

Movement-Initiated Writing in Dance Ethnography

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MOVEMENT-INITIATED WRITING IN DANCE ETHNOGRAPHY

Abstract

A central issue in contemporary dance ethnography is that of writing the somatic - the attempt to articulate kinesthetic, bodily sensations that emerge in a particular culture or context, within a research format (Ness, 1992; Sklar, 2000). Emerging methods including performance making and poetic, narrative, experimental or performative writing create space for recognition of choreographic and sensory knowledges within ethnographic research. This chapter presents a case study that illustrates what I term 'movement-initiated writing' - writing that emerges through dance making, wherein the dance ethnographer is a participant observer in studio practice. Movement-initiated writing presents a methodology for writing out of attention to embodied experience. It is an approach to writing influenced by graphic design and artist-books, where pages are treated as spatial, performative sites. Pages from the author's artist-book *the kinesthetic archive book* are drawn on as an example of how this methodology may occur in practice.

This emic approach attempts to translate the felt affects of a specific world of movement into performances sited in the terrains of pages. This mode of writing draws on Roland Barthes (1977) notion of the 'grain of the voice', Gilles Deleuze's concept of the 'minor literature', (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) Hélène Cixous's examples of *écriture féminine* (Cixous, 1991) and the field of performance writing.

Note: Further images of artist-books can be found on my website alyslongleymoving.com

Movement-Initiated Writing in Dance Ethnography

Sensorial information creates dance. Dancers listen kinesthetically, read spaces with their muscles, make embodied decisions in moments of falling. They experiment with how meaning is created by the timing of a gesture, or by the quality of energy that creates dynamic feeling, or by the composition of bodies and objects in space, making some spaces alive and others invisible. In choreographic research, writing about studio processes is a common expectation, yet traditional academic writing and dance making often exist in a tenuous relationship. Travelling between the highly physical, complex world of kinesthetic knowledge to the descriptive, documental or conceptual register of written language is often an uncomfortable, if not painful, ride. This might be because the experience of movement brims with felt sensation – but how to describe it? In a field defined by embodiment, tactility and movement, the way that dance researchers write of their moving practice determines the way their creative thinking is understood and in turn valued by those unable to access more ephemeral modes of research. This chapter presents the case study of one artist-book - *the kinesthetic archive book*, and discusses the processes that led to its creation. This involved an approach to writing out of movement in which writing was considered co-extensive with dancing. Such writing is itself a form of performance in which meaning is mobile, page spaces are multi-dimensional, textural and evocative, and diverse forms of writing are brought into being hand in hand with choreographic material. This chapter also considers how such an approach to writing may be of use to qualitative researchers from a broad range of fields, by articulating a methodology for writing out of kinesthetic sensation. The following pages are the first three texts that open *the kinesthetic archive book*.

Insert images from *kinesthetic archive book*.

These pages all refer to the act of beginning. They were all written in dance studios out of various kinds of warm-up, and refer to a sense of meeting the working space, of beginning to layer somatic and choreographic movement possibilities into the room.

The page performs the process: choreographing journal notes

After an extended period of writing, editing, experimenting with book design and developing choreographic material in collaboration with the texts that make up *the kinesthetic archive book*, I sat at my desk and considered what I had done, in the form of a list.

these pages are :

an attempt
a following
a tracking
a listening
an attending
an articulation
a partial archive of movement
an experiment in documentation
an interactive object
activated by touch and sight
a refined presentation of selected journal notes
a form of translation
a form of transliteration
an event
a response
the product of two years of sustained dance practice

these pages are not :
a representation
a description
a duck or animal (or other obvious thing that they are
not such as an umbrella or cake)
a substitution for dancing
involved in killing or otherwise maiming any of the
dance ideas that initiated them

What had I done when I made *the kinesthetic archive book*? And why? *the kinesthetic archive book* is the result of a practice-led dance research project exploring writing formed out of choreographic processes. It presents an auto-ethnography of dance practice, drawing on the disciplines of poetic, narrative and performance writing. This project was the result of long-term experimentation with various forms of experimental writing and drawing through rehearsal processes, workshops and performance events. Pages from *the kinesthetic archive book* punctuate this chapter but the book itself is fifty pages long, so only a small selection has been included in the present text. *the kinesthetic archive book* was part of a practice-led PhD in performance studies, in which I inquired into how dance might initiate a creasing and folding of language. It originated from one year's worth of choreographic journals. These journals were kept primarily as a means to generate dance thinking. As such the majority of the writing occurred in the dance studio - sometimes before entering it as I

planned rehearsal strategies, most often directly after experimentation with particular ideas, and sometimes after dancing, when reflecting on our processes. Over the course of my PhD study I refined a particular approach to dance writing that I have named 'movement-initiated writing'. This is outlined in the section titled *Autoethnography and movement-initiated writing* in a later section of this chapter. *the kinesthetic archive book* takes choreographic journal notes and translates them into page-works. For the most part black and white tones dominate the colour palette, yet hints of colour (especially saturated blues and tints of sunlight) also run through the book. The pages reprinted in this text are black and white only and were chosen partially because this limitation does not impair their overall aesthetic affect.

