultural values that persistently force a choice between" the active and the passive voice (8). In this way, the "experience of improvising … establishes the *possibility of an alternative formulation of individual and collective agency*" (8; my emphasis). Improvisation, then, is "neither leading nor following" but a "moving with" or a "being-moved by" (7). It is this quality of the middle tense that Albright describes as "most intrigu[ing]": in improvised dancing, the "third mind" opens up "traditional separations" so that the dancers "can become fluid and mobile" (Albright 2003, 259) with and between themselves and others. Dancing happens between two or many and not only within one, and the difference between

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individuals allows for intersubjective, interactive, and even intra-active agency and movement.

One of the greatest challenges that improvised dancing poses to formal dance practices and choreography is that it is not necessarily the goal of improvisers to "find the correct solution" (Albright 2003, 259) to any implicit or explicit question. Instead, the improviser "tacks back and forth between the *known* and the *unknown*, between the familiar/reliable and the unanticipated/unpredictable," as Foster explains; improvisation "presses us to extend into, expand beyond, extricate ourselves from that which was known" (Foster 2003, 3, 4). As such, improvisation challenges epistemological orders and performs epistemic practices that resist being preserved in traditional writing/choreographing (cf. 4). Improvised dancing, following Foster, means to be practicing a "recasting of power and desire," to be enacting a "new conception of human agency articulated during improvisation," and bringing to the fore a "special identity of body"; improvised dancing "impact[s] on our understanding of history and political agency" and "provide[s] us with an enormously rich source of tactics for navigating the next millennium" (9).

What I am suggesting in light of Foster's and Albright's deliberations is that, through the "middle voice" that Foster describes, improvised dancing creates the possibility of a together-acting or a between-acting reminiscent of Barad's intra-action, in which agency figures "not as an attribute but [as] the ongoing reconfigurations of the world" (Barad 2007, 141):

> In agential realism's reconceptualization of materiality, matter is agentive and intra-active. Matter is dynamic intra-becoming that never sits still—an ongoing reconfiguring that exceeds any linear conception of dynamics. . . . Matter's dynamism is generative not merely in the sense of bringing new things into the world but in the sense of bringing forth new worlds, of engaging in an ongoing reconfiguration of the world. Bodies do not simply take their places in the world. They are not simply situated in, or located in, particular environments. Rather, "environments" and "bodies" are intra-actively co-constituted. Bodies ("human," "environmental," or otherwise) are integral "arts" of, or dynamic reconfigurations of, what is. (170)

This intra-active co-constitution of bodies and environments, in which "[d]ynamism is agency" (141) becomes tangible in the practice of CI through the touch of dancers' skin, which, as Albright describes, "becomes a primary site of communication" (Albright 2013, 266): "If . . . I experience my skin as the porous interface between myself and the world, then I will be more apt to engage my skin as a permeable, sensitive layer that facilitates that exchange" (267). Here, as in Barad's agential realism, it is the contact between two (or more) and the performativity of their bodies through touch and dance that bring to the fore a becoming of a third space, "the third mind." This third space serves not only as a heuristic tool for understanding different ways of becoming in dance; the third space is created through a practice that performs how "materiality is an active factor in the process of materialization" (Barad 2007, 183).

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The "third mind" is the space dancers enter when the give-and-take between them is dissolved into a moving-together and when it is no longer clear who is leading and who is following.

In order to establish such a flow, Albright argues that dancers have to become aware of their own responsiveness and the response-ability of their skin. Only when they have gained this awareness can they learn "to pour our weight like water, into one another's bodies" (Albright 2013, 270). In order to make the idea of "skin as the porous interface between myself and the world" palpable (267), Albright "emphasize [s] the homonymic connections between pore (of the skin) and pour (as in pouring water from a pitcher), asking the students to reflect … on what it feels like to open the pores of your skin wide enough to let the world pour in" (269). This *interoception*, which "replaces the visual emphasis (spect) [in introspection] with the more tactile sensibility of cept" (270), enables dancers to reconceptualize the boundaries of their bodies not as a visual barrier but as physically responsive matter that is malleable and can open up to the world to feel-with and feel-between as well as interact and intra-act. However, CI also demonstrates that the pore/pour dynamics can only go so far. Although Albright explains that the "notion of a "third mind" directs attention away from the oppositional poles of self and other, stretching a single line into a more open play (270–71). She also underlines that the third mind does not establish "a "blurry merger" of energies"; instead "the sensitivity to another's experience also creates an awareness of subtle differences, differences that can be celebrated within the improvisation" (271).

