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co-constructing body-environments

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the journal of IDEA: the interior design + interior architecture educators' association

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co-constructing body-environments: provocation

Presenters at *Body of Knowledge: Art and Embodied Cognition Conference* (*BoK2019* hosted by Deakin University, Melbourne, June 2019) are invited to submit contributions to a special issue of idea journal "Co-Constructing Body-Environments" to be published in December 2020. The aim of the special issue is to extend the current discussions of art as a process of social cognition and to address the gap between descriptions of embodied cognition and the co-construction of lived experience.

We ask for papers, developed from the presentations delivered at the conference, that focus on interdisciplinary connections and on findings arising from intersections across research practices that involve art and theories of cognition. In particular, papers should emphasize how spatial art and design research approaches have enabled the articulation of a complex understanding of environments, spaces and experiences. This could involve the spatial distribution of cultural, organisational and conceptual structures and relationships, as well as the surrounding design features.

Contributions may address the questions raised at the conference and explore:

+ How do art and spatial practices increase the potential for knowledge transfer and celebrate diverse forms of embodied expertise?
+ How the examination of cultures of practice, Indigenous knowledges and cultural practices offer perspectives on inclusion, diversity, neurodiversity, disability and social justice issues?
+ How the art and spatial practices may contribute to research perspectives from contemporary cognitive neuroscience and the philosophy of mind?
+ The dynamic between an organism and its surroundings for example: How does art and design shift the way knowledge and thinking processes are acquired, extended and distributed?
+ How art and design practices demonstrate the ways different forms of acquiring and producing knowledge intersect?

These and other initial provocations for the conference can be found on the conference web-site: https://blogs.deakin.edu.au/bok2019/cfp/.

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in this issue

introduction: unknowingly, a threshold-crossing movement

Julieanna Preston
Executive Editor
idea journal

It is in this special issue that the editorial board holds true to our promise to expand the horizons and readership of *idea journal* while reaching out to associated and adjacent art, design and performance practices and drawing connections to seemingly distant disciplines. The articles in this issue have provenance in a 2019 conference event, Bodies of Knowledge (BOK), which was guided by a similar interdisciplinary ethos. With an emphasis on cultures of practice and communities of practitioners that offer perspectives on inclusion, diversity/neurodiversity and disability, this conference, and this subsequent journal issue, aim to increase knowledge transfer between diverse forms of embodied expertise, in particular, between neuroscience and enactive theories of cognition.

This brief description suggests that there are shared issues, subjects and activities that have the potential of generating new understanding in cross-, inter- and trans-disciplinary affiliations and collaborations. My experience in these modes of inquiry points to the importance of identifying what is shared and what is not amongst vocabulary, concepts, pedagogies and methods. Holding these confluences and diverges without resorting to strict definition, competition or judgement of right and wrong often affords greater understanding and empathy amongst individuals to shape a collective that is diverse in its outlooks, and hopefully, curious as to what it generates together because of that diversity.

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The breadth of the knowledge bases represented within this issue necessitated that the peer reviewer list expanded once again like the previous issue. It was in the process of identifying reviewers with appropriate expertise that the various synapses between scholarly and artistic practices became evident. It is these synapses that shape sturdy bridges between the journal's existing readership, which is predominantly academics and students in interior design, interior architecture, spatial design and architecture, and the wide range of independent scholars and practitioners, academics, and students attracted to BOK's thematic call for papers, performative lectures and exhibitions. At the risk of being reductive to the complexity and nuances in the research to follow, I suggest that the following terms and concerns are central to this issue, aptly inferred by its title, 'Co-Constructing Body-Environments': spatiality; subjectivity; phenomenology; processual and procedural practice; artistic research; critical reflection; body: experience. All of these are frequent to research and practice specific to interiors. In this issue, however, we find how these terms and concerns are situated and employed in other fields, in other ways and for other purposes.

This is healthy exercise. To stretch one's reach, literally and metaphorically is to travel the distance between the me and the you, to be willingly open to what might eventuate. Imagine shaking the hand of a stranger—a somatic experience known to register peaceful intent, respect, courage, warmth, pressure, humour, nervous energy, and so much more. This threshold-crossing movement is embodied and spatial; it draws on a multitude of small yet complex communication sparks well before verbal impulses ensue. This significant bodily gesture sets the tone for what might or could happen. Based on my understanding of the research presented in 'Co-Constructing Body-Environments,' I propose that this is a procedure in the Gins and Arakawa sense that integrates theory and practice as a hypothesis for 'questioning all possible ways to observe the body-environment in order to transform it.'[01] I call this as *unknowingly*—a process that takes the risk of not knowing, not being able to predict or predetermine, something akin to the spectrum of 'throwing caution to the wind' and 'sailing close to

the wind'. My use of the word 'unknowingly' embraces intuition where direct access to unconscious knowledge and pattern-recognition, unconscious cognition, inner sensing and insight have the ability to understand something without any need for conscious reasoning. Instinct. The word *unknowingly* also affords me to invoke the 'unknowing' element of this interaction—to not know, to not be aware of, to not have all the information (as if that was possible)— an acknowledgement of human humility. I borrow and adapt this facet of unknowingly from twentieth-century British writer Alan Watts:

> This I don't know, is the same thing as, I love. I let go. I don't try to force or control. It's the same thing as humility. If you think that you understand Brahman, you do not understand. And you have yet to be instructed further. If you know that you do not understand, then you truly understand.[02]

Unknowingly also allows me to reference 'un' as a tactic of learning that suspends the engrained additive model of learning. Though I could refer to many other scholarly sources to fuel this concept, here I am indebted to Canadian author Scott H. Young's pithy advice on how to un-learn:

> This is the view that what we think we know about the world is a veneer of sense-making atop a much deeper strangeness. The things we think we know, we often don't. The ideas, philosophies and truths that guide our lives may be convenient approximations, but often the more accurate picture is a lot stranger and more interesting.[03]

In his encouragement to unlearn—dive into strangeness, sacrifice certainty, boldly expose oneself to randomness, mental discomfort, instability, to radically rethink that place/ your place/ our place, suspend aversions to mystery—Young's examples from science remind us that:

Subatomic particles aren't billiard balls, but strange, complex-valued wavefunctions. Bodies aren't vital fluids and animating impulses, but trillions of cells, each more complex than any machine humans have invented. Minds aren't unified loci of consciousness, but the process of countless synapses firing in incredible patterns.[04]

Figure 01:
Meeting the horizon; A still image from Shore Variations, a 2018 film by Claudia Kappenberg that reimagines *Waning*, a 2016 live art performance by Julieanna Preston. https://vimeo.com/user11308386.

In like manner to the *BOK2019* conference which was staged as a temporally infused knowledge-transfer event across several days, venues, geographies and disciplines, I too, ingested the materials submitted for this issue in this spirit of unknowingly. The process was creative, critical, intuitive, generative and reflective—all those buzz words of contemporary research—yet charged with substantial respect and curiosity for whatever unfolded, even if it went against the grain of what I had learned previously. For artists, designers, architects, musicians, and performers reading this journal issue, especially academics and students, this territory of inquiry may feel familiar to the creative experience and the increasing demands (and desires) to account for how one knows what one knows in the institutional setting. 'Explain yourself,' as the review or assessment criteria often states. If you are faced having to annotate your creative practice or to critically reflect on aspects that are so embedded in your making that you are unaware of them, I encourage you to look amongst the pages of this journal issue for examples of how others have grappled with that task such that the process is a space of coming to unknow and know, unknowingly.

There are a few people I would like to acknowledge before you read further. First, huge gratitude to the generosity of the peer reviewers, for the time and creative energy of guest editors Jondi Keane, Rea Dennis and Meghan Kelly (who have made the process so enjoyable and professional), for the expertise of the journal's copy editor Christina Houen and Graphic Designer Jo Bailey, and to AADR for helping to expand the journal's horizons.

Okay, readers, shake hands, consider yourself introduced, welcome into the *idea journal* house, and let's share a very scrumptious meal.

acknowledgements
I am forever grateful for what life in Aotearoa/ New Zealand brings. With roots stretching across the oceans to North America, Sweden, Wales and Croatia, I make my home between Kāpiti Island and the Tararua Ranges, and in Te Whanganui-A-Tara/ Wellington. I acknowledge the privilege that comes with being educated, employed, female and Pākehā, and the prejudices and injustices that colonialism has and continues to weigh on this land and its indigenous people. I am committed to on-going learning and practicing of Kaupapa Māori.

notes

01 Jondi Keane, 'An Arakawa and Gins Experimental Teaching Space; A Feasibilty Study,' *INFLeXions* 6 (2012), accessed 29 October 2020, http://www.inflexions.org/n6_keane.html.

02 Alan Watts, *Creating Who You Are* (Video) (n.d.), accessed 29 October 2020, https://vimeo.com/76888920.

03 Scott H. Young, 'The Art of Unlearning' (2018), accessed 29 October 2020, https://www.scotthyoung.com/blog/2018/04/12/the-art-of-unlearning/.

04 Young, 'The Art of Unlearning.'

sound, silence, resonance, and embodiment: choreographic synaesthesia

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abstract

This article explores the potential of a new conceptualisation of dance spectatorship informed by theories of embodied and enactive cognition. The approach adopted here incorporates the bodily experience and the intellectual processing of information that the dance spectator goes through. This perspective enables a discussion on the intersection of referential elements, spectator's knowledge and background, and formal properties of the work into the experience that provide a holistic view of the work of dance and its effects through the concept of synaesthesia.

Meaning moves, sounds feel, images taste and smell. In order to build this understanding, this particular study makes use of an enquiry into experience and body-environment relationships to approach the multi-modal experience of watching dance. I explore the idea of cross-sensory embodied experience as the base for dance spectatorship. I propose that synaesthesia will be useful in modelling spectatorial experience of dance. Further to this, I contend that although maybe not fully consciously, it is possible that the creative agents—the choreographer-director in this case—already have an understanding of this potential. Through this they manipulate elements within their works until they experience something akin to cross-sensory engagement in themselves. This perspective hence also allows new forms of analysis and understandings of creative work in performance.

Through this approach, the article discusses a combination of apparently separate elements and senses in performance, with focus on sound, silence, and resonance through the notion of synaesthesia. Discussion is illustrated and exemplified though analysis of choreographer Wayne McGregor's *Woolf Works* (2015), which not only expresses ideas, emotions, and sensations through the medium of dance, but demonstrates an understanding of dance as cross-sensory potentiality, able not only to deal with deep thematic elements, but also remain viscerally engaging. Embodied cognition, then, is proposed as the best framework to discuss the spectatorial experience of such work.

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keywords:
embodied cognition, enaction, contemporary dance, Wayne McGregor, synaesthesia

In this article I build a proposal for a holistic understanding of dance spectatorship which stems from two basic arguments. First of these is that cognition is embodied and enactive, and that experiencing dance works is a form of cognition. Second, that dance is multimodal, and hence it may be best understood as cross-sensory experience. These two basic arguments are joined to propose the sensory condition of synaesthesia as a model to understand spectatorial experiences of dance, through the analysis of a particular work, Wayne McGregor's *Woolf Works* (2015), a contemporary ballet piece choreographed for the Royal Ballet in the UK.