Three key aims of my PhD study were, firstly, to investigate ways in which movement practice might enable, create and be in direct relationship with page-related practices, secondly, to discuss specific instances wherein artist books emerged out of dance practice, and thirdly, to interrogate methodologies for employing specific technical/ formal/ stylistic approaches to performance writing through five instances of performance making. Each of these aims supported my intention to develop and articulate methods of writing that emerged through dancing, and to explore tactics for developing dance practice through various modalities of writing and the creation of artist books. These research aims led to the creation of five practice-led research projects, each of which employed different methodologies for interweaving dance practice with explorative writing, and each of which led to the creation of an artist's book. *the kinesthetic archive project* is the first of these books. The fifty page works bound together in its performance archive were created from a combination of rehearsals for a produced, theatre based work (Longley and Pedersen, 2006); an ongoing dance practice with long term collaborators; during dance workshops (Forti, 2006; Smith, 2006; Bieringa and Ramstead, 2007; Crisp and Ginot, 2007); during dance teaching, as I reflected on my students' work-in-progress; or through interdisciplinary collaborations, such as the work *Circle*, which was written in response to a request from composer Claire Cowan for a short poetic work to be performed by a choir. This text is an example of collaborative writing and reflects the interdisciplinary thinking that defines my choreographic approach. Compositionally, *Circle* was created in response to the particular demands of a choral music composition. The style and structure of my writing was determined by the expectation that lines and words would be sung by multiple, overlapping voices, with different parts of the choir potentially singing different lines at the same time. The challenge of writing a text where the sense of the poem could be maintained through a choral performance created limitations that determined poetic structure.

Insert Circle one and Circle Two

Narrative ethnographic research came to play an important part in this study as I moved between the roles of artist, and researcher critically examining my own practice. The shifting of authorial position discussed in narrative research (Richardson and St Pierre, 2005; Bowman, 2006) became a much utilized tool in moving between making creative work and writing in relation to my studio methods.

Practice-led research is a research methodology primarily utilized in, but not limited to, the creative arts. The core tenet of this methodology is that creative practices carry and articulate knowledge in specific ways and thus forms of creative work must be recognised as methods of research articulation alongside or independent of traditional forms of academic writing. Artworks such as films, paintings, sculptures, dance and theatre performances, architectural or graphic designs, novels and poetic works are considered research outcomes. Generally, practice-led PhD's present creative work alongside a written thesis that contextualizes the research process in relation to relevant literature and arts practice. For examples of practice-led research see Barrett and Bolt (2007) Brown (1994), Ellis (2005), Longley (2008) or Melrose (2007). The Routledge journal *Performance Research* regularly presents exemplary cases of performance-based research methodologies. Implicit in the paradigm of practice-led research methodology is an assumption that artistic practice offers a means to explore ways of theorizing and articulating knowledge that are in excess of the written (Haseman, 2007, Heathfield, 1997). Indeed, practice-led research offers up possibilities for thinking that are non-linear and rhizomatic, that have potential to offer alternative routes through processing concepts, in contrast to the linearity of traditional academic epistemologies. *the kinesthetic archive project* aimed to translate some non-linear, perhaps fragmentary, somatic, spatial, rhythmic and dynamic insights gleaned from dance research into writing practice. Songwriter P.J Harvey writes; "When I watch you move, I can't think straight" (Harvey, 2000). This project asked; 'Might I reflect on my dance practice with page works that are as bent, corporeal and animated as my movement works?' 'And are there specific writing practices that might allow the emergence of such page spaces?' The following pages take the concept of bending literally, with folded, bent and crumpled paper forming a key element of the aesthetics of the page. I discuss the role of aesthetics and the spatiality of the page in this project in more depth later in this chapter, particularly in the section entitled *Performance writing and artists books*.

Insert *She measures the weight of her own breath and falling petals*

These pages were written during rehearsals for the dance work *Suture* (Longley and Pedersen, 2006) and used firstly as a response to particular improvisation processes, and

then as structuring devices that the dancers and I referred to in setting and refining dance phrases. The *falling petals* text was recorded and became part of the weave of Claire Cowan's sound composition. It was not until years after these works were written in a dance-making setting that I began gathering together all of my choreographic journals from a period between 2006-2007 and began working with particular texts from them in an effort to translate process-based dance thinking to the page. I then began a refining and editing process in which design processes became an instrumental part of my writing practice. These design processes (such as working with the materiality of the pages through drawing and manipulating pages, creating digital files, printing and re-working them with drawing and handwriting, and then re-scanning) attempt to carry a sense of kinesthetic experience, space and tactility into the event of reading.

Issues around how to find a means of writing kinesthetic experience do not just relate to dance researchers, but to all researchers wishing to address embodied experience. Ethnographers such as Sally Ann Ness and Deidre Sklar write that ethnography has seriously neglected embodied experience as a primary site of communication and knowledge that shapes and defines cultural identities and meanings. Sklar considers somatic knowledge central to human experience and cognition. It follows that ethnographers need to address the somatic dimension in order to recognize the role that embodiment plays in cultural life.