The fluidity and mobility is not only created between individual dancers but first has to be stirred up within each of them. Complicating the interrelation between the "consciousness-as-observer" to the body within the dancers, Paxton explains how he imagines that consciousness can observe body-parts when they are, for instance, making "tiny movements … while standing" (Paxton 2003, 177). He calls these movements, which are not directed by consciousness, "reflex-movements" (177), and posits that they can be studied by consciousness through careful training. For Paxton, training consciousness to become fully aware of reflex-movements is crucial because it is the only way "to learn from the moment" (177). In dance in general, but especially in improvisation practices, dancers play with "the borderland between these two aspects of physical control: conscious and reflexive" so that "[w]hen we linger in the borderland on purpose, we become our own experiment" (177). To improvise means "to do (or allow [oneself] to do) what [one] didn't expect to do" (178). Albright calls this "a willingness to explore the realm of possibility, not in order to find the correct solution, but simply to find *out*" and "to cross over into uncomfortable territories, to move in the face of fear, of what is unknown" (259–60). Improvisation, then, becomes a constant daring and a challenge to break away from the patterns that have been encultured; it "can lead us out of our habitual responses by opening up alternative experiences—new physical sensations and movement appetites, encouraging dancers to explore new positionings and desires" (260). For Albright, improvisation offers "a sort of intellectual map with which to chart new pathways for negotiating awkward or difficult cultural crossings" through its "attentiveness to corporeal experience"

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and "mental flexibility" (260). What the improviser hopes to do is to create movements that "reclaim physical possibilities that may have become dormant, senses we have been trained to disregard"—but Paxton himself does not know "where these changes [would] take us" and "who we [would] be" if we achieved them (Paxton 2003, 180). Improvisation not only targets the traditions of formal dance training and choreography but the philosophical foundation of individually willed and willful actions. The continuous and conscious exploration of possibilities that have not been previously considered or corporeally executed can thus be framed as a posthumanist practice, one in which the subject is not constituted by "[f]aith in the unique, self-regulatory and intrinsically moral powers of human reason" (Braidotti 2013, 13) but is instead entangled in the world, giving way to intra-active dynamics through the touching of skin, the sharing of weight, and the performative actions of feeling-with.

Mobilizing Practices of Feeling-With: On Touching the Self in/and the Other

Feeling-with is usually conceptualized as empathy, but the feeling-with of empathy differs decidedly from the feeling-with established through Baradian intra-action and the continuous practice of CI. Empathy emphasizes the differences and divisions between individuals, a separation that empathy, in the best case, bridges without erasing. Although public discourse has often evoked the trope of empathy as a cleansing response to the effects of geopolitical crises and environmental disasters, the concept has received more nuanced attention in the fields of philosophy and neuropsychology. The neuropsychologists Jean Decety and Jason M. Cowell, for instance, show that "empathy can lead to parochial moral behavior" because the dynamics and logics of social in-groups allow people to feel more empathy for members of their own group (Decety and Cowell 2015, 8); studies have also shown that people more easily empathize with "identifiable others," which means that there is a "preference for giving to single vivid individuals over less identifiable others" (9). Although they conclude that "[e]mpathy does play an important function in motivating caring for others and in guiding moral judgment in various forms," they also emphasize that this positive function "is far from being systematic" and does not operate "irrespective to the social identity of the targets, interpersonal relationships and social contexts," and that in consequence the "parochial tendencies" encouraged by empathy "need to be rationally regulated and guided" (10). In a slightly different vein, Catriona Mackenzie and Jackie Leach Scully draw attention to the epistemological pitfalls of considering empathy as an innocent and easily-performed mechanism:

