Writing and dancing the body:
From contradiction to complementarity

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Abstract

Mine is an experiential account of writing’s relationship to dance and dancing. I locate some of the relationships between dance writer, the act of dancing and dance performance by displacing the writer into the space usually occupied by the dancer and maker thereby creating ‘episodes of exposure’. Hence I am investigating the complements and antagonisms inherent between these two languages and attempting to locate some of their interstices. I also consider how my participation in the one informs my production of the other.

My methodologies include creating parallel written and danced texts, which read together, serve to reveal many of the dispositions underlying my writing on dance. I also directly dance elements of my own text and attempt to physically inhabit the words I have written. Finally, in a dance installation, I seek to synthesise and resolve elements of research and practice, combining live text and movement with video documentation of practice.

Conceptually, I refer to the acts of both writing about dance and dancing itself as potentially dialogic in nature; possessing a multiplicity of ‘voices’ that may intersect or clash but which finally explicate one another. For this I look to Mikhail Bakhtin and others. I further argue that the fixity of language and the evaluative nature of some dance writing can be released via a sensing through movement.
Declaration
This is to certify that:

1. the thesis comprises only my original work towards a Master of Fine Arts (Dance)
2. due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material use
3. the thesis is less that 50,000 words in length, exclusive of bibliographies and appendices.
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PRELUDE: Re - viewing the reviewer
Three reviews of Episodes of Exposure
Gallery review by Michael Carolan

It is pouring outside. People are wrapped in fleece. There's a palpable air of discomfort in the darkened gallery. The viewers have been invited to enter but their questions about where they should position themselves go unanswered. After they cross the threshold they discover that this work doesn’t seem to have a clear focal point. No delineation between audience and installation. They shift uneasily, with their drink as companion, standing about waiting for something clear to happen. As they wait they can hear a dialogue featuring a disembodied pair of male and female voices reciting a series of statements related to dance and writing.

The large gallery is lit by an old-school projector shining 13 statements related to dance versus writing. The letters loom large on the wall and the floor. The dancer enters the gallery space, breaking through the projected text. When the audio finishes a large-scale projected video of her dancing commences. She dance-writes over the projection, “The frustrated dancer writes her own body.” It is very quiet.

She dances to no music. The audience keeps the rhythms of their unease to themselves. And it is over too soon.

Susan Bendall's dance installation ‘Episodes of Exposure’ can best be described as dislocating. The installation uses dance, projection, video, text and sound to create an atmospheric blend of inter-textuality that both confuses and confounds the audience. In this, the artist, as dancer, as writer, as reviewer and as performer has woven an at-times intricate network of competing voices.
Bendall mixes contemporary movements that owe a lineage to classical training to move from the large-scale and still projected text to performance in front of the dynamic and monumental projected vision of herself. Costuming has been carefully chosen to allow the projected text to break across her form. Her movement in and out of the projection breaks sentences into words and words into syllables - inviting the viewer to form their own rhythm of her body. She writes on her leg, “embodied dumbness”; a play on words, while the dance is at play, on words.

Because the audience has had no instruction and is given no focal point they have to engage on their own terms. Bendall weaves in and out of the shuffling bodies, leaning against some and whirling away from others. She writes on the wall, she writes on her body. She hands out writing tools to the audience. Some scribe on the wall. Others quickly hand the graphite and textas to others next to them.

As her tiny form moves from the still text to the dynamic image-based projections the audience has to move with her. The mass of bodies seem to overwhelm her yet they shuffle out of her path and turn to face the dance(r). It’s clear that they are very engaged with the performance. The silence is extraordinary. You can hear her bare feet padding a tattoo on the concrete floor. Yet Bendall moves to her own internal text, text she has explored over and over again as a dance researcher, dance reviewer and dancer.

Her dancing is very episodic and generously allows the viewers to become a participatory audience, whether they want to or not. They cheer and clap when she exits; it seems like no time has passed at all. People continue to write on the wall over her video projection as she changes - audience as immediate reviewers. The lights come on and people seem stunned. They have just been immersed in danced words, worded dance and a multiplicity of dialogues that blur the distinction between performer, participant, audience and reviewer. The post-performance dialogue is excited. The artist mixes with the audience and the dialogue continues.
Yes Susan Bendall, writing does confound dancing, as too does dancing for writing. And rightly so. We all hear a variety of voices; driven by our own context. Yet you made us hear our own internal dialogues, but matched these to your movement vocabulary. As you led us on a merry dance on a wintery Sunday afternoon, the voiced silence of the audience became a review of us all.


*Episodes of Exposure* bills itself as a dance installation. This curious hybrid work sees a female performer traverse and create a landscape of written text while immersing herself within the texture of other bodies. Her reference point seems to be the audience from which she seldom delineates herself.

After being offered drinks in the front gallery space of D11 gallery, we are invited to “contribute to the work by adding text commentary or by responding physically”. Sliding doors are opened to reveal a cavernous space illuminated with two projected works. Most prominent, is a large text projection that sits to the right of the space and occupies a large segment of wall and creases onto the floor. Another work is projected across the space onto an opposite wall and depicts a dancer working through a movement sequence, sparely costumed in a flesh leotard. We file in looking for a place to be. After a few moments, and noticing three other text elements written on rolls of paper on the floor, a tangle of voices is heard quietly reciting phrases.

The voices grow louder and as they resolve into clarity, the dancer emerges from a side door and moves into the projected text work. Moving towards the wall, the text distorts onto the body. “Writing confounds dancing” plays across body-as-canvas. She moves against the text with swirling arm gestures, tracing the spaces between words and phrases. She then cuts sharply in a diagonal to a cluster of bystanders, moves decisively through them and collects a large pen from a plinth. She continues her path toward the projection of her dancing self, again cutting through the
audience. At this point she commences writing over the projection of her own dancing body. She intersperses written phrases with danced phrases, moves away from the projection, pauses to write on her flesh, and returns to her writing over the projection and moving with and against the dancing body on the screen.

As the live written text develops, it seems to be some kind of self-reflection or critique - snide, cutting comments - “those who can’t, write” - a final blow. Meanwhile, there has been a more developed episode of dance within the sphere of the projected text work and some audience interaction. The performer supports herself against members of the audience, rests and moves on. People start getting up and writing on the wall with her. When the figure leaves the performance space, a number of audience members are busily engaged in writing their own messages or comments and the ending of the work becomes uncertain and awkward. The audience is left with itself and the projected image of the dancer on the wall, which they continue to watch and write over. There is a strange contradiction in the covering of the body in text as a way of finally revealing it. The silent, reverential writers become the new dancers in this work.

Although interesting, *Episodes of Exposure* was highly problematic and not overly satisfying as performance. I would have preferred a clearer separation between the dancer and audience in this case, with the dancer more strongly showcased. I do not enjoy the uncertain status of being invited to a performance and then placed in a position where I am not sure whether the spotlight will be shone on me. The performance unfolded amongst a swarm of bodies which in a way equalised the viewer and the dancer but which disallowed a clear and consistent point of view. I want a performance to transport me into the imaginings of its creator and this one drew my attention inward, leaving me feeling self-conscious.

If she can dance, I want to see it. There was a limited movement vocabulary in use that seemed to be strongly gestural, stylised and never really extended itself fully.
This truncation was also felt in the swiftness of the movement between each section. The creator of this work might have further intensified the dancer/audience connection by slowing down the transitions between physical and written utterance to create more space for contemplation of each element. *Episodes of Exposure* also seemed to be more about ideas than dance. It was unclear whether it was choreographed or whether the audience were being choreographed.

Blog review by Matto Lucas
+ Melbourne art review, July, 2014.

Sunday afternoon a small group of participants were treated to quite an intimate, beautiful and at times uneasy performance work by writer and VCA Masters student, Susan Bendall. Entering the space, we stood awkwardly around, not being directed to stand and become an audience in any given area, we dispersed uncomfortably within the room. The space had been directed into multiple areas, one data-projected wall - one overhead projected wall - and the anachronistic clash of these two technologies immediately created a tension. When Bendall entered the room, she transitioned between naturalistic movements and flourished, beautiful, choreographed dance movements - weaving in and out of us, she herded us, people moving ‘out of the way’ - although what way was uncertain.

The push and pull made uncomfortable by the sheer nature of the performance and the performer and then being brought back into the passive comfort of being an unmoving audience member was really interesting - our relationship with her body is what spoke the loudest.

“I am not an artist therefore nothing I make can be art” was scrawled along large pieces of paper, scattered over the floor.

Bendall herself created a fragmented and broken narrative by intermittently scribbling onto the gallery wall - a strange, poetic and melancholic review of her own
body’s relationship to dance appeared - and at the end, we, as audience members were invited, silently to add to the wall, to the work.

... essentially this whole work is a conversation about dance and writing ... However, for us, it was about the body and value systems in relation to how our bodies interact with others. “Embodied Dumbness” she scrawled in charcoal down her own leg.

A beautiful, interesting, experimental performance that we were so, so, pleased to be part of.
PREFACE: What happens when I watch dance.

I write a kind of score from which to loosely improvise a textual remaking of the work I experience.

Don't ask me to tell you what I think. I don't know until everything has settled. Tomorrow, or the next day ... or too late to tell the truth.

Words slide down hill and merge, they cluster and jumble and are unrecoverable from the page. I cannot spell - there is a gap between thinking the word and forcing my attention into trying to write it - as if I have to wrench myself away from my immersion and into an alien coding of something for which no language exists.

Words are just fixed points. The space between the words is where the dance lives. It is the pliable, cartilage-like membrane that is permeable to both thought and movement.

The truth of the dance is carried in my body and mind and is sometimes said truthfully in words.

I hover between my own body and the bodies of the dancers. Not quite in my seat. Not dancing but dancing.

My body accepts the dancing as a gift; visual, cerebral, but above all, kinaesthetic; sensed. I dance in my seat, tense, hold, release, live the momentum of a turn, launch myself into a leap, feel the fold of the tumble.

When I distil the improvisation and set the choreography, I sit only periodically. I pace, and remonstrate with myself, gesticulating; eyes mobile, alert but unfocused.
This strange dichotomy which is also unitary, is the impetus for my research. Writing and dance. My empathic body and my word-shaping mind coexist but also educate one another.

**A note on voice:** Throughout my dissertation, my voice adjusts to reflect shifts in position or perspective. A dialogic discourse is one comprised of multivocal strands, that are discrete but co-present. These voices represent shifts in role that are distinct but overlap. Hence:

I = Susan
The writer = Susan as writer
The dancer = Susan in practice or performance

**Use of terms:** Within this dissertation, ‘episodes of exposure’ connotes the choreographic experiments that expose the writer to audience scrutiny in a variety of settings. *Episodes of Exposure* is the title of the final dance installation.

The word ‘dialogue’ is often used in proximity with ‘dialogic’. This is not to suggest that dialogic discourse is merely a dialogue but that dialogue is a component of a larger dialogic discourse.
Introduction

a) Background

This is my story as a non-professional dancer/professional writer travelling through some stages of thinking and embodying ways into an empathetic space where I can better understand my relationship with writing and dancing. Therefore my accounts of embodied experimentation feel central to understanding my project, and so my exploration leads with the experiential.

My aim was to come out of this research process with a greater breadth of understanding about my relationship with dance and dancing, from the viewpoint of a dance writer who dances. Key to this aim is a desire to confront some of the dispositions that I bring to my writing. By consciously and persistently returning to a consideration of these dispositions, I hope to be able to make deliberate decisions about how to deploy or deny these particular voices in my writing about dance. It is hoped that in exercising this degree of awareness when constructing reviews and articles, I allow a greater range of possibility to enter my critical response to work. It might also afford a means of treating disparate works on their own terms - to impose fewer preconceptions upon them. I have always sought this in my writing practice. However, prejudices and dominating tastes intervene at the moment of viewing and writing to sometimes hijack the ability to see work on its own terms. History and experience are only two of the many factors that clutter and corrupt the stance of the viewer/writer at any particular time.

I am not arguing for 'fairness' or a democratising imperative in the process of dance reviewing and commentary. The richness of writing is its multiplicity of commenting voices. Sometimes these clashing voices come from disparate places and subjectivities but sometimes they emanate from a single subject who is not always synchronous with herself. These moments highlight and expose the multiple positions, dispositions and sensibilities that are brought to the participatory experience of viewing dance and writing about it.
Theoretically, I am influenced by the thinking of Mikhail Bakhtin and especially his notion of dialogism, as a way of framing my understanding of writing's relationship with dance and dancing. Polyphony and heteroglossia are especially important concepts for this dissertation and I will return frequently to them. There is much in Bakhtin's writing that is not explored in this work and which belongs more strictly to a study of linguistics. My research does not enter into a defence of what I have excluded or why.

In an attempt to unpack the density of voices that are present in the texture of writing and in dancing, I employ a notion of dialogism derived from the thinking of Bakhtin. Bakhtin’s 1935 essay *Discourse in the Novel* is the key text supporting the notions of dialogism adopted here. His theories of novelistic discourse open up a space for disparate strands of meaning to coexist. I further allow for these voices to be present, both as written text and as embodied, corporeal utterances; through the dancing body. I identify some of my key underlying attachments and dispositions that are distilled into notions of ‘judging’ and ‘sensing’. The former includes an evaluative and analytical stance and tendency, while the latter leads to a sensed understanding and takes the dancing viewer on a journey from word to body and back to word via sensation and kinaesthetic empathy. Thinking dialogically also alleviates what I identify as the potential for writing to lock down meaning and opens up further to a possibility of its release through sensing.

Like Bakhtin's dialogism, the dissertation presents a range of voices that, in this case, are written and danced. They are the intellectualising, critical and analytical, judging mind but also the sensing, empathic, kinaesthetically driven, viscerally charged body. They rage against one another, live beside each other and touch through a relational membrane, which allows them to retain their own shape while being tempered by the other. The multiple voices finally find expression via the conduit of performance. Here their multiplicities are allowed to breathe separately and together.
Instances of dance writing that are dialogic are used to illustrate its application. Susan Leigh Foster and Ann Cooper Albright are foregrounded as exemplars of writing dialogically and further, provide precedents for concurrent writing and dancing practices that seek to embody as they write.

The investigation necessarily ranges across a terrain that is potentially vast but stops to consider only a few small moments that arise as critical for my own writing as I grapple with ways of thinking more freely and interestingly about dance. This also includes being aware of how my writing might better engage an audience who connects with dance, partially through reading reviews. Although the thesis does not engage with this directly, it exists in the background on a wish-list of by-products.

My research did not commence with a conscious awareness of how it might be intersecting with the debate on ‘liveness’. As it became increasingly weighted toward embodiment, and especially in the dialogue I create between the live body and visual documentation of the body in performance, I am always tacitly, if not directly, referencing notions of ‘liveness’ and ‘mediatisation’. Rather than being a line of explicit argument in the dissertation however, it is absorbed into the dialogic texture of the research and lives as a voice amongst others. In chapter 3, I return briefly to the importance of the debate between Phelan and Auslander, as it is in the performative moment that this particular dialogic strand foregrounds itself.¹

Throughout the dissertation, I have been selective in identifying three phases of development in the physical aspects of my work across the whole research project. They feel to have a logic of their own and to represent a kind of cyclical loop. Early experiments with creating choreographed fragments (discussed in Chapter 1) led to exploring the dialogic through the inclusion of multiple ‘voices’; the focus of chapter 2. This, in turn, urged a further experimentation into the notion of producing a more

resolved performance installation, addressed in the third chapter. Each of these kinaesthetic experiments, while pointing forward to the next stage of development, also refers back to previous stages.

It is also interesting to note here how these three iterations of my methodological processes became increasingly extroverted: the first phase, *Choreographed fragments* was a very private, personal and reflective practice. *Moving between writing and dancing* was a transitional stage that led to the true ‘episodes of exposure’, that is, the opening outwards toward spectatorship and witness; the focus of chapter 2. The third phase brings witness and scrutiny into even sharper focus in a performative moment and strengthens the relational interplay between performer and audience.

Over the course my research, and especially through the embodied experiments devised and employed, a changed relationship with writing (and dancing) can be plotted. In activating writing into a three dimensional incarnation, I have synthesised writing with sensing through movement that comes to fruition in performance. Performance became a catalysing and transformational experience. This makes my pre-performance and post-performance subjectivities slightly separate entities.

I refer to this change as a ‘transformed subjectivity’ which casts back to its initial thinking about Bakhtin’s dialogism and reformulates it into an expanded concept of ‘integrated dialogism’, where the intellectual dialogue and the kinaesthetic experience resist quarantining and become part of the same conversation.

Here it seems appropriate to clearly position myself as a non-professional dancer who nonetheless has a lifelong involvement in dancing. My continuing practice is in classical ballet with some contemporary dance and improvisational practice. On the foundations of this training and practice, my research seeks to create a partly
danced dissertation. This performance-focused impetus clearly places my methodology in the realm of practice-led research: “Practice-led research presumes a process of development and testing of knowledge which has an outcome in the production of works of art, design, performance and professional practices”.  

b) Overview of argument
The initial proposition of this dissertation suggests that writing and dance are in some ways oppositional, creating a simplistic binary. My research process began with this question: Writing the body versus dancing the body; are these complementary or contradictory processes?

Although this stance was in some ways rhetorical, it presented as a genuine question for my investigation. Such a conceptualisation serves a purpose in disentangling the symbiotic from the antithetic. A writer-about-dance who also involves themselves in dancing, informs themselves of the interdependence of both activities. This is an interdependence that may not exist in any way for individuals who are dance writers only or who are exclusively dancers. Hence the observations and documentation included in the following writing may be singular, although it is hoped that elements may be useful for others thinking around these relationships. The research also allows for a plurality of responses to the question posed.

Dancing complements writing
Dancing informs writing
Dancing parallels writing
Dancing reformulates writing
Dancing confuses writing
Dancing undermines writing
Dancing confounds writing

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2 ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences “Practice-led Research”, http://www.cass.anu.edu.au
Writing complements dancing
Writing parallels dancing
Writing reformulates dancing
Writing confuses dancing
Writing undermines dancing
Writing confounds dancing

Interestingly, writing doesn't automatically inform dancing. There is no dance
writing without dance but there is dancing without writing.

The proposition that will be initially explored in this writing is again a dichotomous
one: that my act of dancing opens up a discourse between myself and the performed
dance work while my act of writing may function to close down that discourse.

The opening up of dialogue between the writer who dances and the performed
dance work occurs because the dance goes on living in the writer - as memory,
imprint, kinaesthetic echo or residue. It may continue to haunt as a "ghost gesture"3
or be recalled as a visual memory or series of associations.

The closing down of the discourse is prompted by the demand of writing for a
degree of fixity. Its record is stark and unchanging.4 In some sense it is dead. Its
potential is locked-down because it is a finished artefact/object. Every iteration of
writing-as-artefact is identical. It can therefore lack dimension and become
reductive. At worst, the dance may be fossilised in a rigid account.