The result of omitting kinesthesia from the sensorium is that we are left with no sensory locus for building an epistemology of movement and no locus for addressing the cultural or symbolic dimensions of kinetic sensation. (Sklar, 2008, p.87)

The call for ethnography to better recognize embodied knowledges is in fact not a new one, and in many ways ethnography *has* created space for embodied voices and knowledge. The recognition of performative means of research articulation such as theatrical monologues (Miller et. al., 2003), or in poetic writing that allows writing to touch, move and reach our bodies (Fitzpatrick, 2010), has created space for complex kinds of human meaning to be articulated, both about and through embodied practice. However, the kinetic affects and somatic modes of attention that Sklar writes of are quite different registers of experience to those performed by actors translating characters into being. With performative renderings of ethnographic knowledge, it is often social or cultural meanings and experiences that are represented through theatrical means. Somatic perception, on the other hand, is a knowledge that emerges through ones' feeling, sensing body –it involves a 'listening in' through a kinesthetic mode of attention. The term somatic refers to our first person embodied experience. Somatic philosophy contends that our whole body is a thinking

organism, that thinking emerges through movement and movement initiates thinking and knowing (Hannah, 1976, 1983; Fortin 1995).

Even within the field of performance studies, respected researcher Susan Leigh Foster considers kinesthetic affects to be largely overlooked. Foster writes that the “kinesthetic sense has been largely ignored in theories of performance, yet for those of us in dance studies, it remains a predominant aspect of aesthetic experience, one that must be interrogated as part of any inquiry into dance’s significance” (Foster, 2008, p.46). Foster writes about the role kinesthetic senses play for dance audiences. She defines the term kinesthesia as, “the sensations of our bones, muscles, ligaments, tendons, and joints. The sensory experience provided by these corporeal elements, (is) often referred to as the kinesthetic sense” (Foster, 2008, p.46).

So how is that performance studies, a discipline in which perception of movement is a primary trope, has traditionally ignored the felt sense of movement? This may be explained by the fact that it is easier to discuss conceptual frameworks such as a dance work’s signification, how it relates to key issues in philosophy or other research fields, or processes of meaning making. It is rare to read accounts of the felt experience of dancing from a dancer’s (rather than a dancer-choreographer’s) point of view in dance or performance studies literature. The work of dance practitioner Jenny Roche is one notable exception here. Roche’s research discusses the creative labor of the dancer and the “interior space of the dancer’s embodied experience” (Roche, 2009, p. ii). Although there is a scarcity of accounts of dancers’ experience of their work, the experience of moving is at the heart of dancing. You could go so far as to say that it is at the heart of living. Isn’t moving our first and most common shared sense? Movement is life itself, without the internal movement of our organs we cannot live. Touch triggers movement and movement engenders life, growth and thinking. Yet as we grow, many of us take our proprioceptive sense, our sense of movement, more and more for granted, despite the centrality of movement in our everyday experience of life.

Sklar discusses how recognizing kinesthesia within anthropology is both important and challenging as anthropology has “traditionally ignored kinesthesia” (Sklar, 2000, p. 70). Sklar’s article, *On Dance Ethnography* examines the issue of “translating somatic knowledge into words” (Sklar, 2000. p.70), through attending to such details as the spaces of movement, specific rhythms and qualities, knowledge shared in gestures and spatial relationships. Sklar suggests how aesthetic elements of writing might convey such kinesthetic affect:

Writing is an aesthetic *embrace* that invites sensuous opening, almost as if words need to be irresistible, to partner bodily experience at all its levels of intensity, intimacy, and multiplicity. (Sklar, 2000, p. 73, author's emphasis)

Dance practitioner and academic Karen Barbour combines phenomenological, auto-ethnographic and narrative modes of inquiry to evoke forms of knowledge specific to dance practice. Her book *Dancing Across The Page* (Barbour, 2011) provides examples and methods of writing that emerge in relation to her dance work. Barbour provides a valuable range of examples of how dance-based and embodied modes of knowing may be articulated through social science and feminist methodologies. Barbour's work in dance and ethnographic writing offers researchers in qualitative study and the arts with valuable means of writing from embodied, somatic and creative practices. The research project discussed in this chapter also presents a method of auto-ethnographic writing that emerges from processes of dance making, with a greater focus on practice-led research and post-structuralist thinking. It explores ways of writing from the felt experience of moving, from somatic awareness, in order to create space for kinesthetic knowledge in page form. Elements of this method could easily be adapted to a range of different qualitative research contexts, both participant and observation based, wherein researchers desired to attend to and include embodied ways of being in their process of understanding and writing on how people live and form meaning in their lives.

Auto-ethnography and Movement-Initiated Writing

Auto-ethnographic research is “based on the assertion that knowledge is grounded in individual experience, subjectivity, perspective, and positionality” (Plummer et al, 2003, p.29). This relates to Norman Denzin's (1998) discussion of verisimilitude, which critically examines relationships between the portrayal of truth or reality in a text, writing conventions and the impact of these on the event of reading. Margerete Sandelowski (1994) emphasises the inextricability between articulating something 'true' in qualitative research in relation to style, craftsmanship and emotional engagement.