> [I]magining oneself differently situated, or even imagining oneself in the other's shoes, is not morally engaging with the other; rather, it is projecting one's own perspective onto the other. When the other person is very different from ourselves, the danger of this kind of projection is that we simply project onto the other our own beliefs and attitudes, fears and hopes, and desires and aversions. (Mackenzie and Scully 2007, 345)

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They underline that "[e]xperience is shaped and constrained by the specificities of embodiment" and that "[b]odily experience is shaped and constrained by cultural meanings" (343). This implies "that our capacities for imaginative projection depend in very concrete ways on features of our specific embodiment, as well as on our social and cultural context, specific histories, relationships with others, and patterns of emotional response. These constrain our abilities to imagine other persons 'from the inside,' particularly persons whose embodiment is very different from our own" (344). What has been called the "dark side of empathy" (Breithaupt 2017) underlines the challenge of establishing connections between sexed and gendered bodies without obscuring their difference and specificity.

This challenge is central to Irigaray's feminist project: she seeks to liberate the "sex which is not one" and to release her into a form of becoming that eternally defies reduction to "one" or "other." But in the single act of liberation, in every single opening that the woman-I creates in her movements, new interactions emerge that delimit her. As such, Irigaray's woman-I makes visible both diachronic and synchronic realities of confinement: just as *she* is fluid in her becoming, so is her environment of confinement. But moving together with the woman-I through her encounters with her interlocutor in *Elemental Passions*, I understand that it is not her intention to break away from him, fully liberating herself and irrevocably severing all ties. Rather, she envisions bonds of (com)passion and love that are malleable and elastic, bonds that are not fixed and confining but that give just enough support to enable the two lovers to continue their creative and empathetic engagement with each other.

Just as I see Irigaray's woman-speaker dancing in and through her language, I see her engagements with her lover as verbal and corporeal encounters, which are improvised but also guided by the implicit and explicit "choreographies of gender" (Foster 1998) that create the frames in which we act and interact.[14] These choreographies are not necessarily formal and formalized choreographies, but are rather the specific and local forms of conduct of any given community. As such, the "choreographies of gender" also underlie improvised dance practices. Dance scholar Danielle Goldman observes that "improvised dance involves literally giving shape to oneself by deciding how to move in relation to an unsteady landscape. To engage oneself in this manner, with a sense of confidence and possibility, is a powerful way to inhabit one's body and to interact with the world" (Goldman 2010, 5). Like a dancer negotiating gendered frameworks through improvisation, Irigaray's woman-speaker rises up against the limitations and boundaries that her male interlocutor, as both lover and philosophical discourse, has defined for her but without her input or consent. "Instead of ties which are always developing, you want fixed bonds," she says, these fixed bonds keep him safe from coming too close to her, and guarantee a relationship based on property and ownership rather than on participation and exchange. But while the woman-speaker feels that her interlocutor is conceptually delimiting movement and foreclosing potentialities—"You only encounter proximity when it is framed by property. Without the ceaseless penetrating movements which make us overflow one into

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the other" (Irigaray 1982/1992, 24)—she also knows that she keeps moving inside even when she is standing still, as if engaged in a "small dance":

> While I keep moving in my repose. You cannot understand—in your anaesthetic, that I never stop moving, never stop feeling pain and joy, on pain of death. But your movement is also my death. The way I move being too imperceptible for you. Experiencing as inertia what you cannot perceive, you believe you have to guide my destiny. Thinking as death the most living part of life. It is true that it is in me that you set up the framework of your life. And that, through it, you do not feel me any more. (56)

What Irigaray's woman-I desires is for her interlocutor to *move with her* and to find communal practices of elemental passions together—but whether in love, philosophy, or CI, this requires training. Through practice/praxis, both the woman-speaker and her lover could reshape themselves as well as the spaces around them. Looking at Irigaray's text through the practice of CI shows that this endeavor of finding ways of feeling-with does not have to be abstract, theoretical, poetic, and philosophical. Improvised dancing offers lived experiences, and, as Goldman shows, actively and corporeally negotiates boundaries and resists permanent inscriptions of choreographic patterns and could thus serve as an example of the kind of embodied practice that would be necessary to train capacities of feeling-with and feeling-between and to negotiate elemental passions.