Although there are many approaches for studying the reception of dance, spectators still seem to be understanding our experience in 'pieces' – either one element at a time, or a relationship between only two elements. This seems counterintuitive to how experience really feels. In words it is necessary to work through one element at a time however, my experience of *Woolf Works* did not grasp each element separately. My intellectual understanding did not work independently from my bodily sensations, neither did I see the dance and watch the music as if these were two different experiences. The concept of emergence can be invoked here since, in the coming together of elements, the whole is more than the sum of its parts. The experience as a whole emerges from its interdependent elements. The condition of synaesthesia then appears to be an interesting template, in that it can model the bringing together of many aspects of the dance experience. Before I turn to synaesthesia, however, it is necessary to elaborate on the proposal of dance spectatorship as embodied enactive cognition.

My proposal in this article is based on the notion that, as spectator, I experience dance through an embodied enactive process: I perceive the properties of the work, but this perception integrates aspects of my background as spectator as well as the context of the work and the performance. My view is heavily indebted to theories of cognition which understand it as embodied, enactive, embedded, and extended, in other words, it aligns with research on 4E cognition.[01] Although I will not elaborate on extended or embedded understandings of cognition in this particular work, these aspects of 4E cognition still relate to my argument. My focus here, however, is on embodied cognition and enaction.

Embodied cognition is the understanding that cognition happens through the body and not as a separate process, that is, that 'cognition is deeply dependent upon the features of the physical body of an agent.'[02] Further to this, I make use of the understanding of cognition as enactive, that is, the idea that 'the experienced world is portrayed and determined by mutual interactions between the physiology of the organism, its sensorimotor circuit and the environment.'[03] My conceptualisation of experience is underpinned by the sensorimotor understanding of enactivism, one of the branches into which enactive cognition has developed. As suggested by 4E cognition, and according to philosophers Alva Noë and J. Kevin O' Reagan, perception is something we do,[04] it is an active endeavour

through which we encounter 'how things are in the world.'[05] The dance work is apprehended through a particular action of a particular subject: the spectator. Neuroscientist Vittorio Gallese explains that our perception is 'modulated by our own personal history, by the quality of our attachment relations and by our sociocultural background.'[06]

The experience of dance is relational and depends on the interaction between the work and the spectator. The spectator's sensorimotor structures and embodied concepts emerge from their previous bodily experiences of the world,[07] so that this approach implies both that perception is action, and that 'cognitive structures emerge from the sensorimotor patterns.'[08] The perceiver possesses a 'sensorimotor structure' which is 'the manner in which the perceiver is embodied.'[09] According to Varela, Thompson, and Rosch, 'cognition is not the representation of a pregiven world by a pregiven mind but is rather the enactment of a world and a mind.'[10]
As a first step in my conceptualisation of experience, I cannot separate what I know from what I perceive in the dance work, since I perceive it through my body-mind-environment, through my sensorimotor structures and the cognition emergent from it. My spectatorial position is very specific in this sense, as these sensorimotor structures and cognition are highly indebted to my training as a dancer and experience as choreographer, but also my particular scholarly interest in dance and cognition. Through these ideas, the experience of dance is informed by the background of the spectator and understood as embodied because bodily and cognitive elements are co-emergent and inseparable. Further to this, embodied cognition 'belongs to our shared biological and cultural world,'[11] which entails societal construction of sensorimotor structures, cognition, and hence experience too. This helps explain the fact that spectators of similar backgrounds will often have similar experiences of dance works, even though each experience is necessarily individual.

Gestures and expressions of the dancers, which are more clearly referential, are often understood intuitively as distinct from the perceptual properties of the dance, and I propose that they are part of the embodied enactive process which is the experience of dance. Through this approach, these types of gestures, expressions, and meanings are integrated into my perceptual experience as spectator: there is no layer of meaning inserted on top of the dance movement, the movement is meaning.

Following this, the full meaning of a dance work is necessarily broader than the narrative or referential aspects. Meaning includes contextual information beyond that which is internalised in my perception (my own embodiment) or embodied in the work (its perceptual features). In the particular case being studied here, for example, the work's meaning would include the knowledge of Virginia Woolf's oeuvre and Wayne McGregor's choreography. This does not imply that a spectator without this contextual knowledge cannot have a complete experience of the work, but that for someone with this knowledge the work would make

reference to it—they will experience it more fully. Indeed, that certain elements of the work of dance would 'resonate' with this information when the spectator has this knowledge.

Theories of embodied and enactive cognition allow me to situate the analysis and argument that I will develop below. They also frame my search for a holistic, integrated approach to the spectator's experience of dance. However, I would expand an integrated approach and propose that synaesthesia can help understand a fundamental part of this experience, by acting as a model for the crossing and merging of senses in dance watching experiences. It is not my intention to equate synaesthesia and multimodality, however. I understand multimodality as the use of multiple modes of presentation and engagement of multiple senses, whereas synaesthesia would imply perceiving and interpreting information from a particular sense in a different one. I use both concepts here to reflect on a continuum of experience. Multimodality, the inherent state of dance works, can be a fertile ground for synaesthetic experiences, especially since the forms and modes of dance move across sound, vision, kinaesthesia, memory, referential and symbolic elements. Cross-sensorial and synaesthetic experiences can emerge and be facilitated from multimodality, and this can be explained through theories of embodied and enactive cognition. It is in this sense I make use of the notion of synaesthesia: to discuss possible conceptualisations of the spectatorial experiences of dance.

so... what is synaesthesia?

