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THE DOING OF DANCING

Kinaesthetic attention, the dancer and agency.

Paea Leach

THE DOING OF DANCING

Kinaesthetic attention, the dancer and agency.

Paea Leach

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of
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ABSTRACT

The focus of this research is kinaesthetic attention understood from the point of view of a dancer. The research is practice-led, body-first thinking that resulted in three choreographic experiments. Given that kinaesthesia does not have a single reference point, this dissertation intentionally puts forward a multiplicity of questions and viewpoints to understand the world of kinaesthesia. In cohesive work with attention, I attempt to highlight the relevance of kinaesthesia for dance scholarship, note its current flight under the theoretical radar, and ask how kinaesthetic attention enables dancers' agency. The studio research examines how kinaesthetic attention may be useful via two modes of being – with movement: the daily practice of a dancer, and within choreographic processes. Present in the body of the paper are fragments of voices from the fields of dance, phenomenology, philosophy, physiology, psychology and history.

KEY TERMS

Kinaesthesia, attention, movement, bodily-ness.

DECLARATION

This is to certify that:

i. The thesis comprises only original work except where indicated.

ii. Due acknowledgement has been made in all other material used and quoted. In relation to the final creative work for this dissertation – The Difficult Comedown, acknowledgement has been made to collaborator Alexandra Harrison.

iii. The thesis is 24,870 words in length, not including footnotes, bibliographic references, images and appendices.

Signed Date September 2019

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This thesis is a nod to all the dancers, dance makers and thinkers I have met across the globe who have been my wing-people; artists I deeply respect who continue to dance despite the difficulties and constant struggle for recognition – financial and social.

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Dr Joanna Pollitt, Dr Tanya Cates, Dr Leon Koomen, Helen Herberston (co-supervisor), Alice Cummins, Dr Jodie Mc Neilly, Becky Hilton, Wendy Smith, Ingrid Voorendt, Ben Shaw, Alexandra Harrison, Lhasa Shaw…and of course Patti Smith, Pablo Neruda and friends: poets who hold and make thinking space for me, quite unknowingly.

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PERSONAL PRESENT HISTORY

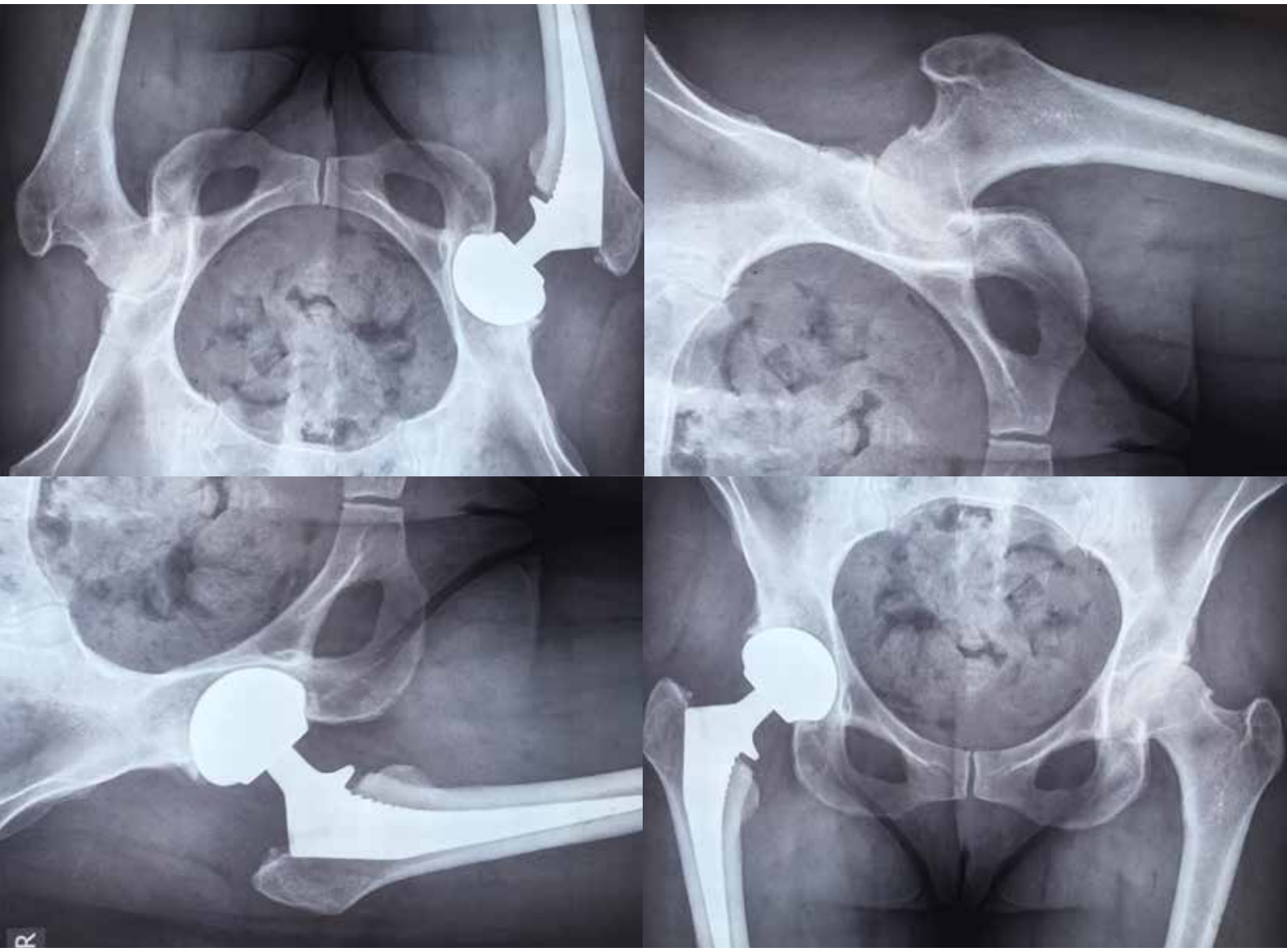

Fig 1 Photograph of X-Ray image, Paea Leach: pelvis featuring right-hip prosthetic, post-surgery, 24th November 2016, The Avenue Hospital, Windsor.

Rupture is a word that has a sparky resonance in my body. To rupture is to break, burst, breach or disturb. As a countable noun, a rupture is a severe injury in which an internal part of your body tears or bursts open[1].

I fell from a great height; a jump to a land in which the earth simply was not present for a few minutes. The sound of the fall was not unlike a tree branch snapping in a storm; the thwacky breadth and intensity close to a gunshot – a crack with force. Spread on the floor, I scanned the full studio searching out who had kicked me. All forty people were stood far from me, watching my wild eyes and sudden realisation.

[1] Collins Dictionary online, 13th May 2019, web page: https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/rupture

I had entirely ruptured my Achilles tendon.

My embodied history is a turgid timeline. A series of insistent perturbations forced me to engage or perish, think-through or continue to be impacted. My ruptured Achilles (2012) ruptured my life like a battering ram: I lost, in all senses, my identity. Who was I if I was not dancing? Additionally, I had a series of neurological dysphasia's rendering me speechless for five days (2017); an emergency caesarean (2015); a total hip replacement, hip arthroplasty or a 'THR' (2016). And, in a time that pervaded an ongoing *before*, I experienced uncountable dissociative fugues or episodes. I can function and speak and move around the world during these dissociations, or breaks in time without (reasonable) trigger. But, there is a gap of time that appears in my memory as a black nothing: my body suspects things my mind will not recall. My limbic brain is in charge during dissociative fugues – the quality of time recalled as energised, highly emotive and often borderless. The word limbic is derived from Latin meaning 'edge' (Jackson 2015, 102). Strange plastic worlds I have been visiting for some years.

This is tantamount to heartbreak: recovery has certainly felt impossible. But, aside from heartbreak and destruction, this series of bodily happenings might be understood as data. They are things that have made me real to myself. Bodily, I was offered the chance to feel these 'events or ruptures' and to gather information emergent from the experiences. This information I then put-to-use: or as Sara Ahmed says, these things are of use, they are useful (Ahmed 2017). Because I am a dancer and I body-forth and I body-with, I have pooled the heartbreak and rupture and turned it toward a doing-ness. I have re-purposed it, made its usefulness useful – to tell me something about attention, presence, 'feltness' and continuity of attention. Or, to help me survive.

I watch dance. Watching is a practice.
I watch with my body.

I observe that dancers naturally or 'accidentally' build kinetic or kinaesthetic bridges from one movement to the next – this even in scores where interruption and discordance is the focus. It is inside of this watching time I have witnessed the irrepressibility of kinaesthetic intelligence; a conscious (and sometimes 'unconscious') attention enacted by the (kinetically engaged) dancer as (she) is being-with and thinking-through movement. It is kinaesthetic attention, I believe, that offers the dancer possibility to feel into the sensory field of the body and deploy this sensing into 'concrete' moving. Attending to attention opens potential for *being-with movement* to occur.

Hannah Arendt believed 'thought fragments' necessary, to enliven and widen the thinking: to think-the-thinking-through (Knott 2011, 21). Quotes and fields of thinking and research included in this paper are diverse, and not from the dance field exclusively. For, in keeping with Arendt's imperative of keeping the thinking wide, and to attempt to evidence the way voices are brought into the studio research, I intentionally place "voices that can encounter one another in continually new ways in the here and now of the writing" (Knott 2011, 301-302). Beyond the dancing, I note this is also my ethos for being-in-the-world: I feel myself to be in conversation with divergent fields of thinking and speaking forth, to meaning make. I seek cause and effect. Perhaps I am trying to etch forth – through doing dancing and reading, then enfolding one into the other – what famed American poet Raymond Carver called 'a new path to the waterfall'.

A New Path to the Waterfall (Carver 1989) was the last book of poetry Carver published before his death. The sixty or so poems in the collection include works from other poet-writers, notably Chekhov. It is an elegy, a meditation on the scope of a life felt at its imminent end: "His poems suggest that an artist's obsessions and signs, fragmentary and intermittent as they be, exist in a world of necessity that transcends anyone else's need of them", so says Carver's wife Tess Gallagher in the introduction (Carver, xxv). I mention it here because I, too, was seeking a 'new path to the waterfall'; I recognize in Gallagher's comment my felt experience of the urgency and necessity of being-with seemingly unrelated fragments, as methods for thinking-through dancing, being in the world and making work. Also, Carver was 'real' – sparse, honest, observant, everyday – and I was deep in a new kind of real, a space in which obvious words escaped me. It is necessary to mention poetry for I engage with poet writers as an important aspect of my process in the studio: my intention is never to apprehend the meaning of a poem, nor to 'dance it' in any sense – but to make use of the poem – bodily. Poetry, too, is concerned with distillation, economy of thought and constraint[2].

Fig 2 (opposite page) Paea Leach in *The Difficult Comedown*, Dance Massive at Arts House, March 11th 2019. Photographer: Heidrum Löhr.

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2 See Ben Lerner, *The Hatred of Poetry*, (The Text publishing Company 2016), Glyn Maxwell, *On Poetry*, (Oberon books 2012).

3 Huston Smith with Philip Novak, *Buddhism: a Concise Introduction*, (Harper Collins Publishers Inc. 2003).

In the Pali Canon it is written:

> If the Buddha granted me a boon, and I could obtain that boon, I should choose for all the world, constant awareness directed toward the body. Smith and Novak[3]

PREFACE

This practice-led research has two aspects: the body of the work (the theory) and the work of the body (the practice and performance making). The paper is divided into four sections. Section one and two discuss kinaesthesia: articulating what it is by highlighting what it is not, and framing it lightly in relation to relevance, history and agency. Part three focuses attention on attention itself and discusses the work of Australian improviser and performer Rosalind Crisp and Australian choreographer Russell Dumas. Part four evidences the movement research undertaken and consequent choreographic experiments, in chronological order of creation.

Rather than finding myself able to launch into the research, I had to consider what needed to be prefaced so that I might begin. I had to think about what needed to be taken away, or subtracted, to 'get-to' kinaesthesia; as well, how did I want to think-through language, how did I want to engage (with) 'dance' language? The early stages required letting go of habits of thought and coming to understand how the concept of subtraction might support me to potentialise the point I was beginning from – bodily. Clearly, there are multiple somatic modalities that foster kinaesthetic attention; in this dissertation, I only discuss ones I have a direct physical experience of.

Prefacing kinaesthetic attention enabled my solo studio practice and choreographic processes to evolve. Three choreographic experiments emerged from this research time, and are discussed separately in 'Section four: Work of the body'. My role was as pedagogue/researcher, performer/researcher, performer/collaborator.

THE WORK OF THE BODY

1. Six propositions for Imagined Choreographies

Movement as research with professional dancers Richard Cilli and Rhiannon Newton, October 2017 (Substation, Newport) and March–August 2018 (VCA studios, Florence St studio).

2. Once I was a Horse

An experiment with the performance lecture. Presented at VCA, Studio 221 performance space, September 24th and 25th 2018.

3. The Difficult Comedown

Creation of a complete work, in collaboration with performer Alexandra Harrison and presented as part of Dance Massive, Melbourne, March 12th–16th 2019. This work is the final choreographic

experiment (as a performance) related to this dissertation. Links to filmed footage of all works can be found embedded in the body of the paper in section four, after discussion of each work under the heading 'documentation', as well as via links connected to the online submission.

Early in the research I did various writing tasks from heuristic research methods, such as self dialogues. A heuristic approach meant I could work with a coagulation of experience, meaning, memory, extrication and articulation with the aid of theory (Moustakas 1990, 15-17). This approach provided me with courage to begin this dissertation so forthrightly; framing my deeply difficult embodied history as a beginning point for enquiry and question forming. However, the bulk of the research has been undertaken in the studio: practising solo and separate to creating work, practising with others in the context of this research and as well, hers, creating work alone and in collaboration.

Extensive studio notes, combined with writing done outside of studio time, have collected and informed me about my values, what I respond to and want to capture, retain or revisit in movement. Through a process of amassing – the raining of words down pages and across multiple journals – I noted what insistently recurred. Scanning this worded data helped direct me toward the pith of my research and arguments in the body of this paper. Interspersed in the body of the paper are *'notes from the field'*: these are studio notes, fragments of discussions, anecdotes. Two documents titled *'notes from the field of a body'* can be found in the appendices: the first collection represents a symbolic and final choreographic task or 'act' – I have taken brief excerpts from my notebooks and hand typed them onto heavy paper – evidencing a timeline populated by words utilised to think-through this research. It felt a necessary and final embodied poetic act. *'Notes from the field of a body'* (2) is a short thick description of a Body Mind Centering® experience described kinaesthetically. Also in the appendices are documents from performance works *Once I was a Horse* (text and hand-out gifted to the audience) and *The Difficult Comedown* (document produced post-performance).

SUBTRACTION: What needs to be taken away to begin?

I began with an interest in the word 'potential'; in dance, it is used frequently to speak about futures, capacity and 'dancerly' facility understood physically. If my embodied experience had become one that felt to be operating in a type of deficit or reduction, I needed to understand how to re-perceive and re-embody potential. This was helped by Phillipa Rothfield's chapter *'Tinkering Way: the Untimely*

Art of Subtraction' in Choreography and Corporeality: Relay in Motion (Rothfield and DeFrantz, 15-30).

Subtraction, says Rothfield, "is an operation that provokes new becomings within (the) work" (Rothfield 2016, 16). Subtraction is related to French philosopher Deleuze and his concept of 'new potentiality' that says new possibilities can emerge because a set of stabilized forces is ruptured or perturbed. That is, what was expected or inevitable has been interrupted, and this interrupted space affords newness. Subtraction is a mode of change; it is the destabilizing force itself, laying ground for a perhaps unexpected emerging to unfold (Rothfield, 16-17). Subtraction gives momentum to a process that offers work the space to become "available to other forces which lie beyond the confines of its conventional iteration" (Rothfield, 16).

Rothfield asks: "To what extent is the field of dance performance open to operations of subtraction?" (Rothfield, 17). This question is a provocation for choreographing work and one to presence while practising and reflecting on dancing; soloing and with others. I believed my daily dance practice was operating as, or in, subtraction: rupture the subtractive force toward change. Due to injury, motherhood and ageing, much of traditional Western contemporary dance (as steps) was not available at all, nor was it interesting to work the way I once had. Subtraction too, had to do with removing noise and excess and in this aspect, is related to paying attention to specific "things". I practised observing while moving: what was interesting, provocative, insistent, recurrent. I noted the rise and fall of energy and intensities, the role of the nervous system, my capacity to pay attention while clocking what I was paying attention to. This requires repetition, for the nervous system learns through repetition (Smith 2018).

A 'field of conditions' was brought to bear on movement as research and the ensuing choreographic processes and outcomes. The field considers: attention(s), virtuosic characteristics, embodied lineages and kinaesthetic value systems. Attention is key, and the undoing of (movement) habits is not my focus – a fact that marks a fundamental scission from the ethos of improviser practitioners (especially). Undoing habits is certainly a focus of dance artists who practice attention over many years, and elsewhere, somatic practitioners might be said to be undoing habit with restorative outcomes in mind. In line with Hannah Arendt's stringent thinking, and as articulated below in 'notes from the field' while talking with dancer Richard Cilli, I am interested in habits of thinking and approach, rather than examining habitual movements themselves. Perhaps habits are useful, and can be reinvigorated; for they tell us something also, they are markers of embedded and embodied history. I discuss this further in 'Section three: attention on the attention' and in relation to the works choreographed for this exegesis. To adopt a position: I aimed to preface not what the dancer is doing, framed within a dueling lexicon of learned or improvised movements; but instead to focus on the kinaesthetic system that underscores, carries and informs how the dancer was doing it.

How was the how useful?
Why is it interesting?
How does it enable agency?

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Richard said: It cannot just be about kicking my legs high, there must be something more going on.

I said: You are right, these jazz steps are not the thing. It is clear you can do them well. But they tell us something about history and 'dance', and about your history and then the more we are asked to watch them repeat, form and un-form, the more we notice how you do them. We start to consider what they are insisting on... They tell us something through their unchanging repetition and their easy recognition. And it is sort of satisfying from my point of view, because I like to remember that dance can be, and is filled with, delight as much as serious endeavour. And, I think it was Deleuze who said something like representation only has one centre and this means there is a false depth...the representation mediates everything we perceive, but it actually moves nothing at all. So maybe we are using and remembering 'representation' and then thinking it further forward, augmenting it to understand something about movement and the way it 'speaks'. If you are into it, so am I...

Leach, studio notes, Easter Monday 2018, Florence St studio, Seddon.

LANGUAGE: WHAT LANGUAGE HELPS ME DESCRIBE THIS?

In the early stages of research, I struggled to fit my thinking into words that existed, especially embodiment. I needed a different strategy to think-through my questions and the language I was using to apprehend them and Hannah Arendt was helpful in this regard.

In Unlearning with Hannah Arendt (Knott 2011) Marie Knott observes Hannah Arendt was someone who sought a new pact between language and life. Knott talks through the impact Hannah Arendt had on, among other things, the use of much employed language through her body of work; among them *Life of the Mind* (1978) and *The Human Condition* (1958). Arendt rejected "instruments of comprehension that (have) proved dull or irrelevant. She allows them to go missing, unlearns them" (Knott 2011, xi). Her adoption, says Knott, of "nonstandard terms gives her fresh ideas the élan necessary to have an impact on her readers" (Knott, 46). Arendt spent enormous amounts of time 'thinking- through'.

Knott remarks that Arendt "thought with all of her senses and with conceptual stringency" (Knott, 46). This is possibly what I am doing in the doing of dancing: thinking-through-moving with physical acuity and stringency, with all my senses sensing. Methodologically, I am enacting a letting go of Arendt's "instruments of comprehension"; in this case, (what I understand to be) language embedded in Western contemporary dance pedagogy and history. To make room for different approaches to movement making, thinking and reading – established or frequently used words needed to be backgrounded or disempowered. Breathing space was required.

Erin Manning suggests:

> "the only way to restore movement to the general nexus that is its native element" is to say that "movement never bodies anything, it just bodies-forth, at any-point. Embodiment is the wrong concept. Just "bodying" is better. Movement goes-a-bodying" (Manning 2014a, 39).

Manning's proposition for a new verb, 'bodying', opened an-other space for being-with movement. In relation to my endeavours toward thinking stringently and seeking a different language, and in line with Arendt's thinking, the word 'embodiment' needed to 'go missing'; even if it was to return understood differently. Though I gravitate to the poetic, and much of embodiment as discussed through phenomenology is poetic; for example concepts of entwining and enfolding and the "flesh as a vertical being" (Hyong-ho in Park 2009, 26), it was not fitting my body. Letting embodiment 'go missing' was compelled further by phenomenologist Maxine Sheets-Johnstone. She states that embodiment has increasingly become attached to a "sense of being in the world that (carries) a moral measure of one kind of another" (Sheets-Johnstone 2015, 25). She refers to the embodiment of courage and the embodiment of kindness as examples. Sheets-Johnstone argues that the way this level of embodiment is assigned, as a hierarchy of being in one's body, implies that the greater the perceived embodiment the more morally robust (ibid., 25). Perhaps letting go of embodiment helps to unbind this attachment of morality to body; offering room for the body to be-with itself.

Hannah Arendt emphasised the special ability of speech to create a 'between': "world arises *between* people" she said (Arendt in Knott 2011, 91). Attuning to what is happening in the doing of dancing might be akin to being involved in a speech or dialogue of betweens, something like listening-in to multiple channels or frequencies, layers of information and sensation. These betweens ask: what is moving between myself as researcher/body-subject, and my thinking that is active when watching and doing dancing; what is between what I sense and what I do; what between my doing and the space beyond my flesh; what between my body and theory? Perhaps I seek to understand how I am participant, observer and instigator of this dialogue, rather than seeking concrete definition or analysis that does not serve creative process. My role is as 'captor' of what is falling through.

Philosopher Julia Kristeva says that "to live is to be in a state of change, to be nearly under siege from a variety of forces" (Kristeva in McAfee 2004, 1). Kristeva employs the term "the speaking being" who exists as "'a strange fold' between them all" (McAfee, 1). 'Them all' are the forces passing through the body under 'siege' derived from the social, political, public and private spaces that hold, shape, make buoyant, and rupture our lives. The body under siege resonated: what would it be like to consider that my body was, indeed, under siege? What did this mean in relation to the information I had amassed bodily, received (in a type of siege) from multiple places/forms/practices/a life lived, that I was now examining and putting-to-use?