Because CI is based on dancers touching and sharing their weight, the practice also necessitates a careful exploration and knowledge of trust and of the kinds of corporeal boundaries that cannot be crossed without violation. CI practitioner Lori B. approached the question of "how dancing boundaries differ from social boundaries or sexual boundaries" with a group of roughly twenty-five dancers at the Harbin New Year's Jam in 1993/94 (b. 2008, 38).[15] The group raised the point that "within the context of CI, it is possible to touch as much as we might want to and that this sharply contrasts experience in the larger community. this (sic) discrepancy is sometimes troublesome and confusing" (40). They concluded that "there seems to be a difference between *sensual* and *sensory*. many (sic) people have sensory experiences while dancing which are somehow more analytical than sensual experiences which seem to *arise* from within" (39). Touching and being touched serve both as a means of developing sensory understandings the self and the world in contact with another and as a means of eliciting sensual experiences of different kinds. The dancers, the majority of whom were women, reported that "some dances feel sensual and sexual and this can feel like a violation while some dances feel sensual and sexual and this feels great" (39). When touch and bodily contact form the basis of a practice, as in CI, social boundaries and the boundaries of the art of dance are stretched and maybe even undone, but sexual(ized) boundaries clearly remain a separate category that requires protection. Trying to define what constitutes a violation of sexual(ized) boundaries, some dancers described it as "being touched with sexual intent"; others described violation as a "one-sided communication" (40), that is, a non-interactive

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communication that could never make room for intra-active dancing to emerge. Speaking to the amount of trust that a contact duet requires, Jo Kreiter reports that she has had "heart dances with strangers, lovers, and those in between" and that this has made her "understand that trust in the dance does not come from knowledge of a person per se but from presence" which she describes as "meeting up with someone who embraces time and space and motion as a sacred frame for seamless listening" (Kreiter 1994/2008, 40). Knowing her own boundaries is essential for Kreiter because she "cannot give [her] trust unless [she knows her] own boundaries" (41). She confirms that "It is a great challenge to trust that a partner can hear [her] fragility, as there is a certain terror in the vulnerability that ensues" (41). The dance can only be potent and empower her and her partner when they do not ignore the "vulnerability stored in [their] body" (41).

For the woman-speaker in Irigaray's *Elemental Passions*, however, all available forms of contact, communication, and shared frameworks of reference are ones that have been established without her; without recognition of her shape, her bodily functions, her strengths or her vulnerability; without acknowledgment of her body's corporeal and symbolic extensions, that is, of her sex*gender. It is because her lived experience, movement, and corporeality have never counted that she understands the force and significance of the kinesthetic and proprioceptive dimension of feeling-with, and that she dares her male interlocutor to think and move differently, to acknowledge the movement of and within her, and to develop shared understandings of this movement. Irigaray's poetically aestheticized language, her *écriture féminine*, dares the reader to feel and move with her text. She demands a willingness to empathize in the sense that the aesthetician Robert Vischer used the term in the eighteenth century: to refer to the "dynamic vitality of objects—how they expressed within their structure certain movement impulses … intensity, momentum, pull, and energy" that "aroused and affected in its entirety [the observer's body]" (Foster 2011, 154, 155). Vischer "envisioned empathy as an experience undertaken by one's entire subjectivity" (Foster 2011, 127), and it is on exactly such an undertaking that Irigaray's woman-speaker asks her lover to join her when she pushes him toward a shared subjectivity that is embodied, fluid, and always becoming. Repeatedly emphasizing her eternal movement, her lips, and her leaking body, she seeks to find her self in an improvised dance with her partner, knowing that she can only appear as her self through moving in contact with the other.