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3 Elisabeth Behnke, “Ghost Gestures: Phenomenological Investigations of Bodily
Micromovements and Their Intercorporeal Implications,” *Human Studies* 20, no. 2
(1997): 188.

4 Of course it is equally true that writing lives through its reading/reader and
choreography may be said to be inert until it is danced. My point here is about
writing as object, not as activated meaning.
In this, dancing the body both complements and contradicts writing the body. In exerting these dual influences, it confounds the process.

What are the mechanics of this confounding and how can these be usefully examined? Firstly to the specifics of the confounding process. Affectively and cognitively, what does dancing do, that impacts the act of writing about dance? Dancing makes me question the need to write. The doing of dance exposes the reductiveness of writing and suggests the possibility of its redundancy. Writing cannot replace the act of dancing or even come close to representing the experience of seeing dance in performance. One result of this is the desire to leave dance alone to be itself, untouched and uncorrupted by commentary. When dancing, there is simply nothing that needs to be said. Dance speaks its own articulacy. The act of dance also heightens awareness of the loss that occurs when its meaning is contained within a pronouncement, a formula or a clever phrase. The dance becomes trapped in a way that never happens when it is being enacted. Dancing also leads me to a tendency toward impressionistic understanding rather than precision, but this is not always what the task of dance writing demands. Dancing requires a continued connection with the sensing faculties. It anchors me within an affective realm. Dance writing acts to pull me outside of this realm.

Further, by trying to dance in a way that may be seen as emulating choreography or by using choreographic tools, my relationship with what I see or write about is confused or conflicted. I cannot be complacent in my knowing about dance. I cannot feel the authority that comes from being secure in a singular (writing) role. The insights into dance gleaned through continuous participation and making, allow my writing self to approach dance performance and render me empathic to it. This in itself may destabilise or confound the critical faculties that might be expected in the task of dance review.

The act of writing about dance in contrast, provokes me into ordering responses and possibly prompts a tendency to privilege some kinds of responses over others. The
kinds of responses that are prioritised may be influenced by a number of factors, both practical and as a product of the subjectivity of the writer. Responses may be privileged because they are simply easier to justify. They may be more palatable to the target audience or to an editor. Responses to dance works may be more conventional and less challenging or they may simply be livelier and easier to 'sell'.

The privileging of certain 'readings' of dance expressed in writing may, additionally, represent a desire on the part of the writer to align themselves with particular stakeholders in the dance. The writer may wish to signal to choreographers and performers that they 'get' what is being done creatively. They might wish to enter a discourse with other writers. They may desire to establish a unique and recognisable 'voice' within a discourse or claim a signature position or a style of response that is traceable back to them. A writer may prioritise or order their responses as a way of expressing their sense of role. They may seek to position themselves in specific ways; as authority, average Jo, an eloquent writer or a transmitter of dance or a painter of word pictures. In various ways all these agendas constrain writing by privileging a certain schema or creating a hierarchy of ideas.

As dancing and writing both complement and contradict one another, the resultant confounding is manifested in the positioning of the writer-who-dances. How does she navigate in, around and between roles? It seems necessary for one's position to be unpacked and declared as much as it can be.

To summarise: setting writing the body in opposition to dancing the body is a false binary and may further be taken to be disingenuous given the symbiotic relationship between these two acts. The way in which I have chosen to characterise their inter-relatedness is to suggest that dancing confounds the attempt to write about dance. Dancing opens up a dialogue, a discourse between myself and the dance performance, that I seek to capture in writing. However, the act of writing works to close down that very conversation; the word incarcerates the dance.
There is a further layer to this conceptualisation. Amongst the huge number of socio, psycho and soma-dispositions that are brought to the job of dance criticism, I have identified two dominant impulses that I bring to the act of writing about dance. These are judging and sensing. They are often in conflict but also inform one another. They form a dual framing. They are the two dominant modalities through which I experience performed dance. It is not quite a dichotomy between intellect and feeling because both naturally come into play in the act of responding to art. It is, rather, a particular deployment of the intellectual (in this case a judging faculty) and then an abandonment of judging and an embracing of the sensory. In this, I take into my body the imprint or residue of the dance and this suspends or immobilises the scrutiny of judgement, if only momentarily. My quest has been to find a conciliatory space where both of these macro discourses contribute commentary on one another.

A writer about dance needs to be an appreciator of the form. It is also a convention for such a writer to be evaluative. The word 'judgement' carries an unpleasant sourness. This is especially so if the judger claims to be an appreciator. However, one way to conceptualise judgement is to see its inherently dialogic character, in the Bakhtinian sense. This will be discussed in more detail throughout the dissertation. If dialogism is defined in this way, judgement can be interpreted as being part of a polyphonic and dynamic debate and not a monologic pronouncement. Even a relatively un-nuanced evaluation resonates with the potential for rebuttal, divergence and subtle differentiation via a dialogic reading. It invites contradiction, dialogue and a multiplicity of meanings. This is a means of opening up the locked-down status of the word as it relates to my endeavour of writing about dance.

Coupled with the judging impetus in reviewing dance, is its opposite impulse. The pure sensory joy of dancing and the sensing in response to performance pull me away from my judging subjectivity. Dancing can never be a purely cerebral activity.

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The writer who dances carries an awareness of dance always in their body and the kinaesthetic is forever present. One or the other may assert itself and they might conflict from time to time. But if judging can be in some sense, dialogic, then there is allowance for a number of positionalities, split into a dual subjectivity, to exist, simultaneously. So, the judging instinct can compete with, but can also exist parallel with, the sensing observer.

The sensing impulse identified here can be seen as an encounter between the writer/viewer and the danced performance. There is physical empathy present when dance is viewed. This is both a common neurological function but is arguably intensified when the viewer's body understands the nature of the movements being performed and when those movements transgress the everyday. Hence, a sense of intercorporeal connection between the writer/viewer and the dancer/dance could be expected to be especially acute in a writing subject who also participates in dancing.

Indeed, it might be said that the function of dance writing, especially reviewing, includes an expectation of evaluation or judgement among others but that without a sensing component, there is no intrinsic motivation to write about dance. If the dance is not felt, sensed and responded to in a bodily way, the intellectual elements remain dormant. The intellectual manoeuvres of assessment, evaluation and judging can be enlivened via a dialogic framing of these activities. It is the sensed, physicalised encounter though that charges other elements and activates them.

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6 The concept of kinaesthetic empathy is explored throughout the dissertation.
7 Neurological mirroring is a process whereby neurons fire in response to visual stimulus and is part of what allows humans to replicate movements and feel an embodied response to them. See Beatriz Calvo-Merino, “Neural Mechanisms for Seeing Dance,” in The Neurocognition of Dance, ed. Bettina Bläsing, Martin Puttke and Thomas Schack (East Sussex: Psychology Press, 2010).
8 Hanna defines the movement in dance as being beyond the range of usual movement in everyday life. (This is interesting given the inclusion of pedestrian movement in contemporary dance). See Judith Lynne Hanna, To Dance is Human: A Theory of Nonverbal Communication (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979).
Thus, although writing about dance and dancing do appear to possess some inherent oppositionality, their relationship is, however, confounding rather than purely contradictory. The shutting down of the discourse between the writer and the performance that seems to be a by-product of the act of writing can, to some extent be alleviated by a conceptualisation of the judging function that is dialogic rather than monologic. The potentiality for writing with meaning and integrity can finally only be realised when that writing is charged by sensing.
A case for dialogism

1. Bakhtin’s dialogism

Considering an artform across multiple perspectives brings a set of specific questions and problems. In this case, dance is at the centre of an investigation that focuses on a specific kind of writing; the dance review, along with kinaesthetic, participatory aspects that include dancing a choreographed fragment in response to a dance work, experimentation with embodying language, bringing a multi-dimensional performance element into an academic seminar environment and finally, synthesising these elements into performance. All of these will be dealt with in the following chapters of the dissertation.

In summoning a theoretical framework that reflected the multiplicity of possible meanings that this investigation might generate, Mikhail Bakhtin’s formulation of dialogism resonated persistently and asserted itself against a range of other possibilities. Dialogism is defined by Michael Holquist as:

> the characteristic epistemological mode of a world dominated by heteroglossia. Everything means, is understood as part of a greater whole - there is a constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others.⁹

This is a discourse in which there can be “no actual monologue”.¹⁰ In fact, borrowing from a musical term, Bakhtin refers to ‘polyphony’, meaning ‘many voiced’. Further to this, ‘heteroglossia’, a central concept for Bakhtin, is translated by Holquist as “word-with-a-loophole”.¹¹ The notion of multiplicity of meaning, as well as the suggestion that meaning itself might be slippery, opens up the investigation to wider levels of analysis than might a more closed system. (For example deconstruction or semiotics, which tend to be more systematised). It suggests meaning that may also

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¹⁰ Ibid., 426.
be unreliable in some aspects and potentially not synchronous with itself. This aspect holds appeal for a dance reviewer, who one day publishes an account of a work and the next day may feel somewhat removed from that account and may have repositioned herself in relation to the work. The purpose of dialogism in Bakhtin’s writing is centrally to offer a reading of plenitude and richness as opposed to reducing and simplifying interpretive possibilities. The inclusion of renegade meaning is also inherent.

In the task of approaching dance through writing as well as through dancing, a number of Bakhtin’s key ideas have been appropriated. The notion of dialogism was originally conceived by Bakhtin to describe “novelistic discourse”. He used the term to suggest the coexistence of numbers of 'voices' within the texture of the novel, which simultaneously claim space within it. No voice is edited or excluded. This phenomenon is both derived from an authorial intention but transcends the author as the voices assert themselves beyond the author's control or even consciousness. Bakhtin claims that “the language of the novel is a system of languages that mutually and ideologically interanimate each other. It is impossible to describe and analyze it as a single unitary language”.

In identifying “novelistic discourse” as the primary site for dialogism, Bakhtin is referring to something different from what is generally conceived as the modern novel and he is not operating from an Anglo-centric cultural framework. He looks back to Rabelais and Pushkin, Turgenev and Dostoyevsky amongst others and is informed by his classical training in philosophy as well as by the English comic novels of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

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12 Ibid., xx. Holquist says that implicit in an utterance is an “illusion of unity”, whereas embedded in this is a constant expression of “a plenitude of meanings, some intended, others of which I am unaware”.
13 M. M. Bakhtin, “From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse,” in The Dialogic Imagination, 47.
In performing discourse analyses on short paragraphs from selected novels, Bakhtin reveals specifically how he identifies individual and overlapping voices in the texture of writing. He says, “Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life”. He goes on: “language lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else’s”. It is only through “appropriation” and adaptation to one’s own purposes that it becomes one’s own. This process of transposition requires the word to be taken out of other people’s mouths and repurposed into a new use.

Here, Bakhtin is not speaking only of individual voices and words but of differentiated discourse types. He identifies a range of such discourses, including direct authorial comment, professional jargon or technical language, language that is used in devotional or religious contexts, legal vocabulary and formulations.

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15 Ibid., 293.
16 Ibid.
17 See Appendix 1 for an example of a discourse analysis of one of my own dance reviews.
2. Reasons for a dialogic approach

Bakhtin identified dialogism as existing within the novel form. However, it is argued here that dialogic thinking can be applied between and across discourses in ways that link them together and illuminate each. As Bakhtin says in “Discourse in the Novel”: “The dialogic orientation of discourse is a phenomenon that is, of course, a property of any discourse. It is the natural orientation of any living discourse”. Therefore, it might be claimed that any piece of writing may represent a polyphony of ideas and voices, even though it may appear monologic, unitary and seeking to fix meaning. Embedded in this is an assumption that its application may extend beyond writing itself into other discourses, including physical discourses such as dance. Such dialogism reflects:

the borrowings
the intertextualities
the conventions
the embedded philosophies
the dispositions, both idiosyncratic and social
which all pertain to a particular historical moment.

Ideas of plurality of meaning and hybridity of form have become very familiar hallmarks of post-modern thinking but Bakhtin was formulating his socio-linguistic-literary theories early in the twentieth century, mostly in the 1930s, even though his writing was not available to an English-speaking readership until 1981. A great deal of influential thinking arrived at notions of plurality later but there is a power and clarity in Bakhtin’s early conceptualisations, making him a significant precursor to the direction that such thinking was moving. Historically, he entered a discourse space that was already primed to accept notions of intertextuality, plurality of

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18 Bakhtin is equally clear about forms of writing that do not easily lend themselves to dialogism. Poetry is chief among these, primarily because Bakhtin claims that it generally lacks the range of voices that exist in fictional dialogue and prose which allow commentary to be embedded via devices such as irony, parody, etc.

meaning and the inherent alienation of the signified and signifier. In a sense, Bakhtin's very positioning in this discourse bears the marks of dialogism. He joined a polyphony of heteroglot voices which he both pre and post-dated. Roland Barthes reflects a similar understanding of language's multiplicities when he talks about the death of the author:

[T]he text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the message of the Author-God) but a multi dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from innumerable centres of culture.\(^{20}\)

Of course, Barthes' intention (at least rhetorically) is to negate the author, so the “multi dimensional space” that he refers to is a container for knowledge rather than emanating from an individual subject. However, the notions of multiplicity, simultaneity, and historical and cultural disparity co-existing in an instance of language, are present in both Barthes and Bakhtin.

For me, there is an appealing innocence and directness in Bakhtin's early expressions of ideas that became much more highly wrought in the hands of thinkers who came after him. His thinking seems more easily recoverable from the words and causes less strain to engage with than the work of many other theorists and this aspect of Bakhtin also appeals.

Bakhtin's ideas are transposed and framed within my dissertation from my position; that of a twenty-first century subjectivity that is aware of the developments in the thinking that came after Bakhtin. These later theorists and philosophers can then enter the discourse without being central to it.

One of the chief attractions of Bakhtin's thinking is that it can be applied not only to writing but also to dance, or at least the process of creating dance and writing about

it. In Bakhtin’s formulation, an authorial presence exists but is decentred. That is, although Bakhtin acknowledges the existence of an authoring entity, he claims that the voice of the author cannot be directly identified in the texture of the writing but rather resides in the orchestration of the whole. It lives as an undelineable part of the texture of a work, in the multiplicity of voices.

The potential to apply Bakhtin’s theory to dance as performance arises in focusing not only on the multitude of voices found within its texture but to the positioning of the ‘author’ or dance-maker. In the choreographic process, the melding of physical and conceptual ideas combine with the enactment of these ideas on specific bodies, their interaction with other bodies, their specific collaborations as well as a host of other variables. The choreographer or maker has strong agency in the process but does not control the whole, especially its reading. The choreographer is present and may have a strong fingerprint in the final performed work, but her exact location is not fixed. Nor is her identity unitary. The multi-voicedness of the danced work is hence dialogic.

3. Dialogic approaches to writing about dance: Precedents

a) Susan Leigh Foster

American writer, dancer and academic, Susan Leigh Foster enacts a dialogic conversation in her 2002 book, Dances that Describe Themselves. She writes in a way that can be construed as dialogic in order to “challenge traditional distinctions between thought and action; subject and object; artist and critic.” Amongst her dialogising tactics, she employs the concept of personifying a dance work by the late American choreographer, Richard Bull, and allowing the dance to ‘have its say’. We learn in the introduction that Bull had himself employed this device when making his work. He wrote letters to his dancers in the persona of the dance that he and they were making. He also addressed the audience in program notes in the voice of the

21 Bakhtin, “Discourse."
dance: “I am the first dance in the history of dance to be able to describe itself and write its own program notes! I am the dance ... I speak to you.”23

Foster’s book *Dances That Describe Themselves*, echoes Bull’s playfulness. It interrupts sections of scholarly analysis with direct addresses to the audience in the voice of the dance, predominantly in a chapter called “Interlude: Epistolary Choreographies” and in the book’s introduction. Within this chapter, The Dance That Describes Itself, (DTDI) interweaves direct and informal correspondence with its readers, organised into sections around themes such as the agency of the dancer. The DTDI is very self-aware and consciously disingenuous in presenting what amounts to a coherent and rigorously constructed academic argument in the guise of an innocent, guileless dance that, after all has been made and danced, and danced again, and been transformed on numerous bodies.

We are disarmed by the salutations:

“Dear Dancers,

Yes, it’s me again, the Dance That Describes Itself. I’m wondering how you’re doing reading this book about me? I thought I could give you some rehearsal tips on how to understand me ...

Dear resisting, stretching, transgressive readers of dances ...
Dear dancing readers ...
Dear dancing makers ...
Dear choreographers ...
”

The addressee's status is also shifting and being repositioned as we are implicitly invited to align ourselves or reject the manner of greeting and re-evaluate our relationship to it.

“Dear choreographers ... “

[Who me?!

Added to this direct epistolary address and academic analysis are sections of historical record and also marginal notes that are direct quotations from real voices - recollections of individuals involved in dancing and making with Bull.24 These notes take up one third of the page width and in sections where they do not occur, a softly spoken invitation to supply one’s own comments is implicit (I naturally found myself using this space to supply written dialogue with the other ‘voices’).

The ‘guileless’ DTDI is also an adept theorist and enters various discourses via the familiar and pedestrian languages of aerobics, break dance, rave culture and tango. The DTDI visits Bakhtin’s writing on the carnivalesque body that allows for transgression within a framework. The dance asks how this may relate to rave culture. The DTDI also considers the relationships between Pierre Bourdieu's conception of habitus and break dancing. He (Bourdieu) says that “[a]s a repository of cultural values, the body protects its ways of doing things, providing an embodied history of the social. The body’s improvisations thus resuscitate and re-enliven the meanings of institutionalised norms, its spontaneity only helps the individual to feel the purpose embedded in an established way of doing things”.25 The DTDI is thus reflecting on the agency of the dancer and also invokes Foucault's conceptualisation of the body and its embedded power relationships. The DTDI imagines how these thinkers might interpret aerobics or break dance. The Dance That Describes Itself also resists becoming a critic. “[O]nce you start tackling these all-encompassing critiques, you run the risk of turning into one yourself ... I don’t want to become one

24 Foster, Dances, 4.

25 Pierre Bourdieu quoted in Foster, Dances, 223. Bourdieu describes “habitus” as habits, routines and behaviours that are entrenched and systematised.
of ‘them’. This affords Foster a further vehicle for interweaving additional voices into her text.

Interestingly, Foster also emphasises the existence of multiple discourses in her earlier work Reading Dancing. In that book she takes various aspects of performance (and is very specific in her examples) and argues that they render themselves readable to an audience literate in their conventions. In each of her examples, she emphasises how elements work together or in discord to assemble a whole readable meaning. She details and disentangles these elements. (Notions of framing, mode of representation, style, vocabulary and syntax are identified as entry-points for reading a dance). In a sense she is arguing for dance as a multivocal text as Bakhtin did for novelistic discourse. In this way, the nature of such a text must be dialogic as must its reading. (In Foster’s account, the viewer is rendered sensitive to the complexity of the dance by their experience and through the dance explicating its many dimensions in a reflexive discourse). While I am not entirely convinced about the inherent readability of dance as Foster describes it, Foster herself is clearly reading it as being dialogic in nature.