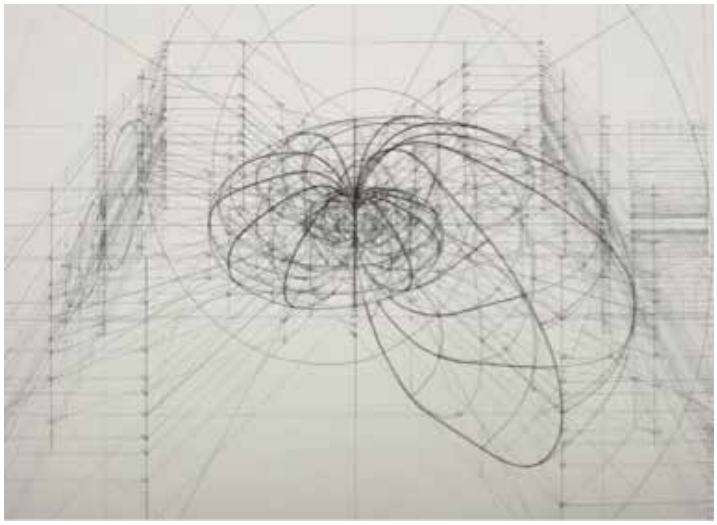
It is not impossible to have (language based) dialogue *for* the dialogue that is movement-moving, but it is difficult. Language can serve to articulate or give voice to the experience, image or sensation, or give the moving an approximate other life. Perhaps understanding occurs somewhere in an enlivening 'between'. Process philosopher Erin Manning names what occurs in the space between one thing and another, as 'co-arising' – a *feltness* that can lead to dialogue:

> "there is no question that articulation through language is capable of conveying certain complexity, bridging the worlds of sensory event-ness with the affective tonality of language in the making such that a dialogue between these co-arising worlds can begin" (Manning 2009, 44).

While performing *The Difficult Comedown* (the third and final work of this dissertation) on the last night, I felt a sense of infolding. I might describe this like a drawing in toward a central line of concentration; a putting to use of the multiple streams of information and lived histories I have embodied and turned my attention toward integrating. Present and in-attention, infolding led to expansion and potential followed: the movement became. I felt myself alive in the nuance afforded by my capacity to pay unbroken attention. My skin tingled, I was excited, I felt as an archaeologist; I could keep going further into my body to keep looking and so, to increase the intensity and amplification of output. I return to process philosopher Erin Manning frequently, as her writing helps to remember, not forget, the elusive concreteness that the felt-experience of dancing is:

> "Thisness: a flocking. A quality of experience that folds the many in the one, an interfusing of agency and patience, indissolubly alterant-altering. A tentative constructing toward a holding in place, not of the one, but of the polyphony of potential: Do not presume to know concretely where the person who makes architectural-body sense lies. She lies in her potential. A flocking toward the concrescence: the many in the one." (Manning 2014b, 29)[4].

[4] Quoted/spoken in performance, 'Once I was a Horse', performance work #2, VCA Studio 221, September 24th and 25th 2018.



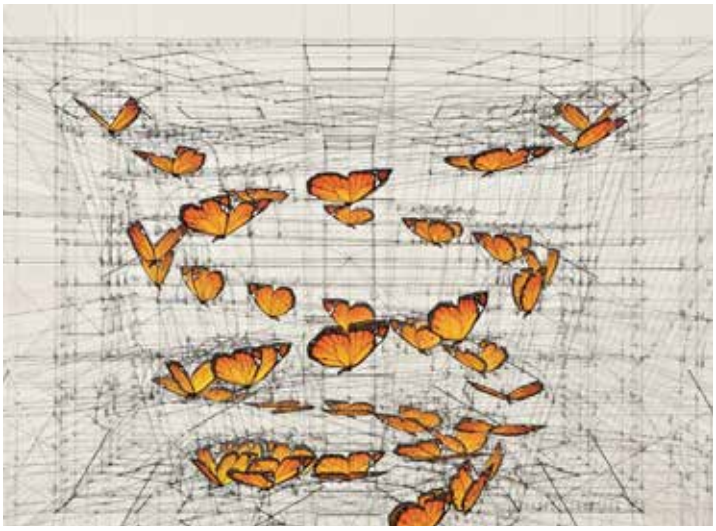


Fig 3 & 4 Rafael Araujo in Arch Daily, "This Architect Fuses Art and Science by Hand Illustrating the Golden Ratio", posted by Piedad Rojas, 29th Dec 2016, cited 23rd January 2018, web page: https://www.archdaily.com/802427/this-architect-fuses-art-and-science-by-hand-illustrating-the-golden-ratio

BODY OF THE WORK

What is kinaesthesia like but not the same as?

KINAESTHESIA

> "Dance enunciates its own mode of thought through the body. It is a form of neuro-specificity enunciated in action". (Rothfield 2019)

The purpose of this paper is served by outlining what kinaesthesia is similar-to, and not the same as: perception, somatic practices, proprioception and posturing. The differences and similarities have been contemplated physically and theoretically: they are emergent, contradictory and intertwining.

Kinaesthesis is an interesting word, it has an energy about it. Inside its borders are *kine, kinesis, aesthesis*. It is taken to mean a marrying of its root words: *kinesis (Greek)* meaning motion and *aisthēsis (Greek)* meaning sensation. So, the sensation of motion: motion as movement with potential.

Kinaesthesia makes use of technologies of thought embedded in a field of practice taking into its account an array of sensations from different sensing systems (Rothfield 2019). My sense of kinaesthesia in operation is something akin to a system in an ongoing activity of information uptake and integration: 'dance like a plant' I tell my students. By this I mean cultivate breath and an attention to everywhere, in all directions – be alive, multiple, receiving, absorbent. Through ongoing practice, I observe I am more able to hold attentions of varying sizes or on different surface areas; micro to macro, received externally as well as felt/navigated internally. Attention is physiological and kinetic, conceptual and temporal all: bone, breath, momentum, gravity, tone, direction, time. Slowing and expanding, being abandoned, inhabiting a disappearing body, un-holding the skeleton, rupturing the rhythm. Kinaesthesia is related to one's kinetic and qualitative, tactile experiences.

MOVEMENT AND PERCEPTION

...we are born in wetness and in movement...

"It is not surprising that we are able to think in movement: movement is our mother tongue" (Sheets-Johnstone 2013, 20) says phenomenologist Maxine Sheets-Johnstone. We gather our vital information for living from, and through, moving. We roll, we crawl, we suck, we walk, we run, we bend, we lift, we write. Drawing from Edmund Husserl's *animate organism* whose understandings of

I am and *I can* develop, importantly, *through* movement (Sheets-Johnstone 2015, 24), Sheets-Johnstone states it is because we are *animate organisms* constantly in some form of movement, that movement is our primary means of learning ourselves into the fabric of the world. We tend not to notice that *I move* precedes the *I am* and *I can*; we forget movement is, indeed, the mother tongue (Sheets-Johnstone, 31).

This forgetting is the central concern for Body-Mind Centering®[5] movement pioneer Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, who says that "movement *is* a perception, given that it is the first perception to develop and thus, the one most crucial for survival" (Bainbridge Cohen 2012, 114). She says that perception "is about relationship – to ourselves, others, the Earth and the universe" (ibid., 114). So, movement is perception is relation. Husserl explicitly recognized neurologist Charles Bastian's *Kinesthesis*[6] named in 1880, "not only as essential to perception, but as co-articulated with perception" (Sheets-Johnstone 2015, 24). In *Job's Body: a Handbook for Bodywork* it is stated that perception is "formed on the basis of movement, just as surely and completely as movement is initiated and guided by perception" (Juhan 1987, 187). Indeed, of the somatic modalities I have direct physical experience of, it is in BMC that I find the closest correlate to kinaesthetic attention; this because BMC futures to dancing or moving.

The movement – I *move, I am, I can* – that enables us to learn ourselves forth is made available as a qualitative experience by our kinaesthetic sense modality. It is referred to as the 'Kinaesthetic Sense', or the sense that tells me about my body; its shape and size, its placement in space. It offers information about limbs and joints and what they are doing at any given time (Juhan 1987, 186). Its absolute defining feature is the nature of its capacity to offer qualitative information, what the dynamic action *feels- like*, that separates it from the classically understood five senses. Bainbridge Cohen argues against the traditional edict that we are governed by five senses, stating "that both the input and output aspects of the stimulus/response loop have both motor *and* perceptual activity" (Bainbridge Cohen 2012, 114 – italics are the author's). The fact that movement and the visceral or subjective experience of movement are left out of the five sensing categories, and indeed, that movement itself is learnt about via video and books (according to Bainbridge Cohen) in many of America's universities, seemed, to her, entirely inappropriate (Bainbridge Cohen, 114).

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[5] Body-Mind Centering is an ongoing, experiential journey into the changing territory of the body. "The explorer is the mind – our thoughts, feelings, energy, soul and spirit" (introduction, Bainbridge Cohen 2012). As a dancer, I have turned to BMC while recovering from injuries, and simply as means to practice specificity. The language of BMC is of especial interest, emergent from the qualitative relationship of the body-system being studied and experienced somatically - circulatory, bone, endocrine, lymphatic for example. I mention BMC here, while I acknowledge space does not permit a lengthy discussion of the incredible experiences one is afforded when in dialogue with BMC. See appendix for example: 'notes from the field of body' (2).

[6] Henry Charles Bastian named 'The Kinesthesis' in 1880 (note American spelling). See J.M.S Pearce, "Henry Charlton Bastian (1837 - 1915): Neglected Neurologist and Scientist", in *European Neurology* 63 (2):73-78.

Elizabeth Dempster commences the paper *Touching Light* with a definition of kine-aesthesis as "the perception of movement" (Dempster 2003, 46). The kinaesthesia of the dancing body, according to Dempster, cuts across a series of functional perceptual systems: "the visual, the articular and the haptic/tactile systems may all be involved in movement perception" (Dempster, 46). Citing American cognitive psychologist James Gibson's work on perception, and the function of the sensory-perceptual systems, Dempster discusses the influence of Gibson's theoretical work, concerning the interplay of the haptic and visual systems, on American postmodern experimental dance practice and training. Gibson named five sensory-perceptual systems: "the auditory, the orienting, the taste-smell, the visual and the haptic" (ibid., 46). Gibson's book *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems* (originally published 1966) stated that the senses do not act as separate organs; instead they are active networks and highly organised systems, which he classified according to their modes of activity, not by their conscious quality. He proposed a more porous interconnectedness; systems operating across "the body-world boundary, looping between inner and outer realities as they co-ordinate action as well as perception" (Dempster, 46). The interplay he proposed between visual and haptic systems "provided theoretical support and experimental data for dancer's creative exploration of the relationship between movement, perception and bodily change" (Dempster, 46). His work helped to prise open the field of what dance looked and felt like, enabling alternate forms of teaching and learning to emerge. Gibson's influence can be felt in the philosophy of body-based movement researchers such as Mabel Todd with Ideokinesis (discussed later), Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen through Body-Mind Centering and the form of Contact Improvisation (CI)[7].

Sheets-Johnstone cites famed neuropsychologist Alexsandr Luria, whose work showed that kinaesthesia is concerned with "muscular innervations and denervations, which allow both the smooth flow of movement and the attainment of complex sequential activities such as writing one's name" (Sheets-Johnstone 2015, 31)[8]. Luria names these physical attainments to be "kinesthetic melodies" (ibid., 31). We do not, says Luria through Sheets-Johnstone, have to wait for some intimated body wisdom to be imparted, for we have direct lines via kinaesthesia and kinaesthetic memory to the "dynamic patterns that constitute our everyday lives" (Luria in Sheets-Johnstone, 31). Kinaesthesia embraces the knowledge and skills needed to engage and move through everyday life – felt, perceptual, cognitive. Once learned these skills become stored, bodily, "inhere in kinesthetic memory" (Sheets-Johnstone, 31).

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7 See James Gibson, *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems* (Houghton Mifflin 1966). See Alan Costall, "Bringing the Body Back to Life: James Gibson's Ecology of Agency", edited by Tom and Jordan Zlatev Ziemke, Roslyn M Frank. 2 vols, *Embodiment* (De Gruyter 2007).

8 See Dmitri Bougakov, Anne-Lise Christensen, Elkhonon Goldberg eds., *Luria's Legacy in the 21st Century*, (Oxford University Press 2009); Izabel Hazinet al., "Luria's Neuropsychology in the 21st Century: Contributions, Advancements, and Challenges." *Psychology and Neuroscience* 2014,7,4 (2014): 433-34.

Singing is experiential much in the way moving is; we sing from the body. Singing, too, is a bodily pursuit. When discussing the role of kinaesthesis in a pedagogy for singing, Karen Bauer states it is the "unifying of sensory awareness with an increased ability to intentionally facilitate movement" (Bauer 2016, 129) that is a result of kinaesthetic acuity[9]. Her argument is that kinaesthetic acuity can be improved through an economy of attention focused on physiology (understanding the role and action of the glottis, larynx et al), repetition and intention. Bauer states that "cultivated kinaesthesia might be subtle in refined functioning, but it is not a vague product of imagination" (Bauer, 130). She asks what is a pedagogy that can teach kinaesthetic acuity? Embedded in this paper are similar pedagogic considerations for dance.

SOMATICS

...the deep matrix...

Somatic attention, as a concept, "signals lived corporeality as the manner by which one person engages with another" (Rothfield 2005, 48). Thus, somatic attention also articulates and merges with phenomenological research relating to embodiment. The word Soma (sōmatikós) is taken to mean relating to the human body as distinct from the mind. In the 1970s the term 'somatics' began being used to house a body of work under one rubric. The field encompasses more than thirty-seven official (body based) techniques such as Alexander technique, Rolfing, Feldenkrais, Trager technique (Eddy 2009, 1)[10]. Somatic work provoked questions toward the strength of the Cartesian duality of body-mind separation and presented a different kind of embodied, bodily potential; the non-violent promise of the somatically directed body (Eddy, 7-9). They are adjacent techniques to the doing of dancing, but they are not the dancing itself. Somatic work and techniques/therapies are often leaning toward and into moving or movement, but they are not trying to future toward choreography. It is true that clarity, or an orientation toward something that is being contemplated in (my) choreographic mind is often revealed via working in the somatosensory zone. But, the Somatic practitioners' primary concern is toward cultivating awareness itself, often in service toward shifting habitual movement and highlighting gaps in sensed awareness, to initiate change in one's daily actions.

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9 Bauer uses the term acuity, meaning 'sharpness' and I choose attention, 'the action of taking care toward something'.

10 The purpose of somatic movement education and therapy is to enhance human processes of psycho physical awareness and functioning through movement learning. Practices provide the learning conditions to: focus on the body both as an objective physical process and as a subjective process of lived consciousness; refine perceptual, kinesthetic, proprioceptive, and interoceptive sensitivity that supports homeostasis and self regulation; recognize habitual patterns of perceptual, postural and movement inter-action with one's environment; improve movement coordination that supports structural, functional and expressive integration; experience an embodied sense of vitality and extended capacities for living (ISMETA 2003), (Eddy 2009, 8).

Skinner Releasing Technique practitioner and teacher Wendy Smith talks about invoking the 'ground matrix' (Smith 2018)[11]. It is through working somatically, descending into the parasympathetic zone of the body, she says, that potential is most attainable. It is most attainable because you are deep in the work of sorting what she calls 'the inner sleeve' of the body: you are seeding the ground for work to occur – you are organising the deep internal matrix. Investigation, says Smith, needs to be at a bodily level – we are too cognitively preoccupied. Somatic techniques offer one the space to work within; "create new neural pathways to create new work" says Smith (Smith 2018). Making choreographic choices from a somatic state is difficult, near impossible, according to Smith; for what the somatic state does is open potential, or make yourself available to yourself – bodily. The somatic state is not one focused on decision making.

Somatic understanding and work is important in a consideration of kinaesthesia and bodily-ness: for it is the body, making offerings through multi-dimensional and multi-sensory doings, being prefaced as the source of revelation. I acknowledge that much of what I refer to as kinaesthetic sensing/attention is brought forth by making use of somatic states and skills; the future forward to intentionally creating work is a marker of difference, as are the aesthetic considerations and choreographic choices present in this body of work that brand the works with an aesthetic authorship. Cultivating awareness (somatically) is part of an arc of doing and moving that compels an intimacy with my choreographic intuiting and eventual choices. A question I am interested in as a choreographer is also asked in somatic work: "what are you able to hold in your history while you are doing something else?" (Smith 2018). In this case, the something else is being-with the body in movement, or acts of dancing. Choreographically what can be realised, amplified and put-to-use is this: how you feel and experience life inside of your body, and how you are able to pay attention to that in the moments of moving, affects people watching you.

PROPRIOCEPTION AND POSTURING TO UN-POSTURE

...sensing peripheries...
...and destabilising the middle...

Maxine Sheets-Johnstone argues that using kinaesthesia and proprioception interchangeably is incorrect, they are not synonyms. For Sheets-Johnstone, it is too easy to name them as the same. In her explanations proprioception is

[11] I initiated two one-on-one sessions with Wendy Smith during this research, as I had worked little with Skinner Releasing Technique. In these sessions, Wendy offered imagery derived from Skinner Releasing Technique, some hands-on bodywork and directed me toward moving/dancing. Long conversations followed, personal notes and reflections were documented – see reference list.

limited to postural language, it is related only to location – where one's body may be described to be. She argues that a "preeminently posturally-tethered body is a dynamically emaciated body, one that falls short of being recognized as an animate organism" (Sheets-Johnstone 2015, 28). One concerned with proprioception over kinaesthesia, is a body in a reductive state not cognizant of the role that perception, cognition, and felt-ness play to compose our felt and lived experience; our 'bodily' reality (Sheets-Johnstone, 28). Her reference to posture is related to the imposition, moral or otherwise, related to histories of uprightness and control. Hers is a position prefacing bodily-ness over posture. Neurophysiologist Charles Scott Sherrington, author of *The Integrative Action of the Nervous System* (Sherrington 1961) replaced the term kinaesthesis with proprioception. Proprioception, said Sherrington, was related to "receptors charged with conveying stimuli provided by the body *proper* to the brain" (Sherrington in Noland 2010, 10). Prior to this, in the paper *On the Neural Processes Underlying Attention and Volition* (1892) neurologist Charles Bastian had stated that "it is all kinaesthesia" (Pearce 2010, 31). Bastian's 'it' referred to all movement. He proposed what he termed *The Kinesthesis* as an unconscious sensation, in that the brain needs muscle sense to be able to co-ordinate movement. He believed that muscle sense had to be received before any action could take place and that the site of receiving is the motor cortex. Sherrington made the distinction that proprioception was more related to balance and that kinaesthesia "is bodily sensation considered in its own right and functioning for introspection" (Sherrington in Noland 2010, 10). Here kinaesthesia is not related to actions of gesturing or moving; it is something functional for a deep internal sensing.

Because I am a dancer who has been 'highly trained', I am 'trained-into' posture. I encounter clients in my role as a bodyworker[12] and note that, often, they begin by commenting on their 'posture'. It has two common features: good and bad. Clients often begin with a type of judgement that seems to link to shame, indicating to me they believe they have had some sort of failure of will. They have not been able to halt the body's insistence on weakness, rupture and softness; facts related to biology as much as perceived human 'failure'. Their external posture tells them they are somehow failing, inept. Infrequently they reference a sense of something somatic or felt.

How do you know your body feelingly? (Oates 2017)

My Body, the Buddhist offers insight into American dance artist Deborah Hay's thinking as she makes, teaches and contemplates dancing (Hay 2000). Her work

[12] I work as a Zen Thai Shiatsu therapist. Zen Thai Shiatsu is a form of hands-on body work drawing from Chinese medicine, specifically working with meridians or energetic lines mapped through the body and with balancing the 'five elements' – air, fire, water, earth, wood. It incorporates Thai massage techniques and osteopathic concepts related to fascial chains and unwinding. It is practiced on the floor and is focused on working to calm the nervous system, addressing the whole person and the whole body. See web page: http://zenthaishiatsu.com/

has been and remains experimental, unorthodox, deeply invested in 'bodiliness'. In 1999 Ann Daly wrote that Hay's work, at age 56 years, was still some of the most radical being made (Daly and Hay 1999, 13). In the introduction to *My Body, the Buddhist*, Susan Foster speaks of Hay's work by first referencing a history of dance, wherein "the dancer learns what the body can and cannot do. The body succeeds or fails, becomes recalcitrant or insufficient. It functions in reactive response to the will being exerted over it" (Foster in Hay 2000, xiv). The will, I might argue here could be the will of the dancer, the will of the teacher, the will of history. Hay's work has been immensely important in untethering the body from adherence to traditional dance forms. She asks, bodily, what dancing can be. She is engaged in practices of ongoing de-subjectification; she works with perceptual attention, observing the actions and actively not following through on perceptual experience toward thought evaluation (Rothfield 2019). She is not concerned with dance as a form of representational posturing.

Foster states:

> "Hay explores the ramifications of multiple, distinctive metaphorical framings of physicality. Body, in turn, has offered a kind of dialogue—probing, assessing, reacting, and instigating—in response to Hay's various queries. Close and consistent attentiveness to this dialogue forms the basis of Hay's regimen for learning to dance and also generates the motional matter from which her dances are made. For Hay, choreography emerges from her ongoing reflections about bodiliness" (Foster in Hay, ix).

In *Willful Subjects*, Sara Ahmed examines wilfulness through figures who will too strongly, or not enough (Ahmed 2014). Beginning with the willful female child who *will not die* despite being buried in the deep earth, Ahmed links willfulness to power structures, labor, the role of the body, queer politics and feminism. Hers is a jaunty and complex progression that calls to question (physical) complicity and the ways wilful defiance has been acted out and suppressed through human history.

Posture, or posturing has a relationship with power and with the will; the kind of power experienced not as force, but *as a willingness* (Ahmed, 54). Ahmed says that "power involves the capacity to carry out an action despite the will of others. Resistance is not strong enough to stop those with power doing what they do" (Ahmed, 54). Ahmed implies that resistance (to forces beyond the singular individual) is futile[13]. Although power is not the focus of this research, and, like agency, is a large topic to unpack, it is pertinent to mention its presence. Should this research continue toward a longer and larger body of work, power and its relationship to kinaesthesia and bodily agency will be necessary to discuss. I utilise Hay's work here as it contributes to destabilizing premises related to dance training and dance performing; a large part of her work and practice aims to directly dissemble ideas of the confinement of the body via posture and shape forming, enacted as a form of agreeance or willingness by the dancer. Hay's work enables the dancer to ask, is resistance truly futile?