Identifying fluidity, mobility, and movement as the motor that gives her subjectivity, she writes that her "life is all suppleness, tenderness, mobile, uncertain, fluid" (Irigaray 1982/1992, 23), that when she is left to her own devices, she "rediscover[s] [her] mobility" (25), which gives her shelter in the sense that it does not tie her down to predefined and static concepts. Moving through the world without local or temporal destination, she wonders about the state of her body, its materiality and meaning: "But is the body always the same?" she asks. "Can we fix it in one self-same form? Does it not wither when it has to keep to one appearance? Is not mobility its life?" (33). At this moment, Irigaray's allegedly essentialist thinking about sexual difference fully embraces a fluid conception of the body, a body whose posthumanist

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subjectivity is continually forming in and through the passion and compassion of improvised, intra-active dance of encountering the world.

Notes

An early version of this paper was presented at a panel on *Elemental Passions* that I co-organized for the 2017 conference of the Society for Literature, Science and the Arts Europe on "Empathies" in Basel, Switzerland. I thank Manuela Rossini for organizing the conference, and I thank my panel co-organizers, Elisabeth Friis, Erik Erlanson, Connor Pitetti, and Jenny Jarlsdotter Wikstrom, for creating a space for communal thought. I also wish to thank the German Research Foundation (DFG) for supporting my research stay at Barnard College in the spring of 2017 during which I initiated this project.

1. Irigaray's text is transmitted through a first-person persona who I read as historically, discursively, and corporeally situated, encapsulating Irigaray's notion of Woman. In the section "Irigaray's Political Bodies in/of Text" below, I discuss the strategic essentialism of this notion.

2. The idea for this article has been stirring in my mind ever since I participated in a Contact Improvisation focus jam organized by Jasmin Scholle and Ceyda Keskin in May 2014: as part of Scholle's dissertation project at Philipps-Universität Marburg, Germany, the jam investigated the potential of "Contact Improvisation as a corporeal-political practice of learning and experimenting with embodied possibilities of communication and negotiation" (from the invitation to the jam; my translation). This experience came back to me most vividly when I was reading Irigaray's *Elemental Passion*.

3. Diffractive reading is a feminist method of reading based on Donna Haraway's and Karen Barad's critique of reflexivity and "prefers the semiotic over the material" and "overemphasizes the dichotomy between the knowing subject and its object of research" (Geerts and van der Tuin, par. 19). Diffractive reading enables discourses to "cross-fertilize each other" (par. 25) because it reads texts with and through rather than against or after one another.

4. CI pioneer Nita Little (Nelson) also draws connections between CI and Barad's work. Her dissertation "Articulating Presence" works with Barad's use of the concepts of response-ability (see Nelson 2014, 283, 292–95), intra-action (see 287–95), and touch: "Touch, always two ways, is co-extensive, and touching as a bodymind is not flesh-bound; it is relational" (286). In her "Enminded Performance: Dancing with a Horse," she argues that "Intra-actions change one in constitutive ways, so that the felt fabric of being present with one another was in energetic and compositional flux, presenting the flexibility of one another's moving embodied attention" (Little 2016, 100). In "Restructuring the Self-Sensing," she lays out that "Barad's work is useful" to think about self-sending and attention training in CI "because it points away from absolutes and fixed identities and toward the vulnerability of experience where actions, even attentional ones like a felt-thought, can be world-changing on a material level" (Little 2014, 253). Further engagement with CI and Barad's agential realism can be found in Dey and Sarco-Thomas 2014.