It seems to be an entirely understandable process then for Foster to go on to write in a consciously dialogic fashion; choosing strands, inventing voices and a persona, and additionally incorporating marginal quotations throughout Dances That Describe Themselves which are from real ‘voices’ - dancers who helped 'write' Bull's dance. She is inviting the reader to consider the dance through a visually rendered text-experience that provides texture and choreography of its own. It is a kind of choreographic animation of her text.

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26 Foster, Dances, 232.
28 The rules around reading dances as posited by Foster demand an engagement with elements of the choreographic process as she defines them. She thus creates her own language of interpretation that:
   a) relies on an acceptance and understanding of those rules, and
   b) are subject to vagaries and exceptions as the grammar of any language is.
In itself Foster's whole project is a meta-language, based on Bull's 'structured improvisation', which provides written and spoken interventions that help shape, direct and free up the dancer's contribution to structuring his text. So she is a voice in dialogue simultaneously with Bull, his dancers, the work itself and, at times its viewers. She is also able to historicise and critique in her own voice. In Bull's choreographic process, Foster has located for herself a discourse typology that is multi-positional and multivocal. It is dialogic.

b) Description and ekphrasis: Dialogic thread or monologic relic?
A side issue to any discussion of dance writing is the presence of description within it. Whether the writer is undertaking a dialogic or multi-faceted approach to a dance work, description of details of the dance persist. There is a question of whether description - dialogic or monologic - belongs in writing about dance at all. Ekphrastic poetry and later, its prose variant, sought to tackle issues of conjuring the visual into language. It seems as though ekphrasis was a technology for bridging between modalities through language but in performing its transmission of language, it valorised its use above the object referred to. Commencing as poetry with Homer's description of Ulysses' shield in the Odyssey, the form was used to conjure into presence the indescribable and render it as tangible as possible. A famous Romantic example is Keats' Ode On a Grecian Urn. The form developed a prose variant which was indispensable in conveying the qualities of visual art prior to widespread reproduction of fine art and has been used widely in art criticism.29 However, Foster, like most other writers, explicitly describes dances as does, say, Lepecki.30 There seems to be a vast documentary reservoir of descriptive writing about post-modern dance especially, which also accounts for it as a deeply felt phenomenological experience.31 These writers engage with physical awareness in

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31 See for example Sally Banes' *Terpsichore in Sneakers: Post-Modern Dance* (Newtown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1987).
their work, yet detailed descriptions of what a dance looks like as well as what it might mean politically and socially are entered into. This is not, typically analogous to review writing but are words used to put a reader in the picture of what happened in a performance. Specifics of who, where, when, how are addressed, it seems partially to document details of works and to position those works historically, which is an important function. Certainly videographic documentation of some of this work is available. So why describe?

The difference between two-dimensional video-documentation of a dance and the live three-dimensional experience is significant but the video record is at least a residually embodied document. Writing is at yet a further remove. Is the urge to construct written record then about audience? The writers have an audience now, for written text, so are they reluctant to dissolve the connection or send their readers away? In other words, are they merely exploiting the platform available to them at a given moment for their task? In this case the choice is not ideal but pragmatic. Or is it, that as writers, they are fundamentally so attached to words that they cannot but think, ultimately that the word is definitive? If this is true, then simply telling about a dance event may be seen as carrying the weight of enough information to convey the important or salient aspects of the dance to the reader. What is interesting is that writers do not verbalise this as being strange. In other words, there is no explicit self-questioning. It appears to be a natural manoeuvre to them. However much Foster incorporates alternative voices into her text, it is rendered as text and often text that describes, even if it is the personified dance that is describing itself. Could it simply be that description itself constitutes a further dialogic voice in a dance dialogue and need not be seen as oppositional or problematic?

In contrast to pedestrian description, some writers have dedicated themselves to writing explicitly with the senses, notably Helene Cixous. Cixous physicalised writing, charged it with the sensual, sexual, immediate, deeply visceral, emphatically female,
revelling in the felt, the experienced, the textured, the non-linear and the non product-driven. Her texts espouse a female poetics of diffuseness expressed as écriture féminine. As Toril Moi comments “Her style is often intensely metaphorical, poetic and explicitly anti-theoretical, and her central images create a dense web of signifiers that offers no obvious edge to seize hold of for the analytically-minded critic”. Cixous never wrote on dance but it is tempting to see in her deeply sensuous and sensual lyricism a corollary for the moving, feeling, sensing, alert body which might tempt a dance writer to write with and through the body rather than about the body. This is perhaps most starkly where the external demands of convention-bound dance writing (such as review) which explicitly demand that those graspable edges be present in order to provide entry points for the non-specialist reader, diverge from a freer, more open-ended discourse that might be entered by those willing and equipped with the literacy to read with their bodies. Reflecting on the particularity of Cixous’ writing, we return to the fact that it still is writing and that in fact, key to her project was the demand to write in a way that was not bounded by a phallocentric discourse, but emphatically it was her right to write for which she fought.

In Susan Leigh Foster’s 1979 work Correspondances, she alternates dancing and talking about the dance. This is far more akin to my project as it involves the actual body with the word (though spoken in Foster’s case). Foster recorded her voice and the sound of her dancing and then used the recording as a background to which she danced again and spoke about a different aspect of dancing. Each iteration of speaking changes its focus and at last, Foster talks about the “way dances can mean”. She identifies a highlight of this work as being the “silences” that it left

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which allowed “silences for subsequent dialogues among the voices”. My methodology has precedents here and its dialogising tendency is inherent in this kind of experiment.

My observations around the descriptive impulse is different from thinking about a reviewing process, where a combination of description, analysis and commentary are generally employed. Reviews are typically written as ephemera; touchstones or glimpses of responses at a particular time to works of a moment. Lengthy descriptions of dances, by contrast, concretise the works they focus on. As a result, the works become emblematic of the time in which the text was written and as exemplars of particular theoretical or conceptual analyses, may act to fossilise the broader issues being explored.

c) Dialogism’s “strand of physical thinking”
Ann Cooper Albright also contains significant resonances for my investigation. It seems that I have entered territory that has coincidences but also territory that is distinctly separate.

Albright sought a kinaesthetic entry-point into the dances of Loie Fuller. In writing her history, Traces of Light: Absence and Presence in the Work of Loie Fuller, Albright identifies a gap between the written, academic history and a felt understanding of her subject. Albright says “I decided to make a dance for every chapter I was writing, to explore through my body the ideas I was working with theoretically”. She sought to “touch some truths about her [Fuller’s] work that were not immediately visible at

first”, resulting in a “physically engaged process”. This she imaged as a kind of contact improvisation duet with her subject, drawing on Albright’s own practice.36

Albright chose also to “dance with words, moving with my body to see how ideas resonate in my body”, and summarises: “This research challenges traditional separations between academic scholarship and artistic creation, between criticism and autobiography - in short between dancing and writing”, and the dancing “creates a strand of physical thinking”.37

Unlike Albright, who seems to be interested in a transcendent process of “bridging between subjectivities”,38 my endeavour simply places me in a different relationship with dance and dancing. It is designed to discomfort and realign my perceptions as a writer. Although inside a physicalising process, I never aim to become what I dance, just to notice the shifts, spaces and changes in the relationships between its components. I am also, significantly, not working with individual or historical subjects but with a range of dance that I have been directly exposed to. I am working not with documentation, but I am the documentation. In common, however, we have a physical process as the basis for knowledge. We also share a dynamic in our moving between modalities.

My particular iterations of moving and dancing share with Albright a drive toward embodying something that is other - understanding through inhabiting. However, unlike Albright, I have sought to reference rather than replicate and I set no particular parameters around the dancing. My outcomes are conceptualised in terms of how they feed into the overall experience of the writer-dancer dialogic and not how they attempt to recover the trace of something else.

38 Ibid., 3.
But in the end we each acknowledge a questioning space that is opened up by our investigation that is living and dynamic. For me this space or gap represents a resistance to fixity, which withstands the tyranny of the word without undermining the word’s power. It is a space that is vital with possibility and the potential for writing or dance to occupy centre stage at any given moment, or to vie for primacy or very occasionally to dissolve into one another. This is a volatile and rich space created through co-existences.

A further point of contact between the scholarship-embodiment undertaken by Albright and my investigation is that she identifies an “intertextual space” in her dancing with Fuller and a hybridity that has some parallel with my adoption of the term ‘dialogism’. Indeed ‘hybridity’ is a term used by Bakhtin that specifies the co-existence of discrete voices within a dialogue.39 We each seek a more complete and multi-faceted experience of understanding our topic while respecting the impossibility of grasping it as anything unitary. We each also seek to locate an interplay between the act of writing and of dancing and all the intellectual and kinaesthetic nuances that we are able to conjure into presence, or which emerge from the process. Essentially the parallel is that we both use kinaesthetic and empathic processes as a means of knowledge. We both employ hermeneutic rather than linear processes.

The problems inherent in such an approach, I have found, is the complexity in its references back and forward between modalities, and those moments of transition between. The water is also muddied by the complex relational associations that involve not just writer and dance but also writer as audience, dancers in a performance, choreographers, as well as the many facets of dance that this project does not venture into.

Ann Cooper Albright in her introduction to *Traces of Light* describes a circularity in the relationship between dancing and writing, a kind of interdependence but also gestures toward a sense of the impossibility of reconciling these two modes, which again is reminiscent of Bakhtin’s coexisting but distinguishable discourses.

This choreography of writing and dancing forms a web of signifying practices that merge and emerge ... Yet these intertexts can also produce a misleading sense that we have captured the thing itself - the presence of a dancing body. I want to introduce the concept of intertextuality ... to point out the space between these texts. While this space may figure as an absence, it is not necessarily a loss.40

Hence an act of writing is dialogic in nature and so too is dance making and dancing. Both allow for a multiplicity of voices to be enacted and heard. A dialogic approach to the written text breaks open the writing/dance dichotomy and the thinking/feeling binary and shows their multiple relationalities. It also helps resist the shutting-down mechanism that can exist when thinking and writing involve evaluative and judging functions. Hence a dialogue that is nourished by the dancing body may be preserved in the writing sensibility. The propensity for dialogic discourse is also intensified when the written and danced are co-existent.

The following three chapters chart the distinct experiential phases in my research which also equate to an intensification in dialogism. My embodied research is the place where discoveries were made and so it is this aspect that carries most weight in my investigation. There is also evidence of a gradual movement from a more introverted or interior dance practice to a more extroverted and external practice.

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40 Albright, introduction to *Traces*, 10.
Chapter 1 - Pre-dialogic or parallel processes

Introduction

I ask myself - Am I trying to push the word into the body, or the body into the word?

Writing’s relationship with dancing can be a vexed one with writing being the bad person in the relationship. Alys Longley states that “Writing has been cast as monstrous - or at least violent - in its ability to disfigure, maim and destroy the life of live arts”. 41 Writing about dance and dancing can be seen to have struggled adversarially over time. There is, as Lepecki says “a space of friction between writing and dance”. 42 Commentators including Lepecki and Phelan 43 return again and again to dance’s ephemerality as reason for the impossibility of representing it in words. Dance, it seems lies outside of the “grasp” of words and words are a betrayal of its very nature.

Part of this distrust of language seems to stem from the power differential that it seems to suggest. An activity such as dance review writing, can be seen as little more than a linguistic validation of something transient. The assumption here is that language is a privileged discourse with the embodied discourse somehow relying on it for translatability; that discourses need to be crossed in order to make dance more widely readable. Susan Leigh Foster says:

Arguably, kinaesthetic knowledge should be presented through the practice of movement; however, external to movement, the predominant means of presenting kinaesthetic knowledge is by language, written and spoken. 44

But this antipathy is obviously not the only way to see the relationship between dance and writing. Coming from a different direction and a different set of

41 Alys Longley, “Moving Words: Five Instances of Dance Writing” (PhD diss., Victoria University, 2011), 1.
43 Phelan, Unmarked, 146.
44 Foster, Reading Dancing, 15.
assumptions, Alys Longley argues for the performativity of writing.\textsuperscript{45} In \textit{Moving Words: Five Instances of Dance Writing} she uses a series of five discrete and particular improvisational practices that result not only in performances but that create a library of five books that resonate with the embodiment of the dance that has created them. She does this via various means; the tactility of the books and also the reader interaction with them are used as ways of releasing a kinaesthetic connection. For example, she uses folds and creases and various unconventional page configurations, as well as leaving a range of choices open to the reader as to how and in what order to engage with the library. In a sense, she causes the reader to dance the books. In this, Longley is activating the written language kinaesthetically. She is causing the words to dance.

Others have also sought to energise the kinaesthetic potential of words. Ann Daly choreographs her writing and merges it with movement trace in \textit{When Writing Becomes Gesture}.\textsuperscript{46} Judith Walton writes also of artist books as sites for potential embodiment as she physically manipulates and enlivens the printed text.\textsuperscript{47} William Forsythe goes so far as to posit that choreography can exist outside of the body as a “choreographic object”.\textsuperscript{48} Helene Cixous and others seek to imbue words with a rich physicality by evoking a sensuous bridge between word and senses.

My own embodied experiments move in reverse to these endeavours in many ways. I commence with the artefact of the written page, with its assumptions, its dispositions, its choices and exclusions along with the tyrannies associated with writing within a particular convention. Even as this writing exists as a concrete

\textsuperscript{45} Longley, “Moving Words.”
\textsuperscript{46} Ann Daly, \textit{When Movement Becomes Gesture} (Austin: Wollemi Pine Press, 2004).
document, I seek to bypass my own choreographing of words and let my body tell the things that my writing mind does not know or does not know how to say.

1. Choreographed fragments.
   a) Articulation and definition
   This initial experimental phase was developed as part of my thesis proposal and was a persistent part of practice over much of my candidature and continued to inform my process throughout. Its purpose was to set a written text (a review) beside a danced text (choreographed fragment) in order to better understand the relationships between an ideas-based response to work and an embodied response. A choreographed fragment is:
   • A movement sequence that responds, in some way, to an element of a dance work that I have seen and reviewed.
   • It is an embodied response (not an embodied review) and seeks to explore movement quality or a conceptual aspect of a dance work but there are no fixed expectations of how it is resolved.
   • There is no expectation around the nature of the response. It is neither a representation, nor an emulation of the original work. Its connection to the original work is likely to be unrecognisable choreographically.

   b) Process
   • Improvisation of short phrases (fragments) were refined into choreographic ideas. A sequence was developed that captured (for me) an element or essence that I found in the work.
   • Choreographic fragments were documented on video and intended to be read side-by-side with the written review.
   • For each review, there was also a written reflection on the writing. I recalled the factors that informed my writing and response to the work at the time of reviewing. I documented how easy/difficult the reviewing process was in this
instance and tried to characterise tone or positionality that may be apparent in retrospect.

- For each choreographed fragment, made and documented, there was also a written reflection on how the making felt. This was partly an attempt to unpack and differentiate the way I feel intellectually and physically. I considered issues such as how the making and its outcome relate to the original work viewed and how these relate to and vary from the written review.

In addition to the documentation and reflective components, a short-hand schema was implemented to track some basic elements of each embodied response or choreographed fragment. This was a simple way of noting surface methodology. (See Appendix 2.)

These series of embodied experiments propelled me forward into new and broader explorations.
c) Writing the body and dancing the body

Establishing what my own relationship was with each of these separate discourses was a way of determining what their relationship to one another meant to me. Which points of intersection were fruitful for my exploration? From this I was able to start to think about where I was positioned in relation to each. I chose to explore the different roles that I took in relation to written text about dance, and the activity of dancing itself.

In this early stage, self-positioning took the form of a process of consciously negotiating a relationship with dance and with my own writing about dance via other people's choreography. As such, I used dance performances as a focus from which I could position myself as an audience member/reader of a dance text and as someone who, in a sense, reformulates a dance work into words - a different discourse. But my exploration was essentially through my own body.

In creating a choreographic fragment for William Forsythe's *i don’t believe in outer space*, I later reflected “I wanted to channel a slightly grotesque sensibility but contrasted with a certain delicacy. The notion of a spewing violence and a sense of considered, balanced movement combined with some fragility seemed central to what I want to say”. So here, I was creating from a conceptual impulse. For Frances Rings’ Bangarra work *Terrain*, the movement I made in response was free and fluid and the connection I felt with the work was far more immediate and centred in my body. My response to Garry Stewart’s *Proximity* for ADT gave me my first entrée into working with text explicitly and I stuck surgical tape to parts of my body upon which I wrote phrases that connected with my relationships with writing and dance. The movement language was very mechanistic and fun to dance. Expressions such as “dancing syntax” and “languaging the body” and even simply “writing a review” were foregrounded in the video between episodes of dancing.

49 Personal reflection November 23, 2012
This investigation turned up some of my embedded dispositions and beliefs around dance and indicated what I saw as the chief complements and antagonisms between them. My initial finding from this phase was that I was perceiving dancing and writing as possessing parallel compositional processes. Though they shared elements of process they departed starkly from one another when they came to be decoded by a viewer/reader. My embodied experiments that comprise this phase took writing and dancing to be separate entities with which I had distinct relationships. Like many others, I considered writing to be my first language and dance my second, or at least, it felt harder to claim dance as a first language because it felt to have greater barriers to entry placed around it.

Although I commenced my thinking with the notion that Bakhtinian thought might be helpful, my first experimental choreographed fragments were very discrete attempts at seeing where I was placed in each separate discourse. Even so, at this early stage Bakhtin’s notion of the existence of an “internally persuasive discourse”
seemed relevant. This is a discourse comprised of “one's own word”\textsuperscript{50} as opposed to an external authoritative language that is learned and internalised and absorbed into one’s self. The authoritative discourse in Bakhtinian terms is essentially an alien language that is absorbed by the linguistically evolving subject and which reflects prevailing ideologies. These could be societal ideologies or discipline-specific or professional discourses that become internalised. As the cognition and language of an individual develop, we transcend the authoritative discourses but we never lose them - they are always implicated in every iteration of specific speech acts that have been used before.

Since language is so highly referential, I see my writing about dance as both my own word and as comprising a kind of authoritative discourse. But in choosing a parallel, embodied experimentation through which to explore this, I am urging an internally persuasive discourse. I posit that in this phase, I render the authoritative, written discourse permeable to embodied discourse, allowing for the instabilities of the body to be present in my writing consciousness. Foucault says that the body is “constitutively unstable, always foreign to itself - an open process of continuous self-estrangement where the most fundamental physiological and senatorial functions endure ongoing oscillations, adjustments, breaks, dysfunctions and optimisations”.\textsuperscript{51} This physical revisiting of what I have seen has both an amplifying and destabilising dimension.