What then, of the body Australian improviser Rosalind Crisp calls the noisy, messy body? A body she describes as leaking, grumpy, unsettled, messy. In this body, the will is weakened to let sensation, delay and amplification do the work of getting you to the dancing[14]. "Don't waste your time having an opinion" says Crisp: "be fat, be multiple, be sliding, be 64 surfaces, disappear, wrap around the body, there is no movement in shapes"[15]. Crisp's practice undoes the hegemony of movement patterns inscribed in dancers' bodies; she skills dancers to understand the presence of these histories in their bodies and how to continually renegotiate them in the dancing (Crisp 2019). Her impact on a generation of dancers in Australia is palpable and wide reaching. Something may be achieved by what Crisp calls a paradox of the highest order: keeping a sense of breath and attention that allows flow on the inside while not allowing that flow to represent anything like flow on the outside[16].

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13 Bojana Cvejić – performance theorist, dramaturge, philosopher – gave an open talk as part of the Keir Choreographic Award in Melbourne, 2018. One of the questions she posed was what the specialisation of dance does beyond itself. This led me to include this question in my thinking, or rather, return to it as it was indeed a motivating question at the beginning of this research time. She spoke at length about the sensualist economy of contemporary society. We are effected, said Cvejić, by multi-sensitive sensorial exposure: the tactile to the kinaesthetic. The sensual logic that is playing out, the 'colonising of our sensorium', and the fact of the evolving logarithms of our identities (formed and compelled by machines), means you cannot be unaffected. No bodily resistance is possible. What is the role that art takes in all of this? What is transferred into the/our bodies, she asked. How, I considered, does this contribute to kinaesthetic confusion? Leach, personal notes, Fitzroy Town Hall, Melbourne, 2nd March 2018.

14 Leach, studio notes, workshop with Rosalind Crisp, 7- day intensive, Mechanics Institute, Orbost Victoria, January 2018.

15 Crisp, *ibid.*, 2018.

16 Crisp, *ibid.*, 2018.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

I am given permission to work with the internal logistics of negotiating the perilous and exciting physicality of 'instability'. I learn from falling, failing, and realising as I am doing the thing.

Leach, studio notes, Tutorial room 1, VCA, April 27th 2018, 3pm

What of the unstable body narrator as explored by Berlin based, American choreographer Meg Stuart? To encounter this body – willfully acting or being acted upon, disappearing, shape shifting – Stuart spends long periods of time excavating the body. Some of her tasks read thus: 'Looking at your own body as if it were dead', 'The last person on earth', 'Twin Body', 'This is not your body' (Peeters 2010, pp 154-165). I have used Stuart's tasks in studio processes to try to mine for a different intimacy with the body and concepts of intensity, to invoke states and to support working in energized conditions. This body – as unstable narrator – is not chaotic; it is one paying hyper-attention while being somehow 'undone' by its own doing. There is a remarkable lack of emotive projection, imperative or narrative. It is the body, willfully or not, doing the work of being with itself. This attention enacted bodily and set forth on a spectrum of momentums and scales, with various relationships to intensity, is a terrain of moving I find captivating as a choreographer. The attention that is operating before me, or the bodily-attending-to a series of conditions becomes something I can see; I can watch it moving around the body. It is alive, bold, porous, remarkable. Thus, it is an especially appealing observation of being-with the body in movement. I care how what one can and cannot 'do' are in encounter, how the person inside the doing of the dancing is negotiating, feeling into, agitating with the moving. I am interested in an un-fitting as a way of being-with. Being-with can be harmonious and unharmonious both.

...unfixing the middle...

The kinaesthetic work of educator Mabel Elsworth Todd through ideokinesis was revolutionary in saying that posture is not fixed. Barbara Clark (with Pamela Matt as editor) discusses her own work and that of her mentor Mabel Todd in *A Kinesthetic Legacy: the Life and Works of Barbara Clark* (Clark 1993). Clark notes that Todd observed the "accepted view (of correct posture) was influenced more by notions of morality than by body mechanics" (Clark, 15). Via studying the mechanics or physics of the skeletal structure, Todd proposed the possibility of discovering – through touch, gentle incremental facilitation and kinaesthetic learning – *balance through* the structure. As early as 1934, Todd observed a type of kinaesthetic confusion (Clark, 15); she worked to offer people clarity of relationship with their body via their own sense of kinaesthetic awareness. This is not dissimilar to a multifarious sea of bodyworkers and their aims in this era. This is not dissimilar to my pedagogic role in which I attempt to teach and question how to be more intimate with kinaesthetically informed mechanisms of movement; to question will and willfulness, drivers – 'what makes you go(?)', power structures and histories that bind our bodies.

In the work of Todd and Clark I found a new system for working with the kinaesthetic sense. As a technique, ideokinesis is structured and simple – sometimes seemingly overtly so. I might say it has a concreteness about it, though it requires a nuanced sensing. Over a series of five sessions with Melbourne-based ideokinesis teacher Shona Innes, I could be-with fundamental lessons (as named by Todd) such as: 'you stand where you sit', 'walking into yourself', 'centering to move'[17]. A warming sensation close to the areas we focused on in each lesson stayed present in my awareness for at least two days: strong, subtle, clear information in the deep nest of the body matrix. How could I take this information, acquired as felt experience and put it to use in a choreographic future?

...to...

...a stillness that is not...

In the chapter *'Interlude: a Mover's Guide to Standing Still'* Erin Manning cites Moshe Feldenkrais, the founder of Feldenkrais technique, who "suggests that posture is how we move *through*. Posture is how we carry our movement stilling" (Manning 2009, 44). She furthers his statement to say that posture is a "quality of moving…it is a movement with a movement reconfiguring" (Manning, 44). There exists no evaluation of good or bad, the attention is on the dynamic possibility of posture. Manning and Feldenkrais both proffer an inversion of traditionally held views of posture as a fixing and constraining imposition. Theirs is an interest in its un-stilling, of posture as another moving thing the body does; something that is neither here nor yet there, and both here and about to be there.

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17 Lessons are articulated in detail in Clark's publication, *A Kinesthetic Legacy: the Life and Works of Barbara Clark* (Clark 1993).

Standing still is a form of 'posturing' that is neither static nor absolute, says Andre Bernard (Bernard, Steinmüller, and Stricker 2006). Standing still offers us the chance to begin by noticing we have breath and gravity, a central axis or plumb line, and, importantly, potential. Standing is proposed by American Contact Improvisation pioneer, Steve Paxton, *as* potential. Standing is an unfixed doing, "standing because it's a chance to observe systems in the body" (Paxton in Nelson 2015, 38). Paxton very simply states this to be true – it is form of dynamic orientation. It is, in line with Feldenkrais, thinking of posture as a place – a location where one might activate a type of pre-accelerative sensing, leaning toward feeling potential, before acting. Paxton's famous small dance is the (inevitable) dance that happens in apparent stillness. The standing still happens he says, "and then you just hang out there and you start to feel the event that is holding you upright, that is keeping you from falling" (Paxton in Nelson, 39). The event is (I would argue) composed of the struts of the legs drawing both into the socket and releasing to the floor, sensing a soft belly, noticing the way the head balances on the atlas and axis joints.

...to potential...

In an interview with Aline Newton, Rolfing therapist, osteopath, dancer and scientist Hubert Godard speaks of orienting around the "Line" (Godard and Newton 1992). The line, for Godard, is a *central line* in close relationship with the limbic (Latin for 'edge') and archaic brain: the emotional and the pre-symbolic. What Godard speaks about is establishing a clear relationship with sky and earth. A tonic function model that works with gravity and allows the 'core' of the person to be given motility is achieved by treating, or unkinking, 'the line'. In ideokinetic training, the central line is "an idea around which a body may mobilize its energies" (Dempster 2003, 49). It is considered a "virtual entity… which has effects but no location" (ibid., 49). Godard acknowledges armor (psychological defense mechanisms that cloak the body) that can be observed *as* posturing or the extrinsic performance of the individual. "Very often" he says, "the neo-cortex or the limbic system strangles the intrinsic work of the central line" (Godard 1992, 44). Letting posture 'go missing' might dissolve an attachment to the external, muscled body classically associated with dance. Perhaps as one moves closer to the central line or central tonality of oneself the edges soften and potential to orient to something behind that: "a latitude of who you want to be" (Solnit 2017, 30), may become. But, how does one 'talk' to 'the line'?

"What if" I ask in class "there is no 'core' and the centre is everywhere?"

How do you identify a better place from which to have a conversation with your body, your sensing: is this perhaps a sensorium, a field you can see and feel yourself to be part of?

You are a nervous system, person, psychology and body in a much larger matrix...

What is the largest context you can hold as you are dancing: be a nesting of all, "hold a focus that is broad and incredibly focused at once"[18]?

Velocity is not the answer to complexity.

Leach, teaching notes/reflection, May 3rd 2019

[18] Leach, personal notes, '*Half a Shade Braver: Leadership in a Time of Magnified Uncertainty*', series of pubic talks with poet David Whyte and CEO Gayle Karen Young, National Library of Victoria, Monday 12th November 2018.

How one 'talks to the line' (outside of Rolfing body therapy sessions) may find a different answer through movement, via choreographer William Forsythe with philosopher Erin Manning in *Thought in the Act: Passages in the Ecology of Experience* (Manning 2014b). Forsythe speaks about enfolding movement back into itself, naming the process of enfolding to be a type of 'subtraction', collapsing the action back to the sensorimotor sensing:

> "Don't chain positions, chain sensations. Return the making of movement to the immediacy of its feeling. In that feeling, a different, more intense, utterly singular thinking will occur" (Forsythe in Manning 2014b, 39).

What is happening here, according to Erin Manning, is an *infolding* as opposed to an *unfolding*. It is not a dissimilar idea to Godard's orientation and ongoing talk with the 'line'. Both approaches are forms of subtraction, seeking I might argue, the body at the exact middle of itself. We are returned to Rothfield and subtraction as a destabilizing force that 'potentialises'. With attention on subtraction, in Forysthe's case the subtraction of positions, and the consequent action folding back into its source – the body – to be deployed as movement, we are offered something that sounds concrete and deeply conceptual at once. I think what Forysthe and Godard both are leaning toward is an orientation with a line that allows disappearance, orientation and emergence. A subtraction that affords potential by engaging with the idea of this line or entity, using it as a central tonality in the simultaneous thinking-doing that kinaesthesia enables.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Richard and I meet to do some moving together on Friday afternoon at Florence street. We talk about structure and sensation. Setting up a structure and feeling into as well as being able to keep seeing 'outside of oneself' - the image.

All of this 'doing', it is work. It is hard work in the fine deep st ructures of the body - concentration is needed. Then I think of Mabel Todd and the posture needing relinquishing from external lines, and some drawing toward the f iner structures that do the work of supporting and carrying us. Not for the faint hearted indeed. What should we do we wondered, here, today? Can we work where we are not always producing, but instead measuring the energy of the space to see what comes back? This gleaned from conversation with Meg Stuart a week earlier about what is happening internally and what is beyond the body. What are we waiting for or reaching toward and receiving back? What are these energies about? How do we fold everything back in to something like a central line?

Paea Leach, Studio notes, Good Friday 2018, Florence Street Studio, 2pm

NOTES FROM THE FIELD OF A BODY_MINE

There are three horizons in the body: the plate of the pubic bone, the base of the sternum (the very base-tip of the xiphoid bone), and the third a line able
to be imagined on which the skull rests.
And lilts.
They hold attention within as small lines articulated along tiny longitudes and bony surfaces.
They carry attention into expanses beyond the flesh,
To lines, vectors he said, beyond the body.

There are three diaphragms in the body: the pelvic diaphragm, the breathing diaphragm, and the Cerebellar Tentorium (named a diaphragm by osteopaths).
The buoyancy of these three operating gives us ascent; offers uplift.

There are triangles that draw us down the back body, grounding us, reminding us of the land below the feet and beneath the sacrum.
The nature of the triangular leg muscles drawing to a point is insistent: -
hamstrings and calves - themselves the correlate with the heart in Chinese medicine. Two pumps.
The triangular points of skull base, the shape of the trapezius muscles, the inverted triangle at the points of the heel.
These as well.
This information is part of the fall of the waterfall: this too, is the Dancing.

Studio notes, Leach, 29th November 2018, 3.51pm

2 BODY OF THE WORK

Histories and futures

HISTORY

In *Choreographing Empathy: Kinesthesia in Performance*, specifically in the chapter titled 'Kinesthesia' Susan Leigh Foster comprehensively tracks the history of kinaesthesia (Foster 2010, 128-181)[19]. She takes up the "concept of kinesthetic empathy as a post-colonial critique for our crushing colonial past" (Mc Neilly 2015, 1), examining empathy and kinesthesia from socio-political, psychological, geographic and neuroscientific perspectives (Mc Neilly, 1). Foster speaks of bodily understanding beginning (medically) with Galenic interpretations of corporeality via the humors of the body, fluids and *pneuma* (spirits able to be inhaled into the body). She tracks the body through time; from fluid and pneuma, toward body as machine and site of medical study and dissection. With fluid as the initial frame for thinking of one's corporeality, says Foster, "the kinesthetic sense of one's orientation in space and movement through space was the product of the sweeping and swaying gravitas of fluids saturating the body" (Foster 2010, 143). It began as a balance based in liquidity.

Most importantly, Foster acknowledges study of kinaesthesia has largely been in the realm of the sciences. Emphasis has been placed on the nervous system, brain function and, more recently and specifically, mirror neurons[20]. This is reiterated by Sheets-Johnstone in the article "Bodily resonance" (Sheets-Johnstone 2013), in which she notes there is no question that research into mirror neurons is incredibly significant. Her work as a phenomenologist is not to undermine this

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19 'Kinesthesia' can be spelt two ways, and Foster along with other authors quoted in this paper choose kinesthesia. When quoting verbatim I use the spelling employed by the author, however I prefer to use kinaesthesia - thus it is the predominantly employed version of spelling in this dissertation.

20 "About 16 years ago, a new class of motor neurons was discovered in a sector of the macaque monkey's ventral premotor cortex, known as area F5. These neurons discharge not only when the monkey executes goal-related hand movements like grasping objects, but also when observing other individuals (monkeys or humans) executing similar acts. These neurons were called 'mirror neurons' (Gallese, Fadiga, Fogassi & Rizzolatti 1996). The discovery of mirror neurons has changed our views on the relations among action, perception and cognition, and has boosted a renewed interest in the neuroscientific investigation of the social aspects of primate cognition". Cited in Vittorio Gallese (2008, 163-164) "Mirror Neurons and the Neural Exploitation Hypothesis: From Embodied Simulation to Social Cognition". In Pineda J.A (eds) Mirror Neuron Systems, *Contemporary Neuroscience* (Humana Press 2009). See He Huibin, "Reconsideration of Mimesis in Drama through the Perspective of Mirror Neurons", Forum for World Literature Studies 9 (4):618. https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=sso&db=edsglr&AN=edsgcl.531044639&site=eds-live&scope=site.

See Norman Doidge, M.D., *The Brain That Changes Itself (revised edition): Stories of Personal Triumph from the Frontiers of Brain Science*, (Scribe 2007). See Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui & Damien Jalet's work *Babel* (created 2010) in Antwerp, Belgium, in which I was an original performer from 2010-2016. In *Babel*, there is a scene in which a male character presents a long monologue on mirror neurons and why this matters for the interconnectivity of humanity. It is 'displayed' choreographically by the rest of the cast moving through a series of learnt gestures that often mirror the speaker and everyone else at intersecting points. *Babel*, (2010), You-tube link, Dash Arts 2010 program on Arabic Arts, cited 19th September 2018: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GhTQ86gY3qk

work, but instead to point out that by "bypassing the experienced kinesthetically-realised dynamics of real-life, real-time movement" (Sheets-Johnstone 2013, 28), and disregarding anything other than the brain, we are failing to recognize the ways kinaesthesia supports our individual corporeality[21]. It is a harder task, says Sheets-Johnstone, to maintain attention bodily. If this is true, then acts of dancing that focus attention on bodily-attention itself, are counteractive actions that support Sheets-Jonshtone's kinaesthetic imperative.

RELEVANCE

In *Agency and Embodiment* (Noland 2010), Carrie Noland argues that kinaesthesia as researched through sensuous scholarship has been flying under the theoretical radar[22]. Kinaesthetic experiences, Noland says, are essential to motility. The fact that knowledge gained through kinaesthesia is "*constitutive of* – not tangential to – the process of individuation" (Noland, 4) makes this so. That is, our kinaesthesia is intertwined with how we embody, or become embodied. Because sensations are logged as memory, says Noland, they "help constitute the 'embodied history of the subject', a history stored in gestural 'I can's', that determines in large part how that embodiment will continue to unfold" (ibid., 4). We individuate, or *become individuated*. We continue to learn *I can* through a gathering of vital and necessary motility and relationality.

Noland cites ethnographer Katherine Geurts' work with the Anlo-Ewe speaking community in West-Ghana to support her argument for the worth of kinaesthesia in scholarship. Though continental philosophy seemed to be waiting for neuroscience to name a sixth-sense, says Noland, Geurts work shows that the community of people she studied in West-Ghana have long possessed and used the word "seselelame" to mean "feeling in or through the

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21 In *Kinesthetic Empathy in Creative and Cultural Practices* (Intellect 2012) Dee Reynolds and Matthew Reason eds., undertake an extensive analysis of kinesthesia as related to empathy, specifically focusing on the creative arts (non-dance specific) and practice-led research. They acknowledge that engagement with mirror neurons, "marks only one element of what some scholars have named as the corporeal turn" (Reynolds and Reason, 21). Citing the work of John Tamborino and his invitation to consider that the 'corporeal turn' "demands we face the challenge of considering practices and experiences that typically sit outside of reflective consciousness" (Tamborino in Reynolds and Reason, 21) they navigate a thorough space from kinaesthesia to kinaesthetic empathy.

22 An explicit purpose for Noland's publication of *Agency and Embodiment* is to directly address what she sees to be a critical neglect; for, "neither constructivist nor affect-centered theories of agency have much to say about kinesthetic experience and motor intentionality" (Noland, 4).

body" (Noland, 12)[23]. For the Anlo-Ewe people, kinaesthesia is not abstract; the actual structure of their sensorium is different, and affected by a myriad of cultural and social constructs and forces. Coming to know the sensrorium is as important a construction of knowledge as is sight and hearing – it supports and affords being in the world. After discussing Geurts work in detail, Noland states:

> "Kinaesthesia is worth our attention, not because kinaesthetic sensation is more truthful that any other modality of experience (it "cannot" lie) but because it has as much epistemological weight as any other (it might not lie). It can be used to judge the accuracy of other knowledges and beliefs" (Noland, 12).

Martha Eddy observed that:

> "Neuro-science is helping to describe what occurs during somatic processes. However, even while neuroscience is becoming the rage, getting up (or lying down) to learn through movement is still a rare educational experience. Perhaps the growth of scholarship in somatic education, neuroscience, and creativity (as in dance) will boost the investigation of each discipline and their interaction" (Eddy, 22).

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[23] Ethnographer Kathryn Geurts in *Culture and the Senses: Bodily Ways of Knowing in an African Community* (Geurts 2002) undertakes an extensive research of the history of the senses, to attempt to fill what she sees as "the gap between cognitive models of perception and the phenomenal level of sensation, experience, and bodily existence by first examining how culture affects the very basic, fundamental stages of this whole process and by then using the analytic categories of practice, embodiment, sensibility, and identity to trace how these fundamentals affect more abstract processes" (ibid., 6). She argues Western (Euro-American) ways of understanding that preface cognitive and neuro science advances are limited as they fail to acknowledge the *bodily* ways we come to know ourselves and be in the world: "From Aristotle to Aquinas and Descartes, (however), cultural traditions have sustained a five-senses model that privileges mental representations and external modes of knowing. This construct, I argue, is essentially a folk ideology" (ibid., 7). She observes that, given the different ways perception and 'bodilyness' is learnt and *performed* by the Anlo-Ewe-speaking community, they are afforded a way-of being in the world that is entirely different to a Euro-American/Western model. She elaborates on the ways our (Western) sensorium is structured (and limited by) our cultural influences and shared embodied performances. The word that occurs frequently in relation to the Anlo-Ewe-speaking community is balance. Their *felt* lives are focused on balance; meaning internal physical balance, the actual capacity to balance objects on one's head, and the concept of balance in one's life.

Noland observes the tendency to bypass the somatic or kinaesthetic, in favor of seeking links to the brain. It may be that, as Sheets-Johnstone argues, it is simply more difficult to be-with kinaesthetic concepts. Neurological research certainly prefaces the brain and thus Noland and Eddy may be correct. And yet, in the ten years since Eddy's above comment was made, there has been an increasing turn to the corporeal within neuroscience and neuro-physiology for example[24]; via the establishment of creative spaces for researching mental health, the body and addiction such as the 'The Brain Park' (Monash University)[25] and within phenomenological bioethics[26]. These are burgeoning fields to which dance practitioners, because of their central focus on body based learning, the acknowledgement of tacit knowledge as knowledge and the interest in mining language to speak to embodied experiences, have the capacity to contribute.

For Noland there is an imperative, much in the same way as for Sheets-Johnstone, to acknowledge the deep and fundamental importance of kinaesthesia. Psychiatrist Bessel Van der Kolk says, "our sensory world takes shape even before we are born. We start off *being* our wetness, hunger satiation, and sleepiness" (italics are author's, Van der Kolk 2014, 95). I touch briefly on fields that begin to draw the body closer, to recognise its 'involvement' and necessity within research fields. I do this to highlight and reiterate that dance research into 'bodily-ness' through manifold forms of somatic and embodied practices, modes and means of moving and analysing moving, improvising and choreographing, are relevant to conversations unfolding in a myriad of fields.