5. Treating improvised dance as a serious dance practice is a relatively recent phenomenon in the West (as is the term "improvisation" itself). It became fashionable only

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when the dancers of the Judson Dance Theater in New York City started to experiment with researching movement as a dance practice in the 1960s; at around the same time in California, Anna Halprin was becoming interested in "improvisation based upon the model of child's play, as opposed to monolithic choreography" (Gere 2003, xv). This was a radical change from the position of the (white) modernist concert dancers of the first half of the twentieth century, for whom improvisation was a choreographic practice in the sense that it was "for private reflection and discovery" (xiv) and was usually not intended to be performed for its own sake or aesthetic merits. In modern dance, improvisation had a clear objective, and acted as a form of experimentation that was always oriented toward the final product of "composition and the rigors of choreography" (xiv).

6. The word play of response-ability has been used in several contexts and by scholars such as Karen Barad. I here refer specifically to Ann Cooper Albright's essay "Feeling In and Out," in which she writes that in the "dialogue between the self and the world one becomes aware of the intriguing possibilities of interdependence, including a deeper sense of responsibility," which is "an ability to respond, an ability to be present with the world and as a way of being present with oneself" (Albright 2013, 267).

7. Rosi Braidotti summarizes that philosophical and political subjectivity in humanism "is equated with consciousness, universal rationality, and self-regulating ethical behavior, whereas Otherness is defined as its negative and specular counterpart" (Braidotti 2013, 15; see also Braidotti 2003)

8. It is important to note that in dance the authority of willed, willful, and controlled authorship through choreography "has historically been a term of privilege and power, functioning to authorize and to exclude," as Anthea Kraut argues (Kraut 2008, 56). Improvisation, from the modernist perspective, transgressed discipline and control, and "[c]ontrol of one's material has been held by many to be paramount" (Gere 2003, xv). The specific subjectivities and agencies that emerge through improvised dance techniques therefore give valuable insights into practices that challenge the binary opposition of action and reaction, subject and object, and activity and passivity.

9. For an overview of the different foci and phases in Irigaray's work, see Grosz 2011, 102; see also Thiele 2014, 12.

10. Diana Fuss refers to Plaza 1980; Burke 1981; Fauré 1981; and Moi 1985 (Fuss 1989, 56–57).

11. Fuss refers to Gallop 1983 and Whitford 1986 (Fuss 1989, 57).

12. In Aristotelian philosophy, Fuss argues, "we see that the figure of 'woman' has become the site of this contradiction: on the one hand, woman is asserted to have an essence which defines her as woman and yet, on the other hand, woman is relegated to the status of matter and can have no access to essence (the most she can do is to facilitate man's actualizing of his inner potential)... . [T]he dominant line of patriarchal thought since Aristotle is built on this central contradiction: woman has an essence and it is matter; or, to put slightly differently, it is the essence of woman to have no essence. To the extent that Irigaray reopens the question of essence and woman's access to it, essentialism represents not a trap she falls into but rather a level of displacement" (Fuss 1989, 72).

13. Defne Erdur's work, practicing and teaching CI in Turkey, is illustrative for this; see, for example, Erdur 2018.

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14. The sexes and genders that have been culturally defined are performed and improvised, but they are also choreographed—an observation that dance scholar Susan Leigh Foster made in the late 1990s in response to the popularity of the concepts of performance and performativity in cultural studies and gender studies. Foster criticizes that these treatments of performance and performativity do not acknowledge the difference between choreography and performance. Choreography, she argues, is "the tradition of codes and conventions through which meaning is constructed in dance" which "resonates with cultural values concerning bodily, individual, and social identities, whereas performance focuses on the skill necessary to represent those identities," Foster explains (Foster 1998, 5). However, choreography is "not a permanent, structural engagement with representation, but rather a slowly changing constellation of representational conventions" (Foster 2011, 5). The changing roles of the choreographer and the dancer allow for more or less collaboration and co-authoring. But as an ideological system, choreography always enables certain movements and excludes others, especially those of marginalized groups or of improvised practices, as Anthea Kraut notes (cf. Foster 2011, 5–6), and it lays out the specific structures and strictures in which we perform and empathize kinesthetically.

15. Upon Lori b.'s suggestion, *Contact Quarterly* devoted volume 21:1 (Winter/Spring 1996) to the issue of sex in CI.

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