My actual written text is never performative but contains the multiple resonances of the dances I have danced and the kinaesthetic empathies that reside in my body.\textsuperscript{52} In this way, even the convention-bound formulas of review-writing retain bodily memories within them and may even on occasion invoke them in a reader. However, it is not the purpose of this research to try to transform the current review

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{50} M. M. Bakhtin, “Discourse,” 345.
\item \textsuperscript{51} Michel Foucault, quoted in Sally Banes and Andre Lepecki, eds., The Senses in Performance (New York: Routledge, 2007), 1.
\item \textsuperscript{52} Notions of kinaesthetic empathy become increasingly important to my research and are discussed in more detail in later chapters.
\end{itemize}
form or to make claims impossible for the review format to deliver. Indeed I am not resisting, nor denying the limitations of the format. My investigation does not lead me to experimenting with new forms of review, per se, although my experiments edge closer to melding review and dance. I am not trying to defy genre either. This is because my first prolonged series of choreographed fragments are not attempting to comment on dance or choreography, but to simply embody. Even so, my choice of using my body to forge responses to works; my choreographed fragments, is an indirect but powerful way to challenge some of the conventions of standard dance review, since this methodology bypasses writing altogether.

In Bakhtin, the voice is “the speaking consciousness”. Holquist states that a ‘voice’ is characterised by possessing “a will, or desire ... its own timbre and overtones.” “Double-voiced discourse” moves a trope between different planes, say from the realm of poetry to that of novelistic discourse. My double-voicing moves the word to the dance. Although the elements are particular to my authoring voice both in language and in choreography, they are also ambiguous and open-ended and are always poised for response from a reader/viewer.

Over the duration of candidature, my written reflections shift from being analytical to being more about the body. Although possessing some hallmarks of dialogism, the early experiments in this phase fall short of being fully realised dialogic conversations even though they were exploring the territory. They were still quite detached accounts of how it felt to dance. I was noticing external phenomena more than I was engaging with an internal interoceptive body. I was doing more writing about thinking even as I believed that I was making sense of how it felt.

53 Holquist, glossary, 434.
2. Reading text and reading dance
In addition to executing parallel acts of writing and dancing, I also considered the role of the reader of these kinds of texts. Even as parallel processes, writing and dance are externally confounded by the instability of variables such as their readability.

A question implied in my broader project is: Are writing about dance and dance making, related processes or does each require separate understandings? That is, do they constitute different forms of knowledge?

Each has the power to release particular understandings, however, they share parallel processes. An entry point into this area of enquiry is to consider these shared processes and then discuss some of the issues surrounding the way in which these separate modalities are read or decoded. Here, I touch on the roles of codified dance technique\(^{54}\) and somatic dance practice,\(^{55}\) including ideokinetic practice,\(^{56}\) and notice how they relate to the confounding of the viewer’s decoding of dance.

Writing about dance and making dance both rely on response to stimuli. But spontaneous responses are not ideas, they are unedited raw data. These responses may also be qualitatively different. Dance writing only exists because dance does and there is an impulse to verbalise it. It is also a simple, commercial reality that

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\(^{54}\) Codified dance technique is a dance practice that has at its core a specific code of 'steps' and an explicit working vocabulary, both linguistic and physical. Classical ballet is an exemplar.

\(^{55}\) Somatic dance practice is an 'in body' dance making practice that has no definable movement vocabulary. Somatic intelligence is defined by Erin Brannigan as “a model of experience that places the body at the site where feelings or sensations are registered, feelings that might be untranslatable into language or any other medium but which accumulate as corporeal knowledge.” Erin Brannigan, “Moving Across Disciplines: Dance in the Twenty-First Century,” *Platform Papers* 25 (2010): 10. That is, sensation is translated directly into movement without the need for linguistic intervention.

\(^{56}\) Ideokinetic dance practice is a dance making strategy that uses imagery as impetus for movement. It provides "a technique via which thoughts and images, anatomical or otherwise, can take form in the body, and by extension, in choreographic works." Elizabeth Dempster, “Imagery, Ideokinesis and Choreography,” *Writings on Dance* 1(1985): 20.
there is a market for reviewing. Thus writing about dance can be perceived as having a level of utility that dance and dance making does not. Writing is also seen as having inherent value, regardless of what it is expressing. That is, the act of writing is seen as a valid and necessary skill in a western, educated context.

Dance making, by contrast, may come from a kinaesthetic impulse, an aesthetic impulse or be conceptually driven. What they share though is that neither can spring, fully formed and complete. Both of these endeavours require shaping and refining before they can live as entities outside of themselves. One can respond immediately to dance works by writing, or make choreography in an 'instinctive' way but the process of disentangling the complexity behind these impulses takes longer. It is this process that gives depth to the work whether written or danced.

The process of refining writing is one of seeking precision in lexical choice and selecting structural elements that lead the reader through the topography of thinking so that they arrive at some conclusion (not necessarily the author's). Readers participating in a shared literacy will most likely have access to meaning on some level. The process of refining choreography, in contrast, may engage with a series of aesthetic decisions or kinaesthetic practices, which may remain largely invisible to the viewer. This is likely to confound the 'reading' process.

Other differences between writing and dance making are that the written word lies within the realm of the everyday whereas dance is seen as a specialised practice. Even writing on a subject such as dance might be considered approachable by a non-dance enthusiast and evaluated in some way. The evaluation may not reflect the intention of the writer nor an understanding of the dance work being written about but would rely on commonalities of understanding about what that individual believed writing should be. That is, whether the writing was successful as a piece of writing. This is because people are routinely taught to write but not to dance.

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Dance, therefore does not carry the same generalised currency as writing. A viewer may not have a literacy to approach a dance work, nor feel equipped to do so. They may not recognise whether or not a process of refinement has occurred. If this process is more difficult for the viewer to discern, does that cause a mistrust in dance that does not exist in writing? We trust the written word, but in western culture, we do not necessarily trust in the bodily, the kinaesthetic, as a mode of knowledge.

The result is that while both writing about dance and dance making share a series of processes, they vary in the way they are likely to be interpreted. The mechanics of the writing practice are culturally embedded within a western, educated context. The means enlisted for conceptualising and 'drafting' in a choreographic process may remain hidden or mysterious to many viewers. Dance making is likely to be driven by a detailed and meticulous process that rigorously includes and excludes ideas, movement vocabularies and transitional choices. Conventional and aesthetically pleasing lines may be deliberately eschewed in favour of a poetics of awkwardness. However, the 'reader' of this dance text may not be able to discern this deliberateness of process or indeed that the end result is a resolved work.

Conventions in non-academic writing about dance such as reviewing are also better understood than conventions in making dance. This is largely because the traditions and practices of modern reviewing have become recognisable and, as previously noted, are attached to a generally accessible, linguistic literacy.

Somatically based and improvisational approaches to dance making have no such codification and what is not named is hard to pin down. Without a prescribed movement language the art is free to be or do anything; this opens up possibilities for development in any direction but at the same time lacks the specificity to invite outsiders in and to fully describe itself. Erin Brannigan says that “somatic intelligence explains how the dancer can occupy the very place where bodily
knowledge demands attention but where discourse fails”.\(^{58}\) This suggests a process that creates meaning that does not translate into verbal language, but which is its own language. In this, the maker and dancer are charged with defining that moment where pure physicality resolves into meaning and the 'reader' is charged with recognition that meaning is present. It is a process then, not only of invention on the part of the choreographer, but of interpretation on the part of the viewer, and embracing an understanding that might not be intellectual. Rosalind Crisp says “to access the delicate subjective moment of the body requires a certain state or condition in the performer that can be immobilised by the conventional western theatre context ... one of active performer versus passive audience ...”\(^{59}\) Therefore more is expected of an audience in this kind of process and the reception of the dance work is highly dependent on the willingness of the viewer to be actively engaged and embrace its premise.

Brannigan identifies a demand to fix meaning in dance. She says that there is an “emphasis placed by mainstream work on linearity and closure that does not suit the process-based work of somatic dance making practices”.\(^{60}\) Linearity and closure are, however, generally features of non-academic forms of writing on dance. A contract is entered into between the reviewer and the reader where there is an expectation that the review explicate the work to some extent. Evaluations are implied as is the assumption that there will be a basic account of what the work looks like and whether the critic recommends it. Because this endeavour is driven by the needs of the consumer, and it is bound by conventions, including word limits, the review tends to be formulaic compared with a dance work.

Therefore, although the processes involved in writing about dance and dance making share parallels, the means of decoding these modes of knowledge vary. Readers

\(^{58}\) Brannigan, “Moving across Disciplines,” 15.
\(^{59}\) Crisp, “Re-membering the Body,” 5.
\(^{60}\) Brannigan, “Moving Across Disciplines,” 3.
bring both shared and disparate literacies to their encounters with writing and
dance. It can be generally claimed, though, that dance as an artefact appears to
possess more oblique characteristics than writing, its ‘rules’ are not necessarily part
of common understanding. As a result, it remains more difficult to read.

Throughout this dissertation, I argue consistently for the writer to be immersed in
the body as an essential component of writing with authentic, felt, sensed
understanding. I seek to remake my writerly knowing into a bodily knowing.

3. Moving between writing and dancing
   a) Embodied dumbness
At around May 2013, I reviewed my methodology and decided to synthesise parts of
the process. This decision was taken in order to alleviate any atomisation of
elements of the methodology and make it more readable as a whole process. Above
all, my purpose was to experiment with how it felt, or how possible it was, to move
fluidly between writing (a review) and dancing a response and to create a tighter
dialogue between each modality. Although, this proved not to be a sustainable way
of working, it became a transitional methodology that opened up a more solid
practice.

Throughout the process, any attempt at dissolving distinctions between the written
and the danced remained elusive. At an extreme, I experienced ‘embodied
dumbness’ where I could not respond in movement to a work. This was especially
the case when I tried to work with writing and dancing simultaneously. Bangarra
Dance Theatre's Blak is a strong example of this block. My response in this case was
inertia. My body had nothing to say about the work. This was an absolute case of
physical incapability or unwillingness. I believe that this was partially a response to
the nature of the work being very dense but I also feel that there were cultural
resistances at play. I could identify powerful narratives within the work but felt
them to be unresolved and sometimes unrecoverable. In all honesty, I felt ill
equipped to dismiss the narrative density in this way because of my non-Indigenous background. In addition, I didn't really want to attach to any one choreographic or conceptual element to tease out in my response. I let the danced response go and wrote only a review. My writing for this was similarly laboured. I overwrote and the review was leaden and bogged down. Ways around this difficulty were trialled. I tried interspersing writing and dancing. For ADTs Proximity, for example, I made twice, once prior to the commencement of writing (an attempt to move without the language overlay already existing) and again after. But I was not able to meld the tasks into one fluid process. Each task demanded its own space to breathe and commanded a different kind of attention.

This clearly informs me that a demarcation exists in the two processes which I wished to breach but did not. My premise had been that dancing and writing occupied overlapping territories and that these would be revealed in the doing. I was also attempting to recover links between thinking and writing about dance by tapping into the recalled bodily sensations that seemed to me were central to the viewing-writing-dancing dynamic. In my failure to perform this simultaneous dual response to work, I was forced to recognise the essential difference between certain physicalising or embodying that accompanies all my acts of writing, and those that pertain specifically to my writing about dance.

b) Writing as unconscious dancing
Early in my research I had identified a predisposition to physically animate when I write and to be highly aware of my physical responses in the process of writing. I returned to this often throughout the process, wishing to understand more about this aspect of writing’s relationship with dance. This was one of the factors that drew me to the idea of attempting to move between processes. I have a need for motility in the act of writing - pacing, gesticulating, sighing - together with a strong awareness of a feeling of tightness, excitement or dread in my gut and chest. I am aware of respiration and aspiration, of posture and bodily tension. So, I posited that
writing may be a kind of unconscious dancing for me, but I discovered that this is not the same as dancing a response to a work I am writing about, since it occurs generically with any act of writing. It is true that this awareness is intensified when I write about dance, but they are not exclusive to writing about dance. These are physiological responses and might suggest that I have a propensity to respond more dynamically, more noticeably or more anxiously to visual stimuli but they do not translate into a melding of the writing-physicalising in choreographing terms. I may be disposed to perceive writing and dancing as co-present or co-existing phenomena, but that does not make me any more capable of consciously interweaving or synthesising these two separate phenomena or forms of knowledge in a performative act. They talk to each other in a dialogic conversation but retain their own selfhood.

David Efron says that gestures are an intrinsic part of the thinking process and that differentials in gestural communication reflect thinking patterns and furthermore are connected with ethnicity and culture. Different gestural styles embody differences in ways of thinking. In a study of post war migrants to the United States, Efron found that Italian migrants literally “carried a bundle of pictures in their hands”. Italian migrants were found to emphasise shape in their gestures. I have noticed a parallel in my tendency to physicalise while writing and this explains my inability to write while intentionally dancing a response. The gestures that physicalise a thinking style, are tied more to thinking than moving - their intention is a thinking intention and the embodiment is simply a by-product of the thinking rather than an conscious embodiment for its own sake.

My inability to move seamlessly between writing and dancing might also be explained, in part, by Leder’s concept of the absent body. Zarrila quotes Leder, who notes that while he is reading a book or thinking, his bodily awareness disappears

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and he becomes unconscious of the particularities of bodily positioning and
sensation. He says the same happens when he engages in strenuous exercise
where the body becomes secondary to the task. At first reading, Leder’s
observations seemed completely contrary to my bodily awareness. Yet it could
explain why I couldn’t dance and write simultaneously. Perhaps it was that my focus
was on the writing first (since that was the external task to be accomplished) and
maybe I could have reversed the process and written through movement more
readily. I tried to catch the kinaesthetic residues and attempt to strike them into life
when perhaps I should have used the residues to move into response and then to
writing.

I do understand how certain levels of bodily experience can recede when performing
an indoctrinated task. Obviously it doesn’t seem strange or unusual to point a toe
when dancing ballet. Its familiarity can render the action easeful enough to not be
the main focus of awareness. I would argue that this is a prioritising of focus or a
shift rather than a ‘disappearance’. I am always aware of pointing or not pointing
my toes but I may be more strongly aware of something else that I find either more
effortful or more pleasurable at the time. Proprioceptive senses make subtle
movements automatic but they never disappear. Obviously the same is not true for
the many automatic physiological processes that continue invisibly within such as
the functioning of the organs, flow of blood and firing of neurons.

Using automatic body function as metaphor, Ann Cooper Albright parallels the acts
of breathing in and out with the acts of dancing and writing. For her, they are part of
a cycle and urge one another into presence.

It starts with a breath ... This is the first moment of any dance ...
Inhalation ... There is the next phase, the exhalation ... It is on the
strength of the exhale, the audible release that the body is brought

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62Drew Leder, quoted in Phillip Zarrilla, “Senses and Silence in Actor Training and
into speech, into language, back into writing. When I move from writing to dancing into writing again, I complete the cycle.  

For Albright there is a continuity of movement between each mode, one driving the other into renewal. The breath analogy suggests interdependence. There is a living, organic relationship for Albright. This is not an experience that I was able to enter at this stage of my process. However, later in my performance phase, I was able to move between the physical acts of writing and dancing, though I abandoned the idea of writing a review while responding in dance to the work.

**Conclusion**

This phase of my embodied research caused me to ask “Am I trying to push the word into the body or the body into the word?” Although identifying some dialogic moments within the spaces and overlaps of my writing and dancing practices, for the most part, these entities continued to travel separately, along parallel tracks. I could not mandate a coalescence of these modalities nor force stability on the way they are decoded.

Deidre Sklar advises that, “Words in the intimate space of sensual aliveness reverberate with somatic memory”.  

So, although there were some failures in my early, embodied enquiry, I am reminded of the power of words as triggers for somatic recollection and the power of dance to incite a need to language what has been felt and seen.

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64 Sklar, “Unearthing Kinesthesia,” 44.
Chapter 2 - From pre-dialogic to dialogic.

Introduction

My next series of embodied experiments were situated within postgraduate presentations and the current chapter is concerned with how these revealed the polyphonous interplay of multiple voices contained within the dynamic of danced and written texts. The chapter discusses three instances of academic-performative work and notes significant factors that arose in relation to the inception of the work, the academic-performative moment, and the learnings that were carried forward to the next iteration. In this process, the use of text becomes increasingly explicit as a dialogic thread. Notions of scrutiny and witness emerge as does sensing or kinaesthetic empathy in terms of my immersion in performative renderings of my word and body. These are considered mainly in the context of an embodied polyphony.

Some of the specific polyphonic threads are:

- the writer’s word
- the writer’s danced word
- other spoken iterations of the word
- other embodiments of the word
- bodily inscriptions of the word.

Throughout this development stage my most significant insights were gained as a result of working through what I later term ‘episodes of exposure’, not through reading or theorising. Hence, it is the thinking through dancing where the dialogic and sensing coalesce.

During this phase I also find myself more consciously choreographing my research. I am making deliberate choices that reveal particular peaks of interest and significance and that play out via a very deliberate patterning and shaping of material. This is evident in the research practices but more particularly in the
performative experiments. The iterations of performance seminars move from tentative inclusions of choreographic elements to more insistently overt performative statements.

Throughout this chapter my voice continues to shift between commentary and analysis and in-the-moment processual accounts. The latter are italicised. In addition, I continue my practice of self-identifying as my various roles. This is consistent with a dialogic practice that presupposes multivocality, indicating real distinctions in positioning between these roles while allowing for their overlap.

1. Text on the edges of dance
   a) Background
   In this experiential phase, I progressed to use elements of my own texts as soundscapes. I took these elements further and experimented with delivering academic symposia and postgraduate presentations partially as orchestrated performative moments. Though in academic settings, my intention was not pedagogic except in terms of my own learning. This melding is something that I had wanted to do earlier on but it was not until dancing insisted itself into the writing-thinking space that I adopted this way of working. These combinations of creative output with academic discourse afforded me ‘episodes of exposure’, where I embody aspects of my dissertation with a view to better explicating its intention as well as opening myself up to the scrutiny of an audience. The audience is simultaneously exposed to the ideas being posited in the dissertation in physicalised terms, even as the writer is exposing herself in a performance context. Thus the audience is invited into a response while the writer takes on the role of the creative entity, if only impermanently. This is the first instance of a participatory methodology and propelled me into an expanded territory, which will be discussed in the next chapter.
Within the phase of work described in this chapter, I continued to strive for a more satisfactory resolution in my experiments and was, at this time, centrally interested in the shifts that take place as I played with proximities between the writing and the dancing and any noticeable new interactions between them. As my methodologies developed, my interest focused more on the nature of the space between these two modes of understanding than about trying to make them exist as one unified conglomerate. My voice continues to shift between that of writer, dancer, and thinker as I refer to myself according to role. In this way, the voices become increasingly polyphonous; discrete but in constant conversation:

Writing is not dancing
Dancing is not writing
Writing can be danced
Dance can be written

In seeking to bridge the gap between the performance and the reviewer, I have revealed to myself more about the nature of the constituents under my investigation. Dance performance is durational in nature and three-dimensional. Writing as an artefact, is somewhat fixed, “the dead, thing-like shell of the word.”