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[24] The developments named by Foster in *Choreographing Empathy: Kinesthesia in Performance*, gave rise to the study of sensation and perception to include not just the mind but research on the body's role as well—by physiologists, by sensationistic psychologists, and by researchers in a new discipline labeled 'psychophysics'. Kathyrn Geurts observes: "According to one historian of the senses, (such) technological innovations led (in part) to a shift in intellectual climate so that the *measurement of sensation* became 'an appropriate and reasonable undertaking'" (cited in Geurts 2002, 8). Researchers in the fields of psychology, psychiatry, neuropsychology (among others) are now attempting to measure Emotional Security (ES), Interoceptive Awareness (IAw) and Interoceptive Accuracy (IA). Much of this work is being undertaken to work with trauma patients. See Bessel Van Der Kolk M.D., *The Body Keeps the Score* (Penguin Books 2014).
See Cali Guiseppe et al., "Investigating the Relationship Between Interoceptive Accuracy, Interoceptive Awareness and Emotional Susceptibility." *Frontiers in Psychology* Vol 6 (2015): 1-13., See Jo Marchant, *'CURE: a Journey into the Science of Mind Over Body'*, (The Text Publishing Company 2016)., See Joseph J Loizzo., "The Subtle Body: an Interoceptive Map of Central Nervous System Function and Meditative Mind–Brain–Body Integration." *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1373 (1):78-95., See David Emmerson., "Yoga as an Adjunctive Treatment for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: a Conversation with David Emmerson" in *'Yoga and Eating Disorders'*, edited by Joe Kelly (Routledge Press, 2016).

[25] *The Brain Park*, web page, cited 13th June 2019: http://bmh.org.au/research-divisions/mental-health/dwtef

[26] See Jenny Slatman, "Multiple Dimensions of Embodiment in Medical Practices." *Medicine, Health Care, And Philosophy* 17 (4):549-557., Havi Carel, "Phenomenology as a Resource for Patients." *Journal of Medicine & Philosophy* 37 (2):96-113.

AGENCY

> I often teach large groups of young women, aged somewhere between seventeen and twenty-three years old. At some point in my guidance around felt-ness and the importance the spine, the material of the bones and questions about why even bother dancing; I introduce the word 'agency'. I ask what they think it means. My favourite response: 'it means to be an agent, like a spy, a secret agent - you know?'.
>
> Leach, anecdotal reflection, 2019

Author, feminist and climate activist Rebecca Solnit claims a "lack of jurisdiction over one's body is a form of silencing" and "a way of making what one says have no value" (Solnit 2017, 27). No voice correlates to no agency. If dance is a body-based form, voicing could be said to have a metaphoric expression through, or as, the body in motion; the 'voicing' is being pulled through the moving – a bodying voice. If no voice correlates to no agency according to Solnit, what kind of silence are dancers (still) being trained into? If kinaesthesia is not considered with more rigor pedagogically, how is agency able to be introduced? With this thought in mind it is not hard to understand why the student who said agency is about being '*like, a spy*' did not relate it to her own sense of self as related to her *bodily* sense of self.

Agency is the "technical term for the feeling of being in charge of your life" (Van der Kolk 2014, 97) and is directly linked to our kinaesthesia, according to Bessel Van Der Kolk. Agency begins, he says, with "what scientists are calling 'interoception', our awareness of subtle sensory, body-based feelings" (Van der Kolk, 97). Agency begins in our awareness of the constant change of inner and outer environments, and is enacted as an ability to mobilise and manage the complexity of information received as movement or via 'gesture' (as Noland terms it). To name actions as gestures, Noland explains, allows and invites an opportunity for *interoceptive* or *kinaesthetic* awareness.

Noland argues that interoception and kinaesthesia are interchangeable. However, I hold that to name them as the same is to miss a fine point: interoception as understood by psychiatrists and psychologists is concerned with focused awareness on the internal body. It is about slowing down, or down-regulating the sympathetic nervous system or limbic brain. Kinaesthetic awareness is, as I have tried to indicate, implicated with posture, perception and proprioception but still may be spoken of as its own sensing system. It is a sense on the move: it is movement-moving and observing the moving as a qualitative experience. Kinaesthesia perhaps may be thought of as beginning as interoception (understood via somatic states or prompts). The sensing is deployed into kinetic action; one becoming into the other – a co-arising. By naming movement as gesture Noland is, however, pointing to the premise that kinaesthetic experience produced by acts of embodied gesturing (moving), renders bodies individuating with large gestural deviance (Noland 2010, 2-4).

In the introduction to *The Primacy of Movement* Sheets-Johnstone states that "movement is at the root of our sense of agency" (Sheets-Johnstone 2011, i). This is my fundamental argument for the relevance of turning toward kinaesthesia. 'Letting go' of embodiment enables a more direct encounter with the very sense that builds our capacity to embody. It is a sense available to all, put-to-use with intention, by few. It is this activated agency, amplified by a conscious turning toward, and how it is put-to-use by the kinetically engaged dancer, that is of interest to me choreographically. Thus, it is of interest to develop a pedagogy and language that more thoroughly enables this turning toward. Bodily activation of agency is further related to discourses related to self-determination, the colonisation of the body in dance traditions, waves of feminism, finding voice and social activism. It has ties to performative interests in vulnerability, rupture, minimalism, intensity, presence and affect. It has contextual relationship to choreographic choices related to ethics, image construction and politics. Sheets-Johnstone and Noland both argue for further academic inclusion and research and indeed, better use of the world of kinaesthesia. In doing so, we are asked to think beyond "the hazard of thinking of bodies in the abstract, for example, rather than in the fine sensory-kinetic terms demanded by corporeal analyses" (Sheets-Johnstone, xviii).

3

BODY AND THE WORK

Attention on the attention

In my journals and notebooks over the years I have written down attention more times that I can count.
I have skated along thresholds of dance and physicality, nurtured interests in Buddhism and yoga, experimented with practices of breath and intensity. Across all experiments has been the mantra: attention.

What am I paying attention to?
How am I doing that?
Can I be better at it?

Leach, studio notes, May 25th 2019

ATTENTION HAS MORE BITE

Awareness, according to Kent De Spain in *Landscape of the Now: a Topography of Movement Improvisation* is a "state of being open to stimuli, of being receptive to what comes your way" (De Spain 2014, 168). Awareness has a wide, telescopic lens he says. Attention, on the other hand, has the defining feature of intentional focus on a "thing": the mind is interactional, the body brings forth its own form of attention. De Spain tells us that "attention is yang to the yin of awareness" (De Spain, 168). According to Chinese medicine Yang is heat and it is masculinity, it is fire up the back of the body. Yang is associated with the power-house muscles: calves, hamstrings, gluteals (buttocks), the muscles of the back. Yin is softer: it is watery, rhythmic, concerned with flow and needs deep-long-rest. Yin is feminine and moving down the front body. So, one is sharp attention and drive and one has a wider and softer presence[27].

De Spain's argument in the chapter titled *Attention* (De Spain, 167–172) is that a style of movement is not what separates improvisation practices from other

[27] Tacit knowledge emergent from my work as a Zen Thai Shiatsu practitioner, previously mentioned. See footnote #13.

forms of dance. Instead, it is the "nature of the attention to what is happening in the moment" (De Spain, 167). If we understand improvisation to be *sui generis* concerned with presence and attention to each moment as its defining feature, and these moments are occurring or becoming in direct and animated relationship with the *improvising* body; he seems to be saying that attention as practised by the improviser, is unique. It is not dependent, he says, on a studio and can become, for the improviser performer, an en-activated attention operating all the time. Once 'operational' this attention can expand and endure, informing the attentive (improviser performer) of their bodily-ness in the most mundane and quotidian of tasks (De Spain, 167). De Spain is saying this attentive attending becomes a way of being in the world; opening, he says, the receptive body to a larger field of creativity.

He states:

> "The process of attention has more than one function in improvisation. It can help us bring our skills and resources to bear in moving and choice-making, but it can also begin to bring the unacknowledged structures of our interior world to the edge of consciousness (where we can at least sense their shadowy presence, if not see them clearly). Like meditation, improvisation is a contemplative practice, a tool for discovery and self-awareness. And as with meditation, improvisation sometimes allows us to focus our attention in the moment on how we focus our attention in the moment, bringing us face to face with our limitations and capabilities….it takes an effort of will to maintain awareness throughout an improvisation…" (De Spain, 170).

De Spain speaks from the point of view of practitioner improviser as this is where his physical work and revelations have occurred. Indeed, his book is focused on nodes of improvisation practice and philosophies – sensation, time, space, structure, cognition, emotion. De Spain interviews incredibly experienced practitioners for whom practising without attention would be meaningless;

thus, De Spain privileges bodily attention as operating more thoroughly in the domain of improvisation. However, just as it is possible to dance in an attention-free manner, it is no doubt possible to improvise in the same way. I am not refuting that there is a heightened mode of attention occurring, understood and practised by life-long improvisers. In this dissertation, I am trying to suggest that attention is equally important for learned choreography, otherwise it (the moving) does not capture my interest.

What if both forms – improvised and choreographed dancing – shared the premise that you are not making something happen, you are not the dancing? You are engaged bodily with the unfolding or the becoming, or in Erin Manning's words "the thinking-feeling that is movement-moving" (Manning 2014, 41). You are enfolded: in attention to what is, implicit as subject in the deployment of movement in varying proximity to will – but in an always intimate proximity with embodied 'betweens', and in a (sometimes fiercely) attentive dialogue with attention. If repetition teaches the nervous system, as stated by Smith, then the repeatable doing of choreography can also act as a "tool for discovery and self-awareness", as De Spain claims. To be repeatable does not have to imply a lack of spontaneity.[28]

It is important to note that De Spain's work focuses on American practitioners; given I am in Australia, and thus influenced bodily by dance lineages and practitioners based here, as well as being a member of a community of dancers (here), I turn my attention to two vastly different Australian makers –improviser performer Rosalind Crisp and choreographer Russell Dumas. Some of my most recent physical experiences have been practising dancing with Crisp: I have attended a series of workshops (2017-2019) and been invited to practice with her and a select few others during a recent residency. I arrived at Crisp's work after dancing and practising with improvisers she had worked with, such as Joanna Pollitt (Perth), Olivia Millard (Melbourne), Lizzie Thomson (Sydney) and Rhiannon Newton (Sydney). The time spent moving with Crisp in the frames that define her practice, has been incredibly informative; for hers is, ultimately, a practice of attention. Russell Dumas is an entirely different maker, and his work and thinking I had only heard about via third-person dialogue. I called in the fragments of what I knew about Russell and looked further; discussion of Dumas' work is only through what I could read, thus it is not spoken from a body who knows his choreographic ethos subjectively. It was in fact not until this year, 2019, that I saw his work performed live[29]. By engaging with these two

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[28] For the reader: as a dancer who has practised and performed improvisation and worked with choreographers (as is more 'traditionally' understood), I am aware that there is a large discourse concerning what these two terms mean - what they have in common and where they differ, in theory and practice both. I understand this point and acknowledge its importance. The scope of this research cannot include a breakdown of this discourse, and chooses to preference kinaesthetic attention. The terms are 'relayed' as understood primarily through my own accumulated bodily history.

[29] *Cultural Residencies 2020*, choreographed by Russell Dumas, Dance Massive 2019 at Dancehouse, 24th March 2019, 5pm.

artists who believe in the robustness of dance to speak for itself, I could consider kinaesthetic attention in practice and choreography, and lean further into figuring my own authorship.

DANCING WITH ROS

Australian improviser Rosalind Crisp has been developing a body of work she calls d a n s e since 2005, between Australia and Paris, where she has worked extensively with Carolyn Carlson and Isabelle Ginot. In *Bodies of Thought: Twelve Australian Choreographers* (Brannigan and Baxter 2014), Isabelle Ginot writes about the work of d a n s e. The work is constructed and investigated via 'scores' that awaken or enliven the subject toward attention. This is honed by Crisp in the company of other dancers via a series of named scores such as 'two bones away from each other', moving from 'the organs then the bones' for example, and specific directives like 'fatten the beginning'. The specific nature of the attention Crisp is interested in is not related to body parts, even if one kind of listening is present and needed, nor to the qualities of movements (Ginot in Brannigan and Baxter, 23). D a n s e is engaged with the "emergent process of the movement, its production logic" (ibid., 23). It is a body first practice that examines the how of the thinking-moving, as Crisp's interest lies not in the movement itself, but the attention of the dancer[30].

"Perception is nourished by attentive action"[30] says Crisp.

There are various ways of approaching perception and beginning, maintaining and sharpening attention and embodying tone and time. The how is supported into being by constraints/ tools specific to Crisp, developed over more than twenty years (ibid., 20). I came to understand when practising with Crisp that there are certain movements that (might be) unwelcome. These movements are what Crisp calls 'learned pathways', or actions with an explicit 'trained into the body' history. The movement itself, or the 'learned pathway', is not actually the issue. Crisp discusses this via the term '*fait accompli*' – which I take to mean, a known pathway or shape that begins and reaches an accomplished ending without attention. If one slows down and delays the beginning, does not attack the moving, subtracts desire to 'complete' it too quickly – potential opens. It is here, Crisp says, at an incipient pre-beginning that one has the most agency to

[30] Crisp's articulation of her practice as one focused on attention and the how of the moving began forming in 2005, prior to naming it d a n s e. To read about Crisp's work from the point of view of a dancer at that time, see Joanna Pollitt "The Demanding World of Rosalind Crisp: Three Points of Immersion by a Sometime Inhabitant", in *Brolga* Issue 25, Published by the Australian Dance Council, Ausdance Inc. 2006.

[31] Leach, studio notes, practicing with Rosalind Crisp: Mechanics Hall, Omeo, Regional Victoria, January 2017.

attend to the action about to happen more directly. Once begun an action enacts its own *fait accompli*; thus, in Crisp's mind, it has carved its own fate and it is not of interest. The focus, says Ginot, is not on what is made, but on how it is generated. The how is the thing.

Importantly, "to become a contributor to her ongoing project d a n s e it is necessary to have gone through other dances, techniques and territories, but equally to have the desire to leave them behind" (Phitoussi in Brannigan and Baxter, 25). This process of leaving behind what we no longer need Crisp terms 'undoing'. It is the means to begin corporeal preparation, it is the desire to begin where you are with a willingness to unbind and attend. To harness what you know in a sense, to put the information to use. There is no hierarchy of movement or limbs and no surface too small or conversely too large. "So, apart from the qualities of movement and perception oriented around weight, practising d a n s e means cultivating a certain detachment, a ferocious attention in a given moment, yet also a kind of buoyancy, a consciousness expanding beyond the self" (Ginot in Brannigan and Baxter, 22).

Indeed, to practice d a n s e does lead one to engage in moving with a certain detachment and trains one's capacity to pay attention to excruciating detail. So far, I have claimed that my interest is in not actively undoing or dismantling learned 'dancerly' habits, and clarity around this claim has emerged from working with Crisp. I also note that I pay attention to kinetic movement; I listen-in to the anatomy that is working in the moving; and this is a distinct difference between Crisp and I – her interest is not kinetic in at all the same way. Working with Crisp highlighted my interest in kinetic specificity, and led me to realise it is entirely possible to train the acuity of this skill via working intentionally with kinaesthesia. This leads to being able to focus fiercely on the internal velocities, or the complexity of the doing in the dancing; it is part of the doing of dancing that I revel in physically and imaginatively, and a skill I notice and gravitate to when watching other dancers.

ENCOUNTERING RUSSELL

In stark contrast to the work of Crisp, in terms of what the moving is or looks 'like', is Australian Choreographer Russell Dumas, for whom "dance is not a peripheral entertainment but is central to the business of living" (Dempster 1990, 1). To draw the work and thinking of Dumas into this paper is an unusual choice, given I have chosen to speak directly from my subjective or felt-lived experience, and indeed I have never danced with or for Dumas. My relationship to him has been proximal and occurred via a type of dancer to dancer physical relay; fragments of stories and conversations caught in the slipstream of doing 'other' dancing. In the

performance lecture *Once I was a Horse* (refer Appendix 2, p 112-113), I speak about my desire to take an active move away from a current genre of dance that does not seem to preface dancing or the body; as a performance form, it is known as 'conceptual dance', 'durational dance', 'non-dance' (refer Appendix 2, p 112). I researched backwards as I was seeking a frame of choreographic thinking and approach that might help me get my bearings in relation to kinaesthetic attention. Seeking an Australian choreographer who has been written about extensively and whose work is concerned not with mimicry or narration but a form of dance "that poses and explores questions" (Dempster 1990, 1), framed and informed by an awareness of various cultural influences and other disciplines and practices such as anthropology, philosophy and film (idib.,1) – I decided to read into the work of Dumas. His rigour is appealing.

Elizabeth Dempster edited an extensive case study on Russell Dumas with Deakin University (Dempster 1990). It contains interviews, essays and reviews published after Dumas returned to Australia in 1976 (after working in Europe for companies *Rambert Ballet, Nederlands Dans Theater*, *Twlya Tharp*, *Trisha Brown Dance Company* et al.). In this body of collected writing Dempster follows the work he undertook with his company *Dance Exchange*, founded with Nanette Hassall, framing Dumas as choreographer, performer, teacher, writer and as a kind of "cultural ambassador, promoting and co-coordinating international exchange between dance artists from the USA, Europe, Asia and Australia" (Dempster 1990, 1). It is in the intersection and exchange of "multiple modes of action" (ibid.,1) that Dumas's work and artistry locates. Dumas's method of merging multiple threads appealed to me. His extensive physical experience as a dancer, subjective cultured view of the world and consequent work realising the moving-thinking body as *part* of that world supported my own thinking of body as complex locus or conduit for the fall-through of different data streams. His work proposes a type of 'essentialism' I am drawn to.

Dumas works with setting and knowing material. Indeed, setting material in-order-to know it thoroughly, thus the movement research undertaken in the studio engages with choreographed movements. The ensuing work of the dancer is in coming to know the history, as he calls it, of the movements. Sally Gardner in '*Russell Dumas: Managing Instability*' (Brannigan and Baxter 2014, 10-12) says the history Dumas speaks of is both internal and external and is managed with other named 'thematics' such as 'falling behind', which is: "a way to both understand the implication and activation of deep survival reflexes in the body, and to throw into relief our habitual or taken-for-granted moving in front-and to the front-of our bodies" (Gardner in Brannigan and Baxter, 11).

Dumas names all the moving as research under the larger term 'managing instability': a governing term that houses 'falling behind' with a series of other named 'thematics'. Working with 'managing instability' assists the dancer to engage with his or her own self-organising structures and habits, so that questions

may be posed rather than endings fixed, and one may work in a type of open-ended environment (Gardner in Brannigan and Baxter, 11-12). The work of his dancing acknowledges time passing and bodies changing and ageing, as inherent aspects of the evolution of (a) choreography. The histories being understood by the movements as they are coming to be known are of the past situated in present, changing within the body dancing 'now'.

Movement, for Dumas, can reveal the complex relation of things between things, rather than act as an illustrative form, forging easy connections of thought to moving to emotion. Questions about relationality can be present as can considerations of virtuosity and what movements might be or become given the conditions (history and adjacent techniques such as somatic trainings) they are held by. According to Dumas, virtuosity, as it has been traditionally trained in dance, "always seemed to be fairly-dumb, too obvious or just vulgarly muscular" (Dumas in Brannigan and Baxter, 4). He proposes something more nuanced and thought-through. His ethos and methodology prefaces the subjectivity of the dancer and her sense of herself sensing in movement. Dumas embraces a non-hurried methodology as he incorporates new forms of information into dancing. In relation to Geurts' observations of the Anlo-Ewe-speaking community, I think he is referring in part to what Geurts understands to be the structure of one's *sensorium*. It is moving in a field of sensing where nothing is separated – 'dance as central to the business of living'.

I put-to use fragments of thoughts from the work of Crisp and Dumas to place a lens of thinking over my own work – to question what is established or fixed in my dancing, thinking, conceptualising, and consequent choreographic work. I acknowledge their work is not discussed in any critical length in this paper, but find fragments of their work interesting to note. I draw a series of connections from Crisp and Dumas' work to mine, constructing my own poetic, contemplative cartographies and deviations; knowing also that their work is entirely different to my work and value systems. I contemplate my desire or tendency to thread to 'an-everywhere' with body as locus: a thinking that is supported by what Guattari, with Deleuze, called "lines of flight" (Elliott 2014, 37). I imagine lines connecting me to a past, present and future; toward and away from myself, practising and making dance in the current now. I share with Dumas and Crisp that movement has a certain robustness, that dance training can (and tends to) train attention away from sensing and trusting the body. This in-trained dulling of attention infers that dancing as a way of being, or as Dumas calls it, a "lived experience" is diminishing (Dumas in Dempster 1990, 7).

Importantly Dumas, like Crisp, asserts that what is needed is trust in the body: "returning the body as authority, rather than it being something that had to be overcome and mortified" (Dempster, 5). Dumas and Crisp's work is based in the practising of dancing: methods emergent from the practice leading to

choreographed works. Indeed, they are hugely different people and makers, but they are both interested in the potential of movement. Via expanding, augmenting, dislocating, rupturing, constraining and framing dancing, they are asking questions about what dance does, and can do. Their shared ethos of unhinging and de-weaving, the role of attention, and the imperative of trust in the body doing the dancing has fed my practice and challenged my values when creating. What appeals most is this statement from Dumas: "My understanding of practice embraces an embodied understanding of the past in the present for the future. I utilise the notion of provenance as a strategy to resist the vacuousness of much contemporary dance" (Dumas in Brannigan and Baxter 2014, 16). This statement returns me to Arendt and the necessity of finding language – in the case of Dumas provenance has reverberations.

I go to ground: I lay down.

Focusing on attention makes the dancing interesting to me. Habits are useful and not unwelcome in the studio. The *fait accompli* that Crisp objects to is also of interest to me. This because I am taken by the person doing the dancing; the who of who they are that seems to emerge in the gaps afforded by engaging in kinetically complex moving. Observing decisions in relation to embodied histories of individuals before me forms part of the fold; this all contributes to dialogue of the 'betweens': it is all considered in relation to the 'strange-fold' of Kristeva. I observe, and am implicitly a part of, a society of people whose attention span is entirely brief and myopic or, focused on a screen: dancers are doing something other – consistently. Dancers are paying a long attention, to a whole body-land, while sometimes dealing with Crisp's paradox of flow on the inside not manifesting as flow on the outside. Given everything I know and do not know, I consider what is the now of this now? What is being pulled through bodies doing dancing, now? How does a body: as net and mass, as breath and site, as history of form, thought and theory – move? What is it that I am doing that is somehow different, in a huge field of relationality?

"It was beautiful because of its use,
it was beautiful in use" (Dumas in Dempster 1990, 5).

POETIC ENDINGS

David Whyte says that poetry is the "way humans speak when they are naturally on their edge, the poet is stealing for a revelation"[32]. Through 'attentionality',

[32] David Whyte, National Library of Victoria, Monday 12th November 2018, see footnote #26.

which he defines as a meeting of intention and attention, one can come to ground in something one is yet to recognise.
"What would it be like", he says, "to drink from another source?"
"This is, of course" (he says) "located in the body for there is no other place in which you can stand"[33].