When you talk with me about research, do not ask me what I found; I found nothing. Ask me what I invented, what I made up from and out of my data. But know that in asking you to ask me this, I am not confessing to telling any lies about the people or events in my studies/stories. I have told the truth. The proof is in the things I have made – how they look to your mind's eye, whether they satisfy your

sense of style and craftsmanship, whether you believe them, and whether they appeal to your heart. (Sandelowski, 1994, p.58)

This approach to ethnographic research melds well with practice-led research. At the heart of practice-led research is the implicit and explicit knowledge articulated through well-made things. Such knowledge might be felt, rather than explained, may manifest in what is not said, as well as what is. Practice-led research dissolves boundaries between form and content, or theory and practice, in the development of creative works (Haseman, 2007). *the kinesthetic archive book* presents instances of writing created out of one dancer's reflection on her experience of moving. Rather than attempting to describe, explain or contextualize this experience, it aims to evoke it through a practice of movement-initiated writing. Through the process exploring methods of interweaving dancing and writing practices, I came to define a process of movement-initiated writing as referring to a method of dance writing in which:

- The practices of dancing and writing are imbricated in each other. If the writer has not participated as a dancer or choreographer in the dance work of which they write, they are working in the more general field of documentation, rather than movement-initiated writing.
- An emergent methodology is followed – that is, writing emerges out of attention to performance logics. Unexpected, illogical, random, poetic and incoherent streams of text as well as drawing and inter-media practices are invited as a way to generate vocabularies of drawing and text specific to a particular instance of dance making.
- Writing might merge with drawing or other forms of image or meaning-making. This studio practice invites in an approach to artistic materials, in which forms overlap and extend each other.
- The purpose of writing is to contribute to the development of performance logics. Movement-initiated writing aims to feed, develop, extend and/or refine dance ideas from the site of the studio.

Movement-initiated writing might be considered a form of emic dance ethnography, a methodology aimed at gaining an insiders perspective on the felt, somatic experience of moving. Such a perspective is muscular, gravitational, inter-relational and affective, and demands a form of writing that works tangentially as well as directly, which can be playful and light as well as serious and grounded, that is dynamic and spacious and that appeals to the felt experience of the reader.

Insert: I was watching your eyes in the walls of your body as it breathed p.17

Insert: The separate being of the spine, p.35

The attempts to translate somatic and process based dance states into page-works via *the kinesthetic archive project* aims to create spaces where felt meanings, silent voices, subtext and intuition were recognized for their formative status in creating concepts. Somatic forms of perception are by their nature ‘first person’ – thus they *cannot* be fully described, explained, or shared and are often considered silent and untranslatable. However, such states are hugely generative of meaning. *the kinesthetic archive project* attended to the felt affect of movement through tangential and non-linear means of mark-making, page design and writing. It asked whether the process of translation (from dance making to written reflection) would itself become a generative creative act, out of which pages might emerge that work from the particular affect of specific instances of dance thinking.

Translating Affect

Sklar's ethnographic dance writing draws on child psychologist Daniel Stern's conceptualization of vitality affects in discussing how somatic knowledge is passed between people. Sklar describes how she follows the pathways of rhythms and senses of space and presence to locate textual pathways. She describes vitality affects as “kinetic qualities, the dynamics of energy inherent in all activity, dynamics like rushing, smoothing, jabbing, or squeezing” (Sklar, 2001, p.185) and outlines how such felt perceptions of experience form the basis for meaning.

Philosopher Claire Petitmengin also draws on Stern's work to discuss the importance of vitality affects as underpinning meaning and communication. Vitality affects are identified with a pre-verbal realm and what might be termed a feeling of meaning. Petitmengin (2007) and Stern (1985) describe this feeling in terms such as ‘form’, ‘intensity’, ‘movement’ and ‘rhythm’. Petitmengin identifies such affects in “the specific dynamic which emerges from the form, gradient, thickness and rhythm of handwriting, very different from one person to another” (Petitmengin, 2007, p. 65). Here Petitmengin's describes the “rhythmic and gestural character” (p.65) of felt meanings, which are highly idiosyncratic and precise, like a signature. She emphasizes how the felt dimension of cognition is in play within artistic experience; “it could be described as a sort of interior landscape, or as a particular taste, and if you do not have any felt meaning, you will not be able to say anything meaningful or coherent” (p. 58). For Petitmengin the interior, somatic sense of pre-verbal felt meaning provides source material for new ideas to gestate and come to fruition. She highlights the delicacy of this process, and the necessity of allowing the sense to emerge into expression:

What becomes of the felt meaning once the right words have been found to express it? ... Expression not only makes it more precise, but makes it evolve, enabling us to discover new aspects of it ... The quality of the situation, the problem, the idea or the interior landscape associated with it, undergoes a metamorphosis. (Petitmengin, 2007, p.74)

Petitmengin's concept of felt meanings relates strongly to the practice of movement-initiated writing in three key ways. Firstly, her discussion of felt meanings as being fuzzy, blurry, or amorphous while at the same time having a highly specific tone, rhythm or dynamic relates to my experience of researching a somatic approach to embodiment. Secondly, Petitmengin makes it clear that in order to develop understanding or articulation of a felt meaning, one must turn attention from "the 'what' to the 'how'" (p. 60). *the kinesthetic archive project* focuses on the 'how' of writing by attending to the stylistic techniques of page design and poetic methodology rather than focussing directly on specific dance concepts. It plays at the edges of meanings in order to capture their feeling - preferring tangential rather than direct pathways. Thirdly, Petitmengin defines the realm of felt meanings as one that has profound implications for philosophy, pedagogy and creative practices (perhaps particularly where these areas meet, such as practice-led research). She recommends that we focus on the interior gestures that "free up or make space more fluid" (p.79) in order to access our ideas with greater depth and understanding. In developing a writing practice that would allow such registers of affective auto-ethnographic writing to surface, I drew on emergent, narrative writing practices.