This forces a distinction in the essential character of the two pursuits. The disjuncture between the reviewer and the performance that I have experienced, leaves a space that feels problematic. I have sought a conciliation of kinds between the two protagonists by placing the writing in a three dimensional environment. I have sought to literally give a body to my words; to imbue them with corporeal presence. As such, I can see these elements as simultaneously distil and proximal. I see a kind of relationship membrane between the two that allows them to touch; that is permeable, and yet retains its integrity.

65 Bakhtin, “Discourse,” 355. Writing can, of course, be phenomenological, but here is being considered as an artefact rather than given all its possible dimensions.
So, for my study, mediated and ordered movement fragments became my language for realising some of my embedded values and dispositions. The gap between the written and danced articulations remained. However, they interacted as dialogic threads, at times delineable and at times undelineable. The intellectual project that contains a strong evaluative impulse is, in itself dialogic, a polyphony of positions. My 'sensing' is not a stripping away of cognition, but a complement to it. Intellectual interventions into movement-making are acknowledged and embraced but my efforts are aimed at not allowing these organising impulses to highjack or completely dictate the physical manifestations of response.

As such, my movement - both spontaneous accompaniments to the writing act, and my crafted attempts to make choreographic fragments or academic-performative installations are seldom felt as a solo although they are generally made on my individual body. This is because of these many voices that assert themselves and recede within the texture of the thinking-writing-moving dynamic.

b) Verbal gestures, physical utterances
(First experiment in a research environment - postgraduate presentation, Sept. 2013.)
This phase commenced with a conundrum of how to engage the audience for a postgraduate presentation in a way that was present and involving, and which showed rather than told about my ideas around dance, language and dialogism. It was finally resolved in a decision to dance part of it. I had been searching for ways of making my investigation more physically present while accounting for the texture of the language. I chose a section from my introductory writing, which explores in short phrases some of the potential relationships between dancing and writing that I have formulated.

Dancing complements writing
Dancing informs writing
Dancing parallels writing
Dancing reformulates writing
Dancing confuses writing
Dancing undermines writing
Dancing confounds writing

Writing complements dancing
Writing parallels dancing
Writing reformulates dancing
Writing confuses dancing
Writing undermines dancing
Writing confounds dancing

I also wanted to make my presentation polyphonic and to disrupt the potential monologism of the seminar format. In a way that might seem slightly ironic, my project has been persistently interested in undermining my own logocentrism or at least the tendency toward logocentrism that might be perceived in its focus on words. My polyphony has a very physical strand, a voice spoken through embodiment. Here I wanted to simultaneously dance and speak the text. I wanted to feel the shape of the words in some way. I started by speaking the words and feeling their resonance. Words as music rather than meaning. Words as shape. The following journal extract records the beginning of my process.

*I decide to record the text in order to free me up to experience the phases. I lie on the floor and listen. Dialogism. I want to add depth. Polyphony. I want to add texture. Stratification. I record a second track, read starting from the end and progressing to the initial utterance. I play the tracks simultaneously. They are at different volumes and of unequal length. They clash and create busy-ness. Words emerge and recede.*
My body responds awkwardly as the awareness of a kind of ‘performance’ imperative pushes to the foreground.

I move to see what occurs. The words are still more assertive than their embodiment. I produce discrete movement phrases that have some attachment to the language. They are not what I want but they are a start, like facing the blank page when writing commences.

How can I amplify the experience for the participants? How can I share something of the dialogue? How can I trigger kinaesthetic involvement on some level?

I decide to add some ‘Chinese whispers’ and to commence them in a counter-circular motion, two at a time. I will send two of my phrases simultaneously starting at either ‘end’ of the ‘loop’ of participants. This is designed to bring an embodied participation to the experience. Once these are under way, I will begin the recorded spoken texts and commence my ‘movement cycle’. In this way, I hope to achieve a physicalisation of the dialogism that I am trying to test. Is this going to be a multi-vocal text or will it simply be read as ill-considered chaos?66

Physical dialogism was very evident in this experiment. It is interesting to note what emerged to claim attention and what got lost or remained obscure. I liked that movement was only one thread and my experience of the interplay of the various voices and how the textual elements moved in and out of prominence depending on one’s positioning within the discourse. From where I was dancing, I heard a combination of my recorded tracks and a murmur of whispers as participants passed my words from mouth to ear. I hoped (though couldn’t see) that people had to shift closer, feel breath on their ears, look for visual and tactile clues as well as verbal, in passing round the whispers. I wished for them to participate in my dance; my

dialogic discourse that I was orchestrating consciously from an authorial perspective, while deflecting it away from a single authoring voice.

A number of observations emerged from this first experiment, largely related to what I presented physically. I experienced in the moment of presentation, the interplay between intention and reception of work. I became aware of both the extent to which viewers may be directed toward a particular response and the extent to which heteroglot loopholes may disrupt predictability of response.

The demarcation between the break time preceding and the commencement of my presentation created a fractured attention in attendees that aligned with the dialogic intention of the event. I enjoyed the combination of the participation, multiple sounds, and discontinuity that made for an uncertain level of engagement and an uncertainty about what was deliberate and what was not. Participants were not sure when I had started because my initial communications perhaps seemed to be personal rather than public. This feels consistent with the idea of Bakhtinian heteroglossia - with meanings generating themselves beyond authorial intention. This in turn feeds into my later consideration of active and participatory spectatorship in chapter 3.

What was really unexpected was the focus on the review form itself by the participants, given that this was not the focus of the dance/paper. In having to clearly state that my writing is largely reviewing, I was surprised at how much this occupied the discussion and questioning. This was an entirely different strand of heteroglot discourse that I hadn’t expected in this forum. In this, lies the possibility that there is something undiscovered which is located in the relationship that performers have with the notion of the review.

I have always allowed for the possibility of an oppositional or antagonistic relationship between performer and reviewer but believe that ultimately the
relationship is symbiotic. So, perhaps this is no longer a pressing issue for me. I had moved beyond seeing this relationship as a clear power dynamic between the two, except for privileging dance over writing, but attendees of my presentation, being dancers and choreographers were placed differently.

c) Dancing the word: Studio experiments

A parallel experiment arose at this point - dancing my own writing. I commenced this as a way to enact the dialogism that I argue for in the relationships between writing and dancing; its confluences and contradictions. This transitional work was episodic and concurrent with the first seminar experiment and the diary recollections represent one early instance of a sequence of practice that arose. The embodiment of text elements was an improvisational practice that assisted in generating movement content and ideas for various subsequent ‘episodes of exposure’. Later versions of this became increasingly performative and concentrated more directly on acts of writing as a dialogic performance thread.

This experiment involved working with a specific range of textual elements - phrases and grabs from my own reviewing - and working with them as physical ideas. I set parameters around my improvisations that directed me to explore specific aspects of physical language such as responding to the sound of the words or sentences, visualising the shape of individual words and exploring their potential as tactile objects. This is what first led me to isolating a sequence of utterances about the relationships between writing and dancing and working through a series of exercises.

In journal entries over subsequent days, I note:

I revisited moving to the spoken texts in the days following the seminar.

Improvisational provocations included working with loose free movement in considering the shape of words while moving through those shapes, giving breadth and generosity to those words that felt expansive and allowing for contracted introversion in the more fearful, fragile words. Another set of improvisations
responded to the emotional register of the words and took them as individual entities.

There was a deliberate emphasis throughout on suspending judgement and self-criticism as I worked through the physical ideas. I sought to attend to some of the more difficult ideas. I wanted to convey a knotted entanglement that meant ‘confusion’. Of course, I did not wish to simply translate words but wanted to work out how to embody something that is simultaneously as simple and common as the experience of confusion, and yet, whose meaning points in so many directions.

I experimented with the physical act of writing, which would become so important in later work. I wanted to bring other materialities into play such as paper to write on or to inscribe in a different way that changed my relationship with the words. I think that I was hoping to not only experience the language that I use in a kinaesthetic way but see it reflected back to me in a different visual medium. What happens when the words or phrases speak back to me in a voice that is not quite my own and yet which I have claimed and taken ownership of?

Some improvisations settled on contact with the floor. Elongation of limbs reaching over the floor surface allowed me to experience ‘complementarity’. An arching hyper-extension embraced my understanding of how it might be to inform writing through dance, together with a scooping embrace of the arm. The sweeping equivalence of ‘par-a-llel’ gently tipped me into a roll with arms unfurling in opposition to my folding legs. ‘Reformulation’ was enacted as building or making, expressed via the arms and hands. Back to the knottedness of ‘confusion’, pronounced in both upper and lower limbs together with an introverted contractedness. How to even consider the notion of ‘undermining’ as a physical state? In working through iterations of movement triggered by phrases, I noticed differences, subtle and gross, in how my body responded. ‘Confusing’, ‘undermining’ and ‘confounding’ were, at times conflated as physical ideas and sometimes discrete.
Is there more angst when dancing undermines writing than when writing undermines dancing?

During the process I noticed shifts in the relationship between body and words. At some moments it seemed that I was inside my words and that they had primacy. At these times it felt rather literal, as if I was trying, somehow to animate the words, even if I was working with multiple senses of hearing the sound of the words, feeling their shape and conceptualising their possible meanings. This occurred most at the beginning of the process, when I was less easy with it. At other times, I danced alongside my words and they became my partners. This happened most when I considered the words as artefacts of writing. So, in a way, although tracing the shape of letters or words had an immersive quality and whole-body involvement to it, the words retained their own shape and identity. I was close to them but not the same as them. Sometimes I was able to take the words into my body, so that there was little sense of separateness. This occurred when my self-awareness abated and not as readily as being inside or beside the words. At times I moved between these states. I wasn't necessarily always clear about what phenomena were informing my interaction with the language in the moment but became aware of these relationalities when I reflected on them. Engaging a wider range of senses in my improvisations broadened the kinaesthetic experience. More proximal senses came into play, for example, the tactility involved in feeling the floor and hearing of spoken text were prominent and I had not been especially conscious of their interplay with my making until they were deliberately recruited.67

It also became clear that too much self-consciousness, whether in dancing or writing is counterproductive. It is necessary to apply effort in writing, but unusual to constantly revisit one's words. Such revisitation either negates the words (in that

one becomes desensitised to them) or calls into question, to an unreasonable degree, their choice. “Why didn’t I use ‘equivalence’ instead of ‘parallel’?”

2. Text as a partner for dance

a) Orchestrating text: Second experiment in a research environment
(Graduate Research Symposium, February, 2014)

A short performance installation was combined with a read paper. The importance of working simultaneously with my central concerns of dialogism and sensing gained urgency after my initial trialling of using text and body in my first seminar presentation using this format. Subsequent improvisational work released curiosity and uncovered a need to deepen my embodied research. Two new areas of focus arose: firstly, to include text in a visual and literally readable format and further, to involve live spoken text in a performative context.

My impulse toward the inclusion of more tangible textual elements was triggered by a sense that the writing should be represented in a more explicit form than it had previously been. I was aware that in some ways the rendering of text elements as text, risked becoming reductive in ways that I have previously identified that writing in and of itself can sometimes be. The possibility of fixity and rigidity might easily be entertained when textual elements are allowed to be read purely as signs. However, because I produce writing as printed text for consumption, it seemed important to include elements of actual written text, even though my written language is not necessarily ideally suited for a performance context. So, I began to work with ways of incorporating the text with the view to rendering some complexity of spoken (read) word and the written, hard-copy corporeal word. It was also important to me to put my words up for some sort of scrutiny.

I decided to use digestible morsels of text rather than sentences or paragraphs. As I selected phrases to use, the de-contextualised and disembodied words confronted me with their unfamiliarity:
embodied dumbness

scaffold-like emergence

dergy vigilance

unresolved and unrecoverable

canonc mutterings

evanescent, vague and slippery

a series of kinetic conversations

physical dialects

sound crackles and combusts,

propelling fireworks through the dancers bodies

Choosing to represent text literally also provoked a number of choices that
presented challenges to be worked through. Should they be presented as hard, cold,
solid words; pigment on paper, as ephemeral projections? Should they speak their
slipperiness and be rendered on acetate?

I commenced development for this phase as a single, improvising body. Again, I
started with language and incorporated the writing act into my dance - as scattered
notes on pages, then as signs written on large A1 sized sheets of paper and finally as
text written directly on my body. I refined to a combination of writing on paper and
bodily inscription while recreating an improvisational structure in movement. In
this, I interacted heavily with the sheets of text. I trampled them, wore them,
wrapped myself in them, held them up to be seen, scrunched them with my feet and
tore them. I spoke the words and spoke against them. These experiments - part of
Dancing the Word - were done over a period of time leading into more intensive
studio-based work where longer sections of improvisation were documented on video for use in later stages.

Solo experiments for Dancing the word. Images: Michael Carolan

My second imperative, to include live rather than recorded renderings of the words seemed unavoidable. I write for an audience, and I felt that the words should be read by others, not myself. The words I produce require a reader to decode what I
have written without assistance. My intervention is redundant once the words have been published. Naturally in a performative or presentation scenario, I do still have a role in directing the individual elements so they are not existing or living on their own terms but they are being allowed to transform and become something else in the throats or on the bodies of others.

A number of levels of transposition of one form to another are occurring in this dialogically performative act. Shifts, translations and exchanges occur across and between bodies and linguistic systems. The translation of written words into acts of speech can be as transforming as that from words to bodies. Michel de Certeau draws a particular distinction between written (academic) language and the speech act. He talks about the difference between writing as data, which has a certain nature of stability. It is a form of language that can be “grasped, recorded and examined in secure places”, while the speech act is reliant on “enunciation” and derives its meaning from context. For de Certeau the speech act is one of “appropriation and reappropriation of language by its users, it establishes a present relative to a time and place, and it posits a contract with another in a network of places and relations”.68 In commenting on this linguistic transposition, Susan Leigh Foster extends his idea to say that this ability for enunciation or translation from form to form can be taken into the realms of “all bodily articulations, whether spoken or moved”.69 These acts of multiple translation occur within my embodied experiments, where words and bodily articulations are passed from person to person.

To achieve these transpositions, I used the same concept as in the first postgraduate presentation but now add live voices to form a polyphonal soundscape. This involved having two readers speak a series of phrases extracted from reviews and articles I have written. I used actors who were given a cue to commence. They read a series of phrases, one beginning at the top of the list and the other starting at the

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68 Michel de Certeau, quoted in Longley, “Moving Words,” 73.
69 Susan Leigh Foster, quoted in Longley, “Moving Words,” 73.
bottom. To this soundscape, a dancer improvised on some of the phrases. Simultaneously, I wrote some of those phrases on my skin and across my body.

Bakhtin reminds that it is not sufficient to simply present a “diversity of voices” in order to constitute heteroglossia.\textsuperscript{70} Those voices must be interanimating each other, must have a destination, must anticipate an answer, must be tempering each other, must be constantly recalibrating against each other. Every discourse “presupposes a special conception of the listener”.\textsuperscript{71} Bakhtin tells us to take a word into “new contexts, attach it to new material, put it in a new situation in order to wrest new answers from it, new insights into its meaning and even wrest from it new words of its own (since another’s discourse, if productive, gives birth to a new word from us in response).”\textsuperscript{72} It possesses “unfinishedness”. This is what I enact explicitly later in my dance installation \textit{Episodes of Exposure}.

I instructed the actors (Ernie Gray and Heather Bolton) that the intention for the soundscape was to create a polyphony; that the words were to be spoken concurrently and that clash and overlap were intended. Surprisingly, the actors gave weight and clarity to the words. Perhaps they mean more re-contextualised than in their original form? Are they closer to dance in this iteration? They were not blurred or obscured as I had hoped but spaces and air were created. Interestingly the dancer (Christos Linou) also treated the phrases as concrete text rather than purely ideas or impetus for movement, that is, he interacted with physical components of the text - a printed copy was held, crumpled, stuffed into his mouth, compressed between his head and a wall and finally fragmented, falling, snow-like from above me. I had suggested that he find one phrase that resonated but he used three separate phrases and worked with them, moving through them sequentially. He chose to interact with and reference my body directly, which was interesting and unexpected.

\textsuperscript{70} Bakhtin, “Discourse,” 354.
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 346.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 346-347.
b) Extending polyphony through heteroglossia
Again the displacement of dance into an academic presentation format leaves space for heteroglossia’s “loopholes” where meaning refracts and disperses into more directions than anticipated. Polyphony plays out in the agency of other voices and disrupts the potential monologism of a centralised authorial dictate. Once more, “internally persuasive discourse” emerges as the authorial subjectivity absorbs components of other voices into her fashioning of material, just as in any collaborative process ideas meld and expand. In other words this is a kind of improvisation with set, scored points of connection but giving rise to new meaning. And further, although producing a feeling of being a holistic entity, the origins of the multiple voices that come into play are essentially alien voices, the words, though produced authorially, are utterances that are “half one’s own word … the internally persuasive word is half one’s own and half someone else’s. Its creativity and productivity consist precisely in the fact that each word awakens new and independent words, it organises masses of our words from within, and does not
remain in an isolated, static condition.” In these experiments, I was giving words over to other uses but also giving them over to be re-made on other tongues and bodies and accepting those words back again in an adjusted or defamiliarised form.

As well as handing over raw linguistic material to collaborators, the space between my communication and the embodiment of that communication was revealing. Interpretation of the task was as much about how the participants positioned themselves in the conversation as it was about my words or instructions. It also revealed some conventions and constructs around performativity that found expression through my collaborators. The performance outcome was more coherent and ‘clean’ than I had imagined or expected. Seriousness and care was evident from participants. This may be the result of an urge to make aesthetic sense out of what was given. It was almost as if they were mirroring, through physicalisation, the disciplined parameters of a written text; consciously giving it form.

Bakhtin emphasises the continued discreteness of the voices in a dialogic discourse, even as he points to their sum constituting a new language. In this ‘episode’, I am beginning to extend the notion of polyphony through heteroglossia. The voices that made up this installation were a combination of author-made voices (my literal voice, my bodily performed presence, my writing on my body surfaces) with external voices, which though constrained by an authoring structure, are essentially other or alien to the author, (the actors’ delivery of the words, pacing, interpretation, tone, mood, weight, the dancer’s improvisational choices that were also partly driven by his physicality as well as levels of conscious inter-engagement of participants among other factors). Hence, there is a co-presence of internally persuasive discourse and externally authoritative discourse.