"Disappear into the originality of it all.
Make an invitation.
Put your voice in the body on the ground.
Practice the presence that is behind your voice.
People are relieved when you show them a way
out of their imprisonment for which they are not blamed.
Listen to the point of not-knowingness.
Pay attention.
Engage with attentionality"[34].

Attention is key, so say all the improvisers interviewed by De Spain[35], as do many Australian improvisers I have practised with and been influenced by: Joanna Pollitt, Alice Cummins, Olivia Millard, Rosalind Crisp for example[36]. Without it you cannot make choreographic decisions as you go, without it you can become lost in a sea of sensation and even 'emotion'. Attention has "more bite" says Deborah Hay (De Spain, 169) – it does not look like something, and that is its delight:

> "The closest analogy (to dance) is that dance is where I practice attention, alertness, and awake-ness in my body that I have at no other time. It is like playing awake, like a dog to its master devotedly, unabashedly. Whatever it takes, I will take it on, to experience that awake-ness in my body. That's where I am touched when I am looking at dance. It awakens me"
>
> (Daly and Hay 1999, 14).

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33 David Whyte, *ibid*., 2018.

34 David Whyte, *ibid*., 2018.

35 De Spain interviews improvisers Anna Halprin, Lisa Nelson, Deborah Hay, Steve Paxton, Simone Forti, Barbara Dilley and Nancy Stark Smith.

36 In the past fifteen-years, I have practised improvisation with many Australian based dancers and makers. I mention these four women here as they have influenced my dancing and thinking in the last fifteen years in very different ways.

WORK OF THE BODY

Researching bodily

EXPERIMENT NUMBER ONE

Six propositions for imagined choreographies

MOTIVATION

My interest for this paper was not in examining how to transfer kinaesthetic acuity or attention. Nor was it entirely driven by choreographic futures. I was and am interested in the processes of process. I began by returning to a work *body like a neon sign* I had made at Dance North[37] as I began this research formally. It was made in the hot house regional town of Townsville (far north Queensland), with a trio of highly competent dancers. We rehearsed in a temporary dwelling shared by a local mining company, so our rehearsals often featured large burly bearded men clad in high-vis bantering away and peering in the windows as they passed. This oddity of place or bleeding of worlds, coupled with my recent experience of movement 'reduction' from a total hip replacement surgery enabled something peculiar. Freed from the confines of city, unable to 'dance' and finding myself in a new spatial relation to heat and miners, I was in a new conversation with what dance is and could be. It was peculiar, yes, and freedom finding. *Body like a neon sign* is technically outside the purvey of this research; however, I drew from it for the entire research period as it seemed to encapsulate my primary concerns and values, yet to be evaluated through a practice-led research period or lens in a university context.

The content of *body like a neon sign* moves from recognisable jazz movement, to improvisation and body-states, unison and 'overly presentational' trios. To consider my interest in the democracy of movement in that no one body

[37] *body like a neon sign*, created for the Tomorrow Makers season at Dancenorth by Paea Leach, Townsville QLD, May 2017, vimeo link, posted by Paea Leach: https://vimeo.com/256573887

part or move is more important than any other, and to reiterate to myself that innovative steps were not the focus, I stole movements (hence the jazz moves). The content also includes movements stolen directly from Pina Bausch's *Le Sacre du Printemps* (choreographed 1975)[38], learnt via You Tube. In the original work for Dancenorth the sound is relentless, experimental and grating, ending oddly with *Bloody Mother Fucking Arsehole*, sung by Martha Wainwright. At this point the dancers are running topless with self-made flower garlands on their heads. I asked the dancers to trust what is alive in the body. I was curious about what was being 'pulled through the body' in the doing of their dancing.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Spatial activation.
It is so quiet.
Dance as a form of protest.
Bring yourself to yourself moving.
These things fall in, we fall into them, we are making them.
A short burst of life.

Leach, studio notes, Townsville, 17th April 2017, 3.46pm

Fig 5 & 6 *body like a neon sign*, choreography by Paea Leach, Tomorrow Makers Season, Dancenorth, April 2017. Photographer: Natasha Mulhall

38 *La sagra della primavera – Igor Stravinsky*, featuring *Le Sacre du Printemps* (The Rite of Spring) by Pina Bausch, You-tube video, posted by Wundershare, January 11th, 2013: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUfj3vGo4n4

A year after working on *body like a neon sign* in Townsville, I initiated time with professional dancers Richard Cilli and Rhiannon Newtown to engage with movement as research in more direct relation to my concerns in this paper and body of work. I began by teaching them part of the work *body like a neon sign*, primarily the jazz 'routine'. They are both highly skilled and 'trained' dancers but, importantly, they have fine skills in thinking-through and being-with moving. Rhiannon is a thoughtful and sharp improviser; she operates on a slow, wide and patient spectrum of time and temporality. Richard has a spatial accuracy and facility that is rigorous, enduring and emotive. They are sophisticated dancers with a way of being as humans in the world that I admire and respect. This felt necessary, given I have questions as a choreographer about relationality; what is the interface between what we do in a studio and the world just beyond its doors? I was, too, wondering about personal value systems and ethics.

Choreography, said Susan Leigh Foster, is perhaps able to act "not as a repository of knowledge but as an orienting tool for determining and affirming a system of beliefs" (Foster 2010, 301-302). If we are paying attention to what is happening bodily, I questioned what am I affirming in relation to my values as I read and direct dancers and movement, make decisions and create work?

PROVOCATION

Conceptual Ethos

The kin in kinaesthesia links to *kinship*: of the same nature or having affinity. Contemporary dancers are, for me, a kinfolk of their own-kind: moving-thinkers with a compulsion to synthesis: an *oddkin* of the *doing-dancing* kind. Dancers are relational beings becoming together.

Kin, says Donna Haraway in *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulcene* (Haraway 2016), is "a wild category that all sorts of people do their best to domesticate" (Haraway, 2). From her point of view as a multi-species feminist theorist, she states there is an emerging necessity to consider how we can build a new type of "kin out of an oddkin" (ibid., 4). In a sort of statement of fact, she says we must stay with the trouble of where we are (environmentally, socially, politically) and consider the imperative that "we become-with each other or not at all" (ibid., 4).

Hers is an argument toward with-ness: thinking-with, being-with, living and dying-with. I proposed this with-ness could be apprehended by attending to kinaesthetic attention because it acts like a sensory nest on the move: it holds the body (together), it allows passage through and qualitative observation. It is structural, textural, enclosing. I took Haraway's proposal, applying it as an

overall lens, as I observed each proposal being encountered bodily by Richard and Rhiannon.

TIMELINE

- Four days full-time at the Substation, Newport (October 24-27, 2017): I was artist in residence at the Substation in 2017. I used part of this time to focus on this research[39]. This ended with filmed documentation of an imagined future work.
- Twelve studio sessions between 2 and 3 hours with Richard and Rhiannon between March and August 2018 (VCA Studios, Melbourne CBD, Florence Street Studio, Seddon).

STRUCTURE

- I offered a guided physical beginning: or guided improvisation and warming in. The content of this was informed by my practice and current interests, orienting around kinaesthetic mapping or attending to internal geographies and connections. The aim was to warm up attention with a shared direction or intention. For example: I may speak through working with the connections of the psoas muscle and its pathways and landmarks, the relationship of bone and weight, attending to the choreography of breath. The beginning was always different. The information is kinetic, poetic and subjective; emergent from my varied history, but fundamentally centered on nuanced internal attention and shared beginnings.
- Initially we worked with improvisation in an 'open sense' – timed scores, watching and responding, duetting. We were feeling-into this work together.
- In October 2017, we worked with *body like a neon sign*. We learnt the structure and pulled it apart: improvising inside of the structure as it was and then extending and augmenting concepts begun in the original work.
- In 2018, I proposed we work with a series of scores, which I then titled *'Six propositions for imagined choreographies'*. The terrain of these was influenced by the works I was reading about. I imagined they had choreographic futures, though the research remained in what was occurring, or the dialogue they gave rise to. The future remained an imagined something.
- Each score was timed, the dancers working for 50 minutes on each provocation. In this time, I observed and wrote notes.

[39] Due to an incredible lack of space at VCA appropriate for dance, I spent much time working away from the university.

- After each score, we talked about the kind of 'field' the instruction, metaphor or score invited. We talked through what was enjoyable or difficult within that encounter. I did not direct or future forward with a great amount of intent. I wanted to see what it was like to maintain a bodily and inter-corporeal attention, together, and what that would yield. I began to imagine future choreographic renderings but I chose to stay with the mild confusion and delight that emerged while watching two dancers attend to their attention- together. What was it about what they were doing, and possibly who they are how they are in the world, that made the potential feel potent and enlivening?

Fig 7, 8 & 9 *Six Propositions for Imagined Choreographies*: research period #1 with Richard Cilli and Rhiannon Newton at Substation, Newport, October 2017. Stills taken from video footage. Filmed by David Meagher.

THE 'SIX PROPOSITIONS FOR IMAGINED CHOREOGRAPHIES'

1. The dark, the animal what is here? What is difficult? what rarely comes to light?
2. My body wants to be disarmed - what is freedom like? If you release everything you have nothing to work with, no integrity. What is a body untethered?
3. Rest on what you know and work in delay - how is history (yours) here?
   Maybe the back body is involved in ideas of resting and waiting.
   How do you work in delay (and not execute movement, not 'kill' it)?
4. I pulse with field potential: how is rhythm here and what does that feel like? What is beneath rhythm?
5. I stand behind the going and I make it go.
6. What is coming back to me? In relation to more than me, how is it something together?

METHOD

In the documentary, *Feelings are Facts: The Life of Yvonne Rainer*, postmodern American choreographer Yvonne Rainer says "once you attack the prescriptions and insist on doing and working with whatever comes out of your body – you have to continue with the process" (Walsh 2016). If what I was seeking was attention on the attention I needed to set up a system where we insistently worked bodily; noting failures, curiosities, moments of kinship in moving, energetic states, pleasures. Once established, I committed to following the process of following the lead of the body, as it were, as prompted by Rainer.

Habit breaking was not (and is not) my focus and 'known' steps are not unwelcome. The premise was that it does not matter what you are doing but instead, HOW you are attending to doing it; and if known pathways emerged – given they were being seen inside a matrix of complex attention paying – they somehow read differently. They are both attached and unattached to known histories and this is interesting. We worked with using learned technique and re-purposing it; importantly in 'undoing' (the) dancing via dancing itself. I was seeking new flows and demands, unsettled energies, willful drivers. I considered *synectics*: the joining together of different and apparently disconnected elements[40]. How might I make possible new kinaesthetic assemblages?

The fascination for me lies in the between: between dancer apprehending movement that can be known choreography (replete with inferred or inlaid histories) or unknown/improvised movement – what is the nature of this encounter? How does the dancer meet the movement with a sameness of attention, regardless of its 'known-ness'? What is it that is happening between one dancer and another in the inter-corporeal space of thinking-moving that they are inhabiting – what is occurring energetically, what is being shared? How is the between, generated by their singular efforts toward being-with, fueling and driving, undermining patterns or revealing newness, rupturing or feeding the nature of the encounter being had between them? What is here: between myself and bodies of current theory, that move in and out of focus, while observing the dancing? How do I document this series of 'betweens', how do I hold them – indeed, *can* I hold them? Or, because they are 'betweens', they are slippery and this is the delight. They are strange-folds of energy and doing, perceiving and responding: the betweens accumulate toward a felt resonance and merge with my choreographic sense or intuition to be put-to-use to make a thing. What was I intuitively responding to?

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40 Wikipedia, web page, 17th May 2018: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synectics

QUESTIONS

1. How could we find a way to work and dance together that began from a shared ethos or understanding of kinaesthetic attention?
2. What are the constraints of what we are doing?
3. At what point do the provocations invite a type of interruption to capture, retain, or understand to forge a path to making something?

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

I watch Rhiannon and I am reminded of freedom,
and diagonals, folding and falling.
Of the potential of whole body jumps: Rhiannon
is good at those.

Richard says:
There is a beautiful energy to jumping on - am
I able to recreate that hit and see the offer?
Maybe this takes away longing.

He says:
There must be something else going on - just
kicking my legs because I can cannot be the task.
You know, because effort shown and level of
difficulty has always been how I am measured -
as valuable, you know.

Rhiannon said:
I like that you let the referential 'moves' be
part of the moving. This work we do when we
meet is in part about habits and recognising and
undoing, but it is not its primary motivation.
Habits can be interesting too. There is something
reassuring about the things we know being there
but being rearranged somehow. Underneath this
is a small hark to 'remember, don' t forget' that
these moves came from somewhere and someone,
they are small history markers. They are

THINGS to be abandoned. Imaginative counterpoints to leap away from.

She says:
Certainly, with others I am working off centre a lot but the organisation is different, there is much more falling through the folds of the body. When I am with you I am reminded of letting go but also further, into falling - actually, falling. I am reminded of going-ness. I think that is something you taught me years ago'.

I say:
From the outside, I take pleasure in knowing that there may be moments of extreme and extremely impressive movements or shapes. I am ok with them - sometimes I even like them, I am probably even waiting for them - because they tell me something too.

And then, Richard says:
A crisis - there is too much happening in the mind - and so, "to do anything felt like a lie". I am 'upptragen' he says, I am 'uptaken', busy, halted and unable to do. I am listening so much that output would muddy the pond. Any kind of anything that I might recognise as virtuosic seems unwelcome and impossible. It feels hard to be accurate in there.

She says:
Because working with body first seems not intelligent enough, we now have all these people making work who don't really know what they are doing at all really. There is no body-time. Or, if there is something like that, there is a category for it - 'durational'.

We agree: We are doing these things to ask - what else can be here?

Fig 10 & 11 *Six Propositions for Imagined Choreographies*: research period #1 with Richard Cilli and Rhiannon Newton at Substation, Newport, October 2017. Stills taken from video footage. Filmed by David Meagher.

DOCUMENTATION

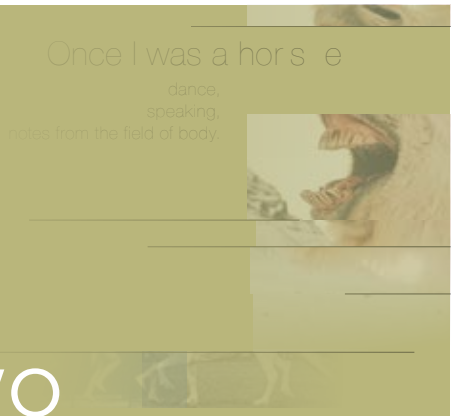
The studio sessions were filmed but, out of context, they are not indicative of very much, and so are not included in the dissertation. The six propositions could have led to a choreographed work though we did not arrive at a performed work in the frame of this research: I wanted to maintain an un-hurriedness. The movement research enabled me to frame and articulate my thinking-with movement. Instead of studio footage of improvisations from the 'six propositions', I attach documentation of a partly choreographed/partly improvised session, filmed at the Substation in October 2017, filmed prior to undertaking 'Six propositions for imagined choreographies' in 2018. In this footage, we see the iteration of *body like a neon sign* and its re-purposing, along with improvised content and a small experiment with fabric to consider, in a very minimal way, the affect of 'outside forces' on the kinaesthetically engaged body. This beginning (with dresses/fabrics) was contemplated more thoroughly in work #3 *The Difficult Comedown,* as can be seen in the performance footage. In the first research period with Richard and Rhiannon, I had a brief musing toward a future work titled Kinning and attach it here also.

Vimeo link to footage from the first research period (October 2017):
https://vimeo.com/354132881

Vimeo link to the edit for *Kinning*:
https://vimeo.com/256503882

CONCLUSION

- The work required dancers of Richard and Rhiannon's caliber to enable dialogue around what was emergent, rich and difficult to occur. This work is about the moving and attention inside of the dancing, it is not able to be grappled with physically and conceptually and imagined into future repeatable choreographies, I believe, by untrained dancers. It requires a certain specialisation.
- We all noted it is a slightly odd way to work because I was proposing focused attention and accuracy while keeping a very open field of research and influence; there was a sense of being informed by so much and so many people – dancers, choreographers and theorists were all present in fragmentary ways. And yet, one's direction and interest always distills.
- We agreed that working to establish 'some kind of shared' physical ethos, was the supportive bed of our time together. With this as a methodology or approach, true autonomy, or the imperative of not altering how you move in response or reaction to an imposed series of stylised/innovative steps – was possible.
- Establishing a way of thinking-into each practice session via sharpening kinaesthetic attention, enabled shared but still differentiated possibilities to work with movement within the scores/provocations.
- What I found fascinating was witnessing two dancers with equal movement facility and capacity that could work clearly with a hyper-kinaesthetic attention and challenge their movement intelligence. I witnessed them being-with movement and sometimes poetic, sometimes obtuse concepts side-by-side. This of course highlighted for me, as a choreographer, the capacity of movement to pronounce difference and point to the poetics embodied by different dancers.
- Richard has a history of working in Sydney Dance Company. It is a company of highly trained bodies; some might say one propelled by the idea that dancers are replaceable automatons. For Richard then, the invitation to be-with his body in a less demanding (muscular) way and more conceptually rigorous, kinaesthetically alive way, was a deep pleasure.
- For Rhiannon, whose practice is strongly based in improvisation and attention and is influenced by Rosalind Crisp, Jo Pollitt, Benjamin Foster (Sydney based visual artist) and myself as a student and performer in previous work I created; her delight emerged from being-with Richard and his history, so divergent from her own.
- Observation of movement is incremental. Thoughts ratchet along slowly. I ended this process wondering: what is it like to observe and infiltrate your own choreographing mind?



EXPERIMENT NUMBER TWO

Once I was a Horse

PROVOCATION

In Poétique de la Danse Contemporaine (Louppe 2010) author and critic Laurence Louppe refers to the body as a net, rather than a mass, the breath operating to enliven the dancer's body carrying and depositing the information inside sensations as knowledge gradually. The body, she says:

> "is empty, not full. It (the breath) refers us, beyond physical sensations, to the geography of the body's landscapes, to a space that connects outside and inside, a global space whose conjugal luminosities the body only diffracts: the body as a passage, a porous screen between two states of the world, and not an opaque, full, impenetrable mass" (Louppe, 55).

If my body is the conduit: the site where physical practice, the doing of dancing, the undoing of dancing, and theoretical research is passing, catching, falling through, colliding, coagulating, and contradicting – how could I create something that spoke to that experience?

Interested in the structure or premise of the performance lecture, and in using my voice as a performer to speak forward my embodied experiences, I undertook this experiment to see how difficult and possible it was to place theory and movement

in direct encounter. The imperative being not to lose the integrity of the moving or thinking; nothing could be at the cost of something else. The dance, importantly, had to be kinaesthetically alive/accurate/attending; but the movement content could also be demonstrative, authentic, humorous, didactic.

TIMELINE AND STRUCTURE

- For a period of four months (June-September 2018) I continued to practice solo in the studio and undertook a process of structuring a lecture performance.
- I mapped and re-mapped an arc to try to demonstrate or share with an audience my experiences, questions and encounters within the practice-led research model.
- I invited four peers at different points in this process to spend time with me in the studio and offer feedback.
- The work was presented twice to allow a settling and comparison on September 24th & 25th 2018 in space 221 (VCA).
- Over two nights approximately fifty people attended.

Fig 12 *Once I was a Horse*, handout gifted to audience. See appendix for whole document. Size:106mm x 90mm. Design: Janette Hoe

METHOD

- I collected a series of quotes from theorists that were contradictory and supportive of each other. These came from: André Lepecki, Rosie Bardiotti, Bojana Cvejić, Phillipa Rothfield, Erin Manning.
- I collected a series of thoughts and statements made by dancers and dance makers: Russell Dumas, Trisha Brown, Meg Stuart, Rosalind Crisp, Wendy Smith.
- I compiled a script composed entirely from studio notes and dialogues while working with Richard, Rhiannon, Alexandra Harrison and Cynthia Troup (dramaturg, Buddhist, writer).

- The composite of these voices formed the structure of the work, and reflected the thinking-through that had occurred thus far. I referred to everyone I quoted by first name only: thus, "Rosie said…", "André said…", "Alex says…", "Russell said…".
- I wrote an 'academic paper' that I presented or 'performed' as part of the work. It was 25 minutes long.
- I learnt part of the material from *body like a neon sign* to enable a continuity of material, indicate a timeline and provide myself with an embodied connection to each part of the physical research.
- I projected part of the footage of the Dancenorth dancers performing the work at the beginning of the performance/presentation. I am already in the space as people enter, wearing a warm, black, shiny snow-type jacket – attending to my attention quietly. The decision to include the footage was to mark time for myself in my now role of re-presenting relatively simple material made some eighteen months before; a time before the body of theory I was now located in had unfolded.
- I intentionally engaged with performative tropes; using costume changes, (entertaining) music and microphones to help shape the journey from one end of the work to the other.

QUESTIONS

- How does the bodily experience of practising dancing meet the cognitive one of speaking about that practice?
- How does theory both hinder and 'help' practising dancing?
- How could I shape a performance that demonstrates or shares the friction I was experiencing in my own body as a dancer engaged in practice-led research?
- How could this act of distilling and encounter with my own live performance and performing, reveal to me, in the instance of its doing, something about what my directions and pre-occupations had been thus far and how successful I was at understanding and articulating them? And further, how might this process point me to the next stage of this overall process?

DOCUMENTATION

The presentation was filmed and is attached to this dissertation. The text/scripts spoken and the 'academic paper' presented in the performance are attached as documents in the appendix for further reference (and in case there are problems hearing the sound on the video), as are images of the handout gifted to audience members.
Vimeo link: https://vimeo.com/353576214.

CONCLUSION

I acknowledge that I did not have to create this work and had indeed done 'too much' work for the scope of an MFA. It felt imperative to try though, as I wanted to see what kind of performance I would make and how hard it would be to do this. As a performer, it was challenging to be attentive across a spectrum of skills. I rehearsed how to segue between moving, speaking in other people's voices, adopting a light and reflective or personal speaking and moving tone, and establishing an academic tone to read the 'paper' I had written. I practiced holding attention to the arc of the whole work, while shifting decisively to attending to the specific requirements of each segment. I was working at shifting states and tones and, as well, bringing the audience with me on this trajectory of thinking-through the materials, arguments and counter-arguments; bodily and verbally. At times I was funny, and this helped us all.