Synaesthesia is defined as a 'condition in which someone experiences things through their senses in an unusual way, for example by experiencing a colour as a sound or a number as a position in space.'[12] Richard E. Cytowic, neurologist expert in synaesthesia, defines it as 'a hereditary condition in which a triggering stimulus evokes the automatic, involuntary, affect-laden, and conscious perception of a sensory or conceptual property that differs from that of the trigger.'[13] Although considered a condition, and hence something separate—or at least at a different level—from the norm of sensory processing, the idea of synaesthesia can also be helpful in the conceptualisation and analysis of dance spectatorship as an embodied enactive process. After all, many conditions in psychology are now deemed a matter of spectrum or range, and not necessarily disorders, and synaesthesia is known to be both a developmental and acquired condition. Cytowic explains:

> We can speak today of synesthesia as a multidimensional spectrum in which the upper end prototypes are perceptual synesthesias such as colored hearing, phoneme tastes, and number forms. At the low end of the spectrum are conventional metaphor and perceptual similarities such as warm and cool colors. Occupying intermediate levels are experiences like goose bumps, empathic pain, imagery inspired by music or an aroma, hypnogogic hallucinations, and Proustian memories evoked by a sensory episode.[14]

While the use of cross-sensory conditions of synaesthesia throughout this article might best be classified in the latter of Cytowic's categories, it is the modelling of the experience which is of real interest in this article. Synaesthesia, after all, already includes an element of cognition in itself—indeed it is based on the idea that there is no separation between cognition and sensory processing. Again, Cytowic's writes:

> While we often speak of synesthesia as a sensory coupling or cross-pairing, it is obvious that elements such as letters, words, time units, or musical keys are not strictly 'senses.' And letters and color are both visual rather than cross-sensory. So we need to bear in mind the wider cognitive sphere that encompasses synesthetic experience.[15]

In other words, synaesthesia itself already merges perception and cognition, in the same way as embodied cognition and enactive perception theories do. There are, however, limits to its application in the particular context of the spectator's experience of dance works. Synaesthetic pairings work in one direction, for example, a colour might provoke a particular sound, but a sound would not evoke a colour necessarily, even in the same person. However, I am using the term, synaesthesia, as a model for cross-sensory experience, integrating all senses, and not necessarily triggering sensation from one sensory modality to another.

My use of the concept for this purpose is not new in itself. Perhaps the most direct study of synaesthesia in application to art is that of performance scholar Josephine Machon. Synaesthesia, Machon proposes, is 'the production, from a sense-impression of one kind, of an associated mental image of another kind.'[16] She works with the term '(syn) aesthetics' (with a playful use of parentheses) [which] encompasses both a fused sensory perceptual experience and a fused and sensate approach to artistic practice and analysis.'[17] She calls up the variety of elements in performance—set, sound, words…, as well as the interdisciplinary nature of her '(syn) aesthetic hybrid.'[18] My decision to employ the term through a different interpretation, in fact, does not stem from a fundamental disagreement with Machon, but rather from a difference of emphasis. Although Machon establishes at the beginning of her argument that she does not divide body and mind, her language of corporeal vs cerebral, and her focus on the former through her 'visceral experience,' seem to separate from embodied enactive cognition and hence from my aim of developing a holistic perspective of spectatorial experience. A similar issue arises on the other side of the cognition-body spectrum in the work of psychologist Margaret Wilson, who defends that our minds '[harness] the power of one domain of thought to aid in representing another.'[19] From my particular approach, the concept of representation emphasises the intellectual side of the experience, even though Wilson herself establishes her view within embodied cognition. This emphasis becomes problematic, not only because representation might refer to mental representation which embodied cognition theories reason against, but also because of the implications and

limitations of representation and narrative in performance.[20]

More directly related to my topic here, dance scholar Freya Vass-Rhee makes use of the idea of synaesthesia when talking about William Forsythe's work and his development of 'a number of innovative choreographic strategies that link vocalisation to the action of dancing.'[21] Vass-Rhee brings up how these strategies, crossing between sound and movement, show cognitive connections between senses which can be revealed 'in the language of synesthetic metaphor', that is, in references 'to sounds as being bright or dark, and colours as loud or quiet.'[22] She is talking of intermodal perception, of 'complex, dynamic systems of structured relations that emerge within and across the modes of vision and audition.'[23] Vass-Rhee recognises that 'Forsythe's turn to the auditory has offered the ensemble a new range of compositional and staging strategies, enhancing the visceral impact of the danced performance through the intermodal division of performer and audience attention.'[24] She is referring to the relationship between sound and movement in addition to choreographer, performer, and spectator. Hers is the closest towards realising the approach I am imagining: a complete embodied, enactive, and cross-sensory conceptualisation of the spectator's experience of dance. Moreover, Vass-Rhee also already indicates how a particular emphasis from the choreographer's position can also enhance audience experience, that is, how choreographers can engage with the complex nature of the works and compose multimodal environments which might invite synaesthetic experiences in audience members.