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Bakhtin’s notion of heteroglossia requires a “stratification” of layers of voices, which he describes in a way that suggests that they have transparency. He refers to language stratifying and functioning on different planes - “elements are projected onto different linguistic planes while at the same time the intention of the author, refracted as it passes through those planes, does not give itself up to any of them”. Hence the heteroglot meanings are revealed. An opportunity was also revealed to hear and absorb into myself, the voices of others, as a means of understanding my own relationships with my own written and danced voices; “... the process of coming to know one’s own language as it is perceived in someone else’s language, and an overcoming of its otherness - an otherness that is only contingent, external, illusory”.

It is also a “discourse ... that requires the transmission and re-processing of another’s word ... one may speak of another’s discourse only with the help of the alien discourse itself, although, it is true, the speaker introduces into the other’s words his own intentions and highlights the context of those words in his own way”.

Meaning remains unfinished and open to a reply. As Martin Flanagan reports, “Bakhtin insists that the individual discursive characteristics of the person addressed by the textual utterance determine to a massive degree the very nature of that utterance. When we adopt an utterance, a text into a new ideological horizon and manipulate it with respect to our own epistemological needs, what we are changing, destabilising and remaking is not the reality of the cultural force that produced the official meaning ... but the reality of the meaning itself. Because of its unrepeatability and open-endedness, no final shade of meaning is possible; no monologic resolution, sterilization or 'last word' can cleanse or seal the utterance's ability to mean.”

74 Ibid., 311.
75 Ibid., 365.
76 Ibid., 355.
Entering a discourse that is partially alien allows the writer to speak and feel and immerse in that other language. Inserting my native writing discourse into, rather than onto a dance topography, dialogises it. This both retains the word as artefact while animating it with flesh. It also displaces the participants into unfamiliar discourses - the dancer and actors enter a linguistic discourse while embodying its meaning. This forces corporeal, kinaesthetic and linguistic engagement on all participants. My collaborators are all typically recipients of review and are now enacting language fragments derived from performance review and commentary. Indeed, I had reviewed the work of one of my collaborators shortly before meeting him. I take the notion of displacement further in chapter 3.

A sense of process was gained in engaging with the practical aspect of making work across this series of experiments. This is not only a feeling for the process of making, which I can never really possess in the way that a professional practitioner does. It is almost more strongly a development of a sense of orientation around having a body of thinking.

Process is long and gradual. It is not merely a series of products or tasks. It is a sea of exploration that needs to remain open to possibility. It must not be closed down by expedience, impatience or despair but must grow in trust. Subsidiary processes may be recruited as participant parts of this. Resulting from this work, I began to see the possibility for developing a suite of tools to use as impetus for exploring choreographic ideas. Developing these for myself was revealing but slow. Many of these experiments felt like dead-ends but opened themselves up as I allowed myself to live with them.78

My dancing/experimental methodology is process but also may be considered as ‘episodes of exposure’. This is essentially an exposure to scrutiny.

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78 A sense of process also encompasses a wider awareness of improvisational techniques through working with expert practitioners such as Rosalind Crisp, Helen Herbertson, Andrew Morrish, Siobhan Murphy, Jo Lloyd and others.
c) The moments and movements of scrutiny: The role of being seen

It seems that the notion of witnessing is relevant here. My ‘episodes of exposure’ have a purpose of being seen and hence, existing in a manner that makes them subject to impression and record, if only fleeting. It is also the who of the witnessing that matters. To be exposed before dancers and choreographers enacts the displacement in roles that I seek to explore. It is part of claiming a right to be part of a dance conversation.

It also tests the sincerity of my claim to be open to scrutiny. Is this genuine or simply a posture? It is easy to say that I want to uncover truths about my thinking or positioning in relation to what I write, but am I truly open to the challenge? For me, this is close to the heart of what I believe is happening when someone presents performance art. They expose themselves as part of a creative artefact for public consumption. They are placing themselves in a public domain or space to be experienced by viewers who often perceive themselves to be consumers of that experience. Further, I would argue that these viewers consider themselves to possess entitlements that correspond with their own embedded expectations. Performers must disclose, to some extent, their intention or hint at the nature of the work to be offered. Audiences have the choice to attend and no obligations as to how to receive the work. The audience’s capacity to enter the performance, respond, be moved, angered or delighted might be managed and manipulated through performance but cannot be dictated.

The human tendency for judgement or evaluation is relevant here. It is true that I am exposed to critique through the publication of my words. This form of critique is not direct though and I seldom have to face detractors or even know about them. It is only in performance that I can place myself in a position that has some meaningful equivalence with that of a dance practitioner and through which I can be confronted with something like the scrutiny that dance performance is party to. Hence, holding myself up to be witnessed and bearing scrutiny seem to be important in edging
closer to an understanding of the empathies and antipathies in the audience - viewer relationship; and ultimately in understanding the moments of connection and disconnection between writing and dance.

This is simultaneously a very challenging thing to do for a non-professional performer and may even suggest a kind of disingenuousness in the writer. After all, nothing compels me to perform and I claim not to like the experience. Further, it could be argued the nature of what I am attempting will never be resolved artistically, because my endeavour essentially does not have the goal of being a resolved artwork. So, what exactly is the point? The role of spectator or witness is an important one, which will be discussed further in chapter 3.

In an ironic reversal of a famous quotation by artist Bruce Nauman, “If I was an artist and I was in the studio, then whatever I was doing in the studio must be art”.79

I am not an artist, therefore nothing I make can be art.

I am not a choreographer, therefore nothing I make can be choreography.

I am not a dancer therefore nothing I make can be dance.

This is part of how I position myself - in a space that isn't quite writing and isn't quite dancing. Yet this is a site, which writes the body and dances the body.

Resulting from this work, I gained a sense of an emergent process that had enough substance to justify an attempt at making work. I had been creating a conceptual scaffold on which to build more performative work. There was now some kind of structure upon which to launch a more solid physical practice. Thinking as writing had transformed into thinking as dancing. This is not to say that my process was in any way a quest to become a choreographer - I never had any such ambitions or

delusions. It has, however, tested what kinds of preconditions might be necessary to support a non-professional practitioner into a place where creation might be possible as a way of understanding. It is ultimately about kinaesthetic empathy as a mode of research or knowledge and this will be discussed in the next section and reconsidered in Chapter 3.

I also believe that my outsider status is a useful one in terms of perspective. My entry-point into dance creation did not follow naturally from my own dancing. It was a process of unpacking my thinking and writing around dance that led to a desire to craft work. Arguably this is still a process that is primarily grounded in the intellectual since I have had to work through a conscious positioning of myself in relation to dance and dancing to arrive at this position.
3. A polyphony of text and dance

a) Third presentation experiment: July 2014

By now, the ‘papered’ part of my presentation had become more embedded in the embodied representation. The installation that resulted in this third instance had absorbed much of the theoretical aspect of its investigation and was able to transmit it directly via its own danced discourse. The two dominant discourses; writing and dancing had interanimated one another more fully and it felt no longer necessary to present too laboured an account of ideas verbally, but to present a synthesis of discourses.

This felt like the development of two macro discourses (writing and dancing) with a multitude of micro-languages functioning within them.

As a result of the understandings gained from the second ‘episode of exposure’, I was more determined to pursue something more aligned to a pure performative work. One that did not only use movement and dance as an illustrative element, but which withdrew, for the most part, the formalities of academic discourse. This felt very exposing since there would be no apologising for the work. More than before, it had to be read, on some level as performance, and risked real criticism. As part of this, I was forced to witness my own dancing and this forced an objectification of my output. There was a dual challenge of self-scrutiny and external scrutiny.

A period of studio practice led to further experimentation with ways of writing and dancing the body. This, in turn allowed more experimentation with performative modes of questioning their relationships. With my intensified focus on scrutiny, I was also seeking external response more explicitly. Together with this was a more acute attention to the role of sensing across my whole project.

In a sense, I became quite adamant in leaving my place in the audience and claiming my right to learn from somatic, phenomenological and performative experience.
b) The sensing function: The feeling of watching and the feeling of dancing

My embodied polyphony as understood through the experiments described previously is a conversation between disparate elements. As explained in my introduction, kinaesthetic empathy and sensing are strands in the dialogic fabric of this polyphony but also play a particular catalysing role in enabling the dialogic thinking.

When the term ‘sensing’ is used, what is being invoked? What are the complex interactions that form sensing’s constituent parts and what makes my claim for these as a charging element in understanding the writing-dance connection valid?

I came to this project with a belief about dance being a more essential and ‘natural’ expression than writing and with a presupposition about its superiority over the craft of inscribing words. In a way, this was a naïve, un-nuanced and unexamined position. It is easy to romanticise dance, which is ‘branded’ as “authentic and preverbal expression … often seen as the symbolic practice that most directly and effectively communicates important notions of identity and society without the intermediacy of verbal language”.  

In teasing out the tensions between these two expressive forms, I have identified ways in which they compete yet complement one another. I have argued that a mechanism for restoring or rescuing dance writing from being a potentially reductive and self-serving enterprise is its transformative property. This transformation exists both in the alchemy enacted when a body experiences movement for itself or when it experiences the various and complex visual stimuli of watching dance. This is essentially a sensory knowing through bodily perception.

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I would like to claim a definition of sensing that incorporates notions of kinaesthetic, bodily empathy in response to dance viewing but which does not strive to determine a precise or absolute encapsulation of all that these terms resonate with. Terms such as kinaesthesia and empathy have complex histories and traverse various disciplinary landscapes.

There is now significant documentation about how human beings perceive movement. These range from observational and anecdotal accounts to recording of precise neurological processes that come into play when someone dances or when they watch various forms of dance. Research by Judith Lynne Hanna in the 1970s and 1980s focuses on variables such as dance expertise and training. Her anthropological methodologies are largely qualitative and lead to conclusions that generalise the viewing experience based on performances of specific works or types of works. She accounts for age, gender and cultural differences and relies on self-reporting of perceptual apprehensions of dance events. These often relate to the kinds of emotions that may be evoked in a work and either transmitted to the watcher or construed by the watcher as being intentional. Hanna also speaks specifically of “kinesthetic sympathy” as a kind of direct bodily transference by which an audience can ‘feel’ the sensations of the performed movement: “Kinesthetic sympathy occurs when we see a human body movement that we experience vicariously in our nerves and muscles; the movement evokes associations we would have had if the original movement had been ours.”81 This is a viewer experience that is absolutely intense and particular.

American critic John Martin, writing mid twentieth century, made extensive observations about the nature of empathic-kinaesthetic understanding. He coined a notion of “metakinesis” and claimed a centrality for the role of emotional transference to the viewing of dance.82 Throughout his writing life, Martin returned

82 Foster, *Choreographing Empathy*, 120.
to reflecting and arguing that a direct emotional and physical response was evoked in the viewing of dance.

More recently, Susan Leigh Foster traces the lineages of the terms empathy and kinaesthesia in *Choreographing Empathy*. She notes the historical recency of the term empathy as we understand it today. Reflecting on the historical iterations of 'empathy' Foster charts its associations with sympathy and the 'finer' sensibilities that were seen as the exclusive province of the upper classes of white European society, through a notion of physiological sharing of sensation, to a belief that humans observe through kinaesthetic transference and are able to replicate 'feelings'; and on to a 21st century understanding of what happens neurologically when a viewer watches dance.

Strong evidence ... that perception simulates action has been provided with the discovery of mirror neurons, located in several areas of the cortex. These neurons fire when the subject performs an action, and they also fire when the subject sees the action being performed. Thus, when we watch someone moving, motor circuits in the brain are activated that do not necessarily result in visible movement but nonetheless rehearse that movement.83

Foster traces the history of the terms choreography, kinaesthesia and empathy and how they are cross-implicated in how the body is perceived and experienced in dance. Foster locates the interstices of viewing and experiencing movement and concludes that “empathy is imbricated within every action and each action is simultaneously an act of perception and an act of knowledge production”.84 The perception/knowledge connection resonates in my grappling with what melds or separates the acts of viewing dance and the kinaesthetic experience or feeling.

Significantly Foster also locates the evolution of the word empathy as paralleling a change in the conceptualisation of individual human physicality that has occurred

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83 Ibid., 123.
84 Foster, *Choreographing Empathy*, 83.
over the past century or so. She identifies a corresponding shift in experiencing inhabiting another’s feelings as the body has become conceptualised as increasingly “muscular and transform[ing] into a volumetric and dynamic organism”. 85 Our physical empathy modulates according to the historically changing construction of our bodily presence. Hence, Foster seems to be claiming a deeper or fuller physical empathy based on a broader and more detailed conceptualisation of the body and relating to a differently defined physicality that is self-aware, vital and present in a way much different from earlier historical accounts of the way humans perceived and interacted with their own bodily reactions. This in turn seems to suggest that to encounter our own bodies in new and different ways allows an expansion in the pathways into the felt corporeality of others.

Further to Foster’s accounts of neurological research is work done by neuropsychologist, Dr. Beatriz Calvo-Merino. According to this research, dancers have a repertoire of specific motor training that pertains to their particular mode of dance which is additional to the general battery of movements common to most humans. Doing and seeing come together in the notion of movement according to Calvo-Merino. 86 Early work by Sperry reminds that a basic function of the perceptual system is to prepare humans to act. 87 Therefore, visual perception automatically has an equivalence in movement and can be seen as a precursor to it. 88 Apparently action and perception share some common neurological mechanisms. Interestingly, differences exist in how movement is perceived visually depending on whether the viewer has trained in those specific movements. This knowledge has opened up the field of neuroaesthetics that recognises that while similar neural pathways are implicated in doing and viewing, the information received by the brain may vary in quality or aesthetic perception depending on the specific training of the mover.

85 Ibid., 129.
Significant to this study, is the very fact that some form of kinaesthetic communication between dancer and viewer is so widely documented as a phenomenon in western concert dance tradition. It has persisted over time and retains currency. The precise nature of its mechanics has been disputed and revised as varied disciplines have engaged with it but still the experience of an absolutely direct communication between movement and perception is retained.\(^{89}\)

**Conclusion**

The development phase outlined in this chapter moved my thinking from a pre-dialogic understanding of writing’s relationship with dance where these two macro discourses existed in parallel, into a more fully dialogic conversation where a number of micro discourses were recruited to add dimension and multivocality to the interaction. This occurred through an intensification of polyphonies that allowed for greater heteroglossia. The importance of witness and spectatorship arose as inescapable. This occurred with the movement out of physical introversion to a more present and exposed body as I took my practice from its private, interior space into a more public and exposing forum. Sensing and kinaesthetic empathy also enter the conversation more prominently from the point of view of dancing, viewing and carrying on the dialogic discourse.

\(^{89}\) Scholars from dance, anthropology, ethnography and neuroscience amongst other disciplines, as well as writers, dancers and dance makers have written widely on this. Refer to bibliography for details of this work.
Chapter 3 - Expanded dialogism

Introduction

Key to this final ‘episode of exposure’ was a desire to synthesise some of the most pressing interests of my research. In the process I hoped to reveal a number of the 'voices' that constituted its fabric. In letting them speak together but separately and in inviting onlookers to add to its threads of meaning, I hoped that some of the voices and roles revealed, would speak to or connect with participants.

A period of studio work saw me experimenting with projected excerpts of video documentation, writing as performance and dance. Moving toward a performative moment, the weight of documentation fell less on the written word and more on visual documentation. Therefore the balance between the written and danced discourses had shifted, with embodiment becoming more insistent and more extroverted (though not necessarily more confident).

My aims for this performative moment were to create a danced and written text that:

- Provided a review by the writer of her embodied self
- Invited spectator response and review
- Displaced both parties
- Was conceptually and aesthetically involving
- Was kinaesthetically involving.

1. Moving toward displacement

a) Resolving work: performativity, materiality and context

Decisions around how to represent the act of writing performatively continued to arise in resolving the work. Included were difficulties associated with the mechanics of writing text as a physical act, chiefly the inherent clumsiness of writing in performance. These included the action, the duration, and the readability. The importance of decipherability was an especially crucial question. I considered
whether significance lay in what I wrote or that I wrote and this influenced the text as product. The decision to create a multiple written dialogic by layering text on top of projection also forced a consideration of what surface to write on. Ideally writing directly onto the wall would be best, but not possible for all locations in which the work was tested.

An ongoing consideration of what it means to write on various surfaces or planes and with what became prominent. White high-sheen adhesive film was used in the studio during development and may or may not be read as belonging in a classroom context, but if interpreted this way, jars with all the intended meanings. Having to write with a board marker on this surface, more strongly situates the writing as a pedagogical act, which was not its intention. An authentic writing act might be resolved via 'live' projected typing or handwriting, yet this was not my performance aim. Rather I aimed to take the act of writing out of its 'real' context and make it a physical and textural part of this 'episode of exposure'. I considered taking a less obviously performative stance but decided that if I sat and wrote during this episode, then, although some meaning would be retained (for instance, the writer reviewing her own dance performance), it would weaken the full presence of each dialogic thread as textural whole, since it removes dimensionality and displacement from the writing act. The act becomes too literal, too directly representative.
Questions about the amount of writing that was performatively interesting for an audience to watch came strongly into play and so I reduced the text to fragmented utterances. This broke up the writing act and re-emphasised meaning. My dancing episodes were designed to fragment the audience’s attention. Onlookers were open to move between dialogical threads or experience them as a whole.

I wondered whether to erase some or parts of the words (or smudge them if the mark is permanent?). If so, what would the erasure mean in this context? Is this where my ‘absence’ (as dancer, as choreographer and even as writer) resides?

It was necessary to contextualise the relationship between the performer and spectator. I positioned myself as part of the audience. The audience was similarly positioned - poised as participants - explicitly invited to enter the work and contribute to it. This led to central questions including: How do I frame an invitation to participate so as not to cause confusion? And when? I decided on a verbal invitation even though I would have preferred non-verbal suggestion. The latter, however, would most likely be too subtle to gain a response. I also considered
making my invitation as part of the written performance, but thought that I should perhaps prepare participants prior to encountering the installations.

I anticipated interpretative questions: is the video projection the main featured work or is it background to the live dancing body? These questions informed my decisions about the scale of elements in the installation - the size of the projected body in relation to the ‘live’ body, and the effect of scale on the projected and hand-written text.