Toward the end of the work, I changed costume one last time: into an oversized black dress that looks a bit like a giant origami on the top half. Its enfolding-ness reflected for me the process of practice-led research; the way things fold in and overlap, before becoming clear. Thoughts had edges now in the way the folds in the dress clearly did; or an exactness of a kind was emerging. After a thorough going through (or 45 minutes into the work) I spoke a poem I wrote that ends with the lines:

'If a horse, she would be shot now.
You only look good, he said,
When you are moving so fast'.[40]

Earlier I had been amused and bemused by the matrix of contradictory and complex thinking and theory I was awash in. I had been very alive in sharing with the audience the feeling of madness and confusion that rises when one is trying to find clarity given the cacophony of voices speaking forth what dance is and is not, what it is responsible for and who should do it, how one should feel, what the imperative must be. But this point in the work needed a pause. I dropped in – I was not funny anymore. Given everything that had occurred to this point, I let the space widen and slow down. I re-enter the space, 'position' myself in the centre and do the final 'dance'. For this last moment, I employed a simple theatrical lighting state to mark the shift.

[41] The whole poem used in the performance can be found in the appendix.

Fig 13 *Once I was a Horse*: 'final dance', image taken from video, filmed by David Meagher, VCA Studio 221, September 25th 2017.

By placing myself in this situation, I could 'choreograph' or shape a direct encounter with myself. It was the final 'dance' in *Once I was a Horse* that evidenced how I have been affected bodily by the trajectory of this research. I saw myself changed. Once – indeed – I had been a horse: 16 horsepower – ready, bucking, fast, capable, athletic. Ruptured to stillness and forging 'a new path to the waterfall', I observed myself more able to work with undoing, intensity, attention and subtraction. Importantly, I felt a different relationship to potential (it was emergent), agency (it felt possible) and rupture (it was not damaging, but informative and helped to shift rhythms). Through doing the work I came to understand what I was taken by and still curious about, as what I wanted to amplify beyond this moment. I felt myself grounded, speaking forth bodily a series of values I had worked to refine, and energetically charged. Deeply engaged kinaesthetically, I trusted the aliveness and porosity of (my) body: the one doing the dancing.

EXPERIMENT NUMBER THREE

The Difficult Comedown

I offer an image and then a poem sent down the side of a page, to fall into *The Difficult Comedown*, the final work in the body of this dissertation. To frame and convey just how resonant and affecting the process of making this work was, is complex. It was a long unfolding in a field of wide consideration. I could not make it alone, I needed a wing-woman who was wild, intelligent, and fiercely interested; irreverent and importantly, very different to me. The process evolved inside the matrix of this research project. Begun as practising with Alexandra Harrison – kin of the thinking-feeling kind – it became into a shared choreographic endeavour and physical enquiry into attention and the matter of the body.

The beginning was fed by extensive reading (academics: Ahmed, Manning, Kristeva, Haraway, Kunst & poets: Milosz, Carver, Oliver, Carson, Smith): dancing while reading aloud, discussing, timed writing and walking the land. It is a dance work that willed itself forward, placing itself insistently in relation to everything of and in the world and pulled through the mothers (two) that have made emergent their own worlds. Held by labor and restlessness, function and perception, willfulness and absurdity, poetry and the materiality of the body – we met, we two women – and followed the work. We paid a fierce and silent kind of attention, together and apart. We held the work *through* our attention: our rigor in articulating a conceptual field allowed us to perform the dance together separately. To be in encounter with Alexandra is to be called to task: to stay with the trouble of working bodily, in deep and intentional relation to life as it is, and to trust rigorous diversional thinking and imaginative leaps.

Fig 14 *The Difficult Comedown*, Artshouse, Melbourne, March 11th 2019. Photographer: Heidrum Löhr.

TIMELINE

- Practising once a week for eight months: March-October 2017 at the Substation, Newport.
- October 2017: one full time week and a small showing to supervisors Siobhan Murphy and Helen Herbertson and ten others. This point shifted the work from single authorship (mine) to a work that would be made between us, or collaboratively.
- Intermittent studio practice at VCA, Florence Street studio, Lancefield Mechanics Institute (country Victoria) between February and July 2018.
- Two weeks in a small hall in country Victoria, November 2018.
- Two weeks in a (different) small hall in country Victoria, January to February 2019.
- Four weeks in studio development: Chunky Move studios and Artshouse.
- Presentation of *The Difficult Comedown*: March 12th – 16th 2019 at Dance Massive, Artshouse.

Thursday 8 November 2018
Studio 4.
Lights out.
City below and beyond. I can see it.

(THE DFC: FOR ALEX)

A beginning that is flayed
Dead animal cut down the gizzards
Laid out
Fur opened like the alba:
Flayed -
Strewn.

A power gathered and dispersed
Oiled
That begins again from a beginning point
Just before dying
Just before being prised open
Or after death and before being washed
A holding back place
This ripped open wide girth geography
Constrained
But not self conscious
No.
Reversing the serious endeavour
Be in your spine
Don't imagine it
Fall through.

Lay the horizon above and
Set up the one below
Let the feathers fly in all directions
But with direction
Already
Sensate directing
And the already reckoning under way

Falling into that
On shimmering surfaces
And beneath lights that want to warm us
Heat us too far for that is what a reckoning
is wanting to do
Send things too far,
So there be grime for the wiping hand.

From the outside to the deep in
All are over warmed and too far discomfited
And then 75,000 feet down
Yes
That too.
And of course.
The heavens
Are a heralding the rains
And the omens
Fuck the desire
And fold over from the deep centre.

The mire is the mire
On boot and across the plain of this place
That is not ours
Tragedy at the stolenness of everything
And the cellular gathering to throw it back
In the face of:
Under the oil slick
To be the oil slick
And the gold
And the bones grafted from too many prayers
To be the horizon
Emptied out
But going forever
Being the oil slick and being above it, just
barely.

Like the blue wave that breaks
Along the reef and makes you walk back to
where you came
Because it was far

And one line at once.

I will make a thing I will know
From this place
And I will do it
And repeat it
And in the repeating I will build
And dispel the flayed creature
I will be and not imagine.
It will ignite
It will compel and be compelling
There is not more fucking time for apologies
This body is craning
And then
And then

The circle will have found an implosion
point with
All that running
And breathing
The slap of a begin
To open then the gentle heaving world it
will be.
To open it
And keep opening it
Jack hammer and tools for the opening my
friends.

Like the heart that says no to that
And must also agree
As it be the only solution
The only way to get to your knees and say
No
Like you mean it.
For one and one being one.
For all the gone people
The writers and lovers and not lovers and
the useless ones
For the earth and the mother you are not
And the place you are being and the inept

faculties available.
For the uprising of your own feet
Boots down
Eyes direct
A song pushing the water
And you
Reckoned - -
Being the reckoning.

Email correspondence, Leach to Harrison
Thursday 8th November 2018

Fig 15 *The Difficult Comedown*, Artshouse, Melbourne, March 11th 2019. Photographer: Heidrum Löhr.

DISCUSSION OF THE WORK: METHOD, OBSERVATIONS AND AGITATIONS

During the trajectory of my project, the work with Alex began as part of the research (in 2017) as practice in the studio. It fully evolved toward a co-choreographed work in 2018. We applied for funding and support. At this point I thought to remove the work from my dissertation, however, I came to realise that the work was deeply in the work of attention. In a relational counter point to Alex and the ways she views and works with dance, I gained further clarification around my own research and concerns therein. Thus, the work in its final presentation, forms the third work undertaken for this research project.

Fig 16 *The Difficult Comedown*, Artshouse, Melbourne, March 11th 2019. Photographer: Heidrun Löhr.

Fig 17 *The Difficult Comedown*, Artshouse, Melbourne, March 8th 2019. Photographer: Pippa Samaya.

It was via practising together during 2017, Alex and I realised we were directing ourselves toward creating a work. A 'something' that would house what was emerging because of our work together. As stated above, Alex and I began by moving and reading, bringing into the space academic texts and contemporary poets. I initiated this method to be-with the density and complexity of the texts I was engaging with through my research. Moving while listening afforded a noticing: some fragments that seemed to elicit a bodily response were kept or recalled. It was in this way that, using timed reading and improvising, watching solo and writing response, watching and moving in response – we began to observe a shared interest in emergent concepts.

These might be framed as: the physical experience of motherhood, the realness and intensity of this labor (still largely unrecognised as labor), the reduction of our capacity to work bodily or 'dancerly' and the embodied frustration and cellular restlessness that ensues, the *duree* of the felt-body. The fact of the matter of our flesh and our ages (over 40) laid ground for a virtuosity of thinking and

capacity to engage with attention. We believed this would not be able to be apprehended without our embodied realities. Enfolded into the process is grief, loss, absurdity, the demands of our separate lives, the capacity to be vulnerable and present with what-is / now / here and available in the body.

What is the potent potential in the strange familiar?

Throughout the process, we worked consistently with practising dance: working with improvisation, asking 'what is here today – what is emergent, wanting to be heard and felt?'. This we did while holding a shared attention to the accumulating choreographic choices and directions we were making together. Alex's history is in physical theatre and circus and mine is deep in the research and doing of dancing itself. Mine is a more postmodern dance training; hers focuses on movement functionality and utilisation of movement as sometimes representative of concept. Ours are very different embodied histories and she is much better at engaging with props and costumes and imagining possibilities for these. My ideas of potential are all deeply set in the dancing.

With each iteration of rehearsal and discussion, we began to feel into and create a world where we understood (often non-verbally), shared concepts. We began to think of these concepts in a wide arc of relationality, beginning with an intimate inter-corporeal relationality or, articulating what lay between us, because of 'us'. This opened toward seeing ourselves as women agents in relation to a body of performance (and societal) histories. The relationship of body to earth and matter (or body as earth and matter), kept expanding to concepts far beyond what we could logically understand: broken ceilings hark to mercurial worlds and forces we cannot comprehend, but feel, *bodily*. The concept of worlds and energies beyond the body eventually became imbued in the lighting design – a series of white panels with deep, accurately realised Art Nouveau inspired patterns, laser-cut into them, cascading geometrically sideways. The panels are broken up – a-rhythmic in their spatial placement; opening to a world beyond where we were and are, bodily. The floor is littered with hundreds of pieces of black 'flitter' – which is very large glitter. The world we were building was so earthed and grounded in body matter, that we called upon the concept of an oil slick to remind us of the situation we are in, bodily, in this world now. The flitter moved with us, got stuck to our skin, shined and shimmered in the light – it was beautiful. It was also, though, in our imaginations – the oil: dirty, black, unrepentant oil.

We worked specifically on paying attention bodily. Alex had recently completed a two-week workshop with improviser Deborah Hay, so her current preoccupation was with perception and impulse, not following through to cognitive evaluation. I was working with developing my sense of what I was doing when I was dancing and 'in-attention'. My process was one of integrating new and old information.

The 'new' gathered from ideokinesis lessons with Shona Innes and a growing relationship to Rosalind Crisp's work – especially the governing concept of 'unholding' (breath, gravity), working in perpetual delay, 'two bones moving toward and away from each other'. I was working with how I paid attention, noting the lacunae. I did not want to choreograph steps, but instead apprehend a type of choreography of concept; a pre-thought-out frame that I could work with and become 'better' at inhabiting.

This work acted as a counter point to the research with Richard and Rhiannon. Although Alex names everything she does as dancing (a philosophy championed by Hay and her work in undoing dance as looking like a 'particular something'), there is a marked difference between Alex's dancing and that of Richard and Rhiannon. Indeed, between 'her dance' and 'my dance' sometimes there felt to be a huge chasm. This is related to training and the way the body is thought-with and through in dance. The pedagogic methods and aims are markedly different between dance and physical theatre / circus. Circus training prefaces a much more functional, strength based body, which reduces therefore the time to work with somatic and kinaesthetic foci.

Though emergent from a personal encounter and desire to be-with another body in the studio, part of my desire to keep working with Alex was due to the way she paid attention. Alex engages robustly and whole bodily, she has a wide conceptual capacity to build relationality. Her imagination is a wild bird taking loops and dives, knitting together worlds in, through, and because of the matter of her body. She is relentless in her attending and available to energetic states and shifts in internal tempo. Her movement is kinetically less complex though, than that of Richard and Rhiannon: while watching Alex I realised I was watching something different. Though her kinetic complexity is less developed, the way she pays attention kinaesthetically is incredibly complex. Given that I had previously thought this kind of attention is best put-to-use by dancers with a highly-specialised relationship with movement, or by 'highly trained' dancers who can re-purpose their trained knowledge, I wondered how this could capture me so?

Alex's capacity held my attention and agitated me simultaneously. This was a curious problematic. The agitation enabled me, provoking me to interrogate my thinking in unexpected ways within the process. Alex's personal relationship to dance and her sometimes dismissal of it if recognisable form is present, compelled me to stay with the trouble: note the agitation, approach a response bodily, name the questions that emerged from the incongruencies. I needed to understand why habit breaking and supressing or denying recognisable movement, was not a high priority for me. I am interested in my subjective role enfolded in the moving. I am not interested in self-erasure in service of something else – a conceptual approach that says I am not required as a subject.

Fig 18 *The Difficult Comedown*, Artshouse, Melbourne, March 8th. Photographer: Pippa Samaya.

Given this, my trained history and my experience of that, is part of the world of now making.

Noting the difference between Alex and I as trained bodies of different kin, I had an anxiety to make it known I inhabited this world we were creating as a dancer. Upon reflection, I realise this anxiety was related to self-identification; my research into kinaesthesia was revealing the deep ties of kinaesthesia to embodiment and agency and this led to personal discomfit given my history of rupture and evaluation of complicity and silence as a dancer in relation to agency. Perhaps, I realised later, I also wanted to assert my belief that dance has the capacity to resonate through the act of dancing itself. Yet, I was flailing, still, as to how to be with this belief robustly. The dance does not require too much else – the encounter is to be had within the moving: ferocious, tender, wide reaching and detailed at once. This I believe, yet acting it forward felt difficult. Design elements help to articulate and name a cultural frame that

others understand, but this is appropriated for the higher purpose or 'truth' of (one's) ethos: in this case, the capacity of the attentive body to convey an energy, a 'something'.

The short solo I do toward the beginning of the work began to form from the word RELIC. A relic: an object, system or tradition from the past that continues to exist[42]. I wanted to remember, not forget, everything: albeit in intentional fragmentary form. I searched for markers in my embodied history by placing the question of what dance as a relic felt like – in-and-with my body – and then working with improvisation to observe the responses offered up and out. How did thinking of my dance as a relic, of dance itself as a relic, support frame building? How did this dance here/now, serve the work?

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Remembering the dance
Fait accompli - not producing, not showing me
that you know by showing me that you knew.
If it is a relic, this dancing - the attention
is on not letting form escape without
interrogation.
Interrupting the desire to flow on the
outside, the capacity to do that.
Scission in a gentle way.
The relationality is then in form (that
is now moved past me) and its new form
- beyond itself - returning to me as my
dancing now.

Leach, studio notes/forming a frame for the 'relic solo' embedded in the work, February 13th 2019

[42] Cambridge online dictionary, 19th February 2019: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/relic

Fig 19 *The Difficult Comedown*, Artshouse, Melbourne, March 8th 2019. Photographer: Pippa Samaya

I observed that I was paying direct attention to three aspects present in the moving:

1. Attention on the kinetic actions, the moving: I am attempting a "poignant intensity of execution with a directional intent" (Hultman 2018, 3) (utilising gravity, momentum, unholding, breath).
2. Noticing what is being pulled through the moving. These 'things' are fragments: small memories of place, a recollection of embodied moving history, an image from the day that has preceded being here. They can also be surges of energy, delight, habit.
3. Clocking capacity or interest in the moment to respond to the rising fragments while holding attention to the moving itself.

The shared method developed by Harrison and I, for bringing this work into the world embraces a wide girth of practises: writing as response, long email correspondence in time outside of working periods, walking the land together side by side – in timed scores and with maps pre-decided – moving together,

soloing and watching. It could be said that though our methods were concerned with a kind of 'with-ness' we were also autonomous in the middle or the thick of it - together. We do not need the other. We take care of each other and there is an imperative of attention in the process and the eventual work, but we remain wonderfully singular – occupied and preoccupied with the matter of our separate bodies and the way movement is deployed because of our histories. No attempt was ever made at 'same dancing', this was an impossibility. Difference was the key, and attention the thing we trained, to be able to perform together alone.

It was never an ambition or interest to dance the philosophy, instead I was observing what was occurring when practising dancing, creating a work (in relation to and with another) and writing about reading, were all running their own streams in the same real-time of my life. Where and how would they collide, support or undermine each other?

DOCUMENTATION

Photographs from the work are embedded here and a document produced post-performance to promote and encapsulate the work is attached in the appendix. Two versions of the filmed footage can be accessed:
the full-length performance https://vimeo.com/337409402
and a five-minute edit https://vimeo.com/337413458.

CONCLUSION

The work was held by our capacity to pay fierce, silent attention – together: it evidenced that kinaesthetic attention is specialised and accumulated – it is not awareness, for this is too general (as noted by De Spain). The experience of making *The Difficult Comedown* in relation to and indeed, emergent from my research, revealed or made more available questions I had been in long contemplation with: what is it that separates one dancer from another if not the capacity to do steps well? How does one hold a field of concerns while maintaining a central tonality? What is required to engage in and drive a process of arriving at work that is deeply researched? How does one trust the body, work bodily, and create a work – future forward bodily – when that trust feels difficult to return to, or can be undermined at any moment by deep set thinking and traditions? How does this paying attention lead to one (the dancer) embodying a more robust sense of agency?

Fig 20 *The Difficult Comedown*, Artshouse, Melbourne, March 8th 2019. Photographer: Pippa Samaya

I have articulated my interest as kinaesthetic attention and laid small paths toward its relationship with agency. I have, through engaging with the university, its consequent demands and necessity toward compelling one to engage with rigorous, expanded and developed thinking models, come to know my practice more intimately and robustly. The work perhaps speaks for itself in the end. I offer a written response requested by Alex and myself from Sydney based academic and author Justine Shih-Pearson to end this assessment of the 'work of the body' in this body of research:

"The next thing I know, they are running, shoulder to shoulder, hip to hip, toe to heel. It is exhilarating. It feels full of danger, likely to end in a crashing tangle of limbs and I come whipping back into the theatre. They twin remarkably; not, as twinning is generally thought to be, as a process of identicalisation, but twinning as the ability to maintain difference and sameness at the same time. Paea is subtly baroque, the end of her movements shadowed in filigree. Alex is solidly modernist, form follows function. From this point on I am captured—where we go and where we end up feels very far from this beginning but I find myself willingly succumb to the ride. A tumult of incongruous images flow into and out of one another: it is a carnival, a constructivist's dream, a game, a competition, a world-building, a planetary system, a quiver, a shake, with some established rules continuing (difference and sameness, sharing weight).

Contemporary dance has, in the last twenty years, had a preoccupation with historicising its own lineage, with the American postmodernists of the mid-twentieth century revisited in anti-theatrical (anti-dance even) fervor (No! says Yvonne Rainer; No! answers Jérome Bel and others). This is not such a work; it is, rather, early avant-garde-like, integrated movement and design recalling Bauhausian performance art and other experiments of the early twentieth century. Lighting, costume and sound design are a delight—the orange dresses, the

voluminous hooped pants, the hanging rib-like strips of LEDs, the wind and just-heard chirps of birds...
I'd like to think this is a new aesthetic and conceptual territory emerging; highly sculptural, with a sense of the strategies of total-theatre; work-like in its play; playful while ludicrously serious; affectful in a bodily sense".

(Shih-Pearson 2019)

AFTERWORD

Personal present futuring

This paper deliberately prioritises the kinaesthetic. I can easily imagine into a future where the work continues; feeding into and from established bodies of research in agency, feminism, health and sociology. A new provenance might indeed be unleashed. Certainly, this research has pedagogic possibilities; it may open toward methods of teaching that integrate the kinaesthetic, kinetic and tactile in as-yet un examined ways. My own teaching experience of linking kinaesthetic attention to agency has yielded positive feedback from my students and helped to establish a stronger *raison d'etre* for their dancing-ness and commitment to it as a form. Discussions of this ilk have helped to bolster my (mostly female) students' recognition of the importance of dance in their lives; it has offered freedom from the still imposed hegemony of training.

As a body worker, dance teacher to all skill levels and body observer in the world, I sense there is a palpable bodily despair; the world *feels* different, and bodies (mine included) are absorbing a cavalcade of information and energies because of the speed of life and an increasing and persistent interface with electronic devices. Already in the 1920s Barbara Clark noted that Mabel Todd observed "breathing was becoming shorter and more rapid", the "diaphragm and heart began to get lazy" and "vision had to jump fast to observe what was passing before it instead of moving more slowly from one object to another" (Clark 1993, 15). This reminds me of Kristeva's body under siege: I observe nervous systems going under. Todd's observations were made almost one hundred years ago. This is remarkable – she could not have foreseen the level of kinaesthetic confusion in contemporary society.

As dance artists, we spend our time in fields of uncertainty, we *like* uncertainty and instability: waiting, seeking, listening for it - bodily. This makes us brave I think. Hysteria breeds a desire for control and there is hope in an opposite to that – in an unbinding – of structures, language, traditions, bodies. In *Hope in the Dark: untold histories, wild possibilities*, Rebecca Solnit makes a case for the robustness of hope. She quotes Ernst Bloch, the German philosopher, who wrote a massive treatise on hope in the 1930s. He said, "the work of this emotion requires people who throw themselves actively into what is becoming, to which they themselves belong" (Bloch in Solnit 2016, 4).

Enfolded in my interest in dance as an art form lurk questions about body-emergent subjectivity and the word *belief*: belief in the capacity the dance and the dancer has, to shift energies and patterns, create enduring resonances between bodies and open fields of thinking that lead to supporting inter-corporeal 'health'[43] , because of a body-first approach. Belief, of course, is the poor cousin of cynicism, and postmodern dance is famous for saying NO! to

[43] See Anna Halprin, *Returning to Health with Dance, Movement and Imagery*, (Life Rhythm Books 2002, 2015).

concepts that may involve the subject too much. But, I maintain that the subject is inextricably enfolded into the body doing the dancing, and that movement is related to concepts of hope because it is inherently interwoven with kinaesthesia which is implicated with agency: movement is moving, so is activism. Hope is embedded in activism.