Following this line of enquiry, I wish to harness the power of the sensory condition of synaesthesia as a model for the experience of dance. I turn to the scenes from McGregor's 2015 work for the UK's Royal Ballet: *Woolf Works* in order to illustrate and exemplify my approach.

woolf works

Woolf Works[25] is the first full length ballet for the Royal Ballet by British choreographer Wayne McGregor. As is usual in his works, he collaborated with artists from different disciplines, such as composer Max Richter, designers Cigüe and We Not I, lighting designer Lucy Carter, costume designer Moritz Junge, film designer Ravi Deepres, sound designer Christ Ekers, and make-up designer Kabuki. This list of collaborators indicates the importance of cross-disciplinary work in this particular piece. While developing the work, McGregor was deliberately composing and correlating different senses and collaborating with people who would further push his attention in multimodal directions. Transposing Virginia Woolf's books into the work of dance using an ekphrasis approach alongside dramaturg Uzma Hamee was a further element to the work. McGregor explains the themes that were part of this work in an interview:

> *Mrs Dalloway* is a beautiful story about people, about human relationships. It's a woven, textured story, which is full of imagination and pain and beauty. Orlando is this romp through 300 years of history, and as Woolf was super-interested in science fiction, in

astronomy and things 'other,' it really suited my alien aesthetic. The third piece, The Waves, is partly her letters and biography colliding with this phenomenal story about growing older, and letting go.[26]

McGregor's work has a tendency to integrate the of elements of performance. He even explores ideas about the body and cognition through his own research and the projects developed by his company, often at the forefront of cognitive sciences and choreographic thinking research.[27] It would seem however that not just the themes but also the form and style of Woolf's works pushed him even further into an understanding of multisensorial approaches in this particular work. In discussions about the work, Hameed, Richter, and McGregor discuss that Woolf's work gave two kinds of information which allowed them to focus in these multimodal—perhaps quasi-synaesthetic—approaches. Firstly, the rhythm of the writing itself, which is, as in poetry, acoustic, visual, and kinaesthetic all at once.[28] And secondly, the amount of sensory information displayed in the writing: the vivid descriptions, the city sounds, and the images, which allowed them to search for this sensorial evocation through the dance work.[29]

Hameed explains that

> [Woolf] plunges us into a world in which events are strung together thematically rather than chronologically, and the fabric of emotion and sensation appears denser than the brittle world of objects. All of this might be seen as the natural territory of dance.[30]

synaesthetic possibilities in woolf works: sound, silence, stillness, resonance

As a spectator, I am transported to a world of emotion and sensation. Although not every scene is equally successful at this experiential translocation, the scenes which accomplish this have something in common: there are powerful forces at play which cross through senses, embodied concepts, and memory.

In artistic work as well as philosophical thought, there is a sense of fascination in the strength of simplicity, of absence. Artists often exploit how full, generative, and evocative absence can be. In performing arts this can include emphasis on the power of silence and stillness. The link between silence and stillness is perhaps the clearest relationship between the terms that I refer to in this article: they are both intuitively understood as the absence of something, of movement, of sound. My intention is to problematise not only this idea of silence and stillness as 'absences,' but to use them as examples to discuss the audience's experience of dance works, and how these non-absences have the potential to trigger synaesthetic reception—and arguably to be designed choreographically to do so.

Performance scholar Phillip B. Zarrilli speaks about absence as parts of the body that the actor does not bring into awareness. For example, he explains, when an actor does not focus on their back because it is 'the "negative" or absent space furthest away from the point of external focus.'[31] He also suggests that these absent points can be accessed by developing 'sensory awareness.'[32]

In a similar manner, silence and stillness can be considered absence insofar as we do not attend to them as spectators, but become full of sensory qualities and cross-sensory potential when we do. The third term in my title, resonance, provides a link between the two preceding terms, and between ideas of form and those of meaning, allowing me to develop a more holistic view. Although there may be similarities with other discourses on resonance,[33] I use the term here as a play between the sound-related meaning—reverberation and prolongation of sound—and its potential cross-modal understandings as a form of memory, reference, or sensory echo beyond the modality of sound. That is, I use the term to facilitate and illustrate my approach to experience as synaesthetic potentiality.

In order to discuss this constellation of terms, it is important to start by referring to the synaesthetic possibilities of the relationship(s) between sound and dance. Sound is perceived in the body and often described as being bodily in itself: as light or heavy, as bright or dull, or, as McGregor describes Richter's music, as 'sit[ting] deep within the body … You can't help but feel that music in 3D.'[34] Although already crossing senses, this seems to be only at the level of our descriptions at this point, without implications at the level of experience. It seems to be widely accepted that the sound which forms part of a dance performance is key to our experience of it: that '[t]he audience is acoustically encircled or surrounded by the performance.'[35] Peter Sellars is also quoted in Ross Brown's reader on sound, stating that 'sound is where we locate ourselves, not physically, but mentally and spiritually. Sound exists inside our heads. It is our greatest experience of intimacy, it transports us, it invades us.'[36] Music and dance are not perceived separately. In McGregor's work, these and other elements are not understood as separate either.

In 'Tuesday', the last section of the work, when the dancers start moving, they do so in the silence between the sentences of the heartbreakingly beautiful words of Woolf's suicide note. Soon after, they start moving in the silence and across the voice over: the movement not quite aligning (in sync with?) with Woolf's written words as delivered aloud, but not quite ignoring them. At one point, Woolf's letter repeats: 'I don't think two people could have been happier than we have been,' and principal dancer Federico Bonelli slides Alessandra Ferri towards the front of the stage, stopping just after the words have faded. In a sense, they produce a dance version of rubato, 'stealing' moments from this particular phrasing. Rubato is a very powerful device for dance, which dance and music scholar Stephanie Jordan defines as 'the slowing, decaying and then catching up with the beat.'[37] In this case they steal time by not quite catching up to the words. This is the end of the letter, and its symbolism is strengthened by all the elements within the scene: Ferri's soft movements, the slow movement of the waves, and the scarce music.