The ‘white cube’ remained the most sympathetic of performance spaces, affording the blankest reading against which to construct meaning. So I began working toward a gallery showing.
b) Liveness

As touched on in my introduction, notions of ‘liveness’ permeate the area of my investigation but are not central to it. Within the domain of my interest, however, the question of what constitutes liveness is conceived as a dialogic thread rather than being a subject to be explicitly unpacked. It is not my intention to consciously challenge notions of liveness though once I started using video documentation as a dialogic element in my performative work, notions of liveness were necessarily invoked. My awareness of this only really arose retrospectively. Whether liveness as a conversation and especially as an argument is still pressing is an angle worth pursuing. It seems that most human acts are mediated somehow - interrupted, enhanced or merely exist side by side with ‘mediatised’, digitised or virtual forms of representation. It has been the practice of artists for many years to move freely between modalities and to use ‘live’ and captured forms simultaneously. So, though still a highly engaging conversation, the tension between the live and mediated artwork seems no longer to be paramount. As Auslander argues, the physically present and mediatised iterations of the ‘live’, are in constant communication with one another and augment each rather than stealing from one or the other.\(^90\)

\(^90\) Auslander, Liveness, 3.
2. Inner critic and external audience

Leading up to and persisting after performance, there was a clear emergence of an 'inner critic' as a predominant voice. My preoccupation with audience in the late stages of preparing my final 'episode of exposure' lead me to identify how compelling this voice is for me and how determining it is of choices made. Specifically, I noticed a very powerful editorial voice. This translated into some quite rigid decisions about who was permitted to access my work. With this, a kind of reductiveness asserted itself that attempted to classify what my work was exactly, (Is it really dance? Is it performance art? Is it installation?). It somehow had to be accorded validity by naming, labelling or defining. Not to be called something gave it too unstable an existence. I do not usually operate on strict categories so was surprised at my need to interpret what I was doing as something concrete, something delineable and something that had a name. I settled uneasily on 'dance installation'; not wanting to mislead anyone, not claiming to be creating a thing called 'dance'.
My inner critic urged a need to determine the suitability of the performance for particular eyes. I was evaluating the lens through which I believed my potential audience might be viewing the work. I was sizing up the work and the potential viewer for fit and deciding “You won't like this - it's too experimental”; “You won't like this, you will be uncomfortable in the dynamic I have set up”; “You won't respect this - you will think it betrays my classical training”. All of which led to multiple audience exclusions. I had a driving need to curate my viewership. I was also constructing external scrutinies and points of view because that is a structure upon which I am reliant as part of my experience as viewer and reviewer. At this stage of the process, the main stakeholder was viewer. It was through the lens of an audience member that I approached the performance moment of this work. Although, I believe, that what I chose to make choreographically and conceptually was not compromised by this skewed prism, the viewership was clearly narrowed by removing to a great extent those with the most strongly indoctrinated sense of what dance might be, (this speaks of my own limitations and uncertainties rather than theirs).

Artistically, however, and choreographically, I was driven conceptually. The notion of layering was tempered with a curatorial eye that strove to decide how much was enough. This led me to strip the body writing down to a single instance, since it was strongly represented in the video already. It was a way of linking the videographic iteration of my dancing with the live performance and opening up the possibility to the audience of writing on me directly. I added spoken text only as a contextualisation device and withdrew this once its presence was established in the work. Written text remained a dominating element but was limited to three bodies of text that were discrete and separate works yet spoke to each other, just as my dancing body spoke to each of them. The body's imposition on those texts also nuanced each text element.
My need to evaluate and judge remains; as audience, as critic and as self critic. I celebrate the process by which critical analysis allows for a rigorous examination of art and its meaning. It can lead to review and progress and enhancement in the right hands. I have always questioned my entitlement to comment on dance in performance because of my status as a non-professional practitioner. This concern remains acute. Am I more entitled now than I was at the commencement of research? I believe so.

In whatever form, the need to evaluate my own performance persists. How successful was my dance installation? As embodied research, Episodes of Exposure was successful. I sought to displace myself into a role that is contrary to my usual habitus. I sought to expose myself, the writer, to the scrutiny of an audience. I sought to hand the right of reply over to that audience. I achieved a high level of engagement and participation. I experienced what it was like to read a review of one's work and the sense that brings of something being written that is simultaneously about, yet not about, the individual. A strange sense of detachment on the realisation that my work, like that of others, is an artefact that lives beyond me - that it is not me. I experienced an immense gratitude that people showed such interest and lively response. Perhaps my investigation also throws up the possibility that not all artists take such things personally and that art is robust. So for my research, Episodes of Exposure was invaluable in testing many of the questions and uncertainties that my project suggested.

3. Tackling judgement head-on
My dual impulses in watching dance and writing about it, mobilise an intellectualising faculty that incorporates critical analysis as well as a desire to evaluate and a sensing response that charges and vitalises the former. As stated in my introduction, any mention of evaluation conjures the evil apparition of judgement.
There is nothing subtle about the word judgement. It is polarising and stirs emotions and antipathies. I would like to be able to say that it lives in a contested space and yet my greater sense is that it currently lives in an almost uncontested space in the academic, artistic milieu, which includes dance. My own observations lead me to feel that it is considered in bad taste to judge dance performance and to disclose those judgements in writing. This is consistent with a general distancing of criticism from judgement over the past decades, especially in the field of fine art. Nowak claims that “since the end of modernism, judgement has been widely held to be either outmoded or inappropriate.” She continues, “judgement of quality, if not impossible, [is] at least, undesirable.” As James Elkins has famously said, there has been a “flight from judgement” and a movement toward description.

Part of my conceptualisation of the notion of critical analysis does involve evaluation or judgement. In embracing these terms, I innocently stepped into a confessional space and one that had the potential to cast me in a role of arrogance, self-importance and ignorance. Although I admit to a certain degree of naïveté in my original choice of the word ‘judgement’, the more I thought about it, the more I believed that it was probably the most apt term, and one that deserved my defence. The more fully I understood the loadedness of the word and its possible resonances and interpretations, the more I felt that it deserved to be dealt with squarely.


92 In the case of performing arts, there is the added ethical issue that negative review might undermine makers or performers.

93 Nowak, “Judgement.”

94 Ibid., par. 10.

95 Ibid., par. 12.

96 Elkins, What Happened, 80.
To be clear, judgement in the context of this research is not imagined to be a singular pronouncement. Nor is it a calibration against any real or manufactured ideal. Judgement, or an evaluative response, is seen to be a polyphony of informing voices. If anything, the judgement is laid against the judger, as it holds within it a cache of understandings and assumptions about that particular subject that can be unpacked or questioned. But more interestingly, an evaluation is a coming together of many social, psychological, and idiosyncratic influences that find their expression through the conduit of response (the critic/reviewer) to a particular dance work. It should be a responsible and principled response that is informed yet necessarily particular and subjective. Surely this conceptualisation of judgement represents an advancement in thinking about art in an era of artistic pluralism where hybrid and trans-disciplinary practice dominate in the spheres of new art including performance.

To banish judgement from the mix of possible responses to a dance work inauthenticates a whole response to that work and enfeebles its power. By making dance performance a special, tender creature, we reduce it to niceness and vanquish its power and its ability to speak for itself and hit back, if needed. It becomes a protected species. It is belittling to the artform to shun this kind of critique and speaks of a kind of political correctness that negates the maturity of that artform. As Nowak says, “once something is deemed to be art, (or ‘our’ kind of art) it is protected from the responsibility that judgement entails. It is implied that art is a privileged practice”.  

If plurality exists in twenty-first century art, then plurality of response must be equally possible. Artistic freedom cannot equate to criticism's silencing. As Nancy

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97 Nowak, “Judgement,” par. 22.
98 I do not subscribe to the notion of ‘artistic autonomy’ which presupposes that art exists in a realm of its own, that it is "self-legislating, a practice or discourse with its own laws or conventions, historical development, institutions and methods of interpretation". Diarmuid Costello and Jonathan Vickery, Art: Key Contemporary Thinkers (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 200, 192.
Princenthal asks, “If art is afforded spirited independence, why not the writing that addresses it?” Art does not flourish simply because critics make no evaluative comments. Art flourishes when it challenges, delights, informs and questions. Most consumers of art thrive on these elements and the intellectual impetus to comment on art arises out of the excitement of both dissident and consonant opinion around new art, including the performing arts. Again, it is a dialogue, and is dialogic. If a dance work or any other art is created with a view to performance or showing, and with a desire for audience or viewer, this presupposes a two-way relationship in which each party is willing to engage with the other and where some kind of exchange may be reasonably expected. The exact terms of that exchange cannot be dictated by either party.

I am choosing to engage with this issue mainly because I believe in the possibility of judgement and evaluative response, not because I seek to valorise it. Judgement is not only one of the many tools or dispositions at the disposal of a critic or reviewer but it is a common way for humans to summarise a response to art or entertainment. It appears to be an inherent and unavoidable way of engaging, so to deny its presence seems evasive at best and possibly disingenuous or delusional at worst.

It has been argued by some that art generates its own critiques and thus does not need external review. Artist Joseph Kosuth echoes this point by claiming that the criticism of art is conducted directly by the art itself. That means that the making of art is both a work and a reflection on that work. This in turn suggests a self-referential character for art and posits a judgement that is internal to art. In Kosuth’s case, it also involves a manipulation or control of critique from within - Kosuth’s explicit project is to have artists manage response to their work as far as possible, by excluding commentary by non-artists. Although Kosuth would like to

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see artists as the rightful consumers and commentators on art, this does not necessarily support a denial of critique, as Corris would have it. Although art, including dance, may self-contextualise, it is not solitary. It is always a voice in dialogue as are the voices of critics. Works talk to other works, critics to works, critics to critics. If art self-critiques in Kosuth's sense, then inviting viewing would seem redundant. Indeed Kosuth has expressed that his ideal audience is other artists. However, a disingenuousness lies beneath this proclamation. Kosuth enjoys an international exhibiting career and must withstand a rich and diverse response to what he creates. A maker cannot dictate the terms of the reception of their practice if they wish it to have any kind of public resonance.

Even so, there are many lively rhetorical stances posited in art and theory and perhaps this is among them and should be enjoyed for its provocation.

Importantly, critical response acts to modulate and reformulate performance just as performance instigates critical response, and whether welcome or unwelcome, insightful or obtuse, fulsome or damning, adds dimension and dialogue around a work. The influences are mutually transforming.

4. Heteroglossia in performance

a) “Half one’s own word and half someone else’s”
Inviting spectator voices into my dance allowed for a proliferation of heteroglot utterances. They were positive unintended outcomes that breathed independent life into the work. In not wishing to direct the audience as to where to be in the performance space, I confused their focus. This was deliberate, as it enacted the split foci of a bombardment of a many-voiced text, but it confounded some performance elements. The projected, dancing 'me' attained less prominence than I

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\textsuperscript{101} Corris claims that Kosuth's rejection of non-artists as critics presupposes the redundancy of the critic, however, I believe that it reveals the absurd circularity of exposing art only to peers and further, how limiting the audience for art only narrows its perspective and transforming power.
had expected, despite being more than life-size. Onlookers stood closer than anticipated and cast greater shadows onto the projected self. Hence it took longer than I had expected for the connectedness of the ‘projected me’ and the ‘live me’ to be fully felt by the viewers.\(^{102}\) I had intended this to be a key relational connection and for it to be immediately apprehended. The actual result seemed to be to create uncertainty as to where viewers were 'allowed' to be and what their role was in relation to the performer.\(^{103}\) This destabilised my control of a staged performance.

My work was not designed as an experiment in group dynamics or proxemics, so the foregrounding of this tempered the work in a way that was unexpected. These dimensions proved the heteroglossia that is inherent in performance that is dialogic. For instance, I had not intended to set up an oppositional dynamic between dancer and audience and in drawing the audience closer to me I placed responsibilities on them that were unintended for my outcome. I have had feedback from one participant who reported feeling performance anxiety around the expectation of writing in response to my writing. This is because I had singled her out to respond. When others commenced writing, she felt there was a clear imperative to participate and was anxious about whether what she wrote would be 'good'. From my perspective this is very useful to consider where we place our anxieties. An act of performing writing in public view was intimidating for this artist who in other forums writes publicly and performs in intimate spaces. She also reported sensing some levels of fear or discomfort amongst the audience as well as enjoyment.

\(^{102}\) The disconnect between the projected and live performers was startling to me but still seemed to have considerable impact. One commentator described the projection as “dynamic and monumental”. See Prelude for full review.

\(^{103}\) Michael Carolan wrote “the audience … have to engage on their own terms”. See Prelude for full review.
Episodes of Exposure. Image: Jake Reeder

Episodes of Exposure. Image: Jake Reeder
Another heteroglot ambiguity that arose from the performance was that the text confounded the reading of the body at times; the body was bathed in projected text, and was layering hand-written text over its projected self at other moments. The corporeal body was inscribed with words, by myself and others. The virtual, projected apparition-body was written over - reviewed by myself and others. This all made for intensification of the dialogic intention of the work and questioned the hierarchies inherent in decoding danced and written text.

Moving in and out of the large projection created a liquid visual of moving text and body where the two merged. The wash of words over body highlighted and distorted certain phrases at particular times, changing their meaning and emphasis. Meaning was not only created consciously by the choice of projected phrases but accidental meaning was allowed to emerge and recede as it flickered across the dancer's body and was seen or not seen by individual onlookers. Hence the viewer was invited to construct or write the text in a further way.
b) The role of silence: Heard and not seen to seen and not heard

Dance reviewers are heard but not seen while performers and makers are often seen but not heard. To some degree, my experiment shook up this divide by displacing participants into new roles.

In my decision to use a soundscape as a prelude to the work only and to perform the bulk of the work in silence, I inadvertently opened up a site for discomfort. The prelude of three minute's duration was a polyphonic 'conversation' between two
voices - my own and a male actor's.\footnote{The actor was Ernie Gray} We spoke phrases from my dance reviews. Presented as a recorded soundscape, the sound began very low and became gradually audible until it was at full voice. This was intended to draw the audience closer, to start as an impression and move into something more comprehensible and then to cease. It was also designed to reveal some of the raw content of the piece and give a sense of the disparate emotions, images and responses contained within the writing of one person over a period of time. Additionally, it was designed to allow the audience to encounter the individual text and dance elements as installation prior to their alteration through choreographic intervention. This sound element was successful but, in retrospect, it might have had more power if performed live as it had been in an earlier experiment.

My physical presence in the work began around 20 seconds from the end of the soundscape. As a dance writer my words were heard and my body was not seen, except as projection. This created a slight disorientation of attention in the audience. As the sound text progressed, the live body was revealed. Sound and spoken word coexisted briefly. The subsequent quietness seemed to intensify the presence of the onlookers as there was nothing audible to support the patterning or tone of the dance. Therefore there were no underlying rhythmical cues to direct the emotional response of the audience. I think it acted to draw the onlookers' attention to themselves. I believe that it did position them clearly as participants in the work as did my presence amongst the standing crowd. It would be interesting to see how the addition of sound or musical score might change the relationship between dancer and onlooker and reshape the individual viewer's sense of their role in the work.

The silence of the work had a dual effect on the dancing. It both freed my movement but also constrained it. The movement lacked defined musical/sound shifts to denote changes or progression to a new phase. It meant that it was the
rhythm of the onlooker/participants that fed back into my movement rather than a
pre-determined external influence. In other words, the bodies that accompanied my
body provided a kinaesthetic score for me to dance to.

5. Kinaesthetic empathy and proxemics

Audience experience is always dependent on where the individual is positioned,
even in a traditional theatre. Greater or lesser involvement can be gained or lost as
proximity to performance and angle of view are altered. When people stand, a
different perspective is created immediately. Perhaps they cannot truly be said to
remain as audience at all and immediately become participants or perhaps they
simply become audient in a different sense. When they stand in non-uniform parts
of a space and choose these positions themselves, yet other variables come into
play.

Further, because the configuration of bodies in the space could not be predicted,
this dance territory was a completely new landscape to negotiate. The structure
around which I improvised still employed a familiar, quite particular, and not very
broad movement vocabulary, but its spatial parameters and emotional tone were
deeply influenced by the physical cues given by the viewers.

As planned, I stood with and transferred my weight in three instances to onlooker/
participants within the work. Interestingly, in each case - two individuals and one
pair - they took my weight and became part of a tableau. This was my way of
making us both audience and performer and a way of eliciting the ‘physical
response’ to the work that I had invited explicitly but knew from testing the work,
may not come voluntarily.

This brings me to a reconsideration of the role of kinaesthetic empathy as it played
out in my own performance and particularly as it used proxemics to position
performer and spectators. Episodes of Exposure was a strongly conceptual work and
sought to translate notions of dialogism into an embodied rendering. As in all work,
there were many possible iterations considered which added or subtracted 'voices' to its texture. Towards the end of the development of the work, I became worried that its intellectual and conceptual underpinnings were dominant over the danced work and that they existed as separate entities, almost two different works that might stand alone even as, when combined, they clearly depended on one another. I wondered again whether the live performer needed to dance at all or whether she just needed to be present to connote the dance writer. It was only in performing the work in the gallery space that the nature of the kinaesthetic relationship between dancer and audience fully emerged for me and how essential it was for me to assume a dancing role.

In recent years I had experienced the power of the connection between dancer and audience from a relatively passive, generally quite traditional audience perspective. This typically manifested as a mimetic muscle memory sensation that also functioned on a deeply emotional level in response to viewing dance performance. It existed alongside an intellectual response but overwhelmed and released me from any fixed reasoning about what I was watching. As a reviewer this sometimes resulted in a strongly positive response to work that I could not always defend.

In performing Episodes of Exposure I experienced acutely how bodies in a space influence one another. Because of the immediacy of the audience, I was able to feel something of how they encountered the work in perhaps a more raw or immediate form than if they had been a collective audience, positioned in a predetermined place and given a firm role.

At times, I must be honest in confessing that I felt the need to assert myself as performer against the group as they clustered immovably in places I wanted to be. Over the course of the work, we got used to each other - me intruding on their right to unencumbered spectatorship, and later realising that I had got what I had implicitly been asking for but had not consciously voiced - to be one element, albeit
a prominent one in a multi-layered dialogic text of dance, writing, individuation and collective response.¹⁰⁵

I experienced a struggle in some to maintain their role of audience as onlooker while being under siege from an unreliable performer who might get too close or shift focus to them. I felt the physical rigidity of certain audience members as I approached them and their unease as I transitioned between fixed points in the installation. I felt a kind of dread arise in one onlooker as I fixed her with my gaze. Another fled as I intruded into an alcove where a piece of text was placed on the floor - he appeared to be trying to maintain himself as audience by keeping a respectful distance from me.

A physical manifestation of audience vigilance came across strongly. This was evidenced in the eye contact and postural changes of individuals. I felt the attention of particular individuals at certain times and felt that I was dancing to them for a moment. Accepting and deflecting of attention was an interesting game, which involved discomfort on both sides. I would feel uncomfortable with a level of non-verbal feedback and quickly shift my focus or I would become aware of uneasiness in someone who’s gaze I had held too long and either push it further or release them from it.

When I actually intruded physically on audience members, I was less aware of psychological discomfort. This happened for two possible reasons. Firstly that in not having eye contact with them, I was unable to read the clear affective facial response to the intrusion. Secondly, in accepting my weight, I felt they were complicit with me. This may not reflect how they actually felt at all, but rather, how

¹⁰⁵ Film scholar, Martin Flanagan speaks of the “dialogic trait of polyphony which resists the monologic, author-centred reading of film by creating a non-hierarchical realm of equal and interdependent consciousness. Relations are reconfigured onto a dialogically equal playing field; the author, characters and reader/spectators all partaking in a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousness.” Flanagan, Bakhtin and the Movies, 187.
my body interpreted their compliance. Interestingly, those I made such invasive physical contact with were all extremely effusive about the performance afterwards and each one approached me and broached notions of how I 'chose' them and how they experienced the moment. It may have been politeness, but nobody expressed objection to the intrusions verbally.