Narrative research and Emergent Methodology

In creating *the kinesthetic archive book* my research process not only explored modes of writing out of dance practice, it also mapped *how* that writing practice occurred - the practice from which writing emerged. Both strands of this research were informed by narrative methodology. Laurel Richardson and Elizabeth St Pierre's discussion of writing as a method through which qualitative researchers come to better understand themselves, their work, and what it is they know "displays the writing process and the writing product as deeply intertwined; both are privileged. The product cannot be separated from the producer, the mode of production or the method of knowing" (Richardson and St Pierre, 2005, p.962). Writing forms such as fragments, stories, poems, abstract prose or film scripts can extend and develop the logic of one's line of inquiry to allow a diversity of perspectives and voices to inform each other within academic writing. Working specifically with style, voice, narrative and character also emphasizes the vital role of the reader in constructing meaning.

Richardson and St Pierre emphasize the post-modern context framing narrative research. They cite Deleuze and Guattari's point that "writing has nothing to do with signifying. It has to do with surveying, mapping, even realms that are yet to come" (Deleuze and Guattari, cited in Richardson and St Pierre, 2005, p.270).

The kinesthetic archive project follows a Deleuzian conception of style, which emphasizes the active way in which ideas come alive through the style of language writers evolve. As Deleuze writes, "Style in philosophy is the movement of concepts. This movement's only present, of course, in the sentences, but the sole point of the sentences is to give it life, a life of its own" (Deleuze, 1995, p.140). This emphasis on style highlights the processual nature of writing as opposed to conceptualizations of writing that assume knowledge is transferred to the page through a neutral language.

One's always writing to bring something to life, to free life from where it's trapped, to trace lines of flight. The language for doing that can't be a homogeneous system, it's something unstable, always heterogeneous, in which style carves differences of potential between which things can pass, come to pass, a spark can flash and break out of language itself, to make us see and think what was lying in the shadow around the words, things we were hardly aware existed. (Deleuze, 1995, p. 141)

This idea of writing highlights the *practice* through which a writer's ideas are brought into being. Roland Barthes writes in *The Death of the Author*, that writing is drawn out of "multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue" (Barthes, 1977, p. 148). This conceptualization of practice highlights the potential co-extensiveness of dancing, writing, and everyday life: the specific approach the writer takes to the page, the way she deals with events at the periphery of her attention as she takes pen to paper, whether her expectations are ambitious or exploratory – variables that relate to the life of the practice have a strong bearing on the development and growth of written ideas. Barthes discusses "the set of those 'rules' which predetermine the work – and it is important to distinguish the different coordinates: working time, working space, and the action of writing itself – the 'protocols' of work" (Barthes, 1985, p.178).

Barthes' notion of the 'grain of the voice' links to Deleuze's conception of style and emphasizes an affective dimension or 'grain' that, "works at the language – not what it says, but the voluptuousness of its sounds – signifiers, of its letters." (Barthes, 1977, p.182). According to Quack (2004) Barthes' notion of the 'grain' of the voice also relates to pages in sensory terms: "the grain of a Barthesian page can always be felt" (Quack, 2004, p.135). The

grain is registered when a sound is heard or an image seen that cannot be registered by traditional analytical or descriptive language.

What is it that allows us to understand sound and music with our feeling bodies without words? The grain of sound goes beyond adjectives: it does not much help to describe a bee, a cello or electro-acoustic sound as 'lovely' or 'loud', whereas buzzing, because it gets closer to the original sound, is closer to the grain of the voice. (Quack, 2004, p.135)

Quack's discussion of the grain of sound draws attention to the difference between language that describes sound, for example, via adjectives that focus on generic secondary traits such as volume, and words that 'get closer' to a singular quality through a poetic route that attends to felt meaning and affect.

Highlighting writing as a material, kinesthetic act, an act that is attentive to 'the grain', provides a writer with a different kind of agency. In contrast to conceiving of writing as being produced through authorial knowledge formed prior to textual articulation. *the kinesthetic archive book* conceptualizes writing as a practice, a kinesthetic act, a mode to which there are endless approaches. Writers might assume they need to 'know' what they plan to achieve, and what kind of language they will use, before they begin to write. This is a very different model to one in which ideas are discovered through a collaboration with text, page and the variables of a moment in which an author meets the edges of her language and her knowledge through a textual practice. The approach to writing adopted here might be paralleled by an improvisatory, experimental approach to dance, wherein one's practice includes a focus on learning how to work with a state of not-knowing.

Music researcher Wayne Bowman discusses the value of narrative research as a means to explore complex and layered meanings of arts practice within communities, in a way that integrates multiple voices and perspectives into a single research project. He writes that:

Narrative work can show us the multiplicity and diversity behind apparent uniformity; it can highlight the temporality of musical engagement; it can give us vivid accounts of the processes of rupture and change that are music's life blood; it can help recover the processual and ethical qualities in musical action that theory so often neglects or obscures. (Bowman, 2006, p.11)

Bowman also emphasizes narrative inquiry's inherent "plurality and complexity" (Bowman, 2006, p.11) as a methodology which demands some understanding of and ability to meld multiple modes of

address within a single text: academic, philosophical, evocative, poetic, storied and situated voices are often interwoven to provide detailed insight into complex interactions. For this reason it is common for narrative and ethnographic methodologies to be combined. Narrative methodology emphasizes writing as a consistent practice that not only occurs through writing *about* something, but also as a practice of invention that emerges as body moves to the blank page, pen in hand. For example, see the following dialogue between writers John Hyde Preston and Gertrude Stein;

John Hyde Preston: But what if when you tried to write, you felt stopped, suffocated, and no words came and if they came at all they were wooden and without meaning? What if you had the feeling you would never write another word?