Zarrilli's idea of absence as lack of attention[38] becomes relevant again when talking about silence. Silence, John Cage understood, is unintended sound, the notation for environmental sound.[39] The existence of silence is only possible through sound—we need sound so that we can notice the silence that shifts our attention. In 'I now, I then', the first part of *Woolf Works*, there is a clear example of deafening silence, when everything is brought into high definition because the music stops. There is a section of loud music and fast movement where we can see an exhilarating duet between two female dancers, Francesca Hayward and Beatriz Stix-Brunell. Towards the end of the duet, Stix-Brunell, playing a younger Mrs Dalloway/Woolf, is substituted by Ferri as the older self. The abrupt silence and slowing down seems to invite us to focus in on a kiss between Ferri and Hayward, which mixes Woolf's personal history with Mrs Dalloway's story. Another example, in the second part of *Woolf Works*, 'Becomings', is a solo by principal dancer Natalia Osipova which continues when the music ends. This sudden change of relationship between elements creates a sense of tension which is very strong for me as spectator. These sensation and attention go beyond the modality of sound, even beyond the perception of movement because the void allows for a synaesthetic experience to emerge, imbued with heightened emotion. McGregor and his collaborators are aware of the focus that comes with silence, and they make clear use of it.

There is a sense of power in silence. Our perception does not just mirror the supposed absence of sound with an absence of relevance or meaning; there is intensification of our responsiveness. What is more, through the silence it is possible to continue perceiving a sense of rhythm across the music/movement complex: the work's pulse. It is possible to produce and receive emphasised moments of tension—through the dancer's breathing, the use of light, or the subtly suggested thematic elements. The end of the second part of *Woolf's Works*, 'Becomings', is a clear example of this. As a spectator I am put in a state of anticipation by the workings of the music and the movement. The scene is set with several small circles of light, within which groups of dancers turn in themselves and around each other. Both the music and the movement of the dancers accelerate evidently, building up tension. I can sense that something is coming, but this does not minimise its effect when it arrives. The circles of light disappear, but the laser beams that have made up the lighting effects of this section remain. These laser lights are intensified and crossed over to the audience. The main melody of the music has stopped, but these lights and the underlying layers of the soundscape keep a recurrent pulse. Feeling almost like a heartbeat, this pulse stretches the effects of the work and keeps the tension ongoing. Through this cross-modal deconstruction of the scene, the effects of the dance are strengthened in our memory too. Silence, indeed, but indebted to all other elements of the work, and far from being absence.

It becomes enticing now to think of what stillness might be in the proposed cross-

modal experience. Jayani Fernando describes another moment of the final piece of the work, 'Tuesday', as follows:

> … she stands there, until Bonelli returns and lifts her high above him. The music continues to crescendo; it reaches the precipice, and then subito piano. Stop. Near silence.[40]

Ferri waits, she's lifted: there is always a sense of future, of expectation, that comes with silence. Perhaps it is in that sense that silence cannot be stillness. Something always keeps moving. In my experience as spectator, silence seems closer to slow-motion: continuity, a sense of tension, and projection of the future. Perhaps this is also the reason why slow-motion dance in silence is a very powerful choreographic device which is often used to focus attention. I would suggest it is why McGregor chooses the slow-motion waves as set for this part of the work.

What could be the experiential cross-modal equivalent to stillness? Similar to silence being unintended sound, in stillness there is underlying movement. Even if we do not consider the inherent tension of a body standing still, there is actual movement happening in the breathing and the blood circulation at the very least—here we have an example of why both silence and stillness cannot be considered absence, unless in contrast with sound or movement. Jayani Fernando talks about how at the end of the ballet there is a moment when everyone in the company is 'almost completely still', and how '[i]n this stillness, everything is suspended.'[41]

Again stillness is not an absence, but the sense of an absorbing void, of travelling towards something that is not there, of what came before. In stillness, I propose, there is a sense of resonance. The actual architecture of a theatre, the use of the monumental set of revolving frames in *Woolf Works*, the grandiose film of slow-motion waves—all contribute to the sense of resonance. A resonance which links with the spectator's experiences, not only with the visual imagery but also with what can be heard, touched, felt, that is, with their embodiment.[42]

In the relationship between sound and movement, however, resonance is also many other things. Resonance is, in a way, a form of memory. 'I now, I then' begins with Woolf's own voice telling us that 'words, English words, are full of echoes, memories, associations.'[43] The work itself begins with 'echoes' of the past, images projected into one of the set's structures, sounds of bells suggested in the soundscape of the music. According to Hameed, in *Woolf Works*, Richter worked with the rhythms and melodies of Woolf's texts, further crossing sensory categories through resonance. McGregor also insists that Richter's music 'taps into memories.'[44] Jayani Fernando writes about how Ferri stands alone on stage at the beginning of *Woolf Works*, 'her body accumulating the resonances of Woolf's words,'[45] which were just heard as a voice over. Through the merging of elements, the work offers resonances that are imbued with the spectator's own background and knowledge, exemplifying the integration of what is intuitively cognitive and what is bodily in the

experience of dance works. Understanding this experience as embodied and enactive cognition allows me to make sense of it in an integrated approach. The modelling of the experience in synaesthesia allows me to see it as a merge of sensations, in which both cognitive and bodily processes can be triggered through the modulation of elements which move across senses.

In the final part of the ballet, there is a sequence involving the whole cast, consisting of simple movements. The sequence is repeated several times, and in each repetition the corps de ballet comes closer to Ferri. This gives both a sensation of echo and memory as well as the idea of threat. Calmness and tension are brought into contact, which is broken just as I, as spectator, was convinced that I could watch it repeat forever. There is echo, resonance and memory in the dancers moving, changing pace and stopping, in the tolling of the bells, the dark and almost ragged costumes, the lighting, the slow waves above... There are resonances both from within the work—Ferri being a guiding connection herself through the three parts and from outside. There are conventions from the world of ballet, from Woolf's work, from the context of the Royal Ballet and the Royal Opera House.

