Mapping Mindfulness-based Performance[1]

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Abstract
In this paper, I report on the University of Huddersfield's *Mindfulness and Performance Project (MAP)*[2], outlining the field of practice that the project was designed to profile, and exploring some of the implications of what we might call 'mindfulness-based performance'. Framing this work within the context of the growing literature on clinical and therapeutic 'mindfulness-based interventions' I explore definitions of mindfulness, and consider how contemplative science might influence and guide emergent work in the theatre. Noting the emergence of a new discipline of Contemplative Studies, I also suggest that mindfulness-based performance has a significant role to play in current research and practice regarding mindfulness applications in the broader culture.

Keywords
mindfulness, meditation, performance, Buddhism, Contemplative Studies

Mindfulness in Performance

A number of related trajectories can be seen to have played out in Western cultures during recent decades: the development of Western Buddhism, the spread of postural yoga, the rise in interest in alternative and secular spiritualities and in practices related to holistic well-being. Woven through these sometimes very different cultural phenomena is a common thread of interest in meditation and mindfulness. That interest can be seen to be reflected in contemporary theatre and performance, with recent examples including Marina Abramovic's *512 Hours* (2014); Bess Wohl's play, *Small Mouth Sounds* (2015), set in a meditation retreat; and Rolf Hind's 'mindfulness opera', *Lost in Thought* (2015).

That theatre and performance practitioners would seek to embrace and explore meditation is not a new development. At least since Stanislavski, Buddhism, yoga, and other systems of spiritual development (such as that developed by Gurdjieff, for example) have provided theatre practitioners with approaches to the training of actors' minds and bodies and to alternative philosophies and systems of thought. These influences have not always been clearly identified or acknowledged, but recent scholarship has brought them into greater focus (see, for example, Maria Kapsali on Grotowski and yoga (2010), or Harrison's Blum's *Dancing with Dharma* (2016) on contemporary Western dance practice and Buddhism).

The Mindfulness and Performance project (MAP) at the University of Huddersfield's Centre for Psychophysical Performance Research was initiated in order to explore and respond to a range of theatre and performance practices that draw on or make reference to this related body of interests: meditation, mindfulness, Buddhism, contemplative arts, Dharma Art. How to frame this body of work strikes me as one of the most interesting and fundamental questions arising from the potential field, so I want to pause for a moment on the choice of 'mindfulness' as our key term. Whilst Buddhism was an obvious and dominant source for much of the work the MAP team were interested in, it runs alongside other traditions in influencing theatre practice. As Franc Chamberlain points out, '[I]t is very difficult to separate out all of the forms of contemplative practice that were finding their way into actor training from 1900 onwards and have continued into the 21st century' (Chamberlain, Middleton and Plá, 2014). Had we focused our attention on Buddhist theatre, we would have excluded other forms of meditation-related practice. 'Meditation' itself, readily associated with 'sitting meditation', seems to suggest a particular form of activity. The word 'mindfulness,' on the other hand, allowed for a more catholic approach. Further, the word had begun to have a great deal of currency in the wider culture; addressing 'mindfulness' in performance seemed timely, important, and academically reputable - all important concerns when seeking the financial backing and support of institutions. In this context, we actively welcomed the association of mindfulness with news reports on its scientific credentials. At the same time, we were all too aware of the problems that engaging with the 'M word' might bring!

The Mindfulness Movement

The rise in interest in mindfulness in US and UK culture that we've seen during the past forty years was almost certainly catalysed by Jon Kabat-Zinn's development of MBSR at the Stress Reduction Clinic at the University of Massachusetts (from 1979). Following his model, mindfulness-based interventions (MBI) have been developed for application in mainstream medicine, healthcare, education and the criminal justice system (see Williams and Kabat-Zinn, 2013). In the UK, an All-party Parliamentary Report on Mindfulness was delivered in 2015 which made recommendations to government in these areas[3].