Gertrude Stein: Preston, the way to resume is to resume. It is the only way. So how can you know what will be? What will be best in it is what you really do not know now. If you knew it all it would not be creation, but dictation. (Preston and Stein, cited in Simon, 1994, p.155-156)

The conversation cited above highlights two different perspectives on the act of beginning in writing. John Hyde Preston presents the writer as needing an idea or a flow of words in order for the writing to manifest, whereas Gertrude Stein presents writing as a creative act that emerges from doing, without first knowing what is to come. Philosopher Brian Massumi discusses the importance of writers allowing themselves to be surprised by what their writing does. His book *Parables for the Virtual* (2002) critiques post structural discourse for its focus on how inscriptive processes of language prevent rather than open up spaces for consideration of the sensorial implications of the body. Massumi reflects on the philosophical implications of allowing meaning to be unstable and proposes a practice of writing which moves from theories of positioning and inscription, to a deeper understanding of transition and mobility. He argues that the complexity of these processes of movement engender ontological insights that offer fertile ground for philosophy. In order to create space for transition, sensation, and movement Massumi proposes that writing must entail risk:

The writing tries not only to accept the risk of sprouting deviant, but also to invite it. Take joy in your digressions. Because that is where the unexpected arises. That is the experimental aspect. If you know where you will end up when you begin, nothing has happened in the meantime. You have to be willing to surprise yourself writing things you didn't think you thought. (Massumi, 2002, p.18)

The ‘archive’ referred to in *the kinesthetic archive project* performs a series of instances wherein dancing and page works lead each other to find new digressive pathways into language and movement. Each page work attends to the site of a specific dance practice, and in each one the position of the authorial voice is key in creating a tension between writer and reader, performer and witness. In the book *Certain Fragments* Tim Etchells describes how, in writing, the choice of pronoun strongly effects the nature, quality, and tone of writing:

Perhaps the most useful discovery was in the writing I did describing our work at a distance – referring always to ‘they’, writing as if *Forced Entertainment* were some distant, semi-fictional group of people in a country far away. The distance was useful – a fictionalizing maneuver that nodded to the versional nature of all history. Along with the distance came other discoveries – a way of intercutting different voices, different layers, eschewing a single line in favor of fragments arranged around a centre that is only ever implied. (Etchells, 1999, p.16)

Methodologies utilized by *the kinesthetic archive book* for investigating specific approaches to performance writing through performance include experimentation with: imagery, translation of somatic sensations, rhythm, page layout, authorial position (as described above in Etchell’s account), voice, vocabulary, the texture and surfaces of pages, relationships to atmosphere or space. An assumption carried into this research practice is that methods for writing influence methods of dancing and vice-versa. The following page-work, for example, reflects on the experience of performance improvisation for an audience, of waiting for a composition to unfold. The somatic details of this writing (internal listening, awareness of the momentum of the neck) and its focus on the feeling of time, were then redeveloped in a later improvisation. The drawn quality of text and the space of the page are central in my attempt to evoke these tonal, sensory and ambiguous states.

Insert p. 14:

Movement writing

In their discussion of a documentation performance project consisting of live events, Ric Allsopp and Scott DeLahunta (1996) discuss “a persistent disjunction in our attempts to integrate the body as a coherent site of representation and presence ... (due to) an increasing separation between ‘a theorized body’ and an ‘experienced body’ where the theorized body – is represented, generated, located, presented and absented – is privileged

over the inherent experience of the body and its systems” (Allsopp and deLahunta, 1996, p. 6). Here, DeLahunta and Allsopp refer to the difficulty of articulating a project that treats the body as an integrated, experiential site, in a written culture that tends toward separating the experienced from the theorized body. As feminist philosopher Elizabeth Grosz (1994) has observed, theorizing somatic experience within critical theory is highly challenging. In *Parables for the Virtual* Massumi (2002) similarly writes on the difficulty of valuing sensory information in a post-structuralist critical framework. At the time of writing this chapter, the body of dance research intent on working from and articulating a somatic ontology is growing exponentially, yet the task of somehow carrying the rich, sensate experiential of intensive somatic dance workshopping into words remains a somewhat elusive task. *the kinesthetic archive book* responds to this task by running with a partial, fragmentary, biased, abstract approach to writing from the dancers' point of view. Out of books full of notes I present a glimpse of texts that carry my sense of the logic of dance practices, while hopefully remaining abstract enough for the reader to find their own sense in them.