There is echo and memory both through the dancer's recalling of movements in the last part 'Tuesday', and in the fact that there are younger and older versions of the characters dancing alongside each other. The embodiment of memory is placed in front of us as spectators. This reflects also in the dancer's qualities: the younger versions dancing faster, perhaps more fully, the older characters heavy with the weight of experience and knowledge, exquisitely nuanced in the movement, gestural, and expressive detail that they present for the spectator's perception.[46] Further to this, 'Tuesday' does not have a clear linear narrative: Ferri is Woolf but she is also Mrs Dalloway. Past and present mix with characters appearing and disappearing, and every time the set revolves there seems to be a different meaning waiting for us. The music comes and goes and so do the references inside of it, the bells, the voices. Finally, McGregor's movement style is far from natural, but it is interspersed with gestures of daily and relatable significance.

All the elements of the performance produce a dynamic interaction between sensation and narrative which is left for the spectator to construe. In dramaturg Hameed's words:

> Artistic collaboration is, of course, a keystone of McGregor's practice too and, from the outset, he envisioned a response to Woolf which came from a similar 'collision of ideas', the opportunities for startling Woolfian juxtapositions or synaesthetic metaphors arising from the co-existence of different formal languages on stage.[47]

Hameed speaks of metaphors as if the way we perceive these formal languages and their relationships is just that: a matter of language. It is possible however that we are looking at a configuration of sensing which is actually multimodal and does not respond to the idea

of codified languages. Indeed, language itself has been argued to be embodied and arising from physical interactions, although this discussion is beyond the scope of this paper.[48] It is possible that the only way to understand our experience of dance is to consider it in this holistic approach: synaesthetic—as cross-sensory experience—embodied enactive cognition.

conclusion

McGregor's emphasis on all elements working collectively makes it possible to understand the work as engaging across senses, concepts, and meanings. McGregor cannot possibly design or anticipate spectatorial experience in all its possibilities—if nothing else because his own embodiment is particular to him. He can however use his own experience to explore the synaesthetic possibilities of the work with his collaborators, and hence the complexity of his work holds the possibility to trigger synaesthetic experience through the intensity of the interaction between elements.

Through the collaborative, cross-disciplinary work under McGregor's artistic direction, *Woolf Works* not only expresses ideas, emotions, and sensations through the medium of dance, but understands dance as a cross-sensorial potentiality, able not only to deal with deep thematic elements, while also remain viscerally engaging. The key is in the work itself. Through silence it is possible to engage with a continuous slow-moving timeline, through stillness the work can call to the resonance of underlying movement, and through embodied sensory aspects of the work, there is an appeal to the comingling of memory and thought. The creative agents within this project—choreographer, designers, composer, dramaturg, and evidently dancers—have played across modalities, engaged the senses in different ways, and generally teased the possibilities of almost cross-wiring their spectator into quasi-synaesthetic conditions.

Although necessarily brief, this article has proposed a discussion of synaesthetic processing as part of both the choreographer's creative process and the audience's experience of the work of dance, exploring its potential as a new conceptualisation of dance spectatorship informed by theories of embodied and enactive cognition. This argument is only possible through the dismissal of the separation between (1) cognition, emotion, and perception, and (2) referential and formal aspects. This perspective allowed me to discuss the intersection of referential elements, spectator's knowledge and background, and formal properties of the work in the experience of the spectator, and to provide a parallel between this experience and the cross-modality of synaesthesia. Understanding experiences of dance in this way allows me to propose an integration of apparently separate elements and senses in performance. This way of making and looking at dance offers new possibilities for the exploration of experiences of dance, and has the potential to intensify the connections between cognitive studies and artistic research.

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notes

01 Albert Newen, Leon De Bruin, and Shaun Gallagher, *The Oxford Handbook of 4E Cognition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

02 Robert A. Wilson and Lucia Foglia, 'Embodied Cognition - Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,' accessed 20 May 2020, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/embodied-cognition/#EnaCog.

03 Wilson and Foglia 'Embodied Cognition - Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy' or Albert Newen, Leon De Bruin, and Shaun Gallagher, *The Oxford Handbook of 4E Cognition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

04 Alva Noë and J. Kevin O'Reagan, 'What it is Like to See: A Sensorimotor Theory of Perceptual Experience,' *Synthese* 129 (1 Perception, Action and Consciousness) (2001): 80.

05 Alva Noë, *Action in Perception* (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 2006/2004), 85.

06 Vittorio Gallese, 'Empathy, Embodied Simulation, and the Brain: Commentary on Aragno and Zepf/Hartmann,' *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 56 (2008): 775.

07 Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch, *The Embodied Mind. Cognitive Science and Human Experience. Revised* (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 2016/1991), 173.

08 Varela, Thompson, and Rosch, *The Embodied Mind*, 173.

09 Varela, Thompson, and Rosch, *The Embodied Mind*, 173.

10 Varela, Thompson, and Rosch, *The Embodied Mind*, 9.

11 Varela, Thompson, and Rosch, *The Embodied Mind*, 172.

12 Cambridge Dictionary, 'Synaesthesia,' accessed 27 January 2020, https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/Synaesthesia.

13 Richard E. Cytowic, *Synesthesia (MIT Press Essential Knowledge series), Kindle Edition* (Cambridge and London, The MIT Press, 2018), 216.

14 Cytowic, *Synesthesia*, 337.

15 Cytowic, *Synesthesia*, 192.

16 Josephine Machon, *(Syn) aesthetics: Redefining Visceral Performance* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 14.