While the focus of this research is dance, I was reading widely for the duration. The assemblage of reading is integrated into the overall thinking, present in ways I think-through kinaesthetic assemblages, and enfolded into the process of embodying and doing in the studio. For the past two years, dancing alone and with others in studios, fields and local halls, I have followed the climate change crisis. This may seem unconnected, but it is important for my sense of relationality: it was the biggest opposite end of the spectrum, to a single body in a studio sensing deeply and working kinaesthetically, that I could imagine. I spent many late-night hours absorbed in Naomi Klein's *This Changes Everything* (Klein 2015), her extensively researched treatise on the climate crisis. It is difficult reading; alarming and physically discomfiting. In relation to my research on bodily-ness, Klein's work, along with others in her field, led me to wonder how this one-small-narrow body dancing; one body "fibrillating with and against the rhythms of our era" (Lepecki 2016, 3); or a handful of bodies thinking – movement into moving together, could be of value in a world throwing more gasoline on the fossil fuel fire than ever before. It is predicted that there remain 13 years or so before we will be too hot to survive. A heartbeat really.

Why pay attention to kinaesthesia: 'how to and why for' care about the world of one small narrow body when the climate crisis is palpable, real, urgent – and *here*?
But also, what more urgent something to do than directly and intentionally attend to the eco-system that is one body, in response to the terrifying opposite end of the spectrum?
Perhaps bodily-ness matters more – now.
But, of course, this paper cannot launch into this empire-sized discussion: suffice it to say, our burning up overpopulated planet has been deep in my consideration as I thought-through bodily-ness and kinaesthetic attention. As I lay down time and again in the studio to begin and be-with dance, I considered the world. The felt response has swung from vital to futile, repeatedly.

To conclude, for now: via adopting a multiple body lens and thinking-through kinaesthetic attention and bodily-ness with the help of sometimes unexpected voices and techniques, I have enabled a rigorous analysis of my practice as a dancer and my choreographic work. Via the three choreographic experiments, and through a continued commitment to my bodily-ness, I am more able to articulate the world of kinaesthesia. I can language it with alacrity and acuity.

Thus, I am more equipped to agree with Noland and Sheets-Johnstone that kinaesthesia is important within scholarship and importantly, in dance scholarship and pedagogy, and should be attended to more directly. Or, with more excitement. For, it is also important for the living of life. I say this from the point of view as a dancer, I speak it from my body; I have felt it feelingly. Staying with the trouble of the ambiguity of movement, and working in active and intentional relation to the world that forms and undoes us, *does* something. Dance is a bodily based protest read as silent, but, I say, able to be loud *because* of its silent and tenacious work with the matter of the body. Sometimes the BOOM of dance floors me because we, the dancers, remember to remember the body – the genesis of agency – and this can be a brilliant point of difference.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Notes from the field of the body: hand typed and photographed

NOTES FROM THE FIELD OF A BODY _mine_

28.2.17
Generative writing workshop with Jenny Kemp (Victoria)

Do not attempt to ignore the voice: listen more carefully -who says you are a cliche?

You cannot arrive at the endpoint before you have started.

(we close our eyes and imagine...instructions are given -directions)

'Everything solid is eradicated except for the one wall of the lounge and a sink floating where was once a whole kitchen. There is something like a force pushing up, and pushing down in a small space inside my body - all I am able to say is that this sensation is finite - it feels ancient. It musters a physical sense, a response I recognise'

29.2.17

Now that I have a child I rock and move, rock and move. The rocking becomes into circles, the circles become a turning.

What is behind me?

1.3.17

'sy/sinetics' means joing together —> apparently different or disconnected elements'.

What is it like?

You are moving and looking at the : ah: image -- look at it and wait until IT begins to change. YES.

'Dynamite the pulpit darling, change the lamps, pull out the grandest gesture, shake the earth if you might, and fuck consequence. Toys lay about like rocks. There is a sameness of expression: inescapable, repeating, infuriating, exploding, alive'.

2.3.17

My body, she cries
My body, my body
The / this/ a world: cut paste cut paste cut.

What is silenced and what oppressed?

What is the tension that causes the language?
What have I misunderstood?

1

8.3.17

I am with Alex.
What is available?
We are strange creatures who can go to the infinite.
We have the right to conceive this as otherwise.

Water resting in the body: the ocean of my body: Why would I cut off that capacity?

27.3.17

I am with Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen (and 120 others).

She says: hand to heart and feel the flow and wait for the return.
We are learning about reflexes....the contact is the yield, it is about what we don't have to learn. Your voice, she says, comes from the same place as your limbs –'embryonically speaking'.

'We are animals – you don't see animals lying on their backs, unless they are dying & in need of rescue'.

"The fluids teach the nervous system." (BBC)

25.5.17
What to do with all the fragments?

I am on the grond and I am sobbing.
He says: I have knelt on one knee and sobbed and heaved and emptied out until I could no more.

It is good to feel at the end of yourself.

14.4.17

Dancenorth: watching dancers dancing
A conversation while this is happening:
What am I doing if I am not dancing large and out?
What is it people expect and want even (she asks)?
Filling a space of expectation and desire. Undoing that. If you begin in another way, we – the watcher – will come with you (I say).
We wait inside of (her) waiting.

A big wide open privileged space. A privileged body.
Quitely motoring and gathering understanding through her doing. Sorting knowledges, known and new, ancient and blood-bound.
With each iteration, do we know more or less?

Saturday → 27.5.17

I think I am working in a different place – Working in the absent field of my own body --- this could be a chapter title I realise.
'In spite of wishing and wanting': and now, in a long conversation with myself.

23.5.18
I begin, as always, by lying on the floor.
First, I descend. Then I spend a long time, maybe 30 minutes, rolling - not very far or fast.
I am noticing surfaces of my body, what is contacting the floor, ≡

I do this for time enough. I eventually find standing as I hear conversations from the street outside passing me by. It is morning - this is a morning dance. I roll down and up my spine, I fold over: I have done this thousands of times before.
Time passes - moving happens.
I sit down to write a long description of it all. I have also done this type of thing thousands (it feels) of times.

I consider that I am always somewhat in the middle of everywhere.

May 18. No, June 18, 2018

Storing potential
Russell: no projection of the nervous systems
Jazz dancing
Acts of clearance: go to ground or crawl about
Simone Forti: the animal body and study in the zoo - watching animals
Wim Vanderkeybus: the animal body - remember his father was a veterinarian.
Mary Wigman: the dances with masks - WILD!!
Teero Saarinen: he danced the blue lady solo of Carolyn Carlson - it was amazing. Deliacte, full of synthesisers and one plastic blind.

June 2018

Alex and I propose a performance in the local regional hall.
We call it: SURVIVAL --"EFFORTS TOWARD BECOMING CONTINUOUS"
The things we need to set up are:
1. The ground - we walk the length of her paddock, up down up and talk about war.
2. Breath
3. Feeling weight: we roll on each other, we carry, we wrestle.
4. The history of sound we have used already: Nick Cave again and again and also Gurrumul.

June 26 2018

The sound of physical thinking.
Watching Richard and Rhiannon: is giving very little information enough?

I ask: what do you forefront in your noticing?
'whipping animals, drop back, head shaking, arse drop out, whacking limbs, a shared thought, he smiles, what is parsing here?;;;;;;

I imagine them by a fire pit, seeing a pulse, setting one up.

3

28.8.18

To be a modern dancer one must be a modern thinker.

The artist must be entrepeneurial, embodied, enactivated, minful, etc.

The business of thinking about dancing.

What is it like?

Remember:

Alex and her flesh animal
Forti and the zoo
the archaic brain
transversality
The world is my field of practice.

Date unknown
When the weight is real it cannot be other than what it is.

20.10.18

Death on my mind, all the coffins I have sat by and touched.
Deborah Hay was not afriad of death.
I read 'Die-Wise!' It is big and long.
I think about multiplicity - the many approaches to the centre of the mandala.

November 2018
List of possible things to do:
disarm the body
go up and down to go through
lengthen the leg bones by practising that
go to grond somehow
steal movement and then deliberately try to push it through a kin-aesthetic frame.
throw a lot away - body included.

words:
hyper aesthesia
shaking
transcending - i do not think I am about this...
performing like a consumer: ethics ?
artification

4

December 12 2018

Is all the /my/this dance training un-necessary? (useless ?)

January 2019

what is an "axis of vulnerability"?

March 6 2019

She said: before, you did not talk about animals, you talked about:
gravity, heft, motherhood, earth, gravity, forces and elements.
This, then, is a new primordial space being brought to bear on the embodied choreograohy already mined.

What belongs here or radically does not?

NO!! This interest in no is to eveyrthing ever embodied and yes at once.
---The kaleidoscopic potential to go away from langauge and back again-

Everything is necessary here because it is so hard won.
The humor is the catastrophe - if so, what is left?
Where is the human-ness? Do you lose control?

Remember the words - do the work of that.
We are post-anthropocene. The earth does not need us.
We are relics of primal forces.

To carry is to care - do I care for her?
Well, yes, because later I will need you to care for me.
→ things are uncomfortable.

I am discomfited.

Rocking up into the midline it is nice to hear the music, the next thing is coming through.

Nothing is ever finished.
A decision
A necessity
a desire to - move - - - ON.

It has been a generous migration.

A windhorse, a side stretch, a gaping breath, a planet, a red dress,
a leap into the moon garden. A walk back to the middle to begin again.

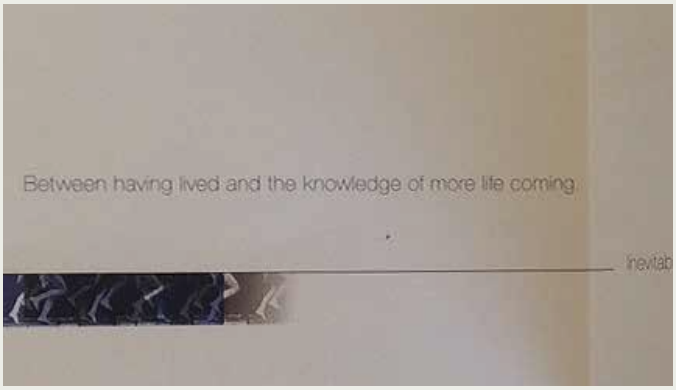
AN END → FOR NOW. S

APPENDIX 2

Once I was a Horse: giveaway gifted to audience

1. Giveaway gifted to audience at end of performance.
2. 'Scripts' spoken live while dancing.
3. Academic speech or presentation spoken (included here as sometimes illegible on the video documentation).

The scripts of spoken text are included here for reference if the sound is not audible enough for the listener.
The text is not verbatim as it changed when performed live.
The speech was edited in the moment, as I felt it needed to be shortened in the moment of its reading, or abbreviated.



APPENDIX 2 (continued)

Once I was a Horse: scripts spoken in performance

[WHILE DANCING]

To create new work, you must create new neural pathways.
The nervous system learns only by repetition.

In 2017, almost exactly one year after my prosthetic leg was installed
>
I had a complete Central nervous system meltdown
>
An expressive dysphasia
One of the aphasia's.
>
>
I could not speak for five days.
>
>
Russell Dumas said the work is in not projecting through the nervous system.

So, I have been practising this, protecting my nervous system, waiting.

That, and wrapping around my midline.
I have been working to understand the conditions.
These things will not be rushed.

>>>>

Of course confusion prevails - because the practising of being in a somatic state is not conducive to making decisions. It is, by its nature, concerned with a state of choicelessness. It is not really interested in a future choreography. It is not, says Bojana, choreographic. It is an adjacent practice.

But, it is a place to begin, and refresh daily.

[WHILE AT ONE OF THREE MICROPHONES, LEANING ON THE WALL]

He said:
"There is a beautiful energy to jumping on - am I able to recreate that hit and see the offer? Maybe this takes away longing".

He said:
There has to be something else going on; “just kicking my legs because I can cannot be the task”. You know, because effort shown and level of difficulty has always been how I am measured – as valuable, you know”.

There are some questions:
Can you receive energy from elsewhere? If so, how does that work?
Can the working be continuous, in a continuum, a “singular moving sensation” rather than punktuum?
Is it always your whole body?

He said:
“There were moments when I could collect a lot of information and delay my response to all of it, and the when the time comes I wanted to jump on 100%”.

I say:
From the outside, I take pleasure in knowing that there may be moments of extreme and extremely impressive movements or shapes. I am ok with them - sometimes I even like them, I am probably even waiting for them - because they tell me something too.

And then:
A crisis - there is too much happening in the mind - and so, “to do anything felt like a lie”. I am upptragen he says, I am uptaken, busy, halted and unable to do.

I am listening so much that output would muddy the pond. Any kind of anything that I might recognise as virtuosic seems unwelcome and impossible. It feels hard to be accurate in there.

What was intriguing for me, say I, was that you plowed on and didn’t try to offer me any answers. You stayed with your discomfort.

Cynthia said:
There is no mind in arms.

She watched:
You were kneeling, somehow leaning on the wall.

Leaning into the back space.

And then you fell flat on your face. And then you realised you could not use your arms, and so you chose something else.

Cynthia said:

- Whatever you chose seemed to emerge from the body.

- "Whatever you found was holding you": the soft knees, the head or side of face toward the light slightly - as though the image is holding you, as though you needed that to be that.

- You didn't choose the obvious, she said, and as you found the thing to work with there was this wonderful ratcheting noise from outside, as though it were emergent from your body – you were not in response to it , it was not a mechanical something added to your image, it was seemingly emerging from you.

- I was hearing an equivalent of what you were doing – or that is how it seemed.

Cynthia said:

- "This undid the idea of 'she's doing that to that sound/music (etc) because that is what dance 'is".

I watch R and I am reminded of freedom, and diagonals, folding and falling.

Of the potential of whole body jumps. R is good at those.

She said:

I like that you let the referential 'moves' be part of the moving. This work we do when we meet is in part about habits and recognising and undoing, but it is not its primary motivation. Habits can be interesting too.

She said:

There is something reassuring about the things we know being there but being rearranged somehow. Underneath this is a small hark to 'remember, don't forget' that these moves came from somewhere and someone, they are small history markers.
They are THINGS to be abandoned. Imaginative counterpoints to leap away from.

She says:

Certainly, with others I am working off centre a lot but the organisation is different, there is much more falling through the folds of the body.
When I am with you I am reminded of letting go but also further, into falling - actually falling. I am reminded of going-ness - and I think that is something you taught me years ago'.

She says:

Because working with body first seems not intelligent enough, we now have all these people making work who don't really know what they are doing at all really. There is no body-time. Or, if there is something like that, there is a category for it – 'durational'.

We agree:
We are both doing these things to ask – what else can be here?

[MICROPHONE 3, FACING AWAY FROM THE AUDIENCE, INTO THE UPSTAGE CORNER, TURNING SLOWLY]

Alex said:
Image ----is a 'ferfie' ------for the kinaesthetic thinker.

Because, she says, I am not one imagining being the whale, I am the whale!

(Turning)

It is an extraordinary way to think, because you are thinking while you are doing, who says you are thinking or not thinking?
Rhetorical dancing is dangerous – Alex says – because the risk cannot be anywhere else. You are in service to something else – your body is not yours.

And then - What am I *actually* missing , when I am missing dancing?

(Turn back)

Alex says:
Individuality in the city has gone *butcha*.

She said:
We need a new topography – a new aspect – I will teach you how to stand on my shoulders.

She said:
It's a fine line people!!!!!

She said:
So then, I am fucking ready , I am not a rhetorical doll in the cage of my technique.
She says I am an agent of dance.
She says, a woman off balance is very threatening.

We laugh.

"The warmth of entropy,
It's all downhill from here"

A neon wall sign for a future work.

[DANCING]

What if you are not on top of it?
What if you are not in front of it, landing it, executing it?

What if the task was not to LAND it?
What if you were not before IT?

What if valency was found in a just behindness?
What if you delayed?

What if dancing did not equal pushing ____something ____OUT.

"I must do something to initiate", said Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, "but I must pause to receive".

[I DECIDE NOT TO SPEAK THIS]

The legs are strong – she is a mustang ----sally.
Down earth, through air.
She, there, is in a going state but also holding off from exploding state.
Between anatomy and a transcendence. Between one's own body. Between fluid space and bone space.
Between truth and fiction.
Between having lived and the knowledge of more life coming: Inevitable.
And then…
Arrive. Just because.
And then shift.
And then hold your own arm.
Up down up down
Bones straining into surface
Like a racehorse
Along the belly
Jumped upon, slammed down, rolling
Away down the stage
Up the escarpment
Sibilant breathing, the mane shook and sideways: vaulted
The snap of that.
And then, now –
One being galloped at
body thrown back
If I were a horse she might be shot now.

[IN THE DARK, BEHIND THE AUDIENCE, CHANGING COSTUMES, I SAY]

"Head down but watching now
If we die before we die we are lucky.
Waiting for a sign of readiness,
Napoleon on his mountaintop.
The horses gallop at the nape of neck, pewter folds.
Here the caveat;
The wind whips.
Delay in the back of the body, the flanks are quiet".

Here the darkness, here the weary, here the rejuvenation, here the ashes, here the rising, here the absent and the pushless push.
A go borne of reduction,
Distilled by history
Essentialised by theory,
Rendered to a type of un-motioning by the-everything
Given everything –
She is lying down now, breathing
Something begins to happen.

'You only look good' said he 'when you are moving so fast'.

"If she be horse I might be shot now.
Here the caveat;
A vault,
A wind whip,
Napoleon on his mountaintop.
Small gallopers at the nape of a neck, the pewter folds.

Given everything –
Mustang legs, truth and fiction, inevitable futures,
Lazy pink lit alabasters!
One flat thing, flatly laid out, breathing
If we die before we die we are lucky.

'You only look good' said he 'when you are moving so fast'".

APPENDIX 2 (continued)

Once I was a Horse: plinth speech 2018

To undertake post graduate research one should begin with a question.

I did not really begin with a question – more a perplexity.
More an observation.

And it was not "choreographically" motivated, at least not to begin with.

In my application, I proposed a 'return' to the 'nest' of the body.
I suggested something had gone awry, that the body in dance making was being forgotten.

At the time, I thought the body was necessary in dance making.
I may well, it seems, have been wrong.

I was prompted to make my proposal following on from seeing works in a type of 'genre of performance' that situated as dance and yet, I did not understand them TO BE dance. These works have been changeably referred to as 'non-dance', 'anti-dance', and 'conceptual dance'. They made me ask questions. And this was the beginning.

In her book 'Choreographing Problems: Expressive concepts in contemporary dance and performance', published 2016, performance philosopher and theorist Bojana Cjevic says that such charges seem to imply that this 'conceptual dance' was repudiating the apparent "essence" of dance, "a gesture" she says, "that broadly related back to the argument of pure dance" related to concepts of 'modernism'.

This was in great par lance with my sweeping paper of 1999 and my young and impassioned campaign for dance being ESSENTIALLY about TRUTH. Of course I have progressed far from that exact ethos but it was perhaps time for some further dismantling and reconstruction; so that I could see what I was making and wanting to question in that act.

Then, I wandered back toward German choreographer Mary Wigman, and her 'dance' Hexentanz of 1926. A time when dance and the dancers were vessels or conduits for expression.
Dance makers in the 1920's were pretty radical.
It was a time of huge social upheaval.

THIS is a time of huge social upheaval / as we witness mass migration / and the largest diaspora the world has seen.
It is a choreography of unprecedented mass and masses.

Words like "pure" and "truth" may no longer be applicable.
Honing attention to *What Is*, just might be.
What is the work asking to 'be like' now?

Researching 'Embodiment' was woefully incorrect and unnecessary, and had been done predominantly by men – mostly white and often French. This research could not, I realised, be another attempt at an examination of what the body is, and is not, etcetera. After being trained into viewing myself as operating in perpetual ontological lack, I was interested in a different abundance. And oddly a new cynicism, or critically sharp thinking, borne of my own wit and myrrh.

I was interested in something more kinetically dynamic. Something more animate, more alive, more animal; with more potential for mess and spillage. With more moving inside of the moving.

I tried to avoid Phenomenology as it is a usual beginning point for dancers entering academia, it is a veritable and wonderful vortex but difficult to understand and,, I could not assume to have the audacity to speak through it. I can however, like a bower bird, reach into phenomenology and make use of fragments to propel the practice and the questioning.

Maxine states that phenomenology is vital in relation to movement and bodilyness "Because its fundamental concern is with experience and with giving veridical descriptive accounts of experience".

But, Bojana says that body-emergent subjectivity may well be one of the problems. And of course, Yvonne Rainer and many of the Judson Church post modernists, worked to erase an "I" from the doing of dancing entirely.
>>>

So, I wanted to focus on something not about the body, but how to research body-first. How to articulate that process using the frame or 'genre' of academic research.

Like pressing zucchini juice through a muslin, I pressed thinking through-moving through reading. This agitation of movement back to theory and back to the studio, is what makes the task of this type of research sometimes compelling, sometimes frustrating. It can render you motionless, it can support you, it can give you cause as well as breed suspicion for what has not been analysed and quantified.

But I kept showing up, not sure what I was looking at.
AND –
Over time, I alighted on the pin head of my interest and named it as 'kinaesthetic attention'.
Just that ---- as the thing to look at --- for now.

>>>
Explication and curly discourse is mostly not the point today – because we are here sensing into an arrival. Observing one (me) seeking an address; a pre-time before a written dissertation.

BUT – this is indeed the academy, so I will offer this kernel:

In the mind of the muscles kinaesthesis is understood as 'the sense perception of movement'. In several dictionaries, it is defined as 'an illusion of moving in space'. The word has a history with neurology. Kinaesthetic Awareness, KA and Kinaesthetic intelligence KI are measures neurologists are now attempting to quantify. In modern medicine, the role of phenomenology, or the importance of the lived experience of one's own body is finally getting a look in. Remarkable.

In dance vernacular and performance critique kinaesthesia seems to be a form of a priori knowledge, spoken of as *kinaesthetic* affect or *kinaesthetic* empathy or now, more commonly, *kinaesthetic* transference.

So, it is a sense that is about movement – it has about it spatiality, a governing aspect and also, you can improve your relationship to it. I might argue that dancers, some dancers, are incredibly interested in how this sense operates in their body.

>>

What is compelling, for me, is how (these some interested) dancers 'put this sense', available to every human being, to 'USE'.

"For a path to be usable" says Sarah Ahmed, "it needs to be used, which means use can keep something alive, whilst disuse can mean disappearance and decay. If by being used, a path becomes clearer over time then the more a path is used the more a path is used". (That's not curly!)…

The nervous system learns by repetition.