As Kabat-Zinn points out, 'Interest in mindfulness within the mainstream of society and its institutions is rapidly becoming a global phenomenon, supported by increasingly rigorous scientific research' (2015, p. 10). There has been an 'exponential' rise in research into MBIs since the late 1990s, with more than 500 peer-reviewed scientific journal articles now published each year (Williams & Kabat-Zinn, p. 2; Kabat-Zinn, 2015, p. 9). Major organizations, such as Mind & Life and the Max Planck Institute support neuroscientific research into mindfulness, and there is an emergent field of 'contemplative science' (see Dorjee, 2016). Mind and Life, founded in 1987, have since 2012 convened large international symposia to promote the emergent discipline of Contemplative Studies. This is the context within which current mindfulness-orientated, and contemplative, performance emerges. In locating our research at the intersection of mindfulness and performance we are able to reference the wider activities of the mindfulness movement and to consider how the findings of neuroscientific research into mindfulness might impinge upon, inform, or illuminate work in theatre and performance. Whilst not wishing to privilege the scientific lens, it may be fruitful to ask how science can support work in the theatre through a mutual engagement with mindfulness.

Whilst clinical applications of mindfulness have found increasing scientific support, and whilst the provision of numerous workshops, classes, books, and audio-teachings on mindfulness practice has been popularly received, there is concern about what has been lost in the translation of mindfulness into new contexts. Malcolm Huxter writes,

> The meaning of what is to the long-term meditation practitioner a profoundly liberating practice seems to have become diluted, obscured, and presented in a manner that is tangential to the Buddha's original descriptions. (Huxter, 2015, p. 30)

One of the MAP Project's reasons for choosing to locate our interest at the intersection between performance and mindfulness, was the intention to provide some touchstones for understanding mindfulness in performance that might help to counter any tendency in the field towards the kind of uninformed appropriation of the term that has been criticized in other areas of Western culture. The popularization of mindfulness brings with it the danger of reduction, appropriation, misrepresentation, and misapplication. Jon Kabat-Zinn's work with MBSR has been critically scrutinized, and there has already been something of a backlash from some of those who were amongst the earlier proponents of the benefits of mindfulness (cf. Lindahl *et al,* 2017). On the MAP project, we are keen to take the opportunity to explore the ramifications of the mindfulness movement as it might be played out in performance contexts, drawing on the lessons learned and discourses already developed in relation to Kabat-Zinn's, and others', mindfulness-based Interventions.

Defining Mindfulness

Despite its origins (on which, more below), 'mindfulness' has come to seem like a secular, non-sectarian term, but when uncoupled from Buddhism it is potentially vague and insufficiently concrete. When I read Harrison Blum's introduction to *Dancing with Dharma* (2016), I envy him the more solid and identifiable boundary lines at the 'fertile intersection of Buddhist practice with movement and dance' (Blum, 2016, p. 3). If you accept what Blum says of movement and dance training (and extend it to actor training) - that they 'foster continuous mindfulness of the body' (Blum, 2016, p. 3) - then to speak of mindfulness in performance training might be to say almost nothing at all. In fact, the assertion that awareness training for performance is a form of mindfulness training is potentially problematic, and the desire to tease out the relationships between performance and mindfulness was part of what fuelled our project.

Blum describes the cultivation of 'mindfulness of the body' that is undertaken by the dancer or movement artist as 'fine-tuning their awareness and control of subtle sensations and movements' (Blum, 2016, p. 3). Such awareness practices can also be found in much actor-training. But what exactly does the word 'mindfulness' connote? Is a dancer or actor's awareness training the same as the 'mindfulness of the body' set out in Buddhism's Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta*) What is implied by the use of the word 'mindfulness' in performance contexts? In order to explore this question, I'm going to examine some definitions of the term.