Insert page - Tasting of skin surface

Insert page - Rehearsal Text

Insert page - Watching Catalina

My writing watches, eyes closed. (Cixous, 1991, p.3)

Although this research is not primarily a feminist study, I would like to note the influence of feminist research in considering issues around writing and embodiment. In particular the work of philosopher Hélène Cixous has profoundly contributed to this study in identifying forms of language and grammar that embrace corporeality, transition, sensation and feeling. Just as somatic studies prioritize a first person experience of embodiment over generalizing scientific models, the writing of Cixous opens space for recognition of a felt, feminine body, intuitive processes and vocabularies alternative to patriarchal discourse.

A practice of the greatest passivity is our way – really an active way – of getting to know things by letting ourselves be known by them. You don’t seek to master. To demonstrate, explain, grasp. And then to lock away in a strongbox. To pocket a part of the riches of the world. But rather to transmit: to make things loved by making them known. (Cixous, 1991, p.57)

Cixous's writing has been central to the development of 'écriture féminine' which highlights the corporeality of writing, the fluidity of written processes, and the female voice in language, all of which offer valuable insights into new possibilities for writing into the space of kinesthetic affect and somatic sensing.

The Spill of Choreographic Thinking

We are living at a time when a vast amount of performance practices and theories have been explicitly complicating the never simple relations between pastness, historicity, memory, and archiving with notions of presentness, futurity, movement, forgetting and destruction. Mediating all these poles, writing appears as a dynamic, hyper-kinetic operator that draws from its constitutive mobility its full performative force. (Lepecki, 2008, p. 2)

Andr  Lepecki's discussion of writing as a 'hyper-kinetic force' draws attention to potentials for writing to move strongly outside its documenting tendencies into a more complex and slippery play with readers. A key element of this mobility might be considered to be in writing that crosses disciplinary boundaries and textual conventions. The terms 'performance writing' and 'artist books' relate to specific fields of page-related practice, which explore and extend notions of pages and books. I am particularly interested in practices of performance writing and artist book creation as means for emphasizing the 'hyper-kinetic force' of writing in material form. The spill of choreographic thinking into material objects is a subject of in-depth research by choreographer William Forsythe, whose *Choreographic Objects* project asks; "What else, besides the body, could physical thinking look like?" (Forsythe, 2010, para. 7). Forsythe has led a series of interdisciplinary dance projects that each explore ways in which choreographic thinking may be manifested in non-human form, inviting consideration of the richness of kinesthetic ways of processing experience. As Forsythe writes, "a choreographic object is not a substitute for the body, but rather an alternative site for the understanding of potential instigation and organization of action to reside" (Forsythe, 2010, para. 12). One might consider *the kinesthetic archive project* as a choreographic object that aims to create a site for dance thinking to inhabit outside of embodied performance.

Performance writing and artist books

We find an increasing consensus that writing is something profoundly more dynamic, active, fluid, and indeed mobile *and* ephemeral *and* uncontrollable than it is usually perceived as being. (Lepecki, 2008, p.2)

When reading this book, please take your time. Remember that you do not necessarily need to start at the beginning. Start anywhere; stop anywhere. Don't worry about reaching the end. Don't read the whole book if you don't want to. Look through the table of contents, and start at the point that sounds most interesting to you. Read one line repeatedly for two days. Do whatever you need to with this book, and if possible, do not let it damage your thoughts. Put it down, and read something else. Read this book as a creative act. (Goulish, 2000, p.3)

A book is a specific kind of order, a specific kind of contextualization, a specific kind of offering. Mathew Goulish's imperative to "read this book as a creative act" (2000, p.3) relates well to *the kinesthetic archive book*, which is fashioned through rhizomatic relationships with dance practices, dances and texts pushing each other into becoming so that the logic of dancing might flood the performance, editing, and presentation of writing. The aim is to create, as Joan Simon describes the artist books of Ann Hamilton, "sensuous, tactile presences remade by the mark of the body" (Simon, 2006, p.3). Inherent in any reference to the book is a gesture towards actions of transfer and transaction implicit in the act of reading. The potential for disrupting expectations of passive readers and singular textual meanings permeates the fields of performance writing and artist books. Performance researcher John Hall writes of the kinesthetic dimension of reading inherent in the surface of pages.

A 'book' is a fold containing pages...a page is a surface to be handled, touched and stroked. Each page is also a space and a view. As a space it is a site where objects are (or could be) placed (composition) and where movement takes place between them ('reading'). The objects are marks. Even an empty page is scanned, perhaps felt. (Hall, 2004, p.16)

Whereas the work of performance writers is often concerned with page works, book artists are concerned with the potentials held in the body of the book. These potentials refer to the logic specific to a given book, the way ideas are opened, sequenced and made interactive through their particular material form. In the introduction to her book, *Artists' Books, A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook*, Joan Lyons emphasizes the connections artist books make with art process:

Words, images, colors, marks, and silences become plastic organisms that play across the pages in variable linear sequence. Their importance lies in the formulation of a new perceptual literature whose content alters the concept of authorship and challenges the reader to a new discourse with the printed page. (Lyons, 1985, p.7)

Throughout *the kinesthetic archive book* the artist book serves as a medium through which to explore how movement logics might be embedded in the interface between scribed and read gestures. Book artists purposefully attend to the physical interactions between reader and page, exploring the elasticity of meaning as pages are turned and hands brush spine and covers. Performance theorist Ric Allsopp writes, "The site of performance can no longer be thought of as separate from the extended environments and networks within which it takes place" (Allsopp, 2004, p. 5). Considering books as sites of performance has implications for the role of the reader and the way in which performances of reading are conceptualized.