I started to think of this attention as a virtuosic attention. Thus, rupturing the binary of the dancing body and its often representational 'kinetic virtuosity'.

>>

American dancer maker Deborah Hay and philosopher and phenomenologist Maxine Sheets-Johnstone both propose that we encounter and think 'Bodily' – because we experience bodily. Sheets Johnstone insists we remove the lexical band aid of "Embodiment", so that we forefront the imperative of lived experience, the kinaesthetic experience.

Sheets-Johnstone says:
"If we leave experience behind, we leave life (real life) behind, with all its lived through meanings, motivations, feelings, thoughts, and so on. Second, we are not simply bodies, morphological forms having such and such parts, but dynamically moving and dynamically attentive creatures".

>>>>>

Questions of what choreography is, or is not, does not occupy the centre of this research, though the work in kinaesthetic attention certainly futures itself toward "acts", or a desire to make decisions one would likely name to be 'choreographic decisions'. A choreographic future gives the bodily-thinking an address, and keeps it separate to the realm of somatic practice, naming the research as intentionally different TO somatic practice.

I would just like to offer a small frame on the thinking about choreography now:

In Choreographing problems, Bojana says that "movement no longer presents the object of choreography, produced by the *body as its instrument*, but is caught in composition with the body, in which the body and movement transform as separate terms" (26). Arguing, she says, that dance favours a phenomenological perspective based on an embodied kinaesthetic experience, whereas choreography is the "event of the mind" which can metamorphose a "simple pavement walk into dance", re-iterates a mind body division between performance and choreography as a division between the body and thought.

Her argument develops, as I understand it, to being that choreography operates in three modes (or times): prior to the performance, during it and lingering in the resonant space once the work is complete (in as much as something is complete).

Before, during, after. A continuum.

>>>>>>>

An important note: In much dance work being made now – Australia and Europe both – there is a turning toward Intensity and Subtraction.

Phillipa Rothfield, in "Tinkering Away: the untimely art of subtraction" (2016) points out that, in a Deleuzian sense, subtraction "is an operation that provokes new becomings' within the work". It allows, essentially, for new possibilities to emerge she says.

Subtraction and intensity are important considerations within the embrace of my attempt at articulating kinaesthetic attention. They both thematically relate to the lived experience of my body: physical subtraction through injury, as much as the subtraction one feels when encountering and grappling with theory.

Intensity has a historical relationship to effort and pushing, a result of training and the validating of the dancer (me in this case) via muscular endeavours – as much as it does to my lived experiences of grief, love, loss, childbirth, being woman.

Life forces, or the forces of life, hold within them an 'other' sense of time --- an intensity that has durée.

AND,

Intensity is not always obvious. It is sometimes related to energetic intensities or states. States as made famous you might say, by Meg Stuart and her Belgian based company Damaged goods. Her work renowned for performers spending long periods of time shaking, screaming, throwing, crying etc. Intensity can be obvious.

A small anecdote from my own vault: More than 12 years ago I was working in a very well known company. The director, who I shall not name, had one form of feedback for everything. Struggle as he might to find other, more resonant or relevant words for his thoughts, he could only respond to any, and all, material with "could it just be a bit more…like…..…intense?".

My physical response was to do the same thing as I just did, but land with a louder sound, or make it look like it was more "impacting" on my body. Supressing, essentially, years of training in liquid like floor-work to represent effort and display impact.
Later I would realise complicity.
Later I would want to write about agency.
Now, if asked again, I would say – intensity, you know, "doesn't have to be…like…. so obvious".

Hmmm.

Subtraction opens potential – for "reduction is never reduction" says Merleau –Ponty.
And, Intensity is now a 'field' – within and beyond the body – offering, as a concept, the potential to work with a range of energies – conjured or 'received'.
>>>>>>

So then - ---

<u>What if my attention can sharpen yours? What if that can be the beginning point?</u>

If I attend to dilating the space between here and there, if I attend to beginnings and not projecting my nervous system – do you receive, as beholder, something more like a corporeal transference? Or, A kinaesthetically felt transference?

"The activation", says process philosopher Erin Manning, "is between registers".

Not getting there, not landing it, but being between a here and there, alighting but never alighting. A virtuosic attending that works to heighten bodily-ness, working in opposition to body as an admirable surface with no continuum of resonance.
.....

The problems and complexities arising in the field of performance theory and philosophy: the *organic regime* of dance, movement as not being the bodily expression of the subject of dance, the lack of need of subjective experience, indeed subjective experience as invalid until argued into significance by theorists, subverting the kinetic spectacle of the body, prompted me to read backwards.

I wanted to return to when the moving was an important aspect of the doing of dancing. I read about work by Australian choreographer Russell Dumas, Americans Trisha Brown, Deborah Hay, Anna Halprin and others. A sort of pre-humanist, pre-materialist, pre-post-post modern era of dance making and process analysis. A seeding time perhaps.

In Bodies of thought by Erin Brannigan (2012?), Australian choreographer Russell Dumas proposes a type of 'utopian impossibility'; a situation where a 'provenance' for dance can occur. He speaks of working toward a means for dancing to be seen and met differently, not only judged by a dancers' "competence or feeling of ease in the public gaze" (Brannigan 17).

"My understanding of practice" he says, "embraces an embodied understanding of the past in the present for the future. I utilise the notion of provenance as a strategy to resist the vacuousness of much contemporary dance" (16). What is it, he asks, that has been "left uncolonised" (17).

Provenance, dancer-ness, bodily-ness, personal-present- history.

And then: in a studio recently, a colleague said to me "it is so uncool these days to call yourself a dancer. Because this seems to imply that you are a 'dancey' dancer as though a) that were a bad thing and b) it means you are only interested in a kind of self serving virtuosity. Why does it not", she continues, "mean that you are spatial, intelligent, sensitive, receptive, attentive"?

Provenance and being a dancer in the world.

I decide **freedom to** ----– is a form of protest – a body based, movement first, activation of agency.

In attempting to adopt "**freedom to**" as a working ethos I afford myself the space to work in a duration that Henri Bergson terms a "succession of qualitative changes, which melt into and permeate one another, an indivisible continuous multiplicity".
.....

So, I am getting there! Stay with me…..

In an effort to propose a single question – this is it:

How does Kinaesthetic attention enable dancer's agency?

Within this is must be answered:

What does kinaesthesis mean?
What are its origins?
How do we pay attention?
What are we paying attention to?
How does agency operate?

Masters Research is intentionally concerned with defining a liminal space, the work and paper has a different density to a Phd. But no less rigour I would argue.

The necessity to be clear about the one thing meant I had to refine my grand beginnings and my hope (or belief that I could) include readings from medicine, psychology, neurology, feminism, Buddhism, phenomenology, social politics and on and on.

Like a bower bird, I have indeed traversed fields of thinking as I am, by nature, an endlessly curious human; I seek relational threads. I think in wide arcs.

I realise my point of difference lay in the fact that I approach the work bodily. The body the body the body. A rose is a rose is a rose.

>>>>>

'Agency' is an important topic now; integrated into a plethora of discourses on identity, gender, politics and sociology. Agency is linked to freedom – freedom to // borne out of freedom from. For this research, I had to exist only in and with the beginning few words of my question, with a knowledge that it was futuring toward agency. One thing at a time.

.....

And so.

Concrete from the 'studio':
These are the people (Projection on scrim – Richard, Rhiannon and Alex).

"He" is Richard Cilli, "She" is Rhiannon Newton.

Richard, Rhiannon and I have a history of knowing each other. In the distant past, I was their lecturer at WAAPA.

In relation to my Research, my role with them was pedagogic.

They are smart, curious, 'highly trained' dancers - their ability to pitch in at a sophisticated level enabling us to do the work of seeing something through something. They were ok with me asking them to do endless jazz sequences.

We three met together for four days in November 2017 and began by learning some of the material I had used with Dancenorth earlier in the year. We worked with it and augmented it, discussed what it was bringing up. I bought two impeccable black polyester dresses, from St Vinnies, that had immediate visual reference to Islamic women. This to see what it is to try and fill up kinaesthetically via 'imposed' means.

In 2018, we met for ten sessions scattered across 6-7 months. I have to say - being with them reminded me of the joy I have for watching dancing and thinking physically - its marvellous ambiguity.

Its a bit uncool to just really dig watching moving sometimes – without all the cerebral evaluative noise.

The final three sessions were framed as "six propositions for imagined choreographies".
They tried each proposition for about 40 minutes.
I watched and wrote and did not interrupt or direct. We filmed some of the moving, but out of context, or without a frame, it is moving as part of a process of thinking.

The six have the following titles:

1. The darkness – the animal – What rarely comes to light?
2. My body wants to be disarmed (in the vein of Deborah Hay and her scores for working with perception).
3. How can I rest on what I know and work in delay? (one thing becoming one, resting in the nervous system and waiting to go, not leading but following the directive of the body, the/my history is here with me).
4. I pulse with field potential (what is potential like? Rhythm beneath rhythms).
5. I stand behind the going and I make it go.
6. Together – when I am not alone – we – I…? What is coming back to me?

These were a way to propose a way to get to something we could shape in the future.
We did not shape it – as the propositions and the discussion served the research.

>>>

Alex is Alexandra Harrison.
Alex and I worked throughout 2017.

We met without regularity, and began by reading philosophy while the other moved. The agitation of curly words and the doing or attending of dancing.

Each meeting we committed to the next iteration of our shared understanding revealing itself in incremental catches of time between mothering and the stuff of life. We work collaboratively, and share an edict to work with what is; the matter of our bodies – older, different – available in an 'other' way. Importantly, not to aspire toward recreating what is no longer here. We showed the work we had made thus far 'The difficult comedown' to a small audience in November.

Our questions where about kinaesthetic attention, endurance, aliveness, amplification, and time of the body. The work continues and the conversation deepens.
.....

To conclude for now…

Once I was a horse is here because I wanted to make a frame that would enable a beholding of the work I have done thus far.

I wanted to 'choreograph' an arc embracing all the actions taken: writings, images, discussions and the movement-moving – that compose the field of a practice-led dance research. Everything is relational, so I wanted to have some people to relate it to.

Kinaesthetic attention emerged from my experience of reduction. It had the capacity to reach toward potential or potentiality, itself a house for 'potent'. Holding it as focus has allowed me to redefine the conditions I both can and am willing to work in.

Also – I have, in short, been learning how to occupy a position – as an artist.

I have then learnt that occupying a position can be threatening as it is also difficult to maintain ---because the weather is changeable. "One must keep repotting oneself" as Richard says.

The academy has offered time and space, and, through financial support, validation of the importance of practice led research. In a world where we are now notified as to how long it will take to read any given online article; this kind of slow incremental burn is a clear protest or point of difference. It affords a slower thinking.

Body time is deep-time – I have had to be patient.
.....

And one very last thing : I seem to believe in movement. Or in dancerliness. Or, the importance of attention directed through the body. Given everything, I still think we need the body.

But belief is also 'really uncool'. It is the poor cousin of cynicism according to European thinkers.

The only way to restore movement to the general nexus that is its native element, says Erin Manning, is to say that 'Movement embodies nothing but itself '. Movement never bodies anything, it just bodies-forth, at any-point. Embodiment is the wrong concept. Just "bodying" is better. Movement goes-a-bodying". (39 Manning 2014).

Maybe.

Sometimes,
I am one flat thing on the floor – breathing.

Sometimes,
I move through it all, despite it all because in the end, I am pretty unconcerned with 'cool'.

APPENDIX 3

The Difficult Comedown: PDF document produced post performance

The **Difficult Comedown**

CREATED + PERFORMED BY PAEA LEACH + ALEXANDRA HARRISON

"...mesmerizing: when it finished I felt my whole body exhale."

a **sell out** season premier at **Dance Massive** 2019

DESCRIPTION

Two women carry and haul, run, wait – and consider: what's clearly necessary, right now? Each asks with all that she is. In duet the women age the body, expand it, injure it. They change. The dance dwells in an ecosystem of seasonality, a rhythm of work that allows the women to persist in unsentimental relationship to the earth. Meanwhile, they don't have to take care of each other – but they do.

The Difficult Comedown is interested in shared resilience and the labour of women. It considers a new epoch beyond the Anthropocene, past human predominance on earth. Borne of long-embodied knowledge, and compelled by wilfulness, this is performance from the ground up: an immersion in slow change.

Performers Paea Leach and Alexandra Harrison shatter their solo lives to come down to earth. It is difficult, but they make mountains.

VIMEO LINKS

Full length – 54 mins **https://vimeo.com/337409402**
Edited version – 5 mins **https://vimeo.com/337413458**

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

PAEA LEACH Co-Creator & Performer

Paea is an independent dance artist, writer, academic. She identifies as Ngāti Kuri (from Northland, Aotearoa) and Australian. Her current work prefaces sensation over sensationalism; activating and amplifying choreographies emergent from working with kinaesthetic attention and 'bodilyness'. Having worked professionally for companies such as Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui's Eastman, Australian Dance Theatre, Chunky Move, Perth theatre company and a swathe of independent dance and theatre makers in Australia and overseas, she now attends to questioning and expanding her collaborative and writing fields. Paea has made work for Strut, Chunky Move, WAAPA, Keir Choreographic Award (et al). She was an Asialink artist in residence and has taught for many years across a wide spectrum of trained and untrained bodies in Australia, Europe and Asia. As a woman mother artist Paea is interested in resilience and survival (of artists), especially and of course, the dancers.

ALEXANDRA HARRISON Co-Creator & Performer

Alex is a trained anthropologist who has never practiced. She is an untrained dancer who has practiced for 20 years. She is also a mother – definitely untrained. She used to listen to her feet when she danced and probably still does. This has its limits as well as advantages. She has made visible lots of devised physical theatre, dance and performance. In 2010 she made *Dark, Not Too Dark*. This piece was her first solo, full-length work. It is a strange and special treasure, which disappears into a past she can only glimpse. Today, she is interested in vitality, *being* the whale and doing charcoal and movement workshops with lawyers. She knows there is no line really and yet she is following something. Yesterday she learned to use a ride-on mower on her farm in regional Victoria. She would like to thank both Gertrude and Alice.

INFORMATION FOR PRESENTERS

CREW ON TOUR

- Cast x 2 personnel
- Production Management x 1 personnel
- Producer x 1 personnel

LOAD IN/OUT CREW NEEDED

- 3 x crew (1 x LX, 1 x audio) x 8 hours
- 3 x mechs x 4-hour call for bump-in and bump-out of set (venue dependent)
- Two-day bump in and tech, open on evening of Day 2

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

The show is best presented in a flat-floor studio space or equivalent.

Preferred surface	Sprung dancefloor – wood or tarkett.

STAGING REQUIREMENTS

Dimensions	Optimum stage dimensions 16m x 12m.
Audience set up	Flat floor, with audience seated in playing space.
Ideal capacity	Best for capacity of 30 – 50 pax.
Lighting/set requirements	Lighting plan available on request.
Stage equipment	Appropriate rigging points for flown set (light) elements to be supplied by the venue.
Sound requirements	Pre-recorded sound – speaker positions negotiable.
Patron warnings	None.

DURATION

60 minutes

FULL CREDITS

Lighting / Set Design	Bosco Shaw
Costume Design	Anna Tregloan
Sound Design	Marco Cher-Gibard
Dramaturge	Cynthia Troup
Producer	Erin Milne – Bureau of Works
Production Management	Bosco Shaw
Costume Construction	Mel Liertz
Sculptor	Neil Taylor
Vocals	Neil Taylor, Marisa Stirpe
Photographer	Heidrun Lohr

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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a sell out season premier at Dance Massive 2019

PERFORMANCE HISTORY

March 2019 – World Premiere at Arts House for Dance Massive

WEBSITES / CONTACT

Artists

Paea Leach	**http://www.paealeach.com**
Alexandra Harrison	**http://alexandraharrison.com.au**

Producer

Bureau of Works – *Managing National & International Touring*

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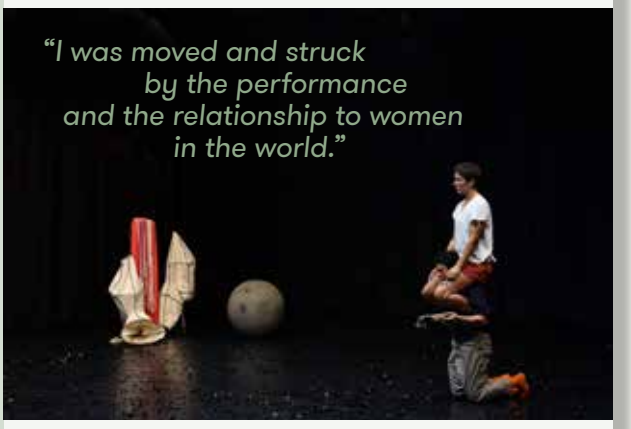

CRITICAL RESPONSES

"The physical intimacy, the rapport between the two dancers, the physical closeness, and the confidence in their own bodies, not a sexual libidinous rapport, but an intimacy nonetheless, showed us the power of trust and the exploration that can come from that trust. Together and apart, together and apart. The two dancers were holding each other, but also holding the space for us. The rapport between the dancers, and the fact that these were two women, meant that we were witnessing the possibilities of a conversation between two women of equal power, sharing the power. It is but bravely affirming of life."

– Clara Brack –

"The next thing I know, they are running, shoulder to shoulder, hip to hip, toe to heel. It is exhilarating. It feels full of danger, likely to end in a crashing tangle of limbs and I come whipping back into the theatre. They twin remarkably; not, as twinning is generally thought to be, as a process of identicalisation, but twinning as the ability to maintain difference and sameness at the same time. Paea is subtly baroque, the end of her movements shadowed in filagree. Alex is solidly modernist, form follows function. From this point on I am captured—where we go and where we end up feels very far from this beginning but I find myself willingly succumb to the ride. A tumult of incongruous images flow into and out of one another: it is a carnival, a constructivist's dream, a game, a competition, a world-building, a planetary system, a quiver, a shake, with some established rules continuing (difference and sameness, sharing weight).

Contemporary dance has, in the last twenty years, had a preoccupation with historicising its own lineage, with the American postmodernists of the mid-twentieth century revisited in anti-theatrical (anti-dance even) fervour (No! says Yvonne Rainer; No! answers Jérome Bel and others). This is not such a work; it is, rather, early avant-garde-like, integrated movement and design recalling Bauhausian performance art and other experiments of the early twentieth century. Lighting, costume and sound design are a delight—the orange dresses, the voluminous hooped pants, the hanging rib-like strips of LEDs, the wind and just-heard chirps of birds... I'd like to think this is a new aesthetic and conceptual territory emerging; highly sculptural, with a sense of the strategies of total-theatre; work-like in its play; playful while ludicrously serious; affectful in a bodily sense."

– Justine Shih Pearson –

"Refreshing and unmannered –
a super work."

APPENDIX 4

Notes from the field of the body (2)

By Paea Leach
23rd March 2017
9am-11am

Written 6pm the same evening.

[Setting]
A lounge room in Fitzroy.
A Body Mind Centering (BMC) treatment with somatic practitioner Olive Beiringa of BODYCARTOGRAPHYPROJECT.ORG
https://bodycartography.org/

[Olive says]
'We begin as a disc, and the disc evolves into two planes'. She goes on more or less – a back plane and a frontal plane – amniotic fluid sac and the yolk sac (back and front respectively). The frontal plane becomes our organs, lungs and digestive system, and the back plane reaches up and over to encompass that space. The middle of this – the mesoderm - is the centre of our being. Or who we will become. It is an emerging place. I imagine this immediately as two spheres circling or reaching rather, slowly, and with an Equanimeous tempo: away, away, away from each other: in the smallest sense of away. Two small but full curves that are more-flat than a circle but not as flat as a long-domed oval. They are dense these two forms working toward being a one/self.

[She begins. Her hands hold my feet. She waits]

There is a spiralling in the femur bones – but not in the socket and not in the knee – it is almost a hand span above the knee. A gentle rolling inward, a spiral that seemed to gather my outer leg toward a midline space as it began folding into the adductors – adductor Magnus quite specifically. That as it travelled up the body, my psoas was collected from underneath, freed from an attachment to the descending colon and given length.

The legs form from the ends first – that is, from the toes and upward along the bone shafts. The bones begin to travel away from the pelvis as 'boopfh' a knee cap forms, and then 'boopfh' an ankle joint. The ligaments travel upward toward the middle body. This image of the legs reaching first from the toes made sense physically, in that the legs do not form dangling away from the centre like a weed gone awry; they began deeply rooted in the central body and reached out with purpose, and with a readiness to receive gravity through the structure of the leg bones.

[Olive says 'I can sense your nervous system scanning me' and I begin small breaths out like a clump of air leaving at once and in a rhythm for a few moments]

Release techniques working with the legs should acknowledge this fact – the legs thrust up into the pelvis, they find a ligamentous origin in the psoas and its connection to the 12th thoracic vertebrae. They are settled in the body, these femurs, not falling out. Without them acting out this piston like differentiated position in our system, we are losing them, losing our legs. This could be a formidable begin. Without our legs, we do not have the tailbone, for she or he or 'it' is also falling out behind, an un-centred planet with a small light headed for the wrong earth. Without our tailbone, we do not have a pelvic integration that can buoy up the torso. The legs want to be the building; the things that stride and go; and the torso the weather; but we often reverse this common sense and intuitively composed structure.

Attention toward the front plane and the back plane and the space that sluices between them. The back plane, my back plane, shot up like one long linear surface. The front plane more difficult to understand, more uncertain.

[Return to them these two planes of support – let it be functional I think. Ah, there they are. Hello].

And the mesoderm became a circling in fact. The centre as a line and line rearranged, and energy without borders. In a dance, or on the move. Like a sheet of tissue placed on the surface of water in a permanent dissolving inertia. '*Saudade*' said my friend in a café in Brussels, is Portugese, and means 'tissue for sleeves'. Sensation I remember thinking – it is something about sensation. I remember this night and that cup of tea, the sensation of hearing the word as I write this now.

Olive said, there is potential to invite your cells to migrate. Cellular migration allows us to sense that there IS migration by a collection of cells, followed by arrival and their collective realisation that their geography informs (a new) function. Here I make a connection to the movement of the people on the planet, the largest diaspora in modern history: to large bodies of migration, to billions and trillions of cells being heaved, or invited, here to there.

Functional response, resonant affect.
My nervous system has moved down a palpable notch. I am warm and I am quiet.