17 Machon, *(Syn)aesthetics: Redefining Visceral Performance*, 14.

18 Machon, *(Syn)aesthetics: Redefining Visceral Performance,* 55.

19 Margaret Wilson, 'What Do the Mirror System, Embodied Cognition, and Synaesthesia Have to Do with Each Other?,' *Cortex* 49 (2013): 2949.

20 In relation to representation, in fact, there is one more aspect that should be considered when talking about dance, but which I cannot go into depth in this text. Scholar Tanya Jayani Fernando, discussing McGregor's *Woolf Works*, makes use of the concept of ekphrasis. Ekphrasis often refers to the literary use of vivid description of a work of visual art. Jayani Fernando uses it in her work as 'the translation of a work of art from one aesthetic medium to another' (Tanya Jayani Fernando, 'The Ekphrastic Body: Wayne McGregor's *Woolf Works*,' Dance Chronicle 42, no. 2 (2019): 143). In this case, she brings together the signifying, quasi-narrative aspects of the work, and the necessary change of formal properties and themes which occurs when transforming a literary work into dance. Whether a translation between art forms or between senses, there seems to be the need to understand the experience of dance in a wider range of processing than the merely visual or the merely intellectual.

21 Freya Vass-Rhee, 'Dancing Music. The Intermodality of the Forsythe Company' in *William Forsythe and the Practice of Choreography. It Starts from Any Point*, ed. Steven Spier (London: Routledge, 2011), 73.

22 Freya Vass-Rhee, 'Dancing Music. The Intermodality of the Forsythe Company,' 73.

23 Freya Vass-Rhee, 'Dancing Music. The Intermodality of the Forsythe Company,' 74.

24 Freya Vass-Rhee, 'Dancing Music. The Intermodality of the Forsythe Company,' 87.

25 *Woolf Works*, choreography by Wayne McGregor, music by Max Richter, designs by Ciguë, We Not I and Wayne McGregor, costumes by Moritz Junge, lights by Lucy Carter, film by Ravi Deepres, sound by Chris Ekers, make up by Kabuki, dramaturgy by Uzma Hameed, premiered May 11, 2015, Royal Opera House, London.

26 Royal Opera House, 'Why Virginia Woolf? Wayne McGregor on the inspiration behind *Woolf Works* (The Royal Ballet),' accessed 1 November 2019, https://youtu.be/otgRonIR1Ic.

27 Wayne McGregor, 'R+D Projects,' accessed November 1, 2019 https://waynemcgregor.com/r-d/projects/.

28 Royal Opera House, '*Woolf Works* Insight (The Royal Ballet),' accessed 1 November 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0ADxUspPW8.

29 Royal Opera House, '*Woolf Works* Insight (The Royal Ballet),' accessed 1 November 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0ADxUspPW8.

30 Royal Opera House, *Woolf Works. DVD Booklet* (UK: Opus Arte, 2017), 5.

31 Phillip B. Zarrilli, 'Senses and Silence in Actor Training and Performance,' in *The Senses in Performance*, eds. Sally Banes and André Lepecki (New York and London: Routledge, 2007), 60.

32 Zarrilli, 'Senses and Silence in Actor Training and Performance,' 62.

33 Perhaps with the work of Gilles Deleuze, for example in *The Logic of Sense* (New York: Columbia University Press: 1990). Although I do not pursue this link here.

34 Royal Opera House, '*Woolf Works* Insight (The Royal Ballet),' accessed 1 November 2019 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0ADxUspPW8.

35 Ross Brown, *Sound: A Reader in Theatre Practice* (UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 138-139.

36 Brown, *Sound: A Reader in Theatre Practice*, 46-47.

37 Jordan, *Mark Morris. Musician-Choreographer*, 111.

38 Zarrilli, 'Senses and Silence in Actor Training and Performance,' 49-60.

39 Alex Ross, 'Searching for Silence,' *The New Yorker*, accessed November 1, 2019 https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/10/04/searching-for-silence.

40 Tanya Jayani Fernando, 'The Ekphrastic Body: Wayne McGregor's *Woolf Works*,' *Dance Chronicle* 12 (2019): 161.

41 Fernando, 'The Ekphrastic Body, Wayne McGregor's *Woolf Works*': 161.

42 Zarrilli speaks of a 'requirement for the actor to 'stand still while not standing still' (65) in a work by Samuel Beckett. He continues by observing that '[t]his means full engagement in an internal, psychophysical (not psychological) impulse and awareness on each (non) action' (65). Clearly Zarrilli understands that stillness is not necessarily absence either. He reflects as follows on his own experience of acting this instruction: 'Each "does not move" was enacted with the breath though my entire body... Each action "resonated" though me, but I did not (overtly) move' (66). Zarrilli refers again to the idea of something resonating, in this case relating stillness and resonance also in the work of the actor, who achieves this through 'heightened sensory awareness (62).

43 BBC News, 'Rare Recording of Virginia Woolf,' accessed 26 September 2020, https://www.bbc.com/news/av/entertainment-arts-28231055.

44 Royal Opera House, '*Woolf Works* Insight (The Royal Ballet),' accessed 1 November 2019 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0ADxUspPW8.

45 Jayani Fernando, 'The Ekphrastic Body: Wayne McGregor's *Woolf Works*,' 149.

46 There is also a contextual sense of knowledge at work here. Both Ferri and Gary Avis, principal character artists who plays the older love interest, are in the later part of their dancing careers. This is a presence which is pregnant with the significance that age seems to carry in the dance world—though perhaps less and less now.

47 Royal Opera House, *Woolf Works A Tryptic. DVD booklet* (UK: Opus Arte, 2017), 6.

48 Argued for example in George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1980).*