The reader of a book is also its performer. In this way the book acquires one more dimension: the history of its performances. It is based on repetitions which have nothing to do with sameness but induce an activation of time and space, motif and context, animation and metamorphosis. (Hoffmann, 2001, p.21)

Examples from *the kinesthetic archive book* included in this chapter present page works in which words, images, colors and marks are all active elements in evoking the somatic affect of dance practices. Theses pages are worked and overworked. Each one is a palimpsest of digital and hand drawn layers. Each reworking reinterprets the texture, quality, tone and movement within the page's spatial field. Journals of studio practice held notes on choreographic and workshop materials, such as reflection on solo movement exploration, feedback notes for dancers, free writing after improvisation practice and notes out of participating in dance workshops. These morphed in form from different page and file types over a long period of time. The remnants of

gesture held in handwritten journals were word processed into data, arranged and rearranged in digital documents, printed and drawn on, scanned and drawn again, with the virtual and actual folding in and out of each other. Each time the grain of the page was recalibrated the tone of the writing was translated and retranslated through shifts in the visual texture of the page. In some instances journal pages were photographed in their original state, in others journal pages were slightly rewritten for clarity and then photographed, in a performance of a journal.

Experimentation with the possibilities presented by artist books presented this study with a means of layering the formation of bookish matters in forms as deeply connected to dance practice as possible. We could conceptualize this work as a means of creating rhizomes between processes that form dance based events and reading events. The rhizome is key in the vocabulary of terms generated by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) to define specific philosophical concepts. A rhizome is a system of organization that works through interconnection and multiplicity rather than linearity and hierarchy. "Principles of connection and heterogeneity: any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be. This is very different to the tree or root, which plots a point, fixes an order" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.7). The concept of the fold is also of use in considering artist books and performance writing.

The multiple is not merely that which has many parts, but that which is folded in many ways. (Deleuze, 1991, p.228)

This concept has specific connotations within philosophical discourse. In his book *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (Deleuze, 1993), Deleuze uses this term to discuss a way of considering relationships between what we might call the virtual and the actual, the inside and the outside, or between matter and the immaterial, epitomized by Baroque thinking, particularly in the work of Leibniz and his idea of the architecture of the time.

The labyrinth of continuity is not a line which would dissolve into independent points, like sand flowing in grains, but is like a piece of fabric or a sheet of paper which divides into an infinite number of folds or disintegrates into curved moments, each one determined by the consistency or the participation of its setting. (Deleuze, 1991, p.231)

Deleuze's discussion of the fold provides a useful philosophical point framework for considering the literal folding of pages as a way of creasing outside into inside, of creating conceptual and physical spaces within the object of the book and in considering dance and writing as folds in a trajectory of ideas rather than separate entities. This recognition of the intrinsic connectedness of things relates to the interdisciplinary practice of this research. Deleuze envisions "a Baroque line, passed down in strict accordance with the fold and which

could bring together architects, painters, musicians, poets, philosophers” (Deleuze, 1991, p.241). The fields of performance writing and the artist book have both evolved through an interplay between artistic disciplines, through which, in this project, I aim to fold dance, writing practices and pages into a coextensive performance event that emphasises the interconnectivity of reading and dancing via a practice of writing. Auto-ethnography is also folded in to the research method underpinning this work. It is envisaged that ethnographers may adapt the practice of movement-initiated writing to writing of or from somatic or embodied awareness, either from observational or auto-ethnographic points of view. This would involve concentrating awareness on the affect of movement (rather than focussing primarily on description or analysis), experimenting with non-linear approaches to written vocabulary and structure, and then treating page lay-out, surface and written gesture as means of composing and articulating research concepts.

The *kinesthetic archive book* gives voice to the practice-led emergence of ideas. As Melrose (2002) argues, divisions made between theory (traditionally led by writing and reading) and practice (studio-based) are problematic in that separating ‘theory’ from ‘practice’ underestimates the theory-building, analytical and contextual work of performance at the same time as it underestimates the creative, playful, formal and inventive work of writing. Conceptualizing writing as entering a state of minorization through embodied practice presents a means of resisting binaries between theory and practice. Such a development may also disrupt what Grosz has described as the somatophobia inherent in academic language (Grosz, 1994), with specific methodologies for creating page works and texts that emerge through attention to sensory, mobile and felt perceptions. Joan Lyons writes that artist books challenge the reader “to a new discourse with the printed page” (1985, p.7). This chapter posits that such new discourses provide a valuable resource for researchers from a diverse range of fields to articulate knowledges in page-based forms. For discourses that lend themselves to emergent research outcomes such as dance research and many forms of ethnography, it is appropriate that researchers draw upon structures for reflection, documentation, articulation and dissemination that allow “a straining of one’s language toward something outside it” (Deleuze, 1995, p.140), as Deleuze writes of the minor literature.

Treating writing as a way of experimenting with movement concepts, rather than a means to analyze, distance oneself, document or critique them allows potential space for pages to fold the logic of an embodied way of thinking into material form. In this way researchers exploring specific kinds of embodied experience might open a door for somatic, bent, mobile, non-linear, atmospheric, sensory, spatial and abstract qualities to enter critical sites of reflection and development.

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