Perhaps the most well-known and popular definition of mindfulness comes from Jon Kabat-Zinn, whose Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction programme is arguably the single-most important catalyst in the recent surge of interest in mindfulness practice. Kabat-Zinn's widely quoted definition is: awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally - or those key words in some other combination[4]. This definition is deliberately secular and fairly widely applicable to awareness training more generally. As we shall see, however, it is a shorthand that carries with it the implied context from which it originated. The presence of that context is crucial to an understanding of mindfulness beyond the directing of awareness.

Although 'mindfulness' has also gained some currency through the work of the psychologist, Ellen Langer, who defines it only as the opposite of 'mindlessness' (Ie, Ngnoumen, & Langer, 2014), definitions of mindfulness inevitably return one to Buddhism. Three major 'handbooks of mindfulness' (Ie et al, 2014; Brown et al, 2015; Purser et al, 2016) dedicate considerable attention to Buddhist approaches, with the Wiley-Blackwell Handbook comparing the 'Western' approach 'exemplified by the work of Ellen Langer' with an 'Eastern approach' identified as 'rooted in Buddhist philosophy' (Ie, et al, 2014, p. xxxi). Bishop et al's influential article, 'Mindfulness: A Proposed Operational Definition' (2004) also proceeds from identifying mindfulness as a capacity cultivated in Buddhist practice. Therefore, in order to consider mindfulness fully, on the Mindfulness and Performance Project we located our working definition in relation to the 'canonical perspective' offered by Bhikku Bodhi, an American Theravada monk, author and translator. Bodhi outlines a number of factors which go beyond Kabat-Zinn's widely-used, economical definition (Williams & Kabat-Zinn, 2013).

Bodhi identifies a complex set of intentions, techniques and functions within the literature. These include: the energetic application of the mind to its own stilling and unification (2013, p. 20); a specific method - 'the four establishments' or Foundations (2013, p. 21), involving 'a constellation of mental factors that work in unison' (2013, p. 21) - such as, reflexive contemplation of one's own experience (2013, p. 21), close repetitive observation (2013, p. 21), and the much debated application of memory or 'remembrance' (2013, p. 22). Mindfulness is consistently described by words that suggest energy, clear comprehension, and lucidity. Within the Eightfold Path, Right Mindfulness sits between Right Effort and Right Concentration (2013, p. 20). Its purpose is given as the extinction of suffering and the attainment of *nibbāna* (2013, p. 21).

Neuroscientist, Dusana Dorjee's response to the problem of defining terms such as mindfulness, and contemplative practice more generally, is to focus on the capacities that they train. She notes that: 'Enhancement of self-regulation (SR) as the ability to notice and effectively manage thoughts, emotional responses, and behavior has been highlighted as the main neurocognitive mechanism of mindfulness...' (Dorjee, 2016, p. 3).

In meditation, the capacity for self-regulation of attention and emotion is trained, Dorjee tells us, with a particular emphasis on 'introspective metacognition (awareness and knowledge of bodily sensations, mental phenomena, and behavior)' and in relation to specific attitudinal qualities, such as non-reactivity and compassion (Dorjee, 2016, p. 3). She identifies contemplative practices as training aspects of 'an overarching natural capacity of

the mind, specifically termed here ‘the metacognitive self-regulatory capacity (MSRC) of the mind...’ (Dorjee, 2016, p. 5).

For Dorjee, then, mindfulness can be defined as:

> a form of mental training aiming to enhance the MSRC of the mind, particularly targeting the development of attention control and metacognitive awareness of mental phenomena together with cultivation of an attitude of non- reactivity (2016, p. 11)

Consistent with the stated aims of contemplative traditions, Dorjee further notes that cultivation of the MSRC, over time, enables 'shifts in the awareness of self and reality' - alterations in ‘modes of existential awareness’ [MEA] (Dorjee, 2016, p. 8). Whllst mindfulness 'creates basic conditions for initial shifts in MEA' (2016, p. 11), for Dorjee, such shifts require further facilitation through related contemplative practices and contextual factors (Dorjee, 2016, p. 11). Within the context of a contemplative tradition or spiritual path, mindfulness practice is co-existent with, and interwoven with, teachings on the nature of self and reality which guide the emergent shifts in existential awareness.

Far from being only the 'fine-tuning [of] awareness and control of subtle sensations and movements' that Blum calls 'mindfulness' in dancers, *sati* is nested within a matrix of ethical and intentional vectors. Reading Kabat-Zinn, it is clear that even in the secular contexts and clinical applications that his work entails, the word mindfulness is intended to carry with it at least some of the nuances it bears in its Buddhist origins. When Kabat-Zinn transposes mindfulness practices to the context of stress reduction, he does so through a process which maps the Buddha's approach to suffering onto the specific suffering encountered by patients with severe physical or psychological pain conditions; he says that 'we can dive right into the experience of *dukkha* [suffering] in all its manifestations without ever mentioning *dukkha'* (Williams & Kabat-Zinn, 2013, p. 298). In this context, the experiences that arise when we watch the mind can be seen to open onto the territory of the Four Noble Truths and The Eightfold Path. Kabat-Zinn writes,

> ...the Dharma can be self-revealing through skillful and ardent cultivation via formal and informal practice in the supportive context of dialogue, inquiry, and skillful instruction, which are themselves all one seamless whole. (Williams & Kabat-Zinn, 2013, p. 298)

The context that Kabat-Zinn identifies around the practice of mindfulness is crucial to the 'self-revealing' of the dharma. As Dusana Dorjee has pointed out in her discussion of meditation research, 'motivational/intentional and contextual factors likely significantly modulate practitioners’ engagement with contemplative practices and resulting changes in SR [self-regulation]' (Dorjee, 2016, p. 5). Dorjee confirms that,

> ...secular mindfulness definitions also highlight the importance of intention to the mindfulness practice. Kabat-Zinn (2003) refers to this in his definition by the phrase ‘on purpose’ and Shapiro et al. (2006) explicitly named intention as one of the three components of mindfulness in MBAs. (Dorjee, 2016, p. 11)

Kabat-Zinn's application of dharma practices in a medical context is not without its detractors, and it is not my purpose here to defend it, but rather to demonstrate that even this - arguably the catalyst for the current secular mindfulness movement - locates the awareness practice of mindfulness in an intentional context. Whilst secular, therapeutic mindfulness does not explicitly point to the development of understandings traditionally

considered dharmic, the implication is that they are nontheless available to participants approaching the practices with a particular kind of intentionality. Kabat-Zinn writes,

> Mindfulness... is not one more cognitive-behavioural technique to be deployed in a behaviour change paradigm, but a way of being and a way of seeing that has profound implications for understanding the nature of our own minds and bodies, and for living life as if it really mattered. (Williams and Kabat-Zinn, 2013, p. 284)

All of this suggests that performing arts practices which train awareness in isolation from a broader philosophical dharma context would not lead onto it; and, that, therefore, there is no justification for adopting the word 'mindfulness' for awareness practices in general. In speaking of 'mindfulness' in performance contexts, we should be cognizant of the full set of meanings carried by the original *sati.*

Furthermore, for Kabat-Zinn, the instructor in MBSR carries a great deal of responsibility for the success of the programme they offer. The instructor's understanding of the transformative potentials of the work, and the extent to which they themselves embody and transmit 'the real curriculum' is crucial (Williams and Kabat-Zinn, 2013, p. 297). Kabat-Zinn describes the complex task of teaching mindfulness as follows,

> Our job is to take care of the territory of direct experience in the present moment and the learning that comes out of it [...] the instructor is continually engaged in mapping the territory inwardly... all the while keeping the formal dharma maps of the territory in mind... but not relying on them explicitly for the framework, vocabulary, or vehicle... Some of this will naturally be thought-based, but a good deal of it will be more intuition-based, more embodied, more coming out of *not-knowing*... This can be quite challenging unless the formal dharma maps are deeply engrained in one's being... (Williams and Kabat-Zinn, 2013, p. 297).

Clearly, this has profound implications for what it means to be suitably qualified to teach mindfulness in any context, including a performing arts pedagogy. If, as a field, we are to develop a mindfulness-based approach to performance, then it would seem that this should entail both a philosophical/ethical dharma context and the necessity that practitioners have a full and deeply embodied personal meditation practice within such a context.

MAP: The 2016 Symposium on Performance and Mindfulness

In 2016, the MAP Project convened a symposium on *Performance and Mindfulness,* designed to explore the extent and nature of performance work that engages with mindfulness practices. Our call attracted a large number of proposals from across Europe, Brazil, Mexico, the United States, Australia, South Africa and Thailand; evidence of the growing number of scholars and practitioners working within this area. The final programme included 7 performances, 10 workshops, and 17 papers by 29 practitioners and scholars from 11 countries. In scheduling the event, guided by the considerations above, we prioritised presenters whose work arose out of a significant meditational practice. The predominant practice context was Buddhism (there was also a Sufi dancer, a Balinese Topeng dancer, and a practitioner of a particularly awareness-based form of improvisation. Only one presentation by a Christian contemplative was proposed).

The work that was represented spanned a broad range of performance practices, styles and intentions, including: actor-training for presence, openness, mental acuity, spontaneity, awareness; dance-making and theatre-making, with an interest in reflexivity, creativity, expressivity; applied drama, concerned with mental health, environmental and

ecological awareness; and contemplative performance, with concerns such as the nature of mind, consciousness, meditation itself, creativity, and themes of belonging.

With a few exceptions (such as the Sufi and Topeng dancers mentioned above), the project mainly attracted practitioners of contemporary Western performance, the majority of whom were making novel connections between meditation practice and performance, rather than reproducing traditional performance forms. In this, mindfulness-based performance seems to follow the example of MBIs and arguably Western Buddhism in general with its tendency to adapt itself through skillful means to local conditions.

The work represented at the *Performance & Mindfulness* symposium was inevitably intercultural, and in many cases syncretic. Nicolás Núñez's extensive research into the development of forms of meditation-in-movement training, for example, draws on both pre-Hispanic Mexican ritual and Buddhist monastic dance[5]. Núñez seeks to create, through his theatrical productions and training forms, access to a 'secular sacredness' (Middleton, 2008). Drawing on his experience of Buddhist teachings as embodied in monastic dance, his attempt is to re-ignite theatre with its original 'sacred' intentions (1996, 2007).

The Buddhist master teacher, Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, similarly explored the ways in which artistic forms can function as vehicles for meditational practice and as access points, or even complete paths, to spiritual and ethical development. Trungpa's lineage was represented at the MAP symposium by Lee Worley, a senior teacher of Mudra Space Awareness (see Worley, 2001), and in Anna Tzakou's workshop on Contemplative Dance Practice as developed by Barbara Dilley (see Dilley, 2015).

The MAP symposium represented a very broad range of performance styles, practices, and sources, but it pointed towards a field of practice that is aligned with the canonical or dharmic definition I outlined above. Many, perhaps most, of the practitioners who presented or spoke about their work demonstrated a commitment to a mindfulness that carries the connotations of a spiritual Path and an ethical framework. For example, Pema Clarke's performance piece, *Boudhanath,* explores personal and biographical material on the theme of parental relationships through the frame of her long-term training in Tibetan Buddhism. The work ultimately seeks to engage audiences in, or with, a contemplation on the illusion of Self. Jaya Hartlein, who was ordained in the Triratna Buddhist Order in 1990, uses movement improvisation to enable participants to come to an understanding of 'how the mind gets attached to concepts, especially ideas of who we are and how we are seen by the world' (Hartlein, 2016). Playfulness in Hartlein's work is encouraged as a way to help participants relate to "*Prapancha* (proliferation of ideas and concepts)" (Hartlein, 2016). Pasquale Esposito, an ordained Soto Zen monk, combines Zen training and actor-training in workshops which explore the nature of experience and being, and which, he writes, 'can open up the possibility to experience our original self' (Esposito, 2016).

On the basis of the work profiled at the Performance and Mindfulness Symposium, if we were to develop the notion of a field of Mindfulness-based-Performance, it would be centred around a 'dharmic' imperative. By saying this, I do not mean to favour exclusively Buddhist work[6], but rather to differentiate between mindfulness as an instrumental consumable to make better actors, and mindfulness as a way into the terrain of meditation, reflection, self-knowledge, and ethics that makes for better, and happier, humans.

Bringing MBP to the table: Performance within Contemplative Studies

In nurturing the emergence of mindfulness-based performance, I am interested in how, as performance scholars and practitioners, we can contribute to mindfulness-based work going on elsewhere in the culture and focused in various ways on the alleviation of suffering. I am thinking in particular of the fruitful collaborations we have seen between science and Buddhism, and of the emergent field of Contemplative Studies that has followed.

Williams and Kabat-Zinn write that, 'The emergence within science and medicine of interest in Buddhist meditative practices and their potential applications represents a convergence of two different ways of knowing...' They call this 'a convergence and intermixing of streams' (2015, p. 3). Mindfulness-based performance could potentially represent a third stream in that confluence. As Williams and Kabat-Zinn write, 'The promise of deepened insights and novel approaches to theoretical and practical issues is great when different lenses can be held up to old and intractable issues' (2015, p. 4).

As much as we are bringing mindfulness into our work as performance practitioners, we also have the opportunity to bring performance into the cultural conversation about, and enthusiasm for, mindfulness. If current interest in neuroscience has been responsible for popularizing and promoting mindfulness, it also has its limitations. Wolf Singer of the Max Planck Institute for Brain Research has pointed out that, 'neuroscience can only investigate the neuronal underpinnings of the cognitive functions of individuals... it will have to join efforts with the humanities for the investigation of phenomena that emerged from networks of interacting brains – from culture building societies' (Singer, 2015). Noting the work of Francisco Varela in bringing an introspective phenomenological dimension to cognitive neuroscience in order to 'explore the richness of the phenomena accessible only from the first person perspective', Singer goes on,

> Such an attempt however requires a reconsideration of the societal and spiritual contexts in which these phenomena emerged and in which they are experienced. This means that neuroscience alone will not be able to solve the problem (Singer, 2015).

I am interested in the role that Mindfulness-based Performance might bring to research of the kind Singer and Mind & Life are involved with; how performers might contribute to studies in the interplay of consciousness, action, and interaction. Performance has its own ways of knowing and a long history, through many lineages, of embodied explorations of psychophysical experience. The mindful performer has the potential to embody cognition in action and to report in detailed first-person ways on their bodymind experiences; the theatre or performance space has the potential to model inter-personal and social dynamics in a reflexive forum.

As performance practitioners and scholars, we might ask what perspectives we bring to the questions of consciousness, identity, self, and the nature of being that mindfulness in its broad, 'canonical' sense - *Sati* - opens onto. In *Buddhism As/In Performance*, David George identifies both Performance and Buddhism as:

> [C]ontemporary intellectual growth-industries in the West, even - some would argue - the foundations of a new paradigm, a new cognitive model with its own and very different Epistemology and Ontology, its own radically new ways to look at Time, Person, Experience… (George, 1999/2011, p. v)

For George, performance and Buddhism share certain affinities in their relationships with key ontological questions; such that, in his argument, 'Buddhist philosophy and Performance Epistemology are seen as mutually illustrating and defining each other' (George, 1999/2011, p. vii). I suggest that such a positioning of performance as a primary disciplinary perspective can support and extend the reach of what we are doing when we work at the boundaries of mindfulness and performance.

The Transdisciplinary research methodology proposed by Basarab Nicolescu (1997), and others (see Bernstein, 2015), provides a framework through which to pursue Mindfulness-based Performance in the context of Contemplative Studies writ large.

Nicolescu proposes that current research requires the integration of science, religion and the arts in order for attention to be paid to all levels of a multi-dimensional model of reality, and to all the dimensions of the human being (Nicolescu, 1997), which are otherwise the subject of diverse and distinct disciplines. In *From Modernity to Cosmodernity: Science, Culture, and Spirituality***,** he interweaves scientific, religious and artistic insights, and includes a chapter on the theatre of Peter Brook (2014, p. 155-166)**.** Nicolescu recognises Brook's theatrical explorations as 'genuinely precise and rigorous research work' (2014, p. 157), constituting 'a field of study of energy, movement and interrelations' (2014, p. 155). From this perspective, performance can be seen to offer valuable insights into fundaments of experience, including embodiment, action, and - of particular interest here - consciousness.

Locating mindfulness-based performance within a transdisciplinary approach to Contemplative Studies makes possible an extremely fruitful interchange; in one direction, performance enriched by the insights of contemplative traditions, and supported by scientific understandings of the psychophysical mechanisms at work in such traditions; in the other direction, performance practitioners creating cultural access points into contemplative practice, and generating new and imaginative modes of contemplation and cultivation in conscious and embodied action.

Concluding Thoughts

At this particular moment in history, with all its challenges to inner and outer experience, to the personal and the collective life, there appears to be a widespread hunger for practices and lifestyles that nurture meditative and contemplative experience. Theatre and performance practitioners are responding to that impulse, and are generating forms of artistic performance and training that combine meditative and theatrical practices in novel ways. The mindful performance practitioner has a role to play in creating cultural spaces in which secular meditation can be experienced, not as a palliative against stress, or as a clinically prescribed lifestyle change, but as a deeply enriching vehicle for contemplation and the enrichment of modes of existential awareness. In this, mindfulness-based performance surely supports theatre's original, ancient and sacred role in society. By engaging with the science that supports and elucidates the mechanisms of mindfulness, and by being cognizant of the ways in which MBIs have and have not managed to navigate outside of traditional meditation contexts, we have the opportunity to better steer mindfulness-based performance work through the wider culture. For the benefit of all.

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Notes

1. This paper was first presented at *Artes da Cena e Práticas Contemplativas* at the *Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro* in 2016. A Portuguese version will be published in a Special Issue of the journal, *Percevejo,* in 2018.
2. The Mindfulness and Performance Project Team are Deborah Middleton and Franc Chamberlain (both University of Huddersfield) and Daniel Plá (University of Santa Maria, Brazil). www.mindfulnessandperformance.co.uk.
3. http://themindfulnessinitiative.org.uk/images/reports/Mindfulness-APPG-Report_Mindful-Nation-UK_Oct2015.pdf
4. A longer version can be found in Kabat-Zinn (2003): “the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment to moment” (Kabat-Zinn 2003, p. 145).
5. As the Brazilian performance scholar, Cassiano Sydow Quilici, has discussed with me in correspondence, such syncretic forms invite analysis informed by intercultural and post-colonial scholarship.
6. In this use of the word 'dharma', I am following Jon Kabat-Zinn, who writes: "[M]indfulness, often spoken of as 'the heart of Buddhist meditation,' has little or nothing to do with Buddhism per se, and everything to do with wakefulness, compassion, and wisdom. These are universal qualities of being human, precisely what the word *dharma,* is pointing to. The word has many meanings, but can be understood primarily as signifying both the teachings of the Buddha and the lawfulness of things in relationship to suffering and the nature of mind." (Williams and Kabat-Zinn, 2013, p. 283). Accordingly, Kabat-Zinn refers to both 'a universal dharma' and 'the Buddhadharma' (Williams and Kabat-Zinn, p. 290).