Episodes of Exposure. Image: Jake Reeder

Kinaesthetic empathy was also felt in a shared vulnerability between dancer and audience in this work. In engaging audience as participant, I forced them to share my own discomfort in being seen and forced a degree of agency on them, even if it was mainly reactive agency. In being close to them, I removed some of the usual barriers between dancer and audience yet I constructed others. As performer, I claimed an entitlement to the space I moved in and had constructed and yet the interactions of dancer and audience revealed a play of yielding and defending territory. There were power shifts and surprises. Many of the bodies I moved amongst seemed kinaesthetically connected to me yet others held tightly against the incursions. At times the sensation of empathic connection between audience members may have been purely on the level of shared discomfort.
I have argued earlier that the sensing function works to alleviate or to release the dialogic complexity or intellectualising tendency of my response to dance. It has to be asked whether the dancing of *Episodes of Exposure* enacted such a release. In a way, it did, though not in the manner usually experienced when the joy of movement overrides the thinking about dance as an artform. The performance moment allowed me to leave behind the conceptual work that had been put in place and to test how the work felt and what it meant to the bodies involved. Performance of a one-off nature places limits on how entirely one can be 'in the moment' and leave concerns about the mechanics of the whole to one side. (Susan Leigh Foster talks about improvisation being a site where known structural or processual elements intersect with the spontaneity of the performative moment.)

Perhaps performance in this context is not an ideal site for testing this aspect of enquiry, with more than the usual number of variables. However, embodied research over the duration of the whole project has consistently confirmed to me that it is the kinaesthetic, emotional-physical interactions that occur in the act of dancing or in the kinaesthetic-empathic transferences that occur in viewing dance that charge the thinking about dance. It is in what happens bodily rather than what happens consciously or intellectually that makes sense and gives value to dance. As such, the performance aspect of this project did not prove conclusively my suppositions but worked together with cumulative experiential layering to strongly suggest the connections posited.

Performance also revealed a different and equally interesting experience of kinaesthetic empathy as felt from the dancer's point of view. For my enquiry I would now posit a slightly refreshed definition of kinaesthetic empathy as “a connection between dancer and audience that subtly readjusts their relationship; physically, psychologically and emotionally and which is by nature, not stable”.

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Conclusion: Integrated dialogism

a) The performance moment as site for integration

The original thinking around the dialogic interplay of voices that can be heard in the relationship between dance, dancing and writing is even more apparent post-performance than I had anticipated. Initially, it was presented to explain how swarms and clashes of disparate ideas and emotional charges may coexist without cancelling one another out. It also reveals how expansive is the dialogue between body and ideas, dancing and writing. The experiential reality of performing with these ideas brought even more layers and greater subtlety to my understanding of what dialogism might potentially represent.

My use of dialogism began as a way of expressing the intellectualising or analytical and critical dimensions and tendencies in my thinking and the sensing or kinaesthetically empathic dimension was expressed as ‘other’ - as a mode of rescue or release. Dialogism was also recruited as a means of accounting for and considering the role of judgement in my reviewing practice. From a post performance perspective, the dialogic coexistence of this rich polyphony of voices seems less distinguishable from an intersubjective physical-empathic conversation that freely intermingles ‘voices’ that are worded in writing as well as spoken purely through bodily expression. Dialogism as Bakhtinian dialogue, embodiment, and as kinaesthetic empathy seem no longer to exist as separate, individuated entities but as parts of the same conversation. This may be considered as an ‘integrated dialogism’.

It seems that it is the act of performance where the conditions for this integrated dialogism arise. I am arguing for the existence of both an intellectual dialogism and a sensing function which may be invoked separately but which may occur almost simultaneously in performance where bodily voices join those of thought to produce a new and especially densely textured conversation. Writing and dance may be seen as macro discourses which proliferate constellations of micro discourses that speak
beneath, above and across one another concomitantly or are given individuated space.

b) The transformed subjectivity
The fact that I proposed such a project was predicated on wanting to be informed better of how I could more meaningfully approach writing about dance works. Its execution has created an extra link in my understanding of the relational connections between a dance work as viewed artefact, and what it means to more fully participate in work as a traditionally placed audience member, a free spectator or collaborative participant.

Constructing my own physical experiments has also allowed me to develop a greater appreciation for a makers’ process experientially. My discoveries have been as dialogically charged and heteroglot as my investigation. Each layer of practice added extra voices to my own discourse around writing and dancing.

Notable changes occurred in my conceptualisation of what dance can be and this has expanded and broadened through the process. Part of it involved the development of a more acute awareness of how writing remakes work into a new language that is sometimes sympathetic to the dance and sometimes jars against its intention.

My register and voice changed as my writing developed. I extended my own voice and cultivated and included a range of new voices. This has served to clarify how I am positioned in a conversation about dance. Very importantly, it has opened up a space where I do feel entitled to join that conversation where previously I had been troubled by my outsider status. My performance experience has caused a shift in my relationship with both writing and dance. In activating writing into a three dimensional incarnation, I have synthesised it into a component of the phenomenological sensing through movement in performance.
The moment of the performance installation was the catalysing and transformational experience amongst those in the research process. Hence there are two distinct experiential phases that represent equally distinct sensibilities. My pre-performance sensibility was understanding, appreciative and sympathetic but my post-performance sensibility is more completely empathic. The activation through performance was achieved by bringing my writing into a sensed realm, by enacting and dancing with words and by creating a dialogical conversation between body, words, and as it turned out, other bodies.

This performative moment acted to blur the roles of spectator and performer/ance that transcended the original intention of displacement and shows how each vitalises the other. The outcome for the writer as dancer is invaluable for my writing practice. It includes a deeper level and changed quality of spectatorship. Perhaps it can be claimed that it is in this moment that the writer/spectator/dancer becomes a true witness for the first time as she is able to ‘see’ from the inside as well as the outside and the perspectives are multiple.

Caroline Wake classifies two types of aims carried by witnesses who are spectators of performance and differentiates those who seek “immersion” from those who seek “critical distance”.107 With the transformed subjectivity that performance has allowed, it feels obvious to me that part of my problematic relationship with writing and dancing lies in this kind of classification. The continuum that traditionally places these two poles at the extremities of critical perspective is in fact a far more fluid relationship. The confounding that the relationship throws up is in fixing to one position rather than embracing the sliding, shifting, stumbling action of being thrown into a new relationship with dance and dancing at every encounter. This is not to remove responsibility for consistency from the writer but to acknowledge that each relationship with a new work entails a resetting of expectations and assumptions

and equally that no human being comes to a work without prejudices, predispositions, judgements and preferences.

Subjectivity is also transformed by being no longer purely spectator or witness but by becoming both subject and object. I am now the object of my own critical review and that of others. I am the subject of a performative moment. I am a performer and spectator at the same time as others are spectators and performers.
Postscript
Dialogism and displacement: A conversation

Entering the space, we stood awkwardly around, not being directed to stand and become an audience in any given area, we dispersed uncomfortably within the room. (M.L)

I am happy to have created uncertainties and possibilities for spectator agency.

There's a palpable air of discomfort in the darkened gallery. The viewers have been invited to enter but their questions about where they should position themselves go unanswered. After they cross the threshold, they discover that this work does not seem to have a clear focal point. No delineation between audience and installation. They shift uneasily, with their drink as a companion, waiting for something clear to happen. (M.C)

It is true though, that I like to be able to orient myself to a performance experience and might have been discomforted by this one!

The space had been divided into multiple areas. One data-projected wall, one overhead projected wall and the anachronistic clash of these two technologies immediately created tension. (M.L)

An interesting thing to notice. I felt that it was the clash, or struggle between the two danced texts, and the written texts, that created the tension. Because both were quite demanding and immersive and my spectator/participants were trapped, I forced moment-by-moment choices about what they engage with and I swung unpredictably between them.

Sliding doors are opened to reveal a cavernous space illuminated with two projected works. Most prominent, is a large text projection that sits to the right of the space and occupies a large segment of wall and creases onto the floor. Another work is projected across the space onto an opposite wall and depicts a dancer working through a
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movement sequence, sparely costumed in a flesh leotard. (S.B)</th>
<th>Instead of having the time to acclimatise to the installations, imperatives of proxemics, and positioning overtook the spectators. The free-ranging nature of the onlookers turned them into participants and perhaps rendered them less able to be consumers of the experience. Their bodies immediately became heteroglot voices in a polyphonic conversation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bendall herself created a fragmented and broken narrative by intermittently scribbling onto the gallery wall - a strange, poetic and melancholic review of her own body’s relationship to dance appeared - and at the end, we, as audience members, were invited, silently, to add to the wall, to the work. (M.L)</td>
<td>There were so many dialogic strands to interact with - so many other ‘voices’ to talk to, so many other bodies to dance with, so much other text to digest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She dances to no music. The audience keeps the rhythms of their unease to themselves. (M.C)</td>
<td>You tried, but as you said earlier, Michael, the discomfort was palpable. You all provided a kinaesthetic music for our shared dance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matto Lucas wrote a review of Episodes of Exposure on his arts blog +Melbourne Arts Review in which he included edited video and an added sound track. He chose rather mysterious and suspenseful music - I’m not sure whether this was something that was a very conscious choice or a sound track that was applied to simply intensify the effect of the visual. However, this addition really underscores the discomfort experienced by many people of presenting dance without sound or music. It also imposes or illustrates a mood that might or might not have been apparent in my version of the work. Interestingly, the only element of sound that the original performance had, (spoken text) was not included in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
... she transitioned between naturalistic movements and flourished, beautiful, choreographed dance movements - weaving in and out of us, she herded us, people moving ‘out of the way’ - although what way was uncertain.

The push and pull of being made ‘uncomfortable’ by the sheer nature of the performance and the performer and then brought back into the passive comfort of being an unmoving audience member was really interesting - our relationship with her body is what spoke the loudest. (M.L)

the documentation/iteration of the work by Matto Lucas.

Lucas’s choice to use fast cuts from me to my acts of writing in his video and his employment of moments of fast-motion was an interesting way of compressing and providing overview for the work. His choices are interesting both in terms of commentary and documentary on my work and also as a new work created by Lucas in which he makes his own narrative around the moments he chooses to recuperate from the whole. It reiterates to me that the act of writing about someone’s work remakes that work or reconfigures it in some way - even before we consider the additional re-workings that come with video editing and post performance sound editing.

Matto wrote words - review words, words added to my text and enunciated, conversational words telling me how he felt about my work. He also remade my work through documentation - such an interesting experience to re-encounter my own work through the lens of an onlooker - for it to be shaped and edited to resemble the thing they thought it was, or the thing they wanted it to be. But unlike having writing edited by one person, there is a knowledge that Matto is only one of very many editors who remade the work during and after its short life. It is rewarding to know that one of these editors felt engaged enough to want to live with the work a little longer than the duration of the performance.

Kinaesthetic empathy was very apparent.
Bendall mixes contemporary movements that owe a lineage to classical training to move from the large-scale and still, projected text to performance in front of the dynamic and monumental projected vision of herself. Costuming has been carefully chosen to allow the projected text to break across her form. Her movement in and out of the projection breaks sentences into words and words into syllables - inviting the viewer to form their own rhythm of her body. She writes on her leg, “embodied dumbness”; a play on words, while the dance is at play, on words. (M.C)

There is also a deliberate conversation, or at least tension between movement styles. I experimented with movement that betrayed classical training as little as possible but would then ‘correct’ back to an idiosyncratic movement language that spoke of my body’s indebtedness to various indoctrinations since I appreciate these lineages.

Bendall moves to her own internal text, text she has explored over and over again as a dance researcher, dance reviewer and dancer. (M.C)

This is a great commentary on how we carry our dispositions with us into any dance event. Even (and especially) when it is your own dance event! It also reminds me of something that Caroline Wake says that suggests to me the multiple resonances of spectatorship, which in turn, suggests its dialogic nature. She says that witnessing is a durational event and that it includes the anticipation of the event, the experience of the event and the residue of the event. I suppose there is kinaesthetic contamination of the kind that is spoken about in reception theories. It also reminds me of the way that Bakhtin invests so much in a single utterance to release so much latent and multiple meaning.

The performance unfolded amongst a swarm of bodies which in a way equalised the viewer and the dancer but which disallowed a clear and consistent point of view. (S.B)

This is where the work most clearly succeeded for me.
People continue to write on the wall over her video projection … audience as immediate reviewers. The lights come on and people seemed stunned. They have just been immersed in danced words, worded dance and a multiplicity of dialogues that blur the distinction between performer, participant, audience and reviewer. The post-performance dialogue is excited. The artist mixes with the audience and the dialogue continues. (M.C)

If she can dance, I want to see it. There was a limited movement vocabulary in use that seemed to be strongly gestural, stylised and never really extended itself fully. This truncation was also felt in the swiftness of the movement between each section. Bendall might have further intensified the dancer/audience connection by slowing down the transitions between physical and written utterance to create more space for contemplation of each element. 

Episodes of Exposure also seemed to be more about ideas than dance. (S.B) Ever the one to make unsolicited suggestions in my reviews!

It was unclear whether it was choreographed or whether the audience were being choreographed. (S.B) Yep!

I try to be honest and direct. Dancers and choreographers want and deserve that. There are big flaws in this work. And it destabilised me. (S.B) How do you feel about reviewing yourself?

Disingenuous! (S.B)
But the review actually feels quite detached and tactful. I said the kinds of things I would say about any work.
(S.B)

And what of writing and dancing the body? Are they contradictory or complementary processes?

Ha!
If you want to know, you can read (between the lines of) my dissertation!
(S.B)
Bibliography


Malnig, Julie. “‘But How Do I Write About Dance?’ Thoughts on Teaching and Criticism.” *Dance Research Journal* 42, no. 2 (Winter 2009).


Appendix 1
A dialogic discourse analysis of a dance review.

Bakhtin performed discourse analyses on specific pieces of novelistic text in order to reveal their dialogic nature. He used Dickens, Pushkin, Turgenev and Rabelais among others, all of whom he believed revealed the best of this kind of writing. I am attempting to demonstrate that many discourse types hold up to this method of analysis, including dance reviewing. Below is an example of a paragraph taken from one of my own reviews. It was chosen randomly to test the process. Indeed there are examples that would respond more richly to this form of analysis but I am keen here to simply apply a close reading and notice the range of voices that exist in a simple section of dance-review.

Original text
I am coming to appreciate the power behind Eke's large operatic gestures. Hers are statements writ large, up close, in your face. The movement language is in big-print. It can seem symbolically over-blown. The aesthetic is deliberately grotesque, well illustrated here by the prominence of the child motif, shown as a kind of alien disco baby - huge prosthetic baby head, massive on Eke's slight frame, destabilising and consuming, convulsing and howling. However, Eke enters an interesting discourse arena and has something to say about gender and the body and about the nature of dance performance and expectations around it. Fountain is immediate and visceral. Its use of textures and fluids draws the audience into another layer of experience. Particularly effective is the use of tall, cylindrical containers of fluid, into which Eke submerges her head and limbs, pausing to allow the distorted images to register with the audience.

Exposure to the dialogic elements of the discourse:
I am coming to appreciate the power behind Eke’s large operatic gestures. Hers are statements writ large, up close, in your face. The movement language is in big-print. It can seem symbolically over-blown. The aesthetic is deliberately grotesque, well illustrated here by the prominence of the child motif, shown as a kind of alien disco baby - huge prosthetic baby head, massive on Eke's slight frame, destabilising and consuming, convulsing and howling. However, Eke enters an interesting discourse arena and has something to say about gender and the body and about the nature of dance performance and expectations around it. *Fountain* is immediate and visceral. Its use of textures and fluids draws the audience into another layer of experience. Particularly effective is the use of tall, cylindrical containers of fluid, into which Eke submerges her head and limbs, pausing to allow the distorted images to register with the audience.

General, non-specialised commentary. Overtly authorial.

A nod in the direction of a specific register that belongs to dance writing.

Description that is partly parodic and partly factual - reveals something of what the visual effect looked like but invokes a sense of the grotesque mentioned earlier.

Academic commentary. If the word 'interesting' were removed, it might be said that this lacks direct authorial voice.

This is a combination of description of what the dancer is doing with how the writer responds emotionally to it. “Destabilising and consuming” is almost ambiguous and could be attributed to either or both the dancer and the writer. This makes these words especially heteroglot.

This voice ascribes intentionality to the dancer/choreographer.
Even as we mix factual reportage of visual phenomena with opinion, we create dialogic discourse. Had I described the articulations of Eke's body through movement sequences, I would have added a specific register that belongs to dance writing, and included yet another voice. Bakhtin identified the novel as the richest and most densely textured site for dialogic discourse. Here, it is clear that even a piece of professional writing can be rich in language that is heteroglot and which is an interweaving of voices that are stratified into a number of planes. They move toward and away from direct authorial comment. They gesture toward general observation and suggest a specific academic conversation that is exterior to the current piece of writing.
### Appendix 2

#### Schema for making danced responses (excerpt)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Movement language</th>
<th>Improvised</th>
<th>Set</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Documented?</th>
<th>Technical Issues</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ros Warby</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Partially</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Home/outside</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>OH&amp;S!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tower Suites</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>(In concrete)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Hated the inflexible way I ended up being in this process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed bills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>studio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infinity, Icons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis Rings</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Partially</td>
<td>Home/inside</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>An enjoyable process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Forsythe</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Partially</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Home/inside</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Felt that parts came together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I don't believe in outer space</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasdance Identity (Blur)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Home/inside</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>This felt rather like an emulation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Act of Now</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chunky Move</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Home/ outside looking in.</td>
<td>Site sensitive</td>
<td>Capturing the Nightscape.</td>
<td>Had to be careful that it didn't become about the filming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Act of Now</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance Massive (as a whole festival)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes Seeking for a 'compressed file' look but captured in a low-tech way.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Quite an odd piece as it has no unifying choreographic language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADT <em>Proximity</em></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>My first use of my text in response. Made twice - before and after writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim Darbyshire <em>More or Less Concrete</em></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Partially</td>
<td>Partially</td>
<td>Studio</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Very challenging to create a sound-dense, physically percussive fragment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hofesh Shechter <em>Political Mother</em></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Studio</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Quite freeing and unstructured.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akram Kahn <em>Desh</em></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Studio</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not entirely satisfying.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: This table represents an early attempt at systematising and recording certain elements of my making process and may be useful in drawing conclusions about my whole process.

It records what elements of the work my making has engaged with (concept, movement language), to what extent the movement sequences were improvised or set, where the making mainly took place, whether the piece was video-documented or intended for documentation, any technical issues that may have been relevant to the process or outcome